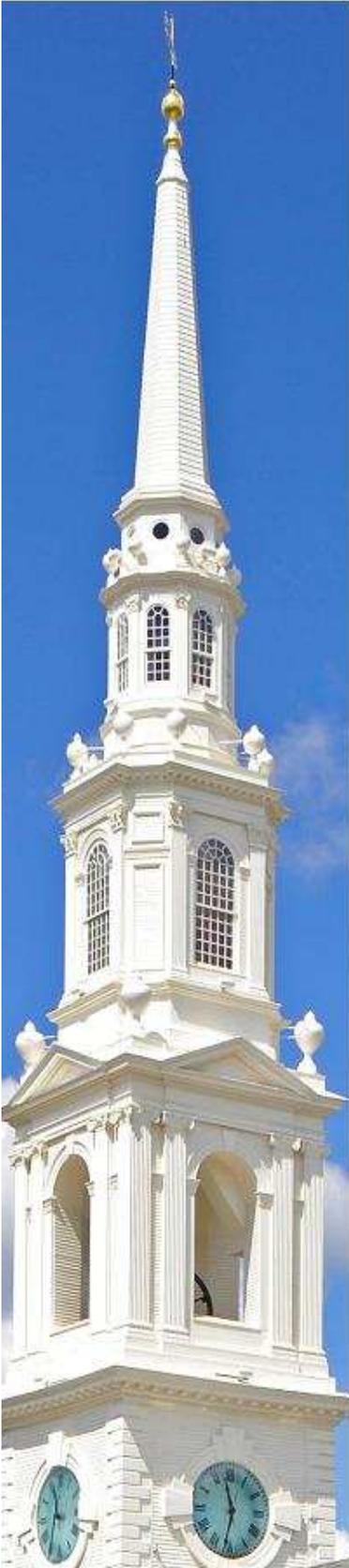


The Spire

Newsletter of the First Baptist Church in America

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From The Interim Pastor



Thank you for your warm welcome as your Interim Pastor! In particular, I want to thank the staff who have worked hard during the weeks since Dan left and are doing more than expected to help me get adjusted to a new place and meet new people. Linda, Steve, and Holly have gone out of their way to orient me and introduce me to new friends.

The work of an Interim Pastor overlaps but is still different from that of a settled pastor. I want to say at the very beginning that I am here to help you prepare for your next settled pastor. I will, of course, be doing many of the things that a settled pastor does: lead worship, offer pastoral care, do administration, visit, and counsel. But I am not a candidate for the settled pastor. I am here to help facilitate your work during the interim period.

I also want to acknowledge that an interim period is not just a time to “tread water” until a settled pastor comes. There is important work to be done both in the church itself and in the wider ministry in the community and beyond. The ship of the church moves forward by the wind of the Spirit even while the crew is experiencing transition! So I ask you to covenant with me and each other to work together to prepare for the settled pastor who will be just the right person to lead this church into the future. Let that covenant include serious, specific, and consistent prayer for the church leadership, the Pastoral Search Committee, and the entire congregation as we move into the future.

I plan to have regular office hours and am available to you as needed. I will be in Providence on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and of course on Sundays. On the weekdays I will be in the church office during the morning hours, and I welcome your calls or appointments. In the afternoons I will often be away from the office visiting in hospitals or with church members in other settings.

One of my all-time favorite scriptures comes from a conversation Jesus had with his disciples, and is found in John 15:15. Jesus says to his disciples, *I do not call you servants any longer...but I have called you friends....* Imagine that! It's like he gave the disciples a promotion: from servants to friends! I have never subscribed to the old adage that a pastor cannot be friends with church members. I look forward to hearing your stories, sharing our lives together, and becoming friends.

Thomas R. McKibbens

Preaching Schedule
A Summer of Psalms

July 06 (Independence Day weekend) (Communion)

Scripture: Psalm 100

Sermon: With Hearts and Hands and Voices

July 13

Scripture: Psalm 46

Sermon: Faith Is for the Fragile

July 20

Scripture: Psalm 137

Sermon: Still Faithful After All These Years

July 27

Scripture: Psalm 121

Sermon: Heading for the Hills

August 3

Scripture: Psalm 95

Sermon: Poetry in a Prosaic World

August 10

Scripture: Psalm 22

Sermon: Articulating the Absence of God

August 17

Scripture: Psalm 103

Sermon: Soul Blessing

August 24

Scripture: Psalm 148

Sermon: Duet With the Milky Way

Linda's Lines

I want to thank everyone for your support during these four months without a senior minister. You have been encouraging and affirming. Whenever I needed help with something you always responded, quickly and without complaining. Our committees and staff have always done their work efficiently, so I was confident in our ability to keep things going. What I observed in this time though was how well things flowed together, how all the separate parts worked together as a unit. I felt we had a unified core – purpose, if you will. Hopefully a sign that we were led by the same Spirit. (I obviously don't know how to express this exactly but I hope you get it any way!)

A lot has been going on with renovations, etc., but we should be back to our normal summer pace now. I am looking forward to working with Tom McKibbens. It is interesting to me the kinds of questions he asks, and I look forward to any insights he is able to give us about how we might improve. I think we are in a time of growth as well as change, so his leadership is much needed. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to serve you the last four months and look forward curiously and eagerly to what this next phase in our life together brings.

Linda

A Note of Thanks

We would like to express our appreciation for all the notes and calls of support and sympathy.

We are blessed to be a part of this loving church community.

Sam and Mickey Hall

From the Board of Deacons Chair

The Deacons Fund

“What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits to me?” Psalm 116:12

There are those among us who have been deeply grateful for assistance from the Deacons Fund from time to time, and on behalf of the Deacons I want to thank all of you who contribute to it on Communion Sundays. You are, indeed, rendering something to the Lord in gratitude for all his benefits to you. There is more need in our church family than many of us who do not deal directly with this fund might suppose. Rhode Island's poor economy, high unemployment and incomes that have been outpaced by the cost of living have hit people hard. That we have been able to offer some relief where it is needed has helped us grow in faith.

“I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.” Acts 20:35

David Murray, Professor of Old Testament and Practical Theology at Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary has come up with ten reasons why it is more blessed to give than to receive. Here is a brief summary for your reflection:

By giving we are obeying God's command to do so.

By giving we honor what God wants us to do.

Each of us has been given gifts by God, and to model ourselves in his image we must give too.

God has given us salvation, so by offering a smaller-scale salvation to those in need we are preaching the Gospel message.

By giving more than we are comfortable with, we are showing our trust in God to provide for us – this is not folly, but faith.

Giving makes God smile (as Pastor Dan would say...)

By giving to help others we advance God's kingdom.

We promote God's work through us by giving.

Non-Christians seeing the generosity of Christians can become aware of what a powerful God motivates them.

Giving is an act of worship

Please give generously to the Deacons Fund and help us to continue God's work at FBCIA.

Ruth Marris Macaulay, Board of Deacons Chair.

Church News

Worship services were displaced to the Fellowship Hall while new carpet and new flooring were laid this past month. All the stairs and vestibule were recarpetted to replace the old, worn, stretched, and stained carpet. The area of hardwood in the front around and in the pulpit area was expanded to improve the acoustics in the auditorium. The project took longer than anticipated because wood needed to be ordered for the platforms in the front to match what was already present where the pianos stood. And all the wood had to be sanded and stained to match. After all of that work, the whole auditorium and the seat cushions had to be cleaned to remove the saw dust; the organ had to be unwrapped and brought back into service and the pianos returned and tuned.



Work in progress on the Waterman Street side aisle.



A workman laid the tack strips in preparation for laying the carpet on the stairs.



On Sunday, June 8, one could see the newly laid floor boards, all of which (and the old floor) had to be sanded and stained.

Services were held in the Fellowship Hall for four Sundays in June while the auditorium and stairs were being re-carpetted and new flooring laid.



Rev. Donald Rasmussen, past executive minister of ABCORI, was the guest preacher on June 8, while the congregation met in the Fellowship Hall.



Peter Schoonmaker sang "Behold, I tell you a mystery...The trumpet shall sound" from *Messiah* by George Frederick Handel.



On Sunday, June 15, Esperanza Tannehill and David Coon admired the newly finished floors and liked the acoustics. (Notice that the steps to the pulpits are still missing and the platforms and the pianos have not been returned.)



(new carpet -vestibule):
Fresh, bright red carpeting covers the vestibule.

On June 8, the church threw a baby shower for Rob and Jessie Jarbadan at the home of Linda Bausserman and Stan Lemons.



The expectant parents were showered with many individual gifts and a number of "group gifts."



Because the name of the coming daughter was still a secret, Betsy Shealy decorated the cake with what the girl was currently called -- "Spawn."



Just arrived from Baylor University Press: the advance copy of *Roger Williams Decoded*, co-authored by Stanley Lemons. This book concerns the long lost, last theological essay by Roger Williams written about 1680.

News from the Board of Missions

Car Wash for Camp Canonicus

The mission committee wants to thank those who helped to make Saturday's car wash a success. About 20 children came out and, with the help and guidance of the adults, washed 9 cars. Special thanks to Richard and Emma who stepped in for Susan and put together the sign board and the cleaning materials. This event was more than the cleaning; the value of the experience itself for the children is invaluable.

Thank you very much.

Photos by Ann Marie Bausserman.



On Saturday, June 14, the church held a carwash to raise money to send children to Camp Canonicus. Children from the Sunday school and from the refugee families swarmed over the cars as they came through. Richard Lepore, Betsy Shealy, and Eva Adoadaji supervised the proceedings.



Camp Canonicus

Thirteen children took the bus to Camp Canonicus each day during week one. They enjoyed playing at the waterfront, boating, crafts, games in the fields, team building activities and Bible study. Arfa, who is 13, was trained as a day camp helper and will return for a couple more weeks before the summer is over.



Three youth went to resident camp during week two. The theme is water, so they are getting swimming lessons and will spend a day at a water park. Of course there will be the traditional camp fires, sing-a-longs, crafts and bible study. I can't wait to talk to them about their week.

Six children will attend day camp during week three and, we have two young ladies from the Congo signed up for three weeks of "leaders in training" camp.



Sending these children to camp is a positive experience in so many ways:

They get to spend a week in the woods.

Their English improves.

The other kids and the adults at camp learn about a different culture.

We support the ongoing mission of the camp, They learn about God.

They make friends with kids who are different from them. It brings new opportunities and options to their world. And, as most people who have attended Canonicus will tell you, it's FUN!

Thank you for all you've done so these young people can experience God's love and God's world this summer.

Please prayerfully consider how we can continue to show these kids that they are important when camp is over.



Susan Lepore



Steve Martorella directed the choir in the singing of "My Shepherd Will Supply My Need" by Virgil Thompson at the service welcoming Dr. Tom McKibbens as our interim minister.



Dr. Tom McKibbens delivered his first sermon as interim minister on "A Psalm for Transitions," using the 23rd Psalm as his text. This was the first in his summer series on Psalms.

After the service Pastor Tom greeting the congregation, here talking to Priscilla Steadman.



A reception in the Fellowship Hall complete with a cake by Betsy Shealy honored Pastor Tom. Mary Alice Kleiber cut him a piece while Frank Nicholson and Pat Billings prepared to eat their pieces of cake.

