

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 8

5:30 pm – Our Neighbor’s Kitchen
serves Chilled Salad Trio,
Parish Hall

Monday, August 19

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

Thursday, August 22

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

Thursday, August 29

5:30 pm – Our Neighbor’s Kitchen
serves Beans ‘n Franks Casserole,
Parish Hall

Mondays

7:30 pm - AA Meeting,
Parish Hall

From Your Editor

We live in more...*anonymous* times. Or so we think. The façade of a keypad in the “privacy” of one’s home, airplane seat or café is just that: once committed to writing, your sentiments are captured in perpetuity. The same goes for the spoken word regardless of the audience: certainly something said “in public” and even in “in confidence” finds its way to many other open ears.

Words matter. Pause before you commit. I am heartened to see the themes of love and acceptance emanating from the UUA General Assembly. What a nicer world this would be if we could all at least strive to check ourselves before uttering. Ask yourself: if you were on the *receiving end* of this statement, how would you feel? If you feel okay about that, it’s probably considerate enough to proceed. Simple concept, hard to apply. Let’s try.

-Jill Nicholson Sackett - Chair, Governing Board.

UUA General Assembly

By Joe Sackett

I again represented our church as a business delegate at this year's Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly (UUA GA), June 20-23, 2024. While completely virtual, it nevertheless promised to be a controversial and perhaps transitional year as the Article 2 revision to our Bylaws was up for amending and a final decision. Additional business included Actions of Immediate Witness (AIW) and a resolution specifically embracing gender diverse people as a fundamental expression of our faith.

Article 2 of our bylaws defines the principles and purposes of Unitarian Universalism. They may be changed via democratic process when necessary to evolve with society and to resonate with our current and potential members. Last changed in the 80s to the familiar seven principles and six sources, the current proposal is to update our bylaws to define a love-centered lattice of values (Pluralism, Justice, Interdependence, Generosity, Equity, and Transformation). Proponents see these as action-oriented and appreciate the promotion of Love as the ultimate source. Detractors see these values as over-simplified and miss the more general principles allowing for more pluralist interpretations. GA delegates first decided on amendments to the Article 2 proposal. The major ones were to include additional values,

Reason and/or Peace. Spirited discussion followed via online video and parallel chat rooms but the voting did not achieve the necessary $\frac{2}{3}$ supermajority for their inclusion. Delegates finally considered the replacement of Article 2 of our bylaws. This very significant decision brought out many compelling speakers from both sides and later passed with 80% of the delegates in favor.

AIWs are petitions by membership for the UUA to define our position on important and timely issues. This year's Actions related to Palestinian civilians, Israeli hostages and climate change. These three were passed by a large margin by the UUA delegates. The delegates also voted overwhelmingly on a resolution to "Embrace Transgender, Nonbinary, Intersex and Gender Diverse People as a Fundamental Expression of UU Religious Values." This made it clear where our faith stands with regard to our friends who have struggled with society's misunderstanding, prejudice and marginalization.

It was an honor to represent UUCW and virtually attend this assembly where I was surrounded by ministers, religious scholars, and long-time UUs who all express unconditional love for others. They maintain an ideal for human dignity and role model the values with which we were all raised despite our different backgrounds. I continue to reflect on how lucky we are to have such a wholly considerate faith.

Set in Stone Kicks Off With Site Visit

We are entering into now-familiar territory with our third Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF) grant award from the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) for our Set in Stone building preservation program. First up on the schedule was a mandatory orientation session for grantees which Jill Sackett attended on July 11. This was quickly followed with a site visit from Paul Holtz of the MHC and Jillian Borghardt of Structures North Consulting Engineers on July 15.

Paul and Jillian spent a good deal of time evaluating the target areas for our Phase 4 repairs. We are focusing on the top half of the west-facing wall of the bell tower. This wall is next in line for the most urgent repairs, with many areas of missing mortar, as shown below. The plan builds in additional repair options if funding allows.

Follow our progress on our Set in Stone website: <https://www.set-in-stone.org/>



The Power of Words

By Aaron Stockwell Wisman

The window seat in the last row is objectively the worst seat on any airplane. It would probably make any kind, saintly person cranky. But that's where my wife and I were one Friday, on our way to Texas: I in the middle seat, Lizzie in the aisle seat, and some other guy in the window seat.

As I was trying to accommodate my seatmate's "manspreading" early on in the flight, I glanced down at the phone he was holding and saw his response to a family member who had texted, "Who is sitting next to you?"

His response was, "Some overweight guy...He is continuously sighing." I felt so small when I read that. Even though I've read all about Fat liberation theology and how diet culture is b*s* and all bodies are good and amazing bodies, it took one little comment that I wasn't even supposed to see to wreck my mood for a bit. My weight and my breathing patterns are the least interesting thing about me.

It can be tough to get out of that negative space, especially when those words were said about me, in cramped confines, by someone I didn't know. Words that I wasn't supposed to even see.

Two days later—Sunday morning—I wanted to worship at my colleague Dan's church. I was visiting for the building

dedication of the congregation I once served and didn't know when I'd be able to visit again. At one point in worship he said, "I don't want to put you on the spot, but I just want to introduce my friend Rev. Aaron. He served the UU church here for a while and now he's visiting from Massachusetts. Thanks for being here, buddy. A beautiful child of God."

To hear these words, spoken in sacred space by a dear friend, and shared with the rest of the congregation present was so powerful. I felt like my soul and heart were so big.

Flying home that afternoon, I wondered to myself what voice I try to be in the world. It's amazing the power our words can have.

May the voices that call you "beloved" ring more loudly than the voices that call you anything less than that. May the words that we speak remind others that they, too, are beloved.

Change of Address?

We want to stay in touch! If you change your address, either U.S. Mail or email, let us know: email jill@sackett.com or write to the church at P.O. Box 218, Winchendon, MA 01475.

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)

Musically Yours...

As stated by an attendee of our June Winchendon Winds concert series: "This music sounds amazing in this epic space! It's dramatic and relaxing at the same time."

We will schedule additional concerts in our beautiful sanctuary – watch for announcements in future newsletters.

Contact Information

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Governing Board Members:

Allan Gordon: (Member)

Rev. Inanna Arthen, Minister Emerita
(Clerk)

Dave Faucher (Auditor)



the orange trumpets
bloom like fire, blow summer
a final fanfare

-Peter Galen Massey