

THE WINCHENDON UNITARIAN

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Unitarian Universalist Church of Winchendon



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Church Telephone 978-297-0554

APRIL 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, April 2

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Tuesday, April 3

6:30 pm - NA Meeting (NEW!)

Sunday, April 8

11:00 am - Sunday Worship with Rev.

Inanna Arthen, "Emerging from Winter"

12:30 pm - Indivisible Winchendon Mtg.

Monday, April 9

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Tuesday, April 10

6:30 pm - NA Meeting (NEW!)

Thursday, April 12

5:30 pm - Our Neighbor's Kitchen serves
Stuffed Manicotti

Sunday, April 15

11:00 am - Sunday Worship - Chalice
Circle Service, "Taxes"

12:30 pm - Indivisible Winchendon Mtg.

Monday, April 16

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Tuesday, April 17

6:30 pm - NA Meeting (NEW!)

Wednesday, April 18

7:00 pm - UUCW Governing Board
Meeting, UUCW Parish Hall

Sunday, April 22

11:00 am - Sunday Worship with Rev.
Inanna Arthen: "Earth Day"

12:30 pm - Indivisible Winchendon Mtg.

Monday, April 23

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Tuesday, April 24

6:30 pm - NA Meeting (NEW!)

Thursday, April 26

5:30pm - Our Neighbor's Kitchen serves
Crispy Chicken Dinner

Sunday, April 29

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

Monday, April 30

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Tuesday, May 1

6:30 pm - NA Meeting (NEW!)

From Your Minister

It seems like this winter will never end, doesn't it? In last year's April newsletter, I noted that Lake Monomonic had re-frozen over during March, and then we had a snow storm on March 15. I'd forgotten that. That's probably why I didn't notice the small non-descript bush by my garage last spring—I didn't look at it at the right time. I puzzled over it all this summer, because I couldn't identify it. This week, I finally realized what it is. It's a pussy-willow, and it's all broken out in furry little catkins. Spring is coming, whether or snow.

We did a lot of snow shoveling at UUCW during the past month, keeping the walks and doors open for all of our activities and events. On Sunday, March 4, I prepared a service reflecting on the rise in extreme and irrational debate, and how we can change that, titled "Men of Straw." On Sunday, March 11, I presented a service themed around Daylight Savings and the meaning of time, titled "Buying Time." On Sunday, March 18, Dave Faucher prepared a chalice circle service exploring the theme of "Folk Tales" and how they relate to our modern lives. On Sunday, March 25, Dave put together a chalice circle service continuing the discussion of modern and

This Month in UU History

April 4, 1810: Unitarian James Freeman Clarke was born in Hanover, NH. He was tutored by his grandfather from an early age and read voraciously; he found the rote learning methods of formal schooling stultifying. He was intrigued by the Transcendentalists and chose Unitarian ministry for a career. Wanting to expand Unitarianism into new regions of the United States, in 1833 he became minister of a Unitarian congregation in Louisville, KY, which was then the western frontier. Struggling to meet the needs of this (to him) very different community, Clarke read sermons published by other denominations and developed a broad and inclusive viewpoint. He believed that Unitarianism needed to adapt to the changing demographics of the nation, and that it was up to him to create a model of a new kind of church. In 1841, he gathered a congregation in Boston which became Church of the Disciples. Services were ecumenical, incorporating practices from various traditions such as Quaker silent services, Catholic holy days and Methodist preaching and hymn singing. Congregation members organized dozens of committees for specific goals and interests, such as charity, music, religious education and Bible study. Clarke believed that every member of the congregation was equal, and the minister was not superior to them or an authority. Church of the Disciples was criticized by the Unitarian establishment in Boston, and some congregation members left when Clarke invited Theodore Parker to speak, soon after Parker's scandalizing sermon, "The Transient and Permanent in Christianity" made him persona non grata in other Unitarian pulpits. Nevertheless, the church and Clarke continued to thrive; in 1844 Clarke was named chaplain to the Massachusetts state Senate. Clarke opposed slavery, but not as wholeheartedly as some; he donated land to the Union Army to train soldiers during the Civil War. He was deeply concerned about social issues such as women's suffrage, poverty, labor unions, disruptions caused by industrialization, prison reform and the death penalty. He served on the Massachusetts State Board of Education and was appointed to the faculty of Harvard Divinity School, where he innovated a revolutionary teaching method based on dialogue with students about their assigned reading.

April 21, 1852: Tufts College was chartered in Medford, MA by Christian Universalists who wanted to found a non-sectarian institution of higher learning, preserve Universalist heritage and train Universalist clergy. Land on Walnut Hill, the highest point in Medford, was donated by Charles Tufts, who said he would "put a light on" the hill he had inherited. Noted Universalist minister Hosea Ballou II served as its first President. Ballou introduced teaching methods used at the University of Edinburgh and University of Oxford, which he had visited. In 1892, the Tufts Board of Trustees voted "that the College be opened to women in the undergraduate departments on the same terms and conditions as men." Tufts is the third oldest college in the Boston area. In the 1970s, it was expanded into a research university with multiple campuses. Its theological faculty, Crane Theological School, was closed in 1968, and its Universalist archives are now kept at the Andover-Harvard Theological Library.

lesser-known folk tales.

Our Neighbor's Kitchen dished up two delicious meals. On Thursday, March 8, I cooked Shepherd's Pie with salad and homemade oatmeal peanut butter chocolate chip cookies for dessert, helped by my dauntless assistants. We were still digging out from that monster snow storm but we had a good number of hardy guests making their way through the drifts for this rib-sticking meal (just what we needed after all that shoveling!). On Thursday, March 22, Dave Faucher and assistants turned out our popular annual St. Patrick's Day feast of New England corned beef boiled dinner with salad and cake (donated by the Winchendon CAC) for dessert.

We've had some new people joining our NA meeting on Tuesday nights. Indivisible Winchendon

has been meeting for lively discussions on Sunday afternoons, and some of us are attending various events and trainings and bringing back reports to the group.

What do people want from church these days? This is a question I've been considering a great deal lately—and not just in the general sense. What do people want from Unitarian Universalist churches, specifically? What kind of spiritual or worship experience keeps people engaged and connected to a congregation? What keeps younger people, in particular, interested and involved?

It's no secret that many small UU churches are struggling to grow. They often have a core membership of families who have attended for decades. New people

Spiritual Calendar

April 1: Easter (Christian). Commemorating the Resurrection of Christ three days after His crucifixion, Easter is arguably the defining day of the Christian faith. Unlike Christmas, its date is firmly grounded in Scripture, as the Gospels describe the Crucifixion taking place at the time of the Jewish observance of Passover. Christians world-wide observe Easter with sunrise services and special Sunday services, feasts and solemn but joyous celebrations. Easter marks the end of the Lenten fast, so Easter feasts often focused on foods that had been forbidden during the fast, such as red meat, eggs, dairy foods and sweets. Lamb was a traditional Easter meal due to lamb being eaten as part of the Passover seder, and because Jesus was called “the Lamb of God.” In the Orthodox church, the dates of Holy Week and Easter are about eight days later, due to use of a different calendar.

April 3: Mahavir Jayante (Jain). One of the most important religious festivals in the Jain faith, Mahavir Jayante commemorates the birth of Mahaveer. Jainism is an ancient faith based on the principle of *ahimsa*: non-violence and doing no harm to any living thing. Jains observe this festival by visiting temple, performing charitable and kind works, and offering prayers.

April 14: Vaisakhi (Sikh). A spring festival celebrated by Sikhs, especially in the region of Punjab, India. It has several levels of meaning. It commemorates the traditional Hindu new year, which is a harvest festival. Like most Sikh festivals, it commemorates the founding of Sikhism. The Jallianwala Bagh massacre, also known as the Amritsar massacre, occurred on Vaisakhi in 1919—British troops fired into a crowd of Sikh worshipers. This incident helped spark the Indian fight for independence from the British crown. Vaisakhi is observed with fairs, artistic displays of the finest flowers and produce from the harvest (viewing them is considered good luck), fireworks, acts of charity and visiting temples.

April 21: First Day of Ridván (Bahá’í). The most important celebration of the Bahá’í faith, Ridván is called “the King of Festivals” and lasts for twelve days. It commemorates the date in 1863 when the founder of Bahá’í, Bahá’u’lláh (born Siyyid `Alí-Muhammad of Shiraz), pronounced himself a manifestation of God called the Báb. He spent twelve days in the Garden of Ridván (which means “paradise”) outside of Baghdad speaking with followers and visitors before traveling to Constantinople. Described as a small, slight and humble young Iranian man, Bahá’u’lláh’s pronouncements did not go over well with Muslim authorities and he was executed at the age of 30. The Bahá’í faith teaches the essential worth of all religions, and the unity and equality of all people. Despite persecution since its founding, it has spread around the world and currently has over five million adherents.

April 23: St. George’s Day (Christian). The patron saint of England and several other countries, St. George was one of the earliest martyrs. He was said to be a Roman soldier who was executed because he refused to obey a command from the Emperor that all soldiers make sacrifices in Roman temples. He is therefore the patron saint of soldiers and the military. He is famous for allegedly fighting a “dragon,” which was terrorizing the countryside and demanding sacrifices from the local ruler. Having devoured livestock of increasing size, the dragon had progressed to children, then adults, and finally the King’s daughter. St. George tamed the dragon, rescued the princess, led the dragon back to the city and told them he would kill it if they converted to Christianity, which they all did.

come and go while the regular congregation gets older and older. Their children, raised in the church and graduates of the church RE program, move away or go to college, and don’t come back. Many of them leave UUism altogether. According to a paper presented at General Assembly in 2010 by Rev. Christana Willie McNight, the retention rate for young people raised as UUs is 12.5 percent. That means that seven out of every eight Unitarian Universalist youth leave the denomination.

As older members pass away and no younger generation stays to take their place, church budgets suffer, not only financially, but also in their “budget” of people able to serve on committees, help with events, do outreach and assist with lay leadership. More and more small UU congregations are not replacing a settled minister who retires or moves on, but are adopting a lay leadership model instead. Yet conventional UU wisdom holds that a good minister is essential if a congregation wishes to attract new members and grow.

But maybe there are other things which we need to be considering.

Numerous polls and surveys in recent years have reported that millennials, like other younger generations, are “less religious” than their parents and grandparents. When you get past the headlines and actually read the poll results, you see that this truism is misleading. Younger Americans are much less interested in conventional “organized religion”—that is, traditional churches with traditional Sunday morning worship services. On the other hand, younger Americans are very interested in spirituality—direct and unmediated experience of the sacred and/or the transcendent. They’re far less interested in listening to sermons. They’re much more interested in services or rituals that engage them on all levels, give them an opportunity to participate, and allow them to have spiritual experiences in a very personal way. Given this, it’s not surprising that among the faiths in America that are growing, and attracting many younger people and families, charismatic Christian churches, Buddhism and earth-centered, or Pagan, traditions are high on the list.

I’ve been reading a long and fascinating article by Hazel Gabe titled “What if the UU Church was also for us?” (link to article below). Hazel describes being brushed off by her minister when she asked about opportunities to lead worship (honestly, I cringed when I read this). She goes on to say,

“Over and over again I see it. I see highly skilled UU meeting facilitators, worship leaders, conference planners, small group facilitators, ritual designers, chaplains, leadership skills trainers, social justice organizers, and faithful UUs whose lives revolved around this religion.

“I see them leaving.

“The thing they all have in common is they are around 20 years old, and most aren’t coming back.”

Hazel talks about popular UU RE programs for teens that give them powerful experiences of collaborative worship, equally shared leadership and a deep sense of community and bonding. She then describes her bitter disappointment at visiting UU churches as an adult and looking in vain for a similar experience. As she quotes Rev. McNight saying, “The way UUs raise our children seems to prepare them for something completely different than what Unitarian Universalism actually offers.”

But this explains why so many UU individuals

and UU congregations have connected so deeply with Buddhism or earth-centered traditions (and not uncommonly, with both at the same time). The overlap among the earth-centered, or Pagan, community and UUism is so large that I meet Pagans who say they’re also UUs, and vice versa, everywhere I go. (I am not exaggerating!) I also meet many UUs who describe themselves as Buddhists, and there are UU congregations who regularly hold Buddhist-themed worship services.

UUism has always been very intellectual, and there’s still a place for that. But as congregations, we need to meet the needs of UUs who crave a different kind of experience. Hazel Gabe poignantly expresses the yearning she, and many of her peers, feel for the deep bonding that comes from shared spiritual experience. That kind of experience isn’t built from sitting passively in a pew. I often hear compliments about my sermons. I joke that I give “TED Talk sermons” because they’re very high in informational content. But I’d rather facilitate, and participate in, more experiential and participatory rituals with singing and meditation, sharing and candlelight. It appears that I am definitely not alone in this.

Like Hazel Gabe and her young peers, I was raised UU. I’m deeply grateful for that. It allowed me to explore my own spiritual needs and find my own path in a richly rewarding way. Many UU churches are developing new models for worship that engage and include all generations and many kinds of spiritual path. If all of this resonates with you...if you’d like to help create a very different kind of church experience...I’d love to hear from you.

Rev. Inanna Arthen

<https://hazलगabe.wordpress.com/2017/03/29/what-if-we-wanted-bridging-youth-leaders-to-continue-their-work/>

“Gardening Sunday” on April 29

Join us on April 29 at 11:00 a.m. as we pour some TLC into UUCW’s garden beds. Sometimes there’s nothing more spiritual than getting your hands into the good earth and nurturing living things. We’ll be clearing out weeds and grass so the gardens can be mulched, and planting some new things, as well. If you have some perennials you’d like to re-home, they might be happy in UUCW’s gardens! All are welcome.

Our Neighbor's Kitchen

We're so happy to see spring come at last, it calls for a celebration! Join us for two of our most crowd-pleasing meals as we wave farewell to the snow and welcome light, life and flowers in our gardens.

On Thursday, April 12, Rev. Inanna Arthen and assistants will reprise our very popular meal of stuffed manicotti (baked pasta shells filled with ricotta cheese), salad and homemade cookies for dessert.

On Thursday, April 26, chef extraordinaire David Faucher, Melissa Wilson and assistants will whip up our annual "Spring Chicken" feast: "Crispy Chicken" cooked in butter with sides, salad and dessert.

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 April 5 and 19, 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.

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 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.

April Birthdays

Deborah Colburn	April 1
Wendy O'Brien	April 3
Jeannette Gutteridge	April 4



(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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