

THE SPIRE

First Baptist Church in America Newsletter

April 2023



As we await the coming of spring (in the air, not just on the calendar), and anticipate Easter, I thought I'd share a portion of a poem by Ted Loder about in-between times. Although the pandemic is officially over and life has pretty much returned to normal, life feels different. As we adjust to the new normal, things just keep on changing. Even church is different this spring with Jamie away. She has provided us with wonderful preachers during her absence. And everyone has been so helpful, filling in where needed, that things do keep flowing along. I am grateful to God and yet it feels different and there is a sense of uncertainty. So I thought I would share with you a portion of this poem by Ted Loder.

Seraphim in Disguise

O God,

Everywhere present but nowhere obvious,

here I am where I always seem to be:

betwixt cold fronts and crocuses,

dreams and disappointments,

failures and summons,

flaws and gifts,

growing up and growing old;

betwixt isolation and intimacy

weariness and renewal,

despair and hope,

confidence and fear,

life and death.

.....

Muster my courage

to let go of the clutch of grievances

that keep rendering me vaguely the same,

to become vulnerable to surprise – by being one –

taking some outrageous, specific dare of love.

Strengthen my trust

that you are in the turbulence

to intensify my struggles,

and to render me, as well,

sociable to joy, subject to your grace.

.....

Ted Loder

In Wrestling the Light

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FORUMS FOR APRIL

Sunday April 2nd

Out of the Box: A short documentary on different gender types and the challenges they face.

Followed by a discussion.

Sunday April 9th

EASTER SUNDAY BREAKFAST

Sunday April 16th

An Introduction to Gender Identities – Ruth Marris Macaulay : Based on the research and book *Introduction to Women’s and Gender Studies: An Interdisciplinary Approach* by Melissa J. Gillis and Andrew T. Jacobs (Oxford University Press, 2020). The authors both taught women’s, gender, and sexuality courses at SUNY Rockland College.

Sunday April 23rd



Kilah Walters-Clinton, M.Ed is a clinical therapist who currently serves as the Director of Race, Equity, and Community Engagement at The Executive Office of Health

& Human Services. Previously, Kilah has served as a probation and parole officer; a diversity, equity, and inclusion advisor, and an emergency service clinician. She attended Lincoln School and is a friend and former student of Ruth Marris Macaulay. More details will follow in the week before her presentation.

Sunday April 30th

Ric Wild from Crossroads will give a presentation on their work and latest initiatives.

FBCIA NEWS

As we prepare for Easter in this in-between Lenten season, I hope you will join us Thursday, April 6 at 6:30 for a light supper followed by our Maundy Thursday service at 7:00

Dear Members,

Before she left for Sabbatical, Pastor Jamie presented an idea to the Deacons to solicit frozen ready-to-go meals in the event the random visitor came to our door looking for food, or for members and friends who would appreciate a home cooked meal in temporary circumstances. The Deacons wholeheartedly agreed, and we are now set up to begin!

In Fellowship Hall, you will see a stack of empty green frozen meal containers with blank labels. If you are so inclined, please take one home, fill it with your epicurean delights, complete the label, freeze it, and bring it back to church when you can, and place it in our kitchen freezer. The Deacons will manage the inventory, so we may make the occasional appeal and set out new containers and labels when we are ready for more.



Please join us on Saturday, April 22 as we celebrate Earth Day! This year’s theme is *Invest in our Planet*, which highlights the importance of dedicating our time, resources, and energy to solving climate change and other environmental issues. We will be

cleaning up the Church grounds and preparing for our vegetable plantings beginning at 9:00 a.m. There will be water and snacks available, but please bring your own gardening tools.

There will be a Quarterly Business Meeting and Luncheon on Sunday, April 23rd after the worship service

A New and Improved Vegetable Garden is Coming

At the Annual Business Meeting in January, we asked for permission to apply for a People's Garden Project Grant from the *RI Conservation Districts*, *USDA Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (NRCS)*, and the *RI State Conservation Committee (RISCC)*.

We are pleased to announce that we have received a grant for \$8,400 and now we have a lot of work to do. We will be installing and planting vegetables in 12 raised beds near the wall in the backyard. Where we have had vegetables and sunflowers along the walls, we will continue to have sunflowers and add native pollinators. This project will allow us to provide more fresh food to those who visit our green space.

Accomplishing this, will require us to work together. We will need to assemble the beds, fill them with soil, surround them with mulch add edging to keep the mulch out of the grass and then plant, weed, harvest and maintain the beds. 4 of the beds will be high raised beds so they will be accessible to individuals who have difficulties getting down on their hands and knees. The 2 high beds near the sidewalk will have pavers to allow access for those who struggle walking on uneven surfaces.

Next week Susan Lepore and Linda Bausserman will be meeting with a representative from the Northern Rhode Island Conservation District to complete the paperwork. Then a small group will be meeting to decide what plants and seeds we should purchase. We hope to begin the actual work on Saturday, April 22 – details to follow.

If you don't like to garden or don't feel you have the energy or mobility to move mulch and soil, you can still be involved. First, we need a name for the garden and we'd love to know any vegetables you think we should definitely grow. (Send your ideas to Susan) You could also participate by providing snacks for the gardeners, researching the native plants that we will be growing, typing information from plant tags and seed packages into the computer and providing recipes for the items we will be growing. There will be a page on our web site, listing what we are growing and giving ideas for use. This will be accessible from the garden via a QR Code. . You can also pick and eat or share the produce we are growing.



Please join us in this exciting outreach and community growing adventure.

AROUND FBCIA



Brenda Clement addressed the Adult Forum on the first Sunday of March on "The Challenges of Affordable House in Rhode Island." She has been active for 25 years in housing issues, having been Executive Director of the Housing Action Coalition of RI, Executive Director of the Housing Network; founding member of the New England Housing Network, and chairman of the board of the National Low Income Housing Coalition.



The Rev. Roger Peltier was the guest preacher on March 5. He is the Assistant Minister of Pastoral Care for the 1st Unitarian Church of Providence. He greeted Janet Davies at the close of the service.



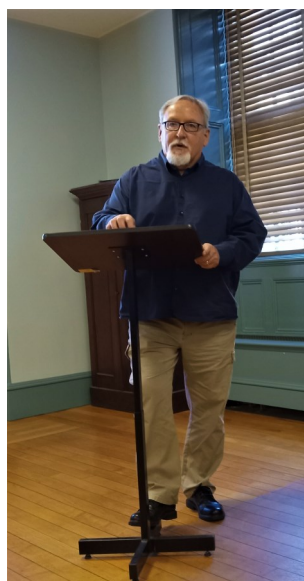
The guest preacher for March 12 was Del Demosthenes, the Associate Chaplain for the Protestant Community at Brown University.



The guest preacher on March 19 was Jim Miller who retired as our pastor in 2005. He was speaking to Peder Schaefer and his son Henry whom Miller had dedicated as an infant back when serving as our pastor.

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Dwight Bolick

The special guest preachers on March 26, were Dwight Bolick, and Eloy Alfaro who led the discussion in the adult forum and then brought the morning sermon.

Bolick is an American Baptist missionary who trains partners in Central America in rainwater harvesting as a way to address severe water shortages throughout the region

Alfaro is an Ecuadorian anthropologist who works with indigenous communities in the Andes and the Amazon



Eloy Alfaro

HOLY WEEK ACTIVITIES

April 2 Palm Sunday Service 11:00

April 6 Maundy Thursday Soup and Bread supper 6:00. Sign-up sheet posted in Fellowship Hall
 Worship 7:00

April 9 Easter Breakfast 9:30 Signup sheet posted in Fellowship hall for egg dish, fruit, pastry
 Easter Egg Hunt 10:15
 Easter Worship 11:00

GUEST PASTORS FOR APRIL

2nd: Nancy Forsstrom

23rd: Nancy Wilbanks

9th: Nancy Forsstrom

30th: Janet Cooper-Nelson

16th: Daryn Stylianopoulos