

MAKING THE CONNECTIONS

First Unitarian Universalist Church of Essex County

December 2014

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MARK IT DOWN

- ◆ Saturday, 13 Dec, CHURCH VISIONING, 12 Noon, Ironworks
- ◆ Sunday, 14 Dec, HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE, 1 PM, Barszcz Residence
- ◆ Board of Trustees, Thursday, 18 Dec, 7:30 PM

Where every mind is free and every soul is welcome!

Spiritually Speaking: Amazing Grace By Rev. Gordon Clay Bailey

"Amazing grace, how sweet the sound."
John Newton, the eighteenth-century Englishman who wrote the famous hymn, had been a slave trader before he became a prominent abolitionist. He said his change of heart, which turned his life around, was amazing grace! It changed him, transformed his actions, and "it saved a wretch like me."

Grace is usually thought of as an undeserved gift: an unexpected reprieve, unmerited divine assistance given to humans for their regeneration or sanctification, a virtue coming from God, approval, favor (stayed in His/Her good graces),

mercy, pardon, a special favor, privilege bestowed that is not necessarily earned. It's the buoy that appears from nowhere and saves our lives. So, what problems do we modern folks need to be rescued from? What is wretched about our situations? Here are a few: physical and emotional suffering, loss of meaning, existential despair. The issues are too numerous to count!

Given our contemporary need for rescue - and I'm speaking specifically of our need to make a decision about the future of this historic congregation - the ideology of liberal theologian Henry Nelson Wieman (1884-1975) is most appropriate. Wieman's theology came to depend little on the divine, but he kept room for grace.

In *The Source of Human Good* (1946), Wieman struggles with the fact that we humans plunge into despair when we fail to live up to our ideals. According to Wieman, however, a creative power or process (call it God, the Divine, etc.) can transform us into beings capable of doing good. How about the good we could do

as a hands-on UU justice seeking people in Essex County?

This process, which he called "creative interchange," is at work whenever individuals or congregations communicate in ways that create new meanings. As we process these new meanings (our new vi-

sion), our sense of the possibilities expands and our sense of belonging is made stronger. That, for Wieman, is grace. And, for me, it is the reality I am choosing to live my life in. How about you?

So as we approach the end of yet another fast moving year, I call on each of us to consider the grace that operates in our lives. How many times this past year did something good happen when you thought nothing could come of the situation? Or what about the job, school, or relationship that was going badly that turned around? Maybe, it was more personal, as my case. Maybe your health has challenged and you had to go through a difficult time. I know we each don't get the reprieve. I know each of you have



"Nocturne" H. Valentine Fanshawe

December Sunday Services

Services start at 11 AM

- 07 Dec *Let It Go* Rev. Gordon Clay Bailey Musician - Dave Braham, Usher - Cindy Long, Social Hour Host- Gregory Giacobe
 Join us for an interesting journey through the ups and downs of the Holiday Season. We will explore the over eating and family gatherings and finally end up talking about what's really at the core of our beings, and if need be how to Let It all Go

- 14 Dec [NO SERVICE] You are invited to attend the service at the UU Congregation at Montclair, 67 Church St, Montclair, NJ.

- 21 Dec [Christmas/Wintertide] So Is That All There Is? Rev. Gordon Clay Bailey Musician - Dave Braham, Usher - Gregpry Giacobe, Social Hour Host- TBA
 With the year coming to an end, gifts and food have made me glad, but is that all there is? Come to FUUCE as we explore the great questions of life, or at least ask some pertinent questions as the year 2014 comes to a close and we peak or glance at the New Year to come.

- 28 Dec [NO SERVICE] You are invited to attend the service at the UU Congregation at Montclair, 67 Church St, Montclair, NJ.



December 2014 INTERFAITH CALENDAR

- 6 Saint Nicholas Day (Christian)
- 8 Rohatsu - Bodhi Day (Buddhist)
- 8 Immaculate Conception of Mary (Catholic)
- 12 Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe (Catholic)
- 16-25 Posades Navidenas (Christian)
- 17-24 Hanukkah (Jewish)
- Winter Solstice
- 21 Yule (Christian)
- 21 Yule [northern hemisphere]/Litha [southern hemisphere] (Wicca/Pagan)
- 24 Christmas Eve (Christian)
- 25 Christmas (Christian)
- 26 Zarathosht Diso (Death of Prophet Zarathushtra) (Zoroastrian)
- 28 Holy Innocents (Christian)
- 31 Watch Night (Christian)

Spiritually Speaking: Amazing Grace, con't

your own trials to deal with but, more often than not, in my soon to be 20th year in ministry, I've found that things tend to work out.

What shall be our collective working out of the conundrum we've allowed to happen here? How shall we change the tenor and direction of FUUCE? Who shall we serve? Are you ready for this awesome new beginning?

My friends, enjoy this special season. Spend time with loved ones and friends, neighbors and coworkers, and any that pass your way in the spirit of Grace. And in the final analysis, lets make a new our spiritual home, sing songs, do good works, and rest comfortably, knowing we did the best we could!

Thanks for a wonderful year. I have enjoyed serving this community.

My closing words for this year are as follows: Love yourselves, and all in your circle, like there are no tomorrows - for today well-lived makes all of your tomorrows a grace-filled existence.

In faith, hope and love,

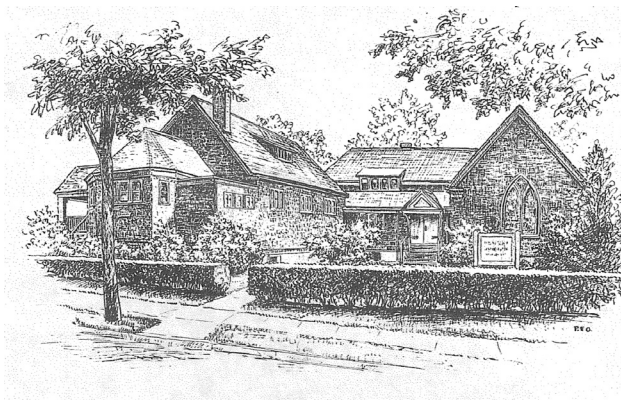
--Gordon



Celebrate the Guest at Your Table!

Our Guest at Your Table program is going strong! So many families and friends have welcomed our "guests" into their lives. Thanks to your support, the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee is working throughout the United States and around the world to advance human rights.

If you have not yet picked up your Guest at Your Table donation, you can do so during coffee hour after service or by talking with Gregory Giacobe, our UUSC local representative 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. You can also donation online at www.uusc.org/givetoguest. Your gift to Guest at Your Table is tax deductible — be sure to complete the form on your box. And remember, gifts of \$125 are eligible to be matched by the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock, to double the impact of your support!



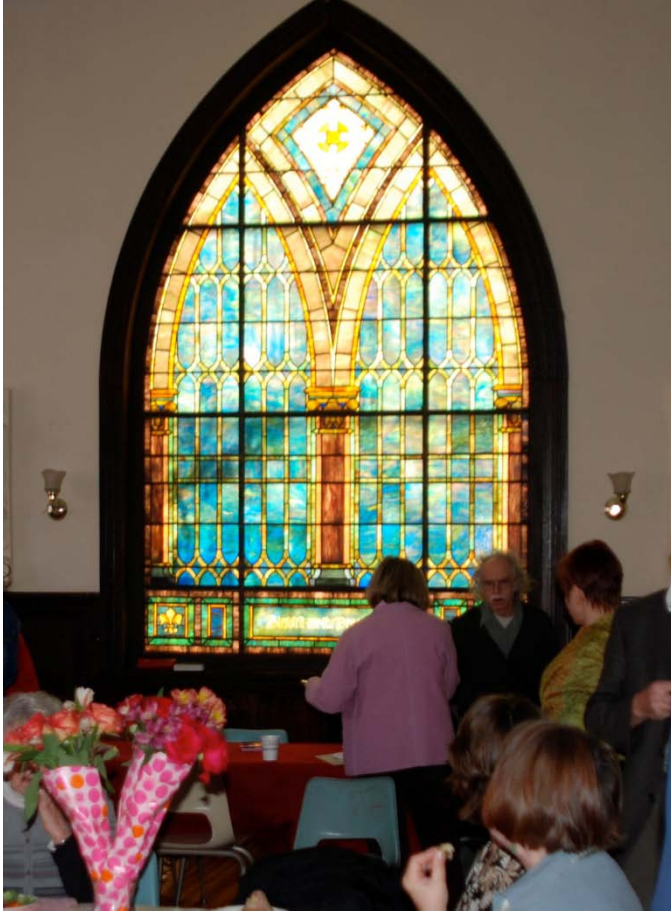
December 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 SERVICE: Let It Go 11AM	8	9	10	11	12	13 CHURCH VISIONING @ IRONWORKS 12 Noon
14 [NO SERVICE] HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE @ Barszcz Residence 1 PM	15	16	17	18 Board of Trustees Sonen Room 7:30 PM	19	20
21 SERVICE: [Christmas/ Wintertide] So Is That All There Is? 11 AM	22	23	24	25 CHRISTMAS	26	27
28 [NO SERVICE]	29	30	31			

Please Help Us Imagine the Next 125 Years

(Or maybe just the next three!)

It was a long time ago that our church, the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Essex County was founded. Time has been kind to us – we are still here to celebrate our congregation and our city. We've had a wonderful 125 years worshipping at 35 Cleveland Street/Benjamin F. Jones Place (in memoriam). But we aren't as numerous as we used to be and that calls for some imagination about our future. Will you help us? We'd appreciate your thoughts as we look forward.



We were lucky to start just as the City of Orange was bursting into activity in the 1890s. Our beautiful Tiffany window shown in the photo (left) was a part of the flourishing of that time.

And now we are excited that this little city is on the move toward a future that we hope will be full of justice and beauty. How can First UU be part of this new era and join this great move forward? We are looking for answers.

We are very happy that Julie Erickson, a very experienced organization consultant, will be guiding our visioning. We are planning to meet at:

THE IRONWORKS

406 Tompkins Street, Orange, NJ

Saturday, 13 December 2014

12 Noon to 2 PM

For more information, please feel free to call Mindy Fullilove at 201-562-3066 or email at vicepres@essexuu.org or visit us at <http://www.essexuu.org/>

We hope you will join us! __



HOLIDAY Open house

Please join us for a
UU Holiday Celebration

December 14th, 2014

1-4 pm

at the home of Frank and Nina Barszcz

4 Ridgeview Ave.

West Orange, NJ 07052

*Potluck—please bring a salad, side dish
or dessert to share.*

RSVP: barszcz4@comcast.net

By December 8

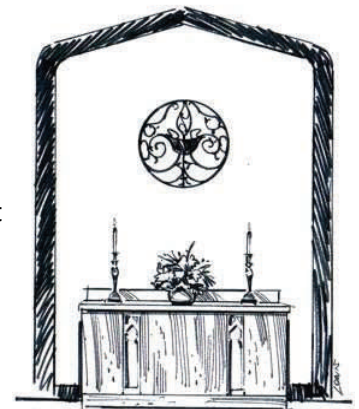


Happenings @ Montclair

Adult RE Classes and Groups are Continuing!

Upcoming sessions include:

- **Green Sanctuary: Explore the Transition Movement - Friday, 5 December (Peierls Room).** Part of the Deep Ecology event series. The Transition Movement is firmly rooted in the idea that people taking action now in their communities can both tackle environmental threats such as climate change, resource depletion and economic instability, and also, in the process of doing so, lead more fulfilling lives. It is about hope in a future that might otherwise appear bleak. Above all, it's about the power of an alternative vision of how society could be more ecologically, socially, and economically sound, without waiting for government or politicians to get it right. Come & listen to what other communities already have done and let's start thinking about what we might want to do right here. For more information, please contact Silke Springorum at silkespr7@gmail.com.
- **Holiday Craft Workshop - Saturday, 6 December, 9:30 AM (Peierls Room).** Are you crafty? Then bring your specialty to our event and lead a craft table. Do you like to cook? Then sign up to provide soup, bread or desserts for our delicious lunch after the crafting is done. Start thinking now about what you would like to contribute... It'll be here before you know it! For more information contact Judith Steinfarrall at recoord@uumontclair.org.
- **Senior Lunch Bunch — Wednesdays, 10 & 24 December, 12 Noon.** We generally choose a topic at each meeting for the next meeting, but the conversation usually wanders over several topics of interest to the group assembled that come up spontaneously (and with plenty of laughter thrown in). Everyone is welcome! For info, email Gary Sanderson at gwsanderson@verizon.net.
- **Solo UU's - Friday, 12 December, 7 PM.** Solo UU's are adults living the single life from our unique perspective within the UU community. We find many opportunities to connect socially, while we build a support network with adults currently living solo. Activities include joining together for discussions and dinner, and going to a movie, concert or play. To find out more, join us on the second Friday each month at UUCM where we meet at 7:00 PM for drinks and appetizers, and then socialize at a restaurant in Montclair. Newcomers are welcome! For info, call Ed Harris at 973-783-7645.
- **Men's Group - Saturday, 13 December, 8:30 AM (Peierls Room).** Are you a man? Are you a UU man? Would you enjoy getting together with other UU men? All UU men are welcome to join a thoughtful, mutually supportive group. Friendly, fraternal conversations provoke reflection, insight and more than a little uplifting humor. Visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/uucammen/> to learn more about our group.
- **Undoing Racism Committee - Tuesday, 16 December, 7:30 PM (Alliance Room).** We are a long-standing committee of UUCM whose goal is to work with our congregation and the wider community to develop, strengthen and act upon anti-racist, multicultural perspectives through worship services, educational programs, lectures, book & film discussions, other cultural events, and community involvement. For more information, contact Betty Doggett at R.Doggett@comcast.net or 973-651-6396.
- **Crazy QUUILTERS — Saturday, 20 December, 10 AM (Rotunda).** Be it a queen-sized bed quilt or decorator pillows, the work done by the Crazy QUUILTERS brings joy to the creators and the recipients. Our bee includes sharing of a potluck lunch. The workshop is open to all willing hands. If you are new to the group or would like info about our upcoming meeting, contact Arlene Marin at arlenemarin@hotmail.com.



Heavenly
Nostrils
by Dana
Simpson



We are on the web: essexuu.org

MAKING THE CONNECTIONS

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

Meeting Address:
35 & 47 Cleveland St
Orange NJ 07050-2907

Church Phone: 973-674-0010

Office Email: office@essexuu.org

Minister's Email: minister@essexuu.org

Web: essexuu.org

Minister: Rev. Gordon Clay Bailey

President: Georgiana Hart

**Vice President: Mindy Thompson
Fullilove**

Treasurer: Bill Slezak

Secretary: Greg Giacobe

Administrator: Greg Giacobe

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.



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