



# Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury

Monthly **COMMENT** Newsletter

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

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OCTOBER 2024



## FROM OUR MINISTER

### “You Don’t Have to Say Anything”

Dear Beloveds,

One of the requirements for becoming an ordained and fellowshipped Unitarian Universalist minister is the completion of at least one unit of Clinical Pastoral Education or CPE. CPE involves learning about both the theory and practice of talking with others in a helping profession. Topics include psychology, social work, and interviewing. It’s much like the training a therapist goes through only it’s much more condensed and there is no licensing. People in CPE learn about talking with others and listening to others so you can use these skills in a pastoral context. This might be as a pastor in a congregation, but also as a chaplain in a hospital, a school, or a prison, or even in the military.

I did my first unit of CPE at a hospital in western Massachusetts. My CPE supervisor - the teacher and facilitator was, like all CPE supervisors, a trained pastoral counselor, and like some (but not all) a licensed therapist. He was also an ordained Lutheran minister and a retired Army chaplain (Colonel). CPE is often jokingly referred to as pastoral “boot camp” by those who have survived it. My CPE had the extra boot camp feel of actually being run by an army officer.

Early in our semester, I was the first student in my group to present a verbatim - to take the supervisor and my classmates through a pastoral conversation I had in the previous week. This involved writing up the conversation as accurately as possible, reading through it, and having the class and supervisor question you about it, critique it, and point out where you might have gone wrong - and what was done well.

I was terrified as I prepared my presentation. We were just starting out and I’d only had one conversation with a patient and I thought it was horrible. I was anxious, the patient was anxious, too and in the Intensive Care Unit, near death with cancer and many complications. A woman in her late eighties, she talked non-stop. She spoke slowly, but I never felt like there was a good place to respond to her. The longer she spoke - about being afraid to die, worrying if she was going to go to hell, full of regret that she hadn’t reached out to an estranged daughter, angry at the hospital staff for infantilizing her, complaining that everyone was trying to force her to eat, crying over a lost love and love affair that she never confessed to her husband before he died some years ago, wondering if she should quit chemo and try the diet her son-in-law was pushing on her, wanting to redo her will to leave her estranged daughter out of it. She went on and on. She seemed to relax the more she talked and I got more and more anxious. I had no idea what to say. I was overwhelmed; I worried that this ministry thing might be a huge, HUGE mistake. I fumbled my way through the encounter. When it was over I asked her if she wanted to pray and she said rather dismissively, “No I’m an atheist!” Then why was she worried about hell?

(continued)

When I wrote up the conversation and all the hemming and hawing I did, I got anxious all over again and doubted myself all over again. When I presented the conversation to the group, the Colonel's eyes bore into me and seemed to scowl - or maybe I imagined it. I got anxious all over again and felt close to tears. The Colonel barked at me, "Do you think you made a fatal mistake in this conversation?"

"Yes," I replied. A silence followed.

Finally the Colonel asked, "What was the mistake?"

I half-spoke and half-choked on my reply an anxious tear running down my cheek, "I felt like I never knew what to say." I sounded weak and whiny. I was sure I was going to be dishonorably discharged from CPE and the ordination process.

Then the Colonel said something that surprised me and at the same time steadied me and to this day might be the biggest lesson I've ever learned about ministry. He said - well, he barked - "What makes you think you had to say anything at all?"

"I, I, I don't know." I whispered.

"Could it be," he continued, "That perhaps all you needed to do was listen?"

All I could do was nod.

Sometimes, we just need to listen. Sometimes people just need to be heard (and seen). Sometimes just being there with someone is enough. Sometimes listening and being there for others is only part of what's needed, but listening - deep, authentic, active, compassionate listening is much more powerful than we realize.

Rachel Naomi Remen says in her book *Kitchen Table Wisdom*,

"We connect through listening. When we interrupt what someone is saying to let them know that we understand, we move the focus of attention to ourselves. When we listen, they know we care. Many people with cancer talk about the relief of having someone just listen. I have even learned to respond to someone crying by just listening. In the old days I used to reach for the tissues, until I realized that passing a person a tissue may be just another way to shut them down, to take them out of their experience of sadness and grief. Now I just listen. When they have cried all they need to cry, they find me there with them.... A loving silence often has far more power to heal and to connect than the most well intentioned words."

This month our theme is deep listening. May you find the loving silence you need and may you be able to offer that same loving silence, and deep listening to others.

Shine on,  
Rev. Tony

**SPIRITUAL CHALLENGE - Practice Listening**

Our theme this month is Deep Listening and my spiritual challenge to you is to practice your listening to others so that they feel seen and understood. Listening is a skill like any other. It can be learned, developed, practiced, and honed. It can also be lost. Like many skills, if you don't use it you lose it. This month, practice your listening skills. At the end of the month see if you notice anything. Do you feel more settled and grounded? Do your conversations last longer? Do interactions with others seem more meaningful? Do you feel better able to remain in the present moment?

According to the Center for Creative Leadership, "You may need to brush up on your active listening techniques if any of the following questions describe you. Do you sometimes:

- Have a hard time concentrating on what's being said, especially when the person speaking is complaining, rambling, or gossiping?
- Find yourself planning what to say next, rather than thinking about what the speaker is saying?
- Dislike it when someone disagrees or questions your ideas or actions?
- Zone out when the speaker has a negative attitude?
- Give advice too soon and suggest solutions to problems before the other person has fully explained their perspective?
- Tell people not to feel the way they do?
- Talk significantly more than the other person talks?

If you struggle with some or all of these, there are some things you can practice to improve your listening. It's generally accepted that active listening requires skills such as paying attention and being as fully present as possible, withholding judgment, and positive body language (eye contact, leaning in, nodding, and smiling). Also important are the ability to notice non-verbal cues and communication. It helps to ask open-ended questions to encourage further reflection and to reflect back what's been said. Perhaps most important is the ability to listen to hear and understand rather than listen to formulate a response. When listening, remain empathetic and withhold judgement and advice. As Parker Palmer says, "No teaching, no fixing, no setting each other straight." It's not our job to solve someone else's problem, but it is our job to be there for them, listen to them deeply, and love and accept them.

The books listed with this month's resources are all great reads picking up tips on listening well, deeply, and empathetically. Good luck!

As always, if you take on the challenge, I'd love to hear about your experience with it.



October's theme is Deep Listening and all services will related to that idea in some way. Some services may differ slightly from these descriptions as some details of the main presentation aren't finalized until a day or two before each service.

**Sunday, October 6<sup>th</sup>**      Listening to Love: When Pigs Fly      Revs. Tony Lorenzen and Sierra-Marie Gerfao  
 People of all ages, please join Jerry Phelps and Revs. Tony and Sierra-Marie for a multigenerational music and ritual-centered celebration of the various ways love makes the seemingly impossible possible. Afterward, anyone who would like to do so is invited to sit down for a discussion about the service's theme with Rev. Tony.



Our Share-the-Plate will go to Laundry Love of Greater Danbury. Dale Brown, a volunteer with Laundry Love of Greater Danbury, will speak briefly about this local non- profit. Sponsored by ten area churches and synagogues, Laundry Love's ministry is to provide clean clothes and bedding for the homeless and families living on the edge. Made up completely of volunteers it is one of two chapters located in CT.

**Sunday, October 13<sup>th</sup>**      How is Your Heart?      Rev. Sierra-Marie Gerfao  
 In this service we will take time to listen to our hearts and care for one another in community.

**Sunday, October 20<sup>th</sup>**      Welcoming, Open, Affirming, and Inclusive      Rev. Tony Lorenzen  
 Rev. Tony reflects on our journey as a Welcoming Congregation, where it's leading us know, who we're called to listen to today, and what we're being called to do based on what we hear."

**Sunday, October 27<sup>th</sup>**      Two-Eyed Seeing      Darlene Kascak  
 Darlene Kascak of the Institute for American Indian Studies and a member of the Schaghticoke Tribal Nation and Schaghticoke Women's Traditional Council concept emphasizes understanding and learning from multiple cultural perspectives. She reflects on the idea that by combining different ways of looking at the world, we can enhance our collective knowledge and work towards a better future for all.

## From Our Director of Religious Education For Children and Youth, Rev. Sierra-Marie Gerfao



### Upcoming in Family Ministries

The nursery is open for children ages 0-5 every Sunday during service. We also offer regular programming open to children in preschool through high school.

- **Saturday, October 5th-Sunday, October 6th** Senior High Youth Group Retreat
- **Sunday, October 6th** NO Programs - Multigenerational Service
- **Sunday, October 13th**
  - Regular Sunday morning programs for preschool-7th grade
  - Group for caregivers of LGBTQIA+ young people after service
  - Movie Night for the Senior High Youth Group Group (time TBD)
- **Sunday, October 20th** Regular Sunday morning programs
- **Sunday, October 27th**
  - Regular Sunday morning programs
  - Trunk or Treat after service

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

### Are You a Parent or Caregiver of an LGBTQIA+ Young Person?

On the **second Sunday of every month, starting October 13, 11:30AM-12:30PM**, 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).

### Save the Date: Sunday October 27th!



Details to come soon! Our annual **Trunk or Treat** is a real treat for all ages! What makes our Trunk or Treat different is that we want *everybody* to have the joy of trick-or-treating in a costume (or not – this is optional), adults included! We decorate our car trunks, dress up, and take turns giving and receiving regardless of age. Please save the date for a **Trunk or Treat at 11:30 a.m. on Sunday, October 27<sup>th</sup>**. As always, we ask that you 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>.

**One or Two Special Volunteers Needed**

- Do you believe strongly in the importance of creating communities in which all kids can belong?
- Do you enjoy being around inquisitive people who work hard to make sense of their experiences in the world and who think a lot about their own values and the values of other people?
- Do you like to ask a lot of questions and consider a variety of perspectives as you form your own ideas?
- Do you like to play, be silly, and have adventures with others?
- Do you have a good sense of humor?
- Are you calm, flexible, and able to capture learning opportunities in all kinds of situations?

If so, you might be exactly the right fit for a volunteer position as a Middle School Youth Group Advisor. After a training session, it is a once-per-month commitment on a mutually agreeable time and day from October through May. Please contact Sierra-Marie at [dre@uudanbury.org](mailto:dre@uudanbury.org) to consider together whether this is the right fit for you.

**How to Reach Rev. Sierra-Marie**

The Rev. Sierra-Marie Gerfao organizes our children, youth, and family ministries. She is available for office hours almost every Sunday after the coffee hour and absolutely *loves it* when you drop by! Come see her anytime after the coffee hour. No need for a big reason! Or make an appointment for a Sunday afternoon conversation.

Other ways to reach Rev. Sierra-Marie:

- **Email:** Rev. Sierra-Marie is happy to have even long or complicated conversations by email. Reach out to her by email anytime! [dre@uudanbury.org](mailto:dre@uudanbury.org)
- **Phone:** You can leave Rev. Sierra-Marie a message in her voicemail at church, 203-798-1994. If you are involved in programs, you also have her cellphone number. Phone calls or texts are welcome, but as she works part-time, this does not necessarily mean she will be able to respond right away.
- **Social Media:** Rev. Sierra-Marie does not send “friend” or “follow” requests to congregants on social media, but will accept *your* friend or follow requests on the platforms she engages. However, she does not use social media for work. Please don't message her on social media about congregational matters.

**Our Caring Circle is Available**

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

**Joan Stapleton** is the contact person for October.

**Bob Bollinger** is the assistant.

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

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



## From the Board of Trustees

by Jeff Asher

### “From My Attic to the UUCD Bylaws”



I have been in the same home in Pawling for the last 38 years. I expect that some of our UUCD Bylaws go back 200 years. What do they have in common? Just like articles in my attic accumulating for these last 38 years, our UUCD Bylaws have text that was adopted in 1973!

But while I may throw away one old, wall phone, I never can work up the strength to get rid of all the other stuff that should similarly be thrown out.

When you look closely as I have done, our UUCD Bylaws have the same problem. From time-to-time, we only change what is required and do not take the time to review adjacent text.

So, as a naïve UUCD Board member, I volunteered to come up with a Bylaw language change when I realized that there was no provision for our Minister to attend our Board meetings as an ex-officio or non-voting member. Long ago, this provision was included as standard in UU Bylaws.

Once I proposed adding this innocuous provision to the Board, I noticed other language needed serious attention. The situation snowballed!

I prefer spreadsheets and really dislike being a wordsmith for changing dry Bylaws that have gone by their expiration date many years ago.

Which brings us to the place your Board is right now where we are currently developing and prioritizing our Annual Goals. Should the congregation invest considerable time and effort in making many, many changes—some truly significant and others relatively minor?

Stay tuned whether we will shortly begin a thorough cleaning of our UUCD “attic.” Or not.

Don't worry, any changes made will need to be approved by members at our Annual Meeting in June 2025. And **you** will have the happy task of reviewing all of them.

# Upcoming Events



## Cee Songbird

### And Friends

Cee Songbird and friends are a group of experienced musicians with a mission: to present real R&B and blues as it should be...with integrity, knowledge, and soul. All the members of the band have played in a variety of different bands and other genres. Cee herself brings the lyricism of Blues to life in a captivating manner.

The music you will hear is the culmination of life experiences and the realization that there is something missing from the live music scene that people want to hear. This focus reflects our dedication to stay true to the roots of real R&B/blues and to play that music with honesty and soul.

When Cee was with us in 2023, she had us on our feet, dancing, clapping, swaying to her music. That's why we asked her back again - a time for all to be connected, moved, and musically fed.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2024 – 4PM



[www.musicattheridge.org](http://www.musicattheridge.org)

24 Clapboard Ridge Road

Danbury, CT

\$25 in person/\$20 streaming  
tickets at door (as available)  
at same price as online



In-person and live-streaming  
tickets at Eventbrite.com

**Music at the Ridge is looking for volunteers once or twice per season to bake refreshments to sell at intermission.** If you don't consider yourself a baker, it is perfectly okay to pick up a box of cookies and/or a bag of clementines at your favorite grocery store. Please speak or email **Nancy Hershatter**.





**Saturday, October 12<sup>th</sup> - 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.

### Examining Personal Stress in a Chaotic World

The 45-minute Sunday program will allow interested adults to share their concerns and feelings about stressful events they may be experiencing. We all have lots of stress, personal, family, political and so on. After the period spent sharing, we will discuss several time-tested solutions to help dissipate the sometimes-uncontrollable stressful emotions that can have such a powerful negative effect on people. These techniques can also help to bring greater clarity to a persons thinking. This meeting is scheduled for Sunday, October 20<sup>th</sup> at 11:15 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall, lower level. **Joe Gillotti** will be the facilitator. Childcare will be provided, but please RSVP to Joe for that by October 13<sup>th</sup>.



UU Danbury is returning a Live, In-Person Auction this year! Lots of goodies, lots of FUN - we are looking for this major fundraiser to be HUGE success! Be thinking of what YOU can do to help... Donate a dinner, a gift card, a service? Help at the In-Person event on **November 2?** Contact **Barb Meyers** or **Lisa Horton** to volunteer or for more information.

### Notice from the UUCD Committee in Solidarity with Palestinians.

Visit the Palestine Museum US with UU members on Sunday, October 27<sup>th</sup> at 1 p.m. It’s a first-class art museum filled with art donated by Palestinians from around the U.S. It’s located at 1764 Litchfield Turnpike, Woodbridge. Those interested can carpool to the program. Admission is \$8. Other UU congregations will be invited. For more see: [palestinemuseum.us](http://palestinemuseum.us).

# Ministry/Team News

From the *Social Action Council*

## Soup Kitchen Corner

by Judy Lacker

On Saturday, October 5, some members of Soup Kitchen Team A (Team leader **Lynn Taborsak, Bob Taborsak, Diane Purvis, Nancy Brown, Linda and Steve Schneider, Jyo Buyyala, and Lisa Deldin**) will be returning to the Dorothy Day Soup Kitchen on Spring Street to help serve take-out meals and sandwiches that were cooked or prepared in volunteers' homes or through donations. Unfortunately, we are not yet able to serve the guests a meal inside Dorothy Day Hospitality House.

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. If joining a team is not for you, you may consider being an alternate. It would require you to be available to substitute for a team member who would contact you a few days in advance of the particular first Saturday of the month. You can sign up on the poster on the bulletin board in the lobby and indicate "Alternate".

From the *Team Green*



### **Come Use our New, Improved Composter!**

Team Green is pleased to announce that we have a *new* composting system and a new manager for the composting amenity at UUCD.

**Yvonne Ruddy-Stein** has generously agreed to be the manager and contact person with all your food/plant recycling issues and concerns.

#### **What can we compost?**

Nothing has changed - vegetable waste & trimmings, but no large stems or flowers.

#### **How is the new composter different?**

The new composter is a *dual* chamber device that will make our process much simpler, and you can find it near the Cottage House garden and chimney area. It has two sliding panels:

- one with a plus (+) symbol, which will be the place to drop in organic materials
- one with a clock symbol, which indicates that organic matter is “stewing” in this chamber. No fresh material should be put into this one as this is where the compost will be finished.

If you have the energy to crank the handle to mix the materials, please do so but be careful to keep your body clear of the handle in case it spins around due to the weight of the materials.

#### **Can I get a demo?**

For each person who brings material to UUCD, we would love to do a show-and-tell with you on a convenient Sunday. Just ask Yvonne or a member of Team Green\*. For all others who may consider bringing material, please respond to Yvonne with your questions, as she is an experienced food composter.

\*Team Green: Donna Lawrence, Cheryl Edelen, Gary Mummert, & Barbara Myers

Note: The old composting drum will remain next to the Fellowship Hall until the compost is finished, so please do not use it.

## Notes on Two Hundred Years (and More)

by Douglas H. Parkhurst

Continued from September 2024...

In mid-November 1957 a fire, likely electrical in origin, damaged First Universalist's church building at 347 Main Street. The quick and efficient response of the Danbury Fire Department, then headquartered a few blocks away on Ives Street, prevented fire from spreading beyond the area of the sanctuary on the first floor. For insurance purposes the cost to repair the damage, including carpentry work, electrical repairs, new fixtures, repainting, and labor was approximately \$2,100 (in excess of \$20,000 today). Ironically, church trustees had recently discussed the possibility of upgrading wiring in the building. The board now took immediate action, voting to rewire the entire building as necessary, with installation of new lighting and outlets in areas where the same were lacking or needed. A space included in this plan was a room in the lower part of the tower, in the southwest corner of the building, then being used by the Sunday school.

Despite the fire damage and start of repairs, usual activities at the church hardly skipped a beat during the rest of 1957. The annual turkey supper, an ever-popular event for church members, friends, and the public, was held on Saturday evening, November 24. The next day was Thanksgiving Sunday and the theme of Rev. Gaston Carrier's sermon was the spiritual necessity of giving thanks and of giving. The "ingathering of pledges" during this service would close out First Universalist's 1957 every member canvass. That evening, a newly formed Great Books Discussion Group was scheduled to meet for the first time. Participants would complete a reading assignment before the meeting and then exchange ideas with other participants at a Great Books round-table. It was noted there was no tuition and no educational requirement to attend.

December followed with Christmastime doings and services. Sixty children attended a holiday party and the youth group went caroling and planned a skating party. The church board met on December 12 and addressed budget concerns and the continuing building improvements and repairs. Near the end of the year Rev. Carrier, wife Mary and their daughters, and with the assistance of eight parishioners, held an open house at the church parsonage at 37 Pleasant Street. About 100 visitors dropped by!

The beginning of 1958 saw growing interest in the programs and mission of First Universalist Church [note - at this time the church year and calendar year coincided]. The annual meeting was held in January and new faces appeared in First Universalist leadership. These included board chair Joseph Farris; Louise Mazur, clerk; Irene Gilbert, treasurer; Herbert Bartram; David Pascal; Nathaniel Gifford; Clesson Allen; Ines Rosser; and Herbert Becker. The nagging problem of the church budget continued. The finance committee announced receipt of fifty-seven pledges totaling \$9,045; these to fund the 1958 budget of just under \$10,000 (equal to approximately \$109,000 today), a shortfall of 10 percent. Under consideration was replacing some of First Universalist's government bond holdings with reputable mutual funds, then paying much higher returns than the bonds. Additional fundraising activities could also be considered.

Another challenge, a more positive one, was how to address increasing enrollment in the First Universalist Sunday school. The church building was large but classroom and activity space was full to overflowing on Sunday mornings. Attendance in the religious education program now exceeded seventy children and at one point enrollments were put on hold. Additional teachers were recruited. The senior high youth group, numbering seven, reported a joint meeting and "splash party" with Unitarian youth from Westport; a study and discussion of

world religions; and the sending of a representative to a Liberal Religious Youth (LRY) conference in New Hampshire. Construction of new space, either a classroom building in the lot behind the church or creation of religious education space in the mostly unfinished church basement, were possibilities.

Francis "Spike" Albert, chair of the religious education committee, had been doing double duty as director of the RE program. Early in 1958, upon joining the Danbury church, Mary Carrier assumed the role of director. Mrs. Carrier, a Massachusetts native, was a graduate of Acadia University in Wolfville, Nova Scotia, and studied at Simmons College School of Social Work in Boston. In February she joined the staff of Fairfield State Hospital in Newtown as a psychiatric social worker. Always active in the life of the church, Mary Carrier was described as "a true ministerial partner, [who] supported her husband's ministry in extraordinary ways throughout his career and their lives together." [See note below]

A formal installation service for Rev. Carrier was conducted at First Universalist Church on Sunday, March 16. Board member Wallace Parkhurst, then president of the Connecticut Universalist Convention, chaired the installation committee. Invitations were sent to Universalist ministers in Connecticut, clergy in the Danbury ministerial association, and Unitarian ministers in Westport, New Haven, and Hartford. Rev. Philip Giles, general superintendent of the Universalist Church of America, spoke on "Which Way Universalism?" Also participating in the installation ceremony were Rev. Frederick Harrison, state superintendent for Connecticut and Massachusetts and previously minister in Danbury; Rabbi Jerome Malino of the United Jewish Center, who offered the greetings of Danbury clergy; and First Universalist moderator Frank Keaney.

The Association of Universalist Women (AUW) was a national organization founded in 1869, and with state and local affiliates did work in charitable, church extension, missionary, and philanthropic areas [see note below]. The Danbury AUW held its annual meeting in early April. Louise Parkhurst [see note below] was elected president. Other officers chosen were Elsie Ahlgrim, vice president; Helen Wood secretary; and Bessie Jackson, treasurer. Women otherwise active in the group included Pauline Olmstead; Augusta Murphy; Edith Ritton; Viola Voegele; Mary Carrier; Edith Taylor; Helen Scott; Ruth Genest; Jane Bjelko; Sallie Rollins; and Catherine Wilson. Members were engaged in support activities and fundraising for residents of Southbury Training School and for the Clara Barton and Elliott P. Joslin summer camps (in Massachusetts) which served children with diabetes. The women organized the church's annual turkey supper in November; raised money with rummage sales, bake and craft sales, and enjoyed social events; and generally worked to further the goals and community outreach of First Universalist Church. In September, Danbury members sponsored a party for residents of Canaan House, a residence treatment facility at Fairfield State Hospital. Church trustee Nathaniel Gifford presented travel slides and a short lecture to the party-goers.

[Note - This writer acknowledges with thanks the thoughtfulness and generosity of Jill Carrier, daughter of Gaston and Mary Carrier, for sharing insights, photos, and memories of her parents and her family's four years in Danbury. Jill and this writer lived in the same neighborhood, attended Sunday school and Park Avenue School, and some years later were classmates at Tufts University.]

[Note - In 1963 the Association of Universalist Women consolidated with the Alliance of Unitarian Women to form the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation.]

[Note - Louise Parkhurst was this writer's mother.]

To be continued in November 2024...

*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 18<sup>th</sup>.**

