



First Church Vision

May 2019

Working toward a peaceful and just world, guided by Love

From Our Minister

In this column I reflect, become a mirror, for topics big and small. Sometimes I take a life experience as a starting point. Sometimes, it's an idea that grows into a sermon. Theological reflection is a process that takes place when we pass an experience through the "fire of thought", in Ralph Waldo Emerson's words. In doing so, we grow a little, sometimes a lot. We see an issue from more angles. We appreciate more deeply that which drew our attention.

At any given stage of life, we are partly free, and partly embedded in the systems that make up our world. We perceive limits in what we can understand and what we can accomplish. Spirituality makes it possible to name these limits, to see beyond them, even to transcend them. It's an active process of give-and-take by which we integrate experience and make meaning. With theological reflection, this process becomes a deliberate practice.

We can do this as individuals, and we can do it together. As members of a Unitarian Universalist congregation we consider the challenges of walking together; we consider with justice asks of us in light of our values and beliefs. We engage in dialogue, we act upon the resulting insights, and we evaluate the result. In this way, we continuously enlarge our capacity to feel, to think and to act. We move beyond the limits we thought we had.

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



- May 5th:** "Transitions". Potluck and Bi-annual Meeting following service.
May 12th: "Changing Perspectives".
May 19th: "The Arts of Theological Reflection", Rev. Taylor.
May 26th: "The Gospel of Mr. Rogers"



Notes from the Parish Committee

Greetings all! April showers bring May Flowers, but all we've seen so far for many, many days is cold rain! I am hoping for all of us that by the time you read this the sun will be out.

Reviewing April, we had a busy month with our Community Meal, Easter and a variety of regular church activities. On Easter we had our traditional Easter Egg Hunt and it was hard to tell who had more fun, the kids or the adults! Our guest speaker, Rabbi Yaakov Reef, is a very dynamic speaker and kept most all of us on the edge of our seats during his sermon. We welcomed him back from Easter 2018 and I dare say we will be inviting him to speak again soon at one of our services during the next church year.

Our Community Meal attendance is growing in the number of people coming to join us for the meal and growing in the number of volunteers helping to set up, cook, serve and clean up. Word of our Community Meal is spreading with the help of The Spanish American Center (Thank you Mickey!), Ginny's Food Pantry, and the Leominster Police Outreach Program. It is good to be part of the community network for helping those members of the Leominster community who need some assistance. More volunteers are always welcome to help at the meal, collect and organize donated clothing or shop for the Grains and Greens Food Pantry. Clothing, food, grocery store gift cards or cash donations are always welcome.

For May, we are looking forward to our Biannual Meeting on the 5th. We will be electing Church Officers and be presenting a Congregational Covenant to our members for acceptance. This is the product of the work of several church members who attended a UUA led workshop in March. This Covenant which we will publish in an upcoming Newsletter upon acceptance, defines who we are, how we will be in relationship to each other and what drives us as members and friends of First Church. Also, in May, we are hoping to have our First Church branded T-shirts soon and will take a group photo for an upcoming Newsletter.

Lots happening at First Church these days and lots of areas to help and get involved. This is our church and we are the owners and operators. We need help to run the church, the building and grounds (it's Spring and the weeds are coming outside), the worship program and our community programs. Just another word about the Community Meal, we will be continuing throughout the summer months while the church is on our annual summer break. We will still need help and food preparation. So, break out those summer side salad recipes and bring a dish! As always, all those who help are held in high appreciation. We can't do this without you!

Until next time.....

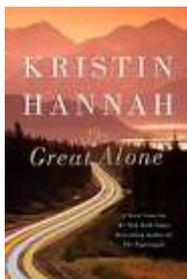
"The Arts of Theological Reflection" May 19th Rev. Taylor

We do this naturally from a place of tranquility: recall a significant experience or idea, and ponder its implications in relation to our beliefs, our deeply held values, and the inner voice that some of us call God. Today's service presents theological reflection as a spiritual practice for Unitarian Universalists.



Easter, April 2019





Book Group Meeting
Friday May 24, 2019 at 7:30pm
in church office
The Great Alone by Kristin Hannah

In this unforgettable portrait of human frailty and resilience, Kristin Hannah reveals the indomitable character of the modern American pioneer and the spirit of a vanishing Alaska—a place of incomparable beauty and danger. *The Great Alone* is a daring, beautiful, stay-up-all-night story about love and loss, the fight for survival, and the wildness that lives in both man and nature.

**Please return your Pledge Forms to the office
as soon as possible!**



1st Church Wish List

- Food pantry items:
 - o Pasta Sauce
 - o Peanut butter
 - o Canned fruit
 - o Canned vegetables
 - o Canned meats and tuna
- o Personal care items: combs, brushes, toothbrushes and toothpaste, small bars of soap, razors and shaving cream, mouthwash
- Food pantry items no kitchen needed:
 - o Peanut butter or cheese cracker sandwiches
 - o Granola bars
 - o Protein bars
- o Flip-top cans of ready to eat foods; pasta, soup, meat, tuna
- o Small bottles of water

Plastic cutlery rolled in a napkin
 Gallon sized Ziplock bags

Socks for both men and women

New items needed: Clean, new or gently used clothing including summer weight coats, jackets, sweatpants, sweatshirts, tee shirts, etc.
 Pillows and blankets.

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:

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

May 18th.

Dates to Remember

May

May 5th: Bi-annual Meeting and Potluck after church service

May 9th: PC Meeting 6:30pm

May 13th: Lady B's Meeting, 6pm

May 23rd: Membership Committee meeting 6pm

May 24th: Book Group Meeting 7:30pm

Every Saturday: Community Lunches, 1 to 3 pm except for 5/18; it's 1:30 to 3:30 and on 5/25 12:00 to 2:00 to accommodate other activities at First Church.



May Birthdays

- Claire Griffiths.....May 1
- Robert Pariseau.....May 7
- Karyn Woodward.... May 8
- Keisha Radford.....May 16
- Nicolas Pariseau.....May 20
- Abigail Shapiro..... May 29
- Janet Hawks.....May 29
- Briazjah Scott..... May 30
- Trishannah Scott..... May 30



The Church with the Lighted Window is Dedicated for the Month of May

In Loving Memory of my parents

Dorothy Murphy

10/18/1916 to 5/9/2012

&

Robert Murphy

7/22/1917 to 5/16/2009

Love, Marilyn

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. During the month of January, I plan to be in my office on the following days.

Wednesday 5/8 from 2:00 to 5:00 P.M.

Wednesdays 5/15 and 5/22 from 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

Wednesday 5/29 from 10:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M.

Thursday 5/2 from 11:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M.

Thursdays 5/9, 5/16, 5/23 and 5/30 from 3:00 to 6:00 P.M.

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



The **Grains and Greens Food Pantry** has been selected to participate in the Hannaford Helps Reusable Bag Program again!

The program is simple!

During the month of **May**, every **Fight Hunger bag** sold at the Hannaford store located at:

927 Merriam Ave, Twin City Plaza, Leominster MA

will generate a \$1 donation to support

Grains and Greens Food Pantry!



Please save and donate your plastic grocery bags!

Through Our Father's table, a mother makes plastic bag waterproof mattresses for the homeless. The green bags are in honor of her son who lost his life to a drug overdose.



Ladies Benevolent Society

The Ladies Benevolent Society will meet on **May 13th** at **6pm** at First Church in the lower level of the building. We will have a short business meeting followed by instruction with Lauren Soucy in the art of making mandalas. Bring your readers and creativity. Coffee and refreshments will be served. Ladies, come and join us! Questions? Please contact Chris at cauhlig2002@yahoo.com or at church on Sunday.