



WINCHESTER UNITARIAN SOCIETY

1965 – 2015



THE
THIRD FIFTY YEARS



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Preface

November 29, 2015, marked the 150th anniversary of the Winchester Unitarian Society's founding. What follows in this booklet is a brief history covering the most recent fifty of those one hundred fifty years—the period between 1965 and

2015. Much transpired beyond the Society's walls during that time. The Viet Nam war ended leaving the country tired and discouraged; racial minorities, women, and those of differing sexual orientations continued and intensified their struggles

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Preface (continued)

for equal treatment; terrorism and its prevention—underlined by the events of September 11th, 2001—became everyday concerns and precipitated long duration wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. By the early 2000s, the progress of global climate change was undeniable to all but a few, while 2007's financial crisis had called into question the strength of our economic institutions and made clear the accelerating pace toward inequality in income and wealth. Finally and of immediate concern to the Society, membership in most mainline Christian-based churches began and continued a steady decline.

All these forces influenced our thoughts and actions as individuals and as a congregation. They and the Society's response to them have made us a church quite different from what it was in 1965. In our aspirations, in our programs, and in our view of ourselves, we have changed.

In relatively few words, this history describes the most salient of these institutional changes. The process of its compilation repeatedly

made clear the enormous amount of creative, devoted energy that has been expended to bring about those changes. Ministers, staff, and congregants have spent thousands upon thousands of hours devising and embarking on new ventures and supporting new positions. Others have spent equal time carrying on those activities that are the same now as they were in 1965 but are the foundation on which new initiatives can be built. Still others have exerted committed and heartfelt effort speaking out against directions they believed were not in the Society's best interest. All have been essential contributors to our accomplishments. All merit our collective thanks.

Appended to our account of the third fifty years is a condensed version of the booklet published in 1965 to commemorate the Society's first hundred years. Together, we hope they provide an informative, thought-provoking picture of the full one hundred fifty.

The One Hundred Fiftieth Anniversary Team

1965-1969

A Long-Term Ministry Ends



Bob Storer's Retirement

The period immediately following the 1965 Centennial Celebration saw the church preparing for the end of Bob Storer's ministry. Steps were taken to lighten his workload by reducing the number of sermons he preached and the extent of his involvement in Liberal Religious Youth (LRY)—previously Metcalf Union. In the spring, 1968, Reverend Storer announced his intention to retire at the end of the next church year. His departure would mark the close of a nineteen-year ministry, one of the longest and most successful in the church's history. The Society's certified membership stood in the five hundreds and its religious education enrollment at over three hundred. Bob's letter of resignation closed with the words: "Permit me to say that I believe the minister who will succeed me is a most fortunate man indeed."

1969-2001

We Reach the Twenty-first Century



Jack Zoerheide Comes to Winchester

In March, 1969, the Pulpit Committee presented the Reverend Jack D. Zoerheide as its candidate to replace Reverend Storer and, at a special meeting following candidating week, the Society voted to call him. Jack, as he quickly became known, was a veteran of WWII where he had served in both the Atlantic and Pacific theatres as a Navy sailor and had been witness to the destruction at Hiroshima. He had been senior minister at the Hingham, Massachusetts, church and, when called, was pastor in Needham, Massachusetts. He had shown a keen interest in social justice issues in Needham and had participated in demonstrations in the South that brought time in jail.



Jack D. Zoerheide

A Larger Voice in the Community

Early in his ministry in Winchester, Reverend Zoerheide moved quickly to put his social justice commitments to work outside the walls of the church. He played a significant role in the establishment of the Mystic Valley Mental Health Association and served on the area-wide YMCA Counseling Service. In 1973, his annual report to the Society stated in part:

“The demands of community and ecumenical leadership—centering around the Winchester ABC¹ program, Ecumenical Association, and the Committee for a Winchester Council on Aging—have been larger at times than I might have wished. My concern, however, has been to give these a primary dimension of leadership through to the point of fruition. They have reached that happy stage. Winchester ABC is a thriving reality. The lay ecumenical thrust [in Winchester] is now well

¹ *Winchester ABC (A Better Chance) brings promising young men from urban areas to live in town, attend Winchester High School, and be given academic and counseling assistance leading to college admission.*

established and operating on its own. The Town has voted a Winchester Council on the Aging.

I want you to know . . . my high appreciation in being the minister to people who appreciate the importance of the kind of community leadership I am able to give.”

Initiatives within the Society

Within the Society’s walls, Reverend Zoerheide’s influence led to the formation of three new lay committees: Social Concerns, Worship, and Fellowship.

The First Social Concerns

Committee: In January, 1969, acting on the request of three lay members, the Standing Committee created an *ad hoc* Social Concerns Committee. The Committee was written into the by-laws at the subsequent May Annual Meeting. Its charge, in part:

[To] assist the members and friends of the Society to find areas of social concern in which they may study and act both

within the church and in the larger community.

The nine-person group saw itself fulfilling this charge by acting as a “steering committee” to create and oversee the activities of various study/task groups. Seven such groups had already been formed by the ad hoc committee: A Worship Workshop (to sponsor after-church discussions and develop experimental worship services based on social justice issues); Parent-Youth Dialogue; Church Communications; Pollution; Housing; Population Explosion; and Red Cross Blood Program. (The last of these had been a church undertaking for many years.)

During the next few years, the Committee solicited funds for the Denomination’s Black Affairs Council (BAC); raised money to enable the establishment of Winchester ABC; organized support meetings for unemployed professionals in Winchester and nearby towns; and visited inmates at the Billerica House of Correction. Social concerns topics became regular parts of after-church

discussions and, at times, the subject of Sunday services.

Despite these early successes, the Committee’s activities became increasingly limited to selecting topics for and presiding over after-church discussions. In 1977, the Society voted to abolish the Committee and fold its social concerns work into a new by-law group known as Adult/Youth Programs. It was expected that the new committee’s education programs would include subjects that emphasized “spiritual growth and issues of ethical, moral, or social values.” For all intents and purposes this ended the first attempt at a focused social concerns initiative.

The Worship Committee: Both the Worship Committee and the Fellowship Committee were longer lived than Social Concerns. Experimental



*Jack Zoerheide
and Newlyweds*



*Cast of The Legacy
of the Free Mind*

Worship was a particular interest of Jack Zoerheide's. In late 1972, the Standing Committee appointed a three-person committee to "assist the minister in matters related to the worship service." For the next two decades, the Committee's membership waxed and waned but it became and remained a vibrant contributor of innovative worship. In 1977, Reverend Zoerheide reported:

"Since the last annual meeting, there have been forty-three

Sunday morning worship services. Thirty of these...have been "traditional" that is our familiar order of service including sermon. Thirteen have been "innovative" that is, each one to a greater or lesser degree following a different order and content. Each innovative service has involved from several to many lay participants, a fact which to some measure explains the consistently higher attendance than at traditional services. Two of the innovative services—October 17th on gun control and last Sunday on womanhood—provoked especially strong and contrasting feelings. In my view, on occasion, a healthy institutional experience."

In 1979, the Worship Committee's chairperson took note of the ninth presentation of the "The Legacy of the Free Mind," a drama written by Reverend Zoerheide depicting the teachings, persecution, and eventual execution of Michael Servetus. The drama, performed by a cast of

Society members, had already been presented at half a dozen Unitarian Universalist churches in surrounding towns. Other “experimental” services included: “The Book of Job in Drama, Music, and the Visual Arts;” “World Hunger Sunday;” and “Spring Sermon,” a commissioned play that explored Unitarian optimism and its potential conflict with real life.

In the early 1980s, the Worship Committee was the catalyst leading to the design and fabrication of eight world religion banners that were dedicated at a creative worship service entitled “Motif for One World.” The banners still hang in the Symmes Room.

The Fellowship Committee: Established at the Annual Meeting of May 1972, this by-law Committee was asked to “strengthen the bonds of religious community by promoting cordial and friendly relations in the church.” Its intent was to address a perception that the Society was insufficiently welcoming to newcomers and lacking in friendliness

among its own members. By 1973, the Committee had begun monthly Potluck and Punch all-church suppers and assumed responsibility for lay home visits, scheduling Sunday greeters, developing an informational pamphlet for newcomers, paying visits to newcomers, and managing all-church picnics in September and June. Over the forty-plus years since its creation, the Committee has been a constant source of energy and innovation directed at helping us to know each other better and to welcome new congregants.

The Next Change in Ministers

At the May, 1978, Annual Meeting, Reverend Zoerheide resigned as senior minister effective in the summer, 1979. During the following church year, he accepted a call to head the UU church in Keene, New Hampshire. Despite urging by the Unitarian Universalist Association, the Standing Committee decided not to engage an interim minister but to undertake and complete a search before Reverend Zoerheide’s departure. One year later, the search committee introduced its



*Robert A. Storer,
Charles A. Reinhardt,
and Jack D. Zoerheide*

candidate and, at a special meeting in September, 1979, the Reverend Charles A. (Chuck) Reinhardt was called by the congregation. He had previously served as minister to UU churches in Staten Island, New York; Morristown, New Jersey; and Bellevue, Washington. Currently, he was affiliated with the First Parish in Cambridge where he served as its chaplain to Harvard, Radcliffe, and MIT. His home was in Winchester, a short walk from the church.

The Parsonage is Sold

The Society's parsonage at 33 Glen Green had been home to the families of both Bob Storer and Jack Zoerheide. Now, because the new minister already owned a home in Winchester, there was no further need for the property. For four years, it was rented and provided the Society with a source of income. Then, acknowledging the desirability of ministers owning their homes and building equity therein, it was sold for \$150,000. On two occasions, the proceeds have been loaned to newly called ministers needing money for a housing downpayment.

Into Television

Chuck Reinhardt brought with him a strong interest and substantial experience in church communications. In his first year, he introduced a monthly publication called "INSIGHTS" which he described as "fascinating stories, ideas and observations that a number of you are willing to share with a growing audience." Equally significant, he began creating programs for the soon-to-be-installed community cable

television system. An *ad hoc* Video Committee was formed to help in this endeavor and to teach interested congregants how to use video equipment. By 1983, “Aberjona Chronicle,” a program of interviews and discussions, hosted by Reverend Reinhardt, was being aired weekly on Winchester’s local channel.

Our First Ordained Woman Minister

Eager to increase the ministerial capabilities of the staff, Reverend Reinhardt introduced the Reverend Jane R.Rzepka to the Standing Committee in the spring, 1980, and urged that she be hired. A recent graduate of Starr King School for the Ministry, Reverend Rzepka became the Society’s assistant minister with responsibility for the church school, youth group, and



Jane R. Rzepka

adult education and, occasionally, for preaching on Sunday mornings. She was the first ordained woman to join the Society’s staff. In 1982, by congregational vote, her title was changed to “Associate Minister.” Reverend Rzepka remained in Winchester until 1984 when she accepted a call to be senior minister in Reading, Massachusetts.

Another Try at a Social Concerns Committee

At the Society’s May, 1982, Annual Meeting, a by-law amendment was voted creating a new Social Outreach Committee (SOC) with a budget of \$6,000, the money to be given to suitable charitable organizations. The vote was not unanimous. A subsequent issue of “INSIGHTS” noted:

“The idea of creating a social concerns arm of the church had been tried briefly and abandoned during the 1970’s, but gradually regained support in the first years of the new decade. It was boosted by the continued enthusiasm of older members disappointed at the outcome of

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earlier efforts, and helped along by the interest expressed by many new members who believe concerted and concerned action is an essential part of their UU faith.

Legitimate concerns were raised over the prospect that money might be spent on special interests, political campaigns, or politically sensitive issues with which individual members of the church might strongly disagree. Some members were unhappy at the idea of seeing the name of their church attached to public letters or statements that expressed views they did not share....”

Use of the word “outreach” in lieu of “action” in the committee’s name—as had been proposed initially—was one outcome of these concerns. And, throughout its early years, the Committee confined its activities, for the most part, to donating its budget to deserving organizations. The allocation of these funds among local, national, or international organizations or to various programmatic purposes—racial justice, environmental protection, women’s or children’s concerns, and others—shifted in response to perceived need and to the preferences

of current SOC members. Beyond these donations, SOC pursued a variety of activities that respected the boundaries implied by the word “outreach.” It managed the church’s gifts of Thanksgiving and Christmas food baskets to Woburn’s Council of Social Concern, urged congregants to sign and send petitions, and held educational sessions on a wide variety of social justice topics. Not until well into the twenty-first century did SOC assume a more socially participative role, appearing at demonstrations and other gatherings, along with supportive congregants, and making it clear that they were from the Winchester Unitarian Society. In recognition and acceptance of this expanded view of the Committee’s role, the Society, at its 2014 Annual Meeting voted to change the Committee’s name to Social Action and Outreach.

A Commitment of 5%

As noted, the 1982 vote to allocate such a relatively large amount (\$6,000) to the Social Outreach Committee had met opposition. A small but vocal minority had been adamant in its view that the Society’s task was to inspire its members to be generous in their own charitable giving, not to redirect pledges made to the church.

The majority, however, wanted the Society to live its principles and, to them, that meant sharing its collective resources with those in need. Only a year after the Social Outreach Committee was established, its members asked that a much bolder financial commitment be made; namely, that the Society set aside 5% of its operating budget *every year* for distribution by the Committee. Passage meant that its budget would be over \$10,000 for the next fiscal year. This provision was duly voted and became a commitment that has endured for over thirty years. It has never been codified in the Society's by-laws; still, it has withstood all efforts to pare it back in the face of budgetary pressures and shortfalls. At each Annual Meeting, as each yearly budget has been approved by the congregation, the 5% commitment has remained in place.

The Peace Network

The early 1980s were a time of high intensity in the nuclear arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union. Concerned that our Denomination was not raising its voice in opposition to the development and deployment of ever more destructive weaponry, Reverend Reinhardt encouraged

the formation of a Special Fund for Peace Committee. Its purpose: to raise and offer to Unitarian Universalist leadership an amount sufficient to trigger a Denomination-wide effort to speak out on the issue. In a Sunday sermon, he displayed his own check for \$100 and challenged the congregation to match it. Within a few weeks over \$5,000 had been raised and, at a Special Meeting of the Society, \$5,000 was added from reserves. At subsequent meetings with the Denomination's president and members of its board of trustees, it was agreed that a Unitarian Universalist Peace Network would be created. In 1984, Chuck's annual report to the congregation pointed out:

“[the] astonishing impact we of this one congregation have had on the whole continental Unitarian Universalist Association. With the profound interest that we have shown in the religious roots of American motives for international amity, with our gift of more than ten thousand dollars, and with able argument and leadership of our own members..., our Denomination has now established a new office....”

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When up and running, that office—the Peace Network—published and distributed curricula, ran workshops, sponsored home-stays with Soviet citizens, maintained a network of UUs willing to write their legislators, and employed an executive director who carried its message to churches throughout the country. The last of those directors was our own Reverend Stephanie Nichols. Throughout its active lifetime, the Society continued to support the Network financially and a member of the congregation served on its board.

Supporting Student Ministers

Assisting student ministers on their way to ordination had been a long held commitment of Bob Storer's but one neglected during the closing years of his ministry. In his annual report in 1983, Chuck Reinhardt urged a renewal of that interest, saying:

“One area of education has remained dormant with us for too long. It is that educational opportunity and responsibility that is particularly suited to a church of this size and complexity. It is work with theological students.”

Two years later, the Standing Committee engaged Harvard Divinity School student Karen Deutsch (now, Karen Lewis Foley) as its student minister. During her three years at the Society, Karen worked with its youth and young adults, preached from time to time, and provided ministerial services to Unitarian Universalist churches in Woburn and Saugus (both too small to support a minister of their own).² In 1988, having finished her studies and been ordained, Reverend Foley accepted a call to be interim associate minister in Concord, Massachusetts.

Following Karen Foley's highly successful stay in Winchester, the Society committed itself to be a regular site for ministerial training. Reverend Foley became the first of fourteen student ministers to pursue their field training in Winchester over the next thirty years. Each commanded our affection and admiration. Each gave as much or more to us as they received from us. They went on to be senior ministers in such places as Needham, Chelmsford,

² During the 1980s, Winchester's ministerial staff provided regular assistance to these two small churches. Both are now inactive.

Littleton, Cambridge, Groton, and Wayland (all in Massachusetts) and in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Greenville, North Carolina, and Tuhlequah, Oklahoma.



Student Ministers

Heather Concannon	2012 – 2014
Darcy Roake	2011 – 2012
Catie Scudera	2010 – 2011
Jeremiah Gold-Hopton	2009 – 2010
Lauren Smith	2005 – 2006
Douglas L. Inhofe	1999 – 2001
Susan Frederick-Gray	1999 – 2001
Fred Small	1997 – 1999
Katie Lee Crane	1995 – 1997
Rob Gregson	1994 – 1996
Elea Kemler	1993 – 1995
Colin Leitch	1990 – 1991
Jennifer Slade	1988 – 1990
Karen Lewis Foley	1986 – 1988



When Bob Storer died in 1988, the Society contributed fifty-five thousand dollars to a memorial fund whose income would support stipends for student ministers. Then, when Chuck Reinhardt retired in 1992, a fund of like amount and purpose was established in his honor.³

Concerns about Money and Membership

As far back as the mid-1960s and early 1970s, concern had arisen regarding the Society’s decreasing membership and more constrained finances. In 1969, the Chairman of the Standing Committee spoke of the difficulty of achieving a balanced budget and of the unfavorable comparison between the levels of giving at the Society and those at other Winchester churches. Nineteen seventy-three’s Chairman stated, “The problems this past year have been as during the past two years; that is, maintaining most programs and enlarging others, but with diminishing membership, reduced income, and tightening

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³ Income from the Banks, Spencer, and Trageser endowment funds is also designated for student minister support.

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budgets.” By this time, the number of pledge units had fallen to two hundred sixty from well over three hundred and membership (approximately five hundred as reported to the Unitarian Universalist Association) was down more than twenty-five percent from its mid-1960s peak.

In 1975, the Standing Committee—hoping to develop a better understanding of the matter and a plan of action to address it—appointed an *ad hoc* Long Range Planning Committee. After several months of study, the group confirmed that “significant improvements” in religious education, music, and creative worship had been unable to reverse the downward trend. It concluded: “We are now a declining institution locally in terms of attendance, number of pledge units, and amount pledged and regionally in number of active churches and ministers.” It suggested that the Society choose among three alternative responses: (1) accept becoming a smaller church and take steps to ensure its continued viability; (2) attempt to grow by becoming a regional church drawing on nearby towns with no Unitarian Universalist presence for additional membership; or (3) continue remaking itself in ways

designed to attract significant numbers of new members locally.

The Standing Committee selected the last of these alternatives and began its implementation by reappointing and reactivating a now moribund 1960s Membership Committee and by asking Minister Zoerheide to redouble his efforts to attract newcomers. The list of suggested actions included continuing to create worship formats that stressed more active participation by the congregation and that involved congregants with one another as well as with the minister; increasing the variety of settings in which church members could interact in small groups; and providing a means for the church to reach and express positions on pressing social issues.

For its part, the reenergized Membership Committee initiated a long list of outreach and welcoming activities, some of them already part of the Fellowship Committee’s efforts: More attractive informational material, minister-led seminars on Unitarian Universalism, telephone calls and visits to newcomers, Sunday greeters, circle dinners, guest Sundays, and ads in the *Winchester Star*, to name just a few.

It seems likely that these efforts to attract newcomers did, in fact, do so; each year, the Society added a small number of families to its roles. But the total of these additions was not enough to balance the loss of members who died, moved, or simply lost interest. By 1990, reported membership stood at 354.

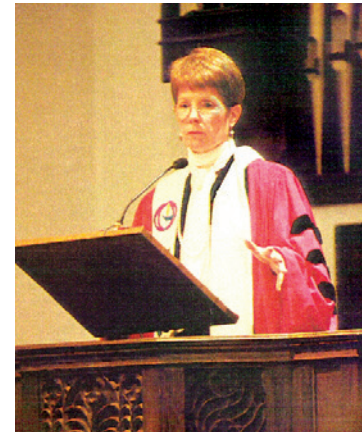
As to finances: the number of pledge units continued to decline and the level of giving remained troublesome. In 1975, the Society's median pledge was \$110 and the average, \$170. For all Winchester churches, those numbers were \$265 and \$302, respectively. From 1977 to 1978, despite efforts to cut expenses, the church sustained a combined two-year operating deficit of over \$9,000. (In both these years, winter Sunday services were held in Meyer Chapel in order to forego heating the sanctuary.)

Temporary respite came following the death of long time Society member, Harold F. Meyer. His estate created a permanent trust fund whose income would be shared by Winchester Hospital, the Winchester Scholarship Foundation, and the Society. The church would receive annual income of approximately \$40,000. This ensured a balanced budget until 1988 when the

Finance Committee announced disappointing canvass results and predicted a deficit of \$8,000. By 1990, the number of pledge units had dropped to 200.

The First Woman to be Winchester's Senior Minister

In September, 1989, the Reverend Arline Conan Sutherland was ordained by the Society and installed as the third woman to be its associate minister. She replaced the Reverend Polly Leland-Mayer who had joined the ministerial staff following Reverend Rzepka's departure in 1984. Reverend Leland-Mayer left the Society in 1989 to become the Religious Educator at Arlington Street church in Boston. While in Winchester, all three associate ministers carried the same assignment: work with youth and adult education programs and preach several times a year. For Reverend Sutherland, a recent graduate of Harvard Divinity School, this was her first experience with parish ministry.



Arline Conan Sutherland

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Reverend Sutherland's arrival coincided with Chuck Reinhardt's announced intention to retire in three years. As that date approached, the Society was faced with a dilemma regarding transition to the next senior minister. Many in the congregation, favorably impressed with Reverend Sutherland's accomplishments as Associate Minister, believed we should take the unprecedented step of promoting from within, foregoing a search and calling Reverend Sutherland to be the next senior minister. Others, in agreement as to Reverend Sutherland's performance, thought, nevertheless, that a search should be undertaken to ensure that the best possible senior minister was found. Complicating the issue were Denominational rules that made clear, in the interest of fairness, that even the smallest step in the direction of a search would make Reverend Sutherland an ineligible candidate. Arline, herself, solved the dilemma by asking if she could pursue an internal candidating procedure in advance of any external search. Over a period of two months, she preached a series of four especially composed sermons and met with groups of congregants, large and small, to hear their concerns and make clear her vision for the Society's future.

At the end of this demanding undertaking, the congregation voted, overwhelmingly, to call Reverend Sutherland to be its next senior minister. By accepting, she became not only the first to be promoted from within, but the first woman to serve the Society as its senior minister. She was installed in 1992 immediately following Chuck Reinhardt's retirement.

To replace Reverend Sutherland as Associate Minister and to carry her responsibilities for religious education, the Society called the Reverend Robert L. Morriss. Reverend Morriss remained with the Society until 1998, when he resigned to become co-minister, with his wife, Makaanah, of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Cheyenne, Wyoming.

[A Partner Church in Transylvania](#)

The Society's Partner Church program began in 1994 when the UU Partner Church Council assigned Winchester to the large urban Unitarian church in Marosvasarhely, Transylvania. Our partner, together with all the Unitarian churches in Transylvania, was just emerging from forty years of repeated efforts by the communist regime to eradicate

Unitarianism. When Reverend Sutherland and four lay people first visited Marosvasarhely, they took gifts of over-the-counter medications, clothing, and money. Perhaps most valuable, they made clear to our new partner that people far from Transylvania cared about their welfare. During our two decades of partnership, conditions in Transylvania have improved and our partnership has thrived.

The highlight of our partnership has been the reciprocal visits that have fostered mutual understanding and created lasting friendships. We've made more than a half dozen trips to Marosvasarhely, including two large groups of both youth and adults in 2006 and 2010. After much planning, in 2008, sixteen of their adults and youth—including minister, Laci Nagy and wife, Gizi—paid a ten-day visit to Winchester. In September, 2015, a group of six adults and seven youth were with us for a ten-day visit. In that short period, they became part of us, a part we missed when they were gone.



First Unitarian Church in Marosvasarhely, Transylvania



Visitors from our Partner Church (2008)

In addition to exchanging visits, the Society has provided college-level student financial support. Over the past decade, more than twenty-five Winchester families have given scholarships to ten Transylvanian young people who, without our help, could not have attended a university. Seven have graduated; three in nursing,



Gay Pride Parade

one in pharmacology, one in legal studies, one in instrumental music, and one as a physician. Of the three still in school, two are studying to be teachers and one to be a sound technician.



The last major component of the Partner Church program is an annual financial contribution to help our partner with special projects: establishing a hot line for single mothers; presenting a series of lectures and discussions on successful

marriage and parenting; and publishing a children's magazine. It has also helped fund construction of a second Unitarian church in Marosvasarhely and to buy tower bells for the first church. Our partner's gift of a small replica of those tower bells is now rung at the beginning of each Sunday morning service in Winchester.

A Welcoming Congregation

Steps to have the Society recognized by the Unitarian Universalist Association as a congregation welcoming to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons began in 1994 with the formation of a Welcoming Congregation Steering Committee. The issues surrounding the welfare of LGBT people were not new to the Society: They had been brought to its attention from the pulpit during Jack Zoerheide's ministry and, in 1990, the Standing Committee had approved use of the sanctuary for LGBT services of commitment. Creation of the Steering Committee signaled an intention to give these issues heightened attention. During the next three years, the Committee pursued a concentrated effort to increase

the congregation's awareness and its understanding of LGBT concerns. Among other efforts, a ten-week workshop was offered; panel discussions were held; films were shown; articles were published regularly in the weekly newsletter; and a Sunday service presented with the title "Let's Not Talk About It." Groups of Society members participated in Boston's annual Gay Pride Parade. At the end of a three-year process, at a special meeting in June, 1997, the congregation adopted, overwhelmingly, a resolution that said, in part:

“... [B]e it known that we, the members of the Winchester Unitarian Society, covenant to affirm and promote that we are a welcoming congregation for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people...”

A year later, the Unitarian Universalist Association formally recognized the Society's status as a Welcoming Congregation. And, in 2004, following its legalization in Massachusetts, two of the Society's beloved members were united in the first same sex marriage performed in the sanctuary.

Stronger Support for Youth

In one of her early annual reports to the congregation, Arline Sutherland referred to the youth group as “sputtering along.” With unpaid lay leadership, interest was low and attendance at Sunday evening meetings was usually four to five teenagers. Then, in 1996, one of those lay leaders, speaking from the pulpit on Sunday morning, urged the congregation to give more attention and commit more resources to its youth. In response, the Society hired Jessica Rubenstein, an experienced professional to be its Director of Youth Ministries. She remained with the Society for seventeen years.

During those years, Jessica created a place where the congregation's youth felt comfortable, secure, respected, and challenged. By 2003, membership in WUSYG (Winchester Unitarian Society Youth Group) had grown from sixteen to fifty and attendance



WUSYG at Work



at Sunday evening meetings was averaging forty. Included were youth from Winchester families not affiliated with the Society but who found a warm welcome in WUSYG. To manage the increased workload of such a large membership, Jessica's hours were increased and a part-time Assistant Youth Director was hired. A variety of programmatic initiatives were undertaken: drop-in sessions on Wednesday afternoons and small group meetings on Wednesday evenings; retreats; overnights; far more participation in Sunday morning services; and almost continuous interaction on social media, especially Facebook. The Society's by-laws were amended to reduce to fourteen the age

for non-voting membership and to require that two members of the Youth Advisory Committee be appointed by WUSYG.

But by far the most significant development was WUSYG's yearly schedule of school vacation service trips. Numbering fifteen to forty adults and youth, WUSYG service groups built houses in inner cities, farmed on a Native American reservation, cleaned up after natural disasters, and organized and staffed day camps for children whose parents could not be with them. They travelled to Paterson, New Jersey; Taos, New Mexico; Baltimore, Maryland; rural Appalachia; Washington state; New Orleans; Roxbury, Massachusetts; and other sites both nearby and remote. Youth shouldered most of the responsibility for funding each trip. Jessica commented:

When planning our service weeks, we seek out opportunities for authentic service, finding that our youth need to do work that meets a real need, not work that merely attempts to keep them busy and make them feel useful—and they always know the difference. . . . Youth need to work with, not just

for, those in need, so we search for service opportunities that allow the greatest amount of personal contact between the youth and those who will benefit from their work.⁴

So successful were these service trips that WUSYG was invited to conduct workshops at UU General Assembly and the Mass Bay District. An article in *UU World* magazine concluded: “Nobody does service trips more or better than the Winchester, Mass. Unitarian Society and its youth group WUSYG.”

The Building Centennial

Nineteen ninety-nine marked the centennial of the sanctuary structure that replaced the old church after the fire of 1897. To celebrate the event and to bring the church buildings more in line with twenty-first century needs, a plan was developed to improve and enlarge staff and administrative offices; expand the youth room; make the facility more wheelchair accessible (including a

⁴ Quoted from the booklet “What We Do Matters,” compiled and published in 2011 by the Society’s Youth Advisory Committee. The booklet contains the recollections of youth and adults who took part in WUSYG’s service trips.

unisex restroom); preserve and clean the stained glass windows, reconfigure and landscape the parking lot; and refurbish the Parkhurst Organ.⁵ A capital campaign in 1997 raised \$220,000 to support these projects.

Midway through the campaign, it was decided to add significantly to the project’s scope. There was agreement that contemporary religious education required larger classrooms than those available in our religious education facility. The requirement could be met by removing walls between existing classrooms but this would mean reducing the number of rooms available for individual grades. To restore the original number, a two-classroom building extension was designed. In addition to classrooms, the extension would provide space for an elevator; thereby making the entire church wheelchair accessible.



*Dawn Kelley Bartlett
Religious Education Wing*

⁵ *In keeping with the times at its installation in 1928, the Parkhurst Organ was more a theatre than a church instrument. The renovation removed several ranks of pipes that were considered redundant and replaced them with ranks that gave the instrument a sound more suitable for the performance of baroque music.*

This much larger capital undertaking was funded by principal from the Harold F. Meyer Fund (approximately \$520,000) and the Dawn Kelley Bartlett Fund (approximately \$360,000). In 1999, with many of Dawn's surviving family members present, the new structure was dedicated as The Dawn Kelley Bartlett Religious Education Wing.⁶ The two new classrooms were named for Martha and Velma Kelley, respectively Dawn's mother and sister.

Not all of the building centennial activities involved building renovation or expansion: A chancel play, "The Great Fire," written and directed by a member of the congregation and acted by other members, was performed on a Sunday morning. It depicted one interpretation of events preceding the destruction of the first church building and the steps that led to its replacement, by a new sanctuary, in less than two years.

⁶ Society member Dawn Kelley Bartlett served in the American Red Cross during WWII. Her last assignment was in Okinawa where she died. Her parents, Martha and Arthur Kelley—long time Society members—donated the stained glass cloister windows in Dawn's memory. They also established a small fund whose income was to be used to place flowers on the altar on or near Dawn's April birthday. By 1999, that fund had appreciated almost a thousand fold.

2001-2008

A Time of Many Transitions

Ministerial Changes

In 2001, after nine years as the Society's senior minister, Reverend Sutherland resigned and moved from Winchester. Most agreed that her departure had been sufficiently disquieting for the congregation to justify a period of interim ministry before a new settled minister was called. For the next year and a half, the pulpit was filled by the Reverend Judith A. Downing, an experienced interim minister. For the following two years, the Society was served by the Reverend Colin Leitch, who had been both a student and an assistant minister in Winchester in the early nineteen nineties. The unusually long interim period was the consequence of a last minute change of mind by the search committee's initial candidate.

In 2004, after a renewed search, the Society called the Reverend Mary J. Harrington. At the time, Reverend Mary, as she preferred to be known, was minister of the Unitarian Universalist Church in Marblehead,

Massachusetts. She had served as executive director of several social service organizations on the west coast and was deeply committed to participation in social justice work. Unfortunately, her ministry in



Mary J. Harrington

Winchester was short, lasting only until the fall, 2006: Toward the end of her first year at the Society, she was diagnosed with ALS⁷ and soon became unable to carry on. Following her resignation, the Society awarded her the title of Minister Emerita. Reverend Mary remained in the area, pursuing her social justice endeavors as long as she could and then retired to her home in Maine where she died in 2010.

For two years following Reverend Mary's departure, while yet another search committee set to work, the Society was served by married Acting Co-Ministers Reverend Stephanie R. Nichols and David C. Boyer. Both were experienced interim ministers;

⁷ *Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.*

both had grown up in Winchester and been participants in the Society's religious education and youth programs. They proved well-suited to giving the Society a sense of direction and confidence during a time of grieving and uncertainty.

Frequent ministerial turnover in the early 2000s was not limited to senior ministers: After Reverend Morriss' 1998 resignation, the Reverends Ralph Roberts (1998-2004), Wendy von Courter (2005-2006), and Jeremy Melvin (2006-2008) all guided and managed the Society's religious education programs. In 2005, at Reverend Mary's strong recommendation and redolent of her wish to expand the church's social justice work, the Reverend Susan Moran became, first, Assistant Community Minister and, then, Assistant Minister for Pastoral Care. The latter reflected her role as support for Reverend Mary as her health worsened.

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Enhancing Our Ministry to One Another

Throughout its history, the Society's ministers paid great attention to those in the congregation who were elderly, incapacitated, grieving or, for some other reason, in need of comfort and reassurance. Often, the ministers' services were augmented by the helping hands of congregants. For example, in the nineteen nineties, a caring network was formed that provided meals and rides to members unable to provide for themselves. Then, in the early 2000s, these congregational efforts were enhanced by the addition of three lay ministries:

A Grief Support Group was founded by a church member who, in her own time of grief, realized the Society did not provide an adequate response. At once-a-month meetings, those suffering the loss of a spouse, relative, or friend could "drop in" and find understanding and support as they grieved.

The Pastoral Care Associates were established. At Mary Harrington's urging and with Susan Moran acting as leader, a group of six congregants were trained in pastoral, listening, and visiting skills. Then,

in collaboration with the ministers, they identified and maintained close, regular contact with the thirty to forty, mostly elderly congregants who needed the Society's attention.

A Small Group Ministry program was launched. Groups of eight to ten congregants met regularly to discuss a topic of mutual interest and relevance to church life. The groups deepened friendships and mutual support beyond what was likely to emerge from Sunday church attendance or participation on committees. Three years after a pilot group was organized in 2004, there were three groups; and by 2010, seventy people were participating in six small groups.

In 2015, all three of these initiatives remained important aspects of the Society's ministries.

Long Haul

In August, 2005, Hurricane Katrina swept onto the Gulf Coast and into New Orleans leaving behind unprecedented water and wind damage and immeasurable human suffering. Thousands were left without homes or possessions. By November, Reverend Mary had organized a volunteer group of fifteen adult and youth congregants determined to go to the Gulf Coast and provide whatever relief they could. Using the North Shore Unitarian Universalist Society of Lacombe, Louisiana, as a base of operations, they spent a week clearing mountains of debris, repairing roofs, gutting water-soaked houses, and offering whatever additional help was requested. Other relief trips followed the first. In May, 2006, Reverend Mary reported that six groups, involving more than forty adults and forty young people, had traveled to the region. Each was guided by the principle of doing what was asked of it by the people who needed help. Participants testified that they received far more value than they gave.

In January 2007, to fulfill Reverend Mary's vision of "being in this for the long haul," she and her supporters incorporated as a separate nonprofit entity called Gulf



Gulf Coast Volunteers for the Long Haul

Coast Volunteers for the Long Haul ("Long Haul" for short.) Reverend Mary was its first president. Since then, for almost nine years, it has scheduled more than forty-five relief trips, drawn in volunteers from outside the Society, and broadened the scope of its activities to include workshops and consultation for trip leaders and volunteers from other organizations. In 2008 and 2015, youth from WUSYG, in partnership with Long Haul, made their service trips to the Gulf Coast. At present, members of the Society continue to serve on Long Haul's board of directors and to participate in its relief trips.



New Dimensions in Music

Since its nineteenth century beginnings, music has been in the forefront of the Society's worship and its community activities. Except when budgets were exceptionally tight, funds were always available to pay for a Sunday morning quartet or for section leaders to support the choir. As far back as the late 1880s, evening concerts, open to the public, were a yearly feature of church programming. This emphasis on and appreciation for music continued throughout the twentieth century. Then, in 2006, with the

hiring of Music Director John Kramer, music assumed even greater prominence. The range of Sunday morning's musical offerings expanded far beyond the traditional to include, not only classical, but jazz, soul, rag, folk, and world music, as well. With the Music Committee's collaboration, a yearly three-concert series, "Music in the Sanctuary" was initiated. Usually there was one classical and one jazz evening with Music Director Kramer playing piano in both. A third artist or group completed the series. Beyond his proficiency as pianist and organist, the new music director proved to be an accomplished arranger and composer. More and more frequently, the music played and sung on Sunday morning has become a Kramer arrangement or composition. Of special note are three of his cantatas, performed in the sanctuary by choir and orchestra: "The Poet's Calendar" which set to music the twelve verses of Longfellow's poem; "A Unitarian Cantata" using words selected by Reverends Nichols and Boyer as especially compatible with Unitarian Universalist concerns and convictions; and "A Dream of Hope," commissioned by the Society in honor of its 150th anniversary and of which more will be said later.

2008-2014

We Approach 150

Settled Co-Ministers

In the spring, 2008, the Society called the Reverends John and Sarah Gibb Millspaugh to fill its senior ministry. The couple would be the first settled co-ministers in the Society's history. Both had graduated from the Harvard Divinity School. Both were currently serving Tapestry, A Unitarian Universalist church in Mission Viejo, California—John as the church's senior minister; Sarah as its community minister. Their ministry in Winchester lasted until 2013. Their concluding report to the congregation referred to an "overall sense that our time serving as your settled ministers has been a great success, both for ourselves as ministers and for the congregation."



Sarah and John Gibb Millspaugh

For two years, after the Millspaugh's departure, the congregation was served by Interim Co-Ministers Reverend Cricket Potter and Reverend Tricia Brennan.

Matters of Governance

The Millspaugh's, especially John, were much concerned about matters of church governance. Of particular importance to John was the distribution of authority in relation to the Society's paid staff. Since 1965, there had been no change in this distribution for four decades: Final decisions regarding the hiring, setting the terms of employment, and terminating paid staff vested solely in the Standing Committee. Recruiting, evaluation, and day-to-day supervision of staff was the responsibility of the committee with which that staff member worked; that is, the Music Committee supervised the Music Director, the Religious Education Committee oversaw the Religious Education Director, and so

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forth. Just prior to Reverend Harrington's calling, the Standing Committee concluded that this arrangement should be changed. Beginning with Reverend Mary's ministry, supervision of all paid church staff would be the responsibility of the senior minister. Individual committees would still have a voice in recruiting and evaluation and the Standing Committee would still have ultimate control over hiring, terms of employment, and termination. This arrangement was incorporated into the Society's by-laws at the May Annual Meeting, 2011.

John Millspaugh was convinced that these changes did not go far enough. In his view, management of the Society would be much smoother and more efficient if the minister not only supervised all paid staff but also determined who would be hired and under what terms and who would be terminated. The matter was the subject of much discussion during the Millspaugh's tenure at the Society but remained unresolved at the time of their leaving. During the search for their replacement, discussions continued and, at a special meeting called in the fall, 2014, the congregation voted to leave the applicable by-law provisions unchanged, at least for the time being.

Towards a "Greener" Sanctuary

Soon after the turn of the century, a group of congregants, calling themselves "The Green Team," began exploring ways in which the church and its members could be more environmentally responsive and responsible. They encouraged recycling, installed compact fluorescent lights, measured the fleet mileage of the members' autos, sold organic coffee, and sponsored religious education classes that promoted "respect for the earth." Junior high school groups made yearly canoe trips to remove trash from the Aberjona River, and Eco Teams, each consisting of four households, assessed their homes' carbon footprints and learned how those footprints could be reduced.

In 2011, by vote of the Standing Committee, the Green Team gained official status as the Green Sanctuary Committee. Reflecting the Society's and the Denomination's growing interest in environmental issues, the Committee was charged with (1) continuing to provide programs for the congregation and the wider community that furthered Unitarian Universalism's Seventh Principle (Respect for the Interdependent Web of all Existence) and (2) leading a congregational



Solar Panel Array

effort to achieve Denominational accreditation as a Green Sanctuary.

Accreditation required the development, Denominational approval, and implementation of a three-year action plan involving projects or programs in four areas: worship and celebration; religious education; environmental justice; and sustainable living. As of 2015, most of the Committee's plan had been approved and was being implemented. Final approval was anticipated by 2016 and accreditation by 2017.

Paralleling these efforts by the Green Sanctuary Committee were those of the Building Committee. Beginning In 2007, energy conservation became an ongoing priority. Efforts focused on the cost of heating the building and on the consumption of electricity. The efficiency of an old and patchwork heating system was improved by means of frequent boiler tune ups, repair and replacement of steam traps, installation of individual radiator thermostats, and selective use of space heaters. In 2010, thanks to these improvements, the Society

was awarded Energy Star status by the Environmental Protection Administration, indicating that its energy consumption was superior to seventy-five percent of similar buildings nationwide. As to electricity, the most significant step was installation, in 2012, of solar panels on the roofs of the religious education wing and the cloisters. Over their twenty-five year life the panels are expected to save the Society thirty to forty percent of its normal electrical expense.

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The End of a Long Run

The closing paragraphs of the Society's centennial booklet note Bob Storer's success reactivating and reenergizing the Unitarian Players. For the remainder of Bob's ministry and for two decades beyond, the Players continued to be a welcome and integral part of church life. Two or three times a year their imaginative and challenging productions in Metcalf Hall were much anticipated, well-attended, and greatly appreciated. Members of the congregation worked as actors, producers, set designers and builders, and stage managers. Then, in the 1990s, congregational participation decreased until—recognizing that it had become more a town or regional activity—the group changed its name to The Winchester Players. Its productions continued and, as finances permitted, it still made an annual contribution to the Society's budget. However, congregational participation continued to wane and, when difficulties arose over scheduling Metcalf Hall and finding storage space, it was mutually agreed that the Players should seek a different venue. In 2010, they relocated to Winchester's First Congregational Church, a departure that marked the end of a seventy-eight year run in the Society's facilities.

Money and Membership Revisited

From 1990 to 2000, the Society's membership, reported as 354 and 360, respectively, remained almost constant. Then, from 2000 to 2014, it resumed its steady decline. By 2014, it stood at 283. Almost half this decrease stemmed from a newly-adopted by-law provision that allowed a member to relinquish voting status temporarily, thereby becoming "inactive" and no longer reported as a member. Still, the loss was significant.

Regarding income, two opposite trends took place: From 1990 to 2000, as membership stayed roughly the same, the number of pledge units grew slightly, from 190 to 205. Then, as with membership, it resumed its decline, reaching 143 in 2014. The *average* pledge, on the other hand, grew by 130%, from \$1,015 to \$2,320 (an increase of approximately 66% when adjusted for inflation). During the same interval, the total amount pledged rose from \$208,400 to \$332,000 and the Society's operating budget increased from \$388,900 to \$625,000.

Two noteworthy changes in the management of the Society's financial resources were instituted during the early 2000s: First, a



congregational vote at the annual meeting in May, 2010, instructed the Trustees of Permanent Funds to “move toward the goal of having the investments of the Society screened for suitability according to generally recognized criteria for Environmental, Social, and Governance factors” and to “report progress toward this goal annually. Second, at the suggestion of Sarah and John Millspaugh, a share-the-plate arrangement was adopted whereby one-half of each Sunday’s undesignated collection was given to a worthy charity, frequently one whose purpose matched the theme of the worship service.

2015

A Look Back at Worship and Religious Education

So far, this description of the Society’s history after 1965 has concentrated on the arrival and departure of ministers, creation of new organizational entities, commitments to new programs, and so forth. There has been no mention of changes in the Society’s worship practices or the shape and delivery of its religious education for children. The evolution of both has been significant.

Changes in Religious Education

From 1965 almost to the end of the 1900s, the religious education curriculum was built on the UUA's Beacon Street material. For example, "Church Across the Street" introduced children to the beliefs and rituals of other denominations; "Miracles Abound" explored the wonders of the natural world; "Haunting House" had the children building their own miniature houses and thinking about the meaning of "home" and the importance of having one's own space. For third and fourth graders, a knowledgeable congregant taught a one-semester course in Bible and, at its close, each child received a Bible.



In 1983, not satisfied with the way in which the Beacon Street curriculum managed the teaching of UU beliefs and history, two members of the Society's Religious Education Committee, working with an outside consultant, developed a curriculum for third to sixth graders called "Beginning Unitarian Universalism." For almost a decade it was printed in quantity and marketed to UU churches throughout North America. It became not only a small source of

income for the Society's religious education department but, of more significance, the standard for teaching the foundations of Unitarian Universalism in many UU churches.

Beginning in 1998, under the aegis of Associate Minister Ralph Roberts, the curriculum changed significantly. With the introduction of "Spirit Play," it became less directive and, Montessori-like, focused on process and learning. Rather than children sitting around a table, the usual class began with them sitting in a circle on the floor hearing and observing a story with the use of props. Through these stories and through self-directed activities such as painting, writing, and crafts,

children were encouraged to "wonder" and to build their own educational experience. Concurrent with the introduction of Spirit Play, and based on the published work of a Society member, steps were taken to be more responsive to children with special learning needs.

As of 2015, hands-on social services experiences have been added to the curriculum and classes retain elements of the Spirit



Play approach but are more directive and teacher led and more concerned with imparting knowledge. For example, the course on “Neighboring Faiths” examines not only prophetic elements of other religions but also their mythic origins and the similarities and differences in those myths. The same approach is used in “Bibliodeon:” Younger children learn the stories of the Bible and receive their own copies, but the Bible is studied as one of many worthy and venerated sacred texts.

Matters of human sexuality have been a key topic in the religious education curriculum for many years. As early as 1966, the Society’s Religious Education Committee and that

of Winchester’s United Methodist Church co-sponsored a multi-session course for eighty-eight teenagers entitled “Facts of Life and Love.” This was not the first time that the course had been given. Also co-sponsored in 1966 was a talk by Dr. Donald McLean, “Parental Responsibility for Sex Education of Children” attended by ninety Methodist and Unitarian parents. In the 1970s, the Society adopted the Unitarian Universalist Association’s new semester-long course “About Your Sexuality” (AYS) taught to seventh and eighth graders by specially trained members of the congregation. At present, the curriculum uses “Our Whole Lives,” (OWL), the UUA’s expanded version of AYS. OWL contains age-appropriate units for elementary, junior high, high school, and adult participants.

Throughout the period 1965 to 2015, finding and retaining skilled and dedicated religious education teachers has been a persistent challenge. In 1965, the Society still relied heavily on church members who taught for an entire year or, at least, one semester. Some taught consecutively for many years and experiencing a class with one of them was almost as transforming for a child as

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was the material being taught. However, as parents' lives became busier, this model became unsustainable. Before long, volunteers—still for the most part parents—taught or co-taught only a few course sessions. But this, too, proved unsatisfactory: The greater number of volunteers required and the higher resultant turnover made teacher recruiting and training more difficult and inhibited the development of close teacher/student bonds. In 2012, the Society began employing paid teachers from outside the church. This has brought a degree of stability and greater assurance of teacher preparation and competence. Lost, however, is sustained contact between the children and adult members of the Society. Partial compensation has been provided by “JanFest:” For the month of January, children meet with one of several adult church members to explore an area of mutual interest in which the adult is expert. Topics have ranged from careers in engineering (especially directed at girls) to learning karate skills.

Changes in Worship

Throughout most of Bob Storer's ministry, almost every Sunday service included congregational recitation of a statement, written by James Freeman Clarke, entitled “Our Faith.” It was assumed to represent the congregation's common religious foundation:

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind—
onward and upward forever.

In 1967, Reverend Storer began omitting the statement from some services and encountered mixed reactions. Some viewed the statement as the core of their religious convictions and objected to its absence. Others made clear that it no longer reflected their beliefs and was better left unsaid on Sunday mornings. Its use became

less and less frequent and, in its place, for a time, a less theistic statement was substituted:

*Love is the doctrine of this church,
The quest of truth is its sacrament,
And service is its prayer.*

*To dwell together in peace,
To seek knowledge in freedom,
To serve mankind in fellowship,
To the end that all souls shall grow
Into harmony with the Divine.*

This covenant, too, was recited less and less during the ministries of Reverends Zoerheide and Reinhardt until, like its predecessor, it made only an occasional appearance.

The importance of other symbols of the Society's traditional, more Protestant-oriented beginnings also dwindled. The two-foot high polished brass cross with the Christogram "ihs,"⁸ a weekly fixture on the altar table during Reverend Storer's ministry, became less and less so until it was replaced entirely; first, simply by flowers

and, later, during Chuck Reinhardt's ministry, by a ceramic replica of Unitarian Universalism's flaming chalice. Recitation of the Lord's Prayer, part of Sunday services since the Society's nineteenth century beginnings, was, with congregational agreement, abandoned in the late 1990s. "Prayer" became a more personal concept, shaped and encouraged by words spoken from pulpit and lectern by both ministers and laypersons but seldom recited by all. In similar fashion, the primacy of the Bible as a source of religious inspiration and enlightenment disappeared. As in the children's religious education curriculum, it took its place beside the texts of all the world's great religions and the words of its great thinkers as guides to the deepening of each congregant's religious faith and understanding.



⁸ The monogram "ihs" denotes the first three letters of the name Jesus using the Greek alphabet. It has also been interpreted to mean, in Latin, "in hoc signo," "in this sign."



Today, the only regular congregational recitation is an affirmation of community and a reminder of the obligation to act, spoken as the chalice flame is extinguished at the end of each Sunday morning service:

We extinguish this flame but not the light of truth, the warmth of community, or the fire of commitment. These we carry in our hearts until we are together again.

— Elizabeth Selle Jones

Over the years, lay participation in worship services has also evolved. During Jack Zoerheide’s ministry, services written and conducted, often entirely, by lay members of the Worship Committee, were frequent. Following Jack’s departure, the emphasis on “creative worship” decreased and lay participation diminished. Then, in 2009, Sarah and John Millspaugh established the Worship Associates, a step that made worship a more collaborative undertaking between minister and congregation. Each Sunday, a Worship Associate rings the opening bell, makes announcements, presents one or more readings, extinguishes the chalice, and otherwise assists the minister.

2015

Celebrating the 150th

A New Settled Minister

In the spring, 2015, after a two-year search, the Society called the Reverend Heather K. Janules to be its sixteenth senior minister. A 2005 graduate of Meadville/Lombard Theological School, Reverend Heather was completing her tenth year as Associate Minister of the Cedar Lane



Heather K. Janules

Unitarian Universalist Church in Bethesda, Maryland. She began her ministry in Winchester by setting a goal of face-to-face meetings with every church member and by planning a year-long recognition of its 150th Anniversary. Among other events there would be sermons focused on church

history and the lessons to be gained therefrom; dedication of a meditation garden; placement of a time capsule to be opened at our 200th anniversary; a congregational commitment to perform 150 unanticipated acts of kindness during the year: her own service of installation; and a second performance of the chancel drama “The Great Fire.” A book of meditations written by ministers who have served or been affiliated with the Society would be published. And, in November, 2015, an entire weekend of celebration would take place.

Celebration Weekend

The weekend began on Friday evening with the first of three “Music in the Sanctuary” concerts scheduled for the church year. A trio, with Music Director John Kramer at the piano, performed pieces by Mozart, Bernstein, and Beethoven. Saturday evening, over one hundred thirty congregants gathered in Metcalf Hall for a catered dinner and after-dinner program. On each table, six pictures were displayed depicting the development and expansion of the church building from 1870 to 2015. An eleven-question quiz tested the attendees’

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knowledge of Society esoterica. The after-dinner program was a *faux* annual meeting that included reports to the congregation by impersonators of Dr. F. Winsor (1883); congregant William Everett (1886); Standing Committee chairman Theodore Williams (1883); Arthur Whitney, chairman of the Committee on Social Meetings (1890); and the Reverend George Hale Reed (1921). Reverend Reed's report challenged the congregation to replace the clear sanctuary windows with stained glass, acquire an organ "worthy" of the Society's music, and eliminate the practice of supporting the church's operating budget through pew rentals. (The Society met all three challenges during Reverend Reed's ministry.)

Sunday, we moved back to the sanctuary for the weekend's finale; the premier performance of John Kramer's five-part cantata, "A Dream of Hope." Commissioned by the Society in honor of its 150th anniversary, the cantata was performed by the adult choir, a twelve-piece orchestra, and the children's chorale. For the final movement, the voices of the congregation joined those of the choir and the chorale. John described his cantata as a "review of Unitarian and Universalist thinking, hopes, and dreams over the last

150 years." There were words by Ralph Waldo Emerson, Sophia Fahs, and Langston Hughes; homage to the Reverend Olympia Brown; and reminders of our "respect for the interdependent web of all existence."

It was a memorable weekend of taking pride in the Society's 150 years of accomplishment and of looking forward to working and worshipping together during the next fifty years.

2015

Taking Stock
and Looking Forward

Almost fifty years ago, the Society took note of its declining membership and considered three alternative responses: (1) accept becoming a smaller church and take steps to ensure its continued viability; (2) attempt to grow by becoming a regional church drawing on nearby towns with no Unitarian Universalist presence for additional membership; or (3) continue remaking itself in ways designed to attract significant numbers of new members, locally. As we know, it

chose the last of these alternatives. And, in the decades that followed, whether intentionally or unintentionally, it has pursued that strategy. Along the way, ministers and Standing Committee chairs have reminded the Society that its highest priority should be growing its membership. A succession of Fellowship, Newcomers, and Membership Committees has created and implemented new and imaginative approaches to bring people to our doors, make them feel welcome, and integrate them into the life of the church. Through small group ministries, grief support, lay-provided pastoral care, and a caring network, we have improved our concern and help for one another. We accepted the challenge to put more resources behind our youth programs. Various program initiatives have carried our presence into the wider world, demonstrating that we are willing to act on behalf of what we believe: The 5% commitment, WUSYG's service trips, the birth of Long Haul, the Peace Network, our Partner Church relationship, and our commitment to be a Welcoming Congregation all make known that our faith reaches beyond Sunday morning. Sunday morning, too, has changed: Our worship services reflect decidedly different theological convictions and musical tastes. Even our



building has been altered to meet evolving needs and priorities: The youth room is much larger, as are the religious education classrooms; the building is wheelchair accessible; and solar panels and heating and electrical systems modifications and protocols are saving energy. Last, but of great importance, we are far more generous in our pledging.

All these developments suggest a vibrant and flexible congregation; one prepared to “continue remaking” itself, to embrace the remaking, and to support it with resources. In the past fifty years, we have become friendlier of spirit, richer in programs, and



more willing in our giving. But we have not been immune to the demographic trends faced by most denominations; our numbers have continued to decrease. Notwithstanding the welcome arrival of new members each year, we are less than half what we

were at our centennial in 1965. In pursuit of one alternative—growth—perhaps, we have achieved another—being smaller but more vital. For this, there is much to be thankful. But the way to our bicentennial will not be easy. As we did almost fifty years ago, we must examine the paths open to us, choose one, and pursue it with the same creativity, energy, and willingness to change that carried us through our most recent fifty. That is our challenge.



Ministers Who Have Served the Society (1965-2015)

Parish Ministers

Heather Janules	2015 – Present
Tricia Brennan and Cricket Potter (Interim)	2014 – 2015
Sarah and John Gibb Millspaugh	2008 – 2013
Stephanie Nichols and David Boyer (Interim)	2006 – 2008
Mary J. Harrington	2004 – 2006
Colin Leitch (Interim)	2003 – 2004
Judith A. Downing (Interim)	2002 – 2003
Arline Conan Sutherland	1992 – 2001
Charles A. Reinhardt	1979 – 1992
Jack D. Zoerheide	1969 – 1979
Robert A. Storer	1950 – 1969

Associate Ministers

Jeremy Melvin	2006 – 2008
Wendy Von Courter	2005 – 2006
Ralph Y. Roberts	1998 – 2004
Robert L. Morriss	1992 – 1998
Arline Conan Sutherland	1989 – 1992
Polly Leland-Mayer	1984 – 1989
Jane R. Rzepka	1980 – 1984

Assistant Ministers

Susan Moran	2005 – 2007
Colin Leitch	1991 – 1992

Affiliate Minister

Joel Baehr	1984 - 1999
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ADDENDUM

1865 – 1965



THE FIRST
ONE HUNDRED
YEARS



An abridged version of the booklet
written and published to commemorate the
centennial of the founding of the
Winchester Unitarian Society

THE FIRST
HUNDRED
YEARS

1865-1965

Winchester Unitarian Society

The First Hundred Years

*(Text from a booklet published
on the occasion of the Society's Centennial)*

1865-1965 Pamphlet Text

The Winchester Unitarian Society was formally organized in 1865, fostered by a spirit of Unitarianism that had been alive and growing in Winchester for many years prior to that date. In fact the Unitarian doctrine first was preached in Winchester as far back as 1636 by the Reverend Zachariah Symmes, an early arrival in Charlestown who became minister of the First Church (Boston) in 1636. Land, abundant in those days, was given in large tracts to the clergy. Reverend Mr. Symmes received a section of the Waterfield part of Charlestown, now known as Winchester. Mr. Symmes' first sermon on Unitarianism at the site of his new land holdings did not always find a receptive listener. History reports that a certain Ursula Cole, whose husband owned a farm on the west side of town, was found guilty of saying that she would rather hear

an old cat meow than hear the Reverend Zachariah Symmes preach. The trial was long and tedious and Mrs. Cole was sentenced to a public whipping unless Mr. Cole paid a fine of five pounds plus court costs. History does not record Mr. Cole's decisions.

After the death of Mr. Symmes his descendants and other families in the community continued to adhere to their Unitarian beliefs. They met in small groups in homes and occasionally attended services in the First Parish in Medford. Meetings were later held on Sunday afternoons in the old Mystic School House, where clergymen from Cambridge, Woburn, and Medford preached not only to the adults but also to the children. Among these visiting ministers were the Reverend Charles Brooks of Medford, the Reverend J.F.W. Ware of Cambridge, and the Reverend Mr. Marsters of Woburn.



Even before the official founding of the present Winchester Unitarian Society, Edwin A. Wadleigh organized a Unitarian Sunday School in 1855, and for four years the school met at the home of Mrs. Mary Sharon, located at the corner of Main Street and Black Horse Terrace. At the time, Mrs. Sharon was matron of the Industrial School for Girls then located on Eaton Street,

and it was a familiar sight on Sundays to observe Mrs. Sharon marching her girls from the school to her home for Sunday school services. When in the fall of 1858 the Industrial School was removed from town and Mrs. Sharon retired to live in her home, it was decided to discontinue the Sunday school temporarily.

The growing clouds of the impending Civil War and the war years themselves delayed the founding of the church for a decade. The spirit of Unitarianism was kept alive mainly by the Symmes Corner Unitarians. Among them was Luther H. Symmes, who kept in his home the book of the Sunday school and the large Sunday school Bible, given by the Honorable Albert Fearing. This Bible was later to become the pulpit Bible of the First Unitarian Church. Mr. Symmes invited both children and adults to visit his home, read the books, and take them home as often as desired. During these ten years, the Winchester Unitarians attended services in Woburn and Medford and their children were enrolled in the Sunday schools of these churches.

Following the war, Dr. Frederick Winsor, who had served the Northern troops as regimental surgeon, came to Winchester and purchased the house and practice of Dr. William Ingalls. In his home at the northern corner of Main and Mount Vernon Streets, the Winchester Unitarian Society had



Dr. and Mrs. Frederick Winsor with their family

its beginning on Sunday afternoon, November 19, 1865, when twenty-five men and women gathered in the Winsor's parlor to listen to a sermon by the Reverend Samuel R. Calthrop, a Harvard classmate of Dr. Winsor, who had been invited to come from Cambridge for a weekend and bring a sermon or two. This sermon proved to be the start of one hundred years of continuous Unitarian preaching in Winchester. Mr. Calthrop and his sermon were so well received that he was invited to return the following Sunday with another sermon in his grip. On the second occasion the group had already outgrown the Winsor's parlor and had to meet in Lower Lyceum Hall to accommodate the eighty enthusiastic citizens. It was apparent after these two



The first home of the Winchester Unitarian Church on Main Street, completed in 1870.

Sunday meetings that the propitious time for organizing a Unitarian Church in Winchester had come. Four days later, on November 29th, 1865, the Articles of Association were drawn up and signed. The signers of these Articles made pledges from \$.50 to \$100. The efficiency and dispatch with which the Winchester Unitarian Society was organized once a Unitarian preacher had spoken in town gave evidence that

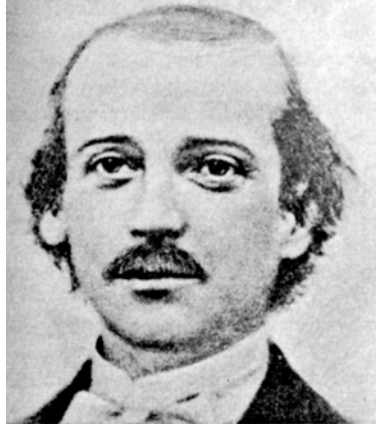
the soil had been well prepared to nourish a Unitarian Church.

For the next six months supply ministers preached weekly to an ever increasing congregation in Upper Lyceum Hall. On June 14, 1866, the Reverend Richard Metcalf was installed as the first settled minister. A graduate of Brown University, he was called here from Providence and served the church for fifteen years. Charles P. Curtis, the first clerk, commenting on the early selection of a minister, said that the parish had made a wise decision because the action "cut off the opportunity we had been giving Harvard Divinity students of sharpening their wits at our expense."

The membership had so increased by 1869 that a church building was deemed both possible and necessary. Land was purchased on Main Street about two hundred yards south of the present building and the cornerstone was laid on August 25, 1869. In the casual, friendly atmosphere that prevailed at the service the singing was chiefly by the Sunday school scholars who stood around the organ. The adults sat on the banks, walls, or wherever they could find a stick of lumber. The babies who could stand alone trotted around after Mr. Metcalf. In March of 1870 the building was completed and dedicated at a total cost, including land, building, and furnishings, of \$27,000, most of which had been raised by subscription. The structure contained seventy-two pews seating 380, and in addition there were fourteen pews in the gallery.

The Winchester Unitarian Church was fortunate that a talented and hardworking family like the Winsors was instrumental in founding and supporting the Church so generously in its early days. Mrs. Winsor was involved in activities in the town as well as in the Church, and at one time ran a private school for girls. The six Winsor children became prominent in educational and business circles in Winchester and Boston. One founded the Middlesex School, one Miss Winsor's School, and a son became president of Kidder, Peabody Co.

Dr. and Mrs. Winsor were warm, friendly people who attracted many to the new church. Attendance at Sunday services increased: the children sat with their parents for morning worship before descending to the lower hall for Sunday school lessons, which included committing to memory Unitarian hymns. Swinging on the posts of the hall was not a part of the curriculum but was a favorite pastime before the arrival of the teacher. In addition to his scholarly sermons, Mr. Metcalf wrote short stories for the children and frequently gathered the young around him on Sunday morning to read his stories to them. A gifted minister, Mr. Metcalf led the new church forward and his spiritual outlook set the goals which succeeding ministers have striven to attain throughout the century. Mr. Metcalf died in 1881 and was mourned by the entire town.



*The Reverend Richard Metcalf,
first minister*

In 1882 the Reverend Theodore C. Williams came with his bride to serve the parish. Mr. Williams had the distinction of being the only minister of this Church to

have been ordained here. After his graduation from the Harvard Divinity School and his receipt of the call of the Church, he begged to be allowed a three-month waiting period because he wished to be “completely ready” for his ordination. After one year Mr. Williams was called to All Souls Church in New York City. In response to his invitation to the semi-centennial of the Winchester Church in 1915, Mr. Williams wrote, “I never forget the kindness of the Winchester people. The place and Church now wear the glamor that sit upon the memories of youth. For it was my first parish in which I was ordained and to which I brought my bride. I hope I can write a hymn and will do my best to make an effort.” Unfortunately Mr. Williams died before the



Theodore C. Williams

semi-centennial observance and the special hymn was not written. He did write many hymns during his lifetime, however, ten of which are contained in the “Hymns of the Spirit.” One of the favorite hymns of the congregation today, Number 280, “When thy heart with joy o’er flowing,” was written by Mr. Williams.

THE FIRST
HUNDRED
YEARS

THE FIRST
HUNDRED
YEARS

The stewardship of the Reverend John Lewis Marsh, who was called in 1884, lasted until 1888. The twenty-second annual report of the treasurer of the Church, submitted on November 10, 1887, showed receipts of \$3,858.61, of which amount pew rentals accounted for \$2,400.

Pledge card subscriptions totaled \$523 and a concert and strawberry festival netted \$122. Among the expenditures were \$1,800 for the pastor's salary, \$150 for the sexton, \$3.50 for communion wine, \$667 for the choir, \$27.50 for blowing the organ, and \$16.31 for removal of ashes and mowing the lawn. During this same period the Church was then as now aware of the needs of the town and granted permission to hold a no-license temperance meeting in the church on Sunday afternoon in March 1887.

Next to serve the Church was the Reverend Herbert H. Mott, who came in 1889 and stayed until



John Lewis Marsh



Herbert H. Mott

1892, when he was called to Providence. It was a regular procedure then to ask the young girls to decorate the auditorium and pulpit for the Sunday service. On one October Sunday colorful leaves were artistically arranged throughout the church and chancel and it was not until after the service that the discovery was made that the attractive sprays were poison ivy.

The pastorate of the Reverend Arthur W.



Arthur W. Littlefield

Littlefield extended from 1892 to 1898. During the last year of his tenure the gray wooden church with its impressive corner spire was destroyed by fire on November 16, 1897. Several present-day parishioners recall as small children

watching the fire which consumed the building in one hour. The cause of the fire was never officially recorded. Legend has it that two boys playing in the carriage sheds behind the Church were responsible. Reportedly they were banished from town and later turned out well. THE WINCHESTER STAR, perhaps with tongue in cheek, wrote that "organ grinders have been in the habit of passing nights there." If this is so, said THE STAR, it might furnish a clue to the origin of the fire."

The fire was a great blow to the Church, for the building was in perfect repair and a new organ had only recently been installed. Expressions of sympathy and offers of assistance poured in from all sides. All churches in Winchester invited the Unitarians to worship with them. A former historian stated on the occasion of the semi-centennial that it was a heart-warming experience because it gave evidence that the other churches believed the Unitarian Church to be a real Church of God and a pillar of strength to the town. On the first Sunday following the fire the Unitarians worshipped at the First Congregational Church and thereafter met in the Small Town Hall until the present building was erected.

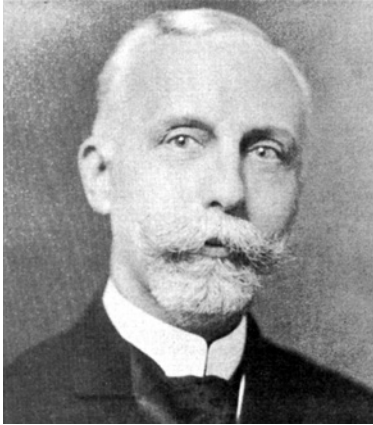
The rebuilding program was marked by a phenomenal display of energy, spirit, and cooperation. Within five days of the fire a committee of twenty-five members of the parish met in the Town Hall to plan for a new church. Many of the younger members of the parish accepted the destruction with mixed feelings and actually looked forward to a structure more in keeping with the times. Mr. Lewis Parkhurst, who was a member of the sub-committee on site for the new church, wrote in his "Recollections" that there was considerable discussion about the location of the new building. Some wanted it on the west side of town and others on the east side. It was finally agreed to locate on the east on the Palmer lot. The Palmer



A view of the Church in the mid-nineteen-twenties

homestead, which stood in the middle of the lot, was moved to 60 Lloyd Street, where it stands today. The horse-drawn removal of this house is a vivid childhood memory of some present-day parishioners.

Dedicated committee work and construction proceeded so quickly that the new building, made of Quincy granite, was dedicated in 1899. The total cost, including land, building, and furnishings, was \$40,000. The dedication of the church coincided with another significant event for the parish—the installation of the Reverend William I. Lawrance, who was to become one of the outstanding leaders of the Unitarian denomination. The will to work and sacrifice for the new church was



William I. Lawrance

remarkable; generous gifts from the parish and the Winsor family paid off the debt in a few years. During this period the Ladies' Friendly, ancestor of the Women's Alliance, which had been organized by Mrs. Winsor, did yeoman service. It sponsored fairs, entertainment, and suppers which raised funds to contribute substantially to the cancellation of the debt.

Mr. Lawrance was with the Church from 1899 to 1910, when he was called by the

American Unitarian Association to organize its Department of Religious Education. During his ministry in Winchester his work with the young people was creative and human; his sermons, scholarly and inspirational. It was no doubt because of his success with youth that he was summoned by the denomination to his newly created post. Throughout his pastorate the life of the church was broadened from Sunday services to week-day activities which drew many new people to the Unitarian Church. Saturday night suppers held in the original Metcalf Hall, where the favorite dish was "Sociable Corned Beef Hash," were popular with everybody.

Two contracts executed by the Church in the early part of the Twentieth Century demonstrated the progressiveness of the

Church. One, dated December 29, 1905, between the Church and the Boston Edison Company, called for the installation of electricity for a minimum charge of one dollar per month and thirty-five percent discount on all charges in excess. The second contract, dated March 6, 1906, was between the telephone company and the Church and authorized the installation of a telephone for thirty dollars per annum, payable quarterly in advance. This document further stipulated that the telephone must be: "carefully used."



Joel H. Metcalf

The next minister to serve the church was the Reverend Joel H. Metcalf, nephew of the Reverend Richard Metcalf, whose tenure was from 1910 to 1920. The years of World War I made their impression on the parish and Mr. Metcalf as well. Two summers of his pastorate

he spent abroad; one as a Y.M.C.A. secretary in France and another as a member of the first Unitarian Mission to Hungary. Mr. Metcalf was an outstanding astronomer, and during his lifetime was credited with the discovery of more than forty asteroids, three variable stars, and three planets. Some of these discoveries were made with his

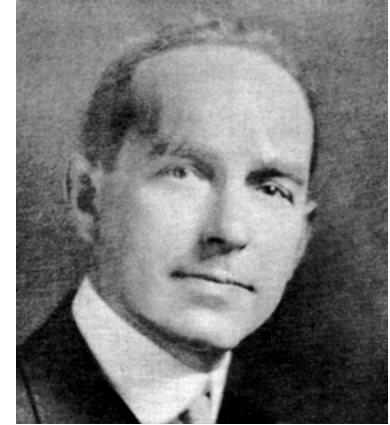
telescope in his Lawson Road home. The young people of the Church and the community used to delight to visit the Metcalfs and be initiated into the mysteries of the heavens. In reminiscences published about him, and written by his daughter, are salient references to the two loves of his life. "For my father's devotion to his job," wrote his daughter, "the ministry hardly surpassed his consuming passion for his hobby, astronomy. Oddly enough, it was through the Sunday School that father first caught a glimpse of the possibilities of the heavens. When he was fourteen years old, he took from the Sunday School library a book called 'Other Worlds than Ours,' which became an open door through which he had visions of the Universe beyond After this first sip, nothing could quench his thirst for knowledge about the heavens."

After Mr. Metcalf was called to Portland, Maine, in 1920, he was succeeded by the Reverend George Hale Reed, who ministered to the needs of the Church for twenty years, the longest ministry to date in the history of the Church. Among the many changes made to the physical plant under his guidance were a broad center aisle, a new organ and a remodeled chancel and choir stall. To strengthen the musical contribution to the services of worship a vested choir was added to assist the quartet, and the much-treasured carillon, given by Jere and Elizabeth Downs was installed in the tower. These bells were dedicated at a

memorable Christmas Eve service of carols, played by their designer and manufacturer, Andrew Meneely, proprietor of the oldest bell factory in America, located in Watervliet, New York.

An important event of Mr. Reed's pastorate was the erection and dedication of the Parish House in February, 1929. After Sunday service, the congregation followed the minister through the cloister to the new building for the service of dedication. The following evening a festive banquet, to which every church in Winchester sent its pastor, was held in the new Metcalf Hall. Reminiscent of the earlier day of this Church, when the members of the parish worked hard and long to build their first church home and the present one, was the conscientious activity of the parish during this period, both as individuals and as groups. Despite the hardship of the depression of the thirties, everyone's shoulder was at the wheel and the needed \$150,000 was raised. Some of the highlights of this effort were benefit concerts by Roland Hayes and Arthur Fiedler.

A few months after the new Parish House became a working reality, the Meyer Chapel was dedicated and thus the original Metcalf Hall was made into an intimate place



George Hale Reed

THE FIRST
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YEARS

of worship. Among other memorials given during this time were the Memorial Trees along the Parkway, the stained glass windows in the auditorium, and the Alice F. Symmes window. The latter was made possible through the gifts of children who earned the money themselves to honor Miss Symmes' enthusiastic work with them in dramatics and church-oriented social activities.

What must have been a courageous action of the parish took place at the time of Mr. Reed's pastorate. Since the founding days of the Church a high percentage of the Church's income had come from the rental of pews. This system with its guarantee of assured income was abolished, and adopted in its stead was the much more uncertain but

more democratic system of parish support—the Every Member Canvass.

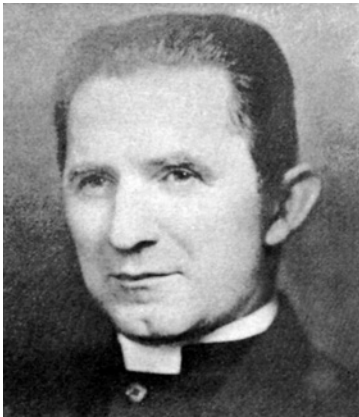
Succeeding in 1940 and serving the Church for nine years was the Reverend Paul Harmon Chapman, who came to Winchester from the First Parish in Lexington. These years of World War II took their toll on the parish; yet, at the same time, the strength and stability of their on-going Church was of great value to

the members. Interested in young people and their religious growth, Mr. Chapman

organized a Religious Education Committee which created a strong Church School and which has retained consecutively since that day the responsibility for its progress and budgetary well-being. Mr. Chapman served the denomination as an advisor to Sophia Fahs and the other authors of the Beacon Curriculum for the denomination's Church Schools throughout the country. The purchase of a parsonage at 33 Glen Green during Mr. Chapman's tenure made possible for the parish and its ministers a second location of Church-centered hospitality.

Despite the strengths and successes of all foregoing ministries, a large percentage of the present parish has known only the influence of the present minister, the Reverend Robert Arthur Storer, who came to Winchester in September, 1950. The sense of deep loss felt by the people of the First Parish in Dorchester was the first indication of what he would come to mean to this parish. For fifteen years he has given freely of his vitality and intellect, and his personality has provided a catalyst that has fused the parish into the enthusiastic and diligent congregation it is today.

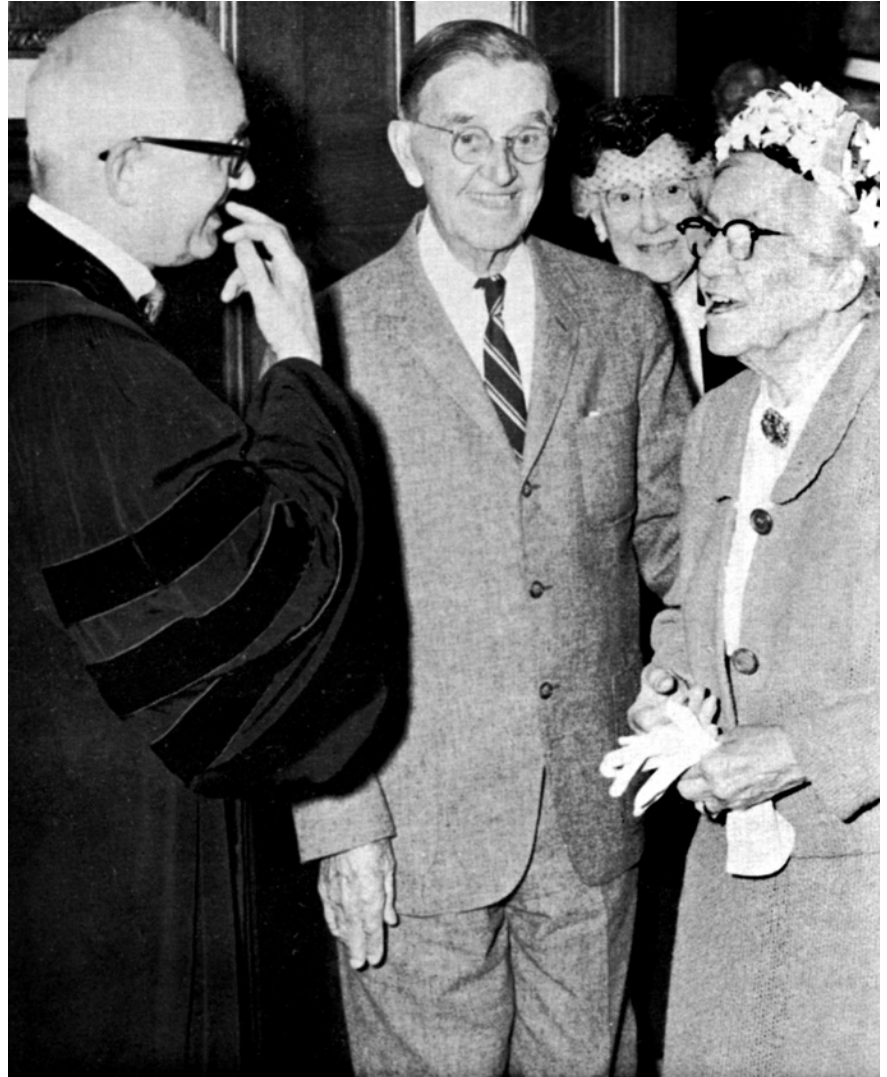
Since 1950 the Church has grown in size and stature and now numbers more than five hundred families that have increased its influence for good in the community. The dramatic growth of the Church School in numbers and effectiveness showed Dr. Storer's



Paul Harmon Chapman

ability to make religious education an exciting concept to youngsters and adults alike. The pressing need for increased facilities which resulted from this expansion was met in 1958 when the parish dedicated a new religious education wing. The parishioners were pleased that the architect could create a two-story structure within the existing building lines of Lawrance Hall and thus provide a worship center for the Lower School and an adequate number of classrooms. They also took pride in the fact that lay committees working without professional assistance were able to raise in two years the \$120,000 necessary for the addition and certain other improvements. With a little guidance from their minister the children of the Church School played an active part in the building of their new classrooms. The parable of the talents was reenacted when each child was given one dollar and invited to use his initiative to invest the dollar in a project which would yield a return. Memorial windows in the Lower School worship center and the cloister have added to the beauty of the Religious Education wing.

All organizations of the Church have felt the impact of Dr. Storer's catholic interests. In 1952 the Players came back on the scene with the production, "Return Engagement." The sustained success of this group has been under the direction and inspiration of Dr. Storer, who before entering the ministry had



Dr. Robert A. Storer and Parishioners



spent several years in the theater. A nationally noted pioneer in the field of sacred dance, he introduced this religious art to the Church. He has trained and directed the young women of the Church in finished performances which have added a new dimension to special services. The excellence of the group has been recognized throughout the state and in the nation. Always alert to a need and ready to find an answer, Dr. Storer started a morning discussion group for retired men, the fellowship of which has attracted men from many churches in town. The popular Tuesday Sewing Group counts

him one of its own. In short, “Bob” Storer, as he has invited the parish to know him, is everywhere constantly on the search for what he likes to call the “worthwhileness of life” and the “grandeur of the human adventure.”

Today the Winchester Unitarian Church counts itself fortunate in the quality of leadership it has been privileged to enjoy for a century. From the Reverend Richard Metcalf to the Reverend Robert A. Storer, each pastor has left his hallmark to inspire and lead the congregation. In 1965 the Church looks back on a meaningful past, takes stock in a vital present, and feels confidently prepared to make a running start into its second century.

WINCHESTER UNITARIAN SOCIETY

1865	Society Organized at Home of Dr. Frederick Winsor
1866	Rev. Richard Metcalf Settled as First Minister
1869	Original Church Cornerstone Laid
1870	Church Dedicated
1897	Church Destroyed by Fire
1898	New Church Cornerstone Laid
1899	Church Dedicated
1928	Organ and Chancel Dedicated
1928	Parish House Conerstone Laid
1929	Parish House Dedicated
1958	Parish House Remodelled for Church School Facilities

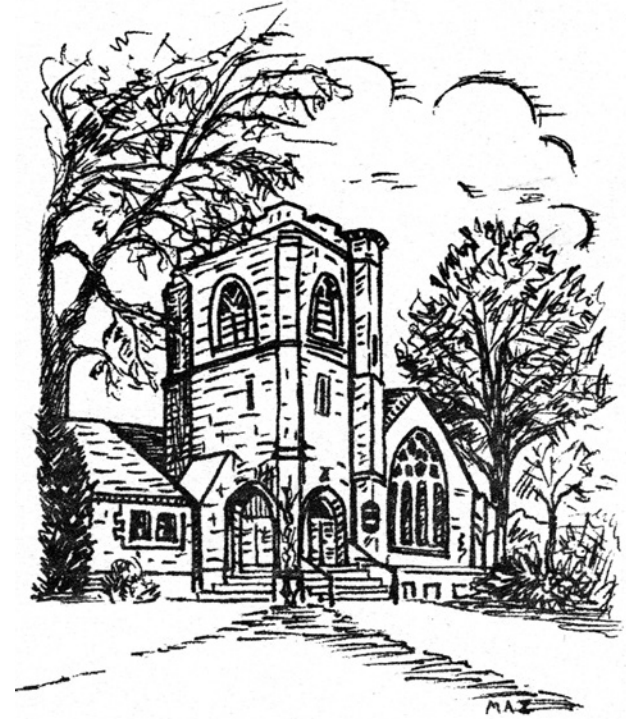
MINISTERS
WHO HAVE SERVED THIS SOCIETY

1866	Richard Metcalf	1881
1882	Theodore C. Williams	1883
1884	John Lewis Marsh	1888
1889	Herbert H. Mott	1892
1892	Arthur W. Littlefield	1898
1899	William I. Lawrance	1910
1910	Joel H. Metcalf	1920
1920	George Hale reed	1940
1940	Paul Harmon Chapman	1949
1950	Robert Arthur Storer	

THE FIRST
HUNDRED
YEARS



Original Church 1870 - 1897



Rebuilt 1899



THE
THIRD FIFTY YEARS



1965 – 2015

WINCHESTER UNITARIAN SOCIETY

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