



Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury

Monthly **COMMENT** Newsletter

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

JUNE 2019

From our Consulting Minister



Dear UUCD Members and Friends,

There is much in Unitarian Universalist congregational life that comes from our Protestant and New England traditions, rituals, and practices of the past, including, some decades ago now, "closing up church" for the summer. There are plusses and minuses to all that changes with the times, but one of the things that I value about how times have changed is year-round church, the consistency of our religious communities being open to all comers, every Sunday, all year 'round. We never know when people will seek out a caring and welcoming community such as ours, when people's lives will free up such that they can take the time to seek out a meaning-making community to deepen their spiritual journeys. Sometimes summertime is exactly the right time for reflecting more deeply about what is missing in our lives, what connections and conversations we long for more of.

And so, with this in mind, I want to share with you a bit about my summer plans and schedule. I will be with you throughout June just as I have been for the past ten months.

During the week of General Assembly (June 18-23) I will be serving as an off-site Ministerial Delegate from my home, voting, weighing-in, taking notes and getting energized by all that is streamed online--more-and-more every year. (Please be in touch with me if you'd like to be an off-site UUCD delegate this year--it's only \$185 to register and there are so many great workshops, worship services, and lectures to take in.) I will lead the service on June 30 with you in Danbury. In July my family and I take our once-a-year trip to see all my Oregon family (including my now-96-year-old grandmother Norma) and we will take some vacation time and recuperative time throughout that month.

And then in August, I will be back-to-work as normal, "even though" it's August. I will lead the services at UUCD on August 4 and August 18. I will be looking and planning with you for the congregational year ahead. In September we will gather together for our annual Homecoming and Water Ceremony service on September 8--remember to gather water from your summer travels or places right in or near your home where you take a moment to appreciate water and all that sustains our lives.

Before I joined you all in June 2018, my spouse Cathy and I had been planning our first-ever (for either or both of us) Sabbatical for this coming fall, October-December 2019. In order to honor that commitment, I will be spending October and November on sabbatical (accrued vacation & study leave time from UUCD) and will then be with you full-time for the month of December. I look forward to doing some substantive writing and resting in October, and in November my family and I will be going on our first-ever international trip as a family, during which we hope and plan to visit friends and UU communities in the Philippines and India. I look forward as well to being with you full-time in December and getting to focus on UUCD entirely for that busy-and-full month of congregational life. And then in January 2020, I'll return to the half-time arrangement in both Danbury and Hartford.

So! I hope for those of you who like to look ahead, this has been useful, and for the rest of you it's not been too boring. There are more stories and details to come I'm sure. As always, if these thoughts elicit something you're inspired about, would like to talk with me about, or that you'd be willing to share with me, I'd love to hear from you. You can reach me best by e-mail, cell phone, text, first-class U.S. mail, or Facebook Messenger if you just have a quick question or comment. I look forward to hearing from you in whatever way is best for you, and to continuing to get to know you, even over the summer months. May this time of the longest days of the year be energizing and uplifting for you!

Warmly,

Rev. Heather

cell: 541-390-6052, e-mail: minister@uudanbury.org

best mailing address: 50 Bloomfield Avenue, Hartford, CT 06105

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 July/August Comment –
Friday, June 21st.**

Our Caring Circle is Available

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

Bob Bollinger is the contact person for **June and July**.

Joan Campbell is the assistant.

If you have a need, please contact Bob.

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

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

Sunday, June 2nd

Many Right Ways

Rev. Heather Rion Starr

It is so intrinsic within us to feel like there is only one Right Way that we each have to find in order to get on in life. But we know with our rational minds that this is just not true--there are many right ways. There are many right ways to be a part of a Unitarian Universalist community, too. How can we find the ways that are right for us while also stretching ourselves to try new things, new roles, new ways of being with one another? We will welcome new members this morning, and following the service, engage in our Annual All-Congregational Meeting.

Sunday, June 9th

Flower Communion, Senior High Bridging, and RE Volunteer Recognition

Cindy Davidson, Guest Minister, and Darlene Anderson-Alexander, Director of Religious Education

Join us today as we gather to celebrate so many year-end events. Our annual Flower Communion Service invites all to bring a flower to share and promises all will leave with a different one ... we are all beautiful, unique, and part of this faith community! We will also send three of our seniors in high school "over the bridge" to young adulthood. Finally, we will recognize and honor those who have served in Religious Education this year. Trio con Brio will be providing some of the music and singing and joy will abound!

Please plan to stay for the Congregational Picnic immediately following the Service. Lunch will be provided by the RE Ministry Team.

Sunday, June 16th

Finding Hope Alongside Life's Journey

Margalie Belizaire

As we journey this mysterious thing called life, we are at times faced with moments of deep struggle; some of which seem like more than we can handle. How do we find the hope to carry on? How do we offer hope to others? Come explore these questions and others. Margalie is the Intern Minister at The Unitarian Church in Westport.

Sunday, June 23rd

Reaching for the Stars

Michael Stengle

A celebration of the human spirit through a reflection on the life of physicist and astronaut Dr. Ronald Erwin McNair.

Sunday, June 30th

Travel As a Political Act

Rev. Heather Rion Starr

Inspired by travel writer Rick Steves, we'll consider any trips or travel we might be looking forward to this summer as a chance to learn and connect with new people, new communities, new customs. What does it mean to absorb and even plan for Steves' vision: "Travel broadens our perspectives personally, culturally, and politically. Suddenly, the palette with which we paint the story of our lives has more colors. We realize there are exciting options to the social and community norms that our less traveled neighbors may never consider."

**Call for the Annual Meeting of UU Danbury
JUNE 2, 2019
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 FOR ELECTION 2019-20

To Be Elected to The Board of Trustees

President:	Melody Levy	1 year term until June 30, 2020
Vice President:	Christine Creter	1 year term until June 30, 2020
Secretary:	Samantha McCoy	1 year term until June 30, 2020
Trustee:	Peter Horton	3 year term until June 30, 2022

Remaining on the Board of Trustees

Treasurer:	Marie Dupree	1 year of 2 year term until June 30, 2020
Trustee:	Ali Haffner	2 years of 3 year term until June 30, 2021
Trustee:	Lisa Austin-Smith	1 year term until June 30, 2020

To Be Elected on the Nominating Team

Member	Yvonne Ruddy-Stein	2 year term until June 30, 2021
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Remaining on the Nominating Team

Member	Mareidith Spector	1 year of 2 year term until June 30, 2020
Member	John Miglietta	1 year of 2 year term until June 30, 2020

Roberts Rules of Order prevail at all Congregational Meetings. Our bylaws also state that there must be a quorum of at least 15% of the membership. At an official membership of 135, this means there must be at least 21 members present at the June 3rd meeting for the meeting to proceed.

Article 111, Section 1. from our by-laws state: General: Any person, at least 18 years of age, who is in sympathy with its purpose and program, signs the Membership Book, and makes an annual financial commitment, may become a voting member of this Congregation.

Voting rights extend only to those who have been members for at least 60 days, which, for this year’s meeting, means anyone who signed the membership book prior to **April 2, 2019**. Absentee ballots are allowed. Absentee ballots are to be handed or emailed to **Brad Greene** by **June 1, 2019**.

Childcare will be available during the meeting.

Notes from the Board of Trustees

by Brad Greene, President

Legacy

Legacy is such a big word. In other contexts, it is filled with weight and importance and is the stuff of biographies and history books. As I'm thinking about it, it's simply what we leave behind when we finish something.

These last couple of years I've thought about this notion of legacy. I've made a significant professional change and other chapters of my life have come to a close. As that has happened, I have reflected on where I have made a difference; where I hoped I have made a positive impact and left things a little better than I found them. What I have discovered is that so much of what we do is transient. Decisions we make, policies or structures we put in place, all of it are easily changed by those who follow us. However, it is how we touch people and our way of being that becomes legacy. How we are, and how it stays in the hearts of others, is what we leave behind.

My time as President of the Board these last two years has been a busy one for our congregation. The completion of the build-out, personnel changes, financial matters, sanctuary, communications and governance work, and many more routine matters, filled our agenda. I expect as our congregation grows and moves forward new issues and challenges will surface, and much of what we've done these last two years will be forgotten.

However, there is one thing that happened that I hope will remain. There were two important issues for our community that we had to wrestle with these last couple of years: the offering of sanctuary and how to proceed after our unsuccessful search for a settled minister. In both cases we created space for dialogue and sharing. We created an opportunity for disagreement and different opinions. People listened and some even changed their minds. It was a wonderful thing for our community, and would be an even greater thing for our world.

Thank you for the privilege of serving our congregation these last two years. I wish everyone a summer filled with fun and relaxation.



Roots & Wings

... what's happening in Religious Education

by Darlene Anderson-Alexander, Director of Religious Education

I hope to see all of you at the “*Flower Communion/Senior High Bridging/RE Volunteer Recognition Service*” on Sunday, June 9th, followed by a picnic sponsored by the Religious Education Ministry Team! As our annual UU Flower Communion ritual celebrates **beauty, human uniqueness, diversity, and community**, it is the perfect time for us to also send our three high school seniors “over the bridge” to young adulthood. Gaby, Devon, and Kiah are each **unique** individuals who have brought so much **beauty** and originality to our **community**. It will be exciting to see what the future has in store for each of them! It is also an ideal opportunity to recognize the volunteers who have guided our children and youth in their quest for truth and meaning this year. They have brought their **diversity** and **unique** teaching styles and interests to their groups each week and our **community** is stronger for their commitment. When you see any of these people - thank them. Even if you don't have a child in the RE program - thank them anyway. These are the folks who are moving the future of UU faith formation forward and we are ALL blessed by their presence!



Teaching Team Members Gale Alexander, Jackie Alexander, Max Alexander, Chris Creter, Alison DiPinto, Ro D'Ostilio, Bruni Edwards, Luchina Fisher, Kathleen Granger, Rob Haffner, Jacqui Kaplan, Leah Kirshner, Kristie Liotta, Holly Lynch, Sam McCoy, Nicole Paris, David Parr, Suzanne Perry, Melene Rose, Yvonne Ruddy-Stein, Johanna Schrader-Fentress, Chris Smith, Heather Smith, Lynn Taborsak, Sharon Tavares, and Jim Wruck; **DRE Du Jour Team:** Gina Cassetta, Lisa Horton, Jim Russell, and Sharon Stram; **Religious Education Ministry Team:** Samantha McCoy (Chair), Alison DiPinto, Kathleen Granger, Jan Malin, and Ali Haffner (BOT Liaison); and, finally, **One-Time Event, Substitute, And Behind-The-Scenes Helpers:** Bryce Alexander, Dean Alexander, Jordan Alexander, Lisa Austin-Smith, Sarah Baskin, Dan Brodax, Gina

Cassetta, Valerie Cochrane, Michele Cousens, Rik Cousens, Paula Crosby, Joanne Davidson, Tony DiFabbio, Cheryl Edelen, Jan Galloway, Brad Greene, Lisa Greene, Ali Haffner, Nancy Hershatter, Margaret Henderson, Jane Leff, Melody Levy, Lou Liotta, Robert Lowe, Sequoia Lowe, Jan Malin, Chris McCartney, John Miglietta, Andy Milkovic, Gary Mummert, Tim O'Donnell, David Paris, Matt Paris, Sean Paris, Jim Russell, Lola Strilowich, Sharon Tavares, and Carl Tramontana. **Thank you ALL!**



Of course, The Religious Education Ministry Team is well into the planning stages of **NEXT YEAR's** RE Program and we need YOU! We are hoping to have the following groups: PreK-2nd Grade, 3rd-5th Grade, 6th-8th Grade, and 9th-12th Grade Coming of Age/Bridging. Additionally, we plan to have four SUUnday FUUnday sessions throughout the year as well as a four-week RE Social Justice Intersession in the winter. To make this a successful year,

we need about 40 volunteers, partially due to the fact that we have a huge Coming of Age class all needing mentors! **THANK YOU** to those folks who have already signed on for next year. The REMT members will be in the foyer for the remainder of Sundays this year and are happy to speak with YOU about how you can join the fun! You should also feel free to contact me (darlene.dre.uucd@gmail.com or 203-798-1994) if you would like to set up a time to talk about volunteering in RE. The best way to keep the Program moving forward in this time of transition is to have as many things in place as possible when the next DRE is hired. **Let's do this!**



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

- ☀ The regular RE year will finish on Sunday, June 16th with wrap-up gatherings in all of the color 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. **If your child used the RE packet last summer, please let me know and I will give them updated activities.**
- ☀ 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 '19-'20. There will also be extra packets for visitors or children who didn't receive a packet on June 16th.
- ☀ Nursery care will not be provided during the summer.



Come to the

End-of-Year Picnic!

Sunday, June 9th
11:30-1:30

Enjoy

- ★ sandwiches, salad, & beverages provided by the **Religious Education Ministry Team!**
- ★ games, music, and fun!
- ★ dedicating the UUCD Peace Pole created by our Prek-5th graders!

Bring a friend!

*gluten-free, vegan, and dairy-free options will be available; folks with other food allergies, please BYO just to be safe!

Ministry/Team News

From the Auction Team

by Marian DiFabbio



in fun and fellowship on November 2nd at Auction 2019!

Here's your chance to serve others and raise money for our spiritual home. Start thinking about what talents you have to share and how you can donate them to the auction ... or... what you have that might be of use to others.

You might be able to:

- Mop a floor, paint a Door, Cook a Feast, Walk a beast,
- Have a Party on your Boat, Embroider a Rainbow on a Coat.
- Repair a Crack, Massage a Back, Bake Bread, Make a Bed.
- Wash a Window 'til it Shines, Share your Cottage in the Pines.
- Share your Tickets, Whitewash Pickets, Giggle with Babies, Lunch with Ladies.
- Feed the Fish, Grant a Wish, Design a Room, Build a Loom.
- Cater a Dinner, Photo the Winner, Teach a Dance, or Alter Pants!

There will be Auction Contracts available in Fellowship Hall or talk to **Marian DiFabbio** or any member of the Auction Team: **Val Cochrane, Barb Myers, Suzanne Perry, Lola Strilowich, or Tony DiFabbio.**

From the Membership Team

by Nancy Tramontana



Greeters help make UUCD a welcoming place for all who enter our doors on Sunday morning. They offer a warm smile, hand out the OOS and help orient newcomers to the service. Please contact **Ginny Cook** if you are interested in volunteering once a month.

From the *Social Action Council*

Soup Kitchen Corner

by Judy Lacker

On Saturday, June 1st, 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, Michele & Rik Cousens and Yvonne Ruddy-Stein and Serena Stein. 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 can all be an important part of the fight to end hunger in our community!

Upcoming Events

Young Women's Forum

Saturday, June 1st - 1:00 - 5:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall

This free event is organized by high school age women to educate our community on what it means to be a woman today, and how we can better our perception of gender as a whole.

All are welcome, regardless of age or gender.

Our event hopes to provide an opportunity for young women to learn more about themselves and what it means to be a woman today. We will cover topics including but not limited to;

- consent
- abuse/domestic violence and how to get help
- mental health
- self-defense
- self-care (yoga)



Men Conversing Over Coffee - We are now nine men meeting once a month on the second Monday. Join us when you can. Note the new PLACE. Monday, June 10th, at 9:30 a.m. at MOTHERSHIP CAFE, 331 Main Street, Danbury (near North Street).



by Keith Dupree

*Back of every mistaken venture and defeat is the laughter
of wisdom, if you listen -- Carl Sandburg (1878-1967)*

As you probably all know, along the path from mistaken venture to wisdom's laughter are many snares, such as those set by habit, ego, insensitivity. There are some snares that have no name, and some that make the path nearly impossible to follow.

7:00 p.m. – *Dear Kimberly* – A temporary office worker has a secret crush on a co-worker. On his last day of assignment, he decides to reveal his feelings to her. Her reaction should provide for a lively discussion!

7:10 p.m. – *The Healer* – Whatever image the title of our feature film conjures up in your mind, the image is probably wrong. In our June feature, living irresponsibly has brought a young man serious trouble, the solution to which demands return to his family home. There he learns that he has an awesome gift, but one that opens a path that he really doesn't want to follow.

9:05 – 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, June 14th at 7:00 p.m. in the UUCD Conference Room. As usual, all are welcome. Pizza will be provided. Popcorn optional! Contributions will be gratefully accepted, all of which will go to the UUCD.

(For more information on these films and on the service from which we make our selections, please check the website at www.SpiritualCinemaCircle.com.)

**Looking Ahead! General Assembly 2019 – June 19th – 23rd
& ways you could join in “off-site”**

General Assembly is the annual business meeting of our Unitarian Universalist denomination, and it’s a whole lot more. Inspirational worship services, informative workshops, entertaining programs, and a bustling exhibit hall help make GA an unforgettable experience for the thousands of Unitarian Universalists that attend. Attendees leave with a renewed sense of energy, inspiration, and innovative ideas to take back to their congregations and communities.

It's not too late to register as an off-site delegate and join Rev. Heather in the chat rooms and worship viewing online spaces! If you would like some personal (ministerial?!) support about how to manage it all online and how to get the most out of the off-site experience, let Rev. Heather know—she'd be happy to meet with you, in person or online, to show you how to navigate things.



What do we want Unitarian Universalism to be? It is a time when we are asking big questions in our faith, and GA 2019 will be focused on digging into those questions together. It is a critical chance for congregational leaders and passionate UUs to set new goals and aspirations for our religious community. Help begin to reshape our Association and our congregations in new and powerful ways.

This year’s theme is about collective power, “The Power of We,” as well as the possibility, the purpose, the struggle and the joy of what it means to be together in faithful community. In the past two years, Unitarian Universalism has recommitted to the work of liberation inside and outside our faith community. The antidote to a time of dangerous dehumanization is a love that connects us to our deeper humanity.

Come to Spokane to experience what our shared faith can become when we embrace the Power of We.



UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Visit uua.org/ga for

- Programming Information
- Registration and Housing
- Financial Aid Information
- Volunteer Opportunities

UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SPOKANE, WASHINGTON | JUNE 19–23, 2019

 Wired Lecturer Richard Blanco <small>Selected by President Obama as the 9th inaugural poet in U.S. history. Richard Blanco is the youngest and the first Latino, transgender, and gay person to serve in such a role.</small>	 Robin DiAngelo <small>Author of <i>White Fragility</i>, DiAngelo speaks dynamically on what it means to be white in a society that prohibits your recognition, yet is deeply divided by race.</small>	 Rev. Lindl Remuden <small>Rev. Lindl Remuden, Director of Partnerships and Emerging Programs at Starr King School for the Ministry, will deliver the sermon at the Service of the Living Tradition.</small>	 Rev. Maria I. Valentin <small>Rev. Maria I. Valentin, minister with the Outfront Universalist Church of Marlton, NJ, will deliver the opening at the Sunday Morning Worship.</small>
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