



Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury

Monthly **COMMENT** Newsletter

Welcoming all in a spirit of compassion, inquiry, and service

APRIL 2018

From the Interim Minister

By the time you read this, you will be gathering in Listening Circles as part of the Sustained Giving Campaign. This comes at a time when you are also preparing to meet the ministerial candidate recommended by the Search Committee. You are poised to begin the next chapter in the life of UU Danbury. How it unfolds will depend largely on you.

What is the purpose of the Listening Circles? The Finance and Stewardship Team of Matt McPartlin, John Miglietta, Marie Dupree, and President Brad Greene, wants the congregation to consider an “aspirational budget” before determining what you’re capable of doing and giving for a long term commitment. To prepare an aspirational budget will require you to share your hopes and wishes for UU Danbury today, and in the years to come.

At the Sustained Giving “kick-off” service on March 18th, several members spoke about what they hope the Congregation will address for the future: sustainable development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs; a religious education program that fairly compensates professional leadership and increases participation by more of the members to sustain its future; advancing the safety of the congregation by installing equipment such as a security system and a defibrillator; and encouragement for sustained long-term giving for the healthy future of UU Danbury. Fairly modest wishes by most standards.

My own thoughts reflected the efforts of the Finance and Stewardship Team goal of building an all-inclusive budget for the sustainability of the congregation. The impetus for this grew out of the Listening Circles you attended last year. One of the areas in need of attention you named was less talk about money. Folks are feeling nickel and dimed by the multiple appeals for money throughout the year. Separate requests for UUA dues and RE registrations make additional demands on the membership. And they require more time and energy to collect and track for volunteers and staff. If UU Danbury is “one” in spirit and “one” in community, then shouldn’t the aspirational budget include all the needs of this “one” congregation?

My colleague, the late Peter Raible, inspired many of us with his vision for our UU religion and congregations. I have adapted what he wrote:

The job of religion is to build castles in the air; the job of the congregation is to put foundations under them. Religion stands for our dreams, our highest aspirations, our deepest ethical concern.... The congregation strives to help us in practical ways to re-inspire these ideals, to encounter them in ways of practice and service, and to uphold them in a world where they are often denied. The adventure of faith is the principle of generosity. ...

Congregations ask members to be generous because generosity is good for our lives both practically and spiritually...

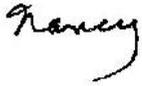
It is always easy to play it safe, to be driven by fiscal statements, and to play cautious with the future. But such is not the call to congregations. The religious summons is to faith and aspiration, to striving beyond present boundaries, to realistic hope in the future ...

How do we do this? We practice generosity in our personal lives and we demand that our Congregation, which stands for the best in us, exhibit generosity in its attitudes, practices and hopes.

I know this Congregation to be very generous when asked. You give out of gratitude, abundance and hope that you will make a difference. I have faith that when your aspirations are shared with others in the Listening Circles, the future of UU Danbury will be sustained for today, tomorrow, and tomorrow...

Thank you for your generosity of spirit.

Yours in faith,



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

Sunday, April 1st The Easter in Us Rev. Nancy O. Arnold

We are in a season that speaks the spring-inspired words about life, death, and rebirth. The markers we see in the changing season are indicators of what can happen within us. We are offered the opportunity to take the seasonal celebrations into our hearts – Passover for freedom, Easter for life, and spring for rebirth. Easter is about a change of heart, and being at home in the cycle of life.

Service Coordinator: Michael Stengle

Sunday, April 8th Living Buddha/Living Christ Rev. Nancy O. Arnold

Unitarian Universalism has its roots in the Christian tradition, and yet many UUs now identify themselves as Buddhist in spiritual orientation. Both Jesus and Buddha are living in the world today. Perhaps they have more in common than one might suspect? The book *Living Buddha/Living Christ* by Vietnamese Buddhist monk, Thich Nhat Hanh, informs of this service.

Newcomers' Circle – Sunday April 8th, 11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m. in the Minister's office. In this session, Rev. Nancy will offer an introduction to our UU history and an exploration of your own religious past. The Membership Team sponsors this once-a-month conversation for anyone interested in learning more about Unitarian Universalism, UU Danbury, and what it means to belong to this congregation. Whether new to UU Danbury or a seasoned member -- you are welcome here. Childcare is provided.

Sunday, April 15th Everyday is Earth Day Team Green and Rev. Nancy O. Arnold

“Given our human capacity to reflect and act upon our own lives as well as the condition of the world, we accept with humility and determination our responsibility to remedy and mitigate global warming/climate change through innovation, cooperation, and self-discipline. We undertake this work for the preservation of life on Earth.” (Statement of Conscience approved at the UUA General Assembly, June 26, 2006) The UUA General Assembly has approved eight more resolutions focusing on climate justice since 2006. And we have been celebrating Earth Day since April 22, 1970. Where are we now? And what comes next?

A Share-the-Plate collection will be taken for *Off the Streets* which works to get currently homeless people out of shelters and the streets into housing.

Sunday, April 22nd Facing the Future with Nostalgia Sequoia Lowe and Rev. Nancy O. Arnold

Do you remember a time when you were happy and at peace? Is the future something that evokes fear? Perhaps there's something from the past that can help lead us into the future...

Sunday, April 29th

Ministerial Candidate

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.

The Sustained Giving Campaign has begun and will last through April!

Please join a Listening Circle (watch your e-mail and announcements at services for upcoming dates/times), learn more about SimpleGive and other donation options, and share your aspirational hopes and wishes for the next few years. Pledge materials will be mailed to your home address in April. Do your part in Sustaining Us Today ... Tomorrow ... and Tomorrow.

Notes from the Search Committee

by Carl Tichler

We have had a busy time since the last month’s notes --- we have been meeting in-person with our pre-candidates. By the time you read this, we will likely have our final candidate decided and (hopefully) have their acceptance of the position. Once the candidate has notified their current congregation and given us the go-ahead, we will let the community know. The time to meet the candidate will be candidating week --- April 29 to May 6. Thanks to the Transition Team for their organizing pot-lucks and coordinating assistance in welcoming the final candidate. The Search Committee will be putting together a detailed schedule for candidating week in the coming weeks.

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

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

Notes from the Board of Trustees

by Brad Greene, President

Trust, Expectations & Connections

This has been a busy year already. Minister Search, Capital Campaign projects, Sanctuary vote, technology changes, snow & ice challenges, music schedules, sustained giving campaign etc. etc. And that is in addition to all of the regular “buzz” of UU Danbury with multiple ministries, teams and committees going in multiple directions. With a volunteer organization, who primarily only sees each other on Sundays, there is ample opportunity for miscommunication, conflict, and hurt feelings.

A couple of years ago a colleague shared with me an observation that the source of most all upset with humans is unmet expectations. We expect people to do certain things, and when they don't we get upset. We expect them to do things the way we would do things. We expect them to see things the way we see things. We expect them to involve us or ask our opinion. When things happen differently from our expectations, we get upset. Of course, we also expect people to read our minds and know what we are expecting! Understanding expectations becomes so important to our functioning as a community.

Another essential part of our community is trust. Groups that have trust tend to move faster and get more done...with less angst. Trust between people falls into a couple of categories. Competence is one. Do I trust that a person knows what he or she is talking about and has the capability to act in a certain area? Trust is also about motivation and intention. Do I trust the “agenda” of the other person?

How do we build trust and get clear on expectations? Creating personal connections is great start. People who get to know each other and make a connection tend to communicate better. They tend to give each other the benefit of the doubt. They tend to make fewer assumptions about intentions or motivations. They tend to be gentler and more forgiving with each other.

In this community we have a number of opportunities to form connections. Seeking out people we don't know during the coffee hour after service is a great start. Serving on teams or ministries together is another opportunity. Some teams will also be sponsoring “pot-lucks” as another way for us to build community. The strength of our community is built on all of the one-to-one connections we make. We have such an incredible opportunity to connect with an array of interesting, diverse, talented, intelligent, funny and committed people. I hope you find a way to make your own connections.

Capital Project Update

by Alex Makai



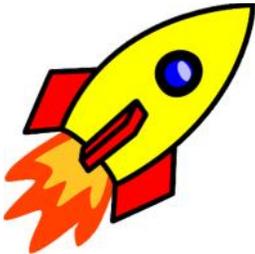
We are working to finalize details of the heating and ventilating equipment as well as choices for interior fittings and finishes for the future classrooms in the Fellowship Hall lower level. The general contractor is preparing the information needed for city permitting. At the same time we are looking into measures to deal with a few areas of moisture entry prior to the start of framing and wall installation.



Roots & Wings

... what's happening in Religious Education

by Darlene Anderson-Alexander, Director of Religious Education



What does your family want to receive from Religious Education? As we move our **RE Program into the FUTURE**, we really want to respond to the needs and interests of our families, and perhaps by extension, those of new families yet to discover us. To that end, I will be contacting each of our 34 families in the upcoming months to set up time for an in-person discussion about all things RE. I look forward to sharing some time together!

Perhaps one thing that you hope your children will receive from their religious education at UU Danbury is a working understanding of our Seven Principles. Here's a look at Principle #2:

“Be kind in all you do” or *“Justice, equity and compassion in human relations”* – that’s right, the second of our **Seven Principles**. Those words are easy to sing and say, but what do they mean in practice when parenting young Unitarian Universalists? Here is a great article from the Washington Post, “Are You Raising Nice Kids? A Harvard Psychologist Gives 5 Ways to Raise Them to Be Kind.”

www.washingtonpost.com/news/parenting/wp/2014/07/18/are-you-raising-nice-kids-a-harvard-psychologist-gives-5-ways-to-raise-them-to-be-kind/?utm_term=.9d3fd5d7d1cc that addresses just that issue. I especially like the suggestion that we offer children ideas for “stepping into the caring and courage zone”.

That was actually the premise behind our Buddy Bench project during the RE Intersession. We also have MANY books in the RE library about raising compassionate children. You are welcome to borrow them at any time. Our UU Danbury community is a wonderful environment to find support while parenting kids who care. I hope that you feel nurtured here!



Sunday, April 1st = RE Worship Circle for Prek-8th graders, *“Passover, Easter, and Ostara”*

Monday, April 2nd, 6 p.m. = Multigenerational Seder - “We will tell the story of the Exodus from Egypt in story and song, and explain a few of the Passover traditions as we go along”. Sign up for a dish to bring on the sheet in the foyer and contact Nancy Hershatter if you have any questions!

Friday, April 20th – Sunday, April 22nd = *Senior High Youth Conference* at White Plains (look for registration information coming soon!)

Saturday, April 21st, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., Danbury Green = “*Bark for ARC*” Have a fun-filled day with your dog – all for a good cause! Check out the event information at <http://www.arcforpeace.org/>

Sunday, April 22nd

- **RE Worship Circle** for Prek-5th graders, “*Earth Day*”
- Junior and Senior High Youth (6th-12th graders) are **STRONGLY ENCOURAGED** to attend the Service with their parents to hear our **MINISTERIAL CANDIDATE** preach!

And – looking ahead to two very important dates ...



Friday, June 1st = *Congregational Potluck* hosted by the Religious Education Ministry Team – each RE class will have a display representing what they learned or discovered this year!

Tuesday, June 12th = The Second Annual “*RElax and REcharge: A Time to Celebrate UU*” RE Volunteer Appreciation Event!

Ministry/Team News

From *Adult Programming*

We are looking for UU Danbury members to volunteer and become active leaders in our new Adult Education Program. Consider starting a program like Chalice Circles, Study/Book Group, Social Group Meetings, Think Tank Discussions, Health and Fitness Programs etc. Any and all program ideas will be considered.

All Adult Education Programs will be open only to adults 18 years of age and older. If a person under the age of 18 wants to attend one of the Adult Education Programs, that minor must be accompanied by a parent for the entire duration of the program and for each class or meeting of that program, **NO EXCEPTIONS**. The security and well-being of the children and minors under the age of 18 who visit or attend programs at UU Danbury must be of paramount importance to group leaders and all adult members throughout the entire congregation. If someone would like to conduct a program for children or young adults under the age of 18, those programs will be cleared, in advance, through the Religious Education Program for final approval and supervision.

When you set up a program you will get all the assistance and help you need to get started. For more information contact **Joe Gillotti**.

From the *Caring Circle Ministry*

Our Caring Circle is Available

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

Inge Hill is the Coordinator for **April and May**. **Joan Campbell** is the Assistant.

If you have a need, please contact **Inge**.

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

From the *Social Action Council*

Social Justice Council Documentary Series

Friday, April 20th - LIVING AND DYING – 7:00 p.m. in the Conference Room

From the Share Wisdom Network, these words are offered to describe this documentary about a couple who make a choice for themselves.

Filmed in cinéma vérité style, this powerful documentary is about so much more than Death with Dignity; it is an invitation to change the end-of-life narrative by embracing living and dying with equal measures of love.

Discussion will be led by **Meredith Spector** who leads our Right to Flourish program. Refreshments, including very special cookies from James, will be provided.

Friday, May 18th - JANE – 7:00 p.m. in the Conference Room

See the profound and touching footage celebrating the work and life of Jane Goodall in her work with primates.

Discussion led by our own **Marie Dupree** who worked for the Jane Goodall Institute for many years.

Refreshments provided.

Soup Kitchen Corner



On Saturday, April 7th, Soup Kitchen Team #2 will serve up a hot, delicious meal at the Dorothy Day Soup Kitchen on Spring Street. Team Leader **Sharon Stram** will be joined by **Siobhan Fallon, Nancy, Julie and Carl Tramontana, Chris Halfar, John Alvord, Darlene Anderson-Alexander and Gary Winn**. 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!

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!

From the *Sunday Services Ministry*



A Chance to Speak Out, a Chance to be Heard

Have something to say others might be interested in? Here's your opportunity. UU Danbury's Summer Services start on Sunday, June 24th and end on Sunday, September 2nd. That's eleven Sundays of lay-led services (one service each week at 10:0 a.m.) Are you interested in speaking from the pulpit one of these Sundays? Guidance and guidelines provided by your friendly Sunday Services Ministry. For more information, contact **Inge Hill, Michael Stengle or Tony DiFabbio**, members of the Sunday Services Ministry.

From the Women's Retreat Planning Team



Upcoming Events



You are invited to our almost-annual **Passover Seder** on Monday, April 2nd at 6:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. All are welcome! Dinner will be potluck style; haggadahs (the telling of the Passover story) will be provided. There will be lots of singing, fellowship and delicious food shared, along with old traditions we cherish and new ones we create together. Email **Nancy Hershatter** and let her know what and whom you are bringing. Suggestions: a main course such as chicken or fish; a vegetable dish or salad; wine; dessert; matzoh ball soup; potato kugel. Nothing containing flour or rising agents. Macarons and fruit are always welcome if cooking isn't your thing. RSVP to Nancy H. so we know how many to expect. Each family should bring their own plates, silverware and drinking glasses.



“So always look for the silver lining, and try to find the sunny side of life.”
 (From a song written in 1919 by Jerome Kern and B.G. DeSylva)

Glimpses into the lives of young and old remind us that even when times are troubled, there may be yet a silver lining.

7:00 p.m. – *Silver Lining* -- The power of song brings a moment of comfort as an elderly woman awaits a visit from her lost son.

7:15 p.m. – *I Mile to You* – Following a tragic accident, a young man confronts the challenge of remembering happy moments and old friends while rebuilding his life.

9:00 – 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, April 13, at 7:00 p.m.** in the UU Danbury Conference Room. As usual, 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.)

Conversations

Join the conversation! On May 10th at 7:00 p.m. the book conversation group will be meeting in the Conference Room to discuss: **12 Rules for Life: An Antidote to Chaos** by Jordan Peterson. Have you ever questioned the advice offered by a columnist like “Dear Abby”? Or wondered why “they” are qualified to tell “you” how to live? Psychologist Jordan Peterson is a Professor at the University of Toronto and has a popular series of lectures on YouTube. In **12 Rules for Life** he tackles some of the most difficult question in life by combining hard-won truths from ancient traditions with the stunning revelations of cutting-edge scientific research. It is a humorous, surprising and informative book.

On Saturday, April 14th at 7:30 p.m. **The Unitarian Church in Westport presents the 2014 film “Merchants of Doubt”**. This film pulls back the curtain on a hidden world where a small group of politically well-connected, media-savvy men-for-hire have sewn doubt and confusion in the public’s mind about the science of tobacco addiction, toxic chemicals, pharmaceuticals, climate change and more.

“An enthralling film. As fascinating as it is horrifying.” Kenneth Turan, Los Angeles Times



Caravan of Faith

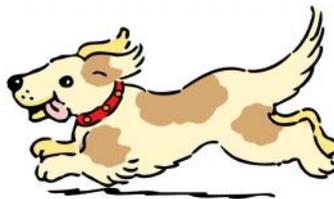


You are invited to this program which focuses on building bridges of understanding and interfaith relations by exploring five different communities of faith: Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Unitarian. Each workshop will include: a talk by the host speaker, time for questions and answers, an interactive fun project, refreshments and fellowship, and a short anonymous evaluation questionnaire. All sessions are on **Wednesdays from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. and participants must be able to commit to all 5.** April 25th – Hinduism; May 2nd – Islam; May 9th – Buddhism, May 16th – Unitarian; and May 23rd – Judaism. For more information contact Beth Cox at 203-743-9979 or cox4000@sbcglobal.net. The deadline to register is April 11th.

The Association of Religious Communities Presents: **“Bark for ARC”**

April 21, 2018 - 10:00 am to 12:00 pm - Danbury Green

Bring your dogs for a fun-filled day including a dog walk followed by pictures, shopping, contests, and more!



Registration begins at 9:30. Day of registration is \$30 per dog with a maximum of \$90 per family with 3 or more dogs.

**Preregister by April 13th AND SAVE! \$25 per dog with a maximum of \$75 per family of 3 or more dogs
Receive a free dog bandana with preregistration!**

All proceeds help support ARC which provides services to the community, including domestic violence prevention, homeless and housing advocacy, mentoring, resettlement services, and more!
Event will be held rain or shine. In the event of severe weather, all fees will be considered donations to ARC.

We hope to see you there!

Click here to download the [registration form](#).