

THE SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH in the City of New York
Pastoral newsletter for October 2020



World Communion Sunday: Christ has the whole world in his hands

Dear Friends in Christ,

I write this on October 2, and it has been a difficult week. Many watched a presidential debate about which the less said the better. We learned of a spike in cases of COVID-19 in our city - and then of the President's positive test for the virus. New Yorkers started receiving their absentee ballots - though many were sent to the wrong addresses (mostly in Brooklyn and Queens - if you got someone else's ballot, just discard it and wait to get a new ballot in the mail), and others received ballots that appear to be only for military use (not to worry: apparently that's a typo, and you CAN use the ballot). Schools and restaurants opened - but the very thought makes a lot of people anxious.

I don't have any great words of wisdom to share. Except for the words of Jesus, from Mark: "Do not fear, only believe." Believe that Christ is with you. Believe that the Spirit will sustain you. Believe that God does not abandon God's creation. And as believers, we might join our hearts in prayer for ourselves and our nation, with the words of the psalmist:

*Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock!
You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth*

²before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh. Stir up your might, and come to save us!

³Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

*⁴O Lord God of hosts, how long will you be angry with your people's prayers?
⁵You have fed them with the bread of tears,
and given them tears to drink in full measure.
⁶You make us the scorn of our neighbors; our enemies laugh among themselves.
⁷Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved.
~ Psalm 80*

And I also recommend: take a deep breath. Take several. Take a walk. Tell the people you love that you love them! Have a conversation with a dog (or a cat, if the cat will say and listen to you). Sing, even if you're out of tune. Pray for your neighbors – even the ones you don't like. And in all things, give thanks to God – for God is here.

Sunday, October 4 is On World Communion Sunday, We will gather on Zoom at 10:15 am for worship and celebrate a Stay at Home Lord's Supper. So please prepare your elements, the bread and the wine, in whatever form you choose. You may want to get into the spirit of World Communion by choosing food and drink from your heritage or another culture you admire.

And please consider making a donation to the **PC(USA) Peace and Global Witness Offering**. You can do this online at: <https://specialofferings.pcusa.org/make-a-gift/gift-info/peace-global-witness/>. And there's a place for you to list your congregation, so that Second Presbyterian can "get credit" - we can use 25% of what we give as we choose.

Or you can mail your contribution to the church, Attn: Iza - and make sure you mark your payment "Peace Offering."

Thank you!

A Further Word about Stewardship

Clerk of Session Nancy Hughes writes:

"Dear Friends, Many of us are reflecting on what church means to us during this most extraordinary year. We are learning to 'be church' even when we can't see each other in person, in the sanctuary, and even, for the most part, in the community. Among the many things that have been disrupted by the coronavirus is our church's income from both donations and space use. Members may already have had their own livelihoods directly affected, or look with concern at an uncertain future. Several groups that use our space have had to cancel programs. Nonetheless, we all want to keep the lights on

and our staff paid. We are immensely grateful to everyone who has continued to give, even when the collection plate is virtual.

“We ask you to reflect on what church, and in particular our own Second Presbyterian Church, means to you, this year and every year. If you can express your support with a financial contribution, that would mean a lot, especially this year.”

For details of your 2020 giving, please contact Nancy and she will create a custom report for you of your direct and online gifts from Jan 1-Sept 24. We apologize that it is not currently feasible to send out a mass (e)mailing to everyone with their personal donor reports at this time, although we hope in the future to be able to generate more regular reports. After the end of the year we will, as always, send Donor Reports for tax purposes; for online donations, a separate report will be sent by the Presbyterian Foundation.

To make a donation, you can use the Donate button on our website, or mail a check to:

Second Presbyterian Church
attn: Iza Bulica
3 W 95th Street
New York, NY 10025-6753

Thank you again!

SPC Staff News

Sexton Pete Spano is on a well-deserved vacation until October 23. Due to pandemic restrictions, this is mostly a stay-cation for Pete, so you may see him in the neighborhood. Feel free to say Hello – but please don’t ask him about work!

Church Administrator Virginia Danner is works from home. You may contact her at vdanner@secondpresbyteriannyc.org – and we’ll get you a phone number soon! Please note, her hours are generally 11 – 2, Tuesdays – Fridays.

Wednesdays Afternoons with Lindsay

For October, at least, I plan to be at – or near – the church on Wednesday afternoons. This is an informal experiment! I hope to spend an hour or so at my “The Pastor Is In” stand, but otherwise will be available to meet you – in Central Park (weather permitting), or in the church narthex, or outside your apartment building, or elsewhere in the neighborhood – anywhere we can be together yet observe social distance requirements. (And note: I’ll be wearing a mask – and I’ll need you to wear one also!)

I often seem to have doctor appointments on Wednesdays, so I will seldom be at 96 St before 2. But just give me a call or send me an email or text ahead of time so we can make a date. Or feel free to try me at the last minute – ya never know!

And Saturday Afternoons with Everyone: SPC @ CP

In addition I'm thinking we should try at least one more Central Park gathering, even though it's getting chillier.

How about: **Saturday, October 10, 1:30 – 2:30 pm.**

And because certain of you love Halloween (I'm not naming any names) why don't we also try: **Saturday, October 31, 1: 30 - 2:30 pm.** (Costumes optional!)

In closing, as the above notices might indicate, I miss seeing you all – and so does everyone else! I know we have Zoom, thank God, but you're all so tiny there! So send me a photo, and I'll put it in the weekly email. Here's one of me to start!



God be with you, until we meet again.

love and light,
Rev. Lindsay