



# It's not just about the money

**Rev. Dr. Susan Suchocki Brown**

Sermon November 6, 2016

It is really not all about the money, nor just about the money. Please and really, don't start by being turned off just because this is Pledge Commitment Sunday. I know, I know this is about the least favorite service topic of the year. It is amazing, how do I know that? Well after 24 sermons about how we are all needed to support First Church UU Leominster financially and after listening over 20 or so to sermons about the needs of a congregation I can read your mind. I'm a little slow. But seriously today isn't just about the money it's about us, our mission, and vision and projects and ideas and you and your generosity.

The very first act this morning is to acknowledge that generosity and then to give you all an opportunity to have some serious and real input into projects.

Everything that we do at First Church UU in Leominster cost us something, sometimes it is money or treasure, sometimes is the time and talents, everything given though is given deep out of our values and UU principles. What are our values? these are: Being an open, welcome, accepting, justice seeking, nurturing, service driven, community loving, group of gathered individuals who give a lot.

So today let's take just a moment to recognize you, each one of you.

Marilyn Paula and Judy tore down and put up new ceiling tiles in the kitchen. These tiles were a gift from the Ladies Benevolent Society members and Sheila. The last day of the tiles being put up as I came in to see them Paula was up on a

ladder cleaning the metal slats that the new tiles are resting on and Marilyn was still putting tiles in place and washing the lights.

The Ladies Benevolent members- raise your hands. Name them---- voted to give money for a sun screen in the office so that we can hold late afternoon meetings in there. plus, they did the baskets for the fair and numerous other good things.

How many of you serve on Committees? Yes- Parish Committee, Nominating Committee, Finance Committee, Growth and Vitality and Membership, Committee on Worship- Lauren, Mark, Stephanie and I were hard at work Thursday night coming up with service elements and thoughts. How about the Committee on Ministry, Bob Soucy, Sheila Bishop and Lynn Radford having difficult conversations about my upcoming retirement? And then the Committee to hire an Interim? Betsy, Claire, Lynn, Bill, Stephanie--- who else is on that one? And Sheila with the 15 West coffee house and Erica who volunteers and Sandra who often is there too.

David Vaillette who does greetings and announcements most Sundays, Rachel who is our Tiny Tots leader, Bill Coulter who sets up Coffee fellowship most Sundays and when he can't Marilyn and all pitch in like last week when he was ill. Marilyn Paula, Diane, Betsy, Chris got it done.

Lauren who is the volunteer Choir Director who plans music and plays all sorts of interesting instruments and Bob who plays guitar with her and the Choir during worship, and helps to manage our sound system. And Mickey who plays the drums and percussion and Claire, Sarah, and Chris when she can sing in the choir.

And Bob and Marie who cheer us up with their witty and funny comments on Facebook keeping us connected during the week and times apart. And Norman who serves on the Parish Committee and as a Trustee and Mike Trudel who with Joe Cardone keep an eye on our investments.

I don't want to forget, Chris Uhlig and the crew who take care of the newsletter. It was fun to watch many working together a couple of weeks ago to get that folded, sealed and sent. Diane, Marilyn, when she wasn't cleaning up after Soup with my grandson Kevin and Chris were chatting up a storm and getting those newsletters to you.

I should of course mention Ron Brown, my spouse whose creative visions for outside landscaping keeps us looking good and who makes a great vegetarian soup and who helps communicate with the AA groups to keep lines of caring and community open.

Ed Willrich takes 24 years of things done and inspired me to put it down on paper for prosperity too.

I see helping and volunteering from each person sitting out there. I know that I can call on anyone of you at any time and you will pitch in, in all the ways you can. This is what keeps us healthy and helping one another. That Judy can help Ed get here, and that 10 of us yesterday gathered at Ed's and helped him with a clean out project and 4 or more on Friday. Raise your hand if you helped. That we have a lift for Lynn to come up in and helpers to make sure the lift is operating right. Well this is the sharing of times, talents and treasures that makes us great. Each and every one gives in many ways. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. This is one of the most precious things about you that I am going to miss.

#### HAND OUT FLOWERS TO ALL.

And, also it is the sharing of financial resources that is going to help sustain us. This past year was exciting as we came together with a vision and mission, statement. That vision is a touchstone of where we want to be. It's not just about the money, though each thing we do does have a cost of some sort associated with it.

The Parish Committee that you elected in May is committed to congregational involvement. Today one of those ways is to give an opportunity for you to put your imprint on a few projects and to get a chance to explore how time, treasure and talent can be used.

There is a process Betsy and I talked about the other night that we want to engage you in.

We want to give you 3 possible projects. Possible I say because if you don't think they are good projects they won't happen, but we were tossing about project ideas to give you an opportunity to explore.

We believe that First Church UU of Leominster is known and can become known more for three specific values as printed and seen on our flags. Justice, Equality and Love.

The first project to develop and think falls under the value of Justice.

We wondering what it would be like to develop a 3-speaker series around this theme.

One could be our MLK Jr. coalition annual celebration.

There is a speaker engaged for this day but if you want to deal with the topic of developing a 3 Speaker series then this is for you to gather around.

The second value is Love.

The current opioid crisis is a situation that we might put under that theme.

The third project is under the theme of Equality. The project idea that came to our mind is surrounding the issue facing Transgender persons.

Now let me explain. We left the project ideas purposely vague. What we are hoping for is that you will develop a program around each of these themes and values. Think about all the related costs- I am using costs loosely. They will cost something- time, talent, treasures. Develop the project or something else if your group is so inclined. Include all things to make this happen. Who, what, how, what resources do we have here at church, what resources do we need to bring in, how to advertise and costs, how to publicize and make sure it is connected back to us being the best ever church community, in and for the community.

I am going to bring around pads of paper and I am going to give you a good amount of time to do this. 15 mins. minimum.

Have fun break into groups either by topic or by desire to get to know someone.