



# FIRST CHURCH UNITARIAN

Littleton, Massachusetts  
Organized 1714

A Welcoming Congregation



# Welcome

*to the First Church Unitarian of Littleton, Massachusetts*



To our prospective minister,

If you are reading this, it means you have shown an interest in First Church Unitarian (FCU) in Littleton, MA. I am grateful to you for that interest.

As you will see from this packet and our website, FCU is a vibrant, active community. While we are in Search, we are simultaneously conducting a capital campaign, holding a practicum on our Covenant of Right Relations on the 10th anniversary of its adoption, and continuing the work we had started on evaluating our current model of governance. Don't worry, we won't adopt a new governance model without you.

I see FCU's future as bright as it is based on a long and strong history. Will we face challenges in the future together? I certainly hope so. What would be the point of an unchallenged existence? With highly functioning lay-led committees and ministries FCU is poised to meet those challenges with the right minister standing with us.

We seek in a minister, a spiritual leader who will enlighten us, inspire us, comfort us, and be partners with us on our shared journeys into the future.

We look forward to learning more about you in the coming weeks as you learn more about us.

Blessings,

*Mike Pilman, Ministerial Search Team Lead  
First Church Unitarian, Littleton MA*



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## Our Vision

We are a Joyful, Welcoming Community where we:

Honor Each

Explore the Sacred

Question Deeply

Seek Justice

Make a Difference

## Our Mission

The mission of First Church Unitarian is to be a welcoming, compassionate, and diverse community, seeking spiritual growth and fellowship while working for a just, peaceable, and sustainable world.



## Letters from Our Church Leaders

*Reverend Steve Edington  
Interim Minister*



Dear Colleague in the UU Ministry,

For the past year-and-a-half it has been my joy and privilege to serve the First Church Unitarian of Littleton, Massachusetts (FCU) as their interim minister. It is my third interim ministry position following a 24 year ministry with the UU Church of Nashua, New Hampshire where my wife and I continue to reside.

I think you would do well to give FCU serious consideration as you seek a settlement. It is a congregation with much to offer when it comes to having an exciting and creative ministry with them. A few things especially stand out for me about FCU as my interim ministry here begins to wind down:

- ◆ This is a congregation whose members and friends care deeply for one another. I have witnessed any number of acts of kindness and compassion amongst members and friends as circumstances call for them; and I am impressed by the work of their Pastoral Care Team.
- ◆ There is a very rich worship life here, which is greatly enhanced by the quality of the music and the talents of the Music Director. Thanks to the efforts of the last settled minister there is an excellent Worship Associates Team in place to help assure that the components of a service flow well.
- ◆ There is a strong social justice commitment within the congregation, greatly aided by an active Multi-Cultural Ministries Committee.
- ◆ There is an equally deep commitment to the overall quality of congregational life as exemplified by their Covenant of Right Relations which was drafted ten years ago and has been reaffirmed in a variety of ways since then.
- ◆ While the Religious Education program is small in size, it is well served by the long-time experience the current RE Director brings to her position.





## Letters from Our Church Leaders

*Reverend Steve Edington*  
*Interim Minister*

- ◆ I've enjoyed a very compatible relationship with a four member staff and assume a settled minister will do the same.
- ◆ And, finally, these people know how to have fun together!

Alongside all of the above, a ministry here will have its challenges—as practically any ministry would. There are still some very mixed feelings about the ministry and the departure of the previous settled minister. I believe we have dealt with many of these feelings in positive and constructive ways, but that does not mean they have disappeared. I'd be glad to offer my current assessment of this matter in any personal conversation you may wish to have with me.

And, of course, there are the challenges of financial needs, of an aging congregation, of a building in ongoing need of upkeep. In other words, the same kinds of challenges I'm guessing you are finding in several of the congregations you are currently considering.

Do feel free to contact me with any questions you may wish to ask about FCU. I'll try to be as informative and open as I can. My phone numbers are 603-883- 3141 (home), 603-930- 8781 (cell) and e-mail: [revsde@hotmail.com](mailto:revsde@hotmail.com).

My very best wishes to you in your search for a ministerial settlement.

In the collegial spirit,

Rev. Steve Edington, Interim Minister

First Church Unitarian of Littleton, Massachusetts

**"For me it's a place to be inspired."**





## Letters from Our Church Leaders

*Deb Girard, Standing Committee Chair  
& Debbie Eston, Deacon Chair*



Dear Prospective Minister,

On behalf of FCU's Executive Team we are pleased you are interested to learn more about First Church Unitarian, Littleton (FCU); who we are, what we offer members, friends, those seeking a liberal religious home and the minister we will call.

We are blessed to be leaders of a compassionate, thoughtful, justice seeking, welcoming, talented, interesting, fun congregation. A congregation up for finding ways to resolve the challenges we face as a small congregation with a desire to grow and live meaningful full lives.

While we enjoy our traditions, new ways are welcome. Finding the balance of honoring our history and opening to new ways can be challenging. At times FCU has struggled with this. We look forward to settling our next minister who will bring new ways to FCU.

In recent years congregants questioned whether or not our governance structure was meeting our needs and as a result we created a Governance Task Force responsible for bringing governance options to the community. That piece of the work is done and over the coming months we will continue to look at models that will work best in our church community. Engagement from our new minister will be important.

While there is a great deal on our plates, we have a vibrant and committed leadership group to help move the congregation forward.

We hope that you will be inspired by our congregation and look to us as your new home.

Sincerely,

Deb Girard

Chair of the Standing Committee

Debbie Eston

Chair of the Deacons







## Letters from Our Church Leaders

*Revs. Megan Lynes & Meg Soens  
Co-Presidents Mass Bay Chapter, UUMA*



Dear Colleague:

We are delighted that you are considering bringing your ministry to First Church Unitarian Littleton, a congregation with a rich and vibrant history.

The Mass Bay chapter of the UUMA is active and large, and you'll find significant collegial support here. We sponsor four chapter meetings a year that include worship, conversation, and a program on a meaningful and enriching topic. For example, one recent program was led by our Good Offices colleagues, and focused on issues that can potentially derail our ministries, with the topics supplied eagerly by those in attendance! We discussed steps we took or wish we'd taken to address issues, particularly by drawing on the advice and support of colleagues. We took time in small groups to reflect, listen deeply, and prayed for one another.

In the spring we usually have a two-day retreat focused on nurturing our ministries and lives. This fall instead of a chapter retreat we had a larger, three day regional retreat at a conference center in NH. It was a wonderful opportunity to join with many more colleagues for nurture, worship and learning!

There are many clergy small groups that meet on a monthly or bimonthly basis, and a member of our chapter executive team can point you to them or help a new one form if that makes the most sense.

Our chapter is intentional about our spirit of radical welcome, and we support one another through programming, mentoring, friendship and pulpit exchange. You can find out more about us online [UUMA.org](http://UUMA.org) and then clicking on our chapter's page. We would be glad to speak to you if that would be useful to your decision making process. Best of luck as you explore the possible match with First Church Unitarian Littleton.

Warmly,

Revs. Megan Lynes and Meg Soens  
Co-Presidents, Mass Bay Chapter, UUMA

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# Ministerial Search Team

## Search Team Vision

Our vision is one of small group ministry where we will work and reach and stretch ourselves in an effort to find 'that' minister who will walk with this congregation and help it to stretch as well. As individuals and small teams, we will take ownership for different pieces of the foundation that will allow us to attract great candidates. We will all speak from the heart and listen deeply when it comes time to narrow the candidates to two or three or four and finally one. We will stand as one before the congregation and, in one voice, present a candidate we found worthy to call Our Minister. We will support our new minister, however they self identify, so that they will have the best start possible with our congregation.



Mike Pilman, Lead

Mike Pilman, Search Team Leader has been an member of FCU since 2000, the same year he started attending UU services. Mike's involvement at FCU includes serving on the Standing, Stewardship, Membership, Building, Technology Committees; being a Worship Associate, singing with the choir as well as supporting numerous special events.

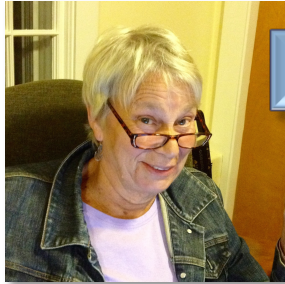
*"The Search is an awesome responsibility and an amazing opportunity. I feel humbled by the trust that the congregation has bestowed upon us. I feel blessed to be working with this wonderful group of individuals. We seek the gift of settled ministry to be bestowed upon us but FCU is also a gift and we seek the minister that we can offer this gift to in true and deep partnership."*







## Ministerial Search Team



Martha Childs

Martha Childs, Communication Coordinator, is responsible for keeping the congregation informed about the process and progress of the Ministerial Search Team. She is a third generation Unitarian who joined FCU sometime in the early 80's. For many years Martha was involved in the RE program as a teacher and committee member/chair. In 1999 she served on the Ministerial Search Committee and then went on to the Standing Committee, Deacons, Lay Pastoral Ministry and Nominating Committee. Martha currently is on the Transition Team and Personnel Committee. She is also a proud member of the Artemis Singers.

*"It's an honor to serve on the Search Team. This is a responsibility I welcome and look forward working with the MST, and the FCU community as a whole, to bring forward the best possible candidate as our next settled minister."*



Lynda Kaylor

Lynda Kaylor serves as our MST Treasurer and reference checker. She became a member of FCU in 2004 after attending services for a while. Over the years Lynda has been a member and then chairperson of the Adult Enrichment Committee. She has also participated in Soul Matters, Even Song and Covenant groups.

*"Honestly, being part of the Search Team seems like a daunting task. But like all challenges, it holds the possibility of significant rewards. For me, it is an opportunity to be of service to this caring and committed community that is such a vital part of my life. My hope is to be a part of the effort that channels our positive energy so we can move forward with a renewed sense of purpose."*

*"I continue to learn about myself and others and take that out to the world "*



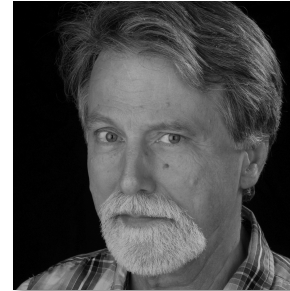
## Ministerial Search Team



Malcolm Kroh

Malcolm Kroh is a returning member, rejoining FCU in 2014, after a short membership from 2000-2003. He is currently serving as a Lay Pastoral Minister in addition to being the Survey Guru for the Ministerial Search Team. In response to recent events, he joined the Multicultural Ministries Committee to focus on anti-oppression work. He's also been known to do some (outstanding) cooking for church functions.

*"I see the Search process as a chance to learn more about the rich history and traditions of FCU, while looking forward to the future of where the church is going next. The next minister will guide us through some new challenges and create goals to carry the congregation into our next stage."*



Larry Licktieg

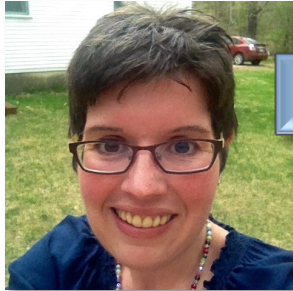
Larry Licktieg took the lead in editing the Congregational Record. Larry has been an active member of FCU since 1991 serving as a Deacon as well as participating in various committees including Lay Worship (chair), Bylaws, Adult Enrichment, Ministerial Intern Search, and Ministerial Liaison. Larry has worked with youth as a RE teacher and OWL instructor. He is currently serving as UU delegate to the UU Urban Ministry and chair of the Videography committee.

*"Members of the FCU congregation are warm, loving, supportive, and indefatigable in the depth and breadth of our caring for one another, and for others. Our next minister must continue to foster those qualities, seek to enlighten us, and help us search for peace and love in all walks of life. Essentially, our next minister must lead us, collaborate with us, and learn with us, both by example and by word."*





## Ministerial Search Team



Cindy Malley

Cindy Malley lives in Winchendon with her wife Dana and daughter Violet. She's been a member of this congregation for three years. She is serving as the Secretary of the MST as well as continuing to be an active member of the Multicultural Ministries Committee and a Worship Associate. In addition to her FCU roles Cindy is the Clerk for the Clara Barton District of the UUA and is a dedicated community volunteer. Her greatest joys include embarrassing her daughter in public, making people laugh and anything containing gluten.

*"I am honored to serve the congregation in this pivotal way. Being one of many hard-working, thoughtful and opinionated team members, I will do my best to put the future of FCU first in choosing our next ministerial candidate. Thank you for selecting me to serve you."*



Laura Semple

Laura first attended FCU in 1990 for the dedication of a family member. Laura quickly became an active member of the church community and was recruited to serve on the Membership Committee. Laura was one of the creators of the Firehouse Coffeehouse which was a musical venue at FCU for 20 years. Laura was also a lead organizer for our Annual Country Fair which is one of our largest fundraisers. Among other teams Laura has served on the Talent Auction, Stewardship, and Lay Ministry.

Laura's role on the team is organizing and securing the "neutral pulpits" for when we are ready to hear our potential candidates preach. She will also be leading in any "hospitality" aspects when working with our prospective candidates, ensuring that they are welcomed while visiting and learning about FCU.

*"I am very excited about serving on our search team. The work is rewarding and is also a wonderful opportunity to deepen relationships, learn new skills, and steward an exciting time for FCU."*



## The Minister We Seek

We understand that it is not possible for one minister to be all things to all people. If you have an interest in these key areas and some skill in the most needed, the congregation can partner with you in developing the rest. First and foremost we seek a preacher, a worship leader, and a spiritual guide. We hope to be informed and inspired by sermons, engaged in worship services, and guided in our shared spiritual journeys. We seek a counselor who is open and accessible and empathetic to the struggles of our congregants. We seek a minister that will join us on our journey to becoming what Josiah Royce and later Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. referred to as the “Beloved Community” that will welcome in and hold all people in our sphere of influence who are in search of that kind of community. We seek a team lead for our staff and an advisor for our lay-led committees. We have many gifts to share and seek a minister who will appreciate these gifts and have gifts she or he wishes to share with us.



“I live in a neighborhood but when I come here I feel part of the Community—people that share a lot of the values that I hold dear.”



## Our Church Community

### Past

The parish was formed in 1714 when what is now Littleton was organized as Nashoba Plantation. The first minister was Benjamin Shattuck, who served for a time as a lay minister and then was ordained on Christmas Day, 1717. At that time there was only one church in town, the town church.

In 1840, an amicable separation took place and the “orthodox congregationalists” left to form their own society and the monetary support from the town ended. By the end of that decade the church became affiliated the American Unitarian Association.

#### **Littleton Town Ministers**

*Benjamin Shattuck, 1717-1730*

*Daniel Rogers, 1732 -1782*

*Edmund Foster, 1782- 1826*

*William Hunt White, 1828-1833*

There are streets in Littleton today named after each of these men. Houses occupied by each of them still stand.



Until the 1970's, Littleton remained a small rural town that was reflected in the church community. During the thirty one years that he led First Church Unitarian, Rev. Robert Hadley and the congregation witnessed and adjusted to the changes coming to Littleton and the surrounding towns. National events also affected the church community; some members left because of Rev. Hadley's stated opposition to the war in Southeast Asia, while other members sponsored and supported a refugee family from Vietnam. Following Rev. Hadley's retirement, the church settled its first woman minister, Rev. Nannene Gowdy, who served for ten years as the membership continued to grow with more folks coming from the surrounding towns.





## Our Church Community

### Past

In 1999, after a successful interim experience with Rev. Alan Taylor, FCU settled Rev. Fred Small. As the new millennium began the church became a Welcoming Congregation and embarked on an exciting period of rapid growth. The membership swelled to over 200 and there was talk of building expansion and exploration of strategic planning. We were excited about the future and pleased to be welcoming new members. A lay pastoral committee was formed, children's and youth programming were dynamic and our Firehouse Coffee House was booming. We were surprised but understanding when Fred announced his resignation to become the senior minister at First Parish in Cambridge.



*William Channing Brown*  
Minister 1898-1904



In 2008, Rev. Marta Valentin joined us interim minister. She was well received by many in the congregation and although membership numbers dipped, new folks continued to come and stay. Through an unusual—and for some, controversial—process, Rev. Marta became our settled minister in 2010. Through her leadership we became more attuned to multicultural issues. The much-appreciated Beloved Conversations evolved into Multicultural Ministries Committee. She left in 2015 to join the New England Regional Staff of the UUA.



## Our Church Community

### Present

Continuing with the innovations that Rev. Marta brought to FCU—Worship Associates, Soul Matters and the Multicultural Ministries Committee—church life remains vibrant. With help from the UUA and our interim minister Rev. Steve Edington, the congregation has worked on addressing the unresolved conflicts engendered by the previous ministerial hiring process. We have resolved to move forward with a capital campaign to fund much needed repairs and upgrades to the physical plant. Our fund raising events are well supported by the membership. These include a fall fair, stewardship dinner and talent auction, all of which provide opportunities for fun and fellowship in addition to their fiduciary function. The children's RE programs are well attended by a smaller, yet dedicated, core group. Due to current demographics the current youth group is small but engaged, putting on a monthly before-church breakfast program and helping out in various church events.

“FCU isn't just a place to come on Sunday mornings. it's a place where you can find lifelong friendships and a sense of community.”

The Search Team has been pleased with the response to both the congregational survey and the Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop. Three cottage meetings were held to give members opportunities to share ideas and hopes for the future, which were very helpful to the team and, hopefully, to the participants. Rev. Edington, along with the personnel committee, has formalized and restructured staff supervision and support. FCU is fortunate to have a solid and dedicated staff who keep the church functions flowing smoothly.

New initiatives have been undertaken. A governance task force is analyzing our current structure in preparation for possible changes in the future. The community talent show organized by the outreach community this fall was well received and will be repeated.

We have come through a difficult period but continue to work together to support each other and this beloved community with optimism and determination.



# Our Church Community

## Future

We look forward to building on our strengths: a deep commitment to each other and a strong sense of community. At FCU there are so many opportunities to experience this vital connection to something greater than ourselves. It may come through an inspiring service, or singing in the choir or working together or teaching the children but it is here to be discovered.

During this time of political upheaval and a polarized society the importance of a safe, loving community will be even more important. The beliefs, values and practices embodied in Unitarian Universalism can provide a beacon of hope to those who are feeling fearful or outraged or helpless in the face of our uncertain national future. We seek to be a shelter from the storm.

There is a concern expressed in our surveys and workshops and conversations that we are an aging population. Vital, energetic, committed and creative we are to be sure, but also aware that the future of this church will depend on attracting more families and younger folks to sustain the momentum.

The FCU community holds a strong belief in the importance of social responsibility and is searching for a way forward to bring our message of love and respect for all people to the wider community. We have so much to offer.







# Caring for Each Other

## Support and Caring

### **Lay Pastoral Ministry Team**

The Lay Pastoral Ministers work in conjunction with the minister to provide a listening ear to any congregant who is in need of our confidential and caring support. They also assist in coordinating efforts when someone experiences a loss or a crisis and is in need of assistance.

### **Caring for Our Aging Parents (COAP)**

The COAP Group is a close, supportive group for those of us who are dealing with issues related to caring for aging loved ones. They meet once a month all year round. Newcomers are warmly welcomed and attendance has been varied as the needs of individuals change. This is truly a peer support group with no agenda, goals or leader but have occasionally invited speakers or guests to visit.

“It is a place we come to practice love. If we were all perfect we wouldn't need to practice.”

### **See A New Sun Foundation (SANS)**

SANS is a grass-roots organization of concerned citizens bound by the shared tragedy of a loved one lost to suicide. Their mission is simple: prevent suicide. They believe education is the key to prevention, so are focusing their efforts on advocacy and funding for school based suicide and mental health education programs. SANS works with schools, churches, and local organizations to raise awareness of the true nature of suicide, and in turn give organizations the tools to prevent suicide.





# Caring for Each Other

## Fellowship

### **Jammin' in the Kitchen**

Is a lively group of people who meet on Tuesday nights from the beginning of April through November, cooking up all varieties of homemade jams, jellies and pickles. With much of the fruit donated by local farms and congregants, they are able to make 600 or more jars which we sell at our annual Country Fair in the fall and the town's Holiday Bazaar in December. Anyone is welcome to come cook every week or once in awhile as they are able. We put on our aprons, some music to jam by, and have a great time raising money for our church!



“Being together with people from this church, in small groups particularly, is very nourishing.”

### **Women's Alliance**

The Women's Alliance is an organization for all women in the church. Its goals are to support the church, the community, and each other. Monthly meetings are held during the day on Saturdays, or on Saturday or Friday evenings from October through June.

### **Men's Group**

The Men's Group formed over 20 years ago and has been meeting every two weeks ever since. They share with each other the ups and downs of daily living. This group has provided support when needed and deepened relationships while enjoying each other's company.



# Caring for Each Other

## Fellowship



### Talent Night

In October 2016, FCU hosted the first Littleton Community Talent Show in the sanctuary through the initiative of the Member-Reach Committee and spearheaded by Julie Bucceri. We distributed flyers and used social media to invite everyone to sign up and participate—all ages, all talents, and all levels of ability—from in and around the Littleton community. We previewed a few acts to offer suggestions on length and presentation, but otherwise did not hold auditions or exclude anyone from participating. The evening was free to all and the performers included singers, musicians, a musical group, a magician, and an actor, with children and adults, members and non-members, and residents from Littleton and outlying communities all mixing together. The evening was a great success by general acclaim, and we are planning to host another show next year and we hope for years to come.

### Annual Church Camping Trip

On the weekend before Labor Day Weekend adventurous member drive an hour to an area campground to spend it in fun and fellowship. The kids have a blast and the adults get away from the din of all our electronic for a while. Like every UU congregation I know, we love our food and do not leave our gourmet talents at home when we go camping. You are welcome to join us for the weekend or the day.







# Caring for Each Other

## Adult Enrichment

### **Soul Matters**

FCU has adopted the Soul Matters small group themed ministry model promoted by the UUA. Each month, several different groups meet in a small, intimate setting to discuss how the monthly theme touches on their spiritual lives, to promote self-reflection and growth.

“FCU helps me build my spiritual path. I've learned a lot, grown a lot, experienced a lot while I've been here.”

### **TED Talks**

For the past two summers, FCU has offered Summer TED Talk Gatherings on Sunday mornings in the vestry of our church. TED Talks are billed as "Ideas worth spreading" and are short but powerful talks that cover an amazing range of topics. The topics we chose were congruent with our UU values and were thought provoking and stimulated lively discussions. Some themes included: Multiculturalism, Atheism, Body language, Happiness, to name a few.

We invited the wider community to the TED Talks and found they were popular and well attended. Happily, we even gained new members from this program and plan to continue it in the future.

### **Path to Membership Orientation**

We encourage those seeking to become members attend a two part Membership Orientation which is offered several times throughout the church year by the Member Reach Team.

Love is the spirit of this church  
and service its law.

This is our great covenant:  
To dwell together in peace,  
To seek the truth in love, and  
To help one another.



# Stewardship

## Membership Support

### Stewardship Dinner

Each year as a “kick off” to our Stewardship Campaign, our church members and friends are treated to an amazing meal prepared by the Stewardship Team. The dinner is a time for us to celebrate our gifts of talent, time, and treasure while lifting up our vision for the future of our church.



### Member Reach Team

Their function at FCU is focused on promoting membership to our church through community outreach and welcoming guests and newcomers to our congregation. Among their ongoing responsibilities are maintaining of name tags, keeping attendance totals for Sunday worship, having a greeter at the front door on Sundays and presenting the Path to Membership Orientation program three times yearly.

“There is a sense of awe that I have found here in the spiritual journey that I never found in any other place.”



## Stewardship

### Fundraising



### Country Fair

The Annual Country Fair is a church tradition of over 80 plus years. Church members and friends organize a fun and family friendly event for the Littleton and surrounding communities in beautiful Fay Park, which is located across the street from our church. The fair is one of our largest fundraising event. More significant than the financial aspect of the fair is the sense of community it builds within and outside the walls of our religious home.

### Holiday Bazaar

The Annual Littleton Holiday Bazaar is sponsored by the Littleton Rotary Club. Displays and gifts offered for sale are open to Littleton affiliated non-profit groups only. FCU sells their famous jams and jellies, along with a variety of craft goods made by the Women's Alliance.

### Talent Auction

Each year the church gathers together for a night of food and fun to raise money for general fund. Members of the church donate quilts and knitting, dinner parties and cooking classes, gift baskets and more. Each year is a different theme. This years event in on April 1<sup>st</sup>; I wonder what the theme will be!





## Musical Program

The choirs and the Music Director work together to offer and lead music for worship services. In addition to the organ and piano accompaniment provided by the music director, the choirs occasionally sing songs accompanied by some of the talented musicians in our congregation. All choirs present an annual spring concert. Our choirs' purpose is to serve the congregation through music and uplift the souls of the singers as they offer anthems and lead congregational song.

### Music Committee

The Music Committee supports the Music Director. This includes helping to set priorities for the music program at FCU, based on input from the congregation and the choirs. It also includes helping to coordinate events, such as the annual spring concert.

### Mixed Choir

The mixed choir is made up of adult members of the congregation. Through their ministry they are the primary source of anthem music in our worship services and hold and participate in annual concerts.

"I love music and I come into sanctuary for the service and the voices; the music that gets played moves me incredibly."





## Musical Program

### Artemis Singers

The Artemis Singers are a group of women brought together by music to celebrate the spirit and lives of women across the world. They are an open chorus, and we invite all women to join them in song. They provide singing for the anthem in worship once a month. They also participate in annual concerts.

"I always feel home here. I grew up Unitarian Universalist and it took a while to find a place in the location where I live. Coming here feels like coming home for me."



### Firehouse Band

FCU is blessed to call the Firehouse Band our resident house band. Singing and playing together for over 20 years, band members Carolyn Hotchkiss, Eric Semple, and Sara and Charlie Weeks created the Firehouse Band out of friendships and musical interactions at FCU. Their harmonizing vocals and musicianship will surely move your spirit and enrich your soul. The band often performs in church, host benefits concerts, and even travels to other UU churches to perform their "traveling musical" service, *"What's so Funny about Peace, Love, and Understanding"*.



## Social Justice and Action

### **Green Sanctuary**

The Unitarian Universalist Association's Green Sanctuary initiative promotes a sustainable lifestyle at church, home, work and in the community. In 2011 First Church Unitarian was granted Green Sanctuary certification from the Unitarian Universalist Association after meeting the standards of the Unitarian Universalist Society's Green Sanctuary Program requirements.



# LGBTQ

*Welcoming Congregation*

### **We are a Welcoming Congregation**

First Church Unitarian is a proud member of the UU Association's "Welcoming Congregation" program, which means we are committed to providing a warm and open environment to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people. For further information on this program please visit the UUA's Welcoming Congregation page.

### **Share The Plate**

Once a month, a non-profit organization supporting the principles of our congregation visits the pulpit to talk about their history and mission. From the offering collected at that worship service, all undesignated loose plate moneys are donated to that organization. Past organizations benefitting from Share The Plate include the Standing Rock Defense Fund, the Neuroblastoma Foundation, and the New Start Project.





## Social Justice and Action

“...the biggest thing for me right now is the whole multicultural movement in the church.”

### Neighborhood Supper

For 25 years, FCU along with three other churches have supported the Neighborhood Supper that provides a “home-cooked” meal every Tuesday evening at the Littleton Congregational Church for 40-60 guests. Each church puts on the supper once a month, from prepping and cooking to serving and clean up, thanks to the efforts of 10-15 volunteers. The supper is a positive community experience for the guests, many of whom face financial challenges or are socially isolated. It is a labor of love for the cooks and crew.

### Multicultural Ministry Committee

The Multicultural Ministries Committee (MMC) is a vibrant group within our church. It is made up of members who share a passion for social justice work with regard to multiculturalism, anti-racism and anti-oppression. They are actively pursuing the greater awareness for both our members and the larger community. MMC members lead Sunday services, offer multicultural film series and discussions, present monthly Ted Talks during the summer, lead the Beloved Conversations Workshops, support a Multicultural Lending Library, recently sponsored an 8-session workshop titled “Being White in a Racist World”, host G.R.A.C.E (Growing Racial and Cultural Equity) events and members visibly support and participate in the Black Lives Matter movement.

### Urban Ministry

We are an active member of the UU Urban Ministry and participate regularly in the Explorers’ club in Roxbury with young children of color.





# Social Justice and Action

## **Prison and Justice Reform Ministry**

The Prison and Justice Reform Ministry is part of the Council of Social Justice (CSJ) at FCU.

The goals of the ministry are to:

- ◆ Raise awareness to reduce the prison population in Massachusetts and correct the systematic injustice toward accused and incarcerated people who may be disproportionately black and/or Latino; addicted to drugs/alcohol; and/or suffer from mental illness, poverty, lack of education, and economic opportunity.
- ◆ Encourage voters to influence lawmakers to pass laws to reform our justice and corrections system.
- ◆ Reduce the stigma and dehumanization of incarcerated people.

The ministry strives to achieve these goals by:

- ◆ Advocating for justice reform with legislators to pass a series of laws
- ◆ Educating the community on the injustice of mass incarceration
- ◆ Offering the opportunity to put a face on the incarcerated through volunteering

Susan Tordella, chair of the CSJ, co-founded End Mass Incarceration Together (EMIT), a statewide, interfaith, volunteer, activist organization, with UUs from other congregations. FCU supports EMIT by raising awareness by showing films, taking action when invited at rallies, and by visiting state reps to inform them so they take action to reform our justice and corrections systems.

Three FCUers visit prison through Toastmasters—Susan Tordella, Cynthia Heiland, and Lynn Cina. Carole Tillis often bakes when EMIT caters a briefing at the Statehouse for legislators and staffers to learn about ending mass incarceration. Bob Williams is supportive with time, food and money.

In the past three years, formerly incarcerated speakers have filled the pulpit, encouraging FCU members to give through share-the-plate for the New Start Project, for citizens returning home from incarceration. Prison volunteers have also filled the pulpit.



## Social Justice and Action

### Loaves and Fishes

In the organization's own words, "Loaves and Fishes exists as a mission of faith to serve people of Ayer, Devens, Groton, Harvard, Littleton, and Shirley by providing food, emergency shelter, resource referral and other temporary services, and by advocating for changes by its clients that will promote independence and self-reliance." Here at FCU, we collect food and sundries for Loaves and Fishes and ask for special assistance for holidays, to fill backpacks, and in June to fill the pantry's shelves for summer.



### Holiday Gift Giving

The Littleton Council of Churches sponsors the Star Program, designed to fill the shelves at Loaves and Fishes with Holiday gifts donated by congregants of each church. Congregant donated gifts cards also support the Littleton Group Home during the holiday season.

"We're always looking at how we can work with each other and become the souls that we want to be in this world."





## Covenant of Right Relations

This Covenant of Right Relations was adopted at Annual Meeting May 21, 2006 and re-approved by our congregation at the Annual Meeting on May 21, 2016 in celebration of its ten year anniversary to guide our community interactions and insure we show each other the respect that is appropriate for our loving community. We value the covenant as critical to building beloved community, and read it aloud before warranted church meetings and at other gatherings where it is deemed important to uphold the covenant as a guide to safe and respectful conversation.

*As love is the spirit of our congregation, as best as I am able,  
acknowledging our human frailties with compassion,  
I covenant:*

To be open, honest, attentive, and compassionate to all;  
To honor our diverse viewpoints;  
To listen with an open heart;  
To speak respectfully and compassionately  
of those present and not present;  
To deal directly with others to resolve conflict;  
To explore and accept my responsibility in conflict;  
To look for the good intentions of others;  
To be patient and gracious;  
To seek common ground;  
To forgive and to accept forgiveness;  
To ask for help when I need it and to give help as I am able;  
To show appreciation.





# Covenant of Right Relations

## Living Our Covenant

Beginning in October of 2016, for the first time several members of the congregation are offering a series of workshops, *Living our Covenant of Right Relations*, designed to give participants the opportunity to learn about and practice some of the skills that the covenant asks of us. The monthly workshops require no advance registration, and members and friends of FCU may attend whichever sessions they prefer. Sessions are facilitated by fellow FCU members with interest or expertise in a particular element of the covenant and/or model of engaging in right relations. Most include a combination of presentation, discussion, and experiential work.



Topics this year include:

- ◆ Personal Stories of Covenant Challenges,
- ◆ Clearing (a model for addressing conflict),
- ◆ Understanding and Practicing Right Relations Across Difference,
- ◆ Radical Amity,
- ◆ Exploring the Practice of Being Patient and Gracious,
- ◆ Giving & Receiving Appreciation,
- ◆ Experimental Global Process, and
- ◆ Exploring Mental Models: How examining our assumptions can foster right relations.

Sessions have been well received so far, and we hope they will continue beyond this year, evolving with the needs of the congregation.



# Sunday Morning Worship

## Sunday Services

Sunday morning worship is for many the core of our congregational life, a time we share in reverence, love, and contemplation of ultimate things. Sunday Morning Worship is held in the Sanctuary at 10 AM from the Sunday after Labor Day through late June. Through hymns, readings, stories, meditation, prayer, candles of caring, and the sermon, our worship is intended to comfort and stimulate parishioners of diverse traditions and beliefs.

Why do we come together in worship? We come to be in community to explore and share our common and our unique beliefs both spiritual and secular. We come to learn and to remember our commitment to our covenant and UU Principles.

Our minister in concert with our Music Director, DRE and dedicated team of Worship Associates craft thoughtful worship services. The love that our congregation has for music, especially in our worship services, cannot be overstated. We are a small congregation with two strong choirs. The “Mixed Choir” perform the anthem most Sundays and the Artemis Singers perform the anthem once a month. Each Sunday we have our “Time for All Ages” where the children are welcomed to sit on the floor and listen to a story provided by our DRE before we, the congregation, sing them on their way to their classes, that is except for one Sunday a month when they stay for our multigenerational worship. In addition to helping to plan services one of our Worship Associates is always on hand to help facilitate worship.



“Sunday worship service is a time I can count on, maybe the only time of the week when I can be still, be present.”





## Sunday Morning Worship

Once a month, when our minister is out of the pulpit, we have carefully crafted services brought to us by our Deacons, Social Justice Committee or a visitor from outside of our community. Also once a month the church offers up our plate offerings to a worthy cause that may be local or for a cause across the globe. We usually welcome in a speaker to deliver a short message on the charity during the service.



### **Worship Associate Team**

FCU supports our minister and staff with a 5-member volunteer Worship Associate Team. These dedicated members perform the “hidden” tasks that make our Sunday and special services run smoothly, such as making sure that everything is in its proper place, providing the speakers with water and preparing candles. They also make sure the microphones are functioning properly, that everyone understands their part of the service and manage any “hiccups” that occur. They participate in monthly meetings where they provide feedback to staff and help organize lay-led services.

### **Videography**

The FCU Videography Committee was formed in 2001 in response to the expressed desire of members of First Church Unitarian to share our Sunday services and special events with those who are unable to attend.



# Sunday Morning Worship

You can see the normal flow of our worship services in our regular order of service. Other orders of service can be downloaded here.

Please put electronic devices in "worship mode."

For an assisted listening device or a large print hymnal, please see an usher.  
During the offertory, votive candles on the chancel may be lit for a joy or sorrow.

*"Anticipation...is making me wait."*  
~Carly Simon

## Community Matters

### *Entering into Sacred Space*

Prelude O Tannenbaum Arr. Vince Guaraldi

## Call to Worship

## Chalice Lighting

## Covenant

Love is the spirit of this church, and service its law.  
This is our great covenant: to dwell together in peace,  
To seek the truth in love,  
And to help one another.

Words of Welcome Rev. Steve Edington

Opening Hymn #57 All Beautiful the March of Days

### *Exploration*

A Time for All Ages How Come Christmas? Roark Bradford

## Lantern Lighting/Song of Blessing

*May your mind be open to new learning.*

*May your lips bring truth into the world.*

*May your heart know love, and your hands do the work of justice,*

*As you go your way in peace, as you go your way in peace.*

## Anthem

Good King Wenceslas

John Mason Neale

### *Building Beloved Community*

## Opportunity for Generosity – Receiving Our Offering

## Offertory

Saetas

Eduardo Torres

### Offering response:

We are grateful for these gifts we have received.

They sustain us and affirm the ministries of our church community.

## Candles of Caring

### Community Response (Sung):

From you I receive; to you I give.

Together we share, and from this we live.

## Words for Reflection#664

*Give Us the Spirit of the Child*  
(Read antiphonally)

## A Time of Silence

## Response (Sung) #123

Spirit of Life

## Sermon

When There Really Was a "War on Christmas"  
Rev. Steve Edington

## Closing Hymn#226

People Look East

### *Sending Forth*

## Closing Words

## Postlude

Skating

Vince Guaraldi

*\*We gather in the Vestry following our worship, and invite you to join us. \**







## Special Worship Services

Our regular services year runs from the Sunday after Labor Day to the Sunday before the UUA General Assembly. We have had a variety of opportunities to be in community during the summer months. For the past two years, the Deacons have hosted a “TED Talk Gatherings” program. FCU continues to participate—as it has for many years—in a “Joint Summer Service” with other area UU Churches. This year the churches gathered at FCU. We also have a number of special services during the regular church year.

### **Yule Service**

The Yule service continues an ancient celebration at the Winter Solstice. On the longest night, as winter begins, the light is reborn—and so are life and love and the promise of returning spring. This is an intergenerational service open to all ages.

### **The Wonder of Christmas – Multigenerational Service and Pageant**

This is our traditional Christmas Eve multigenerational service. We gather in the nurturing darkness and the warmth of light to celebrate this wonderful time of year. Our children and youth present the Nativity Pageant, we sing many carols, light many candles, and have a visit from Santa before going on our way.

### **Christmas Eve Candlelight Service**

The Candlelight Service features the Ceremony of Light, in which the sanctuary is darkened and each person holding a candle passes the flame until the entire sanctuary is again filled with light. This service also includes readings and carols sung by the congregation and choirs.





## Special Worship Services

### Remembrance Sunday

In a beautiful and moving ceremony at the first Sunday service in January, we remember relatives and friends who have died during the past year, and we celebrate births, adoptions, and dedications of children. As we speak the names of loved ones who are gone or those who have come into our lives, we light candles in sconces around the church.

### Maundy Thursday

This service, with deep roots in the Christian tradition, commemorates the Last Supper celebrated by Jesus prior to his crucifixion. Held the Thursday evening before Easter, it is the one service of the year in which communion is presented.

“...for me the most important things are the people and all the memories that I built up over the years.”



### Recognition Sunday

Twice a year, new members are formally welcomed into the church family. In this ceremony new members receive a certificate of membership.

### Religious Education Sunday

During this service, the children are recognized for their accomplishments in the Sunday School and their teachers are honored for their service.



## Special Worship Services

### **Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service**

The Sunday evening before Thanksgiving, the Baptist, Catholic, Congregational and Unitarian Universalist churches of Littleton present a joint ecumenical service. Led by all the ministers, the service features reflections by lay representatives on a common theme. Hosting the service rotates annually among the churches.



### **Sacred Circle Dance**

A gentle healing way to bring body, mind and spirit together. To relieve daily stress and release creative energy. To feel centered and connected.

FCU is fortunate to have a trained Sacred Circle Dance instructor, Ron Willett, as a member of our congregations. Ron volunteers his skill and brings his passion to FCU by leading a Sacred Circle Dance in our Vestry April through December. Sacred Circle Dance is open members and non-member and brings in people from all over the region.







## Religious Education

Religious Education (RE) is offered for children in pre-Kindergarten through grade eight as well as a Senior Youth group. The Religious Education program at FCU is a co-operative model with the religious education program facilitated by volunteers from our church community. The quality of the programming offered to the youth of this church is directly dependent on the commitment and participation of the adult members of our church. Parents and non-parenting adults will be asked to volunteer.

### ***UU Principles Children's Version***

*Every person is important.  
Be kind in all you do.  
We're free to learn together.  
We can search for what is true.  
All people need a voice.  
Build a fair and peaceful world.  
We care for the Earth.*



### **Worship In the Sanctuary**

Children and youth experience being part of our whole church community by participating in congregational worship in the Sanctuary for the first part of the service every Sunday which begins at 10:00 a.m. Following "Time For All Ages" they and their teachers are "sung out" to join their religious education program.

Multi-generational services of varied themes are held once a month in which children remain in the Sanctuary for the entire service. Children under four are cared for in the Nursery during the worship service. Quiet activities can be found in the basket by the entrance.



# Religious Education

## Programs for Children & Youth

### **Spirit Play (cycle 1); 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 Unitarian Universalist values and beliefs.

### **Love Will Guide Us; elementary school ages**

In this program, participants learn to seek guidance in life through the lens of our Unitarian Universalist Sources, with an emphasis on love. Together we ask questions such as, "Where did we come from?" "What is our relationship to the Earth and other creatures?" "How can we respond with love, even in bad situations?" "What happens when one dies?" Sessions apply wisdom from our Sources to help participants answer these questions.

### **Spirit of Adventure; middle school ages**

What? No more gold sprayed macaroni crafts? Not in this class! Religious education has been defined by fine motor activities and table crafts. This curriculum adds different kinds of learning, the learning from physical movement and the learning from challenge and adventure. It teaches UU identity without the usual arts and crafts projects and includes activities like dissecting a computer, building cantilevered architecture using graham crackers, interviewing a sports coach, eating smoked oysters, and singing Jingle Bells in "dog" language!





# Religious Education

## Programs for Children & Youth

### **Junior Youth Group (JYG) - grades 7 & 8**

Our JYG meets twice per month on Sunday mornings during RE class time. Occasionally they get together at other times for fun and for Social Action projects and may join other youth from UU Congregations in the area to share ideas and experiences as well as develop new friendships.

**Our Whole Lives (OWL)**, the award winning UUA sexuality and faith program for 7th and 8th graders is offered every other year.

### **Senior Youth Group (SYG) - high school**

The SYG meets 1st and 3rd Sundays at 10:00 a.m. to share, worship, discuss life issues, participate in social justice projects, and learn how to live and lead using our UU Principles. They also may meet at other times and during spring school vacation participate in a major service project of their choosing. On the first Sunday of the month they sponsor, prepare and serve a delicious pancake breakfast for all as a fund raiser to support their service projects.



### **Chapel Sundays; all ages**

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

### **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.





## Active in Our Denomination

Members of FCU are active in our denomination in many ways. We have members who participate and lead events at the Rowe Camp and Conference Center in Western Massachusetts. A member of our congregation, Araya Fast, serves on the New England Region's G.R.A.C.E (Growing Racial and Cultural Equity) team. Another member of our congregation and of our Search Team, Cindy Malley, has served as the Clara Barton District's Clerk for the past 4 years and as a member of the District's Nominating Committee for 3 years before that.



### Representation at GA

We are proud to say that we have had many members within our congregation attend General Assemblies. Encouraged by our minister, ten members, along with children who were selected to sing in the children's choir, we journeyed to the Nashville to revel in all that is GA. Nashville was the first GA that we had members attend and proudly we boast that we almost always have some representation at GA.

### Council of Churches

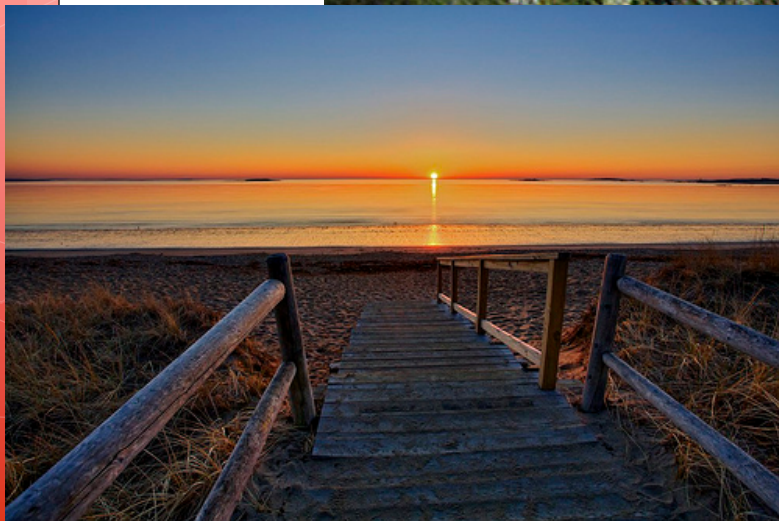
The Littleton Council of Churches (LCOC) exists to help the constituent churches carry out their united activities, and support each other's efforts, to advance the spiritual, moral, and social welfare of the community. Representation on the Council consists of the pastor or minister and up to three other delegates from each participating congregation. FCU's congregants and minister continue to be active members of the council. Presently FCU is represented by Debbie Eston, congregant and the Reverend Steve Edington. Debbie is the Treasurer of the LCOC.



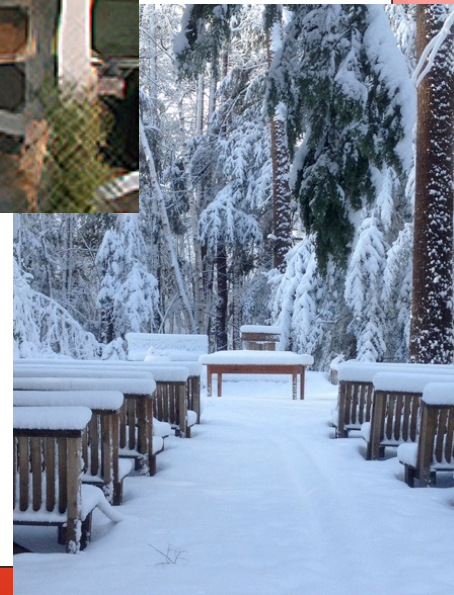
## Active in Our Denomination

### Ferry Beach

Many congregants have a strong connection to the Ferry Beach Park Association, a retreat and conference center located on the coast of southern Maine. Ron Willett currently serves on the Board of Directors as Secretary. Others serve during the annual clean-up week, attend summer conferences and winter reunions, or just enjoy a peaceful camping trip.



FERRY BEACH  
PARK ASSOCIATION





# Governance

## Governance Structure

The **Executive Team** is comprised of the Standing Committee and the Board of Deacons. The Team has been meeting for the last ten years in order to coordinate the business and spiritual aspects of the church, as “business” decisions often have spiritual ramifications. In these situations the purpose of the Executive Team is to facilitate the Deacons and Standing Committee consulting with each other.

- ◆ The **Standing Committee** (SC) is responsible for the finances, administration, property, and business affairs of the Church. The SC can form committees, appoint chairs and members of those committees and disband those committees. Those committees that are formed by the congregation in a warranted meeting make reports to the SC with the exception of the Committee on Ministry. The Standing Committee is responsible for hiring and continuing employment arrangements with non ministerial staff. The Standing Committee is responsible for approving the ministers compensation, periodically reviewing and renewing that agreement.
- ◆ The **Deacons** elected by the congregation, serve, in concert with the minister, to promote the spiritual life of the Church. Deacons are members of the Executive Team and have an active role throughout the year in many areas of church life being an integral part of special services and events; coordinating hospitality on Sunday morning and the Share-the-Plate program; supporting committees focused on aspects of the worship service. The Deacons communicate with the congregation in various ways: Community Matters, the Deacons Blog on the website, the Deacons’ bulletin board in the Vestry (and of course in person). As FCU’s Worship Associates ministry deepens the Deacons are coordinating any overlapping responsibilities to ensure both ministries are effectively serving the congregation.

See the [FCU Bylaws](#) and the most recent [Annual Report](#).





# Governance

## Governance Structure

The **Nominating Committee** serves the congregation by interviewing Members of the church and presenting candidates for elected offices in the church lay leadership. These include Deacons, Standing Committee (Board), Clerk, Moderator, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Auditor, Trustees, and the Nominating Committee itself.

The **Transition Team** was formed by the Standing Committee to assist the congregation and the Interim Minister during the two year period leading to a new settled minister

The **Information Technology Group** is responsible for maintaining the wireless network, addressing printer issues, maintaining the volunteer center computer and keeping the staff computers maintained and serving the needs of their owners.

## Governance Task Force

The Standing Committee of First Church, Unitarian of Littleton commissioned a Governance Task Force to assess and determine how well the FCU congregation is being served by its current governance structure. This includes evaluation of the strengths of our current model, as well as any possible gaps or deficiencies that limit our ability as a congregation to exercise governance at a level that best serves our needs. If the Task Force determines that such gaps or deficiencies warrant changes, they will also research and evaluate other potential methods of governance that could be of value to our congregation. Ultimately this work will be one of the factors in helping the congregation determine the kind of minister we are looking for as we embark on the settlement process for calling our next minister. No major decision about the future of governance at FCU will be made prior to settling and consulting with our new minister.





## Our Staff

Vicki Merriam  
*Director of Religious Education*



For most of her life, Vicki has devoted herself to being an advocate for and educator of children and youth. As a volunteer, professional, parent, grandparent, and friend she has sought to help children and youth be the best they can be, to encourage them in their search for knowledge and understanding, and to grow in kindness and love. She puts her faith in a future they will create.

One significant and influential position was her 15 years as Case Manager and then Independent Living Program Director for The Bridge Youth Services in Connecticut from 1995 to 2011. Her work to help troubled adolescents and young adults become self-sustaining, productive, and happy was extremely rewarding and created long lasting friendships.

Vicki retired in June of 2014 after 35 years as the Director of Religious Education at the Unitarian Universalist Society: East in Manchester, CT. Very soon after, she realized she still had a desire to work with children as well as more to give. She came to First Church Unitarian, Littleton in August of 2014 and is delighted to be here.

She enjoys the congregation, its members and friends, whom she finds to be committed and sincere Unitarian Universalists. They work hard, have a great sense of humor, and wholeheartedly support religious education and Vicki's calling. She hopes to continue as their DRE for many years to come and looks forward to working with a new minister.



## Our Staff

Molly Lozeau  
*Organist and Music Director*



Molly is the music director at First Church Unitarian in Littleton, Massachusetts where she leads the choir and helps coordinate and perform music for services on piano and organ. She teaches piano and coaches vocal students at Saint Anselm College and Southern New Hampshire University, where she developed the piano proficiency curriculum and participates regularly in faculty recitals. She has been accompanying the Concord Chorale since 2011, also serving as performance pianist, ensemble pianist, and guest conductor. Molly's additional involvement in performance and music education has been widespread. She is a founding member of the Open Aire Ensemble.

She also has performed extensively with Opera North in Lebanon, NH and the Boston-based Opera To Go and Guerilla Opera. Molly has taught at the Nashua Community Music School, coached and accompanied high school vocalists, saxophonists, flutists, and clarinetists at Boston University's Tanglewood Institute, accompanied the choir at the Arlington Street Church in Boston, and provided live piano music at the Boston Ballet Institute and the New England School of Dance in Bedford, NH.

Molly holds a bachelor's degree in piano performance from Butler University and a master's degree in collaborative piano from Boston University.





## Our Staff

Henry Whitcomb Jr.  
*Sexton*



Henry Whitcomb has been FCU's sexton since December 2000. Henry was dedicated at FCU in 1961 and is the eldest son of long time church members Henry Sr. and Barbara Whitcomb. Henry's father was FCU's Sexton for many years prior to Henry taking on the sexton role.

Henry is also a partner at Henry Whitcomb Builder LLC and has been building and remodeling homes over 40 years.

Henry is a licensed construction supervisor as well as being certified as a lead safe renovator, is ServSafe certified and has completed an OSHA construction safety and health course.

Tom Cowen  
*Office Administrator*



In the course of a few years of volunteer work on several levels at First UU Church of Houston, TX, Tom found great joy in being involved in the business of church work. He worked with the senior Church Administrator for several years and, when she decided to move on, was offered the opportunity to step up and take her place.

Tom's administrative skills run the gamut of a religious professional. He honed those skills in service to a large congregation and having experienced just about every kind of event that can manifest itself in a church community. Tom is now in New England, after retiring from his home church in Houston, and has found another home in FCU. He has recently been trusted to step into the role of Church Office Administrator. He says "It's a 'ministry' of great rewards."



## Our Staff

*Reverend Steve Edington*  
*Interim Minister*

Steve's religious and spiritual journey began in an evangelical Baptist church in southern West Virginia where he heard the "call" to ministry at age 13. After a very liberalizing and liberating college experience he entered, and four years later graduated from, the Colgate Rochester Divinity School of Rochester, New York—a very liberal, mainline Protestant theological seminary.

His first years out of seminary were as an interfaith Protestant campus minister at a couple of mid-west Universities. For readers of the "Doonesbury" comic strip Steve calls those years his "Rev. Scot Sloan" days.

In 1978 Steve changed his affiliation from American Baptist to Unitarian Universalist, and has been in the UU ministry ever since. After serving UU congregations in Rockland, Maine and Stony Brook, New York, he settled in for a long-term, twenty-four year ministry with the Unitarian Universalist Church of Nashua, New Hampshire. After concluding this ministry in the summer of 2012, Steve has served as an interim minister with the UU congregations of Manchester, New Hampshire, Montpelier, Vermont, and—currently—the First Church, Unitarian, of Littleton, Massachusetts.

Steve has been an occasional adjunct faculty member at the University of Massachusetts at Lowell, teaching courses on "The Literature of the Beat Movement." In Lowell he's also a long-time member of the Lowell Celebrates Kerouac Committee which produces an annual Jack Kerouac Festival every October. He is the author of *Kerouac's Nashua Connection*, *The Beat Face of God—The Beat Generation Writers as Spirit Guides*, *Bring Your Own God—The Spirituality of Woody Guthrie*, and *Troubadour and Poet—The Magical Ministry of Ric Masten*.

Steve and his wife, Michele Scovotti Edington, reside in Nashua, NH. They have one son, Gordon Michael, who is a civil engineer, working in Portland, Maine. Gordon and his wife, Crystal Cassidy Edington live in Kennebunk, Maine with their daughter, and Steve and Michele's grand-daughter, Alexa Nicole.



## Our Building and Grounds

The **Building Committee** is responsible for a host of long- and short-term tasks related to the care, preservation and use of the church building and grounds. We strive to efficiently provide an accessible, sustainable, fair, and friendly environment, while trading off resources and priorities, for all that use the property and indeed for the building itself.

### About the Church Building

Twenty years after the founding, the present location on Foster Street (then known as Ridge Hill), was chosen for a new building. Three churches have been erected on this site. The first two of these buildings were torn down to create larger buildings to accommodate a growing congregation. The third building lasted less than fifty years, when it was replaced because of its poor condition. Through each of the re-buildings, timbers from the older structures were incorporated into the new buildings. The present building was erected in 1841.



- ◆ The first church in Littleton was built on the eastern triangle of the Town Common in 1717
- ◆ The first church building on the present site of the Unitarian Church was completed in 1742 at a cost of £900
- ◆ The present church is the third such building on this site
- ◆ The present church was completed in 1841, at a cost of \$3,217.90. The construction was financed by auctioning the pews to church members.
- ◆ On the church bell is inscribed:

*First Bell 1770*

*Second Bell 1808*

*recast and enlarged 1903*

*On earth peace, good will toward men.*

- ◆ The columns in front of the church are hollow, and hold the weights that drive the clock. The clock itself was installed in 1903.

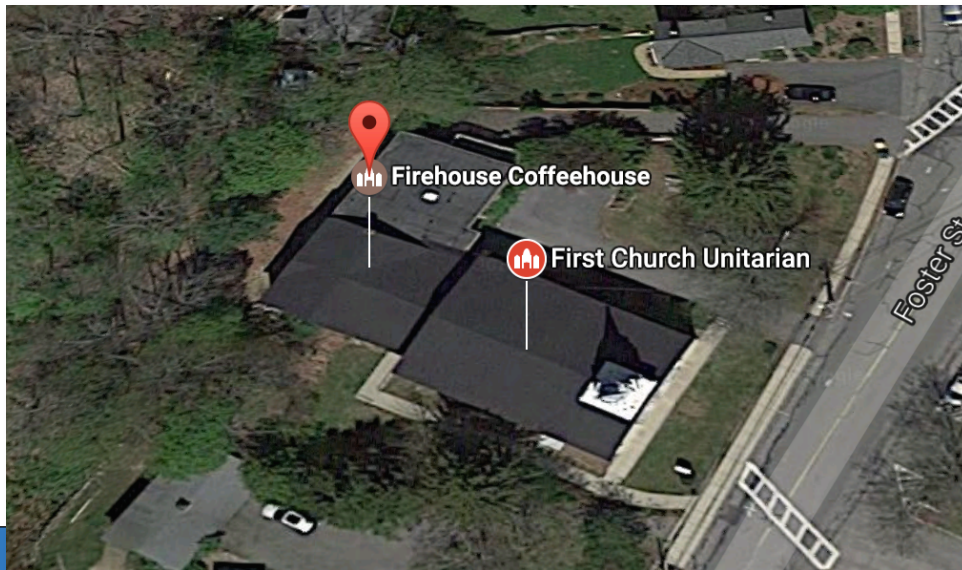




## Our Building and Grounds

### About the Church Building, cont.

Various changes in the structure have been made during the past 160 years. The floor of the sanctuary was raised (the vestibule remains at the original level), a two-story addition that includes the vestry was added in the 1880s, a complete interior remodeling was accomplished in the early 1900s to create a sanctuary in the Greek Revival style, and later the horse sheds attached to the church were torn down. The ones on the right of the building were removed to make room for the Sunday School wing built in 1961. Other changes have included installation of an 1891 Woodbury & Sons tracker organ, a recasting of the church bell, two reconstructions of the steeple—one at the beginning of the twentieth century and the second at the end of the century—and modifications for accessibility.





## Our Building and Grounds

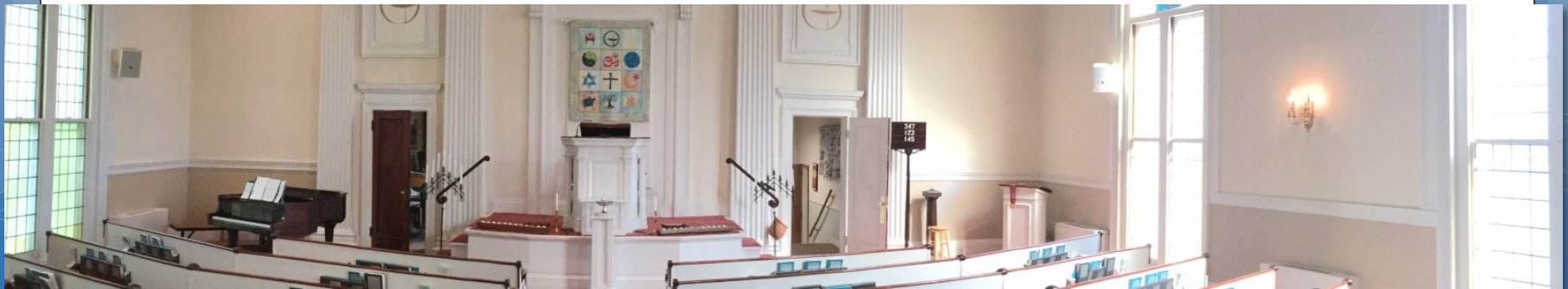
### Foyer and Sanctuary

On Sunday mornings we enter through the front doors that have been welcoming visitors for 302 years. The foyer provides a space to greet each other and prepare to enter into the sacred space of the sanctuary. Nametags for each congregant hang on one wall, and the rest of the space is scattered with various historical displays about the church.



**“I get new insights or ideas that really help me adjust my daily life.”**

The sanctuary is buzzing with conversations and preparations until the bell sounds and our worship begins in this lovely sacred space that holds so much history. The traditional stained glass windows and architectural elements complement our beautiful handmade quilt hanging above the altar. Our tracker organ, installed in 1899, enriches the sanctuary with its amazing sound. The new piano, a Steinway grand, was donated by a generous couple in 2008.



*Click on the image to view a 360-degree tour of the sanctuary.*





## Our Building and Grounds

### Volunteer Center and Vestry

Behind the sanctuary is the an office space we call the volunteer center. It serves as a meeting room, file room, mail room, office supply room, and office equipment room. It also houses a lift allowing for wheelchair access to the sanctuary.

On the left as you leave the volunteer center is the vestry. The vestry is where we gather after the Sunday service for coffee hour, and during the week to show movies, circle dance, and hold many other small- to medium-sized gatherings. There is a small kitchen attached to the vestry.



*Click on the image to view a 360-degree tour of the vestry.*





## Our Building and Grounds

### Staff Offices and Other Rooms

For the rest of the week the side door is used to enter the “business” space of the church. Down the half flight of stairs from the volunteer center and on the right is the office administrator’s office.

Down that hall is the minister’s office.



Further down that hall is the Alliance Room. The room is furnished and decorate by the Alliance— formerly “The Women’s Alliance”—as a sitting room and is open for all meetings of up to about a dozen people. It is the prized meeting room at FCU.

At the end of that hall on the left is an office space for the DRE and the Music Director and on the right is the nursery.



## Our Building and Grounds

### Lower Level—Dining Room

There is a wide staircase between the office administrator's office and the minister's office leading downstairs. That downstairs is not “accessible” from the inside but there is a driveway on the right-hand side of the church which provides wheelchair access.

The downstairs dining room can seat over 100 people for dinner and has a double kitchen. This well-equipped kitchen area is where the “jammers” meet regularly to concoct their famous and fabulous jams and jellies. This room is used for large group meeting and special events, especially those involving food (our Stewardship Dinner is not to be missed). It has become a much more usable space thanks to the building committee who installed sound deadening panels as part of our Capital Campaign.



*Click on the image to view a 360-degree tour of the lower level dining room.*





## Our Building and Grounds

### Lower Level—RE Rooms

Down the hall from the dining room is the Senior Youth Group room which was renovated and furnished by the “Coming of Age” group last year.

There are two additional rooms that can be used by the RE program downstairs.



The outside grounds are lovingly cared for by members of the congregation who take it upon themselves to plant, weed and water the gardens for the enjoyment of all. The building that is First Church Unitarian says a lot about the people who occupy it. We care for and respect our spiritual home as we care for and respect each other.





# Our Finances

## The Financial Team

“It's community—really, beloved community—that phrase from the civil rights movement, I think is special to me.”

### **The Stewardship Committee**

The Stewardship team works to insure the financial development of the church. Each year the team holds a stewardship dinner to kick off our annual campaign. Some years ago we began the transition from a congregation with an annual pledge drive that did not really talk about money to a community where stewardship, including financial support, was openly discussed and embraced. Our annual campaigns since have been easier and more successful.

### **The Finance Committee**

Consisting of three elected officers, the Treasurer, the Assistant Treasurer and the Auditor, the committee advises the Standing Committee and the Church membership on sound financial policies and practices to ensure the financial health of the Church.

### **The Trustees**

The trustees are responsible for managing the financial investments of the church, commonly referred to as “the Endowment”. They manage a collection of restricted and unrestricted funds. Through their efforts the church has been able to grow the endowment while supplying some operating funds each year. The trustees have grown the endowment to \$693,509 as of the last annual report. The endowment contributes between \$30,000 and \$35,000 in interest income to the church operations annually.



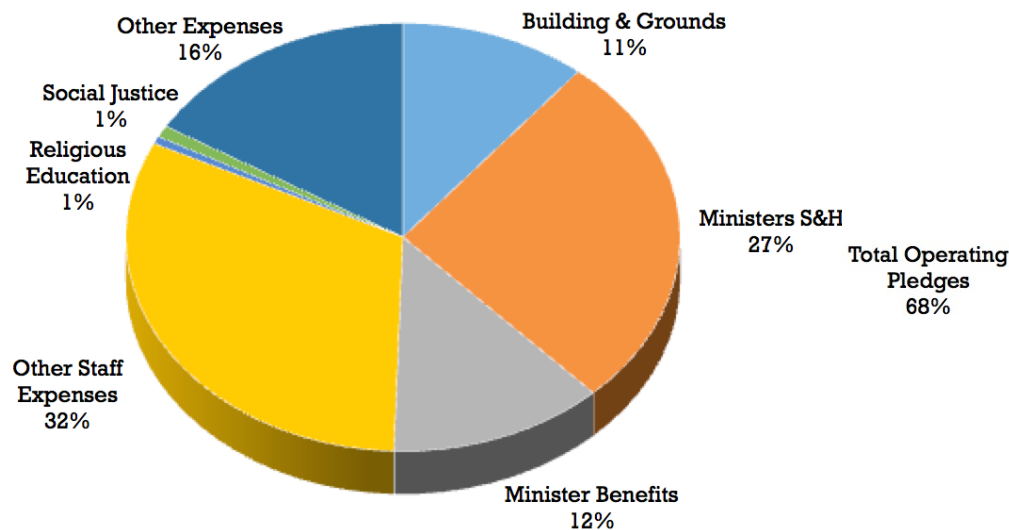


# Our Finances

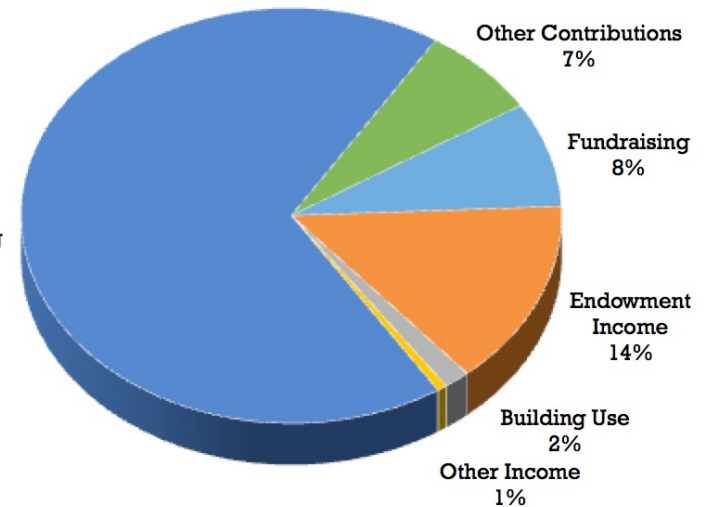
## Operating Budget

The FCU 2016-2017 budget is \$245,000. We are pleased to have a balanced budget but at the same time we hope to for financial growth. While our minister does receive Fair Compensation we have been unable to achieve the necessary level of benefits for our staff to be considered to receive Fair Compensation. After many years of being a Fair Share congregation at the District and UUA level we have been at 50% of that amount for a few years now.

**Expenses 2015**



**Income 2015**





## Our Finances

### Capital Campaign

The Capital Campaign Committee has done an outstanding job of identifying some projects to protect, preserve, enhance, and improve the energy efficiency our building and plant. The Capital Campaign is in its second year and already has funded projects like a new roof and insulation in the sanctuary attic. The campaign has pledged \$110,000 of its \$200,000 goal. The building committee really stepped up to the challenge of identifying the most critical projects needed for the capital campaign and have gone on to oversee the work already performed. The building committee, with funds from the Capital Campaign, also installed sound abatement tiles in the dining hall, reclaiming that as usable space for our congregants that have difficulty hearing in a noisy room.

“It's all of the love and the many gifts that people have given me over the years and also the fact that whatever I have in me that is to give they freely except and they really appreciate.”







## About Littleton

The First Church Unitarian is located in Littleton, MA, a quiet semi-rural town surrounded by some of the best sites of New England: Boston, Cape Cod, the Berkshires, the White Mountains of New Hampshire. With a short scenic drive, you can commune with nature in the mountains or along the ocean, or go into the city to enjoy history, culture, theater, fine dining and much more.



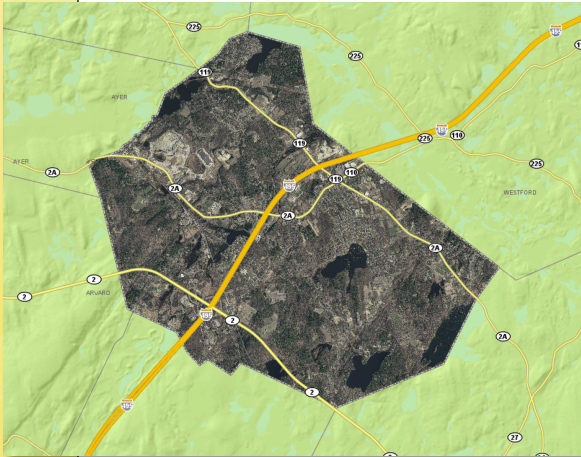
Like much of New England, Littleton and its bordering towns—Groton, Westford, Acton, Boxborough, Harvard, and Ayer—boast a rich culture and social life of their own. There are numerous trails, lakes, rivers, parks, and conservation areas where nature lovers can hike, ski, kayak, bike, or just have a picnic with the family. Along the main street of Littleton past the town common, small and local businesses provide unique and interesting shopping opportunities. A larger mall complex is under construction just outside of the town center that will bring a number of new restaurants and shops to the area, as well as a popular grocery store, a hotel, and a multiplex movie theater.

If you like sports, New England fans support their teams through good times and bad. The Red Sox, Celtics, Bruins, and New England Patriots play in Boston or just south of the city, and many locals enjoy the trip to see them live.



## About Littleton

Littleton has, over the past two decades, invested in their school system to build, expand, or renovate all four school buildings. The town is currently considering further spending to update the school track and football field that are used by the Littleton Tigers. The Park and Recreation department of the town sponsors sports leagues, runs youth and adult enrichment classes, and maintains the facilities at Long Lake and the Castle in the Trees playground. Other town supported facilities include the Reuben Hoar Library and a community TV studio.



According to the 2010 census, Littleton's population is estimated to be 8,924; about a quarter of the population is under 18 years old. The median household income is \$71,384 and the median family income is \$83,365, with a median per capita income of \$31,070.

The Massachusetts Region Commuter Train has a stop in Littleton, providing public transportation access to points west to Fitchburg and east to Boston. The Lowell Regional Transit Authority runs a bus that stops at the IBM campus near the town center. Besides having a high density of colleges, the area is also known as the "Technology Belt", with an abundance of computer and biotech companies employing many of Littleton's residents.

We love the area surrounding FCU, with both natural beauty and enriching experiences to be had and enjoyed.





# Ministerial Search Survey

We hope that our Survey will help you to learn more about our congregation. We believe that the data will reinforce what we've said in our Congregational Record and this packet.

## **Purpose**

The survey was designed to help us to:

- ◆ Gain a clear understanding of the attributes desired in our next settled minister;
- ◆ Learn congregants' thoughts about congregational life and their feelings about FCU;
- ◆ Learn what is important to our congregation;
- ◆ Inform the structure of our subsequent Cottage Meetings;
- ◆ Provide ministers in search with an overview of our congregation.

## **Details**

The survey was created through a collaboration of the Ministerial Search Team. The survey was made available online to all congregants through Survey Monkey; a printed copy was also provided to anyone who requested it. We recorded responses from 78 people.

The survey is divided into three sections:

- ◆ Who We Are: Demographics (Questions 1-18)
- ◆ Our Congregational Life: What is important to us and why we attend FCU (Questions 19-29)
- ◆ Our Hopes and Expectations of a Minister and Worship (Questions 30-39)

Here is a link to our survey results.

In addition to the survey, our congregation participated in three Cottage Meeting discussions (including a Children's Cottage Meeting) and the Beyond Categorical Thinking Workshop.





## In Conclusion

We hope that this is not the conclusion but the next step in a process that will lead to more discovery and perhaps a long and meaningful relationship with FCU.

Once again we thank you for your interest in us and our church and for exploring possibilities with us. We sincerely hope that you have found enough information to determine if you might be a good fit for FCU and we might be a good fit for you.

The Ministerial Search Team of First Church Unitarian, Littleton, MA

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*Aurea Lopez*

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