

Warrant for the 158th Annual Meeting of the Winchester Unitarian Society

Sunday, May 18, 2025

Meeting Convenes at 12:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary

Luncheon at 12:00 p.m. in the Symmes Room

The 158th Annual Meeting of the Winchester Unitarian Society will be held at the Winchester Unitarian Society, 478 Main Street, Winchester, Massachusetts, to consider the following:

Article I To hear and act on the Minutes of the May 19, 2024, Annual Meeting and the Minutes of the October 6, 2024, Special Meeting.

Article II To hear and act on the Report of the Standing Committee.

Article III To hear and act on the Report of the Interim Parish Minister, Reverend Seth Carrier-Ladd.

Article IV To hear and act on the Report of the Director of Youth and Children's Ministries, Sam Wilson.

Article V To hear and act on the Report of Administrator and Outreach Manager, Richard Dorbin.

Article VI To hear and act on the Report of the Music Director, John Kramer.

Article VII To hear and act on the Report of the Trustees of the Permanent Funds.

Article VIII To hear and act on the Treasurer's Report for the fiscal year ending August 31, 2024 and the Treasurer's Estimated Report for the fiscal year ending August 31, 2025.

Article IX To hear and act on the budget recommended by the Standing Committee for the fiscal year ending August 31, 2026.

Article X To authorize that there be raised and appropriated from the income and receipts of the Society, including the Sunday collections and funds obtained by general solicitation or otherwise, such amounts as may be necessary or appropriate to meet the expenses, debts, or other charges of the Society during the fiscal year ending August 31, 2026; and that the Treasurer be and is hereby authorized, subject to the approval of the Standing Committee, to borrow from time to time, for a period not to exceed one year, such amounts as may be necessary and appropriate to meet the expenses, debts, and other charges of the Society during the fiscal year for which provision has not otherwise been made.

Article XI To approve and elect the members of the Ministerial Search Team for the purpose of conducting a search for the next settled minister of the Society.

Article XII To hear and act on the Report of the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee and to elect officers and committees for the ensuing year.

Article XIII To hear and act on *A Congregational Resolution of Conscience and Resistance* proposed by the Social Action and Outreach Committee for adoption by the Society.

Article XIV To hear and act on any other business that may legally come before this meeting.

By the order of the Standing Committee
Ginger Jo Hanson, Clerk

Please see below for the Congregational Resolution:

A Congregational Resolution of Conscience and Resistance (Final Version)

As Unitarian Universalists, we have worked through the years, for all forms and issues of Social Justice. Our dedication to this arises from a deep and heartfelt belief, expressed as our First Principle, in “The inherent worth and dignity of every person”. It is our sense, based on science and our lived experience, that we are one human family.

But just as we will approach family and friends when we see their behavior causing pain or injury, so too has our religious community never hesitated to speak out to try to correct social injustices.

Based on these beliefs then, and considering the transgressions (including, but not limited to those) listed below,

the purpose of this Resolution is both: to emphatically condemn the escalating assault on our Constitutional system of government by the current Presidential Administration, and to publicly declare our commitment to the Constitution.

From the American Civil War until January 2021, every Presidential Administration, Democratic and Republican, had comported itself (for the most part) with adherence to the Constitution, respect for the Rule of Law, acceptance of election results, and the norms of a civil society.

But we now watch with dread, rage and disbelief as the current President:

- intimidates and defies rulings of the Federal Courts, including the Supreme Court;
- ignores laws passed by the Congress;
- dismantles vital Agencies (Social Security, HHS, the IRS, the CDC, many more);
- threatens to use Federal criminal prosecution, and to use the military, against his political opponents, “the enemy within”;
- is attempting to stifle our most precious First Amendment right to free speech by attacking: universities, media and tech companies, law firms and the Judiciary;
- deports legal residents, with no Due Process, and threatens to do the same to any citizen (“the homegrown are next”);
- praises brutal dictators and alienates our democratic allies;
- demonizes and scapegoats vulnerable and oppressed communities;
- exacerbates the climate crisis by blocking Congressionally approved projects;
- has recklessly allowed the minions of his biggest campaign donor to gain access to highly sensitive national security information and citizens’ personal information; and
- ignores conflicts of interest.

Scholars and historians tell us that these are the very methods used by duly elected leaders to transform their democracies to authoritarian regimes.

As nightfall does not come all at once, neither does oppression.

In both instances, there is a twilight when everything remains seemingly unchanged, And it is in such twilight that we all must be most aware of changes in the air – however slight – lest we become unwitting victims of the darkness.

- Supreme Court Justice William Douglas

All of the actions listed above are either unconstitutional, illegal, or transparently and cynically divisive and hateful, and we denounce them.

Yet, while we condemn these actions, *we do not condemn the people* perpetrating them.

It bears repeating that our First Principle affirms “The inherent worth and dignity of every person”.

UUA President, Sofia Betancourt, wrote in January:

“We Unitarian Universalists are people with diverse identities, stories, and experiences. Yet we are personally, theologically, and covenantally bound together by the expansive Love that has always been the animating center of our faith. Far more powerful than any faction, leader, nation, or creed, it is this fierce Love that compels our deepest loyalty and our most courageous action. And it is this Love that moves through and between us, enabling us to nurture wisdom, guidance, courage, and grounding in ourselves and in one another.”

(<https://www.uua.org/pressroom/press-releases/fierce-love-compels-us-action>)

It is this spirit of Love and decency that compels this Resolution. Silence is complicity.

Therefore we, the Members of the Winchester Unitarian Society, resolve to unequivocally condemn the methodical, corrupt, transparent and cynical actions by the current Administration to destroy our Constitutional form of government.

We reaffirm:

- **our determination to preserve the Constitution of the United States;**
- **our belief that people everywhere have more in common than what separates them; and**
- **our demand for the restoration of the norms and institutions that have been a model and beacon of democracy for the world.**

We urge all of our like-minded Congregants, neighbors and fellow Americans to speak and act for these values. If not now, when?