



Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury

Monthly **COMMENT** Newsletter

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

JULY/AUGUST 2019

From our Consulting Minister



"Love allows us to have tensions and stay in conversation.
Love allows us to sit in our contradictions and become a healing balm."
--Everette Thompson, UUA's Side with Love Campaign Manager

Dear UUUCD Members and Friends,

What are the first words, thoughts, questions, mantras or focused motivations that get you out of bed in the morning?

Years ago I worked with another *Hospital* Chaplain at Portland Providence Medical Center, a priest who had journeyed from Africa to study and work in the United States. His name was Freddie, and he shared at some point in our group work together that he started each day with the question: "What will I learn today?" I found that so beautiful, open-hearted, and...different from my own instinctive approach.

I think one of my underlying motivations for getting going in the morning (besides needing to make the kids' lunches before they need to be coaxed out of bed) is to create something. For me it is so fundamentally crucial to be able to see that, by the end of the day, I have created something--perhaps it is just a meal, or an organized countertop, a completed newsletter column(!), or a list of tasks crossed-out; perhaps it's more substantive like a thoughtful, well-crafted sermon. Some motivation to accomplish or "make" something tangible energizes me, even at this time of the congregational year when I feel fairly depleted.

Which leads me to another summer question. What nourishes and replenishes you? Summer is such a crucial time for filling up our individual wells--with new experiences, with special warm weather activities, with time spent in more relaxing ways with family and friends. Having a few good books nearby and taking the time to read them more thoroughly than we have time for during the church year can be a nourishing practice. Making an effort to get up early and walk, or listen to new music, or attend some gatherings in our towns or communities that help us branch out of our usual social circles--any of these things can re-inspire us about this life we are so blessed to live.

May you find ways to make this summer nourishing and replenishing for you. And wherever you notice yourself feeling "filled up again," collect some water for the September Water Ceremony! Our Homecoming, Sources, and Water Ceremony Service will be Sunday, September 8, and we so look forward to returning and renewing our covenant with you to deepen our connection with one another for the coming congregational year.

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. While I will be away (and out-of-state) July 1-13, I will be back after that and hopefully energized for the months to follow. May this time of the longest days of the year also 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

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

Sunday, July 7th

Growing Our UU Principles

Samantha McCoy

Explore some Unitarian Universalist history as we look at the 1961 merger of the American Unitarian Association and the Universalist Church of America. How did the founding UUs settle on their major Principles? How have those Principles changed since 1961? And how does the proposal for an 8th Principle, from Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism, factor in today? Join us for some consideration of how we examine and express our values.

Sunday, July 14th

The Many Faces of God: A Casting Nightmare

Gale Alexander

Sunday, July 21st

Size Diversity

Nicole Paris

We have been swimming in Diet Culture for generations, accepting the notion that all people should be thin. As UUs we accept diversity of all kinds. Can we add to that: people in larger bodies? A discussion of health, metabolism, weight stigma, fat acceptance, and social justice.

Sunday, July 28th

Acceptance and Spiritual Growth

Joe Gillotti

A talk on the 3rd UU Principle, "Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregation". In this talk Acceptance will be looked at in a much deeper context. This message will conclude with four inspiring and uplifting stories that are wonderful and at the same time unusual examples of Acceptance. For people who are interested in examining their depth of understanding of these powerful examples and want to take a fresh look at this third UU Principle and practice, you will hopefully be motivated to just look a little bit deeper into your own views concerning this expanded meaning of Acceptance.

Sunday, August 4th

The Promise and the Practice

Rev. Heather Rion Starr

Where is the UUA's work with BLUU (Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism), why does it matter for the rest of us, and how can we support this work in a constructive and thoughtful way? Our Share-the-Plate offering today will go to the UUA's Promise and the Practice campaign and commitment to support BLUU.

Sunday, August 11th

After Life Option

Meredith Spector and Pamela Brown

There will be information on differing types of burials, rituals, and options including green burials. Following the regular Sunday Service there will be a Death Cafe at 11:30 for anyone wishing to participate. This service will be the beginning of a three part Right to Flourish series exploring choices along the path at end of life. One such choice for Right to Flourish was to rename 'Death Cafe' to indicate the choices that can be made at points on the path. Join us to hear about After Life options and to learn the new name to replace "Death Cafe". Pamela Brown is the Executive Director at Wilton Congregational Church and Hillside Cemetery.

Sunday, August 18th

Unitarian Universalism for All Our Lives

Rev. Heather Rion Starr

What is the Unitarian Universalism you carry in your back pocket, purse, satchel, backpack, or glove compartment? How does Unitarian Universalism feed you such that you mention it to someone you are newly getting to know? We will focus today on welcoming newcomers, being a welcoming community, some UUism 101 and crucial reminders for all of us!

Sunday, August 25th

Leora Tec

What Makes Them Do It?: A Look at non-Jewish Polish Rescuers of Jewish Memory

Leora Tec has recently returned from seven months in Poland which she spent interviewing non-Jewish Poles who devote themselves to preserving Jewish memory. Leora will introduce us to some of these amazing people and will share clips from video interviews she conducted with them in Poland. Leora Tec is a writer, speaker and the founder and director of Bridge To Poland, an organization which seeks to educate people about Jewish history in Poland with an emphasis on how the Jews of Poland are being remembered by non-Jewish Poles today. Leora is a partner of Brama Grodzka-Teatr NN in Lublin, Poland and a Mary Elvira Stevens Traveling Fellow from Wellesley College (2018-2019). Current projects include: A video archive of conversations with non-Jewish rescuers of memory in Poland in partnership with Brama Grodzka; a presentation/performance called, "Remembrance of Things Past: Keeping the Stories of Jewish Poland Alive," in partnership with Witek Dąbrowski, deputy director of Brama Grodzka and a memoir about her relationship to Poland. Leora holds a B.A. from Wellesley College and a J.D./LL.M. in foreign and international law from Duke University School of Law. She enjoys reading, writing, learning languages and doing improvisational comedy.

Sunday, September 1st

Honoring Singer Songwriters

Gary Mummert On this

Labor Day weekend, we will celebrate the music and "labor" of musicians, some who are now doing well and others who are working their way to success. Gary Mummert will curate a selection of songs and videos that have aided his recent soulful journey, using show performances from LIVE FROM HERE as a starting point. Prepare to be entertained and exposed to diverse and compelling music. Healthful snacks welcomed.

Notes from the Board of Trustees

by Melody Levy, President

Dear Friends,

I found my home here in 1991 when Reverend Barbara Pescan was our called minister. She tended the fire in my heart, stirred my understanding about belonging and spoke to my deepest needs and certainties. Growing home here for as many years as I have will serve to assure you of this promise: I will always have my ear to the ground to better understand the needs of our community and to be strategic in response.

The formal year is winding down while the sweetness of this season is calling for adventure and renewal. Despite the quiet around The Ridge, the Board will be meeting regularly and actively throughout the summer months, establishing our goals for the year while preparing for the return of the congregation in September. With all the challenges and rewards ahead of us, we will constantly remember that a vibrant UUCD calls for the participation of all of us. We will be addressing ways to usher our members and friends into belonging and into leadership. This is a working community where we give of ourselves, whether through singing, educating children and adults, financial management, grounds keeping, greeting, social justice, pastoral care or membership. We have an exceptional bounty of diverse talents and passions, both tapped and still in the wings waiting to be recognized. Lend yourselves, if you haven't yet. Our lay ministry to each other is essential.

Thank you, Brad Greene, Alex Makai, Kristen Papucci and Reverend Heather Rion Starr. I believe that we have many reasons to feel enormous pride in your accomplishments.

UUA.org is a steady reference of our greater history and UU current events should you want to delve into learning more about our "bigger" bones. Summer services are at 10 a.m. Remember to bring the water you have gathered from either near or far to pour into our common bowl on Ingathering Sunday, September 8th.

May the love of this community give you strength and courage and faith, until we meet again.

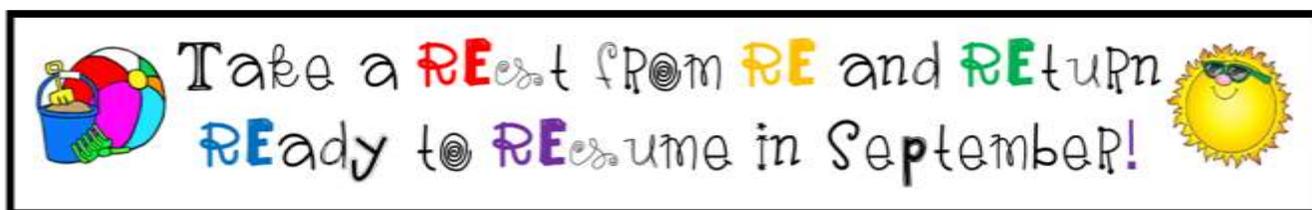


Roots & Wings

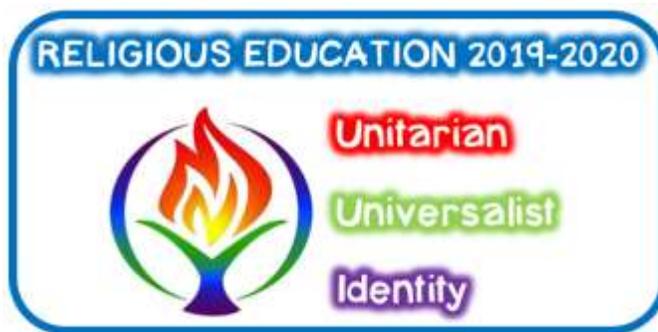
... what's happening in Religious Education

by Darlene Anderson-Alexander, Director of Religious Education

On Sunday, June 9th, during our End-of-Year Picnic, we dedicated the “UUCD Peace Pole” created this spring by our prek-5th graders. Thank you to **Chris Creter** and **Tim O’Donnell** for moving that project forward! Be sure to check out all of the beautiful messages of peace written and drawn on the Peace Pole which has been “planted” right near the Buddy Bench.



Our RE program will once again take a rest during the summer. RE groups will not meet and childcare will not be available, HOWEVER, people of ALL AGES are encouraged to attend the Services on Sunday mornings! “TAKE HOME PACKETS” with UU-related family activity suggestions for each week of summer are available in the foyer. If you see visitors with children, please offer them a packet and show them the notebook describing the plan for RE ’19-’20. We are ALL greeters and have the ability to help new families feel welcome in our congregation! Religious Education groups will begin meeting again on September 15th.



THANK YOU to everyone who has volunteered to date to be a part of Religious Education 2019-2020! Our teaching teams look pretty solid with two additional folks needed to join the 6th-8th Grade Team. A few additional mentors are needed to complete the 9th-12th Grade Coming of Age/Bridging Team as well. Please reach out to **Kristen Papucci**, RE Ministry Team Chair, if you are able to volunteer. 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. We can do this!



For my final opportunity to share with the children during the “Children’s Focus” in early June, I chose to read Only One You by Linda Kranz. If you weren’t at the Service on June 2nd, I would definitely recommend reading it. It’s a lovely story for the young and young at heart in which Adri the Fish’s parents share their wisdom as Adri heads off into the world. Their final thought for Adri is, “There is only one you in this great big world. Make it a better place.” I just know our UU Danbury children and youth will work hard to make the world a better place and I am so proud of all of them!



Thank you for the beautiful vase and all of the heartfelt cards, messages, and visits that you have given me over the past month. Your expressions of appreciation, memories, and good wishes for the future are just so precious to me. I will keep them close to my heart (and in my lovely box!) forever.

~ With love and devotion, Darlene

Our Caring Circle is Available

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

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

Joan Campbell is the assistant.

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

Donna Lawrence is the contact person 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.

Ministry/Team News

From *Buildings and Grounds Team*

by Gary Mummert



to **Melene Rose, Val Cochrane, Lisa Greene, and Todd Zagorec** for help with specialty cleaning of the Fellowship Hall and exterior spruce-up.

From the *Social Action Council*

Soup Kitchen Corner

by Judy Lacker

On Saturday, July 6th, Soup Kitchen Team #1 will serve up a hot, delicious meal at the Dorothy Day Soup Kitchen on Spring Street. New Co-Team Leaders **John Miglietta and Judy Lacker** will be joined by **David Teagarden, Keith Dupree, Inge Hill, Rose Schlemmer and Brian Teagarden**. 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 3rd, Soup Kitchen Team #2 will serve up a hot, delicious meal at the Dorothy Day Soup Kitchen on Spring Street. New Team Leader **Carl Tramontana** will be joined by **Chris Halfar, Rose Schlemmer, Darlene Anderson-Alexander, Nicole and Sean Paris, Deborah Casey and Suze Shaner**.

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!

From the *Membership Team*



The Membership Team is offering and encouraging putting pronouns on name tags. Pronoun preference stickers can be found at the Welcome Table on which you can write your pronoun preferences.

The following is information supporting putting pronouns on name tags:

Why would someone add their pronouns to their name tag?

Typically, society has taught us to make automatic assumptions about what pronouns to use for someone. If a person's *gender expression* (the way they *appear* in terms of gender) seems to be male, we'd likely use *he/him/his* when talking about that person; if a person's appearance seems to be female, we'd be likely to use *she/her/hers*. However, gender is not always that simple.

Sometimes a person's *gender identity* (the way the person *identifies internally* in terms of their gender) doesn't align with their gender expression (the way they look). In addition, not everyone identifies strictly as male or female. So when a person includes their gender pronouns on their nametag, they are simply taking the guesswork away for you! It's their way of saying "when you refer to me using pronouns (opposed to by my name), these are the pronouns I'd like for you to use." ~ adapted from bottomline.org

Simple ways to use pronouns to show LGBTQ+ support:

- Always ask someone's pronouns
- Don't assume which pronoun someone uses
- If you are unsure of someone's pronouns and don't feel comfortable asking, use they or them to refer to that person, it's always a safe option
- Share your pronouns at meetings, before public speaking and in every day introductions to show you are someone who supports proper pronoun usage and set a universal standard for sharing pronouns
- Wear your pronouns on your nametag. By displaying our pronouns it creates an atmosphere of inclusivity for everyone to be referred to in the way they want to be
- ~ adapted from udel.edu

Here is a blog from the UUA website for more explanation and a UU context.

[Affirming the Promise: Full Dignity of Queer & Non-Binary Folx in Unitarian Universalism](#)

The above is adapted from a newsletter from the Unitarian Society of Germantown, Philadelphia.

From *Team Green*

by Barbara Myers

The Garden...

As a part of Team Green's commitment to promoting environmental responsibility, we are pleased to announce that the organic garden will be cultivated this summer by Danbury resident, Amanda Preston. Amanda has previous experience with organic gardening, which is important to maintaining the integrity of the soil and she is excited about the opportunity. She is committed to preserving our carefully nurtured soil and has agreed to donate surplus produce beyond what she consumes personally to a local not-for profit organization.

This plan allows us to continue our organic growing efforts for the 2019 growing season, evaluate its effectiveness and then determine the best course for 2020.

Meanwhile, if you see Amanda working in the garden, be sure to extend her your warm welcome!

Recycling “Plastic Films...”

Team Green installed bins at UUCD this spring for “plastic film,” which, in general, is thin plastic, used for wrapping things. If you don’t take your plastic film back to recycle it at your grocery, you can bring it to UUCD and put it in the black “Film Star” bin.

Team Green will then see that your plastic film, i.e., newspaper bags, produce bags; dry cleaning bags; and clean sandwich bags do not go to waste!

Compost... Because a Rind is a Terrible Thing to Waste!



Each day Americans generate enough food waste to fill a 90000 foot football stadium - you can make a dent in this statistic! Team Green encourages you to either compost at home,

OR bring your compostables to our UUCD bin, located to the left of the Fellowship Hall.

What to compost at UUCD? Coffee grounds, fruit/vegetable trimmings, garden deadheads from non-diseased or sprayed flowers (no meat scraps, dairy products).

At UUCD, we have compostable bags in our kitchen compost containers - just dump the trimmings and coffee grounds into one, and toss it in the bin outside!

Read on for some fun composting facts:

- Compost can improve your soil’s fertility and reduces watering needs (your soil can take up more water)
- Compost is produced by microorganisms, which need both “browns” and “greens.” Oxygen, moisture, and warm temperatures speed up the process.
- “Browns” include substances which tend to be brown: dry leaves, pine needles, straw, etc. The smaller the size the better.
- “Greens” include wet or recently grown materials: veggies, fruits, eggshells, coffee grounds, etc.
- You can make compost passively (yep, just layer everything and wait!) or actively, by turning the pile. Our UUCD composter has a handle for turning, but at home you can use a pitchfork. Turning gives those busy microorganisms more oxygen, which they need.
- How do you know if your compost is mature? It should smell earthy. You can also measure out 2 cups; mature compost should weigh between 8-12 oz.

Upcoming Events



Men Conversing Over Coffee - We are now nine men meeting once a month on the second Monday. Join us when you can.

Monday, July 8th and Monday, August 12th

9:30 a.m. at MOTHERSHIP CAFE, 331 Main Street, Danbury (near North Street).

For more information, contact **Gary Mummert**.



by Keith Dupree

“Exuberance is better than taste.” Gustave Flaubert

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. Our selections:

July 12th:

- Film short: *Writer's Block*: The first of two films paying homage to the animal kingdom and starring the wonderful actress Jane Lynch.
- Feature film: *Unleashed*: Set your imagination free and allow it to consider how your life might be changed if one day your pets took on human form. A serious movie this is not, but c'mon folks, it's summertime!

August 9th:

- 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 films whose titles are: *Match*, *After I Saw You*, *Seeing Red*, *Mr. Connolly has ALS*, and *Elwood Takes a Lover*.

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, July 12th and Friday, August 9th at 7:00 p.m.** in the UUCD conference room. As usual, all are welcome. Pizza is provided. Bring your own beverage. Popcorn optional! Contributions will be gratefully accepted, all of which will go to the UUCD. **(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 UUCD” or check for a notice on the bulletin board in the sanctuary. I will also 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!



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**.

On Thursday, July 11th, we'll be discussing **Enlightenment Now** by Steven Pinker. Using 15 different measures of human progress, like quality of life, knowledge and safety, Pinker provides a holistic view of why the world is getting better for humans across the globe. Warning - this book may challenge your world views! Using 70 graphs, some of which contain as much as 300 years of data, **Enlightenment Now** puts complicated information in a way that is easy to access and understand. To my surprise, it is a "feel good" book.



**Auction 2019 ~ Join the FUN !
Saturday, November 2, 2019**

We're looking for Folks to *Partner* in Hosting Events ~
It's easy, it's NOT expensive, and it is FELLOWSHIP at its BEST!
Why sit on the sidelines when you can be part of this wonderful opportunity
to get to know your fellow UU's and raise money for our Spiritual Home.
For info email **Marian DiFabbio**.

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 16th:**

