



Sunday, June 6

Rev. Sarah K. Person, preaching
10 AM

Sunday, June 13

CELEBRATION SUNDAY

Rev. Jan K. Nielsen, preaching
10 AM



SUMMER WORSHIP ONE SERVICE AT 10 AM CHILD CARE IN THE NURSERY

Join us for Summer Worship! From June 20 through September 6, our Sunday services will be a bit more relaxed, a little less formal. Preachers include Jon Wheeler on Father's Day, June 20; Rev. Jan on July 18; and Cynthia Wolcott on July 25, as well as others. We'll also feature some wonderful singers and musicians. Please come!

Highlights!

- BUILDING COMMUNITY WITH HOSPITALITY
- HEADLINES FROM THE POLICY BOARD: IT HAS BEEN A GOOD YEAR
- PHOTO MINISTRY
- CHURCH SCHOOL REGISTRATION FOR 2010-2011
- CONNECTICUT PRIDE RALLY
- "THE PINT IS PASSED"
- CALL FOR SUMMER MUSICIANS
- UPCOMING EVENTS

Dear Friends,

Here at my desk, I look out into our memorial garden and see our birches in full leaf and our dogwood tree just beginning to blossom. We are in the midst of a glorious New England springtime with bright summer days soon to come.

Each year, just before summer officially arrives, we gather on the second Sunday in June for our traditional Celebration Sunday worship service. Join us at 10 a.m. on June 13 when we'll celebrate our lives and our 189 years as this faith community we call "The Universalist Church." It takes many hearts and hands to support the work of any congregation and on that day we will celebrate and thank all of you -- the hundreds of volunteers whose loving service keeps the spirit of Universalism alive and growing here among us.

Watch for news about my new blog currently being designed by one of our dedicated volunteers, Katy Weber-Tierney. Besides sermons, you will be able to find on my blog a weekly meditation or essay, my reading lists, maybe a recipe now and then, and perhaps also some of my prayers and poems. We'll keep you posted.

Here at the church, we are already planning for the 2010-11 church year. When we gather on Homecoming Sunday on September 13, my sermon will include some thoughts inspired by the novel, The Elegance of the Hedgehog by Muriel Barbery, one of the books I will be reading. This is your invitation to dig into what people tell me is an engaging story. Wherever you find yourself this summer, I hope you'll do some reading and put this book in your stack.

During the next church year, I will be away for some sabbatical time from mid-January until my return in mid-April on Palm Sunday. I am working with Rev. Sarah, the Policy Board, our Church Staff and my Sabbatical Committee, David Arnott, John Kurkjian and Katy Weber-Tierney, to ensure that this will be an enriching time for both of us -- minister and congregation.

I am deeply grateful for the privilege of serving as one of your ministers. It is a calling I love. It is an honor to serve here alongside all of you.

With love and blessings,

Jan

Membership Matters

To contact Martha: mwinslow@westhartforduu.org
or 233-3669, Ext. 109

Building Community With Hospitality

A new food ministry—perhaps less confusingly called a *Hospitality Ministry*—had its first meeting on April 11th. Nine of us met to discuss ways of building community here at our church by cooking for our members. The group plans to start off small by making fresh baked goods for certain coffee hours. We also discussed more ambitious plans like cooking a pancake breakfast, making a spaghetti supper, and baking pies for Homecoming Sunday, or cooking food for Annual Meeting. We especially need people who can be called on to take care of the food for memorial receptions, perhaps a sub group of this Ministry. Our next meeting will take place on **Sunday, May 23, at 10:15AM**. If you would like to get involved in a short term project, or would like to be a core member, we welcome your participation! Contact **Martha Winslow**, mwinslow@westhartforduu.org or 860.233.3669 x109 so we can add your name to the contact list.



David Arnott, Sue Wilson, Ray Giolitto, Kent Smith, Sarah Ivins, Gus Keach-Longo, staff members Rev. Jan Nielsen, Rev. Sarah Person, Sally Oxman and Ted Hine. Workers for the **New Member Dinner: Dick and Linda Sederquist, Mary Fournier, Maria Sgamboti, Orlene Spinney, Ivan Leibin, Scott MacCloy, Barbara Nimmich, Marian and Kent Smith, and Howard Winslow.** I would also like to thank the Membership Advisory Team (see below.) Please forgive me if I inadvertently left your name off one of the above lists.

Membership Annual Report

The following is part of this year's annual report for Membership. In June 2009 we formed a **Membership Advisory Team** to explore issues of membership and make recommendations on ways to improve current practices both to attract new members and to retain existing ones. Team members (in ABC order) include: **Pete Begin, Gus Keach-Longo, Felicia Morgan, Rev. Sarah Person, Joyce Schirm,** and myself, Martha Winslow. **Rob Thompson** joined our Team in January. Our primary focus this year has been whether or not to have requirements for Membership. We examined the UUA document "The Membership Journey," and asked ourselves what a healthy congregation should look like, drafted an "Expectations of Membership Brochure," developed written questionnaires, and held two Membership Forums in January to get feedback from the congregation. Much of the feedback we received included ways that we can become more welcoming to visitors, and we have begun to act on some of these suggestions, including a "tip of the month" in the newsletter, holding a discussion in the parlor after the service as an alternative to coffee hour, and plans to put cards in the pews for visitors to fill out as an alternative to the visitor book. At this time we do not recommend changes to our bylaws regarding membership, but we do recommend keeping the level of expectations of members high. To do this we recognize that we must educate both our newcomers and also our existing members in a variety of ways. Our brochure outlining these expectations, which we shared with congregation and have since revised, is just about ready to go into production. We expect this to be an ongoing discussion and we may change our ideas as we learn new information.

Photo Ministry

The *Photo Ministry*, a second new group, had its first meeting on April 25. This group's purpose is to help us document the life of our congregation. These photos can then be used on our website, and in our self-published literature. We would like have a slide show of special events that can be shown on a regular basis at coffee hour. If you can take photos on a one-time basis, or would like to get a little more involved, please contact **Martha Winslow**, mwinslow@westhartforduu.org or 860.233.3669 x109 so we can add your name to the contact list.

Thank You!

I especially want to thank the people who have taken an active roll in supporting Membership this year. Those people (in no special order) are: **The Welcoming Hosts, Diane Carter, Elise Donabedian, Ivan Leibin, Janet Henderson, Janet Sherfinski, Harriet & Phil Gardiner, Orlene Spinney, Peggy Gray, Susan Raggio,** and most especially, **Maria Sgamboti** who in addition to serving as host, coordinates the hosts' schedules for me. The people who **made lunches for my New UU classes** both in the fall and the Spring: **Ivan Leibin, Patrick Igo, Janet Henderson;** the **New UU Class Presenters: Edie Thompson, Pete Begin,**

Membership Matters

To contact Martha: mwinslow@westhartforduu.org
or 233-3669, Ext. 109

Over 115 visitors signed the guest book this year, a number of people attended the six Minister's Q & A's, and more than thirty newcomers and new members participated in the New UU classes offered in October and March. Thirty-five new members have signed the book since this time last year, a jump from the nineteen new members of the year before.

Other highlights from membership this year includes planning and coordinating two volunteer fairs, running a women's retreat with Joan Brigham to Senexet House for fifteen women, updating and/or creating literature, and lending support to new and existing groups in the church. Two new ministries, a Hospitality Ministry, and a Photo Ministry, have just been formed to address our needs to build community through making and serving food to our members and guests, and to take pictures of the many activities in and around the church which can then be used in our literature, on our website, and can be shown as slides during coffee hours. We also held the New Member Dinner. I am impressed with the amount of energy and enthusiasm our new members have brought with them this year, and their level of participation is high.

Respectfully submitted by Martha Winslow, Member Services Coordinator



Membership Tip of the Month: *Tell return visitors that you're glad they have come back.*

HEADLINES FROM THE POLICY BOARD:



It Has Been a Good Year

What is our plan for our church for the next five to ten years? How is our congregation moving forward in our world to promote our core values? How much change do we want when we have already been changing for the past ten years? Have we been comfortable and not necessarily courageous and unafraid? How can we develop leadership succession? Do we show genuine hospitality to our community and to ourselves?

On March 19 and 20, a group of members and staff gathered to explore these issues and began to formulate our Strategic Plan for the next 5 years, as promised at our 2009 Annual Meeting. Our mentor for the workshop and for the entire process is Barry Finkelstein from the UUA.

Five priorities for our strategic plan have now been identified and the work is underway to explore priorities, direction, goals, resources and ways to evaluate how we will measure our success. The five areas are: Membership and Building Community, Communication and Identity, Faith Development, Outreach and Social Justice, Leadership Development.

Over the next few months, small subcommittees will begin to develop ways to engage all of our members to contribute comments, thoughts and ideas about how we will finalize our Strategic Plan, monitor its progress and celebrate our accomplishments. An exciting time is ahead of us.

If you are interested in helping with any of the five priorities, please let us know. We'd be happy to have you exploring with us!

Policy Board Members:

David Arnott	Scott Kaslusky
Mary Fournier	Scott MacCloy
Ray Giolitto, Moderator	Jan Nielsen (ex-officio)
Peggy Gray	Kent Smith

Church School News

To contact Sally: soxman@westhartforduu.org
or 233-3669, Ext. 111

Thank You!!!

Thank you to the dozens of committed parents and congregation members who have volunteered in the church school during the past church year. Religious education programming would be practically non-existent without the time and talent of so many generous individuals.

Church School Registration For 2010-11

If you have not yet registered your child(ren) for next year, please do so Children's Sunday, May 23. (Reminder: Please bring your checkbook for the materials fee.) Registering at Fiske Hall coffee hours allows us to save the cost of first class postage. Early registration also helps us plan appropriately for next year. It is especially important for us to have an early teacher count. It takes 30+ teachers to staff our classrooms. We need one parent from each family to take a turn in the classroom every other year. If you were not in the classroom in 2009-10, please volunteer to teach in the coming year.

Summer Services

There will be no children's programming during the summer months (Memorial Day through Labor Day). We will have childcare for the very young in the Nursery. Please note that we do not have staffing to accommodate older children in the Nursery. We will have pipe-cleaners and books available in the Sanctuary for families attending with school-aged children.

Beanbags, Basketballs and Wacky Noodles

A couple months ago, I was visiting my friend **June Cahill** at Sanchez School. She was hesitant to mention a need that had come to her attention because she felt that we had already done so much for the school. I assured her that we were interested in helping in whatever way we could. One of the physical education teachers, **Dave Anderson**, had asked for some help purchasing much needed gym equipment. June gave me the list in the hope that we might be able to supply some of the needed items.

I brought the list back to the church and showed it to our Executive Director, **Patty Lee**. As she looked at the list, she had an idea – instead of purchasing birthday

presents for one another throughout the year, why don't we as staff members purchase gym equipment instead. I thought it was a fabulous idea. When we took it to the full staff the following week, the others agreed. It didn't take long before staff members had signed up to purchase all of the equipment on the list!

Sanchez received the equipment in early April. Dave Anderson wrote a lovely thank you letter and sent some wonderful thank you cards made by Sanchez students. In his letter, he said "Your donation has enabled us to do many exciting activities with our students that we would otherwise not have had the opportunity to do. Not only that, but your donation has touched close to 500 students; we just can't thank you enough. I want to assure you that your church's kindness and generosity is greatly appreciated."

It was wonderful for the staff to have the opportunity to give to Sanchez School in this way. We were able to feel the thrill that I'm sure the congregation feels when we complete our book drive every year. How often do we get a chance to directly touch the lives of 500 children? Who wouldn't want to donate a Wacky Noodle!

Love, *Sally*

Got Baby?

Attention new moms and dads: are you interested in meeting other new moms and dads? A play-group will be forming for the summer that will meet once a week during the day. It will be a time for grown up conversation and baby exploration.

Please contact **Lauren Kellnhauser** with your day/time preferences, at 860-945-9833 or LAKellnhauser@gmail.com, by June 1st.



Social Action

June 5 is Connecticut PRIDE Rally

The 2010 Connecticut PRIDE Rally and Festival is **Saturday, June 5**, in Hartford's Bushnell Park. This is a very popular event and our church will have a colorful booth at the festival. You can be a part of this annual event that promotes awareness, acceptance, and equality for GLTB individuals, their friends, and families. We have a lovely brochure, to give to visitors, that promotes The Universalist Church as a Welcoming Congregation.

Consider volunteering to be at our church's booth. You will meet lots of great people! And you will have fun! The hours of the festival are **12:00 to 7:00pm**. Three time slots are available for our booth:

12:00 to 2:00

2:00 to 4:30

4:30 to 7:00

Please contact **Julia Giolitto** (giolitto@giolitto.net or 860.232.9335) to volunteer or to ask questions.



The Wave: Totally Immersed in Costa Rica

Hoping to initiate some action on the field by their hapless team, the diehard Red Sox fans in the bleachers at Fenway Park start a tsunami with thousands of bodies, arms and hands sweeping upwards like a giant halleluiah. Some guy with a bull horn, too far away to see, is orchestrating all this. I wonder if he can see home plate from where he sits. The wave propagates from right field, past the "Pesky Pole", then first base, home plate, and accelerates past third base, crashing into the left field corner of the park, up against the "Green Monster" outfield wall. The bored (and hapless) fans in the bleachers immediately set off a second wave through the ball park. The third attempt to motivate the over stimulated crowd usually dies out before home plate. For a short time, we in the crowd were all fluidly connected to that man with the bull horn, the leader of the wave, who we have never ever met before.

After visiting a native Costa Rican Indian village with the 15 members of our Overseas Adventure Travel group, we crossed over a rickety wooden bridge with barely enough room for the wheels of our small tour bus. Overseas Adventure Travel or "OAT" specializes in small, intimate and educational group travel. In tribute to our expert driver, for getting us across the bridge safely, a wave of up thrust arms and hands, accompanied by much laughter, moved quickly from the front to the back of the bus. This ritual has become our standard acknowledgment to the driver following every successful bridge crossing in our circuitous route around Costa Rica. The wave has become a symbol of the connection and cohesion of the once disparate members of our group, now bonded by friendship and a common interest in exploring and understanding this wonderful Central American country.

Beneath every ocean wave is the sea, the liquid it rides on. If you follow all the molecules of water riding a wave, all they do is follow a circular motion as the wave passes through on its way to the horizon. The water, like the people in the ball park, bobs up and down. We, our fellow travelers, are the fluid through which the wave of time and events move. We are immersed in the process of learning and discovery about this place, its culture and its environment. In the heat and humidity, we are virtually under water, breathing, it seems, more water than air. In the jungles and forests, we are submerged below tree level, immersed in the environment. On the bus, gathered around our trip leader, and walking through the jungle, we are totally immersed in our group, our lives all connected at the same place and same time, as through the eye of a needle, joined in a common thread. We make friends. We are friends, like we have never ever been apart. We hope to see each other again. We make promises. "We must get together", we say. How can two short weeks make such an impression? I think it is because we are sharing something unique for the first time. We are also older, maybe wiser. We understand what it means to be fluid and to go with the flow, to follow the wave, to see that others are exactly like ourselves. We are one. We are the fluid in this world. The waves pass through us, and we are forever connected to each other.

Submitted by The Diversity Task Force

Our Caring Church

We are grieving with the **Fitzpatrick** family. **Tom Fitzpatrick** died on Friday at his home. A memorial service was held here in our sanctuary on Saturday, May 22, with Revs. Jan and Sarah officiating. We send our sympathy to Tom's wife, Elizabeth, his daughters Kate and Colleen, and to their entire family.

We hold in our prayers **Dottie Johnson**, after the death of her beloved husband, **Dr. Donald Johnson** on May 7. Dottie and her two sons, Richard and Theodore, and their families will hold a memorial service for Don on June 5 at 11AM at the Duncaster.

We hold in our hearts as well **Tracey Youngberg, Diane Higgins, Harrison and Ellie**. Tracey's father, Don Youngberg, died on April 12. We send the entire family our sympathy and our love.

Carl Sgamboti, Sr. is responding well to an innovative course of treatment. We join his family in offering prayers of thanksgiving.

Christina Person, Rev. Sarah's mother, woke up on Saturday night, May 8, after being unconscious for 16 hours with no lasting effects from her mild stroke and returned to her residence on Tuesday. Rev. Sarah thanks you for all your prayers and good wishes.

Rev. Jean Brown is recovering from a broken wrist and thanks the congregations for the many good wishes, the flowers and the food.

We are thinking this morning of **Fran Baiamonte** who had surgery on her hand. We know Fran would appreciate your cards and calls.

We are thinking also of **Joyce and Curtis Schirm**. **Curtis** is in St. Mary Home for rehabilitation care. We hold Curtis and Joyce and their family in our prayers.

Nancy Singh is a proud great-grandmother. **Zoya Simone Singh** was born on March 18 to Nancy's youngest grandson, Raj Singh, who lives in New Delhi.

We hold in our prayers **Dick and Val Benham**. **Dick** fell on April 25 as they were leaving the 9 a.m. service, and on Tuesday he had surgery to repair a broken hip. Recovery is still slow and we are hoping for easier days ahead.

We continue to be mindful of all those among us who continue to face medical treatments, losses and other uncertainties of life. We strengthen one another with our care and concern. Remember, if you are coping with painful stress either at home or at work or school, please call upon your ministers, or your pastoral care team. We are here to lend an ear or a helping hand.

Our Knitting Ministry

We are knitters and crocheters who gather together in the spirit of love and fellowship. Together and at home we have made prayer shawls for people in times of joy, crisis, illness, birth, death, love and friendship. Hopes and prayers are woven into these shawls, then they are blessed by those gathered at our meetings and given away to bring comfort and peace to the recipients. Our last meeting of the year will be **Tuesday, June 8 (note the date change)** at 6:30 pm at either Panera's or Cosi's. Watch the weekly announcements in the Order of Service or contact **Marian Smith** for more specific information. (marsmith@hartford.edu or 860-313-0215)

Tom and Sally Oxman welcomed their first grandchild on May 17, Isannah Pratt Oxman, daughter of Toby Pratt and Paul Oxman.

The **Care Team** will meet on **Monday, June 28, from 7 to 8PM** in the Brown Program Center.

Welcome!

A warm welcome to our new members:

STARR COOKMAN
DARRELL COOKMAN
J. MICHAEL TOWER

May their experience here be rich in participation and inspiration.

ALTAR FLOWERS NEEDED for the months of June, July and August. Please contact Judy Busch at judybusch@snet.net or 860.521.2366 if you'd like to make this wonderful gift to our sanctuary in Memory of or in Honor of someone.

A Note of Thanks

We get by with a little help from our friends...

and I found that to be true as we all worked together setting up the gorgeous plants for the Fern Street Market. Those who usually organized and worked were not able to this year but almost without my asking, so many hands appeared and the work got done. My thanks to all. Judy Busch

Social Action



FERTILE GROUND

A Monthly Community Networking Breakfast

The **Fertile Ground** community networking breakfast series will meet **Saturday, June 19**, in the Brown Program Center. Breakfast will be served at **9:30AM** and the meeting will follow from **10** to 11:30AM.

“Long Time Blood Drive Coordinator Passes the Pint”

Dick Brigham, who has organized our Annual Red Cross Blood Drive for many years, has retired from his leadership role. Edie and Rob Thompson have stepped up to take charge of this vital program. This past February, our church collected 50 pints of blood for the Red Cross from members and other volunteers. We are grateful for Dick’s organizing skills, and powers of persuasion! He will continue to share his time and talent – most notably with our Have a Heart food program. Our thanks to Dick and Rob and Edie. And remember, after a certain period of time, you can donate more than once a year.

Life Long Learning

Tuesday Evening Book Group

On **Tuesday, June 1**, the Tuesday Evening Book Group will meet at Borders and Books (by Westfarms Mall) to select next church year's books. We will meet at 7 PM to roam around the store and collect an assortment books. It is an enjoyable, fun evening to participate in and I hope to see you all there! All are welcome!

For July and August, we will meet at Elizabeth Park under the gazebo; it is a nice way to spend a summer's evening!

Any questions or concerns, contact **Orlene Spinney** (860-719-8433, msorlene@gmail.com).

The Daytime Book Group

The **Daytime Book Group** will meet **Thursday June 3, at 1:15PM** in the Parlor to discuss *Year of Wonders* by Geraldine Brooks.

Women Gather for Potluck

will meet **Thursday June 10, at 6:15PM** in the Brown Program Center. Our featured presenter will be **Felicia Morgan**.

~

Attention Members!

We are looking for a friendly, outgoing person to serve as a Welcoming Host once a month for the 9 AM service to begin in the fall. Questions? Please call **Maria Sgamboti** at 860.217.1580 or **Martha Winslow** at 860.233.3669, Ext. 109 for details.

The Universalist, the newsletter of the Universalist Church of West Hartford, provides parishioners and friends with information about our congregation and our larger community. Please send changes to any of your contact information to: Martha Winslow, Member Services Coordinator, The Universalist Church, 433 Fern Street West Hartford, CT 06107 mwinslow@westhartforduu.org

Next Newsletter Submission Deadline	Newsletter Mailing Date
June 16	June 25

Email newsletter items, as an attachment, to Julia Giolitto at giolitto@giolitto.net

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Return Service Requested

DATED MATERIAL – DELIVER BEFORE 05/30/10

Jan K. Nielsen, Senior Minister, Ext. 104, jnielsen@westhartforduu.org
Sarah Person, Acting Associate Minister, Ext. 105, sperson@westhartforduu.org
Jean Cook Brown, Minister Emerita
Patty Lee, Executive Director, Ext. 106, plee@westhartforduu.org
Sally Oxman Director of Religious Education, Ext. 111, soxman@westhartforduu.org
Dee Newton, Church School Administrator, Ext. 108, dnewton@westhartforduu.org
Martha Winslow, Member Services Coordinator, Ext. 109, mwinslow@westhartforduu.org
Lori Bortolussi, Financial Manager, Ext. 103, lbortolussi@westhartforduu.org
Ted Hine, Music Director, Ext. 107, thine@westhartforduu.org
John Harned, Youth & Children's Choir Director, jharned@westhartforduu.org
Daniel Scifo, Organist
Lambert Laing, Custodian
Julia Fuentes, Custodian
Kathy Anderson, Sexton
Tom Oxman, Jr. High Youth Advisor
Margarita Perez, Jr. High Youth Advisor
Sam Lanza, Jr. High Youth Advisor
Marissa Bouchard, Sr. High Youth Advisor
Dan Bouchard, Sr. High Youth Advisor
Jackie Majerus-Collins, Youth-Mentor Coordinator
Linda Scacco, Coming of Age Parent Consultant
Julia Giolitto, Newsletter Editor
Orlene Spinney, Library Collections Manager

Annual Reports—If you would like to receive an electronic version of the 2009 Annual Report, please email Patty Lee at plee@westhartforduu.org. Printed copies are also available upon request.

CALL FOR SUMMER MUSICIANS!

Do you play an instrument or sing? Would you like to contribute to summer worship here at the Universalist Church? Our Director of Music, Ted Hine, is looking for individuals (or groups) of any level of musical ability to help fill our summer services with music. The choir does not perform regularly during summer services, so we have a need for alternate musicians to enrich our worship. In addition, the summer services serve as an excellent opportunity to expand our musical horizons to include styles not normally featured during the rest of the year. Summer services take place every Sunday at 10 AM. Volunteer musicians contribute one or two selections per service. The music can be either sung or performed on an instrument(s) and can be in any style. *If you play the piano or organ well enough to lead the congregation in hymn-singing, we would love to have you act as a substitute on any of the days when our organist, Daniel Scifo, is on vacation. Please contact Ted (tedhine@gmail.com) if you are interested – thanks!