



The Manual

October 2023

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About Our Church

Pastors

Rev. Kevin Baxter Rev. Colin Leitch

Church Officers

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------------|
| President | Stephen Dyson ('24) |
| Vice President | Janet Forbes ('24) |
| Secretary/Clerk | Patricia Blakeney ('25) |
| Treasurer | Thomas Peebles ('23) |

| | |
|-----------|------------------------|
| Governors | Diane Beverly ('24) |
| | Carlton Doctor ('25) |
| | Debbie Hammer ('25) |
| | LiKam Lie ('24) |
| | Jerry O'Sullivan ('25) |

Staff

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| Bookkeeper | Don Vashaw |
| Church Administrator | Alex Ferraro |
| Director of Finance | Sue McQuarrie |
| Director of Music | Andrew Mattfeld |
| Receptionist | Mary Guarino |

Who We Aspire to Be

The Boston Society of the New Jerusalem is a progressive Christian presence in the City of Boston, a reflection of the Swedenborgian theology of service and mission through our commitment to education, social justice, and human rights.

We seek to make a difference in the lives of strangers and seekers through our compassion and acceptance by inviting all who share our common values to be members of our community.

We attempt to be a “rock” of stability and support in an uncertain world — a tranquil and peaceful “home away from home” for all people, where a person is missed when absent, and where one can find comfort, healing, and normalcy when things are not going well.

We worship the Lord Jesus Christ according to His Holy Word and the theological writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. In following those teachings, this Church shall maintain free and open worship of the Divine and shall honor the good in all religions that seek to foster a positive regard for all humanity, recognizing unity and diversity.

From the President's Desk

Summer has ended, and we are in the fall season. I like to use the idea of “fresh start for fall.” This also happens to coincide with our “Back to Church” philosophy, indicating that summer vacations are over and it’s time to get back to work.

I would like to report that the elected leadership of our church has been working diligently on the church budget for the upcoming year. The budgets for each area of funding have been turned over to the Finance Committee, which will review them and make a recommendation to the Board of Governors for acceptance. Once the Board approves the recommendations, the budget request will be presented to the full membership for final approval at our fall members meeting on November 19, 2023.

I am happy to report that for the first time that I know of, all our leadership positions including committees are filled. This ensures that we have varying viewpoints on issues that will result in decisions made in the best interest of the church, keeping in mind our stated purpose and mission.



In closing, I would like to state for the record that I’m not religious. I’m a Christian. Imperfect and unworthy. Saved by God’s grace.

Peace and blessings,

Stephen

Save the Date: Fall Members Meeting

The fall member's meeting will be held on **Sunday, November 19 at 12:45 p.m.** (following worship), and keep an eye out for important meeting information as the date approaches.

Church discovery group begins November 5

What is a church discovery group? This group is for anyone who wants to learn more about our church, whether they're a longtime member, a prospective new member, or not interested in membership at all.

The group will be on a trip of discovery! All the sessions will explore the nature of God and the Holy Bible through different perspectives. One will talk about Swedenborg, whose particular view of the Bible and God is transformative for our lives. Another will discuss how the early founders broke from their traditional churches out of a need to have a Swedenborgian Church in Boston. Then we will look at the way God, Scripture, and our faith motivate our current actions. Finally, we'll explore how our vision of God, Scripture, and faith leads us into the future.

The group will meet on the **first Sunday of each month at 10 a.m.**, beginning November 5.

Session 1, November 5: Who is Swedenborg and Why Should Anyone Care?

Session 2, December 3: The Foundation and History of Church on the Hill

Session 3, January 7: Mission, Purpose, and our Organization Now

Session 4, February 4: How Can Church Help Us Live Lives of Faith?

If you are interested in joining us, let Rev. Baxter know so you can be included on the contact list!

Mission Committee Update

Pumpkins and crisp air signal that autumn is here in Boston.

Heading into the last quarter of 2023, the Mission Committee has spent about \$250,000 of our \$325,000 budget. New giving opportunities abound.

Following the church's September community lunch, representatives from United Way gave us a presentation summarizing how our more than \$600,000 in donations over the past years have been used.

United Way has joined forces with Boston Foundation to increase funding to International Institute of New England, which helps new immigrants in the region. The Mission Committee has independently funded about \$75,000 in our responsive giving for the past two years.

As outlined in last month's newsletter, the Mission Committee has been discussing our mission as a committee and as a church.

Last month, Mission Committee discussed funding relief in Maui. The town of Lahaina is gone due a massive wildfire. About a hundred people lost their lives. This month, Libya had a catastrophic flood in which more than ten thousand people perished.

Morocco had a major earthquake. Ukraine continues to fight against Russia.

Closer to Boston, Dr. Doug Peebles delivered a presentation on the iHelp nonprofit to the Mission Committee and the church. iHelp is a medical nonprofit in its infancy, with an international component. Presently we have allocated \$10,000 for iHelp's work.

Mission Committee has recommended to the Board of Governors that one third of the Church budget be designated for mission giving. This includes UMass education request and Carlton Doctor scholarship already in the budget elsewhere.

Mary Kay Klein will spearhead the ACHA walk on October 15.

We are our brothers' (and sisters') keeper!

See you at community lunch (noon on October 18) and Mission Committee meetings at 12:45 p.m. following the service on the first Sunday of each month.

Respectfully submitted,
Likam Lie

WE THANK
**BOSTON SOCIETY OF THE NEW
JERUSALEM**
FOR YOUR CONTINUOUS SUPPORT
\$668,700*

Our Impact

Together, we can accomplish more than any of us can alone.

As a result of our funding partnership, and advocacy...

36,000+ families set a new course towards financial security improving their credit, increasing their savings, and finding stable employment



“A more vibrant, abundant, prosperous, healthy and equitable future is only possible once we start creating impact in the communities that have been marginalized. By taking a more proactive approach to addressing long standing issues in our communities and developing new ways to track and measure progress, we can turn our vision into a reality.”



IN 2023, YOUR GIFT OF \$100,000 SUPPORTED...

\$12,000

FAMILY FINANCIAL FUND

ASSISTS INDIVIDUALS OR FAMILIES WITH AN UNANTICIPATED EMERGENCY OR TO HELP SOMEONE ENROLLED WITH ONE OF OUR PARTNER AGENCIES TAKE STEPS TOWARD THE ATTAINMENT OF FINANCIAL GOALS.

\$14,000

ECONOMIC INCLUSION AND WEALTH BUILDING

PROVIDING ACCESS TO SERVICES, RESOURCES, AND TOOLS TO HELP INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES GAIN FINANCIAL CONFIDENCE AND STABILITY.

\$12,000

YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT PATHWAYS

EXPANDS ACCESS TO EARLY EDUCATION TO PROVIDE A SOLID FOUNDATION FOR YOUNG LEARNERS AND ENGAGE OUR MOST VULNERABLE STUDENTS.

\$28,000

ENSURING SAFE AND STABLE HOUSING

PREVENTS THOSE WHO HAVE LOST INCOME FROM LOSING THEIR HOUSING AND EMPOWERING INDIVIDUALS WITH RESOURCES TO ACHIEVE GREATER FINANCIAL STABILITY.

\$34,000

FLEXIBLE SUPPORT

TOGETHER WITH MANY KEY PARTNERS, CHURCH ON THE HILL'S FLEXIBLE SUPPORT HELPED TO FUND 17 ONE-YEAR, UNRESTRICTED COMMUNITY ACTION GRANTS THAT WERE AWARDED TO LOCAL COALITIONS AND GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS THAT SHARE UNITED WAY'S VISION FOR ECONOMIC JUSTICE. THESE INCREDIBLE NEW PARTNERS ARE LED BY BIPOC AND/OR LGBTQIA+ STAFF THAT ARE ACTIVELY ADVANCING EFFORTS FOR LOCAL CHANGE.

IMAGINE WHAT WE CAN DO TOGETHER!



❖ ❖ ❖ Kevin's Corner ❖ ❖ ❖



With Christmas decorations all around, we know that it must be October! These decorations are in stores for a very simple reason: Christmas sells! But they enter the store in late September and early October because people plan, and September is late

to start planning December things. People are getting their Christmas stuff now because they want to be ready for when the season starts.

Honestly, this is good advice. We should all plan. Time passes whether we want it to or not, and the events of life need to be confronted. When we do not plan, we tend to have less than positive experiences with our futures. This is not out of spite or divine vengeance, but rather it is out of our actions not being thoughtful and the choices being limited due to last minute availability.

In this tradition, we teach that our understanding needs to be elevated and grow if our actions are going to change. If we are going to become more loving, we need to examine ourselves and change. The Board of Governors is doing this! They are looking at how they need to change and grow to become the leaders that the church needs. They have risen to the challenge to volunteer to be greeters and to hold themselves more accountable in business and reporting. They are coming to meetings with information ahead of time and are redefining how the Board operates. This is great! We are preparing for the people who might attend. And we've had several new folks walk in the door.

As people, as members, as disciples, we need to follow suit. For instance, what does it mean that confidence in organized religion has fallen to an all-time low of less than 36 percent? It is a toss-up (50/50) that people even see the church as a positive force in society. People who identify as liberal and particularly people in the northeast of the United States are least likely to attend church. In fact, the very word "church" is off putting to younger people. What must we do to face a world that is radically different from the world that most of our members were raised in?

I believe our church has a transformative message that is both living giving and saving. I believe we have a great deal to offer a world that is in dire need of help. There are statistics that show church involvement helps people live better lives. It offers integration of the various aspects of life and also offers an open and welcoming community in a world where a price tag seems to be attached to everything. The visioning we must do needs to examine the world as it is instead of a passive understanding of what is next.

What does this all mean? It means we have work to do about our assumptions about our church and our community. We need to take serious stock of who we are, where we are, and who is around us. We need to actively step into our future rather than watch the world go by. If we do not, we certainly will be faced with a future that has fewer options and more difficulty.

Blessings,

Kevin Baxter



The Choir of the New Jerusalem kicked off the fall music season in September, and there's much more to come!

Sounds on the Hill

Sundays • 3 p.m. • Free to all!

| | |
|---------|--|
| OCT. 22 | AN AFTERNOON OF JAZZ GREG LOUGHMAN & ENSEMBLE |
| NOV. 19 | FALL CHOIR CONCERT CHOIR OF THE NEW JERUSALEM |
| DEC. 3 | AMAHL & THE NIGHT VISITORS CHOIR OF THE NEW JERUSALEM |
| DEC. 17 | HANDEL'S MESSIAH SING CHOIR OF THE NEW JERUSALEM |

And join us Saturday, December 9, at 1 p.m. for Caroling on the Common!

Board of Governors Update

At its September meeting, the Board of Governors approved a motion from the Mission Committee that a grant of \$10,000 be given to the iHelp nonprofit for the construction of a school in Bogota, Colombia. The Board voted to authorize church president Stephen Dyson to work with the church's lawyer to develop a formal agreement for use with the contractors the church works with. The Board approved two changes to the committee structure, disbanding the Scholarship Committee, which is no longer necessary as funds are now given directly to the Mass scholarship fund, and replacing the Audit

Committee with an audit liaison. Both of these changes will go before the membership for approval at the fall members meeting on November 19. The Board then met in executive session to address recent behavioral concerns related to a non-member at church events.

As always, full minutes of all Board of Governors meetings are available in the office.

Respectfully submitted,
Alex Ferraro

ACHA Heart Walk is on October 15

Join us **Sunday, October 15** for the ACHA Heart Walk. We'll gather at the **Parkman Bandstand on the Boston Common at 8:30 a.m.**, with the walk itself beginning at 9:00 a.m. The walk around the Common will be over in plenty of time to get to the Church on the Hill for a cup of coffee before worship. One of the walk teams, "Karen's Team" will be walking in memory of Karen Klein McNulty, first president of ACHA, and daughter of our former pastor, Rev. Dr. Ted Klein.



BostonView Update

The directors of the BostonView Corporation met on September 20 in the parlor at 140 Bowdoin Street. Patricia Blakeney called the meeting to order at 4:07 p.m. As the portfolio manager was on vacation, Todd Mikelonis gave the management report.

The major discussion of the day centered around the elevator, which seems to have increased in repair costs and downtime in recent years. The Board told of its loss of confidence in Embree Elevators and inquired with management about other options. Management will get back to the Board after some investigation.

The ongoing projects with JRM HV/AC Plumbing continue. While the new lobby climate control system was installed, the work on the 04 stack still continues. Demolition has been done, but the removal and installation of a new stack still remain.

Of major note is the city closure of the 12th floor. The amenity space did not have the proper clearance from the city for occupancy. Charlesgate working on remedying the situation by replacing the exit signage, adding occupancy signage, and clearing up permitting inspections.

The building insurance inspection noted several issues that needed to be resolved. The most impactful was the need for the kitchen ventilation to be cleaned and certified. All the recommendations and requirements noted by the insurance company have been accomplished and submitted to Church Mutual Insurance for their review.

Staining of the doors has been problematic this year. Weather has not cooperated. The staff is preparing to use a marine grade varnish. Other ongoing issues include the electric vehicle charging stations, the key fob replacement project, which has been partially installed, we hope to have it completed soon. The old system was obsolete and needed to be upgraded.

The discussion of building value for accounting purposes continues. We can use the building tax value for the building value, but we need a basic square footage value of the church space. Patrick Anderson will do a rough analysis of the square footage of the church for this purpose.

Financially, the accounting expenses are up due to the church's audit, also there was an increase in the insurance premium. The building has had quite a few turnovers, which is expected for September. There is one open unit, which leaves us at 99 percent occupancy. This is a good number, and Todd believes it will rent relatively quickly.

While other minor repair issues were also brought up, the management company continues its excellent and professional work. Members of the shareholding company (the church) are invited to join us on the third Wednesday of each month at 4:00 p.m. to learn more about how the Board operates.

Respectfully submitted,
Kevin Baxter, secretary

Missing Words by Janet Forbes

No doubt we've all heard a young child being reminded to say "please" and "thank you" when asking for something. "Please" always comes first — but, somehow, remembering to say "thank you" seems more important.

Have you noticed how seldom you hear those words uttered by adults? They take a nanosecond to say and are generally appreciated and received with gratitude.

On a personal note, as a child, I hated Christmas afternoons. Once the gifts were opened and lunch dishes were done I would hear the same admonition from my mother every Christmas: "It's time to write your thank you notes so your father can mail them tomorrow." It was agony, wondering what to say — often to friends of my parents whom I hardly knew. I remember well the day I left home, bound for nursing school. I asked my parents if they had any words of advice and in unison they said "Always remember to write thank you notes."

Recently, a grandmother wrote to a well known etiquette columnist. She complained that her grandchildren never mention the gifts she sends them each year. The columnist replied "Don't blame them: children learn by

example, if you're not thanked, blame their parents, not your grandchildren."

Check a display of greeting cards for sale and you'll notice there are often very few thank you cards. I recently asked about that at a stationery store and was told "We don't stock many because no one buys them anymore."

Have we become so busy and living in such a high tech society that we don't have time to express gratitude? How long since you've expressed thanks to the folks who provide a service, your letter carrier, neighborhood police and firefighters, the person who bags your groceries, or the stranger who holds a door for you?

Oh, and by the way, thank you to the folks who tell me they read my articles in this newsletter. Much appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,
Janet Forbes

Obtuse Insensitivity by Pastor Colin

Robert J. McKenna Jr. was a judge at the Boston Municipal Court from 1997 until his recent retirement. Prior to serving on the bench, Judge McKenna was an assistant district attorney for Suffolk County for 23 years (for most of his adult life, he has also been a scratch golfer).

Judge McKenna has seen corruption cases come and go from several vantage points. He has long quoted a mentor of his who warned, "It all starts with a cup of coffee." In other words, when you are in a position of authority, accept no favors from anyone who might conceivably benefit from your position.

Buy your own coffee, pay your own way, protect your integrity from even the possible perception of a conflict of interest.

United States Supreme Court justices are paid \$274,200 per year, with handsome benefits. Their term is for life. They are free, one would think, to concentrate on the law, safe from the opinion, and influences and interests, of others.

Justice Samuel Alito took a luxury fishing trip paid for by wealthy businessmen. He flew on a private jet to Alaska and stayed in a \$1,000-a-night lodge. Justice Alito did not disclose the trip and did not recuse himself from cases involving his benefactors. Justice Alito said he was unaware of their connection to the cases and that he was not required by the rules of the court to disclose his free vacation. That all may be true. So we have a U.S. Supreme Court justice saying, in effect, "Think what you want, but you can't prove it."

How far have we strayed from the proverbial cup of coffee?

Justice Clarence Thomas has been given "at least 38 destination vacations, 26 private jet flights" and

numerous other gifts. Justice Thomas says that none of the gifts were from people with cases before the Court and, again, that may well be true.

Justice Sonia Sotomayor's staff routinely "prodded" libraries and universities to buy her books ahead of speaking engagements. She did not recuse herself from cases involving her book publisher. She apparently has violated no ethical codes or laws.

Leave it to the United States Supreme Court to give new meaning to being tone-deaf. Yes, they broke no laws; yes, they violated no ethical codes; no, we don't know if their judicial opinions have been swayed.

Obtuse insensitivity seems to be widely accepted by our Supreme Court. Members of the Court are clearly on the take. Nor is there any indication that they will clean up their act. Why would anyone trust such people?

Good moment for all of us to think about how we accept largesse of any kind. Paying for your own coffee may save your soul.

God bless you.
Pastor Colin

October Birthdays

Valerie Dalton
Janet Forbes
David Dorsey
Ora Damon
Ephraim Baxter
Robert Moore

VISITS, CARDS, AND PRAYERS

Please take a moment to call, send a card, or visit those in our community who are not able to be with us!

If you would like assistance arranging a visit, contact the pastoral care pastor or office.

Bill Davis

Cambridge Rehab Nursing
8 Dana St.
Cambridge, MA 02138

Andrea Martin

Webster Park Healthcare
#200 B1
56 Webster St.
Rockland, MA 02370

Dorothy Ann Klein

Hebrew Rehab Center
1200 Centre Street
Berger, Fl. 1, Rm. 129 South
Roslindale, MA 02131

William Wen Li Yen

South Cove Manor
288 Washington St.
Quincy, MA 02169

William "Martin" Coor

Tewksbury Hospital
365 East St.
Tewksbury, MA 01876

Irene Legeros

Neville Center
640 Concord Ave., 3rd fl.
Cambridge, MA 02138

CALENDAR

Administrative Hours: Monday to Friday, 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM

October Events

- 9th *Columbus Day (church closed)*
- 15th ACHA Heart Walk 8:30 a.m.
Board of Governors meeting 12:45 p.m.
- 18th Community lunch 12 p.m.
BostonView meeting 4 p.m.
- 21st Bowling 2 p.m.
- 22nd Guest speaker: Darrell Hamilton 11 a.m.
Jazz concert 3 p.m.
- 28th Halloween party 1:30 p.m.

November Events

- 5th Church discovery group 10 a.m.
- 15th Community lunch 12 p.m.
BostonView meeting 4 p.m.
- 18th Bowling 2 p.m.
- 19th Fall members meeting 12:45 p.m.
Fall choir concert 3 p.m.
- 23rd Thanksgiving dinner Time TBA
- 24th *Thanksgiving holiday (church closed)*

December Events

- 3rd Church discovery group 10 a.m.
- 3rd Amahl and the Night Visitors 3 p.m.
- 9th Caroling on the Common 1 p.m.
- 16th Bowling 2 p.m.
- 17th Handel's Messiah Sing 3 p.m.
- 20th Community lunch 12 p.m.
BostonView meeting 4 p.m.
- 25th *Christmas Day (church closed)*

Weekly Events

Worship

11:00 Sundays

Alcoholics Anonymous

12:00 Weekdays

Purlo on the Hill

10:00 Mondays

Zoom Prayer Time

11:00 Mondays

Pastors' Coffee

10:00 Tuesdays

Board Games

2:00 Tuesdays

Spirituality Class

12:00 Wednesdays

Tai Chi

1:30 Thursdays

Scripture Study

12:00 Fridays

Regular Committee Meetings

Mission: first Sunday of each month at 12:45 p.m.

Music: second Sunday of each month at 12:45 p.m.



Boston Society of the New Jerusalem
Church on the Hill (Swedenborgian)

140 Bowdoin Street
Boston, MA 02108-2799

200 Years of Celebration
1818-2018



Lydia Maria Child (1802-1880)
Member of the BSNJ
Writer, Author, Abolitionist, &
Civil Rights Advocate

“It is my mission to help in the breaking down of classes, and to make all men feel as if they were brethren of the same family, sharing the same rights the same capabilities, and the same responsibilities. While my hand can hold a pen, I will use it to this end; and while my brain can earn a dollar, I will devote it to this end.” Lydia Maria Child

www.churchonthehillboston.org | (617) 523-4575