



MAKING THE CONNECTIONS

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF ESSEX COUNTY

NOVEMBER 2009

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

NOVEMBER SUNDAY SERVICES 2

NOVEMBER CALENDAR OF EVENTS 3



FROM DARRELL'S DESK- PLANNING THE NEXT WAR OR SOMETHING

One of the several appealing qualities I found in Barack Obama is that he is not a Baby Boomer. Or, more precisely, he is at its demographic tail. Someone who was barely in high school when the Vietnam War ended doesn't really qualify in my book. I think this is a real advantage, especially when it comes to war. Soon we will see if it is.

Recently we have heard the predictable voices clamoring to send more troops, expend more American lives and treasure in Afghanistan. To me, the arguments and the emotions sound all too familiar. To me, I fear that the results will be also.

I fear that at some point in the future we will be asking, "What were we thinking? Why did we waste so much for so little?"

How could we have been so blind?" Meanwhile, other voices will be looking for blame. Who lost Afghanistan?

One of the most psychologically astute terms for understanding this kind of controversy is "the inter-generational transmission of trauma." It has lots of applications, most of them very sad.

For Americans of a certain age it is manifested in seeing every conflict, from international warfare to grocery cart collisions at Path Mart, through the distorting lens of Vietnam. While ideologically I am not a pacifist, as a practical matter I have opposed every military adventure in my lifetime, including the bombing of Serbia to prevent ethnic cleansing, which actually seemed to have worked.

That's why I'm glad we don't have another Boomer in the White House. President Obama's deliberations have been called "dithering" by those, like Dick Cheney, for whom the very idea of thinking something through is as foreign as Islam. They appear to me to be advocating another round of the "ready, fire, aim," military strategy.

But I might be wrong. I also see every war through my Boomer lenses. It is time for other eyes, which see the present and even the future more clearly, to make the decisions. One looks to that time, seemingly ever approaching but never quite present, when a decision for something other than war might prevail.

MARK IT DOWN

- **Thursday, November 12th, Board Meeting, 7:30 pm, Hale House**

NOVEMBER SUNDAY SERVICES

Nov 1 **Masks** **Rev. Darrell Berger**
Musician: David Braham, Senior Usher: Paul Axel-Lute

Halloween is a time for masks. The Italian word *persona* means mask or the character one plays. This is where our word *personality* comes from. This Sunday we will look into some of the masks we wear on days other than Halloween.

Nov 8 **Hope Rises From The Ashes Of My Lai** **Mike Boehm**
Musician: Cindy Long, Senior Usher: Howard Heyman

Mike Boehm served during the American involvement in Vietnam in 1968/69. Since 1992 he has returned to Vietnam 23 times to facilitate humanitarian projects on behalf of the Madison Quakers. These projects include micro-credit for poor women in sixteen villages including My Lai, funding new schools for My Lai, Compassion Houses and the My Lai Peace Park. He will give a slide presentation about these projects

Nov 15 **The Perennial Philosophy** **Rev. Darrell Berger**
Musician: David Braham, Senior Usher: Ann Lang

The Perennial Philosophy is the title of a 1945 book by Aldous Huxley. He describes it as "the **metaphysic** that recognizes a divine Reality substantial to the world of things and lives and minds; the **psychology** that finds in the soul something similar to, or even identical with, divine Reality; the **ethic** that places man's final end in the knowledge of the **immanent** and **transcendent Ground of all being**; the thing is immemorial and universal. Rudiments of the perennial philosophy may be found among the traditional lore of primitive peoples in every region of the world, and in its fully developed forms it has a place in every one of the higher **religions**."

It is as close to "my religion" as anything gets. I believe it is the religion of a lot of UU's, though they may not know it has a name.

Nov 22 **Homecoming: "Me or We?"** **Rev. Darrell Berger**
Musician: David Braham, Senior Usher: Greg Giacobe

At last year's district meeting, Rev. Tony Johnson co-led an excellent workshop on class, a reality often ignored in UU. The workshop posited that working class people focus on family, middle class people on personal fulfillment. This distinction not only motivated most of American theatre in the last century, it is also the theme of our Homecoming worship, as we reflect on the who's and how's of family.

Nov 29 **Charity or Solidarity?** **Rev. Darrell Berger**
Musician: Bill Stafford, Senior Usher: Howard Heyman

How ought we response to issues of equality and social justice?



Worship Associates

In the coming weeks, I will be asking various members, who have volunteered, to do readings as part of worship. On Jan. 17, 2010, when we celebrate Martin Luther King Day, I'd like to do more. I would like to choose four members each to speak for five minutes on the affect Dr. King has had on their life. These four talks will replace the usual sermon part of worship.

If you would like to be one of the four speakers, let me know. In this way we find out more of how our values have developed, how UU works in the world and, even more important, we get to know each other better.

Along this line I may also use a similar format for a "How I became Unitarian Universalist" worship service in the spring. As we discover how some of us came to be UU in Orange, New Jersey, we are likely to discover the roads are many and quite different.

Shared ministry means not only getting ourselves and our values out into the community, but also sharing more deeply with each other.

-Darrell



November 2009

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

THE CELEBRATION SPACE

To update everyone in the First UU community, let me relate what Celebrations & Music has been doing and planning over the summer and so far this fall. First of all, we have composed and approved a new mission statement that will help us focus our efforts in the near future. It reads:

The Celebrations and Music Committee is committed to creating, coordinating and presenting quality worship services that nourish and enrich our congregation's spiritual and intellectual life, establish community bonds and develop a sense of welcoming and openness. We do this by coordinating with our minister and guest speakers, attending to music and worship logistics, and coordinating our worship associates, ushers and - in cooperation with our Building and Grounds Committee - the aesthetics of our worship space.

This has provided new areas of responsibility for the committee including our sound system, the aesthetics of the Sanctuary and coordination of our Worship Associates. If being involved in any of these areas appeals to you please contact either Darrell Berger or me below.

Also, many of you may have noticed that we haven't been using the sound system of late. That's because of a number of problems, most notably a missing microphone and undisclosed changes in the wiring. In addition, one channel in the sound mixer has not been operating for a while. So, last month I contacted the people at the Music Den in the Ledgewood Mall to see about coming out to service our equipment. Also, given that members have asked if there was some way to record services, the committee is looking into augmenting the present system with 1) an MP3 recorder to digitally record services and events, 2) a player for pre-recorded music and 3) an additional microphone input to be placed near the piano to record music such as our choir or jazz services when they are performed. Although estimates are forthcoming, we believe will run in the neighborhood of a \$1000.

As for the sound system now, the mixer had to be taken out for repair and should be ready by early or mid-November. Also, in coordination with our tenants, we are looking into securing the sound system and its components so all of our religious communities can use and enjoy the space.

Gregory Giacobe

Chair, Celebrations & Music

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Guest At Your Table 2009 Kicks Off on 22 November



This fall, Unitarian Universalists of all ages nationwide will come together to give thanks by giving back. Through the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee's Guest at Your Table program, Unitarian Universalist communities celebrate the worth and dignity of all people and learn how to put these values into action. And the experience of families learning together has built lasting connections to UU values for generations of UU youth.

Focusing on four major program areas - advancing economic justice, defending civil liberties & the access to democratic processes, promoting environmental justice, and protecting rights in humanitarian crises - UUSC carries out efforts to advance human rights and social justice by working in partnership with local grassroots organizations in the United States and around the world, and standing with grassroots communities as they confront unjust power structures and challenge oppressive policies. Each program area has a special focus on issues around race, class, and gender as well as how these oppressions perpetuate injustice and human rights abuses. UUSC also provides unique opportunities for social justice activists to translate their values into action by participating in on-the-ground projects.

Guest at Your Table has been an important part of UUSC, and of UU culture, for over thirty years. You can keep this spirit and tradition alive by putting a Guest at Your Table box on your family's table and discussing together what it means to welcome a guest to your table. Last year, more than 700 congregations participated in Guest at Your Table. We hope to make this year's program even better! Guest boxes and donation envelopes will be distributed after our Homecoming service on 22 November with reminders each week through the end of December. Callback of boxes and donation envelopes is scheduled to begin on 3 January 2010. For more information, please contact your UUSC Local Representative, Gregory Giacobe at ggiacobe@optonline.net or 201-823-2459. 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.

We are on the web!

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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