

USH E-news February 14, 2024

"Seeking, Sharing, Soaring"



Photo: Kevin Girouard, January 2024

Unitarian Society of Hartford

"Nourishing Spirit, Building Community, Working for Justice"

50 Bloomfield Avenue, Hartford, CT 06105

Tel: (860) 233-9897 • Email: hartforduusociety@gmail.com

www.ushartford.org

Minister's Office Hours:

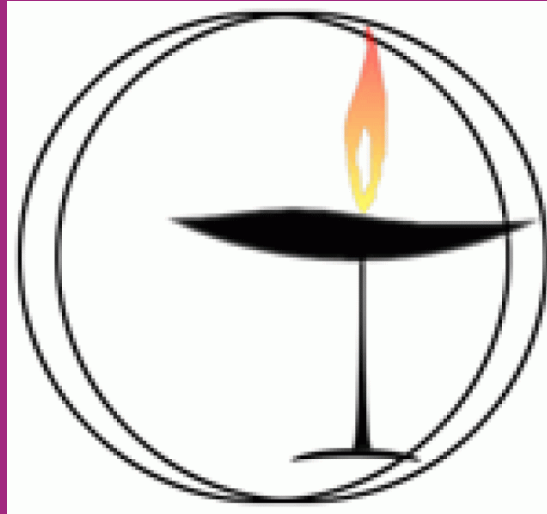
Tuesdays & Thursdays 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.
or by [appointment](#).

Office Administrator Hours:

Sunday 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Monday – Thursday 9:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Virtual Hours: Monday – Thursday, 5 – 7 p.m.

**Sunday Morning Service 10:30 a.m.
February 18**

"Desperate Times, Desperate Men"



**Reverend AJ Johnson, Pulpit Guest
Sue Smolski, Worship Associate
Sam Moffett, Director of Music Ministries**



Reverend AJ Johnson, Pulpit Guest

Our pulpit guest, Rev. AJ Johnson, is the lead pastor at the Urban Hope Refuge Church in Hartford, a Community Organizer for the Center For Leadership and Justice, and a featured speaker on social justice issues and community revival at many community-action panels,

workshops, and national conferences.

Rev. Johnson is married to Melinda Johnson and is the father of sons Ashton and Addison. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Religious Studies and Education from W.L. Bonner College and is currently pursuing a Master of Arts degree in Organizational Management and Leadership from Liberty University.



Matters of the Heart

To have a Joy or Sorrow read from the pulpit on Sunday morning, e-mail **Matters of the Heart**

In-person – use Matters of Heart basket for written cards on Sunday morning. *Please provide concise information

Religious Education: 10:30 a.m.
Annie Witzler, Interim RE Coordinator

Can't be here in person for worship?

Join us on ZOOM 10:30 a.m.

Meeting ID: 931 0388 7934

Passcode: 128493

**Virtual Coffee Hour and Semi-Annual Meeting after,,
including on-line voting for members**

Worship is also streamed on **Facebook** —
follow our page and receive notifications every time we go live.

Couldn't make it to USH, and missed the livestream?
Watch any service, anytime, here on **Vimeo**

Worship Calendar

Join us, in person or online.

Upcoming Services:

**February 25 – "How We Were Saved
By Rock and Roll: A Brief Spiritual
History of American Music"**, Reverend
Bob/Rick Tsukada, Worship Associate and
Meetinghouse Singers and Musicians.



March 3 – RE Faith Focused Service, "Courage", Reverend Dianne Daniels, pulpit guest/Margaret Leicach, Worship Associate

March 10 – Reverend Bob/Miriam Byroade, Worship Associate

March 17 – Reverend Bob/Michael Michaud, Worship Associate



Thoughts From Rev. Bob...

A reminder, this Sunday, February 18, is the vote on the congregation's willingness for me to continue as minister here, for a period of five years. As is our Unitarian Universalist tradition, the congregation, through its membership, chooses its own minister through the democratic process. If you can't be here in person, you will be able to vote online.

I know half a week isn't too much notice – but, with our national elections raising our anxieties for eighteen months or more – isn't it kind of refreshing?

I have really enjoyed my time here and, if it is the congregation's will, look forward to continuing in shared ministry with you. I'd love to hear your thoughts on what we all can accomplish together over the next five years – we'll be exploring that over the course of the next year, and I'm always happy for a chat! Have a great week and – seeing as it's Valentine's Day today – here is to devotion, commitment, shared blessings, and love!

Yours gratefully,
Rev. Bob

USH News



President's Message: Semi-Annual Meeting

February 18

In-Person and Online

[Join Zoom Meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 995 4257 9916

Passcode: 335489

Our semi-annual congregational meeting will be held this Sunday, February 18, following the worship service and a good helping of excellent soup. Normally this meeting is purely informational – a chance to find out what the board of directors has been up to and to ask them questions.

BUT — this year something exciting is going to happen: the members of the congregation are going to be asked to vote on giving Reverend Bob Janis a 5-year contract! The seven months since Rev. Bob has been among us have been pretty awesome, and the atmosphere at USH has turned around 180°! Attendance has grown. Hopes have soared. And the smiling all around is infectious.

The board of directors voted unanimously at our January meeting to offer Rev. Bob a 5-year contract. But we all agree that the whole congregation should have a say in this. Some have asked, “Why 5 years? Why not a settled ministry?”

Valid questions, indeed. To begin with, the idea was originally suggested by Rev. Bob. His reasoning is sound. In 5 years, his youngest child will be graduating from high school. He is not sure how that will impact his life and ministry, and he didn’t feel that in good faith he could commit to a longer timeline. Let’s face it, who among us knows what our lives will be like in 5 years?

The other part of the equation is that the lines between a contract minister and a settled minister have become blurred over the last couple decades. An average settled UU minister now stays at a congregation for 7 years. Including this year, Rev. Bob will have been at USH for 6 years.

That does **not** mean that Rev. Bob has decided to leave at the end of his 5-year contract. It only means that he can’t be sure beyond that

point. If we are really, really nice to him, we may be able to convince him to stay longer!

Bottom line is – **show up and vote on Sunday, either in person or on-line.** Let's show Rev. Bob just how much we want him to stick around. I know that, as board president, I should appear neutral in this matter. But I can't help it – I like the guy!

For those of you in the congregation who are not full members, and want your voices heard, I suggest you send Rev. Bob a note or email letting him know how you feel about the 5 year contract.

During the meeting, there will be opportunities for people to ask questions. It is your chance to grill or roast the board. There will also be updates on what the board has been working on – the usual droning of council reports.

I hope to see everyone here on Sunday!

Your president (for better or worse),
Dana Donovan

Meeting House Presents

Friday, February 16, 7 p.m.
Stan Sullivan and Cece Borjeson
\$20 donation at the door



Stan Sullivan — An eclectic singer-songwriter and acoustic guitar instrumentalist, Stan Sullivan is an award-winning Hartford-based artist. Stan has released two full indie albums—***The Right Road*** and ***Do You Like the Rain?***—and can be heard on several compilations. He has opened shows for nationally touring artists such as Richard Thompson, John Hammond, Rory Block and Cheryl Wheeler. Muriel Anderson, Janis Ian, Dave Van Ronk, John Hartford, and Happy Traum.

Connecticut native Stan Sullivan earned his BA in Modern Languages from CCSU in 1970. He

is a self-described, “singer-songwriter guitar instrumentalist/composer and folk and blues performer.” He modestly explains that although he wrote his first song at age 17, it was not until many years later that the quality of his songwriting and performing came together. And that it did!

Along with performing, Stan has won numerous awards in songwriting and guitar contests that span various categories such as Love, Religion/Spirit, Instrumental, Humorous, Political, and Modern Ballad. Contests range from Arizona’s Southwest Regional Fingerstyle, to New Hampshire’s Folk Guitar & Fiddle, to the Walnut Valley Songwriting Showcase in Kansas.



Getting Clear On Proposed Changes to Unitarian Universalism:

Sunday, February 25 Under the Stairs

A few weeks ago USH hosted a Teach-In on proposed changes to the UUA bylaws. You can see the edited Teach-In [here](#)

That session raised many questions for folks in our congregation. Judy Robbins will be available “under the stairs” directly after the service on two Sundays: **February 25 and March 24**. More information to follow.



Donate for Mother Rose's Boutique!

In his reflection as pulpit speaker last Sunday, John Bengtson spoke of the needs of folks who come to Church Street Eats, able to enjoy food and warmth on Sundays

when other food pantries and soup kitchens in the city are closed. John highlighted something many of us might not have known: our friends at Church Street Eats provide not only food to men and women with no place to call home — they provide clothing and toiletries to their patrons as well.

This Sunday, John and the Youth Group will again cook up gallons of soup, for USH **and** for the hungry folks down at Church Street Eats. After we enjoy Soup Sunday, John Can we go the extra mile, starting this Sunday, to help our neighbors and friends who can use a little extra boost?

Mother Rose's Boutique, a sister project to Church Street Eats, collects donations of (mostly) used clothing. Currently, they're unable

to support the growing need for wearables as donations have become scarce. By working together, we can help them reopen their boutique.

Between now and Sunday, how about going through your closets, and bring to the Meeting House what you can. Going out shopping? Pick up a pack of new socks, undergarments, or toiletries to donate. **All** donations of clothing are welcome, but the need is much greater for men's clothing. All sizes are accepted, but generally Large and Extra Large are most helpful.

Any questions about donations? Want to learn more about helping Church Street Eats? Visit their website [here](#), or contact the [Office Admin](#), or [John Bengtson](#).



Wheelchair Request

Do you have a wheelchair you would like to donate? The Meeting House needs a folding wheelchair to replace our current one. If you have one in good working condition, contact [Evan Williams](#).

USH Gatherings

For information on our weekly and monthly gatherings, click [here](#).

SpiritChat Meets February 23
An Exploration of Nonduality

Nonduality proposes that, despite appearances, none of us is really a separate entity; that everything arises from and is part of a fundamental Oneness. This is a radically different way of perceiving the world and our place in it. It is often considered an element of enlightenment. Most people first approach nonduality as an intellectual concept and then finally as a lived experience.

Spiritual Teacher, Nicholas Bartoli, a former monk, is offering a winter/spring series of Friday morning SpiritChats at USH to explore nonduality. Sessions are open to all on a drop-in basis, 10 – 11:30. A free will offering of \$20 or whatever fits your means is suggested. The next **February session is 2/23**. For more information and the dates of all sessions, go to <https://nicholasbartoli.com>



UU SpiritLife
www.uuspiritlife.org

SpiritLife

Conversations on

Zoom, **Saturday, February 17, 9**

–10:30. This month's article for

discussion is *God As Essence* by

AH Almaas, facilitated by David

Gonci. Read the short article first

and then drop-in to a facilitated

discussion with UUs from the three

area churches, no registration

required. Go to [UU SpiritLife –](#)

[Helping Hartford area](#)

[Unitarian Universalists to](#)

[develop and deepen meaningful spiritual lives](#) for the complete
spring schedule, this month's reading, and the Zoom link.



New 30s and 40s Group Starting – Leap Year Coffee & Tea

Are you in your 30s or 40s? (Or close enough – late twenties are welcome too.) There's a new group forming, to have occasional monthly social meetups and get to know each other. The first meet-up will be **February 29, 7 p.m.** at Tisane Euro-Asian Café, 537 Farmington Ave, Hartford,

06105. Ideas for future meet-ups will be decided by the group — come along and suggest an activity!

All are welcome — you do not have to be an attendee at USH, so feel free to invite a friend. See you on Leap Year's Eve. For questions, feel free to email Rev. Bob at USHMinister@gmail.com. Thanks!



Spring Equinox Labyrinth Walk

UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF HARTFORD
FELLOWSHIP HALL
TUESDAY, MARCH 19
6:00-7:30PM



***Guided Labyrinth Walk with Lisa Haupt,
Certified Labyrinth Facilitator,
with Harp Music by Marcie Swift,
Certified Therapeutic Musician***

Refreshments Free Will Offering

50 Bloomfield Ave., Hartford 860.233.9897 www.ushartford.org

Social Justice



February GNO: Interreligious Eco-Justice Network (IREJN)

[The Interreligious Eco-Justice Network \(IREJN\)](#) is

Connecticut's only faith-based environmental non-profit organization. Committed to justice and grounded in hope, IREJN is a unifying voice dedicated to positive, hopeful action on behalf of the earth, the one thing we all share and the one place we all call home.

Terri Eickel, Executive Director, will be speaking **this Sunday** during our worship service.



Free Zoom Discussion Series: 'The Sum of Us' Podcasts – Stories of Hope, Collaboration & Stronger Communities

Listen to the hopeful collaborations happening around this country in

Heather McGhee's podcasts [The Sum of Us](#). She notes that Americans have been fed a "zero-sum story" that says progress for people of color will take away what white Americans already have. Facilitated Zoom discussions about each podcast will take place monthly from 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. Though the discussion series has started, **people are welcome to join the Zoom sessions at any point in the schedule. The next meeting is February 22.**

Podcast #4: Kansas City, Missouri: Flipping Burgers (40 minutes)

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/e4-kansas-city-mo-flipping-burgers/id1640137860?i=1000581640801>

Terrence Wise was a Black man flipping burgers at a McDonald's in Kansas City, Missouri. Bridget Hughes was a white woman punching the clock at a local Burger King. After feeding hundreds of people a day at work, Terrence and Bridget were both struggling to feed their families at home. Neither saw a way to improve their lives until they teamed up to join the movement for a living wage. During this podcast, these improbable modern-day labor leaders share the story of their friendship and how they came to see racism as the common enemy in the battle against poverty in America.

They helped launch the Missouri Workers Center, a state-wide organization that organizes low-wage workers across racial and geographic dividing lines. Their stories show how even people whose jobs put them among the least respected in society can take on corporate greed and win.

“I came to realize through the Fight for \$15 Movement that we get more together than we do apart,” said Terrence. “So nowadays when I go to work and I clock in, what I have that's greatly different from in the past is hope.”

To register, email ushsocialjustice@gmail.com to obtain the Zoom link. For more information, talk with Judy Sullivan or Gloria Mengual during coffee hour, read your USH Enews, or email them at jasullivan57@gmail.com or gloriafmengual@gmail.com

Here's the link to all of *The Sum of Us* podcasts: <https://open.spotify.com/show/19VMtc487rqmr b6GC8eRvd> For some of the podcasts, a local person will join the Zoom to describe local efforts related to the podcast topic. To register, email ushsocialjustice@gmail.com

Zoom Link for **Sum of Us** discussions [Here](#)



Terrence Wise



Bridget Hughes

GHIAA Winter Core Team Training

What: Explore the fundamentals of faith-based organizing. Practice 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.

On-line leadership training sessions begin February 15. If you haven't already attended a GHIAA orientation, you'll need to schedule a 1:1 with a GHIAA organizer in order to participate.

Training: Thursdays, Feb 15, 22, 29 and March 7, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

For more information and registration: <https://cljct.org/ghiaa/trainings/>
For questions, speak with [Diana Heymann](#) in person or via email.



The Horace Bushnell Food Pantry Still Needs Contributions

Our food bins are empty, as are the kitchens of folks who rely on Horace Bushnell Food Pantry to feed themselves.

Please be generous! When you are food shopping, take advantage of 2 for 1 sales, add an extra to each food item on your

shopping list, leave a bag of food by your door to bring with you when you come to church.

Every little bit helps... gratefully, thankfully, joyfully...



Coat Drive Extended All Winter

Spring is on the way, but it's still cold out there and your outgrown or outdated coat could make a big difference to someone. Donate new or gently-used coats to support the community of Horace Bushnell food pantry.

Please place donations in the bin located in the lobby.

All sizes for men, women, and children are needed.

RE and Chalice Clubhouse



Join the fun at USH —

Looking for a supportive, inclusive, non-judgmental home for your family's spiritual needs? Let USH be yours! Visit and learn about Unitarian Universalism, our congregation, and how USH can foster your family's religious or spiritual journeys.

Sign up for Sundays [here](#) online or in person at the welcome table. Questions? Reach out to

our Interim Religious Education Coordinator [Annie Witzler](#) for more information.



Religious Education

**Join us for Soup Sunday
after the service in
Fellowship Hall.**



Our Whole Lives

Our Whole Lives (OWL)

for 9th and 10th graders (ages 14 to 16), in a joint venture with the Universalist Church of West Hartford, every Sunday from **12:15 – 1:45 in Servetus.**

Please contact Annie

Witzler (re4ush@gmail.com) **for details.**

[Click HERE for this week's RE Newsletter](#)

Events Around Hartford

Cello and Piano Concert

Julie Ribchinsky and Carolyn Halsted



4:30 pm
Sunday, February 18, 2024

Universalist Church of West Hartford 433 Fern Street

A concert in honor of Black History Month featuring works by composers George Walker, Florence Price, and Tania León

Walker's Sonata for Cello and Piano Price's Fantasie Negre No. 2 in G minor for Piano

León's Four Pieces for Violoncello and Samuel Barber's Sonata for Violoncello and Piano, Op. 6

A Free Will Offering of \$20 is suggested. Proceeds will go to the Fern St. Food Ministry

USH Resources

Flu and Covid seasons are here; pharmacies, clinics, and local health departments offer vaccines. Please protect yourself and those around you.

Masks are available at the Welcome Table for anyone who wants one. We have both children's and adult sizes.

If you come to a USH event and test positive for Covid in the week following, we ask you to please let the office, or Rev. Bob, know. These things happen – as we know, many of us have had the virus once or twice – and we just want to keep people informed **and** care for you, if needed.

2023 – 2024 USH Board of Directors

Dana Donovan: President

Nancy Kemmerer: President-Elect

Jon Covault: Treasurer

Gloria Mengual: Secretary

Judy Sullivan: Social Justice Council Chair

Tina Davies: Community Within Council Chair

Laurie Kelliher: Membership Council Chair

Jim Venneman: Finance Council Chair

Rick Tsukada: Spiritual Life Council Chair

Paul Cipriano: Administration Council Chair

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

Board Meeting

The next board meeting is Tuesday, March 12

6:30 p.m. Hybrid

[Zoom Link HERE](#)

The latest financial reports for FY 2023-2024 have been posted; click [HERE](#) to view.

See the 2022/23 Annual Report [HERE](#)

The [Board Meeting Minutes](#) for November 2023 have been posted.

Click [HERE](#) to view the USH Directory, Reports, and other church business information online. Contact [Karolina Wojtysko](#) for the username and password.

USH Staff:

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ushminister@gmail.com | 860-233-9897 ext. 103

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Karolina Wojtysko, Office Administrator & Building Rentals

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The deadline for USH E-news submissions is **noon Tuesday**

Please write in the 'Subject' field "USH Enews", 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.

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: Tina Davies

Production and Technology Manager: Karolina Wojtysko

[Email Your Submission](#)

[Missed Last Week's Enews? Click HERE](#)

[Want to Donate Online? Click Here](#)

USH Calendar of Events

The calendar for February **2024** can be viewed [HERE](#).

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



To submit a Calendar Request (also for an online USH Zoom Room gathering) click [HERE](#).



Unitarian Society of Hartford | 50 Bloomfield Avenue, Hartford, CT 06105 Phone: 860-233-9897

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