

THE WINCHENDON UNITARIAN

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Church Telephone 978-297-0554

JANUARY 2018

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

Monday, January 1

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Tuesday, January 2

6:30 pm - NA Meeting (NEW!)

Sunday, January 7

11:00 am - Sunday Worship: "Fire
Communion Service" (rescheduled)
12:30 pm - Indivisible Winchendon Mtg.

Monday, January 8

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Tuesday, January 9

6:30 pm - NA Meeting (NEW!)

Thursday, January 11

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

Sunday, January 14

11:00 am - Sunday Worship - Chalice
Circle Service

Monday, January 15

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Tuesday, January 16

6:30 pm - NA Meeting (NEW!)

Wednesday, January 17

7:00 pm - UUCW Governing Board
Meeting

Sunday, January 21

11:00 am - Sunday Worship with Rev.
Inanna Arthen - Reflections on MLK
Day

12:30 pm - Indivisible Winchendon Mtg.

Monday, January 22

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Tuesday, January 23

6:30 pm - NA Meeting (NEW!)

Thursday, January 25

5:30pm - Our Neighbor's Kitchen serves
Beef Burgundy Holiday Dinner
(rescheduled)

Sunday, January 28

11:00 am - Sunday Worship
12:30 pm - Indivisible Winchendon Mtg.

Monday, January 29

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Tuesday, January 30

6:30 pm - NA Meeting (NEW!)

Sunday, February 4

11:00 am - Sunday Worship
12:30 pm - Indivisible Winchendon Mtg.

From Your Minister

I'm writing this on the very brink of a new year. Goodbye to 2017 and hello, 2018, whatever you may bring. It's a good thing I'm not superstitious, because this changing of the calendars is taking place during what may be a history-making cold spell. I've never seen anything like it here in Massachusetts—day after relentless day with temperatures some 30 degrees lower than normal and sub-zero lows at night. It's making me very aware of how we take so many things for granted in our modern lives. I woke up Friday morning to a frozen pipe and no water. I'm deeply grateful to the plumber who managed to get the water flowing again, and to the many other pipes that were feared frozen and turned out to be fine, and to electrical service and hardware stores that sell space heaters. But I'm wondering if Elsa from *Frozen* has broken out and taken over, because this winter seems to have started almost as suddenly and almost as severe as in the movie!

We wrapped up 2017 with a busy month of December at UUCW, at least until the weather cracked down in the very last week of the year. On Sunday, December 3, Dave Faucher offered a Chalice Circle Service on the theme of “Human Rights: the Environment.” On Sunday, December 10, I planned a service themed around the Winter Solstice, “On the Brink.” On Sunday, December 17, Dave Faucher led a Chalice Circle Service on the theme of “Human Rights: Health Care.” On Sunday, December 24, UUCW hosted our annual Christmas Eve Candlelight Service in the evening, with traditional carols, readings of the Nativity story from the Gospels, lighting the Advent candles and a sermon titled “The Greatest of Lights.” Our musician Lucinda J. Ellert played our pipe organ and Chickering grand piano—it’s such a treat to hear those instruments’ lovely voices! At the conclusion of the service, we passed candlelight hand to hand around the sanctuary. We postponed the Fire Communion service planned for December 31 to January 7 due to the dangerously cold weather.

On Saturday, December 9, UUCW participated in the Winchendon Historical Society’s biannual Holiday House Tour. With the help of our new sexton, our sanctuary had been scrubbed, buffed and polished until all the woodwork shone. We decked out the sanctuary with two large trimmed and lighted Christmas trees, greenery, swags and electric candles. From 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., many visitors stopped by for the tour, ushered around by lifelong church member Julia White Cardinal who knows our church’s history down to the last detail. At 4:00 p.m., a brass quintet sponsored by Winchendon Winds played a concert of holiday-themed music, interspersed with my lively readings of Christmas poems and stories. At the conclusion of the concert, we turned on the shimmering “tree of lights” out on the front lawn. Despite the challenging weather that day, we had a good turnout for both the tour and the concert and the event was enjoyed by all.

Our Neighbor’s Kitchen only served one meal in December. Our annual Beef Burgundy holiday dinner was postponed to January 25 due to the dangerously cold temperatures and wind chills. But on Thursday, December 14, I cooked a huge pot of thick cheesy Potato Parmesan Soup (I wanted soup you could stand a spoon up in, and I almost succeeded), sub sandwiches stuffed with ham, salami and provolone cheese, brown sugar glazed carrots and homemade cookies for dessert.

NA meetings continued to meet on Tuesdays,

weather permitting. Indivisible Winchendon convened on Sunday afternoons at 12:30 p.m., taking a break on December 24 and 31 for the holidays.

I’ve had more than the usual challenge thinking of a topic to write about this month, because no matter how hard I try, all I can think about is the weather. As the Chinese knew when they coined the curse, “may you live in interesting times,” it’s usually not much fun to live through history. Those peak events that give us a certain cachet of toughness and experience, the stories we tell our kids or at parties, or casually mention when we want to be impressive—in reality, we’d just as soon skip them. Right now we’ve just gone through a hundred-year cold spell, we’re having a major (although not extraordinary) snow storm and right after that it will be even colder. It will be something to remember in the future. But it’s emphatically not fun. People have died in the past week, as a direct result of the severe cold and storms, and more will die. This is a certainty. There are homeless people living out in the woods and in their cars right now—even here in Winchendon (although I hope most of them have found somewhere to go). The weather is costing us a lot of money. If we’re lucky, it’s just the heating bill. If we’re less lucky, we’re paying for frozen pipes and damage to our homes, car repairs and other misfortunes. A friend of mine had to evacuate her house because pipes froze and burst and flooded the house with 71,000 gallons of water (which she has to pay for, to add insult to injury).

Aside from the direct effects of the storm and cold, weather impacts our life routines, work schedule, and plans. Events, vacations and travel that may have been on our calendars for months suddenly are cancelled, postponed, truncated or changed. Everything becomes contingent—our whole lives are now “weather permitting.” Plane tickets and deposits are non-refundable. Kids stay home from school and a parent has to call out from work, or find child care. There are those who jeer at the infamous rush to stores for bread and milk before a storm; they forget how much people nowadays are used to eating out, and how ill-prepared many families are to be housebound and cooking three meals a day for several days.

What does it mean when our society has such a hard time flexing out and adjusting for weather, when our lives don’t easily allow for down time or breaks? In a *NY Times* column last year, David Dudley argued that we should be prepared to “do nothing” in a blizzard—stay home, hunker down, wait it out, take our time

This Month in UU History

January 12, 1820: Unitarian Caroline Seymour Severance was born in Canandaigua, NY. She was educated in girls' schools and academies and taught briefly before marrying banker Theodoric Cordenio Severance in 1840. They settled in Cleveland, OH where both were active in progressive causes. Their home became a gathering place for like-minded people. They left the Presbyterian Church because they felt it was racist and founded the anti-slavery Independent Christian Church. It attracted a number of liberal clergy, including Unitarian Amory D. Mayo. Caroline traveled around Ohio lecturing and organizing, and the Severance home hosted speakers from other states, including Ralph Waldo Emerson and Bronson Alcott. In 1853 she presided over the first annual meeting of the Ohio Woman's Rights Association, and she helped found the American Woman Suffrage Association. But Caroline came to feel that Ohio was not the most congenial location for her. Her husband took a position in Boston and they moved to Massachusetts, where Caroline thrived. She served on the first board of the New England Hospital for Women and Children. In 1873 she was one of the founders and first president of the Moral Education Association. She was a founder of the New England Woman's Club, a vehicle for reform which helped to establish the Girls' Latin School and the Co-operative Building Association. Severance went regularly to hear Theodore Parker's sermons. She helped organize the Free Religious Association. She was the first woman to speak in the popular Parker Fraternity Lecture Course after his death. In 1875, Caroline and her husband moved to Los Angeles to be near two of their sons; they founded the first Unitarian congregation in LA, Unity Church.

January 20, 1856: Unitarian Harriot Stanton Blatch was born in Seneca Falls, NY. Both her parents were progressives and activists; her mother campaigned for women's rights and her father worked for numerous reform causes, including the abolition of slavery. Harriot was educated privately until she was admitted to Vassar, which awarded her a degree in Mathematics in 1878. She inherited her parents' passion for social justice and reform. She co-wrote *The History of Women's Suffrage* with her mother and toured with her mother giving lectures on the Lyceum Circuit. In 1882 she married English businessman William Blatch and spent the next 20 years in England. She joined the Fabian Society and was impressed by the work of the English Women's Suffrage League. After returning to America in 1902, Harriot became active in the Women's Trade Union League (WTUL) and the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA). In 1907, she founded the Equality League of Self-Supporting Women, intended to open the women's movement to working women. She organized Women's Suffrage Marches in New York in 1908, 1910, and 1912, and she was the leader of the 1910 suffrage parade in New York. During WWI, she worked to mobilize women in active roles in the war effort. After the war ended, she adopted pacifist views. When the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote was passed in 1920, Harriot joined the Socialist Party. She campaigned for an Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution.

cleaning up and digging out. Certainly, weather extremes show us where we've failed to make sufficient preparations, coasted along hoping for the best, or were just in denial about priorities. I certainly should have paid more attention to my crawl space this summer—the one housing my well pump and all the important pipes. Next winter, it will be ready for the Polar Vortex. It's hard to feel urgency about frozen pipes when it's warm and sunny, and there's so much else to do.

Severe weather, like injuries and serious illness, teaches us humility. It shows us the limits of our control and the necessity of being able to adapt and rise to challenges. There's an axiom, which is found in many forms across cultures: "humans make plans, and God/Heaven/the universe just laughs." Western culture in general

and American culture especially loves to believe that it's mastered control of things like the elements. We can power through anything, we think; it's a matter of pride to get to work in a blizzard, never flag while we're undergoing chemotherapy, pick up and carry on after a natural disaster. This leaves some people feeling like failures when they can't bounce back from challenges or march through adversity like Superman.

But it's no shame to acknowledge our place in the cosmic scheme of things. As individuals, we're very small and inconsequential, after all. It's when we unite and work together that we become strong—just as one snowflake melts on our tongues but trillions of them paralyze a state. So let's appreciate this little reminder from Mother Nature, and remember to reach out to our

Spiritual Calendar

- January 6: Epiphany / Three Kings Day (Christian).** Traditionally the day when the three Magi, or Wise Men, or Three Kings, visited the infant Jesus to pay him homage and give him gifts. The Magi represented the Gentile, or non-Jewish, peoples of the world, and so Epiphany is considered to commemorate the revelation of God's incarnation to the Gentiles. In Britain, the night before January 6 was called Twelfth Night. Epiphany customs include special church services, singing Epiphany hymns (of which "We Three Kings" is an example), having the house blessed, chalking the front door of the house with symbols of the cross and the Magi, and eating rich cake called Three Kings Cake, or cookies and pastries in the shape of a crown. Spicy foods and sweets commemorated the expensive spices brought by the Magi. In many countries, including most Latin American nations, Three Kings Day is the time when children receive gifts, because the Three Kings brought gifts to the baby Jesus. Puerto Rican children put boxes of straw under their beds for the Three Kings' camels and find presents left in exchange for the straw. In Italy, the Italian name for Epiphany, *Epifania*, became the fantasy character Befana, depicted as an old woman who rides a broomstick and delivers toys to children on Twelfth Night, because she was unable to bring a gift to the infant Jesus.
- January 13: Maghi (Sikh).** An annual festival commemorating the martyrdom of 40 Sikhs who perished defending Guru Gobind Singh in a Sikh-Muslim war in 1705. It is celebrated with a fair called the Mela Maghi. Traditional foods eaten at Maghi include a dish of rice cooked in sugar cane juice, lentils and raw sugar cane.
- January 21: World Religion Day (Baha'i/Ecumenical).** Established in 1950 by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, World Religion Day is now celebrated internationally on the third Sunday of January each year. It is based on two Baha'i principles: the oneness of all religions, and the concept of progressive revelation: that religions have evolved continuously through history. It originated in a 1947 talk by Firuz Kazemzadeh in Portland ME, entitled "World Peace Through World Religion." World Religion Day is meant to emphasize that religion can play a role in unifying humanity, and that the principles underlying different faiths are harmonious, not contradictory.
- January 22: Vasant Panchami (Hindu).** Literally, "the fifth day of spring," Vasant Panchami is celebrated on the fifth day of the first spring month, Magha, in the Hindu lunar calendar. It's celebrated differently in different regions. In many areas, Vasant Panchami is a day for honoring Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge, language, music and art. Parents often teach very young children to write their first words on this holiday. Vasant Panchami is also dedicated to Kama, the goddess of love, and has been compared to a "Hindu form of Valentine's Day." It's a day to declare love for another and to appreciate the power of love in all its forms. Whichever goddess is honored, Hindus traditionally dress in yellow clothing, fill their homes with yellow flowers and eat yellow rice and yellow colored sweets and snacks. Images of Saraswati are dressed in yellow finery and prayers to her are made. Flying kites is also a traditional part of the holiday.
- January 31: Tu BiShvat (Jewish).** Called "the New Year of the Trees," this holiday has become a day for environmental awareness in modern Israel. Over one million Israelis participate in tree-planting events on Tu BiShvat organized by the Jewish National Fund. In the Talmud, Tu BiShvat is used as a marker for calculating the bearing age of a fruit tree; fruit may only be eaten three years after a tree has been planted. Traditionally, dried fruits and almonds are eaten on Tu BiShvat.

neighbors and friends with a helping hand. All this will pass, and more quickly than it feels right now (when a week seems like it will never end). It's only two more months until spring.

Rev. Inanna Arthen

Our Neighbor's Kitchen

January is kicking off with a cold, cold start, and we've had to cancel some events at UUCW. We hope we won't need to do that again! We're planning two crowd-pleasing favorite meals this month.

On Thursday, January 11, we'll reprise last year's

Baked Mac 'n' Cheese Deluxe: creamy baked mac 'n' cheese entirely from scratch, with several cheeses and meaty mix-ins, along with salad or veggie and dessert.

On Thursday, January 25, chef extraordinaire Dave Faucher and assistants will present our annual elegant holiday meal of Beef Burgundy (beef cooked in a red wine sauce) with sides, vegetables and dessert, which was postponed from its usual December date by the bitterly cold weather. It's delicious, but we don't want our diners risking frostbite for it!

We can always use more volunteers. If you can help with food prep, contact the chefs for details on their work flow for the night's meal and when help will be most needed, as this varies with the menu. If you'd like to help with set-up, come to the church between 3:30 and 4:30 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 5:45 p.m. and usually takes about forty-five minutes. Volunteers have a chance to sit down together to socialize and enjoy the meal.

On January 4 and 18, Immaculate Heart of Mary church (52 Spruce Street) will be serving "first and third Thursday" Our Neighbor's Kitchen dinners in their hall. Contact IHM for menus and details on volunteering. UUCW and IHM will be alternating serving dinner on the fifth Thursday, in months that have five Thursdays (silly calendar...!).

This meal is sustained by gifts from the people who attend, the religious communities of Winchendon, the Winchendon Community Action Committee, The Winchendon School, and many volunteers.

NA Meeting at UUCW

UUCW is hosting a new Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meeting on Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. in our Parish Hall. This is an open meeting, with free discussion, information, support and sharing. If you're in recovery

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).

or would like to be, you're welcome to join us. If you know anyone who would benefit from an NA meeting or is looking for a local one, please pass this information on to them.

Winchendon NA Meeting (we will be giving it a more official name of its own) is led by Winchendon residents, in collaboration with the Central MA Area and New England Region of Narcotics Anonymous. For more information about NA and its principles, see www.nerna.org.

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.

December Birthdays

Jacob Nathaniel Elkins
Carol Bramblett

Jan 3
Jan 14



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

UUCW Online

<http://uucw.ncmuuc.org>

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

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