



# FIRST CHURCH VISION

FIRST CHURCH UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST LEOMINSTER, MA

*REVEREND DR. SUSAN SUCHOCKI BROWN, MINISTER*

*LAUREN SOUCY, Choir Director JOE MAZZARELLA, Musician*

*September 2015*

It is 5:47 a.m. and there is a rainbow over my road. How can it not seem like my road when in a camping village of over 1000 sites there is not one other person awake to see this wondrous delight of beauty and display of nature's grace. What is that line from the bible, something about the fullness of creation, the wonder of God? I will have to look it up later but not now, not today, for today is a day for just being a part of this creation, just being and noticing.

It is the last full day of my vacation and there was no rain last night in spite of the ominous flashes of lightening off over the distant city. Half expecting to wake to the sound of raindrops, I began to stir when the red glare of the sunrise and the noise of the morning songbirds woke me. I rose to walk out on the road looking toward the sun coming up over the ocean. As I turned to go and put on the coffee when I saw the rainbow. A beautiful rainbow. An arc of red, yellow, green, blue, purple was there, and it was over my road and it bowed to me, it beckoned me, it got brighter as I faced it and I was full of gratitude and I was ready.

Ready to enjoy one more day of rest and relaxation, ready to enjoy one more morning of sun and birds, ready to start the day with praise and thanksgiving. Ready to contemplate the road which would later lead me back home, back to work, back to the demands of life and of my much loved parish ministry.

But today I would savor one more day sitting by the road and just being. The last weeks have been a time of refreshment, of peaceful reflection, of rest.

I remember the day a few weeks ago when I drove up the road to the campsite. This is the road, that for over 20 years I have been traveling to for a few days to rest, revive and relax. This is the road that will bring family and friends to visit me while I am here. This is the road that I will walk on in the morning and evenings to get exercise and to stretch out lazy muscles. This is the road that will carry me to the ocean on one side and the mouth of the harbor on the other. This is the road that I will sit beside to watch the sunsets. This is the road that I will cross to see the birds in the marsh. This is the road that will carry in other campers who will unload, set up and let out whoops of joy as they settle into a less frenzied life style. I know I let out those same sounds of joy as I drove up the road and set up the trailer.

The road I traveled to get to this place of peace and serenity didn't begin that way. As I entered the road to vacation I was holding a year's worth of tears and troubles, tragedy and challenges. Being a parish minister and a fire department Chaplain does that. Yet I know that is the road my life is supposed to follow. And I know too that I must find times of quiet beauty and of doing nothing and for the few weeks I have been here it has been a road allowing me to gain back the stamina and satisfaction and contentment I need to return.

Yes a rainbow at 5:47 a.m. over my road, a sign that nature is magnificent, a sign that I am on the right road, a sign that I am ready to go back to doing more than being, but first I want one more day of watching the road.

Enjoy life. *Rev. Susan*



## **Debra's Doodles**

I can't tell you how excited I am to start our work together this year at Leominster. Well, I could tell you but you would think I was a little koo-koo. Oh hell, you probably already think that. Rev. Susan and I have already met and started putting together the worship themes for the year. Then, a bunch of us got together for a Parrish committee retreat—everyone could not be there so we are doing it again! At any rate it looks like we have set some lofty goals for the coming year in our ministry together.

One of the things I keep asking myself about my ministry is, "Am I helping to change people's lives for the better?" For me that can look like a small thing—I am showing someone a different way to be religious. Or it can be a big thing—I am helping someone escape an abusive relationship. Together as a faith community this coming year I would like us all to be asking this question. How are we helping to change people's lives? Tall order, maybe, but if you look around I am sure you can see it happening and together we can find ways to broaden our influence in the community.

***See ya in church, Debra***

## **Bring in the New Church Year...**

There will be a theme based mission for the 2015-2016 Church year modified from [A House for Hope: The Promise of Progressive Religion for the Twenty-first Century](#) by Rev John Buehrens and Rev Rebecca Parker.

We will build and affirm a congregation and mission that promotes quality of life.

We will honor this covenant with our hearts, souls, minds,

We will connect with others to expand our circle into ever-widening ripples of influence for good.

Remember to bring back water from those sacred and special places for Water Communion. We will hold two of them, one on opening Sunday, **Sept. 13<sup>th</sup> and Sept. 20<sup>th</sup>**.

Rev Susan will be back in the office on Sept 9 and 10<sup>th</sup>.



## **Sermons**

**Sept 13<sup>th</sup>:** "Hagar's Well"

**Sept 20<sup>th</sup>:** "Optimism and UU's"

**Sept 27<sup>th</sup>:** Debra-> "Transformation"

**October 4<sup>th</sup>:** "Learning about Covenant" Bi-Annual meeting follows service.

## **Bi-Annual Meeting**

On **October 4**, there will be a Bi-Annual meeting; reports need to be submitted. These usually contain hopes and goals for the coming church year. The Parish Committee will be in touch with committee chairs and working group leaders.



## **Parish Committee Happenings**

Members of the PC met on August 21 to retreat and are meeting again on **September 4**. We will be working on creating a mission statement that ties in to the overall mission of First Church, and that keeps the Parish Committee tied into supporting and enriching the spirituality of all our members and friends.

***Lynn Radford***

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



## Worship Committee members being sought.

We would like to invite you to become part of the Worship Committee. Although we meet monthly usually around 5:00- 5:30, if that doesn't fit your schedule you are still invited to be an active participant. When we meet, we think about planning the worship services for the upcoming months. Often we pick readings and or make our opinions known around particular themes. Sometimes we discuss in more depth themes of a spiritual nature. We plan for the Sundays when we will have visitors in the pulpit or when Rev Susan or Deb our ministerial intern will be away. We work with Lauren our Choir Director to hear about possible music and we try to plan music that the congregation can sing, or learn, or enjoy hearing. We think about special holidays and special celebrations. We plan for the future and we try to get as many people as possible involved in worship. One of last year's goals yet realized is to put together a booklet of resources. A booklet of Chalice lightings, opening words, closing words, sermons from other sources, inspirational readings that we hope will peak your interest and make you want to participate on a Sunday morning.

We will also decide which Sunday's to hold a special collection when our non- pledge designated monies will be donated to a group whose mission we want to support through our giving. And speaking of the special collections that are set aside monthly, if you have a group or agency that you would like to see supported, or if you know that they provide speakers please let a member of the Worship Committee know. Though the Parish Committee designates the groups we will see that they get the recommendations. And we may follow up on inviting a guest speaker. So see Rev Susan, Deb Guthrie, Bob or Lauren Soucy or David Vaillette if you have any interest in getting connected to the Worship Committee. Our first meeting will be held on **September 9<sup>th</sup>** at 5:00.



## Membership Committee Meeting

The first meeting of the Membership Committee will be Wednesday, **September 16<sup>th</sup>** at 6:00 PM. The committee has been given readings for our group to read over the summer. The following books were suggested:

"A People So Bold" by John Gibb Millspaugh, editor - Theology and Ministry for Unitarian Universalists  
"A House for Hope" by John Buehrens and Rebecca Ann Parker - The Promise of Progressive Religion for the Twenty-first Century  
and "The Essential James Luther Adams"- Selected Essays and Addresses. Editor - George Kimmich Beach.

We will meet in the church office. Anyone interested in helping our committee may attend our meetings. Questions? See Claire.



There is the possibility of getting a bunch of tickets to a Red Sox game at a reduced group rate in early October if there is enough interest. If you are interested, please get in touch with Rev. Susan!



The Johnny Appleseed Fair is scheduled for **September 26<sup>th</sup>**. This all day event is a great way to be part of the wider community. Our presence is a reminder that John Chapman, Johnny Appleseed was not only born in Leominster but was christened at First Church in 1775.



## Lady's Benevolent Society

We are named officially the Lady's Benevolent Society of FCUU. The Lady Bee's is a woman's group at FCUU. We welcome all women to join us at our September meeting being held on Monday evening, **Sept. 21st** at 7:00 PM downstairs in the room next to the kitchen. This is the official "Lady Bee's" room in our church. In September we will have a short business meeting with election of officers. We will discuss our role helping FCUU at the Johnny Appleseed fair being held on West Street in late September. We will discuss making some baskets to display for our church at the fair. Chances will be sold during the fair. We hope people will help out that day. It is a festive occasion in Leominster and a great way to show people who we are.

After our business meeting refreshments will be served. Any people who decide to become members of our group may pay dues at one of our meetings this fall. The usual meeting date is the second Monday of each month unless the date falls on a holiday. Watch for our dates in the FCUU newsletter. We like to aid our church in fund raising events. We also have monthly meetings during which friendships are strengthened and enjoyment is had with fun activities. One activity some of our members enjoy is attending a monthly book discussion group. First meeting is Friday, September 25th. The book being discussed is "The Invisible Thread". Questions? See Claire at church.

## Joys and Sorrows

Scott Suchocki, Rev Susan's eldest son turns 50 on September 27. Rev plans to visit him in California during his birthday. And, Eric and Andrea Suchocki, the son and daughter in law of Rev will celebrate their 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary this September 15

Over the summer we learned of the death of Debbra Ward. Deb was a past Office Manager and

was vitally important to updating records and setting up streamlined orders of service. More importantly she was dedicated to the church, its members, its students and was always upbeat and helpful. She worked closely with our Student ministers during Rev Susan's very first Sabbatical and without her it would not have gone as smoothly. On behalf of the congregation Rev Susan sent our sympathies to her family members.

Our most favorite and wonderful musician will not be coming back in September. Joe Mazzarella accepted an offer to a position that pays more and gives him more responsibility. He told us he hated to leave and Rev Susan told him we also felt the same. He has made a couple of recommendations of names for us, which we will be following up on. So good luck Joe and God speed. You will be sorely missed come back and visit if you can.

Chelsea Boutwell, daughter of former member David Boutwell is marrying on Saturday Oct 3<sup>rd</sup>. Chelsea now lives in Florida and following her wedding will return there.

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



## Book Discussion Group

**What:** An Invisible Thread by Laura Schroff and Alex Tresniowski

An Invisible Thread tells of the life-long friendship between a busy sales executive and a homeless, eleven-year-old panhandler on the street, and how both of their lives were changed by what began as one small gesture of kindness.

**When:** Friday, September 25, 2015 at 7:30 pm  
**Where:** First Church