

THE WINCHENDON UNITARIAN

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Unitarian Universalist Church of Winchendon



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Church Telephone 978-297-0554

MAY 2018

SUNDAY CIRCLE MEETING 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, May 6

11:00 am - Sacred Circle Meeting
12:30 pm - Indivisible Winchendon Mtg.

Monday, May 7

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Tuesday, May 8

6:30 pm - Recovery Support Group

Thursday, May 10

5:30 pm - Our Neighbor's Kitchen serves
Meatballs Stroganoff

Sunday, May 13

11:00 am - Sacred Circle Meeting
12:30 pm - Indivisible Winchendon Mtg.

Monday, May 14

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Tuesday, May 15

6:30 pm - Recovery Support Group

Wednesday, May 16

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

Sunday, May 20

11:00 am - Sacred Circle Meeting
12:30 pm - Indivisible Winchendon Mtg.

Monday, May 21

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Tuesday, May 22

6:30 pm - Recovery Support Group

Thursday, May 24

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

Sunday, May 27

11:00 am - Sacred Circle Meeting
12:30 pm - Indivisible Winchendon Mtg.

Monday, May 28

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Tuesday, May 29

6:30 pm - Recovery Support Group

Thursday, May 31

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

Sunday, June 3

11:00 am - Sacred Circle Meeting
12:30 pm - Indivisible Winchendon Mtg.

Monday, June 4

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

From Your Minister

I helped with an event in Franklin, MA last Saturday, and spring was about a week ahead of us even such a short distance to the southeast. As I drove down 140, I saw more and more blossoming forsythia, and bird song from the woods accompanied my journey the whole way. Now Winchendon is catching up, and summer is like an impatient driver that's been trapped behind a pokey dump truck for miles: it's ready to burst out and soak our chilly bones with hot temperatures and sunshine as soon as the road is clear.

We've had a busy month of April at UUCW—even more so because there were five Sundays this month. On Sunday, April 1, I led an Easter Sunday service. We had fresh flowers on the altar that people brought in (thank you, Jill and Kate!), both potted bulbs and cut flowers. I gave a sermon on the "Spirit of Easter" and its universal themes. On Sunday, April 8, I presented a service titled "Emerging from Winter." On Sunday, April 15, Dave Faucher put together a chalice circle service on the theme of "Faith and Taxes." On Sunday, April 22, I led a service for Earth Day. On Sunday, April 29, we planned a "Gardening Sunday" instead of a regular worship service. Rainy weather curtailed of our outdoor plans, but we tackled some of the ongoing church clean-up and reorganizing downstairs

This Month in UU History

- May 5, 1819: Unitarian William Ellery Channing delivered what is considered among the most influential sermons in American religious history, “Unitarian Christianity,” also known as the Baltimore Sermon, on the occasion of the ordination of Rev. Jared Sparks at the first Independent Church of Baltimore. Widely published in multiple languages, the sermon itself was only heard by a small number of people because the acoustics in the church were so poor. In the ninety-minute sermon, Channing outlined the essential tenets of Unitarian thought, including rejecting the Trinity, a belief in essential human goodness and the belief that religious doctrine should be examined and challenged by reason. This sermon is credited with helping American liberal Christianity coalesce under the name of Unitarian. In Baltimore, the anniversary of Channing’s sermon is observed as Union Sunday by Maryland UU congregations. Channing was offered the Presidency of the newly formed American Unitarian Association in 1825 but turned it down. You can read “Unitarian Christianity” online at <http://www.americanunitarian.org/unitarianchristianity.htm>.
- May 15, 1961: The American Unitarian Association and the Universalist Church of America merged to form the Unitarian Universalist Association. The denominations had been working together to create and publish religious education curricula since the 1920s, and recognized that theologically they had a great deal in common. Both denominations had been persecuted in England and Europe for denying or questioning traditional doctrines about Christ and salvation. Hostility toward Universalism is still strong among many American evangelical Christians. Evangelical bishop Carlton Pearson underwent a spiritual awakening in 2002 and basically re-discovered Universalism, which he called “universal reconciliation” or “the Gospel of Inclusion”—that God would not and does not damn anyone to eternal hell. In 2004, he was officially proclaimed a heretic by the Joint College of African-American Pentecostal Bishops. He now preaches at All Souls Unitarian Church in Tulsa, OK. Pearson is the subject of a new film, *Come Sunday*.
- May 24, 1944: The Unitarian Church of the Larger Fellowship was formed to help gather and serve the spiritual needs of individual Unitarians who did not have a local Unitarian congregation. The American Unitarian Association distributed sermons, newsletters, devotional material and other literature through the mail. The CLF was based on the “Post Office Mission” initiated by Unitarian Sallie Ellis in the 1870s. Known as “a Unitarian Universalist congregation without walls,” the CLF is very active today and may be contacted through its website, <https://www.questformeaning.org/clfuu/>.
- May 26, 1825: The American Unitarian Association was formed at the Ministerial Conference in Boston. By a complete coincidence, on this same day, the British and Foreign Unitarian Association (now known as the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches) was formed in London. Unitarianism was only legalized in Britain in 1813.
- May 28, 1896: The Young People’s Religious Union was established at Second Church (Unitarian) in Boston. The predecessor of Liberal Religious Youth (Unitarian Universalist), the Union’s initial purposes were: “(a) to foster the religious life; (b) to bring the young into closer relations with one another; and (c) to spread rational views of religion, and to put into practice such principles of life and duty as tend to uplift mankind. The cardinal principles of the Union are truth, worship and service.”

and made a great deal of progress. Many thanks to Jill Nicholson Sackett who has been logging hours in the Pine Room—you’d hardly recognize it!

Our Neighbor’s Kitchen served two delicious meals. On Thursday, April 12, I reprised the very popular pasta feast of stuffed Manicotti shells and garlic bread with salad and homemade chocolate chip cookies for dessert. On Thursday, April 26, Melissa Wilson and Dave Faucher served up buttery Crispy Chicken with jasmine rice, glazed carrots, bread and salad to a capacity crowd—the largest attendance ONK

has enjoyed for some time! We were delighted to see so many newcomers and look forward to welcoming them back to future dinners. This ONK featured “News from the Friends of ONK” placemats with information and some “Thoughts to Chew On.”

The former Winchendon NA Meeting is now the Recovery Support Meeting. We’re hearing feedback that a different format of meeting (open, peer-focused, not 12-step or a program to “work”) will serve people’s needs better, and we’re obliging. Indivisible Winchendon has met each Sunday afternoon, with

Spiritual Calendar

May 1: Beltane (Pagan). This holiday is documented as observed from ancient times in Celtic regions of Northern Europe and the U.K. Beltane traditionally marked the beginning of summer. The ancient Celts moved their cattle and sheep to summer pasturage at this time. Times of transition—such as the change from one season to another—were seen as perilous, and Beltane customs focused on protection, good fortune, clement weather, fertility and prosperity. The Celts also took care to appease the fae folk and spirit world, who were thought to be especially active on the eve of Beltane. Beltane was one of the great fire festivals, when bonfires were lit in highly visible places like hilltops and large open areas. Cattle were driven between two bonfires for protection and luck. In some areas, Beltane customs such as walking the boundaries of one’s farm or lighting bonfires survived into the 20th century. Modern Pagans celebrate Beltane in a variety of different ways. Some aim to reconstruct Celtic practices as authentically as possible; others hold a more eclectic celebration combining May Day and spring traditions from many cultures. The Maypole dance is a favorite modern Pagan Beltane celebration, along with joyful rituals heralding the renewal of life, the end of winter and the approach of summer.

May 3: National Day of Prayer (Interfaith). Although there are numerous earlier precedents, the National Day of Prayer was established by Congress in 1952 as a day for all Americans to “turn to God in prayer and meditation at churches, in groups, and as individuals.” How participants define “God” and how they choose to commune with the divine is not defined, and the date was meant to apply to everyone. Presidents have traditionally issued a proclamation of the Day of Prayer each year. The National Day of Prayer was challenged as unconstitutional by the Freedom From Religion Foundation in 2008, but they ultimately lost their case.

May 16: Beginning of Ramadan (Muslim). One of the Five Pillars of Islam, Ramadan is observed for a full month to commemorate the revelation of the Quran to Muhammed. The essential element of Ramadan is fasting. Muslims refrain from eating, drinking, sex, sinful behavior such as false speech, and fighting from dawn until sunset. A special meal is eaten before dawn and another after sunset, and it is customary to break the day’s fast by eating a few dates. Along with fasting, Muslims also offer additional prayers, perform acts of charity and participate in recitations of the Quran throughout the month.

May 20-21: Shavuot (Jewish). A dual holiday, Shavuot originated as a celebration of the wheat harvest. It also commemorates Moses’ return from Mount Sinai with the tablets containing the Torah. Rich foods made with milk and cheese, either sweet or fried (or both!) are common holiday treats. Some Jewish communities have a custom of studying the Torah all night on Shavuot.

some of our members attending a League of Women Voters event and bringing information and reports back to the group.

I’m fostering a litter of kittens for Ahimsa Haven; they’re between three and four weeks old and still being bottle fed. It’s a lot of work, feeding them four times a day and keeping them clean, warm and dry. But there’s something renewing about caring for babies. I have several senior cats, and it doesn’t feel balanced to be shepherding old animals through the end of their lives with no young ones growing up to take their place. That’s Nature’s way; the old passes on to make way for the new. At the same time, each new generation changes everything around it, because it isn’t a copy or a clone of the old one, but unique and distinctive in its own right.

This endless cycle of change can make us

uncomfortable, especially when it’s a slow cycle and we’ve had a long time to get accustomed to the way things were. Letting go of things or situations we’ve come to cherish and depend on is never easy. But unless we do, we can’t experience the delight and rejuvenation of embracing something new and different. The pain of loss can be soothed by new companions, new babies to care for, new experiences, even a whole new environment. We become habituated to the components of our everyday lives, but habits are like old slippers or a favorite old armchair; they’re worn to fit us and we never have to think about them. But those old slippers may no longer be serving their purpose; that saggy armchair might be bad for our back. It’s good to shake up our habits from time to time, and it’s good to fill our lives with newness. It helps to keep us young.

People my age grumble a lot about the younger generations. I guess I’ve always been ahead of my time,

because several decades ago, I was considered “way out” for attitudes that now Millennials and the generations around them are making mainstream. Ideas about social justice, revolutionizing the workplace, accepting diversity, redefining gender, even asking whether socialism might not be a superior and even more truly American system, and questioning every assumption of capitalism—thirty years ago those ideas made me a radical. Today, these ideas are everywhere.

Decades ago, spiritual writers were predicting that the world was turning away from settled religious forms and institutions toward more individualized and unmediated kinds of spiritual expression and experience. Some of us were “early adopters” as techies say. We not only embraced these new trends, we built them from the ground up. We did so against fierce opposition from the established Powers That Be. We were told we were Narcissistic, seduced by Satan, cultists, self-centered, trivial, superstitious, promoting pseudoscience, immoral, atheistic, and lacking values. Even the innocuous term “New Age” was turned into a scathing slur. Some of us had businesses shut down, lost custody of children, or were arrested under long-outdated “fortune telling” laws (which had highly racist origins).

We didn’t care. As far as we were concerned, we were the future. And now it seems that we were right.

Every spring, we’re surrounded by the new and the newborn. Babies are everywhere, seeds are sprouting, the world itself, emerging from winter’s snow and ice, is reshaped and replenished. It’s a time of year when we’re called upon to share in the vigorous energy of rebirth. So go ahead—just say “Yes!” to something new. Change, like life itself, won’t take no for an answer.

Rev. Inanna Arthen

Something New for UUCW

Beginning on Sunday, May 6, we will begin Sacred Circle Meetings on Sunday mornings. These will be quite different from traditional church services. We’ll be meeting in a circle of chairs, so that everyone is equal. We’ll begin by creating a sacred space, and we’ll light our UU Chalice and candles of joys and concerns. But from there, we’ll be doing 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 and the greater powers that give us life, love and all the myriad blessings we so

often take for granted. If we have a discussion, it will be part of our sacred space and will be structured so that everyone’s words and thoughts are valued and heard. It will be a time to spiritually renew ourselves for the coming week.

Many Unitarian Universalist congregations are experimenting with new kinds of spiritual experiences. Many people are no longer fulfilled by the “sermon and hymn sandwich” model of service—but they’re hungry for spiritual depth and a community to share it with. UUism overlaps broadly with earth-centered and other faith traditions (such as Buddhism). Respecting and celebrating these sources is a big part of being a UU.

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.

Our Neighbor’s Kitchen

Hello to the Merry Month of May, with spring peepers and blossoming forsythia at long last. We’ve got three great meals planned for you this month!

On Thursday, May 10, Rev. Inanna Arthen and assistants will try something new: Meatballs Stroganoff with noodles, roasted vegetables, and homemade cookies for dessert.

On Thursday, May 24, chef extraordinaire David Faucher and assistants will turn out a delicious Ham Dinner with sides, salad and dessert.

We’re covering the fifth Thursday this month. On Thursday, May 31, we’ll satisfy your comfort food longings with an old-fashioned Meatloaf dinner 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 May 3 and 17, 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.

2018 Summer Solstice Flea Market and Fair

Winchendon’s 2018 Summer Solstice festival will take place on Saturday, June 16, and UUCW will be holding our annual flea market and yard sale on the church lawns throughout the day. If you’re a vendor, rest assured that you’re not too late—we’re still getting our vendor lists and arrangements lined up, and there is plenty of space available. A 10’ x 10’ space on the front lawns will be \$40 this year; on the side lawn, the cost is \$30. Please get in touch with us right away if you’re interested in a spot. You can email Rev. Inanna Arthen at iarthen@inannaarthen.com, or leave a message at church, 978-297-0554.

Winchendon Winds Concerts at UUCW

Many of you have been wondering when Winchendon Winds would begin its 2018 season of concerts! UUCW is pleased to announce that we’ll be hosting three Sunday afternoon concerts in our sanctuary this summer, on July 1, July 8 and July 15. More details will be coming soon! For updates about Winchendon Winds, see www.facebook.com/WinchendonWinds or www.winchendonwinds.org.

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).

Winchendon Recovery Support Group at UUCW

A support group for all those in recovery meets 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. This is not a 12-step group, but a group for peers to help each other in the day-to-day work of achieving and maintaining sobriety. The facilitators are Winchendon residents.

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.

Contact Information

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