



Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury

Monthly **COMMENT** Newsletter

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

JULY/AUGUST 2018

From the Interim Minister

Well, this is my last monthly message to you. Partings are difficult, and this one is no different. You are a lively congregation with the kind of commitment to social justice I wish more congregations could emulate. And I have enjoyed getting to know many of you through various meetings and ministries. Thank you for welcoming me into your congregation for this brief period of time.

Ministry is about relationships, so ending a relationship when leaving a ministry position seems contradictory. However, out of respect for colleagues and the building of new ministerial relationships, that is the agreement we make as religious professionals.

Professional religious leaders make covenants with each other in which we agree that once we leave a position, we will refrain from having any contact with members of the congregation. Even though friendships may have been forged, we are bound by our covenant – and respect for our colleagues – to discontinue contact for at least a year in the case of a DRE, and longer for a minister. After that, contact may occur only with the agreement of the current staff person. If a member and former staff member encounter each other, any discussion of UU Danbury is off-limits.

The covenant is in place to allow new ministers and DREs to establish themselves with the congregation. When that agreement is disregarded, it has resulted in conflict and the premature departure of the new professional.

After July 31st, I will discontinue contact with UU Danbury members out of respect for your next Interim Minister, and whoever their successor may be. I know you will welcome them as you did me because you know that ministry is all that you do – together.

It has been a privilege to minister with you these last two years. I wish you a successful search for a new settled Minister, and a future that fulfills the promise you envision.

The future of UU Danbury is in your hands. May you hold it with mutual respect for staff and for each other.

Blessed Be!

Our Caring Circle is Available

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

Bob Bollinger is the Coordinator for **July**. **Meredith Spector** is the Assistant.

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

Donna Lawrence is the Coordinator for **August and September**. **Cheryl Edelen** is the Assistant.

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

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

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 September Comment –
Friday, August 17th.**

Gardening Angels Needed!

Our Comida garden needs a few more volunteers this summer. It's easy, it's fun, and it is family-friendly! Come once this summer for an hour to help grow and harvest produce for the Comida food pantry. Choose your date and time! Send a quick email to Barbara Myers.

July/August Services – One Service at 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, July 1st Holding On and Letting Go: Reflections on Navigating the Human Condition Suze Shaner
As Henry Ellis said, “All the art of living lies in a fine mingling of letting go and holding on.” Inherent in the human condition is that we hold on to people, places and situations - or we let them go – voluntarily or involuntarily. This sermon will explore aspects of these ways of being – when and how they promote health, happiness or suffering. There will be a participative component.

Sunday, July 8th Owning Yourself Gale Alexander
What is the source of your happiness? Where do you look to find it? How do you know when you have it? These are just some of the questions we will explore as we look at our world and who defines it for us.

Sunday, July 15th FEAR in Our Daily Lives, FACT or FICTION? Joe Gillotti
This talk will examine the root causes of FEAR, that is to say, the constant FEARS we all experience in our daily lives, often on a regular basis. You will gain new insights, from a spiritual perspective into just how delusional, dysfunctional and unnecessary fearful thoughts really are. You will get to learn new ideas and practical methods, which are currently available to help you to begin making changes in your FEAR based thinking. This talk will have a participatory component with group interaction and time for a brief Q & A.

Sunday, July 22nd Disrupt Aging in Your Community Tia Murphy
The Right to Flourish presents guest speaker Tia Murphy. This (modified 90 minute workshop) is both interactive and engaging to challenge stereotypes and myths surrounding aging ...from 10 to 110! How can you disrupt aging at any time of your life to offer an opportunity to make an impact on your community, your life and the world in a positive way!

Sunday, July 29th Falling Upward Mike Zaccara
This service is about the 7th Principle, a vastly under examined and un-reflected principle.

August 5th Footsteps in Alabama: Reflections on a Civil Rights Pilgrimage Samantha McCoy
It's admirable to think about history and even better to come face to face with places, moments, and people. But how does learning these lessons make a difference? We'll attempt to make some meaning for our nation today.

August 12th Change: Dirty word or adventure? Marcia Brooker
How do we handle change in our lives, some that we have little or no control over. Using some examples that are familiar to most people, we will talk about ways to embrace it instead of being afraid of it.

August 19th Navigating the Pacific and Wayfinding in Life Jim Russell
It is easy to get lost in life. One morning you wake up and find yourself challenged and alone because circumstances have changed; you know that your life will be different, but feel you have no direction...you are “lost” in the vast ocean of life... For centuries Pacific Islanders have been “wayfinding” - navigating thousands of miles of empty Ocean without instrumentation: no compass, no charts or sextant. Instead, they “read” the waves, the sky, and the weather. Wayfinding is finding a vision, using observation, values, taking care of the Earth and living life with direction and purpose. We will explore the mystery, the secrets, of Polynesian navigators... you will learn how to “read the waters” of your life, creatively...and how UU beliefs are our foundation and our guiding compass, navigating us through life.

August 26th Women Divided Yet United: Susan B. Anthony, Lucy Stone, and the 15th Amendment Samantha McCoy
Susan B. Anthony and Lucy Stone (a Unitarian convert) were once in lockstep at the forefront of the fight for women's suffrage... until the proposal for the 15th Amendment came along. Who gets rights first: African Americans or women? Why did we need to choose? Are we still trying to choose between marginalized groups? "Intersectionality" will be a keyword for this discussion.

September 2nd A Conspiracy of Decency Karen Gillotti and Inge Hill
The rescue of the Danish Jews during World War II.

Notes from the Board of Trustees

by Brad Greene, President

We're Worth It

At some point during the Annual Flower Communion service, I looked around at all the familiar faces and thought about what a remarkable community we are. We have more than our fair share of intelligent, funny, caring, committed and hard-working people.

In June of 2017, I gave the Welcome at the last service of the year just before I was to begin my term as President of the Board. I answered the question of WHY I decided to accept the call to be President with a very simple: this place is worth it. This place IS worth it. What we offer is needed more than ever in the world today. But as important, WE are worth it. We all deserve this caring and welcoming spiritual community.

We disagree. We have conflict. We sometimes have challenges and get on each other's nerves. But I also know that each of us cares deeply, acts out of commitment, and would do anything to help a member of this community who needed it. You don't find that everywhere.

We can each take pride in a year of accomplishment at UU Danbury. When we return in September it is expected that the lower level buildout will be complete. We'll have a new minister at the pulpit. Some of the same challenges we faced this year will still remain for us to tackle. And we'll have new joys and concerns in the year ahead. The one constant is our amazing people.

So...until September, rest, relax, recharge and do what ever you do to just BE. I wish you a summer free from snow, tornadoes, locusts, and other assorted plagues.

Capital Project Update

by Alex Makai



The last of the agreements with multiple contractors for the work on the lower level of the Fellowship Hall has been signed and all the permits needed from the City of Danbury have either been approved or applications submitted. Work at the site should begin by the end of June and the expectation is that it will be finished by the start of our new UU Danbury year in September.

Two of the earliest parts of the work will be the installation of the stairway between the upper and lower levels, located towards the corner where the piano usually sits, and construction of the shaft for the access lift, in the space now used by the coat closet. These will involve cutting through the floor between the two levels. Our contractor is very conscious of the importance of safety while that work is in progress, which should take about one week. The holes in the upper level floor will be covered and taped off outside working hours. If you are in the building at that time please don't go near the work areas. Some of the items on the FH wall will be moved or covered during this work and the platforms, pulpit and piano will be moved towards the left side of the room, away from the side where the stairway will go.

Please retrieve any items of yours that are in the coat closet in the FH lobby. Anything not removed by the time the work on the lift shaft starts will be put in the Cottage House.

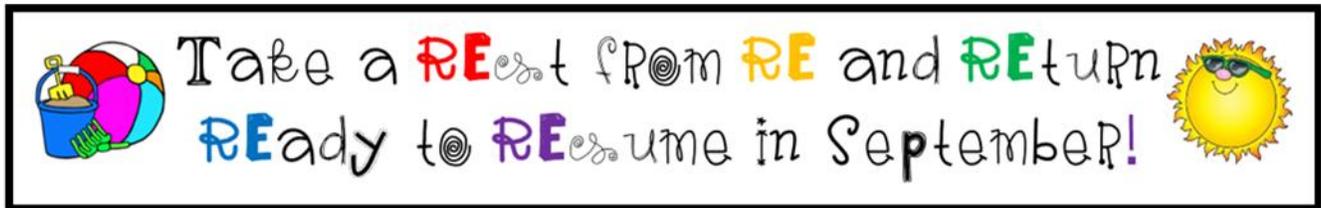
Work on the lower level will continue for most of the summer. During that time please do not go into places where construction is underway, and make sure your children know where they should not go.



Roots & Wings

... what's happening in Religious Education

by Darlene Anderson-Alexander, Director of Religious Education



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

- ☀ All rising prek-5th graders who were in attendance on June 17th received a **"TAKE HOME PACKET"** with UU-related family activity suggestions for each week of summer. If your child did not receive a packet, please pick up one at any Summer Sunday Service OR stop by the Office Tuesday-Thursday from 7:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. If you wish to expand these activities, there are wonderful ideas here:
 - <https://www.questformeaning.org/> Hover over the "family quest" tab and explore!
 - YouTube "Mix-Spirit of Life"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SWMcVdQ1WKQ&list=RDSWMcVdQ1WKQ> Many familiar hymns and other UU-friendly songs!
 - Tapestry of Faith on-line UUA curricula. Check out their searchable database:
<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/search>

Of course, just bringing attention to our faith in everyday life is the BEST Religious Education!

- ☀ Rising 6th-12th graders met off-site on 6/17, so they have received a modified, simpler version of the take home packet, 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. If you attend summer services and see a visiting family, be sure to welcome them!
- ☀ Nursery care will not be provided during the summer.
- ☀

HELPING HANDS



Our younger RE groups worked hard with their helping hands at the end of the RE year. Thank you to everyone in the congregation who supported them by filling their boxes and taking their pledges!



The **RED** (prek-k) group decorated and filled a first aid kit to be used in the lower level rooms. It is filled with band-aids, gloves, eye wash, tape, gauze, and so much more!

The **YELLOW** (1st-2nd grade) group ran a **DIAPER DRIVE** for the folks who use the Comida Food Pantry. They solicited and packaged/labeled 1004 diapers and 26 packages of wipes! Comida does not require a Social Security number to access diapers and other supplies, so this drive will really help babies of undocumented folks.

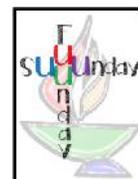


The **GREEN** (3rd-6th grade) group created a PSA about water pollution. Did you know the real “Garbage Island” (a.k.a. the Great Pacific Garbage Patch) is *TWICE THE SIZE OF TEXAS*? Some members of the group cleaned up a stream in Bethel. The group also challenged the congregation to limit their use of plastic water bottles and plastic grocery bags. They hope you will continue that pledge all summer long and tell them about it in September!



Religious Education 2018-2019:
World Religions & Peace

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!





- ✓ **Religious Education Volunteer Orientation** – Saturday, September 8th from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. – for *ALL VOLUNTEERS* - a time to find out what’s new & exciting in RE 2018-19, to meet your teammates, to plan your schedules, and to set up your rooms!
- ✓ **Religious Education Volunteer Training** – Saturday, September 15th from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. – for all interested volunteers – a hands-on, “this is how to plan a lesson” session especially good for new volunteers or those volunteering with a new age group this year; lots of time for questions and idea-sharing!
- ✓ **MNY Fall Junior High Youth Retreat** – Saturday, September 15th – Sunday, September 16th in nearby Patterson, NY! “An intentional community for 6th-8th graders” – REGISTER NOW!! Additional information and the registration link may be found here: <https://www.uua.org/central-east/events/youth/mny-fall-junior-retreat> We have to send one adult for every 4-5 youth; UU Danbury will pay for the adult registration fee. This is a GREAT way for our youth to connect with other UUs in the area!



Ministry/Team News

Ministry of

Appreciation

Thank you to **Charlie Schott and all the UU Danbury musicians:**

Prism, Stringed Cheese, Jazz Trio, UU Danbury Choir, Cheryl Edelen, Barbara Richardson, Janet Cory, Carl Tichler, Marion DiFabbio, Jim Russell, and Carl Tramontana for making last Music Sunday really swing!

THANK YOU to **Jordan Alexander, Lisa Austin-Smith, Melody Levy, and Chris Smith** for creating a RELaxing space for those who volunteered in RE this year to REcharge this past Tuesday!

THANK YOU to **Melody Levy** for donating yards and yards and YARDS of exquisite fabric to RE!

From the Auction Team



**Guess what's less than THREE months away?
That lovely evening In The Woods ... AUCTION 2018..**

If you're not "in the mix yet", then, time is a-wasting ...

Marian/Tony DiFabbio, Val Cochrane, Eva DeFranco, Lisa Greene, Barb Myers, Suzanne Perry, Yvonne Ruddy-Stein, and Lola Strilowich have been meeting and planning since January, but they can't make our Auction a success without UU...

yes U and U and U and U and U!

Contracts are available at the Auction Table during coffee hour. Fill one out today !!!

Auction 2018 Full Participation Plea:

"It's not about what UU can do for U... It's about what U can do for UU". Perhaps you have received the caring of this congregation a time of need, perhaps you have been lifted by the sermons, the music, the coffee hour fellowship...

So, just as we receive from UUCD, it is up to each and every one of us to give back. It is up to each and every one of us to sustain the spirit of hospitality and care that make everyone feel welcome here, and It is up to each and every one of us to support our work in the community beyond these walls.

Give Back Today.

1. Buy a Ticket,
2. Donate Goods or Services
3. Host an Event, and
4. Become a Matching Donor

Please contact: **Marian /Tony DiFabbio, Val Cochrane, Eva DeFranco (for matching donor), Lisa Greene, Barb Myers, Suzanne Perry, Yvonne Ruddy-Stein, or Lola Strilowich.**

Seeking Matching Donations for the Auction

Each year, the financial success of our annual fundraiser is augmented by our matching donor program. This program allows members and friends of UUCD to participate in the annual fundraiser by agreeing to match a % of the auction proceeds (1%, 2%, 5%, 10%...) or simply pledging a flat dollar amount to fit your budget. Often, for some reason or other, members and friends cannot attend the auction, or get outbid on a particular item, or cannot find something suitable at the auction to fit their needs. The matching donation program allows everyone to participate. Any contribution, no matter how small, helps. The goal this year is full participation. Contact **Eva DeFranco** with your contribution today. It is not too early.

From the Social Action Council

Soup Kitchen Corner



On Saturday, July 7th, Soup Kitchen Team #1 will serve up a hot, delicious meal at the Dorothy Day Soup Kitchen on Spring Street. Team Leader **Donna Lawrence** will be joined by **John Miglietta, David Teagarden, Keith Dupree, Inge Hill, Judy Lacker, Janet Cory, Dawn Reshen-Doty, Mike Zacchea and Tony DiFabbio**. 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!

On Saturday, August 4th, 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 **Siubhan Fallon, Nancy, Julie and Carl Tramontana, Chris Halfar, John Alvord, Darlene Anderson-Alexander, Gary Winn and Suze Shaner**. **Due to August vacation schedules, Team 2 is short-handed for August 4th. If anyone is available to help on that date, contact Sharon Stram. Your help would be most appreciated.**

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 *Team Green*

UU Danbury Earns the Highest Tier "Green Houses of Worship Award"



Donna Lawrence and Gary Mummert accept the award from IREJN

The Interreligious Eco-Justice Network is a Connecticut organization whose mission is to empower and inspire religious communities to be faithful servants of the earth. They have established a 3-tiered "Green Houses of Worship" environmental stewardship program which awards certificates based on eco-friendly actions of congregations.

UUCD's Team Green was pleased to accept the highest tier award in a small ceremony on a recent Sunday. Two members of the IREJN came present the award, and to inspire us with their remarks.

Some of Team Green's latest actions which merited this award:

- * establishing a community garden;
- * conducting an energy audit, and encouraged congregants to do so, too;
- * installing low-flow water fixtures;
- * replacing low-efficiency windows and doors;
- * creating a high-end composting system;
- * installing a pollinator garden;
- * rescuing over 25 trees on the property previously threatened by invasive vines.

From the *Women's Retreat Planning Team*

SAVE THE DATE: 20th ANNUAL WOMEN'S RETREAT - APRIL 27-28, 2019

Many thanks to the 57 women who took our 2019 Retreat Choices and 2018 Retreat Evaluation Survey. Your input has given the Women's Retreat Planning Team the ability to make a decision for 2019 that reflects the feelings of the majority of women, and we thank you for that.

With that in mind, please save the dates: April 27-28, 2019 for the 20th Annual UUCD Women's Retreat at The Guest House in Chester, CT. Although it is only one overnight, we will begin earlier in the day than we did this year, to allow us to offer more workshops and activities. And although the retreat will only officially be one night, the Guest House will also offer the option of staying overnight Friday night for those who want to get there early and have a 2-night weekend.

We want to make this a special retreat, so look for a potluck in the fall to explore ideas for our 20th Annual Women's Retreat. Have a wonderful summer.

Upcoming Events



The **Conversations** group meets every other month on the second Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. in the Conference Room. You do not need to read the book to attend. For more information please contact **Mary Ann Kulla**.

July 12th - we'll be discussing "**The Myth of America's Decline**" by **Josef Joffe**. This is a provocative and contrarian work that challenges the pervasive notion that America is on the decline. It promises to start some heated discussion.

September 13th our book will be "**A Higher Loyalty - Truth, Lies, and Leadership**" by **James Comey**. Comey shares his never-before-told experiences from some of the high stakes situations in his career. And he explores what good, ethical leadership looks like and how it drives sound decisions.

November 8th we'll be considering "**The Woman's Hour**" by **Elaine Weiss**. Set in 1920 when only one state is still needed to ratify the 19th Amendment and conclude the seven-decade long crusade to win the vote for women, this book opens a window on a part of our history that is usually glossed over. Who opposed the suffragettes? The opposing forces included politicians with careers at stake, liquor companies, railroad magnates and racists who don't want black women voting.

Movies with a Message

"To know is nothing at all; to imagine is everything."
- Anatole France

Mark your calendars for the second Friday of July and the second Friday of August. We will continue our film series through the summer as we have in past years.

Friday, July 13th

Film short: *Cupids*: With a touch of mischievousness and humor, two cupids undertake the monumental task of getting two strangers to talk to each other!

Feature film: *Summer Coda*: Among the stunning orange groves of rural Australia, two people meet for a romantic adventure, with all its delights and difficulties.

Friday, August 10th

August "Short Night" -- An evening of short films that haven't fit into our regular program, but which are too good to be ignored, among which will be:

Giraffe; Lost And Found; Good Chemistry; Look At Me

Our objective is to present films of substance in a living room setting and to provide an opportunity to discuss with friends. Please join us **at 7:00 p.m.** in the Conference Room. All are welcome. Pizza is provided. Bring your own beverage. Popcorn optional! Contributions will be accepted, all of which will go to UU Danbury. **(For more information on the service from which we make our film selections, please check the website at www.SpiritualCinemaCircle.com.)**

Watch for further information in "This Week at UU Danbury" or check the bulletin board in the sanctuary. Keith will email notices to those people who are on the film series email list. If you are not on the list but would like to be, please send an email request to **Keith Dupree**. In the meantime, may you all have a good summer. See you at the movies!

Thank
you 



Dear Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury,

Thank YOU! On behalf of ARC, it's my pleasure to thank you for your generous donations of food ARC's Food Pantry.

A quote that I'm fond of is from Anita Roddick, an environmental campaigner, human rights activist, and Founder of The Body Shop:

"If you think you're too small to have an impact, try going to bed with a mosquito."

Little things really do add up. Little things make a huge difference to the people served by ARC. Many smiles have crossed the faces of people in need of articles of clothing, hygiene products, fresh and non-perishable food. In the same way, behind the scenes gifts of time and talent make impacts on people that are huge and appreciated.

One love and many blessings,

Rev. Phyllis J. Leopold,
Executive Director



Unitarian Universalist Church in Meriden
Chalice Sanctuary Team

Dear Members of the UU Congregation of Danbury,

On behalf of our Chalice Sanctuary Team, abundant thanks for your recent gift of \$239.76 to support our Sanctuary Ministry. This will help immensely as we continue to cover groceries and other expenses incurred with hosting our guests.

We pray for all who are downwind of the horrific practices in this nation that make the Lady in the Harbor weep.

In faith and gratitude.