

A Second Look

An Invitation to the Life and Work of Our Community of Faith and Fellowship

A S E C O N D L O O K

O C T O B E R 2 0 1 7

Sermon Talk Back on October 15th

One of the benefits of being a church in transition is experiencing new and different things during the period before we select a new pastor. Our transitional pastor, Stephen Phelps, is introducing us to a “talk back” on his sermon on October 15th. During coffee hour that day a moderator will help get a discussion

going and Stephen will join us ten minutes later. He does this so we can speak freely beforehand. A Talk Back is an opportunity to ask questions and offer reflection. Stephen says that once his sermon is given, it belongs to the listener. So let’s take ownership and see what we come up with!

2 6 1 Y E A R S O F M I N I S T R Y

Our Minister of Music – Ready to Serve

In October we welcome Eunjung Ahn as our Minister of Music.

Eunjung was a top choice of the Minister of Music Search Committee’s six-month search this year. She has 25 years of experience in church ministry, most recently serving as organist at First Presbyterian Church in Ridgewood, N.J.

A lifelong Presbyterian, Eunjung shares that she has pursued music ministry from the beginning of her career. “Being a church organist and music director for many years allowed me to bring joy and worship through music,” she wrote in an email.

Eunjung holds a degree in organ performance from Westminster Choir College in



Eunjung Ahn, our new minister of music

Princeton, N.J. She has conducted several choirs during her career, including handbell choirs. She also plays the harpsichord and has discussed introducing chimes to our music program!

The Worship & Music Committee met with Eunjung in August and believes she has the musical proficiency as well as leadership qualities to direct the

choir and bring music to life at Second Church.

Eunjung looks forward to serving a diverse congregation in this dynamic city. She said she is also drawn to the great quality of our organ.

Eunjung lives in Northvale, N.J., with her husband Kunsoo and two children Joel and Rachel. Joel is a U.S. Navy sailor, and Rachel attends The Julliard School. You may remember Rachel played the oboe during Offertory when Eunjung played for us at worship in May.

Eunjung will begin in her position on Oct. 4 where she will lead choir practice at 7 p.m. If you are interested in singing with the choir or if you would like to explore the possibility, please join Eunjung and other choir members on Oct. 4.

Second Presbyterian Church

Sanctuary: 6 West 96th Street/ Office: 3 West 95th Street

212-749-1700 / www.secondpresbyteriangny.org

Stephen H. Phelps, Transitional Pastor

Worship at 10:15 am Sundays

Seeking a better world together

When I first started going to Lebanon, when people asked my religion I would answer that I was Christian. If pressed, I would say I was a Western Christian. If pressed further, I would say I was Protestant. I felt, mistakenly, that in a place where Maronites, Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholic, Armenian Orthodox, Assyrians, Roman Catholics, and various Protestants were part of the rich tapestry of religions in the area, saying that I was Presbyterian was just too rarefied an answer. But one day someone really wanted to know what kind of Protestant I was and when I told her she said: "We love the Presbyterians in Lebanon! You gave us our schools, our universities and our hospitals!" In fact, another friend told me that when his grandfather was asked if he could read and write he would answer: "I am a Presbyterian." American Presbyterians arrived in the region early in the 19th century and were welcomed for not being part of the European colonial presence. They arrived in Armenia slightly later in the century. The Armenian Presbyterians fled during the massacres and many came to Lebanon.

Lebanon has been an opportunity for me to see our denomination at a more global level. I am a part of PCUSA's Syria Lebanon Partnership Network, a national body that supports our sister churches in the region and helps our national church develop policies relating to its concerns. We have an annual meeting in Louisville, KY which I just attended a few days ago. It is truly uplifting to see the church function as a national body. We spent some time talking with Catherine Gordon, who represents our church positions on international issues through the Office of Public Witness in Washington, DC. She gets to know the players in government and told us that there were actually people in the administration who are interested in de-escalating the war in Syria. That is hopeful news. We also had a brief chat with Laurie Kraus who co-ordinates Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, which handles responses to disasters here and abroad. Hurricane season was keeping her busy in our region, along with forest fires in the Pacific Northwest. In Syria and the surrounding countries it's refugees and the internally displaced along with supporting the Synod in its ongoing work and its own response to the refugee crisis. In Lebanon, one out of every three people is a refugee. Interestingly, one of the Synod's responses to the Syrian Crisis has been to ordain women as a witness against the violence against women at the hands of ISIS and other combatants.

My time in Lebanon has made me more appreciative of our denomination, not just for its historic role in the region but for its ongoing work there. Just as important to me now has been my growing admiration for the Arab and Armenians Presbyterians in their tireless work to bear witness to God's love for their troubled region. I've learned so much from this other part of our denominational body, been so awed by the sacrifices they make. They are the ones I think about when we collect contributions to the special offerings. It really makes a difference to their work. --- Cecilia Blewer



Catherine Gordon of the Office of Public Witness and Laurie Kraus of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

Sending Help In A Time Of Disasters

In August the Session, upon the recommendation of the Deacons, approved a \$1,000 benevolence donation to provide relief in the famine and food crisis in South Sudan. Recurring drought, armed conflict, and instability have led to food insecurity for half the country's 12 million people. The donation is going to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

Climate change and poor development practices like draining marshlands have made natural disasters more frequent. These in turn have affected political stability as in Syria where the current crisis was preceded by drought. There is nothing natural about a famine, though, in the modern era as transportation of food is easily done.

There will be a special collection during World Communion Sunday for Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

O C T O B E R 2 0 1 7

October Calendar

Nancy Hughes is worship co-ordinator for October

Karen Amrhein is deacon co-ordinator for Coffee Hour

Sunday, October 1, 11 a.m. - World Communion Sunday - joint worship with Chinese congregation with special collection for Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, followed by potluck luncheon. We are responsible for desserts.

Tuesday, October 3, 5:00 p.m. - Party in honor of our former pastor, Leslie Merlin @ Acqua. Be sure to RSVP.

Wednesday, October 4, 7:00 p.m. - Choir practice with incoming minister of music, Eunjung Ahn.

Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. will be regular time for choir practice

Saturday, October 7, 2 p.m. - Memorial Service for Mimi Lewis, Bram's mother, followed by reception.

Sunday, October 8, 10:15 a.m. - First Sunday of incoming minister of music, Eunjung Ahn, with special coffee hour in her honor.

Sunday, October 15 - Sermon Talk Back during coffee hour

Thursday, October 19, 6 p.m. - Session Meeting, location TBA

Sunday, October 22, 10 a.m. - Kirking of the Alexander Robertson School

Tuesday, October 24, Trustees Meeting, time and location TBA

Sunday, October 29 - Special Halloween coffee hour hosted by Susan Gordon-Clark and Ken Threet

Be sure to pick up your copy of the booklet of spiritual reflections contributed by church members in honor of Leslie Merlin. They will be distributed on October 3 during the party in her honor and will be available at the church thereafter.

Scriptural Reflections
In Honor Of Pastor Leslie Merlin
And Her Twenty Years of Ministry
At Second Presbyterian Church, New York City
Written By Her Loving Congregation



September 2017