



First Church Vision

October 2018

Working toward a peaceful and just world, guided by Love

From Our Minister

My ministry contract with you includes both vacation and study time. I consider this time to be an important gift. It's a privilege for me to use it well, not only to replenish my energy for the coming year, but to stand back and consolidate what I've learned about this congregation, explore new sermon themes and get a head start on the necessary reading. Unfortunately, as this summer drew to a close, I found myself in the middle of a perfect storm: multiple crises, involving family and friends.

A wise person (surely must have) once said, "Stuff happens – and sometimes, all the stuff happens all at once". When it does, the result can be overwhelming. So it was for me in September, as I became one of the casualties in that storm. Suffice it to say, I was worried sick.

I was worried sick, but I'm better now, and coming up to speed. So should it be for all of you who read this newsletter. So it should be for any of you who are paralyzed by fear or indecision. My focus this year will be on helping you to come to terms with the necessary changes which have been articulated so powerfully by the leaders in whom you have entrusted authority. We have spoken from the pulpit, and through this newsletter, and most significantly, through our actions.

It's time to fish or cut bait, as the polite saying goes. In the coming year, every complaint will be heard as an opportunity for you to describe a better way to live out our commitments. Every criticism will be treated as a request to participate in the solution. We will navigate these changes together, with our eyes open. Moving forward, I invite you to remember these words attributed to John Murray, the great Universalist:

*Give the people something of your new vision. You may possess a small light, but uncover it, let it shine. Use it in order to bring more light and understanding to the hearts and minds of women and men. **Give them not hell, but hope and courage.** Preach kindness and everlasting love.*

Let's take these words to heart, as we move ahead into the future we are creating, guided by our vision and our covenant.

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



- Oct. 7th:** “Benefits of Meditation”
- Oct. 14th:** “Stone Soup, Three Ways”
- Oct. 21st:** “Bringing the Right Maps”, Rev. Taylor
- Oct. 28th:** To be determined



Notes from the Parish Committee

In September, we officially welcomed Christi Grausam onto the PC and welcomed the “assistant” recording secretary, Grace Coulter, who provided an ample amount of energy to

our first meeting of the Church year.

We reviewed our current financial status from treasurer, Mark Moran and received an update on much needed building maintenance which occurred over the summer months. Adjacent to the budget discussion and at the Buildings and Grounds Committee recommendation, we reviewed a proposed building use donation schedule based on the length of time the building, primarily the downstairs hall, will be used for an event and the number of people expected to attend the event. We adjusted this schedule to be more in line with the donations received by comparable venues nearby. The recommendation was accepted by the PC and will be part of the building use application policy we have in effect.

We received a report from Stephanie Trudel on social justice activities taking place and recommendations of other projects for First Church to become involved in. Currently there are First Church members and friends involved in the campaign on the Massachusetts ballot question 3 on transgender rights. The First Church team are part of a larger educational outreach effort sponsored by Freedom for All Massachusetts. In addition, we heard the results of short informal survey which occurred at our August luncheon of possible projects of interest to First Church. The Trevor Project for LGBTQ youths and Southern Poverty Law Center garnered interest from members participating in the survey.

We set the date for the Fall Congregational Biannual Meeting for **October 14** to discuss the 2019 budget and to continue our discussions around First Church in transition. It is very important that all voting members attend to have your voices heard about the future directions of First Church.

Our next scheduled meeting of the parish committee will be one week earlier than usual on **October 11**, so we have an opportunity to meet as a committee prior to the biannual congregational meeting.

As always, questions and comments on the goings on of the PC are always welcome.

Until next time.....

“Bringing the Right Maps”

Oct. 21st
Rev. Taylor

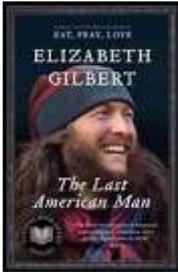
Traveling in Ireland, my GPS confounded me for a number of reasons. I came to appreciate, once again, the value of paper maps – and to respect, even more, the internal map which emerges when we use our existing maps to find our way through unfamiliar territory. The maps we choose guide us in where we go, and how we interpret what we see. There are times to trust the deep knowledge which our maps contain – and other times when it’s necessary to put all maps aside. Where are we?

Informal Presentation: Scenes from Ireland

Oct. 21st
Rev. Taylor

This past summer, Loretta and I made an adventurous trip through the Republic of Ireland, sojourning first in Dublin and then along the Western shore: Donegal, the Connemara, County Claire, Dingle, and the Iveragh Peninsula. We learned much, and saw even more. After the Sunday service, during the social hour and beyond, Rev. Taylor will present a few key images and reflections on the natural beauty and the layers of history and tradition which cover the sacred spaces we encountered.

October Book Group meeting Friday October 26, 2018 at 7:30pm in church office



The Last American Man by Elizabeth Gilbert

Eustace Conway discovered nature's wonders as a boy growing up in South Carolina during the 1960s. Miserable at home, a born perfectionist and fanatic, he took to the woods and developed wilderness skills unknown to most modern Americans. He is, as Gilbert implies with her literary and historical references, a cross between Davy Crockett and Henry David Thoreau. This cultural examination of the modern American male explores the meaning of manhood in all its contradictions and challenges.

WARRANT

Bi-Annual Congregational Meeting

This is to notify you of a congregational meeting, which will be held **October 14, 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 discuss the 2019 budget and to continue our discussions around First Church in transition. It is very important that all voting members attend to have your voices heard about the future directions of First Church.

Help Needed!

Dear Friends,

Marilyn Murphy has been organizing the coffee hour during our fellowship time on Sunday mornings for the past several years. She is stepping down from hosting this time of fellowship, and we would like to thank her for her time and effort to make coffee hour tasty and so pleasant! We need our members and friends to step up to continue having coffee and snacks. We need volunteers to make coffee, set-up, clean-up and/or provide cheese, crackers, dips, fruit, pastries, etc. If there is anything you can participate in, please contact Betsy or Stephanie.

We are very fortunate to have such a beautiful, historic place to worship! Let's show our building a little love, by pitching in to help clean her up! Requires no long term commitment, just a little of your time, and a bit of elbow grease. Remember, many hands make light work! To find out how to do your part, contact Mark or Stephanie.



Ladies Benevolent Society

We will meet on Monday **October 8th** at 7pm at First Church in the lower level of the building. Coffee and refreshments will be served. We will be making craft items for our table at the Winter Stroll. Come join in the fun!

A thank-you to all the Lady B's who participated in the gathering and making of the raffle baskets for the Johnny Appleseed Fair. And also, a big thanks to all who set-up, manned and cleaned-up the booth especially Betsy, Bill, Stephanie, Marilyn and Paula. With everyone's help, we had a successful day with our first fundraiser of the year!! Questions? Please contact Chris at cauhlig2002@yahoo.com 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

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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 November's newsletter, please send it to cauhlig2002@yahoo.com by

October 18th.

Minister's Availability and Office Hours

During the month of October I will be working from home as much as possible. You will see me in Leominster mainly for face-to-face meetings, scheduled in advance, and my Sunday service and talk-back on October 21.

You can always reach me by my cell phone, and this is the only number I use: (603)233-3554. Because of my hearing disability, clear voice messages or text messages are appreciated. For detailed information, email is better. I maintain appropriate levels of confidentiality, in any case.

Pastoral emergencies (e.g. hospital visits, personal and family issues) take priority for me; please feel free to contact me at any time. For all other church business, I plan to observe the following office hours from home:

Wednesdays (Oct 3, Oct 10, Oct 17, Oct 24, Oct 31), 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM

And Thursdays (Oct 4, Oct 11, Oct 18, Oct 25), 3:00 PM – 6:00 PM

Thanks for your consideration.



Rev. Bruce Taylor

Dates to Remember

October

Oct. 8th: Lady B's meeting 7pm

Oct. 11th: PC Meeting 6:30pm

Oct. 14th: Bi-Annual Congregational Meeting after Sunday services.

Oct. 18th: Membership Committee meeting 6pm

Oct. 26st: Book Group 7:30pm



October Birthdays

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



Sharing the Collection Plate

On **October 17th**, any cash that is collected separate of designated pledge money goes towards the MLK Coalition



Bill, Paula, Marilyn and Chris at the 1st Church's booth at the Johnny Applesed Fair

Leominster Fights Homeless

As some of you may know, First Church UU in Leominster earned a lot of justified praise earlier this year by opening its doors for a "warming weekend" for the homeless in the community. Although we were successful in helping some of the neediest in the community, our facility is unfortunately not suited to this kind of activity. In recent months, Stephanie Trudel and Mark Moran have been attending the "Leominster Fights Homeless" committee meetings. Founded originally by Mark Moran, and Jennessa McQuade of the LPD, these meetings have continued most recently at the Leominster Emergency Management center under the leadership of Jennessa and her colleague at the LPD, Kelly Vallee.

The Leominster Emergency Management Center is perhaps one of the best kept secrets around. Located on 37 Carter St in Leominster, it is a superb facility featuring space for overnight emergency accommodations, cooking/dining facilities, as well as state of the art communication capabilities that links us with various other Massachusetts and Federal emergency services. The committee is converging on a consensus of opinion to open this facility to those in need of warming during extreme weather events. The principle need would be for volunteers to help in such events. If you feel that you would like to contribute to the community in this way, volunteers will definitely be needed! All volunteers need to have background checks, the so-called "Cori check" done prior to service. If you wish to do this, kindly contact Stephanie Trudel or Mark Moran.