



# Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury

Monthly **COMMENT** Newsletter

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

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OCTOBER 2023



## FROM OUR MINISTER

### How My Family and I became White

Dear Beloveds,

Our theme for October is Heritage. My Sundays with you during the coming month will touch upon various aspects of Heritage including how our Unitarian Universalist heritage is changing, how the re-emerging field of epigenetics is influencing how we think about evolution, but also how trauma is passed on genetically, and what inheritance do we wish to leave to our descendants, the future members of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Danbury? As we enter into this month of thinking about heritage, I invite you to reflect on your own personal heritage and history. Something I find fascinating about my own heritage is that once upon a time my family was considered “other.” The American heritage of white supremacy culture not only make black and brown people inferior, it robs those it allows to become white of their own diverse heritage. I offer my story to help you start reflecting on your own.

In the 1988 movie *Mystic Pizza*, Julia Roberts plays Daisy, one of three Portuguese American Catholic working-class sisters who are wait staff at a pizza parlor in Mystic, CT. Daisy meets a guy and falls in love but ends the relationship when it becomes apparent that the guy’s White Anglo-Saxon Protestant family is both racist and classist and have nothing but disdain for Daisy and her people. When Daisy goes to the guy’s home for dinner, she’s surprised but not shocked to find one of her friends is the family maid.

Even in 1988 when I first saw this film, I recognized my own family’s history in it. My mom’s grandparents, the Carloses and Figueiredos, all came from the Azores to New Bedford, MA between 1890 and 1903. No one spoke English. I’m going to focus on my grandmother’s family, the Figueiredos as they were a much larger clan. My grandmother, Alberta Figueredo, was born in 1912, married John Carlos, an electrician’s apprentice, in 1933, and my mom was born in 1936. Alberta Figueredo and her 6 siblings were all fluent in Portuguese as well as English, all practicing Catholics, and all working class – mechanics, gardeners, farmers. All but one, Gloria, married other Portuguese immigrant men and women. My mom and her sister were raised in English. Both understood Portuguese into middle-age but couldn’t speak it. The last fluent Portuguese speaker, my great aunt Bernadine Figueiredo Vierra – who we called “Tata” – died in 1998. Neither my mom nor my aunt married Portuguese immigrants, although my aunt married an Irish Catholic. My dad was an atheist although my brother and I were raised Catholic. By the time my mom was in high school, the Portuguese lived outside the old immigrant neighborhoods and were becoming more ingrained into mainstream, White, New Bedford society. My grandparents bought a house in a White neighborhood in Mattapoisett in the 1950s. My mom and aunt were the first people in the history of my family to attend and graduate from college. My brother is a none – nonreligious, and I’m a Unitarian-Universalist convert from Catholicism. My brother married a Palestinian Orthodox Christian. I married a French Canadian Catholic and then recently a German American Episcopalian and former Lutheran. I am the only one of my generation in our extended family who stills cooks – and knows

the recipes for traditional Azorean-American food like malasadas, cacoila, stewed green beans, kale soup, and sweet bread.

My son is a none, and my nephew is being raised nonreligious. No one knows Portuguese. My generation is all college-educated, most are non-practicing Catholics, and in contemporary America we can't consider ourselves anything but White. My brother and I still root for Portugal in the world cup. But we're American, naturalized, homogenized, White-washed, and now White Americans with all the privileges afforded to that reality. But once upon a time, just two generations ago, my family was not considered White and faced the discrimination and slurs that went with being new immigrants with darker skin who spoke a different language. I hope this helps you ponder your heritage and where you fit in – or don't – to the complexity of American culture and history.

Blessings,  
Rev. Tony

### **SPIRITUAL CHALLENGE for OCTOBER 2023 on the theme of HERITAGE - Epigenetics and You**

This I challenge you to reflect on your life in the light of the re-emerging evolutionary focus on epigenetics.

The Center for Disease Control defines epigenetics as the study of how your behaviors and environment can cause changes that affect the way your genes work. Unlike genetic changes, epigenetic changes are reversible and do not change your DNA sequence, but they can change how your body reads a DNA sequence. Gene expression refers to how often or when proteins are created from the instructions within your genes. While genetic changes can alter which protein is made, epigenetic changes affect gene expression to turn genes “on” and “off.” Since your environment and behaviors, such as diet and exercise, can result in epigenetic changes, it is easy to see the connection between your genes and your behaviors and environment. (<https://www.cdc.gov/genomics/disease/epigenetics.htm>)

Recent research demonstrates that physiological changes at the level of DNA are caused by trauma. Changes in DNA can be passed down through the generations. *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma* by Sean Pratt, Bessel A. van der Kolk, et al was the first major popular work to discuss epigenetics and how the body holds onto hurt, pain, trauma, and emotional experience. *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies* by Resmaa Menakem is just one of the recent popular works that looks at how the genetic inheritance of trauma for both white people and people of color shapes the experience and thus the understanding of race. *Lamarck's Revenge: How Epigenetics Is Revolutionizing Our Understanding of Evolution's Past and Present* by Peter Ward places epigenetics in context of the larger conversation about DNA and evolution by natural selection.

My challenge to you this month is reflect on your life in the light of the fact that trauma can be passed down through generations. What trauma might you have inherited that has informed who you are? What trauma have you experienced that might influence your children? What healing has an ancestor done or what healing have you done that might be an influence on correcting the course of generational trauma?

Once again expressing your internal reflection by journaling or creating art is a great way to process what you're pondering.

**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](mailto:revtony@pm.me).**

**Reflect on HERITAGE**

- What story told by (or about) your ancestors has shaped you the most?
- What is your favorite family memento? And why does it have such a hold on you?
- What's the legacy of your first embarrassment? And of your first award/triumph?
- We usually think of heritage as tied to people, but places shape us as much as our family trees. What "inheritance" was passed on to you by your childhood hometown or childhood house?

**Quotes about HERITAGE**

- "When we lie about the past, we steal from the future." - Abigail Bengson
- "Here is what I would like for you to know: In America, it is traditional to destroy the black body — it is heritage." Ta-Nehisi Coates
- "My father used to say that stories are part of the most precious heritage of humankind." -Tahir Shah
- "The past is never dead. It's not even past." - William Faulkner

**Books that relate to the theme of Heritage** - These are great reads to complement our focus on HERITAGE this month.

- *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents* by Isabel Wilkerson
- *Kindred* by Octavia Butler
- *The Dawn of Everything: A New History of Humanity* by David Graeber & David Wengrow
- *Lamarck's Revenge: How Epigenetics Is Revolutionizing Our Understanding of Evolution's Past and Present* by Peter Ward

**HERITAGE at the Movies!**

- *Coco* (family friendly)
- *Blinded by the Light*
- *Fences*
- *Lion*

Other Things about HERITAGE on the Internet

- Can Trauma Be Inherited? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NuIM39dcUs4&t=74s>
- Reflecting On The Past To Understand The Present <https://www.npr.org/2018/06/14/607757718/looking-back-reflecting-on-the-past-to-understand-the-present>
- "Reflections on the 1980s Article II Revision—and Why it's Time to Revise Again" <https://www.uuworld.org/articles/80sarticleii>
- Remembering The Black Empowerment Tragedy - UU World Magazine <https://www.uuworld.org/articles/empowerment-tragedy>

**HERITAGE SONGS**

On Spotify & YouTube

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

## CALENDAR CONNECTIONS FOR OCTOBER

### Interfaith:

- [Feast of St Francis of Assisi](#) (Christian) - Oct. 4
- World Communion Sunday (Christian) - Oct. 1, 2023
- [Sukkot](#): Feast of Tabernacles (Jewish) - Sept. 29 - Oct. 6, 2023
- [Reformation Day](#) (Christian) - Oct. 31 (more [here](#))
- [Samhain](#) (Wiccan) - Oct. 31 - Nov. 1 [[more](#) and [more](#)]

### Unitarian Universalist:

- [Michael Servetus](#) burned at the stake in Geneva - Oct. 27 (1553) (more [here](#))
- [UU Merger Vote](#): Unitarians and Universalists, meeting separately in Syracuse, NY, voted to proceed with consolidation - Oct. 31, 1959. (*The official consolidation, [UUA Founding Day](#), happened in 1961 on May 12. - more [here](#)*)

### National & Cultural Holidays:

- [LGBTQ History Month](#)
- [Hispanic Heritage Month](#) (Sept. 15 - Oct. 15)
- [Breast Cancer Awareness Month](#)
- [Bullying Prevention Month](#)
- [ADHD Awareness Month](#)
- Birthday of Mohandas Gandhi - Oct. 2 (1869)
- Thurgood Marshall sworn in - first African American associate justice - U.S. Supreme Court - Oct. 2, 1967
- Ruth Bader Ginsburg joins the U.S. Supreme Court as its second woman Justice - Oct. 4, 1993
- [Sisters in Spirit Vigils](#) (Canada) - October 4, 2018: Honoring the lives of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG)
- NASA launches first peopled mission, Apollo 7 - Oct. 11 (1968)
- [Indigenous Peoples Day](#) / Columbus Day (U.S.) - Oct. 9, 2023 (second Monday of October) - more [here](#)
- [National Coming Out Day](#) - Oct. 11 (more [here](#))
- Thanksgiving Day (Canada) - Oct. 9, 2023 (second Monday in October)
- [John Brown's Raid](#) - Oct. 16 (1859)
- [United Nations Day](#) - Oct. 24
- [Intersex Awareness Day](#) - Oct. 26
- Halloween, All Soul's Eve - Oct. 31
- [Dia de los Muertos](#) - Nov. 1-2

### For Fun and On the Fringe:

- Country Music Month (designated Oct. 1970 [by Richard Nixon](#)) more [here](#) and [here](#)
- World Vegetarian Day - Oct. 1
- [World Smile Day](#) - Oct. 6
- Apple introduce new iPod - Oct. 13 (2005)
- [Clergy Appreciation Day](#) - Oct. 8, 2023 (second Sunday of October)

## October Services – One Service at 10:00 a.m.

**Sunday, October 1<sup>st</sup>**

Principles to Promises

Rev. Tony Lorenzen

Rev. Tony reflects on reframing our tradition, moving from seven principles to promises about how we will live our values.

**Sound Panels Meeting** – Come find out more about the proposal to install sound panels in Fellowship Hall. **Echoes in the hall currently make it very hard to understand someone speaking at the podium.** After research and deliberation we are recommending that acoustic panels be installed on the ceiling and walls of Fellowship Hall for ~\$16,000. We welcome input from the congregation at an in person meetings at 11:15 am. Keith Henderson will show a short PowerPoint with a mock-up of how the panels will look. This is the time for questions and discussion. We plan to keep the voting meeting on October 8th very brief.

**Sunday, October 8<sup>th</sup>**

To be determined

### **Congregational Meeting after the service**

All members of UU Danbury are invited to join the congregation for a brief meeting on Sunday, October 8th at 11:15 am. As our by-laws require, we will be voting on whether to spend over \$10,000 on sound panels for Fellowship Hall. Per the by-laws, only those who have been a member for 60 days or more will be allowed to vote. For questions contact Margaret Henderson, Board President.

**Sunday, October 15<sup>th</sup>**

Hand-Me-Down Genes

Rev. Tony Lorenzen

Rev. Tony reflects on the re-emerging science of epigenetics and the profound impact of trauma stored in our genes.

**Sunday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Dan Brodax, Joanne Davidson, Nancy Hershatter

Where Words Leave Off, Music Begins

UUCD's own folk-rock trio, Prism, is 13 years old this year. Dan Brodax, Joanne Davidson and Nancy Hershatter will trace, in word and song, the myriad ways that music has shaped each of their lives from childhood onward.

**Sunday, October 29<sup>th</sup>**

The Children Don't Want the China

Rev. Tony Lorenzen

Rev. Tony leads us in a Samhain-Halloween celebration on helps us reflect on what we want to leave as an inheritance to the next generation of our congregation.

## From The Board of Trustees

by Margaret Henderson, Board President



Welcome back to another year at UU Danbury! There's a burst of energy setting off new activities and new ideas this year. Last month I attended the inaugural session of Suze and Dan's "Movies with a Message," where the conversation was thoughtful and provocative. Our Kids' RE Information Fair was a success, Gina Cassetta is running a series for women who've experienced miscarriages, the Women's Group is back for another year, the choir is rehearsing, and plans are underway for a discussion group around this year's UUA Common Read, *On Repentance and Repair* by Rabbi Danya Ruttenberg.

As hopefully you've heard, there will be a brief **meeting of all UUCD members on Sunday, October 8th** after the service to vote on installing sound-absorbing panels. All are welcome to attend, but only current members can vote.

The Board is absolutely thrilled to announce that, thanks to all of you, we made our budget target last year! We are deeply, deeply grateful for your generosity, your faith in your Board, and your faith in this institution as a place that nourishes your soul.

We are starting a practice called **Photos At Church**, where everyone is invited to create pictures of real, live people enjoying themselves at UUCD (with their permission of course!) and share them or post them on social media. Rev. Tony has said anyone can take pictures or movies of him *any time* on Sundays when he's there and post them - that sounds like a challenge to me! Send your pics to Nancy Cullen or Heather Smith.

There have been some questions about Rev. Tony's hours. His official title is Contract Minister (aka Consulting Minister) half-time. We have hired him for a 2-year stint, which we can renew if we want to. Unlike a Settled Minister who is called by the congregation, a Contract Minister is hired by the Board. So besides Sundays in the pulpit and pastoral care, his main purpose is to support all of us as *we* do the business of running the congregation. So far the Board has asked him to focus on Leadership Development and Fundraising. He has a lot of skilled experience and helpful resources to offer - and he *does* make lots of suggestions, but he's also okay with doing things differently if that's what we want.

So the year is off to a great start! If you'd like to pitch in and help, there are lots of small things that need doing - see me or another Board member if you can spare an hour or two. In the meantime, enjoy all that's going on in and around UU Danbury this fall!

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



### Upcoming in Religious Education

The nursery is open for children ages 0-5 every Sunday during service. Our nursery care providers cannot wait to welcome your children! We also offer regular programming open to children in preschool through high school.

- **Sunday, October 1st** - Regular Sunday morning programs + first day of middle and senior high school youth groups
- **Friday, October 6th** - Group for Caregivers of LGBTQI+ Young People
- **Sunday, October 9th** - Regular Sunday morning programs + Circles of Connection (interfaith rituals for healing from miscarriage)
- **Sunday, October 15th** - Regular Sunday morning programs
- **Sunday, October 22nd** - Regular Sunday morning programs
- **Sunday, October 29th** - Regular Sunday morning programs + Trunk or Treat after service + Circles of Connection (interfaith rituals for healing from miscarriage) + Middle School Youth Group pumpkin carving event

If you have not yet registered your family for children and youth programs, [please do so here](#).

### Urgent: Volunteers Still Needed

Here is the bad news: we do not have enough volunteers to run all of our planned programs for children and youth. Without volunteers, programs will be canceled. And here is the fantastic news: you can help us fix this! We have fun, interesting, and fulfilling volunteer jobs.

Will you help us make sure that we have a complete set of programs this year? Below are some of the volunteer positions open as of the mid-September newsletter deadline. Please contact our Director of Religious Education, Sierra-Marie, at [dre@uudanbury.org](mailto:dre@uudanbury.org) to discuss whether any of these might be a good fit for your skills. Please note that volunteers must complete an application, including a background check.

- **Love and Wonder in Nature (LAWN):** Formerly known as our Forest School-inspired program, this is a mostly-outdoor, play-centered, child-led Sunday morning religious education program for children in primary and middle school grades. We still need two to three volunteers to commit to spending two Sundays a month with the kids, playing outside with them and exploring their questions.
- **Spirit Play:** This is a Montessori-inspired Sunday morning religious education program to help children make meaning through story, ritual, and play. We have enough volunteers through December but need one to two more volunteers who can spend two Sundays a month with the kids starting in January. A special training is required.

## Resources for Learning About Judaism

This month in Neighborhood Bridges we are meeting our Jewish neighbors. To learn more about Judaism, check out the following resources:

### General:

- The [Judaism 101](#) website offers basic, wide-ranging information on modern Judaism.
- [My Jewish Learning](#) is a comprehensive website with information on Jewish holidays, life, beliefs, global demographics, and more. Though centered on European Jewry's history and contemporary practices, the website also addresses a range of cultural communities and diverse practices within Judaism.
- On the [Ask Moses](#) website, you can type questions and receive answers from a rabbi or another person learned in Judaism. Research [kashrut](#) (keeping Kosher) and other topics.
- The Absolute Astronomy website offers a variety of encyclopedia-style articles about facets of Judaism, including "[Atheist Jew](#)" and "[Humanistic Judaism](#)."

### On the History of Judaism:

- *The Eighth Day: The Hidden History of the Jewish Contribution to Civilization* by Samuel Karlinsky (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1994) is an excellent scholarly book on Jewish contributions to humankind.
- A website published by the Christian Resource Institute offers "[The Date of the Exodus](#)," Dennis Bratcher's compilation of a variety of kinds of evidence suggesting a date for the Jewish Exodus from Egypt.

### Torah, Commentary, and Interpretation:

- The [Internet Sacred Text Archive](#) website offers the Jewish Publication Society's 1917 translation of the [Tanach](#)—the Five Books of Moses plus the Books of Joshua, Judges, I Samuel, II Samuel, I Kings, and II Kings.
- A searchable, comprehensive [Complete Torah](#) is published by Mechon Mamre ("the Mamre Institute"), an Israeli group of observant Jewish Torah scholars.
- An [article](#) on The Religion of Islam website explores how both Torah and Talmud function as authorities for observant Jewish practice.

### Israel, Today:

- The [Jewish Virtual Library](#) published by the American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise offers information about Israel including its links with U.S. organizations and enterprises, its position in international politics, and a "virtual tour" of the land.

### Unitarian Universalism and Judaism:

- [Unitarian Universalists for Jewish Awareness](#) convened in February, 2011, hosted by the [Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta](#), a congregation that has a group for Jewish awareness and celebrations, L'Chaim.



# Upcoming Events

## New Group for Caregivers of LGBTQIA+ Young People

On the first Friday of every month, starting October 6<sup>th</sup>, 7:30-9PM parents, guardians, and other caregivers of LGBTQIA+ young people are invited to a group for mutual support and celebration of our kids. Please RSVP to [dre@uudanbury.org](mailto:dre@uudanbury.org).



**MUSTARD'S  
RETREAT  
in  
CONCERT**  
Sunday, October 8, 2023  
4pm

Mustard's Retreat performances are always joyful and uplifting, as well as intelligent, thought-provoking and insightful. A reviewer early in their career described their performance as "Music to cure what ails you." In the past few years, they have described their shows as "Defiantly Hopeful," partly in terms of their long career, but more as a statement of what the music, and the folk community, has meant to them.

"Defiantly Hopeful," explains David Tamulevich, "we feel that that is what folk music is about.... Yes, it is joyful and fun, mystery and wonder, the heartbreaks and resiliency, celebrating life. Beneath all of that, it is community and finding common ground beyond the politics and differences... helping each other chart our way through our times. We celebrate all of that...and that, is Defiantly Hopeful."

Mustard's Retreat has traveled more than a million miles and performed more than 7,000 shows, from pool parties and pig roasts, concerts, and festivals, to Lincoln Center Out of Doors, The Barns at Wolfrap, and the Kennedy Center's Millennium Stage. People locally might know them also from their appearances at The Eighth Step, the Falcon Ridge Folk Festival, the Great Hudson River Revival, and from airplay on WAMC, WWUH, WPKN and WYBC, among others. They have 14 highly acclaimed recordings of mostly original material.



[www.musicattheridge.org](http://www.musicattheridge.org)  
24 Clapboard Ridge Road  
Danbury, CT



*In-person and live-streaming  
Tickets at Eventbrite.com*



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 Gerfao

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

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

Limited spaces - sign up today!  
\$ 40 donation




Questions? contact Chaplain Gina at: [BlessedAndBeHeld@gmail.com](mailto:BlessedAndBeHeld@gmail.com)

## Monthly Community Dinners – and a New Neighboring Faiths Program!

We will re-start our monthly community dinners on **Wednesday, October 11<sup>th</sup>**. After that date, the dinners will continue to be on the second Wednesday of the month for the time being.

For anyone of *any age* who would like to stay for a **program after dinner**, this year we will be offering Neighborhood Bridges. This **introductory multigenerational** neighboring faiths program is focused on meeting neighbors in Greater Danbury and hearing a little from them about what is important to them about their faith traditions.

There are two components of this program each month:

1. A visit to a faith community on dates TBA
2. A gathering time after the community dinner to either prepare for the visit or check in with one another after the visit

The schedule is as follows (subject to change as visits are arranged with each faith community):

- October - meeting our Jewish neighbors at Temple Beth El
- November - meeting our Hindu neighbors on our campus
- December - BREAK (no program)
- January - meeting our Sikh neighbors in Norwalk
- February - meeting our Buddhist neighbors in Redding
- March - meeting our Baptist neighbors in Danbury
- April - meeting our Muslim neighbors TBD
- May - program wrap-up

**UUCD Men Conversing over Coffee** meets on the second Wednesday of each month. Our next meeting is on Wednesday, October 11<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. at UUCD in the Fellowship Hall Lower Level. For more information contact **Jeff Asher** or **Joe Gillotti**.



**October 14th: Suze Shaner and Dan Brodax** are facilitating **Movies with a Message**, using **Spiritual Cinema's** movie shorts the second Saturday of each month **from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.** These nights will consist of 1-3 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. You are welcome to bring your dinner. We will supply gluten-free popcorn and bottled water. Donations to UUCD accepted.



Save the date: **November 4th!**

**Your heart, courage, and brains are also needed for:  
The Wizard of GenerOZity Auction.**

Right now we are most in need of **donations of items to auction off.**

Here is a partial list: Services - what can you do that others may need?

- Timeshares - bring in a LOT for us,
- Dinners, parties, special events and baked goods are popular,
- Unwanted gift cards for "gift baskets", or as prizes,
- Donations from favorite merchants!
- We welcome new volunteers on our team!

We will also fund two 8th Principle Projects in our community!

The Auction is FUN - be sure to **save the date!**

[auction@uudanbury.org](mailto:auction@uudanbury.org)

## Even Adults Need Treats Sometimes!



We want *everybody* to have the joy of trick-or-treating this year, adults included! Please join us for our second **ALL-Ages Trunk-or-Treating event after service on Sunday, October 29th**. Costumes are most welcome but not required. Everybody please just come give and get treats! Joy all around! We will offer more detailed information as the date approaches, but here are the basics about how this works:

- RSVP when the Signup Genius invitation comes so we can let everyone know approximately how many people to expect (to help with treat preparation)
- When you park your car before the service, park in the designated area

You are encouraged but not required to decorate your trunk for Halloween - treats will go in or on your trunk

- Bring both wrapped, edible treats and non-edible treats, which you keep separate to avoid allergen contamination
- During the event after service, we will take turns both giving out treats from our own trunks and visiting others to receive treats

Please make sure that your decorations and costumes are culturally respectful and not racist, ableist, or transphobic. Learn more and get a list of costumes and decorations to avoid here:

<http://www.lspirg.org/costumes>.



### Our Caring Circle is Available

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

**Andrea Andersen** is the contact person 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.

# Ministry/Team News

From *Adult Programming*

by Joe Gillotti

## **Chair Yoga –Meditation -Breath Control – Deep Relaxation - Laughing Yoga – Chanting**

Chair Yoga Classes are starting again at UUCD for women and men. Classes are FREE for all UUCD members and friends. The importance for seniors to maintain flexibility and mobility cannot be overstated. So often this vital human function gets lost or totally ignored. Perhaps it's time to consider a new healthy activity and begin to create a more peaceful mind and body for yourself.

You'll find the gentle stretches both sitting and standing can have a wonderful effect on a person's body and sense of well being. All aspects of this class are designed to lead a person to a feeling of physical well being and learning to become calmer in their daily life.

You will have the opportunity to learn: Chair Yoga, deep breathing, meditation, special chanting techniques for calming the mind, tapping for health, laughter yoga and deep relaxing.

Come join this new class and become connected to our happy little group. We will start on Wednesday October 4th from 2:30 pm to 3:30 pm UUCD lower level.

Participants need to contact their doctor or medical provider for approval before attending this Chair Yoga Class. In the event you have questions, concerns, or to register, feel free to call Joe any evening during the week after 7:00 pm.

## **Spiritually Speaking Group Realizing the Purpose and Power of Conscious Awareness**

In life today we are witnessing so much human dysfunction, unexplained emotional pain, and drama that clearly indicates there is a serious need for change. Changes are needed personally, collectively and globally.

This course in human development titled *Spiritually Speaking* outlined through "A New Earth" and "The Power of Now", will start the path for transformation of human consciousness. It can begin the awakening process by slowly reading and studying the before mentioned text in such a way that a person can begin to experience positive changes in their life in a relatively short period of time.

The group participatory study format presented over the past 14 years has proven itself to be a powerful tool. This course of study and practice generates an eagerness in almost every participant to explore new ways of thinking. It supports people in wanting to continue to further understand more and more about themselves and bring a higher dimension of awareness and consciousness into their daily lives.

(continued)

We will make it easier for new attendees to begin to understand some of the main themes associated with learning and practicing Present Moment awareness. This will be a different approach in providing new participants and previous attendees the opportunity to learn some of the basic principles and concepts in Eckhart Tolle's writings even before we start reading the full text.

Each person will be required to obtain a copy of "A New Earth", Awakening To Your Life's Purpose" by Eckhart Tolle. (Available in paper back on Amazon sold at approximately \$15.00)

The group will meet every Tuesday from 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. via Zoom. This free class is intended to continue until December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023. For more information and sign-up, contact **Joe Gillotti**.

## From the *Social Action Council*

### Soup Kitchen Corner

by Judy Lacker

On Saturday, October 7<sup>th</sup>, some members of Soup Kitchen Team 4 (Team Leaders **Bruni Edwards and Yvonne Ruddy-Stein, Joanne Davidson, Michael Stengle, the Parr Family, the Bonansinga/Twombly family and Ali Haffner**) 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](mailto: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.

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

More than a half-dozen church buildings in Danbury are local landmarks. Downtown examples include Lighthouse Ministries, West St. (constructed in the 1860s); St. James Episcopal, West St. (1860s and 70s); St. Peter Roman Catholic, Main St. (1860s and 70s); St. Joseph Roman Catholic, Main St. (early 1900s); First Congregational, Deer Hill Ave. (early 1900s). The building housing Lighthouse Ministries is the only one of these five not still used by its original congregation. This structure was home first to Second Congregational and later Immanuel Lutheran churches.

The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury (UUCD), while this year marking its 201st anniversary, does not presently occupy a landmark building. Over its long history and under different names UUCD has called a variety of sites in and near Danbury home. The earliest meeting places of the Universalist Society were private homes, a schoolhouse in Danbury's Great Plain, and the Main St. courthouse (1820s and early 1830s). Then came permanent homes on Main St. (two) and Liberty St. (1830s to 1960s). For four years following the 1966 merger of the Danbury Universalist-Unitarian Church and the Unitarian Fellowship of Ridgefield the group, by then called Unitarian Universalist Society of Northern Fairfield County (UUSNFC), rented a former inn on Danbury's West Starrs Plain Road and then met briefly in the city's Morris St. School. During the two years (1964 to 1966) of its independent existence the Ridgefield Unitarian Fellowship met in the Ridgefield Community Center on Main St. and in Odd Fellows Hall on King Lane and a neighboring building which later housed a Montessori school.

In 1970 the UUSNFC purchased a former farm property on Picketts Ridge Road off route 7 in West Redding and relocated there. This was home to the group until the move back to Danbury in the early 2000s. For two years the now renamed UUCD held services in what was then called Alumni Hall on the mid-town campus of Western Connecticut State University. In 2005 the UUCD settled at its present location at 24 Clapboard Ridge Road. The early 1890s was a time of church construction in downtown Danbury. Baptist (West St.), Disciples of Christ (Liberty St.), and Methodist (Main St.) churches were erected with each building becoming a landmark in its time. None of the three are standing today; each of these congregations has since moved to a new location. Likewise the Danbury Universalists, after nearly forty years on Liberty St., began planning a move and construction of a new building. The Society was outgrowing its long-time home. The preferred location for the new church was upper Main St., above White. This would be the Universalists' second permanent home on Main St. With the encouragement of Rev. Dr. James H. Chapin, then president of the Connecticut Universalist Convention, funds were raised and a lot designated 347 Main was purchased. Generous donations of \$5,000 each came from Joseph T. Bates of Danbury and Mrs. Laura Scott of Ridgefield [see note below].

A building committee was formed on May 8, 1891, consisting of Joseph T. Bates, Miles D. Washburn, Luman L. Hubbell, Martin W. Foster, and Cola S. Peck. All were or had been active in the governance of the Universalist church and society. Bates owned J. T. Bates and Company, a lumber and building materials business. Washburn was a hatter. Hubbell was secretary of J. M. Ives Company which sold home furnishings, stoves, heating systems, and the like. Foster was a bookkeeper and treasurer of Danbury Hospital Board of Managers. His brothers Thomas and Joel operated Foster Brothers architects, builders, and contractors [see note below]. Peck was associated with Davis and Company which manufactured paper boxes. In the latter part of 1891 Rev. James Vincent was called to follow Rev. Edward Horton as pastor of the church and subsequently joined the building

committee. H. M. Francis of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, was chosen as architect [see note below] and Foster Brothers as contractors. Joseph T. Bates oversaw construction. In time this new church, too, would become a local landmark.

[Note - Joseph T. Bates was from a local Universalist family. Mrs. Laura Scott was the mother of long-time church member and benefactor Laura Scott Fanton. Internet inflation calculators show the value of \$5,000 in 1891 to be well in excess of \$100,000 today.]

[Note - Thomas H. Foster was an active Universalist. Joel G. Foster belonged to Second Congregational Church. A number of buildings designed by Joel Foster, including the Old Jail, still stand in downtown Danbury.]

[Note - Henry M. Francis was a prominent Massachusetts architect who designed churches, schools, other public and commercial buildings, and residences. Many still stand today.]

To be continued in November 2023...

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**DANBURY BRANCH NAACP 2023 FREEDOM FUND DINNER** - "Thriving Together" - Thursday, October 19, 2023 - 6:00 p.m. Cocktail Reception, 7:00 p.m. Banquet Dinner at Anthony's Lake Club, 10 Christopher Columbus Ave., Danbury. \$85.00 - Please make checks payable to NAACP Branch 2001 42 Lake Avenue Extension, Suite 267 Danbury, CT 06811. KINDLY R.S.V.P. TO 475.777.1962 BY OCTOBER 5, 2023.





**Connecticut UU Unconferencers &  
The UU Church in Meriden PRESENT  
ORGANIZING OURSELVES for IMPACT:  
A UU UN-CONFERENCE**



**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2023 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.**

Unitarian Universalist Church in Meriden at 328 Paddock Ave, Meriden, CT

**Possible Conversations**

- Legislative Lobbying
- Progressive Coalitions & Partnerships
- Shared Staff
- Shared Programming
- Shared Worship Resources
- Combined Large Scale Fundraising



- FREE!
- NO CHARGE!
- \$0.00!
- REGISTRATION REQUIRED
- POTLUCK LUNCH  
(bring something to share)

**YOU set the agenda! YOU determine the Programs!**

**REGISTER HERE:** <https://forms.gle/qCACGDxwUyhJBVyV7>

*This is **FREE** event, HOWEVER all attendees must register through Google Forms (link above) AND bring something to share for the potluck lunch!*

Come **UNCONFERENCE** with Unitarian Universalists from around CT! We will gather for a day of learning & sharing about HOW WE CAN BETTER WORK TOGETHER to IMPACT our Congregations and our State! **The unconference model uses open-space technology and centers peer-to-peer learning, collaboration and creativity.** Participants begin the day in a large group and through a facilitated discussion determine the 2-6 offerings for the day. There will be two 2-hour sessions and three available meeting spaces for each session. Want to learn more possible staff sharing arrangements? Suggest the topic! Want to help organize legislative lobbying in CT for UU Values? Offer to lead a session about it!

**Schedule**

- 8:00 a.m. - Doors open - Coffee hour**
- 9:00 a.m. - Planning session**
- 9:45 a.m. - Break**
- 10:00 a.m. to Noon - First Workshop**
- Noon to 1:00 p.m. - Potluck lunch in sanctuary**
- 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. - Second Workshop**
- 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. - Debrief and Closing Worship**

*For questions or to volunteer to help the organizers contact  
Rev. Tony Lorenzen at 508-344-3668 or [revtony@pm.me](mailto:revtony@pm.me)*

*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 November *Comment* –  
Friday, October 20<sup>th</sup>.**

