



The Manual

April 2024

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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)
	<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.

Mission Committee Update

Spring is in the air! Earth Day is coming! Vegetable seeds are growing in their tiny pots.

On March 10, Danielle Laurie and Matt McBride of the University of Massachusetts Boston came to our worship service and stayed afterward to give a talk thanking the church for its work. We are in our fourth year (of five) funding the Dr. Ted Klein Scholarship to the UMass Boston Philosophy Department.

Habitat for Humanity representatives Danielle Buote and Shannon Steele came to our community lunch in March and gave an informative talk on their nonprofit group. Church on the Hill volunteers worked on Habitat builds in Roxbury in 2022 and Malden in 2023. We plan to do three build days this year on a five-unit build in Malden. There were a total of 82 applications submitted. One criteria of the applicant had to contribute up to 30 percent of their income for housing. Fifteen applications were approved, narrowed down to five by lottery. Those families are required to contribute a minimum of 300 hours of "sweat equity" during the building process.

Rev. Baxter has two tool belts and wants volunteers for our three 2024 builds in Malden. Our build days are planned for the second Saturday of the month on the fifth, seventh and ninth months (May, July, September), from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. The Kin Chow family have been hammering nails with Rev. Baxter for the past two years. Virginia Soule and Likam Lie make tasty lunches to support their effort. If you're ready to volunteer, call Mary at the office to get registered.

Thank you, thank you, church members! Fifty percent of our voting members returned the Mission Committee survey in a timely fashion. The first part of our mission, as found in our bylaws, states that we are to be "a progressive Christian presence in the City of Boston, a reflection of Swedenborg theology of service and mission, through our commitment to education, social justice and human rights and the faithful stewardship of our financial resources."

The survey results are below, showing the numbers of people who selected each issue as a priority for mission giving:

- 12 health care
- 10 affordable housing, hunger
- 9 economic inequality and poverty, help for disaster relief, and support for veterans
- 8 homelessness
- 6 climate justice, gun violence, racial equality
- 4 LGBTQ rights
- 3 ageism, refugee crisis and immigration
- 2 international
- 1 voting rights, Swedenborgian and religious missions.

Mission Committee members visited ABCD's location in the North End on April 1 to see their programs firsthand. We have supported ABCD for many years. The Mission Committee will talk with the Boston Foundation on possible future programs. Barry P. Twomey from Mission Hill Health Movement (MHHM) will give us an update on the organization's programs. We funded MHHM in 2022.

Diane Beverly is coordinating a visit to the Emerald Necklace Conservancy visitor center at 125 The Fenway. Call the office if you want to join us. The Conservancy is seeking volunteers on Saturday, April 20, for the Muddy River Cleanup, part of the annual Earth Day Charles River Cleanup. On April 26, the Conservancy is planning an Arbor Day event. On June 5, a Muddy River restoration event is scheduled.

The Mission Committee meets, as always, on the first Sunday of each month (April 7, May 5, June 2) at 12:45 p.m., at Church or Zoom. See you there!

Respectfully submitted,
Likam Lie

Museum Trip

The church is planning a trip on **July 10 at 10 a.m.** to the Castle at Park Plaza to see the exhibit "Auschwitz: Not Long Ago, Not Far away." This nationally touring exhibition brings together more than 700 original objects for the first time, and will take us 1.5 to 2 hours to explore. Created by Musealia and co-produced by the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, it provides a moving and accurate tour through one of the darkest chapters of human history.

As a church, we are going to explore the historic and social justice issues surrounding the Jewish experience during World War II. "Never again" is a rallying cry for the children of concentration camp survivors and Jewish people worldwide.

Church members and friends may reserve a ticket for just \$5. Please make a reservation and give \$5 to the office to hold a ticket.

Our Banners

When I first arrived at Church on the Hill, the sanctuary was a beige box with the depiction of the ascension of the Lord in front of a depiction of Jerusalem. There were slots for hymn boards that had not been used in some time. At the first Easter, I found a ragtag bunch of cloth banners with felt letters falling off. I wanted the sanctuary to be a tribute to glory of the risen Lord and there was little available to decorate it. I ended up printing some old pictures of the stained glass windows from the Cambridge Church, which stayed up there for about four years. As the paper started to wrinkle and deteriorate, a new plan emerged. The photos on the facing page are the result.

We started with some cloth quilted banners for regular use. These look like church windows with clouds in the background. From there, we added Advent banners that remind us of the star that guided the shepherds and wisemen to the

Lord. This spring, we added banners for Lent and the season of Easter, which lasts until Pentecost.

The Lent banner is adorned with palms and the orthodox cross with the letters IC XC NI KA, one pair in each quadrant of the cross. These letters are the from the first and last letters for the medieval Greek spelling of Jesus Christ: "IHCOYC XPICTOC". The work NIKA means conquers. It is a symbol used to talk about the power of the Lord to conquer sin and death.

The Easter banner has the traditional symbol of the lamb with a cross guarded by lilies.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Kevin Baxter



From left: our banners for regular time, Advent, Lent and Easter.

Open Officer and Board Positions

There are five Board of Governors and officer positions up for election at the members meeting this June. Everyone currently serving is eligible for re-election, and there is one vacant seat. We will also be filling two committee vacancies and electing replacements for committee members who are term-limited. The full list of committees and open positions is posted in the membership information center across the hallway from the office. If you are interested in running for any of these positions, please contact the office or the Governance/Bylaws Committee.

Life Lessons from the Birds by Janet Forbes

From my window, I can see several huge elm trees in the park across the street. Every year about this time, it's very common to see a huge flock of birds arriving to sit in the tree for several hours. They don't come and go, but just sit on the highest branches. Do birds nap? It seems these are sleeping as they are so still and quiet, not even chirping. I've had several chats with the park rangers about these birds. They all agree that, based on the time of year, no doubt these are migratory birds returning north after wintering in a warmer climate. I learned that about 85 percent of birds native to New England migrate each winter, although some hardy robins seem to stay here year round. So far this month, I've seen many flocks arrive and depart.

We humans are similar to these birds as, in a way, our lives are a journey. Instead of encountering bad weather like the birds, we may encounter other difficulties such as a personal illness or that of a family member, loss of a job, or perhaps difficulty in finding affordable housing. Admittedly these are unpleasant situations, but like the birds we need to pause and rest when we can. Being well rested doesn't solve the problem but does give us the energy to continue. Those familiar with the Bible know that the need to rest is mentioned many times.

There's another lesson from these birds. They travel together and never take this arduous trip alone. Obviously, we don't need countless people as we travel through life, but having close friends makes the tough times so much more tolerable.

I can certainly attest to that, having been very ill during the past year. Without the support of seven very close friends, some days would have been extremely difficult. I refer to them as my seven angels and if ever the Irish blessing was true, it applies to each one of them. It's simple but profound. It says: "When I count my blessings, I count you twice."

Several of these very special friends kept in contact with me at least once a day, often twice every day of the past year. The others called often and also offered much appreciated and cheerful encouragement. These usually weren't long calls or lengthy emails, but I assure you it made each difficult day much easier.

It's not too late in the year to make some resolutions. I would encourage everyone to resolve to keep in contact with friends or family who are experiencing difficulties. It can be a life changing experience for both you and the recipient.

Respectfully submitted,
Janet Forbes

Sounds on the Hill

Spring Music Events

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

Reminder: Proposed New Membership Categories and Discussion Sessions

The following is a reprint from last month's newsletter:

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

No Surprise by Pastor Colin

We have been walking with Jesus through the grim week that leads to his death. After entering Jerusalem to some acclaim, Jesus acts up in the Temple and his enemies have their bait. The crowds vanish, the disciples make promises they won't keep, Jesus is increasingly alone with his fate. Some women watch him die from a distance.

Crucifixion was not employed to kill people. That could have been accomplished with the thrust of a sword. Crucifixion was cleverly designed to humiliate, to terrorize, to torture, to subjugate, to dehumanize, to frighten not the person on the cross – they were cooked – but the passersby, the onlookers, the oppressed population, all who saw or knew.

The dead bodies were left on the crosses for the vultures of the day. The message was meant to linger. Step out of line, this could be your fate. Live in fear. The Roman Empire was a brutal business.

Empires use violence to get their way (see "Legacy of Violence" by Carolyn Elkins on the British Empire). Where has this been visibly apparent in the American Empire?

Lynching. Lynching of black Americans by white Americans. As with crucifixion, lynching was a public display of power — and powerlessness. Yes, lynching killed, but more than that, it degraded, dehumanized, terrorized, tortured. Bodies were frequently mutilated, testicles removed, burned alive. Trials, of course, were beside the point.

How would you compare Roman barbarism to American barbarism?

Emmett Till was murdered in Mississippi in 1955 at the age of 14. He was accused of being disrespectful to a white woman. His mother insisted on an open casket that showed his mangled body. The murderers were found not guilty by an all-white jury. For \$4,000, they admitted their guilt in Look Magazine. Such was America in 1955. How much has Mississippi changed since 1955? Has the American Empire become more Christian? More moral? More humane?

This very week in Rankin County, Mississippi, six law enforcement officers were sentenced to prison terms ranging from 10 to 40 years for the physical and sexual abuse and torture of two black men, Eddie Parker and Michael Jenkins. "The depravity of the crime ... cannot be overstated," said Attorney General Merrick B. Garland. A sex toy was used. On top of everything, the deputies falsely accused their victims of criminal conduct. The six all pleaded guilty.

So it is that politicians in Mississippi love to talk about law and order. Their words are lies.

Elected officials have rushed to condemn the six officers, who were part of a group called the "Goon Squad." Not one of those elected officials had caught a whiff of the Goon Squad's activities. Sheriff Bryan Bailey of Rankin County, recently reelected without opposition, said "never in my life did I think this would happen in this department.

This is a free country and you may believe Sheriff Bailey. But the Goon Squad existed for nearly two decades. A number of people complained, including to Sheriff Bailey, and some have filed lawsuits. White people were also attacked. This was hardly an isolated incident.

A defense attorney referred to "the culture of the sheriff's department." Did he mean the culture of Mississippi?

Mr. Parker and Mr. Jenkins have filed a \$400 million civil lawsuit against the sheriff's department. We can only pray that they get every cent of that amount.

The assault began with a tip that black men were living with a white woman. Some things never change. The deputies were outraged that the men were living on the wrong side of the Pearl River. Rankin County is largely white, the city of Jackson largely black. The old troupes remain in place.

Mississippi is in the heart of the Bible Belt. Declarations of religious fervor are common to the culture. Dare we ask where you would place Jesus in the story of the torture of Michael Jenkins and Eddie Parker ... and Emmett Till? Isn't he their de facto brother?

Is Easter only the narcissism of our own salvation or does it speak to something broader, deeper in the human character? Is God repudiating the power of Empire, the use of crucifixion and lynching, barbarism as a means and a method? Might Christianity invoke moral character? Parker, Jenkins, Till, Jesus. A grim week indeed.

God bless you,

Pastor Colin Leitch

Mr. Charles J. McCarthy, a longtime resident of Beacon Hill and a member of the Church on the Hill for more than 20 years, died on April 5 at the VA Medical Center in Brockton. He was 84 years old. A memorial service will be held in the future.

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

April Events

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

May Events

5 th	Church Discovery Group	10 a.m.
10 th	RenMen concert	7:30 p.m.
11 th	Habitat for Humanity build	8:30 a.m.
12 th	Spring concert	3 p.m.
15 th	Community lunch	12 p.m.
	Missions presentation	1 p.m.
	BostonView meeting	2 p.m.
18 th	Bowling	11 a.m.
19 th	Board of Governors 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.

Membership: last Monday at 1 p.m.

April Birthdays

Paul LoGiudice
Cindy Gonzalez
Anthony Gonzalez



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

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