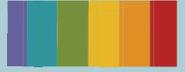


THE SPIRE

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

12/1 Saturday – December Market, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m., Fellowship Hall

12/5 Wednesday – Deacons Meeting, 7:30 p.m.

12/8 Saturday – Lieder Abend Concert, 7:30 p.m., Fuller Chapel

12/9 Sunday – New Members Joining, 10 a.m.

Winter Warmth Concert by the Wiegner's, 4 p.m. Room 111

12/12 Wednesday – All-Boards, 7:30 p.m.

12/14 Friday – 2030's Christmas Party, 6:30 p.m.

12/16 Sunday – Christmas Lunch following Worship, Fellowship Hall

Youth Group to City Mission X-mas Shop, 2 p.m.

12/19 Wednesday – Church Council, 7:30 p.m.

12/21 Friday – Longest Night Service, 5:30 p.m. Fuller Chapel

12/23 Sunday – Advent Cantata, 10 a.m.

12/24 Monday – Christmas Eve Nativity Pageant, 5 p.m.

Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols, 10 p.m.

12/25 Tuesday – Merry Christmas!

Potluck Dinner Church will be held Wednesdays, 6 p.m. Fellowship Hall

Rev. Dr. Carla Jean Bailey, Senior Minister

Barbara Cancellieri, Administrator

Andrus Madsen, Minister of Music

Mary Ayotte, Bookkeeper

Pat Bonnet and Alan Bubba Sooho, Co-moderators

Susan Benes, Nursery School Director

Rev. Leah Rumsey, Minister of Faith Formation

Molly Doris-Pierce, Faith Formation Assistant

Henry Loftus, Marion and Gwen Carter, Sunday Sextons

Frank Neal, Property Manager

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Next Spire Deadline: December 17, 10 a.m.

Next Spire Mailing: December 28, 9 a.m.

My Bailiwick

In his amazing book No Future Without Forgiveness (Doubleday, 1999), Archbishop Desmond Tutu described, with his characteristic candor and wisdom, the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa after the dismantling of apartheid. Archbishop Tutu argues that true reconciliation, even on a national scale and after such horrific violence and bloodshed, can only be accomplished by full, honest confession. It is a powerful testimony from which I still gain insight and hope, even these many years later.

I think of the themes of reconciliation and confession as we approach this Advent season – the time of waiting for the arrival of our Savior to a world still filled with horrific violence and bloodshed. The biblical themes of Advent are not about the sweet baby Jesus so much as they are about turning the world upside down. Ponder Mary's words recorded in Luke, what we now call the Magnificat: *God has scattered the proud, brought down the powerful from their thrones, filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty.* What does that mean? At the very least, it means that the social order we have all come to think of as “the way things are,” will change!

But what does that mean for us here at Second Church? As I navigate my way through this first year as your senior pastor, I've stumbled upon some old hurts and injuries, a couple of “that's the way things are,” and one or two practices that could use a fresh approach. Does Second Church need a truth and reconciliation commission? No, of course not. But we could use some forgiveness, both requested and received. Some turning over of the social order probably wouldn't hurt us any and might actually be good for us! We should listen carefully to a few very dear people who don't have power but are veritable mountains of wisdom.

We are planning some wonderful events for December – everything from the December Market on the 1st to a beautiful Sunday of music on the 23rd -- a quiet, candlelit service of prayer, readings, and music to mark the longest hours of darkness on Friday, December 21st to a chaotic, playful, spontaneous “pick-up pageant” on Christmas Eve at 5. We'll do a few things that we have done before of course, including the Christmas lunch and carol sing on the 16th, and a candlelight service at 10 PM on Christmas Eve. I love traditions as much as the next new pastor!

At the same time, let's look at the deeper themes while we wait for the birth of our Messiah – forgiveness, reconciliation, even a little confession. Then come, Lord Jesus. Come.

Love to us all,
Carla

Stewardship Message

We welcome your financial pledges as we make plans for the programs, staffing and budget for Second Church for 2019. Here are messages from two families in our congregation with their thoughts about why and how they support the life and work of Second Church. Please contact one of us or the church office if you haven't had the chance to make your pledge yet.

Stewardship Committee: Mary Beth McIntyre, Frances West, Laura Foote

From Frances and Chip West:

Participation in a faith community means giving of your time, talent and treasure. We worship together and support each other on life's journey with the confidence that our collective commitment to addressing diverse organizational needs at the church will see us through periods of loss and change as well as of growth and renewed spirit. Each of us has to ask the question: What can our contribution be to the church?

We have found that committing time during the workweek can be constrained by professional obligations. We do our best to navigate these challenges. For us, financial support of the church has a meaning that is two-fold. Firstly, it is an affirmation that the church needs a clear sign of our commitment. Secondly, it is an action that reflects an often-repeated dynamic in our lives: "Give and you shall receive". Acts of generosity, whether of spirit or in a more tangible form, can be reciprocated in the most surprising ways. May God guide your own exploration of how you would like to demonstrate your commitment to our faith community.
Chip and Frances West

From Kim and Andy Gluck:

We have been blessed to be a part of the Second Church faith community for nearly three decades. We deeply appreciate the opportunity to learn and grow in faith with you. We are writing this note to alert you to a possibility of supporting our church in a tax efficient manner.

Initially, we wrote weekly checks to put in the offering. Then, we learned that we could use stock gifts which were much more tax efficient because we could benefit our church with the market value of the stock but never have to realize a capital gain or pay a gains tax.

Now we've found a simpler way to do this. Rather than donate shares directly to our church endowment, we give appreciated stock through what is called a Donor Advised Fund or DAF. Both Fidelity and Schwab offer this option, to donors who have at least \$5,000 of stock to open an account. They will accept the stock gifts, typically convert them to cash and let you know the market value. You then designate the recipients, including the Second Church, and the amounts. As long as the charity you select is a 501c3 qualified charity, the grant will be made. Record keeping and paper work are much easier. The administrator of the DAF generates the check and sends it and a letter to the charity. The fund also keeps track of every gift. It only takes about 15 minutes to open a DAF and you can do it on-line. If anyone wants to learn more, please don't hesitate to ask us.

Kim and Andy Gluck

Faith Formation

Youth Group

12/9: Brunch after Worship

12/16: Volunteering at City Mission Christmas Shops (Tentative time is 2pm)

12/23: Brunch after Worship

12/24: SCN Christmas Services

The Christmas Eve Family Service (5:00 pm) features a pick up Christmas pageant! There is no prep and no rehearsal - all kids who attend the service are invited to pick out a costume when they arrive and join in the fun! Costumes can be picked up in the narthex when families arrive at the service.

Service of Lessons and Carols (10 pm)

2030's Christmas Party: Friday, December 14 at 6:30 pm

We'll get together for dinner, a gift/book exchange (used/white elephant is totally fine!), and whatever else sounds fun (Catan? Puppies? Christmas Caroling?). Mark this on your calendar and keep an eye out for more details to come!

2030's Winter Retreat: Evening of Friday, January 11 - Morning of Sunday, January 13

The plan is to go to the Wiegner's cabin in Dalton, ME for the weekend, heading out Friday after work and returning Sunday morning. Plan on opportunities to be outside (with warm coats!), eat home cooked meals together, relax, hang out, and pray/sing/worship together. More details to come

To Members of the Beloved Community,

Jesus warns against commercial activity in church. When he cleansed the Temple, he said, "Do not make my father's house a house of trade."

However, Jesus also praised using money for good deeds. The Good Samaritan left the injured man in the safekeeping of the innkeeper. The Good Samaritan told the innkeeper, "Whatever you spend beyond (the money I gave you), I will repay upon my return."

As followers of Jesus, we have to find the balance between generating income and supporting activities which help people lead better lives.

Second Church has multiple tenants. Rental income makes a large contribution to our annual budget. Recently, one of our tenants, Clearway School, announced it would leave at the end of the current academic year. Clearway's plans fell through. It will not relocate at least until the end of 2019-2020 academic year.

The question remains, however, about how best to use our physical plant. What is God calling us to do with this asset?

Co-Moderator Pat Bonnet chairs the Ad Hoc Space Utilization Committee.

The committee will recommend to the Church Council use of space for programs and staff of Second Church and criteria for selection of tenants. If you would like to serve on the committee or just have thoughts and concerns you want to share, please contact her.

My best regards,

Bubba Sooho, Co-Moderator

From the Music Desk of Andrus Madsen

December 8, Newton Baroque will feature all four of the paid soloists at Second Church, Nicole Estima, Shiba Nemat-Nasser, Tom Oesterling, and Matthew Stansfield, who will sing a program of 19th century German song, including songs by Clara Schumann, Robert Schumann, Johannes Brahms and Josef Rheinberger. Andrus Madsen will join playing the beautiful 1875 Streicher piano he keeps at the church.

December 23 - This year's Advent Cantata is the overwhelmingly joyful *Missa Dei filii* by Jan Dismas Zelenka. The focus of this mass is on the Gloria text, "Glory to God in the highest." Zelenka expresses the joy of the Gloria text with musical gestures that are almost over the top. You won't want to miss this. Zelenka is a particularly special composer; he was part of one of the greatest orchestras of all time at the Dresden court from 1710 till his death in 1745. While today, Bach gets all the fame, Bach aspired to join the Dresden court orchestra and befriended Zelenka and a number of the other great musical minds in Dresden. Of all of the Dresden greats, Zelenka was the most devoted to sacred music. This particular mass comes from a set of masses each devoted to a different aspect of Christian deity. This mass being the mass for the son focuses on the joy of his birth.

Looking for bell ringers for the 5:00 Christmas Eve Pageant Service. We will rehearse at 10:00 am Christmas Eve for an hour and play during the prelude before the service. Please RSVP to Minister of Music Andrus Madsen and let him know if you are interested in playing. 617-244-2690 andrusmadsen@yahoo.com

A Winter Warmth Concert

The band Lantern Light is presenting their Winter Warmth concert in Room 111 at Second Church on Sunday, December 9 at 4 PM. We'll be performing original and not-often-heard seasonal songs to warm your hearts. And, we are partnering with City Mission Boston as part of their effort to provide winter coats to low-income children in the Boston area.

There is no admission charge to the concert, but we hope that each individual or family will bring a new, warm winter coat, for a child or youth, to be donated to City Mission Boston. Not having a decent, warm coat can make wintertime challenging for any child. Coats should be new and real coats, not fleece jackets.

As a special incentive, Brian O'Donovan, host of A Christmas Celtic Sojourn, has generously donated a pair of tickets to his December 14 show at the Cutler Majestic Theater. Each coat brought to our concert will generate an entry to a drawing to win that pair of tickets!

So plan to come: you will enjoy warm music, bring pride and warmth to a child, and maybe win a night out with A Christmas Celtic Sojourn, one of the highlights of a Boston Christmas!

Lantern Light is:

Marie Duprey (whistles, vocals)

Michael Ross (guitar, vocals)

Gail Wiegner (guitar, mandolin, vocals)

Allen Wiegner (bass, vocals)

Link to Coat Boston at City Mission Boston:

<https://citymissionboston.org/what-we-do/community-engagement/coat-boston/>

Link to A Christmas Celtic Sojourn:

<https://www.wgbh.org/music/celtic/christmas-celtic-sojourn>

From the Board of Mission and Advocacy

The Newton Food Pantry is the only food pantry in Newton that delivers to clients who are homebound. The items most needed are: Oil, Canned Beets, Ground Coffee, Soy Sauce, Spices, Soup and Chicken Broth, Shampoo and Conditioner, Toothpaste and Toothbrushes, Dish Soap, Body Lotion, Laundry Detergent, Bar Soap, and All Purpose Household Cleaner. Place your donations in the Sunday offering basket or the downstairs lobby basket. Items are then delivered to the Newton Food Pantry in the basement of city hall.

Thank You!

Dear Church family,

When I serve a congregation I am reluctant and even disavow the attribution of “church family.” We choose our community of faith, but we don’t get to choose our family of origin. That said, I feel the love, familiarity and tenderness of family in the many kindnesses the Second Church family has shown to Gregor and me since his cancer diagnosis. We were particularly overwhelmed by the generous box of cards, gifts, books, and edible treats that Andy Gluck brought to us this week, replete with so many wonders and deliciousness for body, mind, and spirit.

This is the most difficult time in our lives. Your love, prayers, and tangible ways you have connected have lightened the load in ways we hardly understand. What we do understand is that Gregor’s doctors say his healing progress is miraculous. I feel jubilant most days when I should feel defeated and disenchanting. We are so very grateful that the Second Church community is among our family of choice and truly part of God’s plan for our salvation.

With deep and abiding love,
Mark Seifried and Gregor Cann

From the Board of Parish Life

Eat, sing, and be merry! The annual **Christmas Lunch and Carol Sing** will be on December 16, immediately following worship.

From the Nominating Committee

Would you like to join a board or committee in 2019? Or volunteer in some other way? We would be glad to hear from you. There are lots of ways to get involved. Formal nominations go before the Annual Meeting in February. Please let one of us know of your possible interest. Nominating Committee: Alfredo Kniazzezh, Laura Foote, Betsy Pape, Dana Davis, Alex Richter. *Contact: Laura at 617 650 0543 or foote.path@verizon.net*

Potluck Dinner Church - Wednesdays at 6 o’clock

Dinner Church will continue this fall. We’ll meet at 6:00 pm on Wednesdays, and instead of signing up to provide dinner, we’ll bring food potluck-style. There is no sign up – just bring whatever you wish, ideally enough to feed five or more people – think cookies, veggies from your garden, or a new recipe you’ve been wanting to try. We know that this may mean there are nights when we do not have a traditional “balanced meal” and we accept this as part of the fun. If you are unable to bring something, don’t let this prevent you from joining us. Come anyway! Write Leah with questions: Leahrumsey@g.harvard.edu



Advent and Christmas Season at Second Church

December 1: Come help, come shop, come create at the **December Market!**

December 8: Newton Baroque; Lieder Abend - 7:30 PM Fuller Chapel 🎵
Free to Second Church members. Solo and quartet performances of songs by Robert Schumann, Clara Schumann, Josef Rheinberger, and Johannes Brahms.

December 9: Winter Warmth Concert - 4:00 PM in Room 111 🎵

Lantern Light performs original and not-often-heard seasonal songs to warm your hearts. The group (including Allen and Gail Wiegner) is partnering with City Mission Boston to provide winter coats to low income families. So, your concert fee is a warm, new winter coat (not a fleece jacket) for a child or youth. Each coat brought to our concert will generate an entry to a drawing to win a pair of tickets to Brian O'Donovan's December 14th *A Christmas Celtic Sojourn* show at the Cutler Majestic Theater!

December 16: Christmas Lunch and Carol Sing after Sunday worship 🎵

Our Board of Parish Life is hosting a Christmas Lunch (donation requested). This perennial festive favorite event of the year will include singing your most-loved Christmas carols.

December 21: Longest Night Service of prayer, music, and candle light - 5:30 PM, Fuller Chapel. December hours of darkness are long. Come spend some time with Pastor Carla in quiet prayer as we ponder "the hopes and fears of all the years" in the Bethlehem baby.

December 23: Christmas Cantata – Sanctuary worship - 10:00 AM

This year's Advent Cantata is the overwhelmingly joyful *Missa Dei filii* by Jan Dismas Zelenka. The focus of this mass is on the Gloria text, "Glory to God in the highest". Zelenka expresses the joy of the Gloria text with musical gestures that are almost over the top.

December 24: 10 AM Join the Handbell Choir for a one-hour rehearsal in the morning before playing for the 5:00 service. Interested? RSVP to Andrus Madsen: (617) 244-2690 or andrusmadsen@yahoo.com

December 24: 5:00 PM Christmas Eve worship and a fun, messy, and holy Pick-up Pageant! There will be a part for anyone who would like to participate. Come celebrate the Holy Night with a living nativity, Christmas carols, and gifts for the baby Jesus! And this year, please bring new or gently-used infant clothes and receiving blankets. You may also bring disposable diapers – infant size. All contributions will go to Newborns in Need (newbornsinneed.org)

December 24: 10:00 PM. Christmas Eve worship of Lessons and Carols

We will worship on the holiest of nights with candle light, the beloved Biblical story, special music and traditional carols and a short meditation by Pastor Carla. You are also welcome to stay for a few minutes after worship for cider, ginger bread, and Christmas joy in Fuller Chapel.

December 30: YES, there's worship at 10 AM!

Our friends from Eliot UCC will join us for an informal service in the sanctuary. We'll ponder how to "keep Christmas in our hearts", sing carols, celebrate the best gifts we gave, and enjoy left-over Christmas cookies and Pastor Carla's famous cranberry tea!

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.

