



# THE SPIRE

THE SECOND CHURCH IN NEWTON  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

*Sharing life's journey in Christian faith, love, and service.*



60 Highland St. West Newton, MA • [www.2ndchurch.org](http://www.2ndchurch.org) • (617) 244-2690

## Calendar Highlights:

Worship and Church School each Sunday morning, 10 o'clock, followed by Coffee Hour

12/25 Sunday – Christmas Day Service of Lessons and Carols, 10 a.m.

Last Day to drop off Star Market super-saver stamps at church

12/26 Monday – Christmas Holiday, Church Office Closed

1/1/17 Sunday – New Year's Day Agape Feast, 10 a.m.

1/2/17 Monday – New Year's Day Holiday, Church Office Closed

1/3 Tuesday – Annual Report Deadline, 10 a.m.

1/7 Saturday – United Homes Shelter Bag Lunch Preparation, 2 – 4 p.m. Kitchen

1/8 Sunday – June Cooper of City Mission Society preaching, 10 a.m.

Forum, led by June Cooper, 11:30 a.m.

1/16 Monday – Martin Luther King Jr. Day

1/20 Friday – Senior High Youth Group, 6 – 8 p.m.

1/21 Saturday – United Homes Shelter Bag Lunch Preparation, 2 – 4 p.m. Kitchen

1/27 Friday – Junior High Youth Group, 6 – 8 p.m.

Rev. Mark Seifried, Interim Minister

Barbara Cancellieri, Secretary

Andrus Madsen, Minister of Music

Mary Ayotte, Bookkeeper

Jeff Davis and Pat Bonnet, Co-moderators

Susan Benes, Nursery School Director

David Gaillardetz, Assistant Christian Educator

Gillian Hurst, Children's Music Director

Will McCabe and Charlie Loftus, Sunday Sextons

Frank Neal, Property Manager

ANNUAL REPORT DEADLINE: Tuesday, January 3, 10:00 a.m.

NEXT SPIRE DEADLINE: Tuesday, January 17, 10:00 a.m.

NEXT SPIRE MAILING: Wednesday, January 25, 9:00 a.m.

January 2021

# Christmas Traditions

Reflections from Pastor Mark

“Tradition is not the worship of ashes, but the preservation of fire.” — *Gustav Mahler*

Throughout most of my childhood, I relished holidays. In fact, I don't know if I would have pursued culinary arts as I did after high school had it not been for my family's preparation of the Christmas feast. My parents always hosted a Christmas Eve party. Mom would make a few pans of lasagna or a pot of chili, salads and other side dishes, plus cookies, candies, pies, and cakes so that she could feed anyone that might stop by as they were able.

Christmas Day was another story. We often visited three or four relatives' houses. And they all had food - lots of food: roast beef, goose, ham, turkey, meatballs, duck and more side dishes, pies, candies, and cakes than you could eat. I came from a family of “eaters.” If you were offered food, you ate, because it would offend the host / hostess otherwise. And really, Christmas was more about celebrating Christ's abundance than the hosts' pleasures.

We went to Grandma and Grandpa's house for brunch. We went to Aunt Anna Mae and Uncle Joe's house for a late lunch. We went to Aunt Cecelia and Uncle Lloyd's house for dinner and Aunt Nelda and Uncle Joe's house for supper. (I had 4 uncle Joes and 3 cousin Joes!) Each one was a feast and we received gifts at each home. And we gave gifts to the family of each home.

I remember the year my maternal grandmother died. Mom said she couldn't bring herself to celebrate Christmas as if it was any other year. So rather than go to Grandpa and Grandma's house, since Grandma wasn't there to cook, Grandpa took us out to I-Hop for brunch after Christmas morning worship. Aunt Anna Mae had a big spread like usual, which was fine because she is Dad's sister. But everyone else was related to Grandma so they understood Mom's reticence in celebrating.

Instead of Aunt Cecelia's feast of roasted turkey and all the trimmings, including the roasted carrots and fresh cranberry relish with orange that I can still taste, and Aunt Nelda's feast of sauerbraten and spaetzle noodles with fresh celery and potato salad, we stayed home. Mom made a “turkey roll” that was gray in color. She made instant mashed potatoes, and served the cranberry relish from a can. The fanciest thing we had for Christmas dinner was green bean casserole made from canned beans and (gray) cream of mushroom soup. The gray Christmas was emblematic of the dismal year my family had.

I knew then and there what devotion to one's faith and family meant. People in my family went “all out” for Christmas. They were all religious and spent big portions of the day in private prayer and public worship - not just on Christmas Eve and Christmas. This is what they did all the time. They just elevated Christmas to the level of “feast,” when the best wines were poured and fanciest aprons and vests were donned - because of their relationship with Jesus and what that relationship did for their family and community life.

I also learned that you could “get through” Christmas, exchange gifts and expressions of love, but without the extravagance. The extravagance still came at church with timpani and harp, trumpets and organ celebrating the Incarnate Love of God made known in the Christ child. My tears on Christmas Eve and Christmas are always a mix of jubilation with a bit of heartache. As a pastor, I know that people feel many different things about Christmas. Regardless of where you are or what you are feeling this year, I pray that you will join us for one of the Christmas Eve services. There will be a mix of joy and solemnity at 10:00, and probably a bit of silliness during the pageant at 5:00.

On Christmas Day, we will open our hearts to the ancient scriptures and let them speak for themselves as we echo their meaning in carols. Please join us as we celebrate the intimacy of this special and holy community of faith we know as Second Church.

And please join us to bring in the New Year in a unique and faithful way with the Agape Feast. Read on for more information.

Thanks to all who have made a pledge for 2017!

The church staff and I wish all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

During the month of January, Sunday School will discuss topics such as Martin Luther King, Jr.'s ongoing legacy and New Year's Resolutions in relation to our faith. They will be engaged in scripture, activities, team building, and music! We have had more and more children joining the Sunday School and welcome new families with enthusiasm and warmth!

The Junior and Senior High Youth Groups will discuss New Year's Resolutions and their hopes for the New Year while beginning some winter service projects/community engagement. The Senior High will continue to plan and fundraise for their summer service trip and as always, greatly appreciate all of your support.

As many of you may know, I (Jane) will be leaving Second Church after Christmas to move to New York. This was a very difficult decision for me, and I cannot thank you all enough for being so supportive and enthusiastic about my ministry during my time here. I will deeply miss all of the students and the welcoming and passionate congregation at Second Church. I plan to visit often and have such hope and excitement for the continued efforts and growth of Christian Education and the life and ministry of Second Church as a whole. I am so grateful to have been a part of the rich history of Second Church's ministry in and for West Newton.

With love, Jane Barry

How lucky I am  
to have something  
that makes saying  
goodbye so hard.

-Winnie the Pooh

## An Agape Feast

Please join us New Year's Day, January 1 at 10:00 AM for an Agape Feast. Eliot Church in Newton Corner will join us. We will combine worship and a meal while we celebrate Holy Communion in Fellowship Hall ... around tables just like Jesus initiated the Lord's Supper all those years ago.

We'll share a spiritual charge from Jesus and work to make spiritual resolutions for the year ahead. Special music for the season will be offered. Pastor Mark will lead a conversation on "speaking your reality into life," and a prayer that you can "live" the whole year. Please come in casual dress and feel free to invite friends.

Please see list of food items below to bring.

- Salad: A through E
- Entrée: F through L
- Side dish: M through T
- Dessert: or pastry: T through Z

If your name ends in the letter signified by each category, please bring that item. For example, because his last name is Seifried, Mark will bring a side dish because "S" falls between "M" and "T." Feel free to swap with someone else if you prefer to bring a dish other than that which falls to you.

### Death:

Dr. Keith Brodie, father of Melissa Hanenberger and former President of Duke University, died November 25, 2016 in NC. A memorial service was held December 4 at Duke Chapel.

### Marriage:

Sally Anderson celebrates the fall marriages of her son and daughter – Sven to Jennie Guy of Dublin, Ireland, and Sage to Inga Schaub, of Anraht, Germany.

### Birth:

Kirsi Hannah Jones was born November 28, 2016. She is the daughter of Katie and Jonathan Jones and granddaughter of Dale Bengtson.

## Save the Date!

For the annual Second Church Women's Retreat of 2017 which will be held Friday, May 5 – Sunday, May 7 at Craigville Retreat Center. We always have a great time there!

**Rev. June Cooper of City Mission, Boston  
Guest Preacher and Faith Forum Leader at Second Church,  
January 8, 2017**

The Reverend June R. Cooper has led City Mission Society for 14 years. June is a visionary and compassionate leader who has led the organization through several major changes. Prior to coming to City Mission June lead Boston's federal Healthy Start program a \$100 million dollar initiative that has been credited with significantly decreasing the infant mortality rate in the City of Boston in the late 90's. She earned a B.A. from Newton College of the Sacred Heart, a Masters of Social Planning from Boston College School of Social Work and a Masters in Divinity from Andover Newton Theological School. She is an ordained American Baptist minister and she has standing in the United Church of Christ. June values the promise of what can be accomplished by mobilizing people of goodwill to overcome injustice. She lives in Boston and is a model train enthusiast.

A strong mission partner of Second Church, since 1816, City Mission has dedicated itself to the needs of the most vulnerable in Boston and founded many of the city's most lasting charitable institutions. Today, with her partners, City Mission reaches over 53,000 individuals annually. This work is made possible through City Mission's coordination of suburban and urban partnerships. With roots that stretch back to 1816, City Mission remains a faith based organization and continues to be a vibrant organization with an overarching focus to prevent family homelessness. Underlying all of our work – direct service to families on the brink of homelessness, service learning programs that bring people together for cross-cultural learning and sharing, and our public advocacy centered on combatting poverty and its root causes – are our guiding principles of engagement, education and empowerment.

**Official Call to the Annual Meeting  
Sunday, February 12, 2017**

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of the members of The Second Church in Newton, United Church of Christ, will be held in the Parish House on Sunday, February 12, 2017, following the worship service and lunch for the following purposes:

1. To consider and act upon the budgets for Church Support and Benevolence as recommended by the Church Council and to authorize appropriations from January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017.
2. To receive and act upon the Financial Report for twelve months from January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2016.
3. And to transact any other business that may legally come before the meeting.

Mary Ann Donaldson, Clerk

December 31, 2016

## BAZAAR NEWS

Hello Bazaar Team! We did it again! THANK YOU EVERYONE! We came together and with an attitude of 'can-do' we made it happen for CAN-DO, the affordable housing agency in Newton. To dedicate the proceeds of the Bazaar to a specific cause is a departure from previous years for us. How do we feel about it now? Stay tuned for the results of our internal survey, and after the money is transformed into furnishing a home for a family we have yet to meet; we will tell you about that process in February's *Spire*. The plan is to go shopping with the family. It is important that this family express their own visions for their new home.

In order to make it (Bazaar) happen on Dec. 3rd, we transformed Fellowship Hall into a gathering place, with Bruce Macdonald leading in song and the Mel-a-tones, (the Newton North High School a cappella group, led by Elizabeth Wu) getting us into the spirit of the season with two sets of Christmas carols. Technical equipment was DJ'd by Gail and Allan Wiegner. Your contribution filled the hall with uplifting sounds. Thank You! It made all the difference.

In the middle of the day, Josephine McNeil, Director and President of CAN-DO, spoke to us about the work that CAN-DO has established in Newton. She reminded us that there are thousands of people living in motels in Massachusetts and that we have a unique opportunity to get involved by helping one family to feel welcomed where we live and worship.

At 9:00 am we opened the doors to a waiting crowd of customers and dealers. After the first rush and well-expected bustle, we had a steady stream of visitors during the morning and lunch time. -- Speaking of food: Bon Koo, our in-house chef, designed a combination of Asian favorites for lunch. Steamed dumplings, pot stickers, orange spice chicken and rice, or any combination thereof was available to everyone. His assistants were Alfredo Kniazze, Andrea Mautner, and Sidney and David Koo. Jody Mahr coordinated all monetary transactions at that end of the room. We recon' that we fed about 80 people while Kim Gluck and later David Palmer operated the all-important coffee station, engaging friends and strangers in conversation and building connections. Our long time greeters, Bill and Lee Longman, were truly missed but "understudies" Laura Dorfman and Marty Wengert were stellar welcomers as people entered and left the building, being handed information about Second Church's services and our 100 year old building. This attractive, well received handout was created by Shirley Taylor. Most people I spoke with in the later afternoon told me that they had noticed our signs and sandwich boards about town and on this street; they felt invited to come through our doors.

A chance to get Gift Baskets was a new item for us this year. Nine beautiful creations of packaged, theme-related merchandise graced the stage for everyone to get a chance of winning by purchasing tickets. For a Maine Blueberry design to Lobster Pick Nick paraphernalia and other themes, we sold over 500 tickets and had a lot of fun drawing the winning tickets at 2:30 pm. One creation, not the largest one, just the most attractive, received over 100 tickets! Betsy Pape, Bubba (Alan Sooho) and Ced Paine were main ticket masters. Thank you for wearing those hats!

Our Silent Auction was managed by Alex Richter and Chip West. We had items from Vacation Housing to a rug, services and flower arrangements. It looked professional and interesting. This was also the reaction to our home-made items: Jellies, made from blueberries and blackberries picked at the Palmer's place in Vermont, and hand-made cookies (4 in a pack), artfully decorated (some with the CAN- DO logo), were offered at \$5.00 each.

This brings me to the value of things. When we sell a jar of handpicked jellied fruit at the same price as a large Waterford Crystal Cut Glass Bowl, we are experiencing a fundamental change in the way we live and the values we maintain. So many pretty items are now officially out of favor, no longer worth the price of purchase.



We receive them as donations or gifts; we admire them but do not NEED them or even want to give them the space they take on our shelves. What we are valuing more than fine cut glass from Ireland or paper-thin china from China is the experience to go to China. We drink the tea or coffee from any cup that does not demand special care. We value time we spend with each other, at best doing something meaningful. That is what this Bazaar was all about. We came together, lifted that box, sorted the ware and had a good time doing it together. When Mary Ann Donaldson and Nathalie Wattinne took charge of the Christmas table, it meant that they were as engaged as the people in the kitchen or Barbara Joseph and Claudia Wu organizing the books. When Dale Bengtson staged the Living Room with donated furniture, she had not been assigned to do so, but she saw what needed to be done and did it. There are many in our congregation that do exactly that, especially Kathy Lucey, Donna and Pete Johnson, Dorothea Rudolf, Debby Laubinger and Tom Taylor who cleaned up the Church yard by selling two huge ladders that were squatting on the lawn for the last two years. Many more got involved and we thank everyone, while we also ask you to forgive us for not mentioning more names. We feel we are all in the spirit! Therefore, we can concentrate on creating experiences together. Let us go together to Vermont and pick berries for these wonderful jams, for example. Could there be a senior mission trip? Perhaps this can be explored during 2017; it is my New Year's goal.

Speaking of Mission Trips - Jane Barry and her youth group created 35 decorated wreaths, sales of which collected over \$500 for the Youth Mission Trip. Susan Benes' Nursery School Kid's Corner sold toys for \$308. Putting it all together, we grossed just shy of \$6000. We expect to have about \$5000 to go shopping for, and with, CAN DO. This Bazaar also cost permits, posters, materials and a lot of time and good will; in total it is simply priceless in a good way.

In preparation for the event, we had four meetings, starting in late September, and four days of sorting, setting up and pricing prior to the Bazaar. Faithful Sylvia Wardenaar came every evening that week, chipping away at tasks that required patience and tenacity. During that week many more helping hands decorated the hall with signs, wreaths and seasonal displays. We also "unearthed" last year's saved treasures from the bowels of the basement. In the last week Laura Foote had posted specific items on Craig's List. But long before that, our in-house advertising team, headed by Quindara Dodge, posted our event in local papers and community listings. Our fearless promoters, Joy and Ced Paine, broke ground with post digger and shovel to erect two large banners at both street sides.

I am sure that I left out many details that made the whole day work. During this prep time we also had help from Barbara Cancellieri and Frank Neal. We are grateful and thank you all.

--Oh, I almost forgot to tell you: we thought it was all organized, but when we were close to opening up on Saturday morning, no one had made the coffee! Allen Wiegner saved the day by quickly getting some from around the corner. No excuses, but please--, keep on smiling!

Thank you for all your input, help, and good will, see you for the next adventure,

Your partners in crime,  
Dorothea Mautner and Lissa Gilbert

## From the Board of Mission and Advocacy

### Thanks for your contributions toward the Shaw's/Star Market stamp-saver stamps.

We have bought a whole set of Kitchen Aid cookware for CAN-DO's Taft Ave. Housing Project and no longer need more stamps.

### Moment for Mission

Jan. 8: **San Juan del Sur** has enjoyed a "Sister City" relationship with Newton for over 20 years, during which time the Sister City Project has financed the building or renovation of over 20 schools, and improved the health of communities surrounding San Juan Bay by bringing simple eco-friendly technologies to the families of San Juan.

Jan. 22: **Family Access** believes that the strongest way to assure healthy child development is to ensure the quality of relationships each child has in the critical early years with parents, caregivers and nurturing adults. They strengthen families and the community by providing programs that nurture child development, promote effective parenting skills, and support working parents. In doing so, we actively engage a racially, economically, and culturally diverse population.

Thanks to Second Church for your loving outreach, calls, cards and visits. Bill is making progress and is grateful for the prayers. Lee is grateful for the support.

We hope to be back with you soon.

Bill and Lee Longman



The Second Church in Newton  
60 Highland Street,  
West Newton, MA 02465-2405