

THE VOICE of *Second Church*

United Church of Christ

50 Park Street

Attleboro, MA 02703

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March 2021



WORSHIP ON OUR WEBSITE SUNDAY, 10 AM

Second Congregational Church of Attleboro, UCC
Reverend Dr, Wayne E. Earl, Interim Minister...pastorwayneearl@gmail.com
Katrina Lay, Executive Director, Jack & Jill School – 508-222-1149
jackandjill@attleborosecondchurch.org www.jackandjillattleboro.com
Fred Saunders, Administrative Assistant / Historian
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
Find us on Facebook!

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

March, 2021

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MINISTER’S MESSAGE

“May the Lord cause you to increase and enrich your love for each other and for everyone in the same way as we also love you.”

I Thessalonians 3:12



Several years ago, my then teenage daughter introduced me to a phrase that her generation had coined: “Increase Awesome and Decrease World Suck.” This motto was their way of saying that we should do our best to work for positive change, as such practices will relieve suffering wherever it may be found. The prophet Micah says something similar in chapter 6 and verse 8 of his little book: “Practice justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God.” Such statements function as a call to live out our humanity in service to others, especially on behalf of those who are experiencing difficulty. Our faith tradition demands no less of us as has been demonstrated through the centuries by many Christians from diverse nations and ethnicities.

The season of Lent (meaning both "springtime" and “40 days”) began last month on Ash Wednesday providing the believer with 40 weekdays leading up to the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus on Easter Sunday. These weeks give us time to embrace a deeper practice of introspection and appreciation for personal suffering as well as space to consider the trials of others around us who are in need. As we give up certain freedoms and pleasures, we

become more mindful of what others have to do without, and we resolve to see how we might provide relief to those among and beyond our communities who need assistance. The Scriptures are full of examples of people who got this right and, sadly, still more stories of others who missed this simple, but profound biblical truth.

Lent has also long been associated with fasting from food (based on the 40 day period that Jesus spent in the wilderness). Of course, doing without certain foods, drinks or practices also reminds us that we can actually live without these pleasures. But the main focus is on how we might allow such deprivation to strengthen our individual and community-wide resolve to be better exemplars of our faith tradition, while showing mercy and bringing physical relief to those who may need it. However, beware: such empathy-soaked disciplines will decrease world suck and just may cost you more than any treasured apathy. For blessed are those who remember the poor, as they give to the Lord. May their tribe increase!

With Affection, Pastor Wayne

BOARD OF DEACONS

Dear Believers in Christ,

As we prepare for the Lenten season and the joy of Christ's Resurrection, we approach several anniversaries that have affected all of us. It was nearly one year ago that The Board of Deacons called The Rev. Dr. Wayne Earl as our Interim Minister. Pastor Wayne has been a blessing and a guiding force to our congregation. Unfortunately, Covid-19 arrived at the same time and Second Congo was forced to close our doors to in-person worship. The leadership of Second Congo worked, and continues to work, to bring high quality worship services to the congregation through live-streaming.

The purpose of this email is to advise you that the leaders of Second Congregational Church of Attleboro continue to work towards opening our sanctuary to in-person worship services. Through prayer, study and constant review of scientific data, a decision is made each week to open the doors to in-person worship or to conduct the service through live stream only. This difficult decision is made with the safety and health of our congregation at the forefront of our minds. It is NOT, as some have come to believe, based upon personal opinion.

Speaking on behalf of the leadership who work to make this decision, I implore you to be patient and walk with us toward the day when our doors swing open and all who choose to attend will be welcomed with open arms (even if social-distancing is still required). Let's pray that the data continues to improve, so that we may safely reopen soon.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to address them to the Board of Deacons.

SELF HELP DAY at Second Church
March 13, 2021, 9 to Noon
April 10, 2012 9 to Noon

The friends and family of 2nd Church are blessed with many talents. We hope to have you share your talents as we gather at the Church to work on a few projects to improve our church building. Please note the dates above. These projects are simple and can be

accomplished with a willing spirit. **Precautions:** Rest assured, individuals will be appropriately spaced within the church, face masks are a must, and hand washing/sanitizing are also recommended. If you have one hour or more, come on down and lend a hand. We have painting projects and cleaning projects. We look forward to seeing YOU! Any questions? Call the Church Office. **Please let us know if you're planning to attend so we can plan out the projects and supplies.**

*Many Thanks,
Your Facilities Committee*

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

I hope that many of you, like me, are hopeful for spring, for vaccines, and when we can be together physically in worship and mission at Second Church. Until then we have delivered Lenten packages to our children and youth that we hope are truly flexible in time commitment and experiences that will help all members of our church families continue to grow their faith. Similar to our Advent Wreath activity the *Lenten Devotions* packet is from Illustrated Ministry and the associated supplies (plus a few surprises!) were included. If you have any questions or ideas for our Christian Education Committee, know someone who would like to be added to our resource distribution, or have a particular faith topic that your family would like resources to explore please feel to reach out to me.

Virtual Sunday School at 9am on Sundays is also continuing in the month of March with a special craft each week.

Sunday March 7th:

A Dark Night in the Garden
Luke 22, Mark 14, John 18. As supper ends Jesus and his disciples go to the garden as he would like a quiet place to pray. We will discuss how important it is to pray at all times, but especially when we are looking for answers to big questions. We will wonder what ways we can listen for God's call to us and how to follow his way.

Sunday March 14th:

The Sun Stops Shining
Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, John 19. We will experience the death of Jesus through recognition of his sacrifice for us. Even though his crucifixion is an important part of our

story, we do not leave him on the cross in images including the cross in our Sanctuary. We will wonder at the mystery of what would come after the tomb was closed and things seemed so final. We will explore the idea that even when it seems there is no hope, there is always light and we always have the choice to share that light with others.

Sunday March 21st:

God's Wonderful Surprise

Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, John 20.

It's a surprise, join us to find out!

Sunday March 28th: Palm Sunday

For our last Lenten Sunday School class, we will make our own palms, shout Hosanna, play some games, and retell the Easter story.

As always, if you have any questions or ideas please feel free to reach out to me via email, call, text, or FB messenger.

Diane Osborne
de_saunders@hotmail.com
(508) 409-7919

OUTREACH & MISSIONS

As our Lenten mission (March 1 - April 1) we will be collecting dry goods for the **Attleboro Literacy Center**: students need assistance with household and dry goods (that are otherwise not available at food pantries), and baby supplies. See the suggested list below:

Cleaning supplies

- Bleach, Lysol, toilet cleaner, floor cleaner
- Soap (hand soap and dish soap)
- Sponges, paper towels
- Clorox wipes

Dry goods

- Tinfoil
- Cling wrap
- Ziploc baggies
- Paper towels
- Paper napkins
- Toilet paper

Toiletries

- Toothpaste (for adults and children)
- Tooth brushes
- Mouth wash
- Hand soap
- Face wash



Daily Lectionary Scripture References –March 2021 (Year B)

Mon. Mar. 1
 Psalm 105:1-11, 37-45
 Genesis 21:1-7
 Hebrews 1:8-12

Tues., Mar. 2
 Psalm 105:1-11, 37-45
 Genesis 22:1-19
 Hebrews 11:1-3, 13-19

Wed., Mar. 3
 Psalm 105:1-11, 37-45
 Jeremiah 30:12-22
 John 12:36-43

Thurs., Mar. 4
 Psalm 19
 Exodus 19:1-9a
 1 Peter 2:4-10

Fri., Mar. 5
 Psalm 19
 Exodus 19:9b-15
 Acts 7:30-40

Sat., Mar. 6
 Psalm 19
 Exodus 19:16-25
 Mark 9:2-8

Sun., Mar. 7
Third Sunday in Lent
 Exodus 20:1-17
 Psalm 19
 1 Corinthians 1:18-25
 John 2:13-22

Mon., Mar. 8
 Psalm 84
 1 Kings 6:1-4, 21-22
 1 Corinthians 3:10-23

Tues., Mar. 9
 Psalm 84
 2 Chronicles 29:1-11, 16-19
 Hebrews 9:23-28

Wed., Mar. 10
 Psalm 84
 Ezra 6:1-16
 Mark 11:15-19

Thurs., Mar. 11
 Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22
 Genesis 9:8-17
 Ephesians 1:3-6

Fri., Mar. 12
 Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22
 Daniel 12:5-13
 Ephesians 1:7-14

Sat. Mar. 13
 Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22
 Numbers 20:22-29
 John 3:1-13

Sun., Mar. 14
Fourth Sunday in Lent
 Numbers 21:4-9
 Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22
 Ephesians 2:1-10
 John 3:14-21

Mon., Mar. 15
 Psalm 107:1-16
 Exodus 15:22-27
 Hebrews 3:1-6

Tues., Mar. 16
 Psalm 107:1-16
 Numbers 20:1-13
 1 Corinthians 10:6-13

Wed., Mar. 17
 Psalm 107:1-16
 Isaiah 60:15-22
 John 8:12-20

Thurs., Mar. 18
 Psalm 51:1-12
 Isaiah 30:15-18
 Hebrews 4:1-13

Fri., Mar. 19
 Psalm 51:1-12
 Exodus 30:1-10
 Hebrews 4:14—5:4

Sat., Mar. 20
 Psalm 51:1-12
 Habakkuk 3:2-13
 John 12:1-11

Sun., Mar. 21
Fifth Sunday in Lent
 Jeremiah 31:31-34
 Psalm 51:1-12 or Psalm 119:9-16
 Hebrews 5:5-10
 John 12:20-33

Mon., Mar. 22
 Psalm 119:9-16
 Isaiah 43:8-13
 2 Corinthians 3:4-11

Tues., Mar. 23
 Psalm 119:9-16
 Isaiah 44:1-8
 Acts 2:14-24

Wed., Mar. 24
 Psalm 119:9-16
 Haggai 2:1-9, 20-23
 John 12:34-50

Thurs., Mar. 25
 Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29
 Deuteronomy 16:1-8
 Philippians 2:1-11

Fri., Mar. 26
 Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29
 Jeremiah 33:1-9
 Philippians 2:12-18

Sat., Mar. 27
 Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29
 Jeremiah 33:10-16
 Mark 10:32-34, 46-52

Sun., Mar. 28
Passion or Palm Sunday
Palms:
 Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29
 Mark 11:1-11 or John 12:12-16
Passion:
 Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 31:9-16
 Philippians 2:5-11;
 Mark 14:1—15:47 or Mark 15:1-39
 [40-47]

Mon., Mar. 29 (Holy Week)
 Isaiah 42:1-9; Psalm 36:5-11
 Hebrews 9:11-15; John 12:1-11

Tues., Mar. 30 (Holy Week)
 Isaiah 49:1-7; Psalm 71:1-14
 1 Corinthians 1:18-31
 John 12:20-36

Wed., Mar. 31 (Holy Week)
 Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 70
 Hebrews 12:1-3; John 13:21-32

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- Body and hand lotion (hypoallergenic)
- Wash cloths
- Shampoo/conditioner
- Body wash

Baby goods

- Diapers
- Baby formula
- Wet wipes (hypoallergenic)
- Baby food
- Toddler snacks

Please contact the church office for drop off times (508) 222-4677.

The **Food Pantry** will be "open for business" on **Monday, March 22nd** in Fellowship Hall. The volunteers

distributed bags of food to 9 families in January and 8 families in February. Thank you for your generous donations of money and supplies. Spaghetti sauce, cereals, real fruit juices, canned fruit, baked beans, tuna, spam, peanut butter, hearty soups, corned beef hash, detergent, toiletries, and female hygiene products are always welcome. The drop-off site is in the church office or kitchen for the time being. Contact: Betsey Pray, rlpbpp@verizon.net

The **Family Café** is temporarily closed. Contact: Linda Wiswall, wiswalllinda@gmail.com. 3

The next Outreach and Missions Committee meeting is scheduled for **Saturday, March 13th** at 9 a.m. on Zoom. Please let us know if you would like to join our committee, attend meetings, or have any concerns. Contact: Janet Blair, janbblair@aol.com.

March Birthdays

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| 1 | Jack Baptist |
| | Clint Ferguson |
| 3 | Mark Robinson |
| 4 | Bill Hogarth |
| | Natalie MacDonald |
| 5 | Jean Phillips-Currier |
| 7 | Ginny Bassler |

- 9 Joan Lepper
- 10 Chris Saunders
- 12 David Buttrick
Kevin Goulding
- 13 Steve Withers, Sr.
- 15 Jack McKenna
Mary Quimby
- 18 Jane Huston
- 19 Glenn Weidner
- 22 Mary Goldzung
- 25 Joel Hauerwas
- 27 Mike Edwards
James H Miller
- 28 Connie Bozzi
Ralph Giannetti
- 29 Jean Garrott
Andrew Osborne
- 31 Lucy Hogarth
Betsey Pray
Ruth Shaver



March is an active month underneath the stairs. The children are flourishing. With routines under their belts and expectations understood, we have paved the way for great growth. Spring

is on the horizon and the children's ideas and imaginations are transforming before our eyes.

The teachers are actively assessing children and preparing progress reports for parent – teacher conferences. Our students are registering for Kindergarten. A very exciting time for our families!

Our Board of Directors and parents will be working hard this month preparing for our Gift Card Calendar Raffle which will kick off in April. More details will be coming soon. ☺ Unfortunately, due to COVID we will not be able to have our annual Spaghetti Supper Fundraiser. We are hopeful we will be able to gather in 2022 for this amazing event. We thank you for your continued support of our school.

We look forward to our annual MARCH MADNESS festivities with the following fun days at school! Crazy Hair Day, Disney Day, Pajama Day, Tie Dye Day and Class Color day! March is a long month and these days add some fun and excitement into the school days.

Enrollment for the 2021-2022 school year is underway. If you know anyone seeking placement for the fall, please encourage them to call me at 508-222-1149. I'd be happy to show them our wonderful program.

*Warmly, Katrina Lay
Executive Director*

MARCH CALENDAR

- Each Sunday Service, 10 am
live streamed on our website!
View later as well.
(In-person will be announced)
- Virtual Sunday School at 9:00 am. See CE article for details.
- Profile Team Virtual Meeting,
March 4th, 7:00 pm.
- J&J Board of Directors Meeting,
March 10th, 6:30 pm
- Board of Deacons Virtual Meeting,
March 11th, 6:00 pm
- O&M Committee Virtual Meeting,
March 13th, 9:00 am
- Facilities Committee Virtual Meeting,
March 15th, 7:00 pm.
- Profile Team Virtual Meeting,
March 18th, 7:00 pm.
- Food Pantry Distribution,
March 22nd, 3:00 to 5:00 pm
- Admin Committee Virtual Meeting
March 23rd, 7:00 pm
- April Voice Input Deadline,
March 23rd**
- Profile Team Virtual Meeting,
March 25th, 7:00 pm.
- Church Council Virtual Meeting,
March 28th, 11:30 am.

MUSIC NOTES

A preface to this month's article

After my retirement from teaching, I began to explore the Second Church archives. A little more than a year ago I started to write a series of articles about the history of music at Second Church. Then the pandemic hit, and I turned to technological matters. After Christmas, things began to settle down, and I came back to these little research projects. If what follows were written as a scholarly paper, there would be many footnotes and a long list of primary sources. It doesn't come from Wikipedia or any other single book or article. And, as you'll see, there's still more to figure out.

MYSTERIES IN THE ARCHIVES: OR, BURIED TREASURE

Have you heard of the early 20th-century composer C. S. Briggs, who lived in South Paris and frequently traveled to Norway to visit friends and concertize? Probably not. But if you are an alum of Bates College or hail from Fryeburg (I know people who fit these categories!) you might realize that we're not talking about continental Europe, but towns in Maine just west of Lewiston. And as for C. S., she (yes, a woman composer!) was Cora Skillings Briggs.

What's her connection with Second Church? It's a mysterious artifact that Fred found either up in the curator's office or perhaps buried in a nook in the foundation, in a corner of Jack's office. The object in question is a silver loving cup or vase with this inscription:

*Presented to / Cora Skillings Briggs / From her Friends / of the / Congregational Church
In loving remembrance / of her long and faithful service / as Organist / 1873-1921*

I knew right away that she had not been the organist here at Second, certainly not during the busy period when our congregation had moved from the White Church to the current building. But, with her full name, it was easy to discover some basic biographical facts. She was born in 1859, and lived most of her life in South Paris, Maine. She married her husband

George in 1876, and they had two children, a daughter, Catherine, and a son, Carl. She died in 1935 in Boston, and she, George, Catherine and Carl are all buried in a family plot in South Paris.

About a month ago I returned to the search for Cora Skillings Briggs and unearthed some fascinating details of the life of a talented musician. An online search for “Cora S. Briggs” turned up a reference to “C. S. Briggs.” Using the latter as a search term unlocked hundreds of references to musical performances and to compositions, mostly sacred songs for solo voice, set to texts that she herself wrote. She was most active as a composer between 1900 and 1920, and her publications from that period are found in library collections across the country. Her publishers included prominent Boston firms at the time.

My list now numbers about 15 different songs, the most popular of which seems to be “Hold Thou My Hand” (1904), which was also arranged for different combinations of voices and instruments. There’s a Victrola gramophone recording (1923), with soloist and orchestra, in the Library of Congress; you can listen to it here: <https://www.loc.gov/item/jukebox-66756/>

Remarkably, there’s an even older recording (1906) in the LOC of one of her non-sacred songs, “What Would You Say, Dear?” and you can listen to it here: <https://www.loc.gov/item/jukebox-422478/>

An email to the First Congregational Church of South Paris confirmed that she was the organist there and that she was known also to be a composer. But the staff member with whom I’m in contact did not know much more about her. I’ve been able to piece together more details from an online archive of the local newspaper, the *Oxford Democrat* (1850-1921). In Mrs. Briggs’ time, the paper was published weekly, on Tuesdays, and included much news of the organizations, churches, and general social life of communities in the area.

Cora was busy not only at church, but as an accompanist and piano soloist, as a teacher of piano, and with her women’s clubs, which often met at her home. Her husband George was a bass who sang in various church choirs and performed in local theater and light opera groups. Carl, their son, was a talented violinist who often performed with his mother at church, in concerts, and in local orchestras. Their home was known as a lively social center of South Paris.

Never directly mentioned in the newspaper, as far as I can find, is her work as a composer. She was similarly almost anonymous in her printed music, going by the name of “C. S. Briggs.” It was common practice back then to camouflage the gender of women composers, who were thought to be less talented, important, or marketable than men. Another reason for her anonymity is that eventually she and her immediate family passed away with no direct descendants. Carl died young, newly married, and childless. Catherine never married. More about them below.

One mystery of Cora’s biography – her passing in Boston – turns out to be easily explainable, albeit with some sad circumstances. Catherine had gone to Boston to study nursing around 1907 and had mostly remained there. George died in 1916. Carl, who had gone to Tufts Dental College and had opened a practice in town, died suddenly in 1918. Cora’s sister Kate, who had married and moved to Minnesota, was widowed and then came back to live with Cora, but she died in 1920. Around 1921 (recall, that’s the date engraved on “our” vase), Cora sold the homestead and a building that had probably housed Carl’s dental office. She went to live with Catherine in Boston. Catherine died in 1941, six years after Cora’s death.

If, by this point, you think this is a lot of detail, well, there’s more I’ve not included here in order to keep this story (relatively) short. And there are still mysteries and unanswered questions, first of all about other parts of Cora’s life. I’ve not (yet) found any specific information about her early education or musical training (she married George at age 17) nor about her later life in Boston.

Nonetheless, I’m going to add two more vignettes, one about Cora and one about Carl. Both have some relevance for me and for our own time – a hundred years after Cora vanished into anonymity in Boston. In a long newspaper article that recounted the centennial of the South Paris Congregational Church (1912), Cora was lauded for her many years of service: *“It may be that no other church organist in Maine has had as long a term of uninterrupted service. And she has served with rare ability. She has seen the ministers and the deacons come and go but she has continued to occupy her accustomed seat.”* (I can relate!)

Carl died at the age of 32 in the great pandemic of 1917-18 (recall, he was a dentist). He became ill on Christmas Eve, 1918, and died of pneumonia on the 29th. In the edition of the newspaper, a week later, that carried his obituary, another article noted (I’m paraphrasing) that it was not thought that the influenza would return so virulently, but over the holidays many had become ill, and the churches were now closed.

Finally, one last mystery: How did the engraved vase end up at Second Church in Attleboro? Did it travel down to Massachusetts when Cora moved to Boston? Did it come into the hands of some distant Briggs relative who lived in Attleboro? (Needless to say, the Briggs lineage is huge, and researching that would be an immense project in itself). Was it manufactured here in the “Jewelry City”? Did the engraver try to send it to Cora in Maine or Boston, and it never reached its destination? (Cora and Catherine traveled briefly to Philadelphia in 1921, before settling back in Boston). Did someone here in Attleboro think that the “Congregational Church” mentioned in the inscription was Second Church, and that someone named Briggs obviously must have been a member here?

We’ll send the vase back to South Paris if they would like it for their archives or local historical museum. But if anyone reading this has answers to the mysteries, let me know!

Bill MacPherson, Director of Music