

THE WINCHENDON UNITARIAN

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Unitarian Universalist Church of Winchendon



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Church Telephone 978-297-0554

NOVEMBER 2018

SUNDAY CIRCLE MEETING 1:00 P.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 4

2:00 am - Daylight Savings Time ends!

Turn your clocks back one hour!

1:00 pm EST - Sacred Circle Meeting -
New Moon Observance

Monday, November 5

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Thursday, November 8

5:30 pm - Our Neighbor's Kitchen serves
Kebab-a-Palooza

Sunday, November 11

1:00 pm - Sacred Circle Meeting - Sacred
Warriors

Monday, November 12

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Sunday, November 18

1:00 pm - Sacred Circle Meeting - Full
Moon Celebration

7:00 pm UUCW Governing Board
Meeting, Parish Hall

Monday, November 19

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Friday, November 23

12:00 - 4:00 pm - Spirit of Christmas Toy
Drive

Sunday, November 25

1:00 pm Sacred Circle Meeting - Gratitude

Monday, November 26

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Thursday, November 29

5:30pm - Our Neighbor's Kitchen serves
Roast Turkey Dinner

Sunday, December 2

1:00 pm - Sacred Circle Meeting - New
Moon Observance

Monday, December 3

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Sunday, December 9

1:00 pm - Sacred Circle Meeting

From Your Minister

It's hard to believe that it's already November. In just a couple of days, we'll be turning our clocks back an hour to Standard Time, and suddenly it will be full dark before most of us get home from work. Next Tuesday, the polls will open for an election filled with anticipation and hyperbole (even more than usual, which is saying a lot). In ordinary years, all but the oak trees would be bare of leaves by Halloween. But in this soggy, sodden, rainy fall, not all the foliage has finished changing color yet. Strange times, indeed. But we must keep moving forward, and we had a busy October at UUCW.

On Sunday, October 7, Sacred Circle Meeting observed New Moon in Libra with a focus on how we can act from a spirit of justice as we begin new cycles and projects for this lunar month. On Sunday, October 14, Sacred Circle Meeting did some work around an issue that is troubling most of us these days: anger, and how to channel our righteous anger into right action. I turned on the church furnace before the meeting, and consequently we had a surprise visitor to our circle: the ever-vigilant Winchendon Fire Department. It seems we were shrouding all of Central Street in heavy black smoke from our furnace chimney! So, if you wondered where that was coming from, you have my apologies. The furnace has been fixed, and we all agreed that we will never again plan a "fire" related circle on the day we turn on the furnace for the first time.

This Month in UU History

November 3, 1794: Unitarian, poet, literary giant and progressive William Cullen Bryant was born in a log cabin in Cummington, MA. When he was 2 years old, his family moved to a new home in Cummington which is now preserved as a museum. Bryant's mother was a descendant of John Alden. Bryant had a brilliant mind and wanted to attend Yale, but his family couldn't afford the tuition. He studied law and built a law practice, writing poetry on the side. He also studied natural philosophy and was fluent in several languages. A strong Federalist in his political views, as a teenager his satirical poem "The Embargo" attacked President Thomas Jefferson's shipping embargo (which ultimately led to the War of 1812).

Frustrated with the law, in 1825 Bryant moved to New York City and landed a job editing *The New York Review*, eventually becoming editor-in-chief of *The New-York Evening Post*, a paper founded by Alexander Hamilton. In the next 50 years, Bryant made *The New-York Evening Post* the most respected in the city and acquired a reputation for being the most liberal man of the century. He worked tirelessly for the abolition of slavery, supported the rights of labor unions, religious minorities and immigrants, and attacked corrupt bankers. He was a member of the anti-slavery Free Soil Party which became the Republican Party, and gave these parties an important platform in his newspaper. He continued to write poetry and innovative short fiction. He was a member of the Unitarian Church of All Souls in New York City and wrote Unitarian hymns.

Bryant was a nephew of Charity Bryant, who lived in Vermont in a recognized same-sex relationship with her partner Sylvia Drake from 1807 until 1851. Of the pair, William Bryant wrote, "If I were permitted to draw the veil of private life, I would briefly give you the singular, and to me interesting, story of two maiden ladies who dwell in this valley. I would tell you how, in their youthful days, they took each other as companions for life, and how this union, no less sacred to them than the tie of marriage, has subsisted, in uninterrupted harmony, for more than forty years."

Things were much more peaceful for Sacred Circle Meeting's celebration of the Full Moon in Taurus on Sunday, October 21. On Sunday, October 28, Sacred Circle Meeting took a field trip: our families participated in the Society of Elder Faith's Pagan Family Samhain in North Grafton, MA. It was a very fun and lively event with about 20 kids, pre-school to teenager, and their parents, playing games, doing a craft and taking part in a ritual about Queen Persephone returning to her husband and throne in the autumn. I look forward to having that many families at UUCW in the future!

On Saturday, October 7, UUCW took part in the Winchendon Fall Festival. At 10:30 a.m., we hosted Winchendon Winds for its final band concert of their 2018 season, in front of the church with listeners gathering on the lawn. In the afternoon, we organized some kids' activities, including a giant bubble making competition, a coloring contest and a selfie scavenger hunt for landmarks on Central Street. Our concession stand sold pumpkin dump cake and drinks. Congratulations to the winners of the kids' contests, and of our "basket o' scratch tickets" raffle. It was a cool and overcast day, but a good time was had by all. Thanks to everyone who stopped by and supported UUCW, Winchendon

Winds, and the Winchendon Fall Festival!

Our Neighbor's Kitchen served two satisfying meals in October. On Thursday, October 11, we pulled a home-style menu straight from mom's recipe box: oven-fried chicken, seasoned rice with peas, broccoli and cauliflower with cheese sauce, and pumpkin cake with ice cream for dessert. On Thursday, October 25, chef extraordinaire Dave Faucher presented our annual October feast of roast pork loin with apple and onion gravy, mashed potatoes, green beans, salad, and brownies for dessert. As always, we can't thank our volunteers enough—all of you who help with food prep, set-up, serving and clean-up, we couldn't do it without you! You *are* Our Neighbor's Kitchen!

It seems that so often, when I come to write these thoughts for the newsletter, I'm embroiled in some controversy or upset that is entirely monopolizing my attention. Either I can write about what I'm feeling at the moment, or I can struggle to find a more neutral and inspirational topic. The latter attempt tends to make the newsletter late.

But I don't live in a vacuum. What affects me affects other people, too. The general emotional atmosphere in the world right now surrounds all of us, and

Spiritual Calendar

November 1: All Saints Day (Christian). This date is also known as All Hallows' Day, Hallowmas, Feast of All Saints or Solemnity of All Saints and is a national holiday in many Christian countries. In the Orthodox church it is observed in the spring time. All Saints Day is a day to honor and commemorate "all saints, known and unknown." In the Protestant church, which does not recognize saints as a special class, All Saints is part of a time to remember and honor all Christians who have passed away, especially members of one's own congregation. In Mexico, this is the first day of the *Días de las Muertes* holiday on which the souls of deceased children are remembered and prayed for. Observances include church services, reading the names of those who have died in the past year, visiting and decorating graves, and lighting candles or leaving offerings for deceased loved ones. In Portugal, children go door to door asking for treats like nuts and fruit.

November 1: Samhain (Pagan). One of the best known of the ancient Pagan holidays because it survived for a long time in Ireland. "Samhain" was the name of the month of November, and the first of November represented the beginning of the dark half of the year. Herds and flocks of livestock were brought in from summer pasture and culled, to cut down the number of animals that had to be fed over the winter. All harvest of crops and wild food that hadn't been completed by Samhain had to be left in the fields. The ancient Celts regarded Samhain to be a "liminal" time, when they were between one season and the next, one world and another, and therefore almost anything might happen. Strangers on the road or at your door could be spirits, fairies, gods or weary travelers. Like its twin holiday of Beltane, Samhain was a fire festival with roaring bonfires built on hilltops and on village commons. Dancing, wearing costumes, divination for the coming year and feasts were common customs. Samhain was also a time to honor the beloved dead, a tradition which is found around this time of year in countless cultures. People would leave gifts and offerings on graves, or on the hearth with a lighted candle, and set an empty place at the table. Modern Pagans observe Samhain as a time for sober reflection, remembering our ancestors and lost loved ones, confronting our own mortality, and preparing for winter.

November 2: All Souls Day (Christian). Also known as the Commemoration of the Faithful Departed, All Souls Day is a time to honor and pray for the souls of lost loved ones, especially those in Purgatory. In Mexico, it is the second day of the *Días de las Muertes* holiday and is dedicated to the souls of deceased adults. In many places All Souls Day customs seem to have merged with ancient traditions of ancestor worship.

November 7: Diwali (Hindu). A festival of lights and one of the most popular holidays in Hinduism, Diwali is also known as Deepavali or Dipavali, and celebrates "the spiritual victory of light over darkness, good over evil and knowledge over ignorance." Like many Hindu festivals, it also is a time to affirm and honor community and familial bonds, and has origins in ancient agricultural celebrations. It is timed to fall at the New Moon, the darkest night of the month, and the full festival may be celebrated for five days with each day having a different focus. Celebrants clean, repair and decorate their homes and workplaces. During the festival, temples, homes, offices and other buildings are brilliantly illuminated with lamps and candles, called *diya*, inside and out. People dress in their finest clothes, hold family feasts, and offer prayers to Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity. Fireworks are popular, and people exchange gifts and sweets. Diwali is also celebrated by Jains, Sikhs, and Newar (Nepalese) Buddhists.

November 30: Saint Andrew's Day (Christian). The Feast of St. Andrew commemorates the conversion of Scotland to Christianity, and is a national holiday in Scotland as well as in Romania. In Eastern Europe, young women did divinations to foresee their future husbands on the Eve of St. Andrew's Day.

it can influence our personal concerns in unexpected ways.

The striking thing about the situation I'm dealing with is how fast it erupted and became a major crisis for the people involved. I'm on the staff of a science-fiction

convention, named Arisia, which runs for four days and hosts more than 4,000 attendees. Arisia prides itself on being feminist, diverse, inclusive and progressive. We have a Code of Conduct that every member is asked to agree to uphold and sign when they register.

On October 25, out of the blue, a person who had helped organize the convention for years and once served as its Chair, posted a long detailed public article accusing the convention of dismissing many complaints they had made about sexual misconduct on the part of another person who held a high position with the convention.

The fallout from this article has blown up like one of the wildfires in California. From one spark, within five days dozens of staff and countless attendees had resigned, two Guests of Honor had withdrawn, five members of the executive board resigned, the accused person was banned for life from the convention, more people posted their own similar stories, and Arisia is reeling. In the wake of #MeToo and the Kavanaugh hearings, accusations like this are incendiary.

It seems to me that there's more going on here than the concerns of the Arisia community alone. It's as though we're all walking through life tinder-dry, our strings taut to the breaking point, and almost anything might set us off. It seems that each day the news has some extreme event—mail bombs, shootings, road rage. The Lord of Karma is in his element; no one is too high or powerful to be brought down by some misdeed or secret from the past. UUs don't believe in the End Times, but on some subconscious level, we all seem to be tense and poised for a pending apocalypse.

It's no way to live. Arisia did need its collective attention brought to some issues, clearly. I'm not resigning; in fact, I'm planning some workshops and presentations to help correct some blind spots I see as contributing to the convention's past missteps. But as we approach next Tuesday's election, let's be conscious and aware. When the sidewalks are icy, a wise person adjusts their stride. Let's make sure we're ready to be part of the solutions, not part of the problems.

Rev. Inanna Arthen

Spirit of Christmas Toy Drive on November 23 at UUCW

It may be “Black Friday” to you, but it's Spirit of Christmas day for us! From noon until 4:00 p.m. on the day after Thanksgiving, we'll be at UUCW wearing funny hats, handing out treats and accepting your generous donations of new and gently used toys for Christmas gifts for local families in need. Just stop by any time during the afternoon to drop off your donations. The church will be open, and we'll be getting the

holiday decorations out. If you'd like to help with decorating, we'll be thrilled! See you on “Black Friday”!

Our Neighbor's Kitchen

We've got something fun and different and something tried and true for you at Our Neighbor's Kitchen this month.

On Thursday, November 8, Rev. Inanna Arthen and assistants will use a lot of little sticks to make a fun “Kebab-a-Palooza” dinner. Hot meat and veggie kebabs, fresh fruit kebabs and dessert kebabs are on the menu (and we may think of more things we can put on a spit!).

On Thursday, November 29, chef extraordinaire Dave Faucher and his dauntless assistants will pull out all the stops for our biggest meal of the year: Roast Turkey with all the trimmings, sides and dessert. Rev. Arthen will contribute a signature dish: baked butternut squash with roasted garlic and caramelized onions, and Dave will cook up his sublime homemade cranberry sauce.

As per our diners' preference—we always ask—we are not serving dinner on Thanksgiving.

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 November 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.

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.

Tree Lighting on December 13

After Our Neighbor's Kitchen on Thursday, December 13 (at approximately 6:30 p.m.), we'll be lighting up our tree on the front lawn and singing some carols together. You're welcome to join us even if you

don't attend the dinner that day! We're keeping our fingers crossed for seasonally clement weather, but the lights will go on regardless. See you there!

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

UUCW will hold our traditional Christmas Eve Candlelight Service for the community on Monday, December 24 at 7:00 p.m. All are welcome at this inter-generational service which will include lighting the Advent candles, readings from the Gospels, a short Christmas-themed sermon, traditional carols, music, and passing candlelight around the sanctuary. Come and share this lovely and peaceful prelude to Christmas Day.

Sacred Circle Meetings

Sacred Circle Meetings are held at 1:00 p.m. every Sunday. These are quite different from traditional church services. We meet in a circle, so that everyone is equal. We begin by creating a sacred space, and we light our UU Chalice to honor Unitarian Universalism and our UUCW congregation. From there, we do a variety of things depending on the needs of the group. We'll be doing meditations, we'll be doing healing work, we'll be honoring and celebrating the cycles of the seasons, the lunar cycles and the greater powers that give us life, love and all the myriad blessings we so often take for granted. Sacred Circle Meetings are highly participatory; everyone shares in the readings and ceremony. We may use drumming, chanting and movement as part of our circles. Circles are intergenerational: young people are welcomed as equal participants. It is a time to spiritually renew and energize ourselves for the coming week.

Many Unitarian Universalist congregations are experimenting with new kinds of spiritual experiences. UUism overlaps broadly with earth-centered and other faith traditions (such as Buddhism). "Circle worship"

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).

is being adopted by numerous UU congregations (see www.uua.org/worship/circleworship on the UUA website).

If you're looking for something like this, you're invited to join us. If you have a friend, relative or co-worker who might enjoy this type of meeting, please pass this information on to them! We hope this change will mark a new stage in UUCW's long history as a vital part of Winchendon.

If you have questions or would like more information, please contact Rev. Inanna Arthen at iarthen@inannaarthen.com.

UUCW Online

<http://uucw.ncmuuc.org>

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

November Birthdays

Tim Elkins

November 3



(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.

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