



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 • (617) 244-2690

Calendar Highlights:

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

5/5 Friday – Junior High Youth Group, 6 – 8 p.m.

5/5 Friday – Sunday Women's Retreat, Craigville, Cape Cod

5/6 Saturday – Senior High Youth Group, 6 – 8 p.m.

5/20 Saturday – Spiritual Retreat, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Walker Center

5/20 Saturday – Newton Baroque Concert, 7:30 p.m. Living Room

5/21 Sunday – Children's/Youth Service; Fuller Scholarships presented;
Graduating High School Seniors recognized, 10 a.m.

5/21 Sunday – Congregational Meeting, 11:30 a.m. (See notice of this on back cover.)

5/21 Sunday – Community Supper, 4:30 – 6:30 p.m.

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Rev. Mark Seifried, Interim Minister

Barbara Cancellieri, Secretary

Andrus Madsen, Minister of Music

Mary Ayotte, Bookkeeper

Pat Bonnet and Alan Bubba Sooho, Co-moderators

Susan Benes, Nursery School Director

David Gaillardetz and Molly Doris-Pierce, Youth Group and Sunday School Leaders

Gillian Hurst, Children's Music Director

Will McCabe and Charlie Loftus, Sunday Sextons

Frank Neal, Property Manager

NEXT SPIRE DEADLINE: Monday, May 15, 10:00 a.m.

NEXT SPIRE MAILING: Wednesday, May 26, 9:00 a.m.

Grounded

Reflections from Pastor Mark

"We should honor Mother Earth with gratitude; otherwise our spirituality may become hypocritical." ~
Radhanath Swami

I had my first mystical experience on a hiking trip. I was with a group of people who were in far better shape than I was. We were hiking the Appalachian Trail on Roan Mountain, which is along the Tennessee / North Carolina border. Half the group was religious. They sang old church camp songs and hymns as we hiked. Several had trained voices so they sang in parts ... always ending each hymn in harmony with "Amen." Even those of us who were not religious sang the "Amens."

To be honest, their singing seemed silly to me, but it helped set the tempo for our hike. So I listened and "Amen-ed." I remember that we took a break mid-day. The middle-aged folks sat down, drank water, and ate trail mix. I snuck off to look for a waterfall that was shown on a trail map. As I sought out the waterfall, I could hear my trail mates singing a spiritual they had sung a dozen times in the last 36 hours:

*Climbin' up d' mountain, children
Didn't come here to stay
And if I nevermore see you again
Gonna meet you at de judgment day*

*Hebrew in de fiery furnace
And dey begin to pray
And de good Lawd smote dat fire out
Oh, wasn't dat a mighty day!
Good Lord, wasn't dat a mighty day!*

I could hear the non-singers shouting, "Yes, Lord (Lawd)! What a MIGHTY fine day!" It struck me that I was in the middle of a forest that was as beautiful place I had ever seen and I didn't have words to describe it. I hadn't even noticed the serenity of the mountain and the day. I spontaneously started crying with a sense of awe and gratitude... and then I saw the falls.

I really can't describe what happened except for the fact that everything changed. I had a sense that I was in God's presence. I had a sense that the people I was with were angels. I had a sense that I was supposed to be doing what I was doing – that I was there for a reason – out of shape, impatient with the religious folks' joy, and in the middle of paradise with all my senses newly awakened. I felt grace in my bones and muscles and didn't even know what grace was.

My relationship with God changed that day. God became real. I don't know how or why. And my sense of call – to care for the earth and all creation entrusted to me and to double down on my service to humanity – was enlarged. I felt a sensuality from the Earth and sense of unity with Creation that I had never even pondered.

I have to be honest and tell you that, even as a church pastor, my spirituality isn't complete in the church. I need to get away to be in nature, to commune with the Creator and Her creatures, to sweat as I explore landscapes, to sing with abandon where no one else can hear me, to marvel at the flora blanketing the earth, to breathe freely and deeply of air purified by surf or forest.

There's a Jewish teaching that I learned a while back, that the Word of God was first written in nature – that the people learned of God's genius, but also God's loving faithfulness, by exploring creation. I believe that with all my heart – as much as I believe that Jesus the Christ is the Word made flesh. I need Jesus as a moral guide just as surely as I need nature to keep me grounded in the Holy, the Wholly Other.

As the days lengthen and warm, I hope that you will have an opportunity to stop, to look and listen, to breathe and sing with Nature so you can reconnect to your purpose – our purpose as creatures,

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Christian Education Corner

Sunday School will talk about opening our hearts to each other, May 7 and offer a musical salute of gratitude to celebrate Mother's Day, May 14. On May 21 the young people help to lead a special service, and on May 28 we will all celebrate together in the sanctuary.

Youth Groups

The focus is on winning and losing:

Junior High: Friday, May 5, 6-8 p.m.

Senior High: Saturday, May 6, 6-8 pm

Growing in Faith

Beginning on April 30, the deacons will be hosting a monthly forum for those who would like to grow together in faith and engage scripture in a deeper manner than we are able to treat it during worship.

Please join us in the living room as we discuss "Jesus as healer and how Christians may tap into his healing balm today." The forum will be from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The scriptures we will be discussing are Mark 1:21-28, Mark 4:31-37, Luke 4:40-41 and Acts 3.1-10.

Spiritual Retreat

On May 20 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Walker Center, 144 Hancock, St., Auburndale, there will be a Spiritual Retreat for anyone looking to practice and deepen their faith in community. The guided spiritual retreat is sponsored by the Deacons and will include lunch. Notify Barbara in the church office (office@2ndchurch.org) to reserve lunch, so we will know how many to plan on.

Music, Music, Music!

On Saturday, May 20 Newton Baroque will offer up a program of 19th Century German Lieder with fortepiano featuring performances by Shiba Nemat-Nasser, Julia Steinbok, Pamela Delall, and Tom Oesterling



GARGOYLES AND GLASS SUNDAY, JUNE 4, 3:00 pm

Historic Newton will be sponsoring a tour of Second Church on Sunday afternoon, June 4. We will invite the community to learn about our historic building, our awesome wood carvings, and our beautiful stained glass. We will also be able to share some of our history as a congregation.

Lots of people are needed to help with the tour and serve as hosts. There will be walkthroughs and training in May, so please don't feel nervous about having to know everything.

If you would like to help with this community outreach event, please let me know.
Shirley Taylor shirley@adsum.com

Save the Date

All-Church Picnic on Sunday, June 18, 2017, 12:00-2:00 p.m. at The Fessenden School, 250 Waltham Street, West Newton under the tent. Activities include eating, chatting with friends, swimming under the watch of a lifeguard, and using the field for kicking around a soccer ball or throwing a Frisbee. Grilled hamburgers, hot dogs, and chicken plus lemonade will be provided. In addition to coming to the picnic, please bring a salad or dessert determined by the first letter of your last name: A - N Salad and O - Z Dessert. Be part of the fun and fellowship of this annual event.

Notes on Church Meeting for Discernment-April 9, 2017
Task: to develop a Purpose Statement for Second Church

After the Palm Sunday service, members gathered for lunch and a discussion led by Pastor Mark Seifried, Interim Pastor. In an introduction to small group discussion, Pastor Mark began by commenting on the adage that says that those who don't learn from what they have been doing and adapt to what they have learned are dangerous. Such learning would have been one of the Crossroads process' last pieces if circumstances had been different. As the Advent theme suggests, we should stay ALERT to our memory of how God has worked in our lives and how God has worked in this church since the 1700's.

But we need to develop a shared vision. Such was articulated at last spring's meeting and is being used: Sharing life's journey in Christian faith, love, and service.

The work of this meeting was to develop a Mission Statement of what it is we will do together to relive Jesus story in this time. In the setting of many uses for the word Mission, "Purpose Statement" will be used instead. It was found in the Crossroad process that those participating would like to widen the Church's community outreach and service, rebuild the ministries to young families, grow opportunities for shared work with our mission partners, and experience meaningful worship and fellowship.

Each table group was asked to prepare a Statement; they were asked to prepare one of 15 words or less, which is measurable and meaningful. They were reminded that the group missing from our church is the "millennials." This group is interested in personal and social transformation and purpose. Many also seek accountability to the community and future generations.

The final Statement should be for those currently in the Church and include goals and commitments in which they feel compelled to participate. One member suggested that we all want to belong to a church which is "alive," and that we need the Holy Spirit among us, guiding us. This raised the question of how the Holy Spirit is manifest in this place. After time for the groups to converse and deliberate, each group brought their Purpose Statement forward and read it. There were a variety of presentations, from some 15 word Statements, to lists of important activities and functions. The spokesperson for one group said that they didn't feel a statement was necessary but that the Church needs a leader to take it forward. The statements were displayed and those present were asked to name the verbs used in the statements.

Some of those verbs were expand, strengthen, serve, engage, worship, educate, welcome, connect, include, love, encourage, help, empower, challenge, converse, support, invite, and minister. All were asked to put two stickers on the verbs that they felt were most important. As those clustered, it seemed especially important that we engage and connect.

The meeting concluded with Pastor Mark's asking for volunteers to work with the Statements developed and formulate one that seems to represent the Purpose (Mission) of Second Church. Those volunteering are Connor Choka, Kathryn Huse, Stacey Ellender, Betsy Pape, and Alex Richter. Alan (Bubba) Sooho was not able to be present at this meeting but will meet with Pastor Mark and the ad hoc team to craft the statement.

Mary Ann Donaldson, Clerk

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which is to notice and to praise the One Beyond All, In All, and With All. And if you don't take time or don't notice, I pray that you get some kind of dope slap like I did to wake you up to the proclamation: *Good Lord, wasn't dat a mighty day!*

Ever since that day on Roan Mountain, rather than reciting the bedtime prayer I was taught as a child, "Now I lay me down to sleep ..." I say, "*Good Lord, wasn't dat a mighty day!*" If I'm not feeling it, I remember a waterfall that seemed to call to me: "What is more important than thinking about the beauty of now? Of here? Of this? Of the One who made it all?"

Pastor Mark

From the Board of Mission and Advocacy

Moment for Mission

May 21: **Newton Food Pantry** - We receive non-perishable groceries/toiletries each Sunday for the Newton Food Pantry during worship. You are also invited to bring items to the church lobby throughout the week. NFP provides a 4-5 day supply of nutritionally balanced food items once a month to Newton residents who need their help. They serve 30-40 different families each week. Clients are referred to them by Newton Department of Human Services and Health, clergy, social workers, etc. They are elderly or single parents, unemployed, disabled, or unable to make ends meet on very low-paid or part-time work.

COMMUNITY DINNER: 2ND CHURCH AND OUR GROCERY CARD RECIPIENTS

Neighbors And Friends - Please Join Us!

What: A free, family-style community dinner. We will all enjoy baked ziti and meatballs, salad, rolls and dessert. A vegetarian option will be available. Guests will be asked to help set up and clear up.

When: May 21 from 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm

Where: Fellowship Hall, Second Church in Newton

Why: To get to know our neighbors and community better and why not? We have a lovely space and some good cooks. It will be great fun!

Who: Mission and Advocacy members Barbara C., Lissa, Lee H., Brittany, Kim and Andy are organizing this event. Won't you join us and help out?

Please RSVP by calling the church at 617-244-2690 to let us know how many in your group plan to attend so we can plan the food.

Deaths

Margaret "Peg" Bowen died March 30, 2017 at age 103. Services were private.

Ethel "Sue" Notartomaso died April 7, 2017 at 97. The Second Church funeral was April 11.

Eva Sooho died peacefully in her sleep and at home April 19, 2017. The service was at Forest Hills Cemetery April 22. She was Alan "Bubba" Sooho's mother.

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

Notice of A Congregational Meeting
May 21, 2017 at 11:30 AM

Agenda:

1. Take action on the Proposed Investment Policy (you may pick up a ballot prior to the meeting and vote)
2. Hear an update from the Transition Team on their work as we prepare for the Search Process for a Settled Senior Minister
3. Take action on the proposed Purpose Statement for Second Church: *“Glorifying God in a radically inclusive Christian community through social engagement.”*

Signed, Mary Ann Donaldson, Clerk