



The Spire

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

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March 2025



**Second Congregational
United Church of Christ
Sunday – 9:30 a.m.**

During Lent, we continue with weekly readings from the Gospel According to Luke, and in addition, share some passages related to the early rulers of Israel and Judah when they had settled in the land of Canaan. Rev. Adam is preaching all weeks.

March 2

Transfiguration Sunday
Worship with Communion
Gospel According to Luke 9:21-36
Liturgist: Joyce Mosher

March 5

Ash Wednesday, we will have service at 7:00 p.m. in our chapel. We will use parts of the Holden Evening Prayer format and have communion and imposition of ashes.

March 9

[Remember to change clocks for Daylight Saving Time on Sunday, March 9: "Spring Forward!"](#)

First Sunday in Lent
Gospel According to Luke 7:36–8:3
Judges 4:1-9,17-22
Liturgist: Dale Miller-Bouton

March 16

Second Sunday in Lent
Gospel According to Luke 11:29-54
First Book of Samuel 8:1-21
Liturgist: Ruth Moran

March 23

Third Sunday in Lent
Gospel According to Luke 8:26-39
Second Book of Samuel 11:1-5
Liturgist: Joyce Mosher

March 30

Fourth Sunday in Lent
Gospel According to Luke 9:1-17
First Book of Kings 2:1-12
Liturgist: Kathy Taylor



Art by Carla Bank

Tree of Life

Christian Love and Sympathy are extended to family and friends of **Susan Hansbury Nichols** (wife to late Brooks), who died February 3rd.

Light of the World

During the month of March, the Church Spire is being illumined by Doug & Cheri Marquart, in gratitude for Second Congregational Church serving the community for over 300 years!

“Worship Is a Group Art Project” - A Pastoral Letter

In this issue I want to address a comment I received that people like our worship services because I am entertaining. Don't worry if you are the person who said this to me, I don't remember who said this so this is not about you. But the comment did prompt this essay.

It's true that a background in the arts, with experience in how to put together a cohesive program, involve multiple senses and types of interactions, and connect with an “audience” are helpful when I am planning our worship life. But I want to be clear: worship is not a performance, and it is not entertainment. Worship can certainly have joy—joy is a fruit of the Spirit after all—but our pleasure is not the purpose. Worship is a group art project, one that brings all that our lives contain before God.

Communal worship is an important one of our spiritual practices as Christians, and I would argue that it is an essential one. In worship we get to come together to join in praise and lament, read from our shared ancient texts, share in music making, we give voice to our prayers and seek God's presence. We share peace with neighbors, we make and recommit to covenantal promises, and break bread together. Worship has many pieces and although it changes from time to time, the overall shape has remained the same for much of recorded history.

All of those pieces are part of the art of worship. As an art, worship doesn't have meaning on its own, but only what we make of it. I have the lead role in shaping the container for our worship arts, but it takes all of us together to create and make meaning out of it. If worship were all about individuals, or worse, all about me—I thank God it's not!—it would be a personal art form. And yet, worship is not personal, it is communal.

This particular group art project that we call worship is one we come to bringing all of the parts of our lives. When we walk through the sanctuary doors or log in from our devices, we are not empty vessels waiting to be filled with worship, we are a group of artists bringing the material of life before God for an ever-changing series of one-hour art projects that is never the same twice.

As a church, we affirm that we are each a part of one another, one body, with each part being important. And that also means each parts within ourselves is important too. Just as we strive to welcome every kind of person, we also strive to welcome every part of what's going on in our lives. And in our collective life together, the goings-on of our national political reality are a large part of what is happening in our lives today. Discussing political topics in worship is not just acceptable, it is *good*, because politics is about how people try to shape society. Since Jesus had a lot to say about bringing God's realm to earth, it only makes sense that his followers should want to discuss what that means for their own local churches. If we didn't discuss what it means to shape a society at all it would be incomplete and noticeable, and not very Jesus-y.

Coming together as a community of faith to focus on what is going on in our time and place is what the church is all about. Otherwise, if we were to focus our worship time only on our inner spiritual lives, we would miss the opportunity to do what we can only do when we come together. We would cease to be a church and would instead become a spiritual club or a book group with only one big book.

In difficult times in political history, it is art and artists that help people hold onto their humanity and make it through. So let us not shy away from political discussion in the making of our art. We must embrace political discussion, so our worship arts reflect the totality of what we experience in our daily lives. Worship is one of the church's great art forms. Let us make art together; let us join our hearts, minds, and voices in worshipping God.

Rev. Adam

Read the New Testament in 40 Days for Lent 2025 Challenge

Begins Ash Wednesday and includes all 40 days of Lent (no Sundays)

Selections are chosen in approximately the chronological order in which they may have been written, with some exceptions to create thematic pairings.



Day	Date	Book(s)	Chapters
1	3/5	James & Galatians	all
2	3/6	1 Thessalonians & 2 Thessalonians	all
3	3/7	Ephesians & Philippians	all
4	3/8	Philemon & Colossians	all
5	3/10	1 Corinthians	1-9
6	3/11	1 Corinthians	10-16
7	3/12	2 Corinthians	1-13
8	3/13	Romans	1-6
9	3/14	Romans	7-11
10	3/15	Romans	12-16
11	3/17	Mark	1-6
12	3/18	Mark	7-11
13	3/19	Mark	12-16
14	3/20	Matthew	1-7
15	3/21	Matthew	8-12
16	3/22	Matthew	13-18
17	3/24	Matthew	19-24
18	3/25	Matthew	25-28
19	3/26	Luke	1-4
20	3/27	Luke	5-9

Day	Date	Book(s)	Chapters
21	3/28	Luke	10-13
22	3/29	Luke	14-19
23	3/31	Luke	20-24
24	4/1	Acts	1-6
25	4/2	Acts	7-11
26	4/3	Acts	12-17
27	4/4	Acts	18-22
28	4/5	Acts	23-28
29	4/7	1 Timothy, 2 Timothy & Titus	all
30	4/8	1 Peter & 2 Peter	all
31	4/9	Hebrews	1-7
32	4/10	Hebrews	8-13
33	4/11	1 John, 2 John, 3 John & Jude	all
34	4/12	John	1-5
35	4/14	John	6-10
36	4/15	John	11-15
37	4/16	John	16-21
38	4/17	Revelation	1-7
39	4/18	Revelation	8-15
40	4/19	Revelation	16-22

Central Board News and Notes:

The Central Board met February 19th as announced in church and weekly E-News.



Rev. Adam is prepping for the Lent Season at Second Church.

The CB agreed to support a Soup Supper on Maundy Thursday in April rather than Ash Wednesday to give more time to organize volunteers etc. **Evening services will be held in the chapel on Ash Wednesday, March 5th.**

The Finance Team reported that the new Treasurer's format and report is working reasonably well, which is good news. Special thanks to Rev. Adam and Jan Allen for working through the prior nuances in our financial reporting methods and transitioning it toward more direct, standardized output from the Church Windows program we use along with the Schwab dashboard. The cold winter and frequent snow storms have our gas bill and snow plowing bill running a bit ahead of budget, which the Finance Team has little control of, other than to hope for an early, warm spring! We're reminded to be thankful for a warm building and a safe parking lot when we gather.

The Legacy Team brief included that they have received the MOU from Historic Beverly for final review. Once the LT recommends acceptance to the CB, a congregational meeting will be scheduled to vote on it. The LT continues working with our primary lawyers on submittals to the Attorney General and SJC, and since our real estate attorney recently accepted a position with the Mass Bar Association, the LT will be looking for a replacement to continue the work to date.

As we get further along in our building sale process, the Central Board has begun to consider how best to communicate official news from Second Church. This may require modifying our bylaws as communications needs have changed – more to come in future messages as the plan evolves.

The Property Team and Mary Jane Clark looked into what it would take to get our SCC kitchen up to 2025 certification standards from a personnel training perspective. Previously the caterer that leased space and then a member kept Safe Serve credentials, but that is not an option at this time. After discussion, it was determined that our best path for now is to only allow serving catered foods prepared offsite and brought to the church for serving. This means we don't currently have the means (or need) to offer community meals (e.g. bean suppers). We will be able to bring food in from Henry's etc and our homes for our own consumption, but no cooking will be done on site, and the gas stove will be temporarily turned off. These are not easy discussions, but necessary steps as we look forward.

Central Board News and Notes Continued

General reminders – After thoughtful discussion, the Central Board asked Rev Adam to share a couple of reminders during services. First, since we do broadcast on Zoom, Facebook and BevCam, a simple reminder to attendees to remember that as they share prayer requests and other announcements to consider how they chose to use names, especially full names, and whether that person would desire more privacy. We will repost a sign reminding attendees that services are recorded. Second, during this cold/flu/Covid season, remember some people may wish to wave, elbow bump or otherwise keep more distance during passing of the peace - so a reminder to make your own choices as adults and be respectful of other's choices.

**The next Central Board meeting will be Wednesday March 19, 2025 at 7pm via Zoom.
Contact Dale Earl or another CB member if you'd like to attend.**



SPIRITED WOMEN GATHERING

Spirited Women will be meeting on March 16th in the parlor after worship. Program to be announced later. Grab a coffee then come down to the parlor. We look forward to seeing you and thinking about Springtime!

UCC NEWS. . .

Please pray for the members and friends of the South Acton Congregational Church, UCC. Their final decommissioning worship service will be held on **Sunday, March 9 at 3:00 p.m. at 35 School St, South Acton**, or by Zoom at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89654893558>. Church members are joining the West Concord Union Church; both churches have been worshipping together for several months.



UCC NEWS

The Northeast Association UCC invites you to an installation service for Rev. Katherine Schofield as pastor of the First Parish Church, Congregational, UCC, 10 Central St, Manchester-by-the-Sea. Service begins at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, March 2, followed by a reception.

If you are looking to “do something” about everything going on in our country these days, our conference has put together a website to help you. Visit <https://www.sneucc.org/takeaction> to get some ideas for practical ways to respond in faith with your UCC cousins across Southern New England and many partner organizations.

Invitation: Garden with members of other local churches and Kinship Farm

We are invited by First Baptist Church to join an Ecumenical Spring Celebration on Saturday, March 29 from 2:00–4:30 p.m. at The Garden School, 36 Foster St, Beverly in partnership with [Kinship Farm](#). The celebration is scheduled **outdoors**. Casual gardening work clothes suggested: e.g., jeans, warm clothing, and robust shoes or boots. Please bring additional clothing and/or a blanket if you need them to stay comfortable during the afternoon’s events. We regret and apologize that the trails, tents, and outdoor areas are not equipped with facilities or features to ensure full accessibility for individuals with mobility challenges.



The Second Congregational Church Scholarship applications have been sent to local high schools and are available for 2025 high school graduates and college students. *“Awards will be made to students, without regard to religious affiliation, place of residence, race, color, national origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, or disability. Awards will be made to those 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.*

*Application, grade transcripts and 3 letters of recommendation are due in the church office by the Tuesday, **April 15th deadline**. Applications available in church office, narthex and can be emailed to students: parishadmin@beverlysecond.com .*





One Great Hour of Sharing

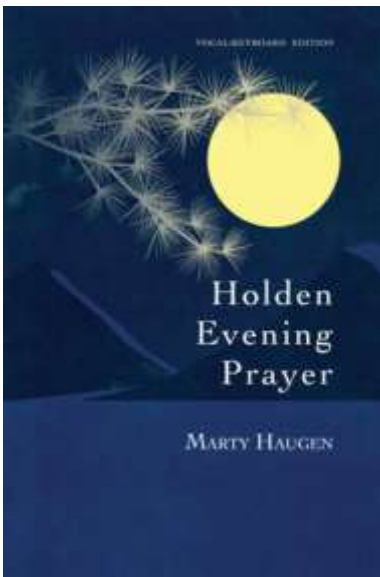
During Lent we will once again join with many denominations in supporting the annual *One Great Hour of Sharing* offering, connecting you to disaster relief, refugee assistance, and development efforts around the globe. When disasters strike, or when individuals are displaced due to violence or poverty, OGHS ensures immediate response and ongoing recovery.

Through your support, OGHS funds comprehensive development programs in areas such as **healthcare, education, agriculture, women's empowerment, microfinancing and food security**. Your contributions help meet urgent needs while addressing the root cause of vulnerability, ensuring long-term, sustainable solutions for affected communities.

We will have a special recognition of this offering during worship on March 30, but you may make your donation at any time during the month. Checks can be made out to the church and **note OGHS on your check or envelope**. Let's **"BE THE LIGHT"** for people in need!



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Weekly Holden Evening Prayer

Each Tuesday during Lent, Rev. Adam will offer the beloved “Holden Evening Prayer” service, which we also did during Advent. This 30-minute service includes a sung liturgy by cherished composer Marty Haugen, time for contemplation, and communion.

Come one week or all six. March 11, 18 & 25 and April 1, 8 & 15 at 7:00pm, in the chapel.

These services will not be videorecorded or streamed.