

Upcoming Worship Dates and Sermon Topics

March 5th: “Congregations and Baseball Teams”

March 12th: Guest Minister Rev. Nell Newton; (Sermon Title) “Pines, Ashes, Seedlings”

March 19th: “Eostara and Spring ritual” (brunch following service)

March 26th: “New Ways of Being”



Notes from the Parish Committee

Our February meeting consisted of reporting on the transitional ministry position, reviewing the by-laws and building use policy, discussing some building maintenance issues. There was a report from the Buildings and Grounds Committee about a sizeable plumbing issue directly related to external groups using the building. The Parish Committee responded by sending a letter to all the groups using the building to remind them of basic requirements for using the building.

We also brainstormed what we as a Parish Committee wanted to accomplish as well as what we would like to see for the Congregation as a whole. Again building issues came up and we discussed what it would take for us to work on fixing the bell tower. Weather damage and age is taking its toll on the structure and we must begin planning now for it to be fixed. The Buildings and Grounds Committee will contact the contractor who normally cares for the building to get a report and an assessment of the job. We hope to get a quote soon. This will be a big job and we will look into ways of funding including grants for historic buildings and fundraising activities.

If anyone has any thoughts around how we can begin to work on the bell tower, please see any member of the Parish or Buildings and Grounds Committees

Many thanks, Betsy

Transitional Ministry Update

After interviewing the candidates, we made an offer to one but was graciously turned down. The candidate wished to pursue another opportunity. The search committee didn't feel that the others were a good match for our congregation at this time and recommended that we re-open the search in March for a late August/September start date. This is the normal cycle for ministers seeking positions and churches seeking ministers. Many would be candidates having already been in contracts through the end of the church year would be looking to make a career move at that time and be looking in early spring for part-time minister job postings. It was unfortunate that we were looking in mid church year but then again fortunate to have gone through the search and interview process already. The search committee learned a lot about the UUA search process even for part-time ministry and we are much more prepared for the spring schedule of posting and interviewing.

Building Use

Please continue to notify Lenore Scully if you are using the building for any purpose. She is responsible for the building usage management and needs to know when and if the building is being used. The Parish Committee have worked on revamping building use policies and procedures. If you have any questions or issues you wish to have addressed about the building be in touch with Betsy Moran and/or any member of the Parish Committee and Lenore Scully in the office. If there are maintenance issues that need to be addressed put a note in the office or communicate with Betsy. It is crucial that the office be informed of **any and all needs**. They should be in writing to Lenore Scully; she will then make decisions and be in communication with Betsy Moran as determined.

Pledges

If you have not returned your pledge form please do so **as soon as possible** so that the Parish Committee can have an accurate record for the new year.

LUUnch Box Soup

March 15, 2017

Please join us on **March 15th** for the LUUnchBox Soup from 12 – 1pm. There will be soup, bread and dessert and plenty of conversation and friendly fellowship. All are welcome. Invite your neighbors and friends to come with you.

UUA Common Read

2016-2017



The story embeds the current movement in the larger story of racial and economic justice movements since the Civil War.

He demonstrates his conviction that justice movements are born in response to local experiences of larger injustices and that such movements thrive only when those involved do the hard work of coalition building.

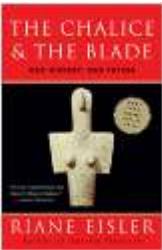


Changes in Our Newsletter

In the interest of Going Green and reducing our dependency on paper we would like to transfer over to a primarily emailed newsletter. Many people currently receive a paper copy and an emailed version. We realize that several current newsletter recipients do not have or are uncomfortable with email. For these people, we will print a limited number of hardcopies for postal mail. Right now we physically print and mail several hundred paper copies. We could reduce our carbon footprint and save money by going to an electronic version. In addition, we could enhance our recently revamped newsletter with more color pictures and photos. We would also not be constrained by size of the newsletter and be able to offer more relevant content. There are many benefits of going primarily to email. We are targeting the start of the new church year in September as the start of the emailed newsletter.

If you need to receive a hardcopy of the newsletter, please call the office (978 537-0310) and let us know. If you wish to receive the newsletter via email and don't already, please email the office at 1stchurchoffice@verizon.net to let us know.

Adult Religious Education



Our adult religious education class, Cakes for the Queen of Heaven, will meet on **March 1st** from 10:00 AM to noon. This group is open to all women; we will continue to discuss chapters 3 and 4 of the classic 1987 book, *The Chalice and The Blade* by Riane Eisler. If you have any questions or are thinking of participating, please contact Diane O'Hare.

Ladies Benevolent Society

The Lady Bee's will be meeting on Monday, **March 13th** at 7:00PM in the Lady Bee's room at First Church. All women friends and members of First Church Leominster are welcome to attend. Come and make new friends and learn how to help our church. Refreshments will be served. Donations for the church's food pantry will be collected from our attendees



Growth & Vitality/Membership

The Growth and Vitality/Membership meeting will be held on Tuesday, **March 14th** at 5:15 PM in the office of First Church in Leominster. We have a small group who attend each month. More people are welcome to join. Come for one or two meetings to learn what we are working on. Questions? See Claire after services on Sunday.



Book Discussion Group

What: Good Harbor by Anita Diamant

Good Harbor is the long stretch of Cape Ann beach where two women friends walk and talk, sharing their personal histories and learning life's lessons from each other. Kathleen Levine, a longtime resident of Gloucester, Massachusetts, is maternal and steady, a devoted children's librarian, a convert to Judaism, and mother to two grown sons. When her serene life is thrown into turmoil by a diagnosis of breast cancer at fifty-nine, painful past secrets emerge and she desperately needs a friend. Forty-two-year-old Joyce Tabachnik is a sharp-witted freelance writer who is also at a fragile point in her life. She's come to Gloucester to follow her literary aspirations, but realizes that her husband and young daughter are becoming increasingly distant. Together, Kathleen and Joyce forge a once-in-a-lifetime bond and help each other to confront scars left by old emotional wounds.

When: Friday, **March 24th** at 7:30 pm

Where: First Church office



Birthdays

David Vaillette.....March 9
Cicely Carter.....March 14
Rachel Ardinger.....March 24
Tristan Shapiro.....March 29

Dates to Remember at a Glance

↻ March ↻

Mar 1st: Buildings and Grounds Committee at the Murphy's 5:30

Mar 1st: Adult Religious Education

Mar 13th: Lady B's at 7:00

Mar 14th: Growth and Vitality/
Membership Committee at church at 5:00.

Mar 15th: LUUnch Box Soup at 12:00

Mar 15th: Parish Committee at 6:30

Mar 24th: Book Discussion Group

Wish List

Napkins

Large Microfiber Mop Head

Glass Cleaner

Toilet Bowl Cleaner

Regular Pine Sol or Other Cleaner

Torch Lighters

Dish Soap (for upstairs and downstairs)

Socks for Homeless (all sizes)

Coffee (both regular and decaf)

Food for Homeless (no kitchen required)

Large Cans of Cocoa

Butter

All Donations Are Greatly Appreciated!!

"The Church with the Lighted Window"

The month of February was dedicated by Ruth Weeks In Loving Memory of Wil-mot L. Weeks and Bill Weeks.

We apologize for this late entry.

Please contact the office if interested in reserving; it will be displayed in the order of service and in the newsletter.

In Like A Lion, Out Like A Lamb

by Lorie Hill

March roars in like a lion

So fierce,

The wind so cold,

It seems to pierce.

The month rolls on
And Spring draws near,
And March goes out
Like a lamb so dear.

Oestara, the pagan name for the Spring Equinox

Ostara (or Eostra) is an Anglo-Saxon goddess who represented dawn, and her name derives from the Germanic word for "east." She's depicted as a young woman surrounded in light and budding trees and flowers. The Ostara festival falls on the day of the equinox, the day when light and dark are equal. It also marks the time when more light will begin to come in, days will be longer, nights shorter and food will be more abundant. At a time when people had to store food to last the long harsh winters, this festival was particularly anticipated as a time of renewed hope. Inspired by the equinox where light and dark of the physical day are equal, Ostara is a time to celebrate life and balance. On this occasion it was believed that taking water at dawn from springs and drinking them would restore balance and be beneficial for a body. Villages celebrated with bonfires and often ate the remaining ham that had been stored up over the winter. With the promise of a new beginning in the fresh blossoms in trees and green sprouts of bulbs from the ground, new nourishment was available and a sense of possibility restored

Read more at <http://www.beliefnet.com/faiths/pagan-and-earth-based/the-ostara-holiday.aspx#ly9efbFUzqZvdUCM.99>

Modern Celebrations

This is a good time of year to start your seedlings. If you grow an herb garden, start getting the soil ready for late spring plantings. Celebrate the balance of light and dark as the sun begins to tip the scales, and the return of new growth is near.

Many modern Pagans celebrate Ostara as a time of renewal and rebirth. Take some time to celebrate the new life that surrounds you in nature -- walk in park, lay in the grass, hike through a forest. As you do so, observe all the new things beginning around you -- plants, flowers, insects, birds. Meditate upon the ever-moving Wheel of the Year, and celebrate the change of seasons.

Garden Blessing:

*The earth is cool and dark,
and far below, new life begins.
May the soil be blessed with fertility and abundance,
with rains of life-giving water,
with the heat of the sun,
with the energy of the raw earth.
May the soil be blessed
as the womb of the land becomes full and fruitful
to bring forth the garden anew.*