

THE WINCHENDON UNITARIAN

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Church Telephone 978-297-0554

MAY 2019

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, May 5

1:00 pm - Sacred Circle Meeting - New
Moon in Taurus

PLEASE NOTE: As per our usual practice,
Sacred Circle Meeting will convene
downstairs in the Pine Room until
warmer weather returns.

Monday, May 6

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Thursday, May 9

5:30pm - Our Neighbor's Kitchen serves
Meatloaf, mashed potatoes and gravy

Sunday, May 12

1:00 pm - Sacred Circle Meeting - Invoking
Our Inner Mother

Monday, May 13

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Wednesday, May 15

7:00 pm - UUCW Governing Board Mtg

Sunday, May 19

1:00 pm - Sacred Circle Meeting - Full
Moon in Scorpio

Monday, May 20

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Thursday, May 23

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

Sunday, May 26

1:00 pm - Sacred Circle Meeting - TBD

Monday, May 27

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Thursday, May 30

5:30pm - Our Neighbor's Kitchen serves
Memorial Day Cookout

Sunday, June 2

1:00 pm - Sacred Circle Meeting - New
Moon in Gemini

Monday, June 3

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

From Your Minister

The year 2019 is continuing to trundle along its bumpy road, with contention everywhere. If the field of Democratic Presidential hopefuls was a horse race, they'd have to use a second gate, while most of us wonder why anyone would aspire to a political career, seeing what's happening every day in Congress. We turn on the news and regret it. It's little wonder that, as in the Great Depression, we're escaping to the movies, or to cable TV—galactic wars or *Game of Thrones* seem downright peaceful compared to real life. We'd love some warm sunny weather, but that's hard to come by, too. We're getting the summery thunderstorms and hail—and the summery bugs—but that's as far as it goes. But life is awakening on cue. I surprised a porcupine in my back yard this week, and the poor little fellow was struggling so hard to get his short legs over a low stone wall, I wished I had a camera. It looks like the cardinals will be nesting by my house, and the apple trees and lilac made it through the winter.

We've had more new people join us on Sunday afternoons! On Sunday, April 7, Sacred Circle Meeting tried again for the celebration of Creativity that the snowstorm last month forced us to cancel—with more success. We called on all nine of the Muses and invoked creativity and inspiration into our lives. On Sunday, April 14, Sacred Circle Meeting celebrated the second Full Moon in Libra, looking at the difference between balance and harmony in our own lives, and social justice and community harmony in the greater world. On Sunday, April 21, Sacred Circle Meeting honored the universal spirit of renewal, rebirth and springtime as it has been celebrated by our

This Month in UU History

May 3, 1825: Unitarian Laura Matilda Towne was born in Pittsburgh, PA. Her parents were socially progressive, and Laura was raised as a staunch abolitionist. She grew up listening to sermons by William Henry Furness, minister of the First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia. Furness was a ferocious abolitionist who attacked the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act so relentlessly in public he was almost indicted for treason. Laura trained as a homeopathic doctor and as a teacher.

In 1861, the Union captured the Sea Islands off the coast of South Carolina. The white residents of the islands fled, leaving behind their homes, belongings and over 10,000 slaves. In April of 1862 Laura arrived on Saint Helena Island with her lifelong friend and companion, Ellen Murray, a Quaker. The two women participated in what was called “the Port Royal Experiment,” the first large-scale government effort in which an entire population of newly freed slaves were educated and assisted in adapting to life as free persons. The teachers who responded to the call for volunteers saw themselves as both teachers and missionaries, bringing “the light of God’s truth” to people they assumed needed to hear about it. But Laura herself was very pragmatic about this aspect of her work and proved herself a born administrator.

In June of 1862, Laura and Ellen opened the first school ever founded for freed slaves. Operating from the back of an abandoned plantation house, it started with nine adult students. This first beginning became the Penn School, which included a rigorous curriculum modeled on private schools in New England. Laura and Ellen ran the Penn School for the next forty years. They offered their students not only education but medical treatment and legal assistance. Among their generations of students was African American U.S. Congressman Robert Smalls. They came to love life on the islands and eventually adopted several African American children.

After Laura’s death in 1901, the Penn School passed to the Hampton Trust, which operated it for years as the Penn Normal, Industrial, and Agricultural School. Now the Penn Center, the former school is a National Historic Landmark. It was used by Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. for trainings in non-violent civil disobedience during the Civil Rights Movement. It is still in operation today. (<http://www.penncenter.com/>)

May 17, 2004: The first day that same sex marriage was legal in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (the first state to legalize such marriages). Hillary and Julie Goodridge were married at the Unitarian Universalist Association Headquarters with UUA President William Sinkford officiating and their daughter Annie Goodridge attending. Robert Compton and David Wilson were also married on this date at Boston’s Arlington Street Church (UU), and other couples were married in civil ceremonies around the state. The *Boston Globe* found that half the couples who applied for marriage licenses on the first day they were available had been in stable relationships for over ten years.

ancestors the world over. On Sunday, April 28, Sacred Circle Meeting focused on a family celebration of the ancient mid-spring festival of Beltane.

Our Neighbor’s Kitchen served two delicious meals in April, to so many happy guests that we’re going to have to start setting up more tables—people are sitting at the round table on the side of the room and joking about “having to sit at the kids’ table.” On Thursday, April 11, I and my dauntless assistants cooked up everybody’s favorite, Lasagna, with meat sauce and three kinds of cheese, in pans so heavy it took two people to get them out of the oven. In case anyone had room left, we also served fresh salad and ice cream treats for dessert. On Thursday, April 25, Dave Faucher and his merry crew brought in a smoker and treated

us to a smoked ham Easter dinner, with fork-tender ham, mashed potatoes, corn squares, bread and butter, salad, broccoli and assorted donated desserts from the Winchendon CAC (thank you!). As always, we can’t thank all our hard-working volunteers enough—from peeling potatoes to putting away the chairs, we couldn’t do it without every one of you.

Sometimes it seems that little things are so much harder than they have any right to be. I’m sure you’ve had this experience. You set out to do something, expecting it to go a certain way, and run into all kinds of snags.

When it comes to computers, I have far more expertise than I do money to support it. I can fix

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Spiritual Calendar

May 1: Beltane (Pagan). This holiday marks the midpoint between the Spring Equinox and Summer Solstice. In the ancient Celtic calendar (the ancient Celtic territory stretched from Britain to what is now northern Spain), Beltane was the beginning of summer. Along with Samhain, six months later, Beltane was a fire festival, during which all household fires were extinguished and rekindled with a coal or brand from a central fire, and bonfires were built on hilltops and in community squares. Herds and flocks were moved to summer pasturage; in Ireland, hearings and legal proceedings were held in royal courts. As with all Celtic sacred days, Beltane was a time when doorways opened between the everyday world and the sacred or supernatural realms, and it was believed that any stranger might be a deity, a ghost or a fairy.

May Day continued to be celebrated as a spring holiday in many parts of Britain, with permanent Maypoles standing in village squares that were decorated lavishly with flowers and greenery. Such a Maypole was famously erected at Merrymount (modern day Quincy, MA) in 1627, to the utter horror of the Puritans. The ribbon dance was a 19th century addition to the custom. Modern Pagans observe Beltane as a joyful celebration of renewed life, the power of creation, and the final end of winter. Common customs are outdoor ceremonies, Maypole dances, feasts and rituals to welcome babies and new life. As with all such holidays, divination for the coming growing season and general guidance was and is an important part of Beltane.

May 2: National Day of Prayer (Interfaith). Established by Congress in 1952 as the first Thursday in May, the National Day of Prayer is recognized by most Christian denominations, as well as Sikhs, Muslims, Hindus, and Jews in the United States. It is simply a day to focus on prayer and spiritual awareness. The Freedom from Religion Foundation sued to challenge the designation of a National Day of Prayer as unconstitutional in 2008 but eventually lost their case, since they could not demonstrate that a National Day of Prayer actually harmed anyone.

May 6: Ramadan begins (Islam). In the Islamic faith, Ramadan is a full month intended to increase spiritual discipline and focus actions and awareness on God and living in a holy fashion. The principal observance is maintaining a fast from dawn until sunset. Meals are eaten before dawn and after sunset, but no food is to be consumed while the sun is in the sky. Along with food, Muslims must refrain from drinking liquids, sex, smoking, and “sinful behaviors” such as false speech or fighting. The fast is compulsory and in some Muslim countries is legally enforced by the secular authorities. Certain persons, such as pregnant or nursing mothers, diabetics, the elderly and those who are sick are exempted. Along with fasting, Muslims increase the time they spend in prayer, read from the Quran, and increase the amount of their charitable giving and good works (giving a percentage of one’s income to the poor is one of the Five Pillars of Islam). Ramadan ends with the holiday of Eid-al-Fitr. Observing the Ramadan fast is one of the Five Pillars of Islam.

May 18: Visakha Puja (Buddhist). Also known as Vesak, this holiday is a celebration of the birth of the Buddha. The day is marked by activities meant to focus awareness on the principles of Buddhism. Buddhists go to temple to make offerings, listen to sermons and readings, and pray. They meditate on the Five Precepts which comprise the core ethical teachings of Buddhism. Giving happiness to others, especially the old, sick and disabled, through gifts and assistance is customary, as is doing helpful services such as decorating temples or creating inspirational art. In some countries, Vesak is a social holiday with processions, fireworks and other festivities.

May 29: Ascension of Baha’u’llah (Baha’i). Marks the anniversary of the death of Baha’u’llah, the founder of the Baha’i Faith. Work is suspended for the day and believers pray and read from scripture. Founded in Persia in 1863, the Baha’i Faith teaches the unity and equality of all people and the essential worth of all religions. A summary of Baha’i teachings includes: Unity of God; Unity of religion; Unity of humanity; Equality between women and men; Elimination of all forms of prejudice; World peace and a new world order; Harmony of religion and science; Independent investigation of truth; Universal compulsory education; Universal auxiliary language; Obedience to government and non-involvement in partisan politics; Elimination of extremes of wealth and poverty; Prohibition of slavery. The Baha’i Faith has been persecuted since its inception, but currently has 5 to 8 million adherents.

computers, take them apart, put them back together, replace parts, connect them in creative ways...but if one of my computers bites the dust, I can't just go out and buy a new one.

So, my main backup computer bit the dust. I inherited it from my dad, who had gotten it from someone who had made some upgrades to it. It had a problem that isn't easily fixable. But, if I could get exactly the same make and model, I could put the hard drive into the "new" one (kind of like a brain transplant) and it should work okay.

Locating the same make and model of a machine that was manufactured ten years ago wasn't easy, but I found one on eBay that I could afford. The "new" machine arrived, and I opened things up, moved some other components, and then went to move the hard drive.

Except that I couldn't. The hard drive in this machine is held in by four itty-bitty screws. Moving it should have been a snap, not even a five-minute job. Take out the screws, take out the hard drive, put it in the "new" machine, put in the four screws. What could be simpler?

Well...one screw was missing and two of them were stripped, so the screwdriver wouldn't even budge them. And getting stripped screws out of a computer is no easy matter—because the methods you'd use to get a stripped screw out of, say, a kitchen cabinet hinge don't work for sensitive electronics.

Several hours, one Dremel tool, one drill, six different screwdrivers and various random widgets and tools later, I finally got the screws and the hard drive out of the "old" machine without harming the hard drive. Then I needed to scrounge up replacements for the missing screws. (Don't ask. Computer parts follow me home, honest. I just find them on my porch, whimpering to come inside.) Then I put the hard drive into the "new" machine, closed everything up, and pressed the power button.

And it turned on, all happy and shiny. It's been working fine ever since. But what an ordeal!

When things like this happen, we can get disproportionately upset. It's not *fair*, we proclaim to the universe. What did I do to deserve this? This should be so simple! When our expectations are thwarted, that's what makes us unreasonably angry. And it's so pointless. I confess: I stomped around, I cursed till the air was blue, I sat and sulked...and all I did was alarm the cats. Getting mad at the screws didn't make them budge. I only made progress in removing them when I

calmed down, thought hard, and patiently tried different solutions. If I hadn't done all that, if I hadn't calmed down and kept working at it, if I'd given up, I wouldn't have the computer back.

So I have a lesson to think about, when so much anger seems to be swirling around and I'm tempted to react in kind. Anger never solves anything. It's when we let go of the anger that we find the solutions.

Rev. Inanna Arthen

Summer Solstice Fair 2019

We're taking applications for vendor spaces for the Summer Solstice Fair on Saturday, June 15. If you're a vendor and would like a space, don't delay!

10' x 10' spaces are only \$35 for a space on Central Street, \$35 for the front circle and \$30 for the side and back yards. It's a perfect opportunity to reach hundreds of fair-goers at Winchendon's biggest party and UUCW's most popular event of the year! If you'd like an application, send an email to Rev. Arthen at iarthen@inannaarthen.com, or contact the church at PO Box 218, Winchendon, MA, 01475.

Our Neighbor's Kitchen

It's another month with five Thursdays, which is much better than a month with five Mondays, and it's our turn to serve the third dinner. So we have three great meals planned for you in May!

On Thursday, May 9, Rev. Inanna Arthen and assistants will cook that ever-popular comfort food from mom's kitchen, Meatloaf, along mashed potatoes and gravy, veggies and dessert.

On Thursday, May 23, chef extraordinaire Dave Faucher and his dauntless crew will prepare our annual "Spring Chicken" dinner, with sides, salad and dessert.

On Thursday, May 30, we'll enjoy a Memorial Day Cookout, with grilled hot dogs and hamburgers and your favorite "picnic" sides—and weather permitting, we may dine outdoors *al fresco*!

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 May 2 and 16, 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.

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

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).

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.

May Birthdays

Cindy Malley	May 9
Katie Sackett	May 9
Sara Michalewicz	May 14
Erika J. Gambill	May 20
Julia F. Cardinal	May 28



(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.

UUCW Online

<http://uucw.ncmuuc.org>

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

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