



unitarian universalist
CONGREGATION OF DANBURY

COMMENT

24 Clapboard Ridge Road, Danbury, CT 06811 * 203-798-1994
Rev. Barbara Fast, Settled Minister

FEBRUARY 2012

At the heart of it..." from Rev. Barbara Fast

I like to begin with **Gratitude** while it is still near the New Year, it is also the second half of our fiscal year. At the January Meeting of the Board of Trustees the Annual Budget Drive Calendar was approved. That makes it official. It is time for the minister to talk about money again. I hope you keep reading!

I am sure you have heard it all before; the appeal to conscience and commitment, to putting our money where our values are. I say "our" because Jonathan and I make a substantial yearly pledge to sustain this congregation. Just like you, we pledge too.

Of course the details of the budget are not yet settled by the Finance Committee, but by February they will be. We are so fortunate to have such kind and responsible people serving on the Finance Committee: **David Doyle, Eva DeFranco, Lynn Taborsak, and Marie Dupree**. If you see them, thank them for their Financial Ministry.

What happens is that each committee of the congregation submits their budget request to Finance. It may be as simple as \$200 for booklets about Unitarian Universalism for new members, or as complicated as detailing expenses for maintenance of our Buildings & Grounds or the compensation for staff. Most costs are more or less fixed.

Finance evaluates these requests and sends a draft budget to the Board of Trustees who adjusts them according to UUCD priorities. Truthfully, there is little discretionary spending in these budgets. After the BOT votes a proposed Budget the budget drive officially begins. We are fortunate to have **Judy Lacker** and **Chris Halfar** leading that effort again. This year it will be brief and simple and the process will culminate in a kick-off party March 4th and a Sunday service March 5th when we will bring our pledges to a worship service called Commitment Sunday. I hope that you will come to both.

After pledging, the budget is revised again to reflect the results of the pledge drive and in May, members vote on a final budget for fiscal year June 2012-13. Pledges maintain and sustain life here at UUCD. This is how we *take care* of this spiritual home. It may not seem spiritually exciting, but it is of the essence for our survival.

Everything at UUCD is transparent. Dedicated people, all volunteers, organize, lead, support, work, and contribute time talent and treasure to sustain and *take care* of this community year in and year out. Without you this community would not exist. Which is why this is truly a **Financial Ministry**.

As part of a **Ministry of Gratitude** let me offer a thank you for what you have given and what you will give to *take care* of the life of this congregation. There are so many issues that come up when we talk about money, about what we have and don't have, what we give or don't, won't or can't give. As we reflect about those issues this season, let us thank each other for all the ways that we minister to each other and in the world; for those who work for justice, for those who are caring and cooking, speaking, leading and teaching, and also for to those who are giving of their financial treasure.

I will close this effort to grow our commitment to financial self-care with my thank you to those who can and choose to give. Without your giving, UUCD would not exist.

Blessings to everyone, and take care.
Barbara

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 March Comment -
Friday, February 17th.**

UUCD Cancellation Policy – During very inclement weather, Sunday Services, Religious Education and any other meetings or events will be cancelled. To learn of a cancellation, please check one of the following: 1. Your email; 2. The outgoing message on the church office phone, (203) 798-1994; 3. The UUCD website, www.uudanbury.org.

Notes from the Board of Trustees

by Ben Roberts

Dear UUCD Members and Friends:

I invariably find that our Sunday services resonate in my mind well beyond the time that we are together. The songs we have sung get stuck in my head. And the ideas expressed from the pulpit stimulate new thoughts that stay with me as well.

This past Sunday, Charlie Schott and Barbara Myers hosted a delightful service on the Seven UU Principles, using both quotes about their meaning and songs for each one. So fun and creative! “We’ll Build a Land” and “Down by the Riverside” serenaded me throughout the remainder of the day. And as I reflected on those Principles, something came together in my mind about the powerful relevance of our work together at this time in history.

It was the case for me—and I’ve heard many others describe something similar—that I was a UU long before I realized it. That is, I was in such complete and natural alignment with UU doctrines (and the lack thereof!) that once I got a basic exposure to them, I immediately felt at home. After yesterday’s renewed grounding in the Principles, the logic behind that phenomenon seemed all the more clear.

Everywhere I go, I encounter more and more people who “respect... the interconnected web of life” and are striving to put that belief into action. And as we move from a year of protest to a year of elections under a system where the voice of the people is increasingly drowned out by the power of concentrated wealth, standing for “the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process” has never been more relevant. And “the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all” seems to be something the human community is increasingly recognizing as a practical necessity--not merely a Utopian ideal.

Still, the language of scarcity is all around us these days. The notion that we live in a time of sufficiency, not just for the privileged few but for all humanity can appear radical. And yet I wonder. Is it possible that on a global scale, we are closer to “a world that works for all” than we might believe?

Meanwhile, within our congregation, we sometimes appear to have our own struggles with financial sustainability and continued growth. Given that we are also surrounded by people who are “UUs without realizing it,” how small a shift might it take for us to move into a level of material abundance that does justice to the spiritual richness we already manifest so gloriously on a weekly basis?

I choose to believe that these possibilities are at our fingertips. It is perhaps the key article of my own faith. I base this on the sense that we are all, individually and collectively, capable of so much more than we often realize, and that our capacities continue to evolve at an astonishing pace.

UUCD is a place where my sense of the possible is continuously expanded by the experience of seeing so many people who care so deeply and are willing to act on that care. It is truly inspiring to see friends, members and staff show up in service to the whole with such consistency and in so many different ways. I am honored and humbled by the gift of your efforts. And I wonder... If our success was guaranteed, what bold plans might we make? What is possible for us if we dare to commit to creating it together?

Sincerely,
Ben Roberts
UUCD President

Welcome to New Members

We joyfully welcome **Maureen O'Farrell, Walt Sizemore, and Kate, Keven and Lilly O'Farrell** as new members to our congregation.



Maureen O'Farrell and Walt Sizemore just celebrated their 11th wedding anniversary and have 7 year old triplet girls, Kate, Keven and Lilly. They moved to Sherman in 2007 from Charlotte NC, where they had lived for around 10 years. Walt has a BA in Anthropology and worked 35 years in community corrections, focusing on prerelease rehabilitation skills and counseling. He is currently spending his time taking care of his 90 year old mother, the kids, and doing various volunteer work. Maureen has her BFA from Rhode Island School of Design and had her own graphic design consulting company. She is currently changing careers and is in graduate school full time to get her MSW. They have also restored/renovated more houses than they care to remember and have run an antique business. Kate, Keven and Lilly are currently loving second grade at the Sherman School. They are involved in soccer and Odyssey of the Mind (that Walt coaches), and Girl Scouts (that Maureen co-leads). The girls all love astronomy, earth sciences, reading and plain old playing.

From Your Community Minister, Rev. Peggy Block Contemplating Valentine's Day, February 14th: "What is this thing called love?"

Cole Porter, in his famous song, asked:

**"What is this thing called love?
This funny thing called love?
Just who can solve its mystery?
Why should it make a fool of me?
I saw her there one wonderful day
She took my heart and threw it away
That's why I ask the Lord in Heaven above
What is this thing called love?"**



Growing up, each of us probably at least once, moved through the stages of romantic love as a many-splendored thing to/through love as a many-splintered thing. "*Bewitched, bothered and bewildered*" (Rodgers and Hart) we somehow moved on in the hope of finding the true love of our life:

Love Walked In by Ira Gershwin

**"Nothing seemed to matter anymore; didn't care what I was headed for.
Time was standing still; nothing counted till
There came a knock-knock-knocking at the door.**

**Love waked right in and drove the shadows away;
Love walked right in and brought my sunniest day.
One magic moment, and my heart seemed to know
That love said "Hello!" – though not a word was spoken.**

**One look, and I forgot the gloom of the past;
One look, and I had found my future at last.**

**One look, and I had found a world completely new,
When love walked in with you."**

Some of us were fortunate along the way. Some of us are searching still – or again, on-line, in-person, wide-eyed, and wary. Hold on to hope! What is “this” thing called love? Romantic love.

Mo Tzu, a fifth century B.C.E. Chinese philosopher, advocated “universal love” as his most important doctrine, that “*all mankind should be loved and treated as one’s kinfolk*”. (Mo Tzu, Basic Writings, Burton Watson, translator).

Jesus was raised under the ancient Hebrew law which was very clear: “*You will not exact vengeance on, or bear any sort of grudge against, the members of your race, but will love your neighbor as yourself*” (Leviticus 19:18). Clearly this law defined “*neighbor*” as “*fellow-citizen*” and “*fellow-countryman*” (Leviticus 19:15,17) as “*your brother*”.

However, after preaching “The Sermon on the Mount,” Jesus went on to teach, “*You have heard that it was said, ‘You will love your neighbor’ and hate your enemy. But I say this to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you...*” (Matthew 5:43-44). Universal love.

Buddha, five centuries earlier and three thousand miles away from Jesus’ homeland, had taught: “*Hatreds do not ever cease in this world by hating, but by love; this is an eternal truth...Overcome anger by love, overcome evil by good. Overcome the miser by giving, overcome the liar by truth*” (Dhammapada I.5, I7.3, Jesus and Buddha, The Parallel Sayings, Marcus Borg, editor).

Had Buddhist and ancient Chinese philosophies travelled to Jesus’ ears via the Oriental trade routes? Had Jesus himself travelled to India and China during his “lost years” from age 12 to approximately age 30? Had Jesus, the religious reformer, simply come, as he is quoted as saying, “*Do not suppose that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to complete*” (Matthew 5:17).

What is more complete than “universal love”? “Reverence for (all) life”, via Albert Schweitzer, et al., into our own contemporary times.

“*What is this thing called love?*” Romantic love. Universal love. Reverence for all life. Love is here to stay – or can be – as Ira Gershwin wrote in his last song, Love is Here to Stay:

**“The more I read the papers, the less I comprehend
The world and all its capers and how it all will end.
Nothing seems to be lasting, but that isn’t our affair;
We’ve got something permanent – I mean, in the way we care.**

**It’s very clear out love is here to stay;
Not for a year, but ever and a day.**

**The radio and the telephone and the movies that we know
May just be passing fancies – and in time may go.**

**But oh, my dear, our love is here to stay.
Together we’re going a long, long way.**

**In time the Rockies may crumble, Gibraltar may tumble
(They’re only made of clay), But – our love is here to stay.”**

With love, of course,
Peggy



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

Religious Education plans for February 2012

Friday, February 3rd - 7:00 p.m. – Religious Educator’s Appreciation has been rescheduled to an evening event. We will be checking in with leaders and assistants and creating space and time to talk about how it is going for each of the groups. Leaders and Assistants Please RSVP to **Mary Collins** or **Nancy Tramontana**.

1st Sunday, February 5th

- 9:00 a.m. *Pre-school-1st Grade*: Honesty (ethical living).
2nd & 3rd Grades: Asking Questions and what about Pluto? (inquiry is an important value of UU’s).
4th & 5th Grades: Mohamed’s Advocate, Khadija – She was his first supporter (UU Source: Islam.) Assistant needed.
- 11:00 a.m. *Elementary (K-2 & 3rd-5th)*: “This Too Shall Pass” – Parallel stories from Jewish and Islamic sources. Assistant needed.
6th-8th Short Film: The Danish Poet – Question: What chain of events led to your existence? Opportunity for writing or illustrating poetry. (Start in the Fellowship Hall.)
Senior High Youth Group: NO meeting due to evening Our Whole Lives programming.

Owl Evening

- 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. *JUNIOR “Our Whole Lives” (OWL)* – Danbury.
 5:30- 7:00 p.m. *SENIOR OWL (10th-12th Grade)* at UUCD, Danbury.

2nd Sunday, February 12th

- 9:00 a.m. *Pre-school-1st Grade*: Love!
2nd & 3rd Grades: Valentine’s for the Governor. Assistant needed.
4th & 5th Grades: Hindu tale of Arjuna and the rent we pay for living is....
- 11:00 a.m. *Elementary (K-2 & 3rd-5th)*: Good or Bad – Give Thanks. Assistant needed.
6th-8th Grade Junior High Youth Group: start directly in the second floor conference room.
Senior High Youth Group: Contact **John Miglietta** to see if you are meeting.

Owl Evening

- 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. *JUNIOR “Our Whole Lives” (OWL)* at Mohegan Lake.

3rd Sunday, February 19th (President’s Day weekend)

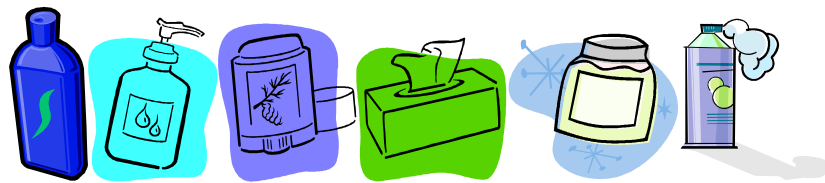
Children’s Chapel at both services for 5th Graders and under, 6th-8th Graders are encouraged to assist.

Topic: Esther and the Jewish holiday of PURIM. Mary Collins is seeking participants for playing Jewish songs and the possible follow up activities.

Senior High Youth Group: Contact **John Miglietta** to see if you are meeting.

4th Sunday, February 25th (Social Action Sunday) - *Senior High present Children’s Focus today.*

- 9:00 am *Pre-school-1st Grade, 2nd & 3rd Grades & 4th & 5th Grades*: will work on their group Social Action projects.
- 11:00 a.m. *Elementary (K-2 & 3rd-5th) and 6th-8th*: will work on their group Social Action projects.
Senior High Youth Group: Meets, will promote the upcoming Senior High Service March 25th.



The preschool RE children’s social action project this month is collecting toiletries for people who do not have homes. Their greatest needs are:

- | | | |
|--|---------------|------------|
| Trial-sized shampoo and conditioner | Hand lotion | Deodorant |
| Pocket-or purse-sized packs of tissues | Shaving cream | Baby wipes |

The items will be given to ARC to distribute. Please leave them in the box that the preschoolers have decorated in the foyer. Please bring items by February 26th, so the children can package them up and send them to ARC! Thanks!

Birdhouse & Butterfly Garden Update

by Brad and Lisa Greene



Back in the spring, the 3rd-4th Graders, as part of their year-long social action project, installed birdhouses and a butterfly garden on our church property. On the day after Christmas, Brad stopped over to look in on the birdhouses and clean them out while the weather was still mild enough. He was pleased to find that we did have some feathered tenants during this past season. The nests were constructed of sticks, which could mean either bluebirds or finches as likely inhabitants.



The butterfly garden that they put in is asleep for the winter at this point but looks to have survived its first season. If anyone has any butterfly friendly plans they'd like to donate, please let us know. We can augment the garden in the spring.

Committee News

From *Buildings and Grounds*

The combination to the door of the Cottage has changed. We have made the following folks aware of the new number: Committee Chairs, Program Chairs, Staff and UUCD event persons. The Office Manager is on site Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. The Cottage is open most days during the week, when the RE Director or the Minister are on site. Please call ahead, to insure the building is open. This is to assure the safety of the building, UUCD members, and assist with our operating cost.

Please remember to do the following before leaving Fellowship Hall or the Cottage (especially if you are in charge of a meeting or event): *Assure that all lights are turned off; *Thermostats are turned down to 60 (cottage); *AC unit is turned off (cottage); *Windows are closed; *Key and combination box are placed back in holder; *Doors are locked (extra care should be taken with FH double doors, as it has a tricky locking system.)

Single Stream Recycling is HERE - All plastics, small pieces of cardboard (ex: empty box of crackers) flattened, cans, and paper can be combined. All recyclable products need to be rinsed, clean and free of food/other particles. Large cardboard boxes need to be broken down, flattened and bundled (tied) no larger than 3 ft. x 3 ft.

From *Adult Programming*

A Discussion Group on Focusing

This new group will meet every Wednesday in February from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. in the second floor Conference Room. This session will be spent learning about Focusing, which is a practice for getting in touch with your inner processes. Those processes may create or perpetuate stress, blocks, attitudes, joy, connection, behavior, in your life today. Focusing is used around the world by people in small groups, businesses, learning, medicine, conflict resolution, etc.

We will have a brief introduction to the Philosophy of the Implicit, from which this practice has arisen. Eugene Gendlin is a philosopher from the University of Chicago (you can Google his name), and the Focusing Institute is in NYC (<http://www.focusing.org/>). The philosophy is very difficult to get through, so we will sample the interest in pursuing it further. The practice of Focusing is usually easy to pick up, and requires a lot of practice to bring it into your life as a natural way of being - there are many partnerships between two people, who both know how and want to build their practice. Those partnerships can be in person, on SKYPE or iChat, or by phone. I have partners as widely spread as Norway, New Mexico, California and Australia. And there are programs that are available online for the first 4 levels of proficiency.

There are no fees or supplies required for this first set of meetings. Please contact **Pat Coulston** if you are interested.

Great Decisions

Great Decisions will be starting in February for the second year. This group will meet at 7:00 p.m. on the second and fourth Monday of each month in the Conference Room for eight sessions. February dates are Monday, February 13th and Monday, February 27th.

This program investigates global events and the implications they have on America's foreign policy. The group members read a 10 - 12 page essay written by known authorities on the topics to be discussed. The group discussion is led by an alternating facilitator. The essays are contained in a booklet (\$20.00) which is available through the group.

The topics to be discussed: Middle East realignment, Exit from Afghanistan & Iraq, Promoting democracy, State of the oceans, Mexico, Indonesia, Cyber security, and Energy geopolitics.

If interested contact **Ron Grant**.

on Being

Krista Tippett's *on Being* - Drop In/Brown Bag lunch gathering meets on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month at 12:30 p.m. in the Conference Room. Join **Claudia Volano** for a selected 50-minute podcast followed by a brief discussion.

From the *Auction Committee*



Prepare yourself to be brought back in time, where wenches were abundant and masters were commonplace....

The plans for the 2012 Annual Goods and Services Auction are well on their way. The event is on Saturday, March 24th, and the doors will open at 6:00 p.m. with plentiful food, flowing drinks and superb entertainment. And, for the first time, your ticket price will include a wine and cheese preview hour on Friday night from 7:00-8:00 p.m.

Now, we need your help to fill the room with exquisite wares and wonderful services for your fellow congregants to bid on and take home. This year's donation form is attached and may be

given to any committee member, left in Sherry Kyriacou's office or emailed (the information only) to **Barbara Myers**.

This year our best costume reigning champion, **Shawn Swzeny**, is organizing the costume contest, complete with an entry fee and 50/50 cash prize for the winner. If you would like help putting together a costume, our own Renaissance Faire enthusiast, **Laura Lucsky**, has agreed to help members put together authentic-looking costumes with what you may already have in your closet. Please contact Laura. But, remember, you may also come as you are....no costumes necessary to attend!

If you have any questions or would love to help us with this year's event, please contact co-chairs **Christine Bonansinga** or **Yvonne Ruddy-Stein**. Watch for more information to be presented during service announcements, coffee hours, Comment articles, Order of Services and Weekly Emails.

We are looking forward to a well-attended and successful event!

Thine participation and attendance is hereby requested...

From the *Finance Committee*



Finance Committee Report – February 2012

The Finance Committee is in the process of developing a budget for the Board of Trustees to consider for the coming year. However, we still need a strong finish for the current budget year which means bringing in the remaining \$80,000 in pledges that are still owed in just five months. Pledges pay for our buildings, staff and programs. They represent the financial backbone of our congregation. Other fundraising and collections help, but pledges provide 72% of the income we need to open our doors, heat our buildings, mow our grass and shovel our snow. So please make your current pledge balance a high priority as the budget drive for next year will begin in March.

In January, thank you letters were sent out to every household detailing all of your tax-deductible donations to the UUCD for 2011. If you have any questions about your 2011 tax statement or your pledge balance, please contact Chris Halfar, Collector or our Treasurer, Marie Dupree. Many people completed their pledges or brought their pledge accounts up-to-date in December. However, there are still 20 pledges on which little or nothing has been paid.

We want to emphasize, again, how important your timely pledge payments are to the health of our congregation. Every pledge is very important and every pledge works very hard to sustain our physical buildings, our staff, our activities and our programs. Most of our budget is made up of fixed costs that don't vary much from year to year. We need your budgeted pledge to meet those basic expenses. We welcome pledges from new or returning members and friends at any time!

UUCD	JUL-DEC 2011	JUL-DEC 2010
Income	\$111,978.29	\$107,914.33
Expenses	\$120,911.06	\$115,546.15
Net	-\$8,932.77	-\$7,361.82



**Annual Budget Drive Corner
What Matters?**

by Chris Halfar and Judy Lacker

Saturday, March 3rd – Kick-Off Party
Sunday, March 4th – Commitment Sunday

What Matters is at the heart of every decision we make. Every time we show up, make a promise, or spend money, we announce: “This matters to me!” When we pledge our financial support to our dynamic, caring congregation, we are saying clearly: “UUCD matters!”

But what is it about UUCD that matters? Is it our passionate minister? Religious education for our children? Sunday worship that brings us together to learn, reflect, and celebrate? Our social action and environmental justice efforts? The choir? The Morris Street School Project? The Dorothy Day Shelter and Soup Kitchen? Being a Welcoming Congregation? Joining the New Sanctuary Movement? The Women’s Retreat? Convivial potluck dinners? Movies with a Message? Chalice Circles? The Power of Now? The always exciting Goods and Services Auction? A tireless Caring Committee? Or is it the whole UUCD community which provides the foundation for all of them?

The Annual Budget Drive will center on Commitment Sunday, March 4th. That day we will come together as a community to pledge our financial support for our spiritual home, saying, “Yes, UUCD matters to me.” The evening before, Saturday, March 3rd, we will enjoy a kick-off dinner with entertainment and fellowship. In mid-February look for a mailing with budget information and a financial commitment form.

To UUCD members, we hope you will take seriously your membership pledge to contribute financially. To UUCD friends, we hope your experience with us inspires you to support this spiritual home which is here for you and your family.

From the *Social Action Committee*

Social Action Update

The Social Action Committee will meet on Wednesday, February 1st, at 7:00 p.m. in the first floor Conference Room at the Ridge House. All are welcome to attend and participate. We have several projects underway and want to involve as many people as possible.



We are *Standing On the Side of Love* with Cupid this month! **Please bring in a package of disposable diapers in size 4 or 5** and place it in the diaper box in the foyer. We will distribute Cupid's diapers at the ARC Food Pantry.

Thank you everyone who has signed up to deliver the weekly food offering to **ARC's food pantry**. Please sign up **for a specific week** on the sign-up sheet in the food basket and take a quick course on how to record the weight correctly. The scale is under the food in the bottom of the basket. We collected 218 pounds of food in December. The food offering must be delivered to ARC at 325 Main Street. You can take the food with you on Sunday and deliver it any time during the week but it must be delivered by Thursday at the latest.



Please sign up for the evening program **"In From the Cold"** on Tuesday evenings this month from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. at the Soup Kitchen. Guests are served leftovers or canned soup with a generous helping of hospitality. There are 4 Tuesdays in February. Can you help with one of those dates? See **Lynn Taborsak** at services on Sunday or email her.

If you have not completed your pink **Social Action Survey**, please take one from the Welcome Desk in the foyer and turn it in as soon as possible. We have many opportunities for you to participate in social action activities and we want everyone to be involved. We have received 59 completed surveys from friends and members who have declared their social action passions and interests. We need to know what your passions and interests are too!

On Sunday, January 1st we raised \$335.00 in the **"Share the Plate"** offering for Charlotte S. Hunter's primary school students in northern Tanzania. Thank you for your generous donations.

Thank you to everyone who donated hats, work gloves and socks for us to distribute this holiday season at the ARC Food Pantry and in Kennedy Park. We were able to distribute 20 hats, 24 pairs of gloves and an amazing 143 pairs of warm winter socks!

On the last two Sundays in January, the Social Action Committee, in coordination with the Connecticut Network to Abolish the Death Penalty, provided a table in the foyer for congregants to write letters to their legislators **urging an end to the death penalty in Connecticut**. Thank you to **Gale Alexander, Joanne Davidson, Maureen O'Farrell, Doris Henderson, Anne Krieg, Jane Leff, Laura Lucsky, Barbara Searing, Mike Searing, Cindy Sherwood and Walt Sizemore** for volunteering to staff the letter-writing table! We will get an update on the status of repeal on Sunday, February 26th when the Social Action Committee will present a service on capital punishment at both the 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. services. The guest speaker is Dr. George Kain, an Associate Professor in the Division of Justice and Law Administration at Western Connecticut State University. He will discuss current efforts to abolish the death penalty in Connecticut and describe the prospects for Connecticut to become the 16th state to abolish the death penalty in this session of the legislature. Dr. Kain is on the Board of Directors of the Connecticut Network to Abolish the Death Penalty.



Adopt-A-Family: Thirty-seven members of our congregation provided 35 holiday gifts to 5 children and 10 adults who are served by the Interfaith Aids Ministry on Rose Street in Danbury. The children, who were 6 to 16 years old, each had three wishes: a toy, a book and an article of clothing. We delivered a basketball, a Dora the Explorer doll, a Bakugan toy (Bryce Alexander knew just the right one to get), a scrapbook kit, a remote control car, many books, coats and sweatshirts, and one shaving kit for a 16 year old boy! Adults each made two requests: a personal item and something for the home. For adults, we delivered hats, gloves, coats, sheets, dishes, pots and pans, glasses, a toaster, a set of wrenches and a movie pass. Since we knew the names and ages of our family members, the UUCD RE children made wonderful personalized tags for each present.

Morris Street School Project: Donna Lawrence reported that there are currently 14 volunteers who help out at least once a week for two hours or more mostly in kindergarten, 1st Grade and as wrap around mentors. IBM made a \$1000 grant which was mostly used for homework pencil boxes with crayons, pencils and erasers that children could keep at home to complete their homework assignments. The money was also used for practice kits for 3rd graders who are preparing for the Connecticut Mastery Test. Any leftover funds or additional donations will be used to pay for specific requests from Morris Street School classroom teachers. **Charlie Schott** is teaching the ukulele in an after-school music class and **Lynn Taborsak** helps with the after school “Great Games” program. We are truly making a difference in these children’s lives!

Green Sanctuary Update: The UUA has reviewed and accepted our application to be a candidate for designation as a Green Sanctuary Congregation. They are impressed with our plans for meeting the programs goals. Team Green will begin to implement our action plan for final accreditation.

Soup Kitchen Corner

On Saturday, February 4th, Soup Kitchen Team #4 will serve up a hot, nutritious meal at the Dorothy Day Soup Kitchen on Spring Street. Team Leader **Lisa Austin-Smith** will be joined by returning team members **Joanne Davidson, Debbie Musumeci, Cathie Billings, Jane Leff, Jan Galloway, Valerie Cochrane** and **Nancy Hershatter**. In addition, they will be assisted by new team members **Gerry Hinson, Mark Zerbe, Kelly Phifer, Wendy Chard** and **Dara O’Toole**.

Please remember that if you are not able to volunteer on your scheduled day, you must find a substitute from the alternates list which you can access from the member’s page of our website – www.uudanbury.org. The show must go on!

You can volunteer to come in at noon and prepare the main dish or you can join other volunteers at 1:30 pm to set-up the dining room, prepare lunches, desserts, salad and wrap silverware. Everyone serves the meal and helps with clean-up.

You can also help us feed our neighbors with a gift card in any amount from any local supermarket. In addition, please continue to bring in your weekly food offering so that we can eliminate hunger right here in our community! We have already given away almost 800 pounds of food. All of us can be “Super Stars” in the fight to end hunger!



Upcoming Events

Tibetan Singing Bowl Sound Healing Experience – Sunday, February 5th - 4:00 p.m.

Come relax, close your eyes, and drift into an altered state which allows the body to heal. Wear comfortable shoes, bring a blanket and pillow and/or mat and let the bells carry away all that no longer serves you. As your chakras re-align, breathe deeply and enter a profound state of physical, mental and emotional well-being. Leave feeling lighter in body and soul as your accumulated stress, anxiety and fear melt from your system. (Not recommended for small children as quiet and stillness is required for maximum experience.) Presented by Beth (Amrit Sadhana Kaur) Mullin, CHTP, IKYTA. Beth also teaches one of the weekly Yoga classes in Fellowship Hall. Tickets \$10.00 before January 31st or \$15.00 at the door. Contact Beth at 845-661-3630 to purchase tickets or for more information.

Save the date! On Saturday, March 17th, **UUCD member Carl Tichler will be accompanying Alice Pantone Unschuld in a recital of operatic and popular songs.** The performance will take place at 8:00 p.m. at the Danbury Music Center, at 256 Main Street in downtown Danbury. The program will include Russian songs, songs by Bellini and other bel canto, and Irish songs in honor of St. Patrick's Day, as well as a solo piece by Carl. Admission is free. Please join us for an entertaining evening!

2012 Women's Retreat



The 2012 Women's Retreat will be held May 4th – 6th at the Guest House Conference Center in Chester, CT. We have all been so excited about the retreat this year that we have already filled all of the rooms we had reserved at the Guest House. We are starting a waiting list for those who are still interested in attending the retreat as the number of ladies who can attend often changes before May. If you want to be placed on the waiting list please send in your registration form with a deposit check of \$50.00 (fully refundable) as soon as possible to

Barbara Myers, or you can just place it in the collection plate at the Sunday service. The balance of the room cost will be due when we can confirm that you have a room. The room rates are: double - \$275.00, and triple - \$240.00. Scholarship funds are available to assist with the cost of the retreat, and if you are interested please contact **Rev. Barbara Fast** or **Sue Tarshis**. We are also offering a day-trip option for the retreat again this year. The cost for attending the retreat on Saturday for meals and the Saturday activities is \$85.00. We will be taking reservations for the day-trip option as we get closer to the date of the event. The planning committee is already busy working on the program for our retreat. Get ready to reconnect with old friends, make new friends, build community, enjoy many workshop options and activities, and have fun!

Monthly Events

NAAM Abundance Meditation

This is a chanting meditation based on breathwork, hand seals and wonderful melodic mantras all geared toward strengthening, relaxing and opening you up on all levels: physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. This puts you in a position to receive an abundant life. This is a monthly meditation (first Saturday of the month, 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall). It changes each month to resonate with the earth's energies. No previous experience required - just bring a curious mind. You may bring a yoga mat, blanket or pillow to sit on and wear comfortable, loose clothing. UUCD member **Susan Shaner** is a Level 3 Naam Yoga instructor.



Women Out To Breakfast meets on the second Saturday of each month at 9:00 a.m. at Elmer's Diner in Danbury. Our next meeting date is Saturday, February 11th. Everyone is welcome. If you would like to attend, please contact **Karen Gillotti**.

Conversations

Conversations meets on the second Thursday of each month from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. in the Conference Room. All are welcome. The group chooses current topics of interest and their sources. Questions designed to stimulate conversation are emailed to all members. If you wish to receive our announcements and questions, please email at **Bruce Buzby**. Recently published books of interest are selected to stimulate and support discussions; reading the book is not mandatory in order to participate and enjoy the gathering. **February 12, 2012: Topic: European Monetary Crisis.** Facilitator: Unknown. Source: "Boomerang" by Michael Lewis, 2011, 224 pages, \$14.26. Michael Lewis possesses the rare storyteller's ability to make virtually any subject both lucid and compelling. In his new book, *Boomerang*, he actually makes topics like European sovereign debt, the International Monetary Fund and the European Central Bank not only comprehensible but also fascinating... The book could not be more timely given the worries about Europe's deepening debt crisis and the recent warning issued by Christine Lagarde, managing director of the I.M.F., that 'the current economic situation is entering a dangerous phase.'



"One's destination is never a place, but a new way of seeing things." – Henry Miller

The protagonists in each of our films this evening journey to a distant place with a specific end in mind. In this month of February, in this month of love, our films illustrate how elusive, yet so frustratingly simple, love can be.

7:00 p.m. – *The Date* – A magical evening, revisited twenty years later: A rendezvous planned long before the age of the world-wide web and texting.

7:30 p.m. – *Opa!* – On one level, this unabashed tribute to Valentine's Day tells once more the story of uptight nerd meets spontaneous nymph. On another level, it asks the questions, "When dreams collide, what should we do? Should we ever give up on our dreams?" On the enchanting Greek isle of Patmos, a straight-laced, high-tech archaeologist finds a culture that is slower paced, but also full of connectedness, celebration, and love. "Opa", in case you are wondering, by the way, is a Greek expression of joy. This evening's film *Opa!* makes a strong statement of joy and of affirmation of life.

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, February 10th, at 7:00 p.m. in the UUCD Conference Room. As usual, all are welcome. Pizza is provided for your culinary enjoyment. Bring your own beverage. Popcorn optional! Contributions gratefully accepted, all of which will go to the UUCD. (For more information on these films, check the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall, look under "UUCD Events.")

Saturday, February 4th – Exit 43 Concert - 8:00 p.m. (coffee and desert at 7:15 p.m.)

Exit 43 (from the Westport Unitarian Church) will be performing at UUCD to benefit the UUCD Morris Street School Program. Suggested donation \$15.00. For more information on Exit 43 go to www.exit43.net.

Upcoming Services**Two Services – 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.****Sunday, February 5th**The Fine Art of Failure

Rev. Frank Hall

"We need to build a tolerance for failure -- our own, and other's. There's only one way to do that..."

Rev. Barbara Fast and Rev. Frank Hall are exchanging pulpits this Sunday. Frank is an extraordinary preacher and minister. Come welcome him back with that warm UUCD embrace. The choir is singing this Sunday!

Barbara will be preaching in Westport.

Sunday, February 12thHauling Out Stones- A Sermon on Forgiveness

Rev. Barbara Fast

We will look for insight into some aspects of forgiveness, through the text of the parable, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, Rembrandt's painting of the same name, some poems and our lives.

Sunday, February 19thSocial Responsibility Towards our Community from the Islamic Perspective

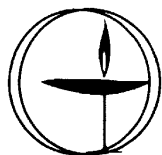
Shazeeda Kahn

The Islamic tradition is deeply rooted in social justice and it is our responsibility towards God. These Divine principles must be manifested in our actions in order to positively affect our community. We warmly welcome back Shazeeda Kahn back to the UUCD pulpit. Rev. Barbara Fast will be leading worship.

Sunday, February 26thAbolishing the Death Penalty

Social Action Committee

The Social Action Committee will present a service on capital punishment at both the 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. services. The guest speaker is Dr. George Kain, an Associate Professor in the Division of Justice and Law Administration at Western Connecticut State University. He will discuss current efforts to abolish the death penalty in Connecticut and describe the prospects for Connecticut to become the 16th state to abolish the death penalty in this session of the legislature. Dr. Kain is on the Board of Directors of the Connecticut Network to Abolish the Death Penalty.



**Unitarian Universalist
Congregation of Danbury
24 Clapboard Ridge Road
Danbury, CT 06811**

FIRST CLASS MAIL