



First Church Vision

December 2018

Working toward a peaceful and just world, guided by Love

From Our Minister

For me, the transition time between late afternoon and early evening is a time for prayer. The same is true for the time of overlap between late fall and early winter. The year's dusk is a sacred time for me. The coming darkness brings with it a sense of quiet that draws me inward.

The week before Thanksgiving we had an early snowfall, which turned to drizzle as the temperature rose. I considered whether to get out my cross-country skis and head to my favorite hiking trails in Hollis, New Hampshire. A part of me kept asking: is it fall, or is it winter? The leaves weren't all down, yet the winter drizzle penetrated my bones. I postponed. The following afternoon I went out to the woods, and followed in the tracks of others. As night fell, I stopped and wrote this.



Hollis, New Hampshire, Late-November

Ask questions like these, and you begin to let go,
Walking at dusk.
The low sun peeks out from the clouds,
one last time.
Rays of sun draw my attention away from my thoughts
to the moist ground beneath my feet.
Deer hoof prints mingle with foot prints
sinking down to reveal the water beneath the snow.
I taste the cool damp of the forest through my fingers,
the exposed skin of my neck.
A brave skier came through here yesterday when I was inside shivering,
traced a path for me to follow, circumventing puddles.
Some places the leaves are so thick,
snow is the exception.
What was the wind that blew these oak leaves down?
Rain-laden wind, midnight gale – who was here, watching?

In faith,

Rev. Bruce Taylor



Shared Ministry Team

The Rev. Bruce Taylor (Rev. Taylor), Minister

Betsy Moran: Congregation President and Parish Committee Chair

Worship Coordinator: Stephanie Trudel

Minister Emerita:

The Rev. Dr. Susan Suchocki Brown

Upcoming Worship Dates and Sermon Topics



- Dec. 2nd** "What Are We Waiting For?", Rev. Taylor
Dec. 9th: "Darkness in the Season of Light"
Dec. 16th: "Walking With You Is My Prayer", Rev. Taylor.
Dec. 23rd: "The Night, Night Before Christmas"
Dec. 24th: Christmas Eve Service, Rev. Taylor 6 pm
Dec. 30th: "The Labyrinth"

Notes from the Parish Committee



Happy December! Where has the year gone??

The Parish Committee agenda for November had a large portion devoted to considering everything we need to think about in going to a lay led model of congregational management. There are so many things to think of and I'm sure we will miss some of them. If anyone has a question like "How would we handle this without a minister?" please send the question along to the PC so we can make sure it is on our list.

Rev. Taylor is also reaching out to our New England UUA partner, Karen Bellavance-Grace for guidance and to find out about other congregations in the New England region and, I hope, close to us so we can visit and see how they operate. We hope to have more information on this soon.

I mentioned covenant in one of my previous writings. A written covenant is a document of our commitment to one another and how we will be in relation to one another. This is something that the Parish Committee feels is needed for our transition to lay led.

We will have a task force to work on gathering information from members of the congregation much like we did when we drafted our Mission and Vision Statements. We are looking for anyone who is interested in being part of this project. We will start in January and finish late April/early May before the Spring business meeting. At the meeting, the task force will present a draft of our congregational covenant to the congregation for approval or further revision.

This is an agreement between all of us and about how our congregation will operate going forward. We need to hear from all of you. So please join the task force if you can or when asked to share your thoughts on our covenant, you take part by making your voice heard.

Many thanks and Happy Holidays from the PC!
Until next time.....

"What Are We Waiting For?"

Dec. 2nd
Rev. Taylor

Advent is the season of hope. As Mary was expecting her child, the people of Israel were waiting for a new leader to rise up, to put an end to oppression and usher in an era of peace. Today's sermon considers this perennial hope and its deep connection to the holiday season.

"Walking With You Is My Prayer"

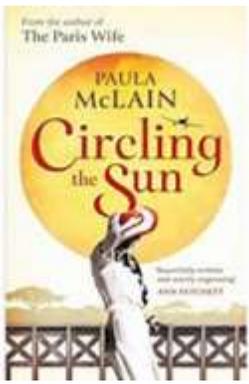
Dec. 16th
Rev. Taylor

This faith community is more than a collection of people. It's a religious body, created and sustained by covenant. Your covenant is more than a spoken formula. It's your DNA, providing continuity from one generation to the next. Today's service explores the nature and importance of a covenant for us as a UU congregation.



The Church with the **Lighted Window**

With the upcoming holidays many of us try to find unique and special ways to remember a loved one's memory, birthday, anniversary, or celebration of a special occasion. One thoughtful way is to honor them by lighting the church's beautiful stain glass window on West St.; the dedication will be noted in the order of service and in the newsletter. Please contact the office if interested in reserving. We are requesting a small donation fee of \$40.00 for a month.



The book group will not be meeting in December, however they will be reviewing the Circling the Sun by Paula McLain on Jan. 25th, 2019.



The Most Peaceful Night of the Year
Christmas Concert
With
Mark Marquis and Friends
December 14th & 15th
(snow date Sunday 16th)
7:00pm
\$10.00 at door



1st Church Wish List

SOAP FOR BATHROOMS
MOP HEADS
TOILET BOWL CLEANER
SPRAY DISINFECTANT CLEANER
DISH SOAP (FOR UPSTAIRS AND DOWNSTAIRS)
FOOD FOR HOMELESS (NO KITCHEN REQUIRED)
HAND SANITIZER
TISSUES

All Donations Are Greatly Appreciated !!



On Dec. 2nd through Dec. 10th,
we wish *Happy Hanukkah* to all those who celebrate it.

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

Minister: Rev. Bruce C. Taylor
minister@firstchurchuu.org

Administrator: Lenore Scully
1stchurchoffice@verizon.net

Newsletter: Chris Uhlig
cauhlig2002@yahoo.com

Web/Emailing: Betsy Moran
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 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 January's newsletter, please send it to cauhlig2002@yahoo.com by

December 18th.

Minister's Availability and Office Hours

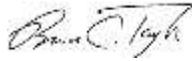
I respond promptly to emails and cell phone messages (603-233-3554) between 9:00am and 9:00pm, Tuesday through Sunday. (Monday is my Sabbath). For pastoral emergencies, please call me anytime and I will respond as soon as I can.

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

Wednesdays (Dec. 5, Dec. 12, Dec. 19, Dec. 26) from 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

Thursdays (Dec. 6, Dec. 13, Dec. 20, Dec. 27) from 3:00 to 6:00 P.M.

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



Rev. Bruce Taylor



Ladies Benevolent Society

We will meet on **December 10th** at 6pm at an offsite location for our annual Holiday dinner. Questions? Please contact Chris at cauhlig2002@yahoo.com or see Betsy at church on Sunday.

We had a table at the Winter Stroll. We hope you stopped by and did a little holiday shopping. There were tealight snowmen and reindeer, cocoa reindeer and hand painted lighted bottles for sale. We have continued to sell these items after church services during coffee hour. We also had two raffles for a "train cake" and a lottery basket.



Poinsettias and Cyclamens for Sale

The Lady's will be having a fundraiser these holiday months selling Cyclamens and Poinsettias in 4", 6" or 8" pots in all colors. The prices are as follows:

4" Poinsettia \$5	4" Cyclamen \$5
6" Poinsettia \$10	6" Cyclamen \$10
8" Double Poinsettia \$21	

The deadline to order is on **Dec. 9th**. We will decorate the church with the flowers for Dec.16th and people can take them home also on that date. There will be an order sheet available at Sunday services or you can place an order by contacting Chris Uhlig, Diane O'Hare or Marilyn Murphy.

Dates to Remember

December

Dec. 1st: Winter Stroll, 3-5pm

Dec. 9th: Deadline for Ordering Poinsettia and Cyclamen Plants

Dec. 10th: Lady B's Holiday party 6pm

Dec. 13th: Membership Committee meeting 6pm

Dec. 14th and 15th: Christmas Concert With Mark Marquis and Friends

Dec. 20th: PC Meeting 6:30pm

Dec. 24th: Christmas Eve Service, 6 pm and Choir Meets at 4:45pm



December Birthdays

Connor Greene.....	Dec. 8
Mary Pariseau.....	Dec.9
Rick Flammia.....	Dec.10
Wendy Aldrich.....	Dec. 15
Pat Robinson.....	Dec. 20
Page Winterberg.....	Dec. 27
Lynn Radford.....	Dec.29

"You give but little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give."

-Khalil Gibran, *The Prophet*



Bill, Paula, Marilyn and Betsy having fun at Dec. 1st Winter Stroll