



Sunday Services

December Theme: Expectation...

December 6: Waiting For...

On the theme of “Expectation,” I’ve long been fascinated by Samuel Beckett’s theater-of-the-absurd play *Waiting for Godot*. It features two strange characters sitting beside a road awaiting the arrival of a mysterious Godot (God?). The point, I think, is that one can waste a lifetime waiting for, or expecting the arrival of, the “Big Whatever” who will make life meaningful and worthwhile. The implied message (again, I think) is that we already have what we need for meaningful living if we will purposefully search for it, rather than simply wait for it. I’ll work all this around to the Holiday theme of Advent—a Time of Waiting, Anticipation, and Expectation—on this second Sunday of the Advent Season.

December 13: Christ Climbed Down.

I use the poem—which is the same title as the sermon—by Beat Poet Lawrence Ferlinghetti (now in his mid-90s), which he wrote in the late 1950s, to offer my thoughts on the continuing significance of the legend or myth of the birth of Jesus. The last stanza of the poem frames up where I go with it: “Christ climbed down from his bare tree this year and softly stole away into some anonymous Mary’s womb again, where in the darkest of everybody’s anonymous soul He awaits again an unimaginable and impossibly Immaculate Re-conception, the very craziest of Second Comings.”

December 20: “Expect Love”. Multigenerational Holiday Service.

We gather to celebrate the season with music and story, sharing and contemplation, love and hope. **Bring NEW mittens, gloves, socks, hats, scarves, sweaters, and underwear** for our Sharing Tree.

December 24: Christmas Eve Services:

- **5:00 p.m. “The Wonder of Christmas”. Family Service.** Join us for carols, lights, and one of the best stories of all to celebrate the birth of Hope in the world. Children and adults will present our pageant, candles will be lit by all, and we’ll have a special visitor to finish the service.
- **7:00 p.m. Traditional Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. “We Need a Little Christmas.”** We come together for carols—by the congregation and choir—readings, and a homily by Rev. Steve that draws on the wisdom of Jerry Herman’s “Auntie Mame.”

December 27: Lay Led Service. This service is being organized and presented by the Worship Team.
Theme TBA



From Your Interim Minister, the Transition Team, and the Deacons...



In his Interim Minister's column for the November FCU Bulletin, Rev. Steve pointed out many of the positive aspects he was seeing in the life of our FCU congregation. He also pointed out how Rev. Marta Valentin

had sowed the seeds for a number of them. He then went on to say: "I know that not all of you are in the same place when it comes to your feelings about the ministry that has recently been completed here...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."

Towards the latter part of this church year a Search Committee will be put in place to begin the process of FCU calling a minister. If that process stays on course—as we feel it will—we will call a settled minister in the spring of 2017.

Reflecting on Rev. Steve's comments, from mid-January through mid-March of 2016 we are looking to facilitate a series of "Healing Conversations." This will involve small groups of 8-10 persons coming together to share thoughts on the following questions:

**How do I feel about my current involvement in the life of the FCU congregation?*

**What are some of the best, and necessary, things that need to happen in our congregational life that will make us well positioned to move forward with a new minister?*

**What am I willing to commit to in order to help make these things happen?*

In the midst of your Holiday Celebrations, we hope you can give some thought to this matter; and that you'll feel free to share them with us, be it with Rev. Steve, and/or any Transition Team member or Deacons.

A schedule for our Healing Conversations will be posted in our January Bulletin.

With all of our best wishes

Rev. Steve Edington

The Transition Team: Joel Ross, David Butz, Martha Childs, Araya Fast, Carole Tillis.

The Deacons: Jon Welch, Debbie Eston, Kris Erslund.



**The Bulletin of
First Church Unitarian
Littleton**

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Share the Plate

News and Updates

On the third Sunday of each month, an international charity will receive all undesignated 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 November 15th FCU contributed \$819 to the World Food Program. The WFP is the food aid arm of the United Nations system and the world’s largest humanitarian agency fighting hunger.

DECEMBER’S RECIPIENT: The ***UUSC’s Guest at Your Table program has been chosen to receive our December 20th Share-the-Plate offering.*** In the 41st year of this human rights program the Guest at Your Table theme “highlights the empowerment of refugees and displaced people”. Please give generously in support of this annual fundraising and education program. Donations by check are to be made payable to UUSC with the notation “Guest at Your Table” in the memo line. Guest at Your Table boxes may be returned on 12/20 or by 1/10/16.



Church Business

Deacon Notes

Wow December is here. So many things to look forward to; Advent, Hanukkah, Solstice, Christmas, Boxing day, Kwanzaa, New Year's Eve and more! Surely a time of great expectations, the Soul Matters theme for the month. (not the Dickens novel Great Expectations, a story for another time)

I work for EMC. You probably heard of the biggest Tech merger in history as Dell is buying EMC. For you this is old news - wasn't that done in October? For me and my coworkers, it is still in the future. The deal will take 6-9 months to complete. Most employees can't help but entertain thoughts about our expectations of what a Dell/EMC company will be like. Will there be layoffs? What about my benefits? or even Will the name change on the outside of the building? No one has answers yet for most of these questions, and personally, I can't make any difference that will impact the outcome.

It's different here at FCU. I can make a difference and so can you. I hope you have wonderful expectations about the upcoming Holidays and about the upcoming year as we begin our search for a settled minister. Please stay involved and don't miss the opportunities you will have to share your thoughts and expectations. "Be the change you wish to see" Mahatma Gandhi

Jon Welch - for the Deacons

Standing Committee Notes

The Standing Committee will take up the formation of a ministerial search team in January. While we are still working on the details we are planning for a collaborative process with the congregation to name a team. The goal is for a ministerial search team to start their work in March.

Committee Corner

Littleton Council of Churches

The Littleton Council of Churches is gearing up to provide traditional December programs, a Littleton Day of Caring in 2016, and possibly other programs/events as the year unfolds. To learn more about the Council check out its website at www.littletonchurches.org. Steve and I are representing FCU this year. We welcome your questions and suggestions. If you would like to serve as a representative please let us know by emailing us at lcoc@fculittle.org or by contacting one of us directly.



Traditional December programs:

- Dec 3rd 5-8 pm - Food Drive at Donelan's - please plan to shop that evening and pick up a shopping list for Loaves and Fishes.
- Dec 5th 7 pm - Littleton Community Christmas Concert at the Littleton Ward of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
- December's Holiday Star program. The list of gifts is available in the vestry and will be emailed to the listserve.

Littleton Day of Caring – 2016. May 21st has been selected for this second annual outreach event. Please pencil it in your calendar and watch for future bulletin articles with information about registering to participate on May 21st. ~Debbie Eston, for the FCU representatives to the Littleton Council of Churches

Multicultural Ministries Committee

Please save these dates:

January 9, Saturday, 7:00 - 9:30 PM, Film and Discussion Series: [The Vigil](#)

January 23, Saturday, 7:00 - 9:00 PM, Racism Here & Now: Let's Talk

Also please watch for news about a Beloved Conversations weekend workshop and an 8-week program on racism and white privilege offered by Ken Wagner here at FCU.

Wishing everyone a blessed and happy holiday season: Happy Hanukkah, Winter Solstice Blessings, Merry Christmas, Happy Kwanzaa!

Other News and Events

Come one, Come all! The Holiday Bazaar is on December 5th, from 9:00am till 3:00pm in the Middle School gym.

The FCU Women's Alliance has a great craft table lined up, with lots of gifts and lots of Jam.

We've been crafting and Jammin' for months. The FCU Women's Alliance supports many charities and the Church, so come and check it out!

Cookies and Caroling

Molly and the FCU choir are excited to announce a new holiday tradition! Immediately following the service on Sunday, December 13, we'll be sharing holiday cookies and cocoa at coffee hour. Around 11:45 we'll gather in the sanctuary for a rollicking sing-along where we'll all sing classic Christmas carols and holiday songs. We'd love for this to become an annual family event that can be enjoyed by everyone. Song books and jingle bells will be provided.

Thanks.
Peggy Britton
for the Music Committee

Build a movement for justice system reforms

If you are passionate about reforming the Commonwealth's justice and corrections systems, we need you to visit nearby UU churches to connect during coffee hour with UU voters. The goals are to inform people about the urgency of reform, and encourage voters to visit their state representative to influence him or her to join the movement at the Statehouse.

The campaign is sponsored by EMIT, statewide grassroots ecumenical task founded by Susan Tordella, of FCU. EMIT justice. Ideally, pairs of volunteers will visit who want to end mass incarceration.



End Mass Incarceration Together, a force of UU Mass Action Network, co-partners with activists across the state for one UU church a month to connect with voters

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, justice and corrections reform require a multi-year campaign to untangle the complex and profitable systems of injustice.

Before going to a UU church coffee hour, volunteers will contact the minister and explain the campaign. Most UU ministers are receptive. A pair of volunteers then attends a Sunday worship (on a day of your choice), sets up a table at coffee hour with information on reform, form letters to address to state legislators, and to invite people to sign up on EMIT's contact list. People will approach the table during coffee hour and it often will



result in UU voters meeting face-to-face with their state representative.

This Coffee Hour Connection Cadre is a vital action that volunteers can do once a month that will influence legislation for justice and corrections reform on Beacon Hill. Please contact Susan Tordella at emit.susan@gmail.com, or by cell phone [978-846-2811](tel:978-846-2811).

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Susan Tordella

Legislative director

EMIT -- **E**nd **M**ass **I**ncarceration **T**ogether

a statewide grassroots all-volunteer working group of Unitarian Universalist Mass Action Network

Website: [end mass incarceration together @ wordpress dot com](http://endmassincarcerationtogether.wordpress.com)

Phone: 978-772-3930

Sacred Circle Dance

"A Circle of Light" Friday December 11: 7 to 9 p.m. in the Vestry

The December circle focuses on light as we approach the Solstice. We also dance the holidays and the approach of a new year: Traditional and new dances for mind-body-spirit equilibrium. *Community Circle easy dances at 7:00 p.m. (NO experience needed – all dances are taught) with more challenging dances at 6:00. For more info e-mail Circle@fculittle.org*

Recognition: FCU a Bronze Sponsor of Castle in the Trees Playground

With the \$1,239 donations from our annual Faire proceeds, FCU will be listed on a permanent sign at the playground as a "Bronze" donor, and on the playground's website. This donation contributes to the community effort of rebuilding the playground, and bring countless hours of free fun family entertainment for many years to come.

When our four children were young, I appreciated the Castle in The Trees playground as a special destination. It is a local outdoor sanctuary for families to play together, away from electronics, with no charge. I am proud that FCU is part of this project to benefit families, and will be memorialized by a permanent sign.

Submitted by Susan Tordella-Williams, on behalf of the Council on Social Justice, FCU Treasurer Scott Dressel, and the whole Faire team that plans and creates such a wonderful day of fun-d raising to benefit our community.

Susan Tordella

FCU Hosts 2016 Joint Summer on August 7

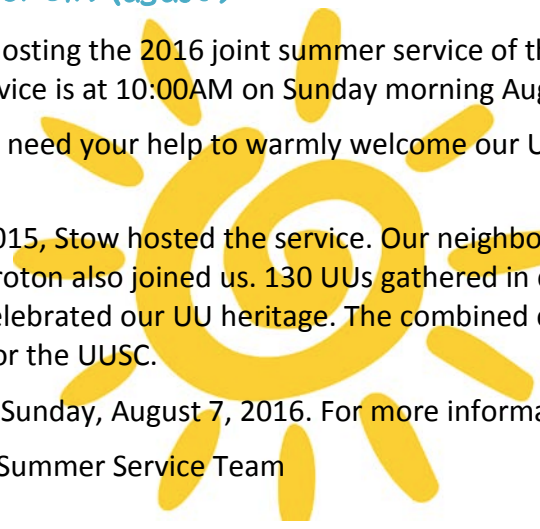
Mark your calendars. We will be hosting the 2016 joint summer service of the Harvard, Littleton, and Stow/Acton UU churches. The service is at 10:00AM on Sunday morning August 7.

Since it is our turn to host, we will need your help to warmly welcome our UU neighbors. Stay tuned later in 2016 for details.

This past summer, on August 2, 2015, Stow hosted the service. Our neighbors from the UU congregations of Hudson, Bolton, Lancaster, and Groton also joined us. 130 UUs gathered in community, raised their voices in song, renewed friendships, and celebrated our UU heritage. The combined choir inspired us and nourished our spirits. The Offering raised \$800 for the UUSC.

Looking forward to seeing you on Sunday, August 7, 2016. For more information, contact Elinor Gentilman.

Elinor McCarthy Gentilman, Joint Summer Service Team



Kids Matter

“Learning from the Cat”

The cat pokes her nose just barely beyond the doorjamb and slowly sniffs as I hold open the door too long, letting the cold air seep into the warm kitchen. “Hurry up and make up your mind,” I say. But the cat pays no heed, twitching her nose and holding her ears erect, anticipating the slightest temptation to draw her out into the late fall landscape. None materializing, she retreats back to her favorite winter spot directly under the woodstove. All summer she ignores that place choosing instead to race outside at every opportunity. But from the moment we first fire up the stove in October and throughout the approaching dark and cold time, she will likely be found there, warm, secure, content.

The holiday season is one of anticipation, a time full of expectations, which may come to fruition and result in much delight and goodness.

At Advent, 4 candles are lit for hope, love, joy, and peace as we count down the days till the celebration of the birth of Jesus. We are anticipating Christmas with its fun, families, food, and gifts when we open each door on the Advent calendar.

Hanukkah marks the time when the oil in the temple’s holy lamp burned eight days seven more than expected. The miracle of light, which symbolizes the freedom to believe and worship as we choose is celebrated with the eight candles on the Menorah.

Yule celebrates the winter solstice and signals the return of the light and our longing for new growth, warm days, flocks of birds, and all the signs of spring.

At the New Year we make resolutions, anticipating change in the coming days and hoping that peace and justice will prevail among all people in our

world community.

But with anticipation there can sometimes be unreasonably high expectations, of assuming things will go a certain way, of being disappointed when things do not. The anxiety that may come with anticipation robs us of the enjoyment and meaning of this season.

LATKES AND LIGHTS, 12/6: We will have many lights for Advent, Hanukkah and Yule. Following the worship service, we invite everyone to join us in the downstairs dining room for a “Latkes and Lights” Hanukkah party. We’ll light the Menorah, have latkes and other food of the holiday, hear a story, make a craft, and play with dreidels.

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT SCHEDULE

All children, youth, and adults who would like to participate in our pageant this year, please mark these dates. Bobbie Dressel will be coordinating. If the schedule is difficult for you, let her know and we’ll work it out as long as you can be here Christmas Eve.

GUEST AT YOUR TABLE (GAYT)

During the month of December, we encourage everyone to contribute to the world-wide community projects of the UU Service Committee. During this season of sharing, imagine those who need only a fraction of our abundance are joining

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM – December

12/6	Regular classes followed by “Latkes and Lights”, Hanukkah party for all.
12/13	Regular classes continue, followed by Pageant costume fitting. Cookies, cocoa & carols follows.

So let us learn a lesson from that cat: live in the moment, let go of expectations, accept the gifts of each season all the while appreciating the pleasure of anticipation and knowing change will come.

Vicki Merriam, Director of Spiritual Development for Children and Youth

COOKIES, COCOA, AND CAROLS, 12/13: Cookies and cocoa will be served in the vestry during coffee hour leading up to a Carol Sing in the sanctuary for all.

11/22 through 12/13 - Sign up for roles in Pageant during coffee hour.

Sunday, Dec. 13, costume fitting after service in the Nursery

Sunday, Dec 20, rehearsal after service in the Sanctuary

Thursday, Dec. 24th - Plan to be here in costume by 4:00. Service begins at 5:00

you for your meals. We especially encourage children to collect coins at home each day in the special boxes and return on 12/22 when our Share the Plate offering will be for GAYT. Boxes, envelopes, and information are available in the Vestry.

12/20	Multigenerational worship, “Expect Love”
12/24	Christmas Eve family worship and pageant, “The Wonder of Christmas”. See pageant rehearsal schedule.
12/27	Chapel Sunday, games for all

Babies are especially welcome.

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, December 22, 1 p.m.</p> <p><i>Items submitted after deadline may not be included.</i></p>



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December 2015 Issue

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