

THE WINCHENDON UNITARIAN

Established 1954 Published by the
Unitarian Universalist Church of Winchendon



PO Box 218, Winchendon, MA 01475
Church Telephone: 978-297-0554

Volume 66 Issue 7
MARCH 2022

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

Now through March 31

UUCW Survey – Online or paper

Thursday, March 10

5:30 pm - Our Neighbor's Kitchen serves
Sausage 'n Noodles
(Drive-Through/Take-Out)

Thursday, March 24

5:30 pm - Our Neighbor's Kitchen serves
Dish To-Be-Announced
(Drive-Through/Take-Out)

Mondays

7:45 pm - AA Meeting, Parish Hall

Thursday, March 31

5:30 pm - Our Neighbor's Kitchen serves
"Church Chili"
(Drive-Through/Take-Out)

Sunday, April 3

11:00 am – Meet 'n Greet,
Church Sanctuary

Sunday, April 3

12:30 pm – Governing Board Meeting,
Church Sanctuary

From Your Editor

This month we celebrate our 26th year of Our Neighbor's Kitchen operations. While going over old records to write this newsletter, I was touched at the number of organizations and people that have supported this program over the years. ONK is truly an example of Winchendon's motto: "Working Together."

As we watch world events unfold before us, feeling helpless to do anything substantive to alter them, we may take solace in focusing on what we can do in our own corner of the world. One measure of society is the compassion and care that its citizens exhibit toward one another. Every small positive gesture helps dampen the negative.

Start at home. Improve your immediate surroundings. Choose how...and just do it.

-Jill Nicholson Sackett - Chair, Governing Board.

Last Call - UUCW Community Survey!

Many thanks to those of you who have responded to our survey. We appreciate your thoughtful feedback and are starting to see some trends in the replies. For those who have not yet responded, we would *love* to hear from you. We'd like to know what events have brought you to the church, whether you have any interest in worship, or attending new or different events. We are examining a range of ideas, from social services, to cooking classes to music-making.

It's easy – click the link below, check the boxes, and you're done!

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScNK7HZQyReLlwkI9uoJ_lpYPQ34LIRkSTKhbylBHdCThVXsw/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1&flr=0

If you prefer to receive a paper copy, just let Jill Sackett (below) know and we'll be happy to provide via mail or email. We look forward to hearing from you and will publish our results in a future newsletter.

Contact Information

Governing Board Chair:

Jill Nicholson Sackett
Email: jill@sackett.com

Governing Board Members:

Allan Gordon:
Email: 31Allangordon@gmail.com
Rev. Inanna Arthen (Clerk)

Meet 'n Greet April 3, 11:00 am

A number of our survey respondents indicated they were “maybe” interested in attending a worship service. Others checked a variety of different activities they might attend. Here is a chance for us to meet and have an informal, no-obligation exchange about what we may be able to do. Curious about our church? Haven't been inside our lovely sanctuary in a while...or ever? Interested in what we do around the community? Stop in this day and meet some of the folks who are dedicated to making our community a better place. We'd love to see you. We'll offer light refreshments and plenty of smiles.



UUCW Online

Main Website: <https://uucw.ncmuuc.org/>

Set in Stone Website: www.set-in-stone.org

Facebook: facebook.com/uuwinchendon

Our Neighbor's Kitchen Marks 26th Anniversary

Our Neighbor's Kitchen (ONK) was so busy cooking last year we let our 25th Anniversary slip by unheralded. We'll rectify that now!

For over a quarter century UUCW has been at the forefront of Our Neighbor's Kitchen, taking on increasing responsibility and commitment. This month marks the 26th year of its operation. Our first ONK supper, featuring corned beef and cabbage, was served March 28, 1996.

Initially, ONK was sponsored by The Winchendon Community Action Committee (CAC), the Bethany Bible Chapel and the Cornerstone Church. The committee that "started it all" consisted of Martha Trepanier, Michael Klimowicz, Dale Greene, Fred Nalette, Janet Mancini and Mary Ann Puemape. UUCW donated use of our kitchen and Parish Hall dining facilities.

The program was an instant success. During the early years, UUCW gradually absorbed more and more of the responsibilities with the CAC and different churches providing some much-appreciated volunteer or financial support. By mid-2000's UUCW had taken over all operations: facility use, cooking, menu-planning, fund-raising,

cleanup, promotion and recruiting volunteers. Sensing increased community demand, and in concert with the demise of our only remaining grocery store, UUCW doubled our efforts in 2015 to begin serving twice-monthly meals.

And we haven't looked back. Today, ONK is a "well-oiled machine" backed by a wonderful group of community volunteers. Two UUCW church families trade off setting the menus, preparing the entrees, and running the kitchen. We have a repertoire of popular meals, but don't hesitate to try out new dishes on our willing diners.

At-the-door donations cover a portion of our costs, and we supplement from a variety of sources, including the CAC, United Parish, special COVID grants and generous private individuals. As with any non-profit endeavor, we must pay strict attention to fundraising and responsible spending.

We were thrilled to be joined by the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church several years ago who provide meals on alternate Thursdays. We are happy to say that free, home-cooked, nutritionally balanced meals are now available in Winchendon every Thursday evening, year-round.

On March 27, 1996, the eve of ONK's debut, Winchendon resident Ron Muse wrote an editorial in the *Winchendon Courier*, highlighting the new supper

program and those kicking it off. He wrote in part:

“There are stories that transcend politics. There are tales that don’t tell ‘who did what to who’ but rather who’s doing what for her...The goal of <Our Neighbor’s kitchen> is simple. To provide food to anyone in the Winchendon community who is hungry or in need of fellowship.

As complex as life seems to get sometimes, it is simplified by the sobering thought that some people still go to bed hungry. While the idealogues will say people who are doing without should pull themselves up by their bootstraps, they miss the point that what makes us strong is not our might alone, but our compassion.

We continue to look at athletes and movie stars as our heroes, but the stuff of real heroes is not done on the silver screen or the athletic arena, but in the community where neighbor reaches out to neighbor...

The strength of a community continues to be those who work quietly, seeking neither praise nor publicity. Their goal is as simple and as daunting as providing a meal for a hungry person.

In many ways, these people are our leaders. And they set an example the rest of us can only hope to follow.”

Well said Ron. How timeless...and still so relevant today. Thank you all.

Set in Stone Readies Next Grant Application

UUCW has two full Phases of building repairs under our belt, and the march continues forward. On March 18, we’ll apply to the State of Massachusetts as part of the Massachusetts Preservations Projects Fund (MPPF), Round 28 grant cycle.

We now have experience working with the State MPPF program. In 2020 we were awarded \$50,000 from the MPPF Emergency Fund, Round 26 grant cycle, which was matched by the Robinson-Broadhurst Foundation, to complete Phase 2 masonry repairs. During that time, we learned a great deal about the MPPF process, State oversight, and the additional time frames required. We were able to demonstrate successful project execution: on time and on budget, even during the uncertainties of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We have spent nearly \$200,000 for Phase 1 and 2 repairs, and have much to show for it. Phase 3 repairs will focus on repairs to the “valley” connection between the tower and main roof. This has been a source of ice build-up and water damage over the years. This area is the greatest threat to the integrity of our beautiful building and requires a complete reinforcement. We have high hopes that we will receive the necessary funding to move forward this year. Fingers crossed.