

A Second Look

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

A SECOND LOOK

MARCH 2018 NEWSLETTER

Your Questions Answered (Some of Them)

Do you wonder if the unbaptized can be saved? What kind of bread should be served at Communion? If the sanctuary has an “altar” or a “table”? These questions, and many others, are answered on the Presbyterian Mission Agency website: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/worship/faq/>. And yes, unbaptized babies are not disqualified from salvation since baptism is but a sign of God’s choosing, calling, and claiming us.

262 YEARS OF MINISTRY

Interim Pastor Lindsay Borden Arrives on April 8th

Before being called to pastoral ministry, the Rev. Lindsay Borden worked as an actor and not-for-profit theater manager, and then as a chef, cooking first in trendy NYC restaurants and later at God’s Love We Deliver and Gay Men’s Health Crisis, providing hot meals for men, women and children with AIDS and HIV.

As a “non-traditional aged” student, Lindsay earned her Bachelor degree in Psychology from Marymount Manhattan College, and her Master of Divinity degree from Princeton Theological Seminary. In both installed and interim roles, she has served churches in both the Hudson Valley and New York City Presbyteries, most recently as the interim pastor at the historic Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church in Brooklyn. Born in Manhattan, she is delighted with this opportunity to serve in her home borough.



We welcome Lindsay Borden as our Interim Pastor

Although “Lindsay” is a family name on her mother’s side and there are Scots Presbyterians among her ancestors, Lindsay’s forebears include immigrants from across both Western and Eastern Europe, and those who were Christian, Jewish, and who know what else! She is proud of her mixed-up, diverse heritage – one that, in its richness of backgrounds and cultures,

she feels reflects the beautiful ideals of this country at its best.

Though she is not a life-long Presbyterian, the Presbyterian Church (USA) is where Lindsay’s faith was renewed as an adult, and where she found a spiritual and theological home – and, in time and much to her surprise, the call to ordained ministry.

She has found that one of the great joys of being a pastor is the variety and breadth of the calling, and of those she is called to serve. There aren’t many jobs that provide the opportunity not only to study and write and speak out; to engage in both administrative duties and theological exploration; to walk with people at the most profound stages of their lives – but also to engage with people of all ages, from infancy on, and from many different social, cultural and even religious backgrounds. Lindsay loves that pastoring gives her the chance to be “up to her elbows” in her faith – and that, though ministry may be many things, it is seldom boring! But though the work can be all-encompassing, she tries to regularly find time for “non-

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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

212-749-1700 www.secondpresbyteriannyc.org

Rev. Stephen H. Phelps, Transitional Pastor (through April 1)

Eunjung Ahn, Minister of Music

Worship at 10:15 a.m. Sundays

Seeking a Better World Together

A Note of Thanks From the Session To Stephen H. Phelps

On April 1st, after the Easter service, we will bid goodbye to Rev. Stephen H. Phelps with enormous gratitude for serving during this most critical transition period, between the retirement of our longtime installed pastor and the selection of our interim pastor.

Steve has brought to us thoughtful, searing, helpful sermons that have expanded our minds and nourished our spirits. As moderator of the Session, he has provided perspective, practical advice and ideas for operating efficiently.

When our beloved pastor Rev. Leslie Merlin departed after 20 years, we did not know what to expect. Yet here we all are--still strong, still worshiping together, sharing fellowship, ministering to each other.

Thank you, Steve, for honoring our traditions and our ways, even the quirky ones.

We will miss your kind, gentle presence here but are glad to know you and Beth are in the neighborhood. We know your service continues as you provide guidance, healing and hope to other congregations. God's grace be with you.

—The Session

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churchy" things like exploring the city and its offerings, going to the gym, sharing good food, reading good writing, rooting for the Yankees, and spending time with family and friends, including her five siblings and her ten amazing nieces, nephews and godchildren.

Rev. Lindsay is excited about becoming Interim Pastor at Second Presbyterian church, and looks forward to getting to know all the members and friends of the congregation. She hopes to find time early on to meet with everyone – whether at coffee hour, in formal meetings, over a shared meal or a casual cup of tea, or for an impromptu walk in Central Park. So she asks you all: please don't be shy about introducing yourselves, and helping her get to know this wonderful church and its people!

A Farewell From The Transitional Pastor

My dear friends,

My time with you will soon come to a conclusion. When the April newsletter arrives, your new interim minister will be at work among you, preaching, teaching, considering, advising, caring . . . and so much more. Life will press on.

Recently, one of you told me how, as Rev. Leslie Merlin's retirement approached in 2017, she feared for the church that people would fall away and the fabric become too thin for the few who remained. This most certainly did not happen, as the member observed gladly. Rather, a new wind brushed into Second Presbyterian last fall, and now, said the member, she feels very confident that new winds will come with your new pastor. Exactly.

Here is a funny thing about a pastor's work. Since what humans need more than anything else is light for the soul, the pastor, who is not the light, needs to practice the art of being a window—plain glass, not stained glass. Now, when people think about their church, they frequently focus on the pastor. A pamphlet of church history, for example, is often organized by the names and dates of their clergy. But a good-enough leader knows that the main thing is to lead by getting out of the way. Put in theological terms, the aim is to pay close attention to not block the light of God's Holy Spirit moving through the church—to not get in the way of the winds of God which the people can sense and enjoy and which can move and change them, provided the leader does not need to make the story about him- or herself.

It's not that having no leader would work just as well. Living and working together brings abundant blessings to our lives, so it matters that we organize and commit ourselves consciously to joined purposes. In a church, the pastor stands for the conscious desire for the light of God in the whole people—and in that way helps actualize the desire.

Anyone who steps into the sanctuary of Second Presbyterian Church on a Sunday morning can sense among you this desire for the divine. Through all these months, you have nourished me with your quest for truth, for love, for a way of justice and hope for this troubled world. I feel deeply grateful to you and to God for the sojourn we have shared.

Now, soon, may the light shine in at the southeast corner of West Ninety Sixth Street for new eyes, new hearts, new hands. May the wind of God blow through the pews into the aisles and out to the streets. I will remember you often, close in my heart. I will see you again.

Peace be with you,
Stephen

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March Calendar - worship coordinators, Ed Carpenter & Elaine Song; Coffee Hour coordinator, Karen Amrhein

Wednesdays, March 7 & 14 - Chimes Ensemble practice at 6 pm; March 7, 14, 21, 28 - Choir practice at 7 pm.

Thursday, March 8, 5:00-6:30 pm - ARS Talent Show in the gym.

Sunday, March 11 at 10:15 am - Sunday worship, Rev. Phelps preaching; Eunjung Ahn, music.

Sunday, March 18 at 10:15 am - Sunday worship, Rev. Phelps preaching; Eunjung Ahn, music.

Monday, March 19-Friday, March 23 - church office closed; Monday, March 19-Monday, April 2 - ARS closed.

Palm Sunday, March 25 at 10:15 am - Sunday worship, Rev. Phelps preaching; Eunjung Ahn, music. Agape Potluck Luncheon.

Thursday, March 29 at 7 pm - Maundy Thursday Tenebrae service with Holy Communion.

Easter Sunday, April 1 at 10:15 am - Easter Sunday Festival worship.

Save the Dates: Saturday, April 7, Tartan Day Parade - ARS & SPC marching; Sunday, April 15 at 5 pm, Harold Stover concert at St. John the Divine.