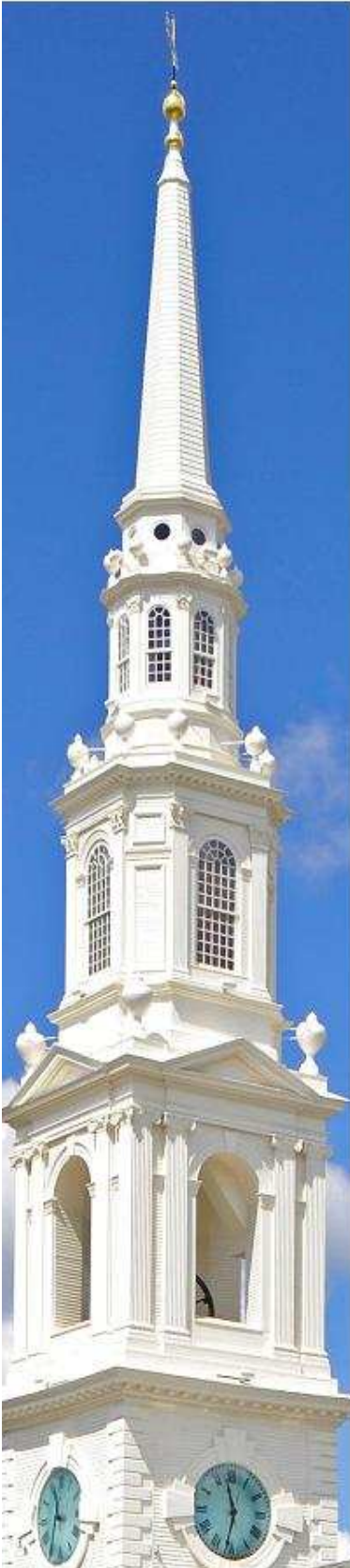


The Spire

Newsletter of the First Baptist Church in America

September 15, 2016, Volume 19, Issue 13



From the Pastor

It is mid-September, and the autumn is beginning to assert itself. Nights are gaining on the days. Leaves are beginning their kamikaze spirals back to the earth. On certain afternoons, you can hear geese honking to one another as they begin their southward sojourns. On chill evenings, we can smell the woodsmoke from our neighbor's firepit. Fall offers something for each of our senses, and teases the poet out of us all. Mary Oliver has been penning verses for decades; her latest book is a collection of love poems celebrating her beloved, her Creator, and the wonders of creation. As we approach the autumn equinox, when day and night are perfectly balanced between summer and winter, I offer you her poem, *Whistling Swans*, as a meditation on the promise of spring that lives in the heart of the fall.

Whistling Swans

Mary Oliver

Do you bow your head when you pray or do you look
up into that blue space?

Take your choice, prayers fly from all directions.

And don't worry about what language you use,
God no doubt understands them all.

Even when the swans are flying north and making
such a ruckus of noise, God is surely listening
and understanding.

Rumi said, There is no proof of the soul.

But isn't the return of spring and how it

springs up in our hearts a pretty good hint?

Yes, I know, God's silence never breaks, but is
that really a problem?

There are thousands of voices, after all.

And furthermore, don't you imagine (I just suggest it)

that the swans know as much as we do about
the whole business?

So listen to them and watch them, singing as they fly.

Take from it what you can.

Jamie

Christian Education Sunday Morning Forum

SUNDAY FORUM SERIES ON JUSTICE by Ruth Marris Macaulay

September 25th to November 20th

In order for us to discuss both the books and the issues surrounding justice in our society this will be a nine-week series which includes at least 3 outside speakers (dates still to be finalized, but coming shortly). Meanwhile we wanted to let you all know what books we will be talking about in case you would like to read them (used copies are available on amazon.com and both are on Kindle). Ta-Nehisi Coates is a journalist and Michelle Alexander is a professor of law.



Between the World and Me by Ta-Nehisi Coates published by Spiegel and Grau (an imprint of Random House), 2015.

Readers of his work in *The Atlantic* and elsewhere know Ta-Nehisi Coates for his thoughtful and influential writing on race in America. Written as a series of letters to his teenaged son, his new memoir, *Between the World and Me*, walks us through the course of his life, from the tough neighborhoods of Baltimore in his youth, to Howard University—which Coates dubs “The Mecca” for its revelatory community of black students and teachers—to the broader Meccas of New York and Paris. Coates describes his observations and the evolution of his thinking on race, from Malcolm X to his conclusion that race itself is a fabrication, elemental to the concept of American (white) exceptionalism. Ferguson, Trayvon Martin, and South Carolina are not bumps on the road of progress and harmony, but the results of a systemized, ubiquitous threat to “black bodies” in the form of slavery, police brutality, and mass incarceration. Coates is direct and, as usual, uncommonly insightful and original. There are no wasted words. This is a powerful and exceptional book.—*Jon Foro*



The New Jim Crow by Michelle Alexander published by the New York Press, 2012

Once in a great while a book comes along that changes the way we see the world and helps to fuel a nationwide social movement. *The New Jim Crow* is such a book. Praised by Harvard professor Lani Guinier as “brave and bold,” this book directly challenges the notion that the election of Barack Obama signals a new era of colorblindness. With dazzling candor, legal scholar Michelle Alexander argues that “we have not ended racial caste in America; we have merely redesigned it.” By targeting black men through the War on Drugs and decimating communities of color, the U.S. criminal justice system functions as a contemporary system of racial control—relegating millions to a permanent second-class status—even as it formally adheres to the principle of colorblindness. In the words of Benjamin Todd Jealous, president and CEO of the NAACP, this book is a “call to action.”

Called “stunning” by Pulitzer Prize-winning historian David Levering Lewis, “invaluable” by the *Daily Kos*, “explosive” by *Kirkus*, and “profoundly necessary” by the *Miami Herald*, this updated and revised paperback edition of *The New Jim Crow*, now with a foreword by Cornel West, is a must-read for all people of conscience.

There will be other readings which we will be using and we will give you more information in the next *Spire*. I will be introducing both books on Sunday September 25th. You do not have to read them to discuss the issues they raise but I will say that reading them was a call to action for me. See you on the 25th!

Missions and Outreach opportunities




Thanks to everyone who donated items, who sorted & priced and who volunteered to work at the Yard Sale. So far, we have raised \$1479.36 for the January trip to La Romana in the Dominican Republic.



This month we are collecting for the [World Mission Offering](#). Here are some of the areas where your donations will be put to use: peace and justice, education, economic development, health and wellness, evangelism and abolition of trafficking. There are special envelopes in the pews during September. If you write a check, write it to FBCIA with World Mission on the memo line.



Support  **PICA** by bringing in your non-perishable food items for September. This month, think **PROTEIN** – especially canned tuna or peanut butter. Donation boxes are at the top of the stairs.



Sandwich Brigade



At 9 a.m. on the first 4 Sundays of October, we will make sandwiches for Crossroads.

If you would like to help, sign up in the Fellowship Hall.

Properties and Sexton Committee

Meet our new Sexton



Karen and Tony Zambarano

On behalf of the P and S Committee, I want to introduce you to Anthony (Tony) Zambarano. Tony will be joining us as FBCIA's full-time sexton on October 2nd. Please make an effort to say hello to him! Tony and his wife Karen live in Coventry. He has two grown children, who live out of state, and Karen works for the Department of Corrections in an HR capacity. Tony comes to us with a great deal of experience, including having worked at the Church of the Annunciation in Cranston for seven years; his most recent job was with Final Gift Crematorium, Inc. in Cranston. His back-

ground and skills make him an excellent fit for our congregation, its needs and those of our historic meeting house. *Joanne*

FBCIA News

PRAYER VIGIL FOR HEALING WITH PEACE AND JUSTICE Saturday, September 24 at 5:15 pm Front lawn of First Baptist Church in America

American Baptist Clergywomen of Rhode Island invite you to join in a prayer vigil for healing with peace and justice. In the face of ongoing violence in our community and world, let's come together to share and listen to one another, and peacefully and hopefully imagine and advocate for another way of being.

Noel Frias, Community Activist for the RI NAACP Youth and College Division will speak on **"What do young people of color need from the police?"** Commissioner of Public Safety, Col. Steven Paré, will answer the question **"What do police officers need from young people of color in the Providence community?"** Rev. Dr. Donald Anderson, Executive Minister with the RI State Council of Churches, will respond to the question **"Why do Christians and Muslims in Rhode Island Need One Another?"** We also will have a key member of the Muslim Community responding to **"Why do Muslims and other Faith Communities in Rhode Island Need One Another?"**

Other confirmed participants include: Emily Jones, Executive Director, RI Interfaith Coalition, Rev. Wendy Kiefer-O'Brien, President, RI American Baptist Ministers Council, Rev. Justin Lester, Pastor, Congdon Street Baptist Church, Rev. Janet Cooper Nelson, Brown University Chaplain, Rev. Jamie Washam, Pastor, First Baptist Church in America, Rev. Linda Watkins, Pastor, First Baptist Church of Pawtucket.

All are welcome to join together to pray, sing, claim, and move toward healing, peace, justice and reconciliation on this Water Fire night in downtown Providence. Come early for best street parking.

Roger Williams Attic

The Missions Committee sponsored its biennial Roger Williams' Attic rummage sale on Saturday, September 10 to raise money to help to send people on the mission trip to La Romana in the Dominican Republic in February 2017. Church members brought in an amazing amount of things to be sold, and the sale netted some \$1400+. In addition at the end of the day, a substantial amount of goods left over was given to some refugee families and to the Open Table Church. It was a church-wide effort as more than thirty people, young and old, pitched in to help make it a success.



Browsers had a great array of stuff and things to choose from.

People lined up to pay for their "treasures."



Jamie Washam and Susan Lepore assisted buyers to get through the line.

Sunday, September 12 was Rally Day when the Sunday school resumed and the choir returned. After church everybody enjoyed pizza for lunch and the children played in a bounce house on the lawn while some parents watched on.



The Adult Forum was treated to a visit by many of the refugee children (and their mothers) for whom First Baptist and several other ABCORI churches had raised \$6000 this year to send them to Camp Canonicus in rural Exeter. Most of them had had the opportunity to go to camp last year as a result of the church efforts, and a few more were able to go for the first time this year. One of the returning campers was a junior camp counselor this year. Janet Kago, a social worker for the International Institute, has been the contact that has brought the children to the attention of the church, and she expressed great gratitude for the help that the churches have given. It has been a life-transforming experience them.



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Holly B. Edwards, Administrative Assistant
Anne Gagan, Bookkeeper
David Michel, Sexton
Ivy Bermudez, Child Care Worker

Sunday Calendar

Sun. Sept. 25	10:00 AM	Sunday Morning Forum	
	11:00 AM	Worship	Rev. Jamie Washam
		Worship Leader:	Joanne Schneider
		Greeters:	Eva and Ahuma Adodoadji
		Ushers:	Donna and Henry Campopiano
	12:15 PM	Tour Guide:	Joanne Schneider

Children's Sunday School Lessons - September

Anchor Point: *God is with us wherever we go.*

Bible Verse: The Lord was with Joseph (Genesis 39:2)

Sun. September 25 - Joseph and His Brothers Reunited

Bible Story: Genesis 42:1-46:34

Bible Verse: The Lord was with Joseph

Sunday Morning Forum

September 25th: Ruth Marris Macaulay will give our reading for the justice series and provide some ideas for preliminary discussion.

Between the World and Me by Ta-Nehisi Coates

The New Jim Crow by Michelle Alexander