



Sharing the Good News from
Newton Presbyterian Church PC (USA)
Early Autumn Edition, September 2018



We are a PC(USA) church, located at 75 Vernon St, Newton MA 02458, Tel. (617) 332-9255

A Prayerful Start

I Peter 3.15-16, “Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; ¹⁶ yet do it with gentleness and reverence.”

This passage was used in medieval universities for the description of why people should study theology. The great masters of theology reasoned that if believers needed to be ready to make a defense or an account of the hope that comes from the gospel, we must prepare through education and study. Today, that is no less true. We live in a world hungry for real truth, and will be able to go into that world better if we have equipped ourselves with some deep consideration of our faith, the Bible, and the church’s teachings. So I’m glad that it’s the start of the Christian season, and we’re starting a variety of educational opportunities. Come, prepare yourself to obey the scripture’s call.

- Rev. Ward Holder

Welcome from Newton Presbyterian Church! We are a PC(USA) church, and we gather for service every Sunday starting at 10:15 am.

Community Corner



Please join us in celebrating the birth of **Aithan Texeira** on August 21st, 2018! Aithan is the son of Nathaniel and Akwen Texeira. We are so pleased that God has blessed our community once again, as Aithan joins: Briella Tabi, daughter of Gerald and Magdalena Tabi, and Aoife Hynes, great-granddaughter of Kay Clarke.

PCNS, Where Preschoolers Grow!!!

In our Christian pre-school we value each child as a unique gift from God. Our caring qualified staff are dedicated to providing a nurturing, safe, and supportive environment where each child can grow in their faith in God and to their full potential developmentally.

Our belief in God is an integral element of the program at PCNS. Woven into our day are expressions of our Christian faith through bible stories, songs, and play. Together we thank God for His blessings.

PCNS is now enrolling. Please feel free to contact us at:
 (617) 332-9255 x6 or pcnspreschool@gmail.com

Blessings,
 Annemarie and Geri
 Co-Directors





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Members Corner: David Penn, leader of our Youth Ministry, shares a thoughtful essay entitled “Confirmation Outside the Lines”

One of the better youth ministry books I’ve read recently is called ***Poetic Youth Ministry; Learning to Love Young People by Letting Them Go***, by Jason Lief. He opens by comparing typical North American youth ministry approaches to the movie **Wall-E**. If you have seen the movie, you will recall that it is something of an anomaly among children’s films because of its dystopian premise. Wall-E is a machine programmed to pick up garbage on earth, which has been (evidently) irreparably damaged by human actions.

Wall-E eventually encounters EVE, (not a particularly subtle nod to humanity’s beginnings), another robot whose task is to search for plant life on Earth and return to the Axiom, a space-cruise-ship lifeboat of sorts sustaining a sedentary human population. How is this like youth ministry? The answer is in how the humans act on the Axiom. They float alongside one another seated in perfect rows, listening to the computer tell them what to do, what to think, and what to eat. Their faces are locked to their computer screens, and years of a sedentary lifestyle mean their bodies are incapable of walking on their own. Their chairs move along predetermined lines, keeping everything in perfect order.

Youth ministry, Lief argues, is too often about staying inside the lines. It is a mechanical exercise that focuses on learning, or at least repeating, objective truths. It is about being ‘in’ or ‘out’. Near the film’s climax, Wall-E and Eve have developed a friendship, perhaps have even fallen in love. There is a scene in which they are dancing together outside the axiom, Wall-E using a fire extinguisher to propel himself beautifully alongside EVE. The motions the robots make are curved, unexpected, beautiful. While I am necessarily leaving out very significant parts of Lief’s argument, I found this contrast apt.

How might we approach youth ministry and confirmation outside the lines, in ways that affirm our shared humanity and our commitment to our theological tradition? I will share two of Lief’s ideas here for how we might do that. These ideas resonate with me, as they support my own findings in research with youth.

First, let us remember, as Newton Presbyterian Church, that raising up youth is a communal task that we agree to each time a child is baptized. Lief writes “Young people do not need one more set of religious processes; they need a community that responsibly calls them to embrace their humanity in the crucified and risen Christ. They need a community that will help them cultivate the courage to embrace their finite, vulnerable humanity...that will model for them what it means...to love, to play, to suffer.” (pg. 85). I would add that young people need to see how faith and life interconnect.

Secondly, the Jesus the youth need to encounter is disruptive. Lief writes “The task is...to help create space in which young people are able to imagine what it means to live as the new humanity in Jesus Christ...creating a form of ministry willing to challenge the dominant cultural narratives by opening up space for dialogue...This is where the biblical story functions as a disruptive force, clearing the space for important questions and alternative stories that point to our human identity grounded in Jesus Christ.”

I look forward to entering the Confirmation journey with our young people this year. I look forward to clearing a space where the Spirit can work. I look forward to doing this work not alone, but as a member of Newton Presbyterian Church. It’s time to leave the comfort of the lines and experience some holy disruption.



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COMMITTEE CORNER...

*NPC hosts three committees: Nurture, Mission, and Stewardship. In this edition, we feature news from the **Nurture Committee** which is provided by Elder and Chair, Susan Griesmer*

The Session of Newton Presbyterian Church organized itself into three committees in the Fall of 2017. These three committees were Stewardship, Missions, and Nurture. **Nurture handles both the oversight of worship and of Christian education for all ages.** Thus, the Nurture Committee engages two of what our Constitution in the Presbyterian Church (USA) has called the “Great Ends of the Church.” These two are “the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God;” and “the maintenance of divine worship.” These are key emphases for the Nurture Committee, and for NPC.

Since its re-organization in February of 2017, worship has been at the heart of NPC. The Administrative Commission directed our temporary stated supply pastor, Ward Holder, to organize worship that was Presbyterian in character, and traditional in manner. Since the election of the Session, that has been the task of the Nurture Committee. It has overseen the manner of our worship, provided for special music at significant events like the bagpiper for our Rally Day this Fall, or for choir or musicians from within our membership, suggested a schedule of services – including when we would celebrate Communion, and invitation and planning of our joint worship with The Eliot Church on September 23rd. All of this effort and planning has been done because we as Presbyterians recognize the crucial nature of worship, both for our own spiritual lives, and as a witness to others. Frequently, people become friends and even members of NPC because they are drawn by our worship.

But we must always also be equipping the saints for all the tasks that God sets before us. Therefore, the Nurture Committee oversees a variety of educational opportunities and initiatives. These include the New Members Class that is offered regularly for people wanting to know more about Presbyterianism in general and NPC in particular. Nurture also provides for other classes, such as the class on the Great Ends of the Church, an upcoming class on the Apostles’ Creed, and other chances for us to deepen our faith. And we have children we are raising in the faith – so Nurture provides special worship bulletins for children, and will begin offering Sunday School during worship for young children later in September. As well, a Confirmation Class will be offered this year for teenagers who are interested in exploring their faith in a deeper way, and preparing themselves to make their own confessions of faith.

In Acts 2, the scripture records that the earliest form of the church committed themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to prayer, and to praising God. Since its very beginning, the church has thrived because of its concentration on these tasks. The Nurture Committee is excited about what God is showing us, and eager to see what is coming. We enthusiastically invite all members of the church who want to learn, or to be involved in worship, to get in touch with the members of the committee.

Pastor’s Corner

Several times, as we read the Gospel of Mark, we see Jesus heal someone, or do something else miraculous, and then he sternly tells the person he just saved not to tell anyone. Normally, Jesus is unsuccessful, and the person just goes out and blabs that this Galilean has done amazing and wonderful things that no one but a holy person can do. This happens so often that scholars have called this the “Messianic Secret.”

Of course, that raises the question. Why does Jesus want to keep things secret? Could he be ashamed? That hardly makes sense. Could he be incognito? Well, yes, but doing miracles is an awful way to keep a low profile. So the question persists a bit.

One answer that I keep coming back to is that Jesus wants everyone to reflect on the message of the gospel-whether his teachings or his miracles-and come to his or her own conclusion. Faith isn’t something that someone else can give you – the church cannot do that, and even the best pastors don’t have the ability either. No, faith is a gift of the Holy Spirit, but the Spirit uses the instrument of the scriptures to bring us to faith. So each of us taking time to consider, to meditate, and to pray about scripture’s message is basic to our Christian lives.

A good way to do that is the discipline of learning our faith. We know that our children need Christian education. But we, their parents and grandparents, do as well. So take some opportunities! The Nurture Committee is organizing a whole range of possibilities for people of all ages to learn more about the faith and to contemplate it deeply. In doing so, we may all find ourselves rushing out into the world to shout it, because we too have been touched by God’s Spirit. That’s a nice way to think about the possibilities that God is putting in front of us.

See you in Church,

RW





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Calendar Corner...

September

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December

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30	31					

September / October Events:

- ✓ Special Worship and Joint Choir with Eliot Congregational Church – Sep 23
- ✓ Presbytery of Boston meets at Newton Presbyterian Church – Sep 24
- ✓ New Member's Class – Sep 30-Oct 21
- ✓ Communion Sunday and Emphasis on Food Pantry – Oct 7
- ✓ Session Meeting – Oct 10
- ✓ Peacemaking Offering – Now through Oct 14
- ✓ Stewardship Drive – Date to be announced

Coming in Nov / December:

- ✓ Communion Sunday and Emphasis on Food Pantry – Nov 4
- ✓ Session Meeting – Nov 14
- ✓ Christ the King Sunday – Nov 25
- ✓ Communion Sunday and Emphasis on Food Pantry – Dec 2
- ✓ Advent – Dec 2-24
- ✓ Christmas!!

Note: Women's Life Group meets on Monday nights throughout the fall at NPC (7pm)

Inspiration for the Days Ahead

In the spirit of nurturing our community through worship and Christian education, we would like to share a list of the Bible passages that will be referenced in upcoming services through November:

<p>September 30 Psalm 124:1-8 James 5:13-20 Mark 9:38-50</p> <p>October 7 Psalm 26:1-12 Hebrews 1:1-4, 2:5-12 Mark 10:2-16</p> <p>October 14 Psalm 22:1-15 Hebrews 4:12-16 Mark 10:17-31</p>	<p>October 21 Psalm 104:1-9, 24, 35c Hebrews 5:1-10 Mark 10:35-45</p> <p>October 28 Psalm 34:1-8 (19-22) Hebrews 7:23-28 Mark 10:46-52</p> <p>November 4 Ruth 1:1-18 Psalm 146:1-10 Hebrews 9:11-14 Mark 12:28-34</p>	<p>November 11 Psalm 127:1-5 Hebrews 9:24-28 Mark 12:38-44</p> <p>November 18 Psalm 22 Hebrews 10:11-14 (15-18) 19-25 Mark 13:1-8</p> <p>November 25 Psalm 132:1-12 (13-18) Revelation 1:4b-8 John 18:33-37</p>
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