

THE SPIRE

First Baptist Church in America Newsletter
May

A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR JAMIE

Welcome to May, Church! Receive this blessing *For Others* from Kate Bowler.

Those who refresh others will be enriched, and one who waters will themselves be refreshed.

Proverbs 11:25

God, we are surrounded by our loves.
They need you. And we need you to carry them.
Let love bear up the weight of us all.

Bless our kids and grandkids.
Children here and those gone.
Bless the people who quicken our hearts, now and years past.
Bless our parents and grandparents,
strengthen our roots and our branches.
Bless our pets and your creation,
and the comfort they bring.
Bless our friends and chosen families,
all the bonds that hold us.

Thank you for this love,
this absurd and wonderful love.

God, bless the memories we hold
of those who have died,
and release in us the fullness of being able
to love them as they were in this life,
and as they are now
in the mystery that is beyond our sight.

God, bless all the people in pain who share
this present time and space with us,
whose lives are yet an unwritten book,
just like ours.

Come and write your words of love that we speak – in our words and our actions –
in ways that heal our past
and stir up our future.

God, I will openly admit that my plan was to rescue us all.
Pry this out of my hands.
Absolve my guilt.
Calm my spirit.
Let me allow you to do the impossible
and bear up the weight of the world
I am determined to carry alone.

Bless us as we practice interdependence,
Needing and being needed.
Helping and being helped.
As unnatural as it might feel.
Thank you for these reminders that we are not meant to do life alone.
And hey, if you're more alone than you meant to be today, hang in there.



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¹Kate Bowler, *The Lives We Actually Have: 100 Blessings for Imperfect Days*

SUNDAY FORUMS FOR MAY

May 11th Linda Bausserman to lead a lectio divina.

May 18th Janet Kago to present her work with Enable Forgotten Children, a mission to help disabled children in Kenya.

May 25th No church at FBCIA—Brown University Commencement

FROM MISSIONS AND OUTREACH



Every year, we participate in four offerings sponsored by American Baptists USA. During the month of May, we support One Great Hour of Sharing, a program that supports disaster relief, ministries to displaced persons and development projects of the American Baptist Churches and its partners. The money raised provides emergency relief and funds for these projects which address chronic needs. Imagine the difference we can make, the light we can be in the world, when we join with other people of faith to share with those who need our assistance. You can donate by writing a check to FBCIA with One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) on the memo line or by contributing in one of the envelopes that will be in the pews starting the second Sunday of May.



We are resuming our dinners at restaurants owned and run by immigrant families. Join us on Wednesday, May 21 at 6 pm at Aleppo Sweets, 107 Ives Street in Providence.



With Christian Ed, we are co-sponsoring a game night at church on Tuesday, May 27th. Bring your favorite board game and enjoy a night of fun with our church family.

MISSIONS AND OUTREACH (CONTINUED)



During May, 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.

Blessing Bags

We also are collecting 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. And please take bags to distribute.

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."

ABCOR! NEWS

Surround Yourself with Women of Faith

on Saturday, May 31 at

Memorial Baptist Church

340 Central Ave., Seekonk, MA

The doors open at 8:30 for check-in and the program begins at 9:00.

Attached is the flyer and an updated registration form.

The cost is \$20.00 which includes lunch.

Registrations must be received by May 23.

HOLY WEEK

Members of the congregation gathered around a table on Maundy Thursday for a soup, bread, singing, and worship service.



On Friday, Karen Marshall, Cheryl Dexter and Cindy Martorella set the tables for Easter Breakfast.

The morning began with breakfast in the Fellowship Hall



The Easter Egg hunt came next: here Jackie and Josephine Brunner are in the hunt.

HOLY WEEK (CONTINUED)



The U.S. Coast Guard Brass Quintet and Stephen Martorella thrilled the congregation with their music.

The choir with Stephen Martorella at the organ and the U.S. Coast Guard Brass Quintet, led the congregation in singing “Christ the Lord is Risen Today”



From the Christian Education Committee

A BIG thank you to all who participated in our Easter Breakfast and Easter Egg Hunt! A special thank you to our Social Committee, Cindy Martorella, and our Sextons, for lending their decorating talents and enthusiasm (and a little muscle) to brighten up Fellowship Hall, and keep everything running smoothly during the breakfast. To all those who brought in dishes to share, thank you, too. Your time, effort and generosity made for a real celebration. Pastor Jamie, your opening Grace was just perfect. Thank you. And last, but not least, our Easter Egg Hunt was a resounding success thanks in large part to our Teen Class, who not only hid all those eggs our front lawn in record time, but checked to make sure all those kids had full baskets. Bravo!

Until next year...

FBCIA NEWS



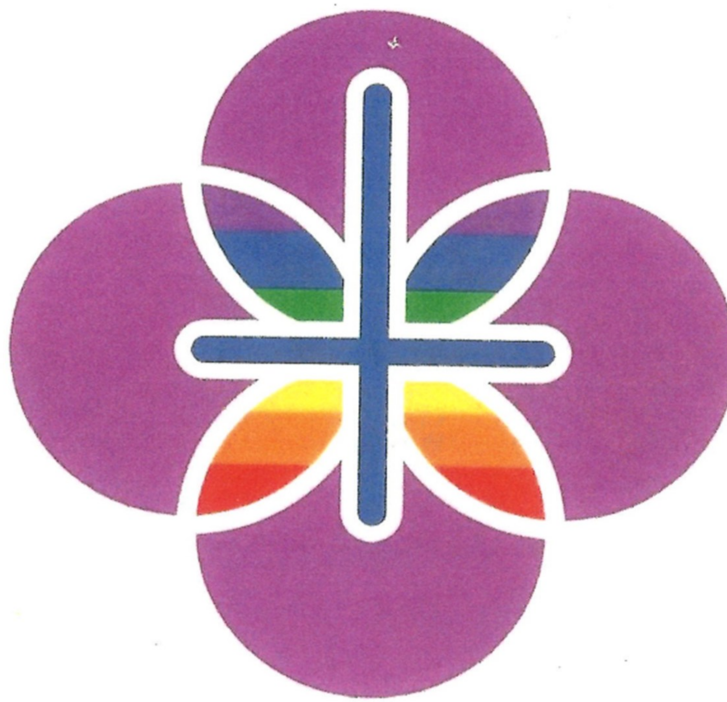
Pieter and Norman Kalkman, ABC International Ministers' Global Servants, spoke to the congregation on April 6 about their work in Europe with Baptist churches and organizations where Baptists are a small minority.



Peder Schaefer retired on April 4th after 50 years as full time finance director for the City of Warwick.

**There will not be a worship service at First Baptist Church on Sunday, May 25th.
Brown University will hold their Commencement that Sunday.**

AWAB



Dear Friends at First Baptist Church America,

We are excited to have you join the
Association of Welcoming & Affirming Baptist!

Please know you are among friends and
are supported as you move forward on this
journey!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Linda Carey".

For First Baptist Church, Ithaca, New York

www.awab.org
Association of Welcoming & Affirming Baptists

Horvell, Pastor

Shirley K Doyle

The First Baptist Church in America, including Rev. Washam, Staff and Congregation,

I am so excited to congratulate Rev. Washam, the entire FBCiA staff and congregation for the recent action of becoming an AWAB member. This journey has been well over 20 years in the making, understanding the unique challenges of moving forward as not only an historic faith community but as an historic landmark site too. This decision has enormous implications, and I trust the conversation of living into this commitment will continue.

I recall in 2004 as the associate minister of education at the time, that the congregation hosted a lengthy 10-week series in the adult forum on legalizing gay marriage. City and state political leaders participated in the forum weekly with substantial support for approving same sex marriage even then. FBCiA was leading the conversation among faith communities and in the Providence community at the time, but acts like joining AWAB, publicly becoming welcoming and affirming or raising rainbow banners have been delayed. Loud applause to Rev. Washam for her leadership and capacity to bring this to fruition - and to those members who have persisted in the struggle to reach this point.

When I left Rhode Island and Lime Rock Baptist Church (also an AWAB member now) for the SF Bay Area in Summer 2013, I remember well that RI (and CA) had legalized same sex marriage that summer. It has been a journey from same sex marriage to 2025 and AWAB membership for FBCiA. It is so personally encouraging. I am so proud of FBCiA for making this move. It is historic. Celebrate it! It is more than a singular achievement. It is the opening of a door to many future advocacy opportunities for FBCiA on behalf of the LGBTQ+ community.

I expect to be in RI in June and will plan to drop by and say hi. I look forward to showing FBCiA to my family (now the proud parent of a six-year-old!) and hopefully meeting Rev. Washam should the timing work out.

Peace,
Mike (Burch)

P.S. Full circle, I learned this news from Rev. Brian Henderson, who is the Executive Director of AWAB and who also sits on the board of The Crossing @ UW-Madison, where I serve now. I know he is very excited about this as well.

The First Baptist Church in America
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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
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.

Driveway Parking

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.

Summer Worship

**On Sunday, June 1st we will begin our summer worship
schedule at 10:00 AM
Sunday school and Sunday forum will resume on Rally Day,
September 14th.**