



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 each Sunday morning, 10 o'clock, followed by Coffee Hour

1/1/18 Monday - New Year's Day Holiday

1/3 Wednesday – Dinner Church, 6 p.m. Room 111

1/7 Sunday – Forum: Healing Heart Power, Linda Marks presenter, 11:30 a.m.

1/10 Wednesday – Dinner Church, 6 p.m. Room 111

1/15 Monday – Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday

1/17 Wednesday – Dinner Church, 6 p.m. Room 111

1/20 Saturday – Newton Baroque Concert, 7:30 p.m. Fuller Chapel

1/21 Sunday – Forum: Reaching Out and Sharing Our Story, 11:30 a.m.

1/24 Wednesday – Dinner Church, 6 p.m. Room 111

1/28 Sunday – Blessing of the Playground, 10 a.m.

Forum: Accessible to All, Charlie Loftus presenter, 11:30 a.m.

Youth and Young Adult Brunch, after worship.

1/31 Wednesday – Dinner Church, 6 p.m. Room 111

Sunday School offered January 7 and 21; Intergenerational Service January 28

The Search Committee meets most Wednesday evenings

Rev. Mark Seifried, Interim Minister

Barbara Cancellieri, Secretary

Andrus Madsen, Minister of Music

Mary Ayotte, Bookkeeper

Pat Bonnet and Alan Bubba Soho, Co-moderators

Susan Benes, Nursery School Director

Rev. Leah Rumsey, Director of Faith Formation

Molly Doris-Pierce, Youth Group and Sunday School Leader

Charlie and Henry Loftus and Victoria Joseph, Sunday Sextons

Frank Neal, Property Manager

January 2018

Next Spire Deadline: January 16, 10 a.m.

Next Spire Mailing: January 26, 9 a.m.

They Don't Know Us

Reflections from Pastor Mark

The two words 'information' and 'communication' are often used interchangeably, but they signify quite different things. Information is giving out; communication is getting through.

~ Sydney J. Harris

Second Church is filled with a bunch of “stuffed shirts.” That’s what our façade says about us. Our building looks like Salisbury Cathedral so people think we are a church of stuck up Anglophiles. You know differently and so do I, but not many other people do.

We recently hosted a funeral for a 52-year-old mother who was a Buddhist from Japan. Her husband was Jewish and from Russia. Their children have been to Second Church for Youth Group and to participate in past years’ Christmas Pageant. At the funeral, I welcomed the large congregation of mostly “un-churched” folks as I often do with the UCC mantra, “No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.” I explained that we are a Christian congregation who is committed to interfaith ministry and that I had prepared a funeral service for the deceased and her family who are not Christians.

Leah and I offered “spiritual” prayers that were adapted from Christian and other faith traditions ... or that had no reference to God. Andrus offered music that was spiritual. My remarks during the eulogy were sentiments that I had gathered from the deceased woman’s friends, a pastoral message about forgiveness which I include in many funerals because so many of us leave this world without having reconciled with loved ones, and a poem about the mystery of death. The funeral really wasn’t a whole lot different than most funerals I have officiated at Second Church except that there was no language about the Resurrection and not much about God. I did, however, refer to Jesus several times because he is my spiritual Master.

A number of Second Church saints helped with hospitality as greeters, ushers, and they put on a wonderful reception with the help of the deceased woman’s friends and a caterer that her husband hired. After I thanked several of our Second Church helpers, some said that they were happy to help and some said, “This is what we are supposed to do,” which was not coincidental.

What was most remarkable to me was that countless people approached me to thank me for all the church had done and for the beautiful service. One Jewish woman said, “I had no idea there was even a church like yours.” A Catholic man said, “I wish our priest knew how to make everyone included the way you all do here.” A person with no faith community said that she would be back to worship with us sometime because she felt like she learned how ignorant she was about Christianity – that she could not only embrace the God we worship but that she felt the need to be in a community like ours.

I guarantee that every member of Second Church knows a dozen people who “need” what we have ... people who are hungry for it and whose lives would be more fulfilling if they had it. With very little effort, we could double the size of the congregation in a matter of months – if you would just tell neighbors about our amazing church and our progressive faith that is based in love.

I can’t make you do that, though. It’s your church. You can talk to others about it and help it expand or you can remain silent and help it contract. You have to want to share what we have with

(Continued)

others. I think the trouble is that most of our active members are so steeped in the politics and administration of the church that they forget just how blessed we are. All they can think of is the institution that is struggling to find itself. All I can say to that is, "We don't need more people for committees. We need fewer committees. We are far more than an institution. We are the Body of Christ that has the capacity for healing, spiritual grounding, and personal transformation."

The bottom line for me is that the church is overflowing with blessings – enough to share with all your friends who are looking for greater fulfillment. The real pickle is that they don't know us.

Pastor Mark Seifried
MarkSeifried@icloud.com

Listening to Your Body, Following your Heart

with Linda Marks, MSM

January 7, 11:30 a.m. and February 10, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

When your body speaks (knot in the stomach, heavy heart, lump in throat) what is it trying to say? This workshop will provide an opportunity to tune inwards to listen to your body and translate body sensations, emotional feelings and deeper thoughts into important messages to guide your life and well-being. Using meditation and experiential exercises from Emotional-Kinesthetic Psychotherapy (EKP), participants will learn about the importance of emotional safety and experience the power of the heart.

On January 7 at 11:30 a.m., we will do an introductory workshop that will include some concepts, meditations and experiential exercises. On February 10 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., we will create a safe environment to explore the healing applications of this work

Linda Marks, MSM, developed Emotional-Kinesthetic Psychotherapy (EKP) in the 1980's and has taught and practiced it with individuals, couples, families and groups for 33 years. Linda is the author of *Living With Vision* and *Healing the War Between the Genders*, and is also a professional singer/songwriter with five albums. She holds degrees from Yale and MIT, and has taught nationally and internationally.



Faith Formation

Integrating Children into Worship

During this time of Advent, we're getting ready for Jesus to come. We think about what it means for humanity to be led by a small child and for us to encounter holiness in human bodies, especially in bodies that move and wiggle, squirm and smile, laugh and dance. As we explored Advent in worship on November 26, Mark and I shared a plan for integrating children into worship, beginning in January 2018. In conversation with the moderators, the Church Council, the Deacons, the Board of Faith Formation, the Board of Worship, and Second Church families, we ask that you join us in this exciting experiment in worship and faith formation.

Beginning in Epiphany, the time of year when we meet the child Jesus and converse with the Magi about the meaning of wisdom, we will invite children to be present with us each week for the entire worship service and to be an active and visible part of the body of Christ at Second Church. We'll continue to offer childcare as well and trust families to help kids decide whether unstructured childcare or participation in worship makes sense for a given child on a given Sunday, knowing that a family's needs will change from week to week and that this is okay.

We know that this will entail some adjustment and some new ways of engaging both children and adults, but we see this as an opportunity to transform our worship in positive and Spirit-filled ways. Some possible adaptations that you may see include:

- A supervised "pryground" at the front of the sanctuary
 - A "pryground" is a soft play area with quiet toys below the lectern
 - It allows children to see what is happening in worship and to participate as they wish (by singing, listening, moving, praying, etc.), while also having a quiet and constructive age-appropriate outlet when they need to move or play
 - This area will be supervised by a CORIed volunteer so that families can focus on worship
- More robust activity bags, including toys and books to teach children about Bible stories and church traditions
- Stuffed animal prayer buddies in the pews for use by children or adults
- Additional opportunities for interactive sermons and music offerings

Sunday School and Youth Group Information

January 7: Sunday School Offered

January 14: No Sunday School or youth/young adult activities

January 21: Sunday School Offered

January 28: Intergenerational Service - Blessing of the Prayground

Inaugural Youth and Young Adult Brunch after worship
(will continue on the 2nd and 4th Sundays)

Beginning with Sunday worship on January 28, children will intentionally be included in worship on a weekly basis. Childcare will remain open and available for any child who wishes to make use of it.

Save the Date!

The annual Second Church Women's Retreat of 2018 will be held Friday, May 4 - Sunday, May 6 at Craigville Retreat Center. We always have a great time there!

Notice: Annual Report Deadline is January 12, 2018

Official Call to the Annual Meeting Sunday, February 11, 2018

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 Fellowship Hall on Sunday, February 11, 2018, 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, 2018 to December 31, 2018.
2. To receive and act upon the Financial Report for twelve months from January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017.
3. Presentation, discussion/debate and adoption of the 2018 Revision of the Bylaws.
4. And to transact any other business that may legally come before the meeting.

Mary Ann Donaldson, Clerk

December 31, 2017

Dinner Church - Wednesdays at 6 o'clock

If you haven't checked out Dinner Church, now is the time! This lively informal service happens every Wednesday at 6:00 pm. It features communion, a collaborative sermon we build together, and a full vegetarian dinner. Write Leah with questions.

Leahrumsey@g.harvard.edu

Deaths

Mary Huse died November 25, at home in hospice care, surrounded by her family. The Memorial Service will be January 13, 2 p.m. at Lutheran Church of the Newtons, 1310 Centre St., Newton Centre. Mary was Kathryn Huse's mother. Kathryn's address is 221 Highland Ave., West Newton, MA 02465.

Paul Morrison, Lee Longman's brother, died November 31, 2017. At 100 years young, he was still working the week before he died.

A Follow-up from the Board of Mission and Advocacy about Holiday Giving

Mission and Advocacy decided to be involved in three gift-giving programs this year. On Monday, December 11, 2017 Lissa Gilbert delivered 30 Mitten Tree presents to Family Access of Newton. She also delivered gifts to seven families from Early Intervention. Laura Foote delivered five large boxes of jackets, coats and toys to City Mission Boston's collection point at First Church Winchester, UCC. Two of those boxes were filled with toys that the Second Church Nursery School collected for City Mission Boston.

We want to give a very heartfelt thanks to everyone who participated. You bought books, toys, clothing, blenders, jackets and other items for families who need a helping hand to provide for Christmas this year. You were very generous and wrapped them in wonderful creative ways. Thanks again to everyone for your participation in helping to make these programs a success. You will bring great joy to these children and families.

Lissa Gilbert and the Mission and Advocacy Team.

Moment for Mission

January 28: **Homes for Our Troops** – Supporting HFOT efforts to build homes and rebuild lives is a great start in keeping America's promise to its Veterans. HFOT homes provide freedom to our most severely injured Veterans and have an enormous impact, too., on their families and caregivers.

A Note to the Congregation

Nov. 12, 2017

Dear Congregation,

As a senior my school asks me to complete a capstone (a year-long senior project). For my capstone I am excited to lead us in initiating the process of becoming an A2A certified church. A2A stands for Accessible to All and is about accepting and including everybody regardless of ability in all aspects of the church. This is about social inclusion as well as physical accommodations.

I'm going to be leading a forum about this January 28 at 11:30 a.m. If anyone would like to be a part of this, please contact me at: fifercloftus@gmail.com. All are encouraged to participate, especially those with disabilities and any youth who are interested.

Sincerely,

Charlie Loftus

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

The Second Church in Newton is an inclusive community of curious and creative spiritual seekers, committed to learning, teaching, social justice and embodying a progressive practice of Christianity through loving kindness, engagement and joyful worship.

