

# First Unitarian Universalist Church Of Essex County



Newsletter

May 2013

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*From Darrell's Desk*

*Rev. Darrell Berger*

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## The New Bad Language

Every American generation has its own way of wounding the English language, as ignorant and habitual usage become standard, or at least, descriptive. I've long surrendered to literally being used to mean figuratively. I know that unique will often be illogically embellished by "more" or "most." I'm more distressed about usage that wounds our ability to think.

"No problem" has become today's "you're welcome." Do parents and teachers drill today's children to mind their "please" and "no problem?" Sometimes "no problem" works fine. For instance, if someone on the street puts down one's own packages to help another person with his or hers, one might consider this an inconvenience. Telling the recipient that it is "no problem" makes good, considerate sense.

But if I'm in a restaurant and I say "thank you" when a wait person places my meal before me, I'd prefer "you're welcome" to "no problem." Why should doing one's job be a problem to overcome?

I'm even more annoyed with the idiom "slam dunk." It means "this is easily accomplished." I played basketball for decades. I could never dunk, slamming or otherwise. I do not think slam dunks are easy.

Also, slam dunks are almost always the result of one player's physical prowess. It usually requires no teamwork or personal forethought. George W. Bush was told that finding weapons of mass destruction in Iraq would be a slam dunk. It was a partially correct use. It required no teamwork or personal forethought, but failed to be easily accomplished.

Rather than eliminating "slam dunk," I suggest we add more basketball idioms, ones that evoke the game's more complex and unfortunately, vanishing strategies. How about "give and go" to describe when two people work together for the good of the team? How about "offensive rebound" when someone does the tough, often unappreciated work? How about "set a screen" when someone unselfishly helps another accomplish one's goal? How about "mid-range jump shot" for something that helps a team as much as a slam dunk, but which has been learned through years of practice?

The most odious current idiom is "no brainer," a decision so obvious that it requires no thinking. Isn't it obvious, in nearly every facet of American life today, that far too many decisions are considered "no brainers?" I suggest we start using the idiom "brainer" to indicate a decision that would benefit from some careful thinking.

Would we live in a better society if we considered more decisions "brainers?" If we had more "offensive rebounds" and few "slam dunks?" If we did not have to explain that giving service and courtesy was not a problem and simply rendered it? I don't know. I do know that my point of view on this may be very unique. Yet these current idioms are literally driving me crazy.

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## Sunday Services at 10:30 AM

**05 May**      ***Transitions/May Day***

**Darcy Hall/Axel-Lutes**  
**Musician: Bill Stafford**      **Usher: Anne E Lang**

How have UU values affected you? In what way? Today we will hear some testimonials from those who have been through our doors over the years. Immediately after service we will have our traditional Maypole dance Lead by Melanie & Paul Axel-Lute.

**12 May**      ***My Time has Not Yet Come***

**Rev. Darrell Berger**  
**Musician: TBA**      **Usher: Paul Axel-Lute**

At the wedding in Cana, Mary asked Jesus to turn water into wine. He said, "My time has not yet come." Yet, he turned the water into wine. This is a mother's influence. This is the sermon topic: the ongoing negotiation between mothers and their children about vocation, obligation and timing.

**19 May**      ***Round Table: Stepping Back to Move Forward - Envisioning How the Orange U-U Church Could Make a Difference in Spirituality, Politics & Education***

**Wayne Eastman**      **Usher: Anne Miller**

I'll begin the roundtable discussion with a 10-15 minute "asking the big questions" presentation on three topics. First, can we in the short term or the longer term become a host, and possibly a home, for younger people and families interested in spirituality but uninterested in committing to a specific form of organized religion, including ours? Second, can we be a host, and possibly a home, for activists who want to advance liberal values and liberal policies in Orange in areas such as positive inclusion for GLBTQ people, alternatives to enforcement-oriented policies on drugs and undocumented workers, and progressive education? Third, and related to the last point, can we become a host for a progressive education pre-school, and possibly at some point in the future a small progressive education school for older children? After the presentation, I look forward to listening to your reactions and ideas--given the dynamism if not the size and youth of our group, I expect we won't be shy.

**26 May**      ***Round Table: Justice for Haiti Now***

**Georgiana Hart**      **Usher: Gregory Giacobe**

First UU presents a woman who has worked in Haiti to combat the cholera epidemic. She will lead a discussion on how the UN brought cholera there in 2010 when infected troops began dumping waste into the Artibonite River. Thousands have died and hundreds of thousands have become infected, and the number rises daily. We will talk about how to put pressure on the international community, the UN, the World Health Organization and the World bank to make them take responsibility NOW!

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### **MAY MEETINGS/EVENTS**

**Axel-Lute Retirement Party, 11 May, 7:00 PM, Parish Hall**

**Social & Earth Action, 12 May, 12 Noon, Parish Hall**

**Board of Trustees: Wednesday, 15 May, 7:30 PM, Sonen Room**

**Celebrations & Music, 21 May, 7:30 PM, Sonen Room**

**ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING, 2 June, 12 Noon, Parish Hall**



**Coffee Hour Coordinator for May: Board of Trustees**





## Please Excuse Our Appearance

We are in the process of re-evaluating the production and distribution of our newsletter, as well as the design and use of our website and Facebook page. Please bear with us during this transition. If you have skills in these areas that you could volunteer, please contact *Greg Giacobe*, the Church Administrator.

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### *Paul & Melanie Axel-Lute's Retirement Party*

Forget the black tie, it's no formal affair. Just come as you are for that casual flair, we'll drink, eat and laugh as we all reminisce. It's a gathering for friends who will surely be missed.

Open-mike! Bring a favorite song, piece of music or story to share, if you like.  
**Saturday, 11 May 2013, 7:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.**

A \$10 contribution per person is requested to cover food and beverages.

First Unitarian Universalist Church of Essex County Parish Hall, 35 Cleveland Street, Orange, NJ  
R.S.V.P. to Anne Miller @ 973-943-5406 or [awmiller123@verizon.net](mailto:awmiller123@verizon.net)

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## **UU MONTCLAIR'S SPRING FUNDRAISER: Save the date for our FUUn Prom Night!**

FUUn Prom Night, (complete with tuxes and gowns, but of course not mandatory!) will be held at the beautiful Van Vleck House in Montclair on Friday, 17 May, from 7:30 to 10:30 PM. The Main Event includes food, beverages, music, dancing and lots of fun. Tickets to the Main Event are \$45 - Extras, such as an additional wine tasting and garden tour, are available for an additional fee. This is a Community event - singles, couples, groups - all are welcome to attend! For more information, please contact Judie Rinearson at 973-509-8902 or [judith.rinearson@bryancave.com](mailto:judith.rinearson@bryancave.com).



## The First Unitarian Universalist Church of Essex County

A church 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, founded as the First Universalist Society of Newark in 1834.

Darcy Hall  
President

The Rev. Darrell E. Berger  
Minister

Greg Giacobe – Church Administrator  
Lawrence Turner – Building Superintendent  
Anisha Sanders – Assistant Superintendent  
Melanie Axel-Lute – Choir Coordinator

Rev. Berger is normally available Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays during business hours.  
Call 973-674-0010. Minister's email: [minister@essexuu.org](mailto:minister@essexuu.org)

Church Office is open Fridays 9 AM to 2 PM • Church Telephone: 973-674-0010  
Church E-mail: [office@essexuu.org](mailto:office@essexuu.org) • Church Website: <http://essexuu.org/>  
Sanctuary, Parish Hall & Church Office: 35 Cleveland Street  
Mailing Address: PO Box 998, Orange NJ 07051-0998

**WE VALUE:** Community...  
Exploration... Fellowship...  
Spirituality... Liberal Religious  
Education... Diversity... Freedom...  
and Action.

**OUR VISION:** To be a life-affirming liberal religious community where people of diverse beliefs, 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 Essex County, the congregation has worshipped in the present sanctuary since its construction in 1892-93. 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 First Unitarian Universalist Church  
of Essex County  
PO Box 998  
Orange, NJ 07051-0998