



Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury

Monthly **COMMENT** Newsletter

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

JANUARY 2020

From our Consulting Minister



Dear UUCD Members and Friends,

2020 is here. 2020 feels like a particularly significant year for obvious, national reasons. Our Unitarian Universalist Association President, Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray, has been repeatedly saying: "The 2020 elections are the most critical in our lifetime." The national, denominational "UU the Vote" campaign will be helping all our Unitarian Universalist congregations across the country to more effectively "mobilize voters, counter voter suppression, and engage in spiritually grounded, values-based issue conversations with voters in [our] communities," "to activate and resource UUs nationally. This is an all-hands on-deck effort."

It's a profound coincidence that 2020 may be the year we most need to focus. (I'm an optometrist's daughter, so maintaining clear 20/20 vision was daily conversation in my home growing up.) In an era when there is so much noise, so much clamoring for our limited time and attention, how can we focus our efforts and energies for greatest impact? With optimal clarity and foresight?

"Organizing for impact" has been one of Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray's mantras since she ran for UUA President in 2016-17 and now the time to truly apply that mantra has come. It can be easy for congregants across the country to be critical of our Unitarian Universalist Association--UUA staff are an ever-changing team of humans, too, just like the rest of us. Now is the time to set aside past critiques and engage in what the present is calling upon us to do. Now is one of the most pivotal moments for us to work together as congregations in association with one another.

For years I have heard people visiting Unitarian Universalist congregations say something to the effect of: "I came because I needed to feel like I wasn't all alone in my efforts. I needed to feel like I was working alongside others towards common goals." Similarly, this is not the year for UUCD, or any UU congregation, to be solely engaged in just our own ongoing maintenance and local service projects. This is the year to connect with larger national denominational efforts to work strategically and together to maximize voter turnout and focused, clear voter engagement. We are so much more effective when we work together. May that especially be so during this pivotal 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. May the spark of the new year and the oh-so-gradually increasing daylight help to lift our spirits and energize us for all that lies ahead.

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.

In case of
Inclement
Weather

**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 February Comment –
Friday, January 17th.**

January Services – One Service at 10:00 a.m.**Sunday, January 5th**How the Light Gets In

Rev. ReBecca Sala

Rev. Sala will speak about how to hold onto hope when it is hard to find.

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, January 12thThe Power of Yes

David Roth

This morning David Roth will sing and speak about what can happen when you say “yes” when “no” seemed to make more sense at the time. Going through this “doorway of discomfort” may lead to surprising places.

Sunday, January 19thOnce Faint and Once Weak

Rev. Heather Rion Starr

We have a tendency to look back and think that our heroes had it all figured out— that they *knew* what they were doing. So often that is not actually the case. This Sunday we will ponder together a period in Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s life when he was deeply struggling and uncertain as to the next right thing to do. What can we learn from his struggles about how to discern our own next steps?**Sunday, January 26th**Shared Ministry: The Language of Listening

Rev. Jan Carlsson-Bull

Shared ministry is a notion and practice that has been moving through our larger community of faith for many years. While those of us who are professional ministers hold specific leadership responsibilities, ministry is not the exclusive role or responsibility of the professional minister. We thrive in mutuality with the congregation and community we serve, and the root language in which we do so is listening. As we worship together, let’s explore what this means through the lens of shared ministry and what this means for this slice of history we occupy.

Notes from the Board of Trustees

by Melody Levy, President

Endings and beginnings call into question what was achieved or realized, coupled with a yearning for what is possible in the year to come. Often, after a Board meeting, one or more Trustee will say, “We’ve got a really good Board this year”. As for myself, I am indebted to every Trustee for getting to each meeting, for stretching beyond boxed thinking, and, for realizing our potential for love, forgiveness, warmth and kindness. With resolve and creative interchange, we continue to nurture an unshakeable belief in our mission statement and guiding principles.

In January, we will resume our search for a Director of Religious Education. The Search Team is composed of **Rev. Heather, Sam McCoy, Kristen Papucci, Todd Zagorec and myself**. The Board is currently reviewing various staffing plans to assist in determining viable options for the ministerial position to be filled in 2021. There will be more to share at the next Common Council meeting, to be held Sunday, January 19th, beginning 11:30 a.m.

In 2020, we will plan to host or travel to more leadership workshops that are offered by the UUA. The Worship Associates Training held in November left those who attended with high regard for the take away. I will be contacting our regional representative for future titles and dates. Please keep in mind the General Assembly is in Rhode Island this June. We are hoping to have a generous number of youth and adults attend. Tuition assistance will be available. Outreach via targeted marketing and updating our website is slated to begin this month. Please, spread the word (or share our Facebook page)...we have sermons to hear and souls to grow, together.

Thank you, dear friends, and best wishes for a healthy, inspiring and love filled 2020.

Happy New Year!

Our Caring Circle is Available

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

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

Meredith 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.



by Doreen Goncalves, RE Coordinator

December in RE was a busy, fast month!

Our classes made mittens for the Interfaith AIDS Ministry. The gifts were all delivered in early December.

On December 8th, RE had their SUNday FUNday . They made ornaments for the Tree Trimming on the 15th. We practiced with Jerry Phelps for the 4:00 Christmas Eve Service - Another Way Home.

December 15th was a multigenerational service. The children were invited to come and decorate stockings and snowflakes. They were also asked to add their wishes for the New Year which were made into a chain for the tree. After the service the tree was decorated!!

Somehow in between we did squeeze in a couple of lessons!!

Looking forward to the New Year!!

Ministry/Team News

From *Adult Programming*

by Joe Gillotti

Spiritually Speaking will not be meeting in January or February. We will resume our meetings every month on the second Tuesday of the month in March.

From the *Caring Circle* – Right to Flourish

by Meredith Spector



From *Team Green*

by Gary Mummert



A Report on the UUCD Solar System

On two Sundays, January 5th and January 26th, Team Green will be set up in the FH after the service to provide three years of data and performance on the installed system.

If you are reading this and unable to attend on these dates, please e-mail **Gary Mummert** so a summary can be sent to you.

From the *Social Action Council*

by Lynn Taborsak

The Social Action Council will be screening the final two episodes 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, January 5th and Sunday, February 2nd 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 January, we are asking everyone to continue to bring in new one-size-fits-all knit hats, winter gloves and mittens. There is a round basket in the Fellowship Hall foyer for your donations. Jersey work gloves are acceptable too.

On Sunday, December 15th, we held a moment of silence to commemorate the tragic loss of lives in the mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School on December 14, 2012. Our generous “Share the Plate” offering of \$257 will be forwarded to the Sandy Hook Promise Foundation.

On Wednesday, December 18th, ten volunteers were trained for a **Rapid Response Team** that will be activated whenever there is ICE activity at the Superior Court in Danbury. John Lugo from Unidad Latino Accion in New Haven provided the training and encouraged us to engage with the Danbury Police Department on the 2019 changes in the Trust Act.

There will be a meeting of the Social Action Council on Sunday, January 12th at 11:30 a.m. in the Cottage Conference Room.

Soup Kitchen Corner

by Judy Lacker

On Saturday, January 4th, Soup Kitchen Team #3 will serve up a hot, delicious meal at the Dorothy Day Soup Kitchen on Spring Street. Team Leader **Lynn Taborsak** will be joined by **Bob Taborsak, Jim Wruck, Liz Casey, Jim Moore, Julie Gordon, and Diane Purvis**. 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 39 years. It’s a UU tradition! Sign-up sheets for each team are available in the foyer at 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. Designed for ages 18-25, but all are welcome. Please contact **Sequoia Lowe** for more information.



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

On Thursday, January 9th, we will be discussing *Active Hope*, subtitled *How to Face the Mess We're In Without Going Crazy*. It is written by Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone. Drawing on decades of teaching an empowerment approach known as the "Work That Reconnects," the authors guide us through a transformational process. It is informed by myths, journeys, modern psychology, spirituality and holistic science, and stresses small group interaction. This process equips us with tools to play our role in the planetary emergency and the collective transition to a life-sustaining society.

On Thursday, March 12th, our book will be *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism* by Shoshana Zuboff.

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, January 13th at 9:30 a.m. at MOTHERSHIP CAFE, 331 Main Street, Danbury. For more information, contact **Gary Mummert**.





by Keith Dupree

*Imagination is the only key to the future.
Without it none exists – with it all things are possible.
Ida M. Tarbell (1857 – 1944)*

Welcome once again to the world of fantasy, to the world of imagination, to the world of cinema!

7:00 p.m. – *Library of Love* – Do you recall the song and dance numbers common in musicals of the 40's and 50's. Relax and enjoy the energy and optimism in this brief tribute to the artistry of yester-year.

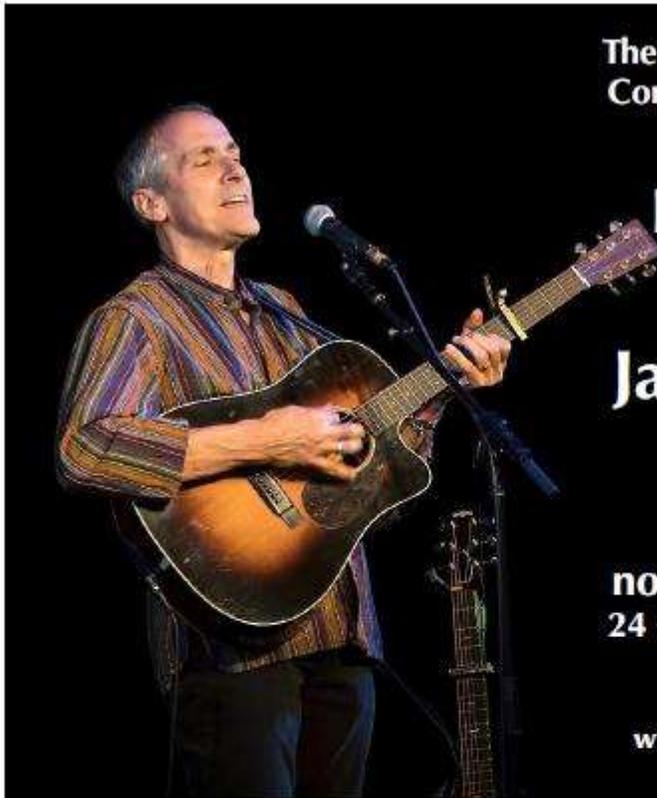
7:15 p.m. – *A Christmas in New York* – The setting is Christmas eve in an upscale hotel in Manhattan. A number of individuals have gathered for some ill-defined occasion, and we watch as multiple story lines evolve simultaneously. This is an ambitious film, not without its flaws. But these very flaws should make for a spirited conversation.

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, January 10th, 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.)

Women On Our 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. 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**.



The Unitarian Universalist
Congregation of Danbury
presents

David Roth
Saturday
January 11th
7 PM

\$20 suggested
no one turned away
24 Clapboard Ridge Road
203-798-1994

www.davidrothmusic.com

We welcome David back to Danbury! As he has found his way to us from home on Cape Cod, his songs have found their way to Carnegie Hall, the United Nations, several Chicken Soup for the Soul books, the Kennedy Center, NASA's Space Shuttle "Atlantis", Peter, Paul, & Mary and Kingston Trio CDs (and 15 of his own), 5 Positive Music Awards, the "Rise Up Singing" and "Rise Again" (sequel) songbooks, and countless venues in this and other countries (and other WORLDS) for more than three decades. Poignant to improbable, holistic to hilarious (think James Taylor meets Jon Stewart), the Chicago native keeps Connecticut in the mix as part of his ongoing *world tour* with a roller-coaster ride of song and story. Join us!

