

THE WINCHENDON UNITARIAN

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Unitarian Universalist Church of Winchendon



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Church Telephone 978-297-0554

NOVEMBER 2016

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE 11:00 A.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

Sunday, November 6

2:00 am - Daylight Savings Ends - "Fall Back" and turn your clocks back an hour!

11:00 am - Sunday Worship - "Life's Compasses"

11:00 am - "Beginnings" RE Class

11:30 am - "Questings" RE Class

Monday, November 7

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Thursday, November 10

5:30 pm - Our Neighbors Kitchen serves Turkey Dinner with all the Trimmings

Sunday, November 13

11:00 am - Sunday Worship with Pastor Inanna Arthen

11:00 am - "Beginnings" RE Class

11:30 am - "Questings" RE Class

Monday, November 14

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Sunday, November 20

11:00 am - Sunday Worship - "The Absurdity of Certainty"

11:00 am - "Beginnings" RE Class

11:30 am - "Questings" RE Class

Monday, November 21

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Thursday, November 24

Happy Thanksgiving! No second Our Neighbor's Kitchen this month - see you on December 8 for lasagna!

Friday, November 25

12:00 pm - 4:00 pm - "Black Friday" Toy Drive at UUCW

Sunday, November 27

11:00 am - Sunday Worship with Pastor Inanna Arthen

11:00 am - "Beginnings" RE Class

11:30 am - "Questings" RE Class

Monday, November 28

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Sunday, December 4

11:00 am - Sunday Worship with Pastor Inanna Arthen

11:00 am - "Beginnings" RE Class

11:30 am - "Questings" RE Class

Monday, December 5

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

From Your Minister

We've had a very interesting, and busy, month of October at UUCW! I've been doing some outreach around the community, and we're getting involved as a congregation with more people who are working to help Winchendon residents.

On October 2, Dave Faucher led a Chalice Circle service on the theme of "The Importance of Myth." On October 9, I led a service on immigration in our country, "The Lamp Beside the Golden Door." On October 16, we shared a Chalice Circle service in which we discussed "Music and Social Justice" and Bob Dylan's Nobel Prize for Literature. On October 23, in a spirit of respectful whimsy, I presented a service titled, "How Would Jesus Vote?" I re-read all four Gospels in one go and applied Jesus' teachings to some of the hot button issues in the current Presidential campaign. On October 30, I led a service on the history and meaning of "All Hallows Eve."

On October 2, I attended the dedication ceremonies for the new GAR Park by Old Murdock, along with clergy from nearly every church in Winchendon, both of our state legislators, Representative Niki Tsongas and many town officials. Turnout was excellent despite inclement weather, and the park is very impressive—do check it out sometime!

On October 15, UUCW sold refreshments at the addictions awareness gathering held by Working Wonders in Winchendon next to the Clark. We set up tables and sold hot dogs, apple crisp and beverages while attendees listened to speakers talk about their personal experiences or explained services their organizations offered. There was also a training on the use of the emergency overdose drug, Narcan. I gave the opening prayer for the event.

On October 19, I attended the community meeting on Homelessness in Winchendon at the Senior Center. UUCW is interested in developing some ways of directly assisting homeless persons, and we're networking with other groups in town to help determine what we could do. I'll be attending future meetings of this community caucus.

I met with other members of the Winchendon Clergy Association on October 6. We talked with Dave Romanowsky from the Clark/YMCA about their plans to expand the Clark and create a Youth Center. UUCW is considering whether we can pick up some of the programs run by the ROC Center, which closed this month.

Our Neighbor's Kitchen served two delicious meals in October. On October 13, I made Chicken Pot Pie with biscuit topping, along with salad and homemade cookies for dessert. On October 27, we served our traditional fall feast of pork roast with apple and onion dressing, roasted root vegetables, green beans, salad, bread, and multiple desserts generously donated by the Winchendon School—cake, two kinds of pie and early Halloween candy. It more than made up for the little bit of snow that coated the ground while we enjoyed this banquet.

If you've spent much time talking to health care providers or reading magazines of the self-help kind, you probably heard and seen advice about what's called "self-care." (The more masculine version is usually framed as "stress management.") This means taking time off from work and obligations to others to make sure your own needs are met. It means paying attention to messages from your body and emotions that you

need to slow down, take a break, do something relaxing, even just have a good laugh. But real self-care is a habit, not just an emergency response. The best self-care practices involve setting some time aside every day—and the busier you are, and the harder you find it to take some daily time for yourself, the more important it is for you to develop that habit. People whose work involves doing a great deal for others, such as parents, care-givers, health care professionals and first responders, need to develop self-care routines most of all. At the same time, the nature of their work, and even more so, the expectations placed on them, mean that such people often have the hardest time finding space for their needs. "Who takes care of the person who takes care of everyone?" is a question that used to be asked about moms, and tireless volunteers, and so many people we often think well of, but seldom have time to do anything for. You can probably name a dozen such people around you. Maybe you're one of them yourself.

Stress and overwork are well known to lead to serious, even fatal, physical health problems. People who work themselves into "breakdowns," either a health crisis such as a heart attack or serious illness, or an emotional crisis, rarely return to their previous level of well-being. Yet so many people who work hard and shoulder heavy responsibilities are unwilling to cut themselves the same slack they readily allow others. They don't want to seem "weak." They fear that no one else can do what they're doing. They're so independent and self-reliant, they don't know how to ask for help.

Self-care on this level isn't complicated. The hard part is realizing its importance and making a space for it in our lives. Eating right, getting enough exercise, taking time to relax, meditate, walk through the woods, get a massage or manicure, play games, hang out with friends, pursue an enjoyable hobby...it's not rocket science! But taking care of ourselves is just as important for our well-being as rocket science is for the safety of our astronauts on the International Space Station.

But what about spiritual self-care? What happens when we don't make space for that in our lives?

My personal path is earth-centered, and for many years I was very involved with my local spiritual community. I did ceremonies and circles with others all of the time, along with my personal disciplines at home. But after the mid-1990s, I drifted away from the community and maintained only a private spiritual practice. While this is very important to me and I observe it faithfully, it's not the same as gathering with others to share action, words, song and intention together.

In the past year, I've started re-connecting with my spiritual community—in person, not just on Facebook. I've gotten into my car and driven miles in order to participate in ceremonies with very old friends and new ones, and it's been a long time since I did that. I've been reminded how much more fulfilling it is to join hands in a circle with kindred souls, than simply to perform ritual on my own. Both have a place. Communal gatherings and private work are equally important. But for a long time, I've been missing one side of the picture, and it's been affecting me.

On October 22, I attended a ceremony in the Ancient Egyptian tradition, in which all I needed to do was sit quietly while the officiant spoke prayers and invocations of empowerment and purification, and I was anointed with scented oil, touched sacred objects and breathed incense. It was all very simple, and yet it was transformative. My buzzing brain settled down and at the conclusion of the ceremony I felt a deep sense of peace—and yes, I felt purified, cleansed of at least some of the spiritual chaos and negativity which has become such a part of our environment in these contentious times.

This is the true core of a spiritual practice—to break our addiction to the everyday hustle and bustle, to open up our tunnel vision and perceive that which is larger than ourselves. This is what makes spirituality truly universal. It draws our attention away from the material and the limitations of our senses. Even a strict atheist or rationalist needs to maintain a sense of proportion, an appreciation of beauty, and an awareness of the immense complexity of life and the universe that

produced it, or risk becoming lost in cynicism and negativity. Christians need to pray not only for things but simply as a way of communing with God and Christ. Buddhist meditation seeks union of the soul with all that is.

Church attendance is a habit which most Americans, in recent years, have largely abandoned. Only about twenty percent of Americans attend church on a weekly basis. And churches are closing—as many as 7,000 of them every year, according to the Hartford Institute of Religion Research. Yet Americans don't report that they have no spiritual beliefs—quite the contrary. They're simply not coming to church.

But we lose something when we never gather in groups to pray, to meditate, to be challenged, and to consider larger issues and ideas together. The first source for UU traditions is, "Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life." A major reason for attending church is that it creates a space in our lives to focus on the spiritual regularly, without distractions. How many times have you started a diet or exercise program, only to falter and give it up after a few weeks or months?

We need other people, and other people need us. Spiritual self-care is as vital to our well-being as physical and emotional self-care, and we can't do it all on our own. If there is one universal spiritual teaching, it's the one that tells us, "we're all in this together."

Pastor Inanna Arthen



RE News

What a great fall we've had down in the Pine Room. What's the Pine Room? It's our Religious Education class home, where we explore what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist, sing songs, tell stories, share our joys and sorrows, and spend time in the company of like minded young people. For the last two months we've gotten into some deep conversations that have been meaningful to all of us. Our youth are pretty amazing people!

As we slip deeper into Autumn, our thoughts turn to Thanksgiving, and then that whirlwind time of the Holiday Season. We'll spend the beginning of the month exploring "thankfulness" and how we show it, share it, and live it. Several of our kids will be hands-on helpers for the Thanksgiving "Our Neighbor's Kitchen" meal, living out their UU values of helping one another.

Believe it or not, we've already begun talking about the direction for our Holiday Presentation during the Christmas Eve service! Everyone is excited about preparations for a Christmas play, and we'll begin practicing the last Sunday in November. We'd love to have your kids be a part of our Sunday mornings!

Kirsty Erikson
Lead RE Teacher

Spiritual Calendar

- November 1: All Saints' Day (Christian).** The Feast of All Saints or All Hallows is a single day on which Catholic Christians honor all of the saints “known and unknown.” Although the date was deliberately set to replace the Celtic celebration of Samhain on November 1 (or the Calends of November) by the 9th Century, the exact reasons for this are disputed. Early Protestants held that every saved Christian is a “saint” and so they eliminated this holiday from their calendar.
- November 2: All Souls' Day (Christian).** The Feast of All Souls is a day on which Catholic Christians would pray for souls who were in Purgatory undergoing purification before they were admitted to Heaven. All Saints' and All Souls' were known collectively as All Hallows, and the night before, October 31, was All Hallows' Even (Eve), which contracted into our modern term, “Halloween.”
- November 2: Birth of Baha'u'llah (Baha'i).** Honors the birth of the founder of the Baha'i faith, Baha'u'llah, in 19th Century Persia. Baha'i is a faith with three major principles: unity of God (there is only one God who created everything in the universe), unity of religion (all major religions come from the same spiritual source and the same God) and unity of humanity (that all humans are equal, and all diversity of race and culture are worthy of respect and acceptance, called Unity in Diversity). On this holiday, Baha'i faithful take the day off from work for devotions.
- November 8: Festival of the Kami of the Hearth (Japanese).** A day to honor those who keep the hearth and cooking stoves going, cook food and feed their families.
- November 13: Isis Resurrects Osiris (Ancient Egypt).** In ancient Egyptian myth, Osiris was murdered and cut into pieces by Set. His wife Isis scoured the land searching for the parts, mourning bitterly. Her tears caused the annual flooding of the Nile. Eventually Isis finds all the parts and breathes life back into Osiris. Ancient Egyptian myths had great influence on the ancient world. The Cult of Isis, who was often depicted holding the infant Horus, spread around all of the Mediterranean and Asia Minor and is thought to be the origin for the Christian reverence of Mary.
- November 24: Day of the Covenant (Baha'i).** Celebration of the covenant given in the last will and testament of Baha'u'llah. Covenant is an important concept in Baha'i, who believe in a covenant between God and humanity and a covenant between leaders and their congregations. Leadership in Baha'i is considered divinely ordained.
- November 27: Advent (Christian).** Begins the four-week period leading up to the Nativity of Christ. Christians and churches follow a variety of devotional practices, including lighting candles in an Advent wreath, weekly or daily devotional prayers, and keeping an Advent calendar. Some churches in modern times collect donations each day through Advent, to be distributed at Christmas, and put boxes out for non-perishable food, clothing and other necessities.

Our Neighbors Kitchen

This month, we're only serving one meal for Our Neighbor's Kitchen. We took a poll of attendees, and overwhelmingly, people are not interested in having a dinner on Thanksgiving Day. We'll just have the one dinner on Thursday, November 10.

But we're making up for it with our traditional November “Turkey Day Before Thanksgiving” feast! Roast turkey, dressing, mashed potatoes, gravy, home-made cranberry sauce, side dishes and dessert, all cooked and served by our chef extraordinaire Dave Faucher and assistants. Come enjoy a delicious holiday meal without the washing up afterwards!

Dinner is served at 5:30 p.m. We can always use more volunteers! If you'd like to help with set-up, come to the church between 3:00 and 4:00 p.m. If you want

to help with serving, come at around 5:15 p.m. so we can go over any special protocols for the night's menu. Clean-up starts around 6:15 p.m. and is usually done shortly after 7:00 p.m. Volunteers have a chance to sit down and share the meal and fellowship.

“Black Friday” Toy Drive

We'll be holding our annual collection of Christmas toys for needy families on Friday, November 25, or “Black Friday,” from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Some funny-looking costumed people will be accepting your donations of unwrapped, new or gently used toys, which will be passed on to the CAC and other charitable organizations for distribution. We'll have hot drinks and food and the church will be open to visitors, so stop by, get a free candy cane and say hello!

This Month in UU History

November 8, 1638: First Church and Parish in Dedham, MA, which is now Unitarian Universalist, was founded. In 1820, the Dedham church was Congregationalist, and experienced a schism between Trinitarian and Unitarian members. The Trinitarian faction withdrew from the church and took some of the church property with them—a scenario which was being or would be repeated throughout New England. The parish sued for return of the property, and the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruled in their favor. This reversed the long-standing tradition that church property belonged to church members and not to the parish. Within 20 years, a quarter of the Congregational churches in Massachusetts were Unitarian.

November 11, 1620: Pilgrim leaders of the group of Dissenters who sailed for Virginia on the *Mayflower* and ended up landing in the future Plymouth, MA signed the Mayflower Compact, an agreement for self-government. The church they established in Plymouth is now Unitarian Universalist.

November 28, 1822: Gifted preacher Octavius Brooks Frothingham was born in Boston, MA. He was ordained by North Church in Salem, MA. His religious views changed, and his friends founded the Third Congregational Unitarian Church for him in New York, which was later called the Independent Liberal Church. Frothingham founded the Free Religious Association and was an active abolitionist. He wrote a number of books, including *Transcendentalism in New England* and *Boston Unitarianism*.

November Birthdays

Tim Elkins November 3

Elaine Gaspard November 27



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

UUCW Online

<http://uucw.ncmuuc.org>

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

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 978-297-1730 (home) or 508-572-1624 (cell).

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