



Winchester Unitarian Society

Highlights

December 8th, 2022

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

The Theme for **December** is Wonder



Upcoming Worship

Sunday, December 11th

Virtual Worship Logistics Below

Music Sunday



Wonder Of The *Night*

IN PERSON ATTENDEES

Come to the WUS Sanctuary (478 Main Street, Winchester).

Please wear a mask when entering the building.
When the children exit to Metcalf Hall,
masks are optional.

--VIRTUAL ATTENDEES--

On Sunday at 10:30 am, click here to connect with the livestream from the Sanctuary: <https://tinyurl.com/WUSlivestream> .

The **Order of Service** for Virtual Attendees can be found on our website under the listing for this service.

Livestreamers are encouraged to send an email to checkingin@winchesteruu.org

We know where you are streaming from but don't know who you are!
We want to hear from you!

More information about the worship services
can be found on the [website](#).

Joys, Sorrows and Transitions

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.

A Round of *Applause*

...for long-time WUS members George “Woody” Wood and Rachel Whitehouse for putting forth a by-law proposal to Winchester’s Town Meeting to support the transition from gas to electric leaf blowers. They proposed an allowance for continued use of gas leaf blowers, particularly by landscapers, during Spring and Fall clean up, but advocated for a [“Quiet, Clean Winchester”](#) (click for more information) during the summer months. Our Unitarian Universalist values were evident in their respectful, informed, thoughtful and collaborative work toward caring for the environment and the health and well-being of all, while considering those whose living might be impacted.

With a year of preparation, much research, outreach to stakeholders and nearby communities who have walked this path, they were unfortunately stalled in their efforts at the Fall Town Meeting. We want to thank them for their passionate efforts and hope that more will join them in bringing this transition to fruition.

Congregational News





Grieving a Loved One Through the Holidays

December 11th, After Worship
Michelsen Room

Facilitated by Rev. Heather and
the Pastoral Care Associates

Return of the Mitten Tree

'Tis the season for warm mittens and gift giving.... so, our annual **Mitten Tree Project** returns!

Our **Mitten Tree Project**, sponsored by the Social Action and Outreach Committee, is underway! Wishes for holiday gifts are posted on (virtual and paper) mittens, giving you the opportunity to shop for a needed/wanted item, wrapping it and placing it under the tree. The paper mittens are hung on the tree in the Symmes Room. All gifts benefit newly-arrived refugee families.



We'll be gathering gifts until the service on **December 18th** when we'll sort them and turn them over to the delivery elves. Thank you for your generosity!

To participate virtually, click on: [WUSMittenTree](#)

Have you read the latest
Mystic Messenger?



[Click here to read Volume 8, Issue 2: MM_V8_#2](#)

WUS Holiday Schedule

December 11th

- **Grieving a Loved One through the Holidays** After worship; location TBD. Facilitated by Rev. Heather and the Pastoral Care Associates.

December 18th

- **Pageant, Holiday Caroling** Come to worship prepared to choose a costume and recreate the Nativity story in community. The Pageant is a favorite for people of all ages.
- After worship, we will share in a meal as part of the **WUSYG Holiday Fundraiser** and sing Christmas carols after dessert.

December 21st

- **Solstice Celebration and Caroling Party, 6pm** We gather in Metcalf Hall for a collaborative and interactive recognition of the shortest day of the year. After we jump the flaming wreath outdoors, we will walk through downtown Winchester, serenading the town with Christmas carols. A great evening for people of all ages.

December 24th Christmas Eve

- **4 pm** A family-friendly service with stories, carols and singing by candlelight.
- **7 pm** A service centered on lessons and carols with singing, beautiful music and celebrating the Silent Night by candlelight.

December 25th Christmas Day/Last Day of Hanukkah: "A New Day" (This service is a collaboration by a few UU congregations. It is pre-recorded and will be livestreamed for those who wish to attend at home. There will be a "worship viewing party" at WUS at our usual time of 10:30 am. Rev. Heather plans to attend in her pajamas so you are invited to do the same.) This service includes something for everyone, with the kindling of many lights, a First Reflection, hymns and carols and two short reflections exploring what Christmas and Hanukkah offer us as we approach the new day.

Standing Committee November 2022 Update

At its monthly meeting on November 16th, the Standing Committee, as usual, covered a large number of matters of importance to the health and wellbeing of our Society. These included reviewing our finances through the end of October and our financial outlook going forward, getting updates on potential building projects, confirmation of the Rummage Sale Fundraiser for Town Day 2023, tracking religious education registration numbers, and approval of some necessary updates to the personnel manual, among them making our holiday policy more flexible to reflect individual staff's schedules.

Our Office Administrator and Outreach Manager, Richard Dorbin, presented a first draft proposal for a comprehensive outreach plan, including rebuilding our website, to help spread the word about the attractions of Unitarian Universalism and our church in particular. This generated some discussion about what might make a better website. We welcome your input – please share your thoughts with Richard and the Marketing Team of Marilyn Mullane and Kristine Kamikawa. If you have talents in this area, we would welcome your involvement.

Finally, the Committee expressed its collective and profound gratitude for the wonderful work of Reverend Heather and Vicky Cocculuto and her team of church member volunteers in organizing and carrying out the meaningful and greatly appreciated memorial service on November 13th for former WUSYG member Brenda Martino.

Update from The Pandemic Planning Task Force 12/01

At this time, evidence of Covid in our area's wastewater remains low and the PPTF and staff continue to monitor this as we make bi-weekly assessments in church protocols.

Thank you to the 71 people who answered the Coffee Hour poll we sent out 2 weeks ago. Based on your feedback, the PPTF has updated our guidelines to allow refreshments in Symmes for Coffee Hour. Masks remain optional for anyone who wishes to wear one.

As food and beverages are not allowed in the Sanctuary, we invite those who do not feel comfortable being around a group of unmasked folks to continue conversations in the Sanctuary.

We continue to ask all to arrive at Worship masked and remain masked until the children leave for RE. Masks will then be optional. On Sundays that we have All-Ages Worship, we ask that everyone remain masked throughout the Service.

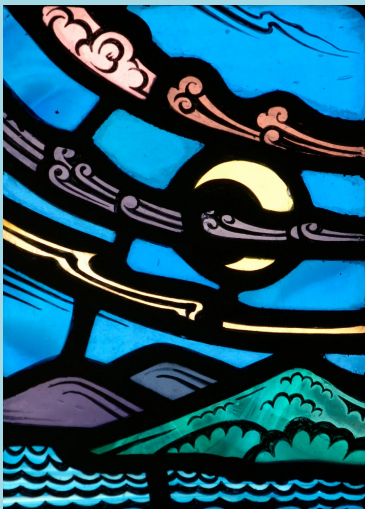
We continue to monitor CO2 output in the Sanctuary during Worship. We have generally reached the magic number 800ppm that indicates a need to open a couple of windows. If you sit near the windows, you may want to keep your coat with you.

Pie Sunday in Metcalf Hall went well and the CO2 concentration indicated we reached a level of 850ppm, a point at which we will aim to increase air circulation but is not of concern.

We hope to have our annual Holiday Potluck in some form in Metcalf Hall on December 18th. More details to come.

Thank you for your continued support in navigating Covid as a faith community.

The Pandemic Planning Task Force and Program Staff:
Fritzie, Cynthia, Dirck and Kim
Rev. Heather, John, Sam and Brenna



Save the Dates

Silent Retreat

Friday, January 13th @ 7pm -

Saturday, January 14th @ 5pm

\$20 for food and materials

Begin the New Year in a centered way with a one-day Silent Retreat. Participants engage in DIY activities (journaling, knitting, reading, napping) and optional group activities (walking through the Fells - weather permitting - and creating Soul Collages.) There is the option to sleep over at WUS.

The retreat is a "go" with at least 10 registrants. Contact Rev. Heather with questions or if you are interested: heather.janules@winchesteruu.org

Religious Education

This past Sunday, the RE kids and families worked together with teachers to build our **Advent Spiral** after church. Later that evening, over 40 people walked the spiral and received a blessing from Reverend Heather in the middle, including RE kids and families as well as other church members and WUSYG youth. WUSYG folks also provided snacks and mulled cider. It was a lovely, contemplative activity. I highly recommend it as a peaceful way to start the holiday season. Thank you to all who helped and participated!



This Sunday, December 11th: RE Classes (K-6th Grades)



This coming Sunday, Spirit Play kids will hear a story called *Rhea and Lummi*, an origin tale about the Winter Solstice. The Neighboring Faiths class will explore the Kwanzaa kinara and its inspiration as well as Christmas and its many origins.

Save the Date: Sunday, December 18th, for the Paper Bag Pageant!

RE families especially won't want to miss the Paper Bag Pageant, which will happen during the service on **December 18th**. This service will be for all ages, and it will be so much fun for everyone. Costumes are provided, but if any kids (and adults!) want to come in the costume of their choosing, they're welcome to do so. There's



room in the stable for all critters, superheroes, princesses, and anything else!



Guest at Your Table boxes are due back by December 18th. Neighboring Faiths kids are excited to get the Guest at Your Table boxes back to donate funds to the good work the UUSC does in areas that have been destabilized due to war, climate change, political upheaval, and more. For more information, go to uus.org. If you would like to contribute but don't have a box, we have many ways to give. Please email brenna.mayer@winchesteruu.org for more

information.

Winter Solstice service will happen on **Wednesday, December 21st, at 6:00 pm** at the church. We'll be holding the service in Metcalf Hall, and then going outside to jump the yule log and then sing carols through the center of Winchester. We encourage families to come greet the return of the light with some festive solstice activities!



OWL: Our Whole Lives (7th & 8th Grades)

The OWL class for this Sunday, **December 11th**, is about sexual orientation. This Sunday's class will be in the usual place (the OWL room) at the usual time (5 to 6:30). See you there!

Junior Youth Group (7th & 8th Grades)

This Sunday, **December 11th**, we will be meeting in Metcalf Hall from 6:30-8 pm, starting with dinner, per usual. We will be joined by WUSYG and the Network for Social Justice interns, planning for our MLK Day event (please **save the date of Monday, January 16th, from 10-1 for the event**, plus some prep and clean-up before and after).

Also, please save the date of **December 18th** when JUSYG will join WUSYG's **Holiday Festival** (and Fundraiser) after the 10:30 am service (which is an interactive Christmas Pageant that your families are all more than welcome to attend, as well)! JUSYG will have its own table to sell

some holiday wares that we make together, so we're hoping JUSYGers can plan on being there from **11:30 'til around 1**. We won't otherwise have a regular meeting that night (neither on Christmas nor New Year's Day). We will be making wares with WUSYG the day before, **December 17th, from 4-6 pm**.

WUSYG: Winchester Unitarian Society Youth Group (9th-12th Grades)

This Sunday, December 11th, WUSYG will be meeting at a different time, 5:30-8 pm. We will be serving dinner at 6:30 and joining JUSYG and the Network for Social Justice to plan MLK Day.

On Sunday, December 18th, some WUSYGers will participate in the "Paper Bag Pageant" while others set up for our **Holiday Festival and Fundraiser** (where we serve food after the service, sell various wares, etc., and then everyone sings carols at the end!). WUSYGers are expected to arrive at 10 am and stay until 1 pm (or whenever we're done cleaning up!) We won't have a regular meeting that night (neither on Christmas nor New Years Day).

On Wednesday, December 14th, we will be visiting the Malden Warming Center to speak with some of the staff and learn about their work, in preparation for our MLK Day collection. We are hoping this trip will help us to learn firsthand what goes into running a community center and more about the problems of unhoused people in the Boston area. We can try to accommodate up to 20 students for this visit and we will work to arrange the carpooling. If you need a ride, we will meet in the WUS back parking lot at 4 pm to leave Winchester, returning to Winchester by 6:30. Otherwise you should plan to meet us there at 4:30 and leave at 6. **Please fill out this [signup sheet](#)** if you can attend!

On Friday, January 6th, we will have a **Holiday Party** (with WUSYG alums) at night, with a gift exchange, etc. More details TBD.

On January 16th, MLK Day, WUSYGers are partnering with the Network for Social Justice to plan a **Community Engagement Fair and Day of Service** (to serve the Malden Warming Center) at the Winchester High School from 10 am 'til 1 pm (plus extra time before and after to help setup and cleanup).

Social Action & Outreach

**Building
Beloved
Community**
through
*Living
Our
Principles*



On Thursday past, our Winchester Unitarian Society's Black Lives Matter banner again was stolen, this time brazenly at 11 a.m. by a man who parked his gray pickup truck in our circular driveway.

Rev. Heather Janules posted on the Winchester Residents' Facebook page: "...I recall the words of the Rev. Carlton Eliot Smith, a Black minister, who observed about another act of vandalism, 'If people are having that kind of reactivity around a sign in front of a church, what do you think it is like for those of us who are walking around day to day in Black skin?'"

We will eventually hang another Black Lives Matter flag. It is my hope that when this new flag is dedicated, this ceremony will include people from beyond the members and friends of the Winchester Unitarian Society. Over time, I have learned that our BLM flag has meaning for many. As one person wrote to me, 'As a person-of-color coming into a predominantly white community, seeing those flags made me feel welcomed...'"

At our May annual meeting we endorsed the Eighth Principle, "journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions." Our BLM banner display is a spiritual commitment to Building Beloved Community. So, also, are our individual actions every day.

—Gloria Legvold, for the RJTPG

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