



Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury

Monthly **COMMENT** Newsletter

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

MARCH 2024



FROM OUR MINISTER

“Tensegrity”

Dear Beloveds,

Tensegrity is a term coined by architect Buckminster Fuller. The word is a contraction of tensional integrity. He wrote *“Tensegrity describes a structural-relationship principle in which structural shape is guaranteed by the finitely closed, comprehensively continuous, tensional behaviors of the system and not by the discontinuous and exclusively local compressional member behaviors. Tensegrity provides the ability to yield increasingly without ultimately breaking or coming asunder.”*

Although you may know Fuller as the inventor of the geodesic dome and he was also a systems theorist. He invented the field of Synergetics - the empirical study of systems in transformation.

The spiritual life, the ethical life, and perhaps human living in general is a study in tensegrity. To keep one’s integrity through the ups and downs, the tensions of life, builds resilience, the ability to bounce back and continue. This in turn, builds hope as hope is the trust, we learn in ourselves and our relationships, our world – the structural relationships that hold us up and keep us going. Tensegrity allows transformation.

Transformation may happen suddenly – a traumatic event occurs in our life; a natural disaster happens; an incurable disease is diagnosed - and there is resulting profound change that can be tied to a specific before and after moment. More often, however, transformation is a gradual process. We may transform so slowly we’re not aware of it happening. However, it happens, transformation never completely severs us from the time before the change happens. We never completely and totally leave our old self behind. As one of my favorite theologians, Bruce Springsteen puts it:

“Whoever you’ve been and wherever you’ve been, it never leaves you. I always picture it as a car.

All your selves are in it. And a new self can get in, but the old selves can’t ever get out. The important thing is, who’s got their hands on the wheel at any given moment?”

That’s tensegrity. Whatever changes happen in our lives, if we retain a central integrity, the various tensions can’t destroy us. Transformation happens over time when we integrate the changes and effects of those changes on life. Change is inevitable, but transformation is not. I encourage you to seek transformation. Participation in a faith community – at the local level here in the congregation or in larger sense as a Unitarian Universalist isn’t worth much unless it transforms you.

With tensegrity,
Rev. Tony

SPIRITUAL CHALLENGE – SPIRITUAL REBOOT

This month the theme is transformation and my challenge to you is to reboot your spiritual life. It's time for a spiritual tune up to see if you can recharge and re-invigorate your human spirit. I'm going to call this month of transforming your spiritual life LENTAMADAN, a contraction of Lent and Ramadan.

This year the Christian season of Lent and the Muslim season of Ramadan overlap each other for a number of weeks in March. Lent began on Valentine's Day, February 14, and ends on March 31, Easter Sunday. Ramadan begins on March 11 and ends on April 9. Thus, for three weeks observant Christians and Muslims will be celebrating seasons that share a number of spiritual disciplines. Both are seasons for putting God first and renewing your prayer life. You can think of it as putting your spiritual life first and renewing your spiritual practices or putting your human spirit first if that works for you better. Both Lent and Ramadan ask the faithful to focus on prayer. Both seasons encourage fasting by abstaining from certain or all foods. Both seasons encourage acts of charity and improving one's self-discipline.

When I was growing up Catholic, we were encourage to "give something up" for Lent. If one gives up chocolate or social media. This is a way to extend the practice of fasting. These days, in many Christian circles, "taking something on" for Lent such as a new spiritual practice is emphasized as much as giving something up. Self-discipline, spiritual practices, fasting, and charity (kindness and compassion toward others, not just giving money) are great practices for all of us, whatever our religious or spiritual orientation.

So, this month I challenge you to Reboot your spiritual life. Take up or renew a spiritual practice. Fast for a day or a week. Maybe try a fast of a different sort and "give something up" such as Facebook or alcohol. Perhaps take something on such as trying to kinder to difficult family members or people with different political views. Maybe try to do better at staying in touch with family or friends. Maybe you could volunteer at a food bank, or visit someone who is in the hospital, or make a weekly donation to a good cause. Whatever you do (or don't do) do it with the intention of practiced, self-imposed self-discipline. Not because you have to, but because you want to in order to see if your heart opens wider, you become kinder, you become less anxious or more settled and calmer. If it's part of who you are, do some spiritual or theological reading. There are many ways to reboot. If you'd like to talk about it with me to help you figure out how you will take on this challenge, just get in touch. Happy Lentamadan!

As always, I'd love to know how you did with this challenge. Text me or call me at 508-344-3668 or email me at revtony@pm.me.

March Services – One Service at 10:00 a.m.**Sunday, March 3rd**A Saving Doubt

Rev. Paul Dodenhoff

The freedom to doubt, to question, to be content to live in Mystery is central to the liberal religious tradition. Like the process of evolution itself, the path that we follow, our practice if you will, is not easy or simple. It isn't without its dead ends or its disappointments. It doesn't guarantee that all of our conclusions will be final or that we will ever find an answer to all of our questions. But also like the process of evolution, it is filled with great expressions of beauty and awe that are sometimes born of great struggle and at other times come as unexpected Grace.

Rev. Paul Dodenhoff was raised in The Salvation Army during the 1950's and '60s, but became interested in other religious paths very early in his teens. His journey led him to study and work within a wide variety of religious and spiritual traditions that led him to make his spiritual home within Unitarian Universalism. He received his B.A. Magna Cum Laude in Religion from Drew University where he also wrote his honors thesis, "Perfected Earth, Worthy Men," his study of the Brook Farm transcendentalist community led by Unitarian minister George Ripley. He also pursued a Master's program at Drew in American Religious History specializing in the study of New Religious Movements in America. He received his ordination as an interspiritual / interfaith minister from One Spirit Interfaith Seminary in New York City in June 2012. His special interests are in the areas of spirituality, social justice, and the intersection of science and faith. He follows a spiritual path based on the teachings of the Buddha and Jesus of Nazareth. In June 2022 after ten years he retired as minister of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Palisades in Englewood, New Jersey. Paul lives with his wife Lisa in New Jersey. He is a self-confessed Tolkien geek and prides himself on his yearly practice of reading Tolkien's "The Hobbit" and "Lord of the Rings" each year in autumn since 1969 when he was first introduced to Tolkien's work.

Sunday, March 10thPeace to All Passersby

Rev. Tony Lorenzen

Rev. Tony reflects on what's needed to transform high conflict and the church's role in restoring community.

Sunday, March 17thThe Current State of Gun Violence Locally and Nationwide

Jeremy Stein

Jeremy Stein (former Executive Director of CT Against Gun Violence) will speak to us about current efforts to address gun violence in Connecticut and the nation.

Sunday, March 24th

To Be Determined

Sunday, March 31stEaster Sunday, 42 A.D.

Rev. Randy Becker

Picture yourself on Easter Sunday in 42 AD. You are somewhere in what we now call Palestine and Israel. Who would you be with? What would be happening? What would you have been eating? What would you have been celebrating?

The Rev. Dr. Randolph W.B. ("Randy") Becker is an ordained Unitarian Universalist Minister, now retired. In his ministry he has served in religious education and parish positions to several congregations and an extended time leading the Long Island Area Council of Unitarian Universalist Societies. In 2022, in his retirement, he joined this congregation as a member.

From Our Director of Religious Education For Children and Youth



Upcoming In Children and Youth Religious Education (RE)

Nursery care for children ages 0-3 is available during services on Sunday mornings, or caregivers are of course welcome to keep their children with them during the service. Children over the age of three are invited to attend the first part of the service with the adults. After the story portion of the service, these children have the option to go to children's programming. Youth groups for pre-teens and teens in junior and senior high school take place on designated Sunday evenings.

- **Friday, March 1:** Group for Caregivers of LGBTQI+ Young People
- **Sunday, March 3:** Regular Sunday morning programs; Junior High Youth Group meets Sunday evening
- **Sunday, March 10:** Regular Sunday morning programs (see additional invitation regarding Girl Scout Sunday); Senior High Youth Group meets Sunday evening
- **Sunday, March 17:** Regular Sunday morning programs
- **Sunday, March 24:** Regular Sunday morning programs; Senior High Youth Group meets Sunday evening
- **Sunday, March 31:** Easter Sunday - kids and teens stay in the service; a non-traditional Easter egg hunt will follow the service

For Caregivers of Young Kids

Are you parenting an infant, toddler, or child of preschool or early elementary school age? Our Director of Religious Education for Children and Youth, Rev. Sierra-Marie Gerfao, is forming a Conscious Parenting Group for caregivers of young children. If you are interested, please email her at dre@uudanbury.org.

Girl Scout Sunday

Girl Scout Sunday is March 10th. Have a Girl Scout who would be interested in helping out in the service on Sunday? Please contact Sierra-Marie at dre@uudanbury.org.

Volunteering This Summer or Next Year With Our Children and Youth Ministries

We may be offering a summer program, either weekly or (if there is not enough interest among families for a weekly program) a one to two week summer camp. As always, we also will be offering a full slate of programs during the 2024-2025 school year. We will need volunteers if any of this is going to happen.

I want to re-share with you something that I wrote in the Comment back in 2022. I was writing about the idea that "the method is the message." Here is what I wrote:

I want you to know that it makes a difference if you volunteer. It communicates to the kids – among many other helpful things – that we are a community on whom they can rely as they explore what they believe, develop a relationship with this congregation and Unitarian Universalism, and try living out their values in a complicated world. It also communicates to parents and guardians that this is a community on whom they can rely, that they are not alone in learning alongside of and guiding future generations. The method is the message.

While working in this congregation over the last couple years, I have often heard adult congregants say that they wouldn't be a good fit to volunteer with children. "I wouldn't even know what to say to kids these days!" "They don't want me. I'm too old and can't relate to kids like young people can." And so on. This method has a message, and I am not sure it is the message you want to communicate to children and their families. I imagine you don't want to communicate with your distance from the next generations that they are so different from you that common ground can't be found; that there are no resources from the past that can help them; and that they and their parents and guardians are on their own in this uncertain era. . .

[Soon] I may ask you if you would be willing to volunteer. This question is an invitation to move through discomfort to help build an intergenerational community where the generations can learn from one another. I hope that is a method and a message in which you will consider investing.

This is as worthwhile an invitation as it was a couple of years ago. If you are thinking you might be interested in volunteering either this summer or in the next school year – in a small or in a large way – I invite you to contact me at dre@uudanbury.org so we can find the right opportunity for your skills, hopes, and energy.

Warmly,
Sierra-Marie

From The Nominating Team

by Jackie Alexander

Wanted: A Few Dedicated People

Do you care deeply about UUCD? Do you want to see it thrive? Now is the time to consider stepping up and joining the Board of Trustees. Most folks find it to be a rewarding experience.

This year the offices of President, Vice President (or two Co-Presidents) and Treasurer are coming open as well as one Trustee position. Elections will be held at the Annual Meeting in June. Officers need to have been members for two years. More information about these leadership positions can be found in the Member Portal of uudanbury.org under Board of Trustees Documents. If you are interested please contact one of the Nominating Team: Jackie Alexander, Dan Brodax, or Annie Senol.

From The Board of Trustees

by Jeff Asher, Trustee



“Where is the front door?”

That was the question I was asked by a perplexed lady walking in the north parking lot. She was visiting the UUCD for the first time before our February 4th Sunday Service. As a relative newcomer myself, I have had moments of confusion also. This confusion cannot only be blamed on my senior status.

For example, the Foyer in the Fellowship Hall has evolved over the years to hold many things appearing cluttered and confusing.

As a result of comments from newcomers and members, your Board is now taking a hard look at what befalls those who enter the UUCD.

They have set up the “Entry Task Force” which is chaired by Keith Henderson. Members include Randy Becker, Nancy Cullen, Suze Shaner, and me. This is a short-term task force to convene until roughly mid-April.

Our “hands-on” work has begun. You are reading this article after task force members have already started to give the “Lobby” or “Foyer” space a facelift.

As part of the protocol for any task force formed by your Board, we have a “Charter” we would like to share:

Entry Task Force Charter

Purpose: To reimagine the entry into our space (Note 1) in a way that makes it both more appealing and more functional.

Objectives:

1. Create a useful and welcoming experience for both visitors and members
2. Be selective in what we include, but consider the pathway from entering our property into our meeting spaces
3. Create an informative & educational experience for visitors
 - Emphasize our Family Ministry work especially with youth.
4. Create a space that is both aesthetic (decluttered and appealing) and functional

(Note 1: Entry includes the parking lot with signage to provide clarity about what building and door to enter, as well as beautifying the foyer [or lobby] in the Fellowship Hall.)

Please help us with your comments and feedback. Together, we can make the UUCD more welcoming!

Beginning Our Journey Beyond Land Acknowledgement

By Nancy Hershatter, Todd Zagorec, and Darlene Anderson-Alexander



Last month, we were honored to welcome the Clan Mother and Tribal Head Leader of the Golden Hill Paugussett Tribe, Shoran Waupatukuay Piper, to our pulpit. It was a wonderful way for us to begin to build a relationship with the people whose ancestors first lived on the land now known as Clapboard Ridge Road. The Clan Mother gave all of us an opportunity to learn so much about Paugussett history, culture and tribal/family life. Her presentation radiated the joy and pride that can only come from being rooted and connected to one's present and past, and passionately committed to preserving that connection for generations to come. We were inspired and uplifted by her stories of resilience and survival. We were grateful for Ms. Piper's time, thoughtful responses to our questions and willingness to dialogue with us and imagine aloud where this tentative beginning can lead us. The Clan Mother offered the following resources for us to learn more about and support her people. Please consider liking and following the Golden Hill Paugussett Tribe on social media and/or sharing these links below with your friends:

[SHORAN PIPER CREATION STORY](#)

[Native American History is Connecticut History](#)

Facebook

[The Golden Hill Paugussett Indian Reservation](#)

Instagram

[waupatuquayscollections1916](#)

[paugussett](#)

We are looking forward to what will unfold as we move beyond our land acknowledgement statement in the coming months and hope that you will join us.

Upcoming Events

New Group for Caregivers of LGBTQIA+ Young People

Parents of LGBTQIA+ young people, please join us in gathering on the **first Friday of every month from 7:30-9PM** for mutual support and celebration of our kids. Our February meeting will take place on February 2nd. Please RSVP to dre@uudanbury.org.

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



March 9th: **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. We will supply water and popcorn. Feel free to bring your takeout dinner. Donations to UUCD accepted.



The Death Café will meet on March 10th and 24th. Please contact **Joni Lowe** or **Marcia Brooker** with any questions



Lisa Gutkin and Sue Horowitz *Double Bill!*

Sunday, March 3, 4pm

Lisa Gutkin is a Grammy award-winning fiddler, composer, singer, and songwriter. As a soloist, she seamlessly swings from Klezmer to the blues, or between traditional Irish and Appalachian sounds, and is best known as a member of the acclaimed *Klezmatiks*. Whether playing the violin, tenor guitar, or singing, her songs are universally resonant.

Sue Horowitz is an award-winning Folk/Americana and Spiritual music artist. She writes and sings about everyday struggles and joys while playing the guitar. Her stories in song are poignant, timeless, and sung with warmth and confidence. Sue blends Americana and Folk, while also drawing influences from Jewish music, blues, and classic rock, making each song unique.



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

tickets at Eventbrite:

In-person and live-streaming
<http://tinyurl.com/mwra5hae>





March 13, 6:00 pm

The **Men's Group** will once again host our **Community Dinner**, repeating their much praised pizza night. We will gather at 6pm for some short gathering words, enjoy dinner together, and then have our educational program on Christian Protestantism and especially the Black Baptist tradition (see more in the article on Neighborhood Bridges).

Will You Step Up?

We have community dinners scheduled for April 10 and May 8, but we have yet to identify who will be host for these months. If you are part of a group that enjoys the use and sponsorship of our congregation's home, and you have not already been a hosting group, this is a call to your group to say "yes" to one of these months. The responsibilities are very simple and you will have support in making it happen. If you or your group is ready, contact **Randy Becker**, Community Dinner coordinator, to find out more details.

Neighborhood Bridges

Our monthly programs of becoming more familiar with other spiritual and religious traditions focuses for March on Christian Protestantism and specifically the historic Black Baptist tradition. A brief educational program will be presented at 6:45pm on Wednesday, March 13 (following the community dinner) by Randy Becker.

All (and we mean all, including all ages!) are invited for our field trip to experience worship with the New Hope Baptist Church of Danbury (10 Dr. Aaron Samuels Blvd. Danbury, CT 06810) for their 10:30am service on Sunday, April 24. Their Church is less than 2 miles and 6 minutes from our home on Clapboard Ridge Road.

In joining New Hope for worship, I would remind us that the Black Church tradition honors their coming together in worship by dressing well for the such times. "Sunday Best" says it all.

More details of our trip to be with them will appear in coming weeks.

Some background information that may be useful:

<https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2021/03/the-history-and-importance-of-the-black-church/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_church

<https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2021/02/16/a-brief-overview-of-black-religious-history-in-the-u-s/>

and the New Hope website:

<https://newhopedanbury.org>

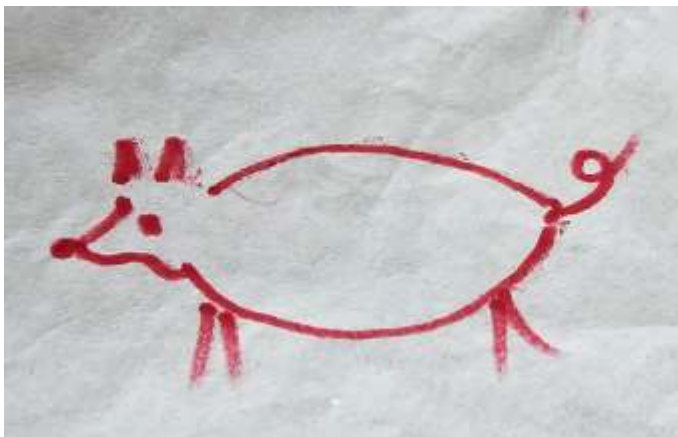
[A basic history on the Protestant Reformation](#)

[A lecture on the History of the Black Church](#)

At the February 14th UUCD Community Dinner, we celebrated Valentine’s Day as a community expression of appreciation rather than as romantic coupling. Attendees were invited to write down (on a large tablecloth) something(s) appreciated in the others around the tables, and then we were all invited to read and receive such appreciations as would help us feel loved.

Here is what was shared: Thoughtfulness, empathy, helpfulness, willingness, fearlessness to take on what needs to be done, compassion, love, online wonder, great sense of humor, creative, love, care, togetherness, creativity, wonderful food, resourcefulness, spirit of inclusion, inclusiveness, welcomeness, helpful people, fun, history keeper, happy to pitch in, best intentions, art, beauty, togetherness, kindness. (plus 2 wonderful drawings!)

As you read the list, take any appreciations that will give you joy and make you feel loved as gifts from our community.



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 March and April.

Valerie Cochrane 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 the *Social Action Council*

New Social Justice group to meet on Monday nights

Want to be active in social justice issues but have limited time? A new Social Justice Group will meet every other Monday night on Zoom, starting March 4th. We will work on issues related to Equity in Connecticut - things like access to healthcare, housing and education; immigrant rights; voting rights; and climate justice. Our goal will be to use what privilege we have - and our collective voice - to help meet the needs of those with less privilege and power.

We'll meet on Zoom on Monday nights at 7 on the first, third and fifth Mondays of the month. This will be a UU Danbury group but at times we'll coordinate our efforts with other UU congregations in Connecticut. Our main focus will be on *local* and *state* actions, rather than national ones. My plan is to start with small tasks and grow as we are able.

Come join us for our first meeting on **March 4th at 7 pm**. Every 2 weeks we'll gather with whoever else from UUCD shows up, and we'll make plans for everything from phone calls and letter-writing to attending Danbury meetings and rallies. Contact Sherry at officemanager@uudanbury.org for the Zoom link.

Soup Kitchen Corner

by Judy Lacker

On Saturday, March 2nd, some members of Soup Kitchen Team 1 (Team Leader **Rose Schlemmer, John Miglietta, Gary Winn, Jane Leff, Randy Becker and Brian Teagarden**) 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. 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.

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

This writer, while reviewing church archives, came across an old order of service. It is from First Universalist-Unitarian Church of Danbury (now Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury) and dated Sunday, March 14, 1965. Few orders of service have been preserved over the years and why this one from almost sixty years ago was saved is not obvious. It appears to be from an ordinary late winter Sunday morning with no particularly memorable activities associated with it.

First Universalist-Unitarian Church was located at 347 Main Street though its days in that venerable building were numbered. The years 1964-65 were largely "in-between" years for the congregation as far as ministerial leadership was concerned. Rev. Byron Kelham was called to Danbury in 1962 but moved on to a church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, after only two years. Rev. William Horton came as interim minister in 1964-1965. In September 1965 Rev. Horton was succeeded by settled minister Rev. Ralph Bailey, who stayed in Danbury for what became a transitional five years.

Let's take a look at this old order of service and see what might be similar or different to what is familiar today on Sunday mornings at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury (UUCD). The service leader that long-ago March 14 was Rev. Horton. Jack Rowland was organist. Flowers were given in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Charles H. Pierce. Harriette and Charles Velie were ushers and coffee hour hosts were Gretchen and Fred Carpenter.

The service began at 11 am with a Prelude, music not specified. Opening Sentences were followed by a Hymn, *Heav'n and Earth, and Sea and Air*, no. 34 in the hymnal and service book used at that time in the Danbury church. This resource, *Hymns of the Spirit*, first published in 1937, was a joint effort by the then two denominations, and used for decades in both Universalist and Unitarian churches. It is sometimes called 'the old red hymnal' and copies can be found even today in some UU congregations.

A Responsive Reading, no. 54 on page 107, and titled 'Fellowship' followed. A Choral Introit was next. Then the Affirmation, as printed in the order of service, was recited:

'We unite in the efforts of faith:

'Faith in truth, in the growth of knowledge and of understanding;

'Faith in love, in the labors and rewards of friendly living;

'Faith in people, in the power of man to build the kingdom of God on earth;

'Faith in life, the life of all things that is the life of God, whose service is perfect freedom, whose presence is fullness of joy.'

A Reading, unspecified, preceded the Offertory and Announcements. Hymn no. 76 was next, *It Sounds Along the Ages*.

Rev. Horton's sermon was titled "Climb A Tree and Holler." The title is intriguing; unfortunately we do not have the text.

A final Hymn, *O Life that Maketh all Things New*, no. 416, brought the service to its Closing Words and Postlude.

The congregation was asked to stand for the three hymns and closing words. Interestingly, the second and third hymns in the service above are included in the UUA's present-day gray hymnal, *Singing the Living Tradition*, published in 1993.

Printed on the page opposite the order of service were "Notes of the Week," a listing of church-related activities planned for March 14 to 21. On Sunday evening the Danbury Film Society [meeting at the church] was presenting "Antigone." The Religious Education Committee would meet Monday evening. Two activities were scheduled for Tuesday. At 7 pm there was Men's Bowling at Bowlarama. At 8 pm there was an Easter program rehearsal. The Wednesday evening Forum [this group met to consider philosophical ideas] discussion would be Sartre's play, "Dirty Hands." On Thursday evening Women's Bowling was scheduled at Holiday Bowl. Friday was open. On Saturday the LRY [Liberal Religious Youth] group was sponsoring a Cake Sale at North Street Shopping Center in Danbury to raise funds for their newly "adopted" Vietnamese child. Donations and purchases were solicited. And, on Sunday morning, March 21, the guest speaker at the service would be Rev. Alan Deale.

Some additional insights can be offered here. In 1965 the Danbury Universalist-Unitarian Church had 120 members, forty children enrolled in the church school, and an operating budget of \$14,000. "Unitarian" had been added to the church name five or so years earlier in anticipation of the 1961 consolidation of the two denominations. Note the order of the two denominational names and the hyphen. As detailed in previous "Notes..." articles the Ridgefield Unitarian Fellowship was organized in 1964 and merged with the Danbury U-Us in 1966 under the new name Unitarian Universalist Society of Northern Fairfield County (UUSNFC). Moving from Main Street in the latter part of 1966, the UUSNFC met in rented quarters through 1969. In 1970 the group moved to West Redding.

Rev. William G. Horton graduated from Columbia College (1950) and Meadville Theological School (1954). Before coming to Danbury as interim minister he was settled in New Jersey and Alberta, Canada. After his brief stay in Danbury Rev. Horton pastored a church in Springfield, Massachusetts. Later he moved to Alfred, New York, and worked as an administrator for the State University there.

The Danbury U-U church was home to the Danbury Film Society which screened movies on a monthly basis. Bowlarama and Holiday Bowl were popular local bowling alleys of that era. Liberal Religious Youth or LRY was the denominational high school youth group, formed in 1953 by merger of American Unitarian Youth and the Universalist Youth Fellowship (a successor organization to the Young People's Christian Union or YPCU). In 1965-66 the continental president of LRY was William Sinkford, much later to become president of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). Barbara Ratchford was for several years adult advisor to the local LRY group. Rev. Alan Deale, scheduled guest speaker for March 21, was at the time minister of Church of the Christian Union (Unitarian) in Rockford, Illinois.

It should be noted, too, that in 1965 Rev. Dr. Raymond Hopkins, a Danbury native who grew up in the Universalist church and who in his youth was active in YPCU, was executive vice president of the Unitarian Universalist Association, the first person to hold this office. Also, Robert Jeffries, president of Data-Control Systems, Inc., a local electronics instrumentation firm, who joined the Danbury church in 1958, was elected at the 1965 denominational General Assembly to a four year term as a trustee of the UUA.

At the bottom of the order of service were printed these words: "We welcome all guests and visitors to our Church and ask that you sign our Guest Book which our hostess will present. Please come back soon -- and often."

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.

