

CONTACT US

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Sunday Service Assistant	Nancy O'Brien		
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Social Media Editor	Herb Emanuelson		
Newsletter Editor	Lisa Smith-Horn		

**February Newsletter Deadline is
Wednesday, February 19**

The Universalist Church
433 Fern Street
West Hartford, CT 06107

Phone: 860-233-3669, ext. 106
E-mail: admin@westhartforduu.org

Fern Street was paved this year, including the installation of a new bike path. The West Hartford bike lane ordinances dictate that it is illegal to park on any street with a dedicated bike path. Starting December 26th, the West Hartford Police Department will begin enforcing this law by ticketing cars parked on Fern Street.

If you are accustomed to parking on Fern Street, please find alternative parking. If our parking lot is full, you may park in the neighborhood across the street. As a reminder, we are not allowed to park in the Baptist Church's parking lot.



Fern Street Parking Update

The Universalist

*FEBRUARY 2020
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER*



Minister's Reflections

Sometimes people wonder if and when they should reach out to speak with a minister. I hear concerns from folks that we're "really busy" or that what they want "doesn't really rise to that level of importance." Sometimes I don't hear from someone until many, many years after when we might have had a really wonderful or helpful conversation.

While it's true that there is always a lot to do at church, it is equally true that speaking with you about all sorts of things—your lives, your questions, your wants and needs, your concerns—is a part of this ministry that I absolutely **CHERISH** and would be miserable without. So, in that spirit, here is "When to Call the Minister," written by my internship mentor and friend, the Rev. Dr. Walt Wieder:

- When you haven't met me yet, but would like to.
- When a sympathetic ear might help.
- When you're going in the hospital or know someone else who is.
- When someone close to you dies or is critically ill.
- When you're planning to be married.
- When you return from vacation.
- When your son or daughter graduates from college.
- When you have a child to be dedicated.
- When you've been arrested, or ought to be.
- When you want to learn more about Unitarian Universalism.
- When you're scared or thrilled or hopeful.
- When you'd like to make a bequest to the church.
- When you, your spouse, or your child gets a big promotion...or loses a job.
- When you're considering joining the congregation.
- When a friend of yours wants to know more about our faith.
- When you have suggestions about the programs for the church.
- When you have suggestions for a sermon or about the worship services.
- When you'd like to help with committee work or congregational activities.
- When you want to discuss community issues or would like my involvement.
- When you're mad at me.
- When you'd like to talk religion.

And, I would add: pretty much whenever you'd like me to know more about you and your life than I do now...or when you'd like to know more about our congregation, our ministry, or me!

I look forward to all our conversations very, very much. Faithfully,

Rev. Adam



Rev. Dr. Adam Robersmith

WORSHIP

SUNDAY 10 am

February 2

Rev. Adam

Universalist Church Choir

February 9

Rev. Adam

Universalist Bell Choir

February 16

Rev. Joy Christi

Universalist Church Choir

February 23

Rev. Adam

**Universalist Church Choir
& Children's Choir**

Director of Lifespan Religious Education



Dear Friends,

This spring we'll be offering a variety of educational programs that center around coming together in fellowship. Let me tell you a little about what we're planning.

We'll start in March with Guest At Your Table – you may remember the cardboard boxes for your supper table. This year we'll do things a bit differently, with potluck for all ages. We'll spend a little time learning about their program for this year and the important work that they're helping to sustain, and gather together for a meal. Mark your calendars, it's happening March 14.

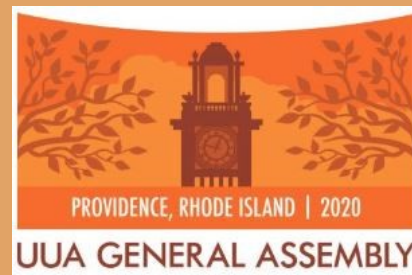
Next will come the return of the Passover Seder on April 11. It will be great to have this event again with children from the church school helping to lead. It's always been a favorite evening in our church year for anyone who has attended before.

Based on the success of last year's Ramadan Iftar dinner, we'll be hosting one again on May 8. Come learn about this Islamic traditional feast, breaking the fast during daylight hours of Ramadan, then join together for a shared meal potluck style.

I'm looking forward to these events and I hope you will too. We're still seeking some volunteers to help organize, so if you are interested in being a part of one of those teams, please look for the signup outside the Program Center.

Faithfully Yours,

Dan Bouchard



Join Us!

Our national annual denominational conference, General Assembly (GA), is wonderfully close by this year, in Providence, Rhode Island. Please consider attending! Most of the church's staff will be attending and it can be incredibly energizing to be around thousands of UU's from across the world! Especially in this pivotal national election year, nourish your spirit by worshipping, organizing, connecting, rallying, and engaging with your Unitarian Universalist community. Details are at <https://www.uua.org/ga>.

We are looking for church members to be delegates.

Please contact Lisa at info@westhartforduu.org if you would like to attend GA and be a voting church member.

OpportUUnities for Involvement

WORSHIP

Worship Readers & Liturgists (Rev. Adam - minster@westhartforduu.org)

Worship Ushers (Peggy Gray - kyacks50@yahoo.com)

LIFESPAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (Dan Bouchard - LRE@westhartforduu.org)

Religious Education Classes & Youth Group

Religious Education Committee

Religious Education Connections

Adult Religious Education & Programming

MUSIC MINISTRIES (Ted Hine - thine@westhartforduu.org)

The Universalist Choir

The Universalist Bell Choir

The Children's Choir

OUR CARING CHURCH

Care Team (Kat Becker - katbeck@snet.net)

Lay Caring Ministers (Rev. Joy Christi - communityminister@westhartforduu.org)

Creative Hands Knitting Ministry (Monica & Patty (creativehands@westhartforduu.org))

Shawl Knitting Ministry (Dawn Zillich - aurorazillich@aol.com)

Touch of the Hand Flower Delivery (Kathryn Henderson - klhenderson7@gmail.com)

Fellowship Hour (Jeff Tyler - jeffrey.a.tyler@me.com)

CHURCH PROGRAMS

Small Groups (Anne Bailey – smallgroups@westhartforeuu.org)

Fern Street Film Series (Anne Bailey – abailey379@gmail.com)

Short Story Conversations (Linda Scacco - lscacco849@aol.com)

Women's Circle (Linda Scacco - lscacco849@aol.com)

Men's Group & Retreats (Joe Wilson - JWILSO11@travelers.com)

Social Justice Ministry (Linda Scacco - lscacco849@aol.com)

COMMUNICATION TEAM (Lisa Sgamboti - admin@westhartforduu.org)

Church Communications: **Weekly Notes, Website & Social Media** (communication@westhartforduu.org)

Office Angels (administrative assistance)

FERN STREET FOOD MINISTRY (Jacob Lee- foodministry@westhartforduu.org)

Foodshare Mobile (Jacob Lee – FoodShareMobile@westhartforduu.org)

Community Breakfast (Jacob Lee – CommunityBreakfast@westhartforduu.org)

Food Pantry (Maxine Fischer – FoodPantry@westhartforduu.org)

Backpack Program (Katherine Wilson – Backpack@westhartforduu.org)

Have-a-Heart Sandwich Program (Peggy Gray – HaveAHeart@westhartforduu.org)



GRATITUDE & THANK YOUs

You all have been amazing. December turned out to be a huge month for the Food Ministry:

THANK YOU TO....

*The Rotary Club of West Hartford - \$3,000

*Anonymous Donor - \$4,000

*Lisa Sgamboti and her family - 2 Kitchen Shelving Units!

*Mysterious Benefactor - 1 New Food Pantry Shelving Unit

*The Knitting Ministry - \$1,300 raised for the Backpack program!

We also received amazing support in food donations as well. Thank you to The Society CT for their donation of 230lbs of food.

2019 IN REVIEW

The Food Ministry programs made leaps and bounds this year in helping to ease food insecurity in our neighborhoods and surrounding communities.

Food Pantry: 28,000 Meals served in the form of **15.89 TONS of food.**

Backpack provided 2500 backpacks and a whopping **23,750lbs** to over 14 schools.

Community Breakfast served **over 2,300 clients** and provided over 4,900lbs in donation and salvage goods.

Have a Heart provided **10,400 sandwiches** for night time meals to the participants of House of Bread.

The **Mobile Food Truck** provides food, simply by using our parking lot, to **over 3,200 people.**

The Fern Street Food Ministry in 2019 provides over 63,000 meals with all of our programs.

We couldn't have done this without our volunteers! They are the people who make this happen. If you know a volunteer, thank them, they've earned it.

SCHEDULE

Mobile Foodshare & Community Breakfast:

February 10 & 24

Food Pantry:

February 15

Backpack:

Wednesday afternoons, Thursday & Friday mornings year round

Have A Heart sandwich making:

Tuesdays at 8:45 am year round

FOOD DRIVE NEEDS

The Backpack program currently needs:

Canned Beans
Canned Corn

The Pantry currently needs:

Canned Vegetables
Quinoa
Soups

The Community Kitchen currently needs:

Bottled Water

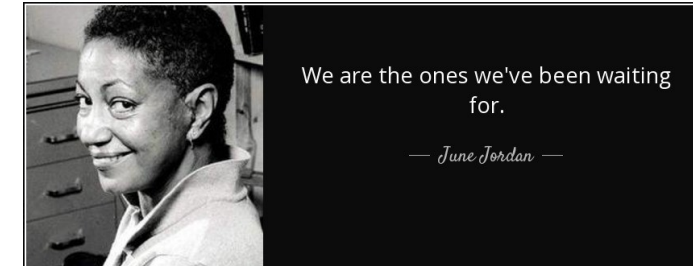
foodministry@westhartforduu.org

westhartforduu.org/food_ministry

860-233-3669 x109

Lay Pastoral Team

Companioning One Another



Alice Walker in her book, *We Are the Ones We Have Been Waiting For* writes, "It was the poet June Jordan who wrote 'We are the ones we have been waiting for.' Sweet Honey in the Rock turned those words into song. Hearing this song, I have witnessed thousands of people rise to their feet in joyful recognition and affirmation. June Jordan, who died of cancer in 2002, was a brilliant, fierce, radical, and frequently furious poet. We were friends for thirty years.

We were not friends who saw each other often; nor the kind of friends who discussed unpublished work. In fact, we sometimes disagreed profoundly with each other. We were the kind of friends, instead, who understood that we were forever on the same side: the side of the poor, the economically, spiritually, and politically oppressed, 'the wretched of the earth.' And on the side, too, of the revolutionaries, teachers, and spiritual leaders who seek transformation of the world. ... I took great comfort in this reality. It seems a model of what can help us rebalance the world. Friendship with others: populations, peoples, countries."

Our mission statement as your Lay Pastoral Team embodies Alice Walker's model of friendship within our congregation and it is based on the ideals of companioning one another. Companioning originates from two Latin words, *com* meaning together with and *panis* meaning bread. Thus, it moved into the word in Old French *compaignon*, literally 'one who breaks bread with another.' As your Lay Pastoral Team we give and receive great moments of companioning. We are able to share and "break the bread" with our congregants' journeys, doubts, day-to-day questions, joys, and challenges.

We hope that as this month of the heart unfolds you too may learn about companioning one another. It is a gift we can provide to and for one another. And as Alice Walker noted, this companioning does, in fact, change and rebalance our world!

Your Lay Pastoral Team members are: Nancy Gennett, Cathy Hitchcock, Carol Mader, Ray Giolitto, Edie Thompson, Joyce Harmon, Denise Kennedy, Kat Becker, and Rev. Joy Christi Przeworski



MEMBER TOWN HALL MEETING TO RATIFY THE 2020 BUDGET

Sunday, February 9th: After the Worship Service

Per our March 2017 by-law revisions, the Board of Trustees is bringing forward to the congregation our proposed 2020 budget for ratification. Please come to our Town Hall Meeting in Fiske Hall after the worship service to discuss and vote. A copy of the proposed budget is available in Lisa's office or a downloadable copy will be available by email or Weekly e-News. Contact Lisa for more information: info@westhartforduu.org

Lifespan Religious Education



Save the Date! Men's Retreat will be April 24-26, 2020

Please mark your calendars to attend the 10th annual Retreat from Friday afternoon, April 24th, through Sunday morning, April 26th. We will again be meeting at the historic farmhouse at Wisdom House Retreat Center in Litchfield, only 45 minutes from West Hartford. This is a wonderful venue for UU men to meet and, through discussion and exploration of topics of concern, come away refreshed and changed with a new understanding of themselves and what it means to be part of a community of UU men. We are currently planning the program and are looking for suggestions for Friday and Saturday evening activities. Details on signing up for the retreat,

including a Saturday only option, will be announced in early March. Contact Dave St.Germain (dkstgermain@gmail.com or phone 860-997-1805) for more information.



February's Plate Sharing Recipient is **Volunteers in Psychotherapy**. Half of the plate donations (whether made by check, cash, or online giving) will go to the organization chosen for each month. The other half will go into our operating funds as usual. **Volunteers in Psychotherapy** is a community nonprofit organization that is funded by private donations and charitable foundations. They provide private psychotherapy for no fee (or a reduced fee) to people who wouldn't otherwise have access to therapy because of cost or lack of insurance. Clients "pay for" their therapy by doing independent volunteer work for the charity of their choice.

Volunteers in Psychotherapy Presentation

Sunday, February 16th 11:15- 12:15pm in the Program Center

Join us for a brief presentation and question-and-answer period with licensed clinical psychologist Dr. Richard Shulman, founder and director of **Volunteers in Psychotherapy**, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing affordable and truly private psychotherapy for the community, in exchange for volunteer work clients donate to the charity of their choice. During the month of February, we will be sharing the Sunday offering plate with this organization. Sign up sheet is posted outside the Program Center.



Our Caring Church

Care Team: *Meals, Cards, Rides, Shawls*

The Care Team is available to provide some extra support and TLC to church members who are going through a hard time. We are a very small team, and could use volunteers to be available to make meals, provide rides to church and to medical appointments. If you are interested in helping, you would be called on from time to time. No regular commitment is needed. Please consider! Please call Kat Becker at 860-997-1804 if interested, or contact Rev. Joy Christi at communityminister@westhartforduu.org.

Shawl Knitting Ministry

Typically, the Shawl Ministry will meet every third Wednesday at 7pm in the Program Center. However, our dates are changed for January and February, **please take note: We will meet February 20th**. Join us for an evening of reflection and crafting prayer shawls for anyone with joys to celebrate or difficult times to bear. Anyone may participate regardless of skill. Lessons, support and supplies are available. Questions? Contact Dawn at 860-378-9561.

Creative Hands: Daytime Knitting and Craft Ministry



Our group meets every Tuesday from 11 am—1 pm in the Memorial Library. All are welcome to join our friendly and fun gathering. For more information, please contact Monica or Patty at creativehands@westhartforduu.org.

A Valentine Message

*Poem written by
longtime member Mort Dunn*

A message on a billboard sign,
"Will you be my Valentine?"
It was not signed, I wondered why,
Was it written by a gal or guy"
Was this some distant soldier's plea,
Of what he hope would come to be.

And was this person young or old,
And was she shy, or was he bold?
And on this very road far down,
The other billboard in our town
Read, "Yes, I'll be your Valentine,
For I am yours, and you are mine!"



Year after year, it was the same,
And still no mention of a name,
While some townspeople did aver,
They knew whom these two lovers were.

And then one year one jagged line
Through picture of a hearts' design
And on the remaining billboard sign,
"I've lost my dearest Valentine"

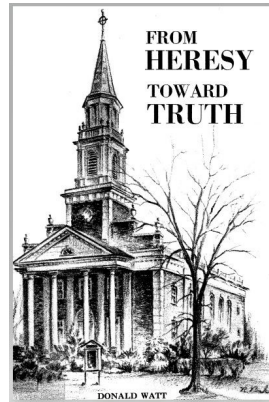
2021 Bicentennial Celebration: Our History

According to the book *From Heresy to Truth* by Donald Watt our church school is the oldest Universalist Sunday School in Connecticut. Founded in 1827, there is an extant printed program for an “Exhibition of the Universalist Sabbath School” which dates from approximately that year and included in the exhibition were instrumental ensembles, singing by the school children, hymns and other music, and long favorite recitations, playlets and tableaux.

Also, in 1835 the {Universalist} Society voted:

That General Wm. Hayden’s Bill for finishing the Sunday school room amounting to fifty-five dollars be accepted.

Lifelong learning has always been a part of the fabric of this church!



Plant-Based Potluck, Fiske Hall

Sunday, February 23rd, 6:00-8:00pm

Plant-based diets have received a lot of attention lately from sources as diverse as the Netflix show *Game Changers*, new cookbooks put out by celebrity chefs like Jamie Oliver, and articles in the New York Times. However, it’s hard to know if a plant-based diet might appeal to you unless you’ve had some of the food. But let’s be honest, it takes a real commitment to learn about how to make the change to a plant-based diet without dinners becoming a parade of burritos and Buddha bowls!



Let’s see if we can teach each other about the foods of a plant-based diet with a potluck! Many of our members have eaten a plant-based diet for years and many members have just started doing so. A potluck will provide everybody the opportunity to share their experiences with plant-based diets, discover new dishes that they may love and exchange recipes with friends.

In addition to sharing a plant-based meal, I’ll provide attendees with information about some local Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farms in the area. We live in an area replete with farms and farmers who offer us great local produce. Becoming a CSA supporter provides us an excellent opportunity to help the farmers and get great food, but it can pose us a challenge, namely, how to cook all of that produce! Sometimes, the farmers give us things that we’ve never even seen before let alone cooked! At the potluck we can learn who has done this in the past and might help us figure out if a CSA works for us and strategies of how to deal with all the produce.

When it comes to the Plant-based Potluck let’s take this approach: For more accomplished plant-based cooks, please bring a dish that you love but most folks new to plant-based diets may not know. For those new to plant-based cooking, bring something that you’ve found you like. For those who haven’t tried plant-based diets but have become curious about them, bring something plant-based, even if it comes straight from the store, and your willingness to discover. For everybody who brings a homemade dish, bring a recipe that can fit on one page printed in a large font that potluck attendees can easily photograph to take home.

We will host the Plant-Based Potluck in Fiske Hall, the evening of Sunday, Feb 23, 6:00-8:00. Families involved in the Youth Group or Coming of Age programs can come join us and then let the kids go off to their things at 6:30. The parents can hang out and chat after the kids have eaten and run!

For more information, please contact Jeff Tyler, at jeffrey.a.tyler@me.com

Short Story Discussion Group

2nd Wednesday of each month, 3:30 - 4:30pm, in the Parlor



Join us on Wednesday, February 12 for a lively discussion and analysis of this month’s short story: “**Everything That Rises Must Converge**” by Flannery O’Connor.

We are selecting stories this coming year from a new source book: “100 Years of the Best American Short Stories”, edited by Lorrie Moore and Heidi Pitlor, the longest running and best-selling series of short fiction in the country. The stories and commentary included offer an extraordinary guided tour through a century of literature with what Moore calls “all its wildnesses of character and voice.”

It doesn’t take long to read a short story, so you can readily fit it into a busy schedule! Come join us for any or all of these story sessions! The book can be



Friday Night FILM SERIES

The Biggest Little Farm

Friday, February 21st at 7:00 pm

(doors open at 6:45pm)

John and Molly Chester, a videographer and a chef, traded city living for 200 acres of barren California farmland and a dream to harvest in harmony with nature. This documentary chronicles the journey to create their spectacular Apricot Lane Farm, a biodiverse design for living that inspires possibilities beyond their farm, its seasons, and our wildest imagination.

This is an very watchable and entertaining true story with breathtaking cinematography.

Take a peek at the trailer: <https://www.biggestlittlefarmmovie.com/videos/>

Bring a simple snack or beverage (alcoholic or non), if you’d like ~ for yourself, and to share with others, if you chose.

There will be an opportunity for discussion afterwards, if you choose to stay on.

For more information, call Anne Bailey 860-379-7740



Blood Drive: February 17th

Greetings to all from the 2020 Red Cross Blood Drive team! We are pleased to announce that as we enter February, it is only a couple of weeks away from the church hosting and sponsoring the annual Red Cross Blood drive in Fiske Hall on

Monday February 17th

1:30-6:30 PM

Universalist Church of West Hartford



I would like to thank Joyce Falkin for the wonderful work she contributed to our successful campaign in 2019. Thankfully, for 2020 we have a long term donor and church member Pat Wilson assisting this year. Pat Wilson has given for years because she wants contribute and be sure friends and family have blood available when needed.

Our sponsorship of the blood drive began well over 30 years ago and was re-established and led for years by our long standing member Dick Brigham. He thought that it would be appropriate to have it as close to Valentine's Day as feasible. In 2019, we had a great sign-up response toward our goal, however, we had numerous donors that could not give due to a low iron count which is taken by the Red Cross prior to actually donating, so we came up a bit short on actual pints collected.

Four easy ways to sign-up:

- * www.redcrossblood.org
- * 1-800-RED-CROSS (1-800-733-2767)
- * Sign-up sheets around the church
- * Questions or sign-up Contact Scott MacCloy or Pat Wilson via email, in Church or on the phone

If you are unavailable on our blood drive date or have given within 58 days before our February 17th, I encourage you to sign-up at the red cross website/phone above for another Red Cross blood drive in our area. The supplies in February normally decline to under a dangerous four day supply level. If you can join us, feel free to sign up and bring a friend. If you can't join us please consider referring a friend that is available. See you in Church (and at the drive)!

Scott MacCloy and Pat Wilson



Women's Circle

Tuesday, February 11th

7:00 - 8:30pm in the Parlor

We will try to brighten this winter season by exploring some of the ways we find to make winter more enjoyable. Women's Circle is a place for women of all ages to connect, to learn, to speak, to be heard, and a place to enhance women's lives in the spirit of heartfelt and mindful sharing. We bring to our group who we are, drawing from our own experiences. All are welcome; come to one, come to all. There is always an open space for everyone – no need to sign up in advance. Meetings are open to members and friends of the church. Come when you can.

For more information contact Linda Scacco at 860-490-6699

Ask the Minister: ANSWERED

Do you have any plumbing and ministry stories you can tell?

My last congregation had a basement that flooded every other year the entire time I was there. (That basement housed our classrooms and offices.) Twice it was incredibly cold winters and drainpipes to the sewers that weren't buried deep enough...so the drains froze. Other times it was massive amounts of rain and groundwater and sump pumps that either couldn't keep up or just stopped working. Regardless, I spent more time trying to make sump pumps work, figuring out what to do with the drainpipes, and cleaning up the basement than I would ever have guessed from my time in seminary. I've also had to do light electrical work, a bit of carpentry, and some landscaping as a minister!

Has the Universalist Church considered becoming a sanctuary congregation for an undocumented immigrant?

I don't know if that was ever discussed before my time. Since I've been here, we did discuss it at the Social Action Coordinating Team. (That's a group of folks who represent the Social Justice Ministry, the Food Ministry, the Connections Team, and the Board, as well as our Director of Lifespan Religious Education and me.) Knowing how much it takes to keep the Food Ministry (our major social action commitment) going, as well as what's needed for the Social Justice Ministry, the Lifespan Religious Education program, and our other current building use...the Coordinating Team realized quickly that we are not capable of becoming a sanctuary congregation in a way that would be good for someone seeking refuge. What I have learned from other clergy who have done sanctuary work confirms that we aren't going to be a good host. I am absolutely in favor of supporting other congregations that are able to do this work, though!

Faithfully,
Rev. Adam

THE UNIVERSALIST PLAYERS

Presents...

March 27-29, 2020



Happiness is...

The Universalist Players return to stage an intergenerational production of "You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown" on Friday, March 27 at 7:00 p.m., Saturday, March 28 at 2:00 p.m., and Sunday, March 29 at 2:00 p.m. in Fiske Hall. Based on the beloved comic strip "Peanuts" by Charles M. Schulz, this family-friendly musical will delight audience members of all ages. General admission tickets are \$15 each and \$10 each for students under 18 and seniors over 65. Tickets can be purchased in advance during Fellowship Hour, at the door or on our EventBrite page. See you there!