



FIRST CHURCH VISION

FIRST CHURCH UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST LEOMINSTER, MA

REVEREND DR. SUSAN SUCHOCKI BROWN, MINISTER

LAUREN SOUCY, Choir Director Jesse Blackman, Musician

November 2015

I have had the interesting experience since August 8th to be learning about how difficult it is to have physical challenges that interfere with daily activities. It has been a way to learn how to walk in others' shoes. Not that having a hand injury in anyway compares to some of the physical challenges others live through or will for their life-time but I have had to rethink a lot of normal ways of doing things.

On August 8th I tripped up a step and fell carrying a ceramic plate and cup. They shattered and a piece of plate about the size of a nickel embedded into my hand. It required a visit to the emergency room to take it out and a couple of stitches were put in. But the wound would not heal and I was in great discomfort. After three visits back to see my doctor and after noticing what looked to be two identical bumps that just popped out after I felt a snap in my wrist, I was sent to a plastic/hand surgeon. He did surgery to finish cleaning out some pieces of plate that were continuing to rub inside the wound and he repaired a tendon that had been cut. When he was in doing this he noticed that all this was very near the nerve in my wrist. So he fixed it up on October 7th and I have been wearing a half cast most of the time till he tells me what the next steps are. I am lucky he says that it did not do more damage to the nerve.

Now I really should not be gripping. I will be able to use my hand again. However, I had to learn how to eat, write, type and do other chores with my other hand. This has made me aware of so many things that we take for granted. Such as how we cut our

food, open doors, jars and bottles, put on our clothes, fasten belts and even which is our dominant hand for driving and waving and shaking hands. What would it be like to not have the use of one of your hands, ever again? I am appreciative of my spouse who has been making breakfast for me since October 7th, I can't whisk eggs yet. I appreciate a church member who when we went out to eat at the Old Mill kept me well supplied with corn fritters, cutting them and pouring maple syrup over them without making me feel silly. I appreciated the day when I got back into the vehicle and could grasp the steering wheel. I miss the gym; I don't dare use that hand yet to grasp the machines. I am slow in answering emails and I need Lenore to help me fill out my checks which I could just barely sign.

The other experience is trying not to be visible with an obvious disability and hearing how people ask or don't about a hand wrapped up like a mummy. The most affirming compassionate thoughtful comment came from a young clerk at TJ Max's. She looked at the hand and me and asked, "Is that anything that will be better *for you* soon?" She left it so open ended that it indicated that she didn't necessarily mean healed or fixed, just better able for me to deal with trying to navigate all the ways that I expected to use my hand. Her comment didn't assume the hand would heal just that I would find ways around the issue. I found her comment empowering and I felt it indicated a real comfort level with all those she would encounter in life who might have visible disabilities. I appreciate all your extra help during this time; I will get better; thanks.

Rev Susan



Debra's Doodles

Well if you haven't heard, I have decided to go ahead and graduate in December so I can save myself a bunch of money on student loans. Of course, I will stay at Leominster until the end of the church year in June. However, there are a number of other things that are kind of up in the air right now, like if I will continue living and working on campus or not. I am sure it will all work out so I am not worried that much about it. I guess the thing is --changes are hard even if they are changes that you want to happen. It is stressful to learn new things and move into new spaces with new people no matter how much you have prepared for the new reality. I am taking a class now that looks at churches through the lens of systems theory and one of the things I learned is that churches are a lot like people when it comes to changes. It stresses them even if they have prepared for the changes and they want the changes to happen. I think especially of this as we seek ways to be more present and useful in the community. It reminds me of the scene in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* when Harry is all down in the dumps because Dumbledore will not talk to him so he feels so alone. His friend, Luna Lovegood, happens to be there feeding Thestrals and she gives Harry a bit of insight. She says, "I bet that is how he wants you to feel." Harry asks, "Who?" Luna said, "Voldemort. He would like you to think you are all alone." Then Harry saw that his strength was in his friendships. His strength was in the fact that he is not alone. So, like Harry, when we go through changes as a church, as a group, the thing we can fall back on... the thing that will see us through it all is that we have each other.

See ya in church, Debra



World Café

On Sunday **November 15th** the Mission taskforce will be hosting a World Café after church. We will be sharing coffee, snacks and conversation related to the mission of the church. Please come prepared to stay a while, socialize and share ideas.

On **Nov. 4th** the Committee on Worship will meet at FCUU at 4:30 pm.



Sermons

- November 1st:** "All souls the ever widening circle"
- November 8th:** "Honoring"
- November 15th:** "Spiritual but not religious-oh really?"
- November 22nd:** "Thanksgiving-giving blessing and Corn Bread and Cider Communion"
- November 29th:** "Responsibility and the gift"
- December 6th:** "Being Really Good"



Monthly Congregational Breakfast

On **November 22nd**, there will be the monthly congregational community breakfast held immediately following church. Gather downstairs for food and conversation. See Bill Coulter if you can assist.

If you want to use the church for any purpose, committee or event please be in contact with Lenore at First Church email to coordinate schedules.



Community Dinner

A community meal with the Spanish American Center and guests will be on at 4:30-6:00. Please notify us if you will be attending.



Membership Committee Meeting

Membership Meeting for November will occur on Wed. **Nov. 11th** at 5:45 PM at First Church. All are welcome to attend.



Lady's Benevolent Society

The November meeting of the Lady Bee's will occur on Monday evening, **November 9th** at the First Church Lady Bee's room at 7:00 PM. All women attending First Church are invited to attend. Dues are \$10.00 for the year ending in August of 2016. We will be discussing our gift giving for this year and the Winter Stroll on December 5th. Please attend and enjoy our camaraderie. Refreshments will be served. Our Holiday pot luck will occur on December 14th with a Yankee Swap. Details to be given at the next meeting. Questions? See Claire on Sunday.



Needs for Homeless/Less Privileged Youth

Socks
Sweat shirts- hooded preferred L, XXL
Sketch pads and colored pencils
Toiletries male and female
Hand warmers
Gloves one size
Scarves, hats, skull caps



Adult R.E.

All women are welcome to attend the Cakes for the Queen of Heaven Adult Re program from 10am to 12:30pm on Wednesday, **Nov. 11th**. We will be focusing on the book, Ancient Mirrors of Womanhood by Merlin Stone.



Birthdays

Kevin Cormier.....Nov.3
Noah Schultz.....Nov. 7
Jaden Doher.....Nov.16
Lilith Ardinger.....Nov.18
Amanda Woodward.....Nov.18



Book Discussion Group

What: **The Particular Sadness of Lemon Cake** by Aimee Bender

On the eve of her ninth birthday, unassuming Rose Edelstein, bites into her mother's homemade lemon-chocolate cake and discovers she has a magical gift: she can taste her mother's emotions in the cake. The Particular Sadness of Lemon Cake is a luminous tale about the enormous difficulty of loving someone fully when you know too much about them. It is heartbreaking and funny, wise and sad.

When: **MONDAY, November 30**, 2015 at 7:30 pm

Where: Karyn Woodward's home



Soup with Susan Nov. 18th

Please join us from 12:00 to 1:00 for a warm, friendly gathering of soup made by Ron, bread and dessert made by Rev. Susan and fellowship made by all. All are welcome. Invite your neighbors and friends to come with you.

Look what's New!

I hope you will notice the lovely feather flags in front of the church when you drive by the building. The aqua, purple and red flags are labeled with the words love, equality and justice. The Growth and Vitality Committee hope these vibrant flags will cause those who drive by to be interested in what other values are evident inside the church. These flags came from Central Flag and Gift store 41 Main Street in Leominster.



Grains and Greens

Grains and Greens is in need of food or money to purchase food and someone to come in to clean the room. Call the church or Rev Susan to find a time to come in and volunteer.



Toys for Tots

We have partnered with Toys for Tots, a collaborative project between Leominster and Fitchburg Marine Detachment 1076 and the local Salvation Army. We have had volunteers sign up to assist with the application process. These will be taken from November 12 to December 18th. Those who volunteer will receive training. The hand out to approved families will take place on December 20. You can still help by signing up to fill out applications or you can drop off toys for kids ages birth – 12. We will have a bin here for accepting donations.

On **Nov. 14** we have been invited to join the members of Rollstone Congregational Church for a potluck and brief training and kick off to the Toys for Tots program. Pot luck at 5:00 at the Rollstone Church in Fitchburg. I am going so am glad to provide transportation. Please let me know if you will come to this with me. One more way to get involved is to join on probably Dec 16th to sort through toys and make up "bags" for families. We would go to Rollstone church where the toys are being stored. It would have to be in the later afternoon after 2:30. If that date doesn't work we can pick another date like the 17th or 18th. Please let Rev. Susan know if you can help. Thanks to those who have already signed up to help.

If you want information in an order of service please get that information to the office @ 1stchurchoffice@verizon.net by Tuesday of the week that you want something post



Call to Knitters, Crocheters, Quilters

Hello Knitters, crocheters and quilters everywhere. We need to make some blankets for ill children. Lady B's need both yarn and knitters. Can you help us? Project Linus gets blankets to children undergoing medical treatments. The ideal blanket size for their use is from 36"X36" up to 40" X60". Please do not use mohair, angora or any other fuzzy or loose fabric as they shed and can cause breathing problems if inhaled by the child. This is an ongoing project for the Worcester Area Chapter of Project Linus. They appreciate it when our church can assist them in their mission to aid these children. Questions?



Parish Committee Happenings

The Parish Committee has met several times since the summer and we've gotten off to a very strong start for the church year!

Of particular note is the success of our bi-annual autumn meeting, at which our budget for FY2016 was approved by majority vote. Additionally, representatives from FCUU's various committees delivered reports about the work they've been doing and their goals for the upcoming year. In that vein, the Parish Committee is dedicated to maintaining increased communication with the church membership as well as aiding in the process of reevaluating and examining our mission.

Finally, I wish to reinforce what I stated at the meeting: we are in need of someone to spearhead the 2016 Pledge Commitment Drive. I have stepped down from that job, and the time to begin thinking about the canvass is upon us. If you are interested in learning more about this, please see myself or Rev. Susan for information.

Blessings to all,
Lynn Radford

The next Parish Committee meeting will be held at 6:00 on **November 4th**.

Don't forget to thank a Veteran or their family on **Nov. 11.**



Happy Thanksgiving! ***Nov. 26th***

If you want to submit to the December newsletter, please do so before **Nov. 15th**. Email Chris at cauhlig2002@yahoo.com or Lenore at 1stchurchoffice@verizon.net.