

THE WINCHENDON UNITARIAN

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Church Telephone 978-297-0554

MARCH 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

Sunday, March 4

11:00 am - Sunday Worship with Rev.
Inanna Arthen: "Men of Straw"
12:30 pm - Indivisible Winchendon Mtg.

Monday, March 5

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Tuesday, March 6

6:30 pm - NA Meeting (NEW!)

Thursday, March 8

5:30 pm - Our Neighbor's Kitchen serves
Shepherd's Pie

Sunday, March 11

2:00 am - Daylight Savings Begins! Turn
your clocks *forward* one hour
11:00 am - Sunday Worship with Rev.
Inanna Arthen: "Buying Time"
12:30 pm - Indivisible Winchendon Mtg.

Monday, March 12

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Tuesday, March 13

6:30 pm - NA Meeting (NEW!)

Sunday, March 18

11:00 am - Sunday Worship, Chalice Circle
Service
12:30 pm - Indivisible Winchendon Mtg.

Monday, March 19

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Tuesday, March 20

6:30 pm - NA Meeting (NEW!)

Wednesday, March 21

7:00 pm - UUCW Governing Board
Meeting

Thursday, March 22

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

Sunday, March 25

11:00 am - Sunday Worship, Chalice Circle
Service
12:30 pm - Indivisible Winchendon Mtg.

Monday, March 26

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Tuesday, March 27

6:30 pm - NA Meeting (NEW!)

Sunday, April 1

11:00 am - Easter Sunday Service with Rev.
Inanna Arthen

From Your Minister

For a short month, February has certainly been eventful—with too many of the kind of events implied in the Chinese curse, "may you live in interesting times." Yet another ghastly mass shooting of young people in a Florida high school on February 14 has been followed with the usual thoughts and prayers, conspiracy theories and denials that have followed all these events in the past. This time, the young survivors aren't backing down in their calls for Congress to do something to prevent these crimes. It remains to be seen whether anything will change. Closer to home, Winchendon lost a beloved local business, the Lucky Dragon restaurant, when it was destroyed in a fire on February 18. The owners posted on Facebook thanking everyone for their concern and sympathy, and promising to redeem all outstanding gift certificates if customers stopped by their home adjacent to the former restaurant. In the midst of loss and tragedy, little things like this help us remember that most people are decent and principled, and we're fortunate to share our world with them.

This Month in UU History

March 13, 1835: Lifelong Unitarian Sallie Ellis was born in Cincinnati, OH. Her father, Rowland Ellis, helped to organize the First Congregational Church (Unitarian) of Cincinnati. Sallie attended Unitarian private schools and Unitarian Sunday school, and joined the Cincinnati church as an adult. She taught Sunday school in Chicago and Cincinnati. In 1859, Sallie lost her hearing, developed inner ear symptoms such as chronic vertigo and nausea, and contracted tuberculosis. Despite her poor health, she turned to intense spiritual studies, reading sermons and attending church, and longed to become a missionary. In 1877 she became treasurer of Rev. Charles' Wendte's Missionary Society and did most of the work involved in distributing 1,846 tracts throughout 26 states. She handled the distribution of tracts and literature at her church and founded a lending library there. Sallie went on to distribute more than twenty thousand tracts, sell books and subscriptions, and loan by mail hundreds of books from the church's circulating library. She carried on an immense correspondence with isolated Unitarians, who sometimes addressed her as "Rev. Ellis." Her work became nationally known as "Miss Ellis' Mission" and in 1883 she attended the Western Unitarian Conference. After her death in 1885, many Unitarian and Universalist congregations adopted the Post Office Mission innovated by Sallie, and in 1903 William Channing Brown founded the Unitarian Church of All Souls as a successor to the Post Office Mission. The Mission inspired the Church of the Larger Fellowship, which was established in 1944 to gather and provide resources to Unitarians who did not have a local congregation. The CLF is vigorous and active today.

March 17, 1832: Abolitionist Moncure Daniel Conway was born in Falmouth, Stafford County, Virginia. Spiritually, Conway went through numerous transitions, impelled by his passion for justice and human rights and his frustration that churches he aligned with didn't share his views. His wealthy father was a slaveholder; his mother, a homeopathic physician, opposed slavery. While at Dickinson College in his teens, Conway was attracted to Transcendentalism. He attended Harvard Divinity School where he befriended Ralph Waldo Emerson, met Henry David Thoreau and Bronson Alcott, and became an abolitionist. He was called as minister to First Unitarian Church of Washington but was fired when he preached against slavery. He then was called by First Unitarian Church of Cincinnati. While there, he married Ellen Davis Dana, a lifelong Unitarian, feminist and abolitionist. Their marriage lasted 38 years despite Ellen scandalizing Conway's family when she hugged a young slave girl while visiting. Conway became increasingly unhappy with the failure of mainstream Unitarianism to take a strong stand against slavery and eventually broke with the denomination. In 1862, Conway met with President Lincoln, arguing that immediate and unqualified emancipation would end the war; his arguments were dismissed. Conway's father's slaves had escaped to Washington, and Conway helped them get to Ohio and freedom. In following years, Conway preached in Universalist churches but eventually rejected theism altogether; he remained a Transcendentalist. He campaigned for peace and was a speaker at the first open public meeting for women's suffrage in England in 1868. Feeling out of place in his own country, he moved to Paris after his wife's death in 1897, devoting the rest of his life to the peace movement and his writing.

The weather has continued to be milder than average (in fact, we're closing on the third-warmest February on record). There may be some more snow in our future but the Polar Vortex is over in the U.K. for now. Being New Englanders, we know better than to take signs of early spring for granted, but we've been enjoying the coat-free days as the gifts they are.

At UUCW, we managed to fit quite a lot of activities into February's twenty-eight days. On Sunday, February 4, which happened to be Super Bowl Sunday, I led a service on the theme of individualism vs. teamwork, titled "Go, Team!" On Sunday, February 11, as we looked forward to Valentine's Day, I presented a

service on a theme which, for reasons that remain mysterious, I had never preached about before: "The Power of Love." On Sunday, February 18, Dave Faucher led a Chalice Circle Service on conservation and animal rights, in which we learned a little about the pangolin, an animal considered to be one of the most endangered on earth. On Sunday, February 25, Dave led a Chalice Circle Service centered around "Random Acts of Kindness."

Our Neighbor's Kitchen served up two delicious meals for the last month of winter. On Thursday, February 8, we reprised a comfort food favorite,

(continued on page 4)

Spiritual Calendar

- March 1: Purim (Jewish).** A celebration of the Jews being saved from genocide in the Persian Empire under the reign of King Ahasuerus, as told in the Book of Esther. According to the Biblical account, the King's Narcissistic vizier, Haman, plotted to have all the Jews in the kingdom killed. Esther, a young Jewish girl married to the King, finds a way to let the King know what his vizier is plotting, and the plan is foiled. Purim observances include the book of Esther being read in Temple, exchanging gifts, giving alms and charity, and sharing a festive meal that includes foods symbolizing aspects of the story. Filled sweet pastries, meat dumplings, seeds and nuts are traditional Purim foods. Purim evolved into a Carnival-like celebration in some areas, with masks and costumes, plays dramatizing the story and burning effigies of Haman. In Israel, Purim has become a massive and very colorful Mardi Gras-like holiday.
- March 1: St. David's Day (Christian).** "The Welsh St. Patrick's Day," this feast day honors the 6th century teacher and Christian monk St. David, who built numerous monasteries around Wales and was famous for his ascetic lifestyle and scholarship. He is the patron saint of Wales, and his feast day has become a day of national and ancestral pride for those of Welsh nationality or descent. Welsh people wear daffodils or leeks on March 1, and enjoy traditional foods such as *cawl* (the Welsh national dish, a soup made of meat and winter vegetables) and Welsh rarebit (hot melted cheese with toasted bread).
- March 3: Holi (Hindu).** Called "the festival of colors," this boisterous and joyful holiday celebrates the triumph of good over evil and spring over winter. At night, religious ceremonies are held around bonfires representing the destruction of the demon Holika. The following day is a free-for-all of merriment in which people drench each other with colored water and colored powders—anyone is fair game including total strangers. Between and after dousings, everyone shares festive food and drinks.
- March 17: St. Patrick's Day (Christian).** Commemorates St. Patrick, a 5th century bishop born in England and credited with bringing Christianity to Ireland. As Ireland's patron saint, St. Patrick has become a focal point and national symbol to those of Irish nationality or descent. St. Patrick was said to have used the three-leaved shamrock to teach the doctrine of the Trinity, leading to the shamrock and its color becoming symbols for both saint and country. St. Patrick's Day is a public holiday in Ireland and Newfoundland, and widely celebrated throughout the world wherever the Irish emigrated and settled in significant numbers, especially the United States. It is celebrated by wearing green and/or shamrocks, and in many places with major parades, banquets, parties and enjoying traditional Irish foods such as corned beef, salmon and soda bread.
- March 20: Ostara / Spring Equinox (Pagan).** The Spring Equinox (or Vernal Equinox) marked the beginning of the year in the Roman calendar and throughout Europe for much of the last three millennia; it is the beginning of the astrological year with the sign of Aries. Modern Pagans observe it by the name of Ostara (or Oestre), which was the Germanic name of a goddess or a month (or both) and the origin of the English name for Easter. Ostara is celebrated as the beginning of visible spring, when plants begin to sprout, the first eggs hatch and baby animals are born. In Greek mythology, Kore, the Maiden, is released from the underworld to rejoin her mother, Demeter, whose joy reanimates the natural world. Modern Pagans observe Ostara with light-hearted and playful ceremonies, eating spring foods such as eggs, asparagus, milk and butter, and coloring eggs (especially in shades of red and pink).
- March 30: Good Friday (Christian).** Part of Holy Week, the week from Palm Sunday through Easter Sunday, Good Friday commemorates Christ's arrest and crucifixion. Many churches shroud their altars, crosses, or religious images in black or purple cloth to represent mourning.
- March 31 - April 7: Pesach (Jewish).** Also known as Passover, this solemn holiday commemorates the Jewish people's release from slavery in Egypt as recorded in the Book of Exodus. Leavening of any kind involving fermentation (such as yeast or sourdough) is so prohibited that Jewish housewives will scrub every inch of the house to remove any trace of it. Passover's best-known observance is the ritual meal called a *seder*, in which specific foods symbolizing details of the story are eaten, and questions about the holiday are posed and answered by specific family members. The observance continues for seven more days, however, concluding with commemorations of the parting of the Red Sea, which ended the pursuit of the fleeing Jewish people.

Scalloped Potatoes with sausage, accompanied by salad and homemade sugar cookies for dessert. On Thursday, February 22, Dave Faucher and our assistants turned out Swedish Meatballs over noodles, with bread, salad and cupcakes donated by the CAC for dessert.

NA meeting on Tuesday nights has been growing, and the Indivisible Winchendon group has been meeting on Sunday for lively discussions. We've been holding Sunday worship downstairs in the Parish Hall; on Sunday, April 1 we'll move back into our lovely sanctuary for Easter Sunday Service.

March may be the first month of calendar spring, according to the meteorologists, but it's not an easy time of year. Before we can welcome the new beginnings of spring, we have to accept and let go of that which has passed away, all that didn't survive the harsh weather and darkness of winter. Melting snow and ice reveal a bleak and bare expanse of destruction, like a battlefield—sodden leaves, fallen trees, the dried broken remains of winter-killed shrubs, and sometimes fur and bones. All this must be faced before we see the first sprouts emerging from the earth, or the birds nesting; before the mud has dried enough to dig in our gardens.

I've been considering death a great deal this winter, not because I wanted to but because it has constantly been present, tapping my shoulder, reminding me that life is fleeting and its end unpredictable. I have a house full of geriatric cats, ranging in age from 10 to 17 years. Three of them were rescue cats, two I took in when their elderly owners passed away or went into nursing homes. One of them, Cerridwen, was diagnosed with lymphoma last November. She was not the oldest of the cats, only 12, and not the one I expected to go first. I elected to take her to Massachusetts Veterinary Referral for chemotherapy. She responded very well to treatment—90 percent of the time she was happy and functioning well. But she would relapse, as the cancer became resistant to the drugs. On February 19, she took a turn for the worse for the last time.

I didn't take her to the veterinarian to be euthanized, because she wasn't suffering or in fear. She was just dying. I wrapped her in a towel and held her in a way that made her feel safe, and sat up with her, and around 3:00 a.m. she passed very quietly. I usually do this with animals, as long as they are not in distress. I regard death as a natural process, like birth. We have an obligation to go through this process with our companion animals.

But it's been hard to think about much else lately, especially because the theme of death has been echoing back at me. It's been dominating the news. A sister board member of Society of Elder Faiths is gathering a committee which will put together resources and a webpage for bereaved families seeking support, information, funeral services and counseling. I've been reluctant to fully commit to this; I've felt as though I've been dealing with as much death as I could handle recently. But my friend wants me on the committee. "We'd really like your expertise," she says.

I edit the newsletter for the UU Society of Community Ministries. The February board member's column was about being a "death doula" (or "death midwife," something which is becoming a trend).

The first time I heard about "death midwives" I was rather taken aback. It seemed like a complete oxymoron, and rather twee. My mother died at home in hospice care in 2006, and I was by her side (along with her sister, my aunt—no hospice care person was there, and they seldom were). My dad passed away in 2015 in the hospital, although we were trying to get him home with some kind of care. Neither of those experiences left me with a positive opinion of the way either hospitals or hospice programs deal with the dying and their families.

And yet...wasn't I just a "death midwife" for Cerridwen? Isn't that what I do?

Death in real life is slow, emotional, organic and complicated. Grief and mourning are difficult and last a long time. Americans shy away from all these things. We like instant solutions, simple answers, and transitions as fast as an action movie cutting to the next scene. But the American aversion to death as a fact of life severely hinders us in facing and solving our country's most critical problems.

In Greek mythology, at the Spring Equinox, Kore, the Maiden, emerges from the Underworld, where she reigns as Queen of the Dead during the winter. In Christian tradition, during the three days between Jesus' death and His resurrection, He, too, traversed the underworld and the realm of the dead. Life being reborn from death, like the phoenix from its own ashes, is the paradox of springtime. Without the night, there is no dawn; without sorrow, we can't appreciate joy. We can't resolve this paradox; we can only ponder it. It's a Mystery.

Rev. Inanna Arthen

Our Neighbor's Kitchen

We're reprising two of our most popular traditional dinners for March! These hearty meals will fortify your spirits and feet as we slog through Mud Season into spring.

On Thursday, March 8, by popular vote, Rev. Inanna Arthen and assistants will dish up Shepherd's Pie with a cheesy topping, salad and homemade cookies for dessert.

On Thursday, March 22, don't miss our annual St. Patrick's Day feast of Corned Beef boiled dinner with Irish soda bread and dessert, cooked by chef extraordinaire David Faucher and assistants.

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 March 1 and 15, 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.

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).

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 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 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.

March Birthdays

Sam Elkins	March 3
Mrs. Charlotte Drury	March 26
Anne M. McGrath	March 29



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

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