



Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury

Monthly **COMMENT** Newsletter

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

JULY/AUGUST 2022

From our Minister



*And so with the sunshine and the great bursts of leaves
growing on the trees, just as things grow in fast movies,
I had that familiar conviction that life
was beginning over again with the summer.*

~ F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*

It's summertime and I can't think of a more appropriate time for "beginning over again", trying new things, and re-trying old things. This summer is no exception to Fitzgerald's supposition. The 2021-2022 congregational year was quite a roller coaster ride and I'd prefer Coney Island's Cyclone! Most of us are weary, some of us are cranky, and we're more than ready for opportunities to be in community with family and friends, to celebrate milestones we've had to postpone time and time again, to breathe deeper, relax more, and enjoy life.

I've typically considered the summer solstice as simply the time when the weather gets warmer and days longer. It's true that the summer solstice marks the point when the sun is at its highest peak in the sky but it's more than a seasonal shift. It heralds changes and new beginnings. I've read that the spiritual meaning of the 2022 summer solstice is about finding balance in your life and mustering up the courage to be the boldest version of yourself. That kind of boldness calls for curiosity and a willingness to try something new. While planning vacations and staycations, barbecues, and lots of outdoor activities, UUCD staff are also busy thinking about the new congregational year ahead – beginning over again but trying new things, and re-trying some old things with a fresh twist. Starting in July, our Sunday Services Team will reintroduce the ritual of dropping stones in water as part of our shared milestones. In September, we're envisioning monthly community dinners and monthly social action projects for all ages and stages of life. I'm excited to lean into the idea of boldness and new beginnings!

What are you willing to try this summer? Maybe something you've always wanted to do but just haven't mustered the courage until now. Maybe something you've done before but it's been a while. I'm stepping back into the theater as part of the cast for the play *Elvis People* in Southbury. It's been a long time since I've done theater work but now seems like the perfect time to do it! Let's encourage one another to try something new, reach out to one another and offer support, and begin again with joy.

With gratitude for summertime possibilities,
Rev. Kathleen

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 19th.**

July Services – One Service at 10:00 a.m.**Sunday, July 3rd**We the People

Rev. Julie Taylor

It is time to celebrate Independence Day and General Assembly! On this holiday weekend we recognize the democratic process both within the context of this nation and the Unitarian Universalist Association.



Rev. Julie Taylor is a Unitarian Universalist community minister specializing in critical incident response, community crisis and pastoral care. Julie is the Senior Director of Contextual Ministry and an affiliate professor at Meadville Lombard Theological School. In addition, Julie serves as a chaplain (Capt) with the New York Air National Guard and on the board of the UU Trauma Response Ministry. An ordained minister since 2001, Julie has served UU congregations in New York City and St. Louis and volunteered with multiple crisis and disaster response organizations. A sought-after speaker and teacher, Julie has contributed chapters to several books on the subject of spiritual care and crisis. Agitating, preaching, and working towards dismantling systems of White Supremacy are key in Julie's theology and work.

Sunday, July 10thConfessions of an Idiot Liberal Communist

Rev. Dr. Kathleen Rudoff

It may seem as if there are easy answers to the debate over gun control, but there aren't, no matter what side you find yourself on. This message tries to make some sense of that debate and the love affair with guns.

Sunday, July 17thWoven in a Single Garment of Destiny

Rev. Susan Frederick Gray, UUA President

In this pre-recorded service, we are reminded that covenant—our promises about how to be together and in the larger world—is our religious response to our fundamental interdependence. Our practice of covenant echoes the theology of our Universalist and Unitarian ancestors, even as our promises, today, knit us together within our Unitarian Universalist communities. Those promises also shape our moral lives, calling us to extend care to the most vulnerable and marginalized members of our human family, rather than falling back on distorted notions of individual freedom.

Sunday, July 24thBroadway Sunday

A lay led service Coordinated by Suzanne Fritsch-Hall

One of the six sources we draw from in living out our Unitarian Universalist principles is the direct experience of transcending mystery and wonder. Many people find that experience through the arts: theater, music, dance, and more. This Sunday is dedicated to the spiritual experiences lived through seeing and singing Broadway!

Sunday, July 31stLoving Eighty (80)!

A lay led service by Marcia Brooker

Marcia will explore some of the joys of being an 80 year old and observations/stats this age group.

August Service Lineup – One Service at 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, August 7 th	Rev. Dr. Kathleen Rudoff
Sunday, August 14 th	Sierra-Marie Gerfao
Sunday, August 21 st	Rev. Kathleen Rudoff
Sunday, August 28 th	Guest minister Rev. D.L Helfer

Pathway to Membership

Pathway to Membership Class with Rev. Kathleen
Sunday, August 28th

The class will start 15 minutes after the service ends (approximately 11:15 start time). It will run for 1.5 hours, and will be held in person at UUCD, with option to join virtually.

In this workshop, you will...

- Learn about Unitarian Universalism
- Discover what UU Danbury can offer you
- Receive information about how to become a member

On her local public access show, Community Forum with Comcast, Suze Shaner, one of our members, interviews Rev. Kathleen.

Rev. Kathleen gives an overview of UUism and describes her journey to becoming a UU member and then minister. The show will air on Comcast Channel 23 on Wednesday 8/3 at 9:00 pm and Thursday 8/4 at 12:00 pm for those who have cable and live in Danbury, Bethel and Ridgefield. In addition, you may access the show here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ytvTXTAxxY8>

Special Recognition and Congratulations!



It's not often that a minister is privileged to have a retired minister as a member of the congregation. And when that retired minister is honored by the denomination for 50 years of professional ministry, and receives an award for their incredible service, it's something for the entire congregation to celebrate! Please join me in congratulating UUCD member **Randy Becker**.

The Unitarian Universalist Association's Angus H. MacLean Award for Excellence in Religious Education, for a lifetime of service to liberal religious education, was awarded to Randy as a religious educator who has contributed to the quality of religious education at the local level; raised the quality of religious education at the Association level; been innovative in the use of religious education resources; brought dignity to the profession of religious education; and influenced religious education beyond our Association.

I am so pleased to share this wonderful news and even more pleased that Randy is a part of our beloved community.

Rev. Kathleen



Rev. Kathleen's email has been spoofed, as have many other ministers nationwide. They are using a few different emails as the sender. The email addresses aren't ones Rev. Kathleen uses. This is simply an imposter trying to hack into your email and get money or a gift card from you.

Rev Kathleen will **never** email you to ask for a favor or money!

Please know that neither Rev. Kathleen's nor UUCD's email has been hacked. Rev. Kathleen's email has been spoofed and there is no way for her to stop these scammers. Please be alert and check email addresses. Rev. Kathleen only uses uurevkathleen@gmail.com and minister@uudanbury.org

From Our Director of Religious Education For Children and Youth



What Will Happen in Religious Education - 2022-2023?

Religious Education programs are on summer break but will return in September. There will be multiple components of the upcoming year in Religious Education. To the extent that our volunteer resources can support these components, they will include:

- An experimental, multigenerational monthly community dinner on the first Wednesday of the month - dinner provided - with after-dinner choir practice and other 45-minute programs
- An experimental, multigenerational monthly community social action project (days and times to be announced)
- Our Whole Lives (OWL) sexuality education programs for the following groups:
 - upper elementary - 10 session program
 - junior high - 25 session program
 - high school - 12 session program
- Junior high youth group to meet monthly
- Senior high youth group (with exploration of the possibility of a 2023-2024 big trip)
- Continued iterations of in-service and after-service programming

Plans will be adjusted as attendance numbers vary and as we learn our way through the year!

Volunteers Needed!

Religious Education plans, including Our Whole Lives programming, will depend on volunteer availability in the coming year. However, it is still important to match the people with the right volunteer roles for them. If you are interested in volunteering, please send an email to dre at danbury dot org with the following information.

- **Frequency:** How frequently are you interested in volunteering (once or twice during the year; three or four times during year; once or twice per month; most Sundays)?
- **Type:** What inspired you to reach out? Are you interested in helping with planning, preparation, or committee work, or is your preference to work directly with program participants?
- **Style:** What is your preferred style of interaction (for example, do you prefer to be in charge, or are you more interested in mutuality; do you like to have structure or do you prefer to interact in more flexible ways)?
- **Age:** Is there a particular age group with whom you are best suited to work?
- **Skills:** Do you have a special skill you can offer the children's community in either behind-the-scenes or direct work (some examples might include making music, telling stories, creating props and sets for stages, art of any type, etc.)?
- **Connections:** Do you have a connection to a community organization with which we could partner for social action events?

Save the Date Notices for Religious Education

Families with children and youth, please mark the following dates on your family calendar:

- **Sunday, August 7th** - Nursery reopens
- **Wednesday, September 7th** - Our first experimental all-congregation monthly community dinner!
- **Sunday, September 11th** - Homecoming service
- **Sunday September 18th** - 2022-2023 Religious Education programming opens for children and youth
- **Sunday, October 16th** - Tentative weekend to begin re-launch of Our Whole Lives (OWL) sexuality programming

In addition to the monthly community dinner, we will have an experimental monthly multigenerational social action activity on dates and times to be determined.

2022-2023 Religious Education Registration

Please [click here](#) to register your children and youth for 2022-2023 Nursery Care or Religious Education. The nursery will open in August. Religious Education programming will begin in September.

Nursery and Childcare

As Covid vaccines become available for young children, we are thrilled to announce that **our nursery will reopen on August 7th**. Parents of children ages 0-5 are welcome to keep their children with them in the service or bring their children to the nursery for care.

Sunday morning nursery hours will be 9:50AM-11:10AM (opening 10 minutes before the service begins and closing 10 minutes after the service ends), though please don't worry if a service runs long. The nursery will remain open until the end of the service for any service that runs long.

Additionally, **when you need childcare for a child of any age in order to attend a meeting or participate in an event** at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury from August-June, please contact the Director of Religious Education for Children and Youth at dre at danbury dot org.

Religious Education Summer Office Hours

In July and August, we will have a Religious Education vacation. Sierra-Marie will:

- Be out of the office for much of July due to professional development obligations and will not have an opportunity to read emails sent during that month. Phone calls will be returned for emergencies only.
- Be happy to meet with community members through most of August. Online appointments are available throughout the week. In-person appointments are available on some Sundays. Please email dre at uu danbury dot org to schedule an appointment.

Sierra-Marie Gerfao

From the Board of Trustees

by Margaret Henderson

I'm writing this from the convention hall at GA (the UUA's annual General Assembly) in Portland, Oregon. This year's convention is titled "Meet the Moment," and I can't think of anything more appropriate for us at UUCD.

As many of you know, on July 1st the Board is welcoming two new members, Gina Cassetta and Gale Alexander. Unfortunately, Co-President Michele Cousens has had to leave the Board for personal reasons. She will be deeply missed. She is pulling back from all of her connections with UUCD for now. Rev. Kathleen and the Board are still absorbing this news, so please be patient with us as we figure out how to restructure things over the summer. Michele has asked that we all give her some space and not try to contact her for right now, so please honor her wishes on this. The Board and I have benefitted greatly from her energy, experience and commitment.

The Board is currently making plans for our retreat which is planned for early August. We look forward to moving forward with all of you in the fall. Here's to an exciting and lifegiving 2022-23!

Notes on Two Hundred Years (and More)

by Douglas H. Parkhurst

This writer has come across a variety of news items, articles, and announcements while researching for Notes. Here is a sampling of some "oldies" plus one more recent. The first three appeared in early Universalist periodicals.

Christian Repository, 1826 - "An assembly of Ministers and Delegates in the faith of Universal Salvation, convened at the city of Hudson, (N.Y.)...and...organized the 'Hudson River Association' in fellowship with the General Convention of Universalists....The first meeting of the new Association is to be held at Danbury, (Conn.) [in] September, 1826." [Note - This was after the organization of the Danbury Universalist Society in 1822 and prior to the formation of the Connecticut Universalist Convention in 1832 and three county associations a few years later.]

The Universalist, Sat. Oct 26, 1833 - "The Connecticut State Convention, assembled in Danbury, Conn. on the 9th inst. on which occasion the house [new church building] recently erected by the Universalists in that place, was dedicated. Dedicatory Sermon by Br. M.H. Smith, of Hartford, Conn." [Note - This building stood at the northwest corner of present-day Main and Wooster Streets. It was the Danbury Universalist Society's first permanent home.]

(continued)

The Christian Leader, Sat. June 20, 1874 - "Connecticut Southern Association [Universalist]: This body held its annual meeting at Meriden, June 10 and 11....Rev. D.M. Hodge, Clerk....In the afternoon Rev. E. Smiley preached from the text, 'The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life' - 2 Cor. iii. 6....The representatives of the various parishes then, under the call of the 'State of the Church,' reported as follows:....Danbury. Rev. D.M. Hodge, pastor. 40 families; average attendance, 75; Sunday School average, 70, with 10 teachers. Use the *Helper* series, and unite with other denominations in a Union Teachers' Meeting...." [Note - Dwight Hodge was minister in Danbury during the 1870s. Edward Smiley was ordained in Danbury and was pastor in 1856.]

The Pensacola [Florida] News, Fri. March 17, 1899 - "Rev. R.P. Ambler of DeFuniak Springs, will be in the city [Pensacola], and preach at the Universalist church, Sunday at 11 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. Dr. Ambler is gifted with great ability, is an eloquent speaker, and can hold his audiences spellbound. Public most cordially invited to hear this talented divine. Seats free." [Note - Russell Ambler, a Danbury native, was fellowshipped by the Connecticut Southern Association in 1845 and was ordained in 1848. He spent many years in Florida spreading the good news of Universalism.]

Hartford Courant, Thu. May 5, 1921 - "The legislative committee on incorporations has approved a bill incorporating The Scott-Fanton Museum Corporation of Danbury....Provision for the museum was made in the will of Mrs. Laura B. Fanton who died about three years ago...leaving land and buildings on Deer Hill avenue of that city. The general object of the new corporation is to establish in the home on Deer Hill avenue a free public museum and center for the public in educational, scientific, historical and cultural duties and to encourage public appreciation in art, science, history and music." [Note - Laura Fanton was a long-time member and benefactor of the Danbury Universalist Church. The Scott-Fanton Museum has evolved into The Danbury Museum and Historical Society at 43 Main Street.]

Comment, September 2000 - "Women! Save the weekend of Friday, March 30 to Sunday, April 1 for a wonderful weekend of spirituality, togetherness, workshops, walks, talks, and just plain old fun. We have the 18th century New England Farmhouse, with fireplace, at *Wisdom House* in Litchfield already reserved....A deposit of \$50...will hold your place in either the Farmhouse or the main building. The total cost of the weekend will be approximately \$150...." [Note - This announces an early Women's Retreat sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Society of Northern Fairfield County (today's UUCD). These gatherings were first held at Wisdom House, a retreat and conference center in Litchfield, CT.]



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 Stapleton 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 the *Caring Circle*

by Joan Campbell

A brief request from Caring Circle: As you may know, when Caring Circle receives occasional congregational requests for meals when someone is ill, or occasional rides to medical appointments, our monthly coordinator draws from our list of volunteer “providers.” Currently, 24 of you have volunteered to be contacted when such needs arise. As we are refreshing this provider list, we’d like to make a special note of people who are willing, once in awhile, to provide a ride to Sunday Services when someone has no other means of getting there. If you would be willing to offer an occasional Sunday ride, please let **Bob Bollinger** (our coordinator for July) know this. All he’ll need is your email address. If you are not already a “provider” and would like to be added to our list, please let Bob know that as well.

From the *Social Action Council*

Soup Kitchen Corner

by Judy Lacker



On Saturday, June 2, some members of Soup Kitchen Team 4 (Team Leaders **Judy Lacker and John Miglietta, Sally Mandler, Gary Winn, Rose Schlemmer, Brian Teagarden, Jane Leff and Inge Hill**) 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 for lunches and breakfasts for Pacific House homeless shelter, also prepared in volunteers’ homes as well as through donations. Unfortunately, we are not yet able to serve the guests 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 am and 2 pm and on Fridays between 8:30 am and 11:30 am. 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 meets on the second Wednesday of each month. Our next meetings are on Wednesday, July 13th and Wednesday, August 10th at 9:30 a.m. at UUCD in the Fellowship Hall Lower Level. For more information contact **Gary Mummert** or **Joe Gillotti**.



The Book Conversations Group will be meeting in-person on Thursday, July 14, 2022 at 5:45 at Cheryl Edelen's home. We will be discussing *DOUGHNUT ECONOMICS* written by Kate Raworth. Bob Bollinger is moderator. The plan is for each person to bring their own sandwich and a dish to share. Contact **Mary Ann Kulla** if you plan to attend. It is not necessary to have read the book to participate. *DOUGHNUT ECOOMICS* has enough original, even revolutionary viewpoints, backed by research, to get a heated conversation going.

Our next "good read" is *THE CHANCELLOR* by Kati Marton which is a biography of Angela Merkel.

Music at the Ridge

by Nancy Hershatter

Beginning on October 2nd, one Sunday per month at 4:00 p.m. our Fellowship Hall will ring with the sounds of a brand new live music series which we are calling Music at the Ridge. These live acoustic music shows will feel like a cross between a house concert and a Saturday night coffeehouse. October 2nd our performers will be Mustard's Retreat, a folk duo from Ann Arbor, Michigan. On November 6th, Pat Wictor will be performing. Pat is a singer-songwriter who grew up in Venezuela, the Netherlands, Norway and England but currently makes his home in Brooklyn. We are hoping to livestream these shows; more on that later.

If you would like to be on the team that makes these intimate concerts a success, email **Nancy Hershatter**. We especially need folks who are willing to a) help with tech setup b) take tickets at the door c) bake and serve refreshments at intermission d) be on the publicity team that gets the word out to the larger community and e) hospitality--making sure our performer(s) have what they need. Our objectives are to build bridges in the community through music, while providing a sustainable venue in western Connecticut for live music to be shared and enjoyed. Revenue will be shared between performers and UUCD.

