



# Second Press

Volume 41 Issue 2 February 2024

Dear Friends in Christ,

As we begin the season of Lent on Ash Wednesday, February 14, let us recall the words of the Apostle Paul delivered to us all in Philippians 4:6-7:

*There is no need to worry; but if there is anything you need, pray for it, asking God for it with prayer and thanksgiving, and that peace of God, which is so much greater than we can understand, will guard your hearts and your thoughts, in Christ Jesus.*



Fred Holbrook  
Interim Pastor

Our world desperately needs peace. When seeking it, we are blessed by the writings and wisdom of the late Henri Nouwen. In his book, *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life*, he describes the Christian life as a journey of reaching out to our innermost self, reaching out to our fellow human beings, and reaching out to God. The third movement of the Spirit, reaching out to God, requires three “rules”—contemplative reading of the word of God, a silent listening to the voice of God, and a trusting obedience to a spiritual guide. “Without the Bible, without silent time, and without someone to direct us, finding our way to God is very hard and practically impossible.”

According to John Calvin, father of Presbyterianism, Lent is a “superstitious observance.” He believed that fasting, denying oneself food during Lent, was a practice that was developed by the church but not taught by Christ. One blogger, when reading this excerpt from Calvin’s *Institutes*, wrote, “Calvin is a moron!” That is a little harsh. But I believe Lent can be a time of drawing our focus to the scriptures, to silence, and to guidance provided by a spiritual director. God really wants a “fast of the heart,” a time when, as Theophan the Recluse (1815-1894) wrote: “one must descend with the mind into the heart, and there stand before the face of the Lord, ever present, all seeing within you.” The Russian Orthodox Church has given us the gift of “The Jesus Prayer” which helps us draw our mind deeper and deeper into the presence of Christ. The Jesus Prayer is, “Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy upon me.” “Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy upon me.” Over and over, we are invited to pray this prayer—audibly, softly, with every breath. This is a gift and, when practiced, Lent becomes a deeper journey and life itself is richer and fuller.

So, as the season of Lent begins, let us read the word of God contemplatively. Let us be silent and listen for the voice of God. Let us identify a spiritual guide or director and be obedient to the wisdom that they share. Whether participating in Second Pres downtown or online, I invite you to listen, really listen for God to speak.

In Christ’s Service,

Fred A. Holbrook, D.Min.  
Interim Pastor

## Adult Education in February | 9:30-10:30am

### Dining Room Class

- February 4** Eliminating Racism in the Next Generation:  
The Sprout School with Kathleen Eastman, Director
- February 11** Author Margaret Edds comes to Second Presbyterian Church to discuss her book, *What the Eyes Can't See: Ralph Northam, Black Resolve, and a Racial Reckoning in Virginia*



### Lent | Cross Examinations: Atonement Theologies Past and Present

- February 18** First Sunday in Lent  
Part 1: Anselm and Satisfaction Atonement ~ with Roger Gench
- February 25** Second Sunday in Lent  
Part 2: Abelard and Moral Influence Atonement ~ with Roger Gench

## February 25



Please plan to attend the Annual Congregation Meeting after worship on Sunday, February 25.

We will elect our new officers for the Class of 2027 and share the annual report for 2023.

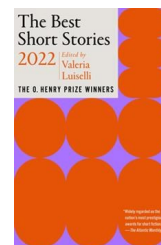
## Faith and Literature Class

Second's Faith & Literature adult Sunday school class will continue reading and discussing *Best Short Stories of 2022: The O. Henry Prize Winners* through the end of March.

As always, our class will be looking for themes of faith and spirituality in these stories.

Our discussions happen simultaneously in person and via Zoom each Sunday morning.

Newcomers are always welcome at any time! For more information, please contact Dan Ream at [danream@gmail.com](mailto:danream@gmail.com).



## Children's Church School | 9:30 am

### Children's Church School | For children, ages 4 years to 5th Grade | 9:30am-10:45am

Join Ms. Laura, Ms. Maggie, and Rev. Paul for Children's Choir and Sunday School.

All are welcome!

We created 5 cents a meal piggy banks in church school.

Please bring your 5 cents a meal collection and place it in the offering plates on the first Sunday of each month!

1st Sunday of the Month — Music Time and Family **Worship** Service with Communion

2nd Sunday of the Month — Music Time and Church School | **Art**

3rd Sunday of the Month — Music Time and Church School | **Mission**

4th Sunday of the Month — Music Time and Church School | **Drama**

[5th Sunday of the Month] — Music Time and Church School | **STEM**

## Youth

### Youth Group | 6th grade through 12th grade | 9:30am-10:45am

Join Annabelle and Andrew for Youth Group every Sunday in the youth suite!

Waffles, conversation, and Bible study at 9:30am.

**Youth Sunday will be on February 25<sup>th</sup> this year.**

Please pray for our youth as they prepare and create the service, and surround our senior, Benjamin Lomeling, with prayers as he prepares to preach.

We give thanks for the leadership of our youth.



## Spotlight on Maggie Parrott



In 2022, Maggie Parrott graduated from VCU with a master's degree in social work, after graduating with a master of divinity degree from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary in 2021.

During the week, Maggie serves as a treatment specialist at the UMFS Child and Family Healing Center, where she is responsible for creating programming for teens in residential treatment, offering therapeutic care and assistance through treatment, and managing a support team. She enjoys spending time with teens at UMFS doing mindfulness activities (art and crafts are her favorite), teaching life skills, and building relationships across conflict with the teens and their families using collaborative problem solving.

On Sundays, "Ms. Maggie" is ever present on our children's ministry team. She supports Ms. Laura and Rev. Paul as they offer dynamic programming leading children in forming their faith.

Maggie is an Episcopalian seeking ordination, with God's help. As she continues through this labyrinth closer to God's call, she enjoys engaging in what God is up to at Second Pres and in downtown RVA. She has a deep love for building relationships, learning new things, and anything you can buy at Trader Joe's!

## PNC Corner

The PNC (Pastor Nominating Committee) received their training from Leigh Anne Ring, Presbytery of the James Presbyter of Relational Care on January 4.

Since that time, the committee has organized a path of work, including studying the Mission Study and drafting the Ministry Discernment Profile, a church profile that the Session will review and approve. The Moderator of the PNC is Lucretia McCulley, the Associate Moderator is Mary Sue Donahue, and the PNC Clerk is Jed Dutton.

We begin and end our meetings with prayer and we appreciate the congregation's ongoing prayers and support as we seek a Pastor/Head of Staff for Second Presbyterian.

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## Shower Ministry Warmth

As the winter months continue, our guests' hands and feet are cold. Please consider donating more men's and women's gloves and socks.




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## Looking for Pace Center meal volunteers

Many hands make light work--we're looking for 10+ volunteers to help us make a meal on **Wednesday, March 13**, for the VCU students who attend the Pace Center. The Center is an inclusive, collaborative ministry of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the United Methodist Church. Over 50 students attend the "Stories & Lunch" gathering each week. Contact [sandra@sandrashelley.com](mailto:sandra@sandrashelley.com) if you can help or if you have questions. Thank you!

Over VCU's winter break, two college students and the Rev. Russ Kerr attended the Montreat College Conference, an annual Presbyterian (USA) campus ministry conference for ministries throughout the Southeast. The group learned about the "necessary risks" to take in following God and Christ in a divided world. Pace's students returned refreshed and excited for a new semester at VCU!




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## Season of Lent Artwork

from the Gallery at Second Pres

Call for artwork! There's still time to submit works of art!

The theme for this season of Lent is *Wandering Heart: Figuring out Faith with Peter*.

Think about your body of work, do you have any works that speak to the challenges and variations of a journey of faith? Perhaps the work is abstract and represents emotional discord or discord in the world. Perhaps the artwork is representational, showing the love of God made manifest. Maybe you created the work during a difficult time. Peter goes through many emotions and approaches in his time with Jesus.

As we look at Jesus' ministry through Peter's eyes this Lent, describe in your artist's statement the process of creating the work. Write about the challenges you found along the way. Delineate how you overcame or moved through and beyond those challenges to create the final work of art. If you sense a connection to your own journey of faith or Peter's, describe that connection, if you are comfortable sharing. Submit up to four pieces of art by February 14. Pick up a submission form from the hall table at parking deck entrance. Please put your artwork and completed submission forms in The Studio on the third floor.

If you have any questions, please email [hgarrity@2presrichmond.org](mailto:hgarrity@2presrichmond.org).





## Prayer Vigil Against Gun Violence

We celebrate that **over 35 people** connected to Second Pres gathered at the state capitol in the swirling snow on MLK Day to join the prayer vigil against gun violence.

The Mission and Advocacy Council issued a call to attend this important gathering to add our voices and active prayers—and you answered with **faith and fortitude!**

Thanks be to God for a church family that shows up to support peace and the welfare of our community.

Photo from the Monday, January 15 group, before heading to the bell tower at the state capitol to join the prayer vigil against gun violence.

## Noack Organ Work

Some months ago the Session approved a proposal for extensive repairs and upgrades to our wonderful Noack organ.

The Noack Organ Company, which is undertaking the work under the supervision of owner Didier Grassin, arrived two weeks ago to remove the Swell division, so you may notice that the instrument doesn't sound quite like itself at the moment. We expect the organ work to be completed by Easter, so thank you for your forbearance whilst this work is underway.



On February 4 & 18 we will be selling Equal Exchange Fair Trade Coffee and Tea in the chapel after worship. We sell this at cost in support of small farmers making a living wage working through co-ops in Central and South America. Buy some for yourself, or as a gift for our Shower Ministry, whose guests love this coffee. Our prices are \$9 per bag for coffee and \$5 per box for tea.

To arrange local home delivery at no extra charge, contact Dan Ream at [danream@gmail.com](mailto:danream@gmail.com).

### Brunch Bunch ~

**Friday, February 16 ~ 11:30am**

at McLean's Restaurant

### March Newsletter Deadline

The deadline for submissions for the next newsletter is **Monday, February 19.**

Please send to:

[wjacob@2presrichmond.org](mailto:wjacob@2presrichmond.org)

## Literary Circle

Tuesday, February 13 at 7:00pm

Literary Circle will meet Tuesday, February 13 at 7:00pm at the home of Nancy Millsaps (1804 Norris Lane, 23226).

Elva Mapp will lead the discussion of *Ban This Book* by Alan Gratz.

Please contact Carolyn Brandt ([crbrandt1412@gmail.com](mailto:crbrandt1412@gmail.com) or 804-288-2511) for more information.

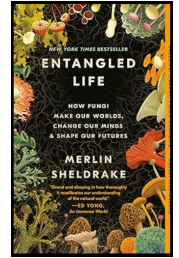


## Day Book Group

Wednesday, February 21 at 10:00am

The Day Book Group will meet at 10:00am, Wednesday, February 21 in Room 308 Virginia Building and by Zoom.

The book for discussion is *Entangled Life* by Merlin Sheldrake.



## What are Special Offerings? Why do we receive them?

Four times a year, Second Presbyterian Church participates in the special offerings of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Through these offerings, received across the denomination, we live out our calling to be a Matthew 25 church. By giving to these offerings we witness to Christ and together we have a collective impact as we further the ministry of the Presbyterian Church,

**One Great Hour of Sharing** is the single largest way that Presbyterians come together every year to build a better world by providing relief from disasters (Presbyterian Disaster Assistance), addressing hunger (Presbyterian Hunger Program), and empowering others (Self-Development of People). Received on **Easter**.

**Pentecost** helps children at risk, youth, and young adults. Half of this offering is designated by Second Pres for at-risk children in Richmond. Received on **Pentecost**.

**Peace and Global Witness** is received on **World Communion Sunday** and promotes ministries of peace and reconciliation, especially in cultures of violence and conflict. Half of this offering is designated by Second Pres for an international partner addressing these issues.

**Christmas Joy Gift** provides financial assistance to church workers and their families and also equips communities of color to build leaders by enabling them to attend Presbyterian schools and colleges. Received beginning with the **third Sunday of Advent**.

In addition to our pledges and giving to Second Presbyterian Church, we give to these four offerings to extend God's work through our denomination. Plan now to give to all four that God's love may reach even further, to make a difference, a greater difference than we can do by ourselves.

## Session Highlights

At its December 16, 2023 meeting, the session took the following actions:

1. Approved a utilization policy for the "Child Care Center" Fund including renaming it the "McDowell Fund" in honor of the bequest by John McDowell. The McDowell Fund is a board-restricted fund. The assets of the McDowell Fund shall be used to support the Sprout School at Second Pres and its mission serving its students. In this regard, its uses should serve the Sprout School children and staff in transformative and meaningful ways related to the children's education and experience at the school. Disbursements from the earnings of the McDowell Fund require approval of the Mission and Advocacy Council. Should the Sprout School at Second Pres cease to exist, or cease to be associated with the church, the McDowell Fund will be used to support children's education generally, with an emphasis on education provided to children regardless of income.
2. Dissolved the Child Care Center Taskforce with gratitude and great thanks. Members who served were Cherry Peters, Mac Pence, Sheri Highfill, Cathy Howard, Gene Roland, and Hannah Garrity.

## Session Highlights (continued)

3. Approved the cost of up to 20 spaces in the parking deck for Sprout School teachers and staff to be withheld monthly from the payout to Second Pres. The provision of parking to the School was one of the provisions of the Affiliation Agreement between the YWCA (owners of the School) and Second Pres.
4. Received as information the treasurer's report (Carolyn Brandt) stating that expenses for October 2023 were less than budgeted and income was greater than budgeted, resulting in a surplus of over \$18,000. Best of all, pledge income exceeded the budgeted amount for the month by over \$37,000 and there was no need to supplement income by allocating prepaid pledges.
5. Budget and Finance Council (Anne McDonnell, chair): The final 2021 financial review document is complete and the 2022 review process is starting. UKirk funding will be sent to the Pace Center, a joint ministry including the Rev. Russ Kerr, PC(USA) pastor and member of the Presbytery of the James (POJ). The first draft of the 2024 budget is complete.
6. Approved the remaining Employee Retention Tax Credit (\$85,308) be placed in Fund 2 for Walk-In and Shower ministries.
7. Communications of thanks were received from the RVA Ringers, the Pace Center, Health Brigade, Virginia Interfaith Center, and the POJ for the detailed mission study and financial data.
8. Approved returning to passing the offering plates and allowing deacons to be added to the communion server rotation.

At its January 16, 2024 meeting, the session took the following actions:

1. Transferred Betty & Greg Dickie to Brown Memorial Park Avenue Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, Maryland.
2. Approved receiving the four special offerings of the PC(USA): One Great Hour of Sharing, Pentecost, Peace and Global Witness, and Christmas Joy, as well as the 5-Cents A Meal offering.
3. Received as information the treasurer's report (Carolyn Brandt) for November 2023. Pledged offerings and investment income were higher than budgeted (the pledge total did include the remaining 2023 pre-paid pledges). Expenses were higher than income due to the distribution of the semi-annual mission allocations. Therefore, the statement shows a deficit of \$45,008. However, our financial status remains strong because we have not yet allocated a portion of the prior year surplus or the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter draw on the General Endowment earnings.
4. Approved using some of the remaining "Shining the Light" capital campaign funds to rehab and stabilize the Courtyard Gate (approximately \$7,000) with due diligence to assure that the work is in accord with the historic rehabilitation tax credit requirements. The balance in the campaign fund is \$58,006. It will be totally expended when \$25,000 is used for the vestibule (sanctuary narthex) glass entrance enclosure and the Timeline history project in the second-floor hallway.
5. Elected David Wilson, Katherine Goodpasture, and Rob Fergusson to serve as commissioners to the February 17 stated meeting of the POJ.
6. Received thanks from Camp Hanover for support.





*Second Presbyterian Church*  
OF RICHMOND VIRGINIA

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**Preaching Schedule for February**

February 4	Kate Fiedler
February 11	Roger Gench
February 18	Fred Holbrook
February 25	Youth Sunday

ASH WEDNESDAY  
*Worship*

**February 14**  
**7:00pm**  
**in the Chapel**  
Annabelle Beavers  
preaching

**February 25**



**ANNUAL MEETING**  
after Worship