

NOVEMBER 2011



**A Welcoming
Congregation**

UUSIS News & Views

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

Facebook: "Unitarian Universalist Society in Stamford"

Worship Services Sundays at 10:00 AM

Sunday, November 6

The Thing with Feathers – the Rev. Dawn Sangrey

"Hope is the thing with feathers," according to poet Emily Dickinson. Religious faith has offered hope to believers throughout human history. But how can anybody continue to hope in the face of the situation in the world, the nation, the city, the neighborhood, the congregation, the workplace, the home? Despair could easily sleep with each of us every night. Where does a Unitarian Universalist find hope in a dark time?

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Dawn's Message 2

President's Thoughts
Ministerial Search 3

Religious Education 4

Joe's Chili Cookoff
Upcoming Events 5

UUSIS Information 6

Calendar 7

Leadership Conference 8

Sunday, November 13

Accepting What Is –

Transformational Counselor Anthony Smokovich

Too often we spend time and energy playing over and over in our minds how we think a situation, or a person, or an event "should" be. This can be the cause of great pain and suffering in our lives. Using some simple yet profound tools, we can learn to "undo" the habit of "resisting" what is actually happening in our lives and find more peace and contentment in our day to day living.

Special music program with UUSIS friend, violinist Darwin Shen.

Sunday, November 20

On the Road from Greed to Giving – Rev. Sangrey

Prepare to celebrate Thanksgiving with the paradox of our plenty in a world full of hunger. How can we feast with a good heart when so many others are without food? As a community of faith we come together to help each other struggle with questions such as these. We will distribute Guest At Your Table boxes during the service.

Sunday, November 27

Looking for the Light – Rev. Sangrey

Prepare for the winter holidays by exploring what will nourish you in your celebrations. The holidays can be a special gift, or they can be blighted by the season's expectations. Be who you are this holiday season, and bring light to the darkness in yourself and others. We will celebrate the first Sunday in Advent, the Christian season of preparation for the birth of Jesus.



The Team That Plays

You came to UUSIS to be a part of something bigger than yourself, to feed yourself and also to get out of yourself. The society needs you every day. Show up. Do what you can. Get in the game.

My first mentor in ministry, whose nickname was Woody, used to tell me, “The team that plays is the team that shows up.” When attendance was low at some meeting I thought was important, his words reminded me to focus on those who came. If you’re not there, you can’t play.

It was Woody Allen, of course, who said, “Eighty percent of success is showing up.” Your potential for success begins when you get in the game.

You and I and all of us at UUSIS are indebted to the people who are showing up right now. Your volunteer community can’t function without a lot of participation from a lot of different people—leaders and followers, folks who can put in a couple of hours once a month and people who are willing and able to make UUSIS their second job. Without each one of them, UUSIS would grind to a halt. I am grateful to all of them. Show your gratitude by stepping up and doing what you can.

Come to Sunday service. Week after week those who gather in the sanctuary find spiritual nourishment, life-long companionship, intellectual challenge, beautiful music, a chance to rest among historic surroundings and be at peace. Making a commitment to attend Sunday worship every week is an awesome spiritual practice—it has the potential to feed you more and more deeply as time goes by. Not only do you nourish yourself but you help to build up the community as well—just by showing up.

First Friday potlucks offer great food and spiritual nourishment. Eating together the food that each person has contributed deepens your connections. Whenever you gather around the table to share food, you are participating in one of the most ancient religious traditions, a time of hospitality and relaxation in a place of safety and warmth. Showing up is good. Bringing food and sticking around to help clean up—great spiritual merit! The more the merrier.

Right now you all need to come together for congregational meetings, workshops, and discussions. Your congregation is a democracy in transition. Decisions will be made in the next few months that will profoundly affect the future direction of the society. Every voice, every opinion, every question needs to be heard. UUSIS is on a path with many crossroads. The people who show up for this journey will determine the congregation’s ultimate destination.

More than anything else, spiritual and congregational growth depends on sincere effort and persistent presence.

It’s the best game in town. You’re on the roster. All you have to do is show up.

I’ll see you there.

Blessings.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dawn".

The Rev. Dawn Sangrey, Interim Minister

President's Thoughts

Dear Members and Friends,

For many years, I worked for a large real estate firm, a sales organization, and the motto there was "recruit, retain and recognize." While this is corporate lingo, I think the concept can apply to any religious organization. We want to recruit more members by sharing our passion for UU values with others, we want to retain our member and friends by building community and providing support, and we want to recognize the gifts that each one contributes for the benefit of all.

It is the recognize piece that I want to talk about today.

Have you noticed how much improvement there is to our parking lot? Bill Van Ness, who takes care of our grounds, suggested an inexpensive treatment that would add years of life to the asphalt. He and Bob Sanders bought the materials and Bill to all intents and purposes volunteered his time to do the work. Thank you, Bill!

John Nolan and Debbie Schmidel have offered to host a Welcome Dinner for newcomers to UUSIS. The Welcome Dinner concept is that it provides a venue, smaller than a First Friday, to spend time getting to know each other and sharing information about UUSIS. And of course, there is the food – I understand John is an excellent cook! Thank you both for adding to the social life of our community.

Thanks go to Ann Rustici and Ann Preston, among many others (because it always takes "many others" to put on any event at UUSIS), for our first First Friday of the year. We look forward to many more this year.

Our Rental Coordinator, Cristina Romero, is doing an excellent job of responding to inquiries about our space, following up with phone calls and making appointments to meet prospective renters. In some cases, her Spanish has been invaluable. Our beautiful buildings and downtown location are some of our greatest assets. Sharing them with others helps the bottom line and makes more people aware of what we have to offer.

Janis Stahlhut has stepped into the shoes of newsletter editor. With the recent elimination of our weekly calendar emails, the newsletter has taken on even more importance in keeping everyone in the loop and sharing information.

And Joe Gonzalez put so much work into the Chili Cook-off alongside so many volunteers. The public brings bags of food for the Food Pantry, a continuing need that we support with our monthly contributions.

It is important to acknowledge the time and energy that goes into making UUSIS our home. Join me in thanking those who go Above & Beyond whenever the occasion arises!

Bonnie Currie
President, Board of Trustees

Ministerial Search

In October, the Board of Trustees met with members of this Committee and the Transition Team to decide how to move forward with a search given the state of finances and infrastructure. All of our options were discussed, with the "pros" and "cons" for each. The meeting could not have been more honest and straightforward. Although the decision was ultimately the Boards, we all unanimously voted to support the direction chosen. And so, the MSC will now end it's work, as the direction chosen does not require our further (formal) working together. On behalf of the entire committee, I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you who participated in all of the work done this past year. The fruits of those efforts will help in guiding us as we move forward. Make no mistake, UUSIS is at a crossroads. More than ever before, the entire future of this congregation is in ALL of our hands. I believe that we have made the right decision to help us survive, but without **everyone** rising to the occasion, it, in and of itself, will not succeed. I for one have incredible faith in our community. Join me in assuring that UUSIS rises again!

Daniel, [dalexb4291@gmail.com](mailto:dalex4291@gmail.com)

Religious Education for school aged children

During the 2011-2012 Religious Education year, the RE program for school aged children of U.U.S.I.S. will focus on the Tapestry of Faith **Moral Tales** Curriculum. The **Moral Tales** curriculum attempts to provide children with the spiritual and ethical tools needed to make choices and to take actions reflective of our Unitarian Universalist beliefs and values. Each of the sixteen sessions of the curriculum has a central story in which real and fictional heroes and heroines display moral courage and spiritual greatness. Each session will include a combination of rituals such as the chalice lighting and sharing of joys and sorrows and age appropriate hands-on and interactive activities to reinforce the content of the central stories. In conjunction with the curriculum, we plan to involve the children in community service on congregational, local, and global levels. For more information, feel free to contact Ellen Garcia, glendalecircle@yahoo.com.

On **October 30th** the RE program will coordinate the Coffee Hour and children in costume will “Trick or Treat” for UNICEF after the Service in the Social Room. They will decorate cupcakes and muffins and other sweets provided by the RE Committee, along with some healthy surprises! *Adults: please remember to bring spare change to contribute to the UNICEF boxes.* This is part of the RE Sunday School Service Sunday in conjunction with the monthly Moral Tales. If parents have questions, please contact Ellen Garcia at her email address above.

For upcoming RE Sunday School activities, check the newsletter, the website and the sandwich boards at the front entrance to UUSIS and the side door/ handicapped ramp entryway.

Life Span Religious Education

Over the past several months, a few of our members conducted lay-led Sunday services sharing their personal spiritual journeys. At the same time, Julie Punishill has begun a marvelous meditation group that meets before the Sunday service each week. Other interesting topics are introduced and explored each year during the “summer season.” These services and initiatives are drawing a fair amount of interest and positive feedback from those attending them – enough to make us consider how we can build on this energy.

As we seek ways to keep our members engaged and attract new ones, Reverend Dawn Sangrey and Diane Montgomery have teamed up to explore new ideas, possibilities and probabilities for “Adult Religious Education” programming. Discussions, workshops, lunch, over coffee or...?? What works for you? Who else would like to explore a distinctive spiritual path or has inquiries about Unitarian or Universalist beliefs or the two together? The Sunday School is using an age continuum curriculum which has an Adult RE component that might interest some. It was intentionally chosen to allow expansion to other age groups.

Let us know your thoughts about Life Span RE and what you would like. Please e-mail di8651@aol.com or talk to Diane during Coffee Hour.

Joe's Annual Charity Chili Cookoff

I would like to thank everyone for supporting the 4th Annual Charity Chili Cookoff on Saturday, October 15. We had another very successful event, with approximately 160 people attending. During the event, we had several people ask about Unitarian Universalism, as well as a few questions about and compliments on our banners. One person asked several questions about David Burt's sculpture hanging over the dais. And one person commented about our architecture, "They don't build buildings like this any more!"

We collected 300 pounds of food and raised just under \$1000. Of that money, \$100 went to the contest winner, Brian Cronin and his "Three Day Chili". Brian is the only contestant to compete in all four years of the competition. \$600 will be going to the Food Bank of Lower Fairfield County. For each dollar donated, the Food Bank can purchase six pounds of food, meaning they can purchase an additional 3600 pounds of food! The remaining funds will go to UUSIS. Congratulations also to our second and third place trophy winners, Shawn Carlson with his Pumpkin Chili and Glenn Price with his "Really Silly Hillbilly Chili"! There were some truly inventive and tasty variations at this year's all-amateur event, and a number of additional people voicing interest in competing next year! Many thanks also to Katie Goldberg and her mom Tara who sold Katie's homemade bracelets during the event. Katie raised an additional \$60 for the Food Bank from her sales.

Special thanks to Tara Fleck, Ethan Fleck, Bonnie Currie, Jeff King and Dani Beltran for helping to set up on the Thursday before the event, and to Tara, Ethan, Bonnie, Don Currie, Leslie Weinberg, Nancy Furnas, Lynne Lane, Carole and Don Ehleben, Norris Wakefield, Neil Danilowicz, my dad Joe Gonzalez, Sr., Shawn and Kelly Carlson, Daniele Pellicano and Jen Romanowski for their help with final setup before, lots of support during, and cleaning up and putting back chairs after the event.

Upcoming Events (See Page 7 Calendar for more!)

Friday, October 28, 6:30 PM: UUSIS New Member Welcome Dinner, Social Room.

Saturday, October 29, 12:30 PM: Ladies Who Lunch

UU Women will find that fun and food are on the menu at *Madonia*, the popular restaurant at 1297 Long Ridge Rd in Stamford (a short distance north of the Merritt Parkway). Please call Marge Laurent, 203-329-9806 to rsvp. Bring a friend!

November 4, 6:30pm, First Friday Harvest Potluck, hosted by Robin Gans. Please bring something for the Food Bank. \$3.00 with potluck dish or \$10.00 without. Sign up sheet available beginning October 23 in the Social Room. Kids always welcome.

Saturday, November 5, 2pm, Book Club Meeting, Alfa Drent's home, contact Alfa (203) 323-9488 for address/directions. Please bring your suggestions for books you would like the group to discuss.

Sunday, November 13, Second Sunday Walkers. Botanist Carol Levine will accompany us to Cove Island to describe flora and probably fauna in the Nature Sanctuary situated behind Terry Connors Skating Rink. Karen Davis & Bob Hawley lead.

UUSIS Information

PERSONNEL & CONTACTS:

Interim Minister – The Rev. Dawn Sangrey
(dawnsangrey@gmail.com)

Minister Emeritus – The Rev. Stan Aronson
President – Bonnie Currie
(curriesboth@aol.com)

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

Treasurer – Robert Sanders
(treasurer@uusis.org)

Clerk – Diane Montgomery (203-918-1285)

Historian – Dorothy Sonn
(zoesgrandmasonn@aol.com)

Religious Education – Ellen Garcia
Fellowship – Ann Preston
(annpreston@yahoo.com)

Membership – Jay Fountain
(fountain@optonline.net)

Care Team – Lynne Lane

Ministerial Search Committee – Daniel
Beltran (Dalex4291@gmail.com)

Transition Team – Tony Allam
(antonio.allam@citi.com)

Music Consultant – Maureen Ferrara Hagle

Cleaning Crew – Juliet Ess

DECEMBER NEWSLETTER DEADLINE:

To submit an article, meeting or calendar event to News & Views for the December issue, please e-mail jstahlhut1@aol.com **no later than November 15, 2011.**

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;

Wednesdays 2 – 4 pm. The office phone will be monitored daily.



The Return of Thanksgiving Dinner!

Thursday, November 24th at 2:00 pm: A cherished tradition returns to UUSIS. After a two-year hiatus, our **Thanksgiving Day Dinner** will return under new leadership – Ann Preston. Started by Dot Sonn a few years ago, this is an opportunity for our community to spend a quality holiday together in a low-stress environment. Join us for food, fun and festivities! Price: \$20.00 per person. Space is limited. A sign up sheet will be posted shortly in the Social Room.

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			October		28 6:30 Welcome Dinner/Social Room	29 12:30 Ladies Who Lunch, Alfa Drent
Oct 30 RE hosts Coffee Hour & Trick or Treat for UNICEF		1 November	2	3	4 6:30 1 st Friday Potluck, Robin Gans	5 2:00 Book Club Meeting, Marge Laurent
6 Sunday Service: The Thing With Feathers, Rev Sangrey ◇ 11:30 Religious Services Mtg, Bob Nixon	7	8	9 7:00 Board Meeting, Admin Bldg 7:30-9 Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary	10 7:30 Stamford Small Congregations Collaborative, Zion Lutheran Church	11	12
13 Sunday Service: "Accepting What Is," Anthony Smokovich. Special music with Darwin Shen. ◇ 2 nd Sunday Walkers, Karen Davis	14	15	16 7:30-9 Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary	17	18	19
			<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>	
20 Sunday Service: On the Road from Greed to Giving, Rev Sangrey <i>Choir</i> <i>Sunday</i>	21	22	23	24 2:00 Thanksgiving Day Dinner, Ann Preston	25	26
27 Sunday Service: Looking for the Light, Rev Sangrey	28	29	30			



Defying Gravity... **Multigenerational Congregations** **Reframing Hope**

How can we transform our congregational life to meet the future?

A joint program offered by the
UU Congregation at Shelter Rock and the UU District of Metropolitan NY

November 5, 2011 9am - 4pm

UU Congregation at Shelter Rock, 48 Shelter Rock Rd, Manhasset NY

Coffee and bagels at 9:00am, program starts at 9:30am Registration \$25 – Lunch included, Scholarships available

Leadership in a congregation can feel like a heavy responsibility. Come to the Defying Gravity Leadership Day and find out how the very role you play in your congregation can lighten your heart and expand your soul. This multi-track conference will provide specific skills instruction tailored just for you - to help make serving your congregation more enjoyable - uncovering the link between service and your personal spiritual growth.

Keynote Speaker - Rev. Carol Howard Merritt



How are congregations effectively navigating cultural shifts? In our time together, we will explore how generational dynamics, technological advancements, and evolving communication have changed our society and how they affect our ministries. Whether you serve a traditional congregation or you're interested in new church movements, we will discern how God is working through and with our current landscape.

Carol Howard Merritt has written numerous articles, is the award-winning author of *Tribal Church* (Alban Institute, 2007) and *Reframing Hope* (Alban Institute, 2010), and a blogger for the *Huffington Post*. Carol co-hosts a weekly *God Complex Radio* podcast. She leads conferences nationally and internationally on cultural shifts and religion. Carol is a pastor at Western Presbyterian Church, an intergenerational congregation and the home of Miriam's Kitchen, which is a feeding and social service program that welcomes 200 homeless guests for breakfast and dinner each weekday.

The afternoon will be filled with expert-led, three-hour workshops tailored to exploring the joys and challenges of specific roles of congregational leadership, including:

The theme for this conference is so very applicable to us at UUSIS that we are asking board members, committee chairs and others who are committed to leading our community through this difficult time to attend. Attending this leadership day as a group promises to help each of us in not only obtaining new skills/ideas for the congregation but also in nurturing our personal spiritual growth. If you are interested in joining a UUSIS delegation, please contact Linda King at lindapking@gmail.com. Cost is \$25 and car pools are being formed.

and MORE!

Register online at <https://www.formdesk.com/uufirms/LeadershipDay>