



# Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury

Monthly **COMMENT** Newsletter

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

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MAY 2023

## From our Minister



*Youth can walk faster, but the elder knows the road.*  
~ African proverb

Most of you know that I live in what is called an “active over 55” community. I am currently among the youngest there, and I can walk faster than many of my neighbors! And while the elders of *any* community may not have all the answers, and may struggle with change right alongside the rest of us, they know many roads. What a gift it is to be motivated by youth and inspired by elders. The trick, if you will, is to listen and learn from both ends of the life continuum as we move out of a liminal time into a new something we don’t yet know how to define.

Just a couple of weeks ago I had the delight and privilege to be a guest at a Four Score Luncheon of elders from our congregation. There were nearly a dozen 80-and-over in attendance, with several more unable to attend. That’s a lot of wisdom and inspiration! We laughed loudly, enjoyed gracious hospitality, and shared stories on everything from living arrangements to music, to family, to childhood, to transgender awareness. I’m pretty sure we could have stayed well into the evening listening, learning, and laughing.

This month we will be moved by our youth in their Sunday service, and we will witness their bridging from high school to the next chapter in their young lives. We will celebrate them and offer our support; knowing they are the future leaders with unique strengths and perspectives. It is a highlight in our congregational year. Let us also look for opportunities to listen to the elders in our beloved community and appreciate their enthusiasm, unique strengths, and willingness to share. We are incredibly blessed to have a multigenerational congregation!

With a heart full of gratitude,  
Rev. Kathleen

Are you interested in becoming a member of UUCD? Are you curious about what is required and what being a member means? Rev. Kathleen would love to meet with you in a Pathway to Membership group meeting after the service on May 21<sup>st</sup>, or privately during the month of May. Please reach out via email:

[uurevkathleen@gmail.com](mailto:uurevkathleen@gmail.com)

*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 June Comment –  
Friday, May 19<sup>th</sup>.**

**May Services – One Service at 10:00 a.m.**

**Sunday, May 7<sup>th</sup>**

Living in Harmony: Easier Sung Than Done

David Roth



This morning David Roth will join us to sing and speak about how to bring about harmony through thought, intention, *and* action in a complicated world. His songs have found their way to Carnegie Hall, the United Nations, several Chicken Soup for the Soul books, the Kennedy Center, NASA’s Space Shuttle “Atlantis”, Peter, Paul, & Mary and Kingston Trio CDs (and 15 of his own), and countless venues in this and other countries (and now other *worlds*) for more than 3 decades. Poignant to improbable, holistic to hilarious, the Chicago native resumes his never-ending world tour right here in Danbury.

**Sunday, May 14<sup>th</sup>**

Great Expectations

Rev. Dr. Kathleen Rudoff

William Shakespeare said expectation is the root of all heartache. Let’s explore our expectations of relationships and congregational life in our quest for loving community.

**Sunday, May 21<sup>st</sup>**

Senior High Sunday

Senior High Youth Group

This is an annual tradition in which our Senior High School Youth Group leads the service. Though they won’t be joining us for the service, we also wish a hearty congratulations to 12th graders Josh Haffner and Luc Parr as they bridge from youth hood into young adulthood.

**Pathway to Membership Class** with Rev. Kathleen, Sunday May 21 – 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. In this workshop, you will...

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

**Sunday, May 28<sup>th</sup>**

Remembering Their Service

Lay Led

On this Memorial Day weekend we remember those who lost their lives in service to what they were called to do, militarily and otherwise. It is good to remember, honor, and celebrate such lives.

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**Summer Service Presenters Needed**

The Sunday Services Team is working on filling out our schedule of summer Sundays and seeking lay presenters to offer services during some of those weeks. If you have an idea for a summer service or even just have interest in participating in a service between the end of June and Labor Day weekend, please contact **Sam McCoy** by May 15<sup>th</sup>. She'd be happy to discuss the possibilities and link you up with a member of our Sunday Services Team to help plan and execute your potential service idea.



## From Our Director of Religious Education For Children and Youth



### Upcoming in Religious Education

All Sunday morning activities for children are optional. Children are always welcome to stay in the Sunday service if they prefer. Our Whole Lives (OWL) is our sexuality education program, and the 7th-8th grade level of OWL meets in the evenings.

- **Sunday, May 7**
  - The nursery is open for young children
  - Older children are invited to child-led, play-based Religious Education
  - Middle School OWL meets Saturday instead of Sunday (with possible Junior High Youth Group event)
  - High School Youth will plan the Senior High Sunday Service
- **Sunday, May 14**
  - The nursery is open for young children
  - Older children are invited to child-led, play-based Religious Education
  - Middle School OWL meets
  - High School Youth will plan the Senior High Sunday Service
- **Sunday, May 21**
  - Senior High School Youth Group leads the Sunday service (all ages attend)
  - The nursery is open for young children
  - Middle School OWL meets
- **Sunday, May 28**
  - The nursery is open for young children
  - No other programs held due to three-day weekend/Memorial Day

Please note that we pause our Religious Education programming over the summer, but offer nursery care year-round. This year's programs will wind down throughout June.

### **Congratulations Josh and Luc!**

Josh Haffner and Luc Parr are bridging from youth to young adulthood with their graduations from high school soon! We wish them the heartiest of congratulations as they make this transition.

**Josh Haffner**

Josh Haffner will graduate in June from Joel Barlow High School in Redding. In addition to spending time with family and friends, he enjoys playing basketball and other sports, and has logged countless hours playing, coaching, and refereeing youth basketball in Redding. Josh began attending UUCD with his family around 2010. He has fond memories of Religious Education (RE) and UUCD events over the years—including the “upstanders” videography project, ARC Peace Camp, classes taught by the “Dad Team,” SUUnday FUUnday outdoor games, OWL, tree trimming, the Boston trip, and the annual senior high service—and would like to thank his former RE teachers, directors, and volunteers (and his sister and friends from the class of 2021!) for being there along the way. Josh looks forward to attending Northeastern University this fall as a biology major.

**Luc Parr**

Luc is a senior at the Wooster School in Danbury and will be attending Bates College in the fall, where he plans to major in psychology and business and also play soccer. Luc began attending UUCD with his family in 2011 and over the years has participated in RE, OWL, and engaged in many family conversations about UU Principles. In recent years, he has volunteered at the Dorothy Day Hospitality House. Luc is also an LGBTQ ally and has co-led presentations with the Human Rights Campaign (HRC). He is also an avid snowboarder, a snowboard instructor and busses tables at Biscotti’s Restaurant in New Fairfield (and always has good stories and insights about the shenanigans he witnesses there after midnight). Luc and the entire Parr/Fisher family would like to thank the UUCD community for the important role you’ve played in Luc’s growth and development over the years and in the years to come.

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**It’s Community Dinner Time  
Wednesday, May 10<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.**



This month’s dinner is sponsored by the Choir who will provide pasta (including gluten-free), salad, and dessert. After dinner, you will have the option of joining in the choir rehearsal or a special activity. Bring your family and neighbors for a special time of community gathering and sharing.

Bring just yourself, and settle in for a lovely, lively time!

Questions? Please contact **Diane Purvis**.

## From the Board of Trustees

by Marie Dupree, Treasurer

Board of Trustees: what do we do!

We meet once a month on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month. We start with a joint networking meeting at 6:45. Our meeting starts at 7:00 with a reading and lighting the chalice. Then we do a check-in for where we are! We approve the minutes of the last meeting. We received an agenda beforehand, so this is all on the agenda.

We have already received the reports and if we have any questions or additions, we will ask. Then we get into the work we need to get to. Sometimes it is related to the budget, building and grounds, issues that need to be addressed, requests and any other issues. We try to get finished by 9:00 or 9:30. Someone takes notes, and we have a timekeeper to keep us within the time we have allocated for each area!

So, that is what we do as a Board. Sometimes we will have a Zoom meeting between meetings if there is something that cannot wait for the next board meeting.

The Board is responsible for the staff salaries as well as hiring additional staff or cutting back. The payroll aspects are handled by the Treasurer with help from the Finance Committee and the President.

The Budget is prepared by the Finance Committee with input from the various committees. The balanced budget is then presented to the Board of Trustees in the May meeting. It is adjusted by the Board and approved by the Board. The head of the Finance Committee presents the budget report and answers any questions.

The Board also deals with any issues that need to be addressed with various committees, however the decisions are made by the committees and the Board serves as a sounding board.

UUCD's Board has always been responsible and is committed to ensuring that UUCD is functioning as a religious organization. We, the Board, is an integral component to the activities of UUCD.

So some personal history! Keith and I have attended and have been members for 53 years. When we began attending, the congregation originally had a minister, but he left shortly after. We were then a lay-led religious community. I was Treasurer in 1971 when our budget was around \$16,000.

The church moved to Pickets Ridge Road in Redding CT in 1972. Keith was President in 1973. I was Treasurer off and on and I became President of the Board in 1987. The month after I became President the RE house burned! We spent two years rebuilding the RE building. I have never been President again but have been Treasurer many times!

Keith and I raised our two children in the RE program. This community and UU religion has been instrumental for our marriage and our children.

We have seen the UUCD grow and change always with the religion and friends and members coming first. It is a strong religious community and shows!

# Ministry/Team News

From the *Caring Circle*



### Our Caring Circle is Available

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

**Bob Bollinger** is the contact person for May.

**Joan Stapleton** is the assistant.

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

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

From *Nominating Team*

## Nominating Committee Progress Report

The Nominating Committee nominates candidates to fill openings on the Board of Trustees, Nominating Committee, and Moderator. These nominees, and any others nominated at the Annual Meeting, are voted on at the Annual Meeting (June 4, 2023) by those members of UUCD who have been members for at least 60 days.

The following will be nominated for Board positions:

President	Margaret Henderson	for a 1 year term beginning July 1, 2023.
Vice President	John Miglietta	for a 1 year term beginning July 1, 2023.
Secretary	Nancy Cullen	for a 1 year term beginning July 1, 2023.
Trustee	Jeff Asher	for a 3 year term beginning July 1, 2023.

The following will be nominated for a Nominating Committee position.

Member	Annie Senol	for a 3 year term beginning July 1, 2023.
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3 other Board members, the Moderator, and 2 Nominating Committee members have terms that extend beyond June 30, 2023. So they do not need to be voted on in 2023.

This completes the work of the Nominating Committee.

Bob Bollinger (Chair), Jackie Alexander, and Dan Brodax

From the *Social Action Council*

**Soup Kitchen Corner**

by Judy Lacker

On Saturday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, some members of Soup Kitchen Team 3 (Team Leader **Lynn Taborsak, Bob Taborsak, Diane Purvis, Nancy Brown, and others** ) 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.. 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](mailto:ddhsandwiches@gmail.com). We can all be an important part of the fight to end hunger in our community!.



In the past couple of years, we have lost some of our **Dorothy Day volunteers**. Please consider volunteering to be on a DD Team - it only involves a few hours, 3 Saturdays per year. You will find it to be a very rewarding experience. Please contact **Judy Lacker** for more information or to sign up.

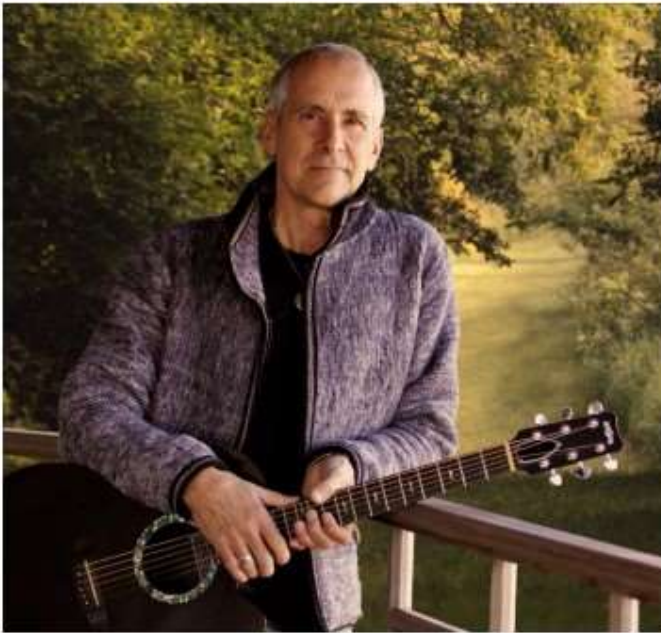
Please note that we have resumed collecting non-perishable food donations on Sunday mornings. Please place your food donations in the basket in the foyer. You can sign up to help transport the weekly collection to The Dorothy Day Hospitality House on Spring Street.



# Upcoming Events

**UUCD Men Conversing over Coffee** meets on the second Wednesday of each month. Our next meeting is on Wednesday, May 10<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. at UUCD in the Fellowship Hall Lower Level. For more information contact **Gary Mummert** or **Joe Gillotti**.





# DAVID ROTH

IN CONCERT

SUNDAY

MAY 7

4pm

24 Clapboard Ridge Road  
Danbury, CT

David Roth strikes many chords, hearts, and minds with his unique songs, offbeat observations, moving stories, sense of the hilarious, and powerful singing and subject matter. As singer, songwriter, recording artist, keynote speaker, workshop leader, and instructor, David has earned top honors at premier songwriter competitions – Kerrville (TX) and Falcon Ridge (NY) – and taken his music, experience, and expertise to a wide variety of venues in this and other countries full-time for three decades.

David's songs have found their way to Carnegie Hall, the United Nations, several Chicken Soup for the Soul books, the Kennedy Center, Peter, Paul, & Mary's "Discovered", the Kingston Trio's "Born at the Right Time", NASA's Goddard Space Center, the classic folk song books "Rise Up Singing" and "Rise Again" (sequel), and 15 CDs on the Wind River and Stockfish (Germany) labels. Winner of 5 Positive Music Awards and the 2015 Grace Note (Unity Worldwide) for Outstanding Contribution to New Thought Music, David has also been featured on many of Christine Lavin's seminal Rounder Records compilations. The former artist-in-residence at New York's Omega Institute has also been a songwriting judge at Kerrville, Napa Valley (CA), Tumbleweed (WA), Eventide Arts (MA), the Avalon Festival (WV), the South Florida Folk Festival, and for the Rhode Island Songwriters Association (RISA).



TICKETS – IN PERSON and LIVE-STREAMING – AT:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/606057914537>



## Notes on Two Hundred Years (and More)

by Douglas H. Parkhurst

...Continued from April 2023

Task Force 2001 did substantial work during the first months of 1997. The committee was organized to articulate a vision and chart a five year course of action for the Unitarian Universalist Society of Northern Fairfield County (UUSNFC and since renamed Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury or UUCD). Its April 6th report to the society was comprehensive and printed copies were made available. Some concerns of years past were revisited with aspects of this report echoing society development plans from 1981 and 1990. The 1981 report called for growth of membership, an increase in pledge income, and improvements to the Picketts Ridge Road property [see note below]. The 1990 plan presented options for two services and two religious education (RE) sessions on Sundays, enlarging existing facilities, and the possible sale of the West Redding property.

The newly issued 1997 report contained numerous recommendations along with suggestions for what were termed "sustaining activities." Seven vision categories were listed along with a five year timeline for implementation of goals. Among the goals were the following.

1. Begin two weekly Sunday services and upgrade and expand nursery, childcare, and religious education programs which would eventually include the wider community.
2. Define and meet goals for increasing membership.
3. Conduct a 175th anniversary outreach program which could be expanded to college students and the community at large. Sponsor arts and music events. [Note - The UUSNFC celebrated its 175th anniversary later in 1997.]
4. Upgrade the positions of director of religious education and office manager. Prepare to hire a music director.
5. Evaluate options for expansion of UUSNFC's physical plant. Complete and present a relocation plan. Design, construct, and move to a new facility in five years.
6. Increase annual operating budget. Launch and conduct a capital campaign to fund relocation.

This report and its recommendations simmered in the congregation over the next two years. Ordinary week-to-week and month-to-month operating issues and routine church activities seemed to take precedence over the forward-looking vision articulated by the task force. Then in 1999 what was called Task Force 2000+ was organized with society member Peter Reed as chair. This committee recharged the effort begun more than two years earlier. October 1999 would be designated "growth month" with a consultant, Jonathan Hopps, brought in from the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) to guide this process. The need to upgrade church facilities to address the problem of physical barriers at the Barn and making the space more useable and welcoming to all attendees was re-emphasized.

Early in 2000 a successor committee to the two task force groups was created. This was called Comprehensive Planning Committee 2000 (CPC). The leadership and direction provided to the CPC by society member Don Schober, who chaired this committee, was crucial if not indispensable to the ultimate success of this renewed effort. Other CPC 2000 members were Ursula Bartles, Bruce Berg, John Corcoran, Alan Fox, Mitch Green, Maggie Hooton, Paul LaCombe, Alex Makai, Rocky Peruch, Lana Shannon, Lynn Taborsak, Joe Teagarden, and Art Warren.

CPC 2000 examined church facilities, program, and finances. Three options regarding church facilities and location were studied. The so-called low cost option would maintain the UUSNFC status quo. The medium cost option was to buy and renovate property and building(s) elsewhere. The high cost option was to buy property and build. Goals for the society included improve and expand the RE program, improve outreach to the community, expand social activity programs, promote increased fellowship among members and friends, increase compensation for the minister and director of religious education (DRE), and make church facilities more user friendly to the physically challenged. The key to success in all these areas was again seen as "intentional growth" [see note below]. On May 7, 2000, at the UUSNFC annual meeting, the congregation voted to further investigate the medium cost option, that is buy and renovate property and building(s) elsewhere.

CPC 2001 was formed the following winter. Don Schober remained as chair. Bruce Berg and Alex Makai continued as members, joined by Marcia Brooker, Ross Fenster, Kim Schmitt, and Linda Spione. Six consultants/advisors were added: Bob Bollinger, Kathy Brewington, Rev. Daniel O'Connell, Doug Parkhurst, Mike Searing, and Art Warren. Mary Alice Kimball served as liaison to the society's board of trustees. Over the next several months committee members developed a work flow process to guide the church in a move to a new home. They dealt with real estate agents, sought legal assistance, contacted an architect [note - Faesy and Sanders of Wilton, CT, which firm later designed the new Danbury Fellowship Hall], and arranged for the services of UUA fundraising consultant Jerry King. The committee visited potential buy-renovate sites, arranged a site inspection and appraisal of the 9 Picketts Ridge Road property and made arrangements to put this property on the market, determined characteristics desired in a new church, and did initial planning for a capital campaign to help fund a new facility. The committee made its report to the congregation at the annual meeting on May 6, 2001.

With the work performed by these several committees and the continuing support of society membership and Rev. O'Connell's encouragement the vision became reality. In May 2002 the Barn property at 9 Picketts Ridge Road was sold to Redding Center for Meditation and Spiritual Development with an agreement for another year of occupancy by UUSNFC [see note below]. In 2003 the congregation purchased residential property at 24 Clapboard Ridge Road in Danbury. A new planning and construction committee, led by Chris and Kim Schmitt, oversaw the next steps of this project. The existing house at the new location was partially remodeled to provide church office space. A garage behind the house was torn down and design and construction of a new fellowship hall undertaken. Rev. Dr. Linda Hansen, recently called and beginning her five year pastorate at the now renamed UUCD, led the final service at the Barn on September 14, 2003.

For the next two years the congregation conducted Sunday services at Alumni Hall [see note below] on the mid-town Danbury campus of Western Connecticut State University. Mary Collins, two years into her long tenure as DRE, oversaw religious education classes upstairs in the Student Center across the street. In November 2005, with the completion of construction, all church activities were moved to 24 Clapboard Ridge Road. The new facilities were formally dedicated on March 26, 2006, with Rev. Dr. William Schulz, former president of the UUA, as guest speaker.

[Note - The 1981 development plan also stressed the need for at least a part-time minister to serve the UUSNFC. The society had been lay-led since the departure of Rev. Ralph Bailey in 1970.]

[Note - As noted, growth was a focus of previous development plans. In addition to increasing membership, growth called for expanding the church program, developing more sources of income, and obtaining a more spacious and accessible facility.]

[Note - The Picketts Ridge Road property is now called Center for Mindfulness & Insight Meditation. Pinewood Learning Center, a child and day care which leased space in Founders House from UUSNFC, stayed on after the sale.]

[Note - Alumni Hall at 2 Roberts Ave. was previously home to St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church. It is now called Irfan Kathwari Honors House.]

Corrections to recent articles - In the February 2023 article Ann Thorpe's first name should be Ann not Anne. In the last paragraph of the March 2023 article United Appeal should read Unified Appeal.

