

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, February 8

5:30 pm – Our Neighbor’s Kitchen
serves Meatloaf, Parish Hall

Thursday, February 22

5:30 pm – Our Neighbor’s Kitchen
serves Swedish Meatballs,
Parish Hall

Mondays

7:45 pm - AA Meeting, Parish Hall

Monday, February 26

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

Thursday, February 29

5:30 pm – Our Neighbor’s Kitchen
serves Curried Chicken,
Parish Hall

From Your Editor

This issue of our newsletter features only two articles: the year 2023 in review and musings on “love”. On examination, these two seemingly disparate topics are inextricably linked. We are a service-focused congregation. Whether it’s welcoming groups to our church home, serving a hot meal, celebrating the universal language of music, or offering non-traditional and inclusive approaches to spirituality, we are coming from a source of love. All of our other efforts related to fundraising and restoring our building are to ensure that there will be a physical focal-point in the town of Winchendon available to carry on community engagement and service well beyond our own time here.

The month of February is brimming with the topic of love. May love well up in you and may you choose to manifest its gifts in any way you choose.

Happy Valentine’s Day...for February 14 and all year ‘round.

-Jill Nicholson Sackett - Chair, Governing Board.

UUCW Year in Review

It's that time of year when we pause and look back at "where did all that time go?" We hope you were a party to some of our months full of activity, accomplishment and community engagement. We welcome this annual exercise and share some highlights below...

Set in Stone Campaign: We are mid-way through this years-long campaign to restore our external masonry and wrap our building in water-tight granite "armor". Since 2018, we have been alternating one year of grant-writing and preparation with one year of intense construction work.

Accordingly, this past year was one of intense construction work. Since much of this phase dealt with the roof "valley" between the tower and main building, we did not need to erect the elaborate scaffolding needed in earlier phases of work. Spencer Preservation Group Architects and Calhess Restoration and Waterproofing Corporation used a bucket lift to access all of the areas receiving repair. From March through July, workers tore out and rebuilt the roof substrate and sloped "cricket" that shunts water out of the valley. They added more gutters to redirect water. Finally, they did grout work on the towers' north face and southeast buttress.

While much of the roof reconstruction is not obvious from street-level, this work allowed us to proceed with interior

plaster and paint repairs in the back of our sanctuary, which had suffered water damage from countless heavy rains. Completed in November, the improvements from that interior work are quite obvious!

While not technically part of the Set in Stone campaign, we accomplished additional exterior work with the refinishing of the front walnut doors' overhead transoms and south-facing walnut door: all peeling and sun-damage sanded away and refreshed with new coats of protective urethane.

Our Neighbor's Kitchen (ONK): We have been serving inside for over 1 ½ years post-COVID. We enjoy a small but reliable gathering of about 20 friendly faces, but still see much larger numbers of meals being taken out. We continue to strive to put the "community" back in these community suppers, and are grateful that we can provide this important service to Winchendon and beyond.

The annual tally at the close of our fiscal year was over 1300 hot meals – impressive considering our small, dedicated staff and attention to preparing so much of our menu from "scratch" using fresh ingredients.

Fundraising: Our June Lawn Fair, typically the biggest fundraiser of the year, was quite literally a wash-out, with record-breaking rains. Fortunately, our concession sales at the town Fall Festival

in October helped us recover, as we sold out of all of our menu items and ran a “delivery service” carrying lunch to vendors tending their booths. Our indoor Holiday Bazaar and Cookie Sale in December helped bring us over the finish line for this year’s fundraising goals.

Community Engagement and Worship:

We held four formal lay-led worship services this year: one each quarter. Our Easter service featured Sharon Beaty at the pipe organ and a traditional outdoor egg hunt. In June we held our fourth annual “Blessing of the Bulbs” ceremony with poetry, readings, music and flower bulbs to take home to plant. In September we held a water communion service, with attendees sharing samples of water and personal stories. Afterwards we poured our collective water into the nearby Millers River. On Christmas Eve we gathered for our annual mid-winter candlelight service with Doc Lindberg performing on the pipe organ and in voice.

UUCW held three new and different events this past year. Our biggest accomplishment was by far the “Pipes and Platter” gala held in April. The afternoon featured classical recording artist and organ-builder George Bozeman in recital, performing Bach chorales on our 1868 pipe organ. The well-advertised event was attended by over 50 people, including members of the American Guild of Organists. Following the “Pipes” concert, many of the attendees proceeded downstairs to the “Platter”

phase – a four-course sit-down meal served by Our Neighbor’s Kitchen chefs.

In September we hosted a special presentation titled “Winchendon: Keepers of the Millers River.” Anna Wilkins of the North County Land Trust and Ivan Ussach of the Millers River Watershed Council gave a very informative talk on the origins and ecological importance of the Millers River, followed by a generous Q&A session.

The third unique event was our Yule Log-making workshop held by Alison Lansing last December and attended by 15 very enthusiastic participants. Those attending our Christmas Eve service were able to enjoy six different Yule Logs on display; all creative products from that workshop.

Last but certainly not least, UUCW continued their commitment to the arts by hosting a series of Winchendon Winds band concerts last June and the Harrisville Brass Quintet last December, all well-attended.

We welcomed the HEAL Winchendon Youth Changemakers into our kitchen during the summer and fall months, offering them a rent-free space for preparing fresh lemonade for their Sunshine Café stand. We also welcomed some very industrious Murdock Middle High School special education students who helped us completely re-dig and re-plant our overgrown north garden beds.

We are an optimistic, hard-working and friendly little community. We are always looking to welcome newcomers and returning friends as we forge new pathways ahead for UUCW.



Love

By Joe Sackett

February is the month to write about my favorite topic: Love. I could write a book but half of it would consist of credits and citations. This article briefly defines and celebrates Love: humanity's greatest achievement.

Most of the Webster Dictionary definitions place love as affection, attraction, or devotion to another entity. I know it to be more expansive than just a relationship. It is foundational to many religions and the center of the UU Values.

I learned early definitions that describe love as the opposite of another feeling. One definition is that love is the opposite of hate. There are people (e.g., abusers of power for ill) worthy of hate, and generating love for these individuals seems insurmountable - and hence its opposite. While this seems to hold, how

can something so perfect and powerful as love be solely the inverse of one of humanity's worst creations? There has to be more.

A friend of mine once proposed indifference (feeling nothing) as the opposite of love. But nothing is also the opposite of any other feeling and the gulf between them is discrete, not a continuum. Feelings are definitely more subtle. I see indifference as unfamiliarity: something or someone outside of your domain. Is fear the opposite of love? Instinctively, in the presence of fear there is no room for love. Again, this is a discrete relationship and fear is a more of a base emotion than a feeling.

Maybe love is not a feeling. Gasp! Love has a long legacy as a feeling so we better keep that for posterity. Love is foundational and much greater. Love is, wait for it... "More Than a Feeling."

Love is a "source." It is the origin of all Good and only Good. It's that simple. Smiles, kindness, caring, compassion, understanding, forgiveness, peace, and charity all come from love and nowhere else. Many UUs place Love as the central source of our Values: Interdependence, Pluralism, Justice, Transformation, Generosity, and Equity. There exist other sources but since love is all humanity's good, nothing worthwhile remains.

We were born to love. It is deeply-rooted in humanity's subconscious and our

omnipotent, healthy mindset. It actually takes mental energy and disorder to draw from anywhere but love. Just watch young children to see how it is natural: they know only good. We adults can learn much from their unjaded minds.

Let's celebrate love by channeling it into all aspects of our lives. Challenge what you think and do. Is it sourced from love? Is it pure and good? When it is, you will feel the magic flow through you.

UUCW Online

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

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

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

Contact Information

Governing Board Chair:

Jill Nicholson Sackett

(224) 567-3635

Email: jill@sackett.com

Governing Board Members:

Allan Gordon

Rev. Emerita Inanna Arthen (Clerk)

Dave Faucher (Auditor)