

THE SPIRE

First Baptist Church in America Newsletter
November 2023



God calls each of us to live out “Grace in Action” individually and as a community. Here at church, God’s generosity manifests through us in building the home of creation, and our call to be world-builders and homemakers. God offers each of us a prodigal, never-ending welcome, that in turns leads us towards hospitality and celebration.

As we approach Giving Sunday on November 12th, take time to reflect on the grace that appears when we least expect it.

In Jesus’ parable of the Good Samaritan, Jews and Samaritans didn’t get along: he challenges us to imagine someone from the “other side” – of the aisle, of the debate, of the conflict – whose actions beautifully reflect the grace of God. And then to go and do likewise. When the image of God shines brightest through our lives, we find ourselves building bridges, showing and receiving mercy, and learning from supposed “adversaries.” Through the ministries and missions of our church, we participate in God’s merciful work of justice and reconciliation.

One of Jesus’ most famous parables is usually called, “The Parable of the Prodigal Son,” but this is actually a parable designed to teach us about the merciful, generous nature of God. To the extent that “prodigal” means extravagant or over-the-top, the word is better applied to the father in the story.

The son comes home hoping for a modest meal in exchange for an apology. Before he can say a word, however, his father lavishes him with love and makes preparations for a party. For the prodigal parent, only a splendid celebration will do.

Jesus says that God – the Prodigal Parent – puts grace into action this way: welcoming us home even when we don’t “deserve” it; forgiving us completely before we even ask; and treating just the sight of us as cause for extravagant joy.

At our best, this sort of celebratory welcome is what church is all about. Welcoming visitors and regulars alike into the beautiful choreography of worship and celebration. We strive to be a community of joy – prodigal, extravagant, and free – for anyone who longs for a meal, an embrace, and the reassurance that they are loved and not alone.

This welcome is about repairing the world through love, one celebration at a time. That’s “Grace in Action.” You can hear it in the language we use: we celebrate Communion, celebrate Baptism, celebrate Easter, celebrate Christmas, celebrate new members’ Great Day of joining our congregation.

The First Baptist Church in America has a long history of “Grace in Action,” and with your help, we can continue to do so. Join us on November 12th for Giving Sunday, when we’ll celebrate and reflect on all the ways God’s “Grace in Action” shapes our community – as well as all the ways we seek to be more gracious in our lives and work together throughout the year.

Peace,

Pastor Jamie

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◇ Around FBCIA



Jeffrey Haggray, the Executive Director of the American Baptist Home Mission Societies, was the guest preacher on Worldwide Communion Sunday, October 1.

The Sunday service on October 8th was focused on African American spirituals, both old and new. Larry Wilson premiered two new pieces that morning, one entitled "Adam, Eve and the Apple Tree," sung by the choir, and the other entitled "Prelude for Gabriel" rendered by Larry at the piano and by Linda Bausserman on the viola. The church also joined an effort to offer compensation in honor of the anonymous composers of spirituals by paying forward money collected each time we sing them to support programs of Stages of Freedom.



October 22 was the last Sunday for Fikiri Kalubandika before he moves to Dayton, Ohio to join the rest of the family. There was a farewell reception with a special cake for him after the church service.



Roger Williams Family Day and 385 years of FBCIA



On Sunday, Oct, 29, the 385th anniversary of FBCIA's being gathered in 1638, the church honored its most recently ordained individuals. They were pictured here with Pastor Jamie Washam: Amy Johnson, Linda Bausserman, Nancy Forsstrom, and Florence Li.



Some members of the Roger Williams Family Association joined the service for the 385th commemoration of the church's being gathered by Roger Willians in 1638.

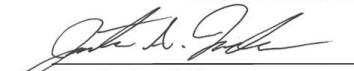
American Baptist Historical Society

In celebration of
385 Years of Faithful Ministry
this certificate is presented to
First Baptist Church in America
of Providence, RI
under the leadership of
Rev. Dr. Jamie Washam

The Board of Managers and Staff congratulate you on reaching this milestone of ministry and service in the American Baptist tradition. This certificate signifies our trust that you will continue to minister faithfully as an affiliate of the American Baptist Churches, U.S.A.



Given this 29th day of October in the year of our Lord 2023


Rev. Jonathan Malone
President, Board of Managers


Rev. Dr. Priscilla E. Eppinger
Executive Director

Arturo Delmoni & Stephen Martorella IN RECITAL



Program:

Tomaso Vitali: Chaconne,
arr. for Violin and Organ

Ludwig van Beethoven:
Violin/Piano Sonatas "Spring" and "Kreutzer"

The First Baptist Church in America
75 North Main Street, Providence
Sunday, November 5, 2023, 2:00 PM

Free and open to the public.

◇ **Halloween visits to our Members**

On the beautiful Saturday, October 30th before Halloween, David and Eleanor Shealy, Ella Teta, Jideobi Washam Unaka, and Kitunganu, Malembe, Imani, and Matendo Walanga went on their annual Trick or Treating to some of the church members homes.

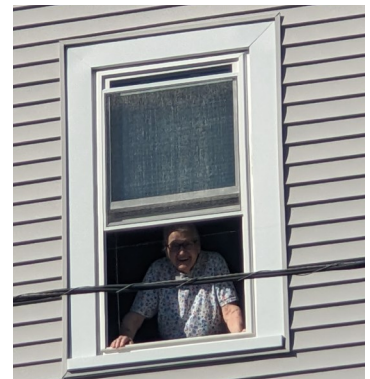
Elsa Grieder



Lena Gates



Priscilla Steadman



Deanna Beachen



Sam and Mark Hall



Barbara McCurdy





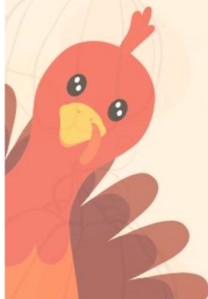
The Little Free Library box, created by Grace Guiney, was installed recently in the backyard of the Meeting House. Anyone can take a book to read or leave a book for others to read.



ANNUAL EAST SIDE INTERFAITH THANKSGIVING SERVICE

HOSTED BY TEMPLE BETH-EL IN
PARTNERSHIP WITH
ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 21 @ 7 P.M.



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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

SUNDAY FORUMS FOR NOVEMBER

November 5th: Kathryn Bothelo will talk about foster care and adoption.

November 12th: Ray Rickman from Stages of Freedom will talk about their programs focusing on the swim program.

November 19th & 26th: Betsy continues the conversation expanding our Welcome better to include all God's children.

DATES TO REMEMBER IN NOVEMBER

Sunday, November 5

Daylight Saving Time ends. Turn your clocks back one hour.

Concert: Arturo Delmoni and Stephen Martorella 2:00 PM

Sunday, November 12:

Pledge Sunday

Sunday, November 26:

Thanksgiving Sunday