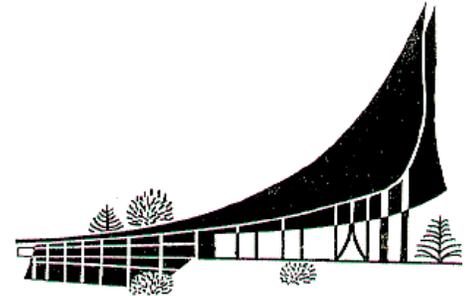


SOUNDINGS

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



THE NEXT SOUNDINGS DEADLINE IS WED., DEC. 18

Dec. 1 - Dec. 28, 2013

A Member of the Unitarian Universalist Association

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Dec. 1 Worship Services: 9 & 11 am Youth Group Wreath Sale, <i>Courtyard</i> No RE, childcare available Mercy Learning Center Committee, Chapel ... 12:30 pm Voices Cafe Meeting, Library ... 12:30 pm .	2 O&AF Rehearsal, ... 7:45 pm	3 RE Meeting, Fellowship Rm., . 7:00 pm	4 Chant & Meditation, Meeting Hse., ... 7:00 pm Chamber Choir, ... 7:45 pm	5 Youth Choir - 5 pm Teen Choir - 6 pm Bell Choir - 6:45 pm Special Projects Choir -8:00 pm	6 Shawl Ministry, M.H. ... 12:30 pm	7 Interim Minister's Forum, M.H., ... 10:30 pm RE Holiday Event Potluck & Caroling Sing a-long, Sanctuary, ... 5:30 pm
8 Services, 9 & 11 am <i>Share the Plate Sunday</i> K-6 start in sanctuary. Youth Group Wreath, Gift & Soup Sale - <i>after both services</i> Jewelry Boutique. E.W. <i>after both services</i> Parent's 8th OWL, Sanct -12:30 Rainbow Task Fask. M.H.-12:30 Transition Workshop, M.H.12:45	9 Gun Safety Committee, E.W., ... 7:30 pm Board of Trustees, Fellowship Rm. ... 7:30 pm	10 Senior Holiday Luncheon, East Wing, ... 11:00 am	11 NVC Practice, E.W., ... 6:45 pm Chant & Meditation, M.H., ... 7:00 pm	12 Finance Committee, Fellows.Rm.- 5:30pm Teen Choir - 6 pm Bell Choir - 6:45 pm Special Projects Choir - 8:00 pm	13 Pageant Rehearsal, Sanctuary, ... 4:30 pm	14 Christmas Concert Dress Rehearsal, ... 10:00 am Neighborhood Circles, M.H., ... 10:00 am Voices Cafe, M.H., ... 8:00 pm
15 Worship Service: 9 am Christmas Concert : 11 am Parent's Group 8th OWL, E.W., ... 12:30 pm UN Committee, Chapel, ... 12:30 pm	16 O&AF Rehearsal, ... 7:45 pm	17	18 SOUNDINGS Deadline -12 noon NVC Practice, E.W. ... 6:45 pm Chant & Meditation, M.H., ... 7:00 pm Chamber Choir, ... 7:45 pm	19 Teen Choir - 6 pm Bell Choir - 6:45 pm Christmas Eve Choir - 8:00 pm	20 Shawl Ministry, M.H., ... 12:30 pm Pageant Rehearsal, ... 4:30 pm	21 Small Group Facilitators, Youth Rm., ... 10:00 am
22 Worship Services: 9 & 11 am Environmental Action E.W. -12:30 pm Parent's Group 8th OWL, E.W., 12:30 pm Youth Group Alumni Gathering, M.H., ... 7:00 pm	23 Christmas Eve Chor Rehearsal, ... 7:00 pm Soundings Mailing, ... 9:30 am	24 Pageant Rehearsal 2:00 pm Pageant Service: 4:00 pm Candlelight Service 9:00 pm Candlelight Service, 11:00 pm	25  Holiday Office closed	26 Holiday Office closed	27 Holiday Office closed UU Movie Discussion, ... 7:30 pm	28

Sermon information on following page.

SERMONS for DECEMBER

December 1 ... 9 & 11 am **“Hanukkah”** (no Religious Education) **Rev. Roberta Finkelstein**

Hanukkah begins early this year; the first night falls on Thanksgiving Eve. As the Thanksgiving week-end comes to a close, join us for a retelling of the story of the Maccabees, a ritual menorah lighting, and some reflections on religious freedom.

Music: O&AF sing at both services.

December 8 ... 9 & 11 am **“Blue Christmas”** **Rev. Roberta Finkelstein**

Pain, loss, isolation or grief can feel more acute in the month of December. The pressure to be happy, to spend money, to live up to impossible expectations, all become more acute during the holiday season. The Blue Christmas service is a way to make room for the expression and hopefully the healing of pain in our lives. This year, as we approach the first anniversary of the tragedy at Newtown, it feels particularly important to acknowledge the blue side of the holiday season.

Music: The Chamber Choir sings at both services.

December 15... 9 am **“Unitarian Universalist Experiences in Kenya”**

Members of this congregation who have spent several years working on service projects in Kenya will talk about their most recent trip. They will be joined by guest speaker Alex Schaeffer. Alex grew up in the UU Church of Arlington, VA.

After college he went into the Peace Corps in Kenya. Upon returning, he co-founded Upeowamacho (<http://www.upeowamacho.org/>), an organization that provides mentoring and funding to allow Kenyan students to attend high school. Alex will be talking about how his UU values have informed his work.

11 am **Annual Christmas Concert** **Special Projects Choir**

December 22 ... 9 & 11 am **“And What I Say to You, I Say To All”** Mark 13.37..... **Rev. Debra Haffner**

In Christian churches, this is the last Sunday of Advent. What are we waiting for? How can we prepare non-anxiously for the days ahead? What miracles are unfolding in our own lives and in the lives of our community? Are we ready?

Music: Teen Choir Sings at both services.

**December 24 Christmas Eve Services ... 4:00 - Christmas Pageant
9:00 & 11:00 - Candlelight Services**

December 29 ... 9 & 11 am **Coffin and Cradle...** (no Religious Education) **Rev. Roberta Finkelstein**

*Coffin and Cradle (no Religious Education) Looking for a spiritual way to welcome the New Year? Join Rev. Roberta for the Coffin and Cradle, a low-key and participatory ritual based service. You are invited to bring objects to place in the coffin (symbolizing that which you hope to let go of in the new year) and cradle (symbolizing that which you hope to give birth to in the new year). **Music: Bell Choir***



FROM THE BOARD

Dear Follow Congregates,

Your Board has been supporting Rev. Roberta and the Transition Team’s work fully. We have been taking part in the Grief and Healing workshops. While many in the congregation took part in the resiliency workshops that were given shortly after Frank announced his retirement the Grief and Healing workshop are very different.

The Board, to a person have found these workshops helpful and worth our time. As a Board we are aware that there are hard feelings regarding past board actions as well as other hurts and concerns. We invite to attend the Grief and Healing workshops that will be held on Monday Dec. 2nd, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. and Sunday Dec. 8th, 12:45 – 2:15 (baby sitting available by reservation please contact Transition team) Let all of us, especially those who are not hurt or healing and are excited by the possibilities to be in dialogue together.

On a personal note I was deeply affected and moved by the honest feedback I received during the workshop. I was relieved, supported and enlightened by the process. It has enabled me to begin to be in right relationship with others. Another member of the Board put it this way “I did not want to attend but I was wrong. The workshop was very useful and I am glad I spent the time.”

Please make the effort to attend.

In Faith and Fellowship,
Randy Burnham, *Board Chair*

In The Interim

On a sunny morning recently I was walking the labyrinth at the Sisters of Mercy retreat center in Madison. I was there to meet with my Spiritual Director; I arrived early enough for a meditative walk.

The labyrinth is an ancient archetypal symbol. Labyrinth images appeared on ancient Greek coins as early as 430 BCE. Similar imagery was found in ancient Egyptian and Native American cultures. The oldest known walking labyrinth path, believed to be around 4000 years old, is found on the Isle of Crete. In the Middle Ages the labyrinth was adapted by the Christian church.

To walk a labyrinth is to enter a sacred space in order to deepen one's spiritual life. Today the labyrinth is used by practitioners of many faiths. A labyrinth is a 'unicursal' path; there is only one way in and one way out. You cannot get lost or take a wrong turn, there are no tricks or traps. So why, then, did I have a moment of panic in my labyrinth walk and think that I was lost? Perhaps because that was the only way for me to receive the message I needed to receive from the universe: just stay on the path.

What a wonderful lesson for somebody whose job is to provide professional companionship to people on a journey! You have entered into this interim time with such energy and integrity. You are showing up, you are engaging, you are experimenting. You are on a path.

In a recent leadership training class we talked about adaptive work; that is, the kind of work that allows a congregation to bridge the gap between their aspirations for the future and the current reality. When you begin adaptive work, you can't really know what changes will need to be made or what tools will be required. You simply set out, with your grand vision firmly before you, and trust that along the way you will discern the next stages of your journey. "Discernment," writes Alban Institute consultants Gil Rendle and Alice Mann, "is said to function like the headlights of an automobile on a dark evening. They don't show you where you will eventually end up. But they will illuminate the next part of the road." Stay on the path.

One of the areas in your congregational life that I believe is in need of adaptive change is religious growth and learning. I met recently with a group of folks interested in re-visioning the adult religious education program known as Odyssey. They have decided to walk slowly enough to truly discern what the growth and learning needs of adults here are rather than just putting together programs without forethought. It takes courage to slow down and reflect instead of just doing something. Anything.

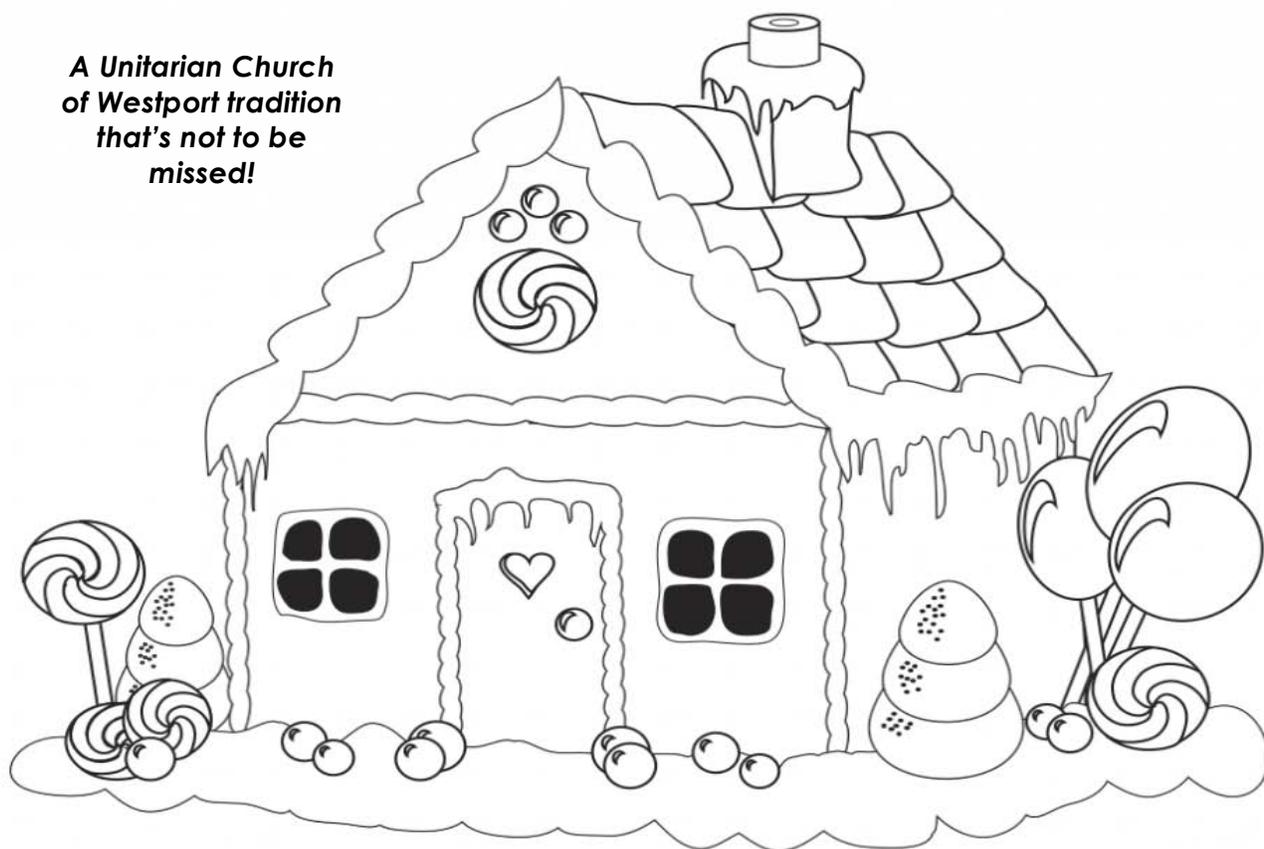
Your Director of Religious Education, Mary Collins, is also beginning a process of adaptive change in the Religious Education program for children and youth. Mary and I share a vision of a time in the near future when all of you will embrace life span faith development (religious education for all ages and all stages) as a shared ministry of the entire congregation. People will be clamoring for the privilege of teaching our children, guiding our youth, sharing wisdom with our elders. There will be a plethora of choices for all who wish to learn, grow, and be transformed.

How will we get there? I don't know. But Mary and the Odyssey team each have some ideas about how to begin. The headlights are on; the next part of the road is illuminated. Let's stay on the path together.

I wish for every one of you a December filled with illumination. Whether it is the Menorah or the Solstice fire or the Christmas Tree that brings most light to your spirit in this month of myriad festivals of light, may you have a blessed and peaceful holiday season.

Rev. Roberta

**A Unitarian Church
of Westport tradition
that's not to be
missed!**



Gingerbread Decorating & Holiday Carol Sing Party

Saturday, December 7th 5:30-8:30 pm

Gingerbread house decorating @ 5:30 pm: You provide a little imagination and we'll take care of the tons of candy and frosting you'll need to create the house of your dreams! Work as a family or each create a unique work of art. (Adult assistance suggested for those under age 8!)
Please RSVP with number of people decorating houses!

Potluck dinner @ 6:30 pm: Bring a dish to share and we'll have quite a feast! Beverages provided. Potluck assignments by last name: A-G please bring a main dish; H-R bring a side dish or salad; S-Z bring dessert. A list of ingredients is always appreciated as are serving utensils.

Holiday caroling at 7:30 pm: After dinner we will gather around Ed Thompson's piano for some holiday songs from a variety of traditions and cultures! Please wear or bring your jingle bells!

Sponsored by your RE Council.

RSVP WITH # DECORATING HOUSES: www.paperlesspost.com/events/5471736-4c2fe2f3/replies/preview

What could Faith Formation Ministry look like in the 21st Century?

Over the years I have tried to name what it is that makes UU Religious Education Ministry so special. So when you are at a holiday gathering or someone asks, you can tap into my philosophy below. This philosophy of Religious Education is also a challenge to us to rise up remembering why we get up early on a cold Sunday morning, or do the leg work for a community event. It matters more than you know for our children and youth, for all of us, and for those visitors who walk in the door and feel something stir inside them. Consider this:

Philosophy of Religious Education Ministry

A child participating in the Unitarian Church in Westport's program will have opportunities to:

- **Experience multigenerational**, multicultural worship and community activities. TUCW is a place to share joys, sorrows, challenges, accomplishments, life's mile stones and transitions of the heart.
- **Explore the stories and values in:** Unitarian Universalism, Jewish, Christian, and other World Religions.
- **To learn about resources for lifelong personal growth** including, but not limited to: Social Action opportunities, sexuality and values programming and that learning continues when people of all ages engage in building relationships with each other; within The Unitarian Church in Westport, in the UU district, and in the greater community.

Religious education is a core ministry of our community. It is a unique spiritual journey over time for both the children, youth AND the adults who engage together to make the philosophy incarnate. One way to be in the know and shape the activities is to be a part of leadership.

Did you know that a vibrant, respectful, reflective RE Council will reflect ALL ages? Ideally, elders with grown children, people with no children, parents, young adults, and teen representation to enrich our individual understanding. Diverse voices in our leadership – attentive to a multicultural perspective – means that we and our children can navigate the world with respect and an eye toward justice.

When I was at the Liberal Religious Educators Association Fall Conference I was intrigued and excited by the Fahs Collaborative work on something called:

FULL WEEK FAITH - Rethinking Religious Education and Faith Formation Ministries For Twenty-First Century Unitarian Universalists. I'd like to explore this with the council and any one in our community who would like to consider Faith Formation for the 21st century. The idea is to support and help us all to live our faith in real and relevant ways - all week – on-site, on-line and on the go.

Here is the website : <http://fullweekfaith.weebly.com/>

This holiday season think about where you spend your time, talent, and treasure. You don't have to choose to do everything. Ask your family members "What is important to you about this season?" Ask yourself "How am I living my faith every day?" We can make choices that feed our spirit and bring us to wholeness. We can choose to live our faith everyday in some way, and share the power of it with those still unaware.

RE CALENDAR

Dec. 1...

No RE classes - only Nursery – Free play at both services
Youth Group – wreath sales after both services

Sat. Dec. 7th ...

5:30 pm Holiday Gingerbread Houses, Potluck, Caroling

Dec. 8th ...

Pre-K-Hanukkah
K-6th - Social Action– START in SANCTUARY
7th –Wiccan Guest-Mtg Hse. Main Fl.
8th – Relationship Skills
9th –COA -Gratitude Statments
10-12-Youth Gr.- Rainbow Task Force

Dec 15 ...

Pre-K – Christmas – Share Love
K-4 - Christianity - Posada
5-6th –Jesus
7th – Judaism Intro
8th –Issues in Friendship & Lifelong relationships
9th –Finalize Gratitude Statements
10-12th – Youth Gr.- Yankee Swap

Dec. 22 ...

Pre-K -Kwanzaa
K-4 – Winter Solstice
5-6 – Hanukkah & Christmas
7th – Wiccan Closing
8th – GUEST PANEL Combined class
9th – Assist in K-4 or go to sanctuary
10-12th Youth Group meets
Youth Group. Alumni – 6 pm – Meet & Greet

Dec. 24 ...

Multigenerational Christmas Pageant



Mitten Project Update

Nov. 14th – Sewing Machine Practice day was held. At right are some of the mittens already made.

Dec. 8th – K-6 will continue the project – the main activity will be to sew the pattern pieces, create gift cards and packaging for the mittens for Bearsley school children.

HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP...

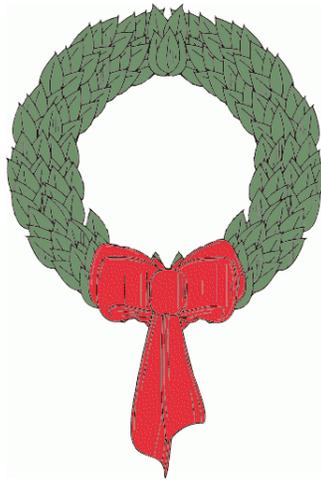
by Mary Curtsmith
Youth Program Director



Hi my name is Amy Dimon. I am 14 years old and am in 10th grade at Fairfield Warde High school in Fairfield. I'm currently taking two languages, Spanish and Chinese, and strive to be a translator for the United Nations. I'm also playing intermural soccer on the weekends once in a while. I have been going to youth group for about a year now and it's always so much fun. I love just being able to walk in and speak your mind and have all your peers understand you. It feels like you can say everything and whatever you say won't change people's views on you, at least in a negative way. My favorite youth group event is the lock-in. I love it because you get to bond with everyone and spend time with your friends; it's like one big sleepover together. There is no excluding and it's a welcoming environment for all too just come and spend time for a night. I know that since I've been in high school things have become more stressful and the work load is growing, but I feel like youth group is my escape from all of that. Even if you don't come every week we open our arms and embrace everyone who shows up whether they go to our church regularly or if they just came with a friend.

I encourage everyone to come at least once to check it out because I promise that you won't be sorry you did. There's no better time than the present to join.

Contact me anytime at adimon1998@gmail.com if you have any questions about youth group, and I hope to see you there!



Holiday Wreath Sale

Date:

December 1
and December 8

Time:

After 9am and
11am service

Where:

entrance courtyard.

Please support
the Youth Group
by purchasing a
beautiful holiday
wreath.

12" wreath - \$20.

20" wreath - \$45.

(Both sizes include a large
red four loop bow)

*Proceeds will go toward the
YSOP trip in February.*

Wondering What Your Emeritus Minister Is Up To?

Every once in a while Frank Hall and I have lunch together. For me these are wonderful opportunities to pick his brain, learn more about the history of the congregation, and put things in context. I also keep him updated on what is going on here.

Last week I asked him if he would like to update the congregation on his path to retirement. He told me that although he misses his work in the congregation and misses the people, he is well. He has been doing some guest preaching, which he enjoys. He also enjoys being able to pick and choose what he does from day to day. He and Lory have a new puppy named Parker. I've seen pictures; Parker is cute as anything! According to Frank Parker makes more demands on him than any congregation ever did. (Perhaps some hyperbole here??) His grandson Alex is getting married (age 26) and asked Frank to officiate -- date to be determined...but soon. Carlyn is in her first year of grad school at Cleveland Institute of Music and doing fine...studying cello and playing magnificently. Frank sends his love to all.

Important Announcement from the Committee on Ministries of the Unitarian Church in Westport

In order to help facilitate a smooth Senior Ministerial transition process at the Unitarian Church in Westport, the members of the Committee on Ministries (CoM) voted unanimously on October 30, 2013, to suspend CoM activities until a new Senior Minister is called by the congregation.

A summary of activities and recommendations of the CoM to date will be reported at the next UCW annual meeting.

John B. Hooper, *Chair, Committee on Ministries of the Unitarian Church in Westport*

Transgender Day of Remembrance

*My name is Palmira Garcia
I was 37 years old
I was killed in Las Marvales,
Venezuela
Death by partial scalping, torture and
facial lacerations
I died on February 5th, 2013*



...And on it went. 237 more times. Names. Places- Brazil, Mexico, USA, Turkey, Honduras, Columbia, Jamaica, France, Malaysia... and candles.

On Wednesday, November 20 our Rainbow Task Force, the Triangle Community Center, and members of the community observed the international Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR). TDOR memorializes individuals who have died throughout the world in the previous year because of anti-transgender hatred.

We spoke the names and lit candles for the 238 trans people who were murdered worldwide this past year. And these are just a fraction of the real number of deaths, because many go unreported, are not designated as hate crimes, or are not recognized as deaths of trans people, because the media frequently reports birth-assigned names and sexes without honoring the true chosen names and gender identities of the victims.

I know we will be back doing this again next year. I dream of a time when we light the candles no more.

KIVA - A Holiday Gift to Help Others Support Themselves

This Christmas, support a struggling entrepreneur by buying a KIVA holiday card for someone you love. Your gift can help a woman in Kenya buy goods for her produce stall so she can send her children to school; or lend a hand to a student in Bolivia who is struggling to pay for higher education; or help a mother in India buy a cow to sell milk to her neighbors.

Thanks to your past contributions over the past 4 years, the KIVA Microfinance Committee of The Unitarian Church in Westport has donated \$24,000 to 480 entrepreneurs in 56 countries. We have set a goal to increase the number of contributions to over 500 by the end of the year. Help us meet that goal by buying KIVA cards for those you love. KIVA cards will be on sale after the 9:00 and 11:00 services on Dec 1 and Dec 15. Please stop by and buy a card.



Gayatri lives in Choudhwar, Odisha, India with her two teenaged children. She is 38 years old and was widowed three years ago when her husband passed away in an accident. She is requesting a loan from KIVA to purchase a jersey cow so she can sell milk and milk products to people in her town. The money she earns will go toward her children's education.

Beardsley walls: before



Project Complete!

A dozen or so volunteers worked in the Beardsley Library the last week in June to reorganize the books on the shelves and redesign the space. One job that couldn't be completed at that time was painting the walls. That was to wait for the painting crew of Morgan Leddy, and Joe Tamucci of our Youth group and congregants Tom Comer, Mary Beth Mollica, Carol Seiple, and Anita Pfluger.

On Election Day the six intrepid volunteers arrived early with drop cloths, paint, buckets, rollers, and brushes in hand. Luckily, Morgan and Joe were not intimidated at the thought of standing on top of the narrow book shelves in order to reach the

Beardsley walls: after



top of the walls while the adults were more comfortable using ladders or concentrating their painting on the lower portions of the walls.

Reactions to the new look were very positive. Students thought the new library was "awesome!"

And many teachers wanted to know when the team could paint their rooms!



From Your Year-Round Stewardship Committee

Celebrate, Educate, and Solicitate

These are the 3 primary objectives of the UU Westport Year Round Stewardship Committee (YRSC).

This is what Stewardship does.

*The committee strives to **CELEBRATE** all the good that is done here -- in our relationships with each other, with the broader local community, and out in the wider world. We clearly are a generous congregation, and that is worth celebrating.*

*The committee strives to **EDUCATE** themselves, as well as the congregation, with regard to what is required of each of us in terms of time, talent, and treasure in order to continue doing all the good we do; all the things that give us cause for celebration!*

*Finally, Stewardship **SOLICITATES**. Yes, the committee poeticized the word, adding the ending 'ate' (merely to rhyme with the first two objectives). YRSC is charged by the board, and in fact, by each member of this church community, whether we know it or not, to facilitate the gathering of treasure (i.e., solicitation of funds). Someone has to remind us of our perennial obligation. This is the way we keep the lights on and maintain such vibrant programs and talented staff.*

That is what YRSC does, in general. Now a few specific things we have been doing recently.

- **The Stewardship Potluck of November 3rd:** If you didn't make it, you missed fabulous food and a wonderful opportunity for fellowship (around 80 people showed up!). Accolades were given and received by everyone who attended via an activity called "Car Wash". Then, a remarkable home grown quartet dubbed "Voices of Parody" provided entertainment by way of song (one member of the group channeled Bob Dylan in a hit solo performance!). Roberta led us in a sort of focus group process, asking each of us what it is we want from Stewardship, and what we are willing to commit to in return. This was part of a Covenant building exercise we are working on, so stay tuned. In summary, fun was had by all and we strengthened our connections with one another.

- **Seven YRSC members** recently attended a full day workshop - "Defying Gravity" - at Shelter Rock UU Church in Manhasset, NY to get fresh ideas for how to be more effective and inspired lay leaders.

- **A sensational steering committee** was formed from within the YRSC that has met a handful of times to discuss and plan our Annual Budget Drive (aka Annual Canvass). The priority is on broadening our discussion and participation in fun and engaging ways.

- **Two members of YRSC** attended the November 2nd Newcomer Orientation to help newcomers understand that UU Westport is a self-sustaining organization, receiving no outside financial assistance and thereby relying entirely on the time, talent and treasure of its members. Giving trends, expectations, and guidelines were shared with the group of approximately 10 who had recently become, or were contemplating becoming, new members.

That gives you an idea of some of the most newsworthy YRSC activities. To see who we are and learn more about us and the work of the YRSC you are invited to take a look at the Stewardship Member poster presentation in the church foyer, just inside and to the right of the main entrance to the building. You may also contact David Smith, YRSC Chairperson, for more information at stewardship@uuwestport.org.

OUR SHARED STAFF VISION

VITALITY: As a staff we celebrate successes and approach our work in a positive and optimistic manner. Each of our 'pieces' of the overall ministry reflects this vision of a vital and healthy congregation.

SUPPORT FOR THE INTERIM PROCESS: We strive to be a non-anxious presence in the transition. We focus on the positive. We encourage members to engage in the interim process. We demonstrate leadership by honoring professional boundaries and being clear about our own appropriate roles in the process. We inform ourselves about the nature of interim ministry through reading and discussion.

HEALTHY COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS ON THE STAFF TEAM: We think of ourselves as partners and collaborators in the work we do. We honor our shared covenant, and remain engaged with each other in staff meetings and throughout the week. We work together to make the best use of limited space and other resources.

SUPPORTIVE INFRASTRUCTURE: We are clear about the appropriate roles of staff, volunteers, and members. We participate in the creation of job descriptions, and encourage the committees we work with to create charters. We identify and honor appropriate lines of authority and accountability. We support the ongoing creation of an accessible database and identify metrics that help us recognize progress.

Our Staff Covenant

We affirm and work in support of the mission of the congregation.

We affirm and work in support of our shared staff vision.

We will be open to change as the congregation progresses through the interim process and chooses new directions and goals.

We will enjoy our work and each other.

We will celebrate each other's successes and encourage each other.

We will assume competence and good will on the staff team.

We commit to regular and open communication, both in formal and informal ways.

We will inform each other of significant decisions in our program areas, and will check in regularly with each other.

We will talk to and not about each other. We will redirect congregants appropriately when we feel we are being triangulated.

We will maintain appropriate confidentiality about issues discussed in staff meetings or among staff members, except in cases where a congregant or other people might be in danger.

We will honor confidentiality with congregants, except in cases where a congregant or other people might be in danger.

We will manage our own anxiety about changes in the congregation by:

- Using our minister as chaplain/confidante when appropriate*
- Seeking support from our professional organizations*
 - Seeking and offering mutual support as staff*
 - Seeking outside help/therapy/coaching if needed.*

We will review our vision and covenant on a regular basis and adapt or reaffirm as appropriate.

Support our fun and fundraising

Holiday Jewelry Sale December 8th

after each service in the East Wing

Donated jewelry "of all kinds, condition, and design" gratefully accepted.

-may be given to Barbara Thormahlen, Chris Place, Julie Fatherley or Penny Schneider.



Flowers for November

November 17

The vibrant colors of these flowers are meant to reflect the incredible spirit of our dear friend

Pamela Harrington.

With love from Dagny,
Tim and Allison

(yes, we only had one flower arrangement in November!)

The Memorial Garden

Several congregants have remarked about the work being done in the Memorial Garden. In September, the committee hired a local contractor to open up a new area adjacent to the parking lot. A new blue stone path was added and trees were removed or trimmed. In October a new stonewall was added at the top of the hill where a dead tree had been removed. In late November, a permanent handrail will be installed in place of the temporary wooden handrail. Some additional landscaping has been done as part of the approved master plan.

Members who pay internment fees have provided funds for this project. The Memorial Garden receives no funds from the annual church budget. However, donations for the garden maintenance are always welcomed.

The memorial Garden Committee takes its responsibilities seriously and seeks to maintain a peaceful and serene resting place for our departed members.

Memorial Garden Committee:
Neil Coleman, Hazen Goddard,
Larry Kastriner, David Thompson and
Marion Wertheim

Driver Needed ...

Now that my wife and I are both working fulltime we are in need of some help driving our two teenage children to and from after school activities. Anyone interested, please let us know at either (203) 216-4823 or david_keeton@sbcglobal.net.

Please save the save the dates of

May 9th-11th

(Mother's Day Weekend)

for our annual, intergenerational family retreat at
Camp Jewell.

UU Movie Discussion Group, Friday, Dec. 27



The UU movie discussion group meets again on Friday, December 27.

The films to be discussed are "Philomena" "Dallas Buyer's Club", and "Nebraska"

This month we'll share a savory potluck (appetizers) and wine.

Potluck at 7:30, discussion begins at 8.

At the Meeting House.

To make this event a success, we are going to need volunteers to chair such areas as Lodging Coordination, Reservation Taking, Fund Raising and Coordinating Workshops. Additionally, we are looking to the UU community for individuals interested in creating and leading a workshop for which they feel passionately.

If interested, please contact Doug Flam at dflam@att.net or Cathy McElroy at mcelroy.cathy@gmail.com.



Would you like to provide

the sanctuary with traditional wreaths and the hanging poinsettia arrangement for the holiday season?

The cost is \$65 for each of the three Sundays they are up.

You can sign up for one, two or all three! More information from Jan at 227-7205 x 10, Jan@uuwestport.org

Calling all Elves!



Each Christmas, UU "elves" purchase Christmas gifts for specific children and their families, who are chosen by the Beardsley School principal as the most in need of assistance.

If you would like to help or receive more information about this project, please contact

Felicity at felicitymedinger@sbcglobal.net or call 203 923-3664.



Transition Team News / "A rose by any other name ..."

There is a phrase causing some confusion lately about the sessions being conducted by the Transition Team with Rev. Roberta - "Grief and Healing." Many have said, "But I'm not grieving ..." or have wondered if these gatherings are for people experiencing personal grief. But these sessions are actually our **important first step as a congregation** in the process of calling our next senior minister. About 60 members of the church have now experienced this transition workshop. Many have said, "I'm not sure why I came because I'm not grieving," but all have left saying, "I'm so glad I came; I learned a lot about myself and others through this process."

The fact is that we are all feeling a **wide variety of emotions** during this transitional time – some call it grief, some call it anxiety, some call it anger (often about issues long past), and some call it impatience to get on with the process. What we have been learning through these workshops is that the congregation as a whole is feeling many aspects of this sea-change in our church history. What we need most at this point is to **listen carefully to each other**, owning our personal feelings and honoring the feelings of others.

All 3 components of our "great covenant" come into play during these Transition workshops – To dwell together in peace, To seek the truth in love, and To help one another. One longtime member of the church related a story of how she stayed away for a year and half many years ago, angry over the way an issue was handled. Realizing, finally, how much she missed this place, she returned. "I discovered," she said, "that the church was getting along just fine without me, but I was definitely not getting along fine without the church." We need each other in this beloved community. Join us in a workshop session to discover your unique role, express your unique feelings, or simply to listen.

Two more sessions have been scheduled:

**Monday, Dec. 2 at 7-8:30 PM and
Sunday, Dec. 8 at 12:45-2:15 PM –**
both on the main floor of the Meeting House.

The Sunday (Dec. 8) meeting will have childcare provided in the Youth Room on the ground floor. [Please be sure to register if you need childcare]

Those who have already attended a session are now wearing a bit of purple ribbon on their nametags – ask anyone on Sunday morning what his or her experience has been. They will be glad to share!

Members of the Transition Team are: *Kristen Leddy, Connie Rockman, Lorna Donnelly, William McEvoy, Bob Perry and Andrew Graham.*

Contact any of us with your questions and concerns.



The Schedule for Christmas Eve services on December 24th

(Please, no prior seat reservations for all services)

- 4:00** – Christmas Pageant Service
(doors open at 3:30)
- 9:00** – Candlelight Service with Choir, Bells, organ and soloists.
(Doors open at 8:40, prelude begins at 8:50)
- 11:00** – Candlelight Service with Mike Costantino and guest trumpeter.
(Doors open at 10:40, prelude begins at 10:50)

Once upon a time, a very long time ago now, about last Friday, Winnie-the-Pooh and all his friends in the Hundred-Acre Wood were gathered at the place where Pooh lived. There was Kanga and Rabbit, Tigger and of course Eeyore. They were all talking very excitedly about the party Owl was giving that evening, which they had looked forward to for many weeks. Kanga had a pretty yellow bow about her neck, Tigger's fur was as shiny as could be, Pooh had cleaned all the honey from around his snout, and even Eeyore had brushed his teeth and combed his mane. Suddenly, Piglet burst in, out of breath, as if he had been running a very long way.

"Piglet" exclaimed Pooh, "you look like you've been running from jagulars, or even the Backson! Whatever is the matter?"

"I've just come from Owl's house." Piglet gasped out, and then started to drink a large glass of watermelon tea that Kanga handed him.

"Is Owl alright?" asked Rabbit, "I do hope so, I'm quite hungry, and I love Owl's carrot-top soup."

"Owl is just fine" said Piglet, finally catching his breath, he turned to the group. "Did any of you return that little card that came with Owl's invitation? The RSVP? I know I only put mine in the mail this morning."

"It was in some foreign language, so I ignored it." said Tigger.

"That was French, Tigger" said Kanga, "RSVP means to "Respond, if you please" to let the person giving the party know you're coming."

"Well, then," sniffed Tigger, "I didn't please to respond."

"I'm afraid I was too occupied with taking care of Roo, and I never did send mine," continued Kanga with a sigh, "It's sitting on my kitchen table at home."

"I didn't respond either." Rabbit spoke up, "I'm very busy, don't you know, and always have a lot of plans and responsibilities, so I didn't want to commit myself."

"I didn't think anyone cared if I came or not." mumbled Eeyore, "No one seems to notice when I arrive."

"Oh, bother, I don't understand what all this fuss is about, we never send RSVPs. Everyone knows that." said Pooh, "Owl knows that too. I'm sure he realizes we're Unitarians, and of course, Unitarians don't RSVP, we simply show up."

"I don't know that he did realize that Pooh" said Piglet, "I just saw him and he told me since no one was coming he's cancelled the party and has flown off to his Uncle Robert's house for the week-end."

A great cry went up. The party wasn't going to be. Pooh glumly sat down in his chair.

"Oh, bother."

DON'T LET THIS HAPPEN TO YOUR EVENT!!! RSVP EARLY AND OFTEN!!!





A FINAL WORD ABOUT THE Viol da Gambas.....

On November 3rd, The Five College Viol Consort offered some excellent musical pieces at both of the morning services. This was the result of a grant (the Silbiger Grant) which we were given from the Viol da Gamba Society of New England. It was an honor and we are grateful for their generosity. If you liked what you heard and wish to learn more about the viol, please feel free to visit the web site of the Viola da Gamba Society -New England (<http://www.vdgsne.org/>), which is a regional chapter of The Viola da Gamba Society of America (<http://vdgsa.org/>). Anyone is welcome to join. Special thanks to Laurie Rabut for her assistance in organizing this!

ON THE HORIZON.....

PAGEANT

Our annual Christmas Pageant will take place on December 24 at 4:00pm.

The rehearsals will be on

Friday, December 13, from 4:30 to 6:00;

Friday, December 20, from 4:30 to 6:00;

and on December 24 at 2:00.

Please be in touch with Ed Thompson for questions and concerns.

ANYONE WISHING TO PARTICIPATE WILL NEED TO SIGN UP

which can be done online.

CHRISTMAS EVE CHOIR

For those interested in singing in the Christmas Eve Choir (the choir that sings for the 9:00pm Candlelight service), please be in touch with Ed Thompson.

The rehearsal schedule is:

December 19, Thursday, at 8:00pm;

December 23rd, Monday, at 8:00pm.

SIGHT SINGING CLASSES

Sight-singing classes are scheduled again in January/February. These classes, run by Ed Thompson, are FREE. However, it is necessary to sign up before Dec.25th. You may do so by contacting Ed at 203-227-7205 ext.18, or Ed@uuwestport.org or talking to him at church.

The dates: JANUARY 4,11,17,25, FEB. 1,8.

Each class meets from 9:30 until 11:00. For more information/questions, please contact Ed Thompson.

YOUTH CHOIR MUSICAL

The Youth Choir (ages 8 – 13) is scheduled to do a musical on Sunday, May 4th. If you are interested in having your children participate, it is necessary to be in the Youth Choir, which meets every Thursday from 5:00 to 6:00.

SOUNDINGS

*Newsletter of the
Unitarian Church in Westport*

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visit our website at
www.uuwestport.org

*The next SOUNDINGS deadline is
Wednesday, Dec. 18 at noon (or before).*

Please e-mail your copy to:

carpo@optonline.net



Toy Drive for Family ReEntry

Fresh Start Program

For the **26th** consecutive year our congregation is collecting toys, games, clothing and/or cash for the children of prisoners.

Please bring your **unwrapped toy(s)** to the church from now until **December 18th**. No time to shop? **Gifts of cash** will be used to purchase **mall gift certificates** for older children and teens. Checks should be made out to the Unitarian Church in Westport memo line **Family ReEntry**.

The **Fresh Start Program** at Family ReEntry in Bridgeport is a ground-breaking demonstration project that helps soon-to-be released prisoners before leaving prison, during transition, and after “coming home.”

The program places emphasis on:

- post-employment;
- strengthening families; and
- giving back to the community.

Learn more, get involved

<http://www.familyreentry.org/cominghomeforgood.html>

