



FIRST CHURCH VISION

FIRST CHURCH UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST LEOMINSTER, MA

REVEREND DR. SUSAN SUCHOCKI BROWN, MINISTER

LAUREN SOUCY, Choir Director JESSE BLACKMAN, Musician

OCTOBER 2015

Ministerial Musings

In the last week of September, the United States was host to Pope Francis. He has been a breath of fresh air to the Roman Catholic community and his attention to issues that are current and important has been a delight to see. However, I was reminded that what he has been saying is not new stuff. I am not sure exactly of the date, I would have to go back and look it up but I remember that around 1917, a Papal Encyclical came out warning against the idolatry of Capitalism and calling the major industrialist to task for forgetting the poor and disadvantaged. A Papal Encyclical is a document that a Pope writes on a regular basis that addresses how the church and society intersect. This pope is just a bit more socially conscious than the more recent ones. Pope Francis has as his guiding principles the philosophy and value of speaking for those lesser advantaged. In Roman Catholic language this is known as "exercising options for the poor."

Also Pope Francis speaking and writing about climate and ecological protection for the world is something that Roman Catholics and other religions have been attending to for centuries. The most popular Roman Catholic figure of course is St. Francis of Assisi. We UU's have adopted much of his philosophy to ground us in our love for the earth. In particular, the blessing of the animals is often based around St. Francis's words and acts.

But we or at least I am thrilled that Pope Francis is visiting this country, talking to so many people and visiting. I am thrilled to be reminded that we are a religiously diverse nation. One of the most delightful aspects of ministry and it has been since I started in ministry is the interfaith aspect of serving.

At Andover Newton, I get the opportunity to see many denominations come together and find a common language that transcends individual beliefs, sometimes that even transcends denominational beliefs to search together for meaning, for purpose, for compassion and most of all to work together so that religion can be a force for good in a society that is stumbling.

Pope Francis may be bringing back long held and written about theological issues, but these issues are most relevant to today.

Let's celebrate our differences, honor the ability to call on history and tradition in positive ways that help us move forward with love and the ability to be transformed and transforming agents. As one of my favorite hymn #95 states, "There is More Love Somewhere... I'm going keep on 'til I find it. There is more love somewhere." (Side note, the words and music are an African American hymn, attributed to Biko, an African activist)

Enjoy life. *Rev. Susan*



Debra's Doodles

Exciting News!! First Parish UU will be entering into a process to discern our mission this year. I love this kind of stuff. I really think it helps us as a faith community to have the sorts of conversations that will lead us to our shared mission. Then when we get on the other side of the process we will have a mission statement that will not only guide our aspirations but also will guide our programming and our self-evaluations. Some people kind of freak out when I mention that we might consider doing self-evaluation in our committees, groups and programs. I think they freak because they remember a time when they had some crappy job with a crappy supervisor, who did not know how to use evaluations to congratulate people for doing a great job and guide, inspire them to do better. But, I am putting the cart before the horse. The Mission Taskforce will be hosting several events and facilitating other means in which we will seek to input from the congregation members and friends for our mission. I thought Mission Taskforce sounds like super heroes or at least a movie with Tom Cruz. Be on the lookout for the Taskforce so you can put in your two cents worth.

See ya in church, Debra



Sermons

October 4th: "Will the Circle Be Unbroken"

October 11th: "Guest at your Table Kick-off Sunday" and special Guest after the service to speak about asylum seekers.

Oct. 18th: "Let's talk Covenant" and the Bi-annual meeting with breakfast.

Oct. 25th: "What frightens us"? Halloween Costume Parade and pot luck.

What's happening on October 11th?

This Sunday Debra will bring the message which will include some history of Unitarian Universalist Service Committee and the *Guest at Your Table* program. Congregants will be invited to take home *Guest at Your Table* boxes in which they can contribute donations over the holidays that will be taken up and sent to this UUA sponsored program.

And Andover Newton Alumni, Isaac Saleem will be joining us after services to speak to us about an Asylum seekers aide program in which he works. Please stay after services to hear his plan and help us discern how we can aid with this program.



What makes your spirit soar?

On **October 18th**, during the Bi-annual meeting and the monthly congregational breakfast please be on the lookout for the Mission Taskforce. You will be able to find us by looking for the balloons. As a part of our efforts to gather ideas for the congregational mission we will be asking "What makes your spirit soar?" Take a moment to tell us fill out a card telling us what makes your spirit soar? For your efforts you will be rewarded with a balloon (if you want one). Do not release your balloon in the sanctuary or Rev. Susan will strangle Debra!



Halloween Celebration

On **October 25th**, the Annual Halloween Costume Parade and Contest will be held during church service with a Pot Luck to follow. Remember no scary, gruesome, violent costumes-> fun and for all ages. We need someone to help organize the Pot Luck, set up, clean up; if you can help, please contact Rev Susan.



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.

Mission Taskforce Drop-Box

In order to accommodate as many, learn and participation styles as possible the Mission Taskforce will be providing a drop box so that more introverted people can contribute their ideas to the mission discernment process—please write down your thoughts and feelings regarding the mission and place it in the box on the second floor landing.



Monthly Congregational Breakfast

On **October 18th**, there will be the monthly congregational breakfast held between the service and the Bi-Annual meeting. See Bill Coulter if you can assist.

WARRANT

***Bi-Annual Congregational Meeting to be held
Sunday, Oct. 18th immediately following
the Sunday service.***

This is to notify you of a congregational meeting, which will be held **Oct. 18, 2015** immediately following Sunday service in the downstairs hall of First Church Unitarian Universalist, 15 West Street, Leominster, Massachusetts. The primary purposes of this meeting will be to vote on the budget proposal and voting in a new Nominating Committee. There will be packets of status reports from the various church committees available.

Committee Reports Deadline

Oct 13th is the deadline to get reports into the office for inclusion in the Bi-annual meeting packet. Email your report to 1stchurchoffice@verizon.net

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



Membership Committee Meeting

The next meeting of the Membership Committee will be held on Wednesday, **October 21st** at 6:00 PM. Come early at 5:45 if you wish to change the sidewalk pulpit sign. We will be working towards creating a new mission statement for First Church. Cards will be written to members of First Church who we have missed seeing. New members are welcome to attend. Questions? See Claire at church.

On **Oct 7th** the Committee on Worship will meet at FCUU at 4:30 pm.

Dinner at the Old Mill

On **Oct 13th** join a gathering to go to dinner at 5:30 to the Old Mill. We are going to meet with whoever can and is interested. Some of us were thinking that Debra should not end her time with us in New England without seeing the Old Mill Restaurant in the autumn season. Call church and leave a yes or email Rev Susan and tell us you are coming so we can make a reservation.

Needs list

D cell batteries
Sanitary Hand cleanser

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.



Lady's Benevolent Society

The Lady Bee's next meeting will be held on Monday, **October 12th** at 7:00 PM in the Lady Bee's room at First Church. All women of the church are welcome. We have some October birthdays to celebrate so come and enjoy the refreshments. We will be working on the new mission statement for First Church. Everyone's ideas are welcome. Paula Murphy was elected to be the Lady Bee's new secretary. Lynne Lockhart will continue as corresponding secretary (her 20th year). Claire Griffiths will continue as President of the group. Hope to see you on the 12th. Questions? See Claire at church on Sunday.

Joys and Sorrows

We send our heartfelt concerns to Tony Lorenzan whose father passed away on Sept. 24th. May memories sustain Tony and his family.

If you want to submit to the October newsletter, please do so before **Oct. 15th**. Email Chris at cauhlig2002@yahoo.com or Lenore at [1stchurchoffice@ verizon net.](mailto:1stchurchoffice@verizon.net)



Adult R.E.

On **Oct 28th** Cakes for the Queen of Heaven Adult Re program resumes. All women are welcome to attend from 10 to 12am on Wednesdays. We will be focusing on the book, Ancient Mirrors of Womanhood by Merlin Stone.



Book Discussion Group

What: Flight of the Sparrow by Amy Belding Brown

Based on the compelling true narrative of Mary Rowlandson - her home destroyed, her children lost to her, she has been sold into the service of a powerful woman tribal leader and made a pawn in the ongoing bloody struggle between English settlers and native people. Flight of the Sparrow explores the real meanings of freedom, faith, and acceptance.

When: Friday, October 30, 2015 at 7:30 pm

Where: First Church



Birthdays

Mickey Guzman.....	Oct3
Leigh Pariseau.....	Oct. 3
Jennifer Giordano.....	Oct. 4
Joe Cardone.....	Oct.8
Clare Johnson.....	Oct.10
Hayden Greene.....	Oct.10
Fran Nadeau.....	Oct.17
Ann Drury.....	Oct.18
Diane O'Hare.....	Oct.23
Ed Wilrich.....	Oct. 30



Soup with Susan Oct. 21st

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. This will be the first one for the season.