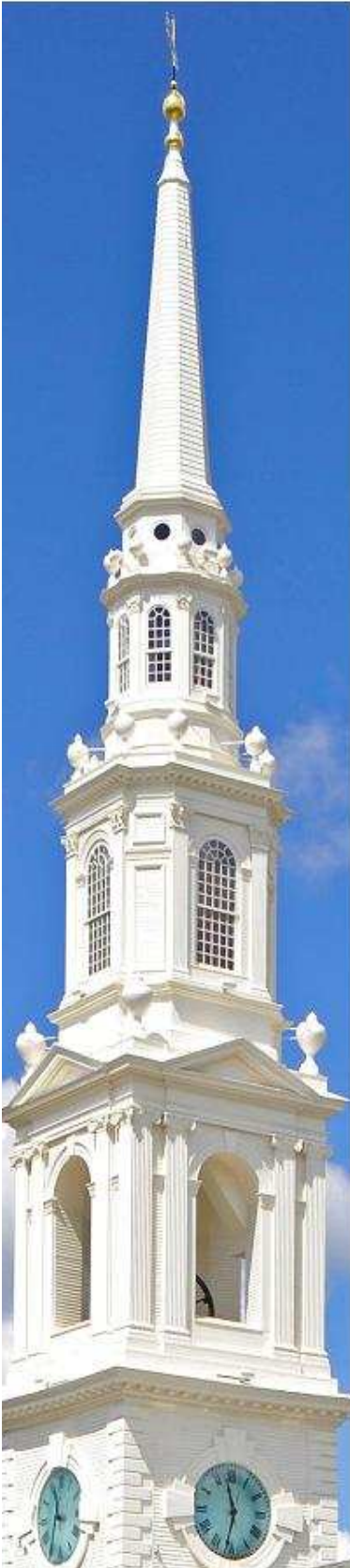


The Spire

Newsletter of the First Baptist Church in America

June 2017, Volume 20, Issue 6



From the Pastor

When Roger Williams inaugurated his “lively experiment” in Rhode Island in 1636, one of his major ongoing contributions to the world was the notion of the separation of church and state. This idea continues to expand and evolve. In 1954, under the Lyndon Johnson administration, an addition was made to the tax code prohibiting the endorsement of a candidate by religious and non-profit organizations, lest they lose their tax exempt status. Religious bodies and other non-profits can take positions on issues and policies, but cannot endorse candidates.

Early in May, the Johnson Amendment, as the provision is known, came under threat when the President signed an executive order calling for its abolition. Overwhelmingly, religious leaders opposed this move. Most believe that it would lead to division and potentially abuse within faith communities.

As the church of Roger Williams, many have reached out to us for our take on this issue. Along with many other people of faith, I strongly advocate that we maintain the separation of church and state. To that end, together with more than 2,500 faith leaders of all religions around the country, I signed on to a letter issued by the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty. The letter states, in part:

As a leader in my religious community, I am strongly opposed to any effort to repeal or weaken current law that protects houses of worship from becoming centers of partisan politics. Changing the law would threaten the integrity and independence of houses of worship. We must not allow our sacred spaces to be transformed into spaces used to endorse or oppose political candidates.

Faith leaders are called to speak truth to power, and we cannot do so if we are merely cogs in partisan political machines. The prophetic role of faith communities necessitates that we retain our independent voice. Current law respects this independence and strikes the right balance: houses of worship that enjoy favored tax-exempt status may engage in advocacy to address moral and political issues, but they cannot tell people who to vote for or against. Nothing in current law, however, prohibits me from endorsing or opposing political candidates in my own personal capacity.

Changing the law to repeal or weaken the “Johnson Amendment” – the section of the tax code that prevents tax-exempt nonprofit organizations from endorsing or opposing candidates – would harm houses of worship, which are not identified or divided by partisan lines. Particularly in today’s political climate, engaging in partisan politics and issuing endorsements would be highly divisive and have a detrimental impact on congregational unity and civil discourse.

I have profound respect for the legacy of this congregation, and for the privileges and obligations it confers upon each of us. As the 37th settled minister of the First Baptist Church in America, I intend to uphold and further this heritage, and trust that, as members of this community, you will also follow the Spirit and your conscience to speak and act, as you are led.

Or, as David Coon suggested at my installation, “unsettling” minister!

In Memoriam



Edith Rathbun, aged 99 died peacefully with her family present on June 14, 2017 at Tockwotton on the Waterfront after suffering a fall. Born on March 23, 1918, she was one of three daughters of Rodman G. and Lillian (Nevin) Rathbun. Edith had been a member of FBCIA since she joined by letter from the 4th Baptist Church of Providence in February 1966. She followed her mother from 4th Baptist to 1st Baptist after Lillian joined this church in 1959 after purchasing the residence on Congdon Street. At that time Edith was still living and working in Washington, DC in the Public Health Service in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Edith graduated from Hope High School in 1936 and then majored in chemistry and biology at Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, NY, graduating in 1940.

When women were accepted for service by the U.S. Navy beginning in August 1942, Edith volunteered and rose to the rank of Lt. j.g. in the WAVES. (That was an acronym for “Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service.”) The WAVES were an official part of the Navy, not an auxiliary corps, and received the same rank, ratings, pay and military discipline as male personnel. She served the Navy in the Naval Medical Research Institute doing research in tissue cultures until the end of the war. After the war she was employed for a time by the Department of Defense and then in the Science Department of the Library of Congress. In 1953 the Department of Health Education and Welfare employed her in the Public Health Service in the manpower division with special attention to the nursing program, and she remained there until she retired in 1978.

She returned to Providence to her mother’s home in 1980 where she lived until she moved to Tockwotton on the Waterfront in August 2013. After coming to Providence, Edith plunged into service in the church, and in the next twenty years served terms on the Budget & Finance Committee, Properties & Sexton Committee, the Board of Deacons, Nominating Committee, Social Committee, Assistant Treasurer, and Member-at-Large on the Executive Committee, and the Organ Fund Committee. Because of her involvement with nursing programs with the federal government, she was appointed to the board of directors the Providence Visiting Nurses Association. In addition, she was quite involved in the Providence Art Club.

She is survived by her sister Virginia Stuart Howard and her three daughters and a son and by two daughters and a son of her other sister, the late Ruth Rathbun Pittman.

FBCIA NEWS



Several members of our church attended the conference of the Inter-faith Coalition to Reduce Poverty and reported on it and led a discussion at the Adult Forum on May 21. (L to R): Jamie Washam, Linda Bausserman, Elsa Grieder, Janet Davies.)

On Thursday, May 25th the church was a bustle with students for Brown's Baccalaureate rehearsal.



The morning, of Friday May 26th, the Brown Lion Dancers came to rehearse.

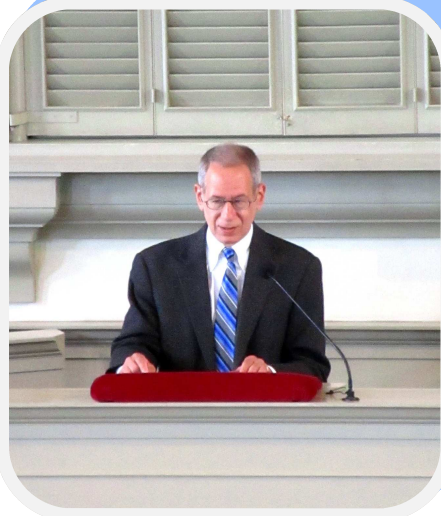


Friday afternoon on the 26th, the Engineering Department had their Commencement Rehearsal along with a Pizza and Coke Cola Party.



Dr. Amy Chilton Thompson, professor at Azusa Pacific University and Fuller Theological Seminary, was the guest preacher on June 4. As it was Pentecost Sunday, she preached on a text from the Book of Acts on "Drunken Men and Prophet Women."

Howard Voss-Altman, Senior Rabbi of Temple Beth-El, spoke to the church on Sunday June 11. He made a passionate plea for taking a compassionate approach to the incarceration of people instead of simply seeking revenge and punishment.



Following the morning worship, Rabbi Voss-Altman greeted the congregation, including Ruth Marris Macaulay.

Good Bye

Good Day,

With a heavy heart it has come for Marek and I to depart from FBCIA's generous hospitality and fellowship. I would love to thank everyone for all the love and kindness that was shown to my son and me.

Drew Bakgaard

Drew's wife Stephanie has completed her Master program at RISD and they will be moving back to Canada.



The Flip Flop Campaign

It's summer again and that means it's time to raise money to send our refugee youth to Camp Canonicus. 6 years ago we sent 4 girls from Eritrea and 2 girls from Liberia to camp for two weeks. Word spread and this spring, camp applications were given to 30 children from Eritrea and Congo. For some this will be their first camp experience, for the others, it's something they've been looking forward to since last summer.

One week of day camp is \$230.00 One week of resident camp is \$340.00. Donations in all amounts are welcome. You can pay for a week, a day, or provide money for a daily snack at the camp store (\$10/week) or give any amount you choose. Monetary donations can be made by writing a check to FBCIA with camp in the memo line.

We will also need sunscreen, bug spray, flashlights, lunch boxes and water bottles. These items can be brought into church anytime between now and July 9. We will be looking for people who can drive children to camp on Sunday afternoon and pick them up on Friday afternoon. Dates will be announced soon.

Thank you for your continued support of this program. It has been a blessing to the children, to the camp and to all the church members who have been involved in providing this opportunity to these young people.

MISSIONS



A Summer Gathering

Everyone is invited to our home in North Scituate for a summer potluck on Saturday, July 8. Bring a lawn chair and a dish to share. Arrive any time after 5. We will plan to eat around 6. Balls and lawn games are welcome too. Talk to us at church for the address and directions.

Richard, Susan,

Kelsey and Emma Lepore

An Update on Lucas, Abala and Asende



About a year ago Lucas, Abala and Asende arrived in the US from the Congo. Janet Kago, brought the brothers to our attention in September when Lucas, who at 18 was his brothers' guardian, was working full-time instead of finishing his last year of high school. We made the decision to join the effort to pay the living expenses of the boys so Lucas could continue his education.

Lucas continued to work part-time and went to school full-time. When the head of the Hendrick Home in Abilene TX was visiting Pastor Jamie, he saw our request for funding on the FBCIA web site and offered the boys a place in their facility.

Hendrick Home for Children raises children in a safe and loving Christian environment. The children are reared in an atmosphere of spiritual, physical, emotional and intellectual growth. They enjoy participating in all academic and extracurricular activities of their public schools. Their

vacations include activities such as water and snow skiing, competitive horse shows, camping in the Big Bend of Texas and fishing in the Gulf of Mexico. Since 1939, Hendrick Home for Children has been a safe and loving "home" for thousands of children after living their early lives in poverty, abuse and neglect.



In February, the boys moved to Abilene where they live in a group home with five other boys and house parents. Lucas was able to attend a school that allowed him to learn at his own pace and on June 4, he

completed his first educational milestone by graduating from high school. He will attend a community college in Abilene in the fall and then plans to transfer to a 4-year university where he wants to study medicine. He will live in an apartment at the Hendrick Home so he will still be near his brothers.

Abala and Asende completed their freshman year of high school. Abala will be a lifeguard this summer and plans to play football when he returns to school in the fall. Asende will join the soccer team.

Thank you to everyone who provided support for this family. Please continue to pray for them as they explore the opportunities that come their way and adjust to their life in the United States.

CAUSE AN EFFECT



Make dinner a selfless act by joining us for a fundraiser to support PICA Food Pantry. Come in to the **Chipotle at 969 Bald Hill Road in Warwick on Tuesday, June 20th** between **5:00pm and 9:00pm**. Bring in this flyer, show it on your smartphone or tell the cashier you're supporting the cause to make sure that 50% of the proceeds will be donated to PICA Food Pantry.



MEXICAN GRILL

If placing an order online during your fundraiser, please note you must choose the pay in-store option and inform our cashier of your participation before paying.

Gift card purchases during fundraisers do not count towards total donated sales, but purchases made with an existing gift card will count.

The First Baptist Church in America
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Stephen Martorella, Minister of Music
Holly Edwards, Administrative Assistant
Anne Gagan, Bookkeeper
Tony Zambarano, Sexton
Ivy Bermudez, Child Care Worker
Haley Jamroz Baccaire, ASL Interpreter

2017 Sunday Calendar

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| Sun. June 18 | 10:00 AM | Worship: Pastor Jamie Washam
Worship Leader: Peter Berdos
Greeters: Linda Bausserman and Stan Lemons
Ushers: Tom Shackelford and Dick Aubin |
| | 11:15 AM | Tour Guide: Elsa Grieder |
| Sun. June 25 | 10:00 AM | Worship: Pastor Jamie Washam
Worship Leader: TBA
Greeters: Dianne and Edgar Thyret
Ushers: Tom Shackelford and Mark Hall |
| | 11:15 AM | Tour Guide: Richard Aubin |
| Sun. July 2 | 10:00 AM | Communion Worship: Pastor Joyce Duerr |
| | 11:15 AM | Tour Guide: Stan Lemons |
| Sun. July 9 | 10:00 AM | Worship: Pastor Jamie Washam |
| | 11:15 AM | Tour Guide: Joanne Schneider |