

JANUARY 2012



**A Welcoming
Congregation**

UUSIS News & Views

THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY IN STAMFORD
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Worship Services Sundays at 10:00 AM

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January 1 "A Christmas Memory"

This will be the 18th year that Dot Sonn will lead the group reading of Truman Capote's classic story, "A Christmas Memory". Though it is New Year's Day, we hope many of you will make it to UUSIS that morning, to enjoy this traditional annual event with us. The Kringles have been ordered from Wisconsin!!!

January 8 Dancing in the Streets: What Makes Us Happy? the Rev. Dawn Sangrey

What we believe about human happiness reflects our assumptions about human nature and the nature of the divine. Talking about joy invites a certain lightness, teasing us out of taking ourselves too seriously. At the same time, questions about happiness touch three essential religious questions: Who are we? Why are we here? What are we to do?

January 15 Listening Is A Spiritual Discipline: An Introduction to Small Group Ministry – Rev. Sangrey

To listen with an open heart requires patience and deep attention to the other. In Small Group Ministry groups, each participant has the rare opportunity to listen without talking and to talk without being interrupted. This service will introduce you to the practices of Small Group Ministry, in preparation for the launch of UUSIS' SGM program.

January 22 The Changing Face of Reproductive Rights Guest speaker Erin Livensparger, Planned Parenthood

Separating facts from the myths clouding the pro-choice/pro-life divide, our guest speaker will outline the alarming direction extreme legislation could be taking us as a society, and what it means not just for women's rights, but for affordable health education and service access for men, women and families. In other words, our overall quality of life and ultimately, our spirituality.

January 29 One Strong Body – Rev. Sangrey

Unitarian Universalists are famous for marching to a different drummer. They say trying to get UUs to move in the same direction is like herding cats. We celebrate diversity, encourage uniqueness, and privilege the individual. At the same time, we recognize that we cannot develop in isolation. We need each other in order to become our best selves. In these days of transition, how would you describe your congregational identity? All together, who are you?



Dawn's Message

New Directions in a New Year

In September 2010 when my interim ministry was beginning here in Stamford, I invited you to imagine a trapeze artist who is swinging on a bar high above the crowd: she swings and swings and gets up to top speed and then lets go of the bar and hurtles toward another bar on the other side of the big top. This image describes the situation of a congregation in transition, a congregation in the space between one settled minister and the next.

In October 2011, your situation changed. Here's one way to imagine it: the trapeze artist dropped into a safety net and bounced back up, only now she's headed in another direction. You're still in transition, but the target has changed. Your search for a settled minister has been replaced by preparation for a Developmental Minister (DM), a minister who will come to work with you on some specific developmental goals.

Your congregational leaders have identified three areas for development: Identity, Membership, and Money. Strengthening these aspects of your congregational life will enable you to move forward toward a more vital and exciting faith community. The Working Groups established to begin this effort are just getting off the ground—you'll be hearing more from them early this year. It's not too late to join one of them if you have ideas and energy to share.

Identity: contact: Norris Wakefield (nwake65@optonline.org);
Membership: contact Christine Fountain (fountain@optonline.net);
Money: contact Meilen Wong (mchwong485@gmail.com).

The interim ministry has also changed, as a result of this congregational shift. The next three months will be a critical working time for digging into Identity, Membership, and Money. As you become more clear about what you want your DM to work on, the Transitions Director at the UUA will be talking about you with prospective candidates so that their skills can be matched with your needs. The more you can say about what you want, the more your DM will be able to help.

In the spring, after the new DM has been appointed, but before he/she begins to work with you, you will continue to make progress with Identity, Membership, and Money—trying out new ideas, seeking help from outside resources in the District and at the UUA—so that you have a strong foundation on which to build with the new DM.

The next six months promise to be an exciting and fruitful time in our interim ministry. It's an exciting time to be in Stamford at UUSIS, and I am grateful to be walking with you.

Blessings.

Dawn

The Rev. Dawn Sangrey, Interim Minister

A few words from the Vice President...

There is something special going on around the congregation these days...

The first Sunday of December, we opened our doors once again to serve hot cocoa to the downtown community as part of the Holiday celebration. While we have hosted the Cocoa Caper for many years, this year was special. Not only did we serve over nine hundred people hot cocoa, we also dared to break out of “what was always done” and tried some new things.

There was a Holiday Boutique where people purchased new and gently used items as gifts. The ladies did a brisk business all evening raising over \$800 for the society. Over \$300 was raised for the Food Bank between the Bake Sale, hosted by the Small Congregations Collaborative, and the donation boxes located around the room. A spontaneous and wonderful addition to the atmosphere this year was Maureen playing holiday songs on our Steinway. One eight-year-old beginning piano student, who has only an electric keyboard at home, politely asked if she could perform “Silver Bells” on our grand piano. She did – and received a round of appreciative applause.

We are thankful to **Jay and Christie Fountain** for their willing and able leadership in pulling together all of the details of the event. Special thanks to **Helene Devin** and **Ann Preston** for organizing the Holiday Boutique. And many thanks to the army of volunteers who came out to help make the event such a success: **Kaja Bace, Nikki Barstow, Shelly Chase, Don Currie, Karen Davis, Ellie De Ridder, Wayne Esquivel, Maureen Ferrara-Higle, Nancy Furnas, Robin Gans, David Hoskins, Jeff King, Rolf Maurer, John Nolan, Ann Rustici, Bob Sanders, Robin Stein, Norris Wakefield, Leslie Weinberg** and **Margi Winters**. From preparing cocoa, greeting the guests, and leaving the sanctuary cleaner than it was before the event, everyone contributed in their own special way. We are blessed to have every one of you as a part of our community and are grateful for your continued service and dedication.

Another addition to the Caper was UUSIS teaming up with members from other small congregations in Stamford. Members of the Small Congregations Collaborative, which started this Fall, are committed to working together to strengthen our outreach to the community. Many volunteers from other congregations came out to help with the event. A grand beginning of collaboration among the different faith communities!

The next collaboration is being planned for January 20: hosting an evening at Neighbors Link Stamford. Neighbors Link Stamford is a new non-profit organization that provides a comprehensive resource center for recent immigrants in the Stamford, Connecticut area. Their mission is to strengthen the whole community by actively enhancing the healthy integration of recent immigrants. Volunteers from each congregation will work together to prepare and serve a simple dinner for 150 clients. This may seem like a daunting task for a small group, but working together, it becomes a doable. If you would like to help, please contact Linda King or Bonnie Currie.

There is definitely something special in the air around the congregation these days... it is the fire of commitment. Let it grow, let it burn brightly inside of each and every one of us. Share the flame!

In Leadership, Faith and Service,

Linda King

Above and Beyond

If I were wealthy, I would commission a third stained glass window to St. **David (Hoskins)** and he would be depicted, not with keys or a book like our Saints Peter and Paul, but with a toolbox. David has been invaluable in keeping our buildings functional, responding to my pleas for help when there is a leak or a flood, a light switch to be repaired before a State Inspection of the Bright Minds daycare facility, or a door that has swollen shut because of too much rain and can only be opened with a gargantuan effort beyond most parishioners. He always goes Above & Beyond for UUSIS. Thank you, David! -- Bonnie Currie

Ann Rustici and **John Nolan** have been setting up for coffee hour every Sunday since September. They come in early, bring the necessary supplies, fill the pots, and help the hospitality volunteer get ready for the social hour that follows our worship service. We are grateful for their faithful service. Thank you, Ann and John.

Ann Preston and Helen Devin would like to thank all of the wonderful people who donated items for our Holiday Boutique. We were able to raise over \$800.00 for the church due to your generosity. We would like to give a special thanks to **Ellie De Ridder, Margi Winters, John Nolan, and Bob Nixon** who helped set up the tables and sell our gifts, and to **Karen Davis, Micaela Dockendorf, and Meilin Wong** who helped us price our items. We also cannot forget to thank our official bell ringer and sign putter-upper **Bob Sanders** for drawing in the crowds. Thank you one and all and best wishes for a happy holiday season!

Our Christmas Eve service is made possible by a team of lay leaders and dedicated volunteers. This year we are deeply indebted to **Bob Nixon** and **Rolf Mauer**, the service coordinators and their army of greeters, singers, ushers, hosts and hostesses including: **Vesta Callendar, Dianne Daddona, Nancy Furnas, Maisie Kohnstamm, Lynne Lane, Sheryl Ma, Diane Montgomery, Janis Stahlhut, Leslie Weinberg, Maureen Ferrara-Higle** (choir), **Jacqueline Carlsen, Michelle Chase, Bonnie Currie, Alfa Drent, Robin Gans, Jeff King, Linda King, Ray Mosher, John Nolan, Julie Punishill, and Meilen Wong. Thank you!!**

*Let your editor know about the people in the congregation who have made a special contribution **Above and Beyond**. Sing the praises on our unsung heroes!*

New Small Group Ministry Groups Forming at UUSIS in January

What happens in a Small Group Ministry group is deceptively simple: a group of eight to ten people meet once a month for two hours with a facilitator. Each meeting is organized around a topic of general interest, such as fear, mothers, approval, curiosity, art, failure, habits and rote, and so on. The topic changes every month, but the structure of the meeting stays the same. This structure creates a safe container for people to listen and talk to each other with sincerity and openness. It provides a way for the participants to practice honest speaking and deep listening.

(continued on page 8)

Virginia Streitfeld Restoration Fund



The UU Women had its annual holiday party at the home of **Nancy Furnas** who graciously offered her home in a short notice emergency. We had a marvelous turnout of twenty-one people and **Alfa Drent** offered toasts to some of our deceased members; **Connie Scanley, Irene Dalcher, Virginia Streitfeld** and others. We decided to give \$1250 from the U UW fund in Virginia's name to projects for the church. The "Virginia Streitfeld Restoration Fund" will be set up and used for restoration projects for the church such as the stained glass window. Like the "Irene Dalcher Music Fund", people can contribute money to the restoration fund in memory of Virginia. Checks should be made out to UUSIS and on the memo write "Virginia Streitfeld Restoration Fund".

More News & Views

Guest At Your Table Collection

On January 8 after New Years, it will be time to return your Guest at the Table gifts! We'll close our Guest at Your Table Program. In recent weeks UUSC Guest at Your Table boxes and Stories of Hope have taught us about real people engaged in struggles for Justice in the United States and around the world. It also taught us about our power to change the world when we share our blessings to support the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee.

Before bringing back your Guest at Your Table Donation, please be sure to convert your cash and coins to a check made out to the UUSIS with GAYT in the memo line. Be generous by raising your donation, from say \$23 to \$25 or more. Please fill out your information on the box. We'll announce the results of the Guest at Your Table Program as soon as possible.

If you did not get your box or Stories of Hope booklet, contact Leslie Weinberg. Membership levels are Individual \$40, Dual, \$75, Senior \$20, Youth \$10. Donations of \$100 or more are eligible to be matched by the UU Congregation of Shelter Rock in Manhasset, NY. You may also donate securely at uusc.org/givetoguest by clicking on "Contribute online to Guest at Your Table".

--Leslie Weinberg, lesweinberg@optimum.net

Spring World of Religions Speakers

Religious diversity is our mantra here at UUSIS. It will come to life this spring as the Religious Services Committee will present a Jewish cantor, a Zen Buddhist meditation leader, an Anglican minister and Hindu leaders and dancers as guest speakers. These four spiritual traditions are reflected in the seven religious flags hanging in our sanctuary. Our goal is to learn about and experience the beliefs, rituals and spiritual practice from people who participate in each faith tradition. Hopefully, we will gain a better appreciation for our own UU tradition on honoring many faith traditions and our commitment to interfaith work in Stamford. The committee would like to add more guest speakers on the world of religions within the limits of time and resources. A happy multifaith 2012 to all.

--Bob Nixon, co-chair Religious Services Committee



Obituary

Claude Montgomery's father, David Montgomery, passed away on December 2, 2011. Born December 1, 1927, Mr. Montgomery was a Farnam Professor of History at Yale University. Considered one of the foremost academics specializing in United States labor history, he wrote extensively on the subject. Along with David Brody and Herbert Gutman he is credited with founding the field of "new labor history" in the U.S. An extensive biography of Mr. Montgomery can be found at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Montgomery_\(historian\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Montgomery_(historian)). Please join us in expressing heartfelt sympathy to the Montgomery family in their time of grief.

UUSIS INFORMATION

PERSONNEL & CONTACTS:

Interim Minister – The Rev. Dawn Sangrey

Minister Emeritus – The Rev. Stan Aronson

President – Bonnie Currie
(curriesboth@aol.com)

Vice President – Linda King
(lindapking@gmail.com)

Treasurer – Robert Sanders
(treasurer@uuis.org)

Clerk – Diane Montgomery
(203-918-1285)

Historian – Dorothy Sonn
(zoesgrandmasonn@aol.com)

Religious Education – Ellen Garcia
(glendalecircle@yahoo.com)

Fellowship – Ann Preston
(annspreston@yahoo.com)

Membership – Jay Fountain
(fountain@optonline.net)

Care Team – Lynne Lane
(LynnE4951@aol.com)

Transition Team – Rolf Mauer
(maurer_rolf@yahoo.com)

Music Consultant – Maureen Ferrara Higle
(maureenfh@optonline.net)

Newsletter -- Janis Stahlhut
(jstahlhut1@aol.com)

Cleaning Crew – Juliet Ess

Interim Minister's Schedule

Interim Minister's Office (203-348-0758);

E-mail: dawnsangrey@gmail.com

Office Hours: **Sundays** 12 – 2 pm,

Mondays 10 am – 2 pm; and **Wednesdays**

2 pm – 7 pm. You are welcome to make an appointment or simply drop in during these times. Occasionally a meeting will take Rev. Sangrey out of the office, so it's best to call first.

When not in the office, Rev. Sangrey can be reached at home at 914-666-6398.

Except in emergencies, please call between 9 am and 9 pm. **Thursday is her day off.** Routine calls made and e-mail sent on Thursday will be answered on Friday. For pastoral emergencies, please call at any time.

UUSIS Office Hours*

UUSIS Office (203-348-0708)

Volunteers will staff the church office on **Mondays and Fridays from 10 am to 1 pm.** The office phone will be monitored daily.

FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER DEADLINE:

To submit an article, meeting or calendar event to News & Views for the February issue, please e-mail jstahlhut1@aol.com **no later than January 20, 2012.**



*The church office will be closed the week of December 25. Rev. Sangrey will be available at home 914-666-6398. The office opens again on Monday, January 2.



JANUARY CALENDAR

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|--|-----|-----|--|-----|--|---------------------------------|
| 1 Service: "A Christmas Memory," Dot Sonn | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 6 PM: First Friday Potluck*, Social Room | 7 |
| 8 Service: Dancing in the Streets, Rev Sangrey • 11:30 Religious Services Committee, Sanctuary • 2nd Sunday Walkers* | 9 | 10 | 11 6:30 PM Board Meeting, at the home of Linda King (potluck dinner) | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 15 Service: Intro to Small Group Ministry, Rev Sangrey • 12 PM: Small Group Ministry demonstration | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 • Neighbors Link Stamford* • Newsletter Deadline for February | 21 2 PM: Book Club, Alfa Drent* |
| 22 Service: Changing Face of Reproductive Rights | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 Service: One Strong Body, Rev Sangrey | 30 | 31 | <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>NOTE: Please check each week's Order of Service for other scheduled events or call the office, 203-348-0708. To schedule an event, please call the office.</p> <p>Recurring: Mon – Fri: Alcoholics Anonymous, Social Room, 7:30-8:30AM Sat: Alcoholics Anonymous, Social Room, 9:00-10:00AM</p> </div> | | | |
| *Event Details: | | | | | | |

January 8, Second Sunday Walkers visit Sherwood Island, karenwdavis@aol.com.

First Friday potluck dinner, January 6, 6pm. Sign up with Ann Preston (203) 355-9372.

Neighbors Link Stamford, Friday, January 20, watch for details of this community service event coordinated by the Small Congregations Collaborative. UUSIS and other members of the collaborative will provide a dinner for a Family Night in Stamford's south end, serving dinner to about 120-150 people, including many children. A program will be provided by Neighbors Link.

Book Club Meeting, Saturday January 21, 2pm - at Alfa Drent's home - all are welcome. We have been reading "The Social Animal" by David Brooks. You can catch a discussion on his book on charlierose.com/view/clip/1153. Also bring suggestions for our next book to read and review. Call Alfa at 203-323-9488 if you wish to attend.

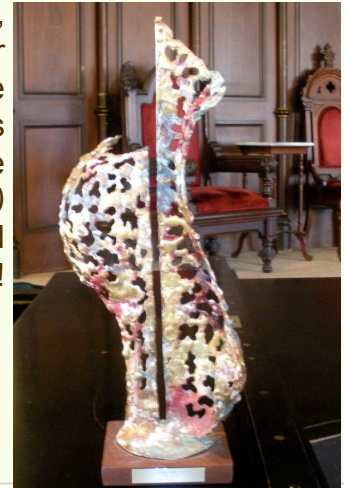


Special Sunday Service Music Program January 29, 2012

Con Brio recorder ensemble

Con Brio (translated *with spirit/panache*) has played for UUSIS before. From upstate CT and MA, *Con Brio* plays music from the Baroque era. They will be accompanied by Maisie Kohnstamm on *viola da gamba*, with Maureen Ferrara Higle on our new Clavinova keyboard. Don't miss this service of different sounds!

Incidentally, former member and the late David Burt's sculpture (right) is entitled *Con Brio!*



(Small Group Ministries, continued from page 4)

Small Group Ministry groups offer two rare opportunities: the opportunity to speak without being interrupted, and the opportunity to pay full attention to each speaker. Members of SGM groups practice both of these spiritual disciplines at each meeting

In January your interim minister will organize one or two Small Group Ministry groups to introduce these opportunities to members and friends. A demonstration of Small Group Ministry will be offered at noon on Sunday, January 15, and groups will be organized at this meeting. If you are interested in SGM and cannot attend the meeting on January 15, please contact Rev. Dawn (dawnsangrey@gmail.com or 914-666-6398).

“Sacred time is the opposite of fleeting time. Fleeting time is the kind of time in which we are distracted, racing around and trying to catch up as we fall further behind; it’s working at the computer while a friend talks to us on the phone. By contrast, sacred time is noticing the shift in a person’s voice...it’s full presence, paying attention in the moment. It’s what happens in a small group ministry group when we discover how to stay present to life again...This recollecting and binding process is a spiritual act. It is opening up time and giving it texture, content, feelings, and ideas...This way of packing time with detail and dimension, slowing it down by filling it up with the full presence of life, is the essence of every spiritual practice.” –Thandeka