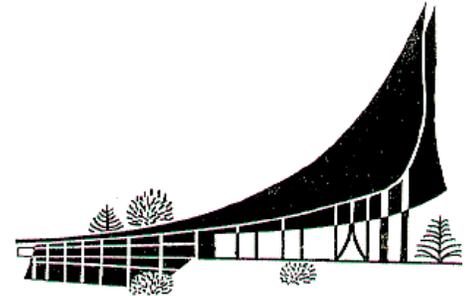


SOUNDINGS

The Unitarian Church in Westport
 10 Lyons Plains Road
 Westport, Connecticut 06880
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THE NEXT SOUNDINGS DEADLINE IS FRIDAY, JAN. 17

Dec. 29 - Jan. 25, 2014

A Member of the Unitarian Universalist Association

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Dec. 29 Worship Services: 9 & 11 am No RE, childcare available	30 Drum Circle ... 7:00 pm	31	Jan. 1  Holiday Office closed	2 Youth Choir - 5 pm Teen Choir - 6 pm Bell Choir - 6:45 pm Endowment, Fellowship Rm., ... 7:00 pm Special Projects Choir -8:00 pm	3 Shawl Ministry, M.H. ... 12:30 pm	4 Special Projects Choir - 10:00 am Interim Minister's Forum, M.H., ... 10:30 pm
5 Worship Services, 9 & 11 am Parent's Group 8th OWL, E.W. , ...12:30 pm Voices Cafe Meeting, Library, ... 12:30 pm	6 O&AF, Rehearsal, ... 7:45 pm	7 Safe Congregation, Roberta's Office, ... 6:00 pm RE Curriculum Meeting, Fellowship Rm., ... 7:00 pm Men's Choir, ... 8:00 pm	8 Chant & Meditation, M.H., ... 7:00 pm Chamber Choir, ... 7:45 pm	9 Youth Choir - 5 pm Finance Committee, Fellows.Rm.- 5:30pm Teen Choir - 6 pm Bell Choir - 6:45 pm Women's Choir - 7:45 pm	10 United With Kenya, Sanctuary, ... 7:00 pm	11 Sight-Singing, Sanctuary, ... 9:30 am Neighborhood Circles, M.H., ... 10:00 am
12 Worship Service: 9 & 11 am <i>Share the Plate Sunday</i> Parent's Group 8th OWL, E.W. ... 12:30 pm Rainbow Task Force, Chapel ... 12:30 pm	13 Gun Safety Committee, E.W., ... 7:30 pm Board of Trustees, Fellow. Rm., ... 7:30 pm	14 Senior Luncheon, East Wing, ... 11:00 am Youth Leadership Circle, Fellowship Rm., ... 7:00 pm	15 Chant & Meditation, M.H., ... 7:00 pm Men's Choir, ... 8:00 pm	16 Youth Choir - 5 pm Teen Choir - 6 pm Bell Choir - 6:45 pm Women's Choir - 7:45 pm	17 SOUNDINGS Deadline, 12 noon Shawl Ministry, M.H., - 12:30 pm Chinese New Year Fun & Friendship Potluck Foyer & E.W., ... 5:00 pm	18 Newcomer Orientation, Chapel ... 8:30 am Sight-Singing, Sanct. ... 9:30 am Small Group Facilitators, Y.R., ... 10:00 am Pastoral Care Assoc. Training, E.W. - 12:30 pm
19 MLK Worship Services: 9 & 11 am Parent's Group 8th OWL, E.W., 12:30 pm UN Committee, Chapel, ... 12:30 pm	20 Holiday Office closed Stewardship Mtg. Fellowship Rm., ... 7:15 pm O&AF Rehearsal, ... 7:45 pm	21 Men's Choir, ... 8:00 pm	22 Chant & Meditation, M.H., ... 7:00 pm Chamber Choir, ... 7:45 pm	23 Youth Choir - 5 pm Teen Choir - 6 pm Bell Choir - 6:45 pm Women's Choir - 7:45 pm	24	25 Sight-Singing, Sanctuary, ... 9:30 am Voices Cafe, 8:00 pm doors open at 7:30 pm

Sermon information on following page.

SERMONS for JANUARY

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*

The following services are rescheduled from the snow day on Dec. 15.

January 5 ... 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. **Music:** Members of the Teen Choir.*

11 am Annual Christmas Concert

The Special Projects Choir present the Poulenc Gloria accompanied by guest instrumentalists and vocalists.

January 12 ... 9 & 11 am“Reconstituting Our World” Dr. Janice Marie Johnson

As we move towards celebrating MLK, Jr. Day, let us pause to reflect on the boldness of those who worked alongside him, designing and championing bold causes that encourage us to embrace Dr. King's Dream. This service honors those who worked tirelessly to make the Civil Rights Movement the success that it was, with a focus on Bayard Rustin.

*Janice Marie Johnson, guest preacher **Music:** Once & Again Folksingers at both services.*

January 19 ... 9 & 11 am“The ‘L’ Word Part 2: Revelation is Continuous”

*Rev. Roberta and Director of Social Justice David Vita will fill this service with the inspiring words of Martin Luther King. The sermon, the second in a series on the nature of religious liberalism, explores the assumption that for UU's 'truth' is always unfolding and evolving. **Music:** 9 am, Men's Choir. 11 am, Women's Choir*

January 26 ... 9 & 11 am “Coming of Age Here and Now”

*Our 9th grade Coming of Age (CoA) group will present the service today. A highlight of the service will be the sharing of their Credo statements (not just what they believe but what they hold as their deepest values). This is our opportunity to listen, hear, acknowledge, encourage, celebrate and welcome them in community in a formal way. They are no longer the children they were. This is who they are now on this milestone day. **Music:** Teen Choir Sings at both services.*

***Note:** Coming of Age Family luncheon will follow the 11:00 am service in the East Wing, and a Gratitude Ceremony for the CoA youth and their Families will begin at 1:00 pm in the Sanctuary.*

Fundraiser Approval Implementation Begins January 1, 2014

In order to better coordinate the many fundraising events that are critical to the success of this church, the Board of Trustees recently established a new policy that requires advance notice and approval of all fundraising activities.

A form for fundraiser proposals and approval is now available on the church website. The PDF form can be printed and filled out. There is also a PDF sample form for handling and reporting cash funds collected during fundraisers. Printed versions of both forms are also available in the church business office.

All fundraisers scheduled to take place after January 1, 2014, will require review and approval. Even if your fundraiser is already on the calendar, you will need to fill out the form in order to proceed.

Completed forms must be submitted to the Director of Operations at least 45 days in advance of the proposed fundraiser. Once approved, the Director of Operations will notify the proposers and schedule an orientation on necessary cash handling and reporting procedures.

If you have questions or concerns about the fundraiser approval process, please contact the Interim Director of Operations, Greg Jones, by email (greg@uuwestport.org) or phone (203-227-7205 ext. 16).

In The Interim

I am sitting at my dining room table watching the snow fall and thinking about the fast approaching new year. What does it hold for me? For you? For us together? So much of the New Year holiday is unhelpful and unhealthy. We make meaningless resolutions to eat less, exercise more, develop a spiritual practice, etc. Then the parties that really aren't that much fun. Too much noise, too much forced gaiety.

Crossing the threshold to a new year can be an opportunity for meaningful reflection and action. That is why I offer you the Coffin and Cradle Services on Sunday December 29th. Think about what you would like to leave behind in 2013. Bring with you to the service an object that represents that intention. You will have an opportunity to place it in a small coffin – a ritual way to surrender what you wish to be done with. People have placed cigarettes in the coffin, pieces of paper with scribbled words, once even a wedding ring. (I don't recommend that one.) Then think about what you would like to give birth to in the new year. Bring with you to the service an object that represents that intention. You will have an opportunity to place it in a small cradle – a ritual way of affirming your aspirations.

Together we will support each other as we move into the new year with purpose and meaning. And then together we will move into the next stage of the developmental work of the interim: coming to terms with history.

The Transition Team and I will begin this process on January 19th when the sermon will focus on what it means to look backward in order to move forward. We will unroll the butcher paper and begin to craft a timeline of this congregation's history. We will be asking all of you to share your thoughts about the highlights, the critical turning points, the significant events in your shared life in faith. The magical thing about creating the history wall is that everybody gets to see the tangible evidence of the reality that the congregation's history is not objective or factual at all; it is an accumulation of personal experiences and subjective memories.

Along with the history wall, the transition team is planning some fun events such as a display from the archives, some oral history sessions, and . . . well, I don't know what else because the meeting to plan these fun events was postponed because of the snow. But the meeting will eventually happen and the fun will eventually follow.

Coming to terms with history also means asking serious questions about what you have learned from your past. Are there habits that have served you well in the past that you would want to recognize and institutionalize? Are there ways of being you would rather let go of and be free of? In some ways the next few months will be one long Coffin and Cradle ritual. Reflect, share, discard, encourage, affirm, embrace. Repeat.

Are there issues that remain unresolved? In addition to learning from each other and enjoying each other's company on this path from past to present, you will working together in the spirit of good will and reconciliation to resolve some of those old (and not so old) aches and confusions. The Transition Team and I will continue to create safe spaces where honest exchanges of view can happen in an atmosphere of respectful speaking and reflective listening. We have already seen some moving and close-to-amazing scenes of reconciliation in the Grief and Healing workshops. We fully expect more of this to happen in the next phase. We welcome and celebrate opportunities to come together over differences.

So Happy New Year! There is so much to look forward to, so much good work to be done, so many possibilities for growth and transformation. The new year is an opportunity to take stock, to pay attention, to answer the question posed by the poet Mary Oliver. "Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?"

In faith and hope,
Rev. Roberta

Re-Boot, Re-Build, Restructure of Religious Education

January's a good time to review how things have been going in Religious Education and to evaluate our program and practices. I wonder if you find this description to be true here at the Unitarian Church in Westport?

- Children and Adults in R.E. Ministry know each others names. When they see each other in the building – before services, after services, at events and say things like: “How are you?” “Did you enjoy your hike last week?” “Anything special happening with you next week?”
- Children know what to expect each week in their group. There is a consistency that comes from the Adults present who have spoken beforehand; they have agreed on rituals and the structure of the day. Teachers know the characteristics of individuals and the group's dynamics, and as needed, bring the group back to their covenant (created at the beginning of the year). Children feel safe and known by caring adults.
- Adults in RE Ministry Teams know who their team mates are. They contact fellow teachers to check in and inform each other of what happened last week, and how they might approach next week. They take ownership of, and are prepared for, the lesson; they ask for help when they aren't sure. People teach because they feel called to this unique, life giving ministry.

What kind of programming and relationships do we need to build to encourage children and youth to grow and thrive here? To strengthen teacher teams?

Rev. Roberta, Jerusha Vogel, RE Chairperson, and Laura Steinbrecher, Board Member, and I have been talking about the need to reboot RE. It starts with Religious Education ministry Volunteers thinking and acting like a TEAM. We have some strong teams, and some that do not act that way.

Teams are accountable to each other and to the children they serve. TEAMS provide support and learning and consistency to children and adults. In January, you may be receiving a call to re-dedicate yourself to this ministry. To make relationships deeper, and more fulfilling. We are all busy, but may you re-affirm and act on your deeper values. We find meaning in life when we belong, connect, and act on our values.

Could you tell a visitor how our Religious Education Ministry is structured or what our vision for the future is?

Tuesday, Feb. 4th, 2014 at 7:00 pm - RE Council Meeting -

I invite: Elders, Non-parents, Parents with children of all ages, Young Adults, and Teens to come to this meeting. Your perspective and feedback is vital.

- **Learn more & contribute your feedback** about the proposed new structure for Religious Education Council.
- It will be a place for us to start the conversation about **Full Week Faith** –
- **see a video of its launch to Religious Educators**
<http://www.meadville.edu/Fahs-fellows> Karen Bellavance-Grace, Fellow for Innovation in Multigenerational Faith Formation, or read the details
<http://fullweekfaith.weebly.com/>

The new year will offer many opportunities for all of you to engage or re-engage with our ministry of religious education. Be a part of the team, share and learn together, get excited! I encourage you to welcome this chance to nurture and strengthen our commitment to the next generation of Unitarian Universalists and to your own lifespan faith development.

Dec. 29th ...

No RE classes – only Nursery

– Free play at both services –Lower Level

Jan. 5th ...

Pre-K- Differences Are Interesting -Lower Level

K-6th - Soc. Action– Immigration Chapel.

7th –Intro to Christianity – East Wing

8th – Showing Visuals today-MH 3rd fl.

9th –Coming of Age -Credo Statemts - Minister's office

10-12th-Youth Group- Welcome New Year-Mtg Hse-Ground Flr

Tues. Jan. 7th ...

Religious Education – Curriculum Circle- 7pm- Fellowship Hall.

Jan. 12th ...

K-7thgrade START in SANCTUARY

Pre-K- Both Boys & Girls Can - Low. lev.

K-4th-Buddhism -

5-6th – Life of Jesus

7th – TRIP- St. Francis of Assisi Weston –

5pm mass, & 7th gr. invited to pizza w/ their youth group 6:30-7:30pm

8th –Conception, Pregnancy, Birth

9th –Coming of Age –FINALIZE

Statements-Review Service

10-12th-Youth Grouper led worship.

Fri. Jan. 17th ...

– Fun & Friendship Chinese New Year- Potluck 6-8 pm

Jan. 19th ...

(MLKing, Jr. Weekend)

Pre-K – Black is Beautiful

K-4 -Famous UU's

5-6th –Bible figure: Jacob

7th -TRIP- Mt. Aery Baptist Church, Bridgeport- time TBD

8th –Defining/Redefining Abstinence

9th – Go to Service

10-12th – Youth Group –

Prep to wel come CoA

Jan. 26th ...

Coming of Age (CoA) Service at 9 & 11 am

Pre-K –Our Good Wishes Can Come True

K-12 – Go to the Service.

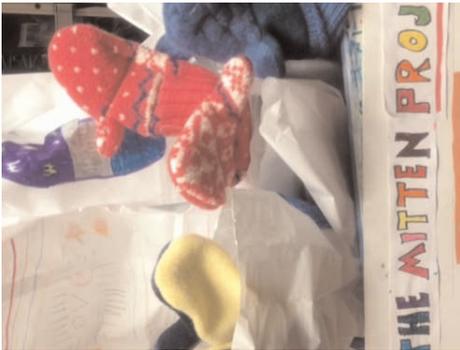
CoA Family Potluck following 2nd service-East Wing

Gratitude Ceremony for CoA families - 1:00pm - Sanctuary

MITTEN PROJECT UPDATE

K-6th graders all had a turn at sewing machines on Dec. 8th. At the end of the morning, there were 35 pairs of mittens to be distributed by the Beardsley school to children!

Thank you to Monica Garrison – for her enthusiasm, and support in creating the activities for K-6th graders, to **Condie Ward**, Weston Westport Cooperative Nursery school teacher, who gave me her pattern and blessings to share this with children.



“I have been teaching RE for several years and have always found it inspiring and rewarding. We have used many approaches to teaching, but probably my favorite is team teaching. The core set of teachers who teach regularly get to know each other well and feel supported by each other. I am excited that we are moving back to team teaching in February. Some of the closest friends I have made at church were ones that I team taught with regularly once or twice every month. I got to know them as individuals and it made preparing for the Sunday lessons much more fun and relaxing.”

-Jerusha Vogel

HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP...

by *Mary Curtsmith*
Youth Program Director

Welcome to the New Year!

Let's look back at 2013 to see some of what we have done as a Youth Group...

- Hosted youth led worship about United for Kenya, and attended a multigenerational service
- Hosted a Social and Service Lock-In
- Discussed the differences between Camus, Nietzsche, and Kierkegaard, examined sexuality/gender terminology
- Fundraised for our service trip by selling soup, baked goods, wreaths, and a raffle

Ben from the Youth Group Wreath Sale



Let's look forward to what we can expect to see in 2014 in Youth Group...

- A service trip to New York City from February 14-16
- Youth Led Service in the Sanctuary on March 30
- Welcoming the Coming of Ager's into the Youth Group February 2, "That's so Gay and it's Okay" workshop by the Rainbow Task Force, Bring a Friend to Youth Group, Native American Pipe Circle with Jim Francek
- Camp Jewell May 9, 10, 11

This is why we love Youth Group... It is a safe and comfortable place to be yourself. Youth Group provides teens with the opportunity to express themselves intellectually and spiritually. We have a fun and stimulating group, please join us every Sunday at 11:00AM in the Youth Group Room in the Meeting House. All 9th-12th graders are welcome.



Flowers for December

December 1

For Garrett Daniel's success at Pratt.

December 8

Commemorating the upcoming anniversary of the tragedy in Newtown, CT and for all those whose lives were taken as a result of gun violence in our state over the past twelve months.

December 15

In loving memory of Peggy Boldt, a founding member, of this church. Given by her children David, Deborah and John in honor of her birthday.

December 22

Given by the Khanna family in memory of K. B. Khanna

December 24

Given by Roberta and Barry Finkelstein in gratitude for the opportunity to minister among us.

December 29

Wishing the Unitarian Universalist Church in Westport community a happy new year from the Seiple family.

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.



From Your Year-Round Stewardship Committee

“money mUUsings”

As an adult, I've sometimes struggled with money issues. I'm sure this has to do with the messages I got as a child about money; its secretive nature (“Money is none of anyone's business”), as a means to exercise control (“You live in my house, I pay the bills.”), as an incentive to behave in a certain way (“I'll give you \$20 if you cut your hair.”)

In my birth religion, the synagogue simply billed congregants. No pay, no pray; no High Holy Day services for you! I think there might have been an initiation fee to join, the annual membership bill and a separate payment for the building fund. I never thought about how those without means could gain access to the congregation or indeed if they even did.

When I came to UU Westport in the early 90s, I felt pretty comfortable with the money thing here. No one talked about money. We got a budget sheet and were asked to make a voluntary contribution. This seemed consistent with my childhood messaging that you didn't talk about money; that it was none of anyone's business. So, for quite a few years, we contentedly sent in less than \$500 a year.

After several years, one annual canvas actually provided some information about what donation levels were expected and how that might be related to one's income. Some further perspective was offered on what was needed to do the work of the community, keep the building in good shape and so on. We realized, to our chagrin, that we were way below both what was needed and what we could afford to contribute. So, we began to contribute a more appropriate share. We're at \$3,600 a year now.

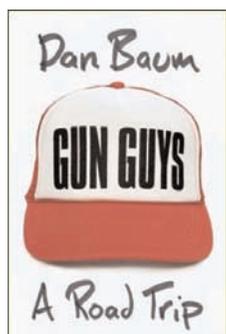
The truth is, my birth family did not do “money” very well. And I don't think we do money as well as we could here at UU Westport, either. Money, of course, by itself is meaningless. It is only a medium of exchange, a means to an end. As a congregation, we exchange money for all the things we need to sustain our community and to accomplish our collective goals...within our walls, among our neighbors and beyond out in the wider world (do you remember that T-shirt?)

On the Year Round Stewardship Committee, this is one of the issues we grapple with: How to have healthy, necessary and meaningful conversations about money. If we do talk about money, how should we talk about it? Should we keep donation levels confidential? What should we tell new members about the expected financial commitment? How should we go about raising the money we need to do the things we need and want to do?

What I do know, is that as I endeavor to figure out how to “do money better” in our UU community, I also get to figure this out for myself, too. And the blending of all the diverse congregational views and personal histories around money makes a very tasty UU Stew. Why not join the stewardship conversation and simmer with us!

Scott Singer, *YRSC Member*

Gun Guys: A Road Trip



Dan Baum is a gun fanatic. He's also a Jewish Democrat who grew up in suburban New Jersey. Our Gun Safety committee is organizing a community read and discussion of his book, *Gun Guys*.

In *Gun Guys*, Dan takes us on a guided tour of gun stores and gun shows, shooting ranges and festivals, contests and auctions, trying to figure out what draws so many of us to guns in the first place. Is it just part of being

American? Introducing a wide cast of characters, Baum shows both sides of the gun culture in America, bringing an entire world vividly to life, and in doing so helping to find a middle ground in the gun debate, where actual conversation can take place.

Gun Guys has been described as the book equivalent of a good Woody Allen movie. Join us in this read and find out why.

Please contact Marjolijn de Jager for more information:

marjolijn36@gmail.com.

"A surprisingly funny book, Gun Guys: A Road Trip is an insightful exploration that brings some much-needed humanity to gun lovers and gun haters."

- San Francisco Chronicle

"For those who prefer humorous, literate and honest discussion about (guns) to frothy ranting, Gun Guys will hit the spot."

- Dallas Morning News

Voices Café: 2...4...1

Saturday, January 25 at 8:00pm in the Sanctuary

Well, we're up to something different once again. It's Voices Café's 2...4...1. Our January 25 show features 2 bands 4 the price of 1 ticket.

The first set features Roosevelt Dime. To listen to the music of Roosevelt Dime is to take a journey through American roots music. Inspired by Appalachian string bands, Memphis soul, New Orleans dixieland, and the musical melting pot of Brooklyn which they call home, the band has forged a sound they've come to call Steamboat Soul. I think you'll call it crazy-fun!

The second set kicks off with Poor Old Shine and I do mean KICKS! Their music is rooted in the folk/Appalachian Mountain tradition and has been compared to The Band, John Prine, and Johnny Cash. Don't be surprised see some combination of guitars, washboard, banjos, pump organ, string bass, mandolin, musical saw, drum set and who knows what else they will come up with on stage.

Save the date for this exciting show.

Tickets available at <http://voicescafe.org/buy-tickets> now and go on sale after Sunday services beginning January 5.

The Beat Goes On

I know it sounds like a drum beat. The Connecticut Food Bank needs food for the 300,000 people they serve. I know... I've been beating the drum about this for going on 9 years and it's only getting worse with the cut to Food Stamps last November 1st. A cut that effects more than 420,000 Connecticut residents – or 12 percent of the state's population – who now have less money to feed their families.

That means 1.4 million meals lost each month, or 17 million meals missing from the dinner plates of low-income families each year. Within those families are 149,000 children, as well as 102,000 elderly and disabled residents.

I recently heard from a member of our congregation who volunteers at a food bank about how they ran out of food. That's right—ran out of food. So, nationally, what's the face of a food stamp recipient? More than half are children. Another quarter are elderly or disabled. And then there are the working poor – people at MacDonald's, WalMart, the restaurant industry- people earning minimum wage



Luna Vandoorne/Shutterstock

who don't have enough money to feed their families.

A McDonald's resource hotline answer to a single mother, 10-year McDonald's employee making the state (Illinois) minimum wage of \$8.25 was to apply for food stamps. Also to check out heating assistance and Medicaid.

And last and the least, of course, the unemployed. The recent Congressional budget deal did not extend unemployment benefits so 1.6 million Americans will lose their benefits now and another 3.6 million people will lose them over the next year. The drum beat goes on.

Helping our neighbors in need is a fundamental American value. And while bringing in food for the food bank will never solve the problem of hunger in America -- paying workers a living wage would be a big step in that direction -- it will help the hungry. At this point you might not be expecting to read "thank you" but, yes, THANK YOU! We've significantly increased our food donations this year.

Now, please don't forget that jar, can, box, bag, package next Sunday!

Transition Team News / Moving Forward in the Transition Process

The year is coming to an end and soon another will begin, but here at church our transition process keeps on going. Around 100 people in our community have attended a Grief and Healing in Transitions workshop. With Rev. Roberta's help, 100 of us have had the opportunity to talk about and process some of the changes our congregation has been going through recently. If you have not yet made it to a workshop we hope you are hearing good things from people who did attend.

For those keeping score, the cumulative numbers on the Grief Graph are as follows:

Denial	3
Grieving	16
Depression	12
Physical Symptoms	7
Panic/anxiety	9
Anger / Acting Out	32
Regret / Guilt	36
Resistance	21
Hope Appears	67
Reaffirmation	55
New Reality	18

Is there anything there that surprises you? We invite you to discuss your thoughts and feelings with purple ribbon wearers at coffee hour - and also with those who have not yet participated. It has been our privilege to be part of these workshops, and our hearts have been touched by some of the candid conversations and heartfelt sharing among our fellow congregants. Truly we are getting better at talking to and listening to each other.

Before we check this box as Complete, we need to know if there is anyone who would still like to attend a workshop. Don't feel left out! Talk to one of us if you would like us to schedule an additional date. If enough people ask, Rev. Roberta will be happy to run it again - but please let us know by January 6th

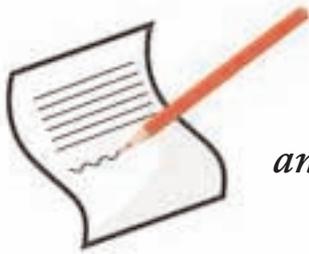
Now, you may be wondering, what's next? In the new year we will start Coming to Terms With Our History. Take a look at Rev. Roberta's article in this issue of Soundings to learn a little bit about this process. You will hear more on January 19th, when the process is officially kicked off. We are eagerly looking forward to creating our history wall, and hearing the stories that people in our congregation have to tell about our church. We will work hard to make this next stage in the transition process interesting, meaningful, and even fun! Watch Soundings and email blasts for details and dates.

In the meantime, we wish you a wonderful festive season and all the best for 2014.

The Transition Team is made up of: *Kristen Leddy, Bob Perry, Connie Rockman, William McEvoy, Andrew Graham, and Lorna Donnelly.* Please contact any of us to ask questions or to share your thoughts.

Community Interfaith Commemoration of the Birthday of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr

“Music on the Road to Freedom” celebrates the African-American Spiritual and its place in the history of the United States. The story of slavery and emancipation, of bringing hope into a desperate situation, intertwines the religious and musical life of our land. Rev. Dr. Bernard R. Wilson, Senior Minister of Norfield Congregational Church, tells the story with an eye to personal experience as well as the broader flow of events. He will be joined by Music Director Ellen Dickinson, the Norfield Sanctuary Choir, Combined Interfaith Choir and soloists, who will sing the spirituals to bring the talking points to musical life. The presentation is free and open to all. Don't miss this special celebration of deeply meaningful music and a story that needs to be told. This event is sponsored by the Interfaith Council of Weston and Westport. All are welcome! Norfield Congregational Church is located at 64 Norfield Rd, Weston, CT.



*Covenant Between
Rev. Debra Haffner
and The Unitarian Church in
Westport*

The Unitarian Church in Westport (TUCW) is committed to supporting the role of Community Ministers in the Unitarian Universalist Association. TUCW endorses Rev. Debra W. Haffner as its community minister. *

Rev. Haffner and the parish ministers of TUCW honor and affirm each other's calls to ministry, in accordance with the UUMA's Code of Professional Practice and Guidelines, but also in the spirit of collegiality and support.

Time permitting, Rev. Haffner will periodically offer TUCW: single pastoral care sessions for members and staff particularly in areas of sexuality; adult and youth religious education; columns in Soundings; worship services or assistance; on call services for pastoral care and emergencies as requested by the senior minister; leadership to safe congregations committee and OWL program; and representation as a TUCW endorsed community minister at community events.

The congregation will offer access to the church facilities, photocopier, telephone, etc. for services rendered to the congregation or the community; space for pastoral counseling as requested by members and education programs for the community, as available; notice of Rev. Haffner's endorsement as a community minister when and where other ministers are identified, including annual reports, orders of service, newsletters, and reports to the UUA; and annual consideration of a stipend of up to \$2300 to cover professional expenses, including UUMA membership, GA registration, travel and housing, retreat travel and registration, training opportunities, and travel to district and council ministerial events.

**The Rev. Debra Haffner was ordained and endorsed by the members of TUCW on May 24, 2003.*

**Our guest preacher on
Jan. 12th,
Janice Marie Johnson**



Dr. Janice Marie Johnson, serves as Multicultural Ministries and Leadership Director at the UUA. She provides leadership, guides strategic initiatives, and develops programs and services that expand Unitarian Universalist congregations' capacity to welcome, include, and meet the ministerial needs of diverse people seeking a liberal religious community of love and justice. She supports congregational professional and lay religious leaders in developing cross-cultural knowledge and skills that foster multicultural growth and ministries in Unitarian Universalism at the congregational, district, regional, and national levels. She is the proud mother of Lehna, a UU young-adult dedicated to art, education, and activism. Janice's maxim, "Masakhane," is a rich and resonant word from the Nguni language -- one of the many languages of South Africa. Loosely translated into English it means, "Let us build together." Janice takes her maxim seriously, very seriously.

*Thank You for
supporting our
Holiday
Jewelry Sale*

The sale made \$1,743 for the church.

Please keep the donated jewelry "of all kinds, condition and design" coming, as we are preparing for Valentine's and Mother's Day events.

Donations may be given to *Barbara Thormahlen, Chris Place, or Julie Fatherley.*

**If you are someone who loves kids and books,
consider volunteering**

for a few hours a week in the Beardsley School library.

We need helping hands for checking books in and out and properly returning them to the shelves. Many other tasks need attention: processing and cataloging donated books, creating bulletin boards, conducting an inventory of the collection, and communicating with the teachers about new resources are just a few.

For more information,

please contact Anita Pfluger. pflugerdunn@juno.com or 203-375-6412.

Sign up for the Winter Minister's Forums!

The Odyssey program is pleased to announce the Minister's Forums for the Winter. Please register using the sign-up sheets in the foyer or via e-mail at odyssey@uuwestport.org. All classes will be held in the Meeting House at 10:30 a.m.

Saturday January 4, 2014

"Bible for Liberals: A Romp Through Israelite History"

Join Rev. Roberta as she attempts the daunting feat of recounting the entire narrative of the early Israelites from primeval times to the beginning of the Common Era. As the editors of the New Revised Standard Version have written, "The Bible tells the story of Israel rather than presenting the history of Israel." Familiarity with the narrative story makes it possible to read the Hebrew Scriptures with a deeper appreciation for the context in which they were written.

Saturday February 1, 2014

"Spiritual Practice for UU's: Living in Abundance"

As a follow up to a sermon this fall, Rev. Roberta and Barry will lead this session on incorporating the spiritual dimensions of abundance into everyday life. Decisions on how our money is spent, how our time is used, and how we view critical decisions can all be informed by our theology of abundance.

Saturday March 1, 2014

"Nurturing the Leader Within: How to Plan and Run a Meeting That Makes Everybody Feel Like They've Been to Church (Or Whatever You Want to Call It)"

Every time you come to The Unitarian Church of Westport, whether it is for worship or a finance committee meeting or to help clean the kitchen, you can leave feeling like you have gotten all that you want and need out of your religious home: a sense of belonging, a stronger UU identity, feeling cared for, feeling like you've made a difference, and an opportunity to grow your soul. Find out how you can create that experience for groups you are part of.



International Council of Unitarians and Universalists meets.

For the first time ever, the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists (ICUU) will hold its biennial Council Meeting and Conference in the United States. The Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock (UUCSR) is delighted to host this historic global event and invites area Unitarian Universalists to come meet with more than 100 Unitarians and Unitarian Universalists from twenty-five countries.

During the last week in January, the UUCSR campus will become something of a "United Nations building" of the worldwide Unitarian Universalist community.

ICUU is the international network of Unitarian, Universalist and Unitarian Universalist organizations. 23 national full member groups comprise the voting members of the Council. Provisional and emerging groups represent Unitarians from more than a dozen more countries. More information about ICUU can be found at ww.icuu.net and www.facebook.com/InternationalUUs.

All are invited to the ICUU OPENING CELEBRATION AND COMMUNITY GLOBAL WORSHIP and the Welcoming Party on Tuesday evening January 28, 2014 at 7:30 p.m. at UUCSR (at no charge) and to the CLOSING CEREMONY AND PETER MAYER CONCERT at Community Church (Unitarian Universalist) in New York City on Friday evening January 31 at 7:30 pm (suggested contribution \$15).



Church Staff

- Rev. Roberta Finkelstein.....*Interim Senior Minister*
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- Edward Thompson *Minister of Music*
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visit our website at
www.uuwestport.org

The next SOUNDINGS deadline is
Friday, Jan. 17 at noon (or before).
Please e-mail your copy to:
carpo@optonline.net

Upcoming events ...

SERVICE/CONCERT You may recall that there were severe winter weather conditions on December 15 which required us to postpone the Christmas concert. So, we are happy to present the Poulenc Gloria on Sunday, January 5th, at the 11:00 service. It is festive, colorful, playful and sublime. A great way to start the new year.

SIGHT SINGING CLASSES Ed Thompson will once again hold sight-singing classes. While they are free, it is necessary to sign up, call, write, speak with Ed. The dates, all Saturdays, are these:

JANUARY 11, 18, 26, FEBRUARY 1, 8, 15.
All classes from 9:30 to 11:00.

CHOIRS If you have been undecided about joining one of our many choirs, January is a good time to 'put your foot in the water'. Give it a try and see how it goes. Please be in touch with Ed Thompson for more details.

VOICE CLASSES with Marcella Calabi will be happening in January and February. The exact dates are still being worked out. This is a fantastic way for you to take the next step with your voice development. You can call Marcella for more information about the classes or lessons: mc@marcellacalabi.com or call her at 212-928-4798. For more information about vocal scholarships please be in touch with Ed Thompson.

FUN & FRIENDSHIP EVENT



WHAT: Chinese New Year Event at TUCW
– wear something red.

WHEN: Friday, Jan. 17th from
6:00-8:00 pm / 6 pm - Potluck -
Make or buy & bring Chinese food
7-7:15 pm -

Speaker about experience living in China

Activities to choose :

- Calligraphy of Chinese characters,
- Story from China,
- Create a dragon,

RSVP to electronic invite scheduled to go out soon.