

THE WINCHENDON UNITARIAN

Established 1954 Published by the

Unitarian Universalist Church of Winchendon



Volume 62 Issue 12

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Church Telephone 978-297-0554

AUGUST 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, August 5

11:00 am - Sacred Circle Meeting -
Lammas Celebration

Monday, August 6

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Tuesday, August 7

6:30 pm - Recovery Support Group
6:30 pm - Indivisible Winchendon Mtg

Thursday, August 9

5:30 pm - Our Neighbor's Kitchen serves
Mac 'n' Cheese Deluxe

Sunday, August 12

Sacred Circle Meeting TBD - watch our
Facebook page for updates

Monday, August 13

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Tuesday, August 14

6:30 pm - Recovery Support Group
6:30 pm - Indivisible Winchendon Mtg

Wednesday, August 15

TBA - UUCW Governing Board Meeting

Sunday, August 19

11:00 am - Sacred Circle Meeting and New
Member Ceremony

Monday, August 20

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Tuesday, August 21

6:30 pm - Recovery Support Group
6:30 pm - Indivisible Winchendon Mtg

Thursday, August 23

5:30pm - Our Neighbor's Kitchen serves
Fish 'n' Chips

Sunday, August 26

11:00 am - Sacred Circle Meeting

Monday, August 27

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Tuesday, August 28

6:30 pm - Recovery Support Group
6:30 pm - Indivisible Winchendon Mtg

Sunday, September 2

11:00 am - Sacred Circle Meeting

Monday, September 3

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Tuesday, September 4

6:30 pm - Recovery Support Group
6:30 pm - Indivisible Winchendon Mtg

From Your Minister

What a summer this has turned into! A long spell of weather so hot and dry, I emptied the 40-gallon rain barrels I rely on to water my gardens. Then torrential rains, thunderstorms, tornados—becoming a commonplace occurrence in New England—flooded streets, all with days on end of tropical humidity that used to be rare for us and is now the new normal. I mowed my lawn this week for the first time since June 9 and the grass was neither thick nor very high; I put in tomato plants that are just starting to produce ripe tomatoes, and not very big ones. But I'm seeing little toads everywhere, and fireflies, and the robins are raising a second clutch of babies in my garage.

In defiance of heat waves, humidity or downpours, we had a very busy month of July at UUCW, with band concerts, Sacred Circle Meeting every Sunday, community meetings and big steps forward in church maintenance projects. We're just catching our collective breath as we head into August.

On Sunday, July 1, Sacred Circle Meeting performed a ceremony to welcome summer and honor the new growing season and the divine powers which nurture it. On Sunday, July 8, we held a celebration of the New Moon in Cancer and the first of three consecutive eclipses. (Have you been feeling that your life and things in general

This Month in UU History

August 11, 1901: Unitarian Margaret Moseley was born in Dorchester, MA. She wanted to become a nurse, but was refused by every nursing program in Boston because they would not accept African Americans. Margaret joined the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) which grew out of the Woman's Peace Party in 1915 and is still active and thriving. She served as the organization's president and started a chapter of the WILPF on Cape Cod. In 1989, the WILPF established the Margaret Moseley Memorial Peace Education Fund in her honor. Margaret served as president of the Community Church (Unitarian) in Boston. In the 1940s, she was a founding member of Cooperative Way, a Boston consumer cooperative. In 1949, she was a founding member of Freedom House, a Boston-based organization working to assist at-risk communities through education which is still active today. She was on the board of the Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts and a leader in the fight against McCarthyism in the 1950s. In 1961, she moved to Cape Cod, where she started a chapter of the NAACP and the Fair Housing Commission. She was the first woman to chair the governing board of the Unitarian Church of Barnstable. In 1965, Margaret traveled to Selma, AL to work on voter registration campaigns. In later years she was awarded the Martin Luther King Jr. award from the Fellowship of Reconciliation. She died in 1997.

are more chaotic and upsetting than usual? You're not alone! This series of eclipses is hitting everyone pretty hard.) On Sunday, July 15, we did a "Circle of Song," sharing some chants and songs from my very large collection, and trying out some drumming together. This will be an ongoing project, as we incorporate more singing and music into our meetings—to use these effectively, we have to take the time to learn them, and practice together. On Sunday, July 22, we did a "waxing moon" ceremony contributed by one of our members. On Sunday, July 29, we celebrated the Full Moon in Aquarius and the second of the three eclipses with a vigorous drumming circle to help purge negative energy and things that are blocking progress and resolution in our lives and in the greater world.

While we were doing all this, Winchendon Winds was performing its 2018 summer series of concerts up in the sanctuary. On Sunday, July 1, new conductor Jim Chesebrough led the band in a concert of festive patriotic music for the Fourth of July. UUCW sold (and sold out of) strawberry shortcake before the concert. On Sunday, July 8, the concert program looked back a century to "Greatest Hits of 1918"—musical milestones from exactly 100 years ago. Winchendon Winds sponsor Lickity Splitz sold ice cream sundaes before the concert. On Sunday, July 15, Winchendon Winds and the Winchendon American Legion Post 193 partnered in a special concert, "Honoring Our Veterans," which included a roll call of veterans present, a color guard and a reception on the front lawn after the concert. All three concerts were attended by well over 100 people who gave the band enthusiastic standing ovations.

Our Neighbor's Kitchen reprised two popular

meals in July. On Thursday, July 12, Dave Faucher and assistants grilled up a summer cookout meal of hamburgers and hotdogs, served on the front lawn of the church *al fresco*. On Thursday, July 26, I and my assistants cooked up our annual July feast of homemade beef and bean chili, with fresh baked from scratch corn muffins, salad and ice cream treats for dessert. As always, many thanks to all our volunteers who pitch in to help out with cooking, set-up, serving and clean-up—we couldn't do it without you!

Recovery Group meeting continued to assemble on Tuesday nights at 6:30 p.m. Indivisible Winchendon took a break during the band concerts, and has changed its day and time, since Sunday afternoons conflicted with attendees' other commitments. Both groups are now meeting on Tuesday nights at 6:30 p.m. in different parts of the church. Indivisible Winchendon resumed meeting on Tuesday, July 24.

The UUCW Governing Board is delighted to announce that the wheelchair lift in the Equal Access Entry is now fully operational, certified and available for use. If you, or a friend or family member, have been unable to attend any of our events because of difficulty with stairs, you can now use the lift to access the sanctuary and Parish Hall. The lift is self-service and always on standby. Directions for operating it are posted outside the lift door on each level and inside the lift. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact us.

In an early scene of Steven Spielberg's movie, *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, our hero is giving his introductory lecture to a college archeology class. "Archeology is the search for fact, not truth," he says to

Spiritual Calendar

August 1: Lammas/Lughnasadh (Pagan). One of the most ancient holidays in northern Europe, August 1 was celebrated as a festival of “first fruits” and the beginning of the grain harvest by the ancient Celtic and Germanic peoples. The name Lammas derives from the Anglo-Saxon name “loaf mass.” The Irish name Lughnasadh is more mysterious, as it is based on the name of the Irish god Lugh, who was the patron god and master of all arts and crafts. Some modern Pagans celebrate Lughnasadh as a time to honor all skills in arts and crafts, from cookery to metal forging. But the most consistent and deepest meaning of this festival is an acknowledgment of our debt to the Earth and the divine powers for everything we eat, drink and wear, and an expression of gratitude for Earth’s abundance and for the living things whose sacrifice sustains us. Traditional celebrations include colorful costumed processions, ritual theatre, and feasts centering on fresh baked bread (often in elaborate shapes), locally grown fruits, grains and vegetables, and locally produced honey, wine and mead.

August 22-25: Eid al Adha (Islam). One of two Islamic holidays, along with Eid al Fitr, observed worldwide, Eid al Adha is considered the more sacred. It commemorates the willingness of Abraham to sacrifice his only son in obedience to God’s command; having shown his willingness, Abraham is prevented from killing his son and a ram is provided by God for the sacrifice. Muslims see God’s action as signifying that one should never sacrifice a human life, especially not in the name of God. During Eid al Adha, Muslims sacrifice an animal and give one third to the poor and needy, one third to relatives and friends, and keep one third for the family. Muslims dress in their finest clothing to offer Eid prayers, share special foods and sweets and visit the graves of deceased loved ones. Another custom is the “stoning of the Devil” (throwing pebbles at pillars) in imitation of Abraham throwing rocks at Shaitan who tempted him to disobey God’s command.

August 29: Raksha Bandhan (Hindu). This widespread holiday centers around a small ritual, in which a colored thread, amulet or bracelet called a *rakhi* is tied about one person’s wrist by another person to denote protection—both from evil, for the recipient, and the responsibility to protect the giver by the recipient. Most commonly, sisters tie the rakhi around their brother’s wrist. The custom is especially important in regions where married sons live close to their parents but married daughters often move far away to live in their husband’s family. Married daughters return home at Raksha Bandhan to help reinforce mutual bonds with their birth family through this ritual. The ritual may also be shared among unrelated people with a protector/protected relationship, such as priests to patrons and individuals to benefactors.

his amused students. “If it’s truth you’re interested in, Dr. Tyree’s Philosophy class is right down the hall.”

The students chuckle because there is an obvious assumption to Prof. Jones’ joke: that there is a difference between “facts” and “truth.” But is there? Don’t we usually think of them as being the same? “Tell the truth.” “State the facts.” Those two directives mean exactly the same thing. Is “truth” ever non-factual?

This is a dilemma that is bedeviling all of us right now. “Everyone is entitled to his own opinion, but not his own facts” is a quote often attributed to Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (in the interest of factualness, he may or may not have said it and if so, may or may not have been paraphrasing an earlier speaker). This popular and oft-paraphrased sentiment contains another obvious assumption: that “facts” are immutable realities, which can’t be altered by interpretation or notions of political correctness or relative value systems. Facts are unambiguous. Facts are, in short,

true. They are true whether or not someone is offended by them, whether or not they disagree with someone’s political stance or religious beliefs or personal experience or opinions of what “should” be the case.

But we don’t think of *truth* as being in the same class at all, and therein lies the source of our fiercest and ugliest disputes and conflicts.

We do think of “truth” as being relative. What is truth for you may not be truth for me. We think of “truth” as being deeper, higher, and broader than “facts.” We think of “truth” as being personal, insights or revelations that have come to us from other sources than pure logic and reasoning. We accept as a given that other people may not share our “truth.” This is especially applicable to religious truth. For people of faith, their religion is “truth.” But line up ten people of different belief systems, and you’ll get ten different versions of what they see as absolute truth. There is no common element to all of them, not even a simple

agreement on the existence or nature of “God.” Mark Twain wrote, “Faith is believing something you know ain’t true.” In other words, to have faith is to believe in a (higher) truth that is (seemingly) contradicted by the facts (mere knowledge).

Not all religious or philosophical truths contradict known facts, of course. Much of what we consider matters of faith fall into the realm of as-yet-unproved or unprovable by science. Are souls immortal? Is there an afterlife? What is the nature of God? We can’t evaluate these questions on the basis of direct evidence. We believe in the answers on the basis of our subjective experience, temperaments and predisposition. An unqualified pronouncement that there is no God is every bit as unprovable and subjective a belief as a devout faith in God, or Jesus, or many gods. (As every logician knows, negative propositions are unprovable.) Believers may feel that they have direct personal experience that serves as proof for them. But subjective experience isn’t scientific evidence.

We build our entire sense of reality out of subjective experience, but we test that experience constantly—every minute of every day—against the experience of others. People who live in complete isolation from human contact for long stretches of time (such as solitary explorers or sailors) quickly lose their connection with “consensual reality.” They develop delusions, quickly begin hallucinating, may become paranoid, and may forget basic language and social skills.

Does this sound familiar? Never before has an entire culture of people lived in such drastically different consensual realities than Americans do today. Yet we’re constantly being told that we are the most relentlessly “connected” population in history, constantly on social media, constantly on our phones, constantly watching TV. How can we live in so many different consensual realities, all contradicting each other, all upheld by “true believers” who tolerate no gray areas or ambiguity, who regard every other belief system as not just wrong but evil?

Can it be that without a solid foundation of shared facts, none of us can have a meaningful truth? Can it be that if we treat all facts as relative and subjective, our grasp on reality will quickly begin to disintegrate?

Consider the state of our country these days and think about that question. The United States is the most religious country in the industrialized world. We have elevated subjective truth over provable facts. If we never test our reality system against facts, we’re free to retreat into little select circles of contacts who validate

and reinforce our version of truth. If there is no such thing as a fact, we’re free to believe anything we want and believe that anyone who says differently is a liar, crazy, evil or trying to hurt us.

Facts have their limits; there is much we don’t yet know and much we cannot know. But to live entirely by subjective opinions and beliefs means we all live in isolation, never testing and correcting our reality against anything but ourselves. Can you see the inevitable outcome of that? If not, take a good look around you.

Rev. Inanna Arthen

Our Neighbor’s Kitchen

We’ve got two of your favorite meals simmering for August, so be sure you save the dates!

On Thursday, August 9, Rev. Inanna Arthen and assistants will turn out Deluxe Mac ‘n’ Cheese, with several kinds of cheese and meaty mix-ins. Rev. Arthen will be making a new side dish: diced tomato and black bean salad. And of course, we’ll have a yummy dessert.

On Thursday, August 23, chef extraordinaire Dave Faucher and assistants will make that annual ONK favorite, Fish ‘n’ Chips: crispy baked fish with Dave’s inimitable homemade potato chips, plus 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 August 3, 17 and 31, Immaculate Heart of Mary church (52 Spruce Street) will be serving “first and third (and fifth) 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

We are now holding Sacred Circle Meetings on Sunday mornings. 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. But 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 and the greater powers that give us life, love and all the myriad blessings we so often take for granted. When we have a discussion, it is part of our sacred space and structured so that everyone's words and thoughts are valued and heard. It is 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.

Toy Town Outdoor Market Returns to UUCW

We are pleased to see the Toy Town Outdoor Market return to the UUCW front lawn, where they are centrally located and within walking distance for many Winchendon residents. The Market sets up on Thursdays from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (weather permitting), and

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).

offers fresh local produce and farm products, and crafts. Stop by and support our local farmers and artisans!

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 o help each other in the day-to-day work of achieving and maintaining sobriety. The facilitators are Winchendon residents.

August Birthdays

Jessica Bacigalupo August 31



(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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