



## Upcoming Worship Dates and Sermon Topics



**March 3rd:** "John Muir, Transcendentalist", Rev. Taylor. New Membership Ceremony for Phil, Kristal and Phoebe Truax

**March 10th:** "Chicken Soup for the Soul "

**March 17th:** "Love and Fear", Rev. Taylor.

**March 24th:** Lay Service TBD.

**March 31st:** "Poetry as a Way In: Mary Oliver", Rev. Taylor.



### Notes from the Parish Committee

This month of March marks nearly three-quarters of the way through our church year. Time has flown by rapidly. We started this year with an eye towards transition and fully embraced that transition in October 2018 when we voted to adopt a wholly lay led model for our congregation starting in September of 2019. This is an enormous step for First Church and one that needs much consideration, thought and planning.

One of the first considerations I think of is, how we are agreeing to be with one another in covenant? For many years we have been members of a strong minister led congregation with an implied covenant of following the minister's lead. This worked well in the past. Now we are embarking on a new way, a new path and a new way of being without an appointed, mutually recognized leader or "face" of the congregation. The "leader" will be the congregation and the governing body, the Parish Committee. The "PC" is a group of people who have pledged to work in the best interest of First Church. Although you have given trust and support to this group of people by virtue of your voting them to their positions, there will be decisions made and actions taken that may be at odds with your own opinion of a situation. Here conflict can and, trust me friends, will arise. We need a mechanism of handling and responding to situations, with openness, love, understanding, and patience, that will arise in the future when we are entirely lay led. We need a covenant to agree on how we are to live, love, worship together, and minister to one another as we go forward together into our new future.

In order to address our need for a covenant, we have asked our colleagues at the New England Region UUA for help in developing a congregational-wide behavioral covenant of shared ministry. An outside facilitator will join us on **Saturday, March 30** for a retreat/workshop to help us draft a covenant as we transition to being lay led. All members and friends of the congregation are invited to attend this workshop. I ask that you **RSVP by March 23** to me ([betsy@firstchurchuu.org](mailto:betsy@firstchurchuu.org)) or to the office ([1stchurchoffice@verizon.net](mailto:1stchurchoffice@verizon.net), 978 537-0310) of your intention to come so we can tell our facilitator how many attendees will be there. We have not nailed down the exact time yet, but it will likely be 11:00 am to 3:00 pm with time for lunch. The actual retreat work itself will take place for 4 hours.

The Rev. Erik Walker Wikstrom in his book *Serving with Grace: Lay Leadership as a Spiritual Practice*, writes "....active participation in the life of your spiritual community gives you an acknowledged stake in it, empowering you to make that community your true spiritual home by infusing it with your values...." Lay work is a natural complement to worship, the opportunity to act upon and test your Unitarian Universalist values.

Let us all be open to taking an active role in our congregation and to infuse it with our own individual values with the guidance of our UU values. I hope you will attend our workshop on March 30 to help frame our future.

Until next time.....

### **"John Muir, Transcendentalist " March 3rd Rev. Taylor**

In seeking direct experience of mystery and wonder, Transcendentalists such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau looked to nature both for inspiration and instruction. They had a kindred spirit in John Muir, whose life was transformed by his encounters with Yosemite, Yellowstone, and other sacred spaces which he devoted his life to exploring, sharing, and preserving for future generations.

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### **"Love and Fear " March 17th Rev. Taylor**

Michael Leunig, the artist and poet, has written: "There are only two feelings: love and fear. There are only two languages ... two frameworks, two results. Love and Fear." In today's service, we will experience the radical difference between these two modes of being.

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### **"Poetry as a Way In: Mary Oliver" March 31st Rev. Taylor**

Mary Oliver, one of America's best-loved poets, passed away in January at the age of 83. Her poems have been read frequently in the context of Unitarian Universalist worship. Today's service celebrates Mary Oliver's poetry and its continuing appeal to Unitarian Universalists.



**March 10th, Don't Forget!!  
Daylight Savings Time, Set your  
clocks ahead!!**



**Book Group Meeting  
Friday March 15, 2019 at 7:30pm  
in church office**

A nonfiction thriller packed with tension, passion, and politics, this book offers a rare glimpse into a secretive world, illuminating a fascinating chapter of North Korea's history that helps explain how it became the hermetically sealed, intensely stage-managed country it remains today.



**Business at Soup and Food Pantry is Booming!!!**

After a slow start the first two weeks, business is booming at Soup on Saturday at First Church. Word has filtered out to the community, and we are feeding, provisioning and clothing more and more people every week. Our guests often say that they find the First Church UU “style” very welcoming, and they genuinely enjoy spending part of their day at our place. We definitely are serving a community who needs us whether it for a hot meal, food to take home, a warm coat, or just the opportunity to sit and chat with other folks while enjoying an agreeable lunch. Thanks again to all those who have worked so hard thus far. Your efforts are well appreciated and are earning respect and recognition in the community for First Church. So far, generous contributions have been arriving from unexpected quarters. Nevertheless, the need is always great, so donations of non-perishable items are always welcome. Clothing, particularly socks, e.g. white athletic socks are also in big demand. If you don’t have time to shop, your cheque made out to “Grains and Greens” for any amount you can manage is always welcome.

**1st Church Wish List**

Socks for both men and women

Gloves, hats and scarves

Hand and foot warmers

Food pantry items:

Pasta Sauce

Pasta

Peanut butter

Canned fruit

Canned soup

Canned vegetables

Canned meats and tuna

Rice

Canned milk

Cereal

Personal care items: combs, brushes, toothbrushes and toothpaste, small bars of soap, razors and shaving cream, mouthwash

Food pantry items no kitchen needed:

Peanut butter or cheese cracker sandwiches

Granola bars

Protein bars

Flip-top cans of ready to eat foods; pasta, soup, meat, tuna

Small bottles of water

Unused travel mugs or reusable cups for hot or cold beverages that we can have on hand

**All Donations Are Greatly Appreciated !!**

**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 March’s newsletter, please send it to

[cauhlig2002@yahoo.com](mailto:cauhlig2002@yahoo.com) by

**March 18th.**

## Minister's Availability and Office Hours

## Dates to Remember

### ↻ March ↻

**March 3rd:** New Membership Sunday

**March 11th:** Lady B's Meeting, 7pm

**March 14th:** Membership Committee meeting 6pm

**March 15th:** Book Group Meeting 7:30pm

**March 16th:** "Growing Visitors into Members" workshop Concord NH.

**March 28th:** PC Meeting 6:30pm

**March 30th:** Covenant Workshop/Retreat at FCUU.

**Every Saturday:** Hot Soup Lunches, 1 to 3

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### March Birthdays

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



### Community Soup Saturdays

For the month of March, we will continue to host a hot lunch program including hot soup, pasta dish, bread, dessert and beverage on **Saturdays from 1 to 3 pm** in the downstairs hall. We have had good attendance for the past month due to good PR and word of mouth. We will continue to need volunteers for set-up, serving or clean-up whether it is for a part of or the whole day. So please join us if you can! We appreciate any time you can give us. Donations of food and supplies will also be welcomed.

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. This month, I will be in the office on the following days:

- Wednesdays March 6, March 13, March 20 and March 27 from 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.
- Thursdays March 7, March 14, March 21 and March 28 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.

## News from the Membership Committee

The Growth and Vitality Committee (aka Membership) has a few new items on it's agenda... Members, Stephanie, Christi, Diane, Betsy and Rev. Taylor, are planning on bringing a team from our church to attend a workshop offered by the New England Regional UUA on Sat. **March 16** in Concord, NH. The workshop is entitled "**Growing Visitors into Members**". Please consider joining us. We will car pool, lunch will be served, and the church will cover all costs for registration.



Our committee will soon be offering some new (affordable) tee shirts with our First Church Leominster UU name so that we may proudly promote our church as we attend events and actions within and around the community. We will take pre-orders based on size. Be on the lookout.

Also be on the lookout for a new weatherproof vinyl sign attached to the West St. entrance of the building. It will direct newcomers to use the side entrance.

We will be following up on the ideas generated and prioritized by the congregation for fundraising (remember that yummy pot luck and all those pads and sticky dots?) and will be sending out a notice summarizing that information and how you might become involved.

Our next Committee meeting will be on Thursday, **March 14** at 6:00 PM in church office. Come join us or just visit with us for a meeting. We welcome you.



## Ladies Benevolent Society

We will meet on **March 11th** at 7pm at First Church in the lower level of the building. We will have a business meeting followed by decorating the sanctuary for Spring. Also, we will be making more personal care bags. Coffee and refreshments will be served. Come and join us! Questions? Please contact Chris at [cauhlig2002@yahoo.com](mailto:cauhlig2002@yahoo.com) or at church on Sunday.

We plan to have an Easter plant sale in March and April with a delivery of the flowers on Easter, April 21st. Look for more information in April's newsletter and order of services.



On Sunday February 24<sup>th</sup>, a video was shown which consisted of a clip of a musical group called Playing for Change. They support bringing music to folks as a way of making connections with each other. The song was Stand By Me.



The Grains and Greens food pantry received a new organizing and cleaning over-haul. We have been getting many food donations every week. However, many of our guests at Saturday's lunches regularly partake of its bounty! So please continue to donate non-perishable foods.