



# First Church Vision

May 2018

**Reverend Bruce Taylor**, Minister

**Jesse Blackman**, Musician

**Reverend Dr. Susan Suchocki Brown**, Minister Emerita

*Working toward a peaceful and just world, guided by Love*

## From Our Minister

As with many denominations, Unitarian Universalists create centers for education and spiritual growth in places of great beauty. Here in New England we are blessed with Ferry Beach, Star Island, and Rowe Center. It's at Rowe Center, in the hill country of Western Massachusetts, that I've been completing a two year program in Spiritual Guidance.

Spiritual guidance is a process through which people and groups reflect on their experiences with in life's greater pattern, and discern a way forward in the midst of change. A spiritual guide serves as an *Anam Cara*, or soul companion, in this important work, which has been known as spiritual direction in traditional Christian circles. The spiritual guidance taught at Rowe draws on teachings from many sources including Buddhism, Christianity, shamanic practice and dreamwork (the subject of our May 27 Sunday service).



Some Unitarian Universalists don't like to speak in terms of religion but spirituality, which tends to overflow the traditional boundaries of any religion. It's more fluid, and also harder to pin down. What do we mean by spirituality? Typically this refers to something deeper and wider than our individual lives. Like water to a fish or air to a bird, it's that in which we live and move and have our being. It provides a context for life's meaning and purpose. It can also provide a sense of direction.

In *Your Soul's Compass: What Is Spiritual Guidance?*, authors Joan Borysenko and Gordon Dveirin provide the vivid image of a migrating bird on a long journey. In the brain of the bird, there are cells that respond like tiny compasses to the Earth's magnetic pull. This allows allow the bird to orient itself in relation to magnetic North. The bird can keep track of where it's going, even as it responds to the winds that shift from day to day and moment to moment. The pull of the spirit is like that.

As individuals and as a faith community, our spirituality provides an orientation to life, even as we are constantly moving and responding to the shifting winds, in a world that is constantly changing.

The bird's internal compass can be thrown off by metallic deposits in the ground. The human spiritual compass can be thrown off as well, typically by mistaking a lesser thing for a greater thing, e.g.: the smaller ego for the deeper self; the status quo for the larger purpose.

Where is the bird going? Where are we going? The simplest answer is home: home to the wisdom that is our birthright; home to the dream which is being continually renewed, realized, and lived into existence.

In faith,

Rev. Bruce Taylor



## Upcoming Worship Dates and Sermon Topics



**May 6th:** "I believe?"

**May 13th:** "What Does 'Free Church' Mean to You?", Rev. Bruce Taylor

**May 20th:** "Voices of Latinx Lives" Spring Bi-annual meeting is May 20th following the service.

**May 27th:** "Tapping Into the Wisdom of Our Dreams", Rev. Bruce Taylor

## Notes from the Parish Committee



Hello Everyone,

First Church will be having our Spring Bi-Annual meeting on **May 20<sup>th</sup>** following the service. I ask in advance that you make all efforts to attend this important meeting.

Aside from hearing Committee and Team reports and electing several church officers, we need to have some frank discussions about the direction of First Church for the future. Attendance is down and we are running a skeleton crew of dedicated volunteers to make the church operate in the manner to which we are accustomed.

We have chosen to perform janitorial services ourselves instead of employing someone from the outside to save funds for much needed maintenance. These services are falling to a frighteningly few number of volunteers. With all the building use we experience, we have a substantial number of people passing through our building on a daily and weekly basis. We host 22 weekly events from recovery meetings to yoga to cooking classes. This doesn't count the weekend use of our function hall. It is not unreasonable that 500-700 plus people pass through our building on a weekly basis. It is a significant task to maintain the building properly with that amount of foot traffic.

Commensurate with that is the substantial use of our aging infrastructure. We are experience more frequent calls for what used to be infrequent routine repairs. We are working with the groups who meet in our spaces to have more care and respect for our 115 year old building.

We also need to discuss the direction we want to take as a worship community. How do we want to be together as a faith community? What do we envision ourselves to be and where do we want to go in the future? We are much like a new church finding our way in the new reality and having joys and concerns along the way. We need to know what we want to give and get out of our faith community; therefore we need to hear your voices at the meeting on **May 20<sup>th</sup>**. Please make it a priority to attend.

Until next time..... Betsy

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**"What Does 'Free Church' Mean to You?"**

**May 13th**

**Rev. Bruce Taylor**

Unitarian Universalism is part of a larger, free-church tradition. As such we are self-governing and self-supporting. What does it mean to be a free church? What is this freedom to which we aspire, and how does it transform lives?

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**"Tapping Into the Wisdom of Our Dreams"**

**May 27th**

**Rev. Bruce Taylor**

For many centuries and in many cultures, dreams have served as a source of spiritual guidance and healing. What are dreams, what kind of truth do they contain, and how can we benefit from them in our waking life?

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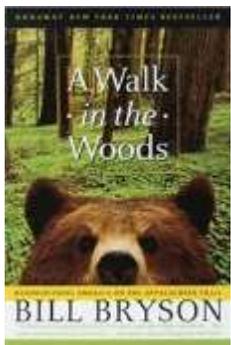
## **May 20 Meeting Reports**

We ask that all committee reports be in to the office by email by **May 10<sup>th</sup>** in order to prepare packets for the bi-annual congregational meeting on May 20th.

## Help Needed!

If you enjoy walking into a clean, tidy church every Sunday, please think carefully about how this comes to be. We no longer have a paid staff janitorial position as of the end of last calendar year. Since that time, the majority of janitorial work has been done by two extremely hard working volunteers, aided at times by the efforts of one or two other individuals. This is a bigger task than it appears because our building is host to groups that hold 22 weekly meetings at the church. The foot traffic through the building is high!

**WE NEED YOUR HELP.** If you could spare even 1-2 hours per week, at a time that suits you best to help with routine cleanup and checking, it would be extremely helpful. Helping in this way shows that the congregation cares about First Church, and is willing to do what it takes to keep things going. We are a community, and as such we must take responsibility to each other to help when needed. It is not fair that a few should shoulder a responsibility when the benefits are joined by the many. Stewardship of the church and its facilities is the shared responsibility of all members. Please consider helping out. If you can do so, please speak with Stephanie Trudel or Marilyn Murphy.



**May Book Group meeting Friday May 25, 2018  
at 7:30pm in church office**

**A Walk in the Woods: Rediscovering America on  
the Appalachian Trail by Bill Bryson**

Bryson shares his experiences hiking the Appalachian Trail with a childhood friend. The two encounter eccentric characters, a blizzard, getting lost, and rude yuppies along the way.



## **Ladies Benevolent Society**

The Lady Bee's will be meeting on Monday **May 14th** at 7:00 pm at First Church. During this meeting, we will be making blankets for the Linus Project! So bring in any crocheted, knitted or quilted afghan project that you currently working on that you would like to donate. The sizes can vary from 36" square to twin bed size although the most favorite size is 40 by 60". There will be materials present for the group to make a fleece knotted edge blanket. We will also be celebrating May birthdays of our members. Questions? Please contact Chris at (978) 534-6488 or see Betsy at church on Sunday.

## **First Church Unitarian Universalist Mission Statement**

We are an open and accepting community working for justice and equality for all through nurturing relationships and providing service to each other and in the greater community

### **Contacts:**

**First Church Unitarian Universalist**  
15 West Street  
Leominster MA 01453  
(978) 537-0310  
[www.firstchurchuu.org](http://www.firstchurchuu.org)

**Minister:** Rev. Bruce C. Taylor  
[minister@firstchurchuu.org](mailto:minister@firstchurchuu.org)

**Administrator:** Lenore Scully  
[1stchurchoffice@verizon.net](mailto:1stchurchoffice@verizon.net)

**Newsletter:** Chris Uhlig  
[cauhlig2002@yahoo.com](mailto:cauhlig2002@yahoo.com)

**Web/Emailing:** Betsy Moran  
[bam36uu@gmail.com](mailto:bam36uu@gmail.com)

## **Attention!!**

### **Newsletter via E-Mail**

We are no longer doing a hardcopy bulk mailing. If you would like to continue receiving a copy or know someone who would like a copy, please contact the office and let us know your email address. Contact Lenore at [1stchurchoffice@verizon.net](mailto:1stchurchoffice@verizon.net) Subject: add to newsletter email

If you need a hard copy please call the office and give Lenore your address.

### **Newsletter Contributions**

If you want to contribute anything for June's newsletter, please send it to [cauhlig2002@yahoo.com](mailto:cauhlig2002@yahoo.com) by **May 18th**.

## Minister Availability and Office Hours

I respond promptly to emails and cell phone messages (603-233-3554) between 9:00am and 9:00pm, Tuesday through Sunday. (Monday is my Sabbath). For pastoral emergencies, please call me anytime and I will respond as soon as I can.

I will be in the office on the following days this month:

Wednesdays 5/2, 5/9, 5/16, 5/23 and 5/30 from 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

Thursdays 5/3, 5/10, 5/17, 5/24 and 5/31 from 3:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M.

Since these hours may change due to unforeseen circumstances, I encourage you to call ahead.

## Dates to Remember at a Glance

### May

**May 1:** Worship Committee at 7:00pm

**May 13:** Lay-Led Worship Training, part three at 12:15pm

**May 14:** Lady B's meeting at 7:00pm

**May 16:** LUUnch Box at 12:00pm

**May 17:** Parish Committee at 6:30pm

**May 24:** Membership Committee at 6:00pm

**May 25:** Book Discussion Group at 7:30pm  
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### Sharing the Collection Plate For May

On **May 13th**, any cash that is collected separate of designated pledge money goes towards the *Promise and Practice Campaign* goal of \$370 by June 30 2018



### May 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



### Community LUUnch Box May 16, 2018

Please join us on **May 16th** for the LUUnchBox from 12 - 1pm. There will be soup, bread, dessert and plenty of conversation and friendly fellowship. 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 20, 2018 immediately following the Sunday service** in the sanctuary of First Church Unitarian Universalist, 15 West Street, Leominster, Massachusetts. The primary purposes of this meeting will be to see a preliminary budget proposal, hear reports from our standing committees at FCUU, voting members will elect our slate of officers for the 2018-2019 church year and a frank discussions about the direction of First Church for the future. There will be packets of status reports from the various church committees available.

### Grains and Greens Food Pantry Benefits from Hannaford Helps Reusable Bag Program in May



We are elated to share that Grains and Greens food pantry has been chosen as the latest beneficiary of the Hannaford Helps Reusable Bag program! Every time the reusable Fight Hunger bag is purchased at either Leominster Hannaford at 118 Lancaster St. or Leominster Twin-City Plaza Hannaford at 927 Merriam Ave. during the month of May 2018, we receive a \$ 1 donation. Please visit these Hannaford stores and buy these handy bags!

### Creating Vibrant, Lay-Led Worship Services - Part Three Sunday, May 13 at 12:15 in the Sanctuary



Please attend this training if you're interested in leading a worship service, solo or in collaboration with other church members, or if you're just plain curious!

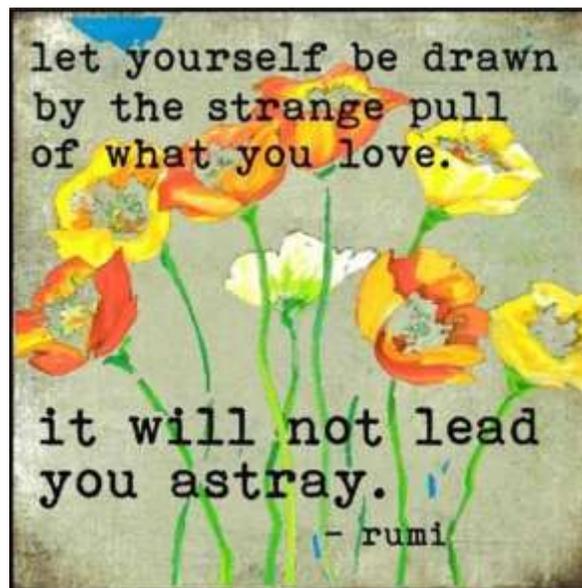
This session will focus on the vocal delivery of readings and sermons, including mental preparation, practices of presence, physical warmups, and mechanics of breathing and articulation.

Future sessions of this series (to be scheduled in the fall) will include opportunities to deliver and receive feedback on sermon content, and to explore the arts of preaching without a script.

## Easter 2018



First Church Vision Wayside Pulpit



Lady B's April Clean-up Evening

