



UULMNJ BULLETIN
SEPTEMBER 2013

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

Once again, UULMNJ must appeal to your sense of justice.

The time for marriage equality in New Jersey is now! UU's have been fighting for marriage equality for over 40 years and it is time to end the battle. New Jersey United for Marriage (NJUM), the campaign for Marriage Equality in New Jersey by the end of this legislative session, is reaching a crucial stage. In just three short weeks we have gained three more votes necessary to overturn the Governor's veto.



UULMNJ, recognizing that this issue is of particular importance to our New Jersey congregations and members, has made an unprecedented commitment in this area. We will soon be hiring a full-time four month organizer to work with New Jersey United for Marriage (NJUM), a coalition involving Garden State Equality, ACLU, Lambda Legal, Freedom to Marry and many other organizations. This person will work with and through our UU congregations in conjunction with NJUM to create a groundswell of grass roots efforts.

We are firmly convinced that the time is now for this issue in this State and that we must not hold back on our efforts to see justice done. In this case, this means that we are hiring our first organizer with only partial funds in hand to pay for it. Granted this is a leap of faith, and a risk, but a risk we must boldly take at this point in time.

We have faith that the importance of marriage equality and the critical timing of this campaign will motivate individuals to come forward to help us fund this vital effort. We have faith that our New Jersey UU's won't let us down.

If you could make a one-time contribution (in any amount) to help defray our expenses, you will be a part of a movement that we hope will make history in New Jersey. Please send your contributions to: UULMNJ, 4 Waldron Ave., Summit, NJ 07901 or go to www.UULMNJ.org.

Thank you in advance for supporting this important cause.

Faithfully,
Rev. Craig Hirshberg
Executive Director

Nick Lewis, Chair
UULMNJ Development Committee

UULMNJ FALL ISSUES WORKSHOP – SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19

Please plan on joining us at the UULMNJ Fall Issues Workshop, on Saturday, October 19. Hosted by the First Unitarian Society of Plainfield, registration (and coffee and bagels) begins at 9:00am, with the meeting starting at 9:30am.

UULMNJ Annual Fall Issues Workshop Saturday, October 19, 2013, 9am –2:30pm First Unitarian Society of Plainfield

Registration is now open at www.uulmnj.org.

Highlights of the event include:

- Keynote by **Sue Fulton**, a 1980 West Point graduate and part of the first class to admit women, and a key player in the repeal of the military’s “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy
- “**Giving Voice**” choral group under the direction of Penny Gnesin
- Important Task Force meetings:
 - Marriage Equality
 - Immigration
 - Economic Justice
 - Environment
 - Health Care/Women’s Health
 - Gun Violence Prevention
- Discuss current issues and how you can work, and take action, with UULMNJ in your home congregation
- Dialogue with UULMNJ advocacy friends from around New Jersey
- *Liaison and Volunteer Training*: Immediately following the conclusion of the workshop - stay for an hour and learn how to use UULMNJ resources to take action in your congregation.

More about our keynote speaker:

Brenda S. "Sue" Fulton is a 1980 West Point graduate, part of the first class to admit women. She was commissioned in the Army, served for five years in Germany, and was honorably discharged at the rank of Captain. She is a founding Board member of Knights Out, an organization of LGBT West Point graduates, and helped found OutServe, the association of actively-serving LGBT military members. As the Executive Director and co-founder of Knights Out, and Communications Director for OutServe, Fulton was a key player in the repeal of the military’s “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy. In 2011, President Obama appointed her as the first openly gay member of the West Point Board of Visitors. She married her longtime partner, Penny Gnesin, at the Cadet Chapel at West Point on December 1, 2012. Sue and Penny live in Asbury Park, NJ.

Please plan on joining us for this event. You can help us publicize it by downloading a flyer at www.uulmnj.org to post in your congregation. We look forward to seeing you on October 19!

*And mark your calendars now for the **UULMNJ Annual Plenary** on Saturday, April 5, 2014 at the UU Congregation of Princeton. More details will follow in early 2014.*

FAITH ORGANIZER FOR MARRIAGE EQUALITY

UULMNJ and New Jersey United for Marriage (www.njum.org), a coalition of local, state and national organizations working to win the freedom to marry for all New Jersey families, are collaborating to establish to position of a Faith Organizer for Marriage Equality.

The Faith Organizer will work as part of a dynamic field and outreach team and will be responsible for helping to manage the faith engagement program of NJUM. The Faith program focuses on work that builds strong relationships with clergy, people of faith and faith communities, supports organizing initiatives, and manages volunteer teams of people of faith. The Faith Organizer will work under the supervision of the Faith Director of NJUM and the Executive Director of the UULMNJ and will work closely with field staff to set goals, show broad support across denominations, and activate clergy and people of faith to lobby the legislature.

This is a full-time position, lasting for 3 – 4 months; interviews are under way. Stay posted for more news!

UULMNJ COMMITTEES UPDATE

At the annual UULMNJ Leadership Retreat this summer, a key agenda item was to review and evaluate our structure to make UULMNJ more efficient and effective and allow for the support and expansion of our organization. Having well-functioning committees, with enough volunteers to carry out their specific duties, is a critical part of making this happen. Committees for which we are looking for volunteers include *communications, congregational relations, development, and finance*. Please contact Rev. Craig if you would like to consider helping us out with these important functions.

UUs IN THE NEWS

Rev. Craig participated in two press conferences in Trenton to keep an active focus on the gun violence prevention legislation waiting to be signed by the governor. Her picture was on the front of the *Trenton Times* on August 9, leading a moment of silence for the Silent March vigil. http://photos.nj.com/the-times/2013/08/silent_march_in_trenton_agains_1.html or see it on our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/uulmnj.

Rev. Bill Neely (Princeton) had a letter to the editor published in the *Trenton Times* on August 28, calling for marriage equality in New Jersey. http://www.nj.com/times-opinion/index.ssf/2013/08/opinion_gov_christies_veto_of.html

Please let us know if you see UUs featured in the news.

CONNECT WITH UULMNJ ON FACEBOOK

UULMNJ has a Facebook page! Like us at <https://www.facebook.com/uulmnj>. Check out the link to the new Poverty Benchmark report on New Jersey.

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.

[*Note: In earlier versions of our e-bulletin, an incorrect link was posted to an earlier page. If you tried that and noticed that it wasn't current, please try again!*]

ISSUES UPDATE – GET INVOLVED

Economic Justice

- Get Out the Vote Effort – All are encouraged to join League of Women Voters or other organizations to help register voters and get them to the polls for the elections in October and November. This is an important opportunity to express our position on the minimum wage via the referendum in November. See our “Get Out the Vote Flyer” at www.uulmnj.org/12-news-events/uulmnj-news-and-events/176-get-out-and-vote.html.
- The newest report on the economic well-being (and not-so well-being) of our fellow New Jerseyans is issued every year by our friends at Legal Services. <http://www.lsnj.org/PDFs/budget/Benchmarks2013.pdf>

Immigration Reform

- As Congress considers immigration legislation, this is the time to make your voice heard. Write or email your member of Congress, urging comprehensive immigration reform. More information, along with a sample letter can be found at <http://www.uulmnjppn.org/index.php/issues/current-priority-issues/immigration-policy-reform/115-immigration-reform-contact-your-congressional-reps>. Please send it to your representative, adding your own thoughts on this issue if you wish to do so.

Health Care

- A new subcommittee of the Health Care Task Force will focus on **Reproductive Justice**. Please contact Rev. Kathleen Green (usr.minister@verizon.net) to become involved in this issue.

Marriage Equality

- UULMNJ is initiating a major campaign in conjunction New Jersey United for Marriage (www.njum.org), a coalition of local, state and national organizations working to win the freedom to marry for all New Jersey families. We are establishing a position of a Faith Organizer for Marriage Equality and will work with UUs and other faiths to build cooperative efforts to support an override of the Governor's veto of the marriage equality legislation. Contact Marty Rothfelder today to become more actively involved (mcrothfelder@verizon.net).

Get involved and join a task force:

- **Economic Justice:** Lorraine Wearley, lorrainewearley@gmail.com
- **Environment:** Rohn Hein, rohn@netzero.net
- **Health Care:** Carolyn Baldacchini, cal6balda@yahoo.com, and **Reproductive Justice:** Rev. Kathleen Green, usr.minister@verizon.net
- **Immigration:** Ted Fetter, fetter4@verizon.net

- **Marriage Equality Task Force:** Marty Rothfelder, mcrothfelder@verizon.net
- **Gun Violence Prevention:** Diane Finn finnflynn@verizon.net or Lew Maltby lmaltby@workrights.org
- See www.uulmnj.org for more task force/issue information.

CONGREGATIONAL NEWS

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!

Skylands UU Fellowship erected a Peace Pole at the entrance to the facility on July 14. "May Peace Prevail on Earth" is written in English, Spanish, Delaware Lenni Lenape, and paw prints. The pole was dedicated to Linda Bonk and Lee Bonk who have given many years of friendship, service, and commitment to the mission of the congregation.

The next film in the **UU Congregation of Monmouth County's** Social Action Film Series, *Living Downstream*, will be shown on Sunday, September 29 at 5:00pm. This film follows scientist, professor, author, and cancer survivor Sandra Steingraber as she travels across North America, working to break the silence about cancer, its environmental links - and the urgent human rights issue therein.

The **Morristown Unitarian Fellowship's** Green Earth Ministry is sponsoring an Earth Dinner: An Organic/Local Pot Luck, on September 28. The potluck will celebrate the abundance of the local harvest and share food stories, ideas and questions. They request that the main ingredient of dishes should be organic and/or local to give attendees a chance to eat, drink and be sustainable.

The **First Unitarian Society of Plainfield's** "First Sunday Explorers" on October 6 will focus on detention centers and dignity for Immigrants. IRATE & First Friends oppose detention of asylum seekers and immigrant detainees who pose no threat to society. They also work for improved conditions that respect the human dignity of all detainees. They will show a short film and speak about their work, including how to improve the conditions of detainees at local detention centers and ways to participate in a Columbus Day detention center vigil/protest.

A new group, working as part of the **UU Congregation of Princeton's** Social Justice Ministry, will be collaborating with The Campaign to End the New Jim Crow, NJ, Princeton Chapter, and The Trenton New Jim Crow Network. UUCP is one of six congregations in Princeton that, in concert with community partners, will engage in actions to end mass incarceration through education, advocacy, and systemic changes to criminal justice at both the state and national levels. They will be co-sponsoring an upcoming event, "A Conversation with New Jersey Senatorial and Gubernatorial Candidates - Mass Incarceration, Political, Social and Economic Implications for All of Us" later this fall.

The **Unitarian Society of Ridgewood** is holding a Public "Listen-In", *Immigration Reform: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*, on September 27 at 7:30pm. Congressmen Scott Garrett, Rodney Frelinghuysen, and William Pascrell have been invited.

On November 2 and 3, SisterSong (www.sistersong.net), a women of color cooperative and the group that coined the term reproductive justice, will be leading a training session at the **Unitarian Society of Ridgewood**. Their goal is to welcome local groups and congregations interested in the RJ movement with the hope that they will spread their knowledge to the public and support RJ programs in their regions.

The **Unitarian Church in Summit**'s Social Action Committee researched a number of non-profit organizations promoting "clean cookstove" environmental programs. "The Charcoal Project" was selected to receive four offertory plates. Their mission is to promote the use of energy efficient clean cookstoves in developing countries such as Uganda, to promote clean air, the physical safety of fuel gatherers, promote local economic improvements and help foster a better quality of life. \$7,778 was collected for the purchase and construction of high-capacity clean-burning stoves for the Rubaare Educational Foundation's school campus in Uganda.

The **UU Ocean County Congregation** reported that their Wrangle Brook Community Garden is becoming a reality; Berkeley Township is renting them almost five acres for \$1 per year and assisting them with a grant for fencing and other necessary materials. It is anticipated that this will be a multigenerational, multi-organizational endeavor and over time not only will it provide vegetables and flowers but also offer areas for recreation and relaxation for all.

The **UU Church at Washington Crossing**'s Annual Samstone Lecture will feature acclaimed author and speaker Ellen Frankel. On November 1, with readings from her novel *Syd Arthur*, stories from her spiritual journey, and anecdotes from her pilgrimages and treks in the Himalayas, Ellen will discuss the surprises, challenges, and joys that following a spiritual path can offer. On November 2, the Samstone Lecture, "Women and Spirituality in the Material World" will explore how we can cultivate our spiritual selves and keep moving forward on our spiritual journeys in a world based on material values. Register at www.uucwc.org.

OUR DENOMINATION

The UU Metro NY District Board recently voted to endorse this statement authored by a group of District leaders.

COMTEMPORARY RACIAL INEQUALITY: A STATEMENT OF FAITH - SUMMER 2013

The promise of Unitarian Universalism mirrors the promise of the United States of America: a democratic society based in the true equality of all people. Neither our faith nor our nation, however, can achieve that promise until we face and change systems that value some people more than others, some lives more than others, and some votes more than others. Events of the past month have made it clear just how far we have to go in this regard with respect to race.... Read the full statement at http://uumetrony.org/Statement_after_Zimmerman_Trial.pdf.

From the UUA

12 WAYS TO SUPPORT YOUR JUSTICE MINISTRY IN THIS NEW CHURCH YEAR

If your congregation or cluster's social justice ministry is focused on partnerships for economic, environmental, racial, reproductive justice and/or LGBTQ equality we have resources for you.

Our UUA Multicultural Ministries and Witness Team, including our Standing on the Side of Love Team, are looking forward to partnering with you in the coming year.
http://org.salsalabs.com/o/1272/t/0/blastContent.jsp?email_blast_KEY=1280593.

***BEHIND THE KITCHEN DOOR* SELECTED AS UUA COMMON READ**

The 2013-2014 UUA Common Read selection is *Behind the Kitchen Door* by Saru Jayaraman. The book reveals how restaurant workers live on some of the lowest wages in America and how poor working conditions-discriminatory labor practices, exploitation, and unsanitary kitchens-affect the meals that arrive at our restaurant tables. As part of the UUA's commitment to ethical eating and economic justice, *Behind the Kitchen Door* invites UU individuals, groups, and congregations to advocate for just working conditions for the 10 million restaurant workers who bring passion, tenacity, and insight into the American dining experience. See <http://www.uua.org/re/multigenerational/read/index.shtml> for more information.

THREE UU ACTIONS OF IMMEDIATE WITNESS

At UUA General Assembly 2013, the delegates committed us to the following three actions:

- 1) Fossil Fuel Divestment, a conversation on shareholder advocacy and divestment;
- 2) Oppose Institutional Racism, i.e. end "The New Jim Crow," a practice by which people of color are discriminately incarcerated;
- 3) Amend the Constitution; Corporations are Not Persons, a goal which congregations should endorse.

<http://blogs.uuworld.org/ga/tag/action-of-immediate-witness/>

(Thanks to Carol Allen, Princeton, for the update.)

From the UU Service Committee:

UUSC is committed to providing you with opportunities to engage your congregation and its members in advancing justice. We've planned a whole year of congregational activities, and we need to know how you want to get involved. A few examples of what we would love your help with:

- Organize a book group or activist training based on *Behind the Kitchen Door*, this year's UUA Common Read. Help us support workers' rights across the country and build momentum toward passage of the Fair Minimum Wage Act.
- Fundraise for UUSC and your congregation! Sign up to sell UUSC holiday cards and products this year — great for holiday fairs or year-round fundraising.
- Serve your congregation as a UUSC liaison. Help with congregational programs like Guest at Your Table and Justice Sunday to raise awareness and support for human rights.

How do you want to be involved? Fill out the fall survey:

<http://actnow.uusc.org/site/PageNavigator/Fall2013Survey.html>

See the Social Action Calendar for more ideas:

http://www.uusc.org/files/UUSC_Action_Calendar_4_page.pdf

From the UU-UNO Office: RESOURCES FOR UN SUNDAY – OCTOBER 20

United Nations Day is October 24th. Honor this day at your congregations on October 20th with a UN Sunday service.

The UU-UNO writes: We are happy to share with you our 2013 UN Sunday Resource Packet, a tool to help you honor UN Day in your congregation by holding a service or an event to reaffirm the connection between the UU principles and the work of the United Nations. We have chosen October 20th as this year's UN Sunday, but we encourage you to choose any date in October that works for your congregation (please contact us for suggestions on additional date possibilities). This year's packet includes resources from our 2013 intergenerational spring seminar on fighting discrimination based sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI), including resources for Religious Educators to help introduce the children to LGBTQ Human Rights Issues. Resource Packet - <http://org.salsalabs.com/o/1272/images/2013%20UN%20Sunday%20packet.pdf>
More info on UN Sunday: <http://www.uua.org/international/events/198984.shtml>

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

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.

The ideal of social action, the desire to make a difference in our community and our world, is something common to all UU congregations. The UULMNJ gives New Jersey Congregations and their members the ability to get their voices heard in Trenton with far greater effect than if they were acting individually. The UULMNJ plays a crucial role in New Jersey's governmental processes by providing a liberal religious voice that tells officials that when they are acting in ways that are consistent with UU principles, they are not only doing the right thing, they are doing the moral thing. - *Nick Lewis, UULMNJ Board of Trustees*

Please forward this e-bulletin to others in your congregation who might be interested.
If you would like to be added to our mailing list, please drop us an email at director@uulmnj.org.