

**AGENDA FOR CHANGE: AN ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER  
ST. LAWRENCE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST DISTRICT  
MAY 2008**

Dick Gilbert - SLUUD Social Justice Coordinator ([rsgilbert@uuma.org](mailto:rsgilbert@uuma.org))  
(Deadline for May issue is May 31)

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**SOCIAL JUSTICE EVENTS CALENDAR**

**May 18-19:** Interfaith Impact of NYS Advocacy Day in Albany (see below)  
**May 17:** Fr. Drum Spring Festival – Call 585-271-2620 or contact [jaria9295@aol.com](mailto:jaria9295@aol.com)  
**May 20:** Farmworker Advocacy Day (see below)  
**May 31:** Metro-NY District Anti-Racism Conclave (for information contact Rev. Hope Johnson ([YoursHOPE@aol.com](mailto:YoursHOPE@aol.com)) and Carl Heath ([CEHeath@verizon.net](mailto:CEHeath@verizon.net)) or visit the ARDC webpage at [www.antiracism.net](http://www.antiracism.net).  
**June 25-29:** UUA General Assembly (for information go to [www.UUA.org](http://www.UUA.org).  
**October 4:** St. Lawrence District Social Justice Council Social Action Conference in Schenectady (see flyer below)

**SOCIAL JUSTICE COUNCIL SERVICES**

If you would like to be on the E-mail list for this Newsletter or if you change your address or if you have newsletter items, please contact Dick Gilbert at [Rsgilbert@uuma.org](mailto:Rsgilbert@uuma.org). In addition to an annual social justice conference and the *Agenda for Change* newsletter, the Social Justice Council offers the services of Dick Gilbert to preach and/or lead social justice workshops. Contact [Rsgilbert@uuma.org](mailto:Rsgilbert@uuma.org) or 585-244-7403.

# Interfaith Legislative Advocacy Day

## Legislative Briefing and Dinner, Sunday, May 18, 2008

3:00 p.m. –6:00 p.m., dinner following

First Lutheran Church, 646 State Street, Albany, NY

**Speakers:** Carol Blowers, Vice President of Government Affairs, Family Planning Advocates of New York State; Andrew Coates, MD, Secretary of the Capital District chapter of Physicians for a National Health Program; Ross Levi, Esq., Director of Public Policy and Education for Empire State Pride Agenda; and Demi McGuire, Director of the NYS Episcopal Public Policy Network, who will provide advocacy training.

## Monday, May 19, 2008 - 9:30 am – 3:30 pm

Room 711A, Legislative Office Building,

Empire State Plaza, Albany NY

Registration begins at 9:30 a.m. A light breakfast will be provided. The program starts at 10:00 a.m. with a briefing on the issues and an introduction to advocacy. Assemblyman Jack McEneny will join us to discuss religiously informed advocacy. Each participant will be part of a team led by an experienced advocate, meeting throughout the day with state legislators and other key policy makers. (Appointments will be made in advance by IINYS and RJV.) Lunch is included in the registration fee. Room 711A will be our home base for the day, a place to rest between visits, network, and share information.

### Join us as we advocate for:

- **Reproductive choice**
- **Marriage equality for same gender couples**
- **Universal health care**

Position papers, tips on lobbying, and information on parking will be available on the Interfaith IMPACT of NYS website and will be mailed to those who register by May 12th.

Please visit [www.interfaithimpactnys.org](http://www.interfaithimpactnys.org) for more information.

Or e-mail Robb Smith at [robbsmith@nycap.rr.com](mailto:robbsmith@nycap.rr.com)

***Interfaith IMPACT of NYS: Progressive and Liberal Religious Faiths  
Advocating for Compassion, Reason and Justice in NYS Public Policies***

# InterfaithIMPACT and Reform Jewish Voice of NYS

## Legislative Briefing & Dinner, Sunday, May 18, 2008

### Interfaith Advocacy Day, Monday, May 19, 2008

#### Registration form

Title \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Congregation/Organization \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

State Assembly Member \_\_\_\_\_ State Senator \_\_\_\_\_

#### Costs:

Sunday: \$20\* – includes dinner at First Lutheran Church, 646 State St., Albany.

Monday: \$30\* – includes breakfast, lunch, and all materials for Advocacy Day.

**TOTAL ENCLOSED**

\* Reduced rates available for students. Call Robb Smith at 518-441-3231 for information or see [www.interfaithimpactnys.org](http://www.interfaithimpactnys.org).

I would like home hospitality for Sunday night (limited availability). Number of persons \_\_\_\_\_.

I am interested in carpooling.  I could drive.  I would like to be a passenger.

I would like more information about:  IINYS;  RJV-NYS

**Make check out to Interfaith Impact of NYS. Mail registration by May 12<sup>th</sup> to:**

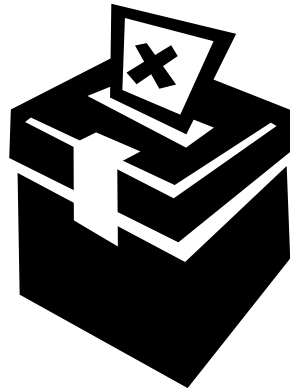
Interfaith IMPACT of NYS  
646 State Street  
Albany, NY 12203

*Interfaith IMPACT of NYS: Progressive and Liberal Religious Faiths Advocating for  
Compassion, Reason and Justice in NYS Public Policies*



**The St. Lawrence Unitarian Universalist District  
Social Justice Council Presents**

## **POLITICS AND LIBERAL RELIGIOUS VALUES CAMPAIGN 2008**



**October 4, 2008—9:30am to 4pm**  
First Unitarian Society of Schenectady

**Theme Speaker – BLAIR HORNER**  
Legislative Director  
New York Public Interest Group

This third annual conference will feature Blair Horner, Legislative Director of the New York Public Interest Research Group. He has held this position for 21 years, interrupted only by a stint in Attorney General Andrew Cuomo's office to create Project Sunlight, an interactive website that allows New Yorkers to learn more about state politics. He has been a driving force behind NYPIRG's successful campaigns to protect consumers, preserve the environment, reduce tobacco use, reform and make government more accountable, improve healthcare quality and provide the public with information on how state government works.

In addition to the theme talk there will be a reactor panel, a question and answer period and topical workshops. This will be an opportunity for social justice people to consider the implications of their faith in a critical election year. Further information and registration to follow. See our website at [www.sld.uua.org](http://www.sld.uua.org).

## UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SERVICE COMMITTEE CORNER 2007 HONOR CONGREGATIONS

The UUSC's work for social justice and human rights in the United States and around the world is only possible with the generosity of individuals and congregations. The UUSC has recognized a number of congregations in the St. Lawrence District as 2007 Honor Congregations with three types of awards.

The **Beacon of Justice Banner Society Award** honors 1 congregation in which 75-99 percent of their membership are UUSC members: the UU Church of Athens and Sheshequin.

The **Creating Justice Banner Society Award** honors 9 congregations in which 25-49 percent of their membership are UUSC members: the First UU Society of Albany, the UU Fellowship of Big Flats, the First Universalist Church of Central Square, the UU Church of East Aurora, the UU Society of Northern Chautauqua in Fredonia, the UU Congregation of Glens Falls, the UU Church of Hamburg, May Memorial UU Society in Syracuse, and the UU Church of Amherst in Williamsville.

The **James Luther Adams Award** honors 3 congregations for their generous line-item contribution of a gift from their annual budget of at least \$1 per church member: the UU Society of Oneonta, the First Unitarian Church of Rochester, and All Souls UU Church in Watertown.

The UUSC thanks these UU congregations and members for their exceptional levels of support for the UUSC. Their generosity enables the UUSC to continue its work advancing human rights and social justice, from Darfur to New Orleans.

Jack Maniloff, SLUUD UUSC Regional Coordinator <jkmf@mail.rochester.edu>

### **Freedom Summer 2008: A Civil Rights Journey, July 12-19, 2008**

The UUSC is pleased to announce its fifth annual Civil Rights Journey through several southern cities, which offers participants the chance to learn firsthand about the struggles of the 1950s and 1960s. For more information or to request an application, please contact JustWorks staff by calling 800-388-3920 (Shayla Reid, ext. 227, Nguyen Weeks, ext. 201, and Kim McDonald, ext. 217) or e-mail us at [justworks@uusc.org](mailto:justworks@uusc.org). Visit our website ([www.uusc.org](http://www.uusc.org)) often for updates, camp information, a review of other JustWorks camps, and a slide show of the 2007 Freedom Summer Camp.

### **UUA-UUSC CYCLONE NARGIS RELIEF FUND**

Those wishing to contribute to a fund jointly administered by UUA and UUSC for the people of Myanmar may do so by sending a check to

UUSC-UUA Cyclone Nargis Relief Fund  
P.O. Box 845259  
Boston, MA 02284-5259

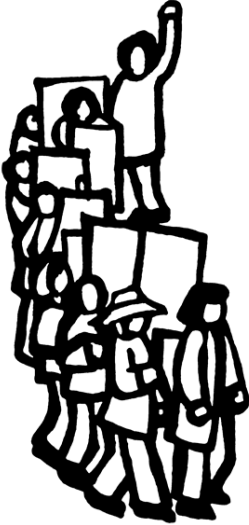
Online contributions can be made by going to [www.uusc.org](http://www.uusc.org).

## NEW YORK STATE ISSUES

### Farmworker Advocacy Day

New York excludes many of our brothers and sisters from basic human rights. Farmworkers are excluded from such rights and protections as:

\*\*A



Join  
and

For  
call

Day of Rest

\*\*Overtime Pay

\*\*Protection when bargaining collectively

\*\*Disability Insurance

\*\*Unemployment Insurance

\*\*Child Labor Protections

\*\*Occupational Safety and Health Standards

AFL-CIO President John Sweeney in ALBANY MAY 20<sup>th</sup> 11am to 3pm. The day will include an opening program orientation, visits with key elected officials, lunch, and a march and rally uniting farmworkers, domestic workers, and allies for justice and respect for all workers. Get on the bus!

more information and to register for a seat on the bus, Ami Kadar at CITA, 585-615-9860

**ACTION ALERT:** This forwarded message is urgent. Please take a moment to get in touch with your State Senator and let them know that you do not want them to vote to reinstate the **death penalty** in New York State. And - if you have a bit more time, please also let Senators Dale Volker and Martin Goldin (sponsors of the bills) know you do not support this legislation. Thanks.

Demi McGuire, NYS Episcopal Public Policy Network, [nyseppn@aol.com](mailto:nyseppn@aol.com), 518 339-5040

### REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND PRIVACY PROTECTION ACT

Former Governor Spitzer introduced this bill S.6045a(Stewart-Cousins) which would provide Roe v. Wade type protections for women seeking abortions in New York State. For further information contact

Family Planning Advocates

17 Elk Street

Albany, NY 12207

Phone: 518-436-8408 – FAX 518-436-0004 – [www.fpaofnys.org](http://www.fpaofnys.org)

## **EDITORIAL: JEREMIAH AND ME - Richard. Gilbert**

Jeremiah of Anathoth was a 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> century BCE Hebrew prophet who spoke truth to the powers of his age. He upset his villagers and family with dire warnings including an indictment of governmental policy. For his diatribes against wealth and on behalf of the poor – the root of the term “jeremiads” - he was in constant trouble and even jailed for a time. This controversial figure was known for his concept that the covenant with God was not something written, but a matter of the heart.

Without question Jeremiah Wright was named for this towering historic figure, and he certainly conducted his ministry in a way reminiscent of the controversial Jeremiah. The U-Tube sermon and subsequent quotations of sermon snippets finally compelled Barack Obama to repudiate the message, and ultimately the messenger.

I think Jeremiah Wright got a bad rap. His long ministry at Trinity United Church of Christ was marked by constant service to the community. A white seminar president said when she needed a spiritual lift, she went to Trinity. When Martin Luther King, Jr., gave his 1967 sermon against the War in Vietnam he was roundly criticized. “The church must be reminded that it is not the master or the servant of the state, but rather the conscience of the state. It must be the guide and critic of the state, and never its tool. If the church does not recapture its prophetic zeal, it will become an irrelevant social club without moral or spiritual authority.”

A minister who has not been critiqued by his/her congregation for trying to speak truth to power is not true to the calling. I hesitate to think of the parishioners who have left church after one of my hopefully prophetic sermons somewhat upset. I tried to be gentle and inclusive, but truth-telling (as least my version of it) is not always comforting. I remember something about “comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable.” To be sure, Rev. Wright used incendiary language I would probably not utilize, but are not the injustices to which he points worthy of some righteous anger? Clearly, and unfortunately (in the eyes of many) he hurt Obama’s campaign – I think Wright’s most recent words were not politically astute. In 2008 mixing politics and religion is a contact sport. One hopes we will learn something about both from this campaign.

### **Quote of the month**

“We will not have questions answered by irrelevant agencies. Our husbands will not come to us, reeking with carnage, for caresses and applause. Our sons shall not be taken from us to unlearning all that we have been able to teach them of charity, mercy and patience. We, the women of one country, will be too tender of those of another country to allow our sons to be trained to injure theirs.”

Julia Ward Howe, Unitarian activist, in the Mothers Day Peace Proclamation  
For more information go to [www.juliasvoice.org](http://www.juliasvoice.org)

JOIN INTERFAITH IMPACT NOW!

Individual and Congregational Memberships Welcome

Interfaith Impact of New York State is a UUA-UUSC partner organization. The St. Lawrence District is an official member and UUs are active on the Board. Robb Smith of our Albany congregation is Executive Director - robb@interfaithimpactnys.org. We encourage individual Unitarian Universalists in New York State to join. We also encourage you to invite your congregation or social action group join as an organizational member. For your convenience a membership form is below. Phone: (518) 463-5652 - E-mail: [interfaithimpactnys@verizon.net](mailto:interfaithimpactnys@verizon.net) Background information on state issues at [www.interfaithimpactnys.org](http://www.interfaithimpactnys.org)

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please print or type:

Name and Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ FAX: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Congregation: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliation:  Protestant  Unitarian Universalist  Reform Synagogue  Other

Membership Dues Enclosed: Individual  \$10  \$20  \$30  \$40  Other \$\_\_\_\_\_

Congregation/organizations  \$50  \$200  \$300  Other (amount) \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to: Interfaith IMPACT of New York State

and mail to: IINYS, 646 State Street, Albany, NY 12203

Your Assembly Member \_\_\_\_\_ Your State Senator \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your support