

Winchester Unitarian Society

Highlights December 24, 2020

([link to today's full issue of Highlights](#))



The theme for December is Stillness

Photo: Horn Pond in winter





HAPPY KWANZAA

Upcoming Worship

We will be meeting via Zoom at 10 a.m. this Sunday, December 27th, for a moment to take a breath before one calendar year ends and the next one begins. "Take a breath, now take another". Please note this is NOT the main worship Zoom room, but one dedicated to Family Worship and Religious Education. Please log on a little before 10 at <https://tinyurl.com/WUSFamily>. The separate Zoom link will also be posted in the chat in the usual worship virtual room. All will need to be admitted by Rebecca and sessions are not recorded.

Miss Juanita and story time. Following the first reflections, our youngest members are invited to visit with Miss Juanita (of the playroom fame) hear stories and sing songs. As soon as the First Reflections ends, please re-enter the link for <https://tinyurl.com/WUSFamily> (it will also be posted in the chat) room where Miss Juanita is waiting for you. The very youngest may wish to bring an adult friend. All will need to be admitted.

*Reminder to families, there are materials posted on the website for you and your children to engage with during Sunday morning worship. The materials for December are posted [HERE](#)

Sunday, December 27
10:30 Worship, ONLINE



Photo by [dorota dylka](#) on [Unsplash](#)

***Spiritual New Year's Resolutions: Leading Into Liminality**

The Rev. Heather Janules

Have you ever been more ready to say "farewell" to an old year than now? As part of the spiritual preparation for whatever waits for us in 2021, we will again draw from Susan Beaumont's thoughts in *How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You Are Going* as we face on-going uncertainty. Our service will include a virtual ritual in which we "dissolve" all the things we wish to release before the New Year. And we will also draw our circle wider by welcoming two congregations who will be joining us for worship: The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Cumberland, MD and the Unitarian Universalist Church of Marblehead, MA. What a wonderful way to conclude 2020 with joy!

This Sunday, we share our gifts with the **Beyond Bond and Legal Defense Fund**, whose mission is to release immigration detainees, to provide for legal services and to support immigrant-led justice organizations.

Transcription Service Now Available When you log on to worship, you will now see an icon reading "LIVE Otter ai." This is a transcription application that provides text for any Zoom meeting, a good tool for those with impaired hearing or anyone seeking clarity about what is being broadcast. You can see a tutorial here: <https://tinyurl.com/OtterDemo>

Worship Notes

**Season's Greetings from Our Partner Church
in Marosvásárhely, Transylvania!**

<https://youtu.be/OpEdI5Qxwkc>

István Imre Strausz, piano. Edina Klára Bajkó and Teodora Szederjesi, vocals.

From Nagy Gizi, wife of the Marosvásárhely minister, Laci. (Rev. Nagy is the first speaker in the video): "Teodora (left) is a Unitarian girl from Csikszereda. She studies acting at the Art University here in Marosvásárhely. Edina and István are teaching there. The song is a Chilean carol."

**Season's Greetings and Happy Holidays
from Winchester Unitarian Society Program Staff!!**

<https://youtu.be/pk-V7U2aXJM>

Our Video Greeting Card

Worship Notes Are Now Online

Although there is no longer an Order of Service, you can now find worship notes online. These notes include Centering Thoughts, Music Notes, as well as the various songs, readings, and hymns from the service. Follow the link below to see the most recent notes from worship. Thank you!

<https://www.winchesteruu.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Worship-Notes-12.20.2020.pdf>

Congregational News

Con artists are again impersonating Rev. Heather by email, asking you to be in touch. The email they use is very similar to - but different from - her WUS email address.

If you were to respond, they would ask you to purchase gift cards for those in need which would, of course, profit the scammers. **Ignore, delete and spread the word!** We support many individuals and community through a myriad of ways BUT WE DO NOT ASSIST PEOPLE BY ASKING FOR GIFT CARD CODES.



**With Gratitude,
in Memory of Judy Virnelli**

We are pleased to announce that the Virnelli family has given a very generous gift in honor of Frank's late wife, Judy, an active and beloved long-time member of WUS. This gift will enable a beautiful landscape renovation of the Mystic Valley Parkway entrance. The renovations will



include sweeping walks from both sidewalks converging to a central staircase that ascends to an expanded terrace outside the Parkway doors. Built on a central spine from the church and aligned with our flags, these improvements will once again prominently connect the church to the Town and give a long overdue facelift to that entrance.

Frank was on the landscape task force in 2009 that advised on the overall landscape plan, created by Julie Khuen and that vision has remained with him. Frank and his family felt this was a fitting way to honor Judy's memory. On behalf of the entire WUS congregation, we are deeply grateful for this gift.

In related news, a group of former Pastoral Care Associates is in the planning stages of a memorial gift brick initiative to be included in the new walkways. More to come!

An Update from the Pandemic Planning Task Force

PPTF reconvened on 11/19 and will be meeting regularly to address specific questions and inquiries about use of WUS space /grounds, to update guidelines as needed and to stay abreast of the impact of the virus on congregational functioning. We will be including program staff in our meetings to support them in planning. We have conducted 2 polls since the beginning of this church year. Although there was a range of responses regarding comfort level in allowing more in-person activity at the church, in light of the recent increase in Covid-19 cases everywhere, we will not be changing the status of our response.

For the foreseeable future, we will continue in "Phase 3 – Vigilant" of our WUS Pathways to Reopening. This means we will continue to limit in-person gatherings to outdoors, or indoors following all guidelines for safety including number of people in the space. Please reach out to us at pandemicplanningtf@winchesteruu.org if you or your committee has any questions about in-person activity on church grounds. All requests to use the church grounds should go through our church administrator, Thomas Slack, and follow the Screening Questions and Sign-In protocol.

Thank you to Thomas for faithfully implementing the guidelines with both church and community use of the building and grounds. Thank you to all who have respectfully utilized these guidelines, allowing some much – needed in-person activity particularly for our youth! It is such vigilance that keeps our community healthy.

We have had one report of a member who tested positive, though no close contact occurred within our WUS community. Contact tracing was done using our protocol. The member successfully completed self-quarantine and reported negative test result post-quarantine. We are so thankful that only mild symptoms were experienced.

Please continue to use our Guidelines and Sign-In sheet for any in-person gatherings so that we may continue effective screening and contact tracing.

In gratitude for the sacred community we create together
~The Pandemic Planning Task Force

PS: You may wish to download this resource, created by someone who recovered from COVID, about what to have on hand should you or a loved one become ill:

[\[link\]](#)

Shop local! But if you're one of the 75% of Americans who shop online at Amazon, please help support WUS by naming the Winchester Unitarian Society as your designated charity on Amazon Smile.

As you shop this upcoming holiday season, we urge you to shop local. But if you're doing your shopping online and you're buying from Amazon, we hope you'll make [Amazon Smile](#) your starting point and support WUS through your purchases. Why? Because Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of your eligible Amazon Smile purchases to the charitable organization of your choice. It's easy. You start your shopping experience at [smile.amazon.com](#) instead of the plain old [amazon.com](#) – it's the same Amazon you know, same products, same prices. You name the Winchester Unitarian Society as your designated charity and start shopping! Got questions about the program? Read more [here](#) or just get started at [smile.amazon.com](#).

Thanks and Happy Holidays!

IMPORTANT REMINDER FROM THE CO-TREASURERS

In order for you to claim a charitable contribution/deduction on your income taxes for 2020, any gifts to WUS must be RECEIVED IN THE OFFICE or postmarked no later than Thursday, December 31st. The date on the check does NOT determine deductibility.

On December 4th, we mailed statements to those who have a balance due on the pledge that they made to the church for the current church fiscal year . If you are enrolled in an automatic payment plan, please ignore this statement. We plan to send out Tax year 2020 statements for all categories of giving by mid-January.

Please read more at the IRS website about changes to charitable donation deductions during 2020 due to COVID-19 at <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/how-the-cares-act-changes-deducting-charitable-contributions>.

If you have any questions about your donations, please contact the treasurers at treasurer@winchesteruu.org or reach out to Jenny in the church office at 781-729-0949.

Thank you everyone for your generosity throughout this challenging year of pandemic! Your contributions keep our staff employed and make our programs and social outreach efforts possible. Wishing you all a happy and healthy holiday and new year!

Judy Murray and Sue Kiewra

UPCOMING MINI SABBATICAL

Rev. Heather will take an abbreviated, six-week sabbatical, all of January and half of February,



2021. She will take a four-month sabbatical next program year.

We are in the process of hiring **Kye Flannery** as our part-time sabbatical minister. Many will remember Kye from the summers she has served as Summer Minister. While she currently lives in Austin, TX, ministry is a remote practice these days for all of us. Kye will preach for three Sundays, lend support to other worship services and be available to the Pastoral Care Associates and the congregation for pastoral support.

Here is a message from Kye:

Hello, Winchester friends! It is a pleasure to be with you while Rev Heather enjoys a time of rest and sabbatical! I want to make sure that I'm available to you as needed both on Sunday mornings and for pastoral care throughout our time together — in short, that it doesn't feel like I'm 1,966 miles away. ;) Though I am.

If you're like me, all manner of existential questions, thoughts, and feelings are coming up during this time — So whether you are thinking about the meaning of life, if you have good coping mechanisms, or are wanting to strategize what health looks like for yourself or your family right now, I'd be really glad to talk it out with you. I'll work with the Pastoral Care team, so please continue to reach out to the group via (pca@winchesteruu.org) or to me directly at kye@winchesteruu.org.

*If you want to talk about less-confidential things, it would be wonderful to see you just to say hello — to that end, I'll plan on hosting weekly drop-in coffee/office hours on Zoom, **Thursdays from noon - 2 EST**. I'll have a kids' book on hand for the first hour if we want to do storytime, or if a parent would like to bring a good storytime book, that could also be wonderful.*

Writers Group: Meets weekly on Wednesdays led and facilitated by Dan Hermes from 9-10ish a.m. Please be in touch if you'd like the url to join the group. Dropping in is fine and invite your writing friends. Dan can be found here at dan@lexiconsystemsinc.com

Registration Open! "Sage Advice - Aging in a Time of Covid" January 4th, 6:30 to 7:45 The Pastoral Care Associates are hosting a conversation with Geriatric Care Manager, Kathy Kemp. Whether you or a loved one is contemplating additional support and/or changes to your living circumstances now or much later - it's never too early to have these conversations. With the added complications of covid, plans are even more important to have in place in case of emergent situations. To sign up (you will receive materials in advance of the workshop) please do so via Rebecca@winchesteruu.org.



If you are facing a time of joy, sorrow or transition in your life, your minister and the Pastoral Care Associates are available to offer a listening ear, compassionate presence and, if applicable, resources. Contact the office, 781-729-0949 or office@winchesteruu.org

Social Action & Outreach



On-Going

There is an urgent need for food donations for the Council for Social Concern in Woburn. You may drop off food at church or at the pantry.

The Food Pantry at the Council for Social Concern is currently low on: **Canned meats (tuna, beef stew, spam, salmon), baked beans, hearty canned soups and pasta sauce.** Since donating food may not be convenient, contributions may be made directly on their website: www.socialconcern.org

Please find the drop off baskets in a new location - by the back door of the building near the parking lot. Access to this basket is unlocked.

Food Pantry is open to Woburn & Winchester residents
If you have any questions or would like to make an appointment, please call Paula Matthews, Food Pantry Director at (781) 935-6495 ext. 208



Do you know about these Massachusetts organizations working for racial equity?

Massachusetts Communities Action Network (MCAN) works for Racial Equity & Economic Justice. **MCAN is a statewide network of seven faith-based and community organizations working for economic and racial justice through collaborative democracy.** COVID-19 is amplifying the disparities and injustices MCAN has been working to dismantle every day. This is a moment of disruption AND of opportunity. To learn more, go to <https://www.mcan.us/covid-in-this-time>

The Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice at Harvard Law School (CHHIRJ) was launched in September 2005. Through its website you can access recent academic and policy research through wide-ranging archived on-line talks. Racism is not just about attitudes; it's about behaviors, institutions, and systems that differentially distribute access, power, wealth, health, opportunity, and punishment. **For example: The Future of Work: The Effect of Job Automation on African-American and Latino Workers in Three Cities.**

<https://charleshamiltonhouston.org/> <https://charleshamiltonhouston.org/> [join their mailing list](#) for weekly events.

Providing Winter Warmth and Continuing Welcome for Local Refugee Family

We continue our Go Fund Me campaign for the local refugee family many of you have so generously helped this year.

We are very grateful that the Reverend Anne Robertson of the Crawford Memorial Methodist Church congregation underwrote the recent purchase of four new tires for the family, ensuring safer driving as New England's ice and snow season arrives.

We hope that you will consider a donation in this season of giving that is comfortable for you. Daily needs and unexpected expenses continue as they gain secure footing in their new home country.

You can reach the campaign [here](#) to donate and/or share the link to the campaign by email, Facebook, Instagram with your circle of friends. Thank you.

Please contact Gloria Legvold (glegvold@comcast.net, 781-729-8247) or Sandy Thompson (sandra.thompson3@comcast.net, 781-724-7571) with any questions.

Religious Education

Children's Religious Education Feedback requested: We are using a combination of online or delivered to your home religious education and family support resources. The Sunday morning packet is now monthly rather than weekly, and the November/December packets have been delivered or mailed to younger families. What's working? What isn't? What suggestions do you have? Share your thoughts with Rebecca Kelley-Morgan Rebecca@winchesteruu.org or Naomi Magnoni at REC@winchesteruu.org

Interfaith Middle School Crossing Paths will be on hiatus until January 10th. Beth, Jessica and Rebecca look forward to seeing you in the New Year.

WUSYG

Winchester Unitarian Society Youth Group

WUSYG is on its winter break hiatus. We'll see you again on Jan. 10th!
Don't forget to plan your gifts for our Secret Gift Giving G-noming PLUS get ready to get Garden Gnomed as we still spread the love whilst staying apart

PARENTS: please REGISTER your child in WUSYG if you haven't already: <https://forms.gle/pRtVA6SEWLxN783w9>

Questions, concerns or compliments, message Sam & Haley: wusyouth@gmail.com

Music

Virtual Choir

The music program will be experimenting with a "virtual choir". This is new to all of us so it will be interesting to see how it comes together. Choir members should already have been contacted about this. Please contact Music Director John Kramer at john.kramer@winchesteruu.org if you have any questions.

Deadlines

Sunday Morning Announcements Guidelines: [Click here](#)

For Highlights submissions: Wednesdays, 9:00 am

For submissions to the OOS: Wednesdays, 9:00 am

Email to office@winchesteruu.org. No more than 250 words, please.

Staying Connected

Visit the WUS website!

- Read the latest Highlights and Mystic Messenger in [the news section](#).
- Want to know if a room is free, or when your meeting is? View [the calendar page](#).
- Need the latest directory, or a list of committee chairs? Go to [the members' section](#) ([contact the office](#) for the password).
- Want to set up electronic giving? Go to the [How to Give page](#).

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