

THE WINCHENDON UNITARIAN

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Unitarian Universalist Church of Winchendon



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REV. INANNA ARTHEN, M.DIV, MINISTER

Church Telephone 978-297-0554

APRIL 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, April 7

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

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

Monday, April 8

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Thursday, April 11

5:30pm - Our Neighbor's Kitchen serves Lasagna with meat sauce

Sunday, April 14

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

Monday, April 15

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Wednesday, April 17

7:00 pm - UUCW Governing Board Mtg

Sunday, April 21

1:00 pm - Sacred Circle Meeting - Celebration of Spring

Monday, April 22

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Thursday, April 25

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

Sunday, April 28

1:00 pm - Sacred Circle Meeting - Family Beltane Celebration

Monday, April 29

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

Sunday, May 5

1:00 pm - Sacred Circle Meeting - New Moon in Taurus

Monday, May 6

7:45 pm - AA Meeting

From Your Minister

We're more than halfway from the Winter Solstice to Midsummer Day, as hard as it may be to believe. Why is winter so endlessly long, and summer, when the days are hours longer, so fleeting? Maybe it's just that we remember it that way. Now that the snow is gone, the unraked leaves in my yards are taunting me, and I'm hoping for dry weather so I can cheat and use the leaf blower. That will only get me so far, though—there are no short cuts for digging the vegetable garden. I'm in suspense waiting to see if my fruit trees, berry bushes and lilac survived the winter. Only the holly bushes are shiny and green. (Oh, and the cordwood that was frozen to the ground last month? Still frozen!) Though I long to be gardening, I have a dozen projects on my plate at any given time, and we've busier than ever at UUCW.

Sacred Circle Meeting is growing, as we welcomed several new people this month. On Sunday, March 3, Sacred Circle Meeting observed the New Moon in Pisces, invoking water and earth, and focusing on our ability to change the shape of our destiny. On Sunday, March 10, I put together a circle calling on the Nine Muses and our creative power—but a snow storm that day forced us to cancel Sacred Circle Meeting in the interests of safety. On Sunday, March 17, Sacred Circle Meeting celebrated the Full Moon in Libra, honoring the principles of Justice, order and right action. On Sunday, March 24, we celebrated the Spring Equinox, or Ostara, coloring eggs, singing together and honoring the reborn deities of Spring. On Sunday, March 31, Sacred Circle Meeting observed the New Moon in Aries and the true beginning of the new solar year, with a rite of blessing for each person and asking

This Month in UU History

April 11, 1865: Unitarian and civil rights activist Mary White Ovington was born into an affluent abolitionist family in Brooklyn, NY, just three days before the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln. The family belonged to Second Unitarian Church in Brooklyn, whose minister (then and for the next forty years), John White Chadwick, was a staunch rationalist and radical even by Unitarian standards. Over the door of the church were the words, “the truth will set you free” and he championed “the essential piety of science” and “full sympathy with the colored man.”

Mary left school at Harvard Annex (later Radcliffe College) due to changes in her family’s finances. She never married. She took a variety of management-type jobs to stay financially independent. She worked in a tenement, Greenpoint Settlement, trying to improve conditions for the working class. A lecture by Booker T. Washington at the socialist Social Reform Club awakened her to the serious problems faced by black Americans. This became her lifelong passion and vocation.

Mary began working with and studying the plight of black Americans and in 1911 published a book, *Half a Man: The Status of the Negro in New York*. In 1904 she began corresponding with W.E.B. Du Bois, who she considered to be an inspiration to her. She learned from him, argued with him, raised money for him, and mediated between him and white allies. Their sometimes prickly relationship continued for decades, even as she disagreed with Du Bois’ increasingly militant approach and his view that blacks should not integrate with whites.

Mary was severely criticized when she moved into the all-black Tuskagee Apartments in 1908 to draw attention to and help improve the economic status of its residents. She was the only white person living there. The owners of the apartments refused to support her settlement work and forced her out. That same year, Mary arranged an event that caused a nationwide furor and made her infamous far beyond New York. The Cosmopolitan Club, which had an integrated membership, planned an important meeting with some prominent speakers. Mary booked a large restaurant to accommodate the guests. Reporters infiltrated the event and published outraged stories about the “Bacchanal feast” and “miscegenation dinner” where nicely dressed black and white Americans actually sat at the same tables and ate together. Mary felt “smothered in mud” by the ensuing storm of condemnation and even received death threats. But she observed later, after the hysteria died down, “the dining of white and colored together in New York ceased to be news.”

In 1909, Mary Ovington and others formed a committee that issued a call for a national conference on the problems faced by black Americans. The National Negro Conference was held in New York in 1909. The second conference in 1910 transformed itself into the permanent body known as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

Mary served the NAACP from 1910 until 1947, when failing health forced her to step down at the age of 82. She served in almost every capacity in its earliest days, from Chair to publicity agent. She trained staff and worked to keep the organization focused on integration rather than follow Du Bois’ Niagara Project toward separatism. Although she remained a Socialist, she criticized Socialist organizations for being too male dominated. She worked to bring black women into positions of authority in the NAACP, and during the suffrage movement, argued for black women’s suffrage. She worked closely with the National Association of Colored Women (NACW).

Mary’s final years were spent in Newton Heights, MA. Her memorial service in 1951 was held at the Unitarian Community Church in New York City. Some of her books are available online at Project Gutenberg (<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/author/36204>).

for guidance for the coming year.

Our Neighbor’s Kitchen served two scrumptious meals in March. On Thursday, March 14, Dave Faucher and assistants served up our annual St. Patrick’s Day Corned Beef boiled dinner, with Irish soda bread,

salad and a fancy chocolate cake and green pudding trifle for dessert. We even had some green lemonade. On Thursday, March 28, Melissa Wilson and assistants prepared an ONK favorite: Shepherd’s Pie, with bread, salad, and assorted dessert slices donated by the CAC.

Spiritual Calendar

- April 9: Mahavir Jayanti (Jain).** One of the most important religious festivals for Jains, Mahavir Jayanti commemorates the birth of Mahaveer, the 24th and last great spiritual teacher of the current half of the cosmic time cycle. Intriguingly, Mahaveer is said to have been born in 599 BCE in a democratic kingdom in which the king was elected by vote. Jainism is based on the principle of *ahinsa* or non-violence. This means not just non-violence toward other living things but non-violence toward oneself—that is, doing nothing which damages one’s own soul. Jains practice strict vegetarianism; in its purest form Jainism is extremely ascetic, but not all practitioners follow the religion to the extreme of its monks and nuns. Mahavir Jayanti is observed by visiting temple, listening to lectures or sermons about Jain principles, processions with statues of Mahaveer, and most importantly, acts of charity and donations to charitable causes.
- April 14: Palm Sunday (Christian).** The beginning of Holy Week, the most sacred period in the Christian calendar. Palm Sunday commemorates the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem after he has been preaching and gathering followers for three years in Palestine. His followers carried palm fronds in a joyful procession into the city. Many churches distribute real palm fronds to their congregations on Palm Sunday; in some places where this is logistically difficult, other live greenery is used. Many churches also dry some of the fronds and burn them to make ashes for the following year’s Ash Wednesday.
- April 19: Good Friday (Christian).** A solemn day which marks the crucifixion of Christ. In a custom going back centuries, many churches drape their altars, crosses and other parts of the sanctuary in deep purple or black shrouds, which are not removed until Easter morning.
- April 20-27: Pesach / Passover (Jewish).** One of the most widely celebrated of the major Jewish holidays, Passover commemorates the freeing of the Hebrew people from slavery in Egypt and their journey to Palestine under the leadership of Moses. Passover is celebrated for seven days. A critical element of Passover is eliminating all leavening, called *chametz*, from the home during this time. Homes and kitchens are thoroughly cleaned and families who can afford it may use different sets of dishes, pans and utensils and even different sinks and ovens just for Passover. Only unleavened bread is eaten during Passover. On the first night of Passover, Jewish families hold a ritual supper called a *seder*, with foods symbolizing elements of the story in Exodus. The seventh day of Passover is marked with ceremonies and festive meals commemorating the parting of the Red Sea, which engulfed the Egyptian pursuers. The days between are semi-holidays during which Jewish families gather for special meals and share festive holiday foods (maintaining the prohibition on *chametz*).
- April 21: Easter (Christian).** Celebrates the Resurrection of Christ after his crucifixion and the affirmation of salvation for Christians. Easter marks the end of the Lenten fast and is traditionally observed with attendance at church services, especially at sunrise, and a sumptuous meal with family and friends.
- While not as contentious as Christmas, Easter has been criticized over the centuries as being a “borrowed holiday” not mentioned in Scripture. It seems to have been well established by the 2nd Century CE but just how it was observed is not recorded. Because the Crucifixion is described as happening at Passover, Easter was dated accordingly, and seems to be designed to “Christianize” the Jewish holiday by casting Christ as the *Korban Pesach*, the Passover lamb sacrificed in the Temple (while it still existed). The story of Christ’s Resurrection blended naturally with many Pagan stories about the renewal of life and gods or goddesses who are reborn in the spring, and symbolism related to these themes was attached to Easter. Early Protestant churches banished Easter along with Christmas, and some modern evangelical sects still insist that Easter is a “Pagan holiday” and shouldn’t be celebrated by Christians.
- April 30: Walpurgisnacht / Beltane Eve (Pagan).** In ancient Celtic tradition, the day began at sunset, and the night before a major holiday was considered a “liminal space,” a perilous and mystical in-between time. The barriers between the mundane world and the spiritual worlds, and between the living and the dead, became porous, and it was possible to divine the future. Celtic regions of Europe had superstitions about “witches” gathering on Beltane Eve. Modern Pagans may hold overnight vigils and greet the rising sun with ceremonies of welcome.

We did all this with the unstinting help of our many volunteers, who pitch in to peel potatoes, serve plates, wash dishes, wipe tables, and do many more unglamorous tasks to make ONK a true community dinner. We couldn't do it without you!

We've been cleaning and reorganizing, especially in the kitchen, and we're planning some fundraising campaigns for work on our beautiful historic building. We have grant applications out and we're keeping our fingers crossed. You'll be hearing a lot more as things progress!

Writing this month's column about Mary White Ovington had me reflecting on whether or not she would be able to accomplish as much were she alive right now. Unitarians were deeply involved in the 19th Century abolitionist movement and the 20th Century Civil Rights movement. They didn't always live up to their own high standards; some Unitarian activists were harshly critical of the more staid institutions and congregations for not risking enough or taking a strong enough stand against slavery or racism. And perhaps UUs are a little too proud, sometimes, of our own martyrs to the cause of racial justice, the UUs who have actually been beaten or killed by racist defenders of the status quo while marching or protesting.

Right now, the Unitarian Universalist Association is more concerned with what they describe as "dismantling systems of white supremacy" than ever. Yet at the same time, it seems to me that the struggle for racial equality and justice has basically been churning back and forth over the same bloody battlefield since the 1970s. There hasn't been any real progress. What's been happening since our current President took office proves that. Early activists, both African-American and white, took huge risks and yet saw enormous strides forward. That forward progress stopped forty years ago.

I can't explain why this is, but it does seem significant that positive change slowed and stopped just as the identity politics movement began. Everyone wants to be understood, accepted and accommodated for their own unique self. Everyone wants to be around people who are exactly like them. And everyone feels oppressed in some way, and they want all of us to know it. There is no quest for unity anymore. The "search for justice" is really an endless game of capture-the-flag, with the flag being the right to claim the moral high ground.

I take a very practical stance. For me, the only question worth asking about a tactic is, "is it working?"

Are these approaches to social justice getting results? Are we getting any closer to achieving social justice?

If not—if, in fact, we seem to be backsliding every day—maybe we need to rethink our tactics. As I read the ferocious articles and essays that seem to be everywhere these days, several mantras constantly run through my head, such as, "those who attack their own allies end up fighting alone."

I don't want to waste my energy in pointless contention. Lack of rational thought always makes me sad, but there's nothing I can do about it. Sometimes you can only help people by quietly doing what they need you to do, not what they want you to do. It can feel like thankless work. But seeing positive change happen is its own reward. You don't need a scrap of recognition or praise to take joy that you helped to end a war.

Rev. Inanna Arthen

Our Neighbor's Kitchen

Spring has sprung, and we've got two great meals to fortify you for all your yardwork and cleaning!

On Thursday, April 11, Rev. Inanna Arthen and assistants will layer up your all-time favorite, Lasagna, stuffed with cheese and meat sauce, along with salad and dessert.

On Thursday, April 25, chef extraordinaire Dave Faucher and his dauntless crew will serve up a complete Easter Ham Dinner, with baked ham, 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 April 4 and 18, 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>

Summer Solstice Fair 2019

We're taking applications for vendor spaces for the Summer Solstice Fair on Saturday, June 15. If you're a vendor and would like a space, don't delay!

12' x 12' spaces are only \$35 for a space on Central Street, \$30 for the front circle and \$25 for the side and back yards. It's a perfect opportunity to reach hundreds of fair-goers at Winchendon's biggest party and UUCW's most popular event of the year! If you'd like an application, send an email to Rev. Arthen at iarthen@inannaarthen.com, or contact the church at PO Box 218, Winchendon, MA, 01475.

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.

Many Unitarian Universalist congregations are experimenting with new kinds of spiritual experiences.

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).

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.

April Birthdays

Deborah Colburn	April 1
Wendy O'Brien	April 3
Jeannette Gutteridge	April 4



(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

Minister: Rev. Inanna Arthen, M.Div

Phone: 978-297-1730

Cell: 508-572-1624

Email: iarthen@inannaarthen.com

Musician: Lucinda Ellert

Phone: 781-944-7254

Email: lucindajellert@gmail.com

Governing Board Chair: David Faucher

Email: dfaucher@on24seven.com

Governing Board Members:

Allan Gordon: 31Allangordon@gmail.com

Jill Nicholson Sackett: jill@sackett.com

Rev. Inanna Arthen (Clerk)

Sexton (Custodian): Darren Surette

Phone: 978-490-6655 (cell)

Email: c/o_iarthen@inannaarthen.com