



MAKING THE CONNECTIONS

# First Unitarian Universalist Church of Essex County

September 2013

Where every mind is free and every soul is welcome!

## From Darrell's Desk: The Final Chapter

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### MARK IT DOWN

- ◆ Sunday, 8 September, Ingathering, Front Lawn, 10 AM
- ◆ Also, Special Congregational Meeting, 11:00 AM, Parish Hall
- ◆ Wednesday, 18 September, Board of Trustees, 7:30 PM, Sonen Room

As many of you know, I have accepted the position of Interim Minister at the First Unitarian Church in Staten Island as of August 15. The Board and I have, however, agreed to retain my ministerial services at the rate of ten hours per week beginning September 1, to focus on our community partnerships, as well as continue some staff supervision and pastoral care. This arrangement is primarily to allow continuity in our several developing relationships with community groups as the congregation looks to its next chapter of service.

It has not been easy for me to make this decision. Perhaps surprisingly for a minister that places a high value on reason, this was mostly an emotional decision. That is, attendance at Sunday worship had dwindled to the point that I no longer felt encouraged about what we were doing. While I always appreciated those who were in attendance, and I was often amazed at how meaningful and even rousing even a few of us could be, I did not think it augured well for our future together.

I think in a way we may have fallen victim to how well we got along. As I have stated many times, I have never been treated better by a congregation. I always felt that what I had to offer was very well received and appreciated. Yet during my six years, membership fell slowly but surely and nothing we tried stemmed the tide.

We are now in the process of a

fundamental re-visioning of the future of the UU presence in Orange. While it may be difficult for some members to understand, this process will proceed better and more completely without my being in the center of it. A minister who has been with a congregation more than a couple of years quickly takes on the group's emotional and institutional coloration. It would be very difficult for me to ask the hard questions, or even to recognize what they are. It would also have been very difficult for the congregation objectively to assess what it may now need in professional leadership.

The position in Staten Island, an opportunity which presented itself late in the spring, allows me to continue to work, yet get out of the way of what needs to be done in Orange.

I have no idea how useful my ten hours per week will be, nor how long we will want it to continue. I do think it buys the membership some time and continuity. I am open to various ways of proceeding with this, including ending it with two weeks notice, as the Board and I have agreed. Or, it might open up some possibilities that we would want to continue for some time.

In any case, I wanted everyone to know that this decision was not motivated by any ill

feeling or negative experience with the Board or any members. On the contrary, it was motivated by the realization that the circumstances under which I was hired had changed, and that the congregation needed to be free to create its future without the encumbrance of incumbency.

Please do feel free to contact me on this or any other issue. I look forward to deepening and making our community outreach partnerships a more active and vital part of our ministry. I also, in the future, very much look forward to transitioning my role in the many wonderful relationships we have developed from that of minister to that of friend.



**September Sunday Services**      **Services start at 10:30 AM**

8 Sep      **Ingathering/Special Congregational Meeting**  
**Darcy Hall & Gregory Giacobe**  
**Musician: Bill Stafford, Senior Usher: Ann E Lang**

This year, our annual Ingathering service will be a little different. Please come for our traditional cookies & lemonade on the front lawn (weather permitting) at 10 AM. Please see The Celebration Space article on Page 5 for details. Immediately following the service, there will be a Special Congregational Meeting in the Parish Hall at 11 AM. This will set a course for the future of our congregation for the foreseeable future. We encourage all Members who can attend to please attend.

15 Sep      **East-West Sunday (formally Third Sunday)**  
**Wayne Eastman & Darcy Hall**

11:15 AM      Welcome to the inaugural session of the bold experiment at our church. Led and coordinated by long-time members Wayne Eastman and Darcy Hall, we encourage members to attend and invite those they know who might find the topics presented interesting. Please see the article on Page 3 for details.

22 Sep      **When Things Don't Measure Up**  
**Rev. Allen Wells**  
**Musician: Dave Braham, Senior Usher: Georgiana Hart**

How can we live with what we've got? We might make things worse by searching for meaning through complex theologies and philosophies. Rev. Wells will explore how we can avoid such pitfalls.

*When asked to fill in the blank for "occupation" on an application form, Allen writes "student".*

*Allen currently serves The Morristown Unitarian Fellowship as Affiliated Community Minister, and has a private, mindfulness-based psychotherapy practice in Morristown. Formerly, he directed The Allen Wells Center for Psychotherapy and Healing in Morristown, NJ. He also served as a psychotherapist at the DiMele Center for Counseling and Psychotherapy in Manhattan. A native of Virginia, he has served as minister of the UU Congregation of Rockland Country NY and, before that, at UU congregations in North Weymouth, MA, Queens and Brooklyn, NY. He has also directed the religious education program for the UU Congregation of Monmouth County in Lincroft, NJ and The Morristown Unitarian Fellowship. In 2009, he graduated from an intensive Integrated Study Practice Program at the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies and he is presently preparing for a six weeks silent meditation retreat at the Insight Meditation Society in MA.*

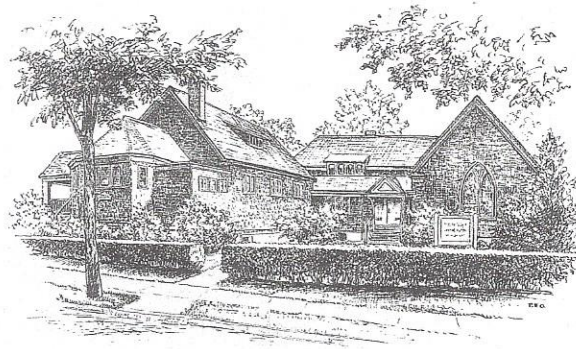
*Allen's interest lies in integrating our internal, personal, psychological world that we commonly call spiritual with our external, social, economic, environmental world, that we usually consider material. You can find him teaching meditation or on the picket line. He is an earth-centered, Buddhist, UU, or as he says more informally: a "Gaia Bu U". He acknowledges that he hasn't written any books because he says he would rather spend the time ballroom dancing.*

## September Sunday Services (cont'd)

### Round Table

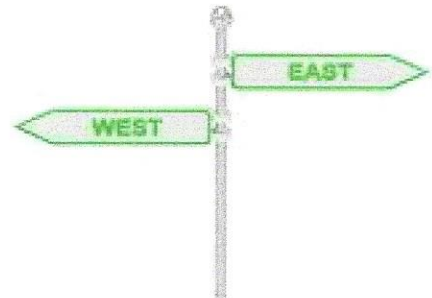
29 Sep

Premiering last year, these unstructured gatherings will be scheduled on the fifth Sunday of the month for Members to meet and discuss ideas and issues that concern them, both inside the church and out.




## East-West Debut

Join us at 11:15 AM on Sunday, 15 September for our first experimental East-West service. We'll be aiming to create an informal, café atmosphere conducive to an "all ages together" (babies and toddlers are most welcome!) alternative spiritual experience. Planned features of East-West include short animated films on religion and spirituality around the world, sermons on video from Rev. Ortman, Quaker Yoga, and (for those for whom it's convenient) riding on the "Big Orange" eastbound train arriving at 11:04. (If you want to join the 11:00 ride to East-West from Mountain Station, feel free to park in front of Wayne and Darcy's at 430 Meeker Street, or in the Mountain Station lots next door, which are free on the weekends.)



# September 2013

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b> 10 AM Ingathering 11AM Special Congregational Meeting	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> 11:15 AM East-West	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> 7:30 PM Board of Trustees, Sonen Room	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> 10:30 AM When Things Don't Measure Up Rev. Allen Wells	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b> Round Table	<b>30</b>				Coffee Hour Coordinator for September: Georgiana Hart	

## THE CELEBRATION SPACE

Welcome back. We on Celebrations & Music hope you had a restful and enjoyable summer. As you might have heard, there are big changes afoot at First UU Essex this fall. Early in June, Darrell alerted us that he had accepted the position of Interim Minister at the Unitarian Church of Staten Island, and would no longer be speaking from our pulpit (See Page 1). Of course, this has impacted our schedule for the fall and beyond.

Even before Darrell's announcement, the committee had supported an idea by Wayne Eastman to hold informal discussion sessions on the third Sunday of each month between September and May, devoted to East-West religious and spiritual dialogue (See page 3). We also supported a similar idea by Darrell to have a Sunday devoted to developing and supporting Orange networking and activism. This will commence on the first Sunday in October and run through May. Both "East-West Sundays" and "Beloved Community Sundays" are chances for our members to meet and network with spiritual seekers and community activists, respectively, to seek change and fulfillment. Neither of these programs will be formal, and will not incur any time or resources (other than the use of our space) on the church's part. We encourage you to participate in either or both alongside our familiar formal service on the second and fourth Sundays of each month. And, above all, please spread the word! The formal services will be a mix of guest speakers and lay-led. Please

contact the committee at [office@essexuu.org](mailto:office@essexuu.org) if you have an idea for a service or would like to lead one. The occasional fifth Sunday will be for round table discussions on whatever participants choose. But we hope you will use the time to discuss pressing matters of the church.

This year, we'll be doing Ingathering a little differently. On 8 September, we'll begin with the traditional cookies & lemonade on the front lawn (weather permitting) starting at 10 AM. We will then process down the driveway to the sidewalk, then up the ramp to the Parish Hall. We will then have a truncated service with a short break before convening the Special Meeting. This Meeting is important for the future of our ministry, and we urge all members who can attend to please do so!

Looking ahead, Rev. Allen Wells will return on 22 September and 22 December. Georgiana Hart will give us her impressions and report what occurred at this year's General Assembly on 13 October. Also, we hope to have the choir perform on 8 December as we move into the holiday season.

As things progress, we will keep you updated on the worship calendar for the rest of the coming year.

—Gregory Giacobe, Chair, Celebrations & Music

## SHARE-THE-PLATE FALL 2013 UPDATE

It has been a very good year for our Share-The-Plate program. Overall, the church's Sunday collections this past year have experienced a noticeable upturn over the year before. Total Sunday collections for 2011/12 it was \$ 2037.00 while for 2012/13 it was \$ 2526.50, an increase of 24.03%. Thank you all for making this program a success!

First launched in late 2008, Share-The-Plate is designed to help local under-funded and deserving charities in the Orange area, and was envisioned as a way for our church community to live out its values and mission in a tangible way. Please see accompanying article for details on how you can become involved and nominate a charity. Each fall and spring, Social & Earth Action collects and reviews any nominations we receive, and selects one the committee thinks most reflects the church's values and mission, as well as most in need. This selection will then be presented to the Board of Trustees for their approval. Soon afterwards, after the charity is contacted and the collection period determined, the details will be publicly announced, and collections will begin. At least half of each Sunday's Offertory collection will be set aside for the designated charity. At the end of the collection period, an announcement will appear in the next edition of the church newsletter, tallying the amount for that period's charity as well as a running total for the program.

The recipient for the Fall 2012 was the Interfaith Food Pantry of the Oranges, operated by a number of religious organizations, but placed at the Church of the Epiphany in Orange, NJ. The period ran from 9 September 2012 to 26 January 2013 and raised a total of \$622.75. The Spring 2013 recipient was ORNG INK, a community arts program by & for youth, run under the auspices of HANDS, Inc., Valley Arts & the University of Orange. The period ran from 2 February to 9 June 2013 and raised a total of \$585.50.



Continued on Page 7

## Fall 2013 "SHARE-THE-PLATE" RECIPIENT CHOSEN

At its 12 May 2013 meeting, Social & Earth Action chose the next recipient for our "Share-The-Plate" program. There was a motion to continue ORNG INK as the recipient for the Fall 2013. The committee endorsed this and was confirmed by the Board of Trustees at its 15 May 2013 meeting. ORNG INK runs free, year-round programs for artists 13 and over through their open studios, young artist collective, emerging artist-in-residence program and through a dynamic series of community events and festivals. They have music, fashion, film, photography and visual arts departments.

The collection period will run from 8 September 2013 through 26 January 2014. Share-The-Plate requires that at least half of the cumulative unrestricted donations made during the Offertory will be set aside for a designated charity. Checks made to the church as part of members' pledge fulfillment, or for any other previously announced appeal (such as Chalice Lighters), will not be included.

The goals of Share-The-Plate is to promote the congregation's stated vision "to be a life affirming liberal religious community where people of diverse beliefs, ideas and back-

grounds 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", and to fulfill the congregation's mission "to study and practice religion in freedom and fellowship", and "[t]o provide support and care for our [religious] community and the community at large". It will also be seen as a way to enhance the meaning of the church's relationships with and among partners in the larger local community, build awareness, learn more about ourselves and the projects the church gives to, and to develop a philosophy of giving within the church community. However, the program is not intended to not displace other regular and special funding appeals.

Members can submit potential candidate organizations and programs to Social & Earth Action, either directly, by mail or through the church web site ([http://essexuu.org/share\\_the\\_plate.html](http://essexuu.org/share_the_plate.html)). The committee will review submissions to see if they fit with the church's mission, vision and the program's goals, before sending their choice to the Board of Trustees. All charities must be submitted by a church member, be

either a 501(c) 3 or 501(c) 4 non-profit organizations, do work that is consistent with Unitarian Universalist principles, supply a name and description of the charitable organization or project, and supply contact information.

Separate checks for the charity, either given during the Offertory or sent to the church for this purpose, should either be made out to the charity or to "The First Unitarian Universalist Church of Essex County" with "Share the Plate" in the "memo" line. To the extent allowed by law, checks written to the church will be acknowledged as a tax deductible donation. A church check for at least 50% of all unrestricted donations given during Sunday collections, as well as any received checks to be forwarded, with be sent with an acknowledgement letter no later than ten days after the last collection for that charity.

For more information, contact Georgiana Hart, Social & Earth Action Chair, at 973-763-1139 or [luchahart@verizon.net](mailto:luchahart@verizon.net).

## UULMNJ UPDATE

Dear UULMNJ Friends,

The time is now! During the fall months, New Jersey will face several questions of justice in our state: Marriage Equality, Environmental Justice (Fracking) and Economic Justice (Minimum Wage Referendum). This will be a time for us to stand up and be counted; to educate others about the facts of injustice, to personally build support among all we know, and to boldly express our positions, with UU dignity and respect to those whose support we need. If ever there was a time to live our faith, it is now.

Here is an update on critical issues:

- **Marriage Equality:** As the courts prepare to hear arguments about the inequality of marriage vs. civil unions, a new statewide coalition of major financial supporters, New Jersey United for Marriage ([www.njum.org](http://www.njum.org)), has been launched. It incorporates Garden State Equality, ACLU, Lambda Legal and other supporters. NJUM is launching a fullblown campaign to overturn the governor's veto by the end of this legislative session. Field organizers are being hired and a broad plan for legislative visits, phone banks, and other actions are being planned. UULMNJ is in contact with NJUM's faith organizer to identify our key role. Our own Marriage Equality Task Force is busy scheduling legislative visits in key districts and planning ways to engage our congregations even more. This is just beginning. More details will be available within the next few weeks.
- **Minimum Wage Referendum** Raising the minimum wage and tying it to the cost of living index will be on the ballot this November. UULMNJ is promoting voter registration and voter turnout. Since we are a 501c3, we do not endorse positions on electoral processes. However, we do want to emphasize that this year we have very important election decisions. We will be



## SHARE-THE-PLATE FALL 2013 UPDATE (CON'T)

In total as of 1 July 2013, Share-The-Plate has collected and distributed \$5865.50 since its inception. This is all due to our church's giving spirit. Thank you very much.

### Past Share-The-Plate Recipients

Feed The Needy (St. John the Evangelist RC Church, Orange NJ)	\$695.50
Haitian Pastors Association, East Orange, NJ	\$1379.00
UUA/UUSC Pakistan Flood Relief Fund, Boston, MA	\$539.25
Anthony O'Brien (UNNOH), New York, NY	\$550.00
Gale Center – Planned Parenthood of Metro NJ	\$1493.50
Interfaith Food Pantry of the Oranges	\$622.75
ORNG INK	\$585.50
<b>Share-The-Plate – Cumulative Total (as of 1 July 2013):</b>	<b>\$ 5865.50</b>

## UULMNJ UPDATE (con't)

electing a Senator, legislators and deciding about a referendum. For more information about voter registration and upcoming election deadlines, see your congregation liaison.

- Fracking Fracking waste is entering New Jersey. The Environmental Task Force has made the overturning of the Governor's ban on fracking by the end of the legislative year a priority. More information will be forthcoming from the task force. Gun Violence Prevention Over the summer, UULMNJ has participated in several news conferences bringing attention to the gun violence prevention bills awaiting to be signed by the Governor.

As we head toward the start of the new congregational year, the expectations and demands of congregational life will begin to expand. Yet, we must remember that there are bigger issues at stake, bigger needs that go beyond our walls, bigger demands that call our faith to respond. New Jersey needs to hear our UU voice over the next few months. Lend your voice, your help, and any resources you can spare to this important effort. Call me if you would like to help.

The time is now!

Faithfully,

Rev. Craig Hirshberg  
Executive Director

### Save the Dates!

Mark your calendars now and please plan on joining us:  
Issues Workshop - 19 October 2013  
Hosted by the First Unitarian Society of Plainfield

More details and registration information coming soon  
Annual Plenary - 5 April 2014

## Social Hour and Altar Flower Volunteers Needed

Many of our church's activities are run and coordinated by volunteers — members and friends who give their time and talents to help make the church a pleasant experience. Would you like to help? We are currently looking for volunteers to serve as hosts for our Sunday Social Hours, held after services, as well as to bring flowers for our Altar Table each Sunday before service. For Social Hour, please contact the coordinator listed in this month's newsletter, or call the church office at 973-674-0010 or at [office@essexuu.org](mailto:office@essexuu.org). We will contact you to confirm your date. Thank you.

**We are on the web: [essexuu.org](http://essexuu.org)**

## MAKING THE CONNECTIONS

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

Meeting Address:  
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Orange NJ 07050-2907

Church Phone: 973-674-0010

Office Email: [office@essexuu.org](mailto:office@essexuu.org)

Minister's Email: [minister@essexuu.org](mailto:minister@essexuu.org)

Web: [essexuu.org](http://essexuu.org)

**Minister: Rev. Darrell E. Berger**

**President Darcy Hall**

**Vice President: Mindy Thompson  
Fullilove**

**Treasurer: Bill Slezak**

**Secretary: Greg Giacobe**

**Custodian: Anisha Sanders**

**Administrator: Greg Giacobe**



**First Unitarian Universalist  
Church of Essex County**

PO Box 998.  
Orange NJ 07051-0998

Making the



**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 1892-3. 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.