

THE WINCHENDON UNITARIAN

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Unitarian Universalist Church of Winchendon



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Church Telephone 978-297-0554

SEPTEMBER 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, September 2

LABOR DAY HOLIDAY - No Sacred
Circle Meeting this week

Monday, September 3

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Tuesday, September 4

MASSACHUSETTS PRIMARIES

Indivisible Winchendon will be Getting
Out the Vote! Please go and vote your
conscience on the ballot questions and
candidates of your choice!

Sunday, September 9

1:00 pm - NEW TIME! Sacred Circle
Meeting - Water Communion and New
Moon Celebration

Monday, September 10

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Tuesday, September 11

6:30 pm - Indivisible Winchendon Mtg

Thursday, September 13

5:30 pm - Our Neighbor's Kitchen serves
Pot Roast dinner

Sunday, September 16

1:00 pm Sacred Circle Meeting

Monday, September 17

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Tuesday, September 18

6:30 pm - Indivisible Winchendon Mtg

Wednesday, September 19

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

Sunday, September 23

1:00 pm - Sacred Circle Meeting - Autumn
Equinox/Harvest Celebration

Monday, September 24

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Tuesday, September 25

6:30 pm - Indivisible Winchendon Mtg

Thursday, September 27

5:30pm - Our Neighbor's Kitchen serves
Tuscan Chicken and pasta

Sunday, September 30

1:00 pm - Sacred Circle Meeting

Monday, October 1

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Tuesday, October 2

6:30 pm - Indivisible Winchendon Mtg

From Your Minister

It's been a very long and very hot August (closing in to be the hottest August on record, according to the *Boston Globe*—and compared to many places, we're getting off easy). I hope people with vacation time were able to enjoy some good beach and camping weather, or a fun and relaxing time wherever you were. I've been keeping busy, with Sacred Circle Meeting on Sundays, two online business meetings and two in-person ones, and an interview via Skype with a podcaster in England. We barely slowed down at UUCW this month. We're taking Labor Day weekend off to catch our breath, and gearing up for the official start of the new church year on September 9.

On Sunday, August 5, Sacred Circle Meeting celebrated Lughnasadh with an altar full of fresh local produce and a loaf of homemade bread I baked the night before. Beth Hunt of Not Just Produced donated a melon for our altar. On Sunday, August 12, we agreed to skip meeting as everyone was away that weekend (August is vacation month!). On Sunday, August 19, we held a drumming circle to help balance the energies after the long eclipse phase, and concluded with a New Member ceremony in which four new members joined us in covenant and signed UUCW's Membership Book. Welcome to the Sacketts and the Menards! On Sunday, August 26, we celebrated the

This Month in UU History

September 18, 1887: This date is celebrated as “Unitarian Day” in the state of Meghalaya, India. It was the day that Hajom Kissor Singh led the first Khasi Hills Unitarian Church service in Jowai, India. Meghalaya is home to the Khasi people, whose distinct culture and language differs from that of the rest of India. Their indigenous religious beliefs centered on family teaching and practices and had no central organization, liturgy, doctrine or clergy. When the British discovered that the Khasi were neither Hindu nor Muslim, they brought in Methodist missionaries to convert the tribal people to Christianity. The missionaries translated the Bible into the Khasi language (which until then had no written form) and founded Christian schools.

Hajom Kisson Singh was born in 1865 and attended one of the mission schools, converting to Christianity at age 15. Khasi traditional religion teaches that there is one God, known as UBlei, who is omniscient and omnipresent. Hajom struggled to reconcile his traditional belief with the trinitarian Calvinist doctrine of the Methodists. He contacted a Unitarian missionary, Rev. Charles Dall, in Calcutta. Rev. Dall sent Hajom quantities of Unitarian literature, and Hajom decided that his beliefs were closest to Unitarian teachings. He wrote a book which aligned Unitarian Christianity with the traditional Khasi beliefs that missionaries were attempting to stamp out. The church’s statement of faith, adopted in 1888, said, “We believe (1) in the Unity of God; (2) in the Fatherhood and Motherhood of of God; (3) in the Brotherhood of Man; (4) in Love, Union, Worship and Faith; and (5) in Immortality.” The book includes three chapters on “Our Duty to God,” “Our Duty to Fellow Humans,” and “Our Duty to Ourselves.”

Hajom spent the rest of his life leading and growing the Unitarian church he founded. He wrote a hymnal that included American Unitarian hymns translated into Khasi. Today, Hajom’s “Religion of One God” comprises over 30 churches with some 10,000 members. Along with the Madras Christian Unitarian Church, it forms the Indian Council of Unitarian Churches. The Council maintains connections with Unitarian organizations around the world. The Meghalaya churches operate pre-schools for children.

“Unitarian Day” is a time for renewing faith and gathering the community. In accordance with the family-centered Khasi tradition, beginning on this day each family in a community hosts the entire congregation in its home for dinner and worship, during which each home and family is blessed.

Modern Meghalaya’s Khasi population has similar economic diversity to India as a whole, ranging from degreed professionals who work online, to families whose homes lack electricity or running water. But all of them place their Unitarian faith at the center of their lives. Their Unitarianism is rooted in their deep indigenous beliefs, yet they are amazingly similar to Unitarians in other countries. Their motto is, “To Nangroi” which means, “keep on progressing.” All of us UUs share that sentiment with them.

Full Moon in Pisces, coloring eggs blue to represent the accomplishments we’re releasing for this lunar month.

Our Neighbor’s Kitchen served two popular meals in August. On Thursday, August 9, assisted by Darren Surette who stepped in on the spot to help, I cooked up Loaded Mac ‘n’ Cheese with chicken, tomato and black bean salad with heirloom tomatoes from Kimball Fruit Farm in Pepperell, and homemade cookies for dessert. On Thursday, August 23, chef extraordinaire Dave Faucher and assistants turned out an ONK favorite, Fish ‘n’ Chips: crispy baked fish with Dave’s homemade potato chips, cole slaw and both pastries and ice cream for dessert. As always, a thousand thanks to the volunteers who work hard on food prep, set-up, serving and clean-up—you ARE Our Neighbor’s Kitchen!

Indivisible Winchendon has continued to meet

on Tuesday evenings at 6:30pm. The Winchendon Recovery Group, alas, will be discontinued for the foreseeable future.

We were saddened to learn that long-time UUCW member Elaine Gaspard passed away on August 2. Elaine was a vibrant part of UUCW, working with the Putnam Alliance and participating actively in church events and fundraisers. Her late husband Ronald Gaspard served on the UUCW Governing Board for many years. They are both missed.

What is truth? I’d guess that most of us don’t ponder that question very often; we don’t think of it as debatable. A recent case of flubber-mouth by a prominent individual had most of us scratching our heads at the negative tautology, “truth isn’t truth.” But what

Spiritual Calendar

September 8: Nativity of the Virgin Mary (Christian). This feast day commemorates the birth of the Virgin Mary to her mother, Saint Anne. Mary's birth is not recorded in canonical scripture, but is found in an apocryphal text known as the "Infancy Gospel" of Saint James. Early Christians circulated such texts as affirmations of the miracles they saw as part of their new faith.

September 10-11: Rosh Hashana (Jewish). Also called *Yom Teruah* ("Day of Shouting"), Rosh Hashana begins the "Days of Awe" which continue through Yom Kippur and start the New Year. In ancient days, this was the time of harvest, especially of wheat, with accompanying ceremonies of humility and thanksgiving. Rosh Hashana is often called the Jewish New Year, although the Hebrew calendar contains at least four holidays considered "new years" in some way. At Rosh Hashana, God is believed to open the Book of Life, in which the names of the righteous, the wicked and those in between are inscribed. The "in between" souls, who have sins to repent and make amends for, have ten days to do so before Yom Kippur, when the Book of Life is closed for the year. Traditional Rosh Hashana customs include eating sweet foods like apples dipped in honey, attending synagogue, offering prayers and blowing the *shofar*, the ram's horn.

September 19: Yom Kippur (Jewish). Known as the Day of Atonement, this is the holiest day in the Jewish faith. Jews observe a 25-hour fast, during which they attend five services at the synagogue, pray, and publically confess and express repentance for sins committed during the year. At the conclusion of Yom Kippur, God is believed to inscribe the penitents' names into the Book of Life as either righteous or wicked, sealing their fate for the coming year. In Israel, Yom Kippur is a legal holiday; airports, public transit, shops and businesses close, there are no radio or television broadcasts, and it is considered improper to eat in public, play music or drive a motor vehicle except in emergencies.

September 22: Autumn Equinox/Mabon (Pagan). The second in a series of three harvest-themed sacred days, Mabon is a joyous "Harvest Home" celebration, celebrating the peak (but not the end) of the harvest in temperate latitudes. Modern Pagans hold ceremonies thanking the gods for their bounty, often covering their altars with fresh garden produce. A harvest supper of locally grown food is traditional, with dancing and singing. Autumn Equinox was also the time when the Eleusinian Mysteries were held in ancient Greece, and some modern Pagans reconstruct those ceremonies (as much as is possible). Because of this, Mabon is often a time to conduct initiation ceremonies and rites of passage.

September 24-31: Sukkot (Jewish). A seven-day holiday, Sukkot has two meanings. It's an "Ingathering" or harvest festival celebrating the harvest of numerous food crops; and it commemorates the Exodus from Egypt when the Hebrews lived in the desert in make-shift temporary huts. At Sukkot, huts or booths called *sukkah* are constructed, based on the shelters farmers would build in the fields during harvests. The *sukkah* may have walls and a framework of almost any material, but the roof must be a thatch of organic material like palm fronds. During the seven-day period all meals are eaten in the *Sukkah*, and some people sleep in them as well. Each day, prayers are offered and the Talmud is read, and often people process with branches or fronds of "the Four Species" of beneficial trees: the citron, date palm, myrtle and willow.

this person was trying to say is more complicated. What he meant was that one person's "truth" is not the same as another person's "truth." That may sound like nonsense—until we find ourselves falling for it.

In a Facebook group I belong to, the moderator recently asked what we should do if we discover that a member of our group holds unacceptable views or says unacceptable things (about immigrants, African Americans, trans-persons, and so on) in other venues, even if they've never misbehaved in our group? Do we ignore it because they're "one of us" and they've never been mean to anyone here? Or do we renounce and

shun them, taking the position that we don't want to shelter and excuse bigots and haters, because that just enables them?

The discussion was derailed almost immediately by a group member—someone I've known for almost 40 years—who personalized the question, saying they'd been "attacked" for defending a feminist group that excluded transwomen. Other group members weighed in with stories about people who had suffered from haters' bullying and rejection, saying we should be a zero-tolerance zone for intolerance (and yes, the apparent contradiction was noted). The debate was a

furious one, and yet somehow, the moderator's original question never got answered. There was no agreement on whether a member should be judged or banned on the basis of their statements outside the group, because that scenario meant completely different things to different people.

Most of us would agree that truth isn't a relative thing—until we're confronted with a situation that challenges our own fears or biases. When that happens, suddenly we may have admit that we've been wrong all along, or go into denial, essentially pronouncing that "truth isn't truth." Studies have shown that once people are invested in believing a thing, even a very inconsequential opinion, it's extremely difficult to get them to change it.

Suppose you were confronted with the possibility that your fondly held "truth" wasn't truth? What would you do?

Rev. Inanna Arthen

Sunday Sacred Circle Meeting Time Changes to 1:00 p.m.

Beginning on Sunday, September 9, Sacred Circle Meeting each Sunday will begin at 1:00 p.m. Please make a note of it!

Rev. Arthen will be networking with other UU churches, and will be a guest speaker from time to time; another of our members has just accepted the position of Director of Life-Long Learning for the UU Church of Marlboro-Hudson. To accommodate those schedules, and because we want to forge connections with other congregations, we are pushing our Sunday meeting up to 1:00 p.m.

There will be no Sacred Circle Meeting on Labor Day weekend, September 2. The official church year will start on Sunday, September 9 with Water Communion and New Moon celebration. Bring a small amount of water to pour into the community container, to symbolize the way our gifts and experiences blend together into a greater whole. We look forward to seeing you!

Winchendon Fall Festival

UUCW will be participating in the 2nd annual Winchendon Fall Festival (sponsored by the Winchendon Business Group) on Saturday, October 6 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Winchendon Winds will be performing a band

concert in front of the church from 10:30 a.m. to around noon. We'll have seating for people on the lawn and refreshments for sale.

During the afternoon, we'll be running some fun activities and contests for kids. We're still getting all the details put together, and there will be more information in the October newsletter. Be sure you stop by UUCW when you attend the Festival, we'll have a lot going on!

Our Neighbor's Kitchen

We've got two delicious meals on the schedule for September, so be sure you save the dates!

On Thursday, September 13, Rev. Inanna Arthen and assistants will tweak your nostalgia with a menu from mom's kitchen: pot roast with colorful jello salad, fresh baked biscuits and dessert.

On Thursday, September 27, chefs Melissa and Dave, with their dauntless assistants, will present Tuscan Chicken in cream sauce over pasta, with 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 September 6 and 20, 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

We are now holding Sacred Circle Meetings on Sundays (at the new time of 1:00 p.m.). 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, 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).

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

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).

Recovery Support Group Discontinued

The Winchendon Recovery Support Group has been discontinued until further notice. We've been working to build membership for 14 months, but there simply hasn't been enough interest or support to sustain it. We thank all those who attended in the past and wish them the best of luck in their life journeys. Should there be strong interest in reviving the group in the future, the group leader will be happy to consider it.

September Birthdays

Willard White
Sue Faucher

September 11
September 15



(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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