



Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury

Monthly **COMMENT** Newsletter

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

JANUARY 2021

From our Consulting Minister



Dear UUUCD Members and Friends,

Growing up as an only child *and* an only grandchild, my grandmother and I developed a special New Year's Eve tradition we called "Watching The Ball Drop." At her cozy (mobile) home in King City, Oregon, we made special snacks and set up the TV trays and watched...The Ball Drop--in New York City, on television. And then, it being only 9pm in Oregon at that moment, we headed to bed. (...Looking back, I realize this must have been a pretty great way for my mom to enjoy New Year's Eve as an adult in her thirties.)

When I was in seminary in California's Bay area, I developed a spin on that beloved childhood memory--I would find a good viewpoint somewhere outdoors, like Berkeley's Claremont Canyon, and hike up there to, again, Watch the Ball Drop--this time, the bright Sun--at sunset on New Year's Eve and sunrise on New Year's Day. For a person who likes my sleep, this is the perfect time of year to catch the sunset and the sunrise with ease. I repeated this new New Year's Eve and Day practice from Pilot Butte when I lived in Bend, Oregon.

As a parent now, I'm still trying to find the ideal way to celebrate the New Year with our young children. I welcome your suggestions and would love to hear your own favorite memories of celebrating New Year's with kids. One thing is for sure: we are all going to be *so* glad to ring in 2021! I know that for me, looking ahead to 2021 has been giving me energy and hope during the stress and strain of this pandemic year.

I hope you keep on finding new ways to evolve old traditions and rituals and to both rekindle and build upon favorite childhood memories. As always, if there is anything you 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. As we turn the pages of our calendars--and swipe our screens forward to a new year--I'm *certain* that 2020 is a year we won't soon forget. May the turning of the year bring you, too, a sense of hope and fresh possibility.

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.

**Deadline for the February Comment –
Friday, January 15th.**

Share our Services!

Feel free to invite friends and family to our service. We will share the link on Sunday mornings for security reasons. Anyone can also add themselves to our UUCD e-list to receive the link directly on Sunday morning by emailing Sherry at officemanager@uudanbury.org with that request.

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

Sunday, January 3rd

Sheltering God in the World

Rev. Kristina Spaude

A sanctuary is a sacred place—one often used as a safe space for people or animals or plants. What if instead of a place, we ourselves embodied the charge of sanctuary and imagined a practice of sheltering the holy in the world by the way we engage with it?"

Rev. Kristina Spaude currently serves as the contract minister for the UU Church of Tarpon Springs, FL. She is a graduate of Meadville Lombard Theological School and previously a graduate of Kent State University. Rev. Kristina trained as a chaplain, and left hospital chaplaincy at the end of July to answer her heart's call to return to work with our congregations during this turbulent time. She is passionate about many things, especially making the way for more justice in this world.

Sunday, January 10th

Ready for Change

David Roth

There are many concerns in our one world and for our human family. This morning David will sing and speak about new beginnings, transformation, and shifting paradigms for the greater good.

Our guest speaker this morning is a singer, songwriter, recording artist, and enthusiastic instructor who has taken his songs, experience, and expertise to a wide variety of venues in this and other countries full-time for more than three decades. His work has found its way to Carnegie Hall, the United Nations, several *Chicken Soup for the Soul* books, the Kennedy Center, Peter, Paul, & Mary and Kingston Trio CDs, the Kerrville and Falcon Ridge Folk Festivals (top honors at both "Emerging Artist" competitions), NASA's Goddard Space Center (his song "Rocket Science" sailed on the space shuttle Atlantis in 2009), the *Rise Up Singing* and *Rise Again* (sequel) songbooks, and 15 CDs on the Wind River and Stockfish (Germany) labels. The former artist-in-residence at New York's Omega Institute is also creator of the Cape Cod Songwriters Retreat and organizer/host of the Cape's Full Moon Open Mic which since 2005 has provided a forum for musicians to connect and be heard while at the same time collecting donations (cumulatively nearing \$16,000 to date) for local non-profits to help neighbors in need. www.davidrothmusic.com.

Sunday, January 17th

Embracing Activist Evolution

Rev. Heather Rion Starr

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X were both assassinated when they were each 39 years old. Prior to their deaths, they met only once in-person and only for a very brief and very public exchange. Yet their perspectives influenced each other, and both evolved considerably in their thinking even during their relatively short lives. What might we learn from their outward and inward journeys that's relevant for us today?

Sunday, January 24th

Staying Loud

Gregory Carrow-Boyd

A change in presidential administration is a great time to evaluate how our government reflects the values we share and promote as Unitarian Universalists. When policies or practices do not align with our values, it's time to get loud or stay loud about who we are. Gather with us for a participatory worship service of clarifying and giving voice to our desire for a more just world.

Gregory C. Carrow-Boyd, MEd, is a Master Credentialed Religious Educator and Aspirant for ministry. He serves on the Board of Trustees of our Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). In this time of physical distancing, Greg misses hugs and movie theaters. Greg also works as the Coordinator for More Than Sex-Ed, a Greater LA-based sexuality education collective that brings the UUA- and United Church of Christ comprehensive sexuality education curriculum, *Our Whole Lives*, to schools, home school groups and the greater community.

4:00 p.m. Ordination of Sierra-Marie Gerfao

Please see the information on the next page.

Sunday, January 31st

Countering Paranoia

Rev. Heather Rion Starr

Especially now that we are even more reliant on online media for all the news of our world, it is easy to become uneasy, ungrounded, even paranoid. How can and must we counter this tendency? How do we intentionally restore our reservoirs of trust in ourselves, in one another, and in this complex world we co-inhabit?

There will be a **Sunday Connections** session following the service, geared towards newercomers and visitors, with the Membership Ministry Team & Rev. Heather.

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**.

Joan Stapleton is the assistant.

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

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

Ordination of Sierra-Marie Gerfao – Sunday, January 24th at 4:00 p.m.

With joy we share with the congregation that we, the Board, have voted to ordain **Sierra-Marie Gerfao**, our Director of Religious Education. Her service of ordination will take place online on Sunday, January 24th at 4:00 p.m. Ordination services are a unique and joyful occasion. We will be joined by clergy, religious professionals, and lay people from across the country, both from within and outside our tradition. Please save the date.

In the Unitarian Universalist tradition, it is congregations, not bishops, that have the power to ordain ministers. Sierra-Marie is credentialed for Unitarian Universalist ministry through the Unitarian Universalist Association's ministerial credentialing office and is a Unitarian Universalist minister in preliminary fellowship. Our decision to ordain her is based on our faith in and support for her ministry, which is a ministry of public theology outside of her work with our congregation.

Though Sierra-Marie will receive the title "Reverend" with her ordination, this title refers to a relationship with our Unitarian Universalist tradition, not a relationship with our congregation. Sierra-Marie will remain in the role of Director of Religious Education, not Minister of Religious Education, in her work with us. Instead, ordaining her is one way that we enact our unique power as a congregation to contribute to our larger tradition. We look forward to celebrating this momentous occasion together on January 24th.

FAQ about the Ordination Service

Q: Does this mean Sierra-Marie attended divinity school to become a minister?

Yes, as shared in her bio when she came to work at UUCD, Sierra-Marie attended Yale Divinity School and completed her Master of Divinity (ministerial degree) in May 2017. However, it is important to note that Sierra-Marie is not seeking a parish ministry and will not be leaving us. Her ministry is a half-time ministry of public theology, which fits well with her half-time work as our religious educator.

Q: Is it usual to ordain someone who is not going to be our minister?

In the Unitarian Universalist tradition, it is a common and frequent occurrence for ministers to be ordained by congregations with which they have a connection but which they have not and will not serve as a minister. Sometimes congregations ordain people who have been or will be their own ministers, but in both cases, congregations ordain credentialed ministers as a service to the larger Unitarian Universalist movement, not as a service to the local community.

Q: Why an ordination now?

Sierra-Marie was able to finish her final credentialing requirements with the Unitarian Universalist Association's Ministerial Credentialing Office this last spring (May 2020), so this is the appropriate time for her to be ordained. In the midst of a strange and difficult year, it can be good to take time to do joyful things and celebrate in every way we can.

Q: Have we ordained anyone before?

Yes, Rev. Fred Hammond on May 27, 2007.

Q: Why is the ordination service in addition to our regular Sunday service?

A: When a Unitarian Universalist minister is being ordained, it is customary to invite their colleagues to lead the service. For this reason, the service often takes place at a time other than the usual Sunday Service, so that more colleagues are able to be involved in the leadership. On January 24th, we will have two services: our regular Sunday service at 10AM and a service of ordination at 4PM.

Q: Is an ordination service different than a usual Sunday service?

An ordination service is a complete service with some additional ritual elements. Many things about it will be familiar, though the traditional ordination language differs from UUUCD customs (for example, "invocation" instead of "opening words" and "sermon" instead of "reflection"). An ordination service typically lasts a little longer than an ordinary Sunday service and often is followed by an informal time to chat and offer blessings.

Q: Will the colleagues leading the service be Unitarian Universalist?

Though Sierra-Marie hopes that many of her colleagues from various faith traditions will be present for the service, most of the service will be led by Unitarian Universalist colleagues. The sermon will be preached by a Unitarian Universalist minister. That said, Sierra-Marie is a Unitarian Universalist Christian, and there may be some aspects of the service that speak to those dual identities.

Q: Will the service be child-friendly?

Sierra-Marie always assumes children will be "in the room," and she will encourage her colleagues to consider this as they plan their leadership of the service. She also hopes to do some specific things, such as creating a children's order of service, to help children be more fully included. Furthermore, children and youth will be invited to have a special role in the act of ordaining Sierra-Marie. Sierra-Marie's biggest worry, however, is that the service will feel long for children. She expects children may "come in and out of the room" as needed, and she encourages families to incorporate attendance with things children can do with their bodies: coloring, playing with playdough, finger knitting, rolling out cookie dough, dancing to the music, etc. Adults are also embodied! Bring knitting, etc. as desired!

Q: How can we help?

We hope many congregants will come together to help make this celebration special! Most importantly, we hope many congregants will be present. Additionally, during this Zoom service, we will be hosting visitors from around the country, including some of Sierra-Marie's colleagues and congregants in other communities she has served. Please help us welcome them warmly to the service. If you'd like to help with something more tangible, such as the creation of a children's version of the order of service, please let Sierra-Marie know.

From the Board of Trustees

by Melody Levy, President

At our best we lean into what we value most. Given how individual we can be, it makes a lasting impression when we rise as one to the *grandeur of success*. Did the Auction No-Committee know us better than we know ourselves? While they addressed a budget deficient, we were invited to *gather and flourish*. At the heart of us there lies extraordinary people, contending with inconveniences and persevering with ingenuity. Thank you, Members, Friends and Staff for all you are, and all you have managed to do from a distance.

This week I attended an online meeting with 210 guests and four ministers who presented their congregations proactive lead up to and adoption of the *8th principle*. The next *Jubilee Three Anti-Racism Training: Learning Together About Systemic Racism* for the Central East Region will be held January 17th – 19th. Details are posted on UUA.org. For more information go to: <https://www.uua.org/central-east/events/region/jubilee-anti-racism-workshop-dc-120>. Please consider scheduling your time to attend a UUA workshop or UUCD class. Our reckoning with racial injustice is determined to be without falter as we continue the journey together toward making a stand against racism.

To the bold and fearless who are proud of their identities and amplified voices, and to allies who work tirelessly to protect, sustain and defend their values, and ours, we see you. In the midst of this winter's waiting, while the days are cold and dark, we'll remember. The altars we serve, however held and where ever placed, are brighter because you are. This new year begins with hope and courage.

We can be braver with the knowledge that the dangers we face are almost never as great as our imaginations suggest. "The human capacity for burden is like bamboo--far more flexible than you'd ever believe at first glance" (Jodi Picoult, *My Sister's Keeper*).

Together we are composing the next chapter in our history. May the coming weeks and months find you healthy and resilient. Our Music Director and *makers of merry* may add...with sparkles galore. Happy New Year 2021!

Attention Committee and Ministry Chairs and Co-Chairs

The next **Common Council** meeting will be January 10th at 4:30. An agenda and Zoom link will be sent in advance. Please plan to attend.



by Sierra-Marie Gerfao, Director of Religious Education for Children and Youth

Upcoming In Children and Youth Religious Education (RE):

Our January content will relate to the spiritual theme of *imagination*. One of our activities for children and youth this month is the creation of a story as a community. In the first week of the month, the “and then...” story-by-mail project will be launched. If your family signs up to participate, please be prompt in completing your part after receiving the mailing, and equally prompt in sending it along. If it gets stuck somewhere, we will all miss out. It needs to reach its final destination by Thursday, January 14th so we can reveal the story on Sunday, January 17th.

Families with children and youth, please see your email for other details regarding the following.

- **CLASSES Sunday, January 3rd:** Classes and Youth Group
- **CONNECTIONS Sunday, January 10th:** Building Video Game Worlds
- **CREATIVITY Sunday, January 17th:** “And Then...” Story Reveal
- **CARING Sunday, January 24th:** Project to Benefit the Women’s Center of Greater Danbury
- **On Dates to Be Announced:**
 - Parents of Preschoolers (POP) Group
 - Parent Covenant Group

From Our Director of Religious Education For Children and Youth

Dear Congregation,

I am fairly certain that somewhere in my family archives, I have a video of my children, when they were small, singing “Happy Birthday” to a relative they adore and love. They were smiling, and cute, and their little voices sounded angelic. And I am pretty sure that this particular video never got emailed off to the relative for whom it was intended because one of the kids decided to complete the video’s finale “we love you” message with a giggle-filled “poo-poo head” that is so closely timed with “we love you” that it would have been impossible to edit out.

“Oh, that one would have been so good” you could probably hear me groaning on the video before click, I shut it down. I think we had five or six takes that day, and the reason the kids were smiling so big in every single one was because they were gleefully excited for the next potty-humor joke they could insert into the endeavor despite what were surely my pleas to have just one good take absent potty-humor. Eventually, if memory serves, there was a pause just long enough before a joke that I was able to use the rest of the video without a problem.

If you are on social media, you have probably been seeing many lovely holiday photos. And while it can be wonderful to get to share in one another’s festivities in this way -- especially when we are practicing physical distancing -- we know, of course, that these snapshots don’t tell full stories. It’s not just potty-humor that gets edited out, or even bribes to smile and say cheese just one more time, it can be tantrums, messes that haven’t yet gotten cleaned up, stacks of bills to pay on a table nearby, spousal arguments, “nailed it” style craft disasters, and more. (And this doesn’t even begin to touch additional challenges that families can face, including mental illness, behavioral challenges, medical crises, family violence, and addictions.)

Life is often messy. Family life is often messy. Pandemic family life, for many of us, has included some extra ups and downs. While the isolation of physical distancing can be incredibly difficult, families often feel isolated in the challenges they face. Child development researcher Ed Tronick says that his research indicates that parents and infants who are developing a secure attachment are only in sync with one another -- in tune with and accurately reading one another’s cues -- 20-30% of the time. I bring this up now because I want to affirm that if you have children or teens in your house, it is normal for things not to go perfectly smoothly, and it isn’t harmful for caregivers to be totally human.

If you are feeling overwhelmed with the task of pandemic caregiving, that is because it is overwhelming. We’ve done nothing like this in our lifetime. Whatever challenges our families faced before the time of the pandemic, the stress of the pandemic is now on top of that. This is one of the reasons I want to encourage parents/guardians to participate in our parent/guardian covenant group. Those who have signed up already have been muddling through scheduling challenges this fall, but I hope to launch the program in earnest this January. As caregivers, we need one another, and we need moments of reprieve, moments when we can take a breath, get up in the balcony and look at the bigger picture, reflecting on the deeper matters at hand in family life in a community that will accept and embrace us.

Warmly,
Sierra-Marie

Welcome

New Members

Jenna & Michael Halse



We have been residents of New Milford for almost 5 years, so hard to believe! Jenna is from Westerly, RI, and Michael is from Wynantskill, NY, so we settled on living in between - exactly 2 hours from both families. We met in 2009 at The University of RI and were married in 2016 on a lovely September day in Warwick, RI. Michael is a Pharmacist at Danbury Hospital and Jenna works from home as a Mortgage Processor. Although 2020 has been such a rough year our shining light in all the sorrow has been welcoming our first child into the world this past June, our son Calvin. Life as new parents has been busy and full of more love than we could have ever imagined. We are so grateful to have found UUCD and cannot wait to be able to bring Calvin in person some day!

Jan Malin

I grew up nearby in Ridgefield, CT, and now live with my husband Mike, our 11 year old twins, Faith and Daniel and three feisty cats in Kent NY. Our home is surrounded by 1,000 acres of woods and wonderful hiking trails where I can frequently be found. After college I was a graphic designer for a couple of years then returned to school to get qualified to teach. It has been 30 years since I began teaching and I still enjoy being an educator, though not so much this year! I'm presently employed by the North Salem School district and am looking forward to retirement in a few years with excitement. I'll be happy to have time to volunteer and to do more of my favorite things - art, learning, traveling, hiking, biking and hanging out with fun people.



Laura Reynolds



I have 2 rescue Yorkshire Terriers, Harry and Sally, and 2 wonderful nephews, 3 great nieces, 3 great nephews and 2 godsons. I couldn't be more fortunate. My circle of friends is not huge but it is solid. Luckily I found, or it found me...sobriety in 1990's and have been learning I'm not the center of the universe ever since. I retired after 34 years at AT&T and started a 2nd career in 2014. I bought a fixer upper home in Brookfield in the 1990's and a fixer upper RV this year so I can travel at my leisure around our beautiful country. I look forward to meeting and knowing others in this fellowship as we move forward.



The 2020 Auction was a HUGE success!

Yes, “Against All Odds,” our Beloved UUCD Community raised more than double the amount of our goal!

Our final total, including the Online Auction, the Spectacular on December 6, and a whopping **53% in Matching Funds** brought our final total to **\$21,180!**

A **HUGE Thank You** to all of you fabulous donors, buyers, and matchers!

And... special thanks to **Peter Horton**, Auctioneer Extraordinaire, and to **Chris Creter** for donating her time, expertise, and creativity for enhancing our Zoom experience during the Spectacular.

And... over-the-moon thanks to **Jerry Phelps**, who truly made **The Spectacular spectacular!** His creativity, grit, musicality, and sheer love of fun is such a gift to all of us!

~ Lisa Horton and Barbara Myers

Thank you to all of our UUCD 2020 Auction’s Generous Matching Donors:	
Anonymous	Donna Lawrence
Andrea Anderson	Jane Leff
Bob Bollinger	Melody Levy
Deb Casey	Alex Makai
Val Cochrane	Sally Mandler
Ginny Cook	Sue Maynard
Chris Creter	Sam McCoy
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Karen & Joe Gillotti	Maredith Spector
Chris Halfar	Joan Stapleton & Carl Dwyer
Jenna & Michael Halse	Yvonne Ruddy-Stein & Jeremy Stein
Elise Jaeger	Heidi Winslow
Anne Krieg	Melene Rose & Todd Zagorec
... and to Nancy Brown, who we accidentally missed including as an Auction Donor in last month’s <i>Comment</i>	

From the *Social Action Council*

by Margaret Henderson

In December the Social Action Council sent postcards to Georgia residents, urging them to vote in the Senate runoff election on January 5th. In addition to the ongoing work of teams like the Dorothy Day Team and Team Green, the Racial Justice Forum has been very busy. **Chris Halfar** led a fascinating workshop on December 14th about the experiences of Black UU's (contact her and request the handouts if you find yourself wishing you'd been there!).

The Social Action Council will have its first Zoom meeting of 2021 on Sunday evening, January 10th at 7:00 pm. All are welcome - come check us out! Email Margaret Henderson for the Zoom link.

Racial Justice Forum Update

by Chris Halfar

The RJF continues to work on programming to help our UUCD community educate ourselves and evaluate our work toward adopting the proposed 8th Principle.

Sam McCoy's discussion group around **Black Voices of the 20th Century** will continue to run on the first Monday of each month (next meeting is January 4th) and you can still email Sam if you'd like to sign up to receive the readings and join the group.

On January 11th at 6:30 p.m. **Margaret Henderson** will lead a discussion on the differing manifestations of **Institutional vs. Individual Racism**. Contact Margaret for more information and the Zoom link.

There are also ongoing monthly and bi-monthly nationwide 8th Principle Learning Community meetings hosted by Paula Cole Jones and Bruce Jackson Pollack. If you would like to join one of those discussions or have other thoughts or suggestions for the Racial Justice Forum, please reach out to **Marian DiFabbio**.

Soup Kitchen Corner

by Judy Lacker

On Saturday, January 2nd, some members of Soup Kitchen Team #3 (Team Leader **Lynn Taborsak, Bob Taborsak, Jim Wruck, Julie Gordon, Diane Purvis and Laura Reynolds**) will be returning to the Dorothy Day Soup Kitchen on Spring Street to help serve take-out meals that were cooked in volunteers' homes as well as bagged sandwiches, also prepared in volunteers homes as well as through donations. Unfortunately, we are not yet able to serve the clients a meal inside because of the Covid pandemic.

You can also help feed our neighbors with a gift card in any amount from any local supermarket. In addition, you can still continue to make food donations to the Daily Bread Food Pantry (25 West Street - entrance off Terrace Place). Donations are accepted on Mondays between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. and on Fridays between 8:30 – 11:30 a.m. **Lynn Taborsak** has also been scheduling the sandwich donations so we have just the right amount each day at Dorothy Day Soup Kitchen. If you are interested in making sandwiches, please email her at ddhhsandwiches@gmail.com. We can all be an important part of the fight to end hunger in our community!

Upcoming Events



UUCD Men Conversing over Coffee will meet via Zoom on Monday, January 11th at 9:30 a.m. Any UUCD men who would like to join, please contact **Jim Russell**.

Women On Our Own

This group is for women who are living on their own. Our circumstances will be similar, but different, and we will be talking about what works well, what is lacking, and so on. We will meet in the UUCD Zoom Room on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday at 4:00 p.m. January dates are the 12th and 26th. 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 **Jane Leff** for more information and the Zoom links.



On Thursday, January 21st, the Book Conversations group will be meeting at 7:00 p.m. to discuss Natures Best Hope by Douglas Tallamy. Please join us. This book asks why thousands of species worldwide are on the decline despite our best efforts at conservation. And it presents a new approach to conservation that starts in your yard! Some things that anyone can do. Natures Best Hope is written in an easy to read, conversational style, and there are photos. It's a New York Times Bestseller. We suggest it for a holiday gift.

In February we'll be discussing former President Obama's new book A Promised Land. This is an 800 page book so start reading now.

You do not need to read the book to attend. For more information and the Zoom link, please contact **Mary Ann Kulla**.



Seeking Asylum from Honduras

What do you do when you fear for your life and the state won't protect you?...As of 2015, Honduras ranked among a tiny group of nations, including war-racked Syria and Afghanistan, with the highest rates of violent deaths of women. Although Honduras' overall murder rate has decreased in recent years, it remains one of the deadliest countries in the world, and the murder rate has been declining more slowly for female victims. Murder remains the second-leading cause of death for women of childbearing age.

I Can No Longer Continue to Live Here

Jill Filipovic, Politico, June 7, 2019

It took Dilcia eight years, four failed attempts and the murders of two of her brothers before she finally made it from Honduras to Texas. She arrived on November 10, 2018 with three children—Gabriela, (aged 6) Oscar (aged 8) and Nayeli (aged 15). They were apprehended by border patrol, and--as an asylum-seeker--Dilcia was given an electronic ankle monitor and the name of an attorney. Fortunately for them, they were not detained nor separated, and they made their way to New Milford, where Dilcia's sister lives.

NMRR has been working with Dilcia and the children since February 2019. We have provided help with English, transportation, education, legal, medical and dental services, rent and daily living expenses. Dilcia's formal application for asylum has been filed by a pro-bono attorney in New York. She has received a work permit and is waiting on a Social Security number that will allow her to get a job. The children are healthy, attending school and learning English.

Our current goal is to provide rent for the family for the next six months, giving them housing security at least until the summer. They live in a two-bedroom apartment in downtown New Milford with a rent of \$1100 a month. Two of our members have already pledged a month's rent each, and if you would like to help a deserving family of four, please consider pledging a month's rent. However, if you would like to donate any amount, it would be greatly appreciated. 100% of your donation will go towards rent.

Please make out a check to St. John's Episcopal Church (NMRR in the memo) and send in the enclosed envelope. If you prefer to pay online, go to: www.gofundme.com/f/7hzgz4.

