

SOUNDINGS

The Unitarian Church in Westport
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A Member of the Unitarian Universalist Association

THE NEXT SOUNDINGS DEADLINE IS FRIDAY, NOV. 19

Nov. 14 - Dec. 4, 2010

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Nov. 14 Worship Service: 9 am COA Service: 11 am OWL Parent Gr., Lib. ... 12:30 pm Spirit in Practice, E.W., ... 12:30 pm Artist's Way, YouthRm., 1:00 pm	15 O&AF Rehearsal ... 7:45 pm	16 RE Council Library, .. 7:30 pm Improv, Fellow.Rm., ... 7:30 pm Chamber Choir, Chapel ... 7:45 pm	17 Chant & Meditation M.H. ... 7:00 pm God in America: Film & Discussion, E.W. ... 7:00 pm NVC Practice, M.H. ... 7:00 pm Abolish Death Penalty, Fellow.Rm... 7:30 pm Men's Ch. -Chapel- 8pm	18 Youth Choir - 5 pm Teen Choir - 6 m Bell Choir - 6:45pm Special Projects Choir, ... 8 pm	19 SOUNDINGS Deadline , 12:00 Noon Shawl Ministry M.H. - 12:30 pm Dancing at Lughnasa, Sanct. ... 8:00 pm	20 Choir Sectionals, Sanctuary ...9 am Small Group Facilitators, M.H., ... 10:00 am Dancing at Lughnasa, Sanctuary ... 8 pm
21 Family Thanksgiving Worship Service: 9 & 11 am Spirit in Practice, EW, ... 12:30 pm Classic Book, R. Burn- ham home,...12:30 pm Climate Change, M.H., ... 1:00 pm Dancing at Lughnasa Sanct., ... 3 pm	22 Health Care Task Force, Library, ... 7:30 pm	23 Improv, Chapel., ... 7:30 pm Environmental Action Com., Fellowship Rm., ... 7:30 pm	24 SOUNDINGS Mailing - 9:30 am Chant & Meditation M.H., ... 7:00 pm Men's Choir., 8 pm	 Church Family Thanksgiving Celebration, Sanct. ...3:00 pm	26 UU Movie Discussion Group, M.H., ...7:30 pm	27
28 Worship Service: 9 & 11 am No RE Childcare Available Artist's Way, Y.R., ...1:00 pm Women of the Bible, Library, ... 4:00 pm	29 O&AF Rehearsal ... 7:45 pm	30 NVC Practice, Fellowship Rm., ... 7:00 pm Chamber Choir, Sanctuary, ... 7:45 pm	Dec. 1 Chant & Meditation, M.H. ... 7:00 pm Men's Choir ... 8:00 pm	2 Youth Choir - 5 pm Finance Com. M.H. ... 5:30 pm Teen Choir - 6 m Bell Choir - 6:45pm Special Projects Choir, ... 8 pm	3 SOUNDINGS Deadline:12 Noon Shawl Ministry, M.H....12:30 pm REEL Justice Film, Sanctuary, ... 7:30 pm	4 Mark Morrison Reed Workshop, ... 9:00 am Circle Facilitators, Meeting Hse., ... 10:00 am

SERMONS:

November 14 ... 9 am "On Becoming Unitarian Universalist" Frank Hall 11 am "Coming of Age Service" <i>We present this year's Coming of Age to the congregation.</i>
November 21 ... 9 & 11 am Family Thanksgiving Service <i>A doorway into thanks.</i>
November 28 ... 9 & 11 am Invasions of Privacy Frank Hall <i>"Privacy: The quality or condition of being secluded from the presence or view of others; free from unsanctioned intrusion: a person's right to privacy." What happens when our privacy is invaded.</i>

A Message about LGBT Bullying

I delivered these comments to open the Vigil in Norwalk, CT on the recent suicides of several lesbian and gay youth. It was great having so many UCW members there.

“Tonight we come together with heavy hearts to commemorate the lives of the at least seven teenagers who took their lives because of bullying and harassment in September. The only thing we know for sure these young people had in common was that they were perceived to be gay or lesbian. We come together tonight to say, “Enough. Never Again. Enough.”

People who are LGBTQI, teens and yes, adults are often harassed and bullied throughout their lives. An anti-bullying initiative will fail as long as WE fail to stand up to the homophobia – the hatred directed at LGBT people – that still exists in our schools, on our streets, in our workplaces, in our laws, and in our society.

To the LGBT people here, both teens and adults, I am here to tell you that God loves you just the way you are, and that sexual and gender diversity is blessing to us all.

To the LGBT teens here, I want to say that you are loved, worthy, and accepted just the way you are. That God made you, that people love you, and that suicide is NEVER the solution. If you are being bullied, TELL SOMEONE, ASK FOR HELP, REACH OUT. Yes, as the YouTube project says, it does get better, but I want it to be okay for you right now. And I want you to know that there are adults who can help.

To all of the teens here, I beg you to become the generation that no longer accepts bullying as a fact of life in middle school and high school, but says NO MORE. Standing up for people who are being bullied, telling someone a joke is offensive, asking fellow students to abandon “that’s so gay,” is not tattling or not being able to take a joke – it’s courageous, it’s intervening, and it may save someone’s life.

To the religious leaders here, I implore you to use your pulpits to proclaim a life saving message that God loves us all. That while we may all not agree about what four passages in the Bible say about same sex sexual relationships, we know that the overarching messages of our Scriptures is “Love your neighbor as yourself.” All of our neighbors. In too many cases, religion has fed cultural homophobia, and left people feeling alienated and ashamed. If religion has been part of the problem, we must become part of the solution, and that includes speaking out against those who hide their homophobia, their own fears of their sexuality, behind four verses.

During the height of the AIDS epidemic, there was a poster that read Silence = Death. Silence about homophobia and bullying and violence and discrimination has also meant death. Pledge with me tonight that you will be silent no more”.

If you or a family member is struggling with questions about your sexual orientation or gender identity, please know that I would be happy to talk with you. Email me at debra@uuwestport.org to set up an appointment.



Sarah Bell, Candace Clinger & Bob Perry rehearsing for “Dancing at Lughnasa”

“Dancing at Lughnasa”

by Brian Friel

Friday, **November 19** & Saturday, **November 20** at 8 PM,
& Sunday, **November 21** at 3 PM

“Dancing at Lughnasa,” Brian Friel’s 1992 Tony Award-winning play, will be presented in our sanctuary on Friday November 19 & Saturday November 20 at 8 pm & on Sunday November 21 at 3 PM. Brian Friel is Ireland’s most eminent living playwright and has been frequently honored and produced in Ireland and around the world

during his long career.

This production of “Dancing at Lughnasa” is directed by Jim Luongo, who directed the theater program at New Canaan High School for more than twenty years. This production marks the third play in as many years that Jim has directed at the church, following the plays “Doubt” in 2008 and “Proof” in 2009.

“Dancing at Lughnasa” is Friel’s best known play; it premiered at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin, transferred to London’s West End, and went on to Broadway, where it won three Tony Awards in 1992, including Best Play. The play is loosely based on the lives of Friel’s mother and aunts who lived in the Glenties, on the west coast of Donegal. It caused tension among his own family as many felt that he was putting too much of his family’s history up on the stage. Set in 1936, the play depicts the late summer days when love briefly seems possible for three of the Mundy sisters and the family welcomes home the frail elder brother, who has returned from a life as missionary in Africa. However, as the summer ends, the family foresees the sadness and economic privations under which they will suffer as all hopes fade.

“Dancing at Lughnasa”: Donation \$20. Call Carl Serbell at 222-7190 for information and reservations.

November 7, 2010

Dear Friends,

Last week we celebrated the life of Bob Lavender, a member of this congregation for fifty years, twice chair of the Board of Trustees, and for several years Financial Advisor to the Unitarian Universalist Association at 25 Beacon Street in Boston.

Bob died on October 5 from complications of Parkinson's disease, which he lived and dealt with for more than seventeen years.

Bob was a pillar of this church, and if he heard me say that he would respond with a witty remark, which he would expect me to return like a tennis ball hit from his court to mine, and he would continue to volley as long as I could keep the exchange going.

His witticisms were always clever, never caustic or cutting or back-handed; but they were inevitable. He had a well-honed sense of humor, unique in a way, except that Carolyn and he were two halves of the Lavender team, and as we prepared for his service I found that his family – three children and six grandchildren – had inherited his humor gene.

Bob was a serious man, however. He was careful with his words the way a mathematician is careful with numbers. He was so very careful that you could begin to feel impatient, waiting for his response. He knew it, so he used that sense of humor to take the edge off.

Ken Lanouette, another pillar of the church, said that when he completed his term as chair of the building committee that was responsible for our wonderful buildings, he told Bob, "I was in charge of getting the building up, now you have to finish the project by building a smoothly-functioning congregation."

Our carefully crafted Constitution has Bob's fingerprints all over it. Sally Dimon, also one of the pillars holding this place up, told me about a time some years ago when she was asked by the Board to do some work on revising the Constitution, which she and a committee worked on for some time before presenting it for approval. Bob didn't give his approval – he made suggestions, however, which Sally says the committee accepted and that those suggestions were a significant improvement on their work – thanks to Bob.

I got to know Bob quite well during the past 26-plus years and I want to say very simply, directly and sincerely that I admired, respected and appreciated him. I trust that he knew that, but during his final days I made a point of telling him so. I thanked him and told him that I always felt respected by him. We both knew that it wasn't about agreement or approval, it was simply about respect.

Former UUA President, Bill Schulz, with whom Bob worked at the UUA offered an inspiring eulogy at Bob's service, and the current President, Peter Morales sent a letter of condolence and praise for Bob, acknowledging his work with the UUA and the Metro New York District. He said, "Bob lived his faith."

Bob expressed his faith in words used for UUA Board chapel services – (*see reverse side*).

Yours,



Bob Lavender's writings -- Opening Words: *used at his memorial service*

In the sacrament of this gathering / We recognize / That life is more
Than hunger satisfied, / More than the shelter / Which keeps the storm at bay.

We give thanks for life, / Lived and to be lived; / Thanks / For the mystery of life,
And the endless search to understand it; / Thanks / For the surprise of every day,
The creation never ending.

We give thanks / For the very marrow life, / And the spirit / Which nourishes it.
And in that spirit / We bless this congregation, / We bless the Association beyond;
We bless the synergy which connects us, / That we may be blessed, / Amen & Amen.

Chalice Lighting

We invoke light / To illumine our reaching, / Hinting at the brightness / Of human potential
We invoke ceremony / To speak for us, / Embrace our hopes, / Encode our highest thoughts.
We invoke flame / To kindle images of our past. / Reminding us / How briefly burns the flame.

Closing Words

We separate to go our separate ways / And yet, in some mystery of time and space,
We remain together.

We separate to live our separate lives / And yet, in some mystery of connectedness,
Our lives are entwined.

We separate to hold our separate thoughts / And yet, in some telepathic mystery,
Those thoughts are held in common. / And so turns the earth. Amen

.....

We pass through many rooms / On our way.

Some passages are casual transits, routine moves;

Some life class fulfillments.

We pass through many rooms / On our way.

Some change not at all for our having been there;

Some are different places when we leave.

Each room nourishes a life of its own / As we pass through ,

The life of the past not sealed, The life of the future unseen;

We enter the room and leave.

Each room nourishes a life of its own / As we pass through /

A process and a paradox -- Once included, / In a sense we never leave.

The door is closing; / Closing on today / The door is closing.

We look back

Through the narrowing crack; / The faces eclipsing;

Something of ourselves remaining behind

The door is closing; / Time to walk away, / Seek new rooms;

Life will go on / Behind the door.

Closing on this heartbeat of time / On this subset / Of service shared.

Perry's Ponderings ...

Sarah Bell, Joann Coviello, and Linda Hudson called me over to the Meeting House the other night because an injured squirrel was convulsing on the sidewalk. I wrapped him in a blanket and carried him into the warm Youth Room. He stopped his violent movements and settled down, but was not in good shape. We called Wildlife in Crisis (the organization that the children voted to receive their Chapel offerings two years ago) and waited for some advice. We named the squirrel "Barnaby" and sat vigil with him, just offering our presence and care.

Barnaby did not make it through the night. The next day at Barnaby's burial we sang *Find the Stillness* and *Spirit of Life*, read two poems Linda found about the animal world and death, and reflected on how Barnaby touched us in our brief encounter. Joann was struck by how much suffering is going on around us without our awareness. Linda and Sarah remembered the passing of pets and loved ones, searching for a piece of understanding around that transition. Joann commented on how Barnaby had brought us together to be present for each other as we held the important questions in our hearts.

In naming Barnaby we named some of the deep life struggles the experience brought to the forefront. To name something is to give it importance, make it real, and recognize its identity. In *Gave It a Name* Bruce Springsteen sings, "Cain slew Abel 'neath the black rain; at night he couldn't stand the guilt or the blame; so he gave it a name." Naming our struggles and atrocities acknowledges their existence and the opportunity to move through them. In her *This I Believe* Eve Ensler, creator of *The Vagina Monologues*, stated, "I believe in the power and mystery of naming things." She goes on to speak about the healing power abused women experience when they finally name what has happened to them.

Religions have various forms of baby naming rituals that recognize the power of receiving a name and having your identity recognized. When the Youth Choir performed the Jonah story, they sang about becoming all you can be with each of them shouting out their names, "Sanjay, Bryce, Sam, Holden, Sammi, Luke, Olivia, Lily, Morgan, Eve, Clare, Lily, Anneliese, Amy, Nina, Skylar, Keanan, and Duncan."

RE CALENDAR

Sat. Nov. 13

9am - 1pm Youth Outreach
Westbridge Coalition

Sat. Nov. 13

6pm - Coming of Age
Candlelight Service

Sun. Nov. 14

9 & 11am ; Coming of Age
Service

Sun. Nov. 14

12:30pm - 1pm OWL Parent
Group - Library

Tue. Nov. 16

7:30pm - 9pm RE Council -
Library

Sat. Nov. 20

9am - 1pm Youth Outreach
Westbridge Coalition

Sun. Nov. 21

9 & 11am Family Thanksgiving
Worship Service - Sanctuary

Sun. Nov. 28

No RE (childcare available)

On Sunday, Nov. 21

GUEST AT YOUR TABLE



boxes are back by
popular demand!
Pick one up in the foyer
and support the important
efforts of our Unitarian
Universalist Service
Committee

Do you home school your children?

Would you like to talk to other
UU parents who do and have your
children connect?
Let's get together.
Contact Perry at perry@uwestport.org
or 227-7205 x15.

HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP...

Lily Rappaport, Youth Program Dir.

Generally speaking, teenagers LOVE sleepovers. For youth groupers, these sleepovers are highly anticipated events. We schedule four or five over the course of the year. They are called "lock-ins" because once you arrive, you are "locked inside" for the night.

Sleeping at a lock-in is often the furthest thing from a youth's mind. There are quiet rooms set aside for those who want to catch some zzzz's. However, most prefer to stay awake with their friends deep into the night. They bond, play games, eat snacks, tell jokes, share music and worship. Spending hours talking openly and intimately about life helps them create long, lasting friendships. As one youth says, "We don't want to waste any time sleeping."

Lock-ins are great memory makers and an excellent way to build community. Our next youth group lock-in will be to welcome the graduating ninth graders from Coming of Age.

Similarly the district sponsors weekend-long conferences or "cons" for Unitarian Universalist youth, grades nine to twelve. Last week Elise Thomson and I, along with a hundred other youth and advisors from New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, attended a Halloween-themed con. We spent two nights and one full day socializing, making new friends, and participating in activities such as drumming, face painting, stress reduction, ultimate Frisbee, silent football and worship. On Saturday night there was a coffee house where we shared music, poetry, humor, skits and other talents, all in a respectful, inclusive, fun-filled atmosphere.

While cons are primarily designed to be fun, they offer opportunity for leadership, facilitation, and public speaking, all excellent skills for youth to learn. A person who develops his or her leadership skills at a con can then bring those skills back into their home community. There are also components devoted to social action, spiritual development and exploration into topics such as racism and gender identity.

If you're interested in attending a future con, you have several opportunities. There is a Spirituality Development Con on January 7-9 at the Fourth Universalist Society in Manhattan, and a Social Con on February 4-6 at the Unitarian Church in Summit, NJ.

Human Development Report Shows Great Gains, and Some Slides

By NEIL MacFARQUHAR, New York Times

UNITED NATIONS — The world has made significant progress in income, education and health over the past 40 years, but the gains have been uneven and in some places war and the ravages of AIDS shortened life spans, according to a United Nations report on Thursday.

Over all, average life expectancy around the globe jumped to 70 years in 2010, up from 59 in 1970. School enrollment through high school reached 70 percent of eligible pupils, up from 55 percent, and average per capita income doubled to more than \$10,000 in the 135 countries for which numbers were available. The statistics cover about 92 percent of the world's population.

The countries improving most since 1970 are Oman, China, Nepal, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Laos, Tunisia, South Korea, Algeria and Morocco.

Developed nations still ranked the highest in terms of overall well-being, particularly Norway, Australia, New Zealand, the United States, Ireland, Liechtenstein, the Netherlands, Canada, Sweden and Germany.

The United States, which once dominated the top of all the indexes, has gradually been shifting downward. Some of that slide is linked to the introduction of new measurements — this year's report included a ranking for gender equality, for example, in which the United States ranked 37th. It does poorly in relation to its income peers in terms of the number of women in Congress, as well as on maternal health.

Health Care Reform Must Move Forward



There are politicians, many of them newly elected, who seem to believe that if you say that the public wants health care reform repealed often enough and loud enough and if the media repeats it often enough and loud enough it will be so.

The facts contradict their fiction. Yes, polling prior to Tuesday's election and exit polls indicate that 48% of the people polled want health care repealed. But what about the other 52%? Well, 36% said that health care reform didn't go far enough and should be expanded and 16% think that it's fine.

But when people were asked about specific provisions of the health care bill like an end to life-time limits on insurance, including young adults up to age 26 on their parents plan, not denying children health insurance because of a pre-existing condition, the approval ratings jumped into the 60% range.

So people in general have a lot of fear, questions, uncertainty, and anxiety about health care reform. Some of it legitimate. Some of it misinformation stoked by the opponents of reform and their well benefactors.

Our Interfaith Health Care Task Force will be redoubling its efforts to work for the implementation of SustiNet, our Connecticut plan, and the Federal reforms. If you would like more information about what we'll be doing, please contact David Vita: david@uuwestport.org or 203.227.7205 x14.

Searching for Michael Anthony

When I was 10 years old I watched the TV series, *The Millionaire*. The program was about John Beresford Tipton, Jr., sketched as a semi-retired industrialist, and shown obscured by one of his high-backed leather chairs. Viewers saw only his right arm as he reached for a cashier's check for one million dollars, each week, and handed it to his executive secretary, a mild-mannered, good-humored, but no-nonsense man named Michael Anthony. It was Anthony's job to travel and deliver that check to its intended recipient, staying only long enough to present the gift and then, customarily, leaving the recipient's life forever.

Each month when we select a Share the Plate recipient I think about *The Millionaire*. Of course we're not giving away a million dollars every month but, I think to the recipient organization, this much-needed money that just suddenly appears out of nowhere has the same effect.

The Church plays the role of John Beresford Tipton, Jr. I'm looking for some "Michael" Anthonys. Our Share the Plate Committee needs 2-3 people who will select 10 recipients (there is only 1 recipient for the summer services) over the course of the year, promote Share the Plate in the congregation and occasionally do the Sunday service announcement. If you're interested, please contact David Vita at david@uuwestport.org, or 203.227.7205 x14.



Social Justice Shorts...

Dear friends of the Beardsley School. Do you need a lift? Take a moment to stop by the Angel Tree on the social justice table in the church foyer after Sunday services and read the personal letters from the students in three classrooms at Beardsley expressing appreciation for their new school supplies...

The Annual Interfaith Thanksgiving sponsored by the Clergy Council and Interfaith Council of Westport and Weston will be held at the Church of the Assumption, 98 Riverside Avenue, Westport on Sunday, November 21 at 4:00 pm. A program of music, dance, and drama will be followed by a reception. Please bring a donation of canned goods or a staple grocery item for the needy among us...

Holiday HELP WANTED to collect Christmas presents on three December Sundays for Family ReEntry. Talk to David Vita or e-mail david@uuwestport.org for more information...

Please continue to support the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee through **GUEST AT YOUR TABLE** beginning Sunday, November 21. Look for the familiar boxes. Take one home and share the stories!

Business Matters

The church has many committees but one that has a low profile but tall job is the finance committee comprised of Art Ulrich, Hazen Goddard, Howard Aibel (from Endowment Committee), Harvey Place, Tom Comer and Ken Vogel (Board Member and Treasurer). The Business Manager is a non-voting member of the committee. This group meets monthly, the first Thursday after the first Monday of the new month, to review monthly income and expenses against the church's operating budget, cash flow, overall pledge statistics, etc. They also prepare the quarterly reports included in this issue of Soundings.

This committee was also instrumental in working with staff and committees on developing the Fiscal Year 2011 budget so we have a more realistic understanding of sources of income and specific expenses. The group follows the Ben Franklin philosophy of "A penny saved is a penny earned" instilled by prior committee members including Roy Fine, Ted Sullivan, and longtime past chair, Bob Kleid. Many thanks to these past and current committee members. I value their advise and direction with the day-to-day financial administrative responsibilities of the Business Office and our outside bookkeeper, Janet Reed. I know they welcome your suggestions regarding prudent management of the church finances. Their work and that of Jim Keenan's pledge canvass team has produced a projected operating surplus. The key factor is the congregation fulfilling their pledge commitments.

John Carroll
*Business Manager/
Church Administrator*

VILLAGE CORNER: Partner Church News

November 21st is Scholarship Sunday – Sign up to Sponsor a Student in Alsóboldogfalva

Our scholarship program has been a very important way to connect on a personal level with high school and college youth who might not be able to continue their studies without financial support. Education is the key to the future – both here and there.

Our Partner Church in Transylvania has forwarded the names of 32 students who are seeking Scholarship Sponsors. Signups will be after both services on **Sunday, November 21st.**

Scholarships range from \$75 to \$300 per year and include the expectation of some communication between sponsor and student. For more information please contact Cheryl Paul, 203-336-9326 or CDixonInteriors@aol.com.

UU Movie Discussion Group Friday, Nov. 26



The UU Movie Discussion Group meets again Friday Nov. 26th. Suggested films for this month are: "Social Network" and "Waiting for Superman"

Potluck dessert at 7:30; discussion at 8. At the Meeting House.

Wear your Name Tag!

It's much easier to meet new people after Sunday service when you wear your name tag! Lets support our Mission Statement by saying "hello" to one new face each week and receiving a warm greeting back.



Flowers for October

October 3

In wonderful celebration of our 22nd anniversary.

Given by Felicity & John McWeeney

October 10

In celebration of th 9th anniversary of my ordination here.

*Given with ongoing gratitude by
Peggy Block.*

*Chaplain, Bridgeport Hospital;
Community Minister, UU Danbury;*

October 17

In celebration of Ben Zuckerman's 25th birthday

October 17, 1985

With gratitude for the caring support of this congregation.

Given by Jan Braunle & Rob Zuckerman

October 24

Celebrating our 24th anniversary
Given by John & Joanne Turmelle

October 31

Given In celebration of the life of Bob Lavender.

To order flowers
contact Jan Braunle in the church
office at 203 227-7205
or jan@uuwestport.org

We are now collecting items for our annual



Holiday Boutique



December 5 .. after both services

Now is the time to gather up those items from your recent attic and closet cleaning (new or in great condition only please).

Barbara Thormalen & Jean Northup will be organizing the jewelry sale. They will be around after each service to accept your jewelry donations.

Your giveaway will be someone else's treasure!

Donations now being accepted in the church office.



FROM THE BOARD

“Our goals can only be reached through a vehicle of a plan, in which we must fervently believe, and upon which we must vigorously act. There is no other route to success.” *Stephen A. Brennan*

Dear Fellow Congregants,

Many of you reading this letter probably feel, in general, things are going pretty well at the Unitarian Church in Westport. The church appears vibrant. We have a new Mission Statement. The Circles of Care are growing. The RE, Youth, and Social Justice programs are all very active. The worship and music inspire us, and our church provides spiritual sustenance and joyful connection in our lives.

Our church, however, faces some major issues which may not be visible on a daily basis, but which need to be addressed. Your Board of Trustees has the responsibility to focus on these issues, and to plan ahead, thinking not only about the needs of current members, but of future members. While our wonderful staff handles the day-to-day, we, your Board of Trustees, must work on the present and future needs of the congregation. This Board is resolved to focus on the following goals during the next twelve to eighteen months. We welcome and would appreciate your thoughts and input.

Vision

Some years ago our congregation embarked on a major visioning process – “Vision 2028” – which identified major goals, including solving our space needs (Housing Our Dreams). Although some of the goals have been achieved, some have not, times have changed, and so may have our vision. This means we really need to go back and have a new conversation, about what kind of church we want to become. How do we want our church to be for our children and grandchildren? What are our long-term goals? How can we sustain and continue the great aspects of our church and what changes would we like to experience? What will be our ministerial needs? What should we do with Sheila Lane? And then, eventually, what will it cost to make these dreams come true, and which dreams can we fund and how will we fund them.

Fortunately, Mary Money, who recently led our efforts to create a Mission Statement, has consented to lead the congregation-wide process to create a vision for UCW’s future (with assistance from Randy Burnham, Vice Chair, and John Mason). We hope to bring the results of the visioning process to a congregational vote in the next church year.

Stewardship / Funding

We are all proud of the tireless imaginative efforts of our Annual Giving A-Team, as well as members who organize special fundraisers, increased space rentals thanks to our business manager John Carroll, and all of you who gave generously to our annual appeal. Unfortunately, despite all these efforts, we are raising \$150,000 less than we need each year to properly compensate our dedicated loyal staff, pay our full UUA dues, hire an Associate or Assistant Minister, and function as a church of our size should. Our budget is slightly over \$850,000....but \$1,000,000 is required. An even larger amount would allow us to do more for the congregation and the community.

There is much generosity in our congregation, with people passionately involved in helping many worthy causes – yet somehow that same generosity and passion is not always awakened when it comes to giving to our own beloved community. We 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. “Stewardship” is more than just fundraising, it means “taking care of” one another, building more connection and involvement. Giving to the church should be seen as an act of worship – when we grow in generosity, we grow spiritually, as giving feeds the soul of the giver. We will be formulating more plans and looking for volunteers to carry this process forward.

In addition, a Legacy Giving Plan, an important aspect of funding the Endowment and Operations, needs to put in place. And lastly, a Ways & Means Committee, with full responsibility to oversee and implement all fund raising events in support of Church operations will be formed immediately.

Communications

Improving the relationship and dialogue between the Board, members and friends is essential. Transparency is critical. To this end, Board Members Kristen Leddy and Steve Axthelm will put in place and lead regular scheduled Board and congregation quarterly feedback sessions, as well as weekly communications systems. No longer will it be acceptable for the congregation to feel uninformed; if you are unaware it will be because you are content to be unaware! The first quarterly feedback session is scheduled for December 19th..

Constitution / Structure

First drafted in 1953, then amended as required, it is now time to consider either updating or entirely rewriting our Constitution. Denny Davidoff (Board Secretary) has assembled a task force that will hold its first meeting November 20th, and will report back by the May 2011 Board Meeting.

Ministry

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? What structure of ministry do we want/need when Frank eventually retires and we transition to a new future? Your Board is working on these important questions, with Ken Vogel (Board Treasurer), Sal Mollica and myself taking the lead.

You'll be hearing more about these plans in the coming months, and we invite you to be part of the conversation. The Board is dedicated to doing what's best for the church, now and long-term. 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.

Respectfully,
Chuck Colletti, *Board Chair*

"The reason most people never reach their goals is that they don't define them, or ever seriously consider them as believable or achievable. Winners can tell you where they are going, what they plan to do along the way, and who will be sharing the adventure with them."

Denis Watley



T-DAY ON A TRAY?

In 1953, someone at Swanson severely overestimated the amount of turkey Americans would consume that Thanksgiving. With 260 tons of frozen birds to get rid of, a company salesman named Gerry Thomas ordered 5,000 aluminum trays, recruited an assembly line of women armed with spatulas and ice-cream scoops and began creating mini-feasts of turkey, corn-bread dressing, peas and sweet potatoes – creating the first-ever TV dinner. Thomas later said he got the idea from neatly packaged airplane food.

No frozen feast on for those of us planning a Thanksgiving dinner here at the church this year.

We'll provide the birds and beverages, feast-ees will bring the side dishes and desserts.

The place is here at The Unitarian Church in Westport.

Depending on the number of folks who sign up we'll either be in the Meeting House or in the East Wing or Fellowship Room.

We'll gather at 4 PM.

Sign up to bring something and plan on \$5 per head (for adults) to cover the beverages and birds.

Sign up sheets can be found on the tables at the rear of the foyer.

Sign up to come, bring an appetizer, side dish, dessert... bring something, without which, Thanksgiving dinner simply would not be, well, Thanksgiving dinner.

Also looking for co-conspirators to help with this event. Contact any of us to join the team.

Diana Bell

- ladydianamary@yahoo.com
- JoAnn Coviello*
- coviellojc@snet.net
- Lynda Shannon Bluestein*
- blueslyn@aol.com

Fiscal Year 2011 - 1st Quarter Finances

	Annual Budget	3 mos. Annual Jul'10 - Sept'10	% of Annual Budget
INCOME			
Pledge	\$ 662,217	\$ 205,199	31%
Voluntary Contribution	\$ 44,100	\$ 5,912	13%
Facility Use	\$ 133,640	\$ 31,163	23%
Other	\$ 18,310	\$ 9,054	49%
Total Income	\$ 858,267	\$ 251,328	29%
EXPENSES			
Compensation	\$ 615,472	\$ 147,055	24%
Maint & Insurance	\$ 123,850	\$ 33,688	27%
Programs & Services	\$ 36,670	\$ 4,946	13%
Denominational	\$ 33,490	\$ 8,175	24%
Other Expenses	\$ 42,980	\$ 13,299	31%
Total Expenses	\$ 852,462	\$ 207,163	24%
Net Income	\$ 5,805	\$ 44,165	

SHEILA LANE

Income	
Rental Income	\$ 9,300
Interest Income	\$ 230
Total Income	\$ 9,530
EXPENSES	
Mortgage Interest	\$ 16,247
Property Taxes	\$ 2,618
Insurance	\$ -
Other	\$ 1,028
Total Expenses	\$ 19,893
	\$ (10,363)

Comments:

At the end of our FY IQ (25% of the year), we are pretty close to operating within our budget. However, it is normal for expenses and income to vary from month to month. Our pledges look good. This can be attributed to some members and friends paying their full amount at the beginning of the year. There are however 188 pledges that are in arrears. Our "Other Income" is up substantially due to the very successful tag sale this summer. The staff is also continuing to do a good job in managing expenses. Office Equipment Maintenance and Computer Expense were up a little.

SOUNDINGS

Newsletter of the
Unitarian Church in Westport

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Carol PorterEditor/Design

visit our website at
www.uuwestport.org

The next SOUNDINGS deadline is
Friday, Nov. 19, at noon (or before).
Please e-mail your copy to:
carpo@optonline.net

Congratulations to members of the Youth Choir!!! You got Jonah to rock!
It is not easy to carry off a musical with such flare, but you did it!

To be sure there were many memorable moments. The first one happened for me when the sailors, who thought they'd seen everything, met someone who was on the run. They soon realized that they may lose their lives to the storm that Jonah was causing. When do we 'lose' someone in order to get the storms of our life to abate? I can relate. Can you?

Another great moment was when Jonah was inside the whale and was trying to figure out how to get himself out. The angels give him all of the clues he needed and it was up to him to make sense out of the clues. He kept on working with the pieces of the puzzle until he figured it out. I can relate! Can you?

Another interesting time was when Jonah arrived in Nineveh. Those mean, lean, nasty Ninevites has no use for the likes of him. Yet, Jonah persisted. Then there was that moment of conversion when the King ordered the Ninevites to stop torturing Jonah and to start listening to him. Oh.....old habits are hard to die. I can relate. Can you?

Then there was the final chorus in which we were reminded, for the zillionth time, about responsibility. In the end, it is up to each of us to take responsibility for our life and become all we can be. I can relate. Can you?

Thanks to all of the parents who weekly bring their children to choir rehearsals. We couldn't have done it without your sense of dedication, both to your family, and to our community.



The 3rd Annual Chowdafest has a new date -
Saturday, February 5...

but the essentials remain the same: popular restaurants compete for your votes & proceeds benefit the CT Food Bank and the Unitarian Church in Westport. To sign up or volunteer, please contact Jim Keenan at chowdafest@optonline.net. For more information, please visit Chowdafest.org.

AN EXCITING RACIAL JUSTICE WEEKEND WITH REV. MARK MORRISON-REED – December 3, 4 & 5

Sponsored by the Racial Justice Committee of the Unitarian Church

There is a surprising, and painful, truth behind Unitarian Universalist efforts to become more racially and culturally diverse. This truth must begin with taking an honest look at who we are and why we are who we are, and it ends in a conundrum but not without hope. If UUs really want to change, accepting the truth is the only place to start. Torn between our reality and our aspirations what are we to do?

Friday, December 3 at 7:30– REEL Justice film followed by a discussion with Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed; Tracy Sugarman, author, illustrator, film maker and chronicler of the Civil Rights Movement; and Bill Buckley, producer of award-winning documentary films for over 35 years.

Saturday, December 4, 9:00–3:30–Torn Between Fuzzy Aspirations and Hard Realities: The Perversity of Embracing Diversity. This presentation and workshop considers why achieving diversity is challenging, but will also talk about which congregations became successfully diverse and how.

For more information or to register, please visit the Unitarian Church website: http://www.uuwestport.org/mmr_info.html

Sunday, December 5 – Reverend Mark Morrison-Reed will be in the pulpit at the 9:00 and 11:00 services.

Sunday, December 5 at 1:00 pm- Book reading and signing with Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed.



About Mark Morrison-Reed: Raised in the Unitarian Universalist faith, Mark Morrison-Reed was ordained in the Unitarian Universalist ministry in 1979. For 26 years, he and his wife, Donna, served as co-ministers--first in Rochester, New York, then in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Morrison-Reed's graduate thesis, *Black Pioneers in a White Denomination*, was published in 1984 and is still in print. Now retired from full-time ministry, Morrison-Reed divides his time between writing and other interests. For instance, he has been working with Meadville Lombard Theological School to organize and build the library's archive of materials relating to African American involvement in Universalism, Unitarianism and Unitarian Universalism.

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