

# THE WINCHENDON UNITARIAN

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**NOVEMBER 2019**

**This is the Church of the Open Mind**  
**This is the Church of the Loving Heart**

**This is the Church of the Helping Hands**  
**This is the Church of the Caring Community**

## Calendar of Church Events

### **Mondays**

7:45 pm - AA Meeting, Parish Hall

### **Thursday, November 14**

5:30 pm - Our Neighbor's Kitchen  
serves Thanksgiving Turkey with  
all the Trimmings

### **Sunday, November 17**

7:00 pm – UUCW Governing Board  
Meeting, UUCW Minister's Study

### **Thursday, November 28**

Our Neighbor's Kitchen takes a break.  
Happy Thanksgiving!

### **Friday, November 29**

12:00 – 4:00 pm – Annual Holiday  
Toy Drive and Sanctuary  
Decoration

## From Your Editor

There are only a few calendar listings for the month of November, but that is because we are in serious preparatory mode for the future! As I write, we have masons toiling away, repairing the stonework on the front entryway of our church as our Set in Stone restoration takes off. They'll finish just in time for a holiday season promising several key church events, beginning with our annual Toy Drive and sanctuary decorating party the day after Thanksgiving. Rev. Arthen has taken on new responsibilities away from UUCW, but luckily was retained as Minister Emerita, which means we have a minister on call for special services, weddings, funerals, and such. We completed a very informative focus panel with current and former church members to explore new directions we may take in serving our Unitarian Universalist congregation and larger community, and are carefully evaluating the feedback we received. We have much to be thankful for and to ponder, and we would love to have *you* at the table. Read on, contemplate, and give us a call or better yet, stop on by! See you at church...

Jill Nicholson Sackett - Chair, Governing Board

## **Focus Panel Contemplates Our Future**

As mentioned last month, our dwindling congregation has been forced to acknowledge that little interest remains in a traditional worship service. We are not alone; this is a widespread phenomenon across many faiths, and is particularly pronounced in Massachusetts. In our state, only 23% report attending *any* church weekly, and a mere 33% say religion “is important in their lives.”\*

So what *is* important to our UU community? On September 29, we convened a group of UUCW members, some of whom are no longer active, to provide perspective and opinions on what they think UUCW should focus on going forward. What offerings may best serve UU’s and more liberal community members? Should we hold worship services at all? Should we consider completely different platforms, such as lectures, music concerts, book club discussions? Should we become a community service ministry? Perhaps a mix of these?

The thoughtful, candid and respectful discourse amongst the panelists was both enlightening and refreshing. We brainstormed endeavors beyond worship services that UUCW could pursue, and cast “votes” for personal preference. The top choices were: 1) programs for disadvantaged kids, 2) workshops (crafts, life skills, etc.), 3) community choir, and 4)

“Ted Talk” Sundays. Runner-up choices included 5) programs for opiate crisis, 6) teen center, 7) tutoring and 8) summer band camp. In addition, there was support for UUCW to maintain certain special events such as Christmas Eve and Easter services.

We’ve taken this feedback to our Governing Board and will be spending the remainder of this calendar year considering what may be put into action. Would you like to weigh in? Please share your thoughts! Contact Jill Sackett via email ([jill@sackett.com](mailto:jill@sackett.com)) or phone (224) 567-3635.

We will keep you all informed through this newsletter and any future meetings we have on this topic.

*\*Presentation, Partners for Sacred Places, Western Massachusetts Historic Commission Meeting, June 26, 2019.*

## **Rev. Arthen Moves On**

After a seven-year tenure, it was with great reluctance that we saw the departure of Rev. Arthen as our part-time minister last September. We are pleased to say that the departure is not complete: in October the Governing Board agreed to confer the title of Minister Emerita to Rev. Arthen. While no longer in our direct employ, Rev. Arthen will remain affiliated with UUCW, have access to ministerial materials for professional work, and remain first on call for future weddings, funerals, and other special services as time and schedule allow.

Among various other pursuits, Rev. Arthen has eagerly taken over and completely revamped the Winchendon Courier. After the last print edition of the Courier ran at the close of 2018, its former editor, Ruth DiAmicis, tried to keep an online version alive. Upon Ruth's announced retirement, Rev. Arthen jumped at the opportunity to put considerable language and publishing skills to work on reviving the paper. If you haven't checked out the new online Winchendon Courier lately, here it is: <http://winchendoncourier.net/>

**Winchendon Courier**  
*online*  
**winchendoncourier.net**

## **Annual Toy Drive and Sanctuary Decoration**

UUCW's Annual Toy Drive is perhaps one of the most "feel-good" days of our church year. Every year on the Friday afternoon following Thanksgiving, we gather at the church to welcome donations of new or "like new" toys or cash. Helping needy children can't get easier...our "elves" stand in our circle drive from noon – 4 pm and donors can simply drive through in their cars and drop off their donations into waiting hands. At the close of the drive, we take all donations over to the Winchendon Fire Department as part of a larger toy collection.

Our elves take turns collecting donations outside or decorating the beautiful church sanctuary inside. We have bins full of

ornaments and put two up two full-sized trees, swag, mini-lights, poinsettias and more against a backdrop of Christmas music and takeout pizza.



We would love to see you stop by on Friday afternoon, November 29, with donations, good cheer, or decorating ideas. Look for the youth wearing holiday hats and join in the giving and/or the fun.

It's a great way to kick off a season of kindness and generosity.

## **Set in Stone Awards Phase 1 Contract & Work Begins**

UUCW was faced with an embarrassment of riches: no less than five separate masonry firms submitted bids in early October to

undertake Phase 1 repairs of our center entryway. All bids were competitive and represented firms with expertise in historic masonry work. We ultimately chose Joseph Gnazzo Company, Inc. based in Union, CT. Gnazzo was able to start work in mid-October, helping to stave off further water damage occurring to our inside entryway plasterwork. They will be working through November and plan to complete Phase 1 before winter hits.



You can follow our stonework restoration progress in detail at our dedicated website: [set-in-stone.org](http://set-in-stone.org) where we're keeping a "blog" of this epic restoration.

## Our Neighbor's Kitchen

New cook in the kitchen! On October 10, newly-minted ServSafe-certified Chef Joe Sackett prepared his family recipe for spaghetti with rich meat sauce. We served hearty portions with crusty garlic bread and a roasted beet salad featuring fresh beets donated from Winchendon's Sunset View Farms. Homemade apple crisp with oatmeal topping completed the meal. Our

educational placemats highlighted the nutritional benefits of the beautiful purple-red beets. Chef Dave Faucher was back in the kitchen on October 24, preparing his annual signature dish of roast pork with apples and onions. Our educational placemats extolled the virtues of the versatile and understandably popular apple. As we are going to press, Chef Faucher will be back again on October 31, Halloween night, conjuring up a surprise "spooky" meal. Fittingly, our placements for that meal contemplate whether there is such a thing as "healthy" trick-or-treat candy (answer...sort of – in moderation).

We have welcomed several new volunteers in our kitchen and also enjoy the enduring help from our regulars. Volunteering is easy, social, and fun. You can try it out at any ONK supper night; just show up around 5:00 pm and we'll show you the ropes. And you won't miss the meal – all volunteers get time to sit down and enjoy the dinner!

## UUCW Online

Website: [uucw.ncmuuc.org](http://uucw.ncmuuc.org)

Facebook:

[facebook.com/uuwinchendon](https://facebook.com/uuwinchendon)

## 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 [jill@sackett.com](mailto:jill@sackett.com) or send a written note to the church at P.O. Box 218, Winchendon, MA 01475.