

# THE SPIRE

First Baptist Church in America Newsletter  
September 2023

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Greetings Church ~

Last month in the space, I mentioned a longstanding dream of our building having a one-seater-gender-neutral accessible toilet. Why does this matter? If we truly aspire to be a place that welcomes all people, we need to work to make what we have more dignified for our community while in the Meeting House. Currently, if one is unable to manage stairs, one cannot access restroom facilities while in our building. We know that bodies can change in the blink of an eye, and at any given moment, any one of us can find ourselves in need of an accessible facility. Recently, a visitor asked if her trans daughter would be welcome among us. I said she would. However, some non-binary folks and others prefer gender neutral bathrooms. If this were an easy fix, we would have already addressed it. Our way is to welcome all who come to our church, yet at this point, our theology and hospitality outpace our facilities. Due to the historical nature of the Meeting House, some of our options are constrained. However, we are a living congregation and not a museum. We possess sufficient imagination and historical integrity to accommodate the past and future within our walls. In order to continue to live into our call to be the church in this moment, we need to seriously consider how we can meet the needs of our community now and going forward. It will be an investment, and one that will return dividends in dignity and ministry to all kinds of people. The saints who preceded us in this church looked and built towards the future needs of our community. May we, in this moment, possess similar vision and resolve, and continue to construct a church that is both theologically and tangibly welcoming to every kind of body.

Peace,

Pastor Jamie

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◇ **Around FBCIA**



While Pastor Jamie was away, Rev. Jim Miller a former Pastor here at First Baptist was in the pulpit.



During the Summer and early fall at the end of each month we hold an outdoor service in the back yard by the Garden of Earthy Delights.

**Invitation to Music That Makes Community One Day Workshop  
Sep. 30, New Bedford, MA**

This is an ecumenical gathering and I want particularly to invite musicians, worship leaders and pastors that I've worked with recently to join me at a live one-day community singing workshop I'm co-leading. And I'm also inviting people who were attending or interested in the local Boston area MMV practice group that met on Zoom during the pandemic.

I attach the info that I just sent to The American Baptists of MA news and notes, but I know there will be UCC, Baptist, Episcopal and other denominations there and hope to see you if you can make it. Please share with your singing friends of all sorts. All are welcome.

Blessings,  
Nancy Willbanks



**Garden of Earthy Delights Work Day**

There will be a workday in the Garden of Earthy Delights on Saturday, September 9 from 9:00 - noon. We will have perennials to plant, a bed to construct and fill with soil, weeds to pull and fellowship.

## ◇ Board of Missions

### Missions Updates



During the month of September, we are asking for your support for International Ministries' World Missions Offering. This year's theme is "He has made everything beautiful in its time" (Ecclesiastes 3:11). Our contributions enable the global servants and partners to continue their transformational work around the world. In addition to inviting people to be disciples of Christ, the ministry serves immigrants and refugees, promotes education and economic development, and fights to abolish human trafficking.

### Potluck Dinner with Missionary Rick Gutierrez

The Missions Committee is pleased to announce that we are partnering with Community Church in Providence to host Rick Gutierrez on **Friday, September 15 at 5:30 p.m - 7:30 p.m (dinner to begin at 6:00)**. Rick and his wife, Anita, are missionaries in South Africa. In coordination with ABCORI, Rick and Anita will be in RI and speaking at local churches to raise awareness about the amazing work they are doing. Here is a link to learn more about them:

<https://www.internationalministries.org/author/ar-gutierrez/>

The event will take place at Rhodes Hall, attached to Community Church. The ramp entrance is at 372 Wayland Ave. There is another entrance from the parking lot on Hobart Street that has a few steps. The agenda is as follows:

5:30-6:00 pm: Arrival; a few light hors d'oeuvres

6:00-6:45 pm: **Potluck dinner**

6:45-7:30 pm: Rick's Presentation (focusing on the work they are doing and how our churches can help) with Q&A

7:30-8:00 pm: Desserts and mingling as people depart

Please note that the dinner is potluck. If you are planning to attend, please RVSP to Pauline Ashworth at [pashworth8@gmail.com](mailto:pashworth8@gmail.com) and indicate whether you will be able to contribute a dish – either dinner or dessert.

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

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## SUNDAY FORUMS FOR SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER

### September 10<sup>th</sup>

Ruth Marris Macaulay will introduce *Planet of the Humans* and the overall fall program

This documentary made in 2019 takes a critical look at the climate change movement and the progress that has been made toward the existential issue that is climate change. The film is directed by Jeff Gibbs with Michael Moore as the executive producer. The film has quite the Moore influence and has a similar style to his documentaries (he does not appear though, and it is not quirky and confrontational as his other films have been!). The film follows Jeff Gibbs as he interviews politicians, CEOs, and climate activists.

### September 17<sup>th</sup>

Watch *Planet of the Humans* Susan Lepore will facilitate

### September 24<sup>th</sup>

Discussion on *Planet of the Humans* led by Linda Bausserman

### October 1<sup>st</sup>

Watch *Human Flow* Susan Lepore will facilitate

A 2017 documentary directed by Ai Weiwei, a director also known for *Vivos* and *The Rest*. This film takes a look at the refugee crisis on a worldwide scale. The documentary approaches the situation from a micro and macro level by focusing on specific examples of displaced people while simultaneously capturing and properly displaying the scale of the issue. The film is shot over the course of a year and shows people from over 23 countries.

### October 8<sup>th</sup>

Steve Martorella & Larry Wilson will speak on the reparations initiative for singing spirituals.

### October 15<sup>th</sup>

Watch *Human Flow* Susan Lepore will facilitate

### October 22<sup>nd</sup>

Watch *Human Flow* Ruth Marris Macaulay will facilitate

### October 29<sup>th</sup>

Discussion on *Human Flow* led by Ruth Marris Macaulay