



MAKING THE CONNECTIONS

First Unitarian Universalist Church of Essex County

December 2016

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Where every mind is free and every soul is welcome!

100 YEAR HOUSE (RECAP) by Patricia Rogers

The city of Orange is shaped like a house. There are many houses in Orange that are a hundred years old, including the First Unitarian Universalist Church, home to The HUUB. This year the church celebrated its 125th anniversary with a housing justice conference on November 5, 2016.

Community Listening Fellow, Khemani Gibson opened the conference with A Place of Meaning participative reading, followed by Frank Barzcz asking for a moment of silence for those families affected by recent gun violence. The day was meant to celebrate the church's past, and examine its present and future.

Bette Bland, who has been working on getting a spoken word club started, felt that a great recap for the day's events was a collective poem. Post-its were around with pens for people to "capture the creativity of the day."

The day's speakers included Diane Reynolds, a lifelong Orange resident who was living in a 100 Year House. She also happened to be HANDS community organizer Dawan Alford's grandmother. She talked about the joys and challenges of living in such an old house.

After 69 years in her home, the upkeep gets expensive, including insulation in the winter-time. I was surprised to hear that her neighbor's house was even older than hers. As she ended her story she urged those involved in development to "not forget about the people who live here, and try to protect the older houses. I hope sharing my story can help." And it did, thank you Ms. Reynolds.

VISTA preceding me at HANDS, Inc back in 2011. She works at New Jersey Historic Trust and shared insight on historic preservation. She studies cultural heritage and conservation. She talked about the qualifications and what states can do to preserve what happens around a 100 Year house, intangible heritage.

Molly Rennie from United Way of Northern New Jersey's ALICE Project, spoke next. She talked about the long multi-generations in the Oranges. Her works with the ALICE project is the cross-section of the population, and promotes a more positive way to look at poor workers. Like expanding the definition or perception of financial need. All alternatives of how to look at the city of Orange. Going back to our asset-based way of seeing what people in the community have.

I learned a lot about Newark, New Jersey from Ann Batiste. Like how the Ironbound used to be a salt-marsh. It was initially undesirable but turned into an arts wave. She works at the Ironbound Community Corporation as well as The New School. It was good to see similar activity in Essex County.

The next speaker talked from the heart, and you could feel it.

That was Molly Rose Kaufman, from the University of Orange, and with family ties to the church. She read an excerpt from her grandmother Maggie Thompson's memoir From One to Ninety-One about her decision to stay in Orange. It is always inspiring to hear about activism. She then went on to talk about sharing the stories of the community and celebrating the lives of those around. I tried not to shed a tear when she shouted out my profiles



MARK IT DOWN

- ◆ Second Sunday: Spirituality Group, Sunday, 11 Dec, 5 PM, Parish Hall
- ◆ Canvass Ends, Sunday, 11 Dec
- ◆ Board of Trustees, Thursday, 15 Dec, 7 PM, Sonan Room

The next speaker was a familiar face, Michelle Raciopi. She was the AmeriCorps

Continued on Page 2

Second Sundays

Spirituality Group will meet in Parish Hall starting at 5 PM

DATES *SPJRTUAL GROUP*

11 Dec Presenters — Frank Barszcz & Darcy Hall

08 Jan How do our Unitarian Universalist principals define our spiritual journey?
2017

Where does spirituality fit for UU's as our heads and hearts work toward social and economic justice?

12 Feb These are just two of the questions we hope to address over the next several months at First Church as we explore the

12 Mar various pathways of our respective spiritual journeys. Through the process of "Guided Group Interaction" group lead-

09 Apr ers Darcy Hall and Frank Barszcz will help create a safe space to talk about the challenges of being connected to the world around us in a meaningful way.

14 May Continuing on Sunday, 11 December from 5:00 PM to 6:30 PM and each month following through June 2017, we will gather in a circle of meditation and sharing as we separate ourselves from daily activities and go to a peaceful inner place for spiritual exploration.

Our Unitarian Universalist chalice will be the centering point for the journey. Meditation and readings will help direct the exchange of thoughts, feelings and ideas about our individual journey. Come ready to share, to listen and to discover the things that make our existence unique in this world.

Please note that we will not be having the traditional UU coffee hour for these gatherings. Juice and water will be available. Group meetings will take place on the second Sunday of the month through June 2017. Sessions will start promptly at 5:00pm and will run no later than 6:30 pm. We ask that if you decide to participate after the first meeting that you make a commitment to attend each session.

100 YEAR HOUSE (RECAP) [cont.]

on MasConsumption and shared the VAMP Festival recap video from 2012 at Ironworks. It was motivational and put me back in the game!

I was able to meet many people, even Mindy Fullilove's high school classmate who also lives in a 100 Year House here in Orange, New Jersey. After lunch, and the honoring of the honorees, we split into groups for the "A Saturday in Orange; Hidden Treasures of Orange scavenger hunt." Powered by the University of Orange and my friend, Aubrey Murdock, each group was given a different map of treasures. The walking tour led you to historic spots in and around the church. We were given QR codes to scan, where we listened to a story or watched a video about the history.

My group, which included Naeema Campbell, one of the HUUB's community listening fellows, Holly Barzcz, Frank, and my dear friend playwright, Georgina, were led to the start of I-280. The formation of the highway was a profound moment in the history of Orange. We watched a video of the construction, and it was crazy to imagine that the highway was once just a big hole dug in the middle of the city. The map then led us to Serrani's Bakery. We met one of the owners who was able to give us even more insight into how I-280 affected her family's business. We also left with some goodies.

A part of the activity was to perform a group sound we heard on our tour. We decided to depict traffic. We were no competition for Doug Farrand, musician and head of Music City, who reen-

acted falling leaves and acorns. Honorees included Pat Morrissy of HANDS, Craig Hirshberg the former director of UU Legislative Ministry of New Jersey, and Andrea Lerner the Congregational Life Consultant and outgoing Metro New York UU District Executive.

This was my first event after becoming a Community HUUB Fellow and I must say it was great! Stay tuned for more!

Patricia Rogers, #ValleyGirlNJ, lives in New Jersey's Valley Arts District. The native New Yorker works as a writer, blogger and community activist. Starting Masconsumption Media in 2012, she has been passionate about capturing the stories of the vibrant up and coming Valley Arts District neighborhood through her blog, zine, events and more. She blogs for Jersey Indie, Luna Stage, and Hat City Kitchen and offers many creative media services. Visit her blog www.masconsumption.com and keep up with your favorite Valley Girl on social media at [@valleygirl_nj](https://twitter.com/valleygirl_nj) (Twitter / Instagram). This article appeared on [Jersey Indie](http://JerseyIndie.com).





**2016 Canvass Continues
thru 11 December**

The 2016 Church Canvass continues as we face a new year of hope and challenge in a changing political and social climate. To the right, Church President Mindy Fullilove's letter updating what has happened in the last year in the hope that it moves Members and Friends to pledge for the present church year. As of today, we have received only six pledges totaling \$7450, only 57% of our modest pledge goal of \$13,000. Won't you help us see First UU through this tough time of transition? For Members and giving Friends we have on file, a canvasser will contact you shortly to discuss our new work and ministry, and how you can help.

With the success of the 100 Year-Old House housing justice conference (see article on front page), introducing Orange, NJ to our new kind of ministry, the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Essex County stands poised to make a new mark on the community it has called home for 125 years. Indeed, we have already seen the fruits of what could be with an unexpectedly large turnout for our Post-Election Potluck on 13 November (see page 5). The people of Orange need our space for community organizing and justice building. With the formation of the HUUB, First UU can fulfill that mission. BUT WE NEED YOUR HELP!! We are facing an expected shortfall of about \$30,000.

We ask Members and Friends, old and new, near and far - that if this spiritual community has meant anything to you, has given you spiritual, emotional and intellectual sustenance through the years that has shaped your lives and hearts - that you please show your gratitude by pledging your support for First UU's continued existence. The deadline for this year's Canvass is Sunday, 11 December 2016. All proceeds are tax-deductible, and will go to this year's expenses. So, if you wish to take full tax advantage, please send your pledge card and contribution today. Please be generous. Checks can be made out and sent to:

First UU Church of Essex County
PO Box 998
Orange NJ 07051-0998

If you have any further questions, please contact Church Treasurer Bill Slezak at treasurer@essexuu.org. Thank you and best wishes for wonderful holidays.

Letter From The President

Dear Members and Friends—

A year ago we embarked on a great experiment, shifting from "parish ministry" to "urban ministry." We made a commitment to live our faith in a new way, confident that "faith without works is dead." In that year we have created The HUUB to carry out our "works" and we have created a lay-led ministry to carry out our "faith." Each of these has been a wonderful journey.

With The HUUB, it is easy to see how we are making a difference. We brought Charlie Wirene to Orange, and his gentle confidence is helping all the activists find their footing and each other. He is taming our buildings, moving us out of crisis mode, into a planned recovery. We can rejoice when we arrive and see long-delayed projects like the ramp now completed and giving our building that homey look of good repair. So many new people are coming through our building for dance, art, mourning, learning, and making music! We are the kind of resource we have always wanted to be.

For me, the faith part of our journey has been even more moving. With the leadership of Darcy Hall, and support of Greg Giacobe, we have talked to one another about the values that animate our lives. We have written poems, colored strange drawing and eaten cake. Those meetings have held in faith, in the sense of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who said, "Faith is taking the first step even when you can't see the whole staircase." We have done that!

I have been a UU all my life, but this year of Faith+Works has been the deepest journey into my faith. I look forward to continuing it with all of you. There will be lots of events, including concerts, a celebration of our history, political discussions, and regular lay-led services, to help each of us continue to learn about and live our seven principles.

I will be pledging to support First UU in this journey, and I hope you will join me. Together we can be part of the civic life of Orange, NJ, and of religious life of our congregation.

In faith,
Mindy



December 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11 SPIRITUALITY GROUP, Parish Hall, 5 PM	12	13	14	15 Board of Trustees, Sonnen Room, 7 PM	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25 CHRISTMAS	26	27	28	29	30	31

100 Year-Old House Conference/125th Anniversary Photo Essay

On 5 November 2016, First UU formally launched its new urban ministry program, The HUUB, by holding the 100 Year-Old House housing justice conference in conjunction with the church's own 125th Anniversary celebration. The HUUB's mission is to bring people together to use their gifts to advance peace, economic justice, respect, and educational attainment in the city of Orange. The conference brought neighbors together to discuss the state of housing in Orange, looking at both the aging building stock and the changing affordability of the city. Over 60 people were in attendance. Here are just a few scenes of the proceedings. From top right, clockwise: [1] Before starting, some coffee - attendees get ready for a full day. [2] Greg Giacobe at Check-in. [3] Sexton Tony Jones conducts a tour of the church campus. [4] Khemani Gilson starts the conference with a blessing followed by [5] a welcome from HUUB Board President Frank Barszcz. [6] Sanctuary, full view. [7] Diane Reynolds speaks on her experience living in Orange. [8] Mollie Rennie talks on the ALICE Project. [9] Ana Baptista. [10] Michele Racioppi of the NJ Historic Trust. [11] Molly Kaufman of the U of O sums up. Photos courtesy of Briana Hankerson/LIT Photography.

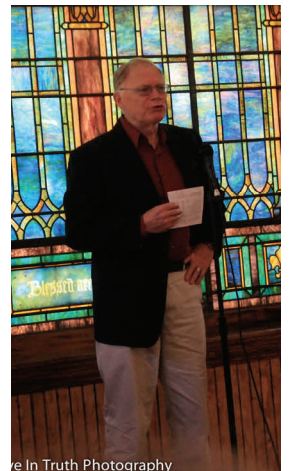


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100 Year-Old House Conference/125th Anniversary Photo Essay

125th Anniversary Luncheon, from top left, counterclockwise: [1] Lunch is served. [2] Old friends (Rickey Slezak, l. and Georgiana Hart, r.)... [3] And new. [4] Church President Mindy Fullilove begins festivities. [5] Wide shot of the Parish Hall. [6] Honorees (l. to r.) Pat Morrissy, Andrea Lerner and Rev. Craig Hirshberg. [7] HUUB Managing Director Charlie Wirene (right) and Molly Kaufman begin the workshop portion. [8] First UU Treasurer Bill Slezak introduces the HUUB Matching Grant Campaign. [9] Honorees with their awards. [10] Mindy and HUUB Board President Frank Barszcz with honorees. [11] Group shot finale. Photos courtesy of Briana Hankerson/LIT Photography.



Post-Election Potluck An Unexpected Success

In the wake of the surprise election results, First UU opened its doors to members, friends and partners to socialize, convive, reflect and share their hopes for the future. The regular Second Sunday program was dropped and in its place, the church sponsored a coffee klatch/potluck on 13 December at 11 AM. Nearly 40 people showed up for a an exciting, and at times emotional, gathering as people shared their hopes and fears of what will happen under the incoming Trump administration.



Guest At Your Table 2016 Reminder

A reminder that the 2016 Guest At Your Table drive continues. Thanks to your support, the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee is working throughout the United States and around the world to advance human rights. You can learn more about UUSC's work or support UUSC directly at www.uusc.org. To learn more about this year's Guest At Your Table, including Stories of Hope, go to www.uusc.org/guest_at_your_table. **This year there will be no donation envelopes distributed or any callbacks.** Donations can be made online at www.uusc.org/givetoguest. Please credit your connection with the First UU Church of Essex County. If you have any questions about the UUSC or Guest at Your Table, please contact Gregory Giacobe at ggiacobe@optonline.net or 201-823-2459. And remember, gifts of \$125 are eligible to be matched by the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock, to double the impact of your support!



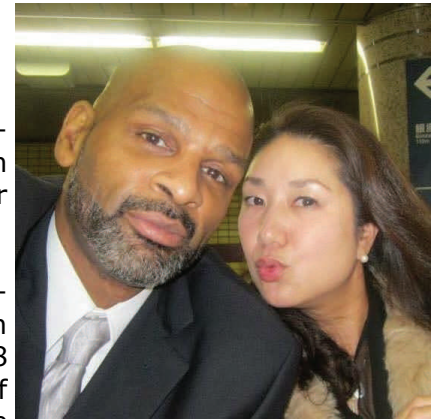
**Phoebe &
Her Unicorn**
By
Dana Simpson



ABOUT THE CHURCH

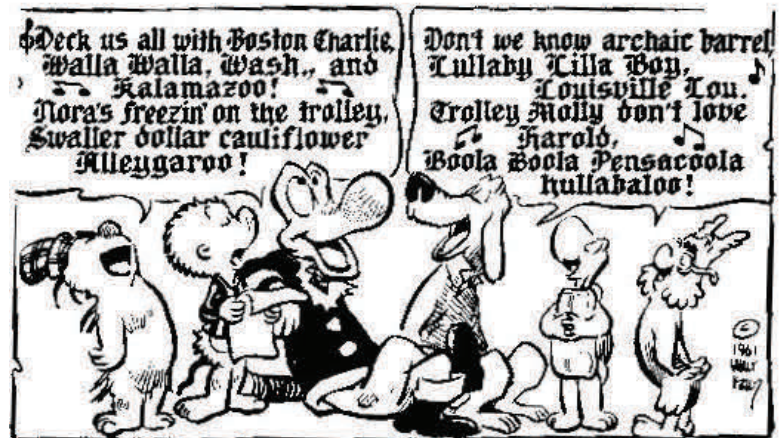
ABOUT THE CHURCH highlights important events in the lives of our Members. If you have a joy or concern you would like to share with the church membership, please contact the Church Office at office@essexuu.org or 973-674-0010, option 9. We have updates below:

- Our condolences go out to Church President Mindy Thompson Fullilove on the passing of her son Robert Smith Fullilove. Also known as LOVELIFE and Bobby IV, he was born in NYC on 10 January 1968 to Robert E. Fullilove, III and Evelyn Smith. With the marriage of Robert III and Mindy in 1983, Bobby was adopted by Mindy and the family moved to northern California. Bobby attended Alameda Community College in Oakland, CA and San Francisco State University. His real love was basketball, which he pursued with passion throughout the rest of his life. He started traveling to Japan in 2002 where he and married Haruko Takasaki in 2009. In Japan, he became a successful coach and English teacher, helping students under huge stress, to cope with the high pressures of the Japanese school system. He was part of a joyous extended family of ex-patriots, bonded by basketball. Bobby was a striking figure in Japan, due to his height, colorful clothing and striking demeanor. He learned to, as Audre Lourde phrased it, "live out loud". Diagnosed with multiple myeloma in 2014, Bobby fought hard, but succumbed to his disease on 20 October 2016. A memorial for Bobby was held at First UU for his extended family and friends on 26 November 2016. [Pictured Bobby Fullilove and Haruko Takasaki.]



POGO

By Walt Kelly





A unique opportunity to join Joel Katz, producer, director, and editor of Strange Fruit, for a screening of this important documentary. Mr. Katz will introduce the film and answer questions after the screening.

**Southern trees bear a strange fruit
Blood on the leaves and blood at the root.**



These are the opening words to one of the world's most famous protest songs. Its music and lyrics were written by Abel Meeropol (pen name Lewis Allan), a Bronx public school teacher — but are often attributed to Billie Holiday, who first sang “Strange Fruit” in 1939 at Barney Josephson’s Café Society, New York’s first integrated nightclub.

Joel Katz’s compelling history of this anti-lynching song explores the alliance between American Jews and African-Americans in the struggle for civil rights.

With BILLIE HOLIDAY, AMIRI & AMINA BARAKA, ABBEY LINCOLN, PETE SEEGER, C.T. VIVIAN, JOSH WHITE, CASSANDRA WILSON AND MICHAEL & ROBBY MEEROPOL

Saturday, December 3rd

7PM

Bnai Keshet Synagogue

99 S. Fullerton Avenue, Montclair

Free & open to the public

We are on the web: essexuu.org

MAKING THE CONNECTIONS

Mailing Address:
PO Box 998.
Orange NJ 07051-0998

Church Phone: 973-674-0010

Office Email: office@essexuu.org

Web: essexuu.org

**President: Mindy Thompson Ful-
lilove**

**Vice President Pro Temp: Frank
Barszcz**

Treasurer: Bill Slezak

Secretary: Greg Giacobe

Administrator: Greg Giacobe

Sexton: Tony A Jones

HUUB Director: Charlie Wirene

WE VALUE: Community... Explora-
tion... Fellowship... Spirituality...
Liberal Religious Education... Di-
versity... Freedom... and Action.

OUR VISION: To be a life-
affirming liberal religious commu-
nity where people of diverse be-
liefs, ideas and background come
together to provide spiritual and
intellectual growth to one another
and to work together in Orange,
New Jersey for a greater good in
the world.

OUR MISSION: To study and
practice religion in freedom and
fellowship. To provide support
and care for our community and
the community at large.

Founded in Orange in 1890 as
the First Unitarian Church of Es-
sex County, the congregation has
worshipped in the present Sanc-
tuary since its construction in
1892-3. The Church continues
the ministry of the Union Univer-
salist Society (also known as the
Church of the Redeemer),
founded as the First Universalist
Society of Newark in 1834.



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Church of Essex County**

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Making the connections

