



FIRST CHURCH VISION

FIRST CHURCH UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST LEOMINSTER, MA

REVEREND DR. SUSAN SUCHOCKI BROWN, MINISTER

LAUREN SOUCY, Choir Director JESSE BLACKMAN, Musician DEBRA GUTHRIE, Student Intern

MAY 2016

Ministerial Musings

As the sun rises on Country Lane there is a chorus of noises. Mostly it is chirping birds and chattering squirrels. I like waking up to the sounds of Spring. The cooing of the mourning doves reminds me of the buoys at the ocean and the starlings make a racket as they swoop in to get seeds. The Robins pick at the dirt out back to get the worms. It is a nice way to wake up and know the changing of the season.

What I am not so keen on is that often I have been awoken before the sun rises by the sounds of howling and yowling coyotes off in the distance. When this noise is heard all my cats jump into bed with me and we sit up eyes wide open and ears alert to see how close the noise gets. It is close. One of the problems of getting hard of hearing though is that it is sometimes difficult to figure what direction the howling is coming from.

Noises can announce a season as much as sights and smells. The lovely hyacinths are coming up in the church yard. The tulips open their petals and a Flowering Almond tree is beginning to bloom outside the front garden and I notice it as I wander out to get the morning paper.

I try to sneak out as quietly as I can because our newest cat, Leo, would love nothing more than to get out too. The problem is he is a bit wild and doesn't come back when called and would stay out

all the time. This is not so good for his longevity given that we hear the coyotes wandering and the lovely red fox.

The lovely red fox meanders up the driveway and walks around the back yard most mornings too. When the fox comes around all the birds hush up quickly. All the squirrel and chipmunks scamper for cover. The starlings take off in a rush of wings and squawking. The mourning doves fly high in the trees and the little Finches take cover in the grape arbor. The lovely red fox is totally oblivious to the effect she has on the neighborhood rituals. But the lovely red fox has become a ritual unto herself. She walks by the fish pond, peering in, probably saying when are they going to get the pond cleaned up and running. She walks by the back door avoiding the holes that have just been dug for the new patio, probably wondering what time the construction is going to start. She even stopped to let Ron greet her from the back door, not running away but watching and listening to him greet her.

It is amazing how much life, wild and otherwise is around us if we can just listen and watch and see it.

May your spring time season be full of life

Enjoy. *Rev. Susan*



Debra's Doodles

Well, I can't believe it is almost over. Two more months and my time here will be done. Sad. I am going to miss you all very much. I am still not sure where I will be yet so I am not sure if I will be seeing you next year when the church year starts up again. At any rate, I will be sure to send word through Rev. Susan of what I am up to. Yes, of course, I will continue to talk to Rev. Susan—she is a treasure of knowledge and experience.

But we still have work to do before I leave! Stephanie is tweaking the mission statement for The Mission Taskforce. It will then come back to the Task Force for approval along with Rev. Susan and when we are all cool with it, we will take it along with a report on our process to the Parish Committee. Once they approve it, it will go to the congregation for a vote.

I will be preaching on Memorial Day Sunday, look for the blurb in the sermon section.

The church is having a picnic. Brownie points for everyone who bring a southern inspired dish. More brownie points if you bring a friend, neighbor, family member, hell bring everybody!! It will be fun.

See ya in church, Debra



Sermons

May 1st: "Honoring the traditions of May Day"

May 8th: "Honoring those who raised us"

May 15th: "Transitions" A lay led service. Remember to recognize Deb Guthrie as she graduates from Andover Newton Theological School this weekend.

May 22nd: Bi-annual meeting and shortened worship service remembering our purpose and covenants.

May 29th: "Jargon, Lingo, Rhetoric, Good Answers and Great Answers" by Debra Guthrie. So many sons and daughters have died in war for the ideal of liberty. Is what is happening today in the political arena what they would have wanted? This morning let us explore together, all the ways that speech impacts our lives and ask ourselves does it really matter? Despite the childhood refrain about stick and stones, we know that words do indeed hurt but can they heal as well?

June 5th: "Flower Communion Sunday" Bring a flower to share with each other.

Memorial Day Sunday, May 29

This morning you are invited to bring pictures or mementos in memory of a loved one who died while in service to the country or after having served. Their service may have been in the military or as a member of the fire, police department. There will be a time in the worship service in which you will be invited to share their story and an altar table will provide space for your photos and mementos.



Church Picnic

The church will be having a pot luck/picnic at Barrett Park here in Leominster on Mother's Day **May 8th**. Members of the congregation, friends and relatives are all invited. The park is off of Chestnut Street just five minutes from the church by car. There are packed dirt walkways that can easily accommodate wheel chairs and scooters. The plan is to go there **directly after church**. Everyone is encouraged to bring picnic food to share. Do not forget to bring Frisbees, kites and other toys for the kids... well and adults, too.



Committee Meeting Dates

At First Church UU:

May 4th: Committee on Worship at 4:30 pm.

May 4th: Parish Committee at 6:00 gathering for food and meeting at 6:30 pm.

May 11th: Membership and Growth Committee at 2:00 pm.

The final meeting of the Teaching Parish Committee will be held after the morning church service on **June 5th**. We will be signing off on the last report going to the UUA for our student intern Debra Guthrie. I hope everyone can attend. Questions? See Claire at church.



On **May 22nd**, there will be a gathering at the synagogue to honor the Rabbi on his retirement. I hope some of you will be able to join me in going over there.

Things we could do together as a congregation

Montachusett Interfaith Hospitality Network

Bring food over one night and sit with the families. Or partner with another church. We could go over first and visit and see the facility.

Assist with food preparation and service with Ginny's and the Spanish American Center. Offering a soup kitchen for the holidays.

Attend the Martin Luther King Jr. circle dialogue on February 20th 12- 2

United Way periodically looks for people to pack food for the feeding of school age children through Kylee's Kare Kits for Kidz project.

Lauren and Bob assist with **servicing meals during** Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter. We could partner with them and that group.

Club 21 which is part of Alternative's Health Care project; they are looking for volunteers.

Spanish American Center brings food to the hotel where the homeless live one or two days per week. We could help.

In the Springtime the Mayor organizes a day to clean up downtown.

We could help the **Friends of the Library** sort books. Ed Willrich is a member of the Friends.

We could be trained by **Emergency Management Agency** to be ready if there is a local disaster.

These are just a few of the ideas about ways to get connected. I am sure others have thoughts too; please share.

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.



Free Computer "Technology Made Easy" Workshop

The church will be hosting a free technology workshop on Saturday **May 21st** from 1-3pm. The workshop is designed to help anyone unfamiliar with the basic web-based functions, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and more, become comfortable exploring those venues. We are gearing this workshop toward the public and are especially interested in attracting seniors. We will be needing many volunteers for this project. Please come teach, learn and show the public some great UU hospitality. Call 978-537-0310 with questions.



Lady's Benevolent Society

The next meeting of the Lady Bee's will be held on Monday, **May 9th** at 6:00 PM. Please note the change in the usual meeting time. We are meeting early to allow the members to make artificial spring flowers to be distributed to some residents of a local Leominster nursing home or two, depending on how many we can make in one evening. If your schedule makes it difficult to come at 6pm, don't worry we will welcome you whenever you can join us. As usual all of the May birthdays will be celebrated that evening with refreshments provided by Marilyn Murphy.

I want to thank June Cardone for the donation of a beautiful blanket which was sent to Worcester for the Linus blanket project for hospitalized ill children. All women friends and members of FCUU are welcome to join us. Questions? See Claire at church.



Birthdays

Claire Griffiths.....May 1
Robert Pariseau.....May 7
Karyn Woodward.... May 8
Tony Lorenzen.....May 14
Keisha Radford.....May 16
Betsy Moran.....May 17
Nicolas Pariseau.....May 20
Abigail Shapiro..... May 29
Janet Hawks.....May 29
Briazjah Scott..... May 30
Trishannah Scott..... May 30



Grains and Greens

We need food for the pantry. The summer months are coming up and we especially need supplies and food for those who are homeless. Cans that don't need can openers, food that can be eaten right from the package, packets of cheese crackers, granola or cereal bars, juice in boxes. Need personal care items too.

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



Book Discussion Group

What: The Irresistible Blueberry Bakeshop & Cafe
by Mary Simses

Ellen Branford is going to fulfill her grandmother's dying wish, to find the hometown boy she once loved, and give him her last letter. Ellen leaves Manhattan and her Kennedy-esque fiance for Beacon, Maine. What should be a one-day trip is quickly complicated when she almost drowns in the chilly bay and is saved by a local carpenter. The rescue turns Ellen into something of a local celebrity, which may or may not help her unravel the past her grandmother labored to keep hidden. As she learns about her grandmother and herself, it becomes clear that a 24-hour visit to Beacon may never be enough.

When: Friday, May 27, 2016 at 7:30 pm

Where: First Church



Adult R.E.

All women are welcome to attend the Cakes for the Queen of Heaven Adult Re program from 10 to 11:30 am on **May 18th**. We will be focusing on the book, *Ancient Mirrors of Womanhood* by Merlin Stone.

Wish List

- New dish towels for the kitchen. Yellow, green, tan
- Plastic silverware
- Napkins
- Floor wax and cleaner
- Glass cleaner
- Replacement mops large cotton head
- Toilet bowl cleaner
- Regular Pine sol or other cleaner.

All Donations Are Greatly Appreciated!!!



Soup with Susan May 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.

WARRANT

Bi-Annual Congregational Meeting

This is to notify you of a congregational meeting, which will be held **May 22, 2016 immediately following the Sunday service** in the downstairs hall of First Church Unitarian Universalist, 15 West Street, Leominster, Massachusetts. There will be packets of status reports from the various church committees available. If you have any desire to serve on any committee or in any elected position, the Nominating committee would be thrilled to hear from you. Members of the Nominating Committee are: Stephanie Trudel, Norman St Denis and John McBee.



Parish Committee

The Parish Committee met in April and voted unanimously to purchase a video security surveillance system for the church. Our thanks go to Bill Coulter, who spent days meeting with various companies and amassing a set of quotes for us to consider, as well as to the 15 West Coffeehouse, whose suggestion and generous donation prompted us to fully consider this project. Three security cameras will be installed at the church in the upcoming weeks.

We've also spent time planning the church's bi-annual congregational meeting. This meeting will take place on Sunday, **May 22nd** immediately following an abbreviated church service. Breakfast will be served as well. Please plan to attend this meeting, where you'll see a preliminary budget proposal, hear reports from our standing committees at FCUU, and voting members will elect our slate of officers for the 2016-2017 church year.

Blessings to all,

Lynn Radford

For the May 22nd Bi Annual meeting, please submit reports into the office by May 15th



Free Hot Meal

Every Wednesday and Thursday from 4-5 at the Spanish-American Center at 122 Spruce St, Leominster enjoy a FREE HOT MEAL courtesy of Ginny's Food Pantry and the Spanish-American Center with a grant from Fallon Health.