

THE WINCHENDON UNITARIAN

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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

Thursday, August 10

5:30 pm - Our Neighbor's Kitchen serves
Chilled Salad Trio, Parish Hall

Tuesday, August 15

7:30 pm – Governing Board Meeting
Dial-In (RSVP Jill Sackett)

Thursday, August 24 and

Thursday, August 31

5:30 pm - Our Neighbor's Kitchen serves
Dish-To-Be-Announced,
Parish Hall

Mondays

7:45 pm - AA Meeting, Parish Hall

From Your Editor

This month we include an article on the annual Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly (UUA GA), written from the perspective of someone making their own personal spiritual journey.

This year, the UUA GA focused heavily on proposals replacing their “Principles” with a new set of “Values” that they hope better reflect our religion. While some may dismiss this as an exercise in semantics, this is really about the core of who UU’s are and what we want to represent. Whether you call them Principles or Values, these are the goalposts through which we travel.

That’s the beauty of Unitarian Universalism. We don’t tell you what to *believe*. That’s up to you. If you agree with our goalposts...by all means pass through and start your own exploration. We are bound together by these Values in our endeavor to make this a more tolerant, informed, inclusive, caring and *loving* world, starting with our own little community right here in Winchendon.

Enter on in.

-Jill Nicholson Sackett - Chair, Governing Board.

A Pivotal UUA General Assembly

By Joe Sackett

I had a fascinating experience as a first-time delegate to the UUA General Assembly held in late June. This year kicked-off a major project to re-envision the purposes of our religion. I watched hundreds of ministers, religious scholars and fellow congregants collectively refine Unitarian Universalism for the 21st century.

Article II of the UUA bylaws currently lists the seven principles as well as the inspirational sources from which our faith is drawn. The previous revision took place in 1986. Through a democratic process, the specific wording of these “principles” and “sources” is being removed and replaced with six “values.” The reasons for the update are well-documented and not without controversy, yet the final vote affirmed that 86% of the delegates support moving forward with the bylaw revision.

This significant undertaking took place through an amazing process. One year ago, the UUA board chartered a small yet diverse Article II Working Group. Their eventual proposal envisioned a Love-centered set of specific values: Interdependence, Pluralism, Justice, Transformation, Generosity, and Equity. Their main reason for the explicit naming and definition of these shared

values is to make them more actionable. The Working Group completed the initial proposal a few months in advance of General Assembly.

As were all UUA congregation members, I was invited to see the Working Group’s initial presentation of the Article II revisions. This was a spiritual watershed for me. The religion to which I’d followed my wife and represented locally by the Church of the Unity (UUCW) where I’d spent hundreds of volunteer hours had morphed under me. Effectively, the values I’d self-affirmed over the past years had suddenly been realized as the new covenant of the UUA. I was excited to participate in the early feedback sessions and decided to virtually attend General Assembly where this was the main topic.

The feedback sessions and GA discussion forum turned into a crowdsourced editing exercise. Stakeholders from the most learned and most experienced to intrepid youth congregants dissected the wording of each value and rewrote them to capture their essence. There was certainly disagreement but I observed only constructively critical interactions. One notable proposal was to include another value for “Reason.” On the surface it seems we would value this, especially in a world full of misinformation and recent backward social movements, however we must also leave space for faith systems containing miracles

defying reason. This massive collaborative effort was organized into a series of “amendments” to the commission’s Article II proposal. The democratic process culminated at the General Assembly where many of these amendments were put to delegate votes and we ultimately voted to continue the Article II revision process.

I expect others will have a similar positive reaction to the codified UUA values. It’s refreshing that the long, learned legacy of Unitarianism is becoming so relevant for our society. They are truly positioning us as the religion for the 21st century.

To learn more, read the Article II Working Group’s proposal here: <https://tinyurl.com/472sr4e6>

UUCW Welcomes Youth in the Kitchen

The handy parishioners who built our downstairs kitchen in the 1950’s would probably be astounded at how much use we have gotten out of that space! Originally built with modest plans to facilitate coffee hours and the occasional parish supper, the sturdy space now handles the demands of the twice or thrice-monthly Our Neighbor’s Kitchen community suppers, weekly AA meeting potlucks, and numerous food-based fundraisers.

When we were approached by HEAL Winchendon to offer up a workspace for their Youth Changemakers to prepare fresh-squeezed lemonade, we were happy to help. Every week a crew of young people arrive with tubs of lemons and sugar and get to work:



Overseen by a Serv-Safe certified adult, the teens have learned how to prepare simple syrup and scaled-up recipes. They’ve sold their lemonade at Taste of Winchendon, WCP amphitheater movie nights, GAR Park concerts, the Clark Summer Solstice Fair, and similar venues, with proceeds going straight back into the Youth Changemaker program.

Next time you attend a town event and spot the Youth Changemaker booth, grab a glass of fresh lemonade and celebrate the “fruit” of collaboration.

Set in Stone Phase 3 Crosses the Finish Line

We have yet one more major step of our building restoration in our rear-view mirror. On July 28 we submitted our Completion Report to the Massachusetts Historical Commission for Phase 3 of our Set in Stone masonry repairs.

Phase 3 focused on rebuilding the failing “cricket” between our bell tower and main building. The cricket sheds water out of this valley area and had been leaking for some time. The old cricket was torn out and rebuilt at a higher pitch with copper flashing soldered across the surface. In addition, old mastic “patching” was chemically removed from the north tower face and the entire face was repointed.

Perhaps the most impressive aspect of this project was the “water test” to which the area was subjected. In addition to the torrential rains we’ve already been experiencing, a crew took hoses up on the roof and aimed high-pressure spray at every nook and cranny imaginable. We were thrilled to see nary a drop of water entering the sanctuary after this rigorous assault.

While much of this work cannot be seen from the ground, Phase 3 marks a significant step in our building preservation.

Cast Your Vote for Culture!

The Winchendon Cultural Council funds a number of arts programs in our town, including Winchendon Winds Band Concerts, a Holiday Brass Concert, and a Pipe Organ Concert hosted by UUCW. The Council is conducting a survey to gauge what types of future programs the public would like to see funded. Please complete their anonymous online survey and let your preferences be known! Click here: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8s8pk6>

UUCW would love to see more music and art take place under our roof!

UUCW Online

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

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

Facebook: facebook.com/uuwinchendon

Contact Information

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Allan Gordon: (Member)
Rev. Emerita Inanna Arthen (Clerk)
Dave Faucher (Auditor)

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 or send a written note to the church at P.O. Box 218, Winchendon, MA 01475.