



The Manual

January 2024

Boston View
Update

p. 4

Music Events
Update

p. 8

January and February
Events Calendars

p. 15

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.

❖ ❖ ❖ Kevin's Corner ❖ ❖ ❖



It is January once again. It is a time of reflection and planning for the year ahead. How do you go about making a New Year's resolution? Lindsey Bever, a reporter for the Washington Post posited these hints:

1. Set your New Year's resolutions at the right time. (Is it something you can do now?)
2. Make an explicit plan for achieving your goal. (Is it achievable?)
3. Choose a goal you'll enjoy.
4. Subtract things from your life. (Time and focus.)
5. Forgive failures. (Being willing to take steps and fail keeps you headed in the right direction.)

Before this list (which she goes into in greater detail), she talks about the mixed reputation that New Year's resolutions have. But if people have a mixed response to them, why do them at all? Katy Milkman, a professor at the Wharton School, was quoted as saying, "...resolutions are a prime example of a psychological phenomenon known as the fresh start effect – a date on the calendar that gives people a sense of a new beginning and motivates them to make a positive change." It is a general truth, we all want to do better.

Swedenborgian spirituality centers around continual growth toward God, which calls us to be agents of love and messengers of the divine. What are we able to do to grow? Is it achievable? Will you enjoy it? Can you focus on it? And can you assess and change or try again? If we say our spiritual life does not need growth, we need to ask some different questions.

For our church, we need to ask ourselves, what does it mean for us to improve? We were founded with the purpose of holding a free and open service of worship of the Lord God Jesus Christ according to the teachings of the New Jerusalem. The role of the service is not to please God, as worship for God's sake makes God deficient. No, the purpose of our worship is our growth. It gives us an opportunity to open ourselves to God to see what needs transformation. Every Sunday is a chance to begin again.

All the rest of our programs are secondary if not tertiary to worship. What role does our Sunday service or worship play in your day? We can even extend the list to the prayer group and the Wednesday study group. Would one rather go and get breakfast? Grab a cup of coffee? Sit on the couch for the game?

Is bringing your fullest self to worship on a regular basis timely, achievable, enjoyable? I would say yes. I attempt to go to church even when on vacation. What would it mean for our church to focus on worship? Do we offer too much distraction? How do we overcome failure? If we miss one week, go the next. If we are late, leave earlier. If we need a cup of coffee or some breakfast, show up at 9:30-9:45.

For all our members, I urge us to see worship as the pinnacle of our week, the event we seek to arrive at early and give our full attention. It is through this simple and achievable act that we can grow closer to our heavenly purpose. It is in doing this that we become the soil for the Lord's seeds to grow.

Blessings,
Kevin Baxter

BostonView Update

The president of the corporation, Patricia Blakeney, opened the director's meeting at 4:01 p.m. in the parlor at Church on the Hill. Four of the directors attended the meeting. The missing director has been battling health issues and was not able to make it. Rev. Baxter, the secretary for the corporation, was not in attendance, so the meeting was recorded to allow him to take the minutes later. Sean McEvoy and Patrick Anderson were guests at the meeting. As always, the members of the shareholding corporation are welcome to attend director's meetings.

After opening in prayer, the directors proceeded to the normal business of approving minutes and recapping the last meeting. The directors received a letter from the Board of Governors of the Boston Society of the New Jerusalem expressing concerns over issues surrounding the completion of the audit process. In short, the church auditing firm had not received all the information it needed from Charlesgate to complete the audit. Charlesgate responded that it had been responding to the requests sent from the auditor; however, there were a couple of pieces of evidentiary backup requested that had been lost in the transition to new accounting software. The hard copies of these invoices were acquired and sent to the auditors before the current meeting. Charlesgate asked that the property manager be included in emails seeking documents to allow him to stay informed. In response, Stephen Dyson asked that the Church's audit liaison also be kept informed by Charlesgate.

Charlesgate reported on the ongoing projects. After a few months of work, the new fob entry system was installed and all of the new fobs have been distributed. The water bubbler project continues into the new year. The bubbler in the workout room is installed and running. Rough-in projects for the church's bubblers are in process,

and the new lobby system has had its coring done. The new system should be in place by the end of January and will save the church and the building a tremendous amount of money over the years to come. The unit 1107 renovation is ahead of schedule and should be completed to be on the market in January.

We currently have a couple of units on the market. The primary reason for this is the withdrawal of the Compass corporate apartments from the building. While very helpful during the pandemic, the relationship has proven to be more problematic than beneficial in the long run. Compass has been stepping back from its units in the building. It is now down to two units. All of this means that a higher number of units are hitting the market in a low rental period. Charlesgate is not concerned about their marketability.

Charlesgate presented, and the directors approved, a \$2,331,741.78 budget for building operations, which is an increase of just more than \$200,000 in expenses. Even with these increases, the budget projects about \$100,000 increase in revenue for the year. Some may remember that the church requested a cost-of-living increase to its budget last year, which is also about that amount. There is a portion of the revenue we use for building remodels, major upgrades and projects that is not a part of the operating budget. The capital expense line makes the budget of the building about \$3 million dollars; the capital expense revenue swings massively each year. At the end of a year, any revenue not used from the capital line is given to the church. This information will be presented in more detail at the fall membership meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Kevin Baxter
Secretary, BostonView Corporation

Announcement of the Annual Shareholder Meeting

BostonView Corporation

February 25, 2024

Following the Winter Members Meeting

Agenda

- Call to order (President)
- Director’s Report (Secretary)
- Financial Report
- Director Elections
- Questions
- Adjournment

Nominations:

James Fenton | Two-Year Term

James Fenton has served a two-year term as treasurer for BostonView. He is a managing partner at PCM Payments. He is experienced in business relations and has a demonstrated history of working in the financial services industry, and his skills include business relationship management, payroll, merchant services, strategic planning, and more.

Deborah Hammer | Two-Year Term

Deborah Hammer has served a two-year term as a director for BostonView. She is a long time member of the Boston Society of the New Jerusalem. Her father and son were property managers of 122 Bowdoin street, which has given her years observation of residential management.

At the Winter Members Meeting, the membership of the Boston Society of the New Jerusalem directed the secretary of the Boston Society of the New Jerusalem to cast the church’s shares to elect Patricia Blakeney, Stephen Dyson, and Ora Damon to the three two-year terms as Directors for the BostonView Corporation.

Officers:

- President: Patricia Blakeney
- Secretary: Kevin Baxter
- Treasurer: James Fenton

Management: Charlesgate

Directors:

- Patricia Blakeney (2025)⁽²⁾
- Ora Damon (2025)⁽¹⁾
- Stephen Dyson (2025)⁽¹⁾
- James Fenton (2024)⁽¹⁾
- Deborah Hammer (2024)⁽¹⁾

Director Announcement

Looking for a great way to be of service to the church? Consider running for a seat on the BostonView Board of Directors! There are two two-year terms up for election at the annual shareholders meeting in February (following the winter members meeting). The two sitting directors (Deborah Hammer and James Fenton, treasurer) are eligible for re-election.

BostonView

The BostonView Corporation is the steward of the primary asset of the Boston Society of the New Jerusalem. As such, it is committed to high standards of professionalism and dedication to the building, residents and management partners, which will ensure a great community and a vital future. The sole shareholder, the church, is the building's largest tenant, taking up a floor and a half of the building. This tenant, as a nonprofit semi-public entity, has needs beyond that of normal tenants.

The Board

The BostonView Board of Directors is a volunteer board. It is in the unique position of providing oversight and counsel to a skilled management company which is charged with the smooth day-to-day operations, upkeep, and rental of an 18-story high-rise with a submerged parking garage. Our meetings average about an hour and meet once a month.

Directors

Our nominating process aims to actively recruit individuals whose commitment, skills, life experience, background, perspective or other characteristics will serve the organization and its needs. An ideal board member should possess the desire and ability to independently research or gain knowledge about areas they might not currently possess understanding.

- Ideal candidates must be: 18 years of age, and able to attend meetings and properly digest the meeting materials. Email, basic computer skills, spoken and written communication skills, professional acumen, and a background check are a must!
- We look for people who have some experience in a relevant professional setting of business, finance, construction, building management, rentals, and the like. Previous board experience and a unique perspective would also be a bonus!

Please contact a director if you are interested in more information or to be nominated!

Respectfully submitted,
Kevin Baxter
Secretary, BostonView Corporation



Church Window Displays

For the last two years, the church has made some delightful window displays at Christmas time. The scenes draw the attention of the folks strolling along Bowdoin Street. The left window features a village inspired by a Christmas Carol and the 12 Days of Christmas. From the counting house through the various ghosts. Finally, we arrive at Tiny Tim's house. If you look carefully, you might find Santa and Bigfoot in the pictures. Not to worry, no window would be complete without the Old North Church! Dickens, Poe, and the various references to the 12 Days of Christmas were also present. The window on the left was the story of the Nativity with a creche on the bottom. The story ends with the song of Simeon.

From the Organ Bench



What an amazing couple of months it has been for the Choir of The New Jerusalem. And a busy one, to be sure!

December started with an incredible production of "Amahl and the Night Visitors" guest directed by Brenda Huggins and Allison Taaffe, made more special by our wonderful choir, and the incredible talents of all of the members who sang roles and covers. It was one of the most anticipated concerts of the fall season, and was very well attended by community members and congregation alike. I would like to personally thank all those involved, not just the members of the choir but those who put on a wonderful and meaningful reception afterwards.

The next week brought the Renaissance Men back to our sanctuary for a wonderful and moving Christmas Spirit concert. The stage was decorated, the lights were dim, and the performers inspirational. I particularly enjoyed the uplifting rendition of "O Holy Night." We are very pleased to welcome the Renaissance Men back in the spring for a reprise concert.

The following weekend, in a beloved Boston tradition, the Choir of the New Jerusalem

performed the Christmas portion of "Messiah" by Handel. It was one of the best attended concerts that we've had in a very long time, and was probably, in my opinion, the best "Messiah" that we have done in my tenure here at Church on the Hill. We were delighted to have Jacob LyteHaven be our guest pianist, and witnessed again the many talents of our choir, as not only a collaborative group, but as solo singers. I am very much looking forward to presenting "Messiah" again next year.

Looking ahead to the spring, we have many concerts and events planned dear reader. We look forward to welcoming the Boston Guitar Orchestra in February, and then our brass ensemble for Holy Week during the end of March. The Choir of the New Jerusalem also is looking forward to presenting a spring recital in January, as well as a choral program in June. We will also be welcoming back the Zamir Chorale of Boston, as well as other notable groups and events interest for your listening pleasure.

On behalf of myself and the Choir of the New Jerusalem, we would like to thank you for a wonderful fall and wish you all a blessed, happy and healthy new year.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrew David Mattfeld



Clockwise from top: Choir members caroling on the Common; the Renaissance Men's Christmas concert; the choir performing Handel's "Messiah" with guest pianist Jacob LyteHaven. The Choir of the New Jerusalem is looking forward to another exciting year of beautiful music.





In December, \$9,000 worth of equipment was stolen from Habitat for Humanity work site in Worcester. We donated \$2,300 in tools to help replace their losses.

Take Time to Be Kind by Janet Forbes

Have you noticed how many react to a tragic news story? We learn the details from TV and radio and read the accounts in newspapers. It often becomes the topic of discussion among friends and family. There certainly was an abundance of tragedies last year. To name a few, there was and continues to be violent unrest in the Middle East, and the devastation of property and loss of life in Ukraine seems endless. Closer to home was the killing of 16 innocent lives in Lewiston, Maine. Although the funerals have been held, the families are naturally still grieving and the many injured are facing prolonged rehabilitation.

It seems that the media features these tragic events at their peak and then we hear and read less and less as time goes on. Sadly for those experiencing difficulty, their pain and suffering doesn't fade with time. In fact, often as time passes the numbness that initially was felt deepens. It may be the absence of a loved one, the loss of a home, the difficulty in finding employment, or a frightening medical diagnosis. For those of us aware of any of these circumstances, I believe our responsibility just begins.

Perhaps we've attended a funeral, sent flowers to a grieving family or contributed to a fund that will assist those affected by a tornado, earthquake or famine. That is appropriate and appreciated by the recipients, but our caring and concern should not diminish with time. Anniversaries of tragic losses often become even more difficult than when the event first occurred.

Obviously, there is little we as individuals can do about world events. We can, however, be there for those we know that are hurting. It can be as simple as a phone call, an email, a note to let them know you haven't forgotten them.

In my time in the nursing profession, I frequently have heard families say that in time of illness or death their friends avoided them when they most would have appreciated being remembered by them. Often just

telling a friend or family that you are there if they need you isn't helpful. They may be preoccupied while trying to cope with the difficult situation. It's better to be specific like offering to do an errand, accompany them to a difficult appointment or dropping off a meal.

I finish with a true story of incredible kindness among friends under the most dire circumstances. I personally know of two families that live across the border from each other, one in Israel and one on the Gaza strip. Both have small farms that produce edible crops in this very rural area. In spite of their differences in backgrounds and religions, they have always cared for each other in the most remarkable ways. The week after the initial violence in their area, both their properties were completely destroyed, including their homes and most farm equipment. They immediately worked together to create a bomb shelter that would accommodate both families and hopefully provide some protection from the constant barrage of rockets. They stocked it with water, food and blankets. Two families, two different political and religious beliefs but caring for each other with total disregard for their differences. We could all follow their example.

There are two things we can always do regardless of our political viewpoint. We can be kind to others and offer prayers that the new year will bring peace.

Respectively submitted,
Janet Forbes

Board of Governors Update

At its December meeting, the Board of Governors voted approved motions from the Mission Committee granting donations to the Outdoor Church of Cambridge and the Emerald Necklace Conservancy. It also voted approved matching contributions through the Mission Committee's matching program.

The Board voted to accept the resignation of Blanca DeLeon from the Governance/Bylaws Committee. Blanca will remain on the Program and Events Committee. The Board approved a motion to direct the secretary of the church to write a letter to BostonView instructing a review of Charlesgate in regard to their performance in responding to the church's requests specific to the audit and their role as management.

The Board approved motions to issue a third credit card to the church administrator, to donate \$2,300 of tools to Habitat for Humanity Worcester, and that the church purchase and post signage that the church is an alcohol-, drug-, and weapon-free environment, and that the church is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Finally, the Board set the date of the winter members meeting for February 25, 2024.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Alex Ferraro

Swedenborg's Birthday

We'll be celebrating Swedenborg's birthday on **Saturday, February 3 at 11:30 a.m.**

Our guest speaker will be Chelsea Odhner, director of content strategy for the Swedenborg Foundation. Chelsea has been writing on

Swedenborg's theology for more than a decade, and in 2019 produced an album of original spiritual music.

If you're interested in attending, please RSVP to the office.

The Resignation of Harvard by Pastor Colin

President of Harvard Claudine Gay has resigned. The forces that want her out have, for the moment, triumphed. Harvard, they say, has been harmed. Individuals have come forward to claim credit for Gay's resignation. Their motives are worth pondering for a long time to come.

Financial supporters of Harvard have found favor in the media. Their self-importance is tawdry. Jesus dispensed with such people 2000 years ago in the story of the widow's mite. The shameless spread their wings. Sadly, people listen.

Should President Gay have resigned? Did she act finally for the benefit of the institution? Were her misuse of sources in her academic work unforgivable? Can you set aside your opinion to reflect on these questions?

As Christians, we reach first for humility, our sins ever before us. We know who we are, for better and worse. We are concerned for Gay's humanity and well being in the aftermath. She has retained her dignity while others have sold theirs. Harvard takes money rather readily, wouldn't you say?

For those drinking coffee in Harvard Square on the morning of Gay's inauguration, the excitement was palpable. The daughter of Haitian immigrants was set to lead Harvard. The American dream made real again. Could the Revolution of 1804 be redeemed? Where is the proper sadness for this resignation? Did Harvard the bully get bullied?

In person, President Gay is immediately likable, alert, personable, accessible. Keep her in mind as an advisor for your dissertation. She is not Harvard in all the best ways.

President Gay is a known quantity at Harvard. Her doctorate is from Harvard, she is a tenured faculty member. Prior to becoming president, she was the Dean of Social Studies and then the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. Her Harvard Ph. D. Dissertation won a prize as the best in political science. Presumably, a number of people at Harvard know her work. Can they be located?

Gay went to Exeter, Princeton, Stanford, Harvard. In my day, alas, that meant you were a good person. How the mighty have fallen.

Social media is a demon, promoting the smallest minds and the surety of the foolish. Can you imagine a society where religious institutions engage in Facebook, Twitter and the like? Nor can I.

President Gay's resignation cries out for soul-searching, for contemplation, for serious consideration. What kind of people are we, are we becoming? Is money really everything?

Claudine Gay will, thank God, survive. She wears her resilience lightly and well. The rest of us beware. The white man in retreat is not a pretty sight.

God bless you.
Pastor Colin

January Birthdays

Rev. Kevin Baxter
 Zebulon Baxter
 Richard Berman
 Diane Beverly
 Susan Saunders
 Tony Vickers

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

January Events

- 7th Church Discovery Group 10 a.m.
- 15th *MLK Day (office closed)*
JFK Museum bus trip 8:30 a.m.
- 17th Community lunch 12 p.m.
Missions presentation 1 p.m.
BostonView meeting 4 p.m.
- 20th Bowling 2 p.m.
- 21st Board of Governors meeting 12:45 p.m.
- 28th An Afternoon of Song 3 p.m.

February Events

- 3rd Swedenborg birthday party 11:30 a.m.
- 4th Church Discovery Group 10 a.m.
- 11th New England Guitar Orchestra 3 p.m.
Super Bowl party 6 p.m.
- 13th Shrove Tuesday breakfast 10 a.m.
- 14th Ash Wednesday service 12 p.m.
- 17th Bowling 2 p.m.
- 18th Board of Governors meeting 12:45 p.m.
- 19th *Presidents Day (church closed)*
- 21st Community lunch 12 p.m.
BostonView meeting 4 p.m.
- 25th Winter members meeting 12:45 p.m.

Weekly Events

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



Emily Elizabeth Parsons
(1824-1880)

Union Army nurse, founder of Mount
Auburn Hospital, and member of the
Boston Society of the New Jerusalem.

“If some things are rough and trying, why that is a reason for staying and trying to make them better, not for running away. It would be poor soldiering to run when the enemy appeared.” Emily Elizabeth Parsons

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