

THE SPIRE

First Baptist Church in America Newsletter
March 2023



Greetings Church ~

My sabbatical time begins this month. Thank you for your generosity in extending this time of rest and reflection. Know that while I am away you remain in my prayers and thoughts. You will be in good hands, with Linda Bausserman providing pastoral care and with a solid line up of preachers. Below is a sneak preview of what you can look forward to in the coming weeks.

March 5	Nancy Forsstrom
March 12	Laura Tuach
March 19	Jim Miller
March 26	Ricardo Mayol-Bracero and Dwight Bolick
April 2	Nancy Forsstrom
April 9	Nancy Forsstrom
April 16	Daryn Bunce Stylianopoulos
April 23	Nancy Wilbanks
April 30	Janet Cooper-Nelson
May 7	Paul Hayes
May 14	Nancy Forsstrom
May 21	Daryn Bunce Stylianopoulos

Nancy Forsstrom is a child of our congregation, and was the second woman ordained at our church. She has pastored a number of congregations. Currently, she works at the Unitarian Universalist Church on Benefit Street in Providence.

Laura Tuach is an ordained in the United Church of Christ and works at Harvard Divinity School as assistant director of field education and instructor of a course on Meaning Making. In her ministry, she seeks to help others discern how to serve according to their highest ideals, ethics, values, and faith commitments. She works closely with students while in their field education placements in her roles

Jim Miller is a retired American Baptist pastor and a former minister of First Baptist in America.

Ricardo Mayol-Bracero and Dwight Bolick are two of our missionaries serving communities in the Caribbean and Central and South America doing faith based work promoting environmental justice.

Daryn Bunce Stylianopoulos is a native of North Carolina and is ordained in both the American Baptist Churches and the Alliance of Baptists. She lives in Massachusetts with her family.

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Nancy Wilbanks is an ordained in the ABC and creates spaces for clergy, music ministers and others who work during worship on Sunday mornings or those, who for other reasons, need to find/have worshipful/prayerful space and time outside of Sunday morning for restoration, nourishment, fun, connection, hope, affirmation, and engagement.

Janet Cooper-Nelson is the Chaplain of the University, Director of the Office of Chaplains and Religious Life and faculty member at Brown University. She is ordained in the United Church of Christ.

Paul Hayes retired as pastor of Noank Baptist Church in Groton Connecticut in 2022, concluding a pastoral career that stemmed over four decades for churches in Connecticut and New York. He has served in leadership positions with the ABCUSA, Alliance of Baptists, Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America~Bautistas por la Paz, and the Baptist World Alliance. He resides in Madison Connecticut.

FORUMS FOR MARCH

Theme for this month: Hospitality & Homelessness

Sunday March 5th

The Challenges of Affordable Housing in Rhode Island
Brenda Clement, Director of Housing Works Rhode Island

Brenda has over 20 years of experience in the housing and community development field. She previously served as Executive Director of the Housing Action Coalition of Rhode Island, a statewide affordable housing advocacy organization, and as Executive Director of the Housing Network, the Rhode Island trade association for community development corporations. Brenda is also a founding member of the New England Housing Network and served on the Board of the National Low Income Housing Coalition for nine years and just recently completed her term as Chair. She is a member of Bethany Baptist Church, Pawtucket.

Sunday March 12th

Extending Hospitality: Inclusive Language
Ruth Marris Macaulay

As part of the overarching theme of hospitality that Jamie suggested we investigate while she is on sabbatical I want to begin with hospitable language. Using inclusive language ensures respect when talking to and about others. It is extremely beneficial to embrace inclusive language into our agenda in order to create an environment where all feel welcome. However, not all of us find it easy to change old ways or talk to people about whom we feel uncomfortable. In this presentation I will look at how gender and sexuality, race, ethnicity and religion, nationality, ability and disability, and age impact who is included or excluded. There will be time for discussion in which we will focus on how these things affect homelessness in our society.

Sunday March 19th

Poverty, Politics and Profit: PBS Frontline Documentary

Put together by Frontline and NPR this documentary investigates the billions spent on affordable housing and why so few get the help they need. The film examines the politics, profits and problems of an affordable housing system in crisis. It addresses key issues including the problems with government assistance, communities blocking the construction of affordable housing, systemic racism, developers, financial corruption, fraudulent business practices and lack of oversight and accountability.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8iei3HtdBbQ>

Sunday March 26th

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

◇ **Around FBCIA**

On Friday, February 3, 2023, Fikiri Mmandama became a citizen of the United States in a naturalization ceremony held at the United States Immigration Naturalization Office in Johnston. Several members of the church and his sister, Mauwa, attended the ceremony and went out for a celebratory lunch afterwards. We offer our heartfelt congratulations to Fikiri for this wonderful accomplishment.



The church welcomed Georgette Munyampirwa as a member on her "Great Day" on February 5, 2023. Pastor Jamie Washam expressed the church's delight to Georgette and her daughter Ella Mercy Teta. Georgette came to the United States from Rwanda and recently became an R.N. at Rhode Island Hospital.

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Dr. Jamie Washam, Pastor
 Stephen Martorella, Minister of Music
 Holly Edwards, Administrative Assistant
 Anne Gagan, Bookkeeper
 Tony Zambarano, Sexton
 Ary Peralta, Sunday Sexton
 Mauwa Bilobi, Childcare Worker

Pastor Jamie Washam has begun her well deserved sabbatical leave. She preached her last sermon on February 19th and will be away until the last week of May. In the interim, guest preachers will supply the pulpit and our former Associate Pastor, Linda Bausserman will provide pastoral care.



Pastor Jamie gave a children's message to some of the children.



She greeted a visitor after the service



Deacon chair Karin Marshall read a citation in honor of Pastor Jamie at the reception in the Fellowship Hall.



Cutting the cake.