

The Before And After Of September 11, 2001

BY DR. WILLIAM ROSS FORBES
Two months have passed since the tragic events of September 11. That day will come to define a sense of "before" and "after" in our lives. "Before," life seemed so much simpler than it does now - but it didn't then! "Before," so many of us were consumed with our own lives - self-absorbed described so many of us! "Before," most of us thought we had learned and even mastered what life was all about.

The events of September 11 brought many of us together across lines that had perhaps divided and defined us "before," but now tragedy caused us to seek common ground. Houses of worship reported that there was a significant increase in attendance at worship and prayer services. (This trend has continued for two months now.) Our interfaith religious community came together in unprecedented fashion to pray, support, and care for one another.

In the long struggle ahead, where we hope that the world will become a safer and saner place for all, there will be a constant need for us to come together across religious, racial, cul-

tural, ethnic, and national realities. Dialog is good. Being together with people who hold different views of the nation, world and religion is a wonderful thing where bridges of understanding can be built.

I would like to propose that we do everything in our power to get to know people of other faith traditions. Spend time with people of varying religious, racial and ethnic backgrounds. One of the greatest strengths of this nation is that we are as diverse a population as can be found anywhere. In recent years we have not been as intentional as we could be in breaking out of our own "comfort zones" of our social, religious, and cultural circles.

Here in our community let us each make a commitment to become bridge builders of support and understanding across lines that perhaps divided us in the past. Get to know better your Jewish, Muslim, Catholic, Protestant, Buddhist, African-American, Spanish-speaking neighbors. Our community will be better for these efforts.

Dr. William Ross Forbes is the Senior Pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Westfield.

Islam To Be Forum Topic At Presbyterian Church

WESTFIELD - Dr. J. Paul Rajashekar, Professor of Systematic Theology at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia and an authority on cross-cultural dialogue, will discuss Islam at The Presbyterian Church in Westfield at 9:15 a.m. on Sunday, November 18.

His talk, part of the Adult Education program at the church, will be held in the Assembly Hall of the Parish House, 140 Mountain Avenue. The public is

invited and there is no charge.

He has written books and articles on religious pluralism and has lectured widely on how Christians can witness in a multi-religious world.

Dr. Rajashekar, who received his early education in his native India, holds a Master of Systematic Theology from Concordia Seminary-Seminex in St. Louis, Mo., and a Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Iowa in Iowa City, Iowa.

Church Seeks Nominees For Marc Hardy Award

WESTFIELD - The First Congregational Church of Westfield has announced that it is currently seeking nominations for the Marc Wesley Hardy Human Rights Award.

Candidates must be between the ages of 16 and 22, be participating in a Westfield-based organization and have distinguished themselves in the area of human rights.

The award will be presented to an individual who has shown openness and friendliness to persons of all races, creeds and nationalities; involvement and leadership in organizations and activities committed to improving human relations and unusual personal dignity.

Other criteria are the candidate's willingness to take a risk for what he or she believes is right; unqualified acceptance of others; respect for diversity; personal integrity; caring and the willingness to listen, and the ability to lead by example.

Nominations should be typewritten, no more than two pages in length, and should indicate the names of ap-

plicable organizations in which the candidate is involved, as well as responsibilities and examples or accounts that illustrate such criteria.

Nominations should be mailed to the church, in care of Board of Outreach, 125 Elmer Street, Westfield 07090, or emailed to Sharilyn Brown at sbrown@aslegal.com, no later than Monday, December 3.

Presentation of the award, which will consist of a certificate and a monetary award, will be made in early 2002. In addition, the winner's name will be placed on a plaque in the foyer of the church. All nominees will be publicly acknowledged in appropriate ways.

Marc Hardy was an outstanding scholar at Westfield High School who was killed in a car accident in 1990, one month before his high school graduation. He had planned to attend Morehouse College in Atlanta, Ga., on a full, five-year scholarship.

For additional information, please call the First Congregational Church at (908) 233-2494.



DECK THE HALLS...Crafters prepare for the upcoming Yuletide Festival to be held this Saturday, November 17, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the All Saints' Episcopal Church in Scotch Plains. The event will feature antiques, holiday crafts and decorations, as well as refreshments for shoppers. For more information, please call (908) 322-8047.

Yiddish Festival Will Be Held at Temple Emanu-El

WESTFIELD - Temple Emanu-El in Westfield will hold a Yiddish Festival Wednesday evenings, November 28 and December 5, from 7:30 to 9 p.m.

On Wednesday, November 28, "American Images of the 'Old World'," an audio visual presentation by Dr. Jeffrey Shandler, will explore the diverse Yiddish phenomena of songs, newspapers, cartoons, greeting cards, and advertisements, and their relevancy to American Jewish life today. Dr. Shandler is a professor in the Department of Judaic Studies at Rutgers University and is also a curator at the YIVO Institute and the Jewish Museum in New York City.

On December 5, "Yiddish Cinema: A Response to Hollywood," will be the theme of an audiovisual presentation by Dr. Eric Goldman. Through film clips, the many portraits of the Jew in Yiddish cinema will be explored. Dr. Goldman is a well-known expert on Yiddish, Israeli, and Jewish film. He is also a member of the Educational Advisory Committee of the United States Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC.

This program is free of charge. Temple Emanu-El is located at 756 East Broad Street in Westfield. For additional information, call Carolyn Shane at (908) 232-6770.

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Temple Sisterhood In Cranford Plans 'Paid Up' Meeting

CRANFORD - The Sisterhood of Temple Beth El Mevor Chayim, located on Walnut Avenue in Cranford, will host their annual Paid Up Membership meeting on Tuesday, November 20, at 8 p.m. The evening will feature R.J. Lewis, a unique variety entertainer.

The artist is a versatile performer, who has credentials that include the Atlantic City casinos, the White House and the Broadway Company of the hit musical *Barnum*.

Co-Vice Presidents of Membership, Gail Salomon and Sidney Solomon, are in charge of the program.

Co-Presidents, Greta Polonitza and Mollie Sperling, will conduct a short business meeting. Hospitality Chairpersons, Linda Kendler and Betty Shor, are in charge of refreshments. The Judaica Shop under the Chairmanship of Harriet Scheiner will be open for holiday shopping.

The event is free for paid-up members.

Church and School Team For Mentoring Program

WESTFIELD - Kids Hope USA volunteers were commissioned during a worship service on October 14 at the First United Methodist Church in Westfield, which was followed by a lunch reception.

Principal Charles "Chic" Hansen of McKinley Elementary School in Westfield, along with several teachers, was also on hand to celebrate the partnership between their school and the church, located on East Broad Street.

The alliance between First United Methodist and McKinley School provides mentoring relationships with children at the school. There is a strict adherence to separation of church and state, with the mentors providing support and friendship to

the students.

Initiated by Dr. Virgil Gulker in Michigan, the Kids Hope USA program has been adopted as a faith-based community outreach program by the First United Methodist Church. Kids Hope USA has developed over 150 programs throughout the United States, this one being the first in New Jersey.

Kids Hope USA, in which one child is supported by one mentor, has been recognized by the White House and commended by Secretary of State Colin Powell, according to Diana Kazazis, Director of the program at the First United Methodist Church.

For additional information, please call Ms. Kazazis at the church at (908) 233-4211.

All Saints' Church to Hold Annual Yuletide Festival

SCOTCH PLAINS - All Saints' Episcopal Church, located at 559 Park Avenue in Scotch Plains, will hold its annual Yuletide Festival on Saturday, November 17.

Open to the public from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., the festival will feature local dealers of antiques, holiday crafts and decorations.

The All Saints' Crafters will show their line of handmade crafts and holiday decorations, which take a

full year to produce. A country kitchen will feature lunches and refreshments for shoppers.

"Our festival attracts people from all over the local area, many of whom have been attending for a number of years," said Festival Chairman Joe Britt.

Free parking is available across the street from the church, next to the United States Post Office. For more information, please call (908) 322-8047.

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Interfaith Thanksgiving Service



The Religious Communities of Westfield unite to share our strength and blessing, standing together in hope and prayer.

Join us in worship on Wednesday Evening

November 21st at 7:30 pm

The Church of St. Helen's, 1600 Rahway Avenue, Westfield

(Corner of Lambert's Mill Drive and Rahway)

Reception following the service in the Parish Center. Child care will be provided for children aged 2-6.

Sponsored by the Westfield Ministerium



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