

# THE WINCHENDON UNITARIAN

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REV. INANNA ARTHEN, M.DIV, MINISTER

Church Telephone 978-297-0554

**MARCH 2017**

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, March 5

- 11:00 am - Sunday Worship
- 11:00 am - "Questings" RE Class
- 11:30 am - "Beginnings" RE Class
- 2:00 pm - Indivisible Winchendon Meeting

### Monday, March 6

- 7:45 pm - AA Meeting

### Thursday, March 9

- 5:30 pm - Our Neighbor's Kitchen serves  
Loaded Mac 'n' Cheese

### Sunday, March 12

- 11:00 am - Sunday Worship with Rev.  
Inanna Arthen
- 11:00 am - "Questings" RE Class
- 11:30 am - "Beginnings" RE Class
- 2:00 pm - Indivisible Winchendon Meeting

### Monday, March 13

- 7:45 pm - AA Meeting

### Sunday, March 19

- 11:00 am - Sunday Worship
- 11:00 am - "Questings" RE Class
- 11:30 am - "Beginnings" RE Class
- 12:00 pm - UUCW Governing Board  
Meeting
- 2:00 pm - Indivisible Winchendon Meeting

### Monday, March 20

- 7:45 pm - AA Meeting

### Thursday, March 23

- 5:30 pm - Our Neighbor's Kitchen serves  
St. Patrick's Day Corned Beef Dinner

### Sunday, March 26

- 11:00 am - Sunday Worship with Rev.  
Inanna Arthen
- 11:00 am - "Questings" RE Class
- 11:30 am - "Beginnings" RE Class
- 2:00 pm - Indivisible Winchendon Meeting

### Monday, March 27

- 7:45 pm - AA Meeting

### Sunday, April 5

- 11:00 am - Sunday Worship
- 11:00 am - "Questings" RE Class
- 11:30 am - "Beginnings" RE Class
- 2:00 pm - Indivisible Winchendon Meeting

### Monday, April 6

- 7:45 pm - AA Meeting

## From Your Minister

What a wild and crazy February it's been! Mostly cool and wet weather until Mother Nature apparently remembered that she was supposed to start winter and forgot. Up here on Lake Monomonac, we got a cumulative total of 30 inches of snow, sleet and ice in ten days flat, and four events planned at UUCW were all cancelled for raging snowstorms, including Our Neighbor's Kitchen on the 9<sup>th</sup>, Sunday worship service and two meetings on the 12<sup>th</sup>. With bitter cold and roaring winds, the snow didn't go anywhere right away. Roads were treacherous and packed snow creaked underfoot, the way it only does when it's well below freezing. But our reminder of the polar vortex winters a couple of years ago was a brief one. Another week, and it was mild and raining, we had the warmest February day on record and all that snow is already completely gone. The chipmunks are scurrying around on the stone walls. Weathercasters are calling for an early, mild spring.

Despite cancellations, we've been keeping busy at UUCW. On February 5, I led a service on the theme of "The First Stirrings of Something New," talking about the ancient holiday of Candlemas, and the meaning behind folklore like "groundhog day." On February 19, Dave Faucher led a Chalice Circle Service on "Are You a Mensch?" in which we shared thoughts about what it means to have character, honesty and integrity in today's overwrought world. On February 26, I gave a service titled "UnPresided," talking about several of our past Presidents and what we expect, fairly and unfairly, of our leaders.

Our Neighbor's Kitchen served a hearty meal of pot roast, mashed potatoes, salad and cookies on February 23. See below for our March menu. The Winchendon *Courier* did a profile piece on Our Neighbor's Kitchen in its February 17 edition.

March has an interesting characteristic which is seldom noted these days. St. Patrick's Day tends to get all the attention; some years, Mardi Gras or Easter is in March. The Vernal Equinox appears on our calendars as "the first day of Spring" and many colleges and universities have a March semester break. But for most people, March is a long month to slosh through puddles, shovel late snow and wait impatiently for real spring.

We entirely forget that March, traditionally, is a women's month. In ancient Rome, it started with Matronalia, a festival to honor mothers and the goddess Juno. It was followed by a festival honoring the Vestal Virgins, the feast of Minerva (goddess of Wisdom) and a festival for the moon goddess, Luna. In ancient Greece, festivals honoring two of the most important goddesses, Aphrodite and Athena—the goddesses of love and wisdom—fell in March. The Feast of Isis, whose cult spread from northern Africa all around the Mediterranean and Asia Minor, was celebrated in March. Isis, often depicted holding the infant Horus, was the protector of mothers, children, sailors, and civilization as a whole. The Jewish culture celebrated (and still does) Purim, a holiday commemorating Queen Esther's saving the Jews in Persia from genocide at the hands of King Ahasuerus. In Medieval England, older children who worked as servants or apprentices visited home on "Mothering Sunday." There are more women-centered holidays and festivals throughout history and around the world—they cluster around the Vernal Equinox, when life and light are renewed after winter and the natural world is flowering and giving birth to

babies everywhere we look.

This association of early spring with female energy may be why March 8 is observed as International Women's Day in almost every country in the world. This date doesn't align with any specific event—it seems to have been chosen because it felt right. Originally called International Working Women's Day, the observance began in 1909 as a day to affirm and support the struggles of working women to improve conditions and win their rights. In more recent times, it has become a day to show affection and appreciation, like Mother's Day or Valentine's Day. But the U.N. assigns a theme to International Women's Day each year; the theme for 2017 is "Women in the Changing World of Work: Planet 50-50 by 2030."

March 8 is also the date of the 2017 "General Strike: A Day Without Women."

On January 21, millions of women in the United States and around the world joined Women's Marches for women's rights, equal pay and opportunity, respect and justice. The success of these marches exceeded the most optimistic predictions. Organizers of the Women's March movement are following up with a "strike" by women on March 8. They ask that every woman, if she can, refrain from working, providing unpaid services, spending money, using the Internet or contributing to the economy for that day. If women must work, they're asked to wear red to show solidarity with the strike. Supporting women-owned small businesses is encouraged.

There is a lot of precedent for women's strikes. One model for them goes back to ancient Greece. Greek playwright Aristophanes wrote a comedy called *Lysistrata* in 411 BCE. In this story, the title character is a woman who persuades women from all the Greek city states to vow that they'll refuse sex to all their husbands until the men stop the Peloponnesian Wars. The main joke is that their tactic is 100% effective: the men, denied sex, are reduced to acquiescent jelly. But the women don't stop with that—older women also lock up all the money, so there aren't any funds to pay for the war. With no sex and no money, the guys have no choice but to give in.

The early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century saw a number of strikes and protests for and led by women as part of the Labor movement. In Massachusetts, the "Bread and Roses" strikes by textile workers mobilized thousands of women and achieved some success.

In 1970, the nascent feminist movement organized a general strike on August 26. At that time, women in

many states were barred from opening a bank account, holding a credit card in their own name, making a will, owning property or serving on a jury. On average, women earned 59 cents for every dollar a man of equal training and experience was paid. Women were barred from higher education and many jobs, and were restricted in how many hours they could work. After future Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor took her law degree, the only jobs she was offered were as a secretary.

The 1970 Women's Strike drew 20,000 women in New York City and thousands more around the country, rallying for equal pay and opportunity, political rights and social equality. Despite mixed reactions from the media and public, and internal dissension among the organizers, feminists count the 1970 strike as a milestone in the women's movement.

On October 24, 1975, ninety percent of Iceland's women participated in a "Women's Day Off," doing no work at home or at paid jobs, to demonstrate how necessary they were to society. Many industries closed for the day, schools and theatres closed, and newspapers shut down because all their typesetters were women. Men took their children to work with them. 25,000 women attended a rally in the capital. The following year, Iceland passed an equal rights bill.

What could a Women's Strike in 2017 hope to achieve? Is there enough solidarity and agreement among American women now for a "general strike" to have any real impact? There seems to be far less promotion and information about the strike than I saw for the Women's Marches in January.

Resistance movements always walk a difficult and narrow path between winning sympathy and alienating potential allies. Strikes have a tendency to upset and anger people who feel that they're unfairly inconvenienced (or even endangered). The most effective strikes are those which cost the wealthy and powerful significant amounts of respect and money while harming as few "bystanders" as possible. People who opposed the Vietnam war in the 1960s reflect that they "snatched defeat from the jaws of victory" when protests became too violent, and lost the sympathy of the mainstream public.

Unitarian Universalists have always been strongly invested in social justice and equal rights for women. We are among the first denominations to recognize female clergy and the first to have a majority of women ministers. Many UU congregations support the Women's March movement and the Women's Strike. But just as UUs are incredibly diverse, the reasons that women participate in a strike or rally cover a wide spectrum of overlapping and sometimes conflicting objectives. Does merely being female really mean that all women share commonality?

If the Women's March movement is to continue growing and organizing, it will need to grapple with these complex questions. Whatever you do on March 8, if you have to adjust some plans because of the strike, think of yourself as being part of positive action for the good of all. Change is never easy. But it's much easier to adapt when we recognize that we're all in this together.

Rev. Inanna Arthen



With the cold weather hopefully behind us, we turn our sights to warmer weather. Downstairs in the Pine Room, the Questing Class has been focusing on our connections to the Earth and how those connections tie us within our communities as well. Many great discussions have happened as our hands are busy creating things that focus us on our topic.

Through March, we will continue talking about our interconnected web. As the weather gets warmer, we'll spend some of our class time outdoors, helping to tidy the church grounds after the winter. It is a time to reconnect with Mother Earth, from flowers sprouting and greening grass to picking up winter litter and blowdowns from our trees. We are part of a community, and in a community, everyone has a part in helping it grow and thrive!

Please consider joining us!

Peace and light,

Kirsty Erikson  
Lead RE Teacher



# Spiritual Calendar

**March 1: Ash Wednesday (Christian).** The beginning of Lent, the 40-day period of self-denial, repentance and charitable works leading up to Holy Week and Easter. It mirrors the 40 days that Jesus spent fasting in the wilderness before he began his mission. Christians attend services where ashes are sprinkled on their heads or used to mark a cross on their foreheads. Ashes are a sign of mourning, humility and repentance in Scripture, as well as a reminder of mortality. The traditional Lenten fast involves abstaining from meat, eggs and luxury foods, as well as marital relations; in modern times, Christians will often choose a specific indulgence to “give up for Lent” such as sweets or coffee.

**March 1: St. David's Day (Christian).** The “Welsh St. Patrick's Day.” St. David is the patron saint of Wales. He was born into the Welsh nobility in the 5<sup>th</sup> century CE and founded a Celtic monastic community at Glyn Rhosyn (The Vale of Roses) on the western headland of Pembrokeshire. Welsh people rallied around his name during their resistance to the Norman conquest. In 18<sup>th</sup> century London, Welsh celebrations on St. David's Day provoked offensive counter-demonstrations by the English. People of Welsh nationality or ancestry may wear a daffodil or a leek as a demonstration of national pride.

**March 12: Purim (Jewish).** A Jewish holiday commemorating Queen Esther's saving the Jewish people in Persia from slaughter by King Ahasuerus, as told in the Book of Esther. Customs include reading the Book of Esther (“The Magillah”) in temple, a street celebration similar to Carnival or Mardi Gras, festive dinners, traditional foods like dumplings and fruit pastries, songs and dramatizations of Esther's story, and burning the figure of the evil Haman in effigy.

**March 17: St. Patrick's Day (Christian).** St. Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland and is credited with bringing Christianity to that island in the 5<sup>th</sup> century CE. His feast day has become a day of national pride and affirmation for people of Irish nationality or ancestry, especially outside of Ireland. Traditions include wearing green and wearing or displaying shamrocks, whose tri-part leaves St. Patrick is said to have used to teach the doctrine of the trinity. In the United States, which saw several major waves of Irish immigrants, celebrations can be quite raucous, with large parades, parties, and substantial amounts of alcohol.

**March 20: Vernal Equinox/Ostara (Pagan).** The Vernal Equinox is celebrated by the name of Ostara or Eostra in some modern Pagan traditions, taken from an Anglo-Saxon name for a holiday, month or goddess (authorities disagree) which became the English term for Easter. Vernal Equinox is the beginning of the astrological year and the sign of Aries the Ram. Many calendars through history and around the world begin at this time. Easter symbols such as bunnies and eggs are really Equinox symbols of fertility, birth and returning life. Modern Pagans celebrate Ostara as the end of winter and the triumph of life and light.

## Our Neighbors Kitchen

We're welcoming the first days of spring with two delicious and crowd-pleasing meals for March!

On Thursday, March 9, we're trying again—since our “Loaded Mac ‘n’ Cheese” dinner was snowed out last month, we're planning it for March. This never came out of a box! Pasta baked with several kinds of cheese, with chicken and sausage added in, along with salad and dessert, cooked by Rev. Inanna Arthen and assistants.

On Thursday, March 23, we'll serve a St. Patrick's Day traditional corned beef boiled dinner, with Irish soda bread and dessert, all prepared by our chef extraordinaire Dave Faucher and assistants.

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 to socialize and enjoy the meal.

## March Birthdays

Sam Elkins  
Mrs. Charlotte Drury  
Anne M. McGrath

March 3  
March 26  
March 29



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

## ***This Month in UU History***

- March 7, 1965: Known as “Bloody Sunday,” on this date 600 marchers for civil rights were assaulted by law enforcement with billy clubs and tear gas on the Edmund Pettus bridge in Selma, AL and ultimately stopped from proceeding. Consequently, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. called on clergy of all faiths to join the cause in Selma. More than 125 Unitarian Universalist ministers answered the call. On March 21, over 3000 marchers departed from Selma for Montgomery, AL. By the time they arrived in Montgomery on March 25, their number had swelled to over 25,000. Among the three persons killed during the Selma marches was Rev. James Reeb, a UU minister. Reeb and two other UU ministers, Rev. Clark Olsen and Rev. Orloff Miller, were attacked and severely beaten by a gang of white segregationists. Rev. Reeb died in a Birmingham hospital on March 11, aged 38. His killers were indicted, but three were acquitted by an all-white jury and one fled the state and was never brought to trial. Rev. Reeb was a father of four, and with his family, chose to live in poor black neighborhoods ministering to African Americans. His death sparked vigils and protests. He was eulogized by Rev. King and his name was invoked when President Lyndon B. Johnson delivered the draft of the 1965 Voting Rights Act to Congress.
- March 14, 1945: The American Unitarian Association voted to establish lay-led congregations known as fellowships. Munroe Husbands and Lon Ray Call guided this movement which emphasized individualism, varied forms of worship and social commitment. Call had noticed that some small churches that could no longer support a settled minister continued to meet with lay leaders. One third of the increase in Unitarian church membership from 1948 to 1958 consisted of people joining fellowships. At the present time (2017), the UUA is exploring varied forms of pastoral leadership for small congregations, including lay leadership and fellowships.
- March 17, 1830: The Irish Unitarian Society (for the Diffusion of Christian Knowledge), now the Irish Unitarian Christian Society, was formed by the Rev. Dr. James Armstrong and others. It published and distributed books and pamphlets about Unitarianism throughout the south of Ireland. Currently, there are active Unitarian congregations in Dublin and Cork, along with the Limerick Unitarian Fellowship which meets monthly. Although there were recorded Unitarian (Dissenting) communities in Ireland in the 1600s, Unitarianism was illegal in Ireland until 1813.

### **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 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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