

Congregational Connection



Pastor's Column

"While they were there, the time came for Mary to have her baby. She gave birth to her firstborn child, a son, wrapped him snugly, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn." - Luke 2: 6

Thank you, church, for all the ways you love God, love one another, and love our neighbors as ourselves. You helped this church bustle and shine in November with great festivity and generosity of spirit. Because of your care, in November, you touched the lives and hearts of 100s of people, from vendors and crafts makers, raffle winners, visitors, artists, dancers, musicians, and those checking out the neighborhood. Thank you. May God continue to bless you and as Norm says, be a blessing to others through you.

As our calendar month turns to December, we have a new year upon us! This year is the 200th anniversary of the debut of "Silent Night, Holy Night." This hymn has become the best-loved worship moment of many Christians—even those who only come to church once a year. Something mystical occurs as we light our candles and sing the hope of "all is calm, all is bright"—peace and light for the world. During our Sunday Worship, we will celebrate the carol's message over the entire season of Advent and highlight its call for our lives that can guide us all year long. May Advent be a time when we experience hope, peace, joy and love together, and find ways to reach people's hearts who need these everlasting and holy messages.

My hope also this December is that all of us will find ways to reach and share God's love. The Christ child came into this world as a babe, I imagine, with his arms outstretched, ready to be held. So often babies have their arms outstretched right? How did they learn that so quickly, that if they do that, they will be carried and hugged and kept warm and secure. We are discovering as people of faith in our wonderful little church that the love we carry from God can be a beacon of light for others when we meet people where they are, not when we impose dogma or beliefs upon them. None of us would be comfortable doing that anyway! Invite people to come to Christmas Eve because you care about them, whether you know them well or you have just met them. Reach out ultimately because God cares, because the Christ child is waiting to be held in your hearts and in the hearts of so many who are seeking for redemptive, transforming, and renewing love. Like those candles shining in the darkness when we sing Silent Night, may your light be a blessing of hope and shine the way for others to the manger, where there lies the Christ child, waiting to be discovered.

May your hearts be filled with God's amazing love. May you find your souls ready for new life, a new church year, new wonder, and hope that will never, ever quit.

"For you once darkness, but now you are light. Walk as children of light."
Ephesians 5:8

Blessings of light and love dear people of God.



From the Desk of the Deacons

November was a busy month. We began by remembering loved ones with photographs on All Saints Day. On Veteran's Day worship was held earlier so we could participate in the ceremony at the Korean Memorial. We also gave water to our neighbors at the parade and opened our building to those who needed to use the facilities. Our services were greatly appreciated by all.

The busy month was highlighted by the Stewardship Campaign and an extremely successful Christmas Fair.

This Sunday is the beginning of Advent and the Church Year. We will celebrate each week with folks lighting the Advent candles and the young people building the crèche. Christmas Sunday (December 23) is always a much-anticipated service as during worship the youth of the Church will present a Christmas pageant. The youth of the community have been invited to participate; the event is on Facebook. There is always room at the Inn.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service will begin at 6:30 P.M. (NOTE NEW TIME) Candles will light the pathway to a beautifully decorated church and service of scripture and caroling for the entire family. Plan to come and participate in the service which will close with a candle lit circle around the Sanctuary formed by our church family and friends.

On December 30th we will hold the traditional service of carols. The Deacons wish each and every one of you the blessings of the season. Merry Christmas!



From the Trustees

We are waiting on insurance claim for kitchen floor leak. The plumber has completed his work so far. We are still waiting on budget submissions from some committees. The fireside room is being prepped and painted by Cormac on his days off. Small business Saturday will take place 11/24/18 with a tree and lights. Equitable and South Shore banks along with private donations were given for the purchase of these. Dow is putting up the tree.

Kathy Mosher, Tom Kosenen, Bob Crisswell.



Notes from the Music Director

It's been very fun being with the church over the last few months, and I now look forward to sharing Advent and Christmas Eve with the church before I leave and Victor returns.

Advent begins the new church year, and it is my hope that everyone is able to experience the hope, peace, joy, and love the season during worship and throughout the rest of your weeks. Very often, those themes are reflected in the music of the season. We are surrounded by Christmas music on the radio and in shops even before Advent begins. If

you find yourself listening to Christmas music, try to pay attention to lyrics. Maybe you've heard them so many times you don't really hear any more, or maybe it's a song that's new to you. Hear what the lyrics are saying to you in that very moment. Maybe they bring back a memory, or maybe they help point out a new aspect of the season, like a new snowflake.

In leading up to our pageant on December 23, all children and youth are invited to rehearse music after worship on December 9 & 16. Bring some ideas for songs for discussion after worship on December 2. Let's have fun making music together!

Peace,

Adam Isbitsky
Interim Music Director
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Music at Sanctuary Hall

HOLIDAY EXTRAVAGANZA WITH SPO DEC. 8 --- Get your tickets now for what promises to be the social event of the Advent season: The Southeastern Philharmonic Orchestra's annual Holiday Extravaganza concert, and it will be held right in our church sanctuary on Saturday, Dec. 8, at 7:30 p.m. Doors will open at 7, but get here early. We expect our sanctuary to be full to overflowing.

SPECIAL DISCOUNTS: If you order your tickets online, you can get a 10 percent discount: \$18 instead of \$20 for adults; \$9 instead of \$10 for students and seniors. Go to brownpapertickets.com and search for "Holiday Extravaganza".

This concert is a bargain at any price, and all proceeds are divided evenly to support the orchestra and the many ministries of our church, including Music at Sanctuary Hall.

LITTLE CHRISTMAS IN JACKSON SQUARE XX --- Our 20th annual Epiphany concert will be at 3 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 6.

We've got a stellar lineup of new and old artists for this special celebration. Joining us this year will be the choirs of Immaculate Conception and St. Jerome parishes, the North River Brass Quintet, an ensemble from the Southeastern Philharmonic Orchestra, Chuck Vermette, Jim Melody, Peter Adams, Paul DeRubeis, Emma DeRubeis and possibly more.

Don't miss this special afternoon, which has raised nearly \$20,000 for the Weymouth Food Pantry over the years.

Rehearsal for the adult choirs will be at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 2. Our Christmas Kids' Choir will have a rehearsal and pizza party on Jan. 5 at a time to be announced.

BIG THANKS TO ADAM ISBITSKY --- I am so grateful that Adam Isbitsky has been able to be with us during my time away. He has blessed us with his talents.

Victor DeRubeis, Director of Music (On Sabbatical)
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Sabbatical Sojourns

Your music director has been visiting other churches during his sabbatical, which will run through Jan. 2.

I've been visiting different denominations each week to see how other churches worship. It's been a mostly positive experience that also makes me appreciate how much I miss my church home.

Here's a rundown of my November visits. All of the congregations have been friendly and welcoming to me.

Oct. 28: First Church, Weymouth Heights. Cathy Bacas Torrey, who is a dear friend of our church and expert on the life and times of Abigail Adams, delivered a sermon at First Church upon the 200th anniversary of Adams' death. Cathy took the Scripture of the day, the story of Job, and related it to the amazing but difficult life of the wife of the Second President. Despite

long separations from her husband, the Revolutionary War, and the death of her daughter from breast cancer, Abigail Adams' faith never wavered.

Nov. 1, All Saints Day: St. Cecilia Parish, Back Bay. The unconventional urban Roman Catholic church ministers to a diverse neighborhood of ethnicities and sexual orientations. I felt especially at home when we sang "Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones," a musical homage to the saints and a tune that is familiar to us when we sing the Doxology, "Praise, God, from whom all blessings flow; praise Christ the Word in flesh born low."

Nov. 8: Jazz Worship at Old South Church, Back Bay. This is the congregation in which Benjamin Franklin was baptized. It has occupied an unusually opulent building in Copley Square since 1875. Willie Sordillo, a fine saxophonist, led a quartet with a vocalist, bass, and piano. We MUST plan a field trip to this wonderful Thursday evening worship!

Nov. 18, Thanksgiving Sunday, Second Congregational Church, Middleboro. The Rev. Patty Kogut, the area minister who has been so helpful during our recent church tribulations, invited me to substitute at this warm and down-to-earth congregation that is very much like our own. They have a wonderful choir, and we sang a Thanksgiving anthem that I will share with our own wonderful choir in 2019.

Nov. 25, Christ the King (Reign of Christ) Sunday, St. John's Episcopal Church, Hingham. In keeping with Episcopalian tradition, St. John's has a very formal service with gorgeous classical choral music by Handel. The hymns, however, were very familiar and sung with gusto by the congregation that packed the sanctuary for two baptisms. Father Tim Schenck's sermon was about the "Upside Down Kingdom" of Jesus Christ -- one in which the leader is here to serve and not be served.

Victor DeRubeis



Church School News

A heartfelt thank you goes out to the children and Youth of our Church School for all their hard work these past 2 months. Our Youth earned their own money and shopped for items to fill the 20 Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes. Along with donations from the congregation we packed and shipped 20 boxes that will be delivered to needy children somewhere around the world. Each box was sent with a photo of the children and a handmade card wishing the child that receives the box hope, peace, love and blessings in their future. Special thanks to the parents and teachers that made this possible.

On Veteran's day the children also made cards to be sent to a soldier in Afghanistan, named Sam Lowell that misses his home and family. The children sent uplifting messages and prayers to let him know that he is not alone and the children wished him a safe return home asking him to come by and meet them when he returns.

Our Church School children helped at the Christmas Fair on Nov. 17th, working at the Snack Bar and the Church Homemakers Table. They lent a hand wherever needed to make our fair a wonderful experience for all that came and shopped. The next day we loaded a car filled with all the food pantry donations from our church and helped to unpack and sort hundreds and hundreds of can goods at the Interfaith Social Services. We are so thankful for their energy and commitment to those less fortunate than us.

We celebrated the Jackson Square Tree Lighting on the lawn of the Church, Saturday Nov. 24th. This was such a fun experience where we carolled throughout the square spreading music and joy, ending at the Tree Lighting at 5:00 where the children sang. Some of us had raked the leaves and mowed the lawn to show the community how proud we are of our church. There were lights strung all over the bushes out front, wreaths on the doors, decorations everywhere and our own beautiful angel watching over us from the stained glass window in the sanctuary, all of this done by the faithful folks here at the church. What a blessed day for the children.

Christmas Pageant- Sunday December 23rd

This is the "most wonderful time of the year" when we get to plan and present the annual Christmas Pageant. The children will be presenting the story of Christ's birth narrated by the Youth Class. The children will appear on the stage as the story is read and we will build a tableau of that First Christmas in Bethlehem. We will be practicing after church on Sunday Dec. 9th and Dec. 16th. We hope that you will be able to bring your children to church over the next 4 weeks as we enter the Advent season and prepare for this special pageant day.

"Nativity in the Windows", Sunday December 23rd

For the second year we are inviting families to bring their Nativity sets to be displayed in the sanctuary windows on Pageant Sunday, December 23rd. The Deacons have left 12 windows for us to decorate with these beloved Nativity scenes so make sure that you sign up for a space, a sheet will be available at Coffee Hour on each Sunday.

Advent in our Sunday School-December

The Latin word for Advent is "coming" or "arrival". We celebrate Advent during the four weeks before Christmas. This year it starts on December 2nd with a wreath and prayers for each child and an Advent Calendar that they will get to take home. The mystery of the season is in the waiting, we don't know how God will come to be among us as human but we prepare and watch for His coming with wonder. Why not take this time of year to slow the hectic pace of your lives and start a new family tradition.

We wish all of our EWCC families a wonderful and blessed Christmas this year!

Kerry Mortland, Church School Supt., Seek Joy!



Stewardship Committee

On Saturday, November 17th Santa's helpers were working hard at our Annual Christmas Fair. The Church was bustling with vendors and members selling crafts, children visiting Santa and people buying baked goods and taking chances on raffles and silent auction items. It was a fulfilling day of holiday celebration with our family, friends and guests who came through the doors to shop, eat, and watch the South Shore Dance Academy performance.

It takes months of preparation and a full team effort to make this happen every year. The Stewardship Committee is very thankful to everyone on our Church team for lending a helping hand. It is so heartwarming to see our Church family laughing and working together!

The total raised this year is \$3,652!! Well done! The Bike Raffle was extended to November 25th to be able to sell tickets at the Weymouth Art Association display for the Small Business Christmas Stroll in Jackson Square. The winning ticket was drawn, and a very happy, local customer won the mountain bike.

The Stewardship Committee appreciates all the help it received to make this day so prosperous and successful. Bless you all for your dedication and commitment.

Also, please remember to turn in your 2019 pledge cards. "What Shall I Bring" is the theme all through 2019. When you make a committed pledge to the Church, it is helpful to the Trustees who have the task of completing the Church budget. Your commitment helps the Church to do God's work in many other ways throughout the year, in the community and around the World. If you need a pledge card, please ask anyone on the Stewardship Committee, they are on the website and can be emailed also. Thank you so much for your consideration.

Thank you again to our Church Family for all that you do each and every day to support our Church. We wish you all a very Blessed Holiday Season.

The Stewardship Committee

Tara Haley, Cheryl McMillan, Kerry Mortland, Kathy Mosher, Martha Webber and Colleen Whitham



Vitality Team

For November, we had a very helpful and uplifting Church Vitality Team Call with Rev. Paul Nickerson. Rev. Paul helped us look at our

Christmas events and ways to share the good news. He drew our attention to the "Great Commission" (Matthew 28: 16-20) and how so easily this becomes the "Great Omission." The best news we have to share in this world is that of the birth of Jesus. The Christmas Pageant is one of our best offerings to make available to our wider community. He encouraged us to talk with parents and Christian education teachers so that they could have a chat with the children of the church and see who their children would like to invite to take part in the Christmas Pageant. Children often show the way for the rest of us about how great it is to invite friends to come join them for good events.

We made sure we had "shareable" material ready for the Christmas Fair to invite folks back for December events. Gretchen and the Music Committee have been partnering with Southeastern Philharmonic Orchestra to share their incredible Christmas Holiday Pops with our South Shore community. We also reviewed our outreach for the first to MSH concerts.

Our Small Biz Saturday, Holiday Stroll and Tree Lighting was incredibly successful. We have set for ourselves a new precedent of being good neighbors in our community! Our Jackson Square Community is living vitality and hope, the likes of which it has not seen for decades. Our local businesses leaders went from saying, "this can't happen in Jackson Square, all we do is complain about parking, it will never work" to this was one of their best days ever and they can't wait for next year. Our church has been in this square for nearly 200 years. Surely November 24th was a highlight for our church and Jackson Square history. We have an important role to play of building community, enlivening hope and expecting miracles.

November was also a month of preparation for the wonder of Advent and Christmas. All the events of December are posted in our church Facebook page under events and on our website. You can invite folks to our events with social media and our shareable events notices. Christmas Eve will be the most important event to share. We have flyers online that are formatted as jpegs that can be shared on your own timelines. How to's are available in our weekly mailings.

Most importantly however, as our moderator Mike Railey put it, we are called as people of faith to invite others to our church not only for our growth, but for our "sustainability" as the church we all love and care for. Leadership is taking on the mantle of that opportunity and will be inviting church members to do so as well. The best way is the old way – tried and true – pick up, bring, and drop off. What makes this not just an exercise, is that this is actually a spiritual practice – sharing our faith. We may find we behold the best Christmas present of all when we share in new ways.

Theologian Henri Nouwen puts it this way: "There are more people on this planet outside the Church than inside it. Millions have been baptized, millions have not. Millions participate in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, but millions do not.

The Church as the body of Christ, as Christ living in the world, has a larger task than to support, nurture, and guide its own members. It is also called to be a witness for the love of God made visible in Jesus. ... Jesus prayed for his followers, "As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world" (John 17:18). Part of the essence of being the Church is being a living witness for Christ in the world."



Mission and Outreach

Many thanks for the baskets full of donations (health and beauty products, clothing, socks, etc.) you brought in October/November for the veterans at the Brockton VA Hospital.

Interfaith Social Services thanks us for bringing 38 bags of groceries the Sunday before Thanksgiving and several Sunday School children/teachers who trekked to Quincy to intake, sort, and stock shelves from the other South Shore church food drives that day. Our church team was AWESOME! They really helped our neighbors who need it!!

Throughout December, we will collect donations of new mittens, hats and scarves for youth and children served by Weymouth Family

Services. Please bring your items in any Sunday and place on the Mitten tree in the Chapel! Thanks so much!!!



Poinsettias for Christmas! - 2018

The holidays will be approaching quickly. The church Christmas Fair was November 17th and after that, time just seems to fly and before you know it – it is Christmas time! Why not brighten up your Christmas holiday by ordering a beautiful poinsettia for you or your loved one’s home. Last year I received a lot of orders and the church was decorated so beautiful for Christmas Eve with them.

Starting on Sunday, December 2nd you may place your Christmas flower orders during coffee hour for each and every Sunday (December 2, December 9th and December 16, 2018. The final cutoff date for ordering poinsettias is December 16, 2018. The poinsettias come in red, white or pink and are reasonably priced at \$9.00. We have a new florist in our local neighborhood that we started using in May, Diersch Flowers. They gave us a good price of only \$9.00. You may pay in cash and/or write a check payable to Diersch Flowers. Any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 781-985-3626.

The flowers will be delivered December 22, 2017 to be set up for our Children’s Christmas Pageant and also for Christmas Eve. Service on December 24th at 6:30 p.m.

Peace and blessing – Nancy Haley



Upcoming Pastoral and Preacher Coverage

- December 2 – Pastor Gretchen Elmendorf
- December 9 – Pastor Gretchen Elmendorf
- December 16 – Pastor Gretchen Elmendorf
- December 23 – Pastor Gretchen Elmendorf
- December 24 (6:30pm) - Pastor Gretchen Elmendorf



Important Dates to Remember

- Saturday, December 8 – SPO Holiday Pops (7:30pm)
- Monday, December 24 – Christmas Eve Service (6:30pm)



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|-----------------|-------------|
| Paul DeRubeis | December 1 |
| Karen Andrews | December 2 |
| Sara Thurber | December 5 |
| Leo Eliasson | December 9 |
| Emma DeRubeis | December 12 |
| Sarah DeRubeis | December 12 |
| Mariana Gramz | December 20 |
| Shirley Horton | December 22 |
| Ray Matusiewicz | December 25 |



In Our Prayers

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------|
| Chickie | Michael B |
| Jack | Mary |
| Kelly | Dave and Lynn |
| First Responders | Servicemen and women |
| Brian W | Debra L and family |
| Kristin | Justin C |
| Jane F | Kelly C |
| Bette | Wendy |
| Angela | Michael F |

- Paul
- Kathy and Andy
- Shirley
- Anyone living in fear
- Mary O
- Linda R
- Dick
- Tanya D
- Leo
- Brenda
- EWCC
- Veronica
- Muriel
- Larry L and family

- Anita
- Dave
- Maryanne H
- Colt
- Victims of wildfires
- Caden
- Tameika D
- Brian C
- Brady
- Kaycee
- Donna and Joe
- Bunny
- Mary C
- Barrington C



From the Office

Please have your January submissions to me no later than December 21st. Thank you.