

THE VOICE of *Second Church*

United Church of Christ

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March 2018



SPECIAL CHURCH MEETING IN PLACE OF THE ANNUAL FINANCIAL MEETING SUNDAY, MARCH 11TH, 11:15 AM†

† **PLEASE NOTE:** The Annual Financial Meeting was replaced by a Special Church meeting to be held on **March 11, 2018**, by vote of the Church Council on January 28, 2018.

RETHINKING THE GOOD SAMARITAN STORY – MARCH 4TH, 1:00 PM

Second Congregational Church of Attleboro, UCC

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THE VOICE

*We seek to be a church of the open mind, the warm heart,
the aspiring soul and a vision for God's world.*

A monthly newsletter

March, 2018

Outreach & Missions	Women's Fellowship	One Plus One	Jack & Jill	Prayer Shawl Ministry	Women's Spirituality Group	Christian Education Committee	Birthdays	Music & Dance	Calendar
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MINISTER'S MUSE

Freedom is Not Arrogance

⁸“Food will not bring us close to God.”[a] We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. ⁹But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. 1 Corinthians 8:8-9 NRSV

The biggest threat to our democracy today is the growing sense that freedom is the same as arrogance. In truth freedom is the opposite of arrogance. I wish we as citizens of this great nation would do a better job of remembering this relic of a cultural norm. Right now we seem to be having quite the crisis of arrogant freedom.

Consider the above passage. Around two thousand years ago there was a polarizing controversy. Could Christians eat food sacrificed to idols? Pagan villages would have these big feasts and the food that had been sacrificed to the idols of Jupiter or Mercury was divided up for the people of the town. Paul said that since there was no truth to idols anyway, Christians could eat the meat. But Paul also thought that if people rubbed this fact in the noses of other Christians who were not quite so sure about the idols, there could be problems. In fact the problem might be big enough for him not to indulge in the freedom to eat the food in the first place.

Looking at my Facebook news feed or attending the invitation to the nearest think tank, it would be easy to think that freedom requires arrogance. Ideas that are proffered politely are not as likely to get as many “likes”. If you want to succeed in the world of Twitter, Congress, or the White House you better master the art of arrogance. But what happens when the only thing on the national stage is arrogance, pomp, the shrill denial of facts, and outright self-aggrandizement? Well then people stop believing in democracy, and without democracy there can't be freedom.

Consider the many freedoms we have today. Due to increased stratification enshrined in our new tax code, some presidential choices made, decreased legal representation for the poor, and enervation of our public schools, wealth and fame can bring a few people more recognition, protections, and set up their progeny better than even the robber barons of the gilded age. If you're one of those people, good for you: just remember if you go around like an arrogant fool claiming that luck and privilege have nothing to do with your success, you might make others despair, and this despair you created might just be a sin. Eventually you will be defeated by the next power monkey on the political stage you helped create.

No strings attached relationships are also pretty prevalent. You can do pretty much anything you want just as long as there are two, or five, consenting adults and you have paid for the right app. It's a free country. But sex sometimes leads to intimacy and intimacy leads to monogamy and profound human bonds that lead to families which in turn lead to virtues and values. And all of those things can be undone with the single swipe of a thumb... so beware. In no point of human history can one so slight a movement of a human digit carry so large a consequence. Even the humble app on a smart phone can be considered arrogance.

Guns are quite legal and accessible. The lobbyists and politicians paid for by the lobbyists are plentiful. In the information war culture of our day, it is easy to be seduced into thinking that to own a gun or sell them it means that you have to oppose any attempt of arms legislation short of the right of an individual to possess their own ICBM. Arrogance which refuses to compromise like this might just set in motion a movement to reverse the Second Amendment. Other amendments have been reversed... So if you are one of those people- good for you. It might be better for you not to take those selfies with your best friend and spouse, your new AR-15, however.

Soon not only will pot be legal in the state of Massachusetts, but you will be able to go into a store and buy it. It will be a sad day for our high school students who somehow are driving brand new Audi's. But marijuana can instill great philosophic insights, which can lead to existential confusion, and many late night trips to the convenience store. If you want to get stoned go right ahead. You will be free to do so as long as the US attorney for Massachusetts isn't looking. I'm just not sure I'm ready to be stopped, instructed or operated on by someone who regularly partakes in this freedom. If you're an Uber driver you may want to take off the legalize pot sticker. Just sayin'.

We have many freedoms in our country. But there are also many vulnerable people like our school children, our elders, and middle aged men with brand new motorcycles out there who could benefit from a more caring, civil, society. Sometimes the freest thing to do is practice self restraint and humility. Freedom isn't arrogance. Come to think of it, arrogance is actually the hallmark of freedom's opposite: tyranny.

Yours in Christ, *Reverend Vern Wright*

LITURGICAL THEMES

LISTEN



“Look, I’ll pour out my spirit on you. I’ll reveal my words to you.” – Wisdom

(from Proverbs)

Have you ever misplaced your phone—which is on vibrate of course—and then asked someone to call it? We get really still and really quiet. Our ears perk up in all directions in order to be ready to hear that little buzz. It is a quieting down and high alert all at the same time. This Lent we will quiet things down and heighten our attention to the “still, small voice” of God and our own True Self. Listening through prayer as well as meditation on holy texts is an ancient Lenten practice. Come and rest, come and listen.

MARCH 4TH

Communion Sunday

Third Sunday in Lent

“Finding Your Breath:

Listening to our Bodies”

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. - Romans 8: 26-30; 38-39

Our sacred texts connect the breath of God with our own aliveness—God blew breath into us at creation and we continue to breathe all of creation in and out of our bodies constantly. The early

church also believed that breath and Spirit were one in the same. How might the meditative practice of paying attention to our breath be, in and of itself, a prayer of connection to God? When we embrace our bodies as the holy vessel of God, we become even more our True Selves—which has been there all along.

MARCH 10TH

Due to schedule conflicts we will be cancelling Confirmation and Praise Worship on Saturday March 10th. Both will resume on March 24th.

MARCH 11TH

Fourth Sunday in Lent

“Finding a Word:

Listening to the Texts”

Wisdom shouts in the street; in the public square she raises her voice. Above the noisy crowd, she calls out. At the entrances of the city gates, she has her say: “How long will you clueless people love your naïveté, mockers hold their mocking dear, and fools hate knowledge? You should respond when I correct you. Look, I’ll pour out my spirit on you. I’ll reveal my words to you.” - Proverbs 1: 20-23

The Wisdom tradition within Christianity invites us to love knowledge, especially the self-knowledge that comes from examining ourselves in relationship to the liberating Word of God.

Lectio divina (“divine reading”) is an ancient tradition of mixing the reading of scripture with prayer and meditation. Rather than an analytical approach to the words of scripture, it is a way for the

words to simply be present and live in us. What will we hear when we let go of what it all is “supposed to” mean and simply let it reside within us?

MARCH 18TH

Fifth Sunday in Lent

“Finding Your Power:

Listening for Healing”

Because she had heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his clothes. She was thinking, If I can just touch his clothes, I’ll be healed. - Mark 5: 24-34

Prayer as a spiritual practice may come easily for you and maybe it doesn't. Even the most devout among us has doubts about prayer's power at times. What is it? How does it work? This week we will consider that the mechanics of what happens in prayer is not as important as that we do it. Because whether or not the outcome for ourselves or others is an actual healing, the very act of being entangled with God and with others through prayer has healing and power-bestowing benefits

MARCH 24TH

Confirmation Class: 6:00 pm

Praise Worship 7:00 pm

MARCH 25TH

Palm Sunday

“Finding Your Purpose:

Listening to Your Heart”

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane... And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.” - Matthew 26: 36-46

Jesus' prayer life was described most often in the scriptures as something he did "away" from the crowds or disciples. As we come to the last week of this Lent journey, we have experienced the blessings of turning away from the noise of the world in order to turn inward to hear that "still small voice" of God, and finding our own voice of wisdom there as well. This Sunday begins the story of the end of Jesus' human life. The scripture contains one of the rare examples of how Jesus prayed. It was honest, it was gut-wrenching, and it finally was a letting-go of expectations about life and a turn toward the acceptance that gives the courage to move onward.

MARCH 29TH

Maundy Thursday Service – 7:00 PM

BOARD OF DEACONS

Lead Deacon this month is Pam Raskin. Contact any Deacon if you are interested in being a liturgist or usher on a Sunday or sign up on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall. We'd love to have your help. Call Ralph Giannetti at 508-226-4618 and let him know if you need a lift.

The Deacons are looking for your help!

Are you tired of sitting around the house because it is too cold or wet to go out? The Deacons can give you a reason to start your spring cleaning!

We are working with the Savers store in North Attleboro on a fundraiser to generate funds by paying us a per pound amount for the clothes that are taking up space in your closets and drawers. They may no longer fit, be out of style, or you may just want to simplify your life. They do not need to be in the best condition! We can also help with your linen closet since Savers accepts towels and sheets.

So gather your unwanted items in trash bags, bring them to church (we can arrange for pickup), and we will take it from there. Friends and neighbors are invited to join. Since we are paid by the pound, more is definitely better! We are looking at running this fundraiser through March so as the seasons change you might want to go through your closet a second time – not a problem!

Questions? Call Karen Slawson,
(508)643-0718

RETHINKING THE GOOD SAMARITAN STORY

Has your life been touched in some way by mental illness? Knowing that for me, the answer was "yes", a friend of mine invited me to her church to hear a speaker, Nancy Kehoe. Then I read Nancy's autobiographical book, "Wrestling with Our Inner Angels", in which she writes very movingly about faith, mental illness, and the journey to wholeness.

In the spirit of bringing some new ideas to our church community, I asked for the Church Council's approval to bring Nancy to speak here at Second Church on Sunday, March 4th at 1:00 pm. Her subject is: "Rethinking the Good Samaritan Story: Who is my neighbor? Who are those left by the wayside today?"

Nancy Kehoe RSCJ, PhD is a member of the Religious of the Sacred Heart and a part time Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychology at Harvard Medical School. For thirty-five years she has led groups on spirituality with men and women who live with serious mental illness. In her presentation she will discuss mental illness as The Great Robber and talk about how we need to become Good Samaritans, reaching out to those who have been left by the wayside, offering a model of how a parish community can create a group for family members and those who live with mental illness.

I hope many of you will be able to come, and I hope you will take a moment to think about others in the area who might be interested in hearing this presentation. Who knows what good might come of it?

If you'd like to know more, just give me a call or talk with me at church.

Paula Foresman

TIME AND TALENT OPPORTUNITIES

We know a few things about time. There's only so much of it... and we all have the same amount in a given day. The question is, how are we going to spend that time. As followers of Christ, we want to use the time that God has given us to make a difference in someone's life and to bring glory to God.

That's where the talents come in. We want to maximize our time by using our God-given talents effectively. Then, giving and serving really becomes fun. God has made each of us special and uniquely gifted us to serve Him and others. Our job is to be a good student of the Bible and of ourselves, identify our gifts, talents and passions, and then use them to serve God and others.

If you have not already done so, please consider filling out a green Time and Talent Opportunities brochure. They can be found on the table in the Narthex or see me if you would like one. You can drop it off in the collection basket, church office or to Jessie Macomber or me. The members of our Church have many diverse skills and experiences that collectively are of enormous value to our church and its mission. Where do your skills and passions meet the needs of our Church? Thanks, *Sue Janson*

"When I stand before God at the end of my life, I would hope that I would not have a single bit of talent left, and could say, 'I used everything you gave me'."
Erma Bombeck

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

The Women's Fellowship will have signups for the May Breakfast, April 28th, and the Indoor Yard Sale, May 19th beginning on March 25th at Coffee hour. If you already know what you want to do you can lock it in early by speaking with Sandy Saunders, 508-699-2738.

As you start your spring cleaning, keep the Yard Sale in mind. Speak with Sandy or Fred Saunders if you have questions about a donation.

ONE PLUS ONE

One Plus One is a group of adults who meet to share Christian fellowship. It is open to members and friends of the congregation and is a great way to meet new people and catch up with old friends.

If you would like to join in the fun, contact the church office or me so that we can add you to our call list. Currently, we are planning for another play in the spring, a cookout in June, and are exploring other possibilities to gather in fellowship. So get out of the house and celebrate with us!

Colin Blair, colincb@aol.com

WOMEN'S SPIRITUALITY GROUP

Our next meeting will be March 19th at 7:00. This month's topic will be Rahab. We will be studying her because she showed courage and the face of faith. Each and every one of us has had to make quick and fast decisions in our lives. If you would like to have better insight to Rahab you can watch some videos on YouTube.

I am more than willing to take suggestions. Please let me know if you have an idea. If you have a question about our group or want more information please contact me at dparziale10@gmail.com or 508-813-6688. Also if you need a babysitter to attend please let me know. I will get a babysitter.

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

The PSM will meet on Monday, March 12th at 12:30 in the Ladies' Parlor. Shawls continue to be of tremendous comfort to individuals experiencing a loss, illness or other traumatic event in their lives. New members are always welcome. We will teach you the ropes. Please contact me if you have any questions. *Roberta Ferguson*

MUSIC NOTES

CHOIR SCHEDULES

The Hand Bell Choir will play in church on Sunday, March 4th, and also on Easter Sunday, April 1st. There will be no rehearsal on Thursday, March 8th.

The Adult Choir will not rehearse on Thursday, March 8th, and will not sing on Sunday, March 11th. Otherwise, rehearsals will be at the regular times, and, in addition, the choir will sing on Maundy Thursday, March 29th.

ORGAN RECITAL

Bill's annual organ recital at Wheaton will take place on Friday, March 23rd. This year, it's also his "retirement recital" and celebration. Cole Chapel, Wheaton College, 7:30 pm. Reception to follow in the lobby of Watson Fine Arts Center *Bill MacPherson*

SACRED DANCE

All ages and experience levels are welcome to join dance practices Saturday mornings at 9am in the sanctuary. We will also be practicing with the children and youth group after

church on the 11th and 18th for a Palm Sunday processional. Please let me know if you have any questions about how to get involved! *Diane Osborne*

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Lent is a time of repentance and preparation. As we continue on our Lenten journey the children and youth of Second Church will continue our walk with Jesus as we move from the Last Supper to the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22, Mark 14, John 18), to Jesus' Crucifixion (Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, John 19), the Resurrection (Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, John 20) and to Jesus' Ascension (Mathew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, John 14).

March 4th will be a gathering Sunday so that our entire Church family can be present to participate in the sacrament of Communion. While each Sunday following March 11th, March 18th, and March 25th all youth and children will engage in age appropriate activities as they gain an understanding of the steps Jesus took in his final days as physical man among God's people.

The Christian Education committee is still in need of volunteers every week for the nursery and Sunday school classrooms. Please sign up on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall.

Peace to you,
Amie K. McCarthy

*Christian Education Director
And the Christian Education Committee*

OUTREACH & MISSIONS

Family Café is March 14th and helpers are always welcome anytime between 3 and 6 PM. Speak with Linda Wiswall or Jessie Macomber if you have questions.

The O&M Committee will meet on March 4th at 11:15 AM.

Charlie Oliver, for the committee



Watch for the Opportunity Baskets and Spaghetti Supper tickets during Coffee Hour on March 18th. The supper is on March 24th and we welcome the entire church family and their family and

friends to join us. If you can't see us on the 18th, give me a call to make your reservation: 508-222-1149.

Warmly, Kara Lehane



March Birthdays

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1 | Jack Baptist |
| 3 | Mark Robinson |
| 4 | Bill Hogarth
Natalie MacDonald |
| 5 | Jean Phillips-Currier |
| 6 | Amie McCarthy |
| 7 | Ginny Bassler
Stuart Werdin |
| 8 | Emma Keane |
| 9 | Joan Lepper |
| 10 | Chris Saunders |
| 12 | David Buttrick
James Cupp
Kevin Goulding |
| 13 | Steve Withers, Sr. |
| 15 | Jack McKenna
Mary Quimby |
| 18 | Jane Huston |
| 19 | Mark Case
Glenn Weidner |
| 22 | Mary Goldzung
Shirley Schromm |
| 24 | Jay Sager |
| 25 | Joel Hauerwas |
| 26 | Jenell Halverson- Martin |
| 27 | James H Miller
Vern Wright |
| 28 | Connie Bozzi
Ruth Connor
Jamesom Connor
Ralph A Giannetti |
| 29 | Jean Garrott
Andrew Osborne |
| 31 | Lucy Hogarth
Betsey Pray |

M A R C H 2 0 1 8

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 6:30 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM Adult Choir Rehearsal	2	3 9:00 AM Intergenerat'nl Sacred Dance Rehearsal 12:00 PM Cub Scout Blue & Gold Banquet
4 10:00 AM Worship / Communion 11:15 AM Outreach & Missions Committee Meeting Music Committee Meeting 1:00 PM Rethinking the Good Samaritan Story	5 6:30 PM Boy Scouts 7:00 PM Deacons' Meeting	6	7 6:30 PM Cub Scouts	8 10:00 AM Communion Visitation Meeting 6:30 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM Adult Choir Rehearsal	9	10 9:00 AM Intergenerat'nl Sacred Dance Rehearsal 11:00 AM Regional Cub Scout Pinewood Derby
11 2:00 AM Daylight Savings Time Begins Amistad Sunday 10:00 AM Worship 11:15 AM Christian Education Committee Meeting Special Meeting of Church ILO Financial Meeting Palm Sunday Dance Rehearsal	12 12:30 PM Prayer Shawl Ministry 6:30 PM Boy Scouts	13 7:00 PM Marketing Committee Meeting	14 5:30 PM Family Café 6:30 PM Cub Scouts	15 6:30 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM Adult Choir Rehearsal	16	17 9:00 AM Intergenerat'nl Sacred Dance Rehearsal
18 10:00 AM Worship 11:15 AM Palm Sunday Dance Rehearsal 7:00 PM Scout Merit Badge Class	19 6:30 PM Boy Scouts 7:00 PM Facilities Committee Meeting	20 7:00 PM Administration Committee Meeting	21 April Voice Deadline 6:30 PM Cub Scouts 7:00 PM PFLAG Meeting	22 6:30 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM Adult Choir Rehearsal	23	24 9:00 AM Intergenerat'nl Sacred Dance Rehearsal 4:00 PM Jack & Jill Spaghetti Supper & Opportunity Baskets 6:00 PM Confirmation Class 7:00 PM Contemporary Worship
25 Palm / Passion Sunday 10:00 AM Worship 11:20 AM Church Council Meeting	26 4:00 PM Food Pantry Dst. 6:30 PM Boy Scouts ◇ 7:30 PM Pastoral Relations Committee Meeting	27	28 6:30 PM Cub Scouts Pack Meeting	29 7:00 PM Maundy Thursday Service	30	31 9:00 AM Intergenerat'nl Sacred Dance Rehearsal

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