

THE VOICE of *Second Church*

United Church of Christ
50 Park Street
Attleboro, MA 02703

January 2024



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www.attleborosecondchurch.org

COFFEE HOUSE & OPEN MIC
SATURDAY, JANUARY 13, 2024, 6 TO 8 PM

FAMILY FELLOWSHIP DINNER AND BINGO
SATURDAY, JANUARY 27, 2024, 6 TO 8 PM

Second Congregational Church of Attleboro, UCC
Reverend Dr, S. William Sencabaugh, Pastor
revdrwill@attleborosecondchurch.org – c: 860-861-5003
William A. MacPherson, PhD., Director of Music
Katrina Lay, Executive Director, Jack & Jill School – 508-222-1149
jackandjill@attleborosecondchurch.org - www.jackandjillattleboro.com
Fred Saunders, Administrative Assistant / Clerk / Curator
BSA Charter Organization Representative, - c: 508-918-0123
Jack Baptist, Sexton
Church Office: 508- 222-4677 Fax: 508- 222-2148
office@attleborosecondchurch.org
www.attleborosecondchurch.org
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THE VOICE

We warmly welcome everyone to celebrate God’s love by joining in dynamic worship, creating genuine community, and serving all with justice and respect.

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

January 2024

Calendar	Jack & Jill	Did You Know?	Sacred Dance	Prayer Shawl	Christian Education	Birthdays	Music Notes	Women’s Fellowship	Coffee House
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Pastor’s Message

Years ago, when a local church was about to close their doors for a final time—word spread like wildfire on social media. All of a sudden, that congregational church became a lightning rod for the community!

Everyone wanted to know what happened. People began posting: “I was married in that church. My kids were baptized in that church. My teenagers were once part of a youth group. I loved their church suppers and fairs. I went to that church every Christmas and Easter!” However, my favorite post (which I will unpack) was “Has the church considered having a bake sale?”

First: How much money would a bake sale raise? Do they know what the operating costs of a church might be? Perhaps the most successful bake sale organization might be the Girl Scouts when they organize the troops to sell those delicious cookies, which I don’t believe they actually bake. The local church on the cusp of closing their doors is not going to have the reach of the Girl Scouts of America!

Second: Fundraising for a church is a difficult endeavor. Some churches have monthly suppers. I have served churches that hosted 8 suppers a year. It was a huge project. Many people enjoyed working together. They created fellowship among the workers and the patrons. These were not ‘gifts to the community.’ We weren’t feeding the hungry as an act of charity. These suppers were to support the operating budget and they were needed to make ends meet.

The church relied on the suppers to sustain the mission of the church. I know of another local church that was known throughout the community as the “Pie Church.” They made pies as a massive project. They froze them and sold them at the local County Fair as well as at holiday times. It was a small church, and the pie fundraiser was their thing. This may not seem fair, but people knew them for pies—not worship or the mission of the church. People from the community may have thought that their mission was pies. The church where I served as a student pastor made peanut brittle. It continues to be their major fundraiser.

Third: The dark side of the church supper was the *ownership* of the workers. Some members became gatekeepers, and were very possessive about who could work, and what their role would be. They did it their way—and if you couldn’t do it their way, well... Gatekeepers aren’t open to new ideas and alternative ways of doing things. I have run up against this several times. In one church, I started as the Water Server, until I proved myself. I was then promoted to Coffee Server! Eventually, I was promoted to the glorious job of Food Scraper. I don’t like to brag, but then I was promoted to Dishwasher. It only took me 6 years to achieve those heights. In another church, in six years, I never made it higher than ‘Server.’

Eventually, after doing something for so many years, relying on the same dedicated crew—we inevitably hear, “I am burning out!” Many will just sneak away, never to be heard from again.

Finally: If the church was so important to the Bake Sale Lady—then she might have supported the church with more passion before the news of the church’s immanent closure was reported. Perhaps the words of Joni Mitchell are important here, “Don’t it always seem to go, you don’t know what you got, ‘til it’s gone.”

The point of this article is not to make anyone feel targeted or guilty. We are NOT even close to closure. We are growing in attendance, membership and stewardship—which are quantifiable numbers. I think we are also growing in qualitative ways as well with regard to Christian education, Mission/Outreach and fellowship opportunities.

There is so much to look forward to in our church. We have work to do—and we’ll do that work together in the coming year!

Peace,
Reverend Will

JANUARY AND FEBRUARY BOOK STUDY (Because Lent is just around the corner)

I have a book study planned for this Lenten season. It will begin on February 20th (Lent begins on Feb 14th—so don’t give up chocolate this year!) The book for Lent will be *Salvation Not Purchased* by Stephen Finlan. (1)

I like to take a little break between book groups, so this year, in January our book will be *Giving Christianity Back to Agape Love* by Matthew Carriker. It's a short book, and the chapters are not that long. However, the material is pretty dense, so I would like to take our time with it. In other words, this book will be the 'filler' in between book groups. So, we will return to the book after Lent, for a few weeks. I don't want to rush through the book, and each chapter will be rich for discussion.

The book group will meet on January 9th, 16th, 23rd, and 30th from 6 to 7 pm in the Conference Room.

COFFEE HOUSE AND OPEN MIC NEWS

If you received a bill for \$50,000—could you pay it off tomorrow?

Each month we host a second Saturday Coffee House. We don't charge admission, but we do have a donation basket. The monies collected are meant to be shared with an organization that is helping people. Last year we donated to a non-profit called RIP Medical Debt. I would like to share with you a true story...

A woman shared how she changed jobs in November. Her health insurance was immediately cut off. Her new employer made her wait for 30 days to start on their health insurance plan. For the entire month of December, the woman and her husband were without health insurance. They could have purchased insurance for that month—but it requires quite a bit of money, filling out paperwork, and red tape. In that time, any and all appointments were cancelled. Also, prescriptions could not be filled. Her husband went without one prescription because it cost \$400 out of pocket for a month supply (I am told it cost \$140 with insurance). They prayed that they wouldn't need to go to the emergency room or need to see any doctor in that month.

But what if they did? They were one accident or sickness away from bankruptcy! This is not hyperbole. This happens every single day. Maybe you haven't switched jobs. Maybe you have had the good fortune of a health care plan that takes care of all your medical needs at a low cost.

RIP Medical Debt- buys the debt from collectors for a penny on the dollar—seriously!

This year our church will donate \$500 (the Coffee House money)—but the reality is—it will wipe out \$50,000 worth of debt! Imagine having someone wipe out \$50,000 of your debt.

We are doing this because we believe in helping those who, through no fault of their own—can't take care of it themselves.

SERVICE NOTES

The Deacon of the month is Michael Touloumtzis.

A **New Members Inquiry Meeting** will be held on January 28, 2024, after the service in the Ladies Parlor. If you are interested in joining Second Congregational Church, please see a Deacon and plan to attend this meeting.

January 7: First Sunday after Epiphany
Communion

Scripture: Matthew 2:1-12

Sermon: "Star of the Day"

January 14: Second Sunday after Epiphany

Scripture: Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18

Sermon: "The Perfect Space"

January 21: Third Sunday after Epiphany

Scripture reading: Mark 1:14-20

Sermon: "Cheap or Costly Grace"

January 28: Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

Scripture reading: Psalm 111

Sermon: "Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow"



Women's Fellowship is seeing great attendance at Coffee Hour each week,

and everyone seems to be truly enjoying the time they share. Please remember that it takes volunteers to make this happen. Do you like to make something delicious to share on the round sharing table, or do you like to come early to help with the setup, or do you like to pour coffee, tea or hot chocolate and there always is clean up after coffee hour. Please let Sandy know what you like to do. She will give you all the guidance you need. No experience is necessary. See the signup sheet at coffee hour or call Sandy at 508-699-2738, e-mail sandrasaunders99@gmail.com or call the office.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!
Women's Fellowship

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

PSM will meet on Monday, January 15th at 2:00 in the Parlor. Shawls are a tremendous comfort to individuals experiencing a loss or other traumatic event in their lives. New members are always welcome. Contact me if you have questions. *Roberta Ferguson*

COMMUNION VISITATION TEAM

The Communion Visitation Team continues to visit folks who are unable to attend services. We are happy to come to your home for a time of fellowship, whether or not you wish to

take communion. We will certainly wear masks and observe all precautions necessary. You may communicate with the Church Office. Cathy Giannetti, Ralph Giannetti, Karen Slawson, Marcia Weidner and Roberta Zarrella are part of the team.



Happy New Year! I hope that your holiday season was as joyous and restful as it was for the Jack and Jill community! We are excited to be back at school!

We are heading full force into the New Year with new events on the horizon! We will be kicking off our *Show and Dinner To Go* fundraiser planning right away. This is a different type of Spaghetti Supper. We reviewed the past few years' attendance and interest and decided we needed to make a change. We are excited to host a children's music show with the option to pre-order dinner to go. The dinner will feature different pasta dishes. Do not worry; we will still have plenty of **opportunity baskets!** Mark your (2)

calendars for Saturday, March 16, 2024. Be on the lookout for more information soon!

We will go right from Spaghetti Supper planning to registration and open house planning. We will open registration for current families and church members on Tuesday, January 16th at 9:30 AM. Registrations for new and returning families will only be accepted via our online portal. If you would like a tour of the program, please don't hesitate to call or email me. I will also be hosting two registration overviews to discuss the different program options. I will host an evening session on Tuesday January 9th at 8:30 PM and a daytime session on Thursday January 11th at 9:00 AM.

Our Open House will be held on Saturday, January 27th 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM. We are excited to welcome families into the school! We love to show all of the great things Jack and Jill preschool has to offer. The classrooms will be open, and teachers will be available to speak with incoming families. Members of our Board of Directors will be on hand to answer any questions that families may have. If you know any families who would like an invitation, please let me know.

In the New Year, our 4/5 year old classes will begin working more in depth on pre-kindergarten skills such as writing lower case letters, attending for longer periods of time, and being required to complete specific projects that we call “have to’s”. The children and families will be attending their open houses and Kindergarten screenings. A very exciting time for our friends!

I want to extend an invitation to the congregation to come and visit our program. I would love to show you the amazing things we are doing here. Please call or email to set up a time to come see the school in action! The space you provide for us opens up a world of possibilities for the young children and families of the Attleboro area. We are very grateful to have the opportunity to be a part of the early years of these children's education. Thank you for your continued support of this program.

We are still looking to add to our substitute teacher list. If you know someone with an early childhood background, please encourage them to call me 508-222-1149 or email me at

jackandjill@attleborosecondchurch.org.

Wishing you all health and happiness in the New Year!

Katrina Lay, Executive Director

Outreach & Missions

This month I want to share with our church family where our end-of-year donations have gone in 2023. As background, Outreach & Missions is allocated its portion of the budget in 12 monthly installments, which is one of the reasons the bulk of our money is distributed in December, although as particular needs arise, we can respond more quickly as needed.

Attleboro Area Interfaith Collaborative: \$2,500.

Boy Scouts: \$100.

Church World Service: \$300.

Girl Scouts of SE New England: \$100.

Literacy Center: \$500.

Maine Seacoast Mission: \$100.

PFLAG: \$100.

Society of St. Vincent de Paul: \$1,200.

Self Help, Inc.: \$500.

Holy Joe's Café: \$100.

UCC Neighbors in Need: \$300.

New Hope Inc.: \$100.

Sisters of Charity El Salvador: \$100.

UCC One Great Hour of Sharing: \$300.

In addition, funds raised by the Coffee House will again go towards relief of medical debt.

Paula Foresman

Music Notes

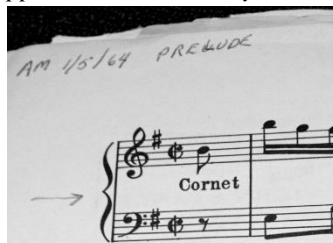
CHOIR SCHEDULES

Bell Choir and Adult Choir rehearsals will resume on Thursday, January 4th, and will be held at their regular times on all the Thursdays in January.

The Adult Choir will sing on all the Sundays this month. The Bell Choir will decide on the next performance date at an upcoming rehearsal.

THIS PICTURE TELLS A STORY

(A near-reprint and update of an article that appeared in the January 2014 Voice).



Sunday, January 5, 1964: That's 60 years ago from the first Sunday in January 2024. It was the “official” beginning of my career as a church organist. I was 14 years old (do the math!) and a freshman in high school. I had played for services occasionally in the fall of 1963 at the Covenant Church (then in its former building, which is now the United Pentecostal Church, 175 South Main St.), but I became a regular, paid employee at the beginning of the new year.

Grandly, I had imagined that I might note the date of every organ piece I played, week by week. That resolution lasted all of a month, but at least I still know my first Prelude (and still have the crumbling sheet music): a Voluntary in E Minor by the English composer John Stanley. [“Cornet,” pronounced Cor-nay, is a French term referring to a particular combination of stops]. The “AM” in the annotation indicates it was for morning worship, since at that time and for several more years there were also Sunday evening services at Covenant.

Who would have thought I'd be playing 60 years later, continuously, except for vacation Sundays and my academic sabbatical for six months in 2011? Certainly not me, as a young teen. But that's the way it worked out: High school, college, graduate school, a new church building and new organ at the new Covenant Church in 1976.

And then a move to Second Church in 1986. Kim Darling had started at Second Church around the same time as I had begun at Covenant, so we had both been in our respective positions for 22 years when he moved to Brockton, and I replaced him.

Then back to Covenant in 1994, the eventual return of Kim to Second Church, and then his retirement and my “2nd coming to 2nd Church” in January 2002, 22 years ago. That makes a total of around 30 years at Covenant and 30 years here at Second. And somewhere between 3900 and 4200 preludes, postludes, offertories and doxologies; 15,000 hymns; and around 1800 in-church accompaniments to choral or solo vocal music.

But I've been blessed with a supportive family (my dear late mother used to drive me to church to practice until I was old enough to get my license); good health; wonderful friends, fellow musicians, choir members, and (3)

colleagues; great instruments (other than the first one I ever played, the old organ at the old Covenant church); and invaluable experience as a musician. And I'm thankful to be at the console at Second Church and serving a church and church family that I love.

Bill MacPherson
Director of Music

INTERGENERATIONAL SACRED DANCE

Sacred Dance practices will be held all Saturdays in January. If you would like to be a part of movement in worship, all ages are welcome to join the intergenerational sacred dancers. We gather at 9:00 am on Saturdays for about 45 minutes of stretching, learning new dances for worship, and a little bit of just "fun dance". If you or your child has any questions please let me know at (508)-409-7919 or de_saunders@hotmail.com.

Diane Osborne.

Christian Education

As we welcome in 2024, we are blessed and grateful for all who join us at Sunday School and Family Fellowship events.

All are welcome to join us for a Gathering Sunday the first Sunday of the month, January 7th. For Littles and Elementary, Sunday School is held every week unless it is noted as a Gathering Sunday. Please note that there are worship boxes for all ages on the bookshelves in the back of the sanctuary if your child would like some quiet activities. The Conference Room is also available.

Toddlers through Pre-K age may be dropped off beginning at 9:45 in the Nursery for our Littles Program for stories, songs, and crafts that support building a foundation of their faith. As this age group is often toilet training, please let the teachers know what support they might need. Also, this class has a snack most weeks including fruit juice, water, goldfish, or an allergy free option. Please alert the teachers of any food allergies so that we can ensure we provide the right option. We are happy to add to our offerings to meet your child's dietary needs.

Teachers: Sue & Nicole

Elementary Age Students in Kindergarten and up are welcome to sit with their families for the first part of worship and will join their teachers in the Narthex when noted in the bulletin.

This year we will be exploring their questions about faith through skits, songs, crafts, and so much more. In the month of January, we will explore lessons and mini-mission projects focused on giving back in our local community and beyond.

Teachers: Diane & Tina

Middle and High School Youth will be dismissed for classroom time during worship on the 2nd and 4th Sundays. On the 1st and 3rd Sundays they will participate in worship and meet with their teachers during Coffee Hour. They will be exploring the 'Way to Live: Christian Practices for Teens', a series of personal stories that tackle the big question of what a 'good life' looks like (spoiler alert: the answer isn't being the most successful or having the most stuff).

Teachers: Tara & Andrew

FAMILY FELLOWSHIP

Many thanks to Sue Janson and the many other hands that made our Christmas Cookie and Crafting event so much fun last month. We were glad to welcome new friends and have joyous time together creating. Also, we are very grateful for those who baked cupcakes and helped us celebrate Jesus' birth with a rousing rendition of Happy Birthday on Christmas Eve morning!

Our next Family Fellowship event will be our annual BINGO Dinner on Saturday January 27th. The event will be held from 6 to 8 pm in the Fellowship Hall. In these cold days of winter don't let the post-Christmas slump get you down. All are welcome to invite family and friends to join us for a home cooked meal and prizes for all! More details will be shared about the menu for the event in Sunday announcements, etc. and if you'd like to help in the kitchen, please let us know.

Also, save the date for a double day of celebration with the Souper Bowl of Caring and the Mardi Gras Pancake Breakfast on February 11th!

Diane Osborne,
Chair of Christian Education
de_saunders@hotmail.com
(508) 409-7919

Did You Know?

In June of 1831, by an act of the legislature, the Boston & Providence Railroad was created. Well, you couldn't have had more controversy if the town had changed its name. In 1825 the White Church was completed,

but the church cemetery was now to the east of the church instead of behind it. The railroad demanded a straight line right through the Kirkyard and this started an uproar. All efforts to stop this travesty came to naught and the parish had to move the graves. Now this was a time of flimsy wood coffins for most people so eventually only the stone markers were removed from many graves. To my knowledge there are still some remains under the tracks (way under) and a few actually on the common.

From 1833 until 1906 the railroad crossings were all at street level. This caused untold deaths and injuries, never mind the property damage. Finally, the railroad agreed to raise the tracks at several crossings in the town. This was when our famous arches were built. The arches were certainly high enough at the time but ask any truck driver today and see what answer you get.

When the tracks were at street level, our front lawn was at street level. There were wooden gates and a crossing tender whose job was to lower the gates when a train approached. This arrangement worked out well except when the man was asleep or intoxicated.

After the street was lowered, the railroad erected the stone wall which still exists in front. The wall was originally topped with brass rails which sadly have long since disappeared.

And that's the way it was.

Ted Moxham

January Birthdays

- 4 Katie Olsen
- 8 Marty Beck
Olivia Taft
- 9 Brent Bowen
Cathy Giannetti
Rosemary Kukla
- 11 Anna Beck
- 19 Chloe Iocco
Casey J. Williams
- 21 Ed McCarthy
Charlie Oliver
- 22 Don Haskel
Ruthie Withers
- 25 Therese LaPorte
- 26 Adam Hauerwas
Angie Vecchioli
- 29 Colin Blair
- 31 Viktoria King

J A N U A R Y 2 0 2 4

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 New Years Day Office is closed	2	3 6:30 PM Cub Scout Den Meetings	4 6:30 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM Adult Choir Rehearsal	5	6 <i>Epiphany</i> 9:00 AM Intergenerational Sacred Dance Rehearsal
7 10:00 AM Worship Communion	8	9 6:00 PM Book Study Group	10 10:00 AM Communion Visitation Meeting 6:30 PM Cub Scout Den Meetings	11 6:30 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM Adult Choir Rehearsal	12	13 9:00 AM Intergenerational Sacred Dance Rehearsal 6:00 PM Coffee House & Open Mic
14 10:00 AM Worship Sunday School 11:00 AM Stewardship Luncheon 2:00 PM Taft Party	15 2:00 PM Prayer Shawl Ministry 7:00 PM Facilities Committee Meeting	16 6:00 PM Book Study Group	17 6:30 PM Cub Scout Den Meetings	18 5:00 PM Board of Deacons Virtual Meeting 6:30 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM Adult Choir Rehearsal	19	20 9:00 AM Intergenerational Sacred Dance Rehearsal 11:00 AM Janson Family Party
21 10:00 AM Worship Sunday School 11:15 AM Christian Education Committee Meeting	22	23 6:00 PM Book Study Group 7:00 PM Administration Committee Meeting	24 6:30 PM Cub Scout Den Meetings 7:00 PM PFLAG Meeting	25 February Voice Deadline 6:30 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM Adult Choir Rehearsal	26	27 9:00 AM Intergenerational Sacred Dance Rehearsal 9:30 AM Jack & Jill Open House and Registration 6:00 PM Family Fellowship Bingo Night
28 10:00 AM Worship Sunday School 11:00 AM New Member Inquiry Meeting 11:15 AM Church Council Meeting	29 3:00 PM Food Pantry Distribution	30 6:00 PM Book Study Group	31 6:30 PM Cub Scout Den Meetings			