



UULMNJ BULLETIN DECEMBER 2015

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the entire UULMNJ family, I would like to wish each and every one of you a joyous holiday season and a happy New Year.

UULMNJ has a great reason to celebrate. We just received a new grant from the Unitarian Universalist program fund. This \$15,000 grant will support our on-going legislative operations and help us expand our anti-racism work. In addition, this grant provides a \$5,000 matching grant to be matched by new or increased donations.

We have had a very busy and productive year. This bulletin will give you an opportunity to review our UULMNJ world. Read about --

- Our 2014-15 accomplishments below;
- Our 2015-16 issues agenda identified at the October Issues Conference;
- The dismantling racism board statement and the related burgeoning statewide efforts;
- Encouraging a congregational discussion about the taxation and regulation of marijuana utilizing the UULMNJ study guide;
- Staying abreast of UULMNJ alerts by joining us on Facebook.

We are able to offer so much because of the contributions of our congregations and volunteers. It is through your efforts that our accomplishments are made possible.

This year, UULMNJ initiated a financial development plan that will secure the future sustainability of our work with expanded legal and program staff and support resources. We are excited about this plan!

Please help us launch this financial effort with a year-end donation. Help us reach our \$5,000 matching grant. Please help us invest in the future of New Jersey by investing in the future of UULMNJ. Donations may be made online by clicking the donation button or by sending a check to UULMNJ, 4 Waldron Ave., Summit, NJ 07901

I personally want to thank you for your continued support. I hope your holidays are merry. May the New Year offer you a world filled with peace and goodwill toward all.

*Faithfully,
Rev. Craig*

director@uulmnj.org
609.672.7331



SAVE THE DATES

Important Dates to Remember! Mark your calendar now:

- **March 12, 2016:** 2nd Annual NJ MUUSIC Festival in Lincroft
- **March 18, 2016,** 7:30pm: Dreaming Tree Coffeehouse to Benefit UULMNJ at the First Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Hunterdon County
- **April 16, 2016:** UULMNJ Plenary and Annual Meeting at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Cherry Hill.
- **October 15, 2016:** Fall Issues Conference

NJ LEGISLATURE TWO-YEAR SESSION ENDING IN JANUARY

2015 is not the only thing coming to an end. The New Jersey two-year legislative session will end the second week in January. Despite the holiday, the legislature is in high gear, trying to push through bills in the next few weeks that have been in the hopper for two years. Legislation that is not passed by the middle of January will have to begin the whole process again with the new session. So, expect a great deal of legislative flurry in the beginning of January. UULMNJ will be sending action alerts as necessary, so watch your email.

DISMANTLING RACISM

In response to the current events of our time, and the work of our criminal justice reform task force, the UULMNJ board has issued a statement calling for UU congregations throughout New Jersey to work toward dismantling racism (www.uulmnj.org/statement-on-dismantling-racism/). Accordingly, a statewide working group has been launched to address this important issue and to incorporate anti-racism work in everything we do. The goal of the group is twofold: 1) to be a statewide resource for congregations who wish to move individual members, their congregations and their communities toward greater racial understanding, and 2) to be a primary advocate for legal and legislative activity addressing institutional racial discrimination.

Elias Ortega (Morristown) and Rohn Hein (Cherry Hill) are serving as co-convenors for the group. Interested? Contact Rev. Craig (director@uulmnj.org) for more information.

BRINGING UULMNJ INTO YOUR CONGREGATION

From the Congregational Relations Committee

We wanted to let you know about a Board Committee whose goal is to support Congregational Liaisons and to bring the Legislative Ministry closer to congregations. The Congregational Relations Committee works to support a strong Legislative Ministry program in each congregation and to give information to liaisons about UULMNJ activities. We will be happy to work with you to sponsor a program on UULMNJ in your congregation if you feel that will be useful.

During November, the Committee led the Sunday service in Plainfield and held UULMNJ information programs in Washington Crossing and Princeton after Rev Hirshberg led the services in those congregations. They will be happy to assist you with leading programs in your congregation. Rev. Hirshberg will lead a service in Englewood on March 13 and we plan to organize a program after that service. Contact Frances Prestianni (fpresianni@gmail.com) if you want more information.

Each Congregation has a Congregational Relations Committee member who will be happy to work with you. Please contact them if you wish to have a UULMNJ program in your congregation or would like other assistance:

- Lessie Culmer-Nier (lculmern@drew.edu): Englewood, Morristown, Plainfield, Somerville, Summit
- Carolyn Baldaccini (cal6balda@yahoo.com): Hackettstown, Lincroft, Montclair, Newtown, Orange

- Elaine Nigam (elaine@nigamfamily.org): Bordentown, East Brunswick, South Jersey Shore, Princeton, Toms River
- Frances Prestianni (fprestianni@gmail.com): Hunterdon, Cherry Hill, Paramus, Ridgewood, Washington Crossing, Wayne

UULMNJ ISSUES FOR 2015 – 2016

The highlight of the fall season was October’s State-wide Issues Conference. The official count was 95 people in attendance from fifteen congregations across the state. This is the highest attendance UULMNJ has ever had! The following issues were identified as priorities:

Criminal Justice Reform/Mass Incarceration

Chairs: Al Stawsky (alynways@gmail.com) Susan MacDonnell (susmacdonn@gmail.com)

- Solitary Confinement, Parole Reform, Police Accountability, Taxation and Regulation of Marijuana (read Rev. Craig’s testimony and our study guide at <http://uulmnj.org/marijuana-hearing-11-16-15/>)
- Bail Reform, Opportunity to Compete passed in 2015

Immigration Reform

Chair: Ted Fetter (fetter4@verizon.net)

- Driver’s licenses for undocumented
- Refugee Crisis

Economic Justice

Chair: Lorraine Wearley (lorrainewearley@gmail.com)

- Affordable Housing, and COAH support
- Foreclosure Protection
- Minimum Wage
- Paid Sick Leave

Environmental Justice

Chair: Bill Potter (mpotterrex@cs.com)

- Renewable Energy
- Water Resources
- Fracking Waste Ban

Reproductive Justice/Health Care

Chair: Carol Loscalzo (closcalzo2@aol.com)

- Reinstatement of Family Planning Funds
- Support of Planned Parenthood

Gun Violence Prevention

Chair: Lew Maltby (LMaltby@workrights.org)

- Domestic Violence
- Child-safe Guns

The materials from the Issues Conference packets are posted on the UULMNJ website at <http://uulmnj.org/wp-content/uploads/IssuesCon15-Reg-Packet.pdf>.

For more information about UULMNJ’s task forces, visit the UULMNJ web site: <http://www.uulmnj.org>.

UULMNJ’s Educational Video series “*YUUR Voice*” is available to be shown in your congregations. Five programs are available on the UULMNJ YouTube channel: Affordable Housing, Climate Change, Mass

Incarceration, Immigration Detention, and Faces of the Undocumented. Each program also has a study guide. <http://uulmnj.org/education-resources/>

UULMNJ IN REVIEW

The Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of New Jersey's (UULMNJ) mission is *to provide the comprehensive structure for New Jersey Unitarian Universalists' non-partisan activism. We work for a socially just public policy in collaboration with like-minded organizations through Education, Research, Advocacy, Witness, and Service.* We are a grassroots organization that has achieved great success in our first seven years and continues to expand our reach as a moral voice in the public policy arena. A brief history of UULMNJ can be found at: <http://uulmnj.org/mission-and-history/>.

Recent UULMNJ activity includes:

- Passed a UULMNJ Dismantling Racism Statement and created the first statewide Dismantling Racism working group designed to build greater racial awareness in our congregations and greater racial justice in New Jersey. <http://uulmnj.org/statement-on-dismantling-racism/>.
- First faith group to call for a reform of the drug laws and the taxation and regulation rather than criminalization of certain substances.
- Created the Legal Advocacy Project (LAP) designed to create significant social change through court decisions.
- Serve as plaintiff with the ACLU against the NJ Dept. of Education for a violation of New Jersey church/state constitutional law.
- Filed two amicus briefs concerning NJ termination of Medicaid benefits for legal immigrants without residency requirement and the NYC police surveillance of the Muslim community in NJ.
- Lobbied for the passage of the following legislation:
 - Opportunity To Compete
 - Bail Reform legislation
 - Proposed Bail Reform Constitutional Amendment
 - Parole reform legislation currently before the legislature
 - Eight stricter gun control laws
 - In-state tuition for undocumented college students
 - Fracking Waste Ban
 - Anti-poverty legislation
 - Earned paid sick days
- Successfully advocated for the release of the Affordable Housing Trust funds.
- Successfully advocated for the NJ minimum wage increase with cost of living index increases.
- Sent over 400 letters to the Secretary of Homeland Security concerning immigration detention conditions in NJ.
- Promoted “Do Not Stand Idly By” program encouraging local municipalities to purchase police weapons from manufacturer who produce smart guns and promote high safety standards.
- Launched Ending the New Jim Crow Task Force.
- Held a demonstration at Hobby Lobby to protest limited employee birth control options.
- Helped to craft New Jersey's environmental and sustainability through Sen. Smith's initiative.
- Helped organize New Jersey UU's participation in the Peoples Climate March in New York with approximately 300 NJ participants.
- Organized the State Advocacy Network (SANS) Workshop at General Assembly.
- Represent UULMNJ on several NJ and national coalitions.

All 21 of New Jersey's UU congregations are affiliated with UULMNJ, and we have connected with almost 1,000 Unitarian Universalists through our advocacy work. UULMNJ enables New Jersey Unitarian Universalists to be part of a burgeoning group of UU State Advocacy Networks that currently span 22 states.

REMEMBER UULMNJ AT YEAR –END

As we work to collectively bend the arc of the moral universe toward justice in New Jersey, know that UULMNJ continues to depend on your time, talent and treasure for its success. Please remember UULMNJ in your year-end giving. <http://uulmnj.org/donate/>

OUR DENOMINATION

From the UUA

Pastoral Message on the Movement for Black Lives from UUA President Rev. Peter Morales
<http://www.uua.org/news/press-release/pastoral-message-movement-black-lives>

Two Things Every UU Should Know About Reproductive Justice
https://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/2things_about_rj_final.pdf

Clergy Support Reproductive Justice in Wake of Planned Parenthood Shootings
<https://www.uuworld.org/articles/shootings-prompt-repro-justice-support>

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee

Left Out

Thousands of refugees have been stranded in Europe's eastern border zones the past few weeks in increasingly abysmal conditions and with no hope of advancing on their journey. Why? Because they happen to come from the "wrong" country. UUSC is working with partners on the ground to ensure refugees' right to seek safe refuge no matter their country of origin. <http://www.uusc.org/updates/left-out>

Talking Points: The Syrian Refugee Crisis
<http://www.uusc.org/sites/default/files/uuscysyrianrefugeetalkingpoints.pdf>

Choose Compassionate Consumption

Promote living wages for workers and open supply chains for ethical producers, while championing all-natural organics, sustainable farming, and minimal or zero impact on the environment. Your purchases fund human rights programs around the world administered by UUSC. <http://www.thegoodbuy.com>

UU-United Nations Office

Confronting the Silence: Perspectives and Dialogue on Structural Racism Against People of African Descent Worldwide

The UU-UNO recently hosted a groundbreaking event at the United Nations focused on structural racism worldwide against people of African descent. For more information on the panel discussion, and a link to watch on UN Web TV: <http://www.uua.org/international/events/upcoming-un-event>

NY Metro District: www.uumetrony.org
Joseph Priestley District: www.jpduua.org
Central East Regional Group: www.cerguua.org/

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Do you want to get more information about upcoming events, educational events, local legislation, and action alerts? Please send your contact information to admin@uulmnj.org and we will sign you up. And follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/uulmnj) and Twitter (<https://twitter.com/uulmnj>)!