

# THE WINCHENDON UNITARIAN

Established 1954

Published by the

*Unitarian Universalist Church of Winchendon*



Volume 59 Issue 4

PASTOR INANNA ARTHEN, M.DIV, MINISTER

Church Telephone 978-297-0554

DECEMBER 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, December 1

7:00 pm - AA Meeting

### Wednesday, December 3

7:00 pm - 9:00 pm - Cybercafé at UUCW

### Saturday, December 6

11:00 am - Christmas Vendor Sale

### Sunday, December 7

5:00 pm - Sunday Worship - "A Generous Spirit."

New Member Sunday. Pastor Inanna Arthen,  
worship leader.

6:00 pm - Post-Service Light Potluck Supper

### Monday, December 8

7:00 pm - AA Meeting

### Wednesday, December 10

7:00 pm - 9:00 pm - Cybercafé at UUCW

### Saturday, December 13

4:00 pm - Christmas Tree Lighting and Carol  
Singing

### Sunday, December 14

5:00 pm - Sunday Worship - Chalice Circle Service

6:00 pm - Post-Service Light Potluck Supper

### Monday, December 15

7:00 pm - AA Meeting

### Wednesday, December 17

7:00 pm - 9:00 pm - Cybercafé at UUCW

### Thursday, December 18

5:30 pm - Our Neighbor's Kitchen Community  
Supper

### Sunday, December 21

5:00 pm - Sunday Worship - Winter Solstice. Pastor  
Inanna Arthen, worship leader.

6:00 pm - Post-Service Light Potluck Supper

### Monday, December 22

7:00 pm - AA Meeting

### Wednesday, December 24

7:00 pm - Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

### Friday, December 26

*Deadline for January Newsletter*

### Sunday, December 28

5:00 pm - Sunday Worship - Fire Communion  
Service

### Monday, December 29

7:00 pm - AA Meeting

### Wednesday, December 31

7:00 pm - 9:00 pm - Cybercafé at UUCW

### Sunday, January 4

5:00 pm - Sunday Worship - "Renewal." Pastor  
Inanna Arthen, worship leader.

6:00 pm - Post-Service Light Potluck Supper

### Monday, January 5

7:00 pm - AA Meeting



## From Your Minister

We had a busy November at UUCW!

We started the month's worship services with a reflection on "All Hallows" on November 2. On November 9, we shared a Chalice Circle Service on the month's theme of "Gratitude." I led a traditional worship service on this theme on November 16, with a sermon that I also preached at the First Congregational Church, Unitarian of Petersham as part of their Interfaith Thanksgiving service. (You can read the sermon, "Saying Grace," on the UUCW website.) On November 30, our Sunday worship centered around a UU Voices sermon, "Thanksgiving."

On November 23, we met an hour early for a workshop in our Welcoming Congregations Journey of Learning. We covered sessions 7 and 8 in *The Welcoming Congregations Handbook*, "The Radical Right" and "Religion and



Carving the turkeys for Our Neighbor's Kitchen on November 20

Homosexuality.” I gave a presentation on these topics, but I took quite a different tack than the printed book, because the book is seriously out of date in these areas. I asked some rather provocative questions, too. How does the anti-gay crusade by some extreme Christian groups parse out when you examine the circumstantial evidence that Jesus might have been gay himself? We looked at the Biblical and cultural arguments—it’s up to you to decide!

We will be voting as a congregation next spring as to whether we feel ready to ask the UUA to formally recognize us as a Welcoming Congregation. If you would like to cover any more topics or feel that we need more discussion about LGBTQI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, Queer/Questioning and Intersexed) persons, or if you have more questions of your own, please don’t hesitate to get in touch with me at any time.

The UUCW Cybercafé has been open each Wednesday, except for November 26 when we were snowed closed. I hope that everyone stayed warm and safe during that early winter weather event, and that you didn’t lose your power for too long, if at all.

On Thursday, November 20, UUCW hosted a pre-Thanksgiving Turkey Dinner With Everything for Our Neighbor’s Kitchen. Traditionally our most well attended ONK of the year, this month’s extravaganza feasted around 90 people with turkey, dressing, mashed potatoes, gravy, honeyed carrots, green beans, homemade cranberry sauce, and dessert. As always, a big shout-out goes to all our generous volunteers, including the hard-working servers from The Winchendon School (which also donates dessert) and

several new helpers this month. If you haven’t attended Our Neighbor’s Kitchen yet, you’re missing some delicious food and a fun time! We have a very special dinner coming up on December 18 (see below!).

Our worship theme for the month of December is “Generosity.”

Many of us may feel a bit of “generosity fatigue” by the end of December. It’s not merely the gift-giving to family and friends that can sometimes be a little overwhelming—all the shopping and wrapping and searching for exactly the right thing, and all on a hard deadline, to boot. But we also hear so many appeals for charitable and humanitarian help at this time of year. Our mailboxes overflow with earnest letters begging for “end of year gifts” and holiday donations, many of them for causes we sincerely support. But it becomes such a clamor, and after a while we find ourselves feeling just a bit resentful. There’s only so much giving we can afford.

Or so we think.

There are many kinds of generosity, because we have many things that we can share. We can be “generous with” our money and material assets, but giving away money doesn’t necessarily make us generous. Generosity is a virtue of the spirit. Often, giving our time, our sympathetic attention, our energy, our help and assistance, can mean more and go further than simply handing over money. It depends entirely on the needs of those receiving our gifts, and on our relationship to them. It also depends on what we have available to give.

In ancient times, generosity was seen as a virtue that both conferred nobility and flowed from it. The Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu (6<sup>th</sup> Century B.C.E. and reputed author of the *Tao Te Ching*) wrote, “The sage does not hoard. The more he helps others, the more he benefits himself. Having bestowed all he has on others, he has yet more; having given all he has to others, he is richer still.”

The Roman philosopher Seneca (1<sup>st</sup> Century A.D.) wrote, “We should give as we would receive, cheerfully, quickly, and without hesitation; for there is no grace in a benefit that sticks to the fingers,” while the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius (2<sup>nd</sup> Century A.D.) wrote, “The only wealth which you will keep forever is the wealth you have given away.”

The word “generous” comes from the Latin *generosus*, meaning of noble birth. An archaic definition of “generous” is “highborn,” a meaning we see reflected in one of its synonyms, “magnanimous.” In Roman

society, the wealthy and upper classes had a social obligation to those below them. A Roman who aspired to the Senate, like politicians today, spent a lifetime traveling around his territories, learning the names and status of all his tenants and workers, and developing a reputation for honesty, justice, virtue and charity towards others. Roman nobles typically became patrons of artisans and citizens of lower rank and spent part of every day meeting with their protégés. Even some Roman women could be patrons because—this may surprise you—Roman women could become financially independent and enjoy the same political and social autonomy as men, meaning they were expected to uphold the same obligations. No one was expected to be more generous than the wealthy and privileged, according to the Roman value system.

American society has far more in common with that of ancient Rome than we like to admit. We also expect our wealthy to share their good fortune with those in need, whether by “creating jobs,” funding public works, donating to social programs or investing in the common weal. Unfortunately, just like the Romans, we find that all too often our wealthiest citizens disappoint us. Instead of creating jobs, they buy back their own stock and hide their profits in overseas tax shelters. Instead of building libraries or hospitals, they donate vast sums to legislators who vote to cut their taxes.

A recent article on *The Daily Kos* reported that the six heirs to the Wal\*Mart fortune, by themselves, are worth more than 41% of all the rest of America’s households combined. Yet these six individuals have contributed approximately 0.04% of their wealth to the Walton family foundation. By contrast, billionaires Bill

Gates and Warren G. Buffett have donated 36.2% and 26.9%, respectively, of their personal net worth to charitable foundations. The Romans would certainly call them men of honor. The Walton kids...not so much.

In all fairness, none of us can predict how we would behave if we possessed the fabulous wealth of a billionaire. We’d like to think that we’d be more like Warren Buffett, but such tests of character are rare. For us, the calls to action are humbler and not always easy to recognize. J.R.R. Tolkien wrote a brilliant short story called “Leaf By Niggle” about a man whose struggle to complete a work of art is constantly interrupted by the needs of his neighbor. Only when Niggle is in the after-life can he see the far-reaching effects of his life and work with true perspective.

As we wrap our gifts and write our checks this month, let’s remember the modern Pagan maxim: whatever we send out, returns to us three-fold. We truly enjoy giving, for many reasons. If we focus on the joy we can create in others, we’ll find that joy echoed in our own hearts.

Pastor Inanna Arthen, M.Div

## **Sunday, December 7: New Member Sunday**

On Sunday, December 7, Pastor Inanna Arthen will lead a worship service focused on our December theme of “Generosity.” This will also be our New Member Sunday, when everyone interested in becoming a member of UUCW is invited to attend



## **RE News**



We’ve had an amazing November; our successful, beautiful amazing wreath of blessings is on one of the bulletin boards downstairs. Do feel free to continue to add to it (we don’t just have to count our blessings in November, after all!), or come down and admire it. The kids worked hard to get this started and to get everyone involved in the project, and the fruit of their labors is a testament to the blessings of every person involved in our church community. Thank you!

It’s December (or almost, as I write this!) Details have been hammered down for our Christmas Eve presentation, and it’s looking to be a fun time for everyone. If you’ve not come to church school, or not come in a while, I would LOVE to meet you. And if you want to have your child involved in the Christmas production, don’t worry about rehearsals, or complicated schedules—we’re making this a fun, flexible event to be inclusive to every child in the Religious Education program. Each Sunday during class time, we’ll busy making our props; the kids are having a blast drawing and cutting and preparing the symbols of the season. Please consider joining us! The more, the merrier!

Kirsty Johnson Erikson  
Lead RE Teacher

# Spiritual Calendar

December 3: Feast of Bona Dea (Roman). A women's festival honoring the Good Goddess of Justice.

December 4: Pallas Athena (Roman). A day honoring the Goddess of Wisdom.

December 8: The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Christian). Many people confuse "immaculate conception" with "virgin birth." Mary was the first human since Adam born without the taint of original sin, hence her conception was "immaculate" or unstained.

December 8: Rohatsu (Buddhist). Celebrates the attainment of enlightenment by the Buddha.

December 13: Saint Lucy's Day (Swedish Christian). Young women in Sweden dress as Lucina or St. Lucy, with crowns of lighted candles, and awaken their families with songs and cakes.

December 17-24: Hanukkah (Jewish). Eight-day festival of lights commemorating the recapture and rededication of the Temple, when one day's worth of oil miraculously lasted for eight nights.

December 17: Saturnalia and Celebration of Ops (Roman). The Saturnalia was a week-long festival celebrating a lost golden age when there were no social classes. People gave gifts in honor of Ops, the Goddess of Abundance (origin of the word opulent).

December 21: Winter Solstice or Yule (Pagan). A festival of fire and light, celebrating the Sun reaching its lowest point in the sky, after which the days begin to lengthen again. The rebirth of the solar child to Mother Goddess.

December 25: Christmas (Christian). A midwinter holiday celebrating the birth of Christ, Christmas went in and out of favor with the church due to its Pagan overtones. The Protestants banned it entirely for several centuries.

Easter, commemorating the Resurrection, is the central Christian holiday.



and speak with Pastor Arthen and members of the Governing Board. New members will be able to sign the membership book and commit formally to joining our congregation. Please speak with Pastor Arthen or Dave Faucher if you're interested in signing the membership book this Sunday.

## **Saturday, December 13: Tree Lighting and Carol Singing**

We're launching a brand new annual event at UUCW on Saturday, December 13 at 4:00 p.m.: carol singing and a tree lighting on the church lawn. Formerly hosted up in Winchendon's Old Center, we're moving the tree lighting festivities to right here in the heart of downtown, where they are easily accessible to all. We'll have hot cocoa and snacks, and kids can visit with Santa (bring your camera!). Bring your whole family for some warm and welcoming seasonal fun!

## **Thursday, December 18: Our Neighbor's Kitchen Serves Boeuf Bourguignon**

Our Neighbor's Kitchen will offer a very special holiday treat for our December dinner: beef braised in red wine, or Boeuf Bourguignon as Julia Child would say. It will be accompanied by a delicious winter

vegetable torte and a dessert. Be sure to join us at 5:30pm for this celebration of the midwinter holidays!

## **December 24: Christmas Eve Candlelight Service**

Join us on Wednesday, December 24 at 7:00 p.m. for our annual Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, led by Pastor Inanna Arthen. As part of this year's service, our RE kids will present a pageant on the themes of the sacred midwinter season, and will lead us all in "Deck the Halls." The service will conclude with the traditional passing of candlelight throughout the church. Don't miss this annual holiday tradition!

## **UUCW Cybercafé**

The weekly Wednesday night Cybercafé will continue running through the end of December from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall downstairs. We'll have a free wi-fi network running for those who need an Internet connection for work or personal reasons and don't have one at home. You'll need to bring your own laptop, tablet or other device. Attendance at the Cybercafé has been light so far. If you're interested in taking advantage of this service, be sure you come in during December! If you know anyone who needs an Internet connection, be sure to let them know about our Cybercafé. We can also offer assistance with

## This Month in UU History

December 3, 1755: Unitarian Gilbert Stuart was born in North Kingston, RI. He became one of America's most famous portrait artists, painting portraits of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams and James Madison.

December 9, 1608: Poet John Milton (*Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*) was born in Cheapside, England. He was a Puritan who gained notoriety in his lifetime by arguing for the legalization of divorce on the grounds of irreconcilable differences. His posthumously published *Treatise on Christian Doctrine* affirmed his Unitarian beliefs.

December 12, 1654: English Parliament declared John Biddle's *Two-fold Catechism* to be blasphemous and heretical. Its theology was entirely Unitarian and therefore illegal under current English law. Biddle was imprisoned and all copies of the catechism were ordered burned by the common hangman.

December 22, 1823: Thomas Wentworth Higginson was born in Cambridge, MA. A Unitarian minister, he graduated from Harvard Divinity School and served congregations in Newburyport and Worcester. He left ministry to become a full-time abolitionist. He supported John Brown, led a raid on the Boston Court House to free a fugitive slave, and led a regiment of freed slaves during the Civil War. His notes about his African-American troops formed the foundation of the academic field of African-American studies. After the Civil War, Higginson championed women's rights. He edited the works of Emily Dickinson.



navigating the Internet, research, and resolving technical problems and questions you may have.

Pastor Inanna Arthen co-monitors the Cybercafé and is available if you'd like to speak to her about any other concern.



dfaucher@on24seven.com or send a written note to the church at P. O. Box 218, Winchendon, MA 01475. Thanks!

### December Birthdays

Eben Gordon	December 3
Julie S. Gambill	December 15
Scott Gambill	December 31



**(If I'm missing any birthdays, please let me know!)**

### 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

### 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).

### UUCW Online

<http://uucw.ncmuuc.org>

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

### Contact Information

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

Phone: 978-433-8866

Cell: 508-572-1624

Email: iarthen@inannaarthen.com

**RE Lead Teacher: Kirsty Erikson-Johnson**

Email: kirstyerikson@gmail.com

**Musician: Lucinda Ellert**

Phone: 781-944-7254

Email: lucindajellert@gmail.com

**Governing Board Chair: David Faucher**

Email: dfaucher@on24seven.com

**Governing Board Members:**

Allan Gordon: lilpun31@mass.rr.com

Secretary, James McCrohan:

jmcrohan@yahoo.com

**Sexton (Custodian): Sue Faucher**

Phone: 978-632-5588

Email: sfaucher@on24seven.com