

The
Unitarian Universalist
Church *of* Worcester



Celebrating more than 50 years on Holden Street!

90 Holden Street • Worcester, Massachusetts 01606 • (508) 853-1942
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Gathered in 1841

A Message to Newcomers

Welcome to worship. We hope that you enjoy your time with us and that you will come back again soon! Hearing devices and large print hymnals are available in the back of the church. See the usher for assistance. Restrooms are available off the lounge at the rear of the sanctuary and in the hallway off the right front of the sanctuary (this one is wheelchair accessible). We invite you to join us for refreshments and conversation in Fellowship Hall immediately after the service this morning. We encourage you to stop by the Information Table, sponsored by the Member Services Committee, and to fill out a visitor's form if you would like to receive our newsletter.

We welcome your thoughtful feedback on your worship experience. Feedback cards are available in each pew. Please return completed cards to the box on the Welcome Table in the Sanctuary foyer or on the Information Table in Fellowship Hall.

This congregation is supported entirely by the gifts and pledges of members and friends. Contributions may be placed in the plates or mailed to the church office, 90 Holden Street, Worcester, MA 01606.

If you have questions about our programs, or about becoming a member of this religious community, please feel free to speak with the pastor or any member of the Congregation.

Sunday Morning Information

Sunday Services

We hold regular worship services at 9:00 AM and 11:00 AM, September through June. Lay-led services are held in July and August. Religious Education (RE) classes and child care are provided at the same time as services during the regular church year, beginning with the last Sunday in September.

Parking

The parking lot in front of the church is available primarily for those with mobility needs, visitors, and families with small children. Parking is also available in the lot across the street and next door at Bancroft School.

Accessibility

We are wheelchair accessible and have an assistive listening system. Large-print hymnals and Orders of Service are available. Talk with us about any other accommodations that can help you be a full participant.

Coffee and Conversation

We invite you to stay for coffee and conversation after the Sunday morning services so you can get to know us. We want to get acquainted, to answer your questions, and to learn how we might support you in your religious journey. Find us at the Information Table in Fellowship Hall or join us for *Conversations with Newcomers*, held the first Sunday of each month after the regular church service.

Between Services

One of the important logistical challenges we face with our

new two-service format is preparing the sanctuary between services and allowing our choirs adequate time for warm-up and preparation. To accomplish this, we encourage those who attend the first service to move out of the sanctuary in a timely fashion after the postlude. Please feel free to bring your warm greetings to fellow congregants in the Lounge or Fellowship Hall at this time.

About Joys & Sorrows

This is a meditative time we set aside for sharing the significant milestones of our lives. We invite all those present to participate; we ask only that you be mindful of this sacred time and use it gently. Those wishing to share are invited to come forward when noted in the order of service, form a line beside the facilitator, and in turn briefly speak into the microphone. If you are not comfortable standing in front of the congregation, you can write out your joy or sorrow and give it to the minister to read.

Religious Education Program

The mission of the Religious Education program at UUCW is to promote a welcoming and inclusive community that values children and youth. Guided by the UU Principles and our Covenant, we strive to nurture the spiritual development of our children and youth and empower them to act on their beliefs. Religious Education classes are offered for children from nursery age through high school on Sunday mornings at both services.

The RE Committee has identified five areas we want our children to learn during their years in Sunday School:

- UU principles, history, and traditions;
- Ethics, how to make decisions, how to live as a UU;
- A celebration of the diversity of world religions and the common threads that join us all;
- A hands-on study of social justice and community service;
- The Judeo-Christian stories and themes that have shaped our culture and our own UU tradition.

We encourage parents to consult with RE director Deb Selkow for more information about our programs.

On Sunday evenings our high school youth return for Youth Group, a safe and inclusive space for teens to gather, explore their spirituality, and create and participate in meaningful activities. These programs are directed by Youth Programs coordinator Rachel Wagner.

About UUs ... About Us

We Believe

Unitarian Universalism is a liberal religion born out of the Jewish and Christian traditions. We keep our minds open to the religious questions people have struggled with in all times and places. We believe that personal experience, conscience, and reason should be the final authorities in religion. In the end, religious authority lies not in a book, person, or institution, but in ourselves. We put religious insights to the test of our hearts and minds.

We uphold the free search for truth. We will not be bound by a statement of belief. We do not ask anyone to subscribe to a creed. We say ours is a noncreedal religion. Ours is a free faith.

We believe that religious wisdom is ever changing. Human understanding of life and death, the world and its mysteries, is never final. Revelation is continuous. We celebrate unfolding truths known to teachers, prophets, and sages throughout the ages.

We affirm the inherent worth and dignity of all women and men. We believe in encouraging people to think for themselves. We know people differ in their opinions, choices, and affections, and we believe these differences generally should be honored.

We seek to act as a moral force in the world, believing that ethical living is the supreme witness of religion. We are deeply concerned about both the here-and-now and about the effects our actions will have on future generations. We know that our relationships with one another, with diverse peoples, races, and nations, should be governed by justice, equity, and compassion.

We Celebrate

Each Unitarian Universalist congregation supports many different kinds of programs. We hold worship regularly,

Our Covenant

In consonance with the principles and purposes of the Unitarian Universalist Association, we the members and friends of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Worcester covenant to sustain and support a courageous and caring community by:

- Bringing our best selves to form a welcoming, loving, and inclusive community of faith;
- Creating an atmosphere of celebration and worship in a safe environment;
- Providing opportunities where diverse people and points of view are respected and where open-hearted and open-minded discussion of our differences is encouraged;
- Treating each other with kindness and respect;
- Approaching conflicts with a spirit of humility and with the respectful intent for peaceful resolution;
- Engaging in and encouraging spiritual and intellectual growth across the lifespan;
- Fostering social justice and positive transformation in our community and in the world at large;
- Growing and maintaining the resources necessary to support the missions and ministries of this congregation;
- Fostering fellowship and enjoying each other and the unique gifts that each person brings to our community.

we share the insights of the past and present with those who will create the future, we undertake service to the community, and we build friendships. A visitor to a Unitarian Universalist congregation will likely find a variety of events and activities such as church school, daycare centers, lectures and forums, support groups, family events, adult education classes, and study groups – all depending on the individual needs and interests of the local members.

Each Unitarian Universalist congregation is the fulfillment of a long heritage that goes back hundreds of years to courageous people who struggled for freedom in thought and faith. On this continent we include the Massachusetts settlers and the founders of the American republic. Well-known Unitarians and Universalists include John Adams, Clara Barton, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Louisa May Alcott, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Susan B. Anthony, Adlai Stevenson, Eliot Richardson, and Whitney Young. Not as famous but equally worthy are the thousands of men and women in our congregations who are leading vital, dedicated, and useful lives.

Our congregations are self-governing. Authority and responsibility are vested in each local congregation – called

a church, society, or fellowship – which adopts its own bylaws, elects its own officers, and approves its budget. Every member is encouraged to take part in church fellowship and other activities.

We Unite

More than 1000 congregations make up the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), which represents our interests on a continental scale. The UUA grew out of the 1961 consolidation of two religious denominations: the Universalist, organized in 1793, and the Unitarian, organized in 1825.

The UUA provides resources and offers consultations to local congregations, creates religious education curricula, spurs social action efforts, expedites the settlement of professional religious leaders, supports the publishing activities of Beacon Press, and produces pamphlets, devotional materials, and the bimonthly journal *The UU World*.



The UUA works with many other Unitarian Universalist organizations, the largest of which is the *Unitarian Universalist Service Committee* (UUSC). Since its early work aiding victims of Nazi oppression, the UUSC has been helping people help themselves through its service and advocacy programs around the world. *The Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation*, an independent member organization, represents, organizes, and acts on the concerns and issues of importance to UU women across the continent. Another related organization, the *Unitarian Universalist Church of the Larger Fellowship*, provides a ministry to geographically isolated religious liberals.

Our Heritage

History

The First Universalist Society of Worcester called its first minister in 1841. Our first home was in the “Harding Block” near Town Hall. We erected a magnificent church on Pleasant Street in 1871 (since torn down) and built our current church in 1955. Eight years after the merger of the Unitarian and Universalist Associations, we changed our name.

In 1995 we were designated a Welcoming Church by the UUA, which means that we strive publicly to further the affirmation and celebration of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) individuals in all aspects of the church community. We also seek to increase the visibility of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Worcester as a Welcoming Congregation within the greater LGBT community.

Twenty-two ministers have served our congregation during its 164 years of continuous existence.

Governance

Our congregation is governed solely by a Board of Management. Officers and trustees are elected by the members at the church's Annual Meeting in the Spring. The minister is “called” by the congregation. We are a member congregation of the Clara Barton District and the UUA. Our church is solely dependent upon the financial contributions of its members and friends.

To Become a Member

While there is no commitment to any specific creed, becoming a member reflects a desire to commit and contribute to the well-being of this religious community. Speak with the minister or a member of the Member Services Committee about becoming a member.

Congregational Activities

There are many ways you can become involved in our community. We have both adult and youth choirs, a full Religious Education program, small group ministry, as well as a variety of fellowship activities. Talk with someone at the Newcomer's Table about opportunities to participate or to complete an interest inventory.

Get Connected

We invite you to sign the guest book or to email the church (office@uucworchester.org) if you'd like to receive our weekly e-mailed newsletter, *The E-Message*. Church calendars, program information, special events, and much more are all available on our Web site: www.uucworchester.org.