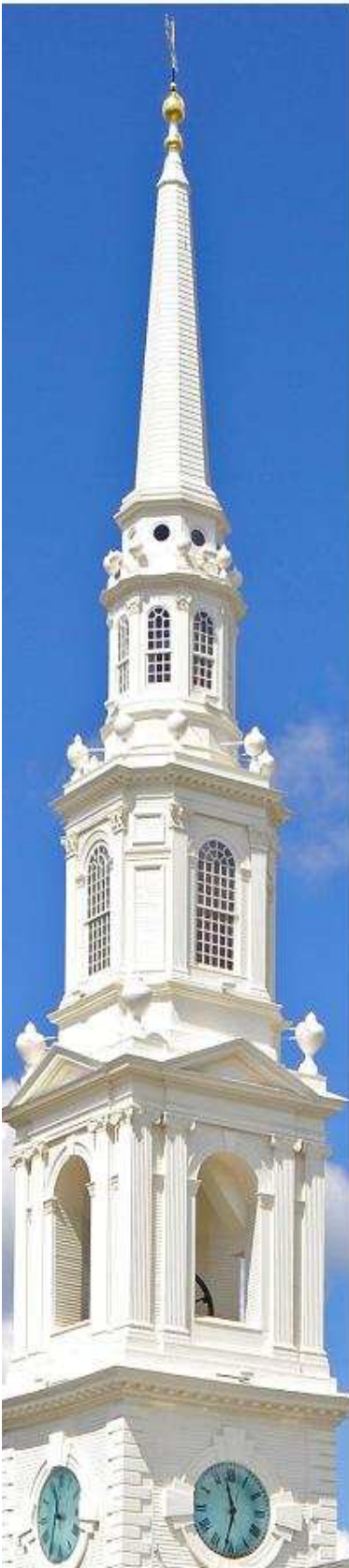


The Spire

Newsletter of the First Baptist Church in America

June 15, 2016, Volume 19, Issue 10



From the Pastor

Performance or Offering?

As a people, we may be more familiar with entertainment and performances than we are with religious offerings and sacred ceremony. When we go to the stadium, theater or to a concert, and are moved by the performance, it is common to applaud, stand, and maybe even to hoot and holler. Does the same hold true in church? When we are inspired by a piece of music, do we applaud in the same way? If so, what are we applauding? Is it the musician and the delivery, or are we applauding and affirming, with our response, their offering to God?

Amongst the Pueblo people of the Southwestern United States, strict rules govern behavior during religious ceremonies. Guidelines vary by pueblo, but most do not allow photography or applause during their dance ceremonies, since these are religious ceremonies, not arts performances.

I realize applause is not necessarily one of the major issues of worship, but it merits reflection. Although it might seem arbitrary, much consideration goes into shaping the order and flow of our worship. On one hand, the notion of our being so awed, overwhelmed, or moved by an aspect of worship that it can't but be transformed into a spontaneous outburst of appreciation is appealing. However, if this reaction is merely a rote response [*I hear a song, therefore, I clap.*] then its meaning begins to leach away. Why do we applaud one portion of service and not another? We don't applaud hymns, but the music, scripture, and other elements of worship are no more or less collective and collaborative efforts of all of us to grow closer to God.

Laurence Wagley observes that, "Congregations are not audiences, and leaders of worship are not performers. The role of the liturgist (and of the choir, organist, and ushers) is to enable the congregation to participate, not to win people's approval. ... What if the congregation applauds a sermon? That means the sermon was pleasing to the congregation. Now, preachers need approval, but I think most would not welcome the implication that their sermons are preached to win people's approval. Instead,

they think a sermon is successful if the people—far from judging the performance of the preacher—consider how pleasing their own lives are to God. Leaders of worship encourage people's participation in worship so that in that participation the people may respond to God.

Applause may, in fact, have a negative effect, making us self-conscious about our performances. And too little applause may make us feel unappreciated. Applause may communicate approval and support, and often an individual or a group needs that. People do come to church seeking a sense of worth, wanting to be loved. But applause is too cheap a response to those needs. If that kind of support is all that worship has to offer, then worship has been impoverished. The poor, those robbed of self-esteem, those who are oppressed—they, too, need approval and support, and the good news of God's love is their best hope. If they see concrete signs of the church's concern and are enfolded into the Christian community, they will feel supported in a way far beyond the effect of applause.

Applause can also lead to a sense of competition. If we applaud the choir's anthem today, why didn't we applaud last Sunday? Do we applaud every Sunday, every event, every person? Do we withhold applause for a particularly good anthem so the choir will work harder?

It is appropriate to show honor to one another but not at the cost of denying honor to God. To applaud a solo, a dance, or a sermon is to draw attention to the means rather than to the end."

I am not calling for an abolition of all applause and appreciation in worship, but I am calling for us to be mindful of who and what we celebrate. Is it the person who sings or the God they sing to and about? Let us not become so enamored with the finger that we miss what it is pointing us toward. Next time you are moved by music or an aspect of worship, feel free to add your offering of applause in service and towards God. It is merely a matter of where your heart and mind are directed. May all aspects of our worship serve to bring us into a closer, deeper, and more joyful union with God.

Jamie

“SCRIBBLES” from Friday Seekers’

May 21, 2016 – end of season

.....

The Friday Seekers’ program on May 21st was probably our best ever and that was because there were so many wonderful people taking part. Before I get into the individuals involved – I want to thank those “behind the scenes” people – Holly and David who helped with the set up and all of the people who brought food for the pot luck supper and extra desserts.

Now for those who took part in the program itself –

Sam Beachen – what can we say about him except that we love him so and everything he says is either witty or wise or both

Sam Brunner (soon to be married) – a new member of our congregation and a first time “performer”

Adeline Bee – (recovering from surgery) – with her beautiful poetry – so heartfelt and expressive

Peter Schoonmaker – for providing our background music as well as a number of his own

Linda Bausserman – another first timer – showing her love of the viola and the violin and sharing that with us all

David Coon – providing us with a preview of his upcoming concert and getting us all in the mood for it

Jeanne Kolb –her song selection brought back some great memories for many of us

Grace and Aaron Guiney – what can I say about these children that we did not say last night – talented beyond belief! Even little brother got in on the act.

Rob Jarbadan – with his rendition of Closing Time – brought us closure for another fabulous night.

Again my thanks to all of YOU – without whom FRIDAY SEEKERS would not be!

Dianne Thyret, Friday Seekers’ Coordinator (SEE YOU IN SEPTEMBER)

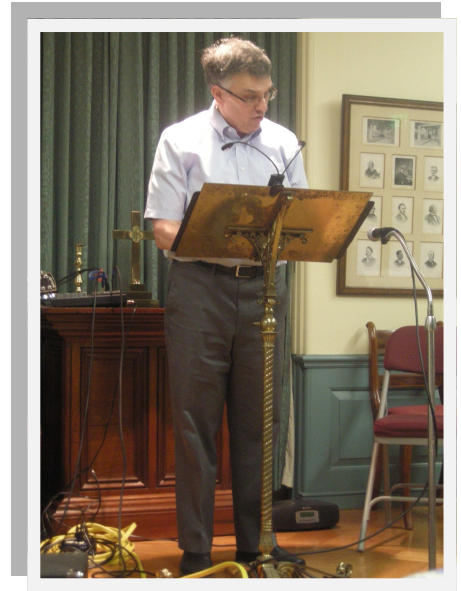
The final gathering of the Friday Seekers was the 5th annual "Coffee House" on May 21. It was an entertaining variety show with instrumental music and singing, poetry, and wit and wisdom.



Sam Beachem began the evening with "wit and wisdom" by saying that he had never had been linked to wit unless it was "nitwit."



Adeline Bee presented a number of her original works of poetry



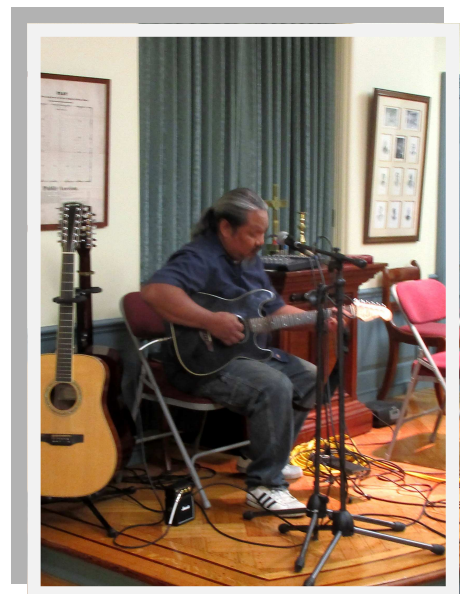
David Coon sang an 1863 song of the Civil War entitled "Weeping, Sad, and Lonely, or When this Cruel War is Over."



Sam Brunner,



Peter Schoonmaker,



and Rob Jarbadan

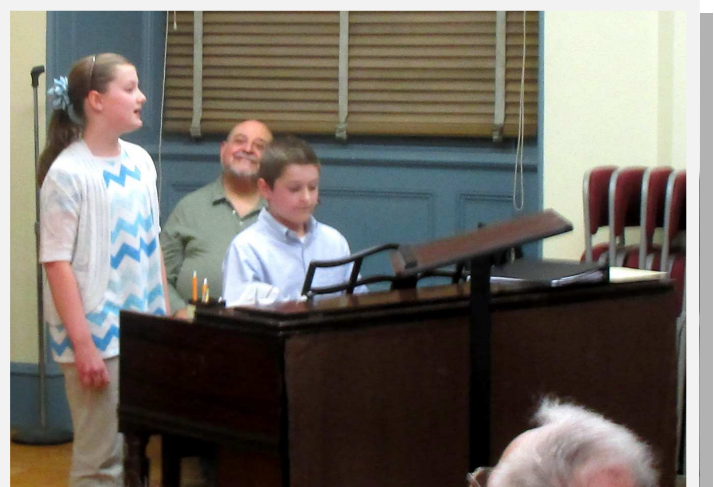
played their guitars with pieces that ranged from Bach to Rock.



The entire crowd sang a number of songs from the 1940s and 1950s (ones which the older folks sang from memory) which included such numbers as "Mairzy Doats and Dozy Doates" (1943) and "I'm Looking Over a Four Leaf Clover" (1948).



Linda Bausserman explained why she loves to play the viola and with Steven Martorella played "Six Studies of English Folk Songs" by Ralph Vaughn Williams.



The Guiney twins, Grace and Aaron presented a mixture of comedy and music as they took turns playing solo, then four hands, and ending with Grace singing "Jesus Loves Me" while Aaron accompanied her on the piano.

Sunday, May 22 was a busy day for folks at FBCIA.



Pastor Jamie was adorned for springtime to lead the church in worship.

In the early afternoon David Coon presented a recital entitled "Songs of the Civil War in Five Elements" in which he sang a series of Civil War songs, each of which was grouped with a modern musical setting of the words of Walt Whitman.



Then later, the choir had a party at the home of Jeanne Kolb and Barry Bainton to honor Pam and Robert Manninen, longtime members of the choir who are soon moving to Maine

Missions and Outreach



This month, for our refugee storage area, we are collecting diapers and sanitary napkins. These items are

expensive for families who have just arrived here and are needed by the mothers of young children and their daughters. Please donate.

OGHS

We are pleased to report that on Sunday May 22, \$458 was collected for the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering. That resulted in a total of \$655 for the three Sundays in May. When we add the \$500 that we budget for this offering, we will send \$1,155 to aid disaster relief.



Flip Flop Campaign

In June, once again, we are raising funds to send children to summer camp at Camp Canonicus. This camp experience has been especially rewarding for our refugee children. If you would like to contribute, please look for the poster in the Fellowship Hall, with instructions on how to donate. Here is what your money will buy:

- \$10 = snacks for 1 camper for a week
- \$20 = snacks for 1 camper for 2 week
- \$45 = 1 day of camp
- \$90 = 2 days of camp
- \$115 = a half week of camp
- \$185 = 4 days of camp
- \$230 = 1 week of day camp
- \$330 = 1 week overnight camp

Please write a check to FBCIA with "Flip Flop" or "Camp" on the memo line.



Saturday, September 10th, we will hold the **Roger Williams Attic**, the biennial church yard sale to benefit our Missions and Outreach programs, specifically the trips to La Romana in the Dominican Republic. During the summer months, please think about putting aside items for sale. Please NO clothes or electronics (tv sets, computers, etc.) but kitchen items, furniture, linens and other household items are welcome.

The First Baptist Church in America
75 North Main Street
Providence, RI 02903
Phone: 401-454-3418
Fax: 401-421-4095
E-Mail: fbc.inamerica@verizon.net
Web: www.fbcia.org

Jamie Washam, Pastor
Stephen T. Martorella, Minister of Music
Holly B. Edwards, Administrative Assistant
Anne Gagan, Bookkeeper
David Michel, Sexton
Ivy Bermudez, Child Care Worker

Sunday Calendar

Sun. June 19,	10:00 AM	Worship	Rev. Jamie Washam
		Greeters:	Donna and Henry Campopiano
		Ushers:	Richard Lepore and Tom Shackelford
		Worship Leader:	Barbara Staples
	11:15 PM	Tour Guide:	Elsa Grieder
Sun. June 26,	10:00 AM	Worship	Ugandan Children's Choir
		Greeters:	Holly and Michael Edwards
		Ushers:	Richard Lepore and Tom Shackelford
		Worship Leader:	Rev. Jamie Washam
	11:15 PM	Tour Guide:	Richard Aubin

Announcements

► Family Pew

Next Sunday, make sure and check out the pews dedicated to children and families. We've taken the penultimate, double-wide pews in the center back of the meeting house, and made them more welcoming to children. Sound absorbing carpets were laid this past week, and a collection of children's books are available to read, along with crayons and paper. Children are vital to our church and worship. If you have other recommendations for how to make this area more welcoming to the youngest members of our community, please let Pastor Jamie know.



► Pastor Jamie and NJ invite you all to join them for a potluck at their home the weekend the Ugandan Children's Choir will be in town. Dinner will be at 6 pm on Friday evening. All are welcome. If you need the address, please call the church office. Plan to come and enjoy the evening with the travelling choir and your church family. Please bring a dish to pass, and pray for good weather.