



Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury

Monthly **COMMENT** Newsletter

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

DECEMBER 2019

From our Consulting Minister



*"Walk leisurely, don't drive; walk in the garden, don't answer the phone,
turn off the television and the radio, forget the CD and the computer.
Quiet the insidious technology, and remember that we live in bodies that,
through a feast of the senses, appreciate the beauty of the world.
Walk under the stars and moon. Knock on the door, don't ring.
Sing at the table. Eat, drink, touch, smell, and remember who you are."*

--Wayne Muller

Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal, and Delight in Our Busy Lives

Dear UUCD Members and Friends,

December. December! December? ...December: a month when most of us long for more light and sparkle in our lives, and a month we can also feel overwhelmed by. What have you found truly brings you joy during this Month of Expectation(s)? What are some of the things you can let go of during this often overly-full month, and what do you want to make room for? Said in another way, what are things you can choose *not* to do, this December, to create a little more spaciousness in your life for the special and particular activities of this month?

Even as I write this (in late October) and my family and I prepare to go on our first-ever international "Big Trip" together, our older child and I are already looking forward to returning for the magic sparkle of December. Every year I strive to appreciate the joys and worry less about getting to everything. What rituals have you found that resonate most with you, that help you to get (and keep) yourself into a mindset of gratitude and deep gladness for our precious lives and communities? How do you practice focusing on the light and sparkle *in the people* around you? And how do you carry the uplifting energy that can be felt during December into the long first months of the new year?

Twice in the month of October, I have had the pleasure and the blessing of being able to walk a half mile along the leaf-covered sidewalk to the Quaker Meeting near our home and sit in silence with some thirty or so other people for a full hour. How incredibly nourishing it can be just to sit in silence. Each Sunday one person (a different person each time) stood to share a very brief message -- not more than a paragraph -- and surrounded by the spaciousness of silence, that very brief reflection stayed with me for days. I long for more of such special and communal silence, myself, and I am struck by how profound it can be to carve out such a sacred time. I remember the meandering thoughts I allowed myself to have during that holy hour so much more clearly than most of my constantly-active monkey-mind routine thinking. I hope we can continue to create such nourishing hours together at UUCD, and I so look forward to being with you full-time for the month of December.

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. May this month of December be meaningful for us all, and gentle too.

Warmly,

Rev. Heather

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.

**UU Danbury Cancellation**

Policy – During very inclement weather, Sunday Services, Religious Education

and any other meetings or events will be cancelled. To learn of a cancellation, please check one of the following:

1. Your email;
2. Your text messages;
3. The UU Danbury website, www.uudanbury.org.
4. Facebook, www.facebook.com/UUDanbury.

**Deadline for the January Comment –
Friday, December 13th.**

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

Sunday, December 1st How the Light Gets In Rev. ReBecca Sala
 Rev. Sala will speak about how to hold onto hope when it is hard to find. **Our Share-the-Plate offering will go to “Well Spouse Association”**. They are an organization that supports the spouses who take care of their ill partners. They offer online support, weekend respites and local support groups. Visit their website at www.wellspouse.org.

Sunday, December 8th Return Again Rev. Heather Rion Starr
 Today we will welcome back Rev. Heather from her two months away, dedicate a new baby in our congregation, and reflect together on the cycles of life, beginning, and beginning anew. How does being away for a time help all of us to appreciate our daily lives?

Sunday, December 15th Home Is Where You Make It Rev. Heather Rion Starr
 In this full and complex month of December, what is most precious to you? How can you free yourself from some of the "shoulds" and focus on what gives you the greatest joy? What truly nourishes your heart?
We will also welcome our newest members into the congregation, and there will be a tree-trimming activity following the service.

Sunday, December 22nd Something Beautiful Rev. Heather Rion Starr
 It is the weekend of the Winter Solstice, the first night of Hanukkah, the Sunday before Christmas. In the tumult of our shared world, during these longest nights of our year, in the storms of our natural and human lives, we still have the ability to create and focus on moments and acts of beauty and love. Let us do so together this morning.

Christmas Eve – Tuesday, December 24th

4:00 p.m. Multigenerational Candlelight Service

7:00 p.m. Home by Another Way - Contemplative Candlelight Service
 Rev. Heather Rion Starr, Jerry Phelps, and others!
 "It was a tug they had been waiting for all their lives." How would you know if you were being called to make a change in your life? How would you recognize if, perhaps, there is another way you might better live out your one wild and precious life? Inspired by the storybook by former priest Barbara Brown Taylor, *Home by Another Way: A Christmas Story*, we will revisit, reconsider, and be reinspired by the ancient story told anew. All are welcome to this joyful annual service.

Sunday, December 29th Curiosity Brian Snow
 With the year 20/20 on the horizon, we will be exploring the theme of curiosity and inviting us to apply it to ourselves as we take a look at what it is that makes us come alive spiritually and emotionally as we make resolutions for the new year. Here are a couple questions get us started: What do we google or read about when we do not have a reading list? When the radio or television is on in the background, what are the words songs or stories that immediately capture our attention? When we open up the newspaper what is the first thing we look for? When we venture outside what are the sights or road signs that capture our attention? What makes us light up with joy?

Notes from the Board of Trustees

by Melody Levy, President

On Sunday mornings we gather for worship to consider what is important in our lives, both individually and collectively. Last weekend the majority of Sunday Service Ministry Team members and some members of the Board attended a Worship Associates Workshop. We learned about being in service to the service, and, about a more current call to research our song and reading selections in order to appropriate their corresponding history. Did you know "This Little Light of Mine" was written by Harry Dixon Loes in the 1920's? It was originally a children's song then later became an anthem of the civil rights movement in the 1950's and 60's. An activist named Fannie Lou Hamer used the song for protesting and pushing back against injustice. We sing our children off to their classes with an understanding of our shared love for them, their teachers, their light and the lessons that will nurture their spirit. We are grateful.

Board members are charged to serve the larger hopes and intentions of our congregation. We are fulfilling our goals, yet a lot remains to be accomplished. Our monthly meeting minutes are online under the UUDanbury member portal along with most other Team/Ministry meeting minutes.

Thank you to all our members and friends who have given from the largest measure to the smallest gesture, from caregiving to grounds keeping, to chalice lighting and tender singing, from auction bidding to finance keeping. We all make the difference and are bettered by it. I hope your holidays are peaceful, warmhearted, generous and gentle. It is a privilege to be in community with you.



by Doreen Goncalves, RE Coordinator

Thank you for the warm welcome as I begin my job as RE Coordinator. I am very happy to be here. Our RE groups are busy each week with wonderful lessons taught by the teachers and volunteers. Each groups theme is below and the lessons are designed to be interactive, interesting and fun.

Orange Group – "Wonderful Welcome"

Blue Group - "The Questing Year"

Green Group - "Toolbox of Faith and Spirit of Adventure"

Purple Group - Coming of Age and Bridging
Social Justice Intercession

Built into the calendar are 4 SUNday FUNdays. No lessons - games and activities for all age groups. The nursery is open for our youngest members.

The Mitten Tree is up, with mittens made by the children and staff. Please take a pair or two. All gifts are due back by December 8th.

We are in search of volunteers. Our **Orange Group** needs 2 more committed volunteers. If you are interested please contact **Ali Haffner**.

If you have any concerns or questions feel free to contact me at REcoordinator@uudanbury.org.

Our Caring Circle is Available

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

Joan Campbell is the contact person for **December and January**.

Maredith Spector is the assistant.

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

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 *Adult Programming*

by Joe Gillotti

Spiritually Speaking – December Date Change

Spiritually Speaking will meet on December 10th – the second Tuesday of December, from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. in the Cottage first floor Conference Room. Please consider attending this 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. For more info call **Joe Gillotti**.

From the *Auction Team*

by Marian DiFabbio

“Congratulations One & All



Auction 2019 Sailed Away to a profit of approximately \$23,000 !

Perhaps you served on the Auction Team, Donated Items, Dinners, Baskets, Matching Donations, Gift Certificates, or helped in any number of ways ~ the success of the Auction is YOUR success, and the success of our Beloved UUCD Community.

From the *Social Action Council*

by Lynn Taborsak

The Social Action Council is screening part 3 and part 4 of the Netflix series “Living Undocumented”, a six part documentary that follows eight undocumented immigrant families living in the United States. Please join us on Sunday, December 8th and Sunday, December 22nd following the Sunday service in the Fellowship Hall lower level Conference Room. A light lunch will be provided and discussion will follow the screening. You may sign-up to attend on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall.

During November, we asked everyone to bring in gently used, large and extra-large washable winter jackets and coats to distribute to homeless individuals in our community. Winter wear is in great demand with the onset of cold weather. **This month we will be collecting new one-size-fits-all knit hats and gloves. Jersey work gloves are needed too.**

On Sunday, December 15th, we will ask for a moment of silence to commemorate the tragic loss of lives in the mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School on December 14, 2012. It is truly a difficult time for family members, school personnel, first responders and the community at large even after seven years.

Soup Kitchen Corner

by Judy Lacker

On Saturday, December 7th, Soup Kitchen Team #2 will serve up a hot, delicious meal at the Dorothy Day Soup Kitchen on Spring Street. Team Leader **Carl Tramontana** will be joined by **Chris Halfar, Rose Schlemmer, Suze Shaner, Nicole and Sean Paris, Darlene Anderson-Alexander, Deborah Casey and Lisa Deldin**. 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!

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 the foyer of Fellowship Hall, or if you would like to volunteer to be part of a team, please contact Judy Lacker. All Teams meet on the first Saturday of the month, 3 times per year.

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.

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, December 9th at 9:30 a.m. at MOTHERSHIP CAFE, 331 Main Street, Danbury. For more information, contact **Gary Mummert**.



Women Living on Their Own

Women Living on Their Own will meet on December 10th at 4:00 p.m. in the Cottage first floor Conference Room. 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. We meet in the Cottage Conference Room on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month at 4:00 p.m. January dates are the 14th and 28th. 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.**



by Keith Dupree

The world is not black and white. More like black and grey.
Graham Greene (1904 – 1991)

Black and grey, indeed! One message of our films in December is that things in this world may not always be what they seem to be.

7:00 p.m. – *Bertie* – Our short film this month introduces us to a handsome chap. Or maybe beauty is only in the eye of the beholder. Bertie is a barking pug, or is he?
7:20 p.m. – *The Sweet Life* – A typical “Boy meets Girl” story but with a dark side. Girl has a death wish, to throw herself off the Golden Gate Bridge. The last line of the movie is a single word, but one I think you may always remember.
8:55 – 9:20 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, December 13th, at 7:00 p.m. in the Cottage first floor 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.)

Theatre Aficionados

Mark your calendars: Thursday, December 12th, is the next “Pay What You Want Night” at Theatreworks, New Milford. The evening’s performance is “Wreck the Halls”. Nothing is sacred in the SLAY ride of adult humor that rips the shiny bows and pretty wrapping off the holiday season. The show features two acts of music-filled satire and burlesque that turns the last quarter of the calendar belly up. Due to adult situations and language, it is not recommended for the younger elves.

Please join us for an evening at Theatreworks, 5 Brookside Ave., New Milford. But note there is no reserve seating for this performance: it is first come, first seated, so don’t be late! For more information, go to the website www.theatreworks.us, or call **Keith Dupree**. Theatre Aficionados is a very informal gathering of people who enjoy seeing local theater together. We convene at the theater when the doors open at 7:30. All are welcome.

UUCD is hosting a live acoustic evening of music featuring David Roth on January 11th. David will also be leading the Sunday morning 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**, coordinator.