

# A SECOND LOOK

*An Invitation to the Life and Work of Our Community of Faith and Fellowship  
Second Presbyterian Church in New York City*

## FROM THE PASTOR

It's Advent, and as we look toward Christmas with joyful expectation, we also look forward to many special church festivities: to hearing the ancient story of Jesus' birth, singing beloved carols, listening to music of the season, lighting candles and decking the halls!

But this Advent, I confess that I'm jumping ahead. I'm thinking about what happens after the shepherds have gone back to work and the heavenly choir packed up its trumpets. After the Magi have taken the long way home to avoid the agents of Empire.

I'm thinking about a government campaign of terror against children. Of a father gathering up his wife and little boy and fleeing his homeland, to seek and find asylum in Egypt. Of a young mother pondering in her heart what might be in store for her firstborn son. Of an itinerant Palestinian Jewish preacher, making his way from Galilee to Syria to Samaria and Judea, always on the move, increasingly in danger.

I'm thinking of a migrant Messiah, an asylum-seeking Messiah, a homeless Messiah, a vilified Messiah.

And so I'm wondering, as we prepare to make a home for Christ in our hearts this Advent, how we can also take to heart his words: "I was a stranger and you welcomed me . . . . Just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

Which brings me back to the nativity story, and to wondering, would I have made room at the inn for this family in need? Will I make room for others, in his name?

Your Session recently endorsed the Exodus Statement of the New Sanctuary Coalition, which proclaims: "With an exodus of migrants headed towards the United States, we have an opportunity to challenge the ways our borders are used to separate instead of welcome. This is a moment to declare that God creates all human beings with inherent dignity." (For full statement, see <https://www.sanctuarycaravan.org/faith>) We're also reviving our involvement with the Church of Gethsemane (see back page).

In this holy season, I invite you all to ponder other ways that we, as Second Presbyterian Church, might welcome the stranger and the outcast, and find the deep joy of this season of light amidst darkness, hope in a fearful world.

*With gratitude for your faithful  
service to Christ,  
and blessings of the season to you  
and yours,  
Rev. Lindsay*

Second Presbyterian Church  
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212-749-1700/[www.secondpresbyteriansnyc.org](http://www.secondpresbyteriansnyc.org)  
Rev. Lindsay Borden, Interim Pastor  
Eunjung Ahn, Minister of Music  
Worship at 10:15 a.m.  
*Seeking a better world together*

## IN SESSION: News from the November Session Meeting

by Nancy Hughes, Clerk of Session

Session had a busy and productive meeting on November 29<sup>th</sup>, at which it took the following actions:

\* Scheduled the Annual Congregational Meeting of the congregation and corporation for Sunday, January 27, 2019, in the Carnegie Library, following worship.

\* Signed on to a statement from the New Sanctuary Coalition, "A Call to People of Faith," protesting the treatment of migrants. Approved possible study leave for Rev. Lindsay to travel with the NSC, accompanying asylum-seekers at the border, if scheduling allows.

\* Gave the go-ahead for the trustees to do a full audit of the church and school.

\* Endorsed the Worship & Music Committee's recommendation to serve the sacrament of Communion on the first Sunday of most months.

\* Approved a new plan for Christmas Eve! (See separate notice.)

\* Will order more *Glory to God* hymnals. Members will be invited to dedicate hymnals in honor or in memory of those they love.

\* Authorized a survey of the old cooling system in the sanctuary, to see if the ducts can be used.

\* Began to review a draft of congregational by-laws. Session hopes to introduce a draft at the congregational meeting in January, after which members will be invited to submit written comments and suggestions.

\* Approved the use of two ARS classrooms for Curious Jane, a girls' summer camp, for 4 weeks starting July 8<sup>th</sup>.



On December 1, Nancy Hughes, Rev. Lindsay Borden, and Susan Gordon-Clark joined members of First Presbyterian Church of Brooklyn in a visit to the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility for Women. The visit was organized by Rev. Diane Lacey of Gethsemane Presbyterian Church.

**Christmas Eve at Second Pres** will honor old traditions and perhaps begin new ones! Our service of worship, at 6 pm, will feature songs of the season, a meditation on the Christmas Eve scripture readings, and of course, singing *Silent Night* as we pass the light of Christ throughout the church. Immediately following worship, we'll gather in the narthex, throw open the doors, and sing Christmas carols to neighbors and passersby! Please bring cookies to share, too (and dress warmly).

**A word about worship:** Beginning in January of 2019, we will celebrate the Sacrament of Communion regularly on the First Sunday of each month (as well as on certain holy days). We hope that grounding our worship in a more regular observance of communion will provide a meaningful rhythm to our worship life.

**I was a prisoner and you visited me...:** As several church members prepare to visit incarcerated women and men with the Church of Gethsemane, we also hope to resume our participation in Gethsemane's letter-writing to prisoners project. We'd like to do this one Sunday a month. If you are interested in helping with this meaningful ministry, please talk to Rev. Lindsay.

**Get out your cameras!** Your newsletter team (Cecilia Blewer, Virginia Danner and Rev. L.) asks all church members and staff to be on the lookout for photo ops, and to forward their photos to us for use in the newsletter. Thank you!