

THE WINCHENDON UNITARIAN

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Unitarian Universalist Church of Winchendon



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Church Telephone 978-297-0554

NOVEMBER 2014
SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE 5:00 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

Wednesday, November 5

7:00 pm - 9:00 pm - Cybercafé at UUCW

Sunday, November 9

5:00 pm - Sunday Worship - Chalice Circle Service:
"Gratitude"

6:00 pm - Post-Service Light Potluck Supper

Monday, November 10

7:00 pm - AA Meeting

Wednesday, November 12

7:00 pm - 9:00 pm - Cybercafé at UUCW

Sunday, November 16

5:00 pm - Sunday Worship - "Grace." Inanna
Arthen, M.Div, worship leader.

6:00 pm - Post-Service Light Potluck Supper

Monday, November 17

7:00 pm - AA Meeting

Wednesday, November 19

7:00 pm - 9:00 pm - Cybercafé at UUCW

Thursday, November 20

5:30 pm - Our Neighbor's Kitchen community
supper serves a turkey dinner with all the
trimmings. All are welcome!

Sunday, November 23

4:00 pm - Welcoming Congregations Workshops
(led by Inanna Arthen) followed by a short
worship service.

6:00 pm - Post-Service Light Potluck Supper

Monday, November 24

Deadline for December Newsletter

Monday, November 24

7:00 pm - AA Meeting

Wednesday, November 26

7:00 pm - 9:00 pm - Cybercafé at UUCW

Friday, November 28, 2014

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

Sunday, November 30

5:00 pm - Sunday Worship

6:00 pm - Post-Service Light Potluck Supper

Monday, December 1

7:00 pm - AA Meeting

Wednesday, December 3

7:00 pm - 9:00 pm - Cybercafé at UUCW

Saturday, December 6

Christmas Vendor Crafts Sale

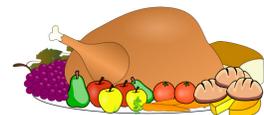
Sunday, December 7

5:00 p.m. Sunday Worship - New Member Sunday.
Inanna Arthen, M.Div, worship leader.

6:00 pm - Post-Service Light Potluck Supper

Saturday, December 13

4:00 pm - Christmas Tree Lighting and Carol
Singing at UUCW



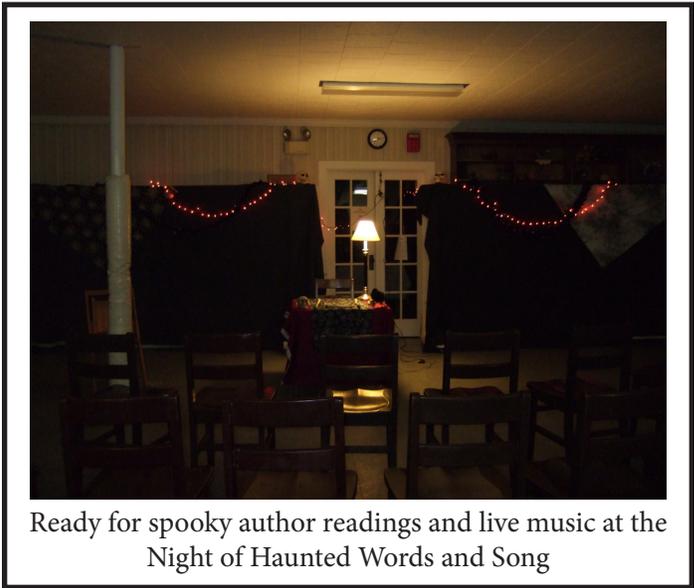
From Your Minister

October was an eventful month for UUCW! On October 1, we launched "Wi-fi Wednesdays" at the UUCW Cybercafé. Each Wednesday from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. I'm there, along with Dave Faucher who is donating the wi-fi connection, as we offer free wi-fi and technical assistance to anyone in the community who needs it. We're set up in the Fellowship Hall downstairs regardless of weather, with plenty of power strips, so bring your wi-fi enabled device and/or your computer or Internet questions and come on down!

On Saturday, October 4, UUCW families converged on Red Apple Farm in Phillipston for our annual hay ride and apple picking excursion. Although Mother Nature chose to rain on us, we carried on undaunted, picking



Heading out on the hay ride at Red Apple Farm



Ready for spooky author readings and live music at the Night of Haunted Words and Song

bags of apples and choosing pumpkins from the field, as we enjoyed a bumpy but scenic hay ride all around the farm. A great time was had by all.

This year, we're choosing a theme for each month's worship services. October's theme was "Compassion." On Sunday, October 5, I led a worship service on this theme. On October 12, Dave Faucher led a Chalice Circle service around "compassion," and October 19 was "TED Talk Sunday." We watched two TED talks related to our theme in place of the sermon and closing words.

On October 26, UUCW members visited the First Parish UU of Ashby, MA for a worship service led by Rev. Bruce Taylor. This was followed by a potluck lunch, and then a panel discussion with LGBTQ people which made up Session 9 of our Welcoming Congregations Journey of Learning. Our own RE lead teacher, Kirsty Johnson Erikson, participated in the panel, along with guests from the UU church of Gardner and the West Teen Coffeehouse in Leominster, MA. I led some parts of the worship service, in which Bruce spoke of discovering a cluster of Unitarian churches on a recent trip to Wales. I read the Lord's Prayer in Welsh to show unity with our Welsh Unitarian sisters and brothers.

On Thursday, October 23, Our Neighbors Kitchen served homemade Sloppy Joes and Dave Faucher's sublime homemade potato chips, with dessert donated by the Winchendon School.

On Saturday, November 1, we hosted our first author and musical event, "A Night of Haunted Music and Song." Local members of the New England Horror Writers Rob Smales, Howard Odentz and Inanna Arthen joined Winchendon musician Brian Dickens for two hours of readings and live music. The Fellowship Hall was transformed into a spooky parlor complete

with Halloween lights, jack-o-lanterns and a raven or two. Turnout was small (no) thanks to an entirely false forecast of snow that evening, but the event came off very well. Don't miss the next one!

Our theme for November is "Gratitude."

I know people who participate in something called "The Gratitude Challenge." There are even calendar pages online you can print out to fill in, and a Facebook page where you can post things. In "The Gratitude Challenge," people commit to actively feeling gratitude for something different in their lives each day for 21 days. On the website sponsored by Tiny Prints, gratitudechallenge.com, the sponsors say the challenge was "created to help you take note of the brighter side of life." They continue, "At Tiny Prints, we believe that sharing gratitude for everyday experiences can revitalize our commitment to living life in a sensational way."

But why just 21 days? Will you run out of things to feel grateful for after three weeks? Of course, there are writers, inspirational coaches and spiritual leaders who urge us to take some time to feel gratitude every day. Some people practice a daily gratitude meditation.

Americans, in a general, have trouble with gratitude. We're a very whiny nation. Especially leading up to the last election, it seems that all Americans can do is complain. Our government is totally corrupt, our economy is faceplanting, immigrants (documented and otherwise) are taking our jobs, our jobs are being sent to other countries, terrorists hate our freedoms, we're losing our freedoms, there are too many guns, they're trying to take our guns away, Christians are being persecuted, Christians are making us a theocracy, we have too many taxes, rich corporations and families don't pay

their fair share of taxes, we're on the brink of socialism, we're on the brink of fascism, we're doomed because not enough people vote, we're doomed because there's a "shadow government" running things and voting doesn't matter, and all the money belongs to about six people and they're hoarding it all for themselves.

And so on. If you read social media, follow the comments threads or letters columns in the news, listen to talk radio or even hang out with a lot of friends, you're liable to not only feel like there's nothing to be thankful for, but as if there's hardly anything worth living for. Americans seem to lap up doom and gloom like it was ambrosia topped with hot fudge sauce.

It doesn't help that November's two main holidays have been almost entirely absorbed into the ever-expanding juggernaut that is The Christmas Shopping Season. If you've been to a store since Halloween (since the week before Halloween, in fact), you'll have noticed that the Christmas merchandize and decorations are already in place. There may be half a shelf of Thanksgiving-related items squeezed in next to the discounted Halloween candy, but that's all. The holiday founded specifically to encourage us to take time out and enjoy the simple blessings of a hot meal and the company of our loved ones has almost disappeared. It's still the busiest travel day of the year, but what does Thanksgiving stand for now? Are we really grateful for our iconic turkey dinner and everything we're supposed to be "giving thanks" for?

The other November holiday is even more focused on gratitude: Veteran's Day. This should be a time when we stop to reflect on all those who served in the armed forces during times of war. We may have ambivalent feelings about war and the military, but one

fact is inescapable: no soldier ever served for personal gain. Our men and women in uniform enter the service knowing that they won't be paid much, may face death or permanent disability and may not be appreciated by the civilians at home when they return—if they return. Yet they serve, and many of them pay a heavy price for doing so. On Veteran's Day, we're called to show our gratitude for their dedication and sacrifice. But how many of us do?

Melody Beattie writes, "Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow."

Practicing gratitude consciously changes the way we think. It's hard to realize how effectively this works until we really try it. We're so used to complaining about everything. We rant, we vent, we fume, we put all our attention on those aspects of life that are frustrating or frightening or negative. But negative feelings don't change any of the situations that upset us—in fact, reacting with negative emotions always, without exception, makes a bad situation worse.

Many spiritual teachers continuously attempt to point out that the first step in changing reality, really changing it in a concrete way, is to change the way we think about it. It's not that sitting in a chair doing nothing but think hard will change our lives—of course not. But until we change our minds and open ourselves to the possibility, we'll never get out of that chair and start doing the work required to make things better.

So, I'm handing you The Gratitude Challenge.



RE News

October was a busy and fun month for our RE kids! We spent some time working on our "secret project" which we hope to have completed by April. The kids and I had much fun working on this. For the rest of the month, we learned more about the topic of "compassion," mirroring what was happening upstairs in church with the adults. We played some fun games to learn about fairness and kindness and all the other parts that make up compassionate living. All of our classes are very hands on, with plenty of time for moving while learning. In November we'll spend time working to understand gratitude and give voice to our own "grateful" feelings. We'll also begin working on our Christmas Eve presentation, which will be fun.

If you haven't joined in the fun of our religious education classes, we so hope you will consider it! The more, the merrier!

In peace,
Kirsty Johnson Erikson

Give it a try. This month, every time you find yourself feeling negative, or upset, or frustrated about something in your life or the world, counter that thought with a conscious thought of gratitude for something you have that's good. Then make it two grateful thoughts for every negative one. Then, try doing something positive, for yourself or even better, for someone else, each time you have a negative thought. See what happens. For the next 21 days—just try it.

I bet you'll be surprised.

Inanna Arthen, M.Div

Welcoming Congregations Journey of Learning

On Sunday, November 23, we'll continue our learning at UUCW with a double session of workshops from *The Welcoming Congregations Handbook*. As we did last year, we'll begin our workshop at 4:00 p.m. and conclude with a short worship service. We'll be covering sessions 7 and 8, "The Radical Right," and "Religion and Homosexuality." These topics will be tied in with current events taking place right now in the wake of the latest elections. We can then discuss

whether there are further sessions we'd like to explore, or if we feel ready to ask the UUA to recognize us as a Welcoming Congregation.

Everyone is welcome to join the sessions at any time. You don't have to have attended earlier sessions to participate. If you'd like copies of the reading materials, slides or handouts, please contact me. The Welcoming Congregations journey of learning is intended to be a thoughtful process, not a painful one. Don't hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions.

UUCW Cybercafé

"Wi-Fi Wednesdays" at the UUCW Cybercafé started on October 1 and will continue every Wednesday through the end of the year. Come join us from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall downstairs. We have a free wi-fi network running for those who need an Internet connection for work or personal reasons and don't have one at home. You'll need to bring your own laptop, tablet or other device. We hope to have some wi-fi-enabled laptops or PCs available soon for general use. Technical assistance and help navigating the Internet are available if you need them.

Inanna Arthen, UUCW minister, will be monitoring the Cybercafé and will also be available if you'd like to talk to her about other concerns.

Spiritual Calendar

November 1: Samhain (Pagan). The Celtic New Year and one of the two great Celtic fire festivals, this is traditionally a time to prepare for winter, reflect on our blessings, remember our beloved dead and confront our mortality.

November 1-2: All Hallows or Hallowtide (Christian). All Saints' Day and All Souls Day honor all the holy (or hallowed) spirits in Heaven, who are remembered with prayers.

November 12: Birth of Baha'u'llah (Baha'i). Honors the birth of the founder of the Baha'i religion.

November 15: Isis Resurrects Osiris (Ancient Egyptian). In a myth that foreshadowed the resurrection of Christ, Isis, in mourning, gathered the pieces of her murdered husband and returned them to life after four days.

November 30: Beginning of Advent (Christian). The four Sundays before Christmas Eve honor the advent, or imminent approach, of the birth of Christ.

This Month in UU History

November 3, 1794: William Cullen Bryant was born in Cummington, MA. A member of the Unitarian Church of All Souls in NYC, Bryant edited the *New York Evening Post* for more than 50 years. He never finished college, but was fluent in several languages, was a self-taught scholar of law and science, read the law and was admitted to the bar in 1815. He was an advocate for women's rights and the abolition of slavery.

November 9, 1805: lifelong Universalist Harriot Kezia Hunt was born in Boston, MA. She was a medical pioneer who advocated the abolition of slavery, women's rights and public health education. She stressed a strong family life as the key to good health and connected mental health to physical well-being.

November 11, 1620: Pilgrim leaders who had arrived in Plymouth signed the Mayflower Compact. The church they founded is now Unitarian Universalist.

November 11, 1744: Devoted Unitarian Abigail Smith Adams was born in Weymouth, MA. Wife of John Adams and mother of John Quincy Adams, Abigail was educated, intelligent and articulate. She advised her husband throughout his long career and worked actively for the abolition of slavery and social justice.

November 18, 1787: The first Anglican church in America, King's Chapel in Boston, became the first Unitarian church in America when its congregation ordained Unitarian James Freeman as "Rector, Minister, Priest, Pastor and Ruling Elder."

November 25, 1758: Noah Worcester was born in Hollis, NH. He conducted morning and evening family worship at home from the age of 12, and joined the Revolutionary Army in 1775 when he was 17. Too poor to pay for education, he studied theology on his own, was ordained as a Unitarian minister and served several churches. He wrote several books and became a pacifist in later years.

November 29, 1879: Unitarian minister John Haynes Holmes was born in Philadelphia. A leader in liberal and pacifist thought, Holmes advocated economic socialism, helped found (and later chaired) the ACLU and was a founding member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He was the chief American publicist for Mahatma Gandhi and a recipient of the Gandhi Peace Award. He was harshly lampooned by Theodore Geisel ("Dr Seuss") for his pacifist views during World War II.

Spirit of Christmas Toy Drive

On November 28, the Friday after Thanksgiving, we'll be at UUCW hosting our 10th Annual Spirit Of Christmas Toy Drive. Just "drive through" our conveniently circular drive as "elves" accept your donations of new and gently used unwrapped toys to be distributed to families in Winchendon and surrounding communities. Donate, volunteer, have some fun on Black Friday Afternoon! We might even get a surprise visit from a jolly man dressed in red.

November Birthdays

Tim Elkins	November 3
Phyllis Priest	November 21
Elaine Gaspard	November 27



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

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 978-433-8866 (home) or 508-572-1624 (cell).

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. Thanks!

<http://uucw.ncmuuc.org>
<https://www.facebook.com/uuwinchendon>

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