FIRST CHURCH IN SALEM NEWSLETTER

Dear friends,

The weather has been raw, wet and windy in these past days, and the crocus in my garden are looking a little battered and worn, but still, I'm appreciating their (floppy-eared) beauty, purple and white in a mass of wintery brown.

Spring is on its way and this year, as always in New England, it will be a bit of a conundrum. A bit of a riddle. A bit of "two steps forward, one step back" as we make our way through the chilly winds of April into the apple blossoms of May.

As I've told you before, I love what Thoreau said about his decision to move to Walden Pond. "I went to the woods," he wrote, "because I wished to live deliberately...." Yes, that's true. But in another place, he added that he went to live in a little cottage in the woods because he wanted to "watch the spring come in." I'm on the watch for spring, as well, and I bet you are too. It was wonderful to see so many of you in church on Easter Sunday!

And I could sense the palpable excitement when Steve made his announcement, on behalf of the Standing Committee, about their vote last week to go ahead with the search process. In the days to come, you will be getting a phone call from a standing Committee member to ask for your thoughts on who might be a good person to serve on the search committee which will be elected by vote of the congregation at the Annual Meeting on June 2, 2024. They will start their work in June, continue over the summer, and through next year, with the hope of bringing you a ministerial candidate for you to meet in April or May of 2025.

It is a big turning point in this interim period of time, and you have all worked hard together to try to get to this point. You have showed up for potlucks and community conversations, responded to surveys, and in general, tried to be present for the "working through" of all that has transpired here, pandemic included, since the departure of your long settled minister Jeff Barz-Snell a few years ago. It has not always been easy. Thank you for your faithfulness, your brave honest kind conversations, your listening.

There is more to be done in naming, making amends, repair and repentance, but there will be time for that. Now, let's take a moment to celebrate this new moment and all that it promises.

In faith, Jenny

>>> April 2024

April is National Poetry Month.

Learn more about it here!

CHNDAY		THECOM	WEDNESDAY	THIRDDAY	-	more about it here
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	ľ	2 12pm Staff & Worship Meeting 6pm Sit & Stitch Club	4pm Haunted Happenings Mtg 6pm Transition Team Meeting	4	5	10am Puppet Palooza
7	8	9	10	II	12	13
Bam Serving Sunday 10:30am Worship Service 11:30am Finance Open House: Draft Budget Presentation		12pm Staff & Worship Meeting 6pm Sit & Stitch Club		7pm Silent Reading Party		
14 10:30am Worship Service 12pm Change Maker Expo & Clothing Swap	15	12pm Staff & Worship Meeting 6pm Sit & Stitch Club	6pm Transition Team Meeting 7pm Standing Committee Mtg	18 10am Earth Day Celebration	6pm Meter & Verse: A Celebration of National Poetry Month	20
21 10:30am Worship Service	22	12pm Staff & Worship Meeting 6pm Sit & Stitch Club	24 6pm Tai Chi	25	26	2 3pm Indoor Drive-In
28 10:30am Worship Service 12pm Transition Team Open House: Brainstorming	29	30 12pm Staff & Worship Meeting	What are poets for, in such an age? What is the use of poetry? The state of the world calls out for poetry to save it. If you would be a poet, create works capable of answering the challenge of apocalyptic times, even if this meaning sounds apocalyptic. ~Lawrence Ferlinghetti from Poetry as Insurgent Art [I am signaling you through the flames]			

First Church Happenings in April



SALEM CHANGE MAKERS EXPO

Sunday, April 14 - @ Fellowship Hour

Partial List of Guests:
Clothing Connection
ECCO
League of Women Voters

Mack Park Farm
NAGLY
Plummer Youth Promise

Salem Coastal Watch Salem Pantry Salem for All Ages

ROOT

Don't miss it!

In addition:

Clothing Swap & Repair Cafe

Willson Hall

12noon - 1:30pm

Hosted by: Social Outreach Committee



CLOTHING SWAP AND REPAIR CAFE

Sunday, April 14, 2024 11:30am - 1:30pm

Lower Level, Willson Hall 316 Essex Street, Salem, MA



Lifespan Religious Education

The children and youth of First Church spent March finishing up our unit on UU history. We learned about the 1961 merger of Unitarians and Universalists, the development of our Principles and Sources, and the proposed covenant of values that UUs from across North America will vote on at General Assembly this year. We also enjoyed Easter activities and celebrations, including egg dying and an egg hunt.

Adults got in on the egg-dying fun this year as well with our first ever Pysanky workshops!

As April comes, we are ushering in the spring. In our RE program, our children and youth will switch their focus to a unit on Spiritual Nourishment: the ways that we support ourselves spiritually and keep ourselves going. We will learn about different forms of prayer, meditation, and other spiritual practices in order to find the ones that work best for us.

This month, we will collaborate with Henny Penny on a few activities: a puppet-making event on April 6 and an Earth Day celebration during public school vacation week. We will also have our second annual indoor drive in! You can learn more about all of these events below.

For the next 4 weeks, we will be continuing our Sit-and-Stitch knitting series. Even if you haven't been able to come to previous events, feel free to join us! You can learn how to make a baby sweater, or bring your own handcraft project to work on with company.

Our Lifespan offerings this month will also include the start of a 10-week Tai Chi class, a celebration of National Poetry Month, the Salem Changemakers Event hosted by the Social Outreach Committee, and our regular monthly events. We hope to see you at some of them!

If you haven't had a chance to take the 2 minute Lifespan survey, <u>you can take it here</u>. This information will help us plan our events going forward. The more responses we get, the better we can serve our church and the wider community. If you would like to get involved in our lifespan program, please reach out!

In Faith,
Theo Burbank (she/her)
Director of Lifespan Religious Education

CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAMMING

Puppet Palooza, Saturday 4/6, 10am-12pm: Sock puppets, paper bag puppets, and shadow puppets, oh my!

Let your creativity shine by making a puppet. We will have all of the supplies that you need, and a few helping hands. All you need to bring is your imagination and ideas to turn ordinary objects into extraordinary puppets!

This event is for children ages 2 and up and their caregivers (this is not a drop-off event). Children under two are welcome to join, but parents should be mindful of small objects that could present choking hazards.

We look forward to seeing you and what you make!



Earth Day Celebration, Thurs 4/18, 10am-12pm: Join us for an Earth Day story, craft, and activities. We will meet in Henny Penny Pre-School to learn about the Earth and let our creativity run wild as we imagine what we can do for the environment.

This event is for children ages 2 and up and their caregivers (this is not a drop-off event).



Indoor Drive-In, Sat 4/27, 3-6 pm: We're bringing back the indoor drive in! Join us for a movie on the big screen, right at our church. Kids will get to make their own "car" to enjoy the movie from, and get some popcorn and a drink at our snack bar. Bring some blankets and pillows and park yourselves in the Cleveland room for an afternoon of fun. Friends are welcome to come along for the ride! The movie will be announced in the next few weeks.

ADULT AND INTERGENERATIONAL PROGRAMMING

Sit-and-Stitch Sweater Club, First 4 Tuesdays, 6-8pm: Join in on our sit-and-stitch series! Whether you're an experienced knitter or you've never held a pair of needles, there's something for you. You can join in and learn how to make a baby sweater from a local vintage pattern, or bring your own handcraft project to work on with company in our beautiful Cleveland Room.

Tai Chi, 10-Week Session starting Wednesday, 4/17, 6-7pm: Taiji chuan (or tai chi) is a system of exercise and moving meditation that arose from an internal (focused on structure over musculature) martial art. As an exercise, it promotes flexibility, stability, relaxation, and leg strength. As a tool for meditation, it promotes a flow state that has been shown historically and with modern science to reduce stress, anxiety, pain, and depression. It is appropriate at all levels of fitness and age, but it is particularly useful for those who do not exercise or are older. It can be adapted to an individual's needs and capabilities. Tai chi coordinates breath with slow, smooth, and continuous movements and offers many gifts in proportion to the practitioner's consistency and sincere effort.

The course offered will be led by Jack Duranceau. The course is 10 weeks long, every Wednesday at 6pm with an expectation of daily individual practice. The form will be the 24-move Beijing Form which is based on Yang tai chi and is the most common type of exercise for seniors in China. The classes will consist of stretches, swings, stance holding, repetitions of important moves, and, finally, integration into the form. The form covers the most important tai chi principles, is compact, can be done on a sidewalk, and it is one quarter of the standard form length. As a result, it can be performed and repeated as time allows every day. We will exercise outdoors in the garden as long as the weather is favorable. Wear loose, comfortable clothing and shoes with flat and level soles like barefoot shoes, slippers, Converse, or Vans.

Meter and Verse: A Celebration of National Poetry Month, Friday, 4/19, 6-8pm: Come together for a night to celebrate poetry. There will be opportunities to read, write, and explore poems of all types.

This is an all-ages event, but we ask that any children are accompanied by an adult.

MONTHLY EVENTS

- Serving Sunday, 4/7, 8-10am: bring donations or helping hands for Clothing Connection before the service.
- Silent Reading Party, 4/11, 7-9pm: bring a book of your choosing and join others to read
- **Soul Matters, 4/14 @ 12:30pm**: small group ministry discussion. The theme for March is Interdependance
- Third Age Book Club, 3/28, 11:30-1pm: discuss The Swedish Art of Aging Exuberantly by Margareth Magnussen, Chapters 12, 13 and 14. The chapters are independent essays, so you can join in at any time without feeling lost.

From your Standing Committee

Greetings from the Stewardship Committee! As you have probably heard, our annual Pledge Drive for our upcoming fiscal year, "Together Our Flame Burns Brighter", is underway. I hope you were able to join us for the kickoff luncheon on the 17th; it was great to see so many people there, we had a lot of fun and got to talk a bit about what First Church means to each of us.

Over the next couple of weeks, we will be reaching out and inviting you to make a financial pledge for the fiscal year starting in July. This is an important year for First Church; not only has the church invested heavily over the past two years in developing our Lifespan Religious Education program and in hiring Reverend Jenny to help guide us through our ministerial transition, but we are also looking at starting a search for our next minister. Because of this, your pledge is more important than ever. Strong participation in this year's pledge campaign is needed not only to help the church get back to a balanced budget but also to help us attract the sort of minister we want to help guide us to a growing and vibrant future. Your pledge is always important, but this year it's even more important than usual.

You should have received an email this past week with more information about this year's drive including a link to pledge. If you missed it here you go! And if you need to update contact information you can also do that in the pledge link.

Feel free, also, to reach out to any of us on the Stewardship Committee if you have questions or would like to discuss your pledge in person. We are hoping to wrap this up by April 15 so that church leadership can accurately plan next year's budget, and we can all enjoy being part of our community.

We are looking forward to hearing from you!

-Your Stewardship Committee:

Charlie Hildebrand Anna Brandenburg Mike Giauque

Nicole McLaughlin

Neil Alsip



Starting Search for a Settled Minister

Hello First Church Members,

On March 27th, your Standing Committee voted unanimously to formally enter the process of searching for a settled minister. If all goes as planned, the process would culminate in First Church welcoming a new settled minister in the Fall of 2025.

The search process is a period of intensive consultation with the congregation. The first step is to collect input from members on the creation of a Search Committee. All First Church members will receive a call from a member of the Standing Committee or Deacon within the next two weeks. In this call, we'll ask for your thoughts on the makeup of the Search Committee and for your recommendations as to which members you feel would represent the church well on this committee. (If you'd like to see a list of current members to help you in thinking about this, please contact Catherine Bertrand (firstchurchinsalem@gmail.com) or members of the Standing Committee stdcomm@firstchurchinsalem.com.

There will be additional presentations (live, virtual, and recorded) on the process and timeline scheduled in the next several weeks. Your Standing Committee is committed to making it possible for all members to participate in this process.

Please accept our thanks in advance!

Steve Palmer for your First Church Standing Committee

Transition Team News

Greetings from the Transition Team! During the church service on Sunday, April 7, the Transition Team led by Jerrie Hildebrand and Rev. Jenny will address the topic of Shared Ministry to help the congregation learn more about what that concept means and how we are already doing it. On Sunday, April 28 after church we are offering a brainstorming session led by Patti Roka on Envisioning Our Future which will focus on articulating our hopes and dreams about directions in which First Church can grow. Lunch and childcare will be provided. We hope you will join us.

Pastoral care Team

In the spirit of supporting our community, sometimes what is needed is a simple phone call to check in on someone who is struggling, a ride to a medical appointment or a meal. These small tasks are what the Care Team provides. We are a group of volunteers who help with these tasks when needed.

This past month, we have been asked to help with rides to medical appointments. We are grateful to all who have offered these services to our community.

If you know anyone who would like a call, a card of cheer, a meal or ride to medical appointment, please reach out to Sharon Corrigan 802-236-0054 or Sally Millice 978-745-1632 or notify the church office. The Pastoral Care team wants to support all in our community who are in need.

Soul Matters

Join us for Soul Matters, a small group ministry that invites participants to share reflections on a specific theme each month. We will meet on Sunday, April 21, 2024, at 12:30 pm in the Music Room on the third floor. The theme for April is Interdependence. To explore this theme, see this month's packet which is filled with exercises, questions, readings and links to music and videos on Interdependence. If possible, select one exercise to do during the month, and one question on which to reflect. You will have a chance to share what you discovered with the group. Packets are available online on the church website under "Soul Matters" on the home page and in print at church.

From Henny Penny Preschool

Our young learners are excited that Spring has arrived. In March we learned new songs such as "Spring is Coming" a traditional verse set to a gentle flowing melody. The song tells of the arrival of Spring, and with birds weaving nests with straw and feathers, the pushing up through the soil of crocus, lilies, and daffodillies, and how joy can be found everywhere.

Inspired by the new season and listening to the children discuss amongst themselves birds they had recently seen, we spent the last week of March with an "All about Birds" theme. Included in our rotation of books was the boldly illustrated Chickens Aren't the Only Ones written and illustrated by Ruth Heller. This is an amazing pictorial introduction to the animals that lay eggs, including chickens as well as other birds, reptiles, amphibians, fishes, insects, and even a few mammals! During circle time we surveyed the children asking if they could be a bird which bird would they want to be? The answers ranged from robin, cardinal, crow, penguin, peacock, and more!

The children created oil resist paintings of backyard birds using oil pastel crayons and watercolors. Oil resist painting is one of their favorite art activities. Their paintings are filled with vibrant oil pastel outlines with softer watercolors filling the empty spaces. They are gorgeous. These paintings, along with other projects will be on display at the Tenth Annual Henny Penny Art Show the evening of May 3rd. The children are always so proud to walk their family members through the "Museum" in the Cleveland Room.

Enrollments are being accepted for the 2024-2025 school year. Henny Penny offers flexible schedules for our half-day program. If you know anyone searching for a high-quality literature and play-based preschool, please have them email an inquiry to hennypennynurseryschool@gmail.com



ANNUAL REPORT TIMELINE

The Annual Meeting approaches! It will take place on **Sunday, June 2**. As we head into Easter we are just about 10 weeks out from the Annual Meeting. Below is a timeline to help guide all of us through the process.

As staff, officer, or chair (or key person) of a committee of the First Church in Salem, we will be looking to you and your co-members for a written description of the activities for the church year spanning Spring (May) 2023–(April) 2024.

KEY DATES [noted in red below]:

- Wednesday, May 1: Content due to the office
- Sunday, May 19: First Draft available to congregation
- Sunday, May 26: Second Draft available to congregation
- Wednesday, May 29: No more edits will be received
- Sunday, June 2: Annual Meeting; Final copy of reports will be available.

week 1

April 1-6

Begin collecting information for report.

week 2

April 7-13

Begin collecting information for report.

week 3

April 14-20

Draft report and circulate to committee members.

week 4

April 21-27

Finalize draft and make edits.

week 5

April 28-May 4

MAY 1
Content due to the office.

week 6

May 5 - 11

Send edits as

week 7

May 12 - 18

Send edits as needed.

week 8

May 19-25

MAY 19
FIRST DRAFT
DUE TO
CONGREGATION

week 9

May 26 - June 1 MAY 26 FINAL DRAFT DUE TO CONGREGATION

No edits after May 29.

week 10

Sunday, June 2 Annual Meeting

> Final Copies Available

Please email your report in a Word Document to <u>firstchurchinsalemegmail.com</u> and include the following information:

- Name of the chair and any other officers
- List of committee members
- Mission statements and/or goals of the committee
- Activities, achievements, and highlights of the year
- Financial information about monies received or spent
- Plans for the future

In and Around the First Church Community

Celebrating Balinese culture



COURTESY PHOTO

Indra Persad Milowe is a Salem-based visual artist who has created art exhibitions about her travels to Morrocco, Costa Rica, and now Indonesia.

Salem-based artist, Indra Persad Milowe, holds exhibition at Topsfield Library

By Michael McHugh StaffWriter

Indra Persad Milowe, an internationally recognized Salem-based visual artist, has traveled extensively to inspire her highly celebrated artwork.

Her most recent exhibition, "Beautiful Ubud, Bali", is on display at the Topsfield Library through Feb. 16 and explores Milowe's second three-week trip as an artist in residence in Ubud, Bali, Indonesia.

During her first visit,

Milowe had the opportunity to attend a traditional Balinese wedding, a baby ceremony, and a five-day Odalan Festival. This most recent trip, a 10-day Galungan and Kuningan Festivals — holidays celebrated every 210 days in Bali.

"It's absolutely beautiful. Nearly everywhere you turn, there's a shrine," said Milowe. "The first day you're walking out there, you might think, "This place looks like it needs a new paint job'. But if you look closer and admire the offering to Lord Ganesh.

and flowers, and garlands, you'll eventually have to ask, 'What's more important? The glitter of the walls or the actual heart of the place?"

Much of Milowe's artwork explores the intersection of the social and spiritual; ceremonies, festivals, weddings, traditional art forms and symbols; and other traditional events or practices from around the world.

While Milowe retired after 40 years of general, ophthalmic, and psychiatric nursing in 2019, her time working with British Nurses Overseas allowed her the opportunity to work in countries with many different culturally distinct identities, inspiring her to return to the art world to share her experiences with others. Milowe's own childhood growing up in Trinidad and Tobago in the 1950s and '60s, has also served as a huge source of inspiration for her work.

Milowe's exhibits, inspired by her time as an artist-in-residence and visits to countries like Singapore,

See ARTIST, Page A5



COURTESY PHOTO "Dewi Sri", a painting in the Beautiful Ubud, Bali exhibition portraying the Balinese, Javanese and Lombok Rice and



COURTESY PHOTO

Milowe's painting of Balinese penjors, curved bamboo poles displayed during Galungan.

ARTIST

Fertility Goddess.

■ Continued from Page A1

Morocco, Costa Rica, and others, have received international attention and praise. Her work is regularly featured in the Rotunda Gallery in Trinidad and Tobago, and she is a regular contributing artist and member of Art Impact International in Washington, D.C.

After creating art inspired by her Trinidadian upbringing, Milowe quickly realized that this type of culturally inspired art was not only rewarding, but popular. One of her first exhibitions, "Festivals and Folklore of Trinidad, West Indies," explores every single festival in Trinidad and Tobago through painting.

"In the Hindu religion, festivals mean a lot. Every festival has a different food, a different theme, and things like that. So I painted every single festival in Trinidad and Tobago, and I quickly realized that not many people do this type of art. I started getting all this press and coverage because it's not your (typical) painting subject that you might see, because usually very few people will think about



COURTESY PHOTO

A painting portraying "Wayang Kulit", an Indonesian form of shadow puppetry.

traditions," said Milowe.

In Salem, Milowe received Travel Channel. two grants from the Public Art Commission to paint two public art exhibitions titled "Kailash" and "Mirabai". "Kailash" is a painted electrical box in Derby Square named after Mount Kailash, a mountain regarded as holy in Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Bon. "Mirabai", named after a 16th century Hindu mystic poet and saint who authored over 1,400 poems and devotional songs, is a set of 22 colorfully painted ballards. Kailash was featured as a backdrop in the reality TV cooking series

"Man vs. Food" on the

One of the paintings featured in the "Beautiful Ubud, Bali" exhibit is titled "Penjors Adorn the Sky" and illustrates the tall, curved poles of bamboo adorned with decorations that are placed outside virtually every building in Bali during Galungan to express gratefulness for daily blessings and to honor the deceased.

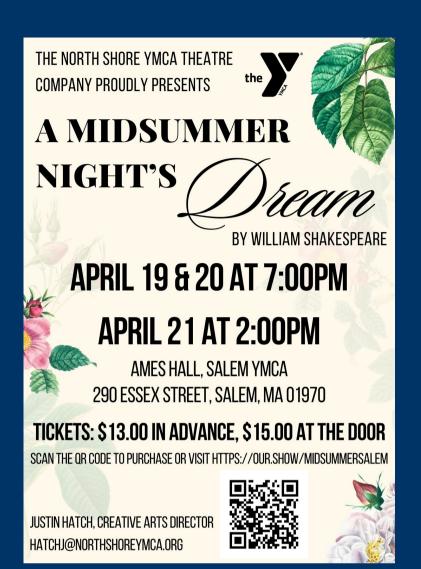
"I think the best part is the week before (Galungan) because everybody is coming together and making their own penjors in preparation," said Milowe. "You'll see everybody in their driveway with bamboo working on them every day, and then suddenly everybody puts theirs up all at once.

Whether you're traveling to another country to find inspiration or simply trying to take in as much of a foreign culture as you can, Milowe says that prior research is of crucial importance.

"When you're traveling, you have to go all in, it's the only way that you're going to learn everything. wore a traditional sarong everyday, and I found that people treated me differently because I was dressed properly, they could identify with me because they saw that I was making an effort. It's very important to do some homework before you go to a foreign country," Milowe explained.

"Beautiful Ubud, Bali" will be on display in the Topsfield Library through Feb. 16. More of Milowe's artwork and information on exhibits can be found on her website: https://indrapersadmilowe.com.

Michael McHugh can be contacted at mmchugh@ northofboston.com or at 781-799-5202





DONATION TODAY!



First Church Communications

Connect with Members and Friends

To connect with members of committees or leadership at First Church please use our online Directory. This can be accessed through your Breeze account: firstchurchinsalem.breezechms.com

Under 'Tags' you will find 'Online Directory''. Updated printed Directories will be made available quarterly. Please feel free to contact Catherine at firstchurchinsalem@gmail.com as well.

First Church in Salem can also be found on social media!

FirstChurchinSalemUnitarian



Contact the Staff

Rev. Jenny Rankin, Interim Minister: jrankin@firstchurchinsalem.org Catherine Bertrand, Congregational Administrator: firstchurchinsalem@gmail.com Theo Burbank, Director of Lifespan Education: fcreligioused@gmail.com Michael Kraft, Music Director: music@firstchurchinsalem.org

Get the Word Out!

We want all of our events and meetings at First Church to be well attended and successful. The First Church staff is here to help you get the word out about your ministry event or need! We strive to reflect the heart of your event while maintaining the best practices to ensure effectiveness, clarity, and consistency.

All communications for publication must be submitted via email to firstchurchinsalem@gmail.com.

Monthly Newsletter: The Herald

We have a monthly newsletter that is sent either on the first of every month or the Friday before the first Sunday of each month.

- Publication Dates: Around the 1st of each month
- Materials Deadline for publication: The 21st of each month

Weekly Newsletter: e-Herald

We have a weekly email newsletter that is sent by 2:00pm on Fridays.

- Deadline for publication: Every Thursday by 10:00am.
- Articles about church related items or events are welcome. Photos and other images are welcome, however, those that are blurry, out of focus, or may violate copyrights may be excluded.
- Things to include as necessary:
 - Contact name and info for committee/team or an individual if your article asks readers to take an action. Consider that many people no longer have house phone lines; it's good to indicate if texting is preferred. Phone numbers should also include area codes.
 - Date and time of event.
 - Location.

Order of Service & Sunday Verbal Announcements

- Print Deadline: Every Thursday by 10:00am
- In-Person Announcement Deadline: Every Friday by 10:00am
- Announcements submissions are 75 words or less (three brief sentences) not including the title, and date and time, if needed.

Verbal announcements should follow print guidelines regarding length. If your news is a repeat announcement or something longer than a few sentences, please reach out to discuss the possibility of a pulpit editorial or offertory reflection.

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SALEM MASSACHUSETTS 01970

PHONE: 978-744-1551
EMAIL: OFFICE@FIRSTCHURCHINSALEM.ORC
PUBLICATION SUBMISSIONS:
FIRSTCHURCHCOMM@GMAIL.COM
WWW.FIRSTCHURCHINSALEM.ORG





CLICK ON NAMES FOR EMAILS
INTERIM MINISTER: REVEREND JENNY RANKIN
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC: MICHAEL KRAFT
CONGREGATIONAL ADMINISTRATOR: CATHERINE BERTRAND
DIRECTOR OF LIFESPAN EDUCATION: THEO BURBANK
SEXTON: BILLY MCCARTHY
CHAIR OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE: STEVE PALMER
CHAIR OF THE DEACONS: LYNN TAGGART
DIRECTOR OF HENNY PENNY: TRICIA PINI