

MAKING THE CONNECTIONS

# FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF ESSEX COUNTY

SEPTEMBER 2009

## FROM DARRELL'S DESK- "DEATH PANELS?"

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### MARK IT DOWN

- **Thursday, September 10, Board Meeting, 7:30 pm, Hale House**
- **Saturday, September 19th, Black Maria Film Festival . 8:00 PM, Parish Hall**

That the health care reforms proposed by the Obama administration will include "death panels" is even less likely than that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction. However, the lie did highlight, once the smoke had cleared, one part of the reform that, to me at least, is very important: end of life counseling.

It was back in the 1970's, in divinity school, that I first came upon the idea of a memorial society. This would help people understand their options regarding burials, funerals and so on. UU churches were at the forefront of this movement all over the country. Rev. Don McKinney of Brooklyn became a nationally known leader.

From this came the idea of the living will, death with dignity, hospice and the durable power of attorney for health care. For many years, end of life counseling was unnecessarily dominated by arguments over euthanasia. Dr. Kevorkian, practicing on the extreme edge of this issue, was not much help to the average family.

A lot of Unitarian Universalist

ministers were, and still are. Ask just about any of us, and we will tell you that one of the things that UU does right is deal with end of life issues. We have all had the experience of doing counseling, or memorial services, where families of other faiths have been grateful and amazed at our approach. Many other religions, apparently, still fall back on "God's will" and liturgical formulae.

Far more UU's have living wills and health care proxies than members of other faiths, I am sure. But this current attack, veiled and screwball as it is, reminds me that the freedom to end life with dignity is not irrevocably won. Continued attention to court cases and state legislation is important. Even more critical is the attention given this by you and your family.

If you don't have a living will and durable power of attorney for health care, get one! If you want to talk about the how's and why's, I'm here for you. Also, it is not enough just to have these documents. Your health care providers need to

know you have them. This means not only your primary care physician, but also any staff of any facility where you or a family member may get medical care. Medical staff can only act according to your wishes if they know what they are!

There is an extremely important health and quality of life issue. To have it be used as a political football in the most distorted way possible is beneath contempt. But if it causes people who have not thought about such things to start, perhaps it is worth it.

**SEPTEMBER SUNDAY SERVICES**

Sep 13 **Beyond Words** Rev. Darrell Berger  
Musician: Bill Stafford, Senior Usher: Paul Axel-Lute

*10 AM: Ingathering. We will have our traditional cookies and lemonade, out doors with weather permitting, then process into the sanctuary.*

*11 AM Worship: "Water Ceremony: Living Water."*

*We will welcome the new church year with our traditional Water Ceremony. Everyone is invited to bring a small quantity of water from their summer travels.*

*"Living Water" is a famous term used by Jesus to indicate the spiritual opportunities he opened for those who believed in him. It is also a literal truth: water is living and our lives depend in it.*

Sep 20 **Successful Living in Blended Families** Rev. Darrell Berger  
Musician: Bill Stafford, Senior Usher: Ann Lang

Every family of human beings is a blend of different ages and personalities, of course. But some families have members from more divergent directions than others. There are "steps" and "halves" of all kinds. There are "fosters" and "grands."

There may be different races or ethnicities. Parents may be straight or gay or bi. UU, I believe, does a good job of ministering to blended families. So good, in fact, I have decided to offer this aspect of UU ministry to our larger community. This worship will explain what I have in mind and how you can help.

Sep 27 **Report From GA** Georgiana Hart & Gregory Axel-Lute  
Musician: Bill Stafford, Senior Usher: Greg Giacobe

This past June, members Georgiana Hart and Gregory Axel-Lute attended the UUA General Assembly, the annual gathering and business meeting of our free faith denomination, held this year in Salt Lake City, UT. Georgiana and Gregory will relate their impressions, as well as the important decisions that were made at this year's GA, among them a new UUA President, a draft of a new version of the "Principles & Purposes", and a proposal to reform how GA itself is run. Please come and hear what is happening in the rest of our liberal religious movement.



**Saturday**

**September 19th**

**8:00 pm., Parish Hall**

**Refreshments to follow**

Dear Members and Friends,

Fall is in the air and "In Gathering" is just over a week away.

I hope you all enjoyed the summer and will be returning to Church on Sunday, September 13th to share your activities during your "staycations" and vacations. One of the first things you'll see is that the parish hall has a new coat of paint, refinished walls and a stage suitable for performances by our many talented members and friends. We are planning several Church social events in the coming year to enjoy and showoff our new look.

Over the last 2 years we have laid the foundation in becoming a resource for our neighbors by offering rental space to several local denominations and service providers. This has allowed us to become a more integrated part of our community and to make some necessary improvements to our facilities. Our challenge this year will be to build on that foundation. We need to improve our administrative practices and strengthen our financial reserve with a successful canvass and more effective fund raising. AND we need to have fun doing it. We can do it but we will need everyone's help

This years Board retreat is scheduled for early October. It's a time for members of the board and committee chairs to review the past year; to look at what we did well and what we didn't do so well and to come up with ideas and plans for how we can do things better. Our challenges for the coming year will be built into that plan. If you have any thoughts or concerns about topics that should be considered during our retreat please email me at barszcz4@comcast.net or call at (201)303-1810 and they will be added to our agenda.


Our screening of the Black Maria Film and Video Festival on September 19th will be our first social event of the year and will be held in the parish hall rather than the sanctuary so please spread the word .The show starts at 8:00pm. The donation is \$10.at the door and includes refreshments.

Ours is a unique religious community offering us all the opportunity to explore our spiritual inclinations and beliefs, and practice our caring values. I look forward to continuing this journey with all of you.

Sincerely,

Frank

## September 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10 Board Meeting 7:30, Hale House	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	 Coffee Hour Coordinator for September: Frank Barszcz		

**We are on the web!**

**[www.essexuu.org](http://www.essexuu.org)**

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# First Unitarian Universalist Church of Essex County

**WHERE EVERY MIND IS FREE AND  
EVERY SOUL IS WELCOME!**

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

The Reverend Darrell E. Berger  
Frank Barszcz: President  
Sandra Langley: Vice-President  
Barrie Peterson: Chaplain  
Donna Blaine: Sexton  
Nina Barszcz: Newsletter Editor

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