



# Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury

Monthly **COMMENT** Newsletter

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

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NOVEMBER 2019

## **From Melody Levy, President, Board of Trustees**

Spring and Summer have oscillated into a tangle of Autumn. Soon the foliage will be gone and the landscape will be November's. I am watching my grandchildren grow joyful into a world that is rich with possibility while catching sight of people putting their gardens to bed and turning over memories of a perfect tomato and a best laid plan. Today I'm certain the light will run out of the day, just as it does. This new month will blow in like a hurricane, or linger while reminding us that the work of gratitude is at our door. "If the only prayer you ever say is thank you, it is enough". (Meister Eckhart)

The activities of the new church year are filling up the calendar. Our first Common Council meeting was attended by the board of trustees and a cross section of committee chairs. Some of our specific goals for this year include marketing our rental spaces to increase revenue, improving our website for internal and external use, financial modeling in order to explore multiple staffing plans and what we should consider, can afford and will have the most positive impact, and, volunteer engagement. Congregational life is always in process. In order to keep growing, we must reevaluate ourselves, keeping what is relevant and changing what needs to be changed. Committee Chairs from Safe Congregation, Pastoral Care, Membership, Immigrant Justice, Social Action, Buildings and Grounds, Music and Team Green attended. Thank you for a great turn out and for your energized spirit, accomplishments and collaboration.

Please extend a hearty welcome to Doreen Goncalves. Her position as RE Coordinator began Sunday, October 20<sup>th</sup>. You may have crossed paths with her sometime during the past four years while she was our lead Nursery Care provider. Doreen's role will provide Religious Education administration and support to children, youth and families of UUCD consistent with our values, principles and purposes. She will be employed on a half time basis (20 hours per week) and will provide designated office hours. Sunday hours will be from 9 a.m. until all activities have concluded. Doreen's current social action impact work in the Danbury area concerns turning leftover cafeteria food into frozen, take home meals to give to students who are without food on the weekends. I imagine when she was an elementary school teacher that she made a big difference in a lot of student's lives. Her leadership and engagement with children, parents, teachers, members and friends will be an additional asset to our outstanding RE program.

We currently have 5 employees and EVERYTHING else that makes our fellowship beep, gurgle and stand tall is because you pitch in. We offer authentic gratitude, have an admirable work ethic and we're just plain wonderful to play with. We cannot hire all of the resources we need but together we can maintain our potential to expand and thrive, while we make the coffee, and put away the hymnals. Our congregation is characterized by active lay participation in all areas. We are here in this community, and though it is not perfect, we dearly need this place of possibility to make meaning with each other. Thank you for all you are and all you do. It is good to be with one another.

*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.

**Friday, November 15<sup>th</sup>.**

**Deadline for the December Comment –**

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

Sunday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>

To be Determined

Brian Snow

**First Sunday Connections** - Attention, Visitors — Guests — Anyone NEW or NEWISH to our UU congregation. Join us in the Cottage Conference Room from 11:30 - 12:30 for this informal monthly get-acquainted session. Let us know what brought you here. What might you be looking for in a continued relationship with us? What questions do you have about Unitarian Universalism and about our Danbury congregation in particular? Childcare will be provided.

Sunday, November 10<sup>th</sup>

Listening Into Being

Rev. ReBecca Sala

What does it mean to truly listen to someone? On the day before Veteran's Day, please join us as Rev. ReBecca explores the ways we listen and don't listen to each other. What would it look like to take the time to hear the stories that are in the hearts of those around us?

Sunday, November 17<sup>th</sup>

Professor Catherine Coppola

Questions of Gender and Race Through the Lens of Mozart's *The Magic Flute*

Professor Catherine Coppola is Director of Undergraduate Studies in Music at Hunter College, where she teaches popular courses on Mozart's operas for graduate, honors program, and gender studies students. She has published in the journals *19th-Century Music*, *The Journal of the Society for Textual Scholarship*, and *Teaching Music*, and in the book *Musical Improvisation and Open Forms in the Age of Beethoven (2018)*. Exploring intersections of opera and social justice, she has chaired a roundtable in *The Magic Flute* (American Society for 18th-Century Studies), and will present "A Context for Gender Equivalence in *Così fan tutte*" (American Musicology Society). For the ASACS panel "Reading the 18th-Century in (the) Light of #MeToo", she contributed a talk called "Fallacies of Context and Change: Why we need Mozart's Women Now More Than Ever". In addition to the PhD in musicology from the CUNY Graduate Center, Dr. Coppola earned a Master's in piano performance from the Manhattan School of Music.

Sunday, November 24<sup>th</sup>

Multigenerational Service - Cultivating Gratitude

Brian Snow



**We are in desperate need for two more committed volunteers for Orange Group. Please contact Ali Haffner.**

For more information about our RE program, contact **Doreen Goncalves**, Religious Education Coordinator.

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Hello UUCD members and friends!

During the months of October and November 2019, I will be away for a long-planned sabbatical period accrued through my ministry with the Unitarian Society of Hartford. In terms of my agreement with UUCD, this is simply when I am taking my vacation and study leave this year, and I will then be full-time with you all for the month of December, to balance things out--and I look forward to that! In October, I will simply be resting and recuperating from 15 years of parish ministry--a vocation in which I am usually, in some way or another, "on call" day-in and day-out. In November, I am going on a Big Trip with my family--first to Quezon City in the Philippines to visit dear friend Rev. Joseph Santos-Lyons and family as well as visit UU communities in the Philippines. Then we will travel to Delhi, India, and hopefully visit large Unitarian communities in the Khasi Hills of northeast India. We return on November 30<sup>th</sup> and I look forward to serving UUCD full-time for the month of December. While I am on sabbatical in October and November, I and the UUCD Board have agreed to engage Margalie Belizaire as emergency Pastoral Care Minister should a clear, urgent need arise for professional ministry--be in touch with Board President Melody Levy and/or Office Manager Sherry Kyriacou if you feel something has occurred that warrants connecting with Margalie. I know not what stories, experiences and learnings I will bring back to you in December and beyond, but I am sure there will be many. I wish you a positive and spiritually-rich time while I am away, and very much look forward to seeing you in December!



Warmly,  
Rev. Heather

# Ministry/Team News

## From *Adult Programming*

by Joe Gillotti

### Adult Ministry Workshop of the Year - “Spiritually Speaking”

Please consider attending this new personal development workshop. Personal Spirituality will be the main focus of these Tuesday night group meetings. We are all life-long learners. In our spiritual quest, we strive to grow and understand ourselves, physically, mentally, emotionally, intellectually and spirituality. There are many new and practical, constructive means available to us that can help a person counteract or reduce, the negative incessant feelings of fear, anger, distrust, feeling offended, feeling resentful, etc., that so many people in society are facing these days. Consider the following quote --- “The road to personal success is always under construction”. Often people admit: “My confidence is so low, what can I do?” This question of confidence is only one of the many personal development issues we are going to address. The new skill sets you can learn through self-exploration and practice, can and will make a significant and meaningful difference in your life as well as the lives of people around you. This is not a PUBLIC SPEAKING group. However, people will have the opportunity to express themselves.

One important aspect of life to remember is “IF NOTHING CHANGES, NOTHING CHANGES”. No sign-up; come when you like. The third Tuesday of each month 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm in the Cottage first floor Conference Room. For more info call **Joe Gillotti**.

## From the *Caring Circle Ministry*

by Joan Campbell

### **Our Caring Circle is Available**

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

**Karen Gillotti** is the contact person for **November**.

**Janet Cory** is the assistant.

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

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

## From the *Social Action Council*

by Lynn Taborsak

**Every Sunday in October we have been collecting travel sized toiletries for the homeless shelters in Danbury.** As we go to press with this update, we have collected an amazing 231 individual toiletries! Keep them coming until Sunday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>. We will deliver them to Dorothy Day on Monday, November 4<sup>th</sup>.

**During November, we are asking folks to bring in gently used, large and extra-large washable winter jackets.** Please make sure the zippers or buttons are intact and empty the pockets. Winter wear is the most frequently sought item when daylight savings time ends on November 3<sup>rd</sup> and it is cold and dark at 5:00 pm!

The Social Action Council will begin screening episodes of the Netflix series “**Living Undocumented**”, a six part documentary that follows eight undocumented immigrant families living in the United States on Sunday, November 10<sup>th</sup> and continued on Sunday, November 24<sup>th</sup> following the Sunday service in the Fellowship Hall lower level meeting room. A light lunch will be provided and discussion will follow the screening. Please sign-up to attend on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall.

**There will be a meeting of the Social Action Council on Sunday, November 10<sup>th</sup>**, in the Fellowship Hall lower level meeting room following the screening of “Living Undocumented”.

The New Milford Refugee Resettlement Committee will present an afternoon of French music featuring the Madrea Winds at 3:00 pm on Sunday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, at St. John’s Episcopal Church on the Green in New Milford. Proceeds from the event will help support a local Honduran refugee family with three school-aged children.

## Soup Kitchen Corner

by Judy Lacker

On Saturday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, Soup Kitchen Team #1 will serve up a hot, delicious meal at the Dorothy Day Soup Kitchen on Spring Street. Team Leaders **John Miglietta and Judy Lacker** will be joined by **Rose Schlemmer, David Teagarden, Keith Dupree, Inge Hill, Brian Teagarden, Jane Leff, Sally Mandler and Gary Wynn**. 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](http://uudanbury.org). The show must go on!

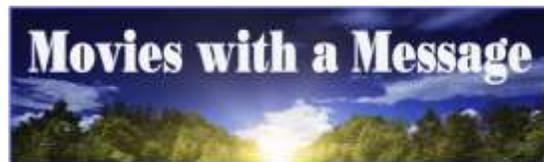
It is also time for members and friends to sign up again for another year. UUCD has been committed to serving a meal once a month for the past 38 years. It’s a UU tradition! Sign-up sheets for each team are available in Fellowship Hall in the foyer. If a Team isn’t for you, consider signing up to be on the Alternates List – just indicate “alternate” on the sign-up sheet in FH. For more information please contact **Judy Lacker**.

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



Join us in conversation, spirituality, and social action every Sunday at 12:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall Lower Level Conference Room. Designed for ages 18-25, but all are welcome. Please contact **Sequoia Lowe** for more information.



by Keith Dupree

*Life teaches you how to live it, if you live long enough.*  
-Tony Bennett

We bring you two amazing films for November, one for the means by which it was constructed, the other for the power of its presentation and the seriousness of its message.

7:00 p.m. – *40th* – A young woman has specific and well-founded anxieties as she approaches the age of 40. This film was the winner of the 48-hour Film Festival, a worldwide endeavor that deserves a story of its own.

7:15 p.m. – *The Carer* – If you are a film buff at all, you won't want to miss this remarkable performance by Brian Cox, who plays the role of a legendary actor now facing the downhill side of life and not happy about it.

8:45 – 9:10 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, November 8<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 PM in the Cottage Conference Room. As usual, all are welcome. Pizza will be provided. Popcorn optional! Contributions will be gratefully accepted, all of which will go to 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](http://www.SpiritualCinemaCircle.com).)**



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

Our next meeting is on Monday, November 11<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m. at MOTHERSHIP CAFE, 331 Main Street, Danbury.

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



The **Conversations** group meets every other month on the second Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Conference Room. You do not need to read the book to attend. For more information please contact **Mary Ann Kulla**.

On Thursday, November 14<sup>th</sup>, we will be discussing Tailspin written by Steven Brill. This book covers the years 1967-2017 and looks at the changes to our economic system, the financial system and our government. Most of these changes have been powered by the best and brightest minds, often with good intentions, or by big business funding big-money lobbying and by the incessant need for our politicians to constantly raise money. The demise of labor unions, and a series of changes to how the government is run, has resulted in an ineffective or hamstrung bureaucracy. The middle and lower class population has lost ground and become increasingly angry, hopeless and vulnerable, while the upper economic echelon is more secure and more remote than ever.

But Brill also introduces us to organizations working quietly and effectively behind the scenes to counteract the damage. At once a diagnosis of our national ills, a history of their development, and a prescription for a brighter future, Tailspin is a book worth reading - and a welcome antidote to despair.

### **Women Living on Their Own**

**Women Living on Their Own** - This group is for women who are living on their own. Our circumstances will be similar, but different, and we might talk about what works well, what is lacking, and so on. Although Jane Leff is getting this group going, she hopes that everyone will take part in shaping it. We will meet in the Cottage Conference Room on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays of each month at 4:00 p.m. November dates are the 12<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>. All those who identify as women, are UUCD members or friends, and are living on your own are welcome to join us. We hope to see you. Bring your ideas. Contact Person: **Jane Leff**.

## From the Auction Team

by Marian DiFabbio



### Come Sail Away on Saturday, November 2, 2019 – 6:00 p.m. UUCD Annual Goods and Services AUCTION

Join us for a Good Time of delicious food, entertainment, door prizes *and* the wonderful feeling that you are doing your part to support the financial health of our Beloved Community.

#### 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.

UUCD is hosting a live acoustic evening of music featuring David Roth on January 10<sup>th</sup>. David will also be leading the Sunday service the next day. For the concert, we need the following volunteers: 2 people to sell tickets at the door; 1 or 2 people to help with publicity; 1 person to handle sound; 2 or 3 bakers; 2 people to sell refreshments at intermission; 2 or 3 to help with set-up of chairs and getting the room back to its Sunday morning layout at the end of the evening. It takes a village to run a coffeehouse. Please contact **Nancy Hershatter**, for questions or to volunteer.

#### Worship Associate Training – Saturday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>

MetroNorth UU will offer a 5 hour workshop led by Rev. Kimberly Debus. She will explore the qualities of open-hearted and expansive worship, how to approach choosing elements for a service, refine practical skills and prepare for working as a worship team. She will also talk about expectations for guest speakers. This training will include conversations and hands-on activity. Childcare available if requested before November 15<sup>th</sup>.

***Come One, Come All!***

***Save The Date! Saturday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.***

UU Fellowship of Northern Westchester, Mt. Kisco, NY

\$35 for the training \$15 for lunch

Please direct any questions to **Melody Levy**.



Many thanks from Buildings and Grounds Team for member support in fall clean-up work. **Yvonne Ruddy-Stein** helped with cleaning debris from the parking areas, **Rik Cousens** helped with interior and exterior painting, **Joan Stapleton** helped with cleaning tasks in the FH and CH, **Joe Gillotti** helped with door painting and forsythia sculpting, **Connor and Matthew McPartlin** helped with cleaning up felled tree debris, and **Todd Zagorec** helped with tree pruning. Great work, good exercise, and shared stewardship. Thanks All! And many, many thanks to **Gary Mummert** for organizing and leading all of the many Buildings and Grounds tasks!

Dear UU Congregation of Danbury,

Thank you for your contribution to **The Promise and the Practice of our Faith: BLUU.**



In October 2016, your UUA Board issued a charge to all Unitarian Universalists, calling us to invest collectively and significantly in the leadership of Black Unitarian Universalists. The commitment to raise and invest \$5.3 million in Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism (BLUU) recognizes that centering black leadership is crucial to building multiracial, multicultural communities and to supporting justice work free from white supremacy. We have before us an unbelievable opportunity to live our theology and to begin to overcome the limitations of our history.

We thank you for being part of this bold commitment to uphold and fulfill the promise we have made to support and center the voices of Black Lives within our faith.

In faith,

Rev. Lauren A. Smith  
 Director of Stewardship and Development

