



unitarian universalist
CONGREGATION OF DANBURY

1822-2016

COMMENT

Welcoming all in a spirit of compassion, inquiry and service

JANUARY 2018

NOTICE OF SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The Board of Trustees of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury is calling a special Congregational Meeting on January 7, 2018 at 11:30 a.m. at 24 Clapboard Ridge Road, Danbury for the purpose of voting on the following resolution:

Resolved, that the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury (UU Danbury) offer physical sanctuary at the 24 Clapboard Ridge Road, Danbury property to an immigrant who is facing deportation.

Resolved, that the congregation authorizes the Board of Trustees of UU Danbury to develop the necessary policies to implement the decision to offer physical sanctuary in a manner which is mindful of the needs of the immigrant and the congregation, including but not limited to a policy specifically disavowing any intent to conceal or harbor.

Resolved, that the congregation authorizes the Immigrant Justice Team (IJT) to conduct the initial vetting of any candidate for sanctuary at UU Danbury. The vetting will include a criminal background check; determination of the viability of the individual's legal case; suitability of the individual for long term confinement; evaluation of the individual's medical history; and the availability of family or other resources to provide support. The congregation authorizes the Board of Trustees to make the final decision as to whether to offer sanctuary to any individual candidate.

Resolved, that the congregation authorizes the Board of Trustees to decide to terminate a sanctuary arrangement in the event that the individual's conduct or other issues detrimental to UU Danbury warrant it.

The right to vote at this meeting shall be restricted to those who have been members of this Congregation as of November 8, 2017.

Requests for absentee ballots may be submitted in writing to Brad Greene at BoardPresident@uudanbury.org or to Kristen Papucci at kpapucci@yahoo.com. Completed absentee ballots must be submitted no later than January 6, 2018.

The vote will be by paper ballot of members present at the January 7, 2018 special congregational meeting and will require a super majority of 2/3 of all votes to pass.

Our Mission Statement:

The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury is an open religious community that welcomes a diversity of people, ideas and beliefs. We celebrate together that which is good in life, and offer comfort and care in times of need. With others, we work to create a just society and a sustainable Earth. We stand as a beacon for independent thought, and encourage lifelong spiritual and intellectual exploration. - Adopted by this congregation May 16, 2008

The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury is a UUA designated “Welcoming Congregation.” Our congregation is welcoming to people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender. The Welcoming Congregation program is consistent with our first UU principle in which we covenant to affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person. We welcome all – regardless of age, race, disability, ethnicity, immigration status, sexual orientation, religious background, or political affiliation – factors that can separate people in our larger culture.

UU Danbury Cancellation Policy

During very inclement weather, Sunday Services, Religious Education and any other meetings or events will be cancelled. To learn of a cancellation, please check one of the following:

1. Your email;
2. The outgoing message on the church office phone, 203-798-1994;
3. The UU Danbury website, www.uudanbury.org or Facebook Page, <https://www.facebook.com/UUDanbury>.

Deadline for the February Comment –
Friday, January 19th.

**From Our Community Minister,
Rev. Peggy Block**

New Year’s Resolutions?

Ten Commandments for a Long Life

(found on the wall of the Daisen-in Zen Temple in Japan)

Little meat, lots of vegetables.

Little salt, lots of vinegar.

Little sugar, lots of fruit.

Little food, lots of chewing.

Little trouble, lots of sleep.

Little anger, lots of laughter.

Little talking, lots of doing.

Little need, lots of giving.

Little clothing, lots of bathing.

Little car-riding, lots of walking.

January Services – One Service at 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, January 7th

Re-Packing Your Bags

Rev. Nancy O. Arnold

Many of the choices we make in our lives are based on what our needs are at a particular time. If you're anything like me, you may find it difficult to part with some of the old to make room for the new. Sometimes we keep carrying the same "bags" of stuff, long after they've outlived their usefulness. In this new year, we'll consider the benefits of examining what it is we carry with us and how we decide what to keep and what to leave behind.

Special Congregational Meeting – 11:30 a.m. (see front page for details)

Sunday, January 14th

The Living Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Rev. Nancy O. Arnold

Through personal story, we will recall how Martin Luther King, Jr. and the civil rights movement continue to inspire our lives. *For this service, I would like to hear stories and recollections of your involvement in the civil rights movement and/or how it has influenced your life since then.*

Newcomers' Circle – Sunday January 14th, 11:30 a.m. - 12:45 p.m. in the Minister's office. Are you new to this congregation? New to Unitarian Universalism? Not so new to UU Danbury but would like to understand the "bigger picture" of Unitarian Universalism? Do you wonder if this is the right spiritual home for you? The Membership Team sponsors this once-a-month introduction to UUism and UU Danbury. In this session, Rev. Nancy will offer an introduction to our UU history and an exploration of your own religious past.

Sunday, January 21st

Healing, Wellness, and the Life of the Spirit

Rev. Nancy O. Arnold

There was a time when healing was an art that honored the connection between body and soul. The separation of the two began when discoveries about how the body works became aligned with a more mechanistic view of health, and the goal of curing what ails us replaced healing the whole. The unity that once existed between body and soul became split, leading us to view the body as a machine, and the soul as the purview of religion; if, in fact, it was deemed valid at all. How might we live with respect for the whole of our being, and cultivate the wellness we seek?

Sunday, January 28th

Sunday Services Ministry

Our Caring Circle is Available

Our 'Care Coordinator' receives requests and answers questions for the Caring Circle.

Joan Campbell is the Coordinator for **January**. **Meredith Spector** is the Assistant.

If you have a need, please contact **Joan** at joancam@aol.com or 203-938-2138.

Please note that your call will be returned as quickly as possible but it may be at the end of the day.

From the Interim Minister's Message

Every year at this time I reflect on the past year and set some "aspirations" for the incoming year. "Work smarter, not harder" has been on the list since the mid-nineties. "Clear space physically and emotionally to make room for new growth, inner peace, and well-being" has topped the list even longer. Both are variations on a resolution to become organized that began more than 40 years ago.

Efforts to enact these ideals have included attending time management workshops at which we are tutored in the use of day/weekly/monthly "planners," each one with its own unique "system" for achieving maximum organization and effectiveness. At one point, while serving the Akron congregation, I even arranged a staff "retreat" day so that all of us could attend such a workshop. If we were all operating under the same "system," I reasoned, communication and productivity would improve, helping us all "work smarter, not harder." It didn't.

The last calendar/planner I used nearly did me in. Like its predecessors, it was no ordinary calendar. It was "designed for action" and was meant to inspire and actualize my goals for the year. It began with the anecdote about a man who meets three workers at a building site.

He asks the first one: 'What are you doing?' – 'I'm laying bricks.'

He asks the next one: 'What are you doing?' – 'I'm building a wall.'

The man walks up to the third worker and asks him the same question.

He looks up with a smile on his face and says: 'I'm building a church.'"

Exercises designed to identify attitudes followed, along with the opportunity to see "yourself as the person you want to be!" The idea was to use the calendar to discipline myself and focus on becoming the person I aspire to be. That planner weighed me down in more ways than one. It was the last time I attempted to fulfill my organizational goals with a planner. It seems that the older I get, the less important reducing a complicated life to a page in a planner becomes. This year, like the last few, I bought a calendar that easily fits into my purse.

Perhaps this is the year that I will actually take time for that which renews and nourishes... perhaps even for the "13 Things" recommended by my colleague, Meg Bowman:

Take time to dream –

IT HITCHES YOUR SOUL TO THE STARS.

Take time to work –

IT IS THE PRICE OF SUCCESS.

Take time to think –

IT IS THE SOURCE OF POWER.

Take time to play –

IT IS THE SECRET OF YOUTH.

Take time to love –

IT IS THE SPIRIT OF LIFE.

Take time to read –

IT IS THE FOUNDATION OF KNOWLEDGE.

Take time to meditate –

IT IS THE HIGHWAY OF REVERENCE AND WASHES THE DUST OF EARTH FROM YOUR EYES.

Take time to help and to enjoy friends –

IT IS THE SOURCE OF HAPPINESS.

Take time to make the world better –

IT IS THE PURPOSE OF LIFE.

Take time for beauty –

IT IS EVERYWHERE IN NATURE.

Take time to laugh –

IT HELPS WITH LIFE'S LOADS.

Take time for health –

IT IS THE TREASURE OF LIFE.

Take time to plan -

IT IS THE SECRET OF BEING ABLE TO HAVE TIME TO TAKE TIME FOR THE FIRST TWELVE THINGS.

May 2018 bring the time of our lives.

Yours in faith,

Nancy
minister@uudanbury.org

Nancy will be away at a ministers' retreat the week of January 28th. Please contact Sherry or the Caring Circle coordinator for pastoral concerns.

Ministry of *Appreciation*

Thank you to everyone who purchased a gift for the **Interfaith AIDS Ministry "Mitten Tree"** and to the REMT "elves" who organized the effort!

Kathleen and Vivienne Granger made beautiful mittens and stood by the tree, **Sam and Ethan McCoy** checked in all of the gifts, and **Michele Cousens** made sure they all had "Santa" tags on them! 'Tis the season to work together to support people in need!

Thank you to all who helped to make this year's **Tree Trim Event** a success!

Dean, Bryce, and Gale Alexander assembled the trees ... **Michele Cousens** spun Holiday tunes ...

Ali Haffner brought ornament ideas and materials ...

Yvonne Ruddy-Stein, Kathleen Granger, and Johanna Schrader vacuumed (and vacuumed some more!) ... and Mrs. and Mr. Claus (aka **Kathleen and Mac Granger**) organized the event and fed us pizza!

Thank you to **Neil and Nick Failla** and **Dean and Bryce Alexander** for trudging through the snow to pick up an amazing bench that will be "magically transformed" into a "**Buddy Bench**" during the RE Intersession!

Thanks to **Michele Cousens**, too, for finding the craftsman who made the bench!

Thanks are due to the crew who installed the Cookie Walk sign:

Alex Makai, Gary Mummert, Carl Tramontana, and most of all to Dave Adams.

Dave appeared with a sledge hammer we had neglected to bring and saved the day!

If you notice someone doing something nice at UU Danbury, let us know.

Email us at thankyou@uudanbury.org.

Notes from the Board of Trustees

by Brad Greene, President

Recently the Board spent an entire Saturday together. As we approach the halfway point of this church year, we clarified our focus and priorities for the next six months.

We had a good discussion about our purpose as a Board. We agreed that we are here to help create a spiritual space and a place of community. All of our actions should support that end and all of you as members of this community.

We brainstormed the potential areas of focus and then prioritized those which we felt would have the greatest impact. Some are already in progress—such as our search for a minister, the build out of the lower level, and the sanctuary vote—and are on the list to bring to completion.

The others we agreed to appear below. You'll be seeing and hearing more about them in the coming months:

1. Communications: We're developing multiple methods to measurably improve the congregation's understanding of where things stand and what's going on. We'll work on ways to help ministries and teams better connect.
2. Expectations & Decision Making: We'll work with some of the more critical ministries and teams (especially those who most impact the day to day experience of members & potential members) to confirm priorities, expectations and decision making and communicate them out to the congregation.
3. Human Resources & Staff: We'll spend time clarifying the expectations and responsibilities of our paid staff and ensuring that we are a good place to work.
4. Money: We all hate talking about it. We are working to refinance our mortgage and secure a bridge loan for the cash needed to complete the buildout in advance of all the capital campaign money coming in. We're going to advance the concepts of pledge receipts equaling our expenses (and not counting on events like the auction for operating expenses); building future budgets off our "wish list"; and moving to more sustained giving.
5. Engagement: We'll work to identify ways to involve more people in the life of the congregation.

We welcome your comments on any of these topics and your involvement in any of them that interest you.

Capital Project Update

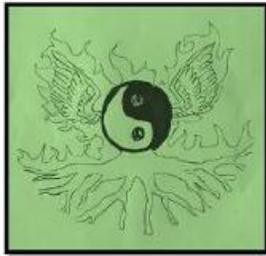
by Alex Makai



The final step in closing the parking area project occurred a couple of weeks ago when City of Danbury returned the Health and Environmental bond we had provided. That marked the successful completion of all the City's inspections.

The bid for the Fellowship Hall lower level work from the second of our general contractor candidates has just arrived. Once we have reviewed the two bids in detail, verified and compared their scope, materials and other details, we should be able to make our choice in the next few weeks.

There continue to be some concerns about fitting the proposed lift shaft in the lower level because the exhaust flue from the stand-by diesel water pump occupies part of the needed space. Some redesign or modification will likely be needed to enable that part of the project to go ahead.



Roots & Wings

... what's happening in Religious Education

by Darlene Anderson-Alexander, Director of Religious Education

Look at our wonderful new “**Roots & Wings**” logo designed by ... Zachary! Thank you to all of the Yellow and Green group folks who submitted designs. They were all lovely!

At the multigenerational “**Light**” Service in December, Reverend Nancy invited congregants to write or draw their planned action for **bringing light to the world** on a star or lightning bolt ornament. Here are our plans:



make cookies ... give of myself ... love, love, and more love ... be the change that I wish ... be kind to family members and others who don't agree with me as well as to those who do ... laugh ... be a lightbulb ... CAGV ... help sick kids feel better ... be part of my spiritual home – UU Danbury ... Hubble will see this ... safety from violence for all ... help animals live happy and healthy lives ... help to end hunger ... give to others ... make my family happy ... invite others to take part ... hold the door ... shine on hope ... show kindness ... stand up for tolerance ... be the light now ... ethical speaking and action ... awaken ... love is love is love is love ... greet people by name with a radiant smile ... sing from my heart ... help someone in need ... smile ... send light to the world ... call representatives ... on-going to end gun violence ... make people happy when they are down ... practice mindfulness, humility, and work to bring creative energy ... support healthy kids ... quiet, non-judgmental presence in the lives of all I meet ... be helpful ... love and peace ... give of myself ... be a nice person ... hope, patience, forgiveness ... hear you ... commitment to ending the source of domestic gun violence in the US ... read a history of Unitarian Universalism ... light to all religions and all people ... continue to hope



We are all truly the Light of the World!



As we look forward to **2018**, there are pretty exciting things happening in and around **Religious Education** – and **MANY** ways for **YOU** to get involved with our amazing children and youth!

RE INTERSESSION for PREK-8th GRADERS: “KIDS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE”

While many of our regular religious educators take a much-needed break, the RE Ministry Team folks and I will be leading this year's Intersession focused on *kids making a difference*. We have lots of meaningful, fun activities planned for three Sundays: **January 21st, January 28th, and February 4th**, culminating in a multigenerational worship service on February 11th. Won't you join us? Come for one Sunday, choose two that work with your schedule, or volunteer for all three! You won't be disappointed! Please contact me or any member of the RE Ministry Team (Samantha McCoy, Kathleen Granger, Alison DiPinto) for details and email darlene_dre@uudanbury.org to let us know when you can help!

HELP BEFORE JANUARY 21st! We will be painting a “buddy bench” during the Intersession but it needs some prep work first. It’s just unfinished wood that needs to be sealed ... all materials and recommendations from the crafter provided ... to be done in the basement of the UUCD Fellowship Hall any time that works for you. This is a great way to help out the RE program if actually working with children is not in your comfort zone or if you are not available on Sundays! Please let me know if you can help!



SENIOR HIGH YOUTH CON



Our Senior High Youth will be hosting a **24-hour Youth Conference** from Friday, February 2nd – Saturday, February 3rd. They will be inviting youth from local NY and CT congregations. They will be asking for YOUR help with meal preparation (Saturday breakfast, lunch, and dinner). Consider saying “sure!” and help UU Danbury to be a welcoming destination for area UU Youth!

January

- * **January 7th** = all prek-6th groups, 7-9 OWL, and 10-12 OWL meet at the regular times
- * **January 14th** = all prek-6th groups and 7-9 OWL meet; 10-12 OWL does NOT MEET (*change from original schedule*) – attend the service
- * **January 14th at 11:30** – **ALL 9TH-12TH GRADE YOUTH** are invited to share pizza and fellowship with the Senior High Youth Group from the Westport UU Congregation and THEN, together, view a staged reading of “*Speak Truth To Power: Voices From Beyond The Dark*” performed by our own UU Danbury Players. This play is part of “a multi-faceted, global initiative that uses the experiences of courageous defenders from around the world to educate students and others about human rights, and urge them to take action. Issues range from slavery and environmental activism to religious self-determination and political participation.” This promises to be a powerful, not-to-be-missed experience.
- * **January 21st & 28th** = RE Intersession (start in House) for prek-8th grades; Senior High Youth plan Con

And now - from Rev. Dr. Elizabeth M. Strong -
“Let the power and strength we embody join us together as we move through the seasons of celebration into a new year with a new vision of hope for peace on earth.”



Notes from the Search Committee

by Carl Tichler

The Search Committee will now be entering the key time in our process --- where we review the applications of all interested candidates, interview them and narrow down the list to the pre-candidates. This is now done online through a secure UUA website, where the candidates can see our packet and congregational record, and then submit their applications if they are interested. The next few months will be the busiest time for us, and due to maintaining confidentiality of the candidates, we cannot discuss any details of these candidates with anyone outside the Search Committee. We will give general updates on the process to the extent that we can.

To summarize what has been done so far in preparation:

- Search Committee Retreat reviewing timeline, process, and responsibilities of each of the team members
- Beyond Categorical Thinking service and workshop
- Congregational Survey
- Preparation of congregational record, consolidating results of the survey, congregation history, demographics of our area, and indicating the salary offer range for our minister. Note that this offer is for a full-time minister and is within the UUA fair compensation guidelines.
- Preparation of packet, telling the story of UU Danbury, what qualities we are looking for in our minister and what we offer as a congregation and community.
- Review of congregational record and packet by our UUA transitions consultant Kristen Leddy and posting to the secure UUA website.

By the time you read this, we will have met with Kristen in preparation for the upcoming busy months.

Thank you from all of us on the Search Committee for your continued support in our work.

UU Danbury Search Committee: **Maredith Spector, Donna Lawrence, Bruni Edwards, Gale Alexander, Luchina Fisher, Ali Haffner, Carl Tichler**

Ministry/Team News

From *Adult Programming*

Would you like to create more peace internally for 2018? Come experience **Kundalini Yoga** and do yourself and UU Danbury a Favor!

Using Kriyas (a series of specific exercises) breathwork, mantras, and meditation, Kundalini Yoga is an ancient technology that helps us to withstand the stress in our lives and experience the peace within us all. **Gina Cassetta**, a certified Kundalini Yoga instructor, will teach 5 classes, on the 2nd & 4th Tuesdays of January, February, and March from 7:00 - 8:15 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. (Jan. 9 & 23, Feb. 13 & 27, March 13 & 27.) 5 classes cost \$75, but if purchased ahead of time the fee is \$60. Please contact Gina for more information or to sign up.

From the *Events Team*

FUND RAISING REPORT

Thanks to:

the Events Team and the Knitting Ministry.

Their Cookie Walk and Knitting Sale earned \$951 and \$945, respectively, for the UU Danbury General Fund.

Many thanks to those who baked, bought, or did both, in support of this annual event.

Special recognition

(The Cookie Monster Award, perhaps?) goes to **Barb Myers, Heidi Winslow, and Pat Coulston** who lent great enthusiasm to this project.

From the *Caring Circle*

Right to Flourish to sponsor Alzheimer's Presentation

Sunday, January 28th – 12:30 – 2:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall

Successful Communication Given "Alzheimer's Logic"

Presented by Donna B. Fedus, M.A., Gerontologist & Founder of Borrow My Glasses (borrowmyglasses.com)

Changes in long-standing communication patterns can be wildly frustrating for individuals with Alzheimer's as well as for their caregivers. Communication problems can also trigger emotional reactions. But communication patterns are expected to change throughout Alzheimer's. This class will help you crack the code in the early to middle stages.

Join us to:

- Decipher "Alzheimer's logic"—there *is* logic there.
- Learn communication techniques for paranoia, blaming others, and memory battles.
- Consider the emotional impact on both sides of the communication.
- Learn new ways of dealing with repetitive questions.

*Suggested donation of \$5 *Bag lunch is acceptable *Contact **Meredith Spector** for more information.

From the *Social Action Council*

Soup Kitchen Corner



On Saturday, January 6th, Soup Kitchen Team #3 will serve up a hot, delicious meal at the Dorothy Day Soup Kitchen on Spring Street. Team Leader **Lynn Taborsak** will be joined by **Bob Taborsak, Jim Wruck, Mike Toto, Liz Casey, Jim Moore, Julie Gordon, Cynthia Stevens, John Alvord and Ron Skelton**. Please remember that if you are not able to help on your scheduled day, you must find a substitute from the alternates list which you can access from the member's page of our website – uudanbury.org. The show must go on!

It is also time for members and friends to sign up again for another year. UU Danbury has been committed to serving a meal once a month for the past 37 years. It's a UU tradition! Sign-up sheets for each team are available in Fellowship Hall, or if you would like to volunteer to be part of a team, please contact **Judy Lacker**. All Teams meet on the first Saturday of the month, 3 times per year.

You can also help us feed our neighbors with a gift card in any amount from any local supermarket. In addition, please continue to bring in your weekly food offering so that we can stock the food pantry at ARC. We need you to include size 4 and 5 disposable diapers in the food offering if possible. We can all be an important part of the fight to end hunger in our community!

Social Action Council Documentary Series

The Social Action Council will present **Gender Revolution: A Journey with Katic Couric** on Friday, January 26th – 7:00 p.m. in the Conference Room. Shown previously at UU Danbury, attendees said "Show it Again!" This documentary examines the role of science, society and culture with regard to gender, and sheds light on stories of struggle, understanding, ignorance, and love.

From the Women's Retreat Planning Team

Annual Women's Retreat - April 21-22, 2018

We are preparing for the 19th Annual Women's Retreat to be held April 21st – 22nd at the Guest House in Chester. In the past we've had wonderful times there. Catching up with old friends, making new friends, attending workshops, singing by the piano or by the campfire, enjoying healthy, expertly prepared meals ALL in a nurturing environment. Workshop Proposals are being reviewed. Please send **Melody Levy** an email with your ideas of a workshop you'd like to lead or attend.

Car pools will be available this year. If you want to participate as a driver or to catch a ride, please email **Sharon Stram**. **Barb Myers** is our registrar extraordinaire. Please email her your registration information. Will you come for the day or will you stay overnight?

Soup Sale January 28, 2018 after the service

\$10.00 a quart

\$5.00 a pint



Conversations

Conversations meets on the second Thursday of each month from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. in the Conference Room. All are welcome. If you wish to receive our announcements and questions, please email **Bruce Buzby**. Reading the book is not mandatory in order to participate and enjoy the gathering. January 11, 2018: Topic: **Compelling Story**. Facilitator: Not Assigned. Source: "**Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a family and Culture in Crisis**" by J.D. Vance, 2016, 272 pages. 2016 is the year of Donald Trump, and J.D. Vance's *Hillbilly Elegy* should be at the top of every politico and thought leader's reading list living in the Acela corridor. Vance is both an excellent writer and a thoughtful person—and when combined with a compelling story, he's able to shed some light on the lives of those living on the other side of the Appalachian Mountains.



Friday, January 12th

The fear of life is the favorite disease of the twentieth century. -
William Lyon Phelps (1865 – 1943)

Come join us for our films to start the new year, each of which has a bit to say about the “fear of life” and each of which responds from a different perspective.

7:00 p.m. – *Cycle* – We begin 2018 with an amusing but thoughtful story about a divorcee, her ex-husband, and a burglar.

7:15 p.m. - *Forever* – Take a mid-winter trip with us to the warm and beautiful island of Mauritius. Along the way, meet three couples each in different stages of their relationship and each in their own form of crisis.

9:05 – 9:25 p.m. – Time for wrap-up and discussion

We believe that good experiences are even more fulfilling when shared with others. To this end, our objective each month is to present films of substance in a living room setting and to provide an opportunity to discuss with friends. Please join us on **Friday, January 12th, at 7:00 p.m.** in the Conference Room. All are welcome. Pizza will be provided. Popcorn optional! Contributions will be gratefully accepted, all of which will go to UU Danbury. **(For more information on these films and on the service from which we make our selections, please check the website at www.SpiritualCinemaCircle.com.)**