

## &gt;&gt;&gt; SOUTH CHURCH ANDOVER NEWSLETTER &lt;&lt;&lt;

# THE CIRCLE



**boldly embodying God's love and compassion**

## THE WONDER OF IT ALL ADVENT AT SOUTH CHURCH

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In the thick of the Advent rush—when we're coordinating family plans, wrapping gifts, and trying to remember if we already bought batteries for the toys—it's easy to miss the wonder right in front of us.

>>> **READ MORE ON PAGE 15**

"Well, now what are we going to do on Saturdays?" said a four year old POP Club participant. Who would have guessed that the Power of Produce (POP) Kids Club would be such a hit at the farmers market?

# A NOTE FROM DANA

## >>> REDISCOVERING WONDER IN THE WAITING

Good People,

In the thick of the Advent rush—when we're coordinating family plans, wrapping gifts, and trying to remember if we already bought batteries for the toys—it's easy to miss the wonder right in front of us.

But what if cultivating wonder isn't just nice, but necessary? What if awe is actually good for us?

In UC Berkeley professor Dacher Keltner's book called *Awe: The Transformative Power of Everyday Wonder*, he reminds us that cultivating awe unlocks a host of good feelings and makes us healthier mentally and physically.

Keltner and other researchers did studies all over the world, across many different cultures, religions, and income levels, to find out what made people experience awe. From thousands of interviews, he generated this list of the 8 Wonders: nature, music, visual art, spirituality, religion (our collective experience of God), facing our mortality, sudden epiphanies, and finally, moral beauty—which he defines as "witnessing other people's courage, kindness, and strength."

This is one of the best parts of church for me—we get to experience so many of these wonders right here. This community is teeming with moral beauty, music, epiphanies, and collective hope that invites us to see the everyday wonder of God's goodness in our midst.

The Advent story itself is built on wonder. Mary's wonder at the impossible news. Joseph's wonder at choosing trust over fear. The shepherds' wonder at angels breaking through an ordinary night shift. The Magi's wonder at following a star across the desert.

They didn't manufacture these moments. They simply paid attention. They stayed open to surprise. They let themselves be interrupted by mystery.

This Advent, what if we practiced the same? What if instead of pushing through our to-do lists, we paused to notice the wonder around us? The friend who shows up when things fall apart. The music that makes you catch your breath. The moment of silence that settles your soul. The pile of dishes that means people gathered. The twinkle of white lights in pine trees.

The wonder is already here. God's presence is already unfolding in the small, true places of our lives. Our work is simply to notice, to pay attention, to let ourselves be astonished.

As we light our Advent candles these coming weeks, may we cultivate eyes to see the wonder of it all—the courage, the kindness, the strength, the beauty that points us toward the One who is Love itself.

May hope, peace, joy, and love be yours this season,

*Dana*





# REDISCOVER WONDER THIS ADVENT

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The Advent story is built on wonder: Mary's at impossible news, Joseph's at choosing trust over fear, the shepherds' at angels breaking an ordinary night, the Magi's at following a star. They didn't create these moments—they let themselves be interrupted by mystery. Visit [southchurch.com/advent](https://southchurch.com/advent) for details and sign-ups!

**Sun. 11/23 11:00AM Advent Wreath Making & DIY Advent Wreath Kit pick up**  
**5:00-7:00PM Hanging of the Greens (drop in when you can!)**

Sun. 11/30 10:00AM Hope Worship

**Mon. 12/1 7:00PM Art Journaling during Advent begins (weekly through 12/22)**

Sat. 12/6 12:00-6:00PM Winter Holiday Market at South Church

**Sun. 12/7 10:00AM Peace Worship**  
**4:00PM Candlelight Christmas Concert**

Tues. 12/9 7:00-8:30PM Beer and Carols at Oak & Iron (caroling starts at 7:45PM)

**Sun. 12/14 10:00AM Joy Worship with brass, intergenerational choirs, handbells**  
**11:00AM Christmas Pageant Rehearsal (all kids & youth invited!)**  
**4:00PM Christmas Caroling hosted by the Care & Calling Team**

Tues. 12/16 7:00PM Quiet Christmas | A quiet, contemplative service | In-person & Online

**Wed. 12/17 4:30PM HoneyComb/Nectar/Hive Choir Parties**  
**7:30PM Edgewood Christmas Worship Service**

Sun. 12/21 10:00AM Love Worship Christmas Pageant with children's choirs  
1:00PM Middle School Youth Group Christmas Party  
2:30PM Swarm/Sting Choir Party  
3:30PM High School Youth Group Christmas Party

**Wed. 12/24 3:00PM From Words to Wonder: A Nativity in the Making** | A joyful, all-ages service featuring handbells, a children's message, and a visual and narrative retelling of the Nativity.

**5:00PM Festival of Carols** | An all-ages service with abundant Christmas carols, a children's message, and a chamber choir, all guided by our Advent theme of "Wonder"

**10:00PM Candlelight Service** | A classic, traditional service with a string ensemble, the Sanctuary Choir, scripture readings by our young adults as we approach midnight together.

**Office Closed through 1/3**

Sun. 12/28 & 1/4 10:00AM Sunday Worship

**Sun. 1/11 10:00AM Save the date...Star Sunday and Epiphany Brunch**

# GIFTS OF GENEROSITY THIS SEASON

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## >>> GIVING TREE

*Lead by the Community Service Team*

Check in the Narthex, at the front of the church, for our traditional Giving Tree to purchase gifts from children's wish lists from local nonprofits that support youth in our communities.

## >>> HAZEL'S HOLIDAY HEROES

*Lead by the Social Justice Coalition*

The Social Justice Coalition is working with Hazel's Holiday Heroes to create holiday magic for foster children in local group homes this year at a cost of about \$100 per child. If you are interested in supporting this effort, please reach out by Friday, December 5th to Andrea Stidsen at [andrea.stidsen@gmail.com](mailto:andrea.stidsen@gmail.com).

## >>> POINSETTIA: DECEMBER 8TH DEADLINE!

*Lead by the Flower Committee*

Join the decades-old South Church tradition of ordering a poinsettia to decorate our sanctuary for the season! Poinsettia cost \$14 each. After the Dec. 21st service, you may take your plant home or donate it for us to deliver to another member of the church. [Click here to order now](#) or you can order in person on Sundays after worship. Deadline 12/8.



**SCAN TO  
ORDER!**



## MONTHLY MISSION UPDATE

**Thank You**

**Sept: Elevated Thought**  
\$3,086

**Oct: UTEC**  
\$2,248

## NEW HEARING ASSISTANCE OPTIONS NOW AVAILABLE IN THE SANCTUARY

The church now offers two new hearing assistance technologies: **T-Coil** and **Auracast**. Both allow the service audio to transmit directly to compatible hearing aids. To use this feature, your hearing aid must support one of these technologies. Please check with your provider to confirm compatibility and learn how to activate it.

If your hearing aid supports T-Coil, please speak with an usher to receive a receiver. Looking ahead, we encourage you to consider including this capability—especially Auracast—when purchasing new hearing aids. Questions? Contact Marty Mason.



# WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

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## YLISSE BESS AND AUSTIN WASHINGTON

Ylisse and Austin live in Andover with their dog, Paprika-Ylisse. They have enjoyed visiting South Church over the past year and look forward to being part of the South Church community as members.

## MIKE AND JAN BRINK

Mike and Jan are re-newing members. They were members of South Church for 37 years, before moving to Cape Cod, where they lived for 10 years. After recently returning to the area, they wanted to have South Church as their spiritual home once again.

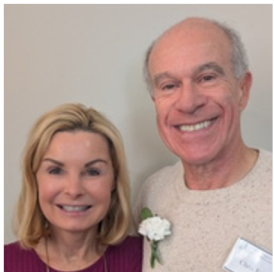
## JASON DAY

Jason is a father of 3 children. He loves music and watching movies. He has had a long difficult journey but has persevered through strength and faith.

## BETH ELLIOTT

Beth lived in rural central Massachusetts for 35 years before joining her daughter and son-in-law in Andover 6 years ago. She is now settled in North Andover and retired from an array of clinical social worker roles. Beth enjoys taking long walks and short mountain hikes, singing with the Ipswich River Community Chorus, and building Magna-Tile houses with her granddaughter.

With periodic time gaps, Beth has been a lifelong UCC participant.

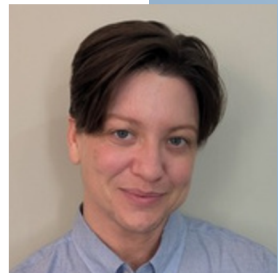


## PATTY FLANAGAN AND CHRIS TALTY

Patty and Chris reside in Methuen with their dog Molly. They have a big, boisterous family with five children and 8 grandchildren. Chris owns a floor covering business and enjoys golf and kayaking. Patty has recently retired from a profession in dentistry and now enjoys time in the kitchen, in the garden, and with her grandchildren.

## K. IVER

K. is a writer and cat parent. They enjoy living in Massachusetts, bird watching, and hiking.

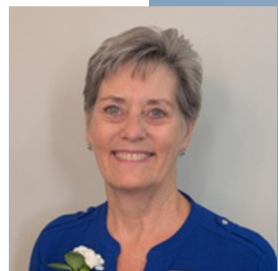


## SHARON AND PAUL LEUZZI

Sharon and Paul moved to Andover 6 years ago. Together they have 5 children and 4 grandchildren. Paul is retired after working 40 years as in-house counsel for various corporations on the East and West Coast. Paul enjoys golf, hiking, biking, kayaking, and photography. Sharon also likes to golf, and also enjoys mahjong and reading.

## LORI VANDERLINDE

Lori recently moved to Andover from Rochester, NY where she worked in the IT. Lori has a son in Rochester and a daughter in North Andover. Since moving here in March, she has been settling into her new condo and exploring all that the Andover area has to offer - Duplicates bridge, pickleball and hiking. Lori first learned of South Church through the Giving Garden where she volunteered this summer.



# FROM MARKET STAND TO MAIN ST.

By Fran Healey

The mission of Andover Farmers Market has always been for it to be more than just a place to buy food. One of the five pillars guiding our decision-making is "economic development" which may sound lofty for a community-based market, but it reflects something real. For 18 weeks each year, AFM facilitates thousands of transactions between neighbors and small local businesses, helping keep money circulating within our community.

This season, our impact took an unexpected turn. We learned that Hummingbird Nutritious Eats, one of our vendors, will be opening a storefront in downtown Andover and that AFM played a role in making it happen.

In the words of founders and owners Chris White and Matt Morrello: "AFM was our first ever farmers market. The support and encouragement received has been so impactful and inspiring that we will be opening a second retail location in downtown Andover. This is a direct result of the success we had at the AFM. AFM went above and beyond to accommodate us, it flowed seamlessly and for that we are forever grateful."

Stories like this remind us why markets matter. When small businesses take root and thrive, they become part of the fabric of a place. They create jobs, enliven streets, and give people another reason to gather. That a Saturday morning market could help spark a permanent downtown presence feels like proof that this kind of community support creates something lasting.

For hundreds of years, South Church in Andover has been a gathering place. Andover Farmers Market is simply the latest chapter in that long story of neighbors coming together. We're grateful to play a small part in keeping that tradition alive.



Hummingbird at the Andover Farmers Market



Hummingbird's newest location at 16 Main Street

## MISSION TRIP REGISTRATION

### >>> HIGH SCHOOL MISSION TRIP 2026

We'll leave from South Church at 5am on Sat., April 18th and return late in the day on Sat., April 25th. No matter where they are on their faith journey, this is a time for all area high schoolers to reflect, build community and meet the face of God in a neighbor they've never known before. Register at [southchurch.com/family](https://southchurch.com/family).



## ➤➤➤ NAVIGATING PURPOSE IN AN AGE OF SPAGHETTI PATHWAYS | EXCERPT

by Michelle Weise

How do we find fulfillment in our work? And perhaps more importantly, how do we find a sense of purpose even when our work doesn't feel purposeful?

Dana and I were asking the same questions. And out of that recognition, the earliest seeds of our podcast, “A Life Worth Working,” were planted. Since that first walk together, we have begun exploring a renewed understanding of calling: one that embraces the messiness, imperfection, and circuitous routes through which people forge meaningful lives.

We call them Spaghetti Pathways—these broken paths that include moments of downshifting, real stuckness, and something that feels like a detour in life. They can also feel like sharp pivots that include deep and wide upskilling to stay ahead of the curve.

Our work lives, we recognize, will not be about building on strengths and moving from one success and certainty to another. Instead, most of us will go through cycles of transformation that require a time of disorientation—of unknowing, of uncertainty. It's not a straight, linear path.

Franciscan Priest Richard Rohr speaks of it as the “wisdom pattern: order, disorder, and reorder,” the title of his 2020 book.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, in *Praying the Psalms*, theologian Walter Brueggemann believes we experience a constant cycle of movement—of “(a) being securely oriented; (b) being painfully disoriented; and (c) being surprisingly reoriented.”<sup>2</sup>

In our podcast, we focus on the disorder and the painful disorientation. We dwell in the messy middle. The mud and the muck is where resilience is born. And it doesn't look Instagram-worthy. But in that stuckness, the most significant learning tends to happen.

And we have been blown away by our guests' willingness to open up and share their most vulnerable moments of stuckness. They've been so generous with us in their ability to linger in that muddy mess of their work lives.

Ultimately, they also see how nothing is wasted: Every experience counts and creates the conditions for new life and growth.

### “Good Work” Is Wonder Work

Again and again in our conversations with guests, a few themes keep emerging. One is simply that the traditional metrics for evaluating “good work”—status, income, prestige—are increasingly inadequate. Instead, meaning and a meaningful life, for many of our guests, have surfaced through wonder. Wonder is essential for curiosity, imagination, and resilience.

Wonder is not merely a fleeting feeling of awe, but a critical posture for living. Damon Davis, an award-winning post-disciplinary artist, chases wonder as a way of life, where art becomes merely the byproduct of a much larger quest for more imagination. Wonder is something to actively cultivate and fiercely protect. He's... continued on next page



## THE SOUL OF WORK: CONTINUED

... less afraid of death than the death of wonder. Without wonder, Damon asserts, “We wither and die.”<sup>3</sup>

Similarly, death doula Meredith Parfet shares her own return to the “ecstatic” and “spiritual wonder” of her younger self—a conscious choice to reengage with the mystery and openness that many of us lose along the way. She describes how she had “tamped down” her spiritual curiosity through the roadmap she had been dutifully following, which led her to a prestigious business school and the world of hedge funds and venture capital. It was only through her confrontation with serious tragedy, loss, and multiple deaths that she found herself really listening to her call to chaplaincy. She began, as she puts it, using a “different part of my brain or a different set of muscles that I’d never used before.” Meredith’s work in end-of-life care is imbued with a reverence for the unknown, a humility that wonder demands.

Korean pop star Soeun Lee embraces wonder as an invitation to a more “life-giving” process. Soeun shares her willingness to inhabit confusion—to step repeatedly into new, unfamiliar spaces. Despite the fact that she could have easily continued a life of celebrity, surrounded by managers, agencies, stylists, and a whole team of people doing things for her, Soeun made a deliberate choice to lean into discomfort and become a novice again. She “had no idea how to be independent,” and felt she owed it to herself to step out of her comfort zone. She moved to another country and started law school as a nobody. Her choice was an intentional embrace of vulnerability: a choice to see uncertainty not as a threat, but as an invitation for more learning.

*“Those who cultivate wonder tend to stretch, grow, and find purpose even in the midst of profound ambiguity.”*

Across these diverse narratives, a pattern emerges: Those who cultivate wonder tend to stretch, grow, and find purpose even in the midst of profound ambiguity.

Collectively, Dana and I have come to see that wonder is not incidental to a life worth working—it is foundational. It demands courage, humility, and a sustained willingness to enter into spaces of discomfort where easy answers are unavailable. Wonder reframes discomfort not as something to be avoided, but as something to be mined for meaning, connection, and growth.

In an age characterized by cynicism and burnout, the question—how do we keep a sense of wonder, curiosity, and vulnerability alive?—feels urgent and necessary. Wonder, in this sense, is a discipline: a way of moving through the world with courage rather than control; with openness rather than being closed in ourselves.

### The Power of Release

Many of our interviewees discuss the role of release—the moment they break free from external expectations, internal constraints, or unexamined paths. Release is not always a dramatic rupture; often, it is a quiet but decisive shift in posture—a willingness to relinquish what no longer serves in order to embrace possibility, agency, and authenticity.

Read the rest of the essay, published recently in the [Notre Dame’s Virtues & Vocations](#) magazine, [here](#).



# SHARED SPACES, SHARED JOY

## >>> A HUB OF ACTIVITY AT SOUTH CHURCH

by Nora Pelt, Communications Administrator

Every week, South Church buzzes with life—not just from our own programs, but from the many groups and individuals who rent our space. We hear the joyful cries of babies and toddlers from the Merrimack Valley YMCA Childcare fill the halls. Each evening, I hear a little one yell “Dad, see if you can find me!” She always hides in the same place, just inside the door of Fellowship Hall, only to squeal with delight when she is found—reminding us that small moments can bring big joy.

Our building hosts a vibrant mix of renters each week: six different instructors hosting music students, little ones enjoying music and movement across seven class options, Spanish language lessons, and chess club. Adults fill the space with yoga, rehearsals for two community choral groups, and Alcoholics Anonymous. Monthly gatherings bring together PFLAG, the Andover Garden Club, local musicians for jam sessions, and children from the Chinese Learning Center.

This year, our renters also include four groups holding concerts for the first time at South Church, a recycling presentation, a 100+ person birthday party, and the Russian School of Math using Fellowship Hall as a local site for an international math competition.

Thanks to our welcoming, accessible, and affordable spaces, **rental income has grown 151.5% since 2022**—and interest keeps growing. If you’re curious about yoga, Spanish lessons, daycare, chess club, or learning more about any of our renters, reach out. I’d love to help you get connected.



Music Together.  
Around the Towns



# 550 HOURS OF SERVICE!

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➤➤➤ ONE DAY! ONE PURPOSE! TOGETHER! 172 VOLUNTEERS!



Recently, our church family came together with the community for the 26th Annual Day of Service—a powerful tradition that brings together people of all ages to serve, share, and celebrate community. 172 volunteers provided an incredible 550 hours of service led by **Event Leaders David Strong and Chris Dunn**, and supported by an incredible team of **Project Leaders—Ellen Arvidson, Kathleen Curry, Gary Gearin, Betsy Hopkins, Amy Joyall, Maureen Johnson, Marianne Knowles, Lysanne LaPierre, Ben Li, Robin Murray, Cindy Ozirsky, Emily Strong**—the day reflected the best of what happens when faith turns into action. A highlight reel video, created by Lucas and Justin Bacchi, beautifully captured the energy and joy of the day.

## Singing at Marland Place and Woodlands at Edgewood

Our singers brought music and smiles to 45 seniors across two residences. With 22 singers, they filled the rooms with warmth and connection—showing that music is one of the most uplifting forms of service.

## Habitat for Humanity

At the Hamilton build site, 9 hardworking volunteers spent the day framing and decking porches for the ongoing project of five duplexes for ten families. Two homes are already complete, and seeing progress firsthand reminded volunteers of the life-changing impact of affordable housing.

## The Giving Garden

A dedicated team of 12 volunteers harvested 186 pounds of greens, prepared two beds for winter, and even smashed 25 pumpkins for compost—turning fall abundance into nourishment for the seasons ahead.

## AVIS Deer Jump Reservation

A large crew of about 15 adults and 15 scouts from Troop 73 joined forces to plant 100 native plants as part of a restoration project. With AVIS leaders Amy Janovsky, Annie Gilbert, Lynn Landry, and Rich Bizzozero onsite, the team's efforts were met with heartfelt gratitude and admiration.

## ABC House

A team of 10 volunteers tackled outdoor cleanup, installed a new Little Free Library, moved AC units, and assembled furniture—sprucing up both the house and the yard... *continued on next page*





## 550 HOURS OF SERVICE: CONTINUED

### ... Lazarus House Projects

Volunteers served in multiple ways across Lazarus House ministries. Five volunteers cooked pancakes, bacon and French toast casserole for 40 guests. Four volunteers scrubbed 16 tables and 64 chairs and sorted 12–15 boxes of donations. Three long-time volunteers prepared a hearty American Chop Suey dinner with salad, garlic bread, and apple crisp for 23 residents.

### Care Packages

Kids and adults helped the Care and Calling Team assemble and decorate 16 care bags and deliver them to church friends who could use a little extra love this season.

### Neighbors in Need

Our community-wide Thanksgiving Share-A-Meal food collection for Neighbors in Need began with Day of Service and wrapped up on Nov. 16th. We brought in an astounding 2670 pounds of food and \$6,425 in gift card and cash donations!

### Raking Crew

People from the community along with Troop 79 created a 23 member leaf raking team that spread out across multiple homes, tackling yards big and small with hard work and laughter.

### Celebration Dinner

The day concluded with a joyful Celebration Dinner attended by 68 people, with 4 meals delivered to friends unable to attend. With 27 volunteers preparing everything from baked beans to mac and cheese, the evening was full of gratitude, fellowship, and song. The slideshow and the DoS Choir's closing numbers—"This Land Is Your Land" and "This Little Light of Mine"—brought the perfect finale to a day defined by compassion, teamwork, and light.

Here's to 26 years of shining that light!



# FAITHS MEET & FUTURES FORM

## >>> LESSONS FROM AUBURN SEMINARY'S EMERGING LEADERS PROGRAM

By The Rev. Genevieve Hosterman, Associate Pastor

This Fall, I had the honor of participating in the Emerging Leaders Program, through Auburn Seminary, which brings together young clergy and faith leaders from Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, for dialogue, skill development, and community. The program began this past October with a four day gathering at Washington National Cathedral. Over the course of the next year, I'll also meet online with my cohort once a month for classes centered around theology, community organizing, and adaptive leadership.

My cohort enjoyed lots of time together, both during and outside of the day's programming. We talked about everything— from our religious and cultural backgrounds, to protest and resistance strategies, to our favorite reality television shows.

While we were together, we participated in a simulation in which we split into small groups and drafted a community action plan to address the rise of a group referred to as “The Powers,” whose authoritarian messaging was gaining popularity in our imaginary community. From the beginning, we were all very aware of the similarities between this imaginary scenario and our own current moment, and it felt powerful to sit down and problem solve with others about how best to respond. My small group's proposal centered around building a network of community gardens across the country— my heart was with the Giving Garden during our planning sessions!



We also had the opportunity to sit down with Rev. Mariann Budde, the Episcopal priest and Bishop of Washington D.C., who gained some notoriety for her sermon at the interfaith prayer service for Trump's inauguration last April. I asked her, **“How do you remain connected to the oppressed while serving in such proximity to wealth and power?”** She responded (paraphrased), **“There's really no substitute for spending time serving others and hearing their stories. If it's not possible to do the direct work, stay close to those who are.”**

A group of us slipped away before we left D.C. to tour Washington National Cathedral, where I lit a candle for South Church and held you all in gratitude and prayer. I returned to Andover feeling inspired and equipped, ready to see where our work as a church might take us next!





# THE GIVING GARDEN THRIVED IN 2025!

By Emily Strong, Garden Manager

This year we expanded, upgraded, and welcomed even more people to help feed our neighbors. On our half-acre plot in North Andover, we invite everyone to roll up their sleeves and join in growing food for our community. With the help of over 700 volunteers and three incredible interns, we harvested more than 17,000 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables this year. Each pound represents a connection between volunteers, neighbors, and the community we serve.

We expanded our education programs, bringing in groups of kids from 12 different schools, clubs, or programs, including Squashbusters, Lawrence Boys and Girls Club, and Lawrence Family Development Charter School.

>>> 17,000+ POUNDS

We also celebrated 10 years of growing with a sold-out Gala in October. The funds raised that evening will help us grow even more in 2026. We're deeply grateful to everyone who has helped the garden flourish over the years, whether by planting seeds, breaking a sweat, or just showing up with open hearts.

With all this growth comes new leadership opportunities. While the Giving Garden remains a project of South Church, we have formed a Board of Directors to guide the garden's future and strengthen its governance. We're seeking involvement from both South Church and the wider community. If you're interested in learning more about our Board of Directors or Fundraising Committee, contact us at [info@givinggardenma.org](mailto:info@givinggardenma.org).

Please follow us on social media as we will share updates and job postings in 2026!

Instagram: @scgivinggarden

Facebook: Giving Garden at Rolling Ridge



# BETTER THAN EIGHTEEN HOLES

## »»» GOD HAS A PLAN (EVEN FOR SIDE ROADS)

By Rob Heinze, Student Minister

You may have noticed I'm not your typical seminarian intern serving as a Student Minister at South Church. At least some of you were surprised at my gray hair and beard. At one point, I was asked if I was dropping off my son. It's been pointed out that I'm not a spring chicken. I'll be the first to admit it's rather unusual to go to seminary after retiring. I've been asked if it's difficult to be an intern at my age. (It's not.) Some people retire to play golf. For me, my role here at South Church is better than playing eighteen holes at Indian Ridge.

While I first heard a call to the ministry when I was 17, I quickly learned I wasn't ready for it just yet. I did other things instead; taking a lot of side roads that led to dead ends. On my refrigerator there is a magnet that says, "God has already factored my stupidity into my destiny." That you are reading this today is proof of that. Psalm 18:2 says, "The Lord is my protector; he is my strong fortress. My God is my protection, and with him I am safe." Indeed, the Lord has kept me safe through many adventures.

It has been an interesting and eventful fifty-year journey that led to finally answering God's call to seminary. I hold fast to the words of Psalm 138:8: "The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me; your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of your hands." I believe that it is only through God's providence that I find myself interning at South Church. There is reason for me to be here. That reason, like so many others in life, is yet to be determined. My experience so far has been one of wonder and delight under the tutelage of Pastors Dana and Genna. I feel genuinely welcomed and supported by everyone I encounter. My hope is that, as I learn and gain experience and build confidence, I can be a worthy servant and a blessing to this community. God's peace be with you.



# FINDING WORSHIP AGAIN

## »»» CLERGY NEED WORSHIP, TOO

Did you know that **19 ordained clergy are connected with South Church**? This year, we began a practice of sending cards to each of them on their ordination anniversaries, honoring their calls and celebrating the gifts they bring to our community. The Rev. Heather Prince Doss, a Presbyterian pastor and friend of South Church, recently reflected on her own ordination anniversary. After leaving congregational ministry to pursue a new calling, she wrote:

*"One of the great gifts of these past 18 months has been finding my way back to that young love. For several months I did not go to church at all. Then, with a strange sense of anxiety, I occasionally slipped into the pews... For a year of Sundays, something in worship sent a tear running down my cheek... Hymn after hymn, sermon after sermon, feast after feast, it felt good to let the holy mysteries do their work on my soul. I didn't have to construct or plan any of it. All of it was a gift. After seventeen years of church leadership, finding a place in the pew feels a lot like coming home to myself."*

What a beautiful reminder that **clergy need the gift of worship too**—the chance to simply receive, to be held by the community, and to let the mysteries do their work. We are deeply grateful for all the clergy who call South Church home.



# 466 SMILES AT THE MARKET

»»» **"WELL, NOW WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ON SATURDAYS?"  
A 4 YEAR OLD POP CLUB PARTICIPANT**

by Jennifer Bouchard



Who would have guessed that the Power of Produce (POP) Kids Club would be such a hit at the farmers market? 2025 marked the launch of the Power of Produce (POP) Club at the Andover Farmers Market which gave kids ages 4-12 \$3 in tokens (aka POP Bucks) each week to buy their own fruits and vegetables.

Created on the West Coast, at the Oregon City Farmers Market, POP Club provides a fun way for children to engage in the local food system through conversations directly with farmers and exposure to (hopefully) new fruits and vegetables.

The Club's weekly activities, planned and coordinated by Haley Joyall, our amazing POP Club Manager, complemented each week's market theme. From "guess the watermelon weight" contest to a two-bite taste challenge (home roasted pumpkin

seeds vs. store bought pumpkin seeds), mystery box, scavenger hunts, and colorful crafts, there was always something for kids to explore and enjoy.

Over the course of the season, 466 children participated in POP Club, and the Market distributed \$4,800 in POP Bucks, which in turn went to support our farms. We are grateful for our amazing farms that partnered with us and made sure that there were items for kids each week.

As the season came to a close, the success of POP Club was clear—not just in the numbers, but in the smiles, sticky hands, and proud kids walking away with their bags full of fresh produce.

Parents shared, "We appreciated the program a lot. It was motivating for our child to attend the market and shop for food, as well as to learn the habit of saving to be able to purchase something he wanted to try." Another parent said, "The girl who ran this booth was so welcoming and friendly. My daughter loved how she remembered her name every week. Very impressive!"

Haley reflected, "As the POP Club manager this season, I had the opportunity to connect with 466 young people in our community and help them engage with their local food system. POP Club was an opportunity for children to learn outside of a classroom environment and I hope they all took away some sort of lesson, whether about buying and eating produce, finding their voice to speak up to farmers, or keeping track of and budgeting their tokens week to week. It was a great privilege to work with such amazing kids, watching as they grew more confident, curious, and excited to show up to the market week after week. I look forward to hearing how many participants return for POP Club 2026!"

The Andover Farmers Market looks forward to another bountiful season of learning, laughter, and local flavor in 2026. Until then, thank you to all the families, farmers, volunteers, and supporters who helped make our first POP Club year a success!

# DID YOU KNOW...

## >>> NO TAXATION... AND A SHOCKING DEATH

By Char Lyons, South Church Historian

That American Revolutionary patriot **James Otis**, the man who coined the phrase “No Taxation Without Representation,” died in Andover in 1783—struck by lightning?

While standing in the doorway of the Capt. Isaac Osgood home at 116 Osgood Street during a thunderstorm, the house was hit by lightning, and James Otis was killed. Oddly, three months earlier he had written his sister that he feared he would be “killed by thunder”! This patriot gave his life for America. Two hundred fifty years later, as we celebrate our country’s history, we investigate this unusual story.

James Otis was a fierce patriot and lawyer, feared by the British for his quick wit and his ability to put the Crown in a poor light. He harangued the courts over the Tea Party incident and loudly pointed out the many wrongs taken against the public.

In 1769, Otis came to blows with a British officer and was caned over the head with such force that he never fully recovered mentally. He was sent to live with his Freemason friend, Capt. Isaac Osgood, in Andover, where he spent his remaining days in relative care. James’s son and Isaac’s son were friends with South Church’s second pastor, Rev. Jonathan French, another fierce patriot, and Samuel Phillips, Jr. They supported James’s physical, mental, and spiritual health with dignity for a beloved and respected patriot.

### The real details...

Otis had mood disorders, noted in the journals of John and Samuel Adams:

*“Otis is fiery and fev’rous. His imagination flames, his passions blaze. He is liable to great inequalities of temper—sometimes in despondency, sometimes in a rage.”* – John Adams, December 23, 1765



Portrait of James Otis, 1755, age 30

His fiery temperament and sharp words were both the source of his infamy with the British officer. His family and friends had already mapped out his future at Osgood farm in Andover.

Several Osgoods were ministers, doctors, or politicians—a good network. Dr. Daniel How, a physician specializing in mental illness, at least following Otis’s death, Andover became known for innovation in mental health care with mental illnesses. His cousin, Dr. Daniel Osgood, was a leading figure. The connection between patriotism and mental health care makes it clear about Osgood. Later, Benjamin Franklin even brought his “troubled” nephew to Dr. French.

Peter Otis died in Dr. Osgood’s home and is buried in South Church’s cemetery. His reputation was preserved, and when he died—“by lightning”—it was seen as a sacrifice who had sacrificed so much for the cause of American liberty.

### A reality check...

James was indeed standing on the... *continued on next page*



## NO TAXATION... AND A SHOCKING DEATH: CONTINUED

... threshold of the home during a storm. Lightning hit the house, leaving burn marks still visible in the entryway. No one else in the house was affected, nor did the house or surrounding trees catch fire. He was found dead in the doorway, with no exit burn wounds, and his shoes still on—a common effect of a lightning strike. Most likely, he died of a heart attack, either from sheer fright or the concussive shock of being that close to the strike.

The lightning story makes a good tale, and if that was what people believed at the time, so be it. It also allowed his mental health struggles to be honored with dignity. Let the legacy remain: he gave up his mental health defending our rights and went out in a dramatic fashion. As John Adams wrote of his death:

*"Otis was as extraordinary in death as in life....He has left a character that will never die while the memory of the American Revolution remains."*

Today, on the Freedom Trail in Boston, Otis's headstone is prominently displayed in Granary Burial Yard on Tremont Street, right next to Samuel Adams. You may hear stories that his head wound required a lead plate, which poisoned him and somehow conducted lightning to kill him. Not only is there no proof, but lead is a poor electrical conductor. The truth: Otis's "distraction" and mood disorders were both his blessing and his curse.

The group **Revolutionary Spaces** in Boston contacted me last spring to research mental health and care in the early days of our nation. They have an exhibit at the Old South Church on Washington Street. I am pleased to be noted as a contributor. You can [find it online](#) under *Patriot, Hero, Distracted Person: James Otis, Jr. and Mental Health in the Eighteenth Century* or *Why Did James Otis, Jr. Live in Andover, Massachusetts? Explore the Town Where the Famous Patriot Spent His Last Years*.

And now you know...

The Osgood family home, one of Andover's oldest historic buildings and the site where James Otis was killed, was scheduled for demolition on Monday, November 10, 2025.



## ALL MEMBERS ARE MINISTERS

### PASTORAL STAFF

The Rev. Dana Allen Walsh, Senior Pastor  
The Rev. Genevieve Hosterman, Associate Pastor  
Sherry Tupper, Minister of Visitation  
Cathy Meyer, Minister of Music  
Taylor Graffum, Minister of Youth and Families

### LAY LEADERSHIP

Dennis Forgue, Moderator  
Anne Hemmer, Treasurer

### SUPPORT STAFF

Nora Pelt, Communications Administrator  
Andy Brien, Facilities Manager  
Amy Morris, Assistant Office Administrator  
Nicole Sirignano, Finance Administrator

### DIRECTORS OF YOUTH CHOIRS

Michaela Barczak  
Sara Durkin  
Shannon Eldridge  
Adrien Jippov

# NEW IN OUR CHURCH LIBRARY

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By Carol-Georgine West, South Church Librarian

## CHILDREN

*They She He Me: Free to Be!* by Maya Gonzalez. A book about pronouns and gender fluidity, identity, and kindness. Stresses the freedom to be who one believes oneself to be. Ages 2-8. J305.3 GON

*It's Okay to Be Different* by Todd Parr. Describes different ways of being different, and how that's okay because that's what makes you special. Ages 2-5. JFIC PAR

## YOUTH

*Alex As Well* by Alyssa Brugman. Alex thinks she's a girl, others think she's a boy. So, Alex sets out to create a new identity. About exploring gender and sexuality, handling friendships, and finding a place to belong. YFIC BRU

*Symptoms of Being Human* by Jeff Garvin. Riley identifies sometimes as a boy and sometimes as a girl. So, Riley creates a blog to vent feelings and describe what it's like to be gender fluid. A story of a teen struggling with high school, relationships, and being a person. YFIC GAR

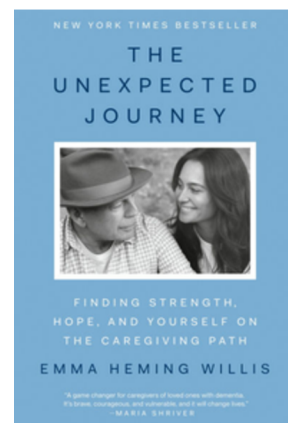
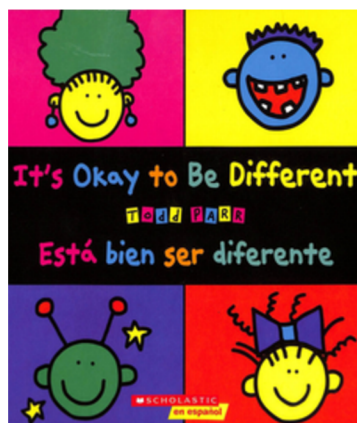
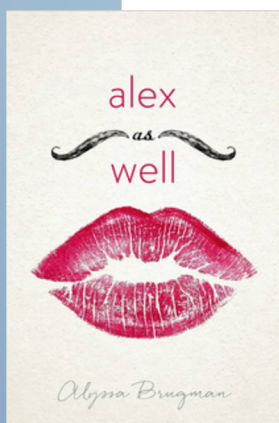
*The Moon Within* by Aida Salazar. Celi is trying to navigate friendships, family, and growing up, as her body changes. Her mother pushes for an ancestral ritual, and Celi tries to take a stand for who she wants to be. YFIC SAL

## ADULT

*The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* by Ilan Pappé. Israeli historian and activist Pappé offers evidence to prove that Israel's founding in 1947-1949 resulted in the massacre of civilians and a million indigenous people forced to leave their homes. 956.9405 PAP

*Ten Myths About Israel* by Ilan Pappé. Israeli historian and activist Pappé deconstructs common-held beliefs about Israel—its founding and existence—and suggests how to move forward towards peace. 956.94 PAP

*The Unexpected Journey: Finding Strength, Hope, and Yourself on the Caregiving Path* by Emma Heming Willis. Willis describes the journey, as the family learns of Bruce's frontotemporal dementia. Whether you're trying to navigate FTD or another form of dementia, this book will serve as a much-needed guide for the caregiver. It includes Willis' personal experience, as well as the latest research and insights from the world's top dementia, caregiving, and integrative experts. 649 WIL





# THE STEEPLE IS LIT IN LOVING MEMORY OF

19

## >>> IN DECEMBER

**Jim Carpentier and his parents Marian and Al Carpentier**  
by the Batchelder and Carpentier families

**Our parents, Everett and Dorothy Dearborn**  
by Deborah D. Brent, David Dearborn, Peter Dearborn and their families

**Reed Holton Henderson**  
by Mom, Dad and Luke

**Our beloved father/grandfather Gary LaPierre & parents/grandparents Al & Colette Hudson**  
by Lysanne, Dean, Nicole & Cameron LaPierre

**Our parents and to honor our children and grandchildren**  
by Laura and Dale Lattanzio

**Walter and Barbara Schoen**  
by their daughter, Sheryl Poole

## >>> IN JANUARY

**Ted and Mildred Nowell**  
by their family

**My father Wilfred Hemmer, mother Patricia Hemmer, and brother Mike Hemmer.**  
I miss you every day. Love, Anne Hemmer

## >>> IN FEBRUARY

**Aunt Ann & Uncle Harry Newton and their son Wayne T. Newton**  
by their nieces Rachel Cloutier, Karen Foster-Gervacio and Cheryl Foster and Wayne's wife JoAnn Latvaitis

**Donald and Janyce Sagaser**  
by their family

*Please let us know if you would like to "light the steeple" in memory of one of your loved ones.*



# CARING

## >>> CONDOLENCES TO

Marilyn Fitzgerald on the death of her husband, **Ernie A. Calverley Jr.**, who passed away on August 26th.

## >>> IN GRATITUDE

Thank you for offering parking spaces for our High Holiday services at Havurat Shalom. Your generosity is greatly appreciated. *Ed Schoen, Co-President*

We are grateful for the Day of Service volunteers for blowing away all our leaves and for the many others who have checked in with us and brought food and cheer. *Love, Kelly Ferguson and David Pace*

Thank you so much for thinking of me as I mourn my dad. Your note and flowers remind me that I am not going through this alone. *Taisha*

## SOUTH CHURCH WOMEN'S RETREAT 2026

January 30 - February 1, 2026

## CENTERED IN COMPASSION

Compassion for Self  
Compassion for Others  
Compassion for the World

Rolling Ridge Retreat Center  
North Andover, MA  
Register by December 1st.



[southchurch.com/retreat](https://southchurch.com/retreat)

European Style  
Indoor & Outdoor Market

## Andover Holiday Market

DECEMBER 6TH

12 - 6 PM

SOUTH CHURCH

41 Central Street  
Andover, MA

Proceeds benefit

