

THE SPIRE

Newsletter of the First Baptist Church in America



A Message from Pastor Jamie

During the season of lent leading towards Easter, many of us have enjoyed a weekly series of reflections on sabbath keeping from the poet and theologian, Wendell Berry. As the world grows increasing fraught, I offer his poetic musings on the practice of resurrection.

“Manifesto: The Mad Farmer Liberation Front” by
Wendell Berry

Love the quick profit, the annual raise,
vacation with pay. Want more
of everything ready-made. Be afraid
to know your neighbors and to die.
And you will have a window in your head.
Not even your future will be a mystery
any more. Your mind will be punched in a card
and shut away in a little drawer.
When they want you to buy something
they will call you. When they want you
to die for profit they will let you know.
So, friends, every day do something
that won't compute. Love the Lord.
Love the world. Work for nothing.
Take all that you have and be poor.
Love someone who does not deserve it.
Denounce the government and embrace
the flag. Hope to live in that free
republic for which it stands.

Give your approval to all you cannot
understand. Praise ignorance, for what man
has not encountered he has not destroyed.
Ask the questions that have no answers.
Invest in the millennium. Plant sequoias.
Say that your main crop is the forest
that you did not plant,
that you will not live to harvest.
Say that the leaves are harvested
when they have rotted into the mold.
Call that profit. Prophecy such returns.
Put your faith in the two inches of humus
that will build under the trees
every thousand years.
Listen to carrion — put your ear
close, and hear the faint chattering
of the songs that are to come.
Expect the end of the world. Laugh.
Laughter is immeasurable. Be joyful
though you have considered all the facts.
So long as women do not go cheap
for power, please women more than men.
Ask yourself: Will this satisfy
a woman satisfied to bear a child?
Will this disturb the sleep
of a woman near to giving birth?
Go with your love to the fields.
Lie easy in the shade. Rest your head
in her lap. Swear allegiance
to what is nighest your thoughts.
As soon as the generals and the politicians
can predict the motions of your mind,
lose it. Leave it as a sign
to mark the false trail, the way
you didn't go. Be like the fox
who makes more tracks than necessary,
some in the wrong direction.
Practice resurrection.

+ Wendell Berry

Sensitive Locations Act

In conjunction with a number of other denominations, the American Baptist Churches USA, participated in a federal case seeking protection for congregations under the sensitive locations act. Until this past year, churches, like hospitals and schools, were places protected from immigration raids. The case sought to restore these protections and on February 13th, 2026 the courts issued a preliminary injunction in favor of the churches. Because we are part of the ABCUSA family, our congregation and property fall under the umbrella of this protective measure. Unless in possession of a signed judicial warrant, DHS, ICE, and CBP agents generally cannot conduct immigration enforcement in protected areas, including making arrests and conducting interviews or interrogations. They are also prohibited from setting up checkpoints or other barriers in order to conduct immigration enforcement of individuals going into or out of a protected area. Signs visible from the outside will be posted to this effect at the Meeting House. Should you have questions, please speak with the pastor.

Sunday Morning Forums in March 10:00 every Sunday

3/1: Sharing our Stories - Betsy Beach, Steven Seay

3/8: Lectio Divina

3/15: monoblock and the Free Wheelchair Mission - Karen Marshall

3/22: Christian Art - Ruth Marris-Macaulay

3/29: The Art of Anthony Tomaselli - Anthony Tomaselli

March Birthdays

March 3 Dexter, Cheryl

March 5 Greer, Bruce

March 6 Coon, Karin

March 11 Domingues, Kyleigh

March 13 Hall, Mark

March 15 Edwards, W. Michael

March 23 Tiemo, Vincent

March 24 Campopiano, Donna
March 25 Lepore, Susan
March 25 Dulgarian, Kenneth
March 26 Cyronak, Judith

2026 EASTER MEMORIALS

If you would like to have a plant in Church on Easter Sunday,
Please fill out this form and return it to the church office
on or before, but **no later than Monday, March 23, 2026**

IN MEMORY OF: _____

GIVEN BY: _____

Number of Daffodils: Cost: \$13.25 each

Number of Tulips _____ Cost: \$13.25 each

Number of Lilies: \$14.50 each

Check or Cash please!

Checks payable to:

First Baptist Church in America

Payment Must Accompany Order Form!

Off of Hope: 

A Gathering of Interfaith Partners

Monday, March 9 at 7 p.m.

St. Martin's Episcopal Church,
50 Orchard Ave, Providence, RI 02906

Join us for an interfaith gathering to build community with
care and compassion featuring guest speaker:

Courtney Nicolato, President and CEO of United Way



In Collaboration With:

Rabbi Barry Dolinger
Rev. Patrick Faulhaber
Rev. Linda Mackie Griggs
Rabbi Sarah Mack
Rev. Sarah Reed Jay
Rev. Liz Lerner Maclay
Rev. Mark Sutherland
Rev. Dr. Jamie Washam



The First Baptist Church in America



Easter Breakfast

On behalf of the Christian Education and Social Committees, we invite you to
join our **Easter Breakfast**, taking place on Sunday, April 5th, downstairs in
Fellowship Hall, beginning at 9:30 am.

We invite you to bring either a fruit salad, egg casserole or baked goods to share. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall.

Following breakfast, at 10:30 am, there will be an **Easter Egg Hunt** on the front lawn, weather permitting,
or in the Auditorium if not.

We look forward to seeing you!

Book Groups

The two book groups that meet on Zoom on Wednesday at 1:30 pm (women's group) and Thursday at 5:45 pm are both reading After Jesus Before Christianity by Erin Vearncombe, Brandon Scott and Hal Taussig.

If you would like to join either of these groups, please contact Linda Bausserman at: linbau84@gmail.com

Daylight Saving Time

This is a reminder to turn your clocks ahead one hour before you retire to bed.
Or you will be late for church!

FBCIA NEWS



Harrison Tuttle, the director of Project NOD (No One Dies), shared the program and plans of NOD with those at the Adult Forum on February 26th. They have created warming centers for the homeless at various churches, including the Community Church of Providence, to combat suffering and death from the frigid weather

The guest preacher on February 26 was the Rev. Ric Wild, the Community Outreach & Volunteer Manager at Crossroads Rhode Island, the state's leading provider of housing and services for people experiencing homelessness. FBCIA regularly collects non-perishable food for the Crossroads food pantry.



Despite church services being cancelled two Sundays in February, the campaign to raise money for the "Blanket the World" campaign for Church World Service exceeded the goal of \$1000 in the remaining two Sundays. By the end of February, the blanket had 119 hearts showing that \$1190 had



been donated which will purchase 119 blankets.

Joseph, the baby of Georgi and Naledi Kolischovski was dedicated, on March 1. Pastor Jamie Washam held baby Joseph who made not a sound at the celebration.

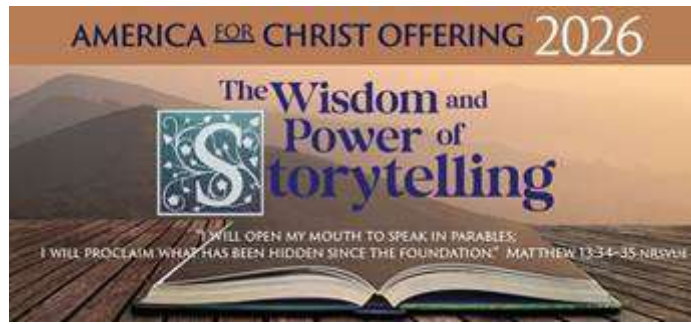


From Missions and Outreach

Blanket the World with Love



For the first two Sundays in March, we will continue our Blanket the World with Love campaign which supports relief efforts sponsored by Church World Service. Blankets like these were distributed during the recent blizzard. Each heart on our blanket represents a \$10 contribution which purchases 1 blanket. Our goal is to see 100 hearts on the blanket in the Meeting House by March 15. Currently, we're over halfway to our goal. Please join us by contributing generously to support this important outreach sponsored by the Missions Committee. You can write a check to FBCIA with "Blankets" on the memo line. If you contribute cash in one of the envelopes you find in the church pew, write "Blankets" on the outside.



Starting on March 15 and continuing through April 12, our focus will be the America for Christ Offering. It is the American Baptist offering which is used for projects here in the United States.

Among other programs, it sponsors:

1. The Children in Poverty Initiative
2. Student campus ministries
3. Refugee resettlement initiatives
4. After-school educational programs
5. Immigration concerns and advocacies

You can donate by writing a check to FBCIA with America for Christ on the memo line or by putting cash in one of the envelopes that you will find in the pews. Thank you for your generous giving.



In Rhode Island, food insecurity continues to be a significant issue **with approximately 38% of families facing hunger statewide. During this cold and snowy weather, Rhode Island food pantries need staples like canned tuna, beans, pasta, sauces, cereal, rice, peanut butter, and soup.** We continue to do our part by contributing non-perishable food items for the Better Lives Rhode Island Food Pantry. Bins are located at the top of the stairs as you enter the Meeting House. The need is great; so please, consider donating.



Blessing Bags

We distribute our Blessing Bags to individuals in need - an outreach program

that is so important during this brutal winter. These bags include peanut butter crackers, granola bars, bottled water, sanitary wipes, socks and a list of available resources. You can donate these items in the bins in the Fellowship Hall. And please, take bags to distribute.



We are also collecting supplies for Youth Pride Rhode Island. Youth Pride hosts a community pantry that serves over 700 youth each year. The pantry is open during the week for young people in need of food, clothes, toiletries, and/or school supplies. These items are free for them on a weekly basis. You can donate these in the Fellowship Hall.

Announcements

Snow Closing

When there is a parking ban in the city of Providence due to inclement weather, church services and other activities held at the church will be cancelled until the parking ban is lifted. Please tune in to your local television and radio stations.

Little Free Library

Our Little Free Library is always in need of more books. If you have some to share, please place them in the little library directly (and do some browsing while there!) or leave them in the office for distribution over time. Thanks!

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.

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.

Staff

| | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Pastor: | Rev. Dr. Jamie P. Washam |
| Minister of Music: | Stephen T. Martorella |
| Administrative Assistant: | Holly B. Edwards |
| Bookkeeper: | Anne Gagan |
| Sexton: | Tony Zambarano |
| Sunday Sexton: | Trenton Vasconcelos |
| Nursery Care Worker: | Ashley Muchiere |
| Sunday School Teachers: | Jayonna Harris Mangye Walanga |

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