



UULMNJ BULLETIN
MARCH 2014

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

"Prayer for a Drop in the Bucket"

*Blessed are the droplets, for they shall fill the bucket to overflowing.
Blessed are they who know there is a bucket, for they shall be filled with hope.
Blessed are they who can see beyond their lifetimes, for they shall walk in faith that
their work will not be in vain.
Blessed are we when we know we only appear so small because what we are
creating is so big.
Blessed are we who are part of one another.
Blessed are we when we give new life and light to others, for we will live more richly
ourselves.
Blessed be.
- By Amy Morgenstern*



Dear Friends,

I became a grandmother this past month. My first grandchild, a little girl was born just five weeks ago. In the humble opinion of her grandmother, she is beautiful, brilliant and perfectly precious. The birth of a grandchild, or any child always fills me with a sense of wonder and awe. New life is a miracle. As I look at this little eight-pound bundle and how she commands her universe, I wonder what her life will be like in years to come. Today it is brimming with possibilities and potential. In her lifetime, what will her world be like? Will she have the opportunities afforded to her parents? Will the air she breathes and the water she drinks be clean? Will the town she lives in be safe from gun violence? Will she have a right to safe health care for any of her personal choices?

Sometimes the work we do feels like drops in a bucket. And when that happens, let's think of the children who need a world of opportunity and fairness in their future. Let's think of what their future might be like if their grandparents and parents didn't stand courageously for a just and compassionate society. What would happen if we didn't take bold initiatives? What would happen if we didn't draw attention to laws that hurt and discriminate? For what we do today will determine the tomorrows, and every drop is important.

We are protecting the future for those who will come after us. And in turn they will follow our example and protect the future for those who come after them. We are a vital part of the great continuum of time and our place matters. *Every* drop is important.

Faithfully,
Rev. Craig Hirshberg
Executive Director

UULMNJ ANNUAL MEETING – APRIL 5, 2014 – PRINCETON – REGISTER TODAY!

UULMNJ 5TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION & ANNUAL PLENARY – REGISTER TODAY!

Saturday, April 5 • 8:30am – 2:30pm

Hosted by the UU Congregation of Princeton in Princeton, NJ

Featuring a keynote address by Gordon MacInnes, *How We Got Here: New Jersey's Crawl Out of the Great Recession*. Gordon MacInnes is the President of New Jersey Policy Perspective, formed in 1997 to address the need for credible research and analysis on important issues facing New Jersey, aims to help develop sound, progressive policies to provide New Jersey with a strong fiscal foundation and an equitable way of raising the money the state needs. MacInnes has served in both the Assembly and the Senate; led New Jersey Network, the Fund for New Jersey and Citizens for Better Schools; and served as assistant education commissioner from 2002 to 2007.

At the conclusion of the plenary, there will be a **liaison and congregation volunteer training** covering actions as a moral imperative, congregational resources and Salsa, our advocacy system. All are welcome to attend; we hope that each congregation will be able to have at least one representative present for this informative session.

More information and registration details can be found at www.uulmnj.org

SIGN UP FOR UULMNJ NEWS AND ACTION ALERTS

You can receive **UULMNJ News and Action Alerts** directly. If you haven't received anything already, it means you are not in our database. If you would like to receive these in the future, please send your contact information to admin@uulmnj.org and we will sign you up.

JAMES DEBOER LEAVES UULMNJ

UULMNJ Issues Organizer Jim deBoer stepped down from the Legislative Ministry at the end of February to accept a call as pastor of the Federated Church of Livingston. He says, "Thank you very much for an excellent opportunity to learn more about advocacy in our state and to make a difference!"

And we offer Jim our thanks and appreciation for all that he has done for UULMNJ during his time with us. As a result of his efforts we are working towards being better prepared to respond to issues as they arise in the future. This might include supporting Task Forces with development of policy statements and other materials, establishing rapid response teams, creating training programs and devising systems that will make our Congregational partners more effective.

MARRIAGE IN NEW JERSEY

Just a reminder that James deBoer has put together a marriage equality guide that you can make available as a handout for coffee hour or to give to any couple looking for more info.
http://www.uulmnj.org/images/documents/Marriage-Equality/Marriage_Implementation_Guide_12-17-13.pdf

CONNECT WITH UULMNJ ON FACEBOOK

UULMNJ has a Facebook page! Like us at <https://www.facebook.com/uulmnj>. And then let us know what you are thinking. Share how your congregation is working for social justice – others want to know, and may even be inspired by your actions.

ISSUES UPDATE – GET INVOLVED

UULMNJ is gearing up for the new legislative session. If you are interested serving on a task force, contact the task force chair or director@uulmnj.org.

We are also looking for volunteers to serve on our *communications, congregational relations, development, and finance* committees, all critical to the well-being of UULMNJ. Please contact Rev. Craig if you would like to consider helping us out with these important functions.

Environment Task Force

- *Help stop fracking:* The Delaware River Basin Commission is meeting on March 11, and the Obama administration holds one of five key votes on the commission's decision whether or not to allow fracking in the Delaware River Basin. *Will you tell the president to shut the door on drilling in one of our best places.* Go to http://www.webaction.org/site/R?i=AdyuMpSsQK_iSTHJGsfCsA to send your letter.
- *RGGI Petition:* The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) is a program designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In 2011, Gov. Chris Christie announced that he was pulling New Jersey from the program. Please stand up for the environment with Environment New Jersey, and tell Governor Christie that New Jersey belongs back in RGGI by adding your name to list of advocates for the environment. Sign our petition at: http://salsa3.salsalabs.com/o/50930/p/dia/action3/common/public/?action_KEY=12928
- *Renewable Energy:* Legislation is being proposed by NJ FREE that seeks the adoption of a requirement for 80% renewable electricity by 2050, with an intermediate requirement of 30% renewable electricity by 2025. It also seeks a requirement that the total electric usage in New Jersey be reduced by 20% by 2025 relative to 2012 usage, and be reduced by 30% by 2050 relative to 2012 usage. See the task force's position paper on the UULMNJ website.
- *Green Sanctuaries:* Is your congregation a Green Sanctuary? Make sure that you have a representative on UULMNJ's Environment Task Force by contacting Task Force Chair Rohn Hein at rohn@netzero.net.

Immigration Task Force

- *1000 Letter Campaign:* Jeh Johnson is the new Secretary of Homeland Security. The immigration task force is conducting a 1000 letter campaign to call attention to the immigrant detention conditions in New Jersey. We are asking each congregation to collect signed copies of our letter every Sunday during March and then bring the letters to the Plenary on April 5. At that meeting, with letters from all around the state, we will take a photo of the pile of letters and write a press release saying what we're trying to accomplish with the letter campaign. Then we will mail off the letters in one package to Secretary Johnson in Washington and issue the press release. Please do everything you can to make this a success. The letter has been forwarded to the congregational liaisons.
- The Social Responsibilities Council in Ridgewood is considering whether Amazon should continue to have a shopping opportunity on their website. There will be a seminar on the subject at USR on April 11, with Craig Garcia of New Labor as the speaker. This is an immigration issue due to the abusive employment practices of Amazon and other online retail fulfillment warehouses affect many immigrants, both documented and undocumented. (For more information on these practices, see the articles at <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2012/02/mac-mcclelland-free-online-shipping-warehouses->

[labor](#) or www.salon.com/2014/02/23/worsethanwalmart.) A video will be made of the April 11 seminar and made available to other congregations. We'll also discuss this at our plenary session workshop on April 5.

- *Tuition equity* for DREAMers was signed into law in New Jersey but with no grant aid to students. Read more at <http://www.uulmnj.org/issues/current-priority-issues/immigration-policy-reform/202-tuition-equity-compromise.html>.
- The National Day Laborers' Organizing Network (www.ndlon.org) has filed a petition to the government to reduce and halt deportations. There will be a mobilization on **April 5th** entitled "2 Million, Too Many, Not 1 More". (The figure of 2 million refers to recent deportations.) Watch for more details.

Chair: Ted Fetter fetter4@verizon.net

Economic Justice Task Force

- *Raise the minimum wage*: The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee is encouraging people to contact their congressional representatives: <http://www.uusc.org/updates/make-them-vote-March2014>. More information on minimum wages is available from: Fast Food, Poverty Wages - UC Berkeley Labor Center http://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/publiccosts/fast_food_poverty_wages.pdf The *New York Times* has an interactive calculator showing the hard choices that minimum wage workers make. <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/02/09/opinion/minimum-wage.html>
- UULMNJ was invited to testify before the NJ Department of Community Affairs Commissioner Richard Constable and Department of Human Services Commissioner Jennifer Velez at a public hearing on how the State can best address the needs of homeless New Jerseyans. Testimony was prepared, however the event was cancelled due to snowy weather.
- *Sandy Bill of Rights*: The Anti-Poverty Network, of which UULMNJ is a member, is working with Senate President Sweeney on legislation for a Sandy bill of rights. As part of that effort we coordinated visits in Toms River, Perth Amboy, and Moonachie.
- *Sandy Relief*: The state Department of Community Affairs has recently released its proposal for how it intends to spend the next round of federal Sandy relief funding. UULMNJ's partner organizations, the Housing Development Network of New Jersey and Fair Share Housing, are critical of this proposal, in that it doesn't sufficiently address the needs of those who need replacement affordable housing, those who are renters, or those who are minorities. Three public hearings were held; the task force encouraged UUs to attend the hearings and prepared talking points for those willing to give testimony. The Fair Share Housing Center (<http://fairsharehousing.org/sandy>) has seen success in using the courts to obtain details of the distribution of Federal Sandy Relief. They now have documentation that minority groups received significantly less money.

Chair: Lorraine Wearley lrrainewearley@gmail.com

Gun Violence Protection Task Force

- Legislation has been re-introduced that would limit ammunition magazines to ten rounds. This bill is expected to pass the legislature so we will direct our activity towards encouraging the governor to sign it.

- New Jersey Together (a faith-based community organization) is asking mayors and town councils to evaluate their gun procurement policies. Of all guns sold in this country, 15% are bought by local law enforcement, and 25% are purchased federally. Our goal is that as municipalities put out bids, they ask gun manufacturers how/whether they are:
 - developing smart gun technologies that use biometrics to make sure that guns are only used by the people to whom they have been issued
 - microstamping of bullets
 - monitoring of the distribution of the guns they manufacture

West Orange recently passed such an ordinance, requesting the information from its suppliers. The task force is gathering information on this initiative and will then let congregations know how they can be part of this effort. *NJ together will also be sending someone to our April 5th Plenary to do a training module at the GVP break-out group about the rationale for this issue and ways to present it to municipality officials.*

- Read about how the Mayor of Jersey City has instituted a policy in which guns for the municipality will only be bought from companies that practice social responsibility <http://www.cnn.com/2013/12/11/us/new-jersey-mayor-gun-manufacturer-safety>
- *Morristown Appearance: Newtown's Team 26 Cyclists – March 9, 11:am – 12:00noon*
From March 8 to 11, *Newtown's Team 26* will ride from Newtown to Washington, D.C. to honor all victims of gun violence, support stronger gun violence prevention laws and to spread their message of peace, hope and love along the way. On March 9 they will make a stop at Morristown's Town Hall. We hope that many of you will be able to join us as we greet and cheer on the riders. Maura Sherlach, a New Jersey resident whose mother Mary Sherlach was the school psychologist killed in the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, will be speaking. <http://www.newstimes.com/default/article/Newtown-s-Team-26-cyclists-ride-to-bring-message-5278403.php>
- Three gun violence prevention education programs will be held at the Summit UU church. The dates are March 23, April 27 and May 18. See the flyer at the end of this bulletin for details.

Chair: Diane Finn finnflynn@verizon.net

Health Care and Reproductive Justice

A new **Reproductive Justice** subcommittee is forming to address women's health issues in New Jersey. If you are interested or can be a resource to this group, please email Rev. Kathleen Green, Chair, to be included.

Chairs: Carolyn Baldicchini (Health Care) cal6balda@yahoo.com and Rev. Kathleen Green (Reproductive Justice) usr.minister@verizon.net

Criminal Justice Reform/End the New Jim Crow

A new task force, *Criminal Justice Reform: The New Jim Crow* has been formed to address mass incarceration and all that it entails. Their policy brief is posted at <http://www.uulmnjppn.org/index.php/component/content/article/2-uncategorised/123-policy-briefs>

Four major areas/objectives that the group believes strike at the heart of mass incarceration/the new Jim Crow have been identified:

- Dismantling the present monster prison system complex;
- Ending racial profiling in all its many forms;

- Repealing the “War on Drugs” and mandatory minimum sentencing;
- Mandating civil and human rights for the incarcerated and formerly incarcerated.

They believe it is possible to define and develop meaningful legislative activity in these and related areas to make a difference in law and to generate meaningful education and support activity. One such initiative is the introduction of legislation to “Ban the Box.”

Under a **Ban the Box** law, criminal background checks are delayed until later in the hiring process, encouraging employers to focus on the current skills and qualifications of a candidate, rather than on past mistakes. Ban the Box laws have been in effect since 1998, and have been adopted by 38 jurisdictions throughout the United States, including the District of Columbia and five states: Connecticut, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and New Mexico.

Ban The Box laws do *not* prevent employers from conducting background checks. They do *not* require an employer to hire an unqualified applicant. They do *not* eliminate an employer’s discretion to hire only people suitable for the position. They do *not* override any existing laws placing restrictions on eligibility for particular positions. They simply ask employers to consider an individual’s full application, providing a realistic opportunity for a person who has changed his or her life.

See UULMNJ’s “Ban the Box” fact sheet at <http://www.uulmnj.org/issues/current-priority-issues/economic-justice.html>.

If you would like to join or be a resource to this task force, please email Al Stawsky, Chair alynways@gmail.com.

UPCOMING EVENTS IN OUR CONGREGATIONS

What social justice initiatives and activities is your congregation planning for the new church year? Let us know so that we can share them here. And maybe you’ll find something you want to bring to your congregation!

Jewish Voices in Unitarian Universalism - March 14-16

Morristown Unitarian Fellowship

“Jewish Voices in Unitarian Universalism” will feature the editors and contributors to the upcoming book by the same name in conversation about Jewish identity, Judaism as a source tradition, Tikkun Olam and social justice, the pluses and challenges of this hyphenated status in UU communities, and fellowship opportunities. Details and registration: <http://www.uuja.org>.

Junior Youth Con - March 29-30

UU Congregation of Monmouth County

More information to come.

Gasland II – March 30

UU Congregation of Princeton

Get a broader look at the dangers of “fracking” in this documentary film as it demonstrates the myths of natural gas as a clean and safe energy source. Learn how fracking impacts our water, air, health, communities, and our democracy, and join in a discussion with a representative of Food & Water Watch. www.uuprinceton.org/cpt_events/gasland-film-screening/

Iranian-American Cultural Event – March 30

UU Congregation of Princeton

This cultural event coincides with negotiations with Iran to curtail its nuclear weapons program. Iranian-Americans from the Peace Education Committee of the Coalition for Peace Action will provide Iranian music and desserts. http://www.uuprinceton.org/cpt_events/iran-amer/

Heal the World - April 1

Unitarian Church in Summit

Innovative political activist Jeremy Heimans will bring his 21st century model of mobilization for social causes to UCS's Heal the World speaker series. Jeremy and his organization, Purpose.com, use cutting-edge technology and social media to mobilize people internationally to make the world a better place.

<http://www.ucsummit.org/wordpress/activist-jeremy-heimans-to-speak-april-1>.

Self and Society: An Emersonian Reflection - A Talk by John Matteson – April 3

Unitarian Society of Ridgewood

In our own time, when debates that pit radical individualism against the common good have grown especially fierce, we would be wise to consider what American writer, philosopher and poet Ralph Waldo Emerson, who stood between the two extremes, had to say about his own “age of the first person singular.” John Matteson is a Distinguished Professor of English at John Jay College in the City University of New York.

Being a Healing Presence: A Training in Pastoral Care Lay Ministry - April 19

Central Unitarian Church

Learn about creating and managing a congregationally-based pastoral care team and the fundamental principles and skills of pastoral care-giving.

http://uumetrony.org/events/Pastoral_Care_2014_flyer.pdf

STATEMENT FROM REV. PETER MORALES ON MASS MORAL MARCH

Last month members of the Unitarian Universalist Association and the United Church of Christ participated in the Moral March on Raleigh in Raleigh, N.C., as part of a group of thousands of concerned North Carolina citizens and committed individuals from throughout the country. We sang, prayed, and marched together to raise awareness about the threats to voting rights in North Carolina that are spreading to other states. (<http://standingonthesideoflove.org/votingrightstoday/>)

As we stood surrounded by people who shared our concerns and listened to our collective cry for change, we both paused and reflected that this is love reaching out in action—raising our voices for those who are being silenced by voting restriction tactics. Showing people who we don't even know, have never met, that we love them, that they matter, and that we won't let their power be taken away from them.

Back in April of last year, the UUA and the UCC once again stood together in Rhode Island and celebrated and worshipped with citizens of that state as they worked to pass marriage equality. And soon after, they became the 10th state to grant all people the freedom to marry the person they love!

We must, as communities dedicated to justice, peace and love, reach out to others to share the transformational stories of what our unique faiths have to offer. Each one of us has a powerful story to share about how our faiths have touched our lives, how it has transformed us, and helped us to make the world a better place. We need to be telling these stories, listening to others, and helping people grow in spirit and in service.

Thanks to you and everyone who embraces the principles of love and justice, we now have nearly 20 states with marriage equality, and we continue to move closer to comprehensive immigration reform that will recognize the human worth and dignity of the 11 million undocumented individuals living in the

United States. At yesterday's march, we stood side by side with the NAACP and other partners to show that we are equally committed to voting rights and access to a fair and open democracy in this country. While there is still much more to do, let's take this time to pause, reflect, and celebrate all we have accomplished together and all that we will accomplish in the future.

Thank you.

Rev. Peter Morales, UUA President

Rev. Geoffrey Black, UCC General Minister and President

OUR DENOMINATION

From the UUA: Reproductive Justice

In just a few weeks, the Supreme Court of the United States will be hearing oral arguments on two combined cases surrounding the Affordable Care Act's contraceptive coverage mandate. *Sebelius v. Hobby Lobby* asks the Supreme Court if for-profit corporations can deny the federally protected no-cost contraceptive coverage mandate to its employees based on the employer's religious beliefs. Are we going to stand by as our reproductive rights are threatened on March 25th? I hope you will join me in speaking up for our rights and raising awareness! Learn more about the case and get involved (<http://www.uua.org/reproductive/293150.shtml>) by organizing an echo event in your area, writing a letter to the editor or an op-ed, or joining us here in Washington D.C. at the Supreme Court on March 25 (http://org.salsalabs.com/o/1272/p/salsa/event/common/public/?event_KEY=81495).

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee

Justice Sunday – March 24

Justice Sunday is a UUSC program through which congregations can learn about and engage in a key area of human rights. Each year, Justice Sunday focuses on a particular theme and offers resources and activities for congregations to explore that topic. The theme of Justice Sunday 2014 is "Justice Is Planting the Seed." By highlighting successful models developed in Haiti, this year's program invites congregations to learn about food security and sustainability. One of the activities we are asking congregations to undertake for Justice Sunday 2014 is to build food gardens and sponsor urban food gardens in Haiti. Build one for your own community and sponsor one for a family in Haiti. See more at: <http://www.uusc.org/justice-sunday>.

Minimum Wage, Moral Outrage

The federal minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour is keeping low-wage workers in poverty throughout the United States. And the tipped minimum wage, which has been a paltry \$2.13 per hour since 1991, is even worse. This is an outrage - and raising the minimum wage is a moral imperative! UUSC members have a very important role to play in supporting workers' rights and helping raise the minimum wage. We can bring our values to the fore, speak up for the dignity and respect of workers, and make sure that this is seen as a moral issue, not just an economic one. <http://www.uusc.org/topics/minimum-wage>

UU-United Nations Office: Intergenerational Spring Seminar – April 3-5, 2014

Registration is open for the UU-UNO Intergenerational Spring Seminar. This year's human rights topic is the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, with special attention to environmental justice. The seminar will be in conjunction with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Details and registration information: <http://www.uua.org/international/events/seminar/index.shtml>.

NY Metro District: www.uumetronj.org

Save the date for the 2014 District Annual Meeting May 2-3 at the Hyatt Morristown in Morristown NJ.

Joseph Priestley District: www.jpduua.org

Register now for the 2014 JPD Assembly, *A People So Bold*. April 11-12, 2014.

<http://www.jpduua.org/news-and-notes/register-now-2014-jpd-assembly>

Central East Regional Group: www.cerguua.org/

Many new on-demand webinars from the Central East Regional Group (CERG) have been scheduled.

Simply log on to Moodle and scroll down the extensive list of on-demand offerings. If you're a first time visitor, you'll need to register. <http://www.cerguua.org/moodle/>

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Do you have an event or announcement that you would like included in our bulletin? We would especially like to include news about the many social justice events and initiatives that New Jersey's UU congregations are involved with. Send an email to director@uulmnj.org and let us know what you are up to so that we can share it with others across our state.

Prevent Gun Violence: Knowledge and Action



Cover photo *Protect Children Not Guns*. Children's Defense Fund. childrensdefense.org/child-research-data-publications/data/protect-children-not-guns-2013.html

Three presentations: Sundays at 1:00 pm
The Unitarian Church in Summit , 4 Waldron Ave., Summit, NJ

Teleconference Participation: PGV Network Members
will receive dial-in information and pdf copy of the presentation.
To join the network: email PreventGunViolence2013@gmail.com



March 23, 2014 1:00 pm
Protect Our Children From Gun Violence
Rev. Shannon Daley-Harris, currently and for 24 years, Senior Religious Advisor of the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) in Washington, DC. Author of numerous publications on advocacy for children.

April 27: Understanding Guns & Firearms Safety

Robert Tessaro, former director of Law Enforcement Relations, Brady Center.

George Faison, a skilled hunter and Unitarian church member.

May 18: Legislation on Firearms Safety Then & Now, Federal & State

Nicola Bocour, director of Ceasefire NJ, graduate of Seton Hall Law School.

Diane Finn, UU Legislative Ministry NJ liaison for prevention of gun violence, will discuss actions congregations can take.