



# 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

For logistical reasons, I write this before our Annual Meeting on January 27 – so I hope to be able to report on how well it went in our March issue!

Meanwhile, I confess I'm still thinking about my time at the Mexico-US border. Still thinking about the people I met, the stories I heard, and the heartbreak I witnessed. And I think about what it means to be an immigrant to this country. What it meant for my grandfather, a young Jewish boy from Russia, over a hundred years ago. What it means for many members of this church. What it means that we or our ancestors have come from elsewhere – willingly or not, in desperation or hope. If we're not 100% Native Americans, the immigrant experience is part of our American DNA – and yet that common experience is used, cynically and cruelly, to tear us apart.

That brings to mind a poem written several years ago by a young woman named Isabella, who was a teen-aged church youth group member in the Lower Hudson Valley. She's in college now. Born in Cuba, Isabella wrote in another poem that she has felt like "a green apple in a red apple tree."

The poem I share here is titled *Nations*. Isabella called it a poem. I call it a prayer.

*Nations. In many ways we are different.  
Ask the world to tell us our differences,  
It will in a heartbeat:  
Location, language, geography, economy and so on.  
But ask it about our similarities,  
And it stays silent.  
Not a word to be said,  
Just a confused look as it ponders the question.  
As in silence without a reply  
We lean over borders and reach across oceans  
To hold hands with each other  
To become one with our greatest relation:  
Our Lord Jesus Christ,  
With whom we are all one.  
~ Isabela Leon, 2013*

"Ask the world to tell us our differences, it will in a heartbeat."  
Indeed. Our world is so quick to point out the things that separate us. I pray that Second Presbyterian Church will continue to lean across borders and reach across oceans, and be a beacon of light reflecting the power that brings us together. As the hymn says, may God grant us wisdom, grant us courage, for the living of these days.

*Grace and peace,  
Rev. Lindsay*

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[www.secondpresbyteriangny.org](http://www.secondpresbyteriangny.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 January Session Meetings

by Nancy Hughes, Clerk of Session

Session had a busy month reviewing the 2019 budget, preparing for the Annual Congregational Meeting, and receiving its regular quarterly update from Mr. Shlachter. We thank Eunjung Ahn, Clayton Young, Irwin Shlachter, Joan Harrison and Luther Wilson for joining us. At its two January meetings, Session:

- Reviewed and approved the 2019 church budget recommended by the trustees
- Received the slate of the Church Nominating Committee for 2019, which has vacancies on all three boards – session, deacons, and trustees. Discussed the implications of this
- Accepted with thanks and sadness the resignation of Kim Steele from the Board of Trustees
- Approved a draft of new by-laws and discussed how to present them to the congregation
- Voted to participate in the Landmark Conservancy's Sacred Sites Open House again this year (Saturday, May 18). Rutgers Presbyterian Church is organizing a scavenger hunt with several houses of worship, and we've let them know we'd like to be a part of it. More details will follow!
- Met with Mr. Shlachter and his team and for his report on the school. ARS is on track to meet its budget for this year. Discussed plans for a follow up meeting in about two weeks to receive additional information about long-range planning
- Approved small ARS tuition increases for 2019-20, as recommended by the ARS Finance Committee
- Discussed delays in the accounting department that are having an impact on operations
- Approved the 2018 Church Statistical Report that we send annually to the denomination.

## Opportunities for Growth in the Month of February

Here are some wonderful opportunities to learn and grow this month, sponsored by the Presbytery of New York City.

**Vital Congregations.** At Rutgers Presbyterian Church, 236 West 73rd Street, on **Thursday, February 7, 8:30 am – 1 pm**, there will be an information session about the VITAL CONGREGATIONS project. Vital Congregations is an initiative of the PCUSA that seeks to work with presbyteries in discerning the Spirit's path forward for existing congregations so that they can exemplify what being faithful disciples of Jesus Christ looks like in their identity and practice, in worship and action. By doing this prayerfully together in relationship with other congregations in the presbytery, we help one another to be equipped, nurtured, and empowered to renew, recover, and live more fully the will of God in each other's congregational contexts of ministry and mission. Kathryn Threadgill, Associate in Theology, Formation, and Evangelism at the PCUSA Mission Agency, will speak to why the PCUSA is launching this initiative and inviting presbyteries to become part, and how it aids congregations and their leaders who participate. With Executive Presbyter Robert Foltz-Morrison, she will answer questions about undertaking this work of the Spirit with congregations in New York City. **This initiative could be very helpful to Second Presbyterian Church, as we review and discern the mission and ministry God is calling us to.** Rev. Lindsay and Clerk of Session Nancy Hughes will attend. If you would like to join them, please let them know.

**Presbytery Leadership Day.** The Committee on Congregational Ministry and Nurture (CM&N) invites all presbyters to join us for Leadership Day on **Saturday, February 23, 2019, 8am-3pm** at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, 7 West 55th St. Our workshops will cover a range of topics including Music and Worship, Stewardship, Pastoral Care, Polity and Justice Ministries. **Past, present and future Elders, Deacons, and Lay Leaders (which means many folks at SPC!) are encouraged to attend.** More details to come. Continental breakfast and lunch will be available. Leadership Day will close with worship and communion. We hope to see you there!