



Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury

Monthly **COMMENT** Newsletter

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

SEPTEMBER 2022

From our Minister



*We must be willing to let go of the life we've planned,
so as to have the life that is waiting for us.*

~ Joseph Campbell

I am thrilled about the numerous exciting things coming up in the new congregational year. Many of those things are experiments and may be different than what we've seen or done in the past. Some experiments fly in the face of what we think congregational engagement should look like or what we planned in the past. But if you're willing to take a chance on some new ideas, and let go of some past ways of thinking and being and doing at UUCD, together we may just find a way to thrive! It's really not unlike what we do in our personal lives as we learn to let go of things we've planned or become comfortable with, in order to embrace something even better, more effective, and beneficial.

The new ideas begin to take shape as we return to community after Summer months of travel for some, spending time with family for some, loss and grief for some, rest and rejuvenation for some, and much more. It's good to come back together and see each other's faces, hear each other's stories, and recommit to our mission as a beloved community. We are so much stronger when we are together! While I have had a wonderful Summer, I'm looking forward to singing together, breaking bread together, learning together, working together, and trying new things together. I hope you can feel the love and support that we give to and receive from one another. Perhaps you know of someone who would benefit from our community and you will make it a part of your own mission to invite them to a UUCD event in September. Let's come together at our Homecoming Service on September 11th, and celebrate!

We have so much to look forward to in this new congregational year: our 200th Anniversary celebration in October, having former ministers as guest speakers, monthly community dinners and social action projects for all ages, as well as special concerts, welcoming new members, and the list goes on. I can't wait to see you in September!

With gratitude for all that is our life,

Rev. Kathleen

Special Reminder: Scams

Text and email scams in religious communities continue and UUCD staff want to remind you that none of us will ever ask you for money or gift card via email or a text. If you receive something that makes such a request, please reach out and let us know. Thank you.



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 October *Comment* –
Friday, September 16th.**

Need someone to help with rentals

As the pandemic wanes and rentals resume, we’re welcoming back in-person groups like the Hindu Prayer Group that has met on Thursdays in Fellowship Hall for years. The Board of Trustees is looking for someone who can occasionally assist on-site with these rentals. We’ll still do most of the work, but sometimes we need another body who can be present at the building for a short time, usually evenings or weekends. We’ll tell you everything you need to know and support you as necessary. If you live close to UUCD and can help, please contact **Margaret Henderson** by September 9th. A small stipend for gas money, etc. may be available.

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

Sunday, September 4th

Cooperatively

Rev. Craig Schwalenberg



Capitalism, Democracy, and Congregational Polity. Thomas Jefferson and Michael Moore. What do all of these things have in common? This Sunday of Labor Day weekend, let's explore the answer, cooperatively...

Rev. Craig Schwalenberg is an ordained Unitarian Universalist minister raised in the Midwest, transplanted to New York (near the source of the Susquehanna.) After 15+ years serving as a parish minister and interim minister, he's started a new community ministry as Your Game Minister— sharing the fun and wisdom where spirituality and play cross paths. His ministry is one of connections, storytelling, hospitality, and games.

Sunday, September 11th

Homecoming

Rev. Dr. Kathleen Rudoff, Sierra-Marie Gerfao, Jerry Phelps

On this very special Sunday we will welcome new members and come together as a multigenerational community to celebrate the start of a new congregational year. Please bring a small amount of water that symbolizes your external and internal Summer journeys as we share in an ingathering of water ritual.

Sunday, September 18th

Meanwhile, the World Goes On

Rev. Barbara Pescan



Barbara Pescan is a Unitarian Universalist minister, retired. She has served churches in Oak Park and in Evanston Illinois and Connecticut, where she served this congregation from 1988 to 1995. Barbara is delighted to see you all again, and wishes it were in person.

Sunday, September 25th

Auction Sermon

Rev. Dr. Kathleen Rudoff

In November of last year, congregant Lisa Horton had the winning bid for choosing a sermon topic. The exact topic and title are still under consideration and will be revealed in the announcements on Sept. 18!

Introduction to Liberation Theologies of Disability

Please [click here](#) to see the list of resources Rev. Sierra-Marie Gerfao offered during her sermon on disability justice in August. If you are already familiar with these resources and looking for more to deepen your understanding, please reach out to Sierra-Marie at dre@uudanbury.org.



Please join us for a Potluck Picnic
immediately following the
Homecoming Service on September 11th.

Bring a dish to share as follows:

Last Name:

A - G Salad

H - S Sandwiches or a Main Dish

T - Z Dessert/Fruit

Drinks will be provided

Our monthly Community Dinners begin September 14th with a Parade of Pasta!



You don't have to bring anything but yourself on the 2nd Wednesday of the month from 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Dinner will be available at 6:00 p.m. and we will move into programming at 6:40, with a choice of discussion, activity, or choir rehearsal. The discussion and activity will end at 7:30 and choir rehearsal will end at 8:30.

September's dinner will offer a variety of pastas and sauces, bread, salad, and a simple dessert. Water, lemonade, and iced tea will also be available and efforts will be made to have all food ingredients labeled and allergies accommodated. An anonymous donor is underwriting this dinner so there is no cost to you!

Bring family and friends and be sure to RSVP via the SignUp Genius email invite that you will receive on Friday, September 2nd as we must have a head count in order to ensure we have enough food for everyone. Manga, Manga!

Our monthly After-Dinner Social Action Projects begin September 23rd with a project to be announced

On the fourth Fridays of the month (or the third Friday in November), we'll gather as an all-ages, intergenerational community, from 7:00-8:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall to learn more about community organizations and do small projects to support them.

Come after dinner and bring your willingness to work. Each month will involve a different organization and a different project. Some organizations may be familiar to you, others you may never have heard of. The September organization will be announced in the Thursday "This Week" announcements.

As with our monthly dinners, bring family and friends and be sure to RSVP via the SignUp Genius email invite that you receive. We look forward to working together to give back to our community!

From Our Director of Religious Education For Children and Youth



Dear Congregation,

As we approach the start of a new “Religious Education year,” I hope you will take time to attend the information session Rev. Kathleen and I are hosting on Friday, September 9th. We are really excited about the plans we have been making for this year’s programs, and we can’t wait to share!

As we have made these plans, we have paid close attention to your feedback and the responses of children and youth to the wide variety of programs we have offered throughout the pandemic. We have paid close attention to wisdom from other congregations. We have paid close attention to best practices of our fields and research that might indicate what will serve children and youth well in this new era. And we have paid close attention to innovative religious professionals and educators throughout the country.

I hope when you hear what we have planned, you get as excited as we are. Further, I hope that if you have children and youth, you feel moved to ensure their participation and inspired to reinvigorate your family’s experience of religious community in support of your children’s development and well-being. None of us can do it alone, and school and sports won’t be enough help for kids to begin to truly answer their own deepest questions, such as:

- “Who am I and what is my place in the universe and in my community?”
- “What is the right thing to do?” “What makes something good?” “Does what I do even make a difference?” and “Why does [fill in the blank] matter?”
- “What will happen when I die?” and “Is my grandma really just gone?”
- “Am I loveable?”
- “What if the mistake I just made means I’ll never have friends again [or insert other concern]?”
- “Is it possible to do something so bad it is unforgivable?”
- “What do I do with this feeling of [insert feeling: loneliness, anger, ecstasy, grief, etc.]”
- “What if I am no good at school?” and “What if I am no good at sports?”
- “What if I am not the person my parents keep telling me I am?”
- “Do other people ever feel this way?”
- “What kind of person do I want to be?”

However, even though Rev. Kathleen and I have made some plans to get us started, it is really the community that creates its programs. I am here to partner with you as you articulate and live into your intentions for this community. I can provide you with resources to guide and support your work, but I can’t do it for you. If any of the experiments Rev. Kathleen and I have planned based on your feedback end up coming alive, it will be because you showed up and made them so. What will we do this year, together, for children and youth?

Warmly,
Sierra-Marie

Upcoming In Children and Youth Religious Education (RE):

What an exciting and fun time of year!
It's homecoming season, also known as "ingathering!"

- **Friday, September 9 (7-8PM):** Religious Education Information Session on Zoom
- **Sunday, September 11:** Our annual multigenerational homecoming service and picnic!
- **Sunday, September 18:** Religious Education programs begin launching
- **Sunday, September 25:** Regular Religious Education programs (note that this is a three-day weekend for most public schools)

Religious Education Information Session

Come learn about the programs we have planned for children and youth this autumn! Revs. Kathleen and Sierra-Marie will host a Zoom meeting *on Friday, September 9th, 7-8PM* to share information and answer your questions. All are welcome! RSVP to Sierra-Marie at dre at uudanbury dot org.

Thank You For Registering!

Thank you to those of you who have submitted a 2022-2023 registration form for your children and youth. If you have not yet had the opportunity, [please click here to do so](#). We need an updated form on file each year for the children and youth in our community.

Our Nursery Has Reopened!

Optional nursery care is available for children ages 0-5 during services. The nursery opens ten minutes prior to the service and closes ten minutes after the service ends. Bring your children, and bring your friends and their children! We can't wait to meet them! An introduction to our nursery caregivers is below.

- ***Doreen Goncalves** (she/her/hers) is a mom of three. She has two daughters and a son, all grown. She has two grandsons who will be turning three in November and for whom she provides care-giving. She is a retired teacher who taught for 25 years, the majority in PreK and Kindergarten. She now teaches English to adults two night a week at LVA. She loves summer!*
- ***Dani Giordano** (she/her/hers) has been working with kids since the age of 13 and also specializes in care for children with disabilities. Her favorite part of working with kids is their creativity and the way their imaginations can take them many places. She has two dogs at home named Lexi and Max whom she's had since she was little. In her free time, she enjoys writing and listening to music. She is currently studying for her health degree at Dutchess Community College and graduates next June!*

Volunteers Needed

Important news: We don't yet have enough volunteers to run all our planned Religious Education programs this year. The only way to guarantee that this is a congregation that offers programs for children and youth (including the lifesaving Our Whole Lives sexuality education programs) is to join a team to make it happen. There are both large and small opportunities to volunteer. Reach out to Sierra-Marie at dre@uudanbury.org and she can help you determine whether one of those volunteer opportunities is the right one for you.

From the Board of Trustees

by Margaret Henderson, President

Welcome to the 2022-23 Church Year!

The Board of Trustees has a lot planned for this year, much of which you'll read about in the following pages. We are looking forward to celebrating UUCD's 200th Anniversary, and we have Wednesday night dinners coming and new, higher handicapped toilets and social action projects and a play reading and so much more!

The Board will be getting new insignia for our nametags that will identify us to everyone, but in the meantime, here's the lineup for this year:

- President: Margaret Henderson
- Vice-President: vacant
- Secretary: Nancy Cullen
- Treasurer: Marie Dupree
- Trustees-At-Large: Peter Horton, Gina Cassetta, and Gale Alexander

Please reach out to any one of us if you have questions or concerns about the UU Danbury community!

Like many of you (especially if you have children in school), the Board members have split the last couple of months between vacationing and getting organized for the year ahead. Since two of us attended General Assembly in June (Margaret in-person and Gina virtually), we thought we'd use this space to report back to you on our impressions of this summer's multiplatform GA. Rev. Kathleen and Sierra-Marie also attended virtually and would like to share their observations with you.

General Assembly Reporting

Check out the worship services that took place at our General Assembly in Portland this Summer. Rev. Kathleen's favorite part of every General Assembly is the variety of worship services. There are services by the UU Christian Fellowship, Church of the Larger Fellowship, Service of the Living Tradition, Bridging service, a huge Sunday service, and more! Check out some of the services that were recorded so that you can see and hear the variety of music, tone, speakers, and ritual. <https://www.uua.org/ga/off-site/2022>

From our Board President, Margaret Henderson

GA 2022 up-close and personal in Portland, Oregon



I ran into Rev. Heather!



The two bottom ribbons are because you all did such a great job of financially supporting UUCD last year!



A small souvenir I got at the UU Hysterical Society's booth

I was fortunate to attend the UUA's General Assembly in person this year since my husband has family in Portland. Although it was an enlightening experience, it seemed subdued because of the pandemic. The conference was multiplatform, so there were only about 1400 people there (with 2,000 more online), whereas people have told me there used to be several thousand in-person attendees. The number of in-person sessions each day was limited to one 3-or-4-hour business assembly in the morning, and then one or maybe two breakout sessions in the afternoon. This was to counteract complaints from the previous year that the pace had been too hectic.

Lunches in the cafeteria/exhibit hall were sparsely attended, and people tended to sit 6 feet apart, so there were fewer of those spontaneous conversations with other UU's. The multiplatform format could have worked really well, but the convention center's wifi couldn't handle all of us trying to sign on at once so mostly we couldn't get internet while we were in the building.

But I heard some interesting speakers - Ibram Kendi was particularly edifying as the Ware lecturer - and it was inspiring to watch our national team of officers in action. They were outstanding role models when it came to inclusiveness and diversity, and even when they had to apologize for mistakes they'd made.

Being at GA the day the Roe vs. Wade decision was announced by the Supreme Court was electrifying. UUA President Susan Frederick-Gray announced she was "roiling inside" that day and then looked out at all of us grimly and said, "If you are angry today, you are welcome here!" Many attendees joined the protest that night in downtown Portland.

One of the three Actions of Immediate Witness (AIWs) this year is called "We Do Not Consent" and is directed at supporting reproductive rights. Another is about using restorative justice, including reparations, to live out our anti-racist policies. The final resolution is about stopping the privatization of Medicare, which is apparently continuing unabated in the Biden administration. I hope our congregation can do some work to further these three important goals this year. For more information, go to www.uua.org/ga.

So even though it wasn't quite the thrilling experience of a lifetime that I had hoped for (having never attended GA in person before), it did give me insight, hope and inspiration that I will carry with me all year.

General Assembly 2023 is next June in Pittsburgh - who wants to go to Pennsylvania with me?!

From our DRE, Rev. Sierra-Marie Gerfao

General Assembly is a great opportunity to meet Unitarian Universalists from around the country (and world) and attend workshops about a variety of interesting topics, including Religious Education. But it is also the time when we do our business as the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (UUA). I try to pay close attention to that business! Here is some notable business that happened this year:

As the "8th principle" and other anti-racism, anti-oppression efforts have gained momentum in our association, a very small but actively recruiting and slowly growing group of people who are opposed to these efforts have become increasingly organized and strategic. They believe that the UUA is bound to split over these issues, and their stated goal is to be the group in the split that "takes the money and the institution."

This goal was discussed at a recorded April conference of the Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Council, a small organization which seeks to avoid dismantling white supremacy by promoting an outdated color-blind approach that has been ineffective in addressing the effects of racism. This organization functions in sync with a second small organization, called the Fifth Principle Project, which claims that anti-racism, anti-oppression efforts are anti-democratic

and that the naming of harms of racism and oppression conflicts with respect for the worth and dignity of each person (a conflation of people and ideas).

The same goal of institutional takeover was later explicitly promoted by one of this group's candidates for the UUA Board of Trustees, who made a candidate statement endorsing that "younger and/or marginalized-identifying members" whose efforts she opposes should consider creating their own "branch of Unitarian Universalism," which she called "21st Century UUs." (This has prompted a number of General Assembly participants to embrace the term "21st Century UU," and a number of those attending in-person wore nametag badges identifying themselves as such.)

The methods of those opposing anti-racism, anti-oppression efforts were at least two-pronged during General Assembly. First, they attempted to get two people elected to the UUA Board by petition candidacies, with a stated goal of continuing these efforts in the years to come until they gain a majority on the Board. Their two candidates worked cooperatively, one presenting views of the group explicitly and the other presenting the views in more subtle ways, designed to make her seem a moderate, well-reasoned candidate. However, these candidates received only 9.4% and 10.4% of votes, and fortunately the candidates endorsed by the nominating committee were elected instead.

Second, the group submitted and supported business amendments intended to undermine our current democratic processes such as the requirements for a certain number of petition signatures in order for a petition candidate to run for Board positions. And the group submitted and supported business amendments intended to foster distrust of processes and people involved in an upcoming scheduled review of UUA bylaws.

It was clear that the group have determined the bylaws review is inevitable, but that they wish to establish opportunities for thwarting changes to the bylaws or questioning the legitimacy of the process down the road. Though they effectively suggested that their amendments were reasonable proposals that might be common with any organization's review of its bylaws, their real concerns did get revealed at one point when a person proposing an amendment complained about the anticipated participation of the 8th principle's author, Paula Cole Jones, in the bylaws review. Nonetheless, and even while the overall process was approved to move forward, several of their supported amendments passed.

Over the next couple of years as the UUA bylaws are reviewed and revisions are proposed, I encourage you to stay tuned, participate where you can (General Assembly 2023!?!) and bring with you all of your commitments to anti-racism through the dismantling of white supremacy, which led this congregation to approve the addition of the 8th principle to its principles. UUA bylaws will be changing in the coming years, including Article II, which currently is the UUA statement of principles and sources. As a democratic body, the outcomes of this process will be determined by feedback received and votes casted.

From Gina Cassetta

#606 Beloved Conversations: Un/Learning for Liberation; White Anti-Racist Practice

I loved this presentation. Dr. Mark A. Hicks talked about how systems of white supremacy depend on detachment from our bodies, disengaged from connection both to the earth and from one another. Realize that when we create tension in our bodies it helps us to feel in control, but we don't need to do that. As we work to end oppression, it must be done with practices of joy.

Janine Gelsing explained how living in a white supremacist system has required us to dial back our emotions in order to suppress empathy for oppressed people.

We do not have to prove we are a "good white person." We practiced some resiliency exercises and were then asked what we felt in our body—was there defensiveness? [Click here to Read More](#)

#629 Include Islam in the UU Sources of Inspiration:

This presentation was presented poorly, but I stuck with it since it was an interesting topic and the arguments seemed valid. The intention was that UU's should build bridges at this time to challenge Islamophobia, especially as the 8th Principle is to dismantle racism and systems of oppression both within ourselves and our congregations. [Read More](#)

#645 Re-Imagining Community: Howard Thurman and UU's Today Presented by Jessica Hamilton, MDiv, and Rev. Daniel Lawlor

This was a fabulous lecture with lots to contemplate! Howard Thurman was born in 1899 and wrote much during the Jim Crow era. A deeply spiritual man, he was a contemplative, a visionary, a mystic who spent much time in nature. [Read More](#)

I also attended #647, Sacred Earth, Embodied Earth by Rev. Mariela Perez-Simon and Rev. Tania Marquez, which was a wonderful movement and meditation experience imagining ourselves as a seed and embodying the nutrients of the four elements as sustenance and support.

I also listened to two lectures regarding Community Ministry since this is an interest of mine : #659: Breadth and Depth of Community Ministry with Rev. Erin Walter and Ben Gabel, lay Community Minister, and Community Ministry 101 moderated by Erin Walter. They both recognized that community ministry helps us open doors to oppressed people and apply our ministry outside the walls of our congregations. Lots of practical advice given here.

I also watched #618 A Faith-Based Response to Homelessness by Antoinette Scully which detailed how she created the No-Ho Homeless Drop-in Shelter in L.A. to be a safe place of support without shame. [Read More](#)

#415 WARE Lecture: This was actually a conversation with the UUA President (Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray) and Dr. Ibram X. Kendi and was Fabulous! I encourage you to [Read More!](#)

From Our Music Director, Jerry Phelps



Come join the UUCD choir this fall!

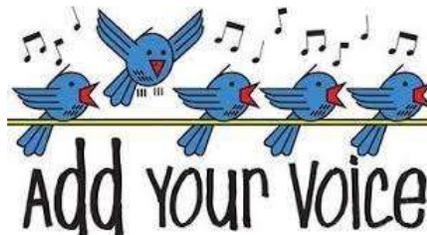
Check out our rehearsal schedule [here](#).

It is not mandatory to attend every rehearsal.

Come when you can, as often as you can.

No experience necessary—

just bring your love of music and community through music!



Notes on Two Hundred Years (and More)

by Douglas H. Parkhurst

This year marks the two hundredth anniversary of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury (UUCD). In 1922 what was then called First Universalist Church celebrated its centennial. Let's take a look back to that noteworthy occasion!

First, a snapshot of Danbury in the early 1920s. The U.S. Census for 1920 counted 22,325 people calling Danbury home. Government was divided between the mostly urban central "city," incorporated in 1889, and the largely rural and relatively thinly populated "town" surrounding the downtown area. Hatting and associated businesses dominated the local economy though this was beginning to change. There were 135 farmers listed by name in the 1922 Danbury City Directory, most of them located beyond the downtown city limits. Eighteen churches were named in the same Directory. There were eight public elementary schools and two parochial schools in the city; five rural schoolhouses continued to operate in outlying parts of town. Danbury High School and the state trade school (now Henry Abbott Tech) were at different locations on Main Street and there was no Immaculate High and no Wooster School.

The Danbury & Bethel Street Railway (trolley) carried passengers around and near downtown Danbury's business, shopping, and residential areas and into the center of Bethel. A branch of this trolley line also ran to the Danbury Fairgrounds and beyond to Lake Kenosia Amusement Park, two premier outdoor attractions of that era. Silent movies were popular and commercial radio was in its infancy. The Taylor Opera House, long a popular downtown entertainment venue, was destroyed by fire in 1922. Candlewood Lake did not exist; it was approved for construction by Connecticut Light and Power Company in 1926 and completed in 1928. Rogers Park, the War Memorial building, Danbury Airport, and the Federal Correctional Institution were each a part of the future.

Roads and highways were being improved, with some paved, to accommodate an increasing number of motor vehicles. Railroads, long established, served Danbury in all directions. Travelers and visitors could stop at the Hotel Green on Main Street (one of several hotels downtown) for a meal or overnight accommodations. A public library; a hospital including nurse's training school; a state normal school (now Western Connecticut State University); and various associations, clubs, fraternal organizations, and trade unions all served the increasingly diverse population of Danbury.

The Universalist Register and denominational Yearbooks for the early 1920s offer a variety of church statistics. There were eleven Universalist churches or societies in Connecticut, one (New London) was federated with the Unitarians and one (Long Ridge in north Stamford) was summer only. The Hartford church (since moved to West Hartford), celebrated its own centennial in 1921.

Since 1893 Danbury Universalists had been meeting in the building they constructed at 347 Main Street, a few doors south of the railroad crossing. Built of granite, brick, and brownstone with a tower overlooking the street this structure was valued in 1922 at \$40,000 (perhaps \$650,000 today). Church membership followed the old New England pattern of society and church. The numbers recorded in the Yearbooks are somewhat ambiguous among categories; for example, figures from 1923 show 56 families/75 individuals/97 parish members/120 church members.

For much of 1922 the congregation was without a settled minister; Rev. Elliott B. Barber had served from 1912 to 1920 (and still lived in town) followed by the brief pastorate of William P. Farnsworth in 1920-21. Miss Adelaide Grabert was church organist and choir director. Chairman of the board was Royal F. Foster, Frank P. Rollins was clerk, and treasurer was Luman L. Hubbell. Hubbell, also a church deacon, served the Connecticut Universalist Convention as the only lay member of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee. There were two women's organizations in the Danbury church and one men's group. Ernest Stuckey supervised the Sunday School which had five teachers and enrolled 40 children. The local chapter of the Young People's Christian Union (YPCU), for Universalist youth and young adults, had 30 members; Clifford Taylor was president, succeeded by Arthur Olson. Danburians were also prominent in the Connecticut YPCU. Paul Voegelé was president of this group and Miss Bessie Pierce (later Jackson) recently completed a term as vice-president.

Our one hundredth anniversary was celebrated over four days in early December 1922. We can assume that most if not all of the events and activities took place at the church. This building was spacious, well-equipped, and had a friendly feel. The sanctuary was furnished with pews and could seat perhaps two hundred. Sliding wooden doors opened into a large adjoining room where if necessary chairs could be placed and more people accommodated. A large fellowship hall upstairs, with kitchen to the rear, was used for dinners, meetings, social events and other gatherings.

Music played a significant part in the celebration. Organ and choral music for the several services were under the direction of Adelaide Grabert. By this time Miss Grabert had been associated with the Universalist Church for more than thirty years.

Events began on Friday evening, December 8th, with the ordination of Gustave H. Leining, a twenty-nine year old native of Meriden, Connecticut, and recent Phi Beta Kappa graduate of St. Lawrence University with preparation at its Canton Theological School. He had been called to Danbury the previous summer to fill the recent ministerial vacancy. Officiants were Rev. Theodore Fischer, DD, minister in New Haven and Superintendent of Universalist Churches in Connecticut; Rev. John Murray Atwood, DD, Dean of Canton Theological School; and Rev. Fred C. Leining of Providence, Rhode Island, Gustave's older brother. Dr. Atwood delivered a sermon on "The Spiritual Authority and Leadership of Jesus." Rev. George W. Roesch, PhD, of the local Methodist Episcopal Church extended a welcome to the new Rev. Leining on behalf of the local community.

The next evening, Saturday, December 9th, there was a parish supper, one hundred years to the day after the First Universalist Society was organized. Presumably the supper was prepared and served upstairs in the church. Longtime member Luman Hubbell read a historical paper and reminiscences were offered by several of those present. The Rev. Lee S. McCollester, DD, Dean of Crane Theological School at Tufts College was in attendance and spoke briefly, as did Rev. Gustave Leining and former Danbury minister Elliott Barber.

At the Sunday morning service on December 10th Dr. McCollester spoke on "The Contribution and Evolution of American Universalism." Nine people were received into church membership and a baby was christened by the pastor. At 7:30 that evening a special service was conducted. The Rev. Joseph Fort Newton, DD, minister of Church of the Divine Paternity (Fourth Universalist Society) in New York City was present and addressed "The Future of the Church." During his long career Dr. Newton served Baptist, Universalist, Episcopal, and non-sectarian churches. The previous year he delivered the Occasional Sermon when the Universalist General Convention met in Detroit. Dr. Newton was well known and highly regarded for his liberal and ecumenical approach to religion. [See note below.] Clergy and visitors from local Baptist, Congregational, Disciples of

Christ, and Methodist congregations were in attendance and the Danbury Universalist Church was reported to be "filled to overflowing" for Dr. Newton's appearance.

On Monday evening, December 11th, a fellowship meeting was conducted. Among those present was Alpheus Baker representing the Danbury City Council; Rev. Ellis Gilbert, president of the local ministers association; State Superintendent Dr. Theodore Fischer; and Herbert Belden of Hartford, treasurer of the Connecticut Universalist Convention. Rev. Alfred J. Cardall, minister in Danbury from 1903-1909 and Rev. Elliott Barber extended greetings and letters were read from former Danbury ministers who could not be present.

So concluded the first hundred years of First Universalist Church of Danbury. Might the "twelve apostles" of Great Plain, those who organized this Congregation two centuries ago, have anticipated what maintained and grew their little group through all those years? The same can be asked of the women and men of the Ridgefield Unitarian Fellowship, the more recent side of our local heritage, from almost sixty years ago. How and why did this small town and later small city church survive when others did not? Will the goals, practices, and traditions of the free and broad faiths represented by our forebears continue as the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury enters its third century?

The Rev. Barbara J. Pescan was with us in West Redding from 1988 to 1995. She has written:

"Because of those who came before, we are;
in spite of their failings, we believe;
because of, and in spite of the horizons of their vision, we, too, dream.
Let us go remembering to praise,
to live in the moment,
to love mightily,
to bow to the mystery."

[Note - From 1908 to 1916 Joseph Fort Newton was minister of The Liberal Christian Church (Universalist and later Unitarian) in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. This is the same church, today known as The People's Church, which was pastored by Rev. Dr. Linda M. Hansen nearly a century later. Dr. Hansen ministered to the Danbury UUs between 2003 and 2008.]

[Note - The Barbara Pescan quote is from *Singing the Living Tradition* Readings No. 680.]



Help Wanted for Our 200th Anniversary Celebration

Come help us throw a party for UUCD! We're planning a luncheon after the service on October 16, and we need volunteers to help prepare the hall and clean up afterwards. This is one of several activities this fall leading up to our official anniversary on December 9th, the date that the Universalist Society of Danbury was founded.

If you can help with the party on Sunday, October 16th or want to get involved with this special anniversary in other ways, please contact **Gale Alexander** right away.

Ministry/Team News

From *Adult Programming*

by Joe Gillotti

Spiritually Speaking

Join us for a weekly study session reviewing Eckhart Tolle's enlightening and riveting book, "A New Earth". The author offers readers intense and compelling suggestions through practical learning to live in the Present Moment. Participants can learn to redirect their attention and attitudes in order to understand and change many of life's unresolved personal challenges. This session will begin on Tuesday September 20th at 7:00 p.m. on Zoom. Space is limited. Please contact **Joe Gillotti** for more information or to sign-up.

From the *Auction Committee*

Auction Committee Now Forming - The Auction Committee is beginning to plan for this year's Auction and we'd like to invite anyone who's interested to come help us put on another wonderful event! If interested please contact **Peter Horton**.

And for everyone else, please be thinking about whether there's something you'd like to donate this year - a service, a dinner or group outing, a craft item or maybe an heirloom. We'll let you know more details about the Auction as soon as we can!

From the *Caring Circle*

by Joan Campbell



Our Caring Circle is Available

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

Joan Campbell is the contact person for September
Cheryl Edelen 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.

From the *Social Action Council*

Calling all Social Justice Warriors

We are proud to announce that the UUCD Social Action Council is once again gearing up to fight for Truth, Justice and the Beloved-Community Way! Join us for a short organizational meeting on Wednesday, September 7th at 7:00 p.m. We'll be deciding on meeting dates and priority actions for the fall.

Sneak peek: November **elections**/UUtheVote,
dismantling **racism**, and
fighting for **an equitable CT state budget**

Please RSVP to **Margaret Henderson**, and be sure to let her know whether you'll be coming in person or joining via Zoom.

Soup Kitchen Corner

by Judy Lacker



On Saturday, September 3rd, 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 for lunches and breakfasts and hot lunches for Pacific House 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 ddhsandwiches@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 meeting is on Wednesday, September 14th at 9:30 a.m. at UUCD in the Fellowship Hall Lower Level. For more information contact **Gary Mummert** or **Joe Gillotti**.



Chair Yoga Classes are being extended at UUCD for women and men. Classes are FREE for all UUCD members.

We all know there is excessive physiological stress, uncertainty, radicalization, climate issues, social tribalism and many more national problems and personal problems that we all face in our daily lives. Perhaps it's time for you to start facing some of the repercussions these threats and problems have on our minds and bodies. You'll find the gentle stretches both sitting and standing can have a wonderful effect on a person's body and sense of wellbeing. All aspects of this class are designed to lead a person to a feeling of wellness and learning to become calmer.

Here are some of the other techniques you will learn. We practice chanting, deep breathing, meditation, special techniques for calming the mind, tapping for health and relaxing, and the most fun of all, laughter yoga and more.

Come join our happy group, it's great value in so many ways, on Mondays 10:00 am to 11:00 am at UUCD. This new class will begin on Monday September 19th in the lower level of the Fellowship Hall. Participants must contact their doctor or medical provider for approval before attending this Chair Yoga Class

To register, or if you have questions or concerns, contact **Joe Gillotti** any evening during the week after 7:00 pm.



***Come experience the music
of the people!***

Our Performers

October 2
Pete and Maura Kennedy

November 6
Pat Wictor

December 4
Geoff Kaufman

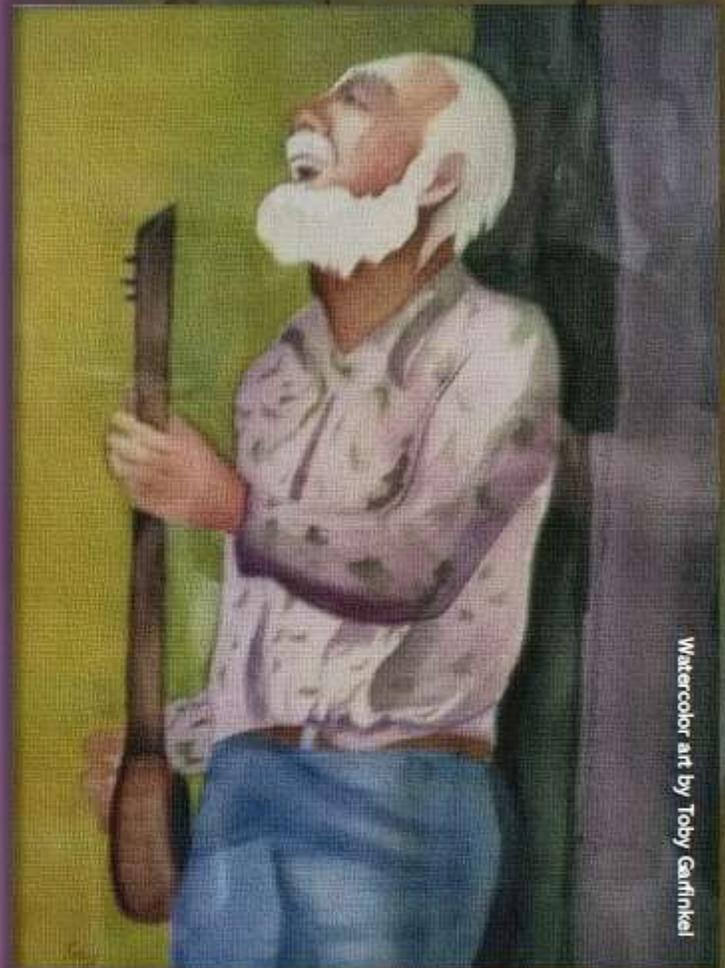
January 8
**Sally Rogers and
Howie Bursen**

February 5
**Lui Collins with
Anand Nayak**

March 5
**Betty and
the Baby Boomers**

April 2
Hudson Valley Sally

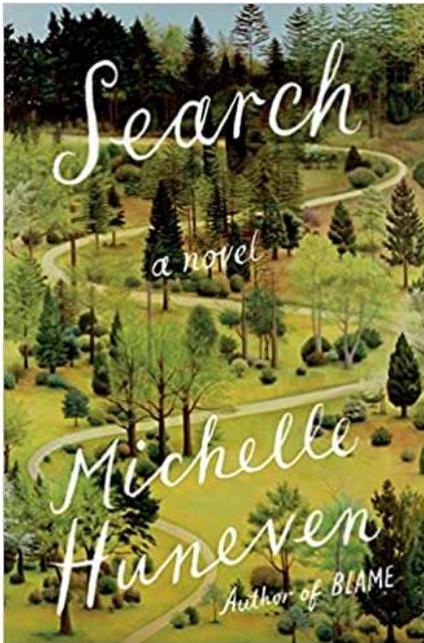
May 7
David Roth



Music at the Ridge Live Acoustic Music Series
First Sunday each month, 4-6 PM, Oct. to May
in the beautiful Fellowship Hall of the
Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury
24 Clapboard Ridge Road
Tickets for in-person or Livestream through
Eventbrite. Com

<https://musicattheridge.org/>

BOOK DISCUSSION - *Search*



Search, a novel by Michelle Huneven, has been making the rounds of Unitarian Universalist book discussion groups this year. Why? Because it is a documentary-style, somewhat fictionalized account of the search process of a Unitarian Universalist congregation as it seeks out its next settled minister.

Filled with references we will all find familiar (chalice-lighting, "Spirit of Life," and more), it is the story of a complex set of committee members who try to find community and consensus in interviewing potential candidates for their ministry before struggling to name one candidate to help move them into the future.

This will be a two-part discussion:

Tuesday, October 11th at 7:00 p.m. - We will explore the characters and setting in the story. Which people most resonate with you? Which the least? Do they seem typical of us UUs? Does the congregation sound familiar in its decision-making, its worship, its life, its aspirations? Where do you see tensions? How do you think they could be resolved?

Tuesday, October 25th at 7:00 p.m. - We will explore the storyline, the search process, both as outlined in the book and compared to the actual search process of Unitarian Universalist congregations. What seemed familiar to you? What feels strange or problematic? Do you think it led to a good outcome? ...to good feelings among the committee members?

The two sessions will be led by **Randy Becker**, a life-long Universalist Unitarian and someone who has been on both sides of the search process. Contact Randy for more information or to sign up.

