



# COMMENT

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Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury, 24 Clapboard Ridge Road, Danbury, CT 06811 \* 203-798-1994  
Rev. Suzanne Spencer, Interim Minister

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OCTOBER 2009

## For the Time Being

## Notes from your Interim Minister

In the last few months, it's been distressing to witness the amount of rumor, misinformation, and pure fabrication that's being injected into our civic discourse. Much of it is connected with the debate over health care (with false stories of "death panels," for example) but not all. This past Sunday, in her Welcome, Pamela Mitchell called our attention to an e-mail making the rounds, which protests the US Postal Service's issuance of an EID stamp. This stamp recognizes two Muslim feasts, *Eid al-Adha* (end of the Hajj, or pilgrimage to Mecca) and *Eid al-Fitr* (end of Ramadan, or "feast of the fast-breaking," this year celebrated on September 20).

The EID stamp was first issued by the USPS on September 1, 2001, after three years of planning. It was apparently the result of a long postcard-writing campaign, mainly by American Muslim women and children. The campaign is said to have started with a Cincinnati housewife, whose friend's son saw a Hanukkah stamp and asked if there was a Muslim equivalent. The stamp, keeping the same design, has been updated over the years to reflect increased postage costs. This year, on September 3, it was issued as a 44-cent stamp, an ongoing reminder of American religious pluralism.

But never mind that history. The current e-mail, after listing a series of attacks against the US by Islamist extremists, proclaims that President Obama himself has "directed the USPS to remember and honor the EID Muslim holiday season with a new commemorative 42 Cent First Class stamp." (I'm leaving out some bold face and caps here, but you get the idea.) It then urges readers "to adamantly and vocally boycott this stamp, and to "pass this along to every Patriotic American that you know."

There are many responses we might make to such an e-mail, if we disagree. We can simply delete it, or put the sender on our "spam" list, or send an annoyed message in return. We can also try to counter misinformation with facts, starting with the reminder that any "new" stamp this year is likely to be 44 cent, not 42 cent. We can go to the post office and request the EID stamps, as a neighborly gesture to Muslims.

But Pamela, I think, had the best response of all. After some deliberation, she replied with a respectful and loving message (printed on next page), reminding the sender that the overwhelming majority of Muslims are peaceful, good neighbors, and pointing out that *Eid al-Fitr* is a holy time, in which Muslims remember those less fortunate than themselves. The sender replied with an apology, thanking Pamela for educating her.

Pamela's response is a wonderful reminder of the quiet witness we can make in these troubling times. Demonizing those with whom we disagree only makes matters worse, but as was written long ago, "a soft answer turneth away wrath." If we can find a way to hold even our opponents in our hearts, then we will truly be "Standing on the Side of Love," consistent with the UUA's new campaign. We'll also be continuing in the spirit of our Universalist forebears, who first gathered in Danbury in 1822.

Love and blessings,  
Sue

(continued from page 1)

“The tragedies you mention are all heartbreaking examples of extremist actions and I feel and understand the anger and outrage connected to that. However, I have many Muslim friends and colleagues who are devout people who are as horrified by these actions as you are. The Muslim religion does not encourage this type of behavior any more than the Christian religion encourages the actions of Timothy McVeigh (Oklahoma City bomber). Ramadan, which is the holiday honored here, is a month of fasting (not even drinking water) during daylight hours so that Muslims can experience the plight of the poor who do not have enough to eat, in order to deepen their commitment to one of the major Muslim beliefs in caring for the less fortunate. You certainly have every right to object to the stamp if it disturbs you, but I feel the need to share with you that I believe it is extraordinarily sad to me that millions and millions of truly spiritual people who are devoted to the same God as Christianity worships are judged by the actions of the minority extremists. I know you to be a sweet and caring person, and appreciate you just taking the time to consider these thoughts.”

*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*

**Comment** is the newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury, 24 Clapboard Ridge Road, Danbury, CT 06811, (203) 798-1994. Articles (**250 words or less**) may be emailed to Sherry at [SherryUUCD@gmail.com](mailto:SherryUUCD@gmail.com) or dropped off at the church office.



Just a reminder that we now take a weekly Food Offering during the Children's Focus of our Sunday service for distribution by our Social Action Committee to local soup kitchens and agencies. A list of appropriate foods appears in our

Sunday Order of Service, **Dried beans and whole grain rice are especially needed.** It is easy to forget to bring your donation so when you think of it stick it in your car.

**Deadline for the November Comment -  
Friday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>.**



## President's Letter

by Jean N. Bowen, President

Swirling around 24 Clapboard Ridge is an activity level that many congregations and organizations would love to claim. Our Members and Friends are involved and committed to this community. The Board of Trustees is addressing the challenges of leading and managing the business of UUCD. There are a few structural shifts and additions that I have put in place with the Board's involvement and approval.

- The *Build-Out Committee* led by **Pamela Mitchell** is in the process of gathering information and analyzing what it will take to complete the lower level.
- *Promotion, Publicity and Web Expansion* of our events, activities and outreach will be led **Shawn Sweeney**, Project Manager, and **Jennifer Leavitt-Wipf**.
- The *Buildings and Grounds Committee* is up and running! **Jeff Shaffer**, chairperson; **Jon Dupree**; **Cynthia Clark**, Facilities Manager; and myself have identified goals for improvements to the grounds and storage areas.
- The *Aesthetics Team* has selected beautiful carpet tiles and tile to improve the acoustics and beauty of the Fellowship Hall. The completion of fundraising for this challenge is led by **Ross Fenster** and **Val Cochrane**.
- The *Finance Committee*, **Bruce Buzby**, Chair, has scheduled bi-monthly meetings to regularly review spending and cash flow.
- **Nancy Tramontana** is now the Board Liaison to *Religious Education*. She and **Mary Collins**, Director of Religious Education have recruited new members to the *DRE Relations Committee*.
- An *Executive Committee* of Officers and Rev. Sue Spencer meet bi-monthly to plan and develop agendas for meetings.
- Personnel have current job descriptions and contracts.
- *Special Events Committee* will review proposals from congregants who suggest fundraising ideas.
- Board approved policies on media contact and a process for members to suggest and implement adult programming and events.

### Upcoming Developments:

- *By-Laws Committee* is recommending improvements to our by-laws to the Board of Trustees with a Congregational Meeting to be scheduled for approval.
- *Past Presidents Advisory Group* to meet and advise on current goals and 2020 Strategic Plan update.

Music was this Congregation's number 1 priority and emphasis of importance in the 2020 Visioning Process. Artists, musicians and members who support the arts and culture in the region contribute to a vibrant and cultural environment. I would like your input and ideas on how we can integrate more fully the arts into our space and also contribute to an exchange with local arts and music groups.



### Newcomers Coffee Connection

Would you like to learn more about Unitarian Universalism and our congregation? If so, please attend an informative meeting on Sunday, October 4<sup>th</sup>, at 12:30 in the Conference Room. Refreshments will be served.

## Board of Trustees Highlights

by Valerie Cochrane

Full Board met on September 9, 2009, the **second** Wednesday of the month, our new date.

A very full agenda included reports from the Treasurer, Minister, President, and Board members.

Of particular interest was the start up of the *Next-Level Committee* and their immediate reconnection with City Hall. Their Chair is new Board member, **Pamela Mitchell**.

**Nancy Tramontana**, Board Liaison, announced that **Frank & Karen Iannella** have agreed to serve on the *DRE Relations Committee*.

Board members were charged with reviewing the proposed updates to the By-Laws which will be available for discussion on a date in November and for vote at a second November meeting. Look for the dates TBA.

As required by the UUA we compiled by consensus a confidential evaluation of our mid-term progress under Sue's interim guidance. Rev. Sue's separate evaluation was done in conjunction with the *Transition Team*. These were then submitted online. Board members who have been involved with previous searches and interims are impressed with the materials and guidance that we currently receive from UUA.

## Policies Adopted by the UUCD Board of Trustees on July 15, 2009

Please read these and keep for future reference. They will simplify your committee work.

### Policy 1:

Event and Adult Education Planning – Members and Committees of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury (UUCD) are encouraged to bring to the Congregation special events, social opportunities and adult religious education for the enjoyment and spiritual guidance of the full membership.

- Any member or friend of the UUCD will complete a proposal available from the office or downloaded from the website to include all details as required.
- The completed proposal will be given to the UUCD Office Manager who will collect detail and refer to the proper Committee Chairperson(s) to confirm.
- The responsible Standing Committee Chair will confirm receipt and dates with the Member and advise the Council or Board of Trustees.
- Board of Trustees or Council as a Committee of the whole may designate an individual to complete the proposal application on their behalf.
- Approval will be the responsibility of the Executive Committee.

### Policy 2:

It is the policy of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury that all contact with media representatives and the press will be expressly with the President of the Board of Trustees or the Minister of UUCD. If unavailable, or at the request of the President or Minister, another member or employee may be designated. The mission, policies and all activities of UUCD will be represented by the leadership of the Board of Trustees.



The summary statistics for May, June, of the 2008-09 fiscal year plus July, and August are recorded below.

	May	June	July	August
% Annual Canvass pledge return	88.3%	96.6%	16.44%	23.6%
Operating Income Year-to-date	\$204,018	\$222,174	\$31,538	\$47,174
Operating Expenses Year-to-date	\$217,544	\$239,330	\$14,837	\$33,826
Operating Income – Expense YTD	<b>\$ -13,496</b>	<b>\$ -17,156</b>	<b>\$16,701</b>	<b>\$13,348</b>
Unrestricted Funds	\$ 869	\$ -2,774	\$12,072	\$ 8,722

**Analysis for August:**

The August pledge returns (5.94%) reached the excellent cumulative level (23.6%). Over the last 7 years the average and maximum pledge returns to date were 15.35% & 22.47% respectively. Thank you for your earlier payments.

Current Operating Income YTD is above its end of August projected value by \$ 7,338 and the Operating Expense YTD is below its target by about \$2,555. Combining these unexpected values with the projected surplus of \$3,455, gives us an actual surplus of \$13,248. This is very good news for UUCD. Thank you.

The Unrestricted Funds (cushion for the variations in income and expense month to month) is falling but still looks healthy at the current level of \$8,722. It is expected to keep falling through September, October and November reaching an expected level of - \$7,000. This is why it is so important to pay our supplemental pledge before the end of November if at all possible. UUCD needs to carefully watch its cash flow.

**Supplemental Pledge:**

Our congregation members have shown their strong concern for the financial health of the UUCD with their response to the supplemental pledge drive (\$16,383). Over 50% of the congregation participated with a 9.9% average increase in their pledge. This increase individually ranged from 1.83% to over 80% and from \$22 to \$1,000. Over 65% of these pledges have already been paid. We thank you for your generosity and timeliness. We also welcome any additional contributions from members that have not had a chance to participate in this pledging event.

Bruce Buzby, Finance Committee Chair  
 Marie Dupree, Treasurer

**Events Committee Update**

by Lisa Greene

The Committee is looking forward to a full calendar of events for the upcoming year. In the near term there are three dates we'd like everyone to know about:

- October 16<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 p.m. The **World Hunger Potluck** will cap off our participation in the Empty Bowls Project.
- November 8<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 p.m. **Artist and composer Douglas Buchanan** will perform his latest work in concert in the Fellowship Hall. Tickets are \$10.00. To learn more about this wonderful artist, visit his website at [www.dbcomposer.com](http://www.dbcomposer.com).
- December 5<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Save the date for our **3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Winter Boutique**. We will once again feature our Snowflake Café, Sugarplum Re-Gifting Corner, Cookie Walk, and Jewelry Table, in addition of offerings from the Knitting Ministry and outside vendors. Watch for more information to come.

## Dr. Uwe Koepke Lives His Beliefs by Opening a New Danbury Health Care Clinic

by Michael Searing

Sometimes people form a personal ethical credo without realizing that there is a religious organization that reflects their beliefs. Such is the case with our UUCD member, Dr Uwe Koepke, a Danbury pediatrician. Your congregation's *Social Action Committee*, or "SAC," asked me to talk with Dr. Koepke and, by writing this article, blow our figurative trumpets to honor the man we know as "Uwe."

As noted on the front page of the Danbury News-Times of August 26<sup>th</sup>, Dr. Koepke is part of a visionary team that has caused a "long needed component in the Danbury region's overall health system," a federally-funded community health center. Funded by a \$1.3 million federal grant, this facility will provide needs-blind access and preventive care to children and, at the nearby practice of Dr. Koepke's wife and her sister, to adults. As a member of the SAC, I point out that the current administration's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provided the funding for this grant.

This facility is expected to open by January 2010 and should also provide benefits to the entire Danbury community. Because human beings with inadequate or no insurance coverage will be able to visit the doctor when feeling sick, the result should be a sizable reduction in emergency room visits that occur when untended ailments become emergencies.

Uwe Koepke has long believed that a just healthcare system would focus on the medical needs of patients, his and all others, instead of asking the question "what will insurance available to this person pay for?" In his August 23, 2009 sermon, on the topic "Justice," he stressed the need for Unitarian Universalists to empathize with people and, therefore, to "walk the walk," and not simply sympathize with people and stop short of action by "talking the talk."

"Justice," as presented by Uwe Koepke, is a concept so important to UU's that our seven principles mention it twice. In a personal philosophy developed over many years, he says that his view of justice must depend on science, both "method and the knowledge thereby gained," but also on readings and discussions in philosophy and on his own imagination. Having pointed out that he has not "personally been granted " the experience of revelation," he opines that justice must fit in with a more general ethical system, namely one that provides just results for all people. Therefore, divine revelation, which is by definition exclusionary, cannot bring just results for all people.

For more facts about the clinic and the positive reactions of our national and local political leaders, you can visit the Danbury News-Times website, [www.newstimes.com](http://www.newstimes.com), or contact me, and I will give you a photocopy.

I also recommend a visit to our congregational website, [www.uudanbury.org](http://www.uudanbury.org). There, you can reread and ponder Dr. Koepke's sermon. I quote here only from his poem, composed in honor of children everywhere and for every time:

### View Point

The stars are shining, all unseen  
Beyond the city's smoky screen.  
City's child sees by the light of neon sign the urban  
blight.

Waves, crash on distant shore  
Unheard by ears of child so poor  
Who hear, instead of gulls and terns,  
Sirens scream of death and burns.

Is the world the same to these  
Who in the dark and dampness wheeze  
As those who may enjoy, partake  
Of wondrous nature, pristine lake?

Judge we not the child of need  
Who could not choose where its seed  
Carelessly was quickly planted  
In a world so darkly slanted.

The *Social Action Committee* would like to put together a forum on healthcare reform sometime this year. If you are interested in assisting with the organization, please contact **Jean Hislop**, **Anne Krieg**, or attend our next Social Action Committee meeting on October 13<sup>th</sup> at 7:30pm.

## Empty Bowls Project – Update

By Mary Alice Kimball



Members of the UUCD sold many of the ceramic bowls we made at the “TASTE OF GREATER DANBURY”. There we raised \$480.00 that will be donated to ARC's Emergency Aid Network. In addition to selling our bowls, we were a visible presence to the community of our vision to help end hunger. You still have an opportunity to support this worthwhile project by buying a handmade bowl or by donating money to the ARC's Emergency Aid Network. A table will be set up in the Fellowship Hall with the bowls to purchase.

Then join us in celebration of the EMPTY BOWLS PROJECT. We will share a simple meal to be served on **World Hunger Day, Friday, October 16, 6:00 pm at the Fellowship Hall**. For additional information see <http://www.uudanbury.org/featured-event>

## Religious Education Update

by Mary B. Collins, Director of Religious Education (DRE)

At this *Comment* deadline we are just beginning our Religious Education groups. Parents, children, and youth are all getting used to new entrances, some different room arrangements and new grade groupings than we had last year. They are:

After the Children's Focus on Sunday morning, **we are entering the House by way of the ramp and double glass doors into the first floor Conference Room.**

**At 9:00 a.m.** the **Pre-school through first grade** children will stay in that room, **2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders will meet in the kitchen** (with the room in between these two groups as an overflow room depending on the size of the groups and their activities). **4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> graders** meet upstairs in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Conference Room.

**At 11:00 a.m.** the **6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders** (for both Youth Group and Neighboring Faiths) meet in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Conference Room. **Senior High** will meet in the Youth Room. **Come Sing A Song With Me** Group will meet in the first floor Conference Room UNTIL the Adult Education offering “Being a UU Parent” meets (October 18<sup>th</sup> – Nov.15<sup>th</sup>). During those dates the children's group will meet in the Kitchen and/or adjacent room.

**Please use the front door of the house to access any of the group meeting rooms without disturbing the other groups in session on Sunday morning, as the House kitchen has become a meeting space.**

Committees hoping to use the copier on Sunday morning, please plan on using it when a group is not in the session (could be: before 9:00 a.m., 10:30 am – 11:00 am on Sunday Morning, or after 12:30 pm).

### Senior High Youth group:

- Confirmed their meeting time will be 11:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings, BUT please be in contact with Advisor **Chan Roewn** for confirmation of the dates of the month when they will meet. (The DRE will attempt to keep the website up-to-date as I know of their plans. Go to: [www.uudanbury.org](http://www.uudanbury.org), click on: *Religious Education, then Curricula Details, and then: Sr. High Youth Group*).
- In October they will plan a November 1<sup>st</sup> event for the younger RE children (note: clocks fall back day, and possible theme: Halloween, All Souls, Day of the Dead).
- The first Metro New York District youth conference, called EnviroCON, will be at the UU Fellowship at Stony Brook, Stony Brook, NY on October 16-18<sup>th</sup>, so **NO** Senior High Youth Group on October 18<sup>th</sup>.

### 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Graders:

- **Junior High Youth Group meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the month** beginning October 11<sup>th</sup> (which is also Columbus Day Weekend. Contact **Greg Pings** or **Samantha McCoy** for details).
- **Neighboring Faiths** – please check with leaders **John Miglietta** and **Judy Lacker** about the dates for the first off-site visit. Again when the DRE knows of it, it will be posted on the UUCD website [www.uudanbury.org](http://www.uudanbury.org), click on: *Religious Education, then Curricula Details, and then: Jr. High Youth Group*.

## Adult Programming

We are excited to be offering the following exciting programs this Fall. Please fill out a registration form and leave it on the table behind Sherry’s desk in the office, or you can also register by emailing Sherry at sherryuucd@gmail.com

**The New Earth** - 10 Mondays, beginning September 21st, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. in the Conference Room. Registration is required and you must have a copy of *The New Earth* (\$6 on Amazon.com). Contact Joe Gillotti. Join us for a (10) week study session covering Eckart Tolle’s enlightening and riveting book, *The New Earth*. The author offers readers intense and compelling guidance in redirecting our attitudes to better understand ourselves, spiritually, and the world around us. This course is intended to help you not only understand the intellectual concepts of Being Present or Being in the Now, but more importantly putting them into practice and thus experience a better way of life for yourself and those around you. Joe Gillotti, the workshop leader, has been teaching Hatha Yoga and Yoga Philosophy for many years. He also has extensive experience in platform training teaching motivational and soft skills techniques in the business world.

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**Myers-Briggs** - 5 Wednesdays: Sept 30, Oct 7, 14, 21, 28, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m. in the second floor Conference Room. Registration is required and there is a \$10.00 materials fee. Have you ever wondered about what your Myers-Briggs type is and what does it say about you? What parts of your life does it impact and influence? Can knowing what it is help you in any way(s)? Can you change your type? If you’ve heard others talk about one’s Myers-Briggs type and wanted to find out about it, now’s your chance to take a series of five weekly workshops right here at UUCD. It is crucial to attend the first three sessions which will lay down the groundwork for understanding type, while the last two will focus on various uses and applications of type. The facilitator, Joanne T. Wells, has had over 30 years of professional experience in a variety of settings: studying, teaching, and applying type knowledge.

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**Kundalini Yoga** - Ongoing, Tuesday evenings, 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. No registration is required, drop-ins are welcome. \$15 per session, payable each session (half of the fee goes to UUCD). Contact Shawn Sweeney for more information. Kundalini Yoga is a sacred art and science that was brought to the west by Yogi Bhajan from India in the late sixties. This yoga incorporates many elements, including breath, mantra, mudra (hand positions) and postures to help people quiet their minds and experience shunia (a profound inner peace). This class is an opportunity for students of all levels and styles to tune into the divine truth that dwells within each of us. Any and all are welcome to join the class. It is open to both members of UUCD, and members of the community. Some mats will be available, but if you have your own, please bring it with you.

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**Being a Unitarian Universalist Parent** - 5 Sundays: October 18, 25, November 1, 9, 15, during the 11:00 service in the Conference Room. Registration is required and there is a \$5.00 materials fee. Facilitator: Barbara Myers. This program will address how to better understand and interpret UU values at home with our children. Session topics will include: UU Values, UU Family Life, Resources for UUism in the Home, Holidays and Celebrations, and Living Our Beliefs. While parents are participating in the program, their children will be involved in the 11:00 RE program, “Come Sing a Song with Me.”

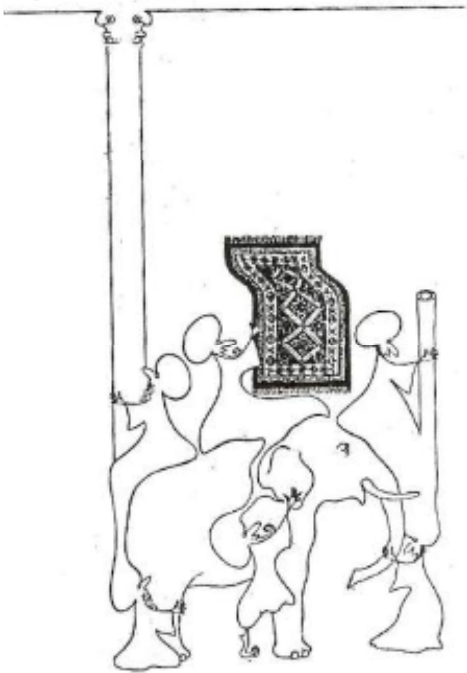
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**Landmark Unitarian and Universalist Sermons** - 4 Tuesday afternoons: October 20, 27, November 3, 10, 4:00 - 5:30 p.m. in the Conference Room. Registration is required and there is a \$5.00 materials fee. Facilitator: Rev. Sue Spencer. In connection with her sermon series on "Historic Theological Options for UUs", Sue Spencer is offering a four-part course in UU history, using as a vehicle some of our religious tradition's watershed sermons. We will look at both Unitarian and Universalist Christianity, Transcendentalism, and Religious Humanism. Participants will be provided with copies of the sermons ahead of time, and asked to read them before class sessions.

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**Chalice Circles** - various times in the UUCD Cottage. Registration is required. Contact Barbara Myers for more information. Circles are groups of up to ten people who meet regularly to build community, learn to practice shared ministry, and nurture their spiritual lives. Topics vary; all are welcome, but must register to participate. See separate brochure to learn more and to register.

## Share in *The Magic of our Carpet*



Thanks to all who supported our past rug fund raisers,  
and/or recently gave matching funds.

We have 80% of the funds needed to carpet Fellowship Hall.

The Board has asked Ross Fenster and the A-Team to kick-off  
the campaign to raise the remaining 20% (\$1800).

More information and pledge cards will be available on Sunday,  
September 27<sup>th</sup>, and Sunday, October 4<sup>th</sup>, or on the website,  
[www.uudanbury.org](http://www.uudanbury.org).

Please pledge to buy as many square yards (\$45 each) or as many  
square feet (\$5 each) as you can.

Make this wish a reality before 12/31/09.

Thanks in advance for your generous spirit.

## Search Committee Corner

by Carol Huckabee

### HOW WE SEE OURSELVES AND OUR NEW MINISTER

A hearty thank you from the *Search Committee* to all of you who participated in the cottage meetings and online survey last spring. You have told us what you would like to see our new minister bring to the congregation, as well as lots about yourselves and what keeps you coming back. Over fifty congregants participated in cottage meetings and seventy-nine of you took the online survey. Both long-time and new members (less than five years) participated and we got feedback from folks who attended both services, although a majority of the survey respondents attended our 11:00 a.m. service.

You told us that you initially attended UUCD because you were seeking:

- Fellowship and involvement in community
- A place to celebrate common values
- Intellectual stimulation
- Religious education for your children
- Spiritual growth
- Family concerns
- The minister
- GLBT concerns

You continue to attend because the UUCD provides community and a place to celebrate common values and fellowship, along with programs for your children and families.

Respondents rated celebration of common values as the most important reason why they attend worship services. A sense of belonging and fellowship opportunities after services were also important, as were intellectual stimulation and personal meditation. A good sermon was the single most important element of worship with music coming in second. Multicultural sensitivity and Milestones were also important elements of our Sunday morning experience.

Respondents shared some of their theological beliefs with us:

59% said that their spiritual life is grounded in a sense of the fullness and connectedness of all things.

44% believe that goodness and meaning are human constructs, and

34% of you strongly believe that powers attributed to a supernatural deity are inherent in nature.

Other faith traditions have been important in your religious development besides UU:

Religious Humanism (61%)

Buddhism (55%)

Christianity (50%)

Judaism (39%)

Neo Paganism (34%)

Hinduism (18%)

Taoism (16%)

Islam (9%)

Respondents identified meditation, yoga, and journaling as other religious practices that they factor into their lives.

We specifically asked survey takers to tell us how they felt about future membership growth and 82% of you viewed growth favorably. In cottage meetings, folks talked about sensible growth that allowed current members to retain their sense of belonging. Respondents indicated that in five years they'd like to see the UUCD have a membership of between 170-225.

You clearly told us that you want a minister who can both lead and walk with us on the journey for growth, vitality and engagement with the greater Danbury community – a journey we feel started with our move back to the urban center in 2005. Our new minister will have a strong, charismatic personality. (S)He will engage and collaborate with community leaders, with the interfaith community, as well as with visitors, prospective members and longtime associates. We want a minister who can be a powerful representative for UU principles in the community. But we also want a minister who listens, who coaches, and who will draw together current and potential members to build a vision of how we want to serve each other and the community.

Our minister will be skilled in giving strong, inspirational sermons that challenge both our minds and our hearts. You told us that you want our new minister to provide both spiritual and intellectual leadership. We are also eager for a minister who evidences their own engagement in the issues of our time and can support our ongoing efforts for social justice in our community and the larger world.

You told us how important it is for our new minister to be involved with us, not just on Sunday mornings but in a variety of settings and on a variety of tasks. We want a pastor who exhibits the sensitivity and empathy for the pastoral work of the church, even if the (s)he enlists and encourages others to help in this important work. We want our minister to have good interpersonal boundaries, to be open-minded, to be approachable and to be someone we can trust. We believe that we have strong lay leadership so that we do not need to look to our minister to spend a great deal of time in administrative tasks but our minister should be able to collaborate well with lay leaders and staff.

As your *Search Committee* we will soon begin evaluating ministerial candidates. We will look for the candidate that best fits the ministerial profile you have helped us build. No one candidate can bring all the skills of ministry to a church but you have helped us define what skills you think are most important for our congregation. Candidates are also evaluating the UUCD to see if we are a good fit for them. We believe our congregation offers candidates a great opportunity to serve a church that will utilize the spiritual, intellectual, and community building skills of ministry. Because of the confidentiality of the search process designed by the UUA (to protect prospective ministers and their congregations during the process), we do not reveal the names of candidates or talk about them during the search process itself. Next spring we hope to present whomever we have found to be the best fit for the UUCD. During Candidating Week you will have a chance to meet, evaluate, and vote on this candidate for settled ministry here in Danbury. You can see the results of the entire survey online on the members page of our UUCD website. We encourage you to read more, as it contains a lot of good information about the congregation.

Your Search Committee consists of: **Gale Alexander, Dennis DiPinto, Carol Huckabee, Judy Lacker, Charlie Schott, Charley Stark, Joanne Wells.**

**If you have any questions for the Search Committee,  
please email them to [search@uudanbury.org](mailto:search@uudanbury.org).**

## Next Level Team Update

by Pamela Mitchell

In July the Board agreed to form a Committee to get to the bottom of our lower level build-out options (pun completely intended). We have a stellar team in place for the 2009-10 fiscal year to orchestrate:

- a needs assessment that looks at our need for this space and usage for RE or other purposes;
- a current review to analyze market for outside tenants and legal parameters;
- a plan for build-out and cost;
- funding proposals and timing.

The group has met several times and we are off to a good start - defining the project scope, analyzing options and assigning tasks to team members who don't make it to the meetings to defend themselves. Seriously, we have a great group in place, and at this time we have the following sub-teams:

- Internal needs assessment/chair - **Pamela Mitchell**;
- Physical plant issues - current state - **Jeff Shaffer**;
- Legal restrictions - usage, taxation, zoning, and access requirements - **Jean Renjillian, Charlie Schott**;
- Financial/funding options - **Bill McWilliams, Dean Alexander**;
- Material/labor options - **Jeff Shaffer, Jon Dupree**;
- Congregation communications - **Ben Roberts**;

Our intent is to have analysis and options presented to the congregation next spring, but we will keep you updated on our progress through the year. Please feel free to chat up any of the team if you have questions, and contact me if you are available to contribute to our efforts.

## HOME SAFETY REFRESHER

Guest speaker: **Jordan Leach**, Deputy Fire Marshall, Danbury Fire Department

### CONCERNED ABOUT:

FAMILY  
FRIENDS  
SELF



### HEAR ABOUT:

SAFETY INNOVATIONS  
FIRST RESPONDER STORIES  
PRACTICAL TIPS

**Sunday, October 18<sup>th</sup> at 12:45 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall**

Pack a lunch!

Sponsored by **RIGHT TO FLOURISH**  
Contact Meredith Spector for more information

**Men Out to Breakfast** is an organization of men seeking fellowship and spirituality and meets for breakfast and discussion on the first and third Saturdays of each month, at the Windmill Diner, Mill Plain Road in Danbury, convenient to Exits 2 and 4. Meeting time: 9:00 a.m. October dates are the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. All are welcome. Please notify **Mike Searing** if you plan to attend.



**Women out to Breakfast** meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of every month at 9:00 a.m. for informal coffee and conversation at Elmer's Diner. Everyone is welcome. If you would like to attend, please contact **Karen Gillotti**. October dates are the 10<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>.

### Auction Committee: Calling all Members

The UUCD Auction Committee is having its first planning meeting on Thursday, October 15<sup>th</sup>, at 6:30 p.m. in the Conference Room, and would like to extend an invitation to you. Ever been to our Auction and thought it would be fun to help out? Are you creative? Do you have a flair for decor? Can you plan and organize? Are you a public relations guru? Might you be able to rustle up some business donations? Then we want YOU! Please let us know if you plan to come or if you have any questions by contacting Christine Bonansinga.

Please note a correction in the new "Opportunities" brochure: while Yvonne Ruddy-Stein is a member of the Auction Committee, she is not the Co-Chair. We're looking for a Co-Chair, though!

The **Harvest Festival** in New Milford will be happening October 11<sup>th</sup>, from 12:00 -5:00 p.m. on Bank Street by the Green. Boasting a woodland fairy theme, the festival will feature local musicians, face painters, improv dancers, children's activities, a historical tour, and much, much more. A special feature happening inside Homeward Bound will be a live ensemble of musicians playing while former Broadway dancer Elizabeth Perkins moves to the music, and local artist **Veronica Swain** paints on a giant canvas in the background.

### *Are You Ready To Live Your Life Purpose Out Loud?!*

Five months before you were born, your unique fingerprints were permanently and unalterably formed. They hold the key to identifying what's known as your Soul Psychology Triad: your Life Purpose, your Life Lesson, and your Umbrella of Consciousness. Join us for a one-of-a-kind half day adventure to discover your individual Umbrella of Consciousness and unlock the secrets of how to live your right life! Get your fingerprints interpreted by Master Hand and Fingerprint Analyst, Roberta Coker, in a safe and seriously fun environment and gain the tools that will help you move forward with your true Life Purpose. **Discover Your Umbrella of Consciousness** half-day workshop, on Saturday, October 17<sup>th</sup>, from 1:00 – 5:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Cost is \$80. For more information contact, Roberta Coker, MHA: 877-424-HAND(4263); [SeriousFun@HandDynamics.com](mailto:SeriousFun@HandDynamics.com) or UUCD member Susan Shaner, MA, MS: 203-730-2103 [susan@sagelead.com](mailto:susan@sagelead.com)

### **Awaken Now! Align to Your Success in Life and Work - 5 Weeks to a JumpStart**

- Are you going through sudden, disruptive change?
- Are you not getting the results you want in your life or career?
- Do you need support understanding and integrating this experience?

If yes, then join UUCD member, **Susan Shaner** for this high-impact 5-week course that will give you greater clarity, support, and provide you with a roadmap to increase your capacity to be resilient in creating the life you want or wanting the life you have. We will incorporate humor, art, movement, breath work, and music. No previous experience required - only have a life and being open. For more information visit: <http://www.sagelead.com/images/PDFs/Course-Description.pdf>.

Schedule: Wednesdays, 6:00-8:30 pm, October 21-November 18, 2009. Discounted Fee: \$495.00. Class size is limited so call today to register! 203-730-2103 or [info@sagelead.com](mailto:info@sagelead.com).

## This Time in History

by Douglas Parkhurst



Issues being addressed in 2009 by the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury relate to finances and pledging, the search for a new permanent minister, and building renovations. In this light it is interesting to note what was happening in the Danbury Universalist Church between April and November of 1884, one hundred and twenty-five years ago. The following excerpts are taken from *Record of the First Universalist Society of Danbury, Conn. commencing January 13, 1873.*

1884, Part 1

**April 6, 1884 -**

**An informal meeting of the Society called to order by the clerk. A. A. Heath elected chairman. Bro. T.H. Foster made a statement as to the circular and blank subscriptions which the Committee have prepared - Bro. Aubrey [Rev. Alfred J. Aubrey, minister] made a further explanation showing the value of a systematic method of raising funds. Voted to adopt the circular and appoint a committee...to confer with the Clerk as to who are to receive these circulars.**

**Voted that it be the sense of this meeting that Bro. Aubrey be employed as our Pastor for another year beginning today. The vote taken by ballot - 29 votes cast and all were in favor.**

The congregation was surprised to receive the following letter a few weeks later.

**Danbury, Conn. - April 30, 1884**

**To the Universalist Parish of Danbury, Conn.**

**Dear Brethren - I respectfully tender my resignation as pastor of your church, the same to take affect May 13, proximo - The crisis and grief in the life of the minister are met when he removes from parish associations made dear by time and kindness. I have been among you over three years: years that have woven about my life a thousand happy associations. When I came I was in poor health and without experience. You were sympathetic in the one case and more than indulgent in the other. In leaving you I can remember only happiness and kindness; I am deeply grateful.**

**God prosper and bless you is ever the prayer of your pastor and friend A.J. Aubrey.**

Then,

**May 11, 1884 - Adjourned legal meeting -**

**The treasurer stated that we owe Bro. Aubrey to date some \$48 - It was stated that some \$40. were yet collectable on last year. The Ladies Social will advance the needful funds for the present. [Two internet inflation calculations figure \$48 in 1884 would have the purchasing power of about \$1,100.00 today] Voted to appoint a committee to draft resolutions concerning the departure of our Pastor...**

Reverend Aubrey was evidently well-liked and respected. On May 19, 1884, the following appeared in the *Danbury Evening News*.

**The Universalist Parish and Rev. Mr. Aubrey -**

**The following resolutions were unanimously adopted by the society, yesterday:**

**The first Universalist Society of Danbury, Conn., hereby presents to Rev. A.J. Aubrey, our late pastor, these resolutions of respect and affection for himself and his esteemed companion, and our grief at his unexpected decision to sever his connection with our parish:**

**Resolved, That in Brother Aubrey this society has found a faithful and efficient pastor, an able and constantly improving preacher, a true and tried friend to the Sunday-school and a valued friend and brother in Christ.**

**Resolved, That his sincere and spiritual bearing before us and his upright and blameless life before all have attracted not only our own profound respect and affection, but also the hearty appreciation of the whole community which unites with us in deploring his departure.**

**Resolved, That the successful labor of Brother Aubrey in securing the removal of the indebtedness of this society, merits our heartfelt thanks.**

**Resolved - That in his spiritual ministrations in our homes, whether in times of joy or bereavement, he has so endeared himself to us and so shown us the uplifting and consoling Gospel truth, that he will ever be cherished with affection and gratitude in the inner chambers of our hearts.**

**May God bless and prosper him in all righteousness and peace wherever his lot may be.**

**The foregoing were ordered to be sent to him, and to be published, and to be spread upon the records of the society.**

-To be continued



AIDS Project Greater Danbury would like to kindly thank you for your generous donation of \$386.88 that you provided to our agency on June 7, 2009. Your considerate gesture has made many of our clients happy and thankful. We are deeply appreciative of your thoughtfulness.

AIDS Project Greater Danbury is a non-profit organization that offers many services to the HIV/AIDS community including extensive case management, assistance with housing needs, mental health counseling, support groups, financial assistance, HIV counseling and testing, youth and community outreach and education, and a needle exchange program. We also own and manage a group home for HIV/AIDS clients in the Danbury area.

We again thank you for your consideration of our agency as a beneficiary of your generosity.

Sincerely,  
Tara Ramay, Office Manager

## **When Hunger Comes to Call**

On Sunday, October 11<sup>th</sup>, we will have a truly special guest in the pulpit. Nancy L. Carrington, Executive Director of the Connecticut Food Bank will speak on the impact of hunger on Connecticut's towns and cities and how the current economic crisis is sending many families to food pantries and soup kitchens **for the very first time.**

We have seen a 50% percent increase in "guests" that we serve at the Dorothy Day Soup Kitchen on Spring Street. Catholic Charities began serving a hot breakfast this spring called "*Morning Glory*". They serve breakfast, Monday through Friday, five days a week. On one day in August, these two programs served 87 breakfasts and 120 dinners. Hunger has come to call on Danbury residents.

This summer's Religious Education program, the **Empty Bowls Project**, gave us a way to raise awareness about hunger and raise money to provide fresh food to people in our community through ARC's Emergency Aid Network. We sold our "empty bowls" at the Taste of Danbury on September 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> and invited the public to join us for a simple meal on World Hunger Day - Friday, October 16<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm. We gave people an opportunity to grow their own fresh vegetables in the middle of the city at the Sow Green Community Garden on State Street. Many of our members and friends have been working very hard to help stamp out hunger right here in Danbury. Nancy Carrington will encourage us all to keep up the good work and do even more.

Please bring a friend or neighbor to hear her speak on Sunday, October 11<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 or 11:00 am. She will tell you why food is a human right.

## Theatre Aficionados

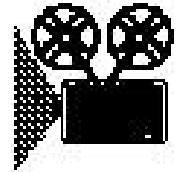
by Keith Dupree

Mark your calendars - Thursday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, is the next "Pay What You Want Night" at Theatreworks, New Milford. The evening's performance is "Kiss Me, Kate", Cole Porter's musical adaptation of Shakespeare's "The Taming of the Shrew."

For more information, go to the website [www.theatreworks.us](http://www.theatreworks.us), or call Keith Dupree.

As there are no reserved seats for this performance, we will convene at the theater when the doors open at 7:30. If you call Keith Dupree to say you plan to be there, we will be sure to look for you.

Members, Friends, Friends of Friends – All are welcome. Theatre Aficionado – You can be too!



## Movies with a Message – Second Friday Cinema

by Keith Dupree

For October, we offer a serious short and a light-hearted feature. The message this month – I don't know -- maybe communication? Come, discuss, and help us define this month's Movies with a Message.

7:00 p.m. – *Lucy's Piano* – Alice, played by Stephanie Zimbalist, is deep in grief over the sudden loss of her daughter, when her crotchety neighbor yells at her about his roses.

7:25 p.m. – *Curtain Call* – A young executive and his girlfriend, Stevenson and Julia, make the mistake of moving into a house inhabited by the ghosts of two famous stage actors from a previous era, Lily Marlowe and Max Gale (played by Maggie Smith and Michael Caine), who bicker constantly. The ghosts insist on "helping" Stevenson with his romance. Communication problems? You haven't seen anything yet!

**We believe that good experiences are even more fulfilling when shared with others.** To this end, our objective each month is to present films of substance in a living room setting and to provide an opportunity to discuss with friends. Please join us on **Friday, October 9<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 p.m.** in the UUCD Conference Room. As usual, all are welcome. Pizza is provided, bring your own beverage. Popcorn optional! Contributions will be gratefully accepted, all of which will go to the UUCD to encourage continuation of UUCD programs.

**(For more information on these films, check the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall. Look under "UUCD Events.")**

## Calling All Women

The Women's Retreat Planners are holding a Women's Pot Luck Dinner On Friday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> at 6:00pm



You are cordially invited to, and enthusiastically encouraged to join us.  
(In other words we really, really want you to come!!)

Come for a yummy pot luck dinner, to enjoy each other's company,  
eat our delicious pot luck meal, talk about the upcoming retreat,  
learn what has been planned, contribute ideas and volunteer, and sign-up to attend the retreat

Please come even if you are not sure you can come to the retreat and especially if you have never attended the retreat before. Let us know you can come to the potluck, and what you would like to bring, by signing up on the clipboard on the table at the back of the Fellowship Hall, or by contacting **Sue Tarshis, Karen Romanelli, Dara O'Toole, or Marie Dupree.**

## Soup Kitchen Corner

by Lynn Taborsak, Coordinator

**Welcome Fall!** If you haven't signed up for a 2010 UUCD Soup Kitchen team, please see **Lynn Taborsak** before or after Sunday services or sign-up on the **Feed the Hungry** roster in the rear of the sanctuary! On the first Saturday of every month, we provide a hot, nutritious meal at the Dorothy Day House of Hospitality on Spring Street in Danbury. You don't have to give up every Saturday to feed the hungry. We are only asking you to volunteer for three Saturday afternoons a year.

Everyone is encouraged to join in this effort. You can volunteer to LEAD a team; you can participate as a REGULAR TEAM MEMBER; you can serve as an occasional ALTERNATE when extra hands are needed; you can help us feed our neighbors with a GIFT CARD in any amount from any local supermarket; and, finally, you can bring in donations of NON-PERISHABLE FOOD ITEMS for the food offering each Sunday.

On Saturday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, Soup Kitchen Team #4 will be led by **Lisa Austin-Smith** and **Debbie Musumeci**. Team #4 includes **Randy and Tucker Smith, Joanne Davidson, Cathie Billings, Jackie Alexander, Jane Leff, Haley Perlow, Jan Galloway and Irene Levanos**. It is officially Fall and our hot meal is really appreciated. If you are unable to come, please find a substitute from the alternates list. Remember, the show must go on.



### UUCD Conversations (formerly the Nonfiction Book Discussion Group)

UUCD Conversations meets on the second Thursday of each month from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. in the Conference Room. All are welcome. Please contact **Bruce Buzby** if you have any questions. The schedule for September through February 2010 is:

**October 8: Science Biography** Facilitator: Bob Wallace. Source: *Darwin's Sacred Cause: How Hatred of Slavery Shaped Darwin's Views on Human Evolution* by Adrian Desmond, 2009, 448 pages, \$18.24. "In this controversial reinterpretation of Charles Darwin's life and work, the authors of a highly regarded 1991 biography argue that the driving force behind Darwin's theory of evolution was his fierce abolitionism, which had deep family roots and was reinforced by his voyage on the Beagle and by events in America." - *Scientific American*

**November 12: Science Biography** Facilitator: Ross Fenster. Source: *The Invention of Air* by Steven Johnson, 2008, 216 pages, \$16.34. A story of science, faith, revolution, and the birth of America. It is a story of sweeping historical transformation, of genius and friendship, violence and world-changing ideas that boldly recasts our understanding of the most significant events in our history.

**December 10: Biography** Facilitator: Doris Henderson. Source: *The Woman Behind the New Deal: The Life and Legacy of Francis Perkins, Social Security, Unemployment Insurance* by Kirstin Downey, 2009, 496 pages, \$23.10. No individual—not even Eleanor Roosevelt—exerted more influence over the formulation of FDR's New Deal or did more to implement the programs than Frances Perkins (1880–1965).

**January 14: American Politics** Facilitator: Roger Bogart. Source: *The Limits of Power: The End of American Exceptionalism* by Andrew Bacevich, 2008, 224 pages, \$13.20. Crisp prose, sweeping historical analysis and searing observations on the roots of American decadence elevate this book from mere scolding to an urgent call for rational thinking and measured action, for citizens to wise up and put their house in order.

# October 2009

October 2009							November 2009						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat/Sun
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7:00pm The New Earth (Conf)	10:00am Knitting Ministry (2 Conf) 10:00am Transition Team (Conf) 6:00pm Yoga (FH)	7:00pm Sunday Serv. Comm (Conf) 7:30pm Myers-Briggs Class (2 Conf)	5:00pm DRE Rel (2 Conf) 7:00pm RE Comm (2 Conf) 7:30pm Book Grp (Conf)	7:00pm Movies w/a Msg (Conf)	9:00am Men's Breakfast
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7:00pm The New Earth (Conf)	10:00am Cluster Mtg (FH) 6:00pm Yoga (FH) 7:30pm Social Action Comm (Conf)	7:00pm Board of Trustees (Conf) 7:30pm Myers-Briggs Class (2 Conf)	6:30pm Auction Comm (Conf)	6:00pm Empty Bowls Pot-Luck (FH)	9:00am Men's Breakfast
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7:00pm The New Earth (Conf)	10:00am Knitting Ministry (2 Conf) 4:00pm UU History (Conf) 6:00pm Yoga (FH)	7:30pm Myers-Briggs Class (2 Conf)	7:30pm Search Comm (Conf)	Comment Deadline 6:00pm Womens Retreat Pot-Luck (FH)	9:00am Women's Breakfast
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7:00pm The New Earth (Conf)	10:00am Caring Comm (Conf) 4:00pm UU History (Conf) 6:00pm Yoga (FH)	7:30pm Myers-Briggs Class (2 Conf)			

Shaded Events are off-site

### Services at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m.

October 4, 2009: **Toward the year 2050: Growing Our Diversity.** Association Sunday, an annual event, affords the opportunity to support the Unitarian Universalist Association's programs for growth – not only numerical growth, but growth in spirit and effectiveness. This year's theme is "Growing Our Diversity," and our service considers how our historically white Association will minister in an increasingly Rainbow Nation. Our first-Sunday Share the Plate collection goes to the UUA's diversity initiatives, and there will also be envelopes for you to make a special contribution to Association Sunday. If you'd like to make an advance contribution, you can do this on-line at [www.uua.org/giving/associationsunday](http://www.uua.org/giving/associationsunday). Service led by Interim Minister Sue Spencer.

October 11, 2009. **Food is a Human Right.** Nancy L. Carrington, Executive Director of Connecticut Food Bank, will speak on the impact of hunger on Connecticut's communities and how the current economic crisis is thrusting more families into financial insecurity, sending them to food pantries and soup kitchens for the first time. She will also speak about anti-hunger efforts taking place at the local, state and national levels.

October 18, 2009. **Our Families, Ourselves.** When we go home, wherever "home" is, do we enjoy it? Or do we find ourselves uncomfortable, perhaps thrown back into some previous stage of our lives? Family Systems Theory is a way of thinking that can lower our anxiety, and raise our level of comfort and compassion – not only with our families, but in all our relationships, including those at UUCD. Service led by Interim Minister Sue Spencer.

October 25, 2009. **Is a World Theology Possible?** The late Wilfred Cantwell Smith, a noted historian of religion, said that there is a unity in the world's religions – not in theology, but in religious history. What did he mean by this? United Nations Sunday seems a good time to explore the issues he raises. Service led by Interim Minister Sue Spencer.