



WINNERS

A Word from our Pastor

**"Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses
yearning to breathe
free, The wretched
refuse of your
teeming shore. Send
these, the homeless,
tempest-tossed to
me, I lift my lamp
beside the golden
door!"**

(The Statue of Liberty-
Ellis Island Foundation, Inc.



why they thought God put the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Garden if God didn't want us to eat it's fruit. The students thought one reason was that God wanted to see if we would obey God's command.

One of the very first questions we wrestled with in Confirmation Class was whether or not we should interpret the Bible literally. I shared with the students that one of my challenges with literal translation is that the Bible is full of contradictions.

I held up the fact that there are two stories of creation that differ in many ways and when some students said, "There are two creation stories?" I said, "Well, let's begin our time together in the beginning!" So we have been reading through the two creation stories and discussing their differences and similarities and what we can learn about God and humanity from each story.

In our last meeting before our holiday break, I asked the students

They also thought that God was giving us the freedom to choose....to choose to obey or disobey. They thought that God didn't just want to make us mindless robots to be manipulated and controlled. They thought that knowing the difference between Good and Evil means we are responsible for the choices we make to obey or disobey how God instructs us to live our lives in care and service to others.

Good or Evil. We get to choose.

And our choices make a difference. Especially in these days where we can so clearly see evil people at work in the world. We can see how the evil actions of a few, can spread the poison of fear,

Carol Steinbrecher

distrust, hatred, divisiveness, and scapegoating, into the hearts of so many good people.

We are entering into our season of Advent when we remember that we are called to shine the light of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love into the world in Jesus' name. When we see dark forces at work in the world, as Christians, we are called to fight for justice. We are called to offer succor, sanctuary, and refuge to the lost, the displaced, the suffering, and the "tempest-tossed."

This is not the time to talk about building walls or to close our doors and turn our backs on those in greatest need. This is not the time to give in to fear. When the disciples were caught in the dead of night in a terrible storm on the Sea of Galilee, Jesus came to them and said, **"Don't be afraid, take courage. I am here!"** Let us take courage and know that Jesus is here with us, with all of us. Right now, Jesus stands with thousands of refugees, knocking. Let us throw open the doors of our hearts. Let us fearlessly throw love in the face of hate.

Good or Evil. We get to choose. Let's choose wisely and well.

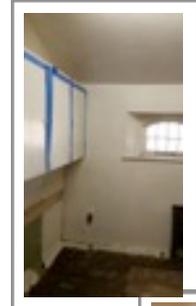


STEWARDS 2015 – A PICTURE-BASED YEAR IN REVIEW



As we close out our 2015 calendar year, we thought it would be helpful to share with the Stratford Street community all the major building/property improvements that were tackled in 2015.

The major project in 2014 was the revitalized Dickie Parlor, which several SSUC members donated their time and money to turn into a comfortable “living room” for us to hold meetings, social get-togethers, and the like. People have really enjoyed the room and the warm/inviting feel created by the overhaul.



Like many people in the greater Boston area, 2015 started out with Ice Damns being a major problem and driving the agenda for repairs and work, and our building was no exception. We were able to bring in an outside company to melt most of the ice dams and get back into our building for our Easter celebration. Unfortunately, the damage imposed to our building was not trivial, as sections of the handicap ramp were destroyed and the Risograph room right behind the choir area had major water damage, which leaked all the way down into the ceiling of the men’s bathroom.

Fortunately, as of the time of this writing, both the handicap ramp and the Riso room repairs have been made, with many thanks to volunteer workers who helped on the ramp and Donelan Contractors, who did the work in the Riso room and men’s bathroom at cost for us.

From the Top: Ice dams last winter, the damaged ramp, water damaged windows, water damaged in the Riso room, and refurbishing the office in progress.

Top: Refurbished Dickie Parlor
Middle: Our Newly stained front door
Below: Our Beautiful new stairs



All of the lights in the Sanctuary and the Dickie Parlor were replaced with highly efficient LED lights, that should save substantial money for the church over the next 20+ years of expected life.



In the springtime, we completely sanded down, re-stained, and filled mortar gaps at our main sanctuary door, which looks absolutely stunning now and should make another 100 years if we take good care of it.

In September after a few delays, we were finally able to replace our crumbling (and unsafe) Memorial Hall entrance steps with nice blue-stone treads. We will make sure that we never use rock-salt on them, and they should give us decades of good looking functionality.

We were able to take the main SSUC sign that sits at the corner of Stratford and Anawan streets and refurbish it, with some sanding, new paint, and new letters.

We also were able to completely rebuild the secondary sign that sits outside the Memorial Hall entrance, which was completely rotted away and dilapidated (see pictures to the right).

While we had workers in fixing the Riso room, we also asked them to demo the legacy sink and shower that existed in the office to free up dead space that wasn't being used. This should be finished up/painted in the upcoming weeks.

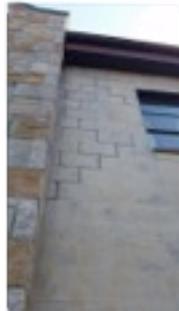
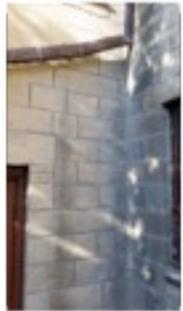
With an old building, there is always something going on, and our aging circuit breaker box broke in early October, leaving a section of the sanctuary in the dark. We were able to get a new, modern circuit breaker box installed and switches placed on the side of the box (you used to have to turn the lights on via the circuit breakers). Of course, anytime you replace electrical stuff in a 100 year old building, you never know what you'll find. We still have some major electrical work that needs to happen, but this is a good foundation/first step for moving forward.

Lastly, in an effort to get us ready for some major improvements to Memorial Hall, we re-pointed many gaps that existed in the cinder blocks on the outside of Memorial Hall, which has caused many water seepage and stains to occur inside Memorial Hall. Painting and overhauling much of Memorial Hall is a biggie on our to-do list for 2016. (continued on Page 4)



From the Top :
Volunteers stain the ramp, Ramp refurbished, newly refurbished front Sign .

STEWARDS 2015 – A PICTURE-BASED YEAR IN REVIEW CONTINUED



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Hall. Painting and overhauling much of Memorial Hall is a biggie on our to-do list for 2016.

Other major items on our plate for 2016 include looking at the water issues/dampness in the basement next to the West Room (including possibly making some changes to our gutter system) and seeing if we can get an ADA accessible bathroom for the church.

The Stewards look forward to continuing to not only preserve our great home, but to make it our better home away from home. Thank you for your continued support, both spiritually and financially.

If you'd like to donate either time or money for something that is important to you at the church, please come see Darren or Norm.

From the Top:

Addressing water in basement and memorial hall entails assessing gutters and re-pointing gaps in the cinder block

Bottom pic: New circuit breaker box.

THANK A STEWARD



If you enjoyed hearing about all the work and updates around the church, please be sure to thank our hardworking Stewards: Norman Rosskothen, Darren Tedesco, Diane McNamara and Evelyn Ortiz.



MAILBOX

“All Creatures Great and Small”

Thank you to all those wise and wonderful friends and members of our church who donated to our “Blessing of the Animals” drive for MSPCA. We received more donations than ever this year- from canned and bagged food, to pet carriers to pet toys! We also collected and donated towels, blankets and quilts. The animals at the MSPCA hospital and shelter as well as their staff friends appreciated the donation and wanted to be sure your donations were acknowledged! Our little church made a big difference to these animals’ health and comfort.

Thank you to all for supporting this collection,
The Deacons.



Church Directory update!



Marguerite Badger has moved to Sophia Snow Place where her many church friends welcomed her! It is difficult for her to be out and about so we will be seeing less of her in church. She wants us to know she is with us in Spirit!

Marguerite Badger’s new address is:
Sophia Snow Place, Room 15,
1205 Centre Street
West Roxbury, MA 02132.

THANK YOU



Many thanks to all for your Warm Wishes and Birthday Greetings recently to help me celebrate my "Day" - With much appreciation to all always

-- Bud Waite --

A big thank you this month’s newsletter contributors: Darren Tedesco for the Stewards, Linda Denekamp, Lampros Minos, Nancy Eng, Joyce Eng, Bud Waite, and of course Carol Steinbrecher.



JOINT SERVICE



On November 1st - All Saints Day - We worshiped and dined with our friends from the IENV. A hearty thanks to all who pitched in and helped to pull off this wonderful service and feast.

December Birthdays

- 2nd Grier Minos
- 3rd Linda Denekamp
- 7th Indra Platais
- 9th Beverly Bower
- 12th Diana Faust
- 18th Judy Tucker
- 18th Michael Yaffe
- 19th Maureen Steinberg
- 21st Jose Ortiz
- 22nd Sung-Yun Pai

YOUR MISSION DOLLARS UPDATE

The Mission Committee supports the ABC of MA (Baptist), MACUCC (Congregational), and Help-A-Child with monthly contributions.

Additionally Missions makes our annual donations to: Boston Rescue Mission, Casa Myrna Vasquez, Future for Farato, Free Wheelchair Mission, Roslindale Food Pantry, and Way Up Youth.

This year a special donation to Gordon College went to support Leah Abercrombie's study/peace mission to Northern Ireland in 2016.



WE ARE THE CHURCH WHEN WE SHARE ONE ANOTHER'S CONCERNS



Prayers for George Moseley who passed away Thanksgiving night with his niece Sue Robinson by his side. Please keep the Moseley's and their friends and family in your prayers and thoughts.

Prayers for Jeanne Gavrilles, who is in the hospital.

Prayers for Nada, Nadia's sister, who will start radiation therapy next week.

Prayers for Bei's sister, Amy, who has learned that her liver cancer has returned and she will be undergoing treatment.

Prayers for Sung-Yun's 2 year-old patient who is on life support. We pray he heals.

Prayers for Michael Yaffe's Uncle Fred, who is slowly recovering, and his wife, Aunt Kathy, who just had kidney transplant.

Prayers for Paloma Ortiz, who is recovering from a recent concussion.

Prayers for Judy Jose-Roddy's brother who had surgery and Judy's sister-in-law, who needs to have surgery, but is not well enough.

Prayers for Nadia's father, Sam Tammo, who is recovering at Brigham & Women's.

Prayers for Elby Rivera, Evelyn's aunt, recent diagnosis of early stage of breast cancer.

Prayers for Moriah Manzano, recent diagnosis of leukemia.

Prayers for Sue Parla who is under the weather.

Michael Yaffe asks for prayers and support for his family as he travels to Miami on December 5th to spend two weeks training doctors shipping out to Afghanistan.

We pray for the families and victims of the bombings in Beirut, Baghdad, and Paris. We pray for peace.

WE ARE THE CHURCH WHEN WE SHARE ONE ANOTHER'S JOYS

We celebrated the musical talents of our guest, Ellina Blinder, who was filling in for Ilya on Nov. 15th.

We give thanks that Noah Tedesco's foot is healing nicely and he is now off crutches!

We celebrate that Andrew Busard was home visiting from college.

We celebrate that Pastor Carol's son, Fisher and his Marching Band competed in the Nationals and won in their division!

Leah Abercrombie has been selected to participate in the **Gordon College 2016 Mission Project** in North Belfast. Her travel and study will occur in January, 2016. She was chosen from a league of students who have outstanding academic performance and serious commitment to their Christian Faith. Her program will include immersion in the New Lodge area, rampant unemployment and poor education made this a dangerous area during the conflict of Neighbors [Protestant and Catholic Faith] also known as "THE TROUBLES" Leah will participate in programs for youth, and assist in bringing peace, mercy and reconciliation.

On November 15th, Joyce, Mary and Nancy Eng, Judy Jose-Roddy and Paula Stevens-Our Hosted Fellowship and collected a total of \$1560 for Leah's Mission work and the SSUC Mission Committee has allocated \$105.00 of their "anticipated Mission budget" for her cause. If you would like to make a donation to support our wonderful young woman in her project, please contact Paula at pstevensour@mortgagemaster.com or Cell 617-921-2477, home 617-327-4413.

UPCOMING AND ONGOING EVENTS

Food Pantry Collection

A reminder to all to bring non-perishable goods on the 4th Sunday of every month - Any type of canned goods and dried foods of all sorts. This month's collection date is December 27th.

Sunday, December 6th 5:00 PM

Handel & Hayden Youth Choir Winter Concert featuring Paloma Ortiz
 United Parish in Brookline Tickets must be purchased in advance contact Evelyn Arana-Ortiz

State of the Church

Sunday, January 10th
 After a shortened service there will be a presentation highlighting some of the exciting things happening at our church of which you may not be aware. After there will be time for your questions, comments or concerns! Please be sure to join in the discussion!

Calendar

December 13, 2015
 Deadline for order Poinsettias
 Last Day for City Missions Donations

December 20, 2015
 Children's Christmas Service

December 24, 2015
 Christmas Eve Service -
 Thursday 7pm

December 27, 2015
 Christmas Carol Sing and Story Time

January 10th
 State of the Church



OUR MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS CARE

Now that the cold weather is upon us, it's time to take more care when walking outdoors.

Lampros Minos, is an Orthopedic Physicians Assistant. He reports that an inordinate amount of injuries, which he sees in the Emergency Room, happen from morning falls due to slick stairs and walkways. Surprisingly the falls occur doing simple activities like getting the newspaper or walking to the car. He suggests when going outside in the morning take extra care on the stairs. Stairs without snow can be *deceptively* slippery due to frost or black ice. Please take care!

Are you passionate about Missions?

**We are forming
a Food Pantry Committee.**

If you would like to get involved:

Contact Judy Jose-Roddy at

jjoseroddy@msn.com or

617-719-8805



**CITY MISSION SOCIETY'S
2015 CHRISTMAS SHOP
SHARE the JOY of the SEASON**

**Please drop off NEW item donations for City Missions
at our church by December 13th, 2015**

Suggestions include:

- Winter coats, sweaters and sweatshirts
- Hats, mittens, gloves and scarves
- Socks and underwear
- Blankets and backpacks
- Toys, books, and games for all ages
- Gift cards Target, Walgreens, Marshalls, CVS, Kohls etc

For those who prefer not to shop... the SSUC Youth are willing to shop for you!! Please label your donation "City Missions - Youth Group"



It's time to order your poinsettias!

Look for the order forms in the Sunday bulletins or in the West Room.

If you want to order a poinsettia and are unable to get to church.

Please contact Fran in the office SSUC@verizon.net or 617-323-4950

Each plant is \$8.25 - deadline to order is December 13th, 2015

LEGENDS IN THE NEWS

“Christmas candy canes”

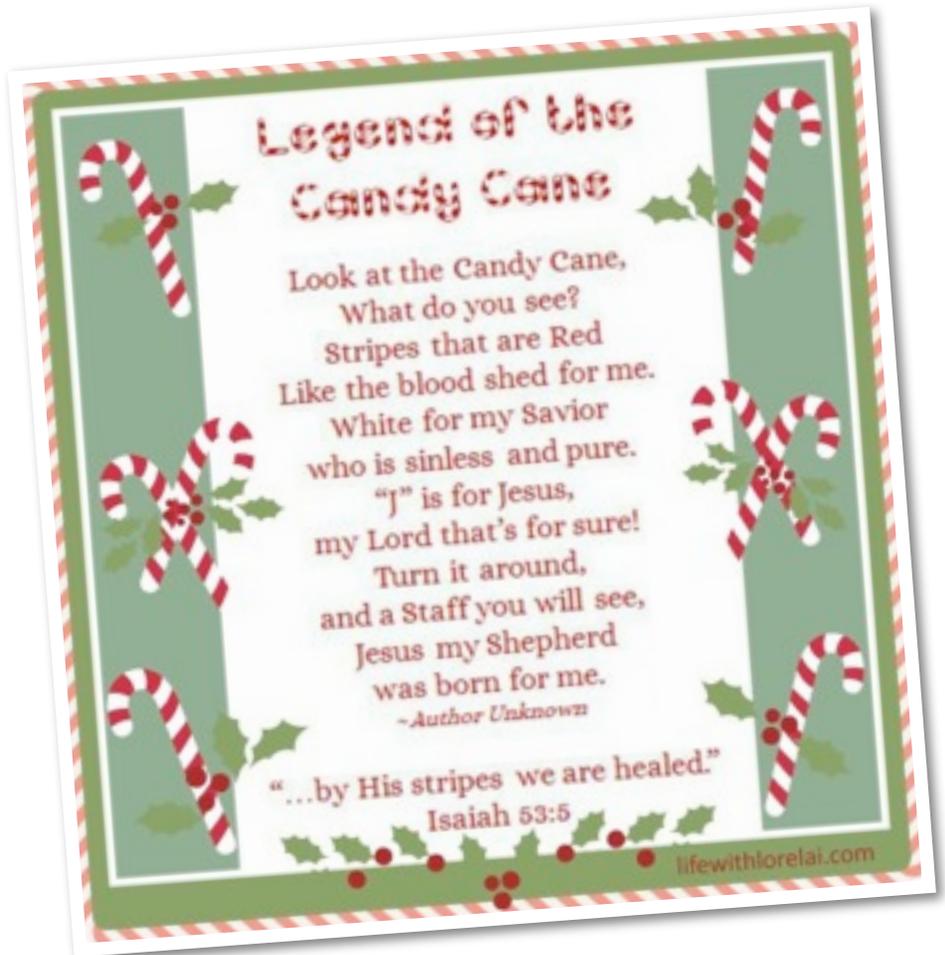
Courtesy of Linda Denekamp

Did you know that the candy cane was said to have originated in Germany about 250 years ago as simple white sugar sticks?

One legend has it that in 1670, a choir master was worried that the children would not be able to sit quietly through the Christmas service so he gave them candy and fashioned the sugar sticks into a candy cane. The “J” shape represented both the Baby Jesus and also a shepherds staff like the ones carried by the shepherds who visited baby Jesus .

Later, around 1900 the red stripes were added. Other meanings were then attributed to the Candy cane. The J still represented the baby Jesus. The white part of the candy were thought to represent the purity of Christ and the red stripes for the blood of the Cross. The peppermint flavor has also been thought to represent the “hyssop” plant which was used for purifying in ancient times.

While none of these stories can be proven, it is good to remind ourselves of the reason we celebrate the Christmas season as we hang our Candy canes on the tree!



GOT SOMETHING TO SHARE?

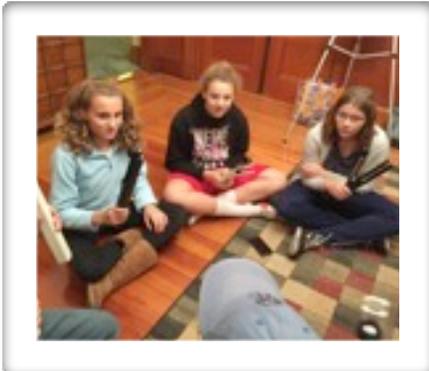
If you have anything to be included in the next Newsletter. Please Email Darra at darraslagle@mac.com or send info to Fran in the church office by the 23rd of the month.

Please note that any complaints will be interpreted that you would like to volunteer to make this publication better before printing next time!

Warm regards - Darra

TUESDAY AFTERNOON CONFIRMATION CLASS

Carol Steinbrecher



We completed the first session of our Confirmation Class and I already miss my Tuesday afternoon time with our vibrant and energetic strong and mighty! As Jesus taught us, we begin our time together gathered

around a meal. There is no better way to learn about the warmth and meaning of Communion than by sitting and eating and sharing a check-in with each other about what's been going on in our lives since last we met. We light candles to remember that Jesus' light shines bright for all of us and that each of us is called to shine our lights brightly for others. We have been reading through the beginning of Genesis as the students didn't realize there are two creation stories! We have enjoyed comparing the stories



and seeing the differences in the two versions. We have also shared our musical talents with each other. We have had violin and piano duets and we broke out the chimes and learned a song to share with the congregation in



December. I am looking forward to resuming class in the New Year!

Meet Our Soloist

TREVOR DRURY



Trevor Drury is a recent Graduate of The Boston Conservatory where he studied Voice

Performance with Dr. Thomas Gregg. He has performed as a soloist and in ensembles across his home of Southern California, as well as in Salt Lake City, Boston, and Italy. He currently works downtown as a Team Lead at SimpliSafe and will be applying to graduate schools for the following year to study voice performance and music technology.



December is the time of Advent. While we prepare for Christmas, decorate, cook, eat, and spend time with family and friends, take time to reflect on the meaning of the season. And please

remember that holidays can be tough for many individuals and families. Look around and reach out to members and friends that could use some cheer or support during this time of year. If you have concerns about someone, please let Pastor Carol know. At the Stratford Street United Church we care, and no burdens should be carried alone.

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