

MAKING THE CONNECTIONS

# FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF ESSEX COUNTY

MARCH 2010

## FROM DARRELL'S DESK—"A SAD RETURN"

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### MARK IT DOWN

- **Thursday, March 4th, Celebrations and Music, 7:30 pm, Sonen Room**
- **Thursday, March 11th, Board Meeting, 7:30 pm, Sonen Room**
- **Saturday, March 27th, Service Auction, 6:30 p.m., Parish Hall**
- **Friday, April 2nd, Church Seder, 6:30 pm, Parish Hall**

Kathleen and I just got back from a week in Costa Rica, mostly in the rain forest of the Osa Peninsula. This was a great vacation not only for what it had (nature) but also for what it did not have (cell phones, television, newspapers, internet).

I had returned only a few minutes when I was feeling very sad for what we have here in the United States today instead of civilization. I could name any number of events or unfolding stories, but the one I found saddest of all was the news that those opposing women's reproductive freedom had found some success in African American neighborhoods by saying that legal abortions were a plot and conspiracy to eliminate Black people. I'm sure you have heard about this by now.

I'll not go into the details of the lies and twisted fear mongering this has entailed. It is just too painful to write down, honestly. I can only anticipate and lament the material and spiritual costs of having to struggle against them. Just the fact that I am writing about it, when I would prefer to give this space to something more positive and

encouraging, is a very small example.

Injecting more fear between the races, creating more paranoia among poor people of color, with the hope of turning long time allies into enemies is just a bit too, well, as I wrote above, sad. I know I will be discussing this in the days and week ahead. Time that could have been spent making progress will be burned just trying to hold one's ground.

I remember when abortion was illegal. Perhaps more of us who do need to speak more frankly about those days.

Finally, we must continue to stress that women's right to choose is exactly that. The best way we can encourage that is to be true to Unitarian Universalist first principles of thinking for one's self, becoming informed about options, and reaching out to help those in need of support as they strive to live independent productive, empowered lives.

We will overcome, yes. I just never cease to be amazed and saddened at some of the things people will put out there which need to be overcome.



## MARCH SUNDAY SERVICES

Mar 7 **Coming of Age**

Darcy Hal

**Musician: David Braham, Senior Usher: Ann Lang**

Our three teenagers will speak to the congregation about their spiritual journeys, their beliefs and their service work at the church and elsewhere. Your attendance and support is important in acknowledging this milestone and welcoming them into this new stage of the Unitarian-Universalist journey. There will be a special festive coffee hour afterwards.

Mar 14 **The Lost Shepherd: A Universalist Unitarian Parable for Our Times**

Barnaby Feder

**Musician: Bill Stafford, Senior Usher: Hal Heyman**

Luke Garner was the Universalist minister at our only church in Newark during the 1930's, one of the only outspoken voices outside the Jewish community warning of the threat of Nazism and a leader in the battle for civil rights. Eventually, the congregation fired him. Not long afterward, the church ceased to matter in the life of Newark and eventually closed. Could a revived form of Universalism lead us back in the city?

*Barnaby Feder is a second-year student at Drew Theological Seminary in Madison. Prior to pursuing his longtime interest in ministry, he was a journalist, including more than 27 years at the New York Times in New York, Chicago and London. A native of San Mateo, Cal., Barnaby is a lifelong U.U. He lives in Montclair with his wife, Michele, and Alfie, a high school sophomore whose brother, Linus, and sister, Matilda, are away at college.*

Mar 21 **Palm Sunday. "Confessions of a Promiscuous Syncretist."**

Rev. Darrell Berger-

**Musician: Cindy Long, Senior Usher: Greg Giacobe**

In the 1990's I was a member of an ecumenical clergy group in New York City. During a discussion someone used the term "promiscuous syncretist" to disparage someone who tries to see too many similarities among religions. I decided, for the first time in my life, I'd heard a theological term that accurately described me! Please attend this worship service. You may discover that you, too, are a promiscuous syncretist.

Mar 28 **The Religions of Our Forebears: The Religions of Our Lives**

Rev. Charles BlusteinOrtman-

**Musicians: Jonathan Slezak, Senior Usher: Paul Axel-Lute**

We are the recipients of all the religious thought that has preceded us on this planet. Some of that thought has gotten humanity into considerable trouble over the aeons. Some of it though, some of it has stood us very, very well. We are the heirs of all the religions of our forebears. And now it is up to us to fashion, to mold and to claim the religion of our lives.


*Rev. Charlie Ortman is serving in his 15th year as the Senior Minister of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Montclair. He previously served congregations in Fitchberg, MA, and Burlington, IA. He is a graduate of the Meadville/Lombard Theological Seminary, and a former member of the UUA Board of Trustees, where he served as the Metro New York Representative. He is the father of Will, Laura and Shana Ortman who are grown and scattered across the USA -- Coast-to-Coast! Charlie and his wife Judy will celebrate their 32nd Wedding Anniversary this coming week (3/31).*



**Church Seder and Potluck  
Friday, 2 April 2010 at 6:30 PM**

Our Annual Church Seder and Potluck will take place this year on Friday, 2 April in the Parish Hall. Please join us for good company, good food, and music as we come together to observe the Jewish Holiday of Passover, and the freedom for all peoples that it celebrates. Paul & Melanie Axel-Lute will conduct the ritual portion. Bring friends. Families and children especially welcome. If you wish to bring a dish, please contact Melanie Axel-Lute at 973-762-4947 or [maxellute@yahoo.com](mailto:maxellute@yahoo.com) or Rickey Slezak at 973-731-9838 or [rickeyslezak@gmail.com](mailto:rickeyslezak@gmail.com). RSVP by Wednesday, 31 March. Doors open at 5:30 PM for set up with the service starting at 6:30 PM.

# March 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4 Celebrations and Music, 7:30 pm, Sonen Room	5	6
7	8	9	10	11 Board Meeting 7:30 pm, Sonen Room	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27 Service Auction 6:30 pm, Parish Hall
28	29	30	31  Coffee Hour Coordinators for March: Barrie Peterson and Ann Lang			



First Unitarian Universalist Church of Essex County

**AUCTION 2010 SATURDAY March 27th**

**OFFER OF SERVICE OR ITEM**

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Category of offer:   " Event at the church       " Event at your home or elsewhere  
                          " Other service                       " Tangible goods

Description:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(For an event) How many persons may attend? \_\_\_\_\_ Date of event? \_\_\_\_\_

(For other service or tangible goods) If you are willing to provide service or goods more than once, please specify maximum number: \_\_\_\_\_

Fair market value: \_\_\_\_\_ Minimum acceptable bid: \_\_\_\_\_

## NOTICE OF SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

There will be a special congregational meeting Sunday March 28th, 2010 at 12 noon, with two agenda items:

(1) Bylaws amendments (approved by the Board of Trustees Feb.17,2010), as follows:

(a) The first sentence of Article V, section 3, is amended to read: "To constitute a legal Meeting, a quorum of at least twenty-five percent of the total voting membership must be present."

(b) Article XIII, section 4, is amended to read: "Section 4. Quorum and Notice for Congregational Decisions on Ministry. All Congregational meetings provided for in this Article shall require a quorum of at least forty percent of the total voting membership, and notice given to each Member of the Church by electronic mail, United States mail, or personal delivery not less than twenty days prior to the date of the meeting."

(2) Renewal of the Minister's contract (pursuant to bylaws Art.XIII sec.8).



**Come walk the Red Carpet at the  
2010 Service Auction  
March 27th, 6:30 pm**

**Join us for an glamorous evening  
inspired by Classic Hollywood!**

**Wear your fun formal and pose for the paparazzi!**

**Brush up on your movie trivia!**

**Bring your friends and your checkbook!**



Murray Grove News Update:

The topic for March 28 Rainbow Circle at Murray Grove is “**Buddhist Teachings to Support the GLBT Communities**,” presented by UU Buddhist educator Alan Oliver. The **Rainbow Circle at Murray Grove**: Gatherings, Celebrations, Workshops/Trainings and Support for the **GLBT Community** happen monthly! All Gay, Lesbian, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning and Intersex folks and their allies and supporters are encouraged to come! Future dates will vary, but it’s on a Sunday once each month, from 5:00 to 6:00 pm (free will donation), followed by dinner (\$5 per person suggested minimum donation). RSVP at 609-693-5558 or [murraygrove@murraygrove.org](mailto:murraygrove@murraygrove.org)

**Grove Gatherings at Murray Grove: Musical/Artistic Coffee Houses.** Every second Wednesday of the month, 6:00-7:00 pm potluck (BYOB); 7:00-9:00 entertainment; \$10 per person

A variety of artists will perform and visual arts will be incorporated, in English Folk Music Club form, where performers can share their craft and engage the audience.

On Wednesday, March 10, Valerie Vaughn, songwriter and performer, will share songs about New Jersey history and folklore. This program is made possible in part by a grant administered by the *Ocean County Cultural and Heritage Commission*, in conjunction with the *New Jersey State Council of the Arts/Department of State*, a Partner Agency of the *National Endowment for the Arts*.

Save the Dates:

Heritage Week at Murray Grove led by Rev Dr Elizabeth Strong, August 1-6, 2010

Drum and Dance Retreat, August 13-15, 2010

Homecoming 2010, September 24-26, 2010

Please ask us about bartering opportunities in exchange for retreat costs.

For information and registration:

Murray Grove Retreat and Conference Center

PO Box 246, Lanoka Harbor, NJ 08734

609-693-5558

[murraygrove@murraygrove.org](mailto:murraygrove@murraygrove.org)

[www.murraygrove.org](http://www.murraygrove.org)

**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

Greg Giacobe: Church Administrator

Barrie Peterson: Chaplain

Donna Blaine: Sexton

Nina Barszcz: Newsletter Editor

Office Hours: Mondays 9 AM to 2 PM and  
Fridays 1 PM to 6 PM

Minister is available Tuesdays, Wednesday  
and Thursdays by appointment. Call church  
main line

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