



Sunday Services

November Theme: Ancestry

November 1: How We're Remembered. I'll approach the "Ancestry" theme from the angle of what kind of ancestors we want to be to those who remember us, and whose lives were touched by ours, once we have passed on. I draw on my years of experience in planning memorial services, and how the lives of those who have died are recalled by those who are taking their measure. Having had, by now, hundreds of such conversations I've gained some insight into what is really important in our lives—what is wheat and what is chaff.

November 8: The Narrative of Your Life. This continues the Ancestry thread. Consciously or not, we are each and all telling a story with the lives we lead. Just as our lives are shaped, in some measure, by the lives some of our ancestors lived, so too will our narrative shape the lives of those who will come to regard us as their ancestors. I'll share some of the experiences I encountered in working on a personal memoir and spiritual autobiography, as they speak to this topic.

November 15: That Would Suffice. This sermon draws on a line by the 14th century German mystic and theologian, Meister Eckhart: "If the only prayer you ever say in your life is 'thank you' that would suffice." Eckhart is one of those persons I regard as a "spiritual ancestor" to UUism, even if he isn't specifically in our tradition. As we move towards the Thanksgiving Holiday I want to offer some thoughts on how we live in a spirit of thankfulness for all of creation whether or not one believes in an intentional Creator.

November 22: Multi-generational Thanksgiving Service. Co-led by DSD Vicki Merriam and Rev. Steve Edington.

November 29: Lay Led Service. Theme and speaker(s) will be announced at a later date.



From Your Interim Minister...



I've been with you now for nearly three months. I know I still have much to learn about the FCU congregation, but these initial three months have given me some first impressions that I feel I can share.

I am impressed at the level of love and care that exists amongst you.

You have a "core of compassion" at the heart of your congregational life that is easily recognized. You truly care about one another; and that is highly commendable.

You have a commitment to social justice as shown by your Multicultural Group and the anti-racism efforts that some of you are involved in. Your previous minister, Rev. Marta Valentin, sowed these seeds well.

You have a rich worship life, and I find I've been able to easily adapt my own style of worship leadership to what you are accustomed to. I appreciate the preparation the Worship Associates offer for each service. It allows me to focus on those aspects of our worship experience that I need to attend to, with others handling some very important details. This also speaks well of Rev. Marta's legacy in creating the WAs.

I believe you have some governance matters to work on when it comes to determining how well you are being served by your present governance structures. Your Standing Committee has made a good start in this area by naming a Governance Task Force under the capable leadership of Jim Nehring.

I've appreciated the feedback and conversations I've had with the Deacons, and the Transition Team is helping me "take your temperature" with respect to your spiritual life, as well as various other areas of your congregational life.

And, finally, I am aware that you are looking to come to terms with the legacy of your previous minister even as you begin to prepare for calling your next settled minister. I know that not all of you are in the same place when it comes to your feelings about the ministry that has been recently completed here. This is hardly unusual. It is a rare minister indeed who leaves a congregation with all of its members on the very same page with respect to his or her legacy.

I know it is important that whatever air needs to be cleared, and whatever kinds of reconciliations need to take place, be done so before you settle a new minister. Last Sunday I said in my sermon that you are a "grace-ful/full-of-grace" congregation. I wouldn't have said that, of course, if I didn't believe it. I am trusting we can use the grace that is amongst you to find ways of sharing perspectives, and accomplishing whatever healing need to be accomplished, as this interim period goes forward. Stay tuned for some of the ways and means by which we can do this.

Speaking of grace, I thank you for the many gracious ways you have brought me into your congregational life in just a short time. We have good times ahead.

Blessings,

Rev. Steve Edington, Interim Minister



**The Bulletin of
First Church Unitarian
Littleton**

IN THIS EDITION

November Services.....1
 From Your Interim Minister2
 Share the plate3
CHURCH BUSINESS3
Deacon Notes
Standing Committee Notes
Governance Task Force
 Committee Corner5
 Other News & Events7
 Kids Matter(s).....9
 FCU FYI.....11

Share the Plate

On the third Sunday of each month, an international charity will receive all undesigned offerings and checks made out to the charity as a contribution from the First Church Unitarian congregation. If you would like to nominate an international charity please send an email to stp@fcu.org.

On **Sunday October 18th FCU contributed \$1,197.50** to the **UUSC-UUA Refugee Crisis Fund**. This refugee crisis is the largest since WWII. Our donations will support of the work the UUSC crisis response team provides.

November’s Recipient: The **World Food Program** has been chosen as the Share-the-Plate offering on November 15th. The WFP is the food aid arm of the United Nations system and the world’s largest humanitarian agency fighting hunger. Please consider a generous donation. Checks may be written payable to World Food Programme.



Church Business

Deacon Notes

A special “Thank You” to Rev. Rebecca Hinds of the Unitarian Universalist Urban Ministry (UUUM) who was our guest speaker on Oct. 11th when Rev. Steve was away. I enjoyed hearing some stories about Fred Rogers, and what it means to be a neighbor. It’s clear that the UUUM is being a good neighbor to the people of Roxbury.

It’s November! Thanksgiving is just around the corner. Fitting right in with theme of the month – Ancestry – I always think of my ancestors at Thanksgiving time. Some of them even arrived on the Mayflower – and the family lore is that other ancestors were already here. Thinking deeper about this theme of ancestry, it occurs to me that there is another side of the equation that I missed at first. I was viewing myself as a descendant – but we should also be conscious that someday people will look back at us as the ancestors. What kind of legacy will we leave? What are we doing to make this a better world for our descendants? Let us all be good neighbors, and good stewards of this world we live in. I'm just saying...

Jon Welch for the Deacons

Standing Committee Notes

The Standing Committee has been working on a number of issues to support the infrastructure of the church, including:

- Created a charter and appointed a team, led by Jim Nehring, to undertake a review of church governance.
- Met with the Personnel Team to agree upon their work over the coming months. As team leader for the staff, the minister will now be responsible for performance reviews and overall management.
- Met with church members who are researching how FCU can support Syrian refugees.
- Regularly meet with members of the Finance Team to review budget issues. Through 9/30 we are running on budget.
- Steve Edington and Deb Girard have had an initial call with Toby Smith from the UUA transition office. She will be working with us on the ministerial search process and will be meeting with the Standing Committee early in November.

On Sunday, October 25, we held a warranted meeting of the church to vote on the following:

- **To allocate up to \$8,000 for legal services to address the issues of disposition of the parsonage.** The motion was unanimously approved. Next step is to identify and hire an attorney.
- **To launch a Capital Campaign to address a number of issues with the church building.** The building committee has identified and prioritized several projects including the roof, acoustics in the lower dining room, insulation of the sanctuary, storm windows in the sanctuary, and painting the exterior of the church. This Campaign will fund this work and will be in the vicinity of \$200,000. The motion was unanimously approved. We are so grateful for the leadership of Peter Erslund, Laura Semple, and Eric Semple as we move forward with this campaign.
- **To approve the use of up to \$20,000 from the general reserve for the new roof.** The money used for the roofing project from both the capital reserve and the general reserve will be paid back with proceeds from the Capital Campaign. This motion was unanimously approved.
- **To support the Neighborhood Supper for another year.** This motion was unanimously approved.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Make a pledge. The Capital Campaign will be kicked off before the end of 2015 and will span a 2-year period. That means that if you commit to a pledge for this campaign in 2015, **you can spread your payment over 3 tax years.** Included in this campaign will be planned giving opportunities that will allow you to support FCU in your will or trust.

Get involved. We need people to step up and work on this Capital Campaign in many capacities: helping with “asks” from the membership, planning some special events, researching grant opportunities, helping with communication about our progress. There is something for everyone to do. So let’s take care of the bones of our house together!

Deb Girard, for the Standing Committee

Governance Task Force

YOUR OPINION NEEDED

The Governance Task Force will be asking you for input to participate in an all-church review of our existing infrastructure, what works and what could be done more efficiently. Between now and December 15, we plan to ask FCU members and friends to participate in at least one of three different venues: an online survey, one-on-one interviews and/or a focus group.

Our goal is to include everyone who wants to have their voice heard, and to ensure that we have a cross-section of participants from long-term and newer members, old, young and in between.

If you would like a one-on-one interview, please let one of our members know: Chairman Jim Nehring (jnehring100@gmail.com), Joyce Williams (drjww@verizon.net), Niela Miller (nielam@comcast.net), Phyllis Terrey (phyllis.terrey2@verizon.net), Ron Willett (rwillett@comcast.net), and Susan Tordella-Williams (Susan.tordella@gmail.com). We will also be asking for interview sign-ups during coffee hour in the coming weeks.

The first phase of our work will conclude in March 2016. The second phase, when the whole church is invited to participate in an exploration of our future direction, will take place by October 2016. The Standing Committee charged the Governance Task Force with this project.

Susan Tordella-Williams, On behalf of the Governance Task Force

Committee Corner

Beloved Conversations

Weekend Workshop is Planned for 2016

We're sorry to announce that we postponed Beloved Conversations until next church year for a couple of reasons. First, four people did sign up, but this isn't enough participants for the program to work well. In addition, the Multicultural Ministries Committee wants to encourage FCU leaders to be in the program. And given everything that's going on this church year –

- ☐ healing/transition between ministers
- ☐ working with the interim minister
- ☐ beginning the ministerial selection process
- ☐ developing a new governance plan
- ☐ determining what to do with the parsonage
- ☐ all our regularly scheduled worship services, activities and fundraisers

– we don't think our church leaders will have much free time to take the full Beloved Conversations program.

Instead, we propose to hold a weekend workshop (Friday night and Saturday) in late winter/early spring which will be a taste of Beloved Conversations. We hope to see you there!



Caring for Our Aging Parents (COAP)

Monday, Dec 7, 7-9pm in the Alliance Room

The COAP Group is continuing to meet on the first Monday of each month. This has grown into a close, supportive group for those of us are dealing with issues related to caring for aging loved ones. Newcomers are warmly welcomed. Keep in mind that this is truly a support group with no agenda or goals or minutes.

For more info contact: COAP@fculittle.org

Lay Ministers

Lay Pastoral Ministry Article for November Bulletin

If you could use a listening ear, the Lay Pastoral Ministers are ready to assist you. Our ministry is compassionate listening. We will listen fully, respectfully, and confidentially. Please visit our webpage at www.fculittle.org or email us at laypastoralmin@fculittle.org.

“When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives means the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a warm and tender hand... Somewhere we know that without silence words lose their meaning, that without listening speaking no longer heals, that without distance closeness cannot cure.”

--Henri Nouwen

Multicultural Ministries Committee

Multicultural Film and Discussion Series—*Dakota 38*

Please join the Multicultural Ministries Committee on Friday, November 6 at 7:00 PM in the Vestry to honor Native American Heritage Month and view *Dakota 38* which is a beautiful, devastating, and up-lifting film. It follows native riders on a 330 mile journey of healing and reconciliation across South Dakota to Minnesota, in honor of those lost at the end of the Dakota War of 1862, in the largest mass execution ever seen in the United States. There will be time afterward to share our thoughts, feelings, and reactions to the film and, of course, refreshments!

Racism Here and Now—Let’s Talk

Please join the Multicultural Ministries Committee on Sunday, November 15, at 6:30 PM in the Vestry for a discussion of Americana Indians--images that matter. We’ll start by watching a TED talk or two. Refreshments!

Women's Alliance

The Women's Alliance would like to thank Rev. Steve Eddington for his talk on Woody Guthrie and Jack Kerouac. An entertaining time was had by all.

At the November meeting we will be doing crafting for the Holiday Bazaar. All are welcome to help, no experience necessary. Meeting at 11:00, lunch at 12:00, crafting at 1:00.

- Wendy McDougall, Pres. FCU Women's Alliance



Other News and Events

Sacred Circle Dance

Friday, November 13 In the Vestry

Come dance a gratitude circle for a head start on giving thanks as we approach Thanksgiving. Simple, easy dances from 7 to 9 p.m. - NO experience needed - with more challenging dances at 6. In the Vestry, please bring an open mind, a willing heart, and your water bottle. For more info, e-mail Circle@fculittle.org

Offer a Hand Up to our neighbors

Potential volunteers are invited to visit a prison Toastmasters program to consider becoming a regular mentor.

Volunteers are asked to attend at least twice a month and enjoy teaching, speaking and mentoring. Training is provided by the Department of Corrections and by participating in the Toastmasters programs in prison. Prior experience as a Toastmaster is not required.

"You will know from one visit if prison volunteering is for you," said Cynthia Heiland, an FCU member and co-coordinator of a Wednesday night program in Gardner.

Long-term volunteers are needed at the Shirley complex on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday nights. Contact Susan Tordella to visit a program at Shirley minimum on Tuesday nights at 630 pm.

Visitors may observe at Gardner or Shirley and can deliver a guest speech of 5-7 minutes, on a topic to prepare the incarcerated people for release, such as interviewing, anger management, how to find a job, starting a business, home budgeting, what makes a good employee, parenting, healthy living or the topic of your choice.

For more information, visit <https://d31toastmastersprisonvolunteers.wordpress.com/> or speak to FCU member Cynthia Heiland, cgheiland@me.com, [508 331-3307] or Susan Tordella, susan.tordella@gmail.com, 978- 772 3930.

Take a Sunday morning adventure for Justice

People passionate about reform to the state's justice and corrections systems are invited to visit other UU churches in Massachusetts to connect during coffee hour with sympathetic voters. FCU member Susan Tordella, a co-founder of EMIT, End Mass Incarceration Together, a statewide grassroots ecumenical task force of UU Mass Action Network, is forming pairs of volunteers to visit UU churches to encourage voters to influence state legislators to enact reform.

The only way to end mass incarceration is by a series of bills passed over a number of years. Unlike marriage equality when only one bill granted about 1,000 rights, it's a multi-year task to untangle the complex and profitable network of injustice in state courts and prisons.

In advance, Susan contacts ministers and social justice leaders in UU churches in targeted areas of the state, then attends Sunday worship and sets up a table at coffee hour with information on reform. The objective is to meet sympathetic voters and invite them to join the movement. Please contact emit.susan@gmail.com, or by cell phone 978-846-2811. The Prison Ministry and Advocacy Task Force is part of FCU's social justice efforts.

December Holiday Gifts for Teens at McLean Hospital

This year we are adding a new holiday gift giving opportunity in addition to the LCOC Star Program. We will be collecting new unwrapped holiday gifts for the teens staying in locked units at McLean psychiatric hospital. December can be a very lonely time to be in the hospital, and some of these teens may not receive visitors, or gifts from other sources. A marked box will be in the vestry starting November 1st through Sunday, December 6 for contributions. If you cannot contribute a gift, consider donating a greeting card. Both boys and girls need gifts. Suggestions: socks, mittens, age-appropriate non-violent DVDs and books, jewelry (nothing sharp), handheld electronic games, playing cards, craft items. Please remember not to wrap your gift. Please do not include: anything violent or including drug/alcohol use, anything sharp, or gift cards (teens may not be able to go shopping). Email valeriehadden@yahoo.com with questions. For those of you who may not know Val she dances FCU's Sacred Circle Dance. Thank you!

Debbie Eston

Kids Matter



ON ANOTHER LEVEL – “The Shoulders on which We Stand”

Some people are your relatives but others are your ancestors, and you

choose the ones you want to have as ancestors. You create yourself out of those values.

— **Ralph Ellison, American writer**

Many of us are familiar with our seven Unitarian Universalist Principles and much of our Religious Education program is based on them. Less familiar is the second part of our statement, collectively known as the UU Sources. In these we find the ancestry of our faith tradition and the foundations of our beliefs. Here are the actual UUA statements with a children's version in italics.

The living tradition we share draws from many sources:

** Our beliefs*

Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life.

** The sense of wonder we all share.*

Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love.

** Women and men of long ago and today whose lives remind us to be kind, fair, and understanding.*

Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life.

** The ethical and spiritual wisdom of the world's religions.*

Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves.

** Jewish and Christian teachings, which tell us to love all others as we love ourselves.*

Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit.

** The use of reason and discoveries of science.*

Spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.

** The harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life.*
Grateful for the religious pluralism which enriches and ennobles our faith, we are inspired to deepen our understanding and expand our vision. As free congregations we enter into this covenant, promising to one another our mutual trust and support.

Thankful for these ideas, we want to learn even more. We come to church where we freely share our thoughts and feelings and promise to trust and help one another.

Using these six sources as a basis, see if you and your family can name some ancestors on whose shoulders we stand. These came to my mind initially. What comes to your mind? Share them with me. 1.Thoreau 2. Rosa Parks 3. Buddha 4. Ruth 5. Einstein 6. Starhawk

With faith and love,
Vicki Merriam, Director of Spiritual Development for Children and Youth

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM – November

11/1	Daylight Saving Time ends, set clocks back one hour before bed on Saturday; Class #3, Youth group pancake breakfast
11/8	Class #4
11/15	Chapel Sunday, all ages
11/22	Multi-generational worship, Thanksgiving
11/29	Community Sunday; game day for all ages

Spiritual Development Curricula 2015-2016

Spirit Play (cycle 2 of 2-year rotating program)

Primary school ages

This program encourages engagement at the child's developmental level and mode of learning. By using stories from many traditions and "wonderings" about the lesson we hope to help the children to begin to "live into their own answers" to the big questions in life through the lens of UU values and beliefs.

Holidays and Holy Days

Elementary school ages

This favorite curriculum is a hands-on exploration of world religions through the festive celebrations of significant holidays in various cultures and religious groups. Each lesson explicitly relates the theme of the celebration to a specific UU value or belief. Recently adapted to include new celebrations and avoid misappropriation of spiritual ritual and beliefs.

You the Creator

Middle school

With a focus on the themes of religion, creation, arts, individual and universal creativity, we'll explore the innate creative power of each person to shape ourselves and the world. An activity-based program of creative empowerment, it is rich with activities like role-plays, continuums, drawing, sculpting, constructing, and designing more perfect people. The theme of spirituality touches every session.

Coming of Age

8th grade and up

This is our program for youth who are preparing to be welcomed into the adult congregation and senior youth group. With the support of their mentors, participants will develop their own credos. Areas of study include: UU heritage and theology, personal beliefs, worship, and social responsibility. The program culminates in the spring with a ceremony.

Community Sundays

All ages

On occasional Sundays, we offer games (indoors or out) and other unstructured activities so children and youth can hang out and play together.

Chapel Sundays

All ages

Service projects, crafts, cooperative games, cooking, decorating our space, special projects and more all with a focus on the theme of the month.

Junior Youth & Senior Youth Groups

Junior youth (middle school, grades 6-8) will meet occasionally for fun community building activities.

Senior youth meet twice per month (1st & 3rd Sundays), cook pancakes for us on the 1st Sunday, and plan a major service project/trip for the spring.

FCU STAFF	FCU OFFICERS	STAY IN CONTACT WITH FCU
 <p>INTERIM MINISTER Rev. Steve Edington interimminister@fcu.org</p> <p>DIRECTOR OF SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT Vicki Merriam dsd@fculittle.org</p> <p>MUSIC DIRECTOR Molly Lozeau music@fculittle.org</p>	<p>TREASURER Scott Dressel treasurer@fculittle.org</p> <p>ASSISTANT TREASURER Sara Weeks assistreas@fculittle.org</p> <p>CLERK Martha Childs clerk@fculittle.org</p> <p>DEACONS <i>The Deacons oversee worship and the pastoral and spiritual life of the church.</i> Jon Welch (chair), Kris Ersland, Debbie Eston deacons@fculittle.org</p> <p>STANDING COMMITTEE <i>The Standing Committee manages the business and organization of the church.</i> Deb Girard (chair), Melissa Baern, Tom Cowan, Mike Pilman, Bob Williams sc-chair@fculittle.org</p>	<p>First Church Unitarian 19 Foster Street Littleton, MA 01460 978.486.3044 office@fculittle.org www.fculittle.org</p> <p>FCU COMMUNITY LISTSERVE Get breaking news from our community. Sign up at http://seven.pairlist.net/ma ilman/listinfo/fcu or visit the link on our website under the “contact us” section. For more information, email office@fculittle.org.</p> <p>FCU FACEBOOK PAGE Like us at http://www.facebook.com/FirstChurchUnitarianLittleton and share our page with others who might be interested!</p> <p>WEBMASTER Leslie Gloyd webmaster@fculittle.org</p> <p>Community Matters Printed in the weekly Order of Service and then distributed via FCU listserv.</p>
<p>CHURCH OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR Laura Beltrami office@fculittle.org</p> <p>SEXTON Henry Whitcomb, Jr. sexton@fculittle.org</p> <p>Henry can also be reached via cellphone at 978.273.0170.</p>	<p>OTHER FCU CONTACTS</p> <p>LAY PASTORAL MINISTERS <i>Lay Ministers offer a listening ear and pastoral attention to members of the congregation.</i> Thom Bentley, David Butz, Caroline Marvin, Jim Nehring, Patti Sardella laypastoralmin@fculittle.org</p> <p>MEMBER-REACH COMMITTEE Joel Ross, chair memberreach@fculittle.org</p>	<p>announce@fculittle.org</p> <p>❖ Thursday, 10 a.m.</p> <p>The Bulletin Published monthly online and distributed via FCU listserv. bulletin@fculittle.org</p> <p>❖ 3rd Tuesday of each month, 1 p.m. ❖ Next deadline: Tuesday, November 17, 1 p.m.</p> <p><i>Items submitted after deadline may not be included.</i></p>



First Church Unitarian

19 Foster Street
Littleton, MA 01460

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November 2015 Issue

View our church calendar at
<http://fculittle.org/calendar.php>