

THE SPIRE

First Baptist Church in America Newsletter

April

A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR JAMIE

Greetings Church !

*¹¹ See! The winter is past;
the rains are over and gone.
¹² Flowers appear on the earth;
the season of singing has come,
the cooing of doves
is heard in our land.*

Song of Songs 2:11-12

Green promises of spring push up through the earth still chilled with winter. Easter comes in a few weeks' time. In our church, longtime labors toward making our community more welcoming are coming to fruition.

In our annual meeting, we voted to affiliate with the Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists. It is always the right time to lean into a deeper expression of God's radical love. In the current climate of hostility towards lgbtq+ folks, our clear embrace of all God's people particularly matters.

The installation of our ADA accessible toilet is nearly complete! Gone are the erstwhile phone booth and unused kitchenette; the area now functions to dignify the presence of all people in the Meeting House. The workers have done a swift and exceptional job. More than one person remarked that the installation looks as though it had always been there.

People planted peas in the Garden of Earthy Delights in mid-March. Daffodils warm the wall along the back garden. Church gardeners are plotting year three in our raised beds. New life abounds.

God is alive and at work in the world, in us and through us. Take heart and keep faith. God fulfills longtime promises.

Peace,

Pastor Jamie



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SUNDAY FORUMS FOR APRIL

Stan Lemons will lead the Adult Forum in discussing tumultuous times in American politics, culture, and church life and how we as a church can learn from those times in our present circumstances. Please join us at 10:00 in the Fellowship Hall on

April 6th

Ruth Marris Macaulay will give a presentation on Sudan

April 13th

Ahuma Adodoadji will give a presentation on his work at the Carter Center

April 20th

No Forum Easter Breakfast and Easter Egg Hunt

April 27 - "Churches and Reform in the Ante-Bellum Era"

May 4 - "House Divided: The Baptist Civil War"

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HOLY WEEK AT FIRST BAPTIST

Maundy Thursday, April 17th

6:30 pm Soup and bread supper

7:00 pm Worship

Easter Sunday, April 20th

Breakfast: 9:00 - 9:45 am

Easter Egg Hunt: 10:00 - 10:30 am

Easter Service begins at 11:00 am - We will be joined by the US Coast Guard Brass.

A sign up sheet for Easter Breakfast is posted in Fellowship Hall by the kitchen door

- Egg casserole
 - Muffins or breakfast rolls
 - Fruit salad.
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Sunday, April 27th

11:00 am - Worship and Hymn Sing

12:30 pm - Quarterly meeting and luncheon

From Missions and Outreach



The final total raised for the **Blanket the World with Love** campaign was \$1,417.31. We recently received this email from Church World Service: "We can't thank you enough for your incredible dedication as a **CWS Blanket Leader!** Because of you, communities across the U.S. and around the world are receiving warmth, comfort, and hope in their time of need." Thanks so much for supporting this endeavor.



During April, we will continue to collect non-perishable food items for Better Lives Rhode Island. Bins are at the top of the stairs as you enter the Meeting House. The need is great; so please, consider donating



To celebrate Earth Day, on Saturday, April 26 we will sponsor a clean-up day on the church property and help Susan and her team with the Garden of Earthy Delights. Plan to be at the church at 9:30 and bring gloves and water to stay hydrated. The only tools we don't have are rakes.

Blessing Bags

We continue to collect bottled water, socks, peanut butter crackers, granola bars and disinfectant wipes for our Blessing Bags to distribute to individuals in need. You can leave these items in the bins in the Fellowship Hall.

Youth Pride Rhode Island

Please consider donating supplies for young people whose families may not be supporting them. You can find a complete list of needed items at <https://www.youthprideri.org>. Click on "donate" and then "donate supplies."

FBCIA NEWS



Pastor Jamie Washam and Rabbi Goldberg led the discussion about the writings of Rabbi Abraham Heschel and Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. in the Adult Forum on Sunday, March 9. It was a joint gathering of folks from Temple Beth Sholom and FBCIA.



Amanda Tyler, executive director of the Joint Baptist Committee for Religious Liberty, was the special guest preacher on March 23. She had been the keynote speaker elsewhere on Saturday at a statewide interfaith civic forum on How to End Christian Nationalism, and she **was** invited to preach at FBCIA as well. She is being greeted by David Coon.



On Sunday, **March 30th**, Peder Schaffer hosted a presentation on Rev. Albert C. Thomas, who was pastor of our church from 1941 to 1954. He was also the grandfather of fellow member Bruce Thomas. Rev. Thomas dedicated Peder in our church just after his birth.

Passport to the Psalms

special experiences for grandparents & grandchildren

Grandparents and grandchildren of all ages are invited to join us for the fourth stop on our journey through the Book of Psalms. Each stop allows us to experience something special from the psalms.

Our fourth stop will be on Saturday, April 26. We will meet at 10:00 a.m. for Watson Farm's annual sheep shearing event.

Each family will receive a book that captures the imagery of sheep and shepherds found in the psalms. Grandparents and grandchildren also will receive a passport that includes related activities to share afterwards.

Stop 4: Sheep & Shepherds



We are God's people, the sheep of God's pasture. Psalm 100:3b

God brought the people out like a flock; God led them like sheep through the wilderness. Psalm 78:52

The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. Psalm 23:1

Saturday, April 26 10:00 a.m.

Watson Farm

(455 North Road, Jamestown)

Please contact eldercare@abcori.org or (401) 522-9731 to let us know you plan to join us and receive additional info. Please note you will need to buy a ticket in advance.

Elder Care Ministries

American Baptist Churches of Rhode Island

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 Stephen Martorella, Minister of Music
 Holly Edwards, Administrative Assistant
 Anne Gagan, Bookkeeper
 Tony Zambarano, Sexton
 Ary Peralta, Sunday Sexton
 Victoria Pfanstiehl, ASL Interpreter
 Ashley Muchiri, Nursery Room Assistant

Statement of Welcome

Roger Williams gathered the First Baptist Church in America in 1638 on the bedrock of religious liberty, with its principles of soul freedom and the separation of church and state. Together, we continue our ministry of welcome and liberation.

This congregation honors its Baptist heritage. Many of our members are lifelong Baptists and others come from varied denominational and religious backgrounds. We welcome all people of every age, race, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, cultural background, socio-economic status, mental or physical ability, marital status, and any other distinctions of society. We are diverse people united in Christ. We remain a safe harbor.

Announcements

A gentle reminder that parking in the church driveway on Sunday is reserved for those with mobility issues and small children you do not need a handicap placard. Please try to pull up when parking so others are also able to park there. Thank you.

Back Garden Fence

The fencing along the top of the back garden wall has been broken since the summer of 2023. The delay is due to the reticence of the city to repair their portion of the fencing. We would like to gently urge them to do their part. In the past we have had success with reaching out to the city via their 311 service. If you would like to offer friendly encouragement for them to fix the fence, here is the process:

www.providenceri.gov/pvd-311

Select: I am unsure how to classify my issue
 Address: 75 North Main St, Providence
 Select how or if you want to be contacted
 Describe the problem in your own words
 Attach a picture
 Submit

Thank you for your help!