



Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury

Monthly **COMMENT** Newsletter

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

SEPTEMBER 2023

FROM OUR MINISTER



Welcoming Others to Belonging

Dear Beloveds,

“Home is the place,” wrote Robert Frost in the poem Death of the Hired Man, “that when you have to go there, they have to take you in.” Not so often remembered is the next line in the poem “I should have called it something you somehow haven’t to deserve.”

Home being a place where “they have to take you in” sounds like something the keepers of the house do begrudgingly, not willingly. No one should be required to deserve a home. There are plenty of instances in each of our lives where we have been included and welcomed even though we didn’t necessarily deserve it. Home implies a welcome like that given to the prodigal son. Whether you have to go there or not, they not only want to take you in, but they also rejoice at having you. They welcome you as you are. Just because you’re you. Just because you showed up.

There’s a scene in Cry Freedom, Richard Attenborough’s biopic about Steve Biko, where Biko is having dinner with Donald Woods, the white newspaper editor who smuggled real story of Biko’s life, his work and his death in police custody, out of South Africa to tell the world. Biko is chastising Woods for Woods’ white liberalism. Biko says to him, *“We don’t want or need to be you. I won’t be what you want me to be, I will be myself as I am. You invite us to sit at your table with your table linens and your china and your silver tableware, and if we dress like you and eat like you and use your fancy white things as you do, you will kindly let us stay. We don’t want that; we want to wipe the table clean. It’s an African table and we’ll sit at it in our own right as Africans. Before you whites arrived, we had our own culture, our own civilization. You see, our language is different, there is no aunt or uncle my niece calls my wife, not aunt but mother’s sister, that is the word in our language mother’s sister, my brother’s son. There are no separate words for family. All begin with brother and sister.”*

We are all family, all the relationships begin with brother and sister, even the people we haven’t met yet. Welcoming is not inviting everyone as you would guests. To welcome is to treat people as though they already belong. As we celebrate Ingathering this month and you welcome me as your new minister, let us together make this congregation a place where everyone is welcome not because they are deserving or because they are guests, but because this is home and they already belong.

Blessings,
Rev. Tony

SPIRITUAL CHALLENGE for SEPTEMBER 2023 on the theme of WELCOME

Welcome What Comes Your Way this month.

Live Yesly for a month and do a Yes and No audit of your life.

This month's spiritual challenge based on the theme of Welcome is grounded in the practice and techniques of improv. The first rule of improv theater is "Yes, and" You always buy into and the world created by the player or players already in the scene. Even if you don't like or agree with what they're doing.

In her book "God, Improv, and the Art of Living", MaryAnn McKibben Dana reflects on the "yes, and" style of improv as a central tactic of the spiritual life. We all do our best to take whatever life gives us – and even if we hate it – like cancer or death of a loved one or job loss, or mental illness or addiction – we do our best to work with it, take it somewhere else, somewhere somewhat better, to move the story along. If an actor starts an improv scene with something like "What a beautiful orange sky today!" You can't follow that with "No, the sky is blue." It just destroys the scene. You accept what's there and it's on you to be creative enough to carry it somewhere. You might say something such as "Yup, we haven't had a sky this orange since the creamsicle rocket to mars crashed into that commercial vacation shuttle in low earth orbit back in 2048." McKibben says that improv rules are an embodiment of the serenity prayer, "to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference." Improv is also at home with the Buddhist idea of Anitya or "impermanence" meaning that life is in a constant state of change. "Yes, and..." practice teaches us to remain in the present moment and deal with what comes our way. Improv doesn't require our "yes" to a celebration, just as we don't celebrate ill health, racism, the death of a loved one, or the trauma of war. Our "yes" is an acknowledgement of the reality we face. Our "and" is our creative response. Steeping ourselves in negation diminishes our ability to "and" well.

My challenge to you this month is to keep track of when, why, and how you say "yes" and "no" to what life brings your way. If you want to be creative and go a little further, work on your "and" response to both difficulties and the good things that come your way.

As always, I'd love to hear about your experiences with this challenge. Call or text me at 508-344-3668 or send me an email at revtony@pm.me.

Reflect on WELCOME

- What's one of the biggest changes you've welcomed into your life that few people know about? Who surprisingly tried to stand in the way of that change? Who surprisingly supported the change?
- Tell me about self-acceptance: What part of you is the hardest for you to welcome with open arms?
- Theologian Joan D. Chittister said, "Hospitality is simply love on the loose." Does that ring true for you?
- If you were asked to name 2 ways you could help to make your church more welcoming, what would they be?

Quotes about WELCOME

- "I was beginning to learn that home is the space within us and between us where we feel safe—and brave. It is not a physical space as much as it is a field of being." - Valarie Kaur
- "The Arabs used to say, when a stranger appears at your door, feed him for three days before asking who he is, where he's come from, where he's headed. That way, he'll have strength enough to answer. Or, by then you'll be such good friends you don't care..." - Naomi Shihab Nye
- "Hospitality is the first step toward dismantling the barriers of the world. Hospitality is the way we turn a prejudiced world around one heart at a time." - Joan D Chittister

- “It’s amazing really. As a human being all you have to do is enumerate exactly the way you don’t feel at home in the world, and the moment you’ve uttered the exact dimensionality of your exile, you are already on your way home.” - David Whyte

Books with a theme of Welcome These are great reads to complement our focus on WELCOME this month.

- *In the Shelter: Finding a Home in the World* by Pdraig O Tuama
- *Britt-Marie Was Here* by Fredrik Backman
- ***Take What You Need: Life Lessons after Losing Everything* by Jen Crow (UU Author)**
- *Radical Welcome: Embracing God, The Other, and the Spirit of Transformation Paperback* by Stephanie Spellers

WELCOME-ing Movies!

- Marcel the Shell with Shoes On
- Antonia’s Line
- Taylor Mac's 24-Decade History of Popular Music
- Lost in Translation

Other Things about WELCOME on the Internet

- Welcome to the Brink of Everything, Parker J. Palmer <https://onbeing.org/blog/parker-palmer-welcome-to-the-brink-of-everything/> On welcoming the gifts of age.
- On the Article II Study Commission’s Invitation to Welcome New Values Introduction and context: <https://www.questformeaning.org/quest-article/embracing-the-living-tradition/> The proposal: <https://www.uua.org/files/2023-06/Article%202%20Package.pdf>
- What Makes You Feel “Welcomed Home”? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rWt76WqRCVs>
- Welcoming Stories http://www.firstpersonamerican.org/stories_welcoming.html A video series encouraging Americans to become more welcoming by inviting immigrants to share their story about someone who made a big difference in their lives when they first arrived.

WELCOME SONGS

On Spotify & YouTube

- Spotify playlist [here](#)
- YouTube playlist [here](#)

CALENDAR CONNECTIONS FOR SEPTEMBER

Interfaith:

- [Rosh Hashanah](#) - Jewish New Year - Evening of Fri, Sep 15, 2023 - Evening of Sun, Sep 17, 2023
- [Mabon/Autumn Equinox](#) - Wicca - Sept. 21, 2023 (more [here](#))
- [Yom Kippur](#) - Jewish Day of Atonement - Sept. 24-25, 2023
- [Mawlid al-Nabi](#) - the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad - begins Sept. 26, 2023

Unitarian Universalist:

- Ingathering/Water Communion Ritual - date varies by congregation
- The first meeting of [the Transcendentalist Club](#) - Sept. 19 (1836) more [here](#)
- Universalism Day: [John Murray](#) preaches [1st sermon](#) in the US (1770) – Sept. 30 (more [here](#))

National & Cultural:

- [Hispanic Heritage Month](#) (Sept. 15 - Oct. 15)
- Suicide Prevention Month, World Suicide Prevention Day, is Sept. 10
- [Labor Day](#) – Sept. 4, 2023 (*first Monday)
- International Literacy Day - Sept. 08
- [9-11 Remembrance](#) - Sept. 11
- [International Peace Day](#) Sept. 21 (more [here](#))
- [World Gratitude Day](#) - Sept. 21
- [Bisexual Pride Day](#), CBD, Bisexual Pride, and Bi Visibility Day - Sept. 23
- [Bisexual Awareness Week](#) - Week of September 23 (more [here](#))

For Fun and On the Fringe:

- [Johnny Appleseed Day](#) - Sept. 26
- [Talk Like a Pirate Day](#) - Sept. 19
- [Hobbit Day](#) - Sept. 22
- [Banned Books Week](#) - Oct.1-7, 2023 (more [here](#))



Our Caring Circle is Available

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

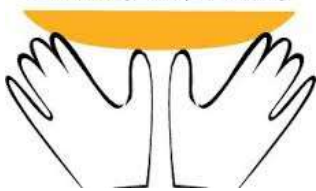
Andrea Andersen is the contact person for September and October.

Joan Campbell is the assistant.

If you have a need, please contact **Andrea**

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

Share the Plate



organizations to spotlight.

The Sunday Services Team would like to return to monthly "Share the Plate" contributions starting in January 2024, on the first Sunday of the month. We're in the process of forming a committee devoted only to "Share the Plate", with an additional goal of updating the process that is in place. We're looking for input from the congregation regarding both "best practices" as well as for nominations for

Reverend Tony is fully in support of this and recently stated that "statistically, congregations that use donations to support community partners see an increase in donations to the congregation"! If you have experience with this or have ideas and would like to be involved with breathing new life into "Share the Plate", please email **Kristen Papucci** or **Margaret Henderson**, or come speak to us at coffee hour!

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

Sunday, September 3rd

A Cooperative Game

Rev. Craig Schwalenberg

Would you like to play a game? Which game? You choose. The game isn't important to me. If we play together, then they're all the same. And we'll win or lose together, cooperatively.

Rev. Craig's preferred pronouns are per/pers (short for person, first coined by Marge Piercy in the 1976 novel, "Woman on the Edge of Time", but he/his are also acceptable. 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, per has started a new community ministry as Your Game Minister— sharing the fun and wisdom where spirituality and play cross paths. Pers ministry is one of connections, storytelling, hospitality, and games. Rev. Craig is an affiliated community minister with the Church of the Larger Fellowship. Per has also been a member of the UU Trauma Response Ministry team for over a decade. Rev. Craig lives in central, upstate New York with pers wife, Cheryl DeDecker, and their dog, Harmony. Cheryl practices her own ministry as a Consulting Hypnotist and Life Coach, with a focus on complementary medical hypnosis, pain management, and addressing anxiety. Together, they are geocachers and avid gamers.

Sunday, September 10th

Gaia, Earthsong and the Oneness of Everything

Jim Scott

Jim Scott is a composer, guitarist and singer whom Pete Seeger called "some kind of magician". He creates and performs music for a just, peaceful and sustainable world. Jim was part of the Paul Winter Consort for decades, performing all over the world, including twice yearly summer and winter solstice concerts at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City. His flamenco-style guitar playing is legendary among guitarists. "With virtuoso guitar work and an easy, honest presence, he delivers his musical message straight to minds and hearts." -- Nancy Hershatter, for Music at the Ridge. That same afternoon, Jim will open our second season of Music at the Ridge. For those new to UUCD, Music at the Ridge is our once-a-month Sunday afternoon live acoustic music series of concerts held here in Fellowship Hall (<https://www.musicattheridge.org>)

Sunday, September 17th

Rev. Tony Lorenzen

The Richmond Way: Wisdom from Ted Lasso on Welcoming, Team Building, and Living a Good Life

Rev. Tony Lorenzen leads our Ingathering service and reflects on improv, coaching, and working together as a team.

Please join us for a **Homecoming Picnic** immediately following the September 17th service. Bring a dish to share with the congregation and guests that might join us for the RE Informational Fair. Questions? Contact Heather Smith.

Sunday, September 24th

When Southbury said No to the Nazis

Ed Edelson

Ed Edelson, former First Selectman of Southbury, reflects on an event from local CT history when in November of 1937 the Rev. M.E.N. Lindsay organized local leaders and citizens to stop the German-American Bund from setting up a pro-nazi education and training camp in Southbury, CT. Mr. Edelson was instrumental in making a documentary about the event and his children's book "Lois's Story: A Young Girl's Inspiration Helps Stop Hate and Fear" tells the story from the perspective of Rev. Lindsay's daughter. Mr. Edelson remains a resident of Southbury, where he's a member of the Mattatuck Unitarian Universalist Society. For more background and history see: <https://southbury-ct.org/1937> and <https://www.amazon.com/Loiss-Story-Young-Girls-Inspiration-ebook/dp/B08QHC8VM2>.

Volunteers Needed

Important news: We don't yet have enough volunteers to run all our planned programs for children and youth this year. The only way to guarantee that this is a congregation that offers programs for children and youth 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.

Congregational Vote October 8th



Your Board has received lots of complaints about sound quality during Sunday services, and after much research and deliberation we are recommending that acoustic panels be installed on the ceiling and walls of Fellowship Hall. We are soliciting comments from the congregation at two public meetings, to be followed by a congregational vote October 8th on whether to spend the money.

Sound Panels for Fellowship Hall

Echoes in the hall currently make it very hard to understand someone speaking at the podium. (This is not a problem for those attending on Zoom, because our sound equipment "cleans up" the sound before broadcasting it.) Over the summer Keith Henderson convened an Acoustics Task Force to evaluate the problem and test out various solutions. They replaced the podium mic and re-aimed some of the speakers, but the improvement was minimal. Sound-absorbing panels are what made the biggest difference.

They investigated further and decided to go with a bid from New York Soundproofing to install the panels for \$19,000. They reported their findings to the Board at a special meeting on August 20th, and the Board voted unanimously in favor of moving ahead with their plan. Since the cost is over \$10,000, the Bylaws require that we hold a congregational vote.

We realize this is a significant amount of money, and we are very grateful to Ann Thorpe for setting up a fund to cover expenses like this. Still, I'm sure many of you have questions about the plans. We're going to hold two meetings during September to introduce the specifics and get your input (dates TBA – one in person and one on Zoom). Finally, the vote will happen at a brief congregational meeting after the service on October 8th. Two thirds of those voting must approve it for the proposal to pass.

Welcome

New Members

Dale and Jonathan Hill

Ms. Dale Hill is an economist and evaluator with over 35 years' experience in international development. The Hills attended River Road UU congregation in the DC area from 1996 until two years ago, when the couple moved to CT to live closer to other family members. Ms. Hill holds an MPA from Princeton University and a BA in economics from the University of Virginia. She is mostly retired, but is still advisor to several non-profit organizations. She is also retired from skiing, sailing and canoeing, but still enjoys lap swimming, choral singing, creative writing, Scrabble, and dreamwork.

Jonathan Hill attended Boston University where he earned a degree in systems engineering. Dale and Jon were both accepted as Air Force summer interns after their junior year, and thus blossomed the relationship that later turned into marriage. After a brief stint as engineer, Jonathan owned a printing business, and then turned to real estate management. Jon and Dale raised two children. Jonathan has also retired from skiing, sailing, and canoeing, and for the last twenty years, his passion has been tennis.

From The Board of Trustees

by Gale Alexander



We are starting off an exciting 201st season at UUCD with the arrival of our new contract minister, Reverend Tony. New possibilities are ahead. You may have already received an invitation from him to attend a Town Hall style gathering and perhaps you would also like a personal chat. Tony will be making himself available for both.

I'm looking forward the open house event coming up in September, offered by our Religious Education Ministry Team. Be sure to check our website for this and other upcoming events throughout the year.

I hope you all have had a relaxing and revitalizing summer and are looking forward to a new year full of possibilities and fun.

From Our Director of Religious Education For Children and Youth



Upcoming In Children and Youth Religious Education (RE)

It is homecoming season! 2023-2024 programs for children begin at the end of the month. Programs for teens begin right away in October.

- **Sunday, September 3:** Labor Day Weekend, no programs
- **Saturday, September 9- Sunday, September 10:** Volunteer training weekend 1 (please see volunteer team emails regarding which weekend to attend; the second weekend will be Saturday, September 24-Sunday, September 25 only for select groups)
- **Sunday, September 17:** Our annual multigenerational homecoming service and picnic! Our information fair for children, youth, and family programs!
- **Sunday, September 25:** Programs for children begin launching (note that this is a three-day weekend for most public schools)
- **Sunday, October 1:** Programs for teens begin launching

Thank You For Registering!


Thank you to those of you who have submitted a 2023-2024 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.

Fair for Children, Teens, and Families September 17th

Kids and families, please join us on the lawn on September 17th 10:30AM-12PM (adults attending the service can join kids outside after the service ends). We will have a bounce house, games, and other activities for the kids. There will also be information for adults about this year's programs for kids, teens, and families. If it rains, we will set up some activities in the fellowship hall.



Upcoming Events



JIM SCOTT

in


CONCERT

Sunday
September 10, 2023
4pm


Jim Scott is a composer, guitarist, and singer whom Pete Seeger called "some kind of magician." He creates and performs music for a just, peaceful and sustainable world.

Jim was part of the Paul Winter Consort for decades, performing all over the world, including twice yearly summer and winter solstice concerts at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City. His flamenco-style guitar playing is legendary among guitarists.

"With virtuoso guitar work and an easy, honest presence, he delivers his musical message straight to minds and hearts."



www.musicattheridge.org
24 Clapboard Ridge Road
Danbury, CT



Tickets at Eventbrite.com

UUCD Men Conversing over Coffee meets on the second Wednesday of each month. Our next meeting is on Wednesday, September 13th at 10:00 a.m. at UUCD in the Fellowship Hall Lower Level. For more information contact **Jeff Asher** or **Joe Gillotti**.



The **Women's Group** will start meeting again on Thursday, September 28th at 2:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall lower level. It will be wonderful to be together again! Because it's been so long please let **Jane Leff** know if you will be attending.



Mark your calendar for the revival of Movies with a Message!

Suze Shaner and **Dan Brodax** are revitalizing Keith Dupree's Spiritual Cinema showings. We will start on September 16th and then we will meet the second Saturday of each month from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. These nights will consist of one or two short movies that explore the big questions about life and living (i.e, *Who are we? Why are we here? Where are we bound? and What can we become when we live at our highest level of potential?*) with discussion afterwards. We will supply some pizza, including a gluten-free pizza and you are welcome to bring your own food and drink. Donations accepted.



Do you know someone who has experienced a miscarriage? If so, please let them know about a special program taking place this September-November as part of our community outreach efforts. Gina Cassetta, assisted by Rev. Sierra-Marie Gerfeo, UUCD Director of Religious Education and Family Ministries, will be leading four Circles of Connection: Interfaith Rituals for Healing After Miscarriage. These rituals were written by Gina as her final project for her MA in Transformative Leadership and Spirituality, and are meant for those who have had miscarriage, whether it happened six months ago or decades ago.

Meet in a safe space for 4 sessions to honor your emotions and your loss with others who understand. Facilitated by Chaplain Gina Cassetta & Rev. Sierra-Marie Gerfeo

Although miscarriages are fairly common, they are not usually acknowledged by society. Often occurring early in a pregnancy and before an announcement is made, they thus become a life event shared with very few and processed mainly on their own. Coming together in a safe space allows people to recognize their pain and loss and to know that they are not alone with the memories of their child and dreams that never came to fruition.

Held at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury
24 Clapboard Ridge Road, Danbury;

September 17, October 8 & 29, November 19, 2023
2 - 4 pm

Space is limited and advance registration is required. Scholarships are available, and the money collected will be used to offset the cost of running the rituals, for childcare if needed, or donated to UUCD for use of the space.

Limited spaces - sign up today!
\$ 40 donation



Questions? contact Chaplain Gina at: BlessedAndBeHeld@gmail.com

Ministry/Team News

From the *Social Action Council*

Soup Kitchen Corner

by Judy Lacker

On **Saturday, September 2nd**, some members of Soup Kitchen Team 3 (Team Leader **Lynn Taborsak, Bob Taborsak, Diane Purvis and Nancy Brown**) 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 ddhhsandwiches@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.

This is Team 2 (Plus 2) at Dorothy Day today - having fun and getting out a delicious, hot meal, etc.! We could REALLY use a couple of other folks to join our Team.

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.



Notes on Two Hundred Years (and More)

by Douglas H. Parkhurst

The Rev. Harry Adams Hersey began his pastorate at First Universalist Church, now Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury (UUCD), on March 1, 1930. He would turn sixty years old in April. By then a parish minister for almost a quarter century, Rev. Hersey was pursuing a second career much as some Unitarian Universalist clergy do today. Born in Dorchester, Massachusetts, in 1870 young Harry's first occupation was as a piano tuner in and around Boston. While in his twenties Harry became active in the Young People's Christian Union (YPCU) chapter at a Universalist church near his home. His interest in church activities and pursuing higher education blossomed. In 1899 he enrolled at Tufts College, Medford, Massachusetts, and in 1903 graduated with a bachelor of arts degree. Study at Tufts School of Religion followed where Harry earned his bachelor of divinity and master of arts degrees in 1906. That same year he married Lottie May Champlin, a fellow YPCUer from Hartford, Connecticut. The couple would have four children. In 1940 Rev. Hersey received an honorary doctor of divinity degree from Tufts.

Ordained to the Universalist ministry in 1906, Rev. Hersey's first church was in Stafford, Connecticut. Over the years he served parishes in West Somerville, Massachusetts; Caribou, Maine; Muncie, Indiana; and Canton, New York. For three years Harry Hersey did field work for the General Sunday School Association (Universalist). And, taking a break from the ministry, for two years he owned and operated a music store and did piano tuning in Canton, New York.

It is an understatement to say the 1930s and 40s were difficult decades for Americans. Unemployment, economic privation, and misery caused by the Great Depression preceded the uncertainty, danger, and sacrifice of the country's full mobilization and participation in World War II. Then came the beginning of the nuclear age. These were years, too, which saw declines in the hatting industry and in farming, both mainstays of Danbury's economy. It was within the context of these local, national, and international challenges, and their effects on his community, that Rev. Hersey ministered to the people of First Universalist Society and Church.

At eighteen years and six months First Universalist was Dr. Hersey's longest settlement and remains today the longest of any minister in the history of UUCD. He was active in town, including service on the Danbury Board of Education, Rotary Club, Danbury Arts Center, Danbury Historical Museum (Scott-Fanton), Salvation Army advisory board, Danbury Grange, Danbury Ministerial Association, and local and state Council of Churches. He was easily recognized around town, too, riding a bicycle as he went about his parish and community business. For fourteen years Dr. Hersey was secretary of the Connecticut Universalist Convention. He wrote articles for magazines, a 50th anniversary history of the national YPCU (1939), and a book *A History of Music in Tufts College 1856-1945* (1947). And all the while fulfilling his primary obligation as a full-time parish minister. Harry Hersey retired, much admired in his church and community, on September 1, 1948, at the age of seventy-eight. In July he gave a final sermon to his Danbury congregation. He spoke on being a minister and a member in a modern free church. We are fortunate his words from that occasion are preserved. They offer a flavor of his broad faith and the liberal religious perspective of his time. He said this:

The minister in a free church "is free from the worst of all fears - the fear of the truth - the fear lest it differ from what he believed in religion. He is free to change his opinions; free to perform any service for any person; free from believing in the almost total failure of God in his declared purpose that all men shall be saved; free to judge God, as Jesus did, by human standards; free from authority. He does not have to obey any superior official; is not bound by a fixed creed. In fact the minister in a free modern church does not live behind an 'iron curtain' which shuts off one of the largest and most vital fields of human thinking.

"Similarly, the members of a free modern church are free; free to differ from the minister and from one another; free in matters of belief. They may have very conservative, or very liberal, views doctrinally, because no matter what their particular doctrinal belief, it is clear, in living and dealing with them, that such doctrinal differences make no difference in their character; and it was by a man's 'character' that Jesus judged them. He rejected his professional followers, who did not do the will of God, and he accepted the unprofessing men who did that will. The tree (human life) was judged not by its professions but by its fruits. Finally, the members in such a church are free to think. No secret ecclesiastical police; no spying members of their own families will report them if they dare to think for themselves in religion as they do in all other spheres of human thought. Both minister and people avow their faith in 'the authority of truth, known and to be known.'

"Therefore both minister and people choose to believe the best portrayals of God, in the Bible; the largest promises of Jesus; the most inclusive, instead of the exclusive teachings of the Book in the dignity and worth of man; in genuine universal Fatherhood of God and a real brotherhood of man; in the endless life of every human being. They believe absolutely that all the ends of the earth shall know the salvation of God, who has sworn by Himself; whose word has gone forth in righteousness and shall not return void, but shall accomplish that for which it was sent; till every knee shall bow and tongue confess to Him. The minister and people are free to believe that, despite all changes in human opinions of Jesus (and they have been and are many), that, Jesus Himself is the same yesterday, today and forever; God's supreme revelation of Himself; the 'Way' in, through and out of life."

Harry Adams Hersey died at his home in Somerville, Massachusetts, a few miles from his beloved Tufts College, on October 11, 1950, two years after he and Lottie left Danbury. He was eighty. His funeral was held two days later in Goddard Chapel at Tufts. Among participating clergy was Rabbi Jerome Malino of Danbury, a close friend. Walter Sweet, Danbury's superintendent of schools, and Clifford Taylor of the Danbury Universalist church were honorary bearers.

[Note - There is much to learn about Dr. Hersey. Information with a photo and details of his ministry and activities in Danbury can be found in chapter 4 of *The Story of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Northern Fairfield County 1822-1995* by Reverdy Whitlock.]

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 15th.**

