

# THE SPIRE

First Baptist Church in America Newsletter

June 2023

---



## Short Takes

On Tuesday Stan and I went to the Heritage Museum and Gardens in Sandwich, MA. It was a beautiful day, sunny and warm. The traffic wasn't bad, there were people there but it wasn't crowded, many flowers were in bloom and beautiful, the scents were wonderful, the birds were singing away and we had a wonderful, relaxing day. In the car on the way, I checked my email and saw that Rev. Paul Schoonmaker was in hospice care. I had just seen him two weeks before so I was surprised as well as saddened. For those of you who don't know him he is Peter's father and was an interim minister here in the past. He was a dear man, much beloved by many parishioners in the churches he served. On the way home I saw the email saying he had passed away. I was reminded of how things can change in a heartbeat. Also, the juxtaposition of the tender new plants of spring and the death of an older man were a heady reminder of the cycles of life and how often we have to hold different stages of the cycle at the same time.

On Wednesday, I was volunteering with some fellow master gardeners and was given the task of turning over the ground cover in one of our beds. Someone commented about the backbreaking work. (I think they thought it might be too much for me.) I replied that I had spent two Saturday mornings digging up sod and this was a piece of cake in comparison. So then they ask me about the garden and where I was working. When I said that the church was at the foot of college hill in Providence one of them said. "Oh, is that the Baptist Church? I've been watching the building of that garden. I follow you on FB. It's a beautiful site (sight?)." We never know who is out there watching us!

Finally, I want to say what a privilege it has been to do pastoral care in Jamie's absence. Everyone has been very helpful and I thank you.

Linda Bausserman

75 North Main Street  
Providence, RI 02903  
Phone: 401.454.3418  
Website: [fbcia.org](http://fbcia.org)  
Email: [fbcia1638@gmail.com](mailto:fbcia1638@gmail.com)

## GUEST PASTORS



Janet Cooper-Nelson, senior chaplain at Brown University, guest preacher on April 30, spoke about hope.



The guest minister on Sunday, May 7 was Rev. Dr. Paul Hayes, a recipient of the Edwin T. Dahlberg Peace Award from the American Baptist Churches, USA. He and his wife Wendy greeted those who attended the worship service.



Daryn Stylainopoulus was the guest preacher for the last Sunday before Pastor Jamie returns from her sabbatical.

## WORSHIP MAY 21st



On May 21, the church was treated to the world premiere of Anton Hicks and Stephen Martorella's "Grace-Full." Soprano Sarah Dunn was accompanied by Martorella on the piano and the string quartet of Maeve Lemus (violin), Amy Bedard (violin), Sally Ryan (viola), and Christine Perkins (cello).



## SUNDAY FORUMS



**April 30:** Ric Wild from Crossroads Rhode Island spoke to the Adult Forum about the programs and plans of Crossroads to address the housing needs of homeless individuals and families.

**May 7:** Colleen and Larry Whelpley and Morris presented an Adult Forum program on their work in training service dogs. The dogs spend the week at the ACI and weekends with the Whelpleys who expose the dogs-in-training to the experiences in the world. The dogs learn to be unafraid of all sorts of things, such as loud brass instruments on Easter and the pipe organ.



**May 14:** This is a simnel cake made by Ruth Marris Macaulay. Simnel comes from a Latin word for wheat flour. It has 11 balls of marzipan on top to represent the disciples ( minus Judas). It was traditional for what is called Mothering Sunday in England which takes place on the 4th Sunday in Lent and was a day that servants could go home to visit their families and their mother churches - it was only later that it became more focused on mothers.

**May 21:** Rob Jarbadon gave guidance and instruction in the Adult Forum about use of the defibrillator, CPR, epipens, and the first aid kit; how to call 911 (what is essential to get the fastest response); how to recognize when someone suffering from a stroke, what to do when someone is choking or have an epileptic seizure. Ruth Marris Macaulay took notes while Colleen Whelpley, for the Christian Education Committee presided.

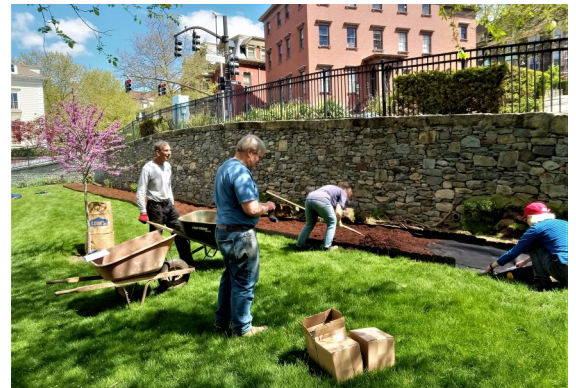


## THE GARDEN OF EARTHLY DELIGHTS



From left to right Pauline Ashworth, Susan Lepore, Steve Ashworth Supervisor, Stan Lemons, Linda Bausserman. Work on the Garden of Earthly Delights , April 29th.

Week three of the creation of The Garden of Earthly Delights: The sod has been cleared, edging installed, and mulch laid before the raised beds are to be built. The workers were (L to R) Richard Lepore, Tom Stevenson, Karen Marshall, and Linda Bausserman. Not pictured: Lee McDaniel and Stanley Lemons. The redbud tree celebrating Pastor Jamie's Ph.D. was in full glory.



Saturday, May 13 was a beautiful day, and nine workers continued the mulching of the backyard garden, planting native plants, and constructing the raised beds. Shown here are [left to right]: Karin Coon, Susan Lepore (our boss), Karen McVicker, David McVicker, David Coon, Richard Lepore, Kenneth Clauser, and Jeanne Kolb. Not pictured: Linda Bausserman.

**May 13** A work in progress, showing the first of the raised garden beds. Several are to be constructed. These will prevent the churchyard rabbit from eating everything.





## FROM THE BOARD OF MISSIONS

### IT'S TIME TO SHARE

A LETTER FROM YOUR WORLD RELIEF OFFICER



Dear American Baptist Leaders,

This scripture held special meaning for me in the past year. Quite possibly it did for you too. War in Ukraine persists, communities from Kentucky to Puerto Rico are in the throes of long-term recovery from tornadoes, floods, and hurricanes, while wildfires continue to imperil western U.S. states. And those are just a few of the life-changing hardships people faced in 2022. In the midst of it all, American Baptists have responded through One Great Hour of Sharing, and we are seeing the harvest indeed.

American Baptists have given generously to OGHS — Ukraine Relief — \$1,366,000 in the past 11 months. Those funds have been used to provide relief for the people of Ukraine—those that have remained within the country and those that have sought refuge in neighboring nations. During a recent call with Rev. Igor Bandura, Vice President of International Ministries' Baptist partner in Ukraine, Rev. Bandura shared about the continued hardships the Ukrainian people face. And he also shared these thoughts/glimpses into the life of the Baptist churches in Ukraine today.

Most churches are full on Sundays despite the fact that half of their members have left.

- There have been 3,000 baptisms in the last 6 months of 2022; 25,000 new people are attending churches.
- On seeing God in the midst of war...“It is hard to go through a war. Really hard. And it’s the best time for people to see the power of God.”
- On the future of the Baptist Union....“We continue to think about, dream about, and plan for our future.”
- On the transformation of the local church...“This war has brought a real chance to reform our churches. Our churches were good before the war. But we’ve become better.”
- On the Union’s own transformation...Before the war, this Baptist Union, made up of 2,300 churches, had an organizational capacity that

So let's not allow ourselves to get fatigued doing good. At the right time we will harvest a good crop if we don't give up...

— Galatians 6:9

was huge, but did no projects on a national level. Now they are coordinated to deliver a multi-million-dollar humanitarian relief program across their country. They never had to do anything like this. Now they not only know they can do it, they are doing it—and they developed this capacity under all the pressures of war.

• On compassion....”Before the war, when we heard about war or hard things in another part of the world, we prayed. Yes, we prayed. But this war has allowed us to truly understand compassion. Ukraine as a country will emerge from this war a more compassionate people.”

Does any of that surprise you? It surprised me. What a harvest indeed! As I write this letter, two massive earthquakes have rocked Turkey and Syria. Within days of the earthquake, Rev. Bandura shared that the Baptist churches in Ukraine are taking

up offerings to help their brothers and sisters in Turkey and Syria. In the midst of their continued hardships, they are not fatigued doing good—they are responding to “a time to share” for others in need.

It is our time to share again, as you so faithfully have for so many years! Your giving provides hope and healing—and as we are witnessing in Ukraine, it can be the catalyst God uses to bring forth change within the church and within a nation. Let us not be fatigued, for we are witnessing this gospel truth: “At the right time we will harvest a good crop if we don’t give up, or quit.”

Thank you for your generous gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing.

In grateful partnership,

Lisa Rothenberger-Winter World Relief Officer



[www.abc-oghs.org](http://www.abc-oghs.org) | **One Great Hour of Sharing 2023**

We are creating Welcome Baskets for donation to Crossroads. The baskets aid in the transition of homeless individuals and families as the move from temporary shelter to permanent housing. We will be filling the baskets with essentials, such as personal care products and home basics like paper towels and trash bags. We have a sign-up sheet downstairs on the bulletin board to keep us organized. Monetary donations are also welcome (please indicate that the donation is for Baskets) and will be used to purchase the needed items. We'd like to collect all items and/or monetary donations by Sunday, June 18.

Thank you for your consideration.

The First Baptist Church in America  
75 North Main Street  
Providence, RI 02903  
Phone: 401-454-3418  
E-Mail: fbcia1638@gmail.com  
Website: www.fbcia.org

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

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

It is with sadness that we announce the news of Rev. Dr. Paul Schoonmaker's passing on Tuesday, May 23.

Visiting hours will be from 4:00-7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 31, at Carpenter-Jenks Funeral Home, 659 East Greenwich Avenue, West Warwick.

The memorial service will begin at 4:30 p.m. on Sunday, June 4, at First Baptist Church in America, 75 N. Main Street, Providence.

In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be sent to:

Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering, American Baptist Churches USA/ Mission Resource Development, PO Box 851, Valley Forge, PA 19482-0851

Please note on the memo line: In memory of Rev. Dr. Paul Schoonmaker—RMMO

**THERE IS NO WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY, MAY 28  
AS BROWN UNIVERSITY WILL BE HOLDING  
COMMENCEMENT AT FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IN AMERICA**

Ten o'clock Summer Worship will begin on Sunday, June 4th,  
and will continue through Labor Day weekend.

Sunday Forum and children's Sunday school will resume in September  
when worship returns to Eleven o'clock.