



THE WINCHENDON UNITARIAN

Established 1954; Published by the

Unitarian Universalist Church of Winchendon

Volume 55 Issue 4

Rev. Marguerite Sheehan, MINISTER

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December, 2010

WORSHIP SERVICE 10 A.M.

P. O. Box 218, Winchendon MA, 01475

**This is the Church of the Open Mind
This is the Church of the Helping Hands**

**This is the Church of the Loving Heart
This is the Church of the Caring Community**

Church Calendar of Events

Saturday, Dec. 4, 5 PM. Public Spaghetti Supper

Sunday, Dec. 5, 10 AM. Morning Worship: This I Believe: Donna Marchand, Cindy Malley

Monday, Dec. 6, 7 PM. AA meeting

Tuesday, Dec. 7, 5 - 8 PM. Daisies/Brownies

Saturday, Dec. 11, Winchendon Recall Election

Sunday, Dec. 12, 10 AM. Morning Worship: Rev. Marguerite Sheehan

Monday, Dec. 13, 7 PM. AA meeting

Tuesday Dec. 14, 5 - 8 PM. Daisies/Brownies

Wednesday, Dec. 15, 7 PM. Governing Board

Sunday, Dec. 19, 10 AM. Morning Worship: Cindy Malley

Monday, Dec. 20, 7 PM. AA meeting

Tuesday, Dec. 21, 5 - 8 PM. Daisies/Brownies

Friday, Dec. 24, 7 PM. Christmas Eve Service

Sunday, Dec. 26, 10 AM. Morning Worship: Rev. Marguerite Sheehan

Monday, Dec. 27, 7 PM. AA meeting

Tuesday, Dec. 28, December newsletter material due

Thursday, Dec. 30, 5:30 PM. Our Neighbors Kitchen
(low cost meal—everyone invited)

CANCELLATION POLICY

If the weather seems inclement, after checking the augers like scanner reports, avian entrails, weather forecasts, crystal ball, and even looking outside, Cindy Malley and John White will make a decision by 6 AM. on whether to cancel church. They will then email everyone on the email list with the information. Only critical staff will be called. If you do not have email and are undecided about attending, call Cindy at 978-297-9562 or John at 978-297-0716. With the advances in electronic communication, we will not do a telephone tree this year.



Annual Community Christmas Eve Service

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24, 7 PM.

CANDLES AND CAROLS

COME AND BRING YOUR FRIENDS
AND FAMILY

Minister's Reflection

. The Catholic mystic Meister Eckhart was famous for saying that "If the only prayer you say in your entire life is thank you that will suffice." This is a season of giving and receiving; giving and receiving our unique gifts, giving and receiving our gratitude to each other and to the world. Meister Eckhart calls this kind of practice a prayer and attests that this prayer of thank you will suffice. We do not need to do anything more, and we do not need to receive any more. It will suffice.

I am writing this reflection on Thanksgiving Day while my mother is dying. This time that I am able to spend with her simply sitting by her bedside, simply being, simply thanking her for the gift of life that she gave me and my siblings, must be enough. It does not feel like enough as anyone who has lost a most loving relative or spouse knows. How can our prayers express what we have been given and what we are losing? It is simply impossible to put into words and so we say, with heads bowed in gratitude and in grief, "thank you."

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I will take this prayer with me into the rest of this holy season and I hope against hope that this prayer will guide the rest of my own days. Do you have such a prayer that runs through your veins as you go through your life? Is that prayer enough to hold you and direct you? And what is the prayer, the one prayer that our community of faith calls out, in good times and in sorrowful times? What helps us turn within for strength as we gather together when the season turns cold and dark? What helps us turn outward when the winds blow in Winchendon as they do every winter and we find ourselves asking again, how can we keep our physical and metaphorical doors open to the community that surrounds us? What gift are we, the Unitarian Universalist Church of Winchendon given so that we might give it back? This is my prayerful question for this season of giving, season of thanks giving.

This month we have opportunities to reflect on who we are and what we have been given. On December 1st at 7PM our first Chalice Group will gather. [This was canceled.] Everyone is invited. Bring a friend. We will have a chance, in a quiet and thoughtful, prayerful way, to reflect on who and what we are called to be. Just a few days later, on December 4th at 6PM we will gather as a caring church and transform our social room into an Italian restaurant, turn up the music, pass out the garlic bread and eat with our local community, raising funds for our door restoration and raising “fun” for our town. Already we have gathered toys for children, and mittens for cold hands. On Christmas Eve you will pull out the stops and celebrate the spirit of Christmas – love, peace, joy, thanks, giving. On that day I will be doing the same thing in Northfield and so in this way, the prayers of these two churches, and so many other people around us, will be echoing across the hills that song, that prayer of thank you.

It is all that we have and it is enough. Thank you for being a church that reaches in, reaches out, and in the end, expresses gratitude for all that is our life. May the season of winter, and all its celebrations, bring you back to your self.

Peace and Joy, Reverend Marguerite

RE News

A look ahead...

What is **Chalica**? Chalica is a week-long Unitarian UnUniversalist holiday beginning the first Monday of December and ending with worship on the following Sunday. The chalice is lit each day and a Principle is honored and acted on. Simple gifts may be given such as personal notes or small home-made items. The intentions are to be noncommercial, to remind ourselves of the Seven Principles, and to create a family ritual. This (or a modification of) may be something your family wishes to try this year from December 6 – 12.



Ever spend a long time searching for “just the right” Christmas tree? What does the “perfect” Christmas tree look like, anyway? The children’s Christmas Eve presentation will explore this from the tree’s point of view. We will prepare for this special evening during RE time this month so please try to have your children here as much as possible over the next few Sundays. We do this only during church time so that we don’t need to squeeze rehearsals into our already busy holiday season. The Christmas Eve Service begins at 7pm and **RE families are asked to be at church at 6:15pm.**

RE classes take a break on December 26th and resume on January 2nd.

A look back...

Our movie night in November was our best attended yet! Eighteen of us enjoyed an early slice of Thanksgiving from Charles Shultz. We snacked on popcorn, pretzels, and jelly beans just like the characters we were watching. “A Calling to Sacred Places”, presented by guest speaker Patrizia De Libero Brown, was certainly a treat for all of us. RE students remained in the sanctuary for this wonderful program and learned about many beautiful holy sites around the world. The Spirit of Christmas Toy Drive on

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Black Friday was rewarding, knowing that we were playing a part in making the holidays a little brighter for some families in the area. It's a concrete way for the children of the church to be involved with such an event and many of them donate their own outgrown toys to the cause. The children also made natural ornaments for the town Christmas tree which birds and other small animals can snack upon. We have had "Children's Worship" twice in the Pine Room this fall, both fun and meaningful times. These (almost) monthly worships are when all RE students meet to explore a topic together. Last year we examined our 7 Principles, this year we are delving into the origin of the Principles -- the Six Sources. We sit in a circle on the floor, sing a hymn, and light the Chalice. A basket of river rocks is passed around for Stone Communion. Everyone places their chosen stone on the altar and answers a prompt about the topic of the day. When discussing our First Source -- "the mystery and wonder of life" or "things in life that make us say 'WOW!'" -- each person mentioned one thing that makes them say "WOW!": huge ocean waves, presents, how the earth was made and where life came from, the stars, how seeds turn into plants and trees, Dora the Explorer, leaves changing colors in the fall, the birth of baby animals, and the expanding universe. As you can tell, we never know where these kinds of discussions will lead! After Stone Communion, we may hear a story, play a game, do an activity or craft, or something else that relates back to the day's subject. We wrap up our time together by singing a hymn and/or blowing out the Chalice. It's beautiful to watch the various ages work together and to hear what each have to say about life, in general. If you would like to join us for a Children's Worship, please do! You may see me to find out when our next one is scheduled or take a look in this year's prospectus.



Peace, Love, and Laughter this Holiday Season!
Tracy

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BIRTHDAYS IN DECEMBER

Sarah Branch December 8

Julie Gambill December 15

Scott Gambill December 31

COFFEE HOUR HOSTESSES

December 5 Donna Marchand

December 12 Patti Stanko

December 19 Amy Scott

December 26 Wendy O'Brien

Do you have any questions concerns or positive reactions to what is happening in our church? The place to come to is the Committee on the Ministry (COM). We meet regularly with the Rev. Marguerite to discuss what is happening. Comments are confidential. The committee members are Deb Colburn, Elaine Gaspard, and Patti Stanko. Please contact one of us if you want to share your concerns or enthusiasm!

Our agreement with the Rev. Marguerite is that she is in our pulpit twice a month, usually the second and fourth Sundays. We have to arrange for worship leaders on the other Sundays. Cindy Malley is trying to assemble a schedule of leaders for the coming months. We have a few "old reliables" and hope there are some other members who would also help in this capacity. Whether you have led a service before or just have some idea or story you would be willing to share, speak with Cindy. Not only does she need a preacher once a month, but she also needs two people for five minute "This I Believe" statements.

We are also in need of greeters for our Sunday Services. The only requirement is you be early, around 9:40. The greeter meets the worshippers, passes out orders of service and asks visitors to sign our guest book. Until someone else assumes the task, Cindy Malley is scheduling and would be happy to sign you up!

Chalice Group! Everyone Welcome

The first monthly Chalice Group was to have met in December. Regretfully, it was canceled because of Eleanor Sheehan's passing. We are now planning to start the group in January. This is an open group gathering to have a quiet time in our hectic lives to reflect, to listen and to build fellowship. Please come and invite a friend. There is no preparation and no homework. Just come and be together. Reverend Marguerite will facilitate the first group.

WE NEED YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS!

Starting next month we plan to email this newsletter whenever possible rather than using snail mail. This will save the church in postage and paper. We have some people's email addresses but not everyone's. If we may not have yours, send an email to John White at whites573@verizon.net and you will be on the list. Thank you.

With deep sadness we announce the passing of Eleanor Sheehan on Friday, November 26. Mrs. Sheehan is the Rev. Marguerite Sheehan's mother. Services were held on Wednesday, December 1 in Chicopee.

Also passing was the Rev. Marguerite's sister-in-law, Diana Sandgren. Her services were on Thursday, December 2.

CARING CONNECTIONS

UUCW is a caring congregation. Along with our Putnam Alliance, we reach out to each other to offer caring and we remember each others' joys and concerns. Please let Reverend Marguerite know if you would like to visit other members and friends, deliver flowers or an occasional meal, act as a greeter on Sunday services, offer a ride to church or any number of "caring connections" or if you are in need of a "caring connection" yourself at this time.

OPTIONS COUNSELING

Montachusett Home Care Corporation is pleased to announce its newest initiative called *Options Counseling*. Options Counseling is a program designed to educate individuals and their caregivers with information that helps them to make the best possible decisions regarding their community options. The Options Counselor can provide you with information regarding topics such as resources for services, benefits, housing, etc. To request further information, please call MHCC's Intake Dept. at 978-537-7411 and ask about Options Counseling.

HELP NEEDED

We are passing on an appeal the Church has received from the Winchendon Community Action Committee (CAC.) The lingering recession (at least hereabouts) and its accompanying increase in unemployment has increased the demand for their services while decreasing the public money that they have received for support. They have more poor people in need of assistance and less to do with. In the past our church has collected non perishable foodstuff for their food pantry. We can do it again. Individual cash donations would also help.

Coloring Page



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



For more information, service times, and past topics, please visit our website at

www.uuwinchendon.org

Please watch for updates, new sermons, and Photos of good times



The Unitarian Universalist Church of Winchendon

is a member of the

Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations

<http://uua.org>