



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

My Bailiwick

In any one year, we celebrate quite a few opportunities to start over – to begin again. I always think of the start of the school year as beginning new, with new crayons and books and sharpened pencils. The Christian liturgical year starts over on the first Sunday of Advent, late in November or early December. Then there's New Year's Day, January 1st, with its rash of resolutions, and the start of Lent on Ash Wednesday, giving us an opportunity to make new commitments, to begin again, relinquishing things we should stop doing.

Of all the opportunities to "begin again", the most significant is Easter Sunday, when the Gospels tell us Jesus appeared, after his death, to those who loved him. The Gospels also tell us that Jesus appeared as a stranger – that even his disciples didn't recognize him. They had to come to know him in a new way – to begin again, so to speak. That's a powerful metaphor, that resurrected stranger one.

Like most clergy I know, I've been thinking about what we'll find when our churches are finally able to emerge from this long pandemic. We fear they'll look something like our backyards after the snow melts. Church projections aren't optimistic. Even before the pandemic, nearly half the congregations in the UCC had 100 members or less. Over 20% of them have fewer than 50 members. Second Church has a whopping 248 members – larger than half the churches in our denomination!

I believe we have much to learn from the resurrection stories, written long after Paul traveled around starting new churches, not the least of which has to do with that stranger theme. The resurrected Christ didn't look anything like the rabbi the disciples knew. They had to figure out how to know him, trust him, even follow him differently. Similarly, I'm pretty sure we're going to have to figure out things after the pandemic that will be different. Life in our church isn't going to feel the same. We're going to have to learn how to be a church differently. In a recent interview with NPR regarding the status of American churches after months of shutdowns, David Kinnaman, president of the Christian research organization Barna Group, said easily as many of 20% of American churches will close. "They're recognizing that the relationships that they thought were much deeper with people were actually not as deep as they expected." I'm already seeing signs of this very thing.

When we come out of the pandemic and are able to gather in-person again, it will be a "begin again" time for us. I'm paying closer attention to the resurrection stories about recognizing the stranger-Christ this year, so I'll be ready.

Love to you all, Carla

cbailey@2ndchurch.org

April 2021

A Note of Thanks

Dear Second Church Family -

The sudden passing of our husband, Dad, and "Bumpa," Pete Johnson, on December 17, 2020 naturally left the Johnson and Villiotte families in heartbreaking shock. Even with the restrictions and fears of the Covid virus ever-present and with Christmas coming the following week, almost immediately, the caring friends of Second Church reached out to us with condolences of all kinds. Food, flowers, cards, texts and calls continue to feed our hearts.

While we all miss real hugs, the love and caring extended by Second folks sure felt like we'd had a big giant one.

With gratitude and thanks, Donna Johnson and Family

Updates from the Foote and Rosser/McAuley Families

Laura and Nathaniel Foote are happy to share that their son Henry and his wife Rosa Li are new parents to a daughter, Emerson, born in Durham, North Carolina on December 20, 2020. Henry is in his final of year of residency at Duke University Hospital.

Joan and Peter Rosser are delighted that they have become grandparents to Lydia Bell McAuley who was born December 30, 2020 in Pinehurst, NC. to their daughter Stephanie Rosser McAuley and her husband Daniel. Grandparents, in addition to Joan and Peter, are Linda and Rick McAuley.

From The Board of Parish Life

Please join us on Zoom for "Story Discussions" on *Thinking Thursdays*.

Each week, we will suggest a short story, article, film or essay which we hope will open our hearts and minds to wider experiences and perspectives. We hope you will mark your calendars and join us!

Thursday, April 8th at 7:30pm – 8:30pm we will discuss *The Boston Globe* series, **A Beautiful Resistance: Stories of Black Joy and Wellness** compiled by Journalist Jenee Osterheldt - February 2021 - In celebration of Black History Month. Please watch some of the videos and read the articles in preparation. We hope you will find them inspiring and enlightening.

Thursday, April 15th 1:00pm – "*What Doesn't Kill You Makes You Blacker*" – a memoir in essays by Damon Young, Chapter 13 – 'Living While Black Killed My Mom'

Thursday, April 22nd at 7:30pm – "*Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning*" by Cathy Park Hong. A book of personal essays written by an Asian American. We will select an essay for discussion.

Thursday, April 29th at 1:00pm – Short Story by Sherman Alexie ~ "What You Pawn I Will Redeem"

Although the times will vary *each Thursday*, the Zoom Link will remain the same and we will be sharing that link in Constant Contact as we get closer to our kick off! Please reach out if you are having difficulty finding the books/links/articles.

We encourage you to join us early next month for discussion and please send along any content that might be suitable going forward. Questions or to submit content ~ please contact Martha Comfort comfortmarthae@gmail.com or Dana Davis dcampdavis@comcast.net.

HOLY WEEK

All Holy Week events will be announced through Constant Contact.

Saturday ~ March 27 ~ Drive-through church parking lot to pick up your palm branch between 10-noon

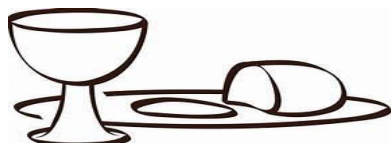
Palm Sunday ~ March 28 ~ Pre-recorded worship, posted by 8 AM on Facebook and our website: www.2ndchurch.org

"Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches. Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting, "Hosannah! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!"



Maundy Thursday ~ April 1 ~ Worship at your own table at home with the enclosed Maundy Thursday Home Worship Service.

See the reverse side of this insert for the liturgy for your observation of Maundy Thursday.



Maundy Thursday ~ April 1 ~ 7:30 PM ~ Evening Prayers via Zoom.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87599491942?pwd=Z04xRVJjdVhEeVRuNXJzMEhYY292dz09>
Meeting ID: 875 9949 1942 Passcode: 051035.

For this evening service of prayer, please have a lit candle close by. We will extinguish our candles together at the conclusion of the service.

"They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to them, 'Sit here while I pray.' He took with him Peter and James and John, and he said to them, 'I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here and keep awake.'

Good Friday ~ April 2 ~ Pre-recorded Worship, posted by 8 AM on Facebook and our website: www.2ndchurch.org

This service will include a setting of Psalm 51 by Michel Richard Delalande (1657-1726), performed with a single singer, a viola da gamba and a harpsichord alternating with verses of the psalm. Teresa Wakim will sing accompanied by Matt Zucker and Andrus Madsen, with chant from Jason McStoots. Shiba Nemat-Nasser will also perform a Lamentation of Jeremiah *tenebrae* lesson by Sebastien de Brossard (1655-1730) accompanied by Matt Zucker and Andrus Madsen.

Holy Saturday ~ April 3 ~ Vespers Organ Recital, 5:00 PM, Second Church Sanctuary

All are invited to enter the sanctuary quietly, wearing masks and keeping social distance. This service will also be livestreamed.

Easter Day ~ April 4 ~ Pre-recorded Worship, posted by 8 AM on Facebook and on our website: www.2ndchurch.org



Violinist Susanna Ogata will play the "Resurrection Sonata" by Heinrich Ignaz Biber. Tom Oesterling and Shiba Nemat Nasser will sing "O Death Where is Thy Sting" from Handel's Messiah, and Max Tipton will sing "Rejoice Ye Heavens" by Georg Philip Telemann with strings and Chris Beluscio playing trumpet. Chris will also accompany our Easter hymns.

A Maundy Thursday Liturgy for Home Worship



You may choose to have this service at your side as you eat your meal – at noon or in the evening, alone or with others. If you are with children, encourage them to participate in parts of the Liturgy. You may also want to have a lit candle at your table.

Before the meal: *Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, borei p'ri ha-adamah.*
We praise You, Eternal God, Ruler of time and space, Creator of the fruit of the earth.
Bless this food, that we might be nourished by it. Amen.

Before the meal, read: Mark 14:12-17

On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed, Jesus' disciples said to him, "Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?" So, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him, and wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks, where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there." So, the disciples set out and went to the city and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal. When it was evening, Jesus came with the twelve.

During or following the meal, read: Mark 14:18-21

When they had taken their places and were eating, Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me." They began to be distressed and to say to him one after another, "Surely, not I?" He said to them, "It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the bowl with me.

At the end of your meal, keep before you some remaining food – preferably bread or cracker – and whatever you have been drinking, and read these verses:

While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body" (*eat something remaining of your meal*). Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God" (*drink from your cup*).

Prayer: Blessed are you, bountiful God, for this good earth and for the flowering of springtime. Save the dry lands from destructive droughts. Protect the flowing waters. Allow in this time the planting of fields for food.
Blessed are you, faithful God, for you accompany suffering humanity with love. Be present wherever the coronavirus has struck. Visit all who mourn their dead. Give courage to those who fear the present and the future.
Blessed are you, gracious God, for you care for the needy. Feed the hungry. Protect the refugee. Embrace the distressed. House the homeless. Nurse the sick. Comfort the dying. Especially we pray for those we name before you now :

Holy God, we worship in the gathering shadows of Jesus' suffering and death. We come with his friends, the men and women who have followed him in every place and generation, to live again this story of service and betrayal, of weakness and courage. We come to witness your love in action. Be with us, we ask, in Jesus' name, remembering the prayer he taught us, "Our Father, who art in heaven...."

From the Board of Faith Formation

It has been said, there are two things in life we cannot avoid, Death and Taxes. April 15th is the day by which all US citizens must file their taxes. The next day, April 16th is the day that has been designated National Healthcare Decision Day. On this day, organizations across the country focus on learning, communicating and documenting preferences for our healthcare decisions and what matters most. It is natural to avoid and even fear these conversations. As Christians we are a community with shared values, called to live as Jesus taught with love and compassion and to trust in God. Our church community is the ideal place to normalize these conversations and learn to be advocates for ourselves and each other.

On April 11th during coffee hour, Priscilla Gazarian and the Board of Faith Formation will lead us in a discussion on the value and importance of advance care planning. Armed with new knowledge and tools, we hope you will not only complete or update your own advance care plan, but also commit to talking about it with others. As a way to model how to have these conversations, we will host a virtual "Death over Dinner" event on April 25th.

Those interested in attending the Death over Dinner event will receive materials to review before we convene via Zoom. No reason not to have a little fun with this event even though we cannot physically gather for a meal. Set your table, cook something nice, dress for dinner and join us for a conversation that matters!

The Value and Importance of Advance Care Planning
Sunday, April 11th 11:00 a.m. during coffee hour

Virtual "Death over Dinner" conversations
Sunday, April 25th at 5:30 p.m.

From the Board of Mission and Advocacy

- ❖ When you write out your shopping lists, please include diapers and/or wipes to donate. The Board of Mission and Advocacy is collecting for Cradles to Crayons. Any size is welcome but sizes 4, 5, and 6 are especially needed. Please bring your donations to the Living Room at the church any weekday between 8-5. While you're there (and before you go out to rake your yard) pick up a jigsaw puzzle to do at home!
- ❖ Starting last week, the federal government began sending out relief checks. The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 provides \$1,400 for most of us. Several of our Second Church parishioners have wondered how they might use this money to help others.

Our Board of Mission and Advocacy supports many organizations that address the needs of so many. For example, we are collecting diapers for families through Cradles to Crayons. The Newton Food Shelf has seen demand increase three fold in recent months. Even our church has seen a drop in income from several sources on which we have relied in the past.

You may need to use the stimulus checks to meet your own basic household needs. That is their intent and unquestionably comes first! But if you can, please consider giving away a portion or all your stimulus check to an organization that will use it to improve other people's lives.

Together, we can use unexpected money for unexpected generosity

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

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An Invitation to Generosity

*Nobody hungry, nobody thirsty, shade from the sun, shelter from the wind, For the
Compassionate One guides them, takes them to the best springs.* Isaiah 49:10

“Nobody hungry, nobody thirsty” is the hope of God in Isaiah. It is also the hope of this One Great Hour of our Sharing (Offering) and caring. With the gifts of our hearts, we let love flow, like new well-water to a thirsty village; for crops, for cooking, for life! Let our giving be an upselling of generosity and may the stream of love bring about God’s kin-dom. Our gift is prayer in action. Praise be to God. (See insert and envelope.)

Rev. Dr. Carla Jean Bailey, Senior Minister Barbara Cancellieri, Administrator
Andrus Madsen, Minister of Music Mary Ayotte, Bookkeeper
Rev. Leah Rumsey, Minister of Faith Formation
Sally Anderson and Kathy Lucey, Co-Moderators
Susan Benes, Nursery School Director; Sydney Koo, Faith Formation Assistant
John Ferrera, Communications Coordinator: johnferrerawork@gmail.com
Marion and Gwen Carter, Sunday Sextons
Frank Neal, Property Manager