



# The Manual

December 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

Hello to everyone. We have embarked on the season of thanks for all the blessings of life that we enjoy. I am honestly struggling with the responsibility of being president and chair of the Board of Governors here at the Church on the Hill. Being in these positions requires that you must be fully engaged in all aspects of church life. This at times is very demanding and controversial; however, it is necessary to be successful in moving self and others in the right direction, and with the Holy Spirit's presence, we will get there. Recently, we have identified several issues as a church that need improvement and as we move forward in that direction hopefully errors and shortcomings will be eliminated.

On a different note, I would like to report the following. I have been fortunate to have been involved in several significant and rewarding situations. The first is attending the ACHA (Adult Congenital Heart Association) event in Dedham with Rev. Baxter acknowledging the dedicated work of this partner organization in the lives of so many people and their families living with this condition. The recognition of Church on the Hill's participation was huge. The next day was a walk as well and Rev. Baxter also participated in the ACHA's heart walk the next day.

Next, I attended a seminar, with Rev. Leitch on the Greater Boston Housing Report Card 2023, sponsored by the Boston Foundation, another partner organization of our church. We sat through a very thorough and exhaustive presentation on zoning within Boston proper and surrounding communities, also containing a special analysis of community land trusts. These topics are very important to Rev. Leitch and our church and I am pleased to say thank you to both of our pastors for their engagement in civic and community issues.

Also, I had the pleasure in accompanying our Missions Committee chair and another Church on the Hill partner organization ABCD (Action for Boston Community Development) with the distribution of Thanksgiving gift cards to senior-citizen residents of



the Blackstone Apartments. We experienced heartfelt appreciation from those residents and was a pleasure for me to hear their testimonies and their interest in ours.

The fall choral concert series presented by the Choir of the New Jerusalem was once again another touching experience for all. Hopefully as word circulates about the free concert series more folks will attend.

In closing, I would like to thank and commend all those who took part in the Thanksgiving day celebration here at the church for members and friends who attend service here at our church who were unable to be with their families. The evening was full of thanks, food, games, beautiful decorations and even NFL football on the large screen (my favorite). No matter how small or large your contribution was, your time and talents really is apparent. Thank you all!

Peace and Blessings!  
Stephen



Top: The Choir of the New Jerusalem presented a stirring fall choir concert.  
Bottom: The Program & Events Committee hosted the annual Thanksgiving dinner at the church.



## Board of Governors Update

At its November meeting, the Board of Governors voted to authorize monies for an upgrade to the library and approved a formal relief policy proposed by Rev. Baxter.

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

Respectfully submitted,  
Alex Ferraro

## Fall Members Meeting Update

At the fall members meeting on November 19, the membership reviewed and approved the 2024 budget, held elections, and approved three amendments to the bylaws.

Diane Beverly and Jerry O'Sullivan were elected to fill unexpired terms on the Board of Governors, Lisa Hadley was elected to the Music Committee, and Blanca DeLeon was elected to the Program and Events Committee. There remains one vacant seat on the Program and Events Committee; any members interested in the position should contact the Board of Governors.

The membership amended the bylaws to replace the Audit Committee with an audit

liaison, to eliminate the Scholarship Committee and have the Board of Governors oversee the scholarship policies that are in place, and to allow members who are in the choir to continue to serve on the Governance/Bylaws Committee. This last amendment was necessary now that choir members are employees of the church rather than contractors.

The full minutes of all members meetings are available in the office.

Respectfully submitted,  
Alex Ferraro

## ❖ ❖ ❖ Kevin's Corner ❖ ❖ ❖



As the name would suggest, we are entering the tenth month of the year! If you read the September newsletter, you would have read about the additions to the calendar that now make the roots of our month's names a tad bit off (by two months). Over the past few months, I have been focusing

in sermons and other ways at the things we ignore or let go. Things that are lost in translation in culture, scripture, and sometimes life itself. Often, we are presented with concepts, words, and even people that we do not understand. Our brains, rightfully so, make assumptions about what words or actions might mean.

This past month, I talked about the notion of talents in the Bible. People read the words in Matthew about a master giving his servant talents and often fill in the blank. What is a talent? People think of it as coins. A talent is \$6,000 drachma. A single drachma is considered a days wage. At our minimum wage (\$15/hour), one talent would be worth \$720,000. This means in the passage The first servant received \$7.2 million, the next \$1.4 million, and the other just a measly \$720,000. To be given hundreds of thousands of dollars in trust and to not do something with it is different than a single coin. We make assumptions on words and social norms in scripture that are so alien to us, we can often miss the point.

The same is true of other people's behavior. We do not know what is in their mind, we are simply left to understand what we think their intentions might be. We will fill in the gaps based on our history and life. Sometimes, we can do this well and at other times, we miss the mark. We can think a person is out to

get us, when the truth is the other might not even be aware of what they are doing.

When I was in chaplaincy at San Francisco General Hospital, the University of California San Francisco produced a book for nursing students about cultural norms. In western culture, a person not making eye contact might be considered rude or elusive. In eastern culture, a person not making eye contact might be a sign of respect for position or authority.

As we work with other people, we need to understand that much of our experience we label onto others is actually a reflection of ourselves. When we are upset, we are more likely to respond as a person wronged. When we are in a state of love, we are more likely to respond compassionately. When we are well rested and taken care of, we are more likely to be respectful. When we are exhausted and in haste, our reactions will most likely not reflect our highest self.

As we work and grow together in our spiritual lives, we must look at what it is we are letting in the door of our soul. Are we filling it with messages of love and goodness or of power and control. Whatever we focus on, whatever we open ourselves to becomes the lens through which we see all things. If it is worldly success, love of the neighbor, or love of the Lord, the ruling love of our heart will guide all we see and do. I hope that this Christmas finds you well, and that you might be born into a new state of love that transforms how you see the world.

Blessings,  
Kevin Baxter



Julia Powers of ABCD joined our own Mission Committee Chair Likam Lie and President Stephen Dyson to present residents of Blackstone Apartments for seniors with gift cards for Thanksgiving.

## Wesley N. Gray Trust Update

The Boston Society Wesley N. Gray Trust has issued a grant to New Christian Bible Study, Inc. New Christian Bible Study created and manages a webpage dedicated to Swedenborgian Bible study. The grant was given to help add the New Century Edition of Emanuel Swedenborg's theological writings to the current offerings on the website. ([www.newchristianbiblestudy.org](http://www.newchristianbiblestudy.org)). Currently, a person can go there and read the Bible, commentaries, and explore the writings and sermons of the church. It has become an integral part of the Swedenborgian research world.

Sadly, we learned that Bishop Montsho, the principle of Mookie College in South Africa passed into the fullness of the spiritual world

in an untimely fashion. Bishop Montsho had previously worked with the Boston Society Gray Trust on translation work and outreach to his local community. While we hope to continue to work with the people of South Africa, it will take some time to determine the best way to do that.

We hope to provide a fuller update on the state of the trust at the winter member meeting.

The trust is currently administered by Kevin Baxter, Janet Forbes and Andrew McLain.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kevin K. Baxter

## Mission Committee Update

December is here! Christmas is almost upon us, and 2023 won't be with us for long.

In November, the Mission Committee distributed 25 Star Market gift cards to people at the Blackstone Apartments for Thanksgiving. Diane Beverly, Stephen Dyson and I had a productive meeting with Boston Foundation about the committee's contributions. Stephen, Rev. Leitch and I also attended a presentation on homelessness in Boston.

The committee contributed \$10,000 to iHelp for the construction of a school in Colombia. Many children in the area are at risk of

malnutrition, and our work in the region with iHelp will be ongoing.

Women's Lunch Place delivered a presentation at the church following the November community lunch, and Rosie's Place will be coming to do the same on December 20.

As always, we'll see you at our committee meetings on the first Sunday of each month after church lunch at 12:45.

Respectfully submitted,  
Likam Lie



## BostonView Update

The directors met on November 15 in the parlor at the church. After accepting the minutes as presented, Sean McEvoy of Charlesgate management gave his report. The fob reader project has been delayed until we receive the 400+ fobs that are needed to replace the current ones.

The directors approved a bid to install new bubblers throughout the building. Currently, the use of bottled water is proving to be an expensive endeavor. The coffee machine and workout room use quite a bit of water. Issues of ordering and replacement by employees add additional cost and difficulty. The church's water bubblers are also quite extensively used. The cost of approximately \$25,000 to install the bubblers would be recovered in two to three years. In addition to this cost, the need to renovate the church's sacristy and remove asbestos will add additional expense of \$16,000. This will help both the church and BostonView with expense and labor issues.

With the directors' blessing, management is rehabbing apartment 1107. Unit renovations are within the annual budget. The unit will be a test renovation toward a more open concept one-bedroom unit.

The laundry payment system has been updated and a new resident web-based app is working well. Sean had envelopes and forms available at the front desk for residents to get refunds from their old laundry cards. A little resident relations went a long way.

At the time of the meeting, we have two open units. We are hoping they get rented quickly; however, this is a slower rental season.

The draft budget was presented, the directors will review it and make any needed changes at the December meeting.

Finally, the directors are working with building maintenance to address the ventilation in the church's women's restroom. We hope to have a proposal or solution next month.

The meeting was adjourned. As always, members of the shareholding corporation are welcome at our meetings, which are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 4 p.m. in the parlor.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kevin Baxter, secretary

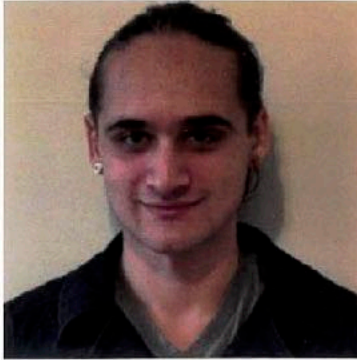
## Elections for the BostonView Board of Directors are Approaching

Both Deborah Hammer and James Fenton are eligible and willing to run again. If you would like to be considered for a directorship, please contact a director or the secretary of the Corporation.

Directors: Pat Blakeney, James Fenton, Stephen Dyson, Ora Damon, Deborah Hammer.  
Secretary of the Corporation: Kevin Baxter

## STUDENT IMPACT STORY

ELLIOT SARGENT



## ELLIOT SARGENT

The Rev. Dr. J. Theodore Klein  
Endowed Scholarship

### ELLIOT SARGENT

#### ANTICIPATED GRADUATION

Spring 2024

#### MAJOR

Philosophy & Public  
Policy (BA)

#### SCHOOL

College of Liberal Arts

#### HOMETOWN

Shelburne Falls, MA

*Thank you for this contribution to my education, this money is of great help in allowing me to continue my studies. Because of this contribution, I will not need to take out a private loan this year and can continue to devote most of my time to academics rather than work. I also hope to take up an internship in 2023 and I doubt this would be possible without your donation.*

### What are you studying and when will you graduate?

My two degree programs are *Philosophy and Public Policy* and *Political Science*, and I will be graduating in the Spring of 2025. A specific thing that I am studying is the similarities between the philosophy of Machiavelli and the biblical Book of Judith.

### Why did you choose this academic track?

#### What led you to take up this field of study?

I chose my first major not knowing much about philosophy or policy. It might be fair to say that I chose it because it was the least uninteresting, though I have come to find it very interesting. I have added the political science major because of my interests in public policy and political theory. I have always been interested in the practical side of politics and I grew more interested after taking a class on urban education that had a strong emphasis on policy.

From UMass Boston's Scholarship Impact Report, here is a profile of one of the student recipients of the Rev. Dr. Theodore J. Klein Endowed Scholarship.

The purpose of the Rev. Dr. J. Theodore Klein Scholarship is to aid UMass Boston students with financial need who are studying ethics and philosophy. In addition to his time here at Church on the Hill, Rev. Dr. Klein was a professor in the philosophy department at UMass Boston for three decades. Church on the Hill endowed the scholarship in his honor in 2021 to remember him and to fulfill our moral commitment to prepare the next generation of scholars.

#### STUDENT IMPACT STORY

##### **How do you hope to use your degree upon graduation?**

After graduation, I plan to attend law school. If possible I will enroll in a hybrid program and pursue a master's either in public administration or public policy. I plan to take a philosophical approach towards whatever career I pursue after law school so that I know my role and duties as a lawyer and can defend them.

##### **How did you feel when you learned you received this scholarship?**

When I saw that I received this scholarship I was excited and honored, as well as relieved given my current financial situation.

##### **What is the most surprising thing you have learned so far at UMass Boston**

Perhaps the most surprising thing I have learned is that the top predictor of whether one lives in a dangerously polluted neighborhood is race. Learning about environmental racism has been both disturbing and enlightening, and has become an area in which I am particularly interested in looking at from a policy perspective. Another surprising thing I've learned is that the Cherokee Native American Tribe was promised a delegate to congress in an 1835 treaty and that this promise has never been fulfilled. The treatment of Native Americans by the U.S. Government has always been of interest and concern to me, and I am considering a focus on Indian Law when I go to law school.

## One Size Fits All by Janet Forbes

For many, this time of year is very stressful. It's when folks often worry about what gifts to buy for friends and family. There's so much to consider, not the least of which is the size of our budget. Then, if we're considering clothing, do we know the correct size? The person's preferred color? Style? And on it goes. Then there's the problem of wrapping. Do I have a box that will do? What about wrapping paper and what about the cost of mailing?

I have a suggestion. Knowledge of size, color etc not required. Forget the price too. One size of this gift does indeed fit all.

How about giving gifts of kindness this holiday season? We all know folks whom we appreciate year-round, both seen and unseen. It may be the crew that collects our garbage, the police who patrol our neighborhood and the fire personnel who provide such a valuable service in the event of fires or other emergencies. I know for a fact that most of these people are thrilled when a citizen expresses simple gratitude. I have a friend who stops by her neighborhood fire and police stations with cookies and Christmas cards each December. Then there's the bagger at your supermarket who ensures your groceries are always distributed evenly into bags, making them easier to handle. Do you always greet them and thank them? How about your letter carrier? Most multi-unit buildings have the same carrier getting your mail to you daily in all types of weather. How hard would it be to leave a card or note for them or to make a point of thanking them in-person?

Many who read this publication are retired and on fixed incomes. No one should expect lavish gifts from these folks, but it costs very little to write a note of appreciation or even to verbally express your

gratitude to the people who make your life easier every day. It's often said that in a city you can live just feet away from your neighbor for years and never know their name. You can change that — slip a card under their door introducing yourself. The next time you see them, say hello.

How about those who are employed? You are not excluded. Hopefully year-round you treat your fellow employees with kindness. Do you refrain from bringing your personal problems and bad moods to your job? If you are able, do you offer to help a fellow employee that is having a particularly tough day? Do you express gratitude if they do give you assistance?

The simple fact is kindness is remembered long after flowers wilt or a box of candy is eaten. I don't, however, want to imply that it's ever wrong to give a tangible gift if it's within your means. I just believe that regardless of income we can all give the gift of kindness and gratitude.

On a personal note, I appreciate the readers of this publication who contact me often with words of appreciation for something I've written. That means a lot. The media is constantly filled with reports of such dreadful events both here and around the world. I really believe that if everyone everywhere performed even simple acts of kindness every day, it would make such a positive difference.

My wish and prayer is that your holiday season will be peaceful and that you will give and receive many acts of kindness in the coming year.

Respectively submitted,  
Janet Forbes

## An Authentic Christmas by Pastor Colin

The Merriam-Webster word of the year for 2023 is "authentic." No doubt this is in part because we seem to be living through a crises of authenticity. Some call it a post-truth age.

Social media, among other factors, has made what is genuine, what is true, what is real, what is trustworthy more questionable, more dicey, less predictable. The effort to be honest, accurate, truthful, genuine is a basic religious practice. Fox News need not apply.

In such an era, what would an authentic Christmas look like? How would we celebrate Christmas in order to be genuine, lifting up the values of Jesus? We might begin by ignoring the Christmases of the recent past.

Jesus and his fellow Jews were waiting for a messiah, a chosen figure, an anointed one, descended from King David, who would deliver Israel from its enemies and lead it into a golden age. For Christians, of course, Jesus himself is the messiah. He has come and will come again. In both cases, something is missing, something is needed. The messiah will provide what is crucial and vital and necessary for his people. The wait, the longing for the messiah is the wait for the fullness of life, for virtue and goodness in all things, for the truly authentic and trustworthy and real.

In a world uncomfortable with authenticity, the need and the longing might be more acute, more visible, more heartfelt. We don't need more shopping, more entertainment, more celebrity voices, more screen time, more sports. The need for a messiah might correlate with the reality of our situation, as it did in Jesus' day.

Anticipating a world conference in Dubai, of all places, reports on climate are coming out around the world. In spite of some progress replacing fossil fuels with electricity, the news is not good.

Federal agencies in the United States report that "the effects of rapidly warming climate are being felt in every corner of the US and will worsen over the next 10 years with continued fossil fuel use." Climate change is taking an ever increasing economic toll. Billions are spent on extreme weather disasters — instead of schools, housing, and health care.

It is important to remember that we are not victims of climate change, we are the perpetrators. Where is the truth-telling messiah?

The heroes of the strong American economy are the consumers. This we hear again and again. The heroes and the dupes, one might say. The Christmas season requires that consumers go all-out, setting aside personal wellbeing in order to buy what they really don't need. Sacrificial shopping, it might be called. Are Mark Zuckerberg, Jeff Bezos, Elon Musk modern messiahs, leading the way? Yikes.

To celebrate the season, Citibank has raised its credit card interest rate to 24.24%. The average American consumer has a credit balance of \$6,000. How can one get an invitation to the Citi Christmas party? Religions once took usury seriously. Now, the markets are sacred. A real messiah might go to his death with only the clothes around his waist.

What are your circumstances this season? How might a messiah transform your life, lifting heavy burdens hard to bear? Your aches and pains might be enlightening. Your needs might be authentic. Christmas might be your best response.

God bless you.  
Pastor Colin

## December Birthdays

Anthony Auger  
Alex LoGiudice  
Jesus the Nazarene

## 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*

## December Events

3 <sup>rd</sup>	Church Discovery Group	10 a.m.
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Amahl and the Night Visitors	3 p.m.
9 <sup>th</sup>	Caroling on the Common	1 p.m.
10 <sup>th</sup>	RenMen Christmas Concert	7 p.m.
16 <sup>th</sup>	Bowling	2 p.m.
17 <sup>th</sup>	Lessons & Carols service	11 a.m.
17 <sup>th</sup>	Board of Governors meeting	12:45 p.m.
17 <sup>th</sup>	Handel's Messiah Sing	3 p.m.
20 <sup>th</sup>	Community lunch	12 p.m.
	Missions presentation	1 p.m.
	BostonView meeting	4 p.m.
25 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Christmas Day (church closed)</i>	

## January Events

7 <sup>th</sup>	Church Discovery Group	10 a.m.
15 <sup>th</sup>	MLK Day bus trip	9 a.m.
17 <sup>th</sup>	Community lunch	12 p.m.
	Missions presentation	1 p.m.
	BostonView meeting	4 p.m.
20 <sup>th</sup>	Bowling	2 p.m.
21 <sup>st</sup>	Board of Governors meeting	12:45 p.m.

## Weekly Events

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### Worship

11:00 Sundays

### Alcoholics Anonymous

12:00 Weekdays

### Purls on the Hill

10:00 Mondays

### Zoom Prayer Time

11:00 Mondays

### Pastors' Coffee

10:00 Tuesdays

### Board Games

2:00 Tuesdays

### Spirituality & Scripture Class

12:00 Wednesdays

### Tai Chi

1:30 Thursdays

### 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



Clarence W. Barron (1855-1928)  
Member of the BSNJ,  
newspaperman, Dow Jones  
president, and founder of  
*Barron's Magazine*

“There is no question, national or international, no question of the individual or collection of individuals, which cannot be settled by the laws which belong in the human heart. Such laws may be called spiritual or natural, divine or human; they are one and the same. ... It is only for the world to hear and to do.” Clarence W. Barron

[www.churchonthehillboston.org](http://www.churchonthehillboston.org) | (617) 523-4575