Photo by Kevin Girouard

Sunday Worship:
February 1, 10:30 a.m.

"Educating All of Us"

The history of public education is a fascinating story of vision and struggle. We will take a look at what Unitarian Universalist hopes for the future of education might entail.

Reverend Bob Janis, Minister
Laurie Kelliher, Worship Associate
Meredith Neumann, Director of Music
Benjamin Mabrey, Pianist

Matters of the Heart
To have a joy or sorrow read from the pulpit on Sunday morning, send the information to **Matters of the Heart**.

This Sunday is Soup Sunday

Services are livestreamed every Sunday on **Zoom** and **Facebook**
Zoom info: Meeting ID: 931 0388 7934
Passcode: 128493
Virtual Coffee Hour to follow
*** Note: Zoom Coffee Hour ends at noon**
Past Services

Join us on Zoom

Upcoming Worship Services

February 5 – First Thursday Vesper Chapel Service, 6 p.m. Reverend Bob

February 8 – "Small Gestures, Big Results", Matt Dicks, pulpit guest/ Peter Meny, Worship Service Coordinator/Margaret Leicach, Worship Associate/Meredith Neumann, Director of Music/Benjamin Mabrey, Pianist

February 15 – "Love in the Age of AI", Judy Robinson, Pulpit Guest/Rick Tskada, Worship Associate/ Meredith Neumann, Director of Music

February 22 – Reverend Bob/Ben Harvey, Worship Associate/Meredith Neumann, Director of Music/USH Choir/Benjamin Mabrey, Pianist.

Mid-week Message from Reverend Bob

It's cold, it's wet, it's icy. The snowdrifts are high. The roads are bad. The events on the calendar, and the electricals, are both uncertain. And did I mention, it's cold.
It won't be forever. Beach weather is already on its way, believe it or not.

But in the meantime, please take care of yourself. Do what you need to do to take good care.
And if we can help – or even if there's not much we can do – please feel free to reach out (I'm at **minister@hartforduu.org**, 860-539-1259 – please be wary of other emails as there are a few impersonator emails floating about.) I'm not saying we can always fix much – everyone is pretty stretched thin sometimes – but sometimes a listening ear helps a little, right? And we can ask around to try to get some help.

And if you are one of those wild ones who actually LIKE winter…yay! Blessings to you, go out there and enjoy all this delicious snow and ice. It won't be here forever.

Blessings, all!

Sincerely,
Rev. Bob

Editor's note: I don't believe it an exaggeration to say we were blessed, last Sunday, with Carl Shields' reading of his poem, "The Ledger of Sanctified Shadows". Following the service, there were numerous requests for a printed version. Carl has graciously agreed, and we are honored to provide that here. Thank you once again, Carl…

The Ledger of Sanctified Shadows
by Carl Shields

They built their doctrines like
Fortresses,
Stone stacked upon stone,
Each rule a rampart,
Each decree a gate
That opened only inward.

Outside those walls,
Whole worlds waited-
But the gatekeepers learned to fear
What they could not name.

They told women their voices
Were too loud for heaven,
Too soft for leadership,
Too dangerous for scripture.
So they rewrote the sacred
With missing chapters,
And called the omissions divine.

They told men who loved men
That their hearts were errors,
Their tenderness a trespass.
They turned identity into exile, and carved shame into Commandments
That never belonged there.

They told those of other faiths
That their gods were shadows,
Their rituals misguided,
Their ancestors mistaken.
And in the name of unity,
They fractured the world.

They told seekers and skeptics
That questions were rebellions,
That curiosity was a serpent
Coiled beneath the pews.
So they taught generations
To fear their own minds.

They told survivors of violence
To forgive before they healed,
To stay silent for the sake of the flock,
To carry wounds like sacraments
While their harm-doers
Wore vestments of immunity.

They told children
That obedience was holiness,
That suffering was sanctified,
That fear was a form of faith.
And those children grew into adults
Who mistook trembling for reverence.

They told the poor
That poverty was piety,
That hunger was humility,
That their suffering
Was a lesson in gratitude —
While wealth gleamed
From the chalices of the saved.

They told entire cultures
That salvation required surrender,
That conversion was compassion,
That erasure was enlightenment.
And in the ashes of burned Languages
You can still hear the echo
Of prayers never meant to be
Silenced.

Yet —
Beneath the weight of these decrees,
Beneath the centuries of Gatekeeping,
Beneath the scars left by sanctified
Power,
A quieter truth persists:

Faith itself never demanded this.
It was the institutions
That feared the wildness of the
Human spirit.
It was the hierarchies
That mistook control for care.
It was the systems
That traded compassion for certainty
And called the bargain holy.

Still-
In the cracks of every cathedral,
In the breath of every chant,
In the unclaimed corners of every
Doctrine,
There flickers a gentler ember:
A sacredness that belongs to Everyone —
Women, queer people, doubters,
Believers,
The faithful, the faithless,
The wounded, the wandering,
The ones who stayed
And the ones who fled.

And that ember,
Small but stubborn,
Outlives every empire
Built in its name.

And that ember,
Small but stubborn,
Outlives every empire
Built in its name.

USH General Interest

Every week we need people to serve as Greeters, Ushers, Welcome Table guru, RE teachers, Book Table display organizers, and Candle Lifters. See us for information in Fellowship Hall during coffee hour and sign up!

Link for online sign-up

Celebration of Life
Theodore H. "Ted" Johnson M.D.

The Celebration of Dr. Ted Johnson's life is planned to be held **Saturday, January 31, 10:30 a.m.** at South Congregational Church, 90 Main Street, New Britain. Reverends Jane Rowe, South Church, and Bob Janis, USH, will co-officiate. There will be a reception following the service at the Shuttle Meadow Country Club, 51 Randecker Lane, Berlin.

Calling hours are scheduled for Thursday, January 29, 4 – 7 p.m. at Carlson Funeral Home, 45 Franklin Square, New Britain.

Please read the full obituary which is linked below:
Link to Obituary

UU-101 Sessions for Newcomers

Session Two is scheduled for: ????????

*Winter weather forecasts continue to confound the prognosticators among us. Last Sunday was snowed out; the situation for this coming Sunday is too early to call. Therefore, please keep your eyes and ears open for information about this gathering, to learn more about UU and USH... at a time when we can offer a reasonable likelihood of meeting face-to-face. And, if you haven't already, please do make your interest known to **Karolina** (in the office).*

Are you interested in learning more about this congregation, about Unitarian Universalism, or about membership? Would you like to meet other congregants and get to know each other?

We would love you to come to two free sessions, facilitated by Rev. Bob and Laurie Kelliher, to share about our spiritual journeys and get to know this tradition.

Come and learn about Unitarian Universalism and about membership at USH. Meet other newcomers and spend an evening with Rev Bob and Laurie as we share our spiritual journeys and learn more about our UU tradition.

Light refreshments will be served...Please RSVP to **larkkelliher@gmail.com**

CANCELLED LAST SUNDAY DUE TO SNOWSTORM —
NEW DATE TO BE ANNOUNCED SOON

Learn About Sunday Volunteering During Future Coffee Hour

Realm
Have you signed up?

Our Board is excited to announce that we have begun to use a new church management system called **Realm**. In addition to better serving our administrative needs, it offers exciting new opportunities to support the way we are all involved at USH. Eventually, Realm can make it easier for us to more readily connect with one another, keep up with what's going on at USH, and grow as a connected community.

Realm is a closed system where only USH members and friends will be provided a link to join our online community. The next step to implement the system is for ***all USH members and friends to create their accounts.*** For starters, this will become the way to access and update the USH Directory. In addition to entering the basic directory information, you decide what additional information to share.

A link to **Realm** has been sent to your email address on file.
Can't find the link? Use this link to request an account **HERE**

After you have made your account, download The RealmConnect app on your phone. This app can be downloaded on your smartphone or tablet. Realm is also accessible by computer. Be aware, **the Realm Connect App for your smartphone provides faster communication.**

"Stories of our Lives"

We are going to have ONE MEETING ONLY in February which is going to be BOTH online and in person. This meeting will be at the usual Zoom time: FEBRUARY 2, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. The in-person group will meet in the Meditation Room, and the Zoom link is below.

Zoom
Meeting ID: 833 0672 8944
Passcode: 850172

The reason for this one-time hybrid is I am in New Hampshire February 16th. Sorry about that. I had a feeling, setting up two meetings monthly October through May, that a scheduling conflict would come up one month, and February is as good a month as any for this to happen. The good news is, it looks like, barring illness, March, April, and May are clear for both the first Monday Zoom and the third Monday in-person.

Apologies for this, especially to the in-person crew for the change in date. I will design the session especially for hybrid and I think it will be a really good one-off session. Hope you can make it (and apologies again). See you February 2nd!

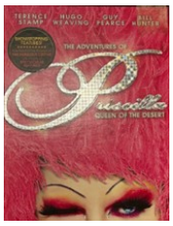
Kind regards,
Rev. Bob

Gentle Yoga is back, Starting next Monday February 2nd.

Gentle Yoga meets weekly on Monday mornings 10:00 – 11:00 am, in the Meditation rooms. Led by experienced yoga practitioner and teacher LU Giammatteo, these hour-long sessions incorporate gentle stretching and strengthening positions and movements in a supportive, encouraging environment. Stand or sit, according to your preference and ability... all levels are welcome.

If you'd like to learn more before showing up, email **LU** with your questions.

Participants are
asked to donate $5 per session (proceeds to USH) if their situation allows.



PIZZA and MOVIE NIGHT
Friday, February 6, 5 p.m.

Note the date change, this month **only**— to avoid schedule conflicts, our movie night is **one week earlier**! Come for an evening of conversation, pizza, salad, dessert, and movie, plus a discussion after the movie if folks are up for that.

February's movie is the celebrated '***The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert'***, a 1994 Australian release with Terence Stamp, Hugo Weaving, Guy Pearce, and the aforementioned *Priscilla*... a decrepit yet glammed-up tour bus who brings her own particular flair to the outback.

Plot sketch: a trio of Sydney-based drag performers lands a contract for a show in central Australia; they take the show on the road, literally, and thus the adventure begins. Like all good journeys, there are numerous layers to this odyssey. Rated **R** (language).

Sign up at Coffee Hour on Sunday (table at entrance to Fellowship Hall) or email **Tina Davies** to sign up (use **"movie"** in subject line). $15* covers pizza, salad, dessert, non-alcoholic beverages. Feel free to bring your own beer or wine, if that's your preference.

*Or $5/slice, for the light eaters.

Medical Emergency Training for AED and Stop the Bleed — let **Paul Cipriano** know if you want to be in the training class. Date TBD.

In the USH Ambulatory Gallery

Welcome to 'The Rose's Tale,' a display of hooked rugs designed by Deana David and hooked by many talented artists all over the U.S. and Canada. Each of these designs represents a real rose variety – some of which are hundreds of years old, and some which have been bred very recently. These pieces have been hooked with patterns that will soon be released in the upcoming book ***The Rose's Tale***, and a wide variety of materials like wool, pantyhose, potholder loops, yarns, roving, t-shirts, sweaters— just about any fiber you can think of.

This project has spanned over two years, and every hooker who's participated was able to choose her design based on her personal style and personal connection to the actual rose. All roses have been represented in their true colors; all are magical and special beauties.

If you are interested in buying any of the pieces, ask Deana either in person or write to: **ribboncandyhooking@gmail.com** Although many of these rugs will be displayed again in the next months, some of the makers are happy to sell.

HOOKED RUG SHOW OPENING

Valentine's Day (February 14)
The Unitarian Society of Hartford
50 Bloomfield Avenue, Hartford
3 p.m.

There are forty hooked rugs on display from the upcoming book ***The Rose's Tale,*** which will be out in early Spring. Deana will give a talk, and there'll be snacks and drinks. A party! Come and check out these stunning rugs, hooked by friends all over the U.S. and Canada. On Valentine's Day, let's fall in love with these gorgeous rugs together!
Email **ribboncandyhooking@gmail.com** with any questions. This event is free, but donations for USH are always welcome.

If you aren't able to come to the party but would like to see the show — send Deana a message. She can either meet you or put you in touch with Karolina, in the office, who can let you into the show. This is a great event to bring your guild to — just let Deana know how to help with logistics. We hope to see as many of you at the party as possible, and if you are too far away, don't worry... there'll a video.

Social Justice

February Good Neighbor Offering (GNO) — Chrysalis Center

Chrysalis Center opened in 1975 to provide critical support services to adults living in poverty who struggled with mental illness to help them live as independently as possible in the community.
Today, Chrysalis Center also helps individuals living below the poverty level and struggling with food insecurity, dealing with substance abuse, HIV/AIDS, release from incarceration and homelessness. Services have grown beyond community support services and case management to include community employment services, community supportive housing, recovery services and affordable housing.

- La Cocina Culinary Arts Training Program provides hands-on job training for individuals pursuing careers in the culinary and hospitality industries.
- Community Supportive Housing Services is a combination of housing and case management services intended to help support individuals and families coming from homelessness.
- In North Hartford, an area known as a food desert, 50% of residents live at or below the poverty threshold. Chrysalis Center's **FOOD HUB** includes a variety of programs and initiatives which address the critical issue of food insecurity and lack of fresh and nutritious foods in the community.
- The Recovery and Empowerment Center (REC), located on the main campus in Hartford, is a social rehabilitation program tailored to meet the needs of individuals experiencing mental illness by providing social support, peer engagement, advocacy, skill building and health and wellness activities. There is a computer lab available to all members, as well as social outings, an onsite fitness center and access to low-cost, healthy meals at La Cocina.

Horace Bushnell Update

It is so very cold... and without warm, nourishing food to eat, that cold is felt even more acutely. Children who depend on school for lunch and possibly breakfast as well, suffer more deeply during school holidays and snow cancellations. ***You*** can help with your non-perishable contributions, particularly when that food includes lots of protein. Please continue to give generously.

~In gratitude,
Diana Heymann

Winter 2026 GHIAA Organizing Leadership Training

Our Winter 2026 Organizing Leadership Training is coming up soon and open to all! Join us to explore the fundamentals of faith-based organizing, practice the tools of relational culture (individual meetings and house meetings), consider how we build and wield power, share our process of identifying issues and developing campaigns, and build our skills for action. **Please complete the form linked here to register.**
Our winter training series will be held in person on **Tuesday evenings, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m., February 10, 16, 24, March 3 and 10, at Temple Sinai (41 West Hartford Road, Newington)**. Please note: this is a four-week training, but we are scheduling five weeks so we have a snow date if needed. While we understand that unforeseen issues may arise, we ask all participants to register with the intention of being present for all sessions of the training.
If you are newer to GHIAA and haven't yet been through training, this is for you. If you were trained a while back but could use a refresher, this is for you. If you are a clergy member or a lay leader, this is for you. If you know other members of your congregation/institution who could benefit from the skills and practices of organizing, this is for them, too.

Religious Exploration

NEEDED: Teachers for SUNDAY, February 1: Let Shahan know if you wish to help. The lesson for Explorers will be about how to deal with strong emotions. (It was originally scheduled for snowstorm Sunday).

Youth: This Sunday is Soup Sunday

RAMADAN DINNER INVITATION: Saturday, January 31, 6 p.m.— Farmington Valley American Muslim Center. The youth group has been invited to a Ramadan Dinner and info session on the meaning of Ramadan. **See flyer**. Lara (from Germany UU community) will attend this. Come meet her!
The Center's address is 35 Harris Road, Avon CT 06001.
See their website: **www.fvamc.org**

LARA WILL BE HERE FOR SOUP SUNDAY: Lara Weber, 20, from Munich, Germany, will be here in the USA (with different host families) in February and most of March. Her family has been involved in UU life in Germany for generations. A number of years ago, her older brother took part in the UU Youth Exchange program and was hosted by a family from Fern Street. If anyone would like to meet Lara (particularly if you fall in the young adult age range) OR if you think there may potentially be an interesting activity for her — kindly let me know!

SAT, FEB 7, VISIT TO CONGREGATION BETH ISRAEL IN WEST HARTFORD at 11 a.m.: Our next visit to a "Neighboring Faith" is to Congregation Beth Israel on Saturday, February 7 at 11 a.m. **More details to follow**. Please keep this time slot open if you can! You will get a short Judaism study outline.

Wanted: your unneeded coats, men's clothing, shirts, pants, hoodies, underwear, socks, hats, gloves, blankets, mini-toiletries, etc.: This is in preparation for USH's first NIGHTLIGHT mission on *Saturday, March 21*, distributing food and clothing directly to the homeless in Hartford (see flyer). Bring them to USH. There is a large storage bin under the stairs. **We have a second bin now!**

- THE PROBLEM: Connecticut is facing its sharpest increase in homelessness in over a decade. Cuts to SNAP and food benefits have worsened food insecurity statewide. Many individuals cannot access shelters due to capacity limits, trauma, disabilities, or safety concerns.
- **NIGHTLIGHT:** The NIGHTLIGHT (**uuwyn.org/nightlight/**) program helps deliver food, clothing, blankets, toiletries, etc.. directly to the homeless. The program, a part of UUWYN, will follow many of the procedures employed by the Midnight Run program Midnight Run in New York city. More detail on why NIGHTLIGHT will help fill a need can be found here: **NIGHTLIGHT-Homeless-Assistance.docx**

YOUNG ADULT FROM GERMANY IN THE USA IN FEBRUARY AND MARCH: Lara Weber, 20, from Munich, Germany, will be here in the USA (with different host families) in February and most of March. Her family has been involved in UU life in Germany for generations. A number of years ago, her older brother took part in the UU Youth Exchange program and was hosted by a family from Fern Street. If anyone would like to meet Lara (particularly if you fall in the young adult age range) OR if you think there may potentially be an interesting activity for her — kindly let me know.

Future Events: Save these dates!

SATURDAY & SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21/22: SKI TRIP: (SAVE THE DATE): SKI BUTTERNUT – local (see flyer): details to follow

SATURDAY, MARCH 21, 2 p.m. to 11 p.m.: NIGHTLIGHT Mission (see flyer): details to follow

Stand by for info to come regarding late June's SUMMER RETREAT IN BOSTON & WALDEN: Don't miss this. Details will follow, but this flyer gives an idea. Here's where we'll be staying: Luxury Living at its Best in Extra Large Estate - Houses for Rent in Southborough, Massachusetts, United States - Airbnb

USH Resources

Unitarian Society of Hartford
50 Bloomfield Avenue, Hartford, CT 06105 (860) 233-9897
Website: **www.hartforduu.org**
Email: **office@hartforduu.org**

Office Hours:	**Minister**
Monday – Thursday 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Sunday 9 a.m.– 2 p.m. Call/Text: 860-539-5729	Thursday 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Friday 9 a.m. – noon or by appointment. Call/Text: 860-539-1259

Board Meetings are held on the
Fourth Monday of the month, 6:30 – 8 p.m.
Next Meeting: February 23

2025 – 2026 USH Board of Directors —

Nina Elgo: President
Virginia deLima: President-Elect
Jon Covault: Treasurer
Gloria Mengual: Secretary
Laura Cipriano: Community Within Council Chair
Laurie Kelliher: Membership Council Chair
Rocco Orlando: Finance Council Chair
Michael Michaud: Spiritual Life Council Chair
Paul Cipriano: Administration Council Chair
Judy Sullivan: Social Justice Council Chair

Have a question or comment for the board? Send an email to: **ushboardofdirectors@gmail.com**.

Click **HERE** to view the USH Directory, Reports, and other church business information online. You will need the user ID and Password to access these documents. **Contact the Office for the username and password.**

Financial reports for FY 2025-2026 have been posted;
click **HERE** to view.

See the 2024/25 Annual Report **HERE**

The **Board Meeting Minutes** can be found here.

Link for Welcome Team Sign-Up Genius

USH Staff:

Rev. Bob Janis, Minister
minister@hartforduu.org | 860-233-9897 ext. 103
Cell: 860-539-1259

Karolina Wojtysko, Church Operations Manager
office@hartforduu.org | 860-233-9897 ext. 100
Cell: 860-539-5729

Meredith Neumann, Director of Music
musicdirector@hartforduu.org | 860-966-2453

Shahan Islam, Director of Religious Exploration
shahan@hartforduu.org | 860-233-9897 ext. 104

Patty Peck, Bookkeeper
ushtreasurer50@gmail.com

The deadline for USH E-News submissions is
5 p.m. Monday!

Please write in the 'Subject' field "USH E-News", and include the dates that your submission should be featured. Announcements about upcoming events appear for two consecutive weeks **maximum**, unless other arrangements have been made with the editorial team.

When forwarding information concerning an "outside" event or organization, **please pre-edit your copy** in order to keep the piece to 200 words or less. Note that **all material is subject to editing** prior to publication. **Also, please submit editable material** (text and images separately, rather than "poster" format).

Articles should be sent as email file attachments, (MS Word preferred) and images need to be sent separately as jpeg, jpg, png, tiff, bmp, or gif files.

Thank you for your cooperation.
Editor-in-Chief: Tina Davies
Production and Technical Expertise: Karolina Wojtysko

The calendar for **February** can be viewed **HERE**.

Please consult our Online Calendar regularly for all upcoming events coordinated by the Unitarian Society of Hartford.

Visit our **Happenings** page on the website for more details.

Unitarian Society of Hartford | 50 Bloomfield Ave | Hartford, CT 06105 US

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