



Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury

Monthly **COMMENT** Newsletter

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

JUNE 2018

From the Interim Minister

As this program year winds down, and our ministry together nears its end, I want to reflect, with gratitude, on those of you who have made this interim ministry so rewarding.

“Love is the spirit of this congregation” begins the Chalice Lighting Affirmation spoken in unison at the service each Sunday. The Congregation lives out its covenant “to dwell together in peace, to seek and speak the truth in love, to help one another and celebrate life” in many ways. It is to all of you who have contributed the work of your hands and hearts to this Congregation that these “Thanks!” (adapted from several sources) are directed.

- THANKS to those who play instruments and to those who sing, for without music our lives would be barren.
- THANKS to those who teach, for they engage our children and youth to think of their faith as they think of themselves.
- THANKS to those who saw and hammer and paint, for they keep the building from falling down around us.
- THANKS to those who lovingly tend the plants and grounds, for they make this house of worship a place of beauty.
- THANKS to those who send cards and deliver food to those who are ill or unable to get around, because caring is an important part of our faith.
- THANKS to those who volunteer at Morris Street School, Dorothy Day, and Comida, and thanks to those who support their efforts, because social action is an important part of our faith.
- THANKS to those who plan parties and entertainment, for they promote friendship, which is the heart of this Congregation.
- THANKS for our older people, for they are our link with the past.
- THANKS for our younger people, for they give us a sense of continuity.
- THANKS for the children, for they are our link with the future.
- THANKS to those who spend hours in seemingly endless committee meetings, for they are the lifeblood of the Congregation.
- THANKS to those who keep the books, for without them UU Danbury would be out of business.
- THANKS to those who plan and conduct fund raisers, including the Auction, for without them the congregation would be fiscally challenged.
- THANKS to those who ask for money and to those who give it, for the best things in life are not always free.
- THANKS to those who submit their news to the Weekly Email and Comment – on time.
- THANKS to those who are never satisfied with things the way they are; and
- THANKS to those who continually search for a better way, because they keep this Congregation dynamic.

I can think of no better way to end this second interim year than by saying “thank you” to all of you here. All of you are the spirit of love that makes this congregation the special place it is through the many big and small things that you do. You are a gift to UU Danbury. Thank you.

Yours in faith and love,

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.

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

Sunday, June 3rd

Music Sunday

Charlie Schott and Friends

We will welcome new members during this service.

Sunday, June 10th

DRE Darlene Anderson-Alexander and Rev. Nancy O. Arnold

Flower Communion and High School Bridging

In this multigenerational service, we will celebrate the traditional UU Flower Communion and honor graduating high school seniors in a Bridging Ceremony. Please bring a flower to the service – you will return home with a different one of your choosing. Those with abundant gardens are asked to bring more than one flower so that visitors may participate in the Flower Communion.

Sunday, June 17th

“If You Build It, Will They Come?”

Rev. Nancy O. Arnold

In the movie *Field of Dreams*, a farmer responds to a voice that says “If you build it, he will come...” Without knowing who will come, or how he will support his family, the farmer builds a baseball field where his corn once grew. On this, our last Sunday service together, we’ll reflect on our time together, and the possibilities that exist for your future.

Sunday, June 24th

The Tree of Life and The Life of Trees

Mary Ann Kulla

The latest science says that trees have far more capabilities than we currently give them credit for. We’ll take time to remember, appreciate, and reconsider our local trees, as complex life forms.

Our Caring Circle is Available

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

Bob Bollinger is the Coordinator for **June and July**. **Maredith Spector** is the Assistant.

If you have a need, please contact **Bob** at bbollingerx@gmail.com or 203-438-7210.

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

Notes from the Board of Trustees

by Brad Greene, President

Saying Goodbye

As the 2017-2018 church year approaches the summer respite, one of our rituals is to say thank you and goodbye to those moving to new places or new roles. We are not just in transition this year but every year as the composition of our congregation, leadership, ministries and committees is ever-changing. It's what gives us fits but also contributes to the dynamic nature of our community.

This year we say goodbye and thank you to our Interim Minister of the past two years, Rev. Nancy O. Arnold. Rev. Nancy has given us the wisdom of her experience. Her insightful observations will inform our future path and we are grateful for that gift. We wish her well in her next chapter in New Hampshire.

We also say thank you to two Board members, Michele Cousens and Robert Lowe, who are cycling off the Board this month. Their caring and dedication to our congregation is much appreciated as is their willingness to innovate and think outside the box. We look forward to seeing what roles in our community they will take on next.

We say goodbye and thank you to Charlie and Laurie Schott as they move to another part of the state. They have been a strong presence in our congregation for many years and their contributions to this community will be missed significantly.

Each year we also have a few of our babies leave the nest. This year it is Caroline Iannella, Daisy Lowe and Julie Tramontana who are graduating high school and moving on to the next exciting phase of their lives. We can all be proud that these are the type of young people who are leaving our community to go out into the world.

I'm sure there are many others who are leaving committees, teams and ministries for different roles or opportunities. To all we say thank you for your dedication and contribution to our community.

All the comings and goings remind me of the opportunity we all have to be present in this moment; enjoy those with whom we have the chance to work, laugh and collaborate; and make a difference in our community. It's why the idea of term limits is more appealing than lifetime appointments. The boundary of a limited timeframe creates a sense of urgency to make something happen today. That's my personal commitment to all of you for the coming year, and my hope for an approach others will take as they serve our community in whatever capacity.

Happy summer!



The recent storm and tornado that tore through Danbury and the surrounding area taught us how much we have come to rely on cell phones and email to communicate. With so many people being without power and internet – including UUCD – it was difficult for us to stay connected at a time when we needed it most.

Last year, with some prompting, many people provided their cell numbers to Sherry. But in May it became apparent that we had no way to reach too many people. In addition to being frustrating, it was scary that so many members were inaccessible and there was no way to know if they needed help.

Please provide all your contact information to Sherry at officemanager@uudanbury.org. If you don't want your cell number published in the Directory, just note that. The numbers will only be utilized to communicate in emergency situations.
Thank you.

Notes from the Search Committee

by Carl Tichler

As mentioned in our previous month's notes, both of our final candidates unfortunately accepted offers from other congregations. In the past month, we looked at new candidates who were in the "second round", and we were not able to find a suitable candidate from this group. Because of this, the congregation will be going into a new Search in the coming year, with a new Search Committee, and also a new Interim Minister.

Obviously this is a discouraging result, given the effort we put into the process and the hopes and expectations of the congregation of welcoming a new settled minister. Throughout the process, we brought different perspectives and personal histories to our work together. We all shared the excitement of meeting several wonderful candidates, getting to know them personally and professionally, and envisioning with them different possibilities for the congregation to grow in shared ministry. That excitement and energy will continue in the coming year. Speaking for myself, and I believe for the entire Search Committee, I am grateful for the experience of working on the Search, and look forward to passing the ball and lessons learned to the next Search Committee. Thank you from all of us for your support.

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



Roots & Wings

... what's happening in Religious Education

by Darlene Anderson-Alexander, Director of Religious Education

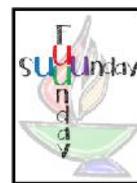


I am writing this article immediately following this year's **Senior High Youth Service**. I am inspired and my soul has been nourished by their "7 Courses for 7 Principles" food-themed Service! In the midst of the weather-related tragedies and inconveniences this past week and yet another school shooting, this Service reminded me of the good things happening in the world. It was good to see so many familiar faces here this Sunday and to know how much we really hold each other up in this uncertain world.

And the beat goes on ...

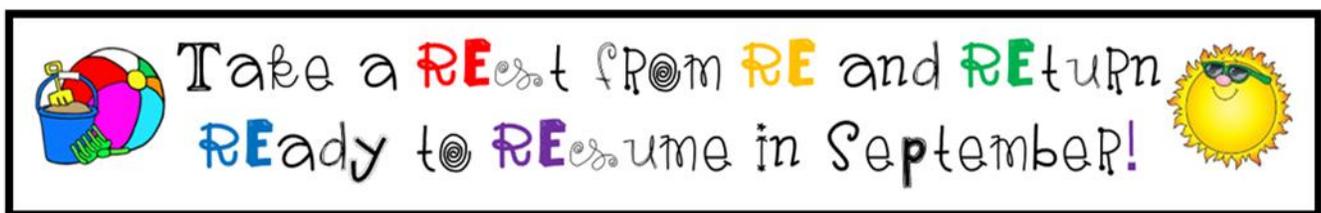
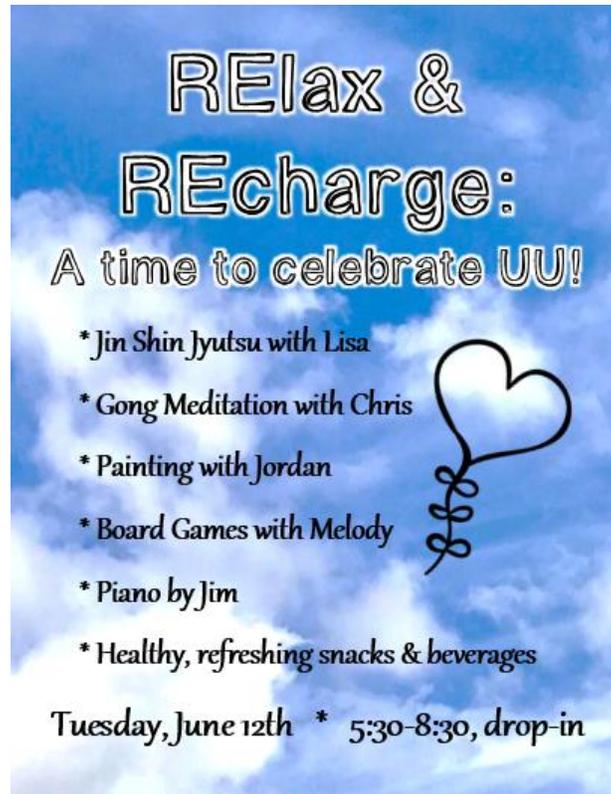


There are still some opportunities to be a part of RE 2018-19 and we hope that YOU will join us! Speak with RE Ministry Team members Sam McCoy, Alison DiPinto, Kathleen Granger, or me ANYTIME! We would be happy to help you find the perfect place for your interests and talents!



Thank you to our amazing **RE 2017-2018 teaching team volunteers**: Jackie Alexander, John Alvord, Gina Cassetta, Michele Cousens, Rik Cousens, Chris Creter, Ro D'Ostilio, Brad Greene, Lisa Greene, Rob Haffner, Jacqui Kaplan, Leah Kirshner, Jane Leff, Kristie Liotta, Holly Lynch, Sam McCoy, Nicole Paris, David Parr, Ben Roberts, Kim Roberts, Yvonne Ruddy-Stein, Johanna Schrader-Fentress, Suze Shaner, Heather Smith, Lola Strilowich, and Jim Wruck! And those irreplaceable **one-time event, substitute, and behind-the-scenes volunteers**: Bryce Alexander, Dean Alexander, Gale Alexander, Jordan Alexander, Madison Alexander, Lisa Austin-Smith, Marcia Brooker, Valerie Cochrane, Tony DiFabbio, Nancy Hershatter, Gerry Hinson, Adam Kyriacou, Elisabeth Levy, Melody Levy, Joni Lowe, Robert Lowe, Priscila McCann, Gary Mummert, Tim O'Donnell, Jim Russell, Charlie Schott, Walt Sizemore, Chris Smith, Carl Tichler, Lynn Taborsak, Carl Tramontana, and Gerrit Westenberg.

Finally, a huge shout out to the leaders of our program – the **RE Ministry Team**: Samantha McCoy (Chair), Alison DiPinto, Kathleen Granger, and Michele Cousens (BOT Liaison). It certainly takes a village to raise children and we are blessed in this community to have so many folks be a part of that process! I hope to see ALL of these amazing folks on Tuesday, June 12th at this appreciation event:



Here's what the summer at UU Danbury will look like for our children and youth:

- ☀ The regular RE year will finish on Sunday, June 17th with wrap-up parties in all of the groups.
- ☀ All prek-rising 5th graders will receive “**TAKE HOME PACKETS**” with UU-related family activity suggestions for each week of summer; rising 6th-12th graders will receive a modified, simpler version, more along the lines of journaling/self-reflection.
- ☀ There will be a table set up in the foyer during the summer services with a display explaining the summer theme and information about RE '18-'19. There will also be extra packets for visitors or children who didn't receive a packet on June 17th.
- ☀ Nursery care will not be provided during the summer.

Ministry/Team News

From the *Social Action Council*

Soup Kitchen Corner



On Saturday, June 2nd, Soup Kitchen Team #4 will serve up a hot, delicious meal at the Dorothy Day Soup Kitchen on Spring Street. Team Leader **Melody Levy** will be joined by **Joanne Davidson, Joni & Robert Lowe, Michael Stengle, David & Gia Parr, Bruni Edwards, and Michele Cousens**. 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 *Team Green*

Composting at UU Danbury

This Service provided by Team Green

Because the rotating bin is filling up, we will stop adding new organic matter in early May. An alternative system will be set up to continue to collect food scraps. Look for signs at the green trash can which will have 5 gallon buckets inside to accept your deposits. Thanks to all who participate, and know that you are helping to produce compost for our Comida garden on our premises.



Upcoming Events

Please join us for the Family Potluck on Friday, June 1st. Remember – a “family” = one person – 15 people (or more!). **ALL are welcome!** Please RSVP here so the hosting RE Ministry Team may plan accurately:

<https://tinyurl.com/June-1-UU-Potluck>



Family Potluck

Friday, June 1st

5:30-7:30, Fellowship Hall

- Bring your favorite food from childhood or your family's current favorite
- Beverages will be provided
- See displays from all of this year's Religious Education classes
- Make new friends and catch up with the old



Sponsored by the Religious Education Ministry Team



UUCD will be hosting the AARP Smart Driver Course on Wednesday, June 6th from 8:45 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. The course will be facilitated by Joe Gillotti. **To register call Joe Gillotti. Advanced registration is required, a limit of 15 attendees will apply.** Connecticut residents, 62 years of age and older, who are the primary driver in their household, are eligible for a discount from their insurance company for a period of 2 to 3 years with some insurance companies offering a discount up to 5%.



*When I was 4, you walked out and left us. I didn't understand why you were leaving.
I only knew you were no longer there. A letter from "Jay" to his Dad
(Advice column Dear Annie -- May 14, 2018)*

In their own way, our films for June each consider an all-too-common societal problem. Our short film – bad bosses. Our feature -- the fatherless child.

7:00 p.m. – 833 – Jake, it is fair to say, contributes to his own problem. And yet he receives support from an unlikely source.

7:20 p.m. – *The Father Effect* – This is one man's story of his struggles of growing up without a dad and his determination to find his way as he raises his own children. Nonetheless, some of the statements the film makes about parenting may be viewed as confrontational. While ultimately this is a story of forgiveness, please be advised: The story could be tough for some people and stir up feelings buried long in time.

8:20 – 8:45 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, June 8th at 7:00 p.m. in the 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.)**



**ARC presents
Keep the Faith
Thursday, June 14th
5:30-7:00 p.m.
Reception & Program
Academy of International Studies
201 University Drive, Danbury, CT 06810**

You are invited to witness Charlie Schott
being honored for his work with the KIDS Program.
Tickets are \$40 each.

If you would like to attend, please let Sherry know by June 4th and
write a check to UUCD with "ARC" in the memo line.
If there are enough folks attending we'll reserve a table.

From the *Auction Team*

Calling One, Calling All ...
prepare to Enter the Magic of The Woods
at the

**UU Danbury 2018 Goods and Services Auction:
Saturday, October 20th (with a Preview Night, Friday, October 19th)**

Save these dates and plan to attend, in costume or not, as you choose.
Planning is well underway for this second largest source of funds for UU Danbury.
It is expected to generate over 15% of our congregation's total revenue.

We need you to begin thinking about what you will donate to this exciting and fun-filled event.
It could be a high quality tangible item, hosting a dinner, picnic or party, offering your vacation home or time share for a week's rental, or offering a service by sharing a skill that you have.

It is **YOUR** donations and enthusiastic participation that will make this Auction a success!

Please direct your questions or comments to co-chairs Marian or Tony DiFabbio,
or Auction Team members Val Cochrane, Lisa Greene, Barb Myers, Suzanne Perry,
Yvonne Ruddy-Stein, or Lola Strilowich.

Remember **it is up to** us, yes, **ALL members of UU Danbury** to make this year's
Goods and Service's Auction a success.

Please take a moment **TODAY** to seriously think about the wonderful talents you have to share
and how you can do your part to contribute to Auction 2018 !

More information will follow in future Comment articles, Orders of Service and Weekly E-mails.