



# The Manual

March 2024

Happenings from the  
Office

p. 3

New Membership  
Category Discussions

p. 7

Holy Week  
Schedule

p. 8

# 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)
	<i>Vacant ('25)</i>

## 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.

## Happenings from the Office

### Renovations update

The new water dispensers are up and running, much to the relief of Stephen, myself, and everyone else who had to carry the jugs for the old ones. The next phase of library renovations is scheduled to begin around the middle of the month, and we hope to have them completed by the end of the month.

### Laptop computer for sale

From time to time, we have old computers and devices that the office no longer needs but that are still functional with older operating systems. We currently have a Dell laptop and an ASUS laptop, each valued at \$100, that we are looking to sell to people who will make use of them. If you're interested in purchasing one, please contact the office.

### Board of Governors update

At its February meeting, the Board of Governors addressed \$151,121 in unexpended funds from the 2023 budget. Per the bylaws, these funds are to be divided between United Way and the Boston Foundation; the Board voted to

recommend to the membership that \$50,000 be donated to United Way, with the remainder going to the Boston Foundation.

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

### Membership meeting update

At the winter members meeting on February 25, the congregation heard reports from pastors and committees, approved the Board of Governors' recommendation to allocate unexpended funds between United Way and the Boston Foundation, and voted to make Polly Baxter a member of the church.

The congregation voted to cast the church's votes for James Fenton and Deborah Hammer for the BostonView Board of Directors. There were no nominees to fill vacancies on the Board of Governors, the Governance/Bylaws Committee, and the Program and Events Committee.

Respectfully submitted,  
Alex Ferraro

## ❖ ❖ ❖ Kevin's Corner ❖ ❖ ❖



Easter falls about as early as it possibly can this year. The warm weather mixed with this early Easter date give us a sense of hope that nicer weather is here to stay.

While the snow storms and squalls of New

England winters are often difficult, I cannot help but ask: Where did my winter go? Seasons are important. Not only do we have seasonal economy, but we also have a seasonal ecology.

From ski instructors to landscapers, there are people who live off of the changing weather. While we may enjoy 60-degree days in February, there is a cost. So too with animals. Our groundwater and local animal population are based in a historic relationship with New England winters. We must realize the problems we face are much larger than whether or not we are happy to clean our coats and put them away.

Also, the same might be said about our spiritual lives. We all have a desire to be happy and experience the feelings of peace and joy within ourselves. Looking at weather as a allusion to our spiritual state of mind offers insight. What does it mean for us to look past the difficulties we face in hopes of just seeing the good we hope to experience?

Lent reminds us that it is in temptation where our inner selves and outer selves meet, where our love of things of the world and our desire to

be spiritual beings come into conflict. Practices of self denial and other forms of transformation can remind us of this important lesson. Simple acts of giving up food or fighting off cravings as we attempt to live healthier lives are analogous to our struggles of growing in love.

We need to develop tools that keep us safe when facing sadness and difficult situations, in much the same way that coats and mittens shield us from the cold. Things like prayer, scripture reading, and worship can help us as we struggle with the winters of our life. What would life be if we did not struggle with temptation and trial?

The loss of the season of winter is disastrous for our natural and even spiritual self. While we still may get one last storm, I miss New England winter. Drastic temperature shifts may not happen in Southern California, but they have palm trees. We have maples; we need the strife to get what's sweet from them.

As we enter into this new spring, let us remember and mourn our lack of winter. Let the spiritual reality of the winter of our spiritual discontent not be forgotten either. Keep in mind the need to have proper spiritual coats for the time we feel alone or conflicted. The Bible, our church, and our friends. In those moments of difficulty, we will be kept warm in the spirit and truth of our creator.

Blessings,  
Kevin Baxter



Philosopher and mystic Emanuel Swedenborg (left) and Swedenborg Foundation Vice President of Marketing Chris Dunn (right) at our annual Swedenborg birthday celebration.



## Mission Committee Update

March 19 signals the first day of spring — a new season and time to plan the garden.

On February 21, representatives from the Emerald Necklace Conservatory gave us a presentation on their programs — which the church has funded in the amount of \$11,000 through the Mission Committee. A report from Diane Beverly is below. The Mission Committee plans to do a park tour this spring. Call the office to join us. The Emerald Necklace Conservancy has invited us to the Muddy River Cleanup on April 20, 2024 (10 a.m. to noon), which is a part of the annual Earth Day Charles River cleanup.

At our Mission Committee meeting on February 4, 2024, we decided to distribute our mission questionnaire at or after the February 25 members meeting. The questionnaire asks members to check off their priorities for mission giving such as

housing, homelessness, food insecurity, gun control. Your input is important!

Next month, Habitat for Humanity will give a presentation on the work we help support. The Mission Committee has scheduled three Habitat work days for April, May and September. Call the office to volunteer!

The Board of Governors informed us that we ended 2023 with a surplus of \$151,121. We voted to approve \$50,000 to United Way and the rest to the Boston Foundation.

The Mission Committee meets on the first Sunday of each month at 12:45 p.m., in the church parlor and on Zoom. See you there!

Respectfully submitted,  
Likam Lie

## Emerald Necklace Conservancy Update

On February 21, we were fortunate to have Declan Battles and Nika Trufanova of the Emerald Necklace Conservancy attend our Wednesday lunch and talk to us about their organization's work to preserve and restore the beauty of our city's Emerald Necklace park system. The Emerald Necklace is about five miles long and spans about 1,000 acres. It runs from Charlesgate to Franklin Park, and connects 13 Boston and Brookline neighborhoods.

The Emerald Necklace established in the 1800s by Frederick Law Olmsted to beautify Boston at a time when the city sorely needed it. There were areas in Boston people avoided due to the smell from sewage and runoff.

The Conservancy and its current staff and volunteers have worked hard to maintain and restore the Emerald Necklace. They have cleaned up the muddy river and gotten rid of invasive species of weeds that were taking over. They've also implemented daylighting, a process of removing blockage that has driven a river or stream underground, so that the water can return to its natural above-ground flow.

We are grateful for all they have done, and the Mission Committee plans to visit the Emerald Necklace when the weather gets better.

Respectfully submitted,  
Diane Beverly

## Proposed New Membership Categories and Discussion Sessions

Over the past year, when reviewing the membership lists, the Membership Committee became aware of a need for a change in how we handle membership. The committee has presented the ideas detailed below as concepts, but has not received much feedback. We are now looking at formal gatherings for discussion.

While the church has done a good job keeping track of our voting membership, we do not have a clear process surrounding associates, friends, and partners of the church. The Membership Committee is considering the creation of the following categories for non-voting members: associates of the church, honorary members, friends of the church, and partners.

- **Associate of the church** is a non-member category for people who are active in the life of the congregation in a meaningful way. Associates can be invited to serve as non-voting members of our committees. The Board of Governors has oversight over the category.
- **Honorary member** is a membership category given by the congregation and has no attendance or participation requirement.
- **Friend of the church** is a category for people who wish to be on our mailing list and to occasionally participate in attending church events. The office has responsibility to annually review the list.
- **Partner** is a designation that includes people who are on our mailing and call lists

because they have a professional relationship with the church.

As part of the committee's charge, the group has examined our role of voting members and has looked at the rules in the bylaws governing them. It states that a voting member must contribute actively to the life of the church and must not violate the teachings of the church. In addition, when we reviewed the IRS definition of a church, some interesting issues arose. The Membership Committee is putting forth the Affirmation of Faith that has been said on Sundays since the beginning of this year as a statement of faith to be accepted by the membership. This creates the need for a division of voting membership categories. There will be a confirmed voting member and an organizational voting member. The confirmed member states a belief in the faith. The organizational member vows to support the church in the fulfillment of its work, but does not have to state a belief in it.

The Membership and Governance/Bylaws committees invite all to attend information and discussion sessions in April. The first will be on **April 12 at 11 a.m.**, on Zoom and in-person at the church; the second will be on **April 14 at 12:45 p.m.**, in-person in the church parlor. Individual questions can be addressed to the Membership Committee through Stephen Dyson, who serves as chair.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rev. Kevin Baxter and Stephen Dyson

## **Holy Week**

### **Palm Sunday, March 24**

Sunday Service • 11:00 a.m.

### **Maundy Thursday, March 28**

Brass Musical Offering • 5 p.m.

Communion Dinner • 6 p.m.

### **Good Friday, March 29**

Tenebrae Service • 7:00 p.m.

### **Easter Sunday, March 31**

Communion Service • 11:00 a.m.

w/ Brass Ensemble



## ...But What Can I Do? by Janet Forbes

One only has to listen briefly to a newscast on any given day to realize how much pain and suffering exists, not only worldwide but in America and even closer to home in Boston. The death and destruction continues daily in the Middle East and in Ukraine with no apparent resolution in sight.

In America, anti-semitic behavior is rapidly increasing and racial inequality continues. Mass shootings hardly make the news anymore. Is it any wonder we often hear folks ask, "But what can one person do?"

Realistically, there is very little an individual anywhere can do to bring positive change in these situations. There is, however, a way we can make a difference in our immediate surroundings. It needn't cost a penny. It begins simply by being kinder and more considerate of others. Perhaps a visit, a phone call or a note to a friend that you haven't seen lately will brighten their day. Maybe a neighbor would appreciate the offer of doing a simple errand for them. Remembering to use common courtesy when shopping may brighten the day of a harried sales clerk.

I'd like to share another way, one that I personally have experienced. Following my discharge from the hospital almost a year ago, I was facing frequent medical appointments. The RIDE would transport me, but just the thought of finding the right building and then the right office, then enduring the endless wait seemed overwhelming.

Suddenly, a friend who happens to be our current church president offered to accompany me to that first appointment. What a difference it made to have him nearby while we waited in a crowded waiting room with standing room only. Then there was the

long wait for transportation to return home. Little did I know this was going to have to be repeated every month, and little did I know that Stephen would offer to accompany me to each and every appointment. It has become almost humorous as my doctors just seem to assume that Stephen will be with me each time. They sometimes have given him the date and time of my next appointment. He knows where the lab is by now and stays beside me while my blood is drawn. This is such a thoughtful act of caring and kindness. Month after month, he's been with me with never once a word of complaint or impatience. Having him nearby hasn't changed the course of my illness, but it certainly has made the many appointments much less anxiety producing.

I share this to give you a suggestion to do something similar for a friend of yours. A simple act of kindness but I believe it would be so appreciated.

Accompanying someone to an important appointment will not change the outcome, but it will make the experience easier.

Privately, of course, I always thank Stephen but now the readers of this publication will be aware of his caring attitude.

I urge you when discouraged by the news both in Boston and abroad to seek out a friend or neighbor. Pay them a visit or call them. If appropriate, offer to perhaps do an errand or help them in another way.

We can't solve the world's problems single-handedly, but we almost certainly can make a friend's world a bit brighter.

Respectively submitted,  
Janet Forbes

## Two-Sided Evil by Pastor Colin

As the death toll nears 30,000 in Gaza, what is the Israeli plan for the end of hostilities? Much of Gaza is simply rubble at this point, half of Gaza's buildings are damaged or destroyed. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speaks of "total victory" against Hamas. What would that look like? Can it be achieved?

Netanyahu is fighting for his political life and he is fighting to stay out of jail. He must deliver something lasting for the Israeli people. They have paid a terrible price in international prestige. Israel's moral standing has crumbled. More than eight thousand children have been killed in Gaza. Every heart aches for those innocents.

Charles Sennott, founder of The GroundTruth Project, has said repeatedly that Hamas is a "death cult" that deserves to be destroyed. Yet October 7 was an opportunity of sorts for Hamas. They seemed to outsmart Israeli intelligence. Had their fighters attacked the Israeli military, it would have been seen by many as an uprising of the oppressed. Reasonable people — including Jews — might have cheered. Instead, horrific terrorism ensued, echoing the Holocaust. The taking of 240 hostages was the awful crime of kidnapping. Sennott's verdict was sealed forever.

How was it that Israeli intelligence was so badly fooled? Well, Israel obtained Hamas' battle plan for October 7 a year before it happened. They evidently downplayed the possibility. Really? Israeli intelligence didn't take Hamas' historical intentions to destroy Israel seriously? Or was there more diabolical thinking?

It does seem that Netanyahu acquiesced to Hamas' rule in Gaza in order to weaken the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and the prospect of Palestinian statehood. Settler violence in the West Bank is well documented. Palestinian homes have been seized.

Netanyahu did business with Hamas and 1,200 Israelis died on October 7? Netanyahu is still in power? Israel is not the country it once was.

Most of the world sees the United States as complicit in the whole mess. The U.S. does finance the Israeli military. The phrase "Israel has the right to defend itself" has run out of steam. Too many have died for too long.

The true nature of the occupation in Gaza and the settler violence in the West Bank has not been properly understood by most Americans. It has been too easy for politicians to keep funding Israeli excesses. The American people are also to blame. Television news is entertainment.

How has Netanyahu treated President Biden's loyalty? Shabbily. Everyone is getting what they deserve, it seems, except the Palestinian people and the Israeli people. For them, it's a lose-lose that will go on for a long, long time.

Hamas' leaders tend to live in Qatar or Beirut, Lebanon. Journalists interview them in nice hotels. Netanyahu is safe in Jerusalem. The verdicts of history are in the distance. Biden totters in Washington.

Where should our sympathies lie? With life, with human beings, with God's people seeking to accept and polish the gift they have been given. Hamas and Netanyahu and the far-right Israeli government deserve zero respect. Pity Joe Biden.

Someday two states, let us pray. The histories of the Palestinian and Israeli people are eerily similar and painfully tragic. If only this, if only that. Both sides have missed chances. Their leaders have chosen evil.

You can be a friend of the Israeli people and the Palestinian people, and you ought to be. Justice demands no less.

And the dead, what about the 1,200 and the 30,000? They stay dead.

God bless you,

Pastor Colin Leitch

# Sounds on the Hill

## *Spring Music Events*

28

MAR

Thursday 5 p.m.

Musical Offering with  
Church on the Hill Brass

29

MAR

Friday 7 p.m.

Tenebrae Service with  
Church on the Hill Brass

28

APR

Sunday 3 p.m.

Project STEP  
Concert

10

MAY

Friday 7:30 p.m.

Renaissance Men  
Retrospective Concert

12

MAY

Sunday 3 p.m.

Choir of the New Jerusalem  
Spring Concert

16

JUNE

Sunday 3 p.m.

Zamir Chorale  
in Concert

Church on the Hill | 140 Bowdoin St. Beacon Hill  
[churchonthehillboston.org](http://churchonthehillboston.org)



The New England Guitar Orchestra, conducted by Dr. Robert Bekkers (left), joined us for a concert on February 11. If you missed the performance, you can watch it on our YouTube channel!



## BostonView Update

The BostonView directors meeting was held on February 21 in the church parlor at 2:05 p.m. The chair called the meeting to order, and the minutes and financials were addressed as per normal.

Sean McEvoy presented the management report. The major issue facing the building is a significant boiler repair where most of the parts need replacing. The need to repair the boilers, heaters, water shutoff, boiler supply and return, along with circulator pumps is dire. A bid from JRM is \$85,000. Sean will be looking into the issue, but due to the importance, the board gave him latitude to accept the lowest bid contract when the request-for-proposal date passes. Before signing, he will email the board 24 hours before signing the agreement. While this issue is significant, it is part of routine maintenance, and the repair fits into our expected maintenance budget.

Sean also announced to the Board that he will be promoted in the coming months. This means he will no longer be doing the daily management of the building, but he will still have oversight over this building, which will be in his supervisory portfolio. We were excited for his new opportunity and reinforced the need for on-site daily management. The Board also requested that spot one be listed a church space and be used for short term building parking only.

The city, state, and Delaware filings were submitted.

A motion was made to approve the bid for asbestos abatement on the balcony in the sanctuary. We asked that it happen after March 19, which will allow us to only have to move the books on the balcony once.

With the water project ending, the Board asked that the lobby machine be temporarily plumbed while Charlesgate investigates lobby design.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

As always, the directors invite the members of the shareholding company to attend its meetings. They happen on the third Wednesday of each month at 2 p.m., except on holidays.

The BostonView annual meeting occurred following the church's Winter Member Meeting. Deborah Hammer and James Fenton were re-elected as directors at the direction of the shareholders.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kevin Baxter  
Secretary, BostonView Corporation

## February Birthdays

Blanca Deleon  
Stephen Dyson  
Mary Kay Klein  
Elizabeth Hadley  
Virginia Soule

## 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*

## March Events

2 <sup>nd</sup>	Journey of Discovery workshop	11 a.m.
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Church Discovery Group	10 a.m.
10 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Daylight Saving Time begins</i>	
10 <sup>th</sup>	Missions presentation: UMass	12:45 p.m.
16 <sup>th</sup>	Bowling	11 a.m.
17 <sup>th</sup>	Board of Governors meeting	12:45 p.m.
20 <sup>th</sup>	Community lunch	12 p.m.
	Missions presentation	1 p.m.
	BostonView meeting	2 p.m.
24 <sup>th</sup>	Palm Sunday	11 a.m.
25 <sup>th</sup>	Music Committee meeting	4:30 p.m.
28 <sup>th</sup>	Maundy Thursday	
	Musical offering	5 p.m.
	Last Supper meal	6 p.m.
29 <sup>th</sup>	Good Friday Tenebrae service	7 p.m.
31 <sup>st</sup>	Easter Sunday	11 a.m.

## April Events

7 <sup>th</sup>	Church Discovery Group	10 a.m.
12 <sup>th</sup>	Memb. category discussion	11 a.m.
14 <sup>th</sup>	Memb. category discussion	12:45 p.m.
15 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Patriots' Day (office closed)</i>	
17 <sup>th</sup>	Community lunch	12 p.m.
	Missions presentation	1 p.m.
	BostonView meeting	2 p.m.
20 <sup>th</sup>	Bowling	11 a.m.
21 <sup>st</sup>	Board of Governors meeting	12:45 p.m.
27 <sup>th</sup>	Habitat for Humanity build	8:30 a.m.
28 <sup>th</sup>	Project STEP concert	3 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.

Membership: last Monday at 1 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)**

Writer, abolitionist, civil rights  
advocate, scholar of Swedenborg, and  
member of the Boston Society of the  
New Jerusalem.

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