

UUSIS NEWS & VIEWS

The Unitarian Universalist Society in Stamford

FEBRUARY 2010

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*February's Pastoral Care
on call person is*

**Jim Bridge
at
203-984-3706**



*For emergencies, please contact the
Community Minister,
The Rev. ReBecca Ames Sala at
203-219-4341 or
ramessala@yahoo.com.*

WORSHIP SERVICES

Sundays at 10:00AM, except as otherwise noted.

2/7: Lincoln and Race—The Rev. Ron Sala

The Sunday before Abraham Lincoln's birthday, we'll consider the man and the myth and what they mean for race relations in the age of Obama.

2/14: In Defense of Marriage—The Rev. Ron Sala

One of the prime arguments for keeping marriage a straights-only club is that the institution would be damaged by the inclusion of gays and lesbians. Ironically, the only states where divorce rates are increasing are ones that have banned gay marriage, while those that have allowed it lead the nation in *falling* divorce rates. On St. Valentine's Day, we'll ask what lessons the politics of same-sex marriage have for gay *and* straight relationships.

2/21: Gotta Serve Somebody—The Rev. Ron Sala

Bob Dylan sang, "You might like to eat caviar, you might like to eat bread, / You may be sleeping on the floor, sleeping in a king-sized bed / But you're gonna have to serve somebody...." The first Sunday in Lent, traditionally a time for helping the less fortunate, we'll consider the spiritual aspects of service.

2/28: This Little Light of Mine - Where Have You Gone?—The Rev. Karen S. Judd, LCSW

This service will contemplate the choices we make in our lives that diminish our inner light and consider choices we can make that create a strong and vibrant inner light to share with others. The Rev. Karen S. Judd is an Interfaith Minister serving the community through her work with Mid-Fairfield Hospice and, from her office in Bethel, CT, providing psycho-spiritual counseling, reiki, the creation of and performing of weddings, memorial services, baby blessings and other sacred ceremonies, and serving as a guest minister in a variety of pulpits. Rev. Karen is a graduate of One Spirit Interfaith Seminary in New York City and Columbia University School of Social Work.

FEBRUARY 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 PoemAlley Meeting, Conference Room, 7:30pm	2 Green Team Meeting, Conference Room, 7:00pm	3	4 Cancer Support Group, Social Room, 11:00am ⇒By-laws Committee Meeting, Conference Room, 7:00pm	5	6 Rental, Social Room, 2:00-6:00pm
7 Religious Services Meeting, Sanctuary, After Service ⇒Adult RE, Rev. Ron's Office, 12:00-1:30pm	8	9 Membership Meeting, Conference Room, 5:45pm ⇒Board Meeting, Conference Room, 7:30pm	10 Ladies Who Lunch, Zody's 19th Hole, 12:00 pm	11	12 Annual Chinese New Year's Celebration Dinner, Social Room, 6:30pm	13
14 2nd Sunday Hikers, Waveny Park, New Canaan, After Coffee Hour	15	16 Sacred Circle Pagan Group--Movie Night, Social Room, 7:30pm	17	18 Cancer Support Group, Social Room, 11:00am ⇒By-laws Committee Meeting, Conference Room, 7:00pm	19 Welcome Dinner, Social Room, 4:00pm set-up/6:30pm Dinner	20
21 Committee on Ministry Meeting, Rev. Ron's Office, 11:30am	22	23	24	25	26 UUSIS Movie Night, Social Room, 7:00pm	27 PoemAlley, Sanctuary & Social Room, 2:00-5:00pm

28 Publicity Meeting, Sanctuary, After Service

NOTE: This calendar has all events as listed by the time of publication. Please check with the Administrator at 203-348-0708 or admin@uusis.org if you wish to schedule an event.

Recurring:

Mon. - Fri.: Alcoholics Anonymous, Social Room, 7:30-8:30AM
Sat.: Alcoholics Anonymous, Social Room, 9:00-10:00AM
Sat.: Igreja Do Evangelho Quadrangular, Sanctuary & Social Room, 6:00PM-∞

February Birthdays

- 1 *Ethan Fleck*
- 5 *Bob Nixon*
- 6 *Alan Steel*
- 9 *Janet Cory*
- 13 *Wenda Sheard*
- 15 *Jan Shaw-Feigin, Paul Dennis*
- 20 *David Burt, David Stein, Michael Berlinski*
- 23 *Justin "Bill" Nixon*
- 28 *Eli Ednie*

Ron's Report

I've been moved, as I'm sure you've been, by the worldwide outpouring of assistance following the devastating earthquake in Haiti. I'm glad we, and our fellow UU's, are part of it.

I'm proud the American Red Cross, whose work is in the vanguard of this—and virtually every—disaster was founded by our Universalist sister, Clara Barton. She wrote of her faith as “a belief in which all who are privileged to possess it rejoice.” She put her faith into action on the battlefields of the Civil War, in the devastation of the Great Johnstown Flood, and wherever people suffered.

While extraordinary disasters bring out the best in us, I believe part of spiritual development is a growing sensitivity to the ordinary suffering of others. Ongoing disasters like poverty, hunger, violence, and discrimination rob people of life and health as surely as sudden calamities.

Our Social Action Committee, under new chair Robin Gans, does ongoing work addressing suffering in Stamford and around the world. I hope you'll give them feedback in the survey they're preparing and also join their meetings first Mondays at 7:30pm.

Together, we can make every day a better day for those who need our help.

Rev. Ron

President's Message

With every new year comes the tendency to look back on the year that was, and make predictions for the year that will be. I already looked back at 2009 in my last column, so now is the time to look ahead. As with many organizations like ours, these have been, and will continue to be, tough times financially. And with an old building like ours, things can go from bad to worse quickly. In early January, the furnace for our Sanctuary blew and we had to spend \$4400 on a replacement. However, even with that unforeseen expense, things are not all bad. We have cut back expenses in a couple of areas, and with fuel costs lower than expected, we are well under what we were expecting to spend there. If we all work hard to fulfill our pledges and make our remaining fundraisers successful, then we might actually end up a bit ahead by the end of our fiscal year in June.

Our congregation has also not grown to the degree many of us were hoping it would. Our UUA President, Peter Morales, recently stated that Unitarian Universalism should be the religion for our times, and he is absolutely right. With all of the war and conflict going on, UU's promote unity, coming together despite our differences, and making changes for the better in our world. If you know anyone who is looking for a spiritual home and identifies with our principles, invite them to come with you one Sunday. You'd be surprised how many might take you up on your offer.

As Pagan as I am, I am not in the business of making predictions. But I will say this. My hope, my wish, is that 2010 will be infinitely better for all of us, both individually and as a congregation. There will be some work involved in making it happen, make no mistake. But if we all work together, things will get better, and UUSIS will continue to thrive in downtown Stamford!

As always, please contact me at trustees@uuisis.org should you need anything.

Joseph Gonzalez, Jr.



CHRISTMAS EVE HELPERS—THANK YOU!

The good people named below were so kind and helpful to me on Christmas Eve and on December 27th (the “A Christmas Memory” reading, 16th year!!!). These friends would probably not consider what they did as being “Above and Beyond”. However, they did what was expected efficiently and cheerfully, and kept me from totally freaking out. It was a true example of the quotation that is on my kitchen cabinet—“True religion is action in community.” Thank you all for your part in these events. Each person had a job to do, and doing it together was such a good experience and made for what I felt was one of our very loveliest Christmas Eve services. All contributed to what I believe Rev. Ron wanted to convey—coming from darkness into the light (and Spring comes!). Thank you to:

Tom Burke, Jacquie Carlsen, Greg Chrzczon, Bob Hawley, Arun Kumanduri, Luis Kumanduri, George Mandler, Ray Mosher, Bob Nixon, and Ann Scheps

Bless you!
Dot Sonn

DEDICATE A HYMNAL TO A LOVED ONE

For members and friends who would like to commemorate a lost loved one or dedicate a lovely thought or intention to someone on a special label in our new hymnals, *Singing the Journey* (supplement to our regular hymnals), please make a tax-deductible contribution of \$20 per dedication to the UUSIS office. The label will be prepared and affixed (by Tara) with your dedication text and name. The choir already has sung a few songs from the hymnal and we'll be using it along with our regular hymnal.

Maureen Ferrara Higle

WE HAVE A NEW MISSION STATEMENT!

On January 12, the Board of Trustees voted to approve the Mission Statement that was proposed to us. Our new statement is: "We exist to build a community that deepens individual faith, celebrates unity among diversity, and promotes a just and humane world." This statement comes at the end of a months-long project initiated by Bob Nixon and the Committee on Ministry. A workshop was held in November where about 25 participants came up with four statements to bring before the Board of Trustees. At its December meeting, the Board, along with the chairs of our many committees, reviewed the statements and reworked them into the one above. After allowing about a month for additional feedback from the congregation, the Board approved the statement unanimously at its last meeting.

**We exist to build
a community
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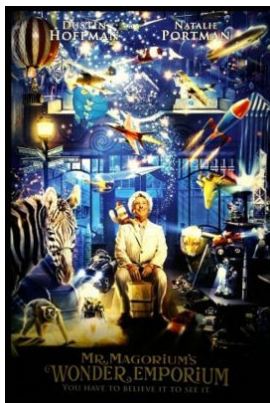
This statement encompasses all of the common themes that we wanted to communicate: building a community, ministering to ourselves and to others, finding our common values while celebrating our differences, and exploring and deepening personal faith and growing spiritually. This is a useful, meaningful statement that this and future Boards of Trustees can use to guide this congregation and its events and social action work for the next five to seven years. It will now be used as the basis for our new Strategic Plan, which we have just started rewriting. Please look for opportunities to either join the Strategic Planning Committee or provide input to the Strategic Plan. This is your chance to have a voice in the future of our congregation!

Thank you to all who contributed to the Mission Statement creation process. I look forward to hearing from many of you as we move ahead with creating our new Strategic Plan!

Joe Gonzalez



UUSIS MOVIE NIGHT



Are you looking for a way to relax? Are you looking for a kid friendly place to watch a fun family movie? Searching for an affordable movie night out?

Then join us on Friday, February 26 at 7PM in the Social Room for a screening of "Mr. Magorium's Wonder Emporium"!

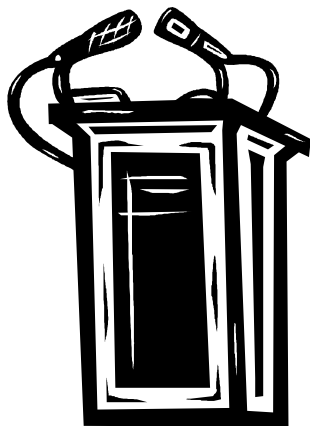
Admission is \$10 per person, children under 4 are free. Price includes unlimited popcorn, snacks and beverages! Bring your family and friends! Anything we make in excess of the license fee goes directly to UUSIS. Please RSVP to admin@uusis.org or trustees@uusis.org no later than Wednesday, February 21, so we know how much food and drink to supply! Hope to see you there!

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST WOMEN

Our next meeting will be Tuesday, March 16 at 2:00PM at the home of Alfa Drent, 15 Stanley Rd., Darien, 203-323-9488. We will discuss Greg Mortenson's book *Three Cups of Tea* and also his new book *Stones into Schools* under the able leadership of Kristi Hardin. So start reading, but if you run out of time do the first one. Please RSVP to Alfa.

Shaw Stuart

WORSHIP ASSOCIATES: YOU BEHIND THE PULPIT--APPLY NOW!



Have you ever sat in a service and wondered how it was put together, how each element built to sustain a tone of reverence and wonder? Have you ever wanted to be involved with putting together services on topics and themes that intrigue or inspire you?

Rev. Ron and the Religious Services Committee are looking for people to join our team of **Worship Associates** who **help choose service topics, find readings, design worship, and lead services**. In an effort to have a Worship Associates team that will best enhance our congregational mission, as well as being representational of our community, we have an application process. Email Rev. Ron at ron.sala@uusis.org for an application form, or pick one up in the social room. Please return your application by 2/10.

FIRST SUNDAY FOOD COLLECTION

For January, UUSIS donated 33 lbs. of food to The Food Bank!

Most Needed Food Items: Mashed Potatoes • Fruit Cocktail • Canned Tuna / Canned Chicken • Soups
Carnation Instant Breakfast • Breakfast Cereal • Peanut Butter / Grape Jelly • Juices
White or Brown Rice (2 Lb Bags) • Powdered or Parmalat Milk • Pasta • Jarred Spaghetti Sauce
Canned Stews • Canned Vegetables (Corn, Cut Green Beans) • Applesauce • Crackers
Dried Beans (Pinto Beans, Black Eyed Peas, Lentil, Kidney) • Macaroni & Cheese

PLEASE NO BABY FOOD! Those items are provided for through the WIC program. The Food Bank can not accept baby food items any longer.

Food collections will be held on the 1st Sunday of each month. We will continue to keep a basket in the kitchen for those who bring food on other days. Any questions, please see Janet Cory or Tara Fleck.

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!



THIS YEAR'S CHINESE NEW YEAR DINNER TO BENEFIT EARTHQUAKE SURVIORS

As they have done for the past five years, Sheryl and Ray are offering to host the Annual Chinese New Year's Celebration Dinner.

The following is the plan:

- ◆ The date of the dinner will be February 12, 2010, from 6:30pm to 9:30pm in the UUSIS Social Room
- ◆ It will be limited to 70 people (friends, members, children and guests).
- ◆ **Tickets will go on sale starting January 17, 2010.**
- ◆ Ticket price is \$20/person (1/2 will go to UUSIS, 1/2 will be donated to Haitian earthquake relief fund (to be named later)). However, you can contribute more, based on your willingness to do so. Sheryl and Ray will donate all the food.
- ◆ People are encouraged to bring intercultural or other auction items to the dinner. An auction will be held during the dinner; proceeds going to the Society and Haitian relief fund.



What they need:

- ◆ Help from the Society to set up tables for 70 people, provide soft drinks and wine, and assist with clean up.

People who would like to assist us with this event, please contact Sheryl or Ray by email at afisheryl@yahoo.com or remosher2003@yahoo.com, respectively.

MEMBERSHIP

Please welcome Jo-Ann and Henry Brenner, Ann Preston and Teresa Hare to our family as voting members. They joined on January 10.

The other day someone asked me how many members we have. My official response was “We are hovering around 100. Because not only do we have people joining, but if I give you a number then someone will move away tomorrow.” Sure enough, a few days later I found out that one of our members is in the process of moving. It has taken me quite a while to realize that our membership numbers fluctuate because people join, move away, pass away and some members lapse because they don't have a pledge on file. Sometimes simple questions don't have simple answers.

If you are new to UUSIS, we have an event for you! We will have a Welcome Dinner on Feb. 19 at 6:30pm in the Social Room. Come and make some new friends over a simple supper. The purpose is to sit with someone that you don't already know – established members, new members, visitors. Please RSVP at coffee hour or by Evite in your e-mail.

We will be creating an updated directory soon. If you have changed your contact info in the last year, please contact Membership or the UUSIS Office.

Caitlin McConoughey



SECOND SUNDAY HIKERS

Bob Nixon, Orestes, and Karen started the Greenwich Point hike feeling chilled, but we made a turn after we passed the lake, and as if by magic the bright sun made us warm. We saw swans, gulls, and ducks on the sparkling blue waters. The view of Manhattan was crystal clear. We greeted many dogs and their owners. Some dogs wore coats over their coats, but most did not. After the hike we went to the Arcadia Cafe for hot chocolate and chai. Then we just looked at Just Books.

Next Hike: Sunday, February 14, Waveny Park in New Canaan

Love,

SACRED CIRCLE PAGAN GROUP: MOVIE NIGHT

On Tuesday, February 16, Jim Bridge of the Sacred Circle Pagan Group will again be hosting a Movie Night. As of this writing, he is considering several films. Please look for more information in the weekly email and Order of Service. Also, if you have a Pagan movie you would like to suggest, please let Jim or me know. See you then!

Tara E. Fleck

ADVOCACY

Our Unitarian Universalist Service Committee Guest at Your Table Boxes were collected on January 10. The desk in the Social Room will have flyers, boxes, and information for a while. You may also send your check if not attending services. Contact Leslie Weinberg, UUSC Representative, at 203-517-8496 or lesweinberg@optonline.net with questions. Please put your information, such as name, address, membership level, telephone number or e mail address on the box. We are recognized by the UUSC by what percentage of UUSIS members also belong to the Service Committee. They will send a membership card or letter for tax purposes. I urge you to count your donation and make out your check to UUSIS with GAYT in the memo line and to consider rounding up to the next dollar.

Membership levels are:

- ⇒ \$10 Youth membership
- ⇒ \$20 Senior membership
- ⇒ \$40 Standard membership
- ⇒ \$75 Dual membership
- ⇒ \$100 or more will be matched dollar for dollar by the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock, Manhasset, NY.

**The Holiday Gift
Collection for St.
Luke's
LifeWorks was
successful!**

The Holiday Gift Collection for St. Luke's LifeWorks was successful! About 34 agencies were served through this year's Holiday Gift Collection at St. Luke's LifeWorks. Over 2,000 children received a minimum of two gifts for the holidays - there were actually 5,000 gifts!

Leslie Weinberg

A FINAL THOUGHT...

**"It takes a clever man to turn cynic and a wise man to be clever enough not to."
— Fannie Hurst, American Author, 1885-1968**

ABOVE & BEYOND

I believe UUSIS's Administrative Assistant deserves a big "shout out" and a round of applause! **Tara Fleck** works tirelessly behind the scenes, helping all of us put together programs, managing building and renter issues, interfacing with suppliers, handling bank transactions...and has also directed UU services with the Sacred Circle Pagan Group. The ways that Tara contributes to UUSIS are virtually endless, yet indispensable to our well-being.

I know I say this to you often, but it is well deserved— Thank you Tara for all that you do for all of us. You truly are a gem! *Tom Burke*

A big thank you to our Treasurer **Tom Burke** and our Finance Committee Chair **Rama Kumanduri** for all the tax paperwork they did one Sunday morning. It is so easy to forget that tax paperwork must be filed for UUSIS. Thank you both for your efforts!

Above and Below is more like it! Over a dozen volunteers cleaned out the choir loft of the cartons of books that had been stored there, passing them carton by carton down the twisty narrow steps from the choir loft, around the corner and down the steep steps to the basement, where they are currently stored in cartons on tables awaiting sorting. Thanks go to **Dave Adams** (a newcomer who just jumped right in), **Tom Burke**, **Greg Chrzczon**, **Don Currie**, **Neil Danilovicz**, **Karen Davis**, **Paul Dennis**, **Jeff King**, **George Mandler**, **Rolf Maurer**, **Bob Nixon**, **Dick Porter**, **Ariel Sirocco**, and **Norris Wakefield** for their support of this challenge. It didn't take long and it was a really good workout!

If you want to recognize someone or a group who went "Above & Beyond", please write a brief paragraph and submit to Tara Fleck, Office Administrator, for inclusion in the next newsletter.

LOST AND FOUND: ARE YOU COLD? WE HAVE MANY LOST ITEMS IN THE BIN. CONTACT THE OFFICE IF YOU ARE MISSING ANYTHING.

SUBMISSION INFORMATION

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SUBMIT AN ARTICLE TO UUSIS NEWS & VIEWS, PLEASE E-MAIL ADMIN@UUSIS.ORG OR CALL (203)348-0708. ARTICLES ARE DUE BY THE 15TH OF EACH MONTH AND SHOULD BE FEWER THAN 200 WORDS.

Parish Minister – The Rev. Ron Sala
Community Minister – The Rev. ReBecca Ames Sala
Minister Emeritus – The Rev. Stan Aronson
Music Consultant – Maureen Ferrara Hagle
Office Administrator/Newsletter Editor – Tara Fleck
Cleaning Crew – Goodwill Industries

President – Joseph Gonzalez
Vice president – Neil Danilowicz
Treasurer – Tom Burke
Clerk – Bonnie Currie
Buildings and Grounds – Neil Danilowicz
Pastoral Care Lay Ministry Team – Nancy Furnas
Committee on Ministry – Bob Nixon
Fellowship – *Open Position*
Finance – Rama Kumanduri
Membership – Caitlin McConoughey
Religious Education – Jacqueline Carlsen
Religious Services: Robert Hawley & Leslie Weinberg
Social Action – Robin Gans
Publicity – Jeff King
Green Team – Linda King & Mike Berlinski
Denominational Affairs – Diane Montgomery
Historian – Dorothy Sonn
Photographer – Ray Mosher
Rental Coordinator – Diana Martinez
Director of Personnel – Eleanor Dennis

The Unitarian Universalist Society in Stamford

20 Forest Street, Stamford, CT 06901

Phone: 203-348-0708 / Fax: 203-358-0029

Email: admin@uuisis.org

Web: www.uuisis.org

NEW MINISTER'S OFFICE HOURS:

Tues. and Thurs.: 1:00 – 7:00PM

Weds.: Day off. Emergency calls only.

Fri.: Sermon prep day at home, emergency calls only.

Other times available by appointment.

You may call the Rev. Ron Sala on his mobile phone at 203-559-9620 between 9:00AM – 9:00PM on remaining days of week. *Emergency calls any time.*

E-mail: ron.sala@uuisis.org

Direct Office Phone: 203-348-0758 to leave a private message.

OFFICE HOURS:

Tue., Thurs., and Fri.: 9:00AM – 3:00PM

E-mail: admin@uuisis.org

