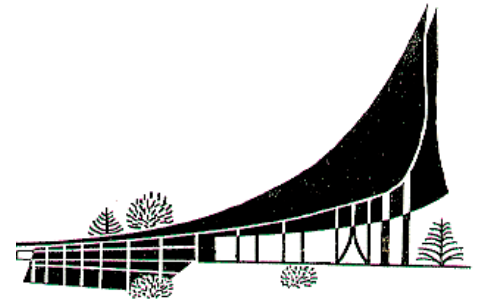


# SOUNDINGS

The Unitarian Church in Westport  
 10 Lyons Plains Road  
 Westport, Connecticut 06880  
 203 227-7205  
 uuchurch@uuwestport.org  
 www.uuwestport.org



A Member of the Unitarian Universalist Association

**THE NEXT SOUNDINGS DEADLINE IS FRIDAY, FEB. 11**

Feb. 6 - Feb. 26, 2011

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>Feb. 6</b> Service: 9 & 11 am K-6 Start in Sanctuary BOT Coffee Chat 10:15am - 12:15pm Jan's Office Valentine Boutique, E.W., - 10:15 - 12:15 pm UN Committee, Chapel, ...12:30 pm	<b>7</b> O&AF Rehearsal, Sanctuary, ... 7:45 pm	<b>8</b> SeniorLunch, East Wing, ... 11:00 am Social Justice, Council, E.W., . 7:30 pm Chamber Choir, ... 7:45 pm	<b>9</b> Chant & Meditation, M.H. ... 7:00 pm Men's Choir, ... 8:00 pm	<b>10</b> Youth Choir - 5 pm Finance Com. M.H., ... 5:30 pm Teen Choir - 6 pm Bell Choir - 6:45pm Women's Choir, - 7:45 pm	<b>11</b> Dore Memorial Service ... 11 am SOUNDINGS Deadline - 12 pm Shawl Ministry, M.H., 12:30 pm REEL Justice/ Laramie Project, Sanct., - 7:30 pm	<b>12</b> Sight-singing for Beginners ... 9:30 am Newcomer Orientation, Chapel - 9:30 am
<b>13</b> Service: 9 & 11 am BOT Coffee Chat 10:15 am - Jan's Office Congregational Feedback Sanctuary .... 12:00 pm OWL Parent Gr., Library, ... 12:30 pm Rainbow Task Force, Chapel ... 12:45 pm	<b>14</b> Board of Trustees, Fellowship Rm., ... 7:30 pm	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> SOUNDINGS Mailing - 9:30 am Chant & Mditation, M.H. ... 7:00 pm NVC Practice, Chapel ... 7:00 pm Abolish Death Penalty, Fellowship Rm., - 7:30 pm Men's Choir - 8:00pm	<b>17</b> Youth Choir - 5 pm Teen Choir - 6 pm Bell Choir - 6:45pm Special Projects Choir - 8:00 pm	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> Youth DC Service Trip Newcomer Orientation, Chapel - 9:30 am Small Group Facilitators, Meeting Hse., ... 10:00 am
<b>20</b> Service: 9 & 11 am No RE: Childcare Available BOT Coffee Chat 10:15 am & 12:15 pm Jan's Office OWL Parent Group, Library ... 12:30 pm Classic Book Group, M. Constable's home ... 12:30 pm	<b>21</b> O&AF Rehearsal, Sanctuary, ... 7:45 pm	<b>22</b> Environmental Action, East Wing, ... 7:30 pm	<b>23</b> Chant & Meditation, M.H. ... 7:00 pm Men's Choir, ... 8:00 pm	<b>24</b> Youth Choir - 5 pm Teen Choir - 6 pm Bell Choir - 6:45pm Special Projects Choir - 8:00 pm	<b>25</b> SOUNDINGS Deadline - 12 pm Shawl Ministry, M.H., 12:30 pm UU Movie Discussion , Meeting Hse., ... 7:30 pm	<b>26</b> Youth Return from DC Trip

## SERMONS

- February 6... 9 & 11 am ..... **"Between the Pulpit and the Pew** ..... Frank Hall  
*The old proverb says, "There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip." Between the time I decide a sermon top and the time I write it and deliver it, things change – and in the process of delivering it some things go wrong. Better luck next time...*
- February 13... 9 & 11 am ..... **Living and Loving in the Right Hemisphere**..... Frank Hall  
*Jill Bolte Taylor, a brain scientist who suffered a stroke in the left hemisphere of her brain, writes about her personal journey into the right hemisphere where she experienced a life-changing encounter with her 'other self.' It's a Valentine's Day story.*
- February 20... 9 & 11 am ..... **The Buddha's Way** ..... Frank Hall  
*What is the essence of Buddhism and why is it attractive to so many Unitarian Universalists?*



## FROM THE BOARD

**“The great thing in the world is not so much where we stand, as in what direction we are moving.”**

Oliver Wendell Holmes

Dear Fellow Congregants,

As discussed in my past letters, your Board of Trustees has elected to focus on a number important issues, and to plan ahead, thinking not only about the needs of current members, but of future members. In the spirit of transparency it is important that you, the congregation, be aware of our progress. As always we welcome and would appreciate your thoughts and input.

### **VISION PROGRESS**

Mary Money is leading the congregation-wide process to create shared goals for Unitarian Church in Westport's future. At January's Board meeting, she led the Board through the process and timeline she will organize and oversee. There are concerns about timing, meshing with the Annual Appeal for operating funds and fundraising events Jim Keenan is leading. The results of the visioning process is still planned to be brought to a congregational vote at our annual meeting in September 2011. However, we will not rush the process and will take all the time necessary.

### **STEWARDSHIP/FUNDING PROGRESS**

**-Year-Round Stewardship:** David Smith has volunteered to Chair the Year-Round Stewardship Committee. To succeed our congregation must foster a culture of ownership and generosity among ourselves. To do so, and to truly fulfill our potential, a church of our size must move beyond the annual pledge drive model, toward a process of Year-Round Stewardship.

**-Legacy Giving Committee:** John Hooper, past Board Chair is leading the Committee to initiate a comprehensive program of Legacy/Planned Giving. To take the first important steps forward in properly funding the Endowment and Operations two events were held, a January 22nd cocktail party at the John Hooper/Gail Pesyna home and a tea hosted by Sally and Garth Dimon at their apartment in Meadow Ridge (Redding) on the afternoon of January 23rd. Both events were well attended and well received thanks to the help of the Rev. Terry Sweetser from the UUA.

**-Ways & Means Committee:** Now known as Fun and Fundraising. Will be led by Jim Keenan with responsibility to oversee and implement all fund raising events in support of Church operations. Jim has a year's worth of possibilities for member's connection, marketing in the larger community and fun/fundraising.

**-Annual Appeal Campaign:** I thought we were fortunate and blessed to have found two capable members step forward to Co-Chair the Annual Appeal. They share the belief and vision that we need each year to raise the funds needed to function as a church of our size should. Unfortunately their personal situation will not allow them to accept the leadership position.

### **COMMUNICATIONS PROGRESS**

**-U Matters:** We are on our way to improved transparency and better relationship and dialogue between the Board, members and friends. To this end, our U Matters weekly informal meetings (after each service) to hear congregational concerns is working, and our first quarterly larger group Talk-Back session held in December moved us closer to better understanding. Please join us after each service in Jan's office with suggestions and mark your calendar for the next Talk-Back on February 13th after the 11am service.

### **CONSTITUTION/STRUCTURE PROGRESS**

Progress is being made by Denny Davidoff (Board Secretary) and her task force. The group is still on track to report back by the May 2011 Board Meeting. Any proposed changes to the Constitution will be communicated and explained to you before being discussed by the congregation and brought to a vote at the Annual Meeting September 2011.

### **MINISTRY PROGRESS**

Other pressing matters have delayed us. Hopefully we can begin in February answering the questions. Do we need an Associate Minister, or an Assistant Minister, to work with Frank Hall? If so, when can we fund that position? What is the right structure?

### **Other Matters Progress:**

**Sheila Lane Update:** The process involving the Finance Committee, Endowment Committee, and the Board still hopes to have a clear set of choices about the property, the debt, and the congregation's vision for its future to put to a vote.

Your feed-back is needed and respected. Please feel free to discuss these issues – or whatever's on your mind – with any of the Board members. Remember, monthly Board meetings are open to observers, and the Minutes are publicly posted and Board members are available for discussion after services.

Respectfully,

Chuck Colletti, *Board Chair*

January 31, 2011

Dear Friends,

What a month! Record-breaking snow accumulations matched by days of Arctic air.

I remember reading a piece titled Living with Michigan Snow. This year we could insert Connecticut in place of Michigan:

**Dear Diary,**

**December 8:** 6:00 PM. It started to snow. The first snow of the season and the wife and I sat for hours by the window watching the huge soft flakes drift down from heaven. It looked like a Grandma Moses Print. So romantic we felt like newlyweds again. I love snow!

**December 9:** We woke to a beautiful blanket of crystal white snow covering every inch of the landscape. What a fantastic sight! Can there be a more lovely place in the Whole World? Moving here was the best idea I've ever had. Shoveled for the first time in years and felt like a boy again. I did both our driveway and the sidewalks. This afternoon the snow plow came along and covered up the sidewalks and closed in the driveway, so I got to shovel again. What a perfect life.

**December 12:** The sun has melted all our lovely snow. Such a disappointment. My neighbor tells me not to worry, we'll definitely have a white Christmas. No snow on Christmas would be awful! Bob says we'll have so much snow by the end of winter, that I'll never want to see snow again. I don't think that's possible. Bob is such a nice man. I'm glad he's our neighbor.

**December 14:** Snow, lovely snow! 8" last night. The temperature dropped to -20. The cold makes everything sparkle so. The wind took my breath away, but I warmed up by shoveling the driveway and sidewalks. This is the life! The snowplow came back this afternoon and buried everything again. I didn't realize I would have to do quite this much shoveling, but I'll certainly get back in shape this way. I wish I wouldn't huff and puff so.

**December 15:** 20 inches forecast. Sold my van and bought a 4x4 Explorer. Bought snow tires for the wife's car and 2 extra shovels. Stocked the freezer. The wife wants a wood stove in case the electricity goes out. I think that's silly. We aren't in Alaska, after all.

**December 16:** Ice storm this morning. Fell on my butt on the ice in the driveway putting down salt. Hurt like heck. The wife laughed for an hour, which I think was very cruel.

**December 17:** Still way below freezing. Roads are too icy to go anywhere. Electricity was off for 5 hours. I had to pile the blankets on to stay warm. Nothing to do but stare at the wife and try not to irritate her. Guess I should've bought a wood stove, but won't admit it to her. I hate it when she's right. I can't believe I'm freezing to death in my own living room.

**December 20:** Electricity's back on, but had another 14" of the stuff last night. More shoveling. Took all day. Snowplow came by twice. Tried to find a neighbor kid to shovel, but they said they're too busy playing hockey. I think they're lying. Called the only hardware store around to see about buying a snow blower and they're out. Might have another shipment in March. I think they're lying. Bob says I have to shovel or the city will have it done and bill me. I think he's lying.

**December 22:** Bob was right about a white Christmas because 13 more inches of the white stuff fell today, and it's so cold it probably won't melt till August. Took me 45 minutes to get all dressed up to go out to shovel and then I had to pee. By the time I got undressed, peed and dressed again, I was too tired to shovel. Tried to hire Bob who has a plow on his truck for the rest of the winter; but he says he's too busy. I think he's is lying.

**December 23:** Only 2" of snow today. And it warmed up to 0. The wife wanted me to decorate the front of the house this morning. What is she ... nuts??? Why didn't she tell me to do that a month ago? She says she did but I think she's lying.

**December 24:** 6". Snow packed so hard by snowplow, I broke the shovel. Thought I was having a heart attack. If I ever catch that guy who drives that snowplow, I'll drag him through the snow by his hair. I know he hides around the corner and waits for me to finish shoveling and then he comes down the street at a 100 miles an hour and throws snow all over where I've just been! Tonight the wife wanted me to sing Christmas carols with her and open our presents, but I was busy watching for the snowplow.

**December 25:** Merry Christmas. 20 more inches of the #\$\$%&\*!! slop tonight. Snowed in. The idea of shoveling makes my blood boil. I hate the snow! Then the snowplow driver came by asking for a donation and I hit him over the head with my shovel. The wife says I have a bad attitude. I think she's an idiot. If I have to watch "It's a Wonderful Life" one more time, I'm going to kill her.

**December 26:** Still snowed in. Why did I ever move here? It was all HER idea. She's really getting on my nerves.

**December 27:** Temperature dropped to -30 and the pipes froze.

**December 28:** Warmed up to above -50. Still snowed in. SHE is driving me crazy!!!

**December 29:** 10 more inches. Bob says I have to shovel the roof or it could cave in. That's the silliest thing I ever heard. How dumb does he think I am?

**December 30:** Roof caved in. The snow plow driver is suing me for a million dollars for the bump on his head. The wife went home to her mother. Another 9" predicted.

**December 31:** Set fire to what's left of the house. No more shoveling.

**January 8:** I feel so good. I just love those little white pills they keep giving me. Why am I tied to the bed?

.....

Those of us over a certain age are warned against the dangers of shoveling, but the above journal entries warn about another kind of danger – it's about attitude.

If you have to keep shoveling, be careful. If we continue to compete with Michigan's snowfall, the Florida housing market will bounce back! Keep smiling.

Yours,



## Perry's Ponderings ...

In 1770 Universalist preacher John Murray said, "You may possess only a small light but uncover it. Let it shine, use it in order to bring more light and understanding to the hearts and minds of men and women." We shared our small lights and understanding of our hearts and minds at the Family Worship and Potluck this past Saturday evening. It was a special gathering of all ages that brought us together as a family.

The event began with each person choosing one of the seven words representing our UU Principles – Respect, Kindness, Spirit, Truth, Voice, Peace, Nature – and drawing or writing why he or she connects with that word. Then everyone shared their UU Principle Postcards in small groups. Part of 4th grader Clare's message was that our church frees your spirit by letting you express yourself.

Clare felt empowered to express herself during the worship candlelighting when she shared a heartfelt concern for her cousin going through medical difficulties. The children and youth in every grade have been lighting candles each week in Religious Education. This has given them a time to share joys and concerns so they can be held in the *loving hearts*, as the children's affirmation says, of our community.

The Saturday evening worship included *The Tale of Sapling*, written by UCW member Peter Gray, reminding us to find the answers in our own *heartwood*. We also had a vibrant musical performance from Charlie Schott's band, The Stringed Cheese Trio. As they played *Little Bit of Light*, young Liza danced around and around in the front of the sanctuary. She uncovered her light and let it shine so we could all warm our hearts in it.

The evening ended with a potluck where we laughed and shared a festive meal. Daniel is just learning words, but without speaking he decided to spoon feed me from my bowl of rice. This role reversal made perfect sense on an evening when we all fed each other a hearty feast of UCW community.

*Thank you to the Peterson's for planning, Peter Gray for the story, Alex, Lorna, Cole, Matthew, and Tess for acting, The Stringed Cheese Trio for playing, Frank and Jamie for leadership, Sarah Bell, James McKinnon, and Linda Hudson for the potluck, and everyone who joined us with open minds, helping hands, and loving hearts..*

## RE CALENDAR

### Sunday, Feb 6...

9&11am K-6 Start in Sanctuary  
12:30pm OWL Parent Group- Lib.

### Sunday, Feb 13 ...

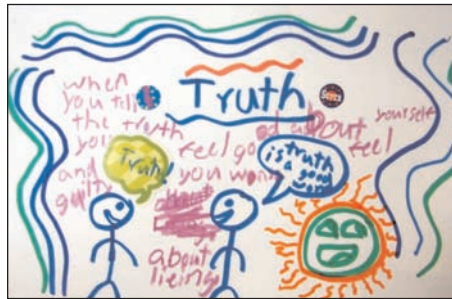
12:30pm OWL Parent Group- Lib.

### Sunday, Feb 20 ...

No RE – Childcare Available

**Is your child involved in a Scouting program?  
We have mentors for the faith component.  
Contact Perry at  
perry@uwestport.org**

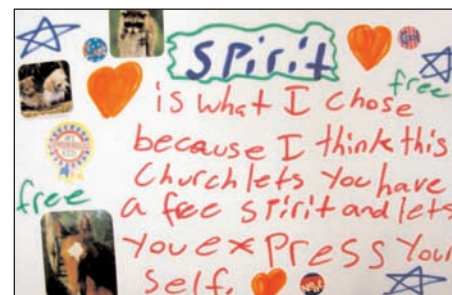
*Each child created a UU Principle Postcard at the Family Worship Event...*



*Truth from Conor*



*Peace from Alex*



*Spirit from Clare*



*Nature from Tess*

## HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP...

*Lily Rappaport, Youth Program*

Nothing gives me greater joy as an advisor than seeing our youth being kind to one another. I'm moved when I watch them share giggles and secrets, warm hugs, friendly conversation and encourage each other with acts and words of compassion and kindness.

When youth group discussed our personal resolutions for the New Year, most expressed a desire to make the world a more peaceful place for us all. Even though it seems an impossibility, we agreed that we must seek understanding and work toward building a global community where all peoples can live together in mutual respect. Compassion may be the key to unleashing the possibility of living together in this kind of harmony and we all possess the potential to practice this virtue.

Indeed the practice of compassion is central to every one of the major world religions. Confucius was the first to formulate what has become known as the Golden Rule: "Do not do to others what you would not like them to do to you." He said it was the central thread that ran through his teachings and should be practiced "all day and every day". The Golden Rule was the essence of Torah and the bedrock message of the Qur'an. The Dalai Lama put it simply when he said, "My religion is kindness."

Other religions also insist that it is not sufficient to confine your compassion to your own group. You must have what one of the Chinese sages called *jian ai*, "concern for everybody" – honoring the stranger and loving your enemies.

Using knowledge of their own religion, a group of independent religious leaders worked together to write a document called the Charter for Compassion. The Charter states compassion can break down political, dogmatic, ideological and religious boundaries. It calls upon us to appreciate cultural and religious diversity and to make compassion a clear, dynamic force in our world. To learn more, see [charterforcompassion.org](http://charterforcompassion.org).

Imagine if we all resolve to perform simple acts of kindness every day, how different life could be. Together we can make our world a peaceful global community.

## PAID SICK DAYS KEEP US ALL HEALTHY



Have you ever wondered what a restaurant employee does when he or she is too sick to come to work? That cook, bakery worker, dishwasher, waiter, what do they do? They go to work preparing and handling food which

the consumer, well... consumes. Or what about healthcare workers? What do they do? They go to work too. Retail sales? Bus drivers? Children's Day Care workers? The same. The same. The same. Last year at a school function, 30 University of Connecticut students were infected with a norovirus — a violent "stomach flu." The students recovered in the UCONN infirmary. The state Department of Health attributed the outbreak to an ill food service worker who spread the disease.

Eighteen million cases of food-borne norovirus, a virulent food-borne illness, occur each year, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Half of those cases are linked to ill and contagious food service workers in restaurants. 18 million cases and that's just one virus that the CDC monitors.

The Connecticut General Assembly will be considering legislation - AN ACT MANDATING EMPLOYERS PROVIDE PAID SICK LEAVE TO EMPLOYEES (HB 6187) – that would require that employers with fifty or more employees provide five paid sick days to their employees for use for the employee's sickness, the employee's child's sickness, or to deal with sexual assault or domestic violence issues.

Those businesses alone account for 54,221 food-service workers.

Two days after his inauguration, Connecticut Gov. Dannel P. Malloy appeared before the Connecticut Business & Industry Association and told more than 300 business owners, managers and representatives he believes companies should be required by law to offer paid sick leave to workers. Believe me, he didn't make any friends but he spoke the truth. The hard truth. Without paid sick days workers go to work and infect us all.

Why do they go to work? Because they have no choice. They tend to lack the protection of a union. They're low-paid service workers and when they don't show up for work they can be penalized. They can be fired. It's happened. And that's one thing that they can't afford.

## All CALLING TO DO GOOD

The ultimate expression of our spirituality is to work for social justice. As members of a spiritual community, we are fueled by our shared spiritual values, exist to represent Unitarian Universalist values in public discourse, and are called to live out those shared values, to "walk our talk".



UU theologian James Luther Adams wrote about the prophet hood of all believers, meaning that every member of the congregation is called to moral action. We all have something to contribute. And when we all contribute together we are powerful.

Eight weeks ago Reverend Mark Morrison-Reed led a weekend of racial justice activities here at the Church. Some of you participated in that weekend. The words of Reverend Morrison-Reed are in our Hymnal, Reading #580, **The Task of the Religious Community**:

“The central task of the religious community is to unveil the bonds that bind each to all. There is a connectedness, a relationship discovered amid the particulars of our own lives and the lives of others. Once felt, it inspires us to act for justice.

It is the church that assures us that we are not struggling for justice on our own, but as members of a larger community. The religious community is essential, for alone our vision is too narrow to see all that must be seen, and our strength too limited to do all that must be done. Together, our vision widens and our strength is renewed.”

I believe that we all want to “do good”. That it's practically built into our DNA as human beings, almost like a “compassion” gene.

And yet there are all of these societal obstacles to “doing good”: political polarization, cynicism, individualism, a collapse of confidence in institutions, feeling powerless, that social reform does more harm than good... and personal obstacles: we live increasingly more hectic, competitive, and busier lives with work, school, children, family... responsibilities.

And yet Unitarian Universalism is historically rooted in social justice as a direct expression of our faith. Our tradition is one of "deeds, not creeds". So how do we deal with this contradiction?

We offer the congregation opportunities for engagement with a wide range of issues. Involvement that is time sensitive, meaningful, effective, and appreciated.

Whatever your situation, you can do something. Maybe it's bringing food for the CT Food Bank on Sundays, or contacting a state legislator, or participating in a Read Aloud Day at the Beardsley School once a year, or chairing a committee – whether it's daily, weekly, monthly, several times a year -- you can do something, you can be a part of something, you can make a difference.

*If you'd like to know how, just call or e-mail me at 203.227.7205 x14 or david@uuwestport.org.*

*There's a place for you in social justice. Let's “walk our talk” together.*



**“Boutique”  
Valentine  
Special  
Feb. 6th**

After each service  
(proceeds to help the  
Church General Fund)"

**UU Movie  
Discussion Group  
Friday, Feb. 25**



The UU Movie Discussion Group will meet on Friday, February 25 to discuss 2 films. They are “True Grit” and “Black Swan”. (January’s meeting was cancelled because of bad weather). Be sure to bring your Academy Award ballot for our Annual Contest). Potluck dessert at 7:30; discussion at 8. At the Meeting House.

**The Vision Process  
for our Congregation is  
getting started!**

**Please hold the date of  
April 30th  
for a full-day Vision event.**

**The  
“Vision of Us”  
(VOU)**

*Please contact  
Mary Money at  
mary.money@hotmail.com  
if you are interested in  
helping out in any part  
of the process.*

**Business Matters**

We have all heard the expression, "dialing and smiling", used when people make "cold" calls. Well last week we were not smiling when we learned that the church phone system's voice mail module (like a computer hard drive) failed. DOA! The phone system is now passé and we have, till now, managed to keep it going.



The prospects of going without a main number message and individual voice mails was scary but we were told it would be at least a week before the technician could round up the needed module. On top of that, I would not be around when the technician came next week as I would be on vacation.

To the rescue came Peter Gray, a UCW member and close friend of mine. He read the email blast where we announced that we had no voice-mail capability. He called me today with great news. Peter, in a prior life, had his own business and his phone equipment was the same as ours! He has been storing it in his attic. He retrieved it and brought it over Friday afternoon. We replaced our defective board with his and voile, our voice mail capability had returned. After some quick recordings of personal messages we were back in business.

Thank you Peter! More than a coincidence as Ed Thompson said to me. Well, actually Ed joked with me, knowing I belong to a Congregational Church, saying "see John, miracles do happen in a Unitarian Church!" Miracle or not, we are grateful for Peter stepping forward. Unitarians in action, helping one another.

John Carroll / *Business Manager*

**Join us for  
Darwin Day  
Friday,  
February 11**

with cocktail hour,  
full course dinner,  
fascinating  
conversation,  
a science quiz, and a  
talk by Yale’s Paul  
Turner, PhD.  
The cost is \$60 per  
person and all are  
welcome.  
Best regards,

John Levin, Southern  
Connecticut Darwin Day  
Committee  
(646) 221-9134  
jlevin@tfm-llc.com

For a YouTube video and more,  
visit  
[www.darwindayct.org](http://www.darwindayct.org)

**Attention  
Newcomers!**



Please join us on Saturday February 5 from 9:30am-12:00 noon in the downstairs chapel for Part I of our 3-part Newcomer Orientation series.

In Part I we welcome you, answer any questions you might have and suggest some ways to connect with others in the congregation as you continue to get to know us. One or more ministers and staff members attend this session and join others in the group in sharing the stories of how we came to this church and to Unitarian Universalism. You’ll receive a packet of information that identifies specific ways to get involved, as well as an informative DVD and other materials introducing you to Unitarian Universalism.

Part 2 will be on Saturday, February 12, and Part 3 will be on Saturday, February 19. While there is no need to RSVP, contact Betty Rich at [stoutfam@optonline.net](mailto:stoutfam@optonline.net) if you have any questions.



It began with a conversation with Jamie Forbes, our Youth Outreach Director. She wanted to know if the Once & Again Folksingers could sing a few pieces at Barnes & Noble Bookstore to benefit the Beardsley School.

I checked in with the choir members and found that most of them were available and interested. We booked January 22nd at 1:00. The day came sooner than we thought. We met at 12:30 at the church for a warm-up and then formed a caravan of car-poolers to Barnes and Noble. At 1:00 most of us had arrived. There were two cars who took a wrong turn because they thought they were following caravan cars and, as it turns out, the car they were following was not a part of the choir. Yikes.....they were wandering in the 'desert'. I hoped it would not take them 40 years to find us! What to do?

We started anyway, with a song that did not require soloists. By the time we finished that number, the remaining voices had found their way to Barnes and Noble, and all soloists were in their places with bright shining faces! Whew!

We began with a piece by Bob Dylan, "Blowin' in the Wind". We then sang an African piece called "Bumbalela". That word translates as 'never give up'. A perfect thought for the Beardsley school people. The crowd that gathered, many of whom were UU members, numbered about 40. Yeah!!!!!! The next piece was a song about world peace. Another worthy subject! Amy Marshall then spoke for a few minutes about the progress that she was making with programs, test scores, community involvement. It was heart-warming news. We ended the event with "Come and Go With Me". We knew that we had done a good deed. Our desire is to have those children grow, get educated, and become a part of society in a productive way. And that is what we were doing: educating ourselves and getting involved and growing as a result.

Of the dozens of times I have been in the store I do not recall that there has been live music before. Another first.....and it was us! Thanks to the members of the O&AF for their time, talent, energy and caring!!

## SOUNDINGS

*Newsletter of the  
Unitarian Church in Westport*

Phone: (203) 227-7205

Fax: (203) 221-7979

E-mail: [uuchurch@uuwestport.org](mailto:uuchurch@uuwestport.org)

### Church Staff

Frank Hall ..... Senior Minister  
[frank@uuwestport.org](mailto:frank@uuwestport.org)  
EdWard Thompson ..... Minister of Music  
[ed@uuwestport.org](mailto:ed@uuwestport.org)  
John Carroll..... Church Administrator/  
Business Manager  
[john@uuwestport.org](mailto:john@uuwestport.org)  
Jan Braunle ..... Administrative Associate  
[jan@uuwestport.org](mailto:jan@uuwestport.org)  
Perry Montrose..... RE Director  
[perry@uuwestport.org](mailto:perry@uuwestport.org)  
Jamie Forbes ..... Youth Outreach Dir.  
[jamie@uuwestport.org](mailto:jamie@uuwestport.org)  
Lily Rappaport ..... Youth Program Dir.  
[lily@uuwestport.org](mailto:lily@uuwestport.org)  
David Vita ..... Social Justice Director  
[david@uuwestport.org](mailto:david@uuwestport.org)  
Robert Santiago ..... Sexton  
[bobby@uuwestport.org](mailto:bobby@uuwestport.org)

### Endorsed Community Minister

Rev. Debra Haffner ...[debra@uuwestport.org](mailto:debra@uuwestport.org)

### Board of Trustees

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Carol Porter ..... Editor/Design

visit our website at  
[www.uuwestport.org](http://www.uuwestport.org)

The next SOUNDINGS deadline is  
Friday, Feb. 11, at noon (or before).  
Please e-mail your copy to:  
[carpo@optonline.net](mailto:carpo@optonline.net)

**Please hold the date:  
May 6, 7 and 8, 2011**

**Intergenerational Retreat at Camp Jewell  
This may be out LAST CAMP JEWELL Weekend  
Plan to join us as we INSPIRE and CONNECT in the beautiful  
Berkshire camp.**

**Organizers Needed: Please come to our first organizational  
meeting on  
February 7th at 7:00pm.**



## Star Island - UU Retreat in New Hampshire

I am always surprised when I meet UUs who've never heard of Star Island, since it was my formative (and total) experience with Unitarianism growing up. My parents didn't belong to a particular congregation, but I accompanied my aunt for a week every summer to this conference center 10 miles off the New Hampshire coast. The island is austere and beautiful: a quarter-mile across with no cars, but seagulls, tide pools, and wild roses in abundance. A weathered hotel from the 1800s and adjoining cottages house the 200 or so weekly "conferees" and 100 college-age staffers called "pelicans." It's like sleepaway camp for families, but with more comfortable accommodations and fewer mosquitoes.

With no traffic on the road and no locks on the doors, and practically the entire island within view of the hotel's front porch, kids are free to run in packs—in a good way, yet not totally unlike wild dogs but for the sun-bloomed freckles and ice cream-stained T-shirts. Most conferences have children's programming at the same time as the adults', and there are also myriad intergenerational events. Meals are served family-style at tables for 12, encouraging breaking bread with new acquaintances thrice daily. By the ripe old age of 8, most kids have defected to youth-dominated tables, the din of which is either heartwarming or headaching, depending on who you are and proximity to said tables.

The atmosphere on Star is as unplugged as one prefers. Cell phones and electronics are allowed but kept unobtrusive. A business center with Internet access and desktop computers can be used at a nominal charge; the island is TV-free, but films related to the conference theme are shown, or you can choose a week with no screen time at all. Similarly, one can spend their week in as unstructured or activity-packed, solitary or social, a manner as they want: reading in a rocking chair, rowing solo to a neighboring island, or immersing oneself fully in the conference from daybreak (bird watching and polar bear dipping) to midday (topic speakers/discussions, arts workshops and sports) to evening (spectacular sunsets, bonfires and dances) to late into the night (raucous card games and candlelit chapel services).

I now attend that same conference of my youth—International Affairs (7/23-30, 2011)—with my aunt, along with my own family. The 2011 theme is "Water as a Human Right and Resource," and where better to explore the topic than a tiny island community with rainwater cisterns for bathing and saltwater toilets that sometimes glow with bioluminescence; a reverse-osmosis drinking water system and a microbiological waste treatment plant; and limited showers—a luxe 3 per week (or every other day, if that sounds better).

In addition to IA, there are several weeklong conferences for families (children younger than 6 attend for free); 2- and 3-night retreats and, new this year, a weeklong conference for LGBTQ families and friends. Information and registration forms for the 2011 season, as well as summer employment applications, are available at [www.starisland.org](http://www.starisland.org)

As a young person, I equated being Unitarian, or vacationing among them, at any rate, with freedom: freedom from looking both ways before crossing, freedom from daily bathing. This boded well as I finally got around to joining a faith community as an adult. (This was about two months ago. I'm 40.) I hope that congregants at The Unitarian Church in Westport will visit and fall in love with Star Island, just as I've found my UU home for the other 51 weeks of the year.

Jessica Patton Pellegrino, *Codirector, IA Youth Program*  
[www.internationalaffairsconference.org](http://www.internationalaffairsconference.org)

*For information on Work and Volunteer Opportunities  
for Youth and Young Adults see other side*

# Work and Volunteer Opportunities for Youth and Young Adults

## **Camp Unirondack,**

a UU summer camp in the Adirondacks of upstate New York.

Ages 16 and above can apply for positions on kitchen or maintenance crew

(<http://www.unirondack.org>)

Age 18 and above can apply for counselor positions

## **Gap Year Opportunities**

(between high school graduation and college)

Look up Global Citizen Year, which places gap-year students in Africa and Latin America.

Or find a country to teach English in through

WorldTeach.org. Or volunteer through

omprakash.org (all recommended by

Nicholas Kristof – New York Times editorial writer and world traveler)

## **Youth Envoy Coordinator Position at UU-UNO - young adult**

The UU-UNO is seeking a Youth Envoy Coordinator to manage high school aged youth engagement with the envoy program and the UU-UNO. Go to [www.UU-UNO.org](http://www.UU-UNO.org)

### **Salary:**

Part Time Fellowship (20 hrs a wk) in our New York City office and some weekend visits  
\$1,000/month Stipend

1 yr position – contract renewal dependent on grant renewal

## **Youth Services Opportunities Project Fellows Program-** young adult-

NYC (this is a wonderful organization!!)

The Fellows program continues YSOP's mission of engaging young people in direct service, while encouraging their development as the future leaders of non-profit organization.

Fellows help with the management of our organization. The YSOP Fellows Program requires a one-year commitment and will

begin mid to late September. YSOP offers \$15,000 as a Living Allowance, \$87/month for commutation and other travel expenses, and participation in YSOP's medical insurance plan. Consult the YSOP website for more information ([www.ysop.org/ysopfellows](http://www.ysop.org/ysopfellows))

## **UUA General Assembly (GA) Youth Caucus)-** high school youth

GA Youth Caucus is a gathering of youth during General Assembly in June where youth can discuss, learn, share, grow and take part in the larger business of GA. Youth Caucus staff and program facilitators provide support, workshops, discussion groups and worship opportunities for all those gathered, with a special focus on youth. These positions might be filled but something to keep in mind for next year! (e-mail [jgiacoia@uua.org](mailto:jgiacoia@uua.org))

Worship/spirituality Coordinator- 1 youth-2 year position (GA 2011 and 2012)

Chaplains – 2 youth, 2 adults – 1 year position  
Network Coordinator-1 youth-1 year position

## **Unitarian Universalist Service Committee-** all ages

"There are many ways to learn, but we have found that when you smell the chemicals in a Mexican factory or literally dig in with a Gulf Coast partner, the experience is deeper, richer, even profound. With this transformative quality in mind, UUSC provides two unique opportunities for experiential learning: Just Works Camps and JustJourneys." Contact UUSC if you are interested in learning more about upcoming UUSC experiential learning opportunities. They currently are sponsoring a Haiti Volunteer Program and in the past year sponsored the following trips: Uganda: Witness to a Return Home, Guatemala JustJourney, Freedom Summer: A Civil Rights Journey.

For questions regarding experiential learning with UUSC, please e-mail [mobilization@uusc.org](mailto:mobilization@uusc.org) or call 617-868-6600

# food fight!



## **3rd Annual Chowdafest Competition**

Vote on your favorite soups & chowders  
from over 20+ local restaurants

**"SOUPer Bowl" Saturday**

**February 5, 2011 - 11:00am - 4:00pm**

**Bedford Middle School in Westport**

**\$6 Adults (\$5 if you bring a can good)**

**\$2 Kids under 12 - Kids vote too!**

Conducted by the Unitarian Church in Westport • Benefitting The CT Food Bank

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Join us at a special presentation of:

# THE LARAMIE PROJECT



**Sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Youth Group and Rainbow Task Force**

**Date:** Friday, February 11, 2011

**Place:** The Unitarian Church in Westport, 10 Lyons Plains Road, Westport, CT 06880

**Time:** 7:30 PM

**What:** Screening of The Laramie Project, followed by discussion led by Robin McHaelen, Executive Director of True Colors

**Synopsis:** The Laramie Project deals with the brutal beating and death of Matthew Shepard, a gay college student from Laramie, Wyoming, and the impact that this crime had on the residents of Laramie, Wyoming. The film is an adaptation of Moises Kaufman's play in which the thoughts and opinions of Laramie residents are presented alongside re-enacted excerpts from the trials of the two men who attacked Matthew Shepard in 1998. The film was originally produced for HBO.

In the month of February, 2011, Unitarian Universalist Youth Groups from across the United States and Canada will be taking a stand against hate and bigotry by hosting a special screening of The Laramie Project to benefit local charities dedicated to reducing hate and intolerance. The Unitarian Church in Westport is participating in this effort.

**Cost:** There is no charge to attend this screening, but we will be soliciting donations and selling dessert and non-alcoholic beverages in order to raise money to sponsor local Fairfield County youth so they can attend the True Colors Conference in March, 2011 at the University of Connecticut. This conference is the largest LGBT Youth Conference in the country.

### **More Information About True Colors:**

True Colors is a non-profit organization that works with other social service agencies, schools, organizations, and within communities to ensure that the needs of sexual and gender minority youth are both recognized and competently met. The organization trains more than 2400 people annually, organizes the largest LGBT youth conference in the country with more than 2000 attendees and manages the state's only LGBT mentoring program. True Colors has been spotlighted by both national and local media for their expertise in LGBTI youth issues, including most recently CNN.

<http://www.ourtruecolors.org/>

### **Questions? Contact:**

**David Vita**  
**Director of Social Justice**  
**Unitarian Church in Westport**  
**10 Lyons Plains Road**  
**Westport, Connecticut 06880**  
**203-227-7205 x 14**