



First Church Vision

September 2018

Reverend Bruce Taylor, Minister

Reverend Dr. Susan Suchocki Brown, Minister Emerita

Working toward a peaceful and just world, guided by Love

Notes from the Parish Committee

Happy September! I hope everyone had a restful summer. We are all looking forward to starting a new church year. Not much to report from the summer for the PC. In the spring before we ended the last church year, the PC authorized some much-needed building and plumbing repair which took place over the summer. Also, many PC members came out to work around the grounds to try to keep the labyrinth clear of natural vegetation, aka, weeds. Success was mixed but thanks to everyone who pitched in to help.

At the end of August, the PC held a reflecting and planning retreat at the church. This was facilitated by Rev. Bruce. The PC came prepared with priorities important to each person. We listed some 25 ideas and concepts. From this list we went through a ranking process to determine which are the most important that we can address and push forward with as goals. We will continue to look at this list and formulate plans in future meetings. One of our goals is to look at the "Big Picture" from the "10,000 foot" view instead of getting into nitty gritty of church management. So, stay tuned for more about this in the coming months.

Until next time..... Betsy

New Vision Task Force

The Vision Task Force is charged with gathering information for the purposes of assessing where we are as a congregation, and which direction we want to go in. We have already sent out an online survey to take a snapshot of what folks are thinking and feeling at this time regarding First Church. A Luncheon was held at the 435 Grill, to mostly socialize, and also to discuss the online survey. It was a wonderful time of reconnection. It may become an annual thing! The Task Force will be periodically surveying and polling members in order to keep our fingers on the Pulse of FCUU. If you didn't receive the online survey, please contact any member of the team. We need your input! (Team members are, Betsy, Diane, Rachel, and Stephanie)

Social Justice Crew

The newly formed Social Justice Crew is here! All summer long our church has hosted a weekly Public Education Phone Bank, for the YES on 3 Campaign to protect Transgender rights. This November, there will be a question on the ballot that pertains to our states equal protection laws. Two years ago in 2016, our state legislature voted to include Gender Identity as a protected class. There is now a ballot initiative to take those rights away. Our members have been making phone calls weekly to educate folks on what this question is really about. YES on 3 maintains the protections we have currently in place. Please consider joining us as we work to uphold everyone's Inherent Worth and Dignity. Weekly Phone Banks are held Tuesdays from 6-9pm. Sign up with Stephanie.

Hot Summer Days by Mark Moran

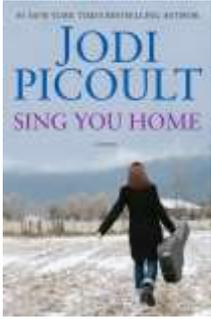
In popular Christian mythology, when we die we see St. Peter at the Pearly Gates and he conducts a sort of an "intake interview" based on our lives. If this is true, then I will have a lot to say to the old boy. I will tell him that he cannot threaten me with perdition, because I have already been to Hades. When he demands further details, I will inform him that my duties of volunteer janitor took me inside First Church every day during one of the most miserable, humid, hot summers of the Global Warming era. For good measure, I will add that even Mephistopheles is not wicked enough to keep Hell as hot as FCUUL in July!

Still, the work needed to be done, and it was dutifully, albeit sweatily attended to. This work, as well as other heavy lifting was done by a painfully small number of dedicated people. It is understood that many of the congregation just want to come to church on Sunday, participate in spiritual life and go about their business the rest of the week. Unfortunately, this is an unsustainable model. There are things that must be done in the running of a church. FCUUL no longer has the resources to pay all of the needed support staff. Like it or not, the ministry at first church, both the spiritual and the mundane, is a shared responsibility. It must be shared among the many, not the few. Those few currently shouldering the majority of the tasks are heading towards certain burnout.

We hope that the congregation will consider this situation carefully and thoughtfully, and be motivated to make modest contributions to easing the burden assumed by the few, very dedicated volunteers who help keep First Church running. Please think about dedicating some time to help out. The need is always there, the hours always flexible.

September Book Group meeting Friday September 21, 2018 at 7:30pm in church office

Sing You Home by Jodi Picoult



In the aftermath of a series of personal tragedies, Zoe throws herself into her career as a music therapist. When an unexpected friendship slowly blossoms into love, she makes plans for a new life, but to her shock and inevitable rage, some people—even those she loves and trusts most—don't want that to happen.

Sing You Home is about identity, love, marriage, and parenthood. It's about people wanting to do the right thing for the greater good, even as they work to fulfill their own personal desires and dreams. And it's about what happens when the outside world brutally calls into question the very thing closest to our hearts: family.

Events Committee 2.0



We are looking forward to the **Johnny Appleseed Festival on Sept. 22nd**, a tradition for our community. Our church has strong ties to Johnny Appleseed, and we will be selling Mulled Cider at the event this year, which is a first for us! Come by and enjoy some delicious cider from local Bolton Farms! If you can help out setting up before the fair, manning the table during or with clean-up after, please contact Billy Coulter.

As the year progresses, we will be planning for the Winter Stroll. In addition, the Events Committee hopes to plan many fun social events for members as well as the community. We aim to be Visible and Viable! Your ideas are wanted! Contact Christi, Billy, or Stephanie and contact Lauren for vendor inquiries for the Winter Stroll

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 **September 10th** at 7:pm at First Church in the lower level of the building. Coffee and refreshments will be served. We will be having officer elections and making Patriot's and Red Sox blankets and baskets for the Johnny Appleseed Fair. Please plan on attending the fair and giving some time at the table. 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 October's newsletter, please send it to cauhlig2002@yahoo.com by

September 18th.

Homelessness Community Initiative

The second community meeting to address the Homelessness issue in Leominster and Fitchburg took place this August. Many key players in and about town attended. This is a multifaceted issue, and our work is only beginning. We are committed to partnering with the Leominster Addiction Outreach Program Coordinator, Jenessa McQuade, the LPD, the Mayor's office, Rep. Natalie Higgins, and Sue Chalifoux-Zephir, MIHN, Ginny's Helping Hand, and other local resources to ensure that the Homeless population is able to access resources they desperately need. One aspect that was highlighted during our meeting was the obstacle of transportation for folks who want to seek treatment for substance abuse issues. There will be a fundraising Gala held to raise funds specifically for this purpose, so break out those dancin' shoes! The Twin City Gala will be held Friday **September 28th** at the Double Tree by Hilton, 99 Erdman Way, Leominster Ma, 01453 from 6pm until 12. Tickets are 50.00 per person, and all proceeds go to the [Leominster Police Addiction Outreach Program](#). For more information, contact Mark or Stephanie.



Thank you fairy garden terrarium.... can you see Jesse?

Dates to Remember

↻ September ↻

- Sept. 9th:** First church service of the year.
- Sept. 10th:** Lady B's meeting 7pm
- Sept. 13th:** Growth and Vitality/ Membership Committee 6pm
- Sept. 21st:** Book Group 7:30pm
- Sept. 22nd:** Johnny Appleseed Festival 9am to 6pm
- Sept. 28th:** Twin City Gala to support Leominster Police Addiction Outreach Program 6 to 12pm



FCUU members join Lunenburg protest against separation of families at the border



Do you like to sing??

We are hoping to add some voices to the church choir. A number of folk mentioned in the church survey that music and choir are things they really enjoy about our church. Give it a try!!! See Betsy or Paula for additional information.

Growth and Vitality/ Membership Committee

The Growth and Vitality/ Membership Committee met over the summer via video conference (affectionately referred to as "zooming").

We welcome Stephanie Trudel to the committee, whose members now include Diane O'Hare, Christi Grausam, Betsy Moran, Rev. Taylor, and Stephanie. We thank Claire Griffiths for her years of service to the committee. We would love to have some additional members. We meet once a month, usually a Thursday evening in the church office. Next scheduled meeting, Thursday **September 13** at 6:00 PM.

Print Cartridge Collection and Recycling



Do you have a home printer that uses ink cartridges? Would you like to donate your used cartridges to a worthy cause, like First Church?

We can return the used ink cartridges to Staples for a cash refund. So please save your used cartridges, bring them to the church, keep them out of the landfill and let's recycle them together.

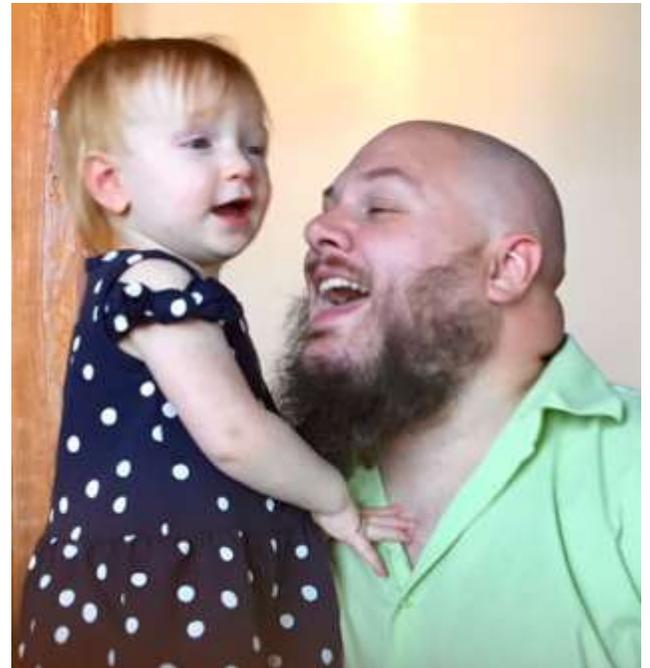


Rev Bob Johansson speaking at the summer service on August 5th, 2018

Lady B's Summer Pool Party in July



Flower communion service in June



Summer Luncheon in August at 435 Grille

