



All are welcome and celebrated here.

THOUGHT FOR MEDITATION

Time is elusive. A moment can last a lifetime,
a lifetime passes in an instant. Each moment is fleeting,
but time itself lasts forever...

So, dear audience, what marks your time?
Your slice of eternity?

Spoken by the Griot in Happily After Ever

September 24, 2023

*Please rise in body or spirit.
You are invited to join in the liturgy **in bold type**.

*Childcare is available on the first floor of this building for children ages 0-4.
Ushers can help direct you there. Children K-5th grade are invited to attend Learning
Centers after the Message for All Ages time in the service.*

*Please wear a name tag so we can greet one another by name
(There are blank name tags in the back of the sanctuary).*

PRELUDE – Gratitude from *Happily After Ever*

Words: Bob Chase

*Who am I now? I am not the same one
who left on this dangerous journey.
And I could not see how the road out
ahead would lead to this place for me.*

*'Twas all arranged, I'd consent to be wed
though my heart would be sad forever.
Then you appeared, and I soon
understood what your love would mean
to me.*

Kristine Hart & Charl Louw

Music: Cliff Aerie

*I have found you; I can't lose you.
Though I know now in this world,
I must reshape every premise
I had come to see as true.*

*My heart is alive in a way I've not known,
the answer to my questions.
I finally can see a true love meant for
me, revealed as the one in you.
I finally can see a love, meant for me; a
love filled with gratitude.*

WELCOME

Rev. Katrina Forman

REFLECTIVE READING – LIVING PSALM 105 by Maren Tirabassi

Give thanks to God,
who teaches us what wondrous works
truly are –

a day when no one stumbles.
and every one of us remembers to
sing,

clouds, even the ones we do not want,
that cover us, shelter us,
and guide us to understand
that life is more than sunlight,

fire in the belly and the heart
that gives light when we wake
troubled from sleep,
and warmth when we travel together.

Give thanks to God,

who gives quails and manna,
every day, every day, every day,
even when we would like
to change the menu ...

for then we learn what it is
to travel in a food desert,

and who and breaks open the rock
(and, even though we would prefer
the psalm with the honey)
gives us water, rolling down justice,
and compassion
like an everlasting stream.

Give thanks to God,
who brings us out from the past in
joy,
and whose chosen are those who sing.

***OPENING HYMN #436 – God of Grace & God of Glory (vs. 1, 3, 4)** CWM RHONDDA

Words: Harry Emerson Fosdick

Music: John Hughes

1 God of grace and God of glo - ry, on your peo - ple
 2 From the e - vils that sur - round us and as - sail the
 3 Cure your chil - dren's war - ring mad - ness; bend our pride to
 4 Set our feet on loft - y plac - es; gird our lives that
 5 Save us from weak res - ig - na - tion to the e - vils

pour your power; crown your an - cient church - 's sto - ry;
 Sav - ior's ways, from the fears that long have bound us—
 your con - trol. Shame our reck - less, self - ish glad - ness,
 they may be ar - mored with all Christ - like grac - es,
 we de - plore; let the search for your sal - va - tion

bring its bud to glo-rious flower. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,
 free our hearts for faith and praise. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,
 rich in things and poor in soul. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,
 in the fight to set us free. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,
 be our glo - ry ev - er - more. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,

for the fac - ing of this hour, for the fac - ing of this hour.
 for the liv - ing of these days, for the liv - ing of these days.
 make our bro - ken spir - its whole, make our bro - ken spir - its whole.
 in the quest for lib - er - ty, in the quest for lib - er - ty.
 serv - ing you whom we a - dore, serv - ing you whom we a - dore.

PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION (unison)

Rev. Ron Verblauw

God of abundance, forgive us for embracing a worldview that capitalizes on scarcity. Help us to know that you have given us enough for our journey. You have created us wonderfully and uniquely. Forgive us for comparing ourselves with our neighbor when we are called to love them. Help us to embrace how you have made us as individuals who may bring our singular gifts to our common life.

MOMENT FOR SILENT REFLECTION

ASSURANCE OF GRACE

Beloved, you are enough. God loves you as you are for who you are. We, collectively, have enough and may share in a common life where all may flourish and live in harmony as our Creator intended and designed. You are forgiven and free to embrace the life that is uniquely yours.

PASSING THE PEACE

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Scott Randel

A Reading from the Apocrypha: Tobit 4:3-8

So Tobit called Tobias and said to him, "Son, when I die, give me a proper burial. And after I'm gone, show respect to your mother. Take care of her for the rest of her life, and when she dies, bury her beside me. Remember, she risked her life to bring you into this world, so try to make her happy and never do anything that would worry her.

"Every day of your life, keep the Lord our God in mind. Never sin deliberately or disobey any of God's commands. Always do what is right and never get involved in anything evil. Be honest, and you will succeed in whatever you do.

"Give generously to anyone who faithfully obeys God. If you are stingy in giving to the poor, God will be stingy in giving to you. Give according to what you have. The more you have, the more you should give. Even if you have only a little, be sure to give something. This is as good as money saved. You will have your reward in a time of trouble. Taking care of the poor is the kind of offering that pleases God in heaven. Do this, and you will be kept safe from the dark world of the dead."

Gospel Lesson: Matthew 5:38-48, 18:21-22

"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; ⁴¹and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

Then [at another time] Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" ²²Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy times seven."

MESSAGE FOR ALL AGES

Rev. Katrina Forman

(Children Depart for Learning Centers)

***HYMN 391: In the Midst of New Dimensions (vs. 1-3)**

NEW DIMENSIONS
Words & Music: Julian Rush

1 In the midst of new di-men-sions, in the face of chang-ing ways,
2 Through the flood of starv-ing peo - ple, war-ring fac-tions and de - spair,
3 As we stand a world di - vid - ed by our own self - seek - ing schemes,
4 We are man and we are wom-an, all per-sua-sions, old and young,
5 Should the threats of dire pre-dic-tions cause us to with - draw in pain,

C C/B F C C F Am7 Dm7 G C

Who will lead the pil-grim peo - ples wan-dering in their sep - arate ways?
Who will lift the ol - ive branch-es? Who will light the flame of care?
Grant that we, your glob - al vil - lage, might en - vi - sion wid - er dreams.
Each a gift in your cre - a - tion, each a love song to be sung.
May your blaz-ing phoe-nix spir - it res - ur - rect the church a - gain.

Refrain
Am Em F C F C G7 C Dsus4 D7 G7sus4 G7 Am

God of rain-bow, fier - y pil - lar, lead-ing where the ea-gles soar, We your

Em F C F C/E F C/E F C/E Dm7 G7 C

peo-ple, ours the jour-ney now and ev - er, now and ev - er, now and ev - er - more.

SERMON

"From Scripture To The Stage"

Rev. Bob Chase

MUSIC FOR REFLECTION – Happily After Ever

Words: Bob Chase

Sanctuary Choir

Music: Cliff Aerie

*IF EVER IS A MOMENT
THAT DEFINES ITSELF IN TIME
IT MUST BE FOLLOWED BY ANOTHER
THAT BUILDS UPON THE RHYME
AND FURTHER EMPHASIZING
THE STORY THAT'S AT PLAY
SO WE ALL CAN LIVE TOGETHER
IN A BETTER, BRIGHTER DAY.
HAPPILY, HOPEFULLY GLEEFULLY WISE
MAGICALLY, MYSTICALLY HANDS TO THE
SKIES
JOYFULLY, PLAYFULLY REACH FOR THE
PRIZE
TENDERLY, LOVINGLY OPEN YOUR EYES*

*THE ROAD BEGINS WITH DIGNITY
FOR EVERYONE YOU MEET
THEN ADD A TOUCH OF HUMOR
TO TASTE THE POTION SWEET
TO MAKE AN EVER-BETTER WORLD
AND SEE IT ALL COME TRUE
IS THE JOURNEY OF A LIFETIME
AND THE ROAD THAT WE MUST CHOOSE.*

*SO HEED NOW WHAT WE SAY,
CHOOSE A BETTER WAY,
ACT NOW! DON'T DELAY
TO BUILD A BETTER DAY.
TO BUILD A BETTER DAY.*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Rev. Katrina Forman

Joys and Concerns

Rev. Cindy Reynolds

Rev. Bob Cassells

Pat Batchelder and Mary Coryell, cousins of Janet Frick

Dawn Ermler-Fischer

The Hellman Family

Joy Mishkin

Lindsay Trembulak

Pastoral Prayer

Lord's Prayer

Our {name for God}, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

OFFERTORY

Invitation

Rev. Ron Verblaauw

Music for Meditation

Charl Louw

*Response of Thanksgiving – Doxology

LASST UNS ERFREUEN

Words: Thomas Ken

Music: arr. Hal H. Hopkins

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below; Praise God for all that love has done; Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One.

*Prayer of Dedication

***CLOSING HYMN #538 – Standing at the Future’s Threshold (vs. 1-4)** *LUX EOI*
Words: Paul Gregory Music: Arthur S. Sullivan



1 Stand-ing at the fu-ture’s thresh-old, grate-ful for God’s guid-ing hand,
2 Midst the teem-ing cit-ies’ mil-lions, wit-ness to God’s bound-less love,
3 O-pen-heart-ed in ex-chang-es with the faith-ful not our own,
4 Build-ing jus-tice as the bul-wark of the peace that God would give,
5 Je-sus Christ, e-ter-nal Sav-ior, Source of life and truth and grace,



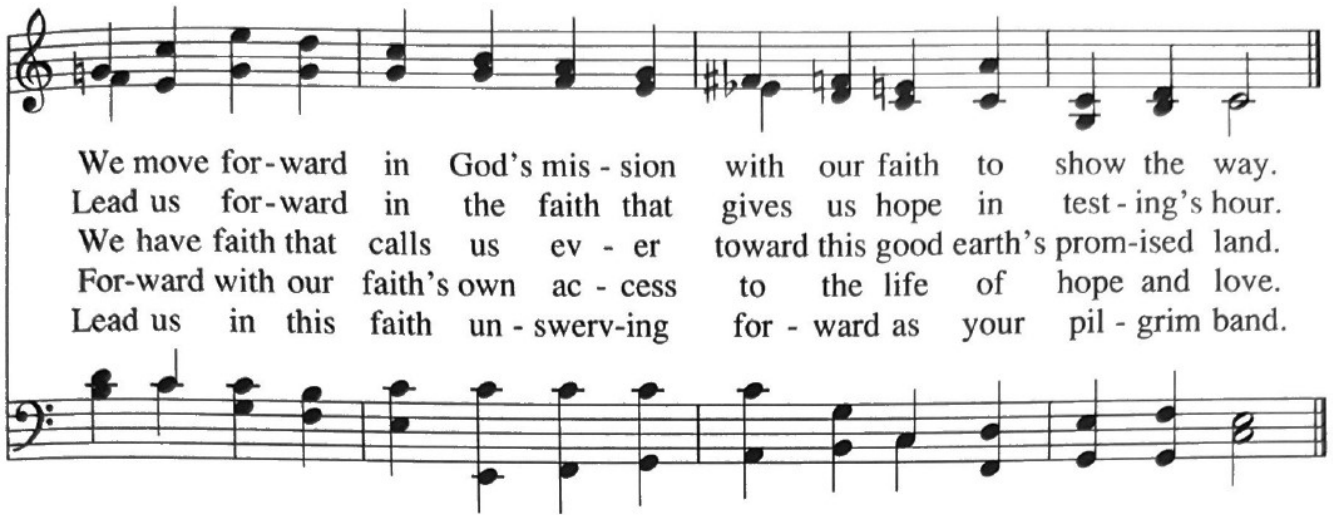
Ask-ing no pro-tect-ed strong-hold, called to be a pil-grim band,
Reach-ing for each sys-tem’s lost ones, seek-ing jus-tice with each move;
Trust-ing God’s way with these strang-ers not to leave the truth un-known,
Mak-ing sac-ri-fice the hall-mark of the life we’re called to live:
We would ask no spe-cial fa-vor, with the low-liest seek our place,



Seek-ing ev-er for new vi-sion of the gos-pel for our day,
Grant us cour-age, strength, and pa-tience to con-tend with vi-cious power,
Join-ing them in shared en-deav-or where we have Christ’s clear com-mand,
Grant us, God, to bear our wit-ness to this peace in Christ, and move
Know the in-as-much of serv-ing, have your cross as our com-mand:



Hymn continues on following page



We move for-ward in God's mis - sion with our faith to show the way.
 Lead us for-ward in the faith that gives us hope in test - ing's hour.
 We have faith that calls us ev - er toward this good earth's prom-ised land.
 For-ward with our faith's own ac - cess to the life of hope and love.
 Lead us in this faith un - swerv-ing for - ward as your pil - grim band.

***ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Rev. Ron Verblaauw

***CALL TO ACTION AND BENEDICT**

Rev. Bob Chase

***CHORAL BENEDICTION #81 – God Be with You**

Words: Jeremiah E. Rankin

Music: William G. Tomer

***God be with till we meet again; By good counsel guide, uphold you,
 With a shepherd's care enfold you: God be with you till we meet again.***

POSTLUDE – Just One More

Words: Cliff Aerie

Kristine Hart, John David Whitener & Charl Louw

Music: Bob Chase

Just one more stream to ford
 One Serpent left to slay
 One desert left to cross until I find my way.
 Look at me.
 See who I really am and what I want to be.
 I am strong.
 Not confined to rules determined in this place.
 I am fierce.
 Anxious to confront the demon face-to-face.
 I am free.
 Not bound by what others choose to see.
 I am me.
 And on this sacred journey I can be even more.

Just one more night to wait
 For one more cunning plan
 To free me from my fate from one more desperate man.
 Even more,
 Standards set in words that I cannot profess.
 So much more,
 As in love my life can be no less.
 I'll escape,
 Before their plans can bind me here and make me stay.
 I will not bow,
 I can be much more than words can say.
 Free me now,
 Or never will I sing my song or dance. My own dance.

Just one more,
 Just one more step on my way
 Before I reach the end of my journey.
 Just one more. Just one more!

***About A Women's Lectionary**

This year, we will be following *A Women's Lectionary*, a new work of translation, lectionary and commentary written by Rev. Dr. Wilda Gafney. It is a resource that centers women's stories, chosen with womanist and feminist commitments in mind.

THANK YOU for joining us for worship this morning. Please sign a welcome card if you are visiting and put it in the offering plate. Please stay for coffee hour in the Assembly Room immediately following the service.

COFFEE HOUR PROVIDED BY Nancy Herron and Amy Hohn Stover

MANY THANKS TO TODAY'S USHERS: Armando Tamargo, Isabelle Genest, Rob Middleton, Eric Kneis, Blythe Chase

JOYS AND CONCERNS

Please share your prayers, joys and concerns within our community so that we may rejoice with you and support you. Reach out to a pastor or the Congregational Care Coordinator, Genie Temmler, deacons@unioncong.org.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

TODAY! STAY AFTER WORSHIP FOR A SECOND HOUR ON END OF LIFE PLANNING 11:30AM IN PERSON AND ON ZOOM

Donald "Donny" Dennison, Esq., a member of First Congregational Church, Montclair and local elder law attorney, will be hosting an informative discussion on elder law immediately following worship today. Elder law is an emerging practice area that focuses on developing holistic plans to address the unique needs of aging and disabled individuals (of all ages), including, but not limited to, plans that will meet the health, financial and social needs of a person and their loved ones. Topics to be discussed include estate planning, long-term care planning and government benefits. Joining Donny will be one of his colleagues, Jacqueline Yarmo, Esq., who also an Elder Law attorney. Please join us for what is sure to be an informative but casual discussion on these important topics!

TODAY AT 5PM AT UNION CONG – MULTI-CHURCH YOUTH GROUP LAUNCH AND ICE CREAM SOCIAL

We excited to be taking part in the formation of a new, multi-church youth group. The ecumenical youth ministry project will create a space for young people to experience a welcoming, supportive Christian community that affirms their full identities, that enables them to develop deep and meaningful relationships with their peers, and that encourages the development of a progressive Christian spirituality. A collaborative effort of First Lutheran Church, Glen Ridge Congregational Church, Grace Presbyterian Church, St. Luke's Episcopal Church, and Union Congregational Church.

GENEROSITY 2023

The new name reflects a season of change at Union Congregational Church. By generously sharing your spiritual and material gifts, you help us make stronger connections with each other, our community, and our mission as a church. Because of you, people across the generations are finding joy, growing in faith, and being inspired to serve and foster change. In the coming weeks, look for stories of how our generosity is transforming lives.

THIS WEEK:

DAYTIME BIBLE STUDY will take place on Tuesday, September 26 at 12:30pm.

"HAPPILY AFTER EVER" AND BOOK OF TOBIT EVENING BIBLE STUDY – TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 7:30PM

For a more in-depth look at the source text for "*Happily After Ever*," Bob Chase is hosting and facilitating a second evening Zoom bible study on the Book of Tobit on Tuesday, September 26th. Please come out and support this great project! The Zoom link will also appear on the front page of our church website and in the calendar listing for the event.

NO GENTLE YOGA this Wednesday. The next Gentle Yoga will take place on Wednesday, October 4 at 10:30pm in the Guild Room.

THE OLDER ADULTS GROUP WILL BE MEETING THIS WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27 ON THE ASSEMBLY ROOM PORCH.

Per Tim's letter, please join us for a **ZOOM CONGREGATIONAL CONVERSATION** about a settled minister on **WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27 at 7pm on Zoom**. You will receive an email the day of the event and the Zoom link will also be hosted on the front page of our website and in the calendar listing for the event.

EVENING BIBLE STUDY continues on Thursdays at 7pm.

MFEE NEEDS DRIVERS FOR THEIR FREE BILINGUAL PROGRAMS IN MONTCLAIR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Volunteer drivers needed! Urgent need for Mondays and Wednesdays at 5:15pm. MFEE runs free bilingual programs for English-Language Learners in Montclair Public Schools. Over 50 children come twice every week for tutoring, academic enrichment, and social support. Most students live within a 5-minute drive of the program - but a 5-minute drive is impossible if your parents are working full-time (or if your family doesn't have a car). We rely on community volunteers to drive students to and from the after school program - would you consider becoming a volunteer driver? We are looking for folks to commit to the same day/time once a week. MFEE takes care of everything - you'll just pick up the children and drop them off. Over time, you'll get to know the kids and forge the kind of relationship that becomes the fabric of our community. If you are interested in learning more, please complete the interest form or contact Dory Hack at dory@mfee.org or at 917-822-0361.

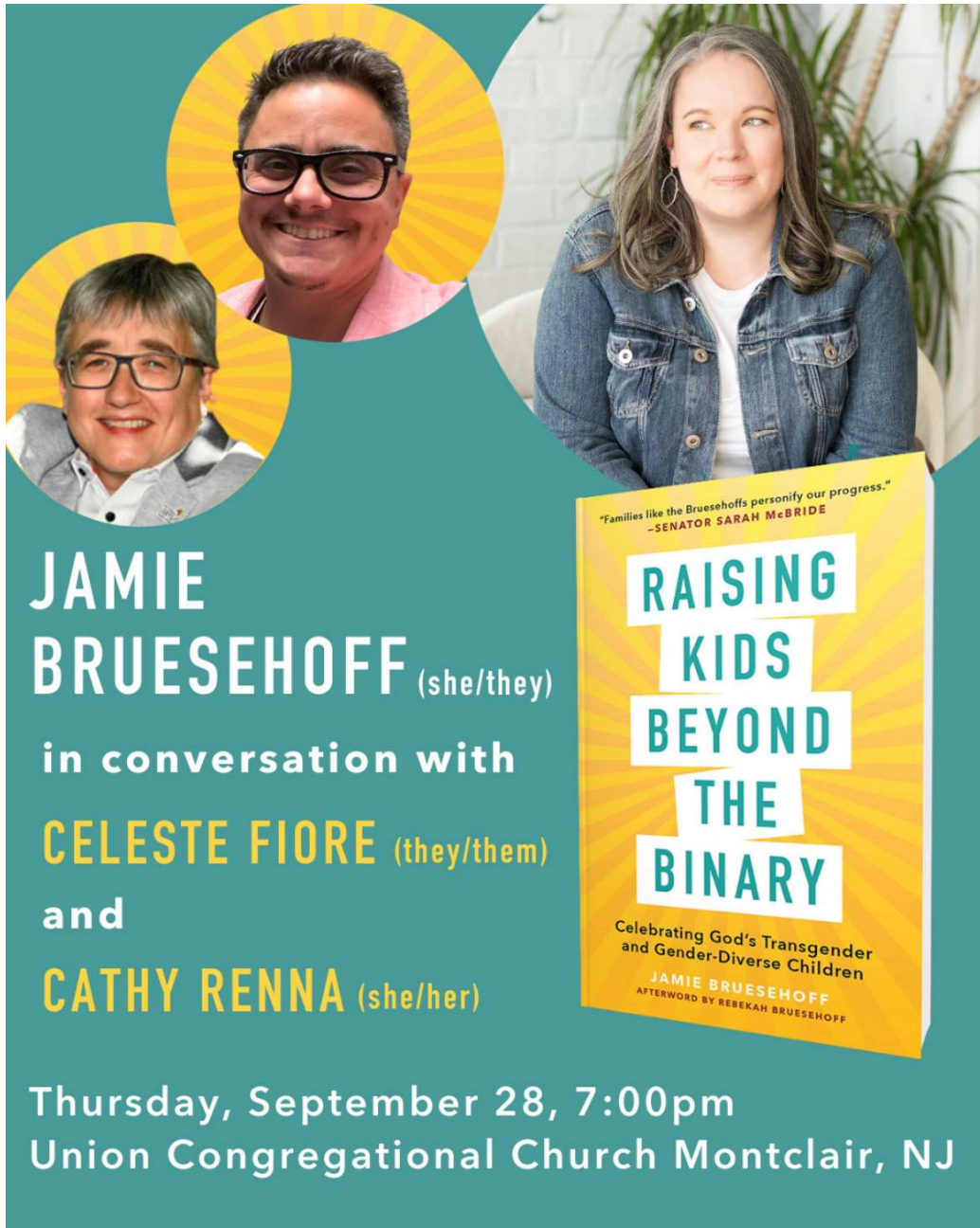
SAVE THE DATE FOR THE NEXT "OUR WHOLE SELVES" MOMS GROUP GATHERING ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1 AT 7:30PM AT JEN HAND'S HOUSE.

Please email Rev. Katrina at kforman@unioncong.org for more information about the Moms Group.

MEN'S RETREAT – OCTOBER 6 THROUGH OCTOBER 8

For more details or if you have questions, please contact Mike Spinella. Call 973-943-0501 or email mspinella2554@gmail.com.

OUR LGBTQ+ OPEN AND AFFIRMING COVENANT IN ACTION
LGBTQ+ BOOK LAUNCH EVENT AND DISCUSSION AT UNION CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH "RAISING KIDS BEYOND THE BINARY" - THURSDAY, SEPT. 28 AT 7PM.
HELP IS NEEDED FOR FELLOWSHIP. Please email Rev. Katrina at kforman@unioncong.org if you are interested in volunteering your time.



JAMIE BRUESEHOFF (she/they)
in conversation with
CELESTE FIORE (they/them)
and
CATHY RENNA (she/her)

Thursday, September 28, 7:00pm
Union Congregational Church Montclair, NJ

"Families like the Bruesehoffs personify our progress."
-SENATOR SARAH McBRIDE

RAISING KIDS BEYOND THE BINARY
Celebrating God's Transgender and Gender-Diverse Children
JAMIE BRUESEHOFF
AFTERWORD BY REBEKAH BRUESEHOFF

In partnership with Watchung Booksellers, the Montclair Library, and Montclair Interfaith Alliance, author Jamie Bruesehoff will be appearing at Union Congregational Church for a spirited discussion with Cathy Renna (LGBTQ Task Force) and Celeste Fiore (Trans Affirming Alliance) to discuss Jamie's new book "*Raising Kids Beyond The Binary*." It will be an evening filled with conversation, connection, and resource-sharing. Books will be available for sale and signing.

This event is free, but registration is required! Please refer to Thursday's email newsletter for the link to register. Jamie Bruesehoff (she/they) is an award-winning advocate, sought-after speaker, and heartfelt writer. She is an openly queer woman married to a Lutheran pastor and mom to three spirited children, including a sixteen-year-old transgender daughter. She is passionate about sharing her family's story, because she believes our stories are bridges to understanding, compassion, and celebration. This program is made available by First Lutheran Church of Montclair, Union Congregational Church, The Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Montclair, Grace Presbyterian Church, St Luke's Episcopal Church, Montclair Public Library, Watchung Booksellers, Trans-Affirming Alliance, and the National LGBTQ Task Force.



**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7, 7:30PM
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2PM
AT UNION CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

Please visit the website: www.happilyaftereverthemusical.com or email happilyafterever2023@gmail.com to order tickets for the performance of your choice.