

# THE WINCHENDON UNITARIAN

Established 1954      Published by the

*Unitarian Universalist Church of Winchendon*



Volume 58 Issue 8

INANNA ARTHEN, M.DIV, MINISTER

Church Telephone 978-297-0554

**APRIL 2014**

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE 5:00 P.M.

PO 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**

## Calendar of Church Events

### Monday, Apr 7

7:00 p.m. - AA Meeting

### Tuesday, Apr 8

4:30 p.m. - Brownies

### Sunday, Apr 13

4:00 p.m. - "Regional Association Sunday" - Join us at the Leominster for a joint service hosted by our local cluster of UU congregations, followed by a potluck supper. *There will be no service held at UUCW this Sunday.*

### Monday, Apr 14

7:00 p.m. - AA Meeting

### Tuesday, Apr 15

4:30 pm - Brownies

### Thursday, Apr 17

4:30 - 6:30 p.m. - Maundy Thursday Chowder Supper at UUCW

### Sunday, Apr 20

5:00 p.m. - Sunday Worship: Easter Sunday

Worship Leader: Inanna Arthen, M.Div

6:00 p.m. - Post-Service Light Potluck Supper

### Monday, Apr 21

7:00 p.m. - AA Meeting

### Tuesday, Apr 22

4:30 pm - Brownies

### Thursday, Apr 24

5:30 p.m. Our Neighbor's Kitchen community supper serves "Spring Chicken." All are welcome!

### Sunday, Apr 27

5:00 p.m. - Sunday Worship - Blessing of the Animals (multigenerational)

6:00 p.m. - Post-Service Light Potluck Supper

### Monday, Apr 28

7:00 p.m. - AA Meeting

### Tuesday, Apr 29

4:30 pm - Brownies

### Sunday, May 4

5:00 p.m. - Sunday Worship: Chalice Circle Service

6:00 p.m. - Post-Service Light Potluck Supper



## From Your Minister

It's April, and at last this longest of winters is unclenching its jaws and loosening its grip on us. As I write this, the first signs of new life are stirring in my backyard garden beds: tiny green shoots of crocuses, some of them poking through a crust of old snow. Sun-yellow goldfinches, the state bird of Massachusetts, are visiting the feeder.

Easter usually falls in April. It is always the first Sunday after the first full moon following the Spring Equinox—which is also the first Sunday after Passover. The "Last Supper" shared by Jesus and his disciples was a Passover Seder. This year, that Sunday is April 20. Easter, which commemorates the resurrection of Christ after his crucifixion, is the core celebration, or Holy Day, of the Christian religion. Christmas, which marks the miraculous birth of the holy child, was never celebrated as consistently, or with as much solemnity, as Easter. Each spring, Easter validated and confirmed the Christian belief that Jesus was the Son of God who had redeemed humanity's sins, and returned from death to reign in Heaven as part of a three-fold deity.

I've always wondered why Easter would be a significant holiday for Unitarian-Universalists. Unitarians did not accept the concept of the Holy Trinity or the divinity of Jesus, who we regard as a great teacher—divinely inspired perhaps, profoundly attuned with God, but not God himself. Universalists believed that a just and loving

God would never condemn his creations, and universal salvation was guaranteed—with or without Christ’s redemption. We UUs think of ourselves as “liberal,” but a century or more ago, our beliefs about Jesus made us more than that. We were, to traditional Christians, heretics—and proud of it.



What meaning can UUs find in Easter? Does it contain a sacred thread which transcends, or underlies, the teachings of Scripture?

Our ancient ancestors had very little to buffer them against the forces of Nature and the cycles of the seasons. Their food supply, prosperity, health and survival all depended on the capricious and unpredictable changes of the earth and sky. It’s not surprising that so many of the oldest myths dramatize the ceaseless change of summer to winter and back, with the accompanying death and renewal of plant and animal life. The ancients wove passionate stories of gods and goddesses whose birth, death and rebirth both mirrored and caused the turn of the seasons.

Persephone was the daughter of Demeter, the earth goddess. When Persephone was taken forcibly to the underworld by its King, the god Hades, Demeter’s grief plunged the earth into winter. The gods negotiated with Hades that Persephone would spend six months of the year with her mother and six months ruling the underworld by her husband’s side, and thus the seasons were born. Sir James Frazer, in *The Golden Bough*, traced numerous myths of gods who were identified with the crops, especially grain, which was cut down at harvest time and then reseeded to rise again as green shoots in the spring.

The stories of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection in the Gospels are not exact analogs of the old Pagan myths, because they also were constructed to align with prophecies in the Old Testament. But the emotional impact of the story derives from the deep human awareness of our dependency on Nature’s clemency

and our helplessness against her power.

In the 21st Century, we have a keen awareness of that power, and the price of throwing natural cycles out of balance. Changes in the earth’s atmosphere are causing changes in our climate, with extreme weather, devastating droughts, and rising sea levels threatening the well-being and even survival of millions of people world-wide. Food may become scarce and disease more prevalent. Energy sources are dwindling even as more and more energy will be needed to manage hotter summers and colder winters.

April 22 is Earth Day, which was celebrated for the first time in 1970. Forty-four years ago, the threats that environmentalists tried to bring to our awareness were much more visible. Fouled beaches, polluted rivers and trash-strewn highways were obvious. Our challenges now are more subtle. No one sees the tons of floating plastic garbage accumulated in areas of the ocean called gyres, thousands of miles from land. Climate change can be denied by people who don’t think beyond local weather conditions. The Northeastern United States and Canada may be thawing out from a record-breaking winter, but almost everyone else in the northern hemisphere had a much warmer winter than normal.



Earth Day and Easter have a lot in common—especially for UUs, who honor both Christian tradition and Earth-centered wisdom. Earth Day calls on us to expand our perspective, to look beyond our immediate location and see the greater pattern. On Earth Day, we think about the consequences of our choices, both large and small. We’re asked to think about sacrifices we can make, compromises between our own desires and the needs of other people and other living things. Easter is preceded by the six weeks of Lent, during which many Christians practice charity, penitence and self-denial.

Easter inspires us to look past our everyday lives to the greater issues of life, death and eternity. It calls us to consider a great act of self-sacrifice and ponder how we might emulate that kind of selflessness in more humble ways.

As we rejoice in the return of Spring, with new gardens, flowers, babies and warm weather, we can also hold the lessons of Easter and Earth Day in our hearts. Both of them teach us that our lives and everything in them are gifts from a power beyond ourselves. It's a lesson worth remembering every season of the year.

Inanna Arthen, M.Div



Regional Association Sunday 2012

**Sunday, April 13, 2014**

## **Regional Association Sunday**

On Sunday, April 13, at 4:00 p.m., UUCW will join other congregations in our local North Central Massachusetts Unitarian Universalist Congregations (NCMUUC) cluster for a joint service at the First Church Unitarian Universalist of Leominster, MA. Ministers from Leominster, Ashby, Athol, Petersham, Lancaster, Gardner, Fitchburg and Winchendon will all participate in a service themed on "sharing our journeys" to Unitarian-Universalism. After the service in the sanctuary, we'll gather for a potluck supper in the parish hall downstairs. Please bring a favorite pasta dish to share. During supper, we'll continue informally discussing our various paths to becoming UU.

***There will be no worship service held at UUCW on April 13.*** If you'd like to carpool to Leominster for the service at 4:00 p.m., please contact us.

The First Church is at 15 West Street in Leominster, just west of Main Street (Rte 12). For directions, see the church website at <http://www.firstchurchuu.org/>.

## **Thursday, April 17, 2014** **"Maundy Thursday"** **Chowder Supper**

The Thursday before Good Friday is called "Maundy Thursday." Support UUCW by joining us for a New England tradition for this date: a delicious home-cooked chowder supper featuring chowder, clam fritters, salad and apple-cranberry pie, prepared by the same skilled kitchen crew who bring you Our Neighbors Kitchen every month. We'll be serving buffet style from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., so you can come at any time for your meal. Donation: \$5.00 per person or \$10.00 per family. We look forward to seeing you!

**Sunday, April 27, 2014**

## **Blessing of the Animals Service**

On Sunday, April 27, 2014, at 5:00 p.m., UUCW will host a Blessing of the Animals service. People are invited to bring their pets (on leashes or in carriers) to be blessed in this multi-generational service. Bring photos or other symbols to represent your animal friends who would prefer to stay at home. Please watch our Facebook page or church website for further details, or contact us if you have any questions.

## **Welcoming Congregations**

On Sunday, March 30, UUCW continued its Welcoming Congregations journey of learning as we met at 4:00 p.m. for sessions three and four from *The Welcoming Congregations Handbook*: "The Common Elements of Oppression" and "Gender Socialization and Homophobia." Each session included a slide show and charts projected on a screen, which is a more "green" way of presenting these workshops than using many sheets of newsprint and markers (and it's also easier to read!).

"The Common Elements of Oppression" looked at what "oppression" is (and is not), and explored methods that our society utilizes collectively (and often unconsciously) to restrict the freedom and actions of some groups while allowing others more power.

In "Gender Socialization and Homophobia," we

considered gender roles and stereotypes, how they form, and how they contribute to homophobia by validating set ideas of how boys, men, girls and women “should” behave, dress and appear. Several of the church kids joined us during this session and it was interesting to hear their feedback. They had much more liberal ideas than kids did when I was in grade school in the 1960s!

This was the last workshop planned for the current church year. We will resume in the fall with sessions five and six, along with more joint congregational events and services. We may have a movie night or two with films related to this theme.

Everyone is welcome to join the sessions at any time. You don't have to have attended earlier sessions to participate. If you'd like copies of the reading materials, slides or handouts, please contact me. The Welcoming Congregations journey of learning is intended to be a thoughtful process, not a painful one. Don't hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions.

Inanna Arthen, M.Div

## **Yard Sale Time is Coming!**

It's almost time for our ever-popular UUCW Yard Sales to resume for a new season! Right now, soggy ground allowing, we're aiming to hold our first 2014 Yard Sale on Saturday, May 17. The Yard Sales generally take place the third Saturday of the month—in June, that will be June 21, day of the big annual Summer Flea Market and Winchendon's 250th Anniversary Celebration (food, parade, fireworks! Be there!).

If you'd like to donate materials for a Yard Sale, or have a table of your own, please contact the church or Sue Faucher (978-632-5588).

We're also contacting vendors for the Summer Flea Market, which will have longer hours this year due to the full day and evening of exciting events. If you'd like a table or booth, please contact Sue Faucher.

## **“Gasland II” Documentary Film to be Shown at UUCW**

UUCW will host a special screening of the film *Gasland II* for the public. Many people in this area are concerned about a proposal by the Tennessee Gas Pipeline Co. to run a natural gas pipeline from Pennsylvania to Dracut, MA. This pipeline will carry

## **Jug o' Punch**

On Saturday, May 17 at 4:00 p.m., New England Celtic Band Jug o'Punch will play at the Old Centre Congregational Church in Winchendon. Tickets are \$10.00 and should be purchased in advance because the concert is expected to sell out. Contact Shirley Parks at 978-297-3112 for tickets. ([http://jugopunch.us/Home\\_Page.html](http://jugopunch.us/Home_Page.html))

gas produced by the method called “fracking” and it may be sold on the overseas market and not benefit local citizens at all. Some area residents have been approached by Kinder Morgan, a subsidiary of TGP, about doing surveys of their property.

Date and time for the screening are still to be determined; please keep checking the new church website (<http://uucw.ncmuuc.org/>) or Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/uuwinchendon>) for further information.

## **Spiritual Calendar**

- April 13: Cerialia (Roman): Festival of the grain goddess Ceres, whose name gave us the word “cereal.” Wear something white, and dance around your garden patch.
- April 13: Palm Sunday (Christian)
- April 15: Passover (Judaism)
- April 18: Good Friday (Christian)
- April 20: Easter Sunday (Christian)
- April 22: Earth Day (Everyone!)
- April 27: Floralia (Eastern Europe): Wear flowers, give flowers to your loved ones, find something with floral embroidery and decorations to wear or display.
- May 1: Beltane (Celtic): It's the peak of spring, time to rejoice and open the door to summer. Maypole dances are traditional, but you can prepare your garden, too. The last frost day here is May 15!
- May 2-3: Bona Dea (Roman): Festival of the “Good Lady.” Women, attend a gathering with your female friends! Appreciate the abundance of our Mother Earth.

## This Month in UU History

Did you know that the very last person to be burned at the stake for heresy in England was a Unitarian? Edward Wightman was executed on April 11, 1612. After his death, heretics received life imprisonment.

Abner Kneeland was born in Gardner, MA on April 7, 1774. He converted to Universalism and served 60 days in jail for “blasphemy” in 1838.

On April 13, 1743, Thomas Jefferson was born; he became a confirmed and very vocal Unitarian.

On April 19, 1882, Unitarian Charles Darwin, who published the theory of evolution, died at age 73.

Unitarian minister Ralph Waldo Emerson died on April 27, 1882. His ghost is said to haunt the chapel in Divinity Hall at Harvard where he created an uproar in 1838 with his “Divinity Hall Address” in which he asserted that Jesus was a great man but not the son of God. Emerson wasn’t invited to speak at Harvard again for thirty years.

Hosea Ballou, called “the father of American Universalism” was born in Richmond, New Hampshire on April 30, 1771.

On May 5, 1819, William Ellery Channing preached the sermon “Unitarian Christianity,” also called the Baltimore Sermon, for the ordination of Rev. Jared Sparks of the First Independent Church of

Baltimore. This influential 90-minute-long sermon was translated into seven languages and helped unite liberal churches under the name “Unitarian.” The acoustics in the church were so poor, only the first three pews actually heard it preached.

## April Birthdays

Wendy O’Brien April 3

## Change of Address?

We want to stay in touch! If you change your address, either U. S. Mail or email, please let us know. Email [dfaucher@on24seven.com](mailto:dfaucher@on24seven.com) or send a written note to the church at P. O. Box 218, Winchendon, MA 01475. Thanks!

## UUCW has a New Website!

Please bookmark our new website:

<http://uucw.ncmuuc.org>

With a shiny new design, new content and regular updates, this is the place to go online for in-depth UUCW information!

## Like Us on Facebook!

If you’re on Facebook, be sure to “like” the UUCW page for all our news and updates. We’ll be putting updates about the Summer Flea Market and 250th Celebration here, so “like” us to stay informed.

<https://www.facebook.com/uuwinchendon>

### Contact Information

**Minister: Inanna Arthen, M.Div**

Phone: 978-433-8866

Email: [iarthen@inannaarthen.com](mailto:iarthen@inannaarthen.com)

**Musician: Lucinda Ellert**

Phone: 781-944-7254

Email: [lucindajellert@gmail.com](mailto:lucindajellert@gmail.com)

**Governing Board Chair: David Faucher**

Phone: 978-632-5588

Email: [dfaucher@on24seven.com](mailto:dfaucher@on24seven.com)

**Governing Board Members:**

Allan Gordon: [lilpun31@mass.rr.com](mailto:lilpun31@mass.rr.com)

Secretary, James McCrohan:

[jmccrohan@yahoo.com](mailto:jmccrohan@yahoo.com)

**Sexton (Custodian) Sue Faucher**

Phone: 978-632-5588

Email: [sfaucher@on24seven.com](mailto:sfaucher@on24seven.com)

### Caring Connections

UUCW is a caring congregation. We reach out to each other to offer caring and we remember each other’s joys and concerns. Please let Inanna know if you would like to visit other members and friends, deliver flowers or an occasional meal, act as a greeter for Sunday services, offer a ride to church, or make any other “caring connection.” Please let us know if you or someone close to you is in need of such a “caring connection” from us. You can call Inanna directly at 978-433-8866 (home) or 508-572-1624 (cell).