



The Spire

SECOND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
35 Conant Street, Beverly MA 01915

Rev. Lisa Stedman, Pastor & Transitional Minister
Chaplain: Wendy Linares
Music Director: Marshunda Smith

Phone: 978.922.5722

Fax: 978.922.3064

Email: parishadmin@beverlysecond.com

Web site: www.BeverlySecond.com

www.facebook.com/BeverlySecond

March 2023



A Lenten Worship Series
**"Seeking: honest questions
for deeper faith"**



Sunday, March 5th – Worship with Communion in the Sanctuary and on Zoom

Week 2 in our Lenten series ***seeking*** –
"How Do We Begin Again?"

Preaching: Rev. Lisa W. Stedman
Prayers: Rev. Wendy Linares

Music: JS Del Dotto on piano, no choir this week

Sunday, March 12th - Worship in the Sanctuary and on Zoom

Week 3 in our Lenten series ***seeking*** –
"Will you give me a drink?"

Preaching: Rev. Lisa W. Stedman
Prayers: Rev. Wendy Linares

Music: SCC Choir with Director Marshunda Smith and JS Del Dotto, piano

Sunday, March 19th - Worship in the Sanctuary and on Zoom

Week 4 in our Lenten series ***seeking*** –
"How can we ask better questions?"

Preaching: Rev. Wendy Linares
Prayers: Rev. Lisa Stedman and

Music: SCC Choir with Director Marshunda Smith and JS Del Dotto, piano

Sunday, March 26th – Worship in the Sanctuary and on Zoom

Week 5 in our Lenten series ***seeking*** –
"Can these bones live?"

Preaching: Rev. Lisa W. Stedman
Prayers: Rev. Wendy Linares

Music: SCC Choir with Director
Marshunda Smith and
JS Del Dotto, piano



LIGHT OF THE WORLD

During the month of March, the Church Spire will be illumined in loving memory of Ernst Family Members and Nokes Family Members.

Pastoral Ponderings

Pastor's Ponderings with Rev. Lisa

As we begin March, we have also just begun the Lenten season. I have always thought of Lent as a spiritual journey, in which we move closer to God and deeper into our own faith. For me, this means engaging questions and seeking insight/inspiration – which is the theme of what we will be doing over these next 6 weeks.

This is especially true for SCC this year, as we continue to move toward what is next for us as a community of faith. I hope you will find blessing and inspiration in all our Lenten activities and in the following prayer poem by *Beth A. Richardson*.

This Lent, I look forward to seeing you along the way!!

Blessings, Rev. Lisa

Bless This Journey

We stand at the threshold and look behind us

At all that we have done,
At all that we have loved,
At all that is familiar,
And our hearts fill with grief,
With sadness,
With gratitude.

Bless this journey,
God of past and future.
Guide our steps,
Walking beside us,
Before us, within us
As we step across this threshold.

We stand at the threshold and look before us

At the future we can and cannot see,
At the beginnings we can and cannot imagine,
At the possibilities we can and cannot know,
And our hearts fill with fear,
With trust,
With hope.

Bless our grief and our gratitude,
Our sadness and our trust,
Our fear and our hope.





*One Great hour of Sharing
March 19, 2023*

OGHS annual mission offering of the United Church of Christ involves you in disaster, refugee-immigration and development ministries throughout the world.

When a disaster strikes or people are displaced or made refugees by violence or extreme poverty, you are part of the immediate response and of the long-term recovery.

Through OGHS you engage in holistic development programs including health care, education, agriculture, food sustainability, micro-financing and women's empowerment.

You meet immediate needs, and you address the underlying causes that create those needs in the first place.

Your gifts of hope will be dedicated on Sunday **March 19**. Please make checks payable to SCC, noted: OGHS.

Message from Chaplain: Wendy Linares

March Greetings, Everyone!

Since it's the season I thought I would share some Irish blessings with you. Some cute, some funny, some just plain lovely! Here they are!

Bless you and yours

May the Irish hills caress you.

As well as the cottage you live in.

May her lakes and rivers bless you.

May the roof overhead be well thatched

May the luck of the Irish enfold you.

And those inside be well matched.

May the blessings of St. Patrick

Behold you.

Until we meet again,

May the good Lord take a liking to you,

May God hold you in the

but not too soon!

Palm of His hand.

May strong arms hold you

Christ with me, Christ before me

Caring hearts tend you

Christ behind me, Christ in me

And may love await you at

Christ beneath me, Christ above me

Every step.

Christ on my right, Christ on my left

Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit

Christ when I arise

Christ in the heart of everyone who

Thinks of me.

As always, reach out to me for support. 508 451 7585

Wendylinares60@gmail.com

Warmly, Wendy



We are grateful to those whose generous support enables us to provide compassionate care to our patients and their families every day of the year. Care Dimensions appreciates your thoughtful donation of Prayer Shawls. Thank you and Best Wishes from all of us at Care Dimensions.

2023 SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarship Applications have been sent to area schools, inviting Class of 2023 members to apply for our annual scholarship. In the past year our individual memorial awards have been incorporated into the recently established **SCC Scholarship**. Awards will be made to students whose experiences and values are in keeping with the United Church of Christ's social justice mandates centering on equality for all—having exhibited a willingness to educate or serve others in a chosen career and having a need for financial assistance.



Church members and friends in the Class of 2023 and college students are invited to apply by the **April 15 deadline**, for review by the Scholarship Team. Scholarships will be presented in May.

Applications are available for pickup in the church office or you may request to have one mailed or emailed by contacting the church office at:

parishadmin@beverlysecond.com.



Second Congregational Central Board – March 23 Spire

The Central Board received a brief on the good work of the **Building Our Legacy Team**, focusing on Second Church's future. We were very glad to see progress in hiring an appraiser, soliciting help from lawyers with experience in this area, and reviewing our records. We expect the agreement with a lawyer will be above the \$10,000 total threshold that needs congregational approval, so look for a meeting in the next month or so (separate notices per our By-Laws will be posted and announced). Please read the more detailed update from the Legacy Team, and know that the CB appreciates the efforts being expended on Second Church's behalf.

We also received a status on the **Pastoral Search Team** from Rev. Lisa, and are pleased with the progress. The Central Board reiterates the request for you to complete the survey for BOTH teams, as we need your input to help us shape our next steps.

Technology – we understand from our sound technology consultant, that several churches have raised issues related to sound quality as video shots pan in and out after the latest version update from Zoom, via Zoom Community Support websites. We are hopeful that Zoom is working on corrections and will keep an eye (rather an ear) on it. **“Special thanks” to David Brandt** for helping man the controls that enable us to stream Sunday services while Clare is recovering from her surgery – **much appreciated!**

Our next meeting will be February 21st, 2023 at 6:30pm.

Building Our Legacy Team Update

The Building Our Legacy Team has been very active this past month. Its members are Mac Donaldson, Dale Earl, Doug Marquart, Dale Miller-Bouton, Peg Round, Kathy Taylor and Jack Terrill as Chair. We held our monthly meeting on February 7, 2023.

We were concerned when it was reported that someone said that a decision had been made on who we were selling the church to. This conversation occurred in Salem and the person who it was said to immediately called to determine if it was true. The answer is NO! It was not true, and no decision has been made. How do you know this? No recommendation has been made to the congregation and the congregation has not been asked to vote on a recommendation. Only the congregation can make that decision according to our bylaws and state regulations. Please help us by not spreading rumors. While it is true that we are in the process of talking to interested parties, we are still quite a way from making a recommendation to the congregation.

The Team sent out a survey this month on the type of legacy the congregation wants to establish. Thank you to those who filled out the survey, but we would like to have more responses. The link to the survey has been in the weekly newsletter and paper copies are available in the narthex and office. The deadline for filling out the survey has been extended. Please consider filling it out.

The Team selected the Appraisers Group out of Belmont, MA to conduct a commercial appraisal of the building and property. The appraisal was conducted on site on February 3 and we expect the results by the end of February. We have been warned not to release the appraisal results when received in case we engage in a competitive process.

The Team has conducted interviews with 3 attorneys who have experience with churches. A follow-up request was sent to the 3 attorneys asking for a proposal and the expected fees for their services. We will be following the purchasing rules that are in place for Second Church in selecting an attorney. We expect to be going to the congregation to approve the funds for this eventual contract. My thanks to Doug for finding the attorneys and coordinating the interviews and correspondence.

In anticipation of filing with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Attorney General's Office, Mac is working with Mary Jane to locate the various records of the church. These are necessary to document the origin of the church and its various funds.

Thank you for the support we have received to date. We are diligently working, and I fully expect that we will be able to come to the congregation with a recommendation by the end of June.



Jack Terrill, Chair

Building Our Legacy Team

Coming in Lent!!! A New Worship Series "Seeking: honest questions for deeper faith"

This Lent we will be ***seeking***: seeking clarity, seeking wisdom, seeking a love that makes us whole. Christians have a long tradition of embarking on a spiritual quest, which invites us to look with fresh eyes at our life and the world, and listen for the longing in our souls. All we need to begin are willing hearts. May we journey with bravery and discover how trust meets us along the way. And may the questions we share guide us all closer to the heart of God and the sanctuary of our souls.



This Lenten season, we will read many stories of Jesus encountering people who are seeking: a new beginning, a different life, a deeper faith. In these interactions, an unveiling often occurs—assumptions are disrupted, a new perspective is revealed, mystery grows. Like the characters in our Lenten scriptures, we are also seeking many things: clarity, connection, wonder, justice, balance. We are seeking our calling, the sacred, and how to live as a disciple. We hope this devotional will help you unpack some of your big questions in ways that are honest and faithful.

The series will feature a focal question each week which will be the basis for worship. We will also offer devotional materials in the form of either a booklet or daily prayer cards, weekly poetry prayers (for use on Tuesdays in zoom to prayer and published in our weekly e-news), special music that aligns with the theme, and much more!!

Lent begins Feb. 22nd with Ash Wednesday and a soup supper at 5:45 followed by a service at 6:45. The First Sunday of Lent is Feb. 25th. We hope you will join us at SCC!

Good Reads from Pastor Lisa's InBox

Another Good Read from Pastor Lisa

BUILDING A LEGACY: Learning, Discerning, and Leaning In | Part 6: Changing the Narrative: Moving from "Decline, Failure, Closure, and Death" to "Maturity, Legacy Building, Ministry Completion, and Resurrection." 11/14/2022 -
by: [Charles Kuchenbrod](#)

<https://www.sneucc.org!/w576Ob-7x1FYpWYYrHKFnY2q4nbT-a2wrFdVCn-ilr9MOvHIRvufsgskhgb44nWF70XkleBnWgS3Y0dRjF6Dw-GI37LZCsMJuZG1UB0BAprS7BtW5bS6EB63IjQIaaOL6M>

You are INVITED to join Zoom to Prayer!!

Tuesdays at 10 am on zoom – we gather to touch base with one another and share our joys, concerns and thanksgivings. During Lent, we will also share a new prayer poem on that week's theme of **seeking!** Please join us... each week or whenever you can! Email Mary Jane in the office to receive the link for this zoom!

HOLY WEEK AT SCC

Sunday, April 2nd – Palm Sunday Worship with Communion

Week 6 in our Lenten series **seeking**

– "*Which Jesus will you follow into Jerusalem?*"

Preaching: Rev. Lisa W. Stedman Prayers: Rev. Wendy Linares

Music: Very special guest music leader: Rev. Kathy Eddy, JS Del Dotto on piano

Everyone is invited to join the choir for the week!!!

Maundy Thursday Soup Supper and Service – April 6th Supper at 6 pm, Service at 7 pm. Please plan to join in on this special evening! Sign ups will be in late March.

Good Friday – April 7th – Open Chapel Devotionals from 11 am to 2 pm.

Ecumenical Easter Sunrise Service - at Lynch Park, 6:00 am

Easter Celebration Worship – in the SCC Sanctuary and on Zoom at 9:30 am

A message from the Rev. Darrell Goodwin, Executive Conference Minister, in response to the "He Gets Us" Super Bowl ads:

As a progressive Christian leader in a polarized world, I am always hoping to find ways to share a more inclusive, historically accurate and tangible Jesus. An image that is significantly distant from the Jesus that has been politicized over the past few years. It was a breath of fresh air to know that the series of ads "He Gets Us" was attempting at first glance to offer just this possibility. However, the funders of this invitation are the same folks who promote anti-LGBT legislation, a denial of women's rights to their own bodies, the campaigns of clear white supremacists, and the evangelical church.

At best, these ads - which could bring hope - seem to be an age-old bait and switch tactic. A person is lured in with the possibility of unconditional love to only find out there is a laundry list of rules, regulations and hoops. The reality is, in this model, who God created you to be is usually inherently wrong but the connection with the "right" church can remedy the problem.

This approach to sharing faith can lead folks to feel violated, abused, and most of all can cause irreparable harm and even death. Instead, I would rather these ads promote a gospel of radical inclusion, a path that says no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey you are welcome here. This is a mantra you can hear in one of the over 600 congregational churches I have the honor of serving. I serve as the first openly gay, black executive conference minister of the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ. This fall we purchased the website www.findhopenow.org. It is the beginning of an attempt to help people find authentic hope in a world that can sometimes feel hopeless. It may not be a flashy ad on the Super Bowl but It's an invitation that isn't funded by right-wing propaganda or a false attempt to love. It's funded by small contributions from 100,000 people across Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut who support their local churches in their communities so that there will be hope centers all over New England awaiting you with open arms.





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Spirited Women will meet on March 19th following worship.

We will meet in the parlor. All women are invited!

We will be doing something creative and Spring themed.

Hope to see you there!

Warmly, Wendy