



# Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury

Monthly **COMMENT** Newsletter

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

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**MAY 2018**

## **From the Interim Minister**

As I write this, the Sustained Giving Pledge Packets are in the mail on their way to you. Yes – snail mail. That’s how important this Sustained Giving Campaign is for UU Danbury and for each of you. Since you will have read the packet contents thoroughly by the time you see this, I won’t repeat what you already know. So I’m going to ask you to think about what to pledge to make this aspirational budget a reality.

Each of us has a personal value system that shapes the ways we choose to live in the world. Our values are revealed in the choices we make. When it comes to sustaining UU Danbury, the choice should be fairly clear. But it can be challenging to determine what your spiritual home is worth to you in monetary terms.

In our culture, it is quite customary to operate out of scarcity. We tend to see limits, rather than possibilities.

Decisions about how much we give of our time and money require that we discern what we value most. Our faith calls us to ask: What is it we value? In what do we place our trust? Do we see the world as a means to get what we want? Or do we see ourselves in relationship with others to make the world a better place?

When people become part of this congregation, they enter into a relationship with the other members. They commit to support the life of this community. They bring an open heart and a helping hand to sustain this Congregation. Together, you work to accomplish that which you cannot do alone.

When we choose to live with abundance, we acknowledge our interdependence with others. In many ways, it removes a lot of pressure. We no longer have to be in charge, or take control of every aspect of our lives. Instead, we can allow ourselves to be open to the possibilities that present themselves. Rather than holding tightly to what we have, we can open ourselves to imagine what might be.

In this congregation, you are asked to make a personally meaningful monetary pledge and to fulfill that pledge. In other words, you make a financial commitment guided by what your heart tells you is right, and in keeping with your values and circumstances. This year there is a target goal for giving in order to fund a budget that includes all of the expenses – including Religious Education fees and UUA dues.

When our giving is consistent with our values, we have a feeling of satisfaction and wholeness. We are offering that which is of utmost importance to us. We are trusting that our offering will be received in good faith, as it was given.

Here are some questions to assist in your discernment process:

Do you spend your hard-earned money in ways  
that are consistent with your Unitarian Universalist values?

Is the money you give to others offered from a place of gratitude and abundance?

Or do you give to others – like this Congregation –  
out of a sense of duty, or from a place of scarcity?

I ask you to consider what your gifts to this Congregation would be if you approached your giving from a place of abundance:

How much would it cost if you gave according to the blessings you and your family receive here?

How well does your monetary giving line up with your values?

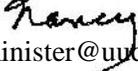
To determine whether your spending reflects your values,  
look at your checkbook ledger or credit card statement.

Does it reflect what you value most?

(continued)

As I said, determining what your pledge will be to sustain UU Danbury can be challenging. But this Congregation is worth it. When you consider what your “personally meaningful pledge” might be, please think about all that you receive from these people – all that you receive from this Congregation of which *you* are a part. And then pledge from your heart.

Yours in faith,

  
minister@uudanbury.org

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*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.

**Deadline for the June Comment –**  
**Friday, May 18<sup>th</sup>.**

**Call for the Annual Meeting of UU Danbury**  
**JUNE 3, 2018**  
**immediately following the 10:00 a.m. Service**

Every May, or the first 10 days of June, as specified in the By-Laws, we hold the Annual Meeting of UU Danbury. The purpose of the Annual Meeting is to “hear reports of officers, committees, and staff, to elect new officers and trustees, to adopt an annual budget, and to transact any other business that may properly come before the Congregation.”

Slate of Candidates to be announced.

## May Services – One Service at 10:00 a.m.

**Sunday, May 6<sup>th</sup>**

The Friends We Keep

Rev. Nancy O. Arnold

A friend is one with whom you dare to be yourself. In our lives, the people who touch us most are those with whom we share the deepest parts of ourselves. Some of those people can be found right here in this congregation. Why not bring a friend this Sunday and share what you have found here? The Choir will sing.

You are invited to attend a reception following the service on May 6th to extend our thanks to the Rev. Peggy S. Block for her 18 years of service as UU Danbury's Community Minister and wish her well in her retirement.

**Sunday, May 13<sup>th</sup>**

Once Upon a Time...

Rev. Nancy O. Arnold

Each of us has at least one story that has shaped our lives. I'll tell you mine, if you'll tell me yours...

Jazz with Charlie and Carl

**Sunday, May 20<sup>th</sup>**

Sr. High School Group

Join us for the Senior High Youth Service! Although this is an annual UU Danbury tradition, each service is entirely unique. We are sure to be treated to music, readings, and musings by our wonderful high school youth. Come and worship with our future!

**Sunday, May 27<sup>th</sup>**

A Time for Peace

Lynn Taborsak

As the country pauses to honor those who have died in our nation's wars, we will pause to advocate for peace: peace among nations, peace in our communities and peace in our homes. The service will be led by the Social Justice Council and include readings, stories and music that manifests our support for peace, justice and freedom.

Share-the-Plate will be collected to support the sanctuary program at the UU Church in Meriden, CT.

### **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** at [ingebhill@gmail.com](mailto:ingebhill@gmail.com) or 202-427-9318.

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 Search Committee**

by Carl Tichler

As all of you reading this are hopefully aware, we had the unfortunate circumstance of having both of our final candidates accept offers from other congregations, each closer to where they presently live. There was an email communication to friends and members about this on March 30<sup>th</sup>. We are now looking at additional candidates from the "second round" of candidates who did not find a suitable congregation, or were late to the original process and are now looking at a potential new congregation. As noted in the earlier email, we will be following the same process and standards for these new candidates --- if we do not find a suitable candidate in this second round, we would be entering a new search starting in January 2019.

We will keep you posted on our process 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

### Miles to Go Before We Sleep....

The weather is getting warmer (finally), which means we hopefully won't have to spend any more money this year on snow plowing! The warmer temperatures also mean that our church year is coming to a close and some of us will begin to scatter for rest, relaxation, travel and vacation for the summer months.

In a year that has already been very busy, there are still a number of things left to do in the next few weeks.

We were all disappointed that the first round of the minister search did not yield a candidate but we are optimistic that the second round will surface the right person to take us forward and that we will still be welcoming a new minister in June. Our Search Team has done an incredible job and we are so grateful that they are willing to continue their work together a little longer than planned. Thank Meredith, Donna, Ali, Carl, Gale, Bruni, and Luchina when you see them.

Our lower level build out is happening! Permits and contracts are being executed and work is beginning. The activity, which has been behind the scenes, will start to be more evident soon.

With the warmer weather there is also the opportunity to give our property some love and attention. Gary Mummert does so much of the work by himself. He's always looking for some extra help. I'll be there to help him on April 29<sup>th</sup> with some of the Sr. High Youth. If you can spare some time over the next few weeks, please see Gary.

This time of year is always busy with our pledge campaign, budget preparation and annual meeting. I hope you've had an opportunity to review the outstanding Sustained Giving Materials prepared by our Finance Team and are planning to make a pledge by May 6<sup>th</sup> to support our aspirations. This will allow us to prepare a budget for 2018-19 which will be voted on at the June 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting. Your active participation in this element of our community is so important.

We remain ready to welcome an individual seeking sanctuary. Resources and supplies have been gathered and the space has been transformed. And so many other teams, committees and ministries are busily working to close this year and prepare for the next.

Your support, action and voice is so important as we start to bring this year to a close.

## Capital Project Update

by Alex Makai



The general contractor for the Fellowship Hall lower level project has received approval on its permit application from the City of Danbury. That's an important milestone passed without delay. Contracts are in place with the suppliers of the access lift and alarm systems. Agreements for HVAC, sprinkler work and painting should be completed in the next couple of weeks. Before the start of interior construction a couple of steps are being taken to minimize the risk of moisture entry. The recent heavy rains enabled us to pinpoint the places needing attention.

**From Rev. Peggy S. Block**

Dear UU Danbury,

It has been a pleasure and a joy to be your (one and only so far!) Unitarian Universalist Community Minister, fulfilling various responsibilities from our early days together at “The Barn”, at our temporary quarters on the WestConn campus while our present glorious property and sanctuary were developed, and in the years since.

What is a “UU Community Minister”? It is a separate professional designation for approved UU Ministry in the “larger community” and connected professionally to a local UU Congregation – as mine was for 2 years as Campus Chaplain at Green Chimneys in Brewster, NY, a sanctuary for animals and children; 18 years Hospital and Hospice Chaplain at Bridgeport Hospital; and 14 years with you as your Community Minister, fulfilling various occasional responsibilities for this beloved Congregation in the Danbury community.

Here eighteen years!!! Weddings. Funerals. Memorial Services. Sunday Services. Christmas Eves. Homecomings. Baby Blessings...monthly Ministers’ Meetings.

I have been blessed by you, many times, in so many ways, especially during these recent months since my November surgery and the subsequent health challenges. I am deeply grateful for your cards and notes, and wish you all the best in the future.

As I have been sorting (a.k.a. “downsizing”) I came across this “treasure”. I pass this on to you, from my former colleague, Rev. Richard (“Dick”) Leonard at All Soul’s in New York City in 1998, where I occasionally served with Rev. Dr. Forrest Church, my first UU Minister:

**A Souvenir from our Annual Meeting...**

*The following address was given by Rev. Richard Leonard at the Annual Meeting, February 3, 1998:*

Until I read the agenda tonight I wasn’t sure whether Ministers Emeriti were expected to speak at an annual meeting or not, so I have been scratching something on my notes at the back of the room. I did notice that ministers are advised to give brief reports, so mine will be brief.

First, I want to thank you again for the honor you bestowed on me last September by making me your Minister Emeritus.

Secondly, I want to leave some advice with you as we set out in this exciting capital campaign year. Because there are so many reports to be given tonight, I thought I’d try to say everything worth saying in just two words. Here they are:

- |                      |                    |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Work hard.           | Try harder.        |
| Play fair.           | Think big.         |
| Look ahead.          | Mend fences.       |
| Keep smiling.        | Donate organs.     |
| Act natural.         | Welcome strangers. |
| Avoid clichés.       | Pay bills.         |
| Stay warm.           | Pay pledges.       |
| Keep cool.           | Pay attention.     |
| Live free.           | Love mercy.        |
| Come clean.          | Make whoopee.      |
| Do justice.          | Provide shelter.   |
| Don’t smoke.         | Sow seeds.         |
| Avoid complications. | Alter egos.        |
| Fight crime.         | Consider lilies.   |
| Question authority.  | Cultivate beauty.  |
| Get married.         | Keep hope.         |
| Stay married.        | Stand fast.        |
| Pursue learning.     | Grow up.           |
| Entertain angels.    | Age slowly.        |
| Don’t overdo.        | Love God.          |
| Don’t underdo.       | Suffer idiots.     |
| Judge not.           | Say prayers.       |
| Keep focused.        | Stay well.         |
| Lose weight.         | Pardon me.         |
| Pop corn.            | Thank you.         |
| Respect nature.      |                    |



# Roots & Wings

... what's happening in Religious Education

by Darlene Anderson-Alexander, Director of Religious Education



The **Religious Education Ministry Team** has an **EXCITING** year planned and **YOU** are invited to be a part of it! Look for Yoda in the Fellowship Hall foyer for details. Here's what's in the works:



**RED (PreK-K)** = “We Are Many We Are One” – a UUA curriculum containing stories, games, and projects that encourage children to honor themselves, their religious community, nature, and cultures from around the world. Supplemented with “Picture Book World Religions” [2-3 Sundays/month]

**YELLOW (1st-2nd grades)** = “Signs of Our Faith” – a UUA curriculum about being Unitarian Universalist every day. Supplemented with “Picture Book World Religions” [2 Sundays/month]

**GREEN (3rd-5th grades)** = “A World of New Friends: An Introduction to World Religions” [2 Sundays/month]

**BLUE (6th-8th grades)** = “Neighboring Faiths/Building Bridges” – UUA curricula that includes site visits to a variety of houses of worship [2 Sundays/month]

**PURPLE (9th-12th grades)** = “Traveling UUs” – attend services at a variety of UU congregations [1 Sunday/month] ; “Virtue Ethics: An Ethical Development Program for High School Youth” [1-2 Sundays/month]

## NEW THIS YEAR ... MULTI-AGE GROUPS:



“**JEDI ACADEMY**” one Sunday each month for all **1st – 8th grade** Padawans as they prepare to become guardians of peace and justice in the Galactic Republic! The focus is on the development of mindfulness, peace, and justice using the spiritual/ethical lessons from “Star Wars”.

“**SU**nday **FU**nday!” About one Sunday each month **ALL** Religious Education participants (that's prek through 12th grade!) will have structured, themed **FUN** together! Kathleen and Alison will be heading up this effort and they need **YOU** and your enthusiasm, energy, and ideas to build this Community!



That’s a lot to think about! And we STILL have much, much more going on in RE for the remainder of THIS year! The schedule changed a bit, so please visit <https://uudanbury.org/religious-education/> and click on “end of year schedule” for the latest updates. Here are some highlights:

Our **RED Group** is working on a service project for our congregation! Won’t you help them? They will be collecting items until May 20th.

Please help the **RED RE GROUP** fill a first aid bag for our new downstairs space!

**THEY NEED THESE ITEMS:**

- ace bandages
- plastic gloves
- single use ice packs
- first aid cream
- Band-Aids
- gauze
- first aid tape
- antiseptic towelettes
- eye cleaning solution

Thank You! 



Be sure to plan to attend the **Senior High Service on Sunday, May 20th**. This is an annual service, but completely unique each year. These have always been my favorite services – they give me hope for the future!



The Second Annual “*RElax and REcharge: A Time to Celebrate UU*” RE Volunteer Appreciation Event will take place on **TUESDAY, June 12th** in the early evening! All folks who have volunteered or helped out in RE this year will receive an invitation for this “drop in and feel special event”, but I wanted you to get it on your calendars now. Lisa will be returning with her Jin Shin Jyutsu sessions, Melody will be hosting board games, Jordan will be guiding us in painting a still life, Chris will be leading us in meditation, and Jim will be treating us to piano music (and some cookies of course!). Ahhhh ... what a well-deserved break for our **AMAZING RE VOLUNTEERS!**

# Ministry/Team News

## From *Adult Programming*

### Adult Education Programs

Some questions have been raised regarding the age limit concerns (18 year old adults and above only) attending the Adult Education Programs at UU Danbury. The previous explanation for this requirement was not adequately explained.

1. The UU Danbury Religious Education Program serves youth through 12<sup>th</sup> grade but does not oversee any adult programming that also includes youth. We have Safe Congregational policies which include background checks for RE volunteers, a minimum of two adults in all RE rooms, and a requirement that parents stay on-site during organized RE programming or designate a responsible adult to do so. Since these policies do not apply to Adult Programming, these programs are separate from RE.
2. Adult Education Programs do not have these same safe guard requirements for children under the age of 18. It is important that parents and friends in the UU Danbury congregation do not assume that Adult Education Programs provide the same high level of protection and supervision for under age attendees. When we refer to “safe congregation for children”, we are providing what we believe to be the best possible defense against children being taken advantage of, or possibly abused, in the many ways that can unfortunately occur in our society at large. Abuse is defined broadly as inappropriate touching and contact, sexual abuse, intimidation, bullying, manipulation, and so on. We understand this policy is new and different. We are asking everyone to give this new recommendation a chance, and at the same time realize that this policy supports the long term greater good and goals for the entire UU Danbury congregation. For questions concerning this matter, contact **Joe Gillotti** or **Carl Tramontana**.

## From *Buildings and Grounds*



### It's Clean-UP Time at UU Danbury

Please contact **Gary Mummert** if you have a few hours to spare. As we approach the build-out, we'll have lots of little tasks and some big ones to be done. Inside and outside tasks await and B&G can be flexible with your time available. Saturday mornings in April and May would be ideal for Volunteering - from 10 to 12. Call or text Gary to discuss your available time.

## From the *Social Action Council*

### Social Justice Council Documentary Series

Friday, May 18<sup>th</sup> - 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, May 5<sup>th</sup>, 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, Ron Skelton, Cynthia Stevens and Rose Schlemmer**, 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*

### From *Team Green*



#### 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 24<sup>th</sup> and end on Sunday, September 2<sup>nd</sup>. That's eleven Sundays of lay-led services (one service each week at 10:00 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.

#### 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.

### From the *Women's Retreat Planning Team*



The 19<sup>th</sup> annual Women's Retreat left us with full hearts, new friends and stronger bonds with each other and our beloved community. Our 20<sup>th</sup> annual Women's Retreat will be held during the last weekend in April, 2019. Save the date!

## 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.

## Upcoming Events

### **Conversations**

Join the conversation! On May 10<sup>th</sup> 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.

### **Theatre Aficionados**

**Mark your calendars:** Thursday, May 10, is the next "Pay What You Want Night" at Theatreworks, New Milford. The evening's performance is Mel Brook's comedy "Young Frankenstein." Please join us for an evening at Theatreworks, 5 Brookside Ave, New Milford. But note there is no reserve seating for this performance: it is first come, first seated, so don't be late! For more information, go to the website [www.theatreworks.us](http://www.theatreworks.us), or call **Keith Dupree**.

Theatre Aficionados is a very informal gathering of people who enjoy seeing local theater together. We convene at the theater when the doors open at 7:30 p.m. All are welcome.



You are invited to a Special Screening and a post-screening chanting event with “Sista’s Light”. Danbury 16, 61 Eagle Road, Danbury on Wednesday, May 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m. Co-hosted by Elisabeth Levy. Reserve your tickets at : [www.gathr.us/s/22879](http://www.gathr.us/s/22879).

**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



*The charm, one might say the genius of memory is that it is choosy, chancy, and temperamental: it rejects the edifying cathedral and indelibly photographs the small boy outside, chewing a hunk of melon in the dust.*  
Elizabeth Bowen, Irish-born author (1899 – 1973)

Each of our films for May is based on an actual event. Are either “true”? Probably not, no more than memory is true, or creative inspiration. But each film, I would argue, has a message to convey.

- 7:00 p.m. – *Sing* – Our short film for May won an Academy Award in 2017 for best live action short. In it, a young girl is forced to make an agonizing decision.
- 7:30 p.m. – *A Rising Tide* – In the face of wars, misfortune, and natural catastrophes, there may be more people on earth today trying to rebuild their lives than at any other time in human history. *Rising Tide* is a story of a New Jersey family as they struggle to pull their lives together after Hurricane Sandy.
- 9:15 – 9:30 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, May 11, at 7:00 p.m.** 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](http://www.SpiritualCinemaCircle.com).)**