

THE WINCHENDON UNITARIAN

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Unitarian Universalist Church of Winchendon



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Church Telephone 978-297-0554

MARCH 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, March 3

1:00 pm - Sacred Circle Meeting - New Moon in Pisces Observance

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

Monday, March 4

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Wednesday, March 6

7:00 pm - UUCW Governing Board Mtg

Sunday, March 10

2:00 a.m. DAYLIGHT SAVINGS BEGINS

“Spring Forward” - set your clocks ahead one hour or you’ll miss Sacred Circle Meeting!

1:00 pm - Sacred Circle Meeting - The Power of Creativity

Monday, March 11

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Thursday, March 14

5:30pm - Our Neighbor’s Kitchen serves St. Patrick’s Day Corned Beef Dinner

Sunday, March 17

1:00 pm - Sacred Circle Meeting - Full Moon in Libra Celebration

Monday, March 18

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Sunday, March 24

1:00 pm - Sacred Circle Meeting - Ostara/Vernal Equinox Celebration

Monday, March 25

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Thursday, March 28

5:30pm - Our Neighbor’s Kitchen serves Shepherd’s Pie

Sunday, March 31

1:00 pm - Sacred Circle Meeting

Monday, April 1

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Sunday, April 7

1:00 pm - Sacred Circle Meeting

Monday, April 8

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

From Your Minister

Many of us are feeling rather worn out by the time March gets underway. Winter has been going on for too long, the school year has been running for six months, we’re about to lose an hour with the start of Daylight Savings Time, and we’re casting side-eyes toward the dreaded Ides of April (also known as Tax Day). It’s not surprising that even your minister has trouble being optimistic and perky. After the 20-hour power outage on February 25 (and I have to count my blessings, I know people who were out for longer and had to find places to stay), I was running short of firewood for the wood stove. I drove down to Pepperell to buy a carload of wood. Technically, I didn’t *run out* of the cordwood I bought last fall. With all the rain we had this winter, my remaining cordwood is frozen down in an inch of solid ice, which has never happened before. I doubt I’ll be able to get it loose until May! I am grateful for farm stands that sell firewood by the cart—we might have another power outage, after all. And I’m ruminating over the way Mother Nature can make hash (or popsicles) of our carefully stacked plans.

We had a busy February at UUCW. On Sunday, February 3, Sacred Circle Meeting observed the New Moon in Aquarius, looking at our highest and most selfless ideals and convictions, and how we can start to manifest those in

This Month in UU History

March 26, 1892: Unitarian and progressive politician Paul Howard Douglas was born in Salem, MA. His stepmother took Douglas and his brother to Maine to escape her abusive husband and raised the boys there (in a time when abused women seldom left at all, far less with stepchildren). Douglas graduated from Bowdoin College and earned an M.A. and Ph.D in economics at Columbia University. During the 1920s he held professorships at several prestigious academies including Harvard. Douglas was a Georgist economist, who argued for taxation of real estate and other assets rather than income. After the Great Depression, Douglas co-authored and supported strong plans for banking and monetary reforms, but these didn't lead to legislation.

Douglas became more involved in politics, serving as economic advisor to governors in several states and helping to draft laws establishing unemployment insurance and pensions. But Douglas, a registered Independent, had an antipathy to the existing system. He believed that the Democratic Party was too corrupt and the Republican Party too reactionary, and wrote *The Coming of a New Party* in 1932 urging the formation of a party similar to Britain's Labour Party. He supported Socialist Party Thomas Norton's campaign for President that year. Douglas assembled a coalition of Independents and liberals and was elected to the Chicago City Council by a narrow margin, but chafed at his minority status there. In 1942 he joined the Democratic Party and made an unsuccessful run for the U.S. Senate.

Douglas enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps as a private at the age of 50, and earned two Purple Hearts during WWII. Bounding back from 13 months of rehab, Douglas found the field of economics too conservative and ended up campaigning for the U.S. Senate again in 1948. With a paralyzed arm, he traveled over 40,000 miles and delivered 1,100 speeches. When the incumbent Senator C. Wayland Brooks refused to debate him, Douglas debated an empty chair, switching seats and role-playing Brooks' answers. Douglas was a wild card; he'd pronounced President Truman "incompetent" and tried to draft Dwight D. Eisenhower at the 1948 Democratic National Convention, and he campaigned for the Marshall Plan, civil rights, repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act, more public housing, and more social security programs. Considered unelectable, Douglas was a tireless campaigner with the support of left-wing and Independent groups. He won the Senate seat in an "upset" victory.

Known as "an unconventional liberal," and occasionally a "maverick," Senator Douglas was called "the greatest of all the Senators" by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. He campaigned for civil rights, opposed pork barrel spending, and led investigations into government fiscal mismanagement. He fought for environmental protection, public housing, and truth in lending laws, and authored the Consumer Credit Protection Act. In 1952 he was urged to run for President, but he refused to do so. In 1966, Douglas' opposition to the Vietnam War and support for fair housing laws contributed to his narrow election loss for a fourth term. In retirement, Douglas taught at The New School, wrote books and served on a commission on housing.

A Quaker—like many UUs—Douglas was a member of All Souls Unitarian Church in Washington, D.C., and Cedar Lane Unitarian Church in Bethesda, MD. After his death in 1976, his ashes were scattered in Jackson Park in Chicago, IL. A memorial marker to Douglas stands at the Marine Corps training center at Parris Island.

reality. At the conclusion of our circle, we went outside and released some balloons into the windy blue sky. I think they may have made it to Canada. On Sunday, February 10, I planned a circle meeting devoted to "the power of Love," in all its forms, as represented throughout human culture and the world. On Sunday, February 17, Sacred Circle Meeting observed the Full Moon in Virgo, delving deeply into where and how we put our energies into hearth, home, and the details of everyday life. On Sunday, February 24, we focused on

the universal archetype of The Sacred Fool, and what we learn by turning logic and dogma on their heads.

I swapped dates with Dave Faucher for cooking Our Neighbor's Kitchen, so I cooked two meals in February, and I'll take a break from the kitchen in March. On February 14, I cooked a Valentine's Day feast of sweet and sour baked chicken, noodles tossed with butter, parmesan cheese and green peas, salad, and triple-chocolate brownies for dessert. On February 28,

(continued on page 4)

Spiritual Calendar

- March 1: St. David's Day (Christian).** For the Welsh and people of Welsh ancestry world-wide, St. David's Day is a day of national pride and celebration of heritage. Saint David lived in Pembrokeshire, Wales in the 6th Century. He was renowned as a teacher and ascetic throughout the Celtic world, and he was admired for his personal discipline and devotion and his ability to inspire others. However, he didn't proselytize and seek conversions as St. Patrick did. Saint David founded a monastic community at Glyn Rhosyn which is now the site of a cathedral. By the 11th Century, Saint David was seen as a patron saint by the Welsh, who rallied under his banner as they resisted English assimilation and exploitation. St. David's Day is celebrated by wearing daffodils (in past times, leeks were worn on hats), eating traditional Welsh foods, holding parades and fairs, and organizing festivals of music, poetry and art called *eisteddfodau*.
- March 6: Ash Wednesday / Lent Begins (Christian).** The forty days leading up to Easter Sunday comprise a period of fasting, penitence and prayer known as Lent. The degree of fasting, or restricted foods, has varied considerably, but traditionally Christians could not eat eggs, dairy products or meat during Lent. The period commenced with services of blessing on "Ash Wednesday." Attendees would be marked with a cross of ashes on their foreheads to symbolize humility and repentance. Some churches make their own ashes for Ash Wednesday by burning palm fronds after Palm Sunday. In modern times, many Christians don't observe as strict a fast, but choose something to "give up for Lent" such as sugar or caffeine, or a non-food indulgence like watching TV. Charitable work and giving, daily prayers, reflection on sin and repentance and making amends to others are also Lenten traditions. The theological focus is to prepare oneself for spiritual renewal and affirmation of salvation at Easter.
- March 17: St. Patrick's Day (Christian).** One of the three patron saints of Ireland, Saint Patrick was actually a native of Britain who was abducted and taken to Ireland as a youth in the mid-5th Century. He became a bishop, and is credited with Christianizing Ireland. His reception as a missionary was not always friendly and Patrick endured beatings and imprisonment, but he persevered. He is famous for using the three-leafed shamrock to illustrate the concept of the Holy Trinity, and was said to have driven all snakes from Ireland (Ireland had no snakes, so this is considered to be a metaphor for the Druids). Saint Patrick's feast day became both a solemn religious holiday and a day to celebrate national pride and heritage by the Irish and those of Irish ancestry world-wide. Aside from attending church or Mass, St. Patrick's Day celebrations include parades, fairs and festivals, eating traditional Irish foods, wearing green clothing and wearing or displaying shamrocks.
- March 20: Ostara / Vernal Equinox (Pagan).** Often labeled on conventional calendars as "the first day of Spring," the Vernal Equinox marks the moment when the Sun's height in the midday sky is exactly half way between its lowest (Winter Solstice) and highest (Summer Solstice) points. In temperate latitudes, this usually is a time of milder weather and the first signs of emerging plants and nesting birds. But the sunlight's strength is approaching summer levels no matter what local weather does, and this is what we, and the natural world, respond to. Ostara or Eostra are Anglo-Saxon names for either the month or the goddess it honors; Eostra gave her name to Easter in English speaking lands. The Vernal Equinox is the beginning of the zodiacal year with the sign of Aries, and in many ancient calendars was also the New Year. Modern Pagans celebrate Ostara with ceremonies welcoming the Sun and new life, games, coloring eggs (red is a traditional color), and feasts of new spring foods like young greens, eggs, milk and cheese.
- March 21: Magha Puja Day (Buddhist).** The second most important date in the Buddhist calendar, Magha Puja commemorates a gathering of the Buddha with 1,250 of his first disciples, and honors the creation of the ideal and exemplary community (monastic or lay). It is celebrated with candlelight processions and offerings of candles and incense in temples.
- Nowruz (Persian/Zoroastrian).** Also known as the Iranian New Year's Day or the Persian New Year, Nowruz is celebrated world-wide by diverse communities at the Vernal Equinox, and predates Islam. In common with many New Year traditions, celebrants clean their houses, buy new clothing, visit family, share sweet and special foods, and give to charitable causes. An old white-bearded man named Amu Nowruz is said to bring presents to children.

I made potato parmesan soup, Italian sausages in marinara sauce, salad and Oatmeal Scotchie cookies for dessert. I'm very thankful to all the hard-working volunteers who peeled potatoes, prepped salad ingredients, served food before they ate themselves, helped with clean-up, and did so much more from start to finish. I couldn't do it without every one of you!

In a recent column, advice writer Carolyn Hax printed a question from a reader: "I would like to understand how people make new friends when they are in their mid-50s." The questioner said she was interested in people, went to activities like the gym, signed up for hikes, and somehow it just didn't go anywhere. From Carolyn, and from other readers' comments, the questioner got the standard facile advice: join a community theatre group, play bridge, give it a lot of time, don't appear too eager, and so on. But like all quick and easy advice, those of us who have been in the questioner's situation know that the reality is a lot more complicated than that.

Loneliness, and a lack of friends, is a critical problem in modern day America. In May, 2018, a study by Cigna found that around half of all Americans reported high levels of loneliness. By this, they didn't mean isolation, but a sense that they lacked deep, reciprocal relationships in which they could have meaningful conversations, share emotions and feel truly understood by someone else. Lonely people may be surrounded by others and yet feel disconnected. The "Generation Z" age group, young adults around 18-22, reported the highest degree of loneliness despite being constantly in touch with others through phones and social media. Superficial chit-chat and casual interactions don't assuage loneliness.

Just from my personal observations, I have some ideas about why people are so lonely in our world. This doesn't mean that these causes will easy to fix.

- Our lives have become very fractured. We move around constantly and lose our sense of belonging and place. My parents moved several times during my childhood. I meet people who grew up in one place and can only wonder what that must feel like. And people now are far more mobile, with families breaking up more often.
- We need our friends, communities and associates to be *just like us* much more than we used to. Even as we campaign for social "tolerance," we've become more intolerant on a personal level. If people don't agree with us on every point—politics, personal identity, opinions on

social issues, religion, whatever—we can't feel close to them.

- We've closed ourselves into our own little life bubbles. I've really noticed this over the last ten years. Before everyone had cell phones, people used to share their phone numbers without a thought. Now I still don't have phone numbers for people I've known for several years. In this supposedly hyper-connected world, it's never been harder to contact people—because people have put up so many barriers to defend themselves from always being available.

The Irish say, "you have as many friends as lifetimes." What that means is that it can take a lifetime of shared experience, history and group identity to forge the kind of intimacy that we associate with the word "friend." Like "home" and "family," the word "friend" has been overused and cheapened by corporations and politicians until we hardly know what it means. But we know what we think a "friend" is, and we know how we feel when we lose one.

What do you think goes into being a good friend, and do you believe you really are one? How many people do you know who don't seem to have many friends, who seem lonely, who seem to be reaching out? These are important questions to think about as the snow and ice melts and we're ready to get outside and be more interactive. There are few more valuable and worthy skill sets than the ability to be a truly good friend.

Rev. Inanna Arthen

Our Neighbor's Kitchen

As we "March ahead" into Daylight Savings and the first day of spring, we've got two great meals to celebrate the end of winter!

On Thursday, March 14, chef extraordinaire Dave Faucher and assistants will pull out the stops for our annual St. Patrick's Day feast of Corned Beef and Cabbage boiled dinner, Irish soda bread, sides and dessert.

On Thursday, March 28, Dave and his dauntless crew will soothe your tummy with that perfect comfort food, Shepherd's Pie, with sides 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 March 7 and 21, 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.

UUCW Online

<http://uucw.ncmuuc.org>

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

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.

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).

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.

March Birthdays

Sam Elkins	March 3
Mrs. Charlotte Drury	March 26
Anne M. McGrath	March 29



(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.

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