

# THE SPIRE EASTER 2024



## THE NEWSLETTER OF SEATTLE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH VOLUME 88, NO. 2

Hey y'all,

Somehow, it is late March and Easter is upon us! Admittedly, I have never considered Easter one of my favorite holidays, but each year I find that it is the one I need most. I need Jesus to get up. I need to be reminded and to see year after year that death does not get the last word. I need resurrection.

Many people over the course of my ministry have asked me if I really believe Jesus rose from the dead. They want to know if I really believe that early in the morning while it was still dark Jesus got up in body and in spirit and walked right on out of that tomb. And y'all know what? I do. Something that I wholeheartedly, unwaveringly believe is that Jesus rose from the dead in the exact same body he was crucified in. His body still had the marks on his hands and in his side. The same Jesus that was crucified is the Jesus that got up. Thanks be to God!

It matters that Jesus arose in body and in spirit. It matters that his body still had the scars of crucifixion. What happens to bodies here and now on this earth matters. Bodies matter. The hope of resurrection gives us hope for resurrection in our own bodies, not just in the hereafter, but right now. We can practice and live into resurrection right here, right now.

One of my favorite Easter poems is “Manifesto: The Mad Farmer Liberation Front” by Wendell Berry. He shows how to live into and practice resurrection right here, right now. I particularly love the last couple stanzas:

*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 down 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.*

Each year I feel we need resurrection more than the year before, but the reality is that we desperately need resurrection always. The Good News is that nothing can stop Jesus from getting up in body and in spirit and walking out of that tomb.

Friends, this Easter, be joyful though you have considered all the facts and practice resurrection today and all days.

Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed!

Peace,

—Rev. Leigh

## HOLY WEEK SERVICES 2024

SUNDAY, MARCH 24  
Palm Sunday 11am

FRIDAY, MARCH 29  
Good Friday Tenebrae 7pm

SUNDAY, MARCH 31  
Easter Day 11am



seattle first baptist

### FLOWERING OF THE CROSS

On Easter Sunday we will be embracing the tradition of “flowering the cross.” We observed this tradition last year and it was deeply meaningful. This is a tradition that represents the transition from Good Friday and Jesus’ death at the hands of empire to the liberative love of resurrection in the garden on Easter Sunday. At the beginning of the Easter service, all will be invited to come forward and add a flower to a bare wooden cross in a symbolic gesture of life-affirming love and flourishing. The church will provide some stems, or, you are welcome to bring a flower from your home to contribute.



### EASTER BREAKFAST

The Easter breakfast is back! All are welcome to share breakfast in the Fellowship Hall on Easter morning from 9:30-10:30am. Celebrate the joy of this day with our church family. Some craft activities will be available for young ones!



### CHURCH MOVIE NIGHT

Friday April 12, 6-9pm  
featuring Disney Pixar’s Luca

“Set in a beautiful seaside town on the Italian Riviera, the original animated feature is a coming-of-age story about one young boy experiencing an unforgettable summer filled with gelato, pasta and endless scooter rides. Luca shares these adventures with his newfound best friend, but all the fun is threatened by a deeply held secret: he is a sea monster from another world just below the water's surface.” This beautiful movie engages topics of difference, identity, prejudice and embracing all of who you are.

Bring a camp chair, a cozy blanket and get ready to share in viewing this movie with your church family! All ages welcome.

Contact Pastor Anita to volunteer to help with setup and/or cleanup.

### COFFEE AND CONVERSATION WITH THE PASTORS

Join our pastors for coffee and conversation on the first Sunday of every month from 12:30-1pm in the Parlour. Next session is Sunday, April 7.

### YOUTH GROUP

For youth in grades 6-12

April 10 and 24, 6:30-8pm in the Youth Room

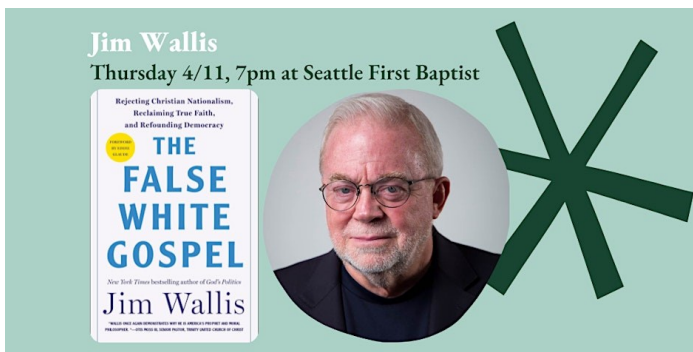
## PASTOR ANITA'S SABBATICAL

Dear church,

As of July 1, 2025, I will be eligible for a sabbatical. Church policies guarantee a sabbatical leave of at least 7 weeks after 7 years of service. I am working with the church council to determine the length and time frame of my sabbatical. I am in the process of applying for a grant that would help offset the costs of some travel, retreats and pilgrimages. Thank you to Pastor Leigh, Darren, Mike Zaugg, Brooke Rolston, Janet Hasselblad, Susan Blythe-Goodman, Cassia Herman, and Aaron Burkhalter for their help with my planning and grant application.

With gratitude,  
—Rev. Anita

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### JIM WALLIS THE FALSE WHITE GOSPEL

Author Jim Wallis returns to Seattle First Baptist Church in support of his new book!

**Thursday, April 11 at 7pm**  
**Seattle First Baptist Church**  
**1111 Harvard Ave, Seattle, WA**  
**Tickets: \$6; Ticket + Book: \$35**  
**[Tickets Available Here](#)**

New York Times bestselling author Jim Wallis returns to Seattle to celebrate the release of *The False White Gospel: Rejecting Christian Nationalism, Reclaiming True Faith, and Refounding Democracy*, a major new work that argues that the answer to bad religion is true faith that will help refund democracy.

#### About the Book

It is time says Jim Wallis, to call out genuine faith—specifically the “Christian” in White Christian Nationalism—inviting all who can be persuaded to reject and help dismantle a false gospel that propagates white supremacy and autocracy. We need—to raise up the faith of all of us, and help those who are oblivious,

stuck, and captive to the ideology and idolatry of White Christian Nationalism that is leading us to such great danger. Wallis turns our attention to six iconic texts at the heart of what genuine biblical faith means and what Jesus, in the gospels, has called us to do. It is time to ask anew: do we believe these teachings or not?

This book isn’t only for Christians but for all faith traditions, and even those with no faith at all. When we see a civic promotion of fear, hate, and violence for the trajectory of our politics, we need a civic faith of love, healing, and hope to defeat it. And that must involve all of us—religious or not. Learning to practice a politics of neighbor love will be central to the future of democracy in America. And more than ever, the words of Jesus ring, “You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

#### About the Author

Jim Wallis is Georgetown University’s inaugural holder of the Archbishop Desmond Tutu Chair in Faith and Justice, and the Director of its new Center on Faith and Justice. He served on President Obama’s first White House Advisory Council on Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships, and is the author of multiple New York Times bestselling books, including *God’s Politics*. In 2022 and 2023, *Washingtonian* magazine named Wallis one of the 500 most influential people shaping policy in DC. Wallis is also the founder of Sojourners.

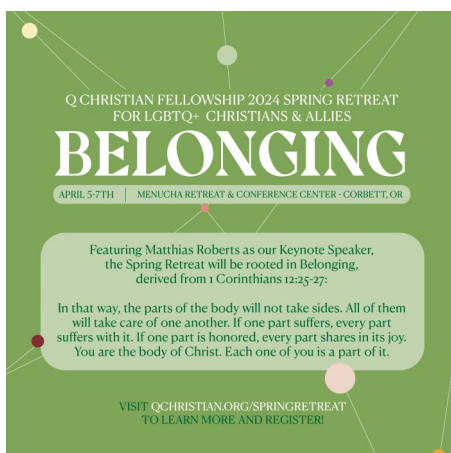
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## SMALL GROUPS TRANSITION

As many of you know, Vanessa Perkinson accepted another position at the beginning of this year and stepped away from her role as Small Groups Coordinator. We have been working on a plan for this transition, and are excited to give everyone an update! As Small Groups continues to flourish and thrive, Pastor Leigh will provide pastoral leadership, support, and oversight to this ministry. The church office will provide administrative support. The advisory group will continue in their role. Pastors Leigh and Anita will conduct the small group leader trainings a couple times a year as new leaders emerge. Anyone who has ideas for new groups or is interested in leading a group can chat with Pastor Leigh. For any and all things Small Groups related, please continue to email [smallgroups@seattlefirstbaptist.org](mailto:smallgroups@seattlefirstbaptist.org). In the midst of this transition, we would like to say a special thanks to Cherry Johnson for all she has done to coordinate and lead the Small Groups Ministry. We are so thankful for

Cherry and the ways she has poured into this ministry helping to make it what it is. Thank you, Cherry!

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**Q CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP  
2024 SPRING RETREAT  
APRIL 5-7 at MENCHUA RETREAT &  
CONFERENCE CENTER, CORBETT, OR**

Q Christian Fellowship is an organization that cultivates radical belonging among LGBTQ+ people, alongside their parents and allies, through a commitment to growth, community, and relational justice. The spring retreat exists to provide an opportunity for spiritual renewal for a close-knit gathering of LGBTQ+ Christians and allies. With time set aside specifically for worship, small groups, spiritual renewal, sabbath, and fun, participants can find ways to connect with themselves, with others, and with the Divine, in whatever form that looks like for them.

You can learn more and register for the Spring Retreat here: [www.qchristian.org/springretreat](http://www.qchristian.org/springretreat)

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**PROTECTING AND CARING  
FOR THE EARTH  
SPECIAL EARTH MONTH ACTIVITIES**

Interfaith Climate Action (ICA) invites you to join their efforts to protect God's creation. In April that invitation extends to a range of activities in observance of Earth Month. From forest bathing to forest restoration, from collective action to communal eating, from Earth Day worship to classes on practicing our faith through care for the Earth, you will find an activity that touches your soul. Please invite your family and friends! Activities are listed below by date.

**Collective Action: Cruise Ship Protest at Pier 66  
Saturday, April 6, 10am—Noon**

You are invited to rally with ICA, Seattle Cruise Con-

trol, and other climate, health, and social justice groups to protest the opening day of the Seattle-Alaska cruise season. We will demonstrate with art, chants, fliers, and music to protect the people and planet we love. In a press conference led by young people dressed as sea creatures, we will hear about the ways cruise ships pollute our waters and air, endanger our health and climate, exploit onboard workers, and overwhelm destination communities. We'll gather at Pier 62 at 10am, then march the short distance to Pier 66, with the press conference at 11am. New to cruise ship harms? The interactive feature article [Cruise Ship Invasion](#) provides a quick, vivid introduction. For information, contact ICA member Elizabeth Burton, [bookmoose1@yahoo.com](mailto:bookmoose1@yahoo.com), (206) 407-5398.



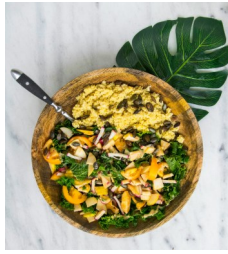
**Class: Caring for Our Common Home  
At SFBC Sunday, April 7, 9:30–10:30am**

Come to this session presented by ICA members to reflect on how our faith compels us to care for the Earth. Sandra Jones will lead the session, and George Lawson will share his lifelong faith journey as a steward of the Earth. Linda Zaugg will introduce excerpts from the film "The Letter: A Message for Our Earth" and share how Pope Francis's Laudato Si message influenced her commitment to caring for our home. (You can [watch the entire 80-minute film on YouTube](#).) Contact Sandra Jones with any questions.

**Communal Meals: A Place at the  
Veggie and Vegan Table  
Saturday, April 13, Times and Places TBD**

To honor the earth by serving its bounty, Interfaith Climate Action members and others will host lunch and dinner potlucks of delicious vegetarian and vegan dishes in their homes. You will be able to sign up at the SFBC Welcome Table at coffee hour on March 17 and 24 to be a dinner host, or on March 31 and April 7 to attend as a guest. Questions? Contact Lynn Gaertner-Johnston. FAQ: What is the difference between vegan and vegetarian food? Both vegan and vegetarian dishes feature foods with the lowest greenhouse gas emissions. Vegan dishes avoid all animal foods including meat, fish, shellfish, insects, dairy, eggs, and honey. A vegetarian dish may include eggs,

dairy products, and honey. It does not include meat, poultry, fish, seafood, insects, gelatin or animal rennet, or stock and fat from animals.

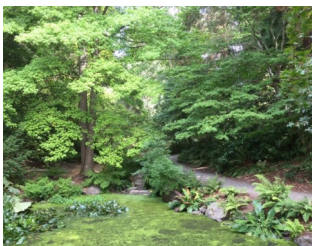


**Class: Reconciliation Through Eating  
At SFBC Sunday, April 14, 9:30–10:30am**

Eating is something we do every single day, multiple times a day. Eating is not a solitary act; it is an act of dependence. When we eat, we are depending on other people, the land, and God. Join Pastor Leigh to talk about food and our faith, exploring food interdependence and how our eating is connected to the Earth.

**Forest Bathing at Washington Park Arboretum  
Saturday, April 20, 9:30-11:30am**

Bathe in the wonder of creation! Join our group in a forest bathing exercise with Rev. Keith Curl-Dove, Presbyterian Church (USA) minister and certified Wild Church Leader. Forest bathing, known in Japanese as *shinrin yoku*, is a guided meditative and spiritual experience of communion with Creation that calms the mind, nourishes the body, and connects the soul with other-than-human kin. The facilitated time will be about two hours, but you may just decide to stay all day. No experience necessary, and accessible for all. Come equipped with a rain jacket or umbrella in case of showers. To carpool, sign up at the SFBC Welcome Table on April 7 and 14 or email [smallgroups@seattlefirstbaptist.org](mailto:smallgroups@seattlefirstbaptist.org) to provide or request a ride. Look for the exact meeting place on the church calendar and in *This Week* in early April. Get Started Reading. While you are signing up for rides at the SFBC Welcome Table, pick up a copy of Jenny Odell's *Saving Time: Discovering a Life Beyond the Clock*, ICA's book choice for discussion on May 6.



**Class: Fossil Fuels, Powers, and Principalities  
At SFBC April 21, 9:30 – 10:30am**

The fossil fuel industry is a textbook case study for

understanding a theology of powers and principalities—a way of explaining seemingly invincible systems of power and Empire through a theological lens of Life and Death. Rev. Keith Curl-Dove, Presbyterian Church (USA) minister and Fossil Fuel Campaign Manager at Washington Conservation Action, will introduce seeing the world through a powers-and-principalities lens, using the fossil fuel industry as the prime example. By understanding the ways that the industry holds us captive, we will be better prepared to resist it and work for a future with clean, equitable energy.

**SFBC Earth Sunday  
Worship Service and Community Luncheon  
April 21, 11am–1:30pm**

Celebrate Earth Sunday in a special worship service, with Rev. Keith Curl-Dove as guest preacher. Then celebrate the blessings of the earth with a scrumptious Earth Sunday vegetarian and vegan meal prepared by SFBC Chef Stephenie Simmons.



**Hands-On Caring for the Earth,  
East Duwamish Watershed  
Saturday, April 27, 10am—Noon**

Come outside—and bring your friends! Join our ICA group of all ages in giving back to the Earth in a volunteer forest restoration project sponsored by Green Seattle Partnership exclusively for us. Use [this link](#) to register and get details. (This private event does not appear on the Green Seattle Partnership calendar.) Rain or shine, we will meet across from 8631 39th Avenue S. Tools will be provided, but plan to wear long sleeves and long pants to avoid scrapes and stings. Working in the woods, watching the creation heal itself, will be healing for us. We will celebrate Shabbat with the blessing in English and Hebrew. Contact Cindy Ervin with questions: (206) 349-1680, [cynthervin@msn.com](mailto:cynthervin@msn.com). Carpooling: Sign up at the SFBC Welcome Table on April 14 and 21 or email [smallgroups@seattlefirstbaptist.org](mailto:smallgroups@seattlefirstbaptist.org) to provide or request a ride.

**Class: Planet vs. Plastics:  
Prayerful Actions to Save the Earth  
At SFBC Sunday, April 28, 9:30–10:30am**

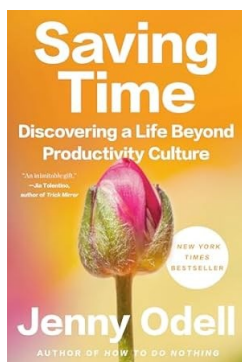
Planet vs. Plastics is the global theme for Earth Day

2024. With ICA member Lynn Gaertner-Johnston, review the environmental issues and the actions we can take. If each step we take is a prayer for our planet, learn ways—some of them surprising—to prayerfully reduce, refuse, reuse, recycle, and remove the plastics that confront us daily. Please bring your strategies and examples to share.

**Interfaith Climate Action Monthly Meeting  
On Zoom, Sunday, April 28, 6:30–8pm**

Your ideas and prayerful actions can change the world and save our planet. Please join ICA members to debrief Earth Month and talk about activities to consider for the future. Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83474603114>. Contact: Lynn Gaertner-Johnston.

**GET AHEAD OF THE GAME  
START READING NOW**



On May 6th, the Interfaith Climate Action Group is sponsoring another congregational book discussion—this time on the book *Saving Time: Discovering a Life Beyond the Clock* by Jenny Odell. This a one-time evening group over Zoom.

The book jacket says Odell shows us how our painful relationship to time is inextricably connected not only to persisting social inequities but to the climate crisis, existential dread, and a lethal fatalism.

This conversation will be most meaningful if you have read the book in advance, so get your copy now. Used copies are available on eBay, abebooks, and other websites. Copies are available at the public library as well as your favorite brick and mortar or online bookstore.

**Congregational Book Discussion  
Tuesday, May 6, 7-8:30pm on Zoom  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83474603114>**

**NEW WOMEN’S GROUP STARTS SOON**

A new Women’s Group (which is for women of all ages, trans women, and those who identify as gender-queer or non-binary) has formed. It will have its inaugural meetings on the 4th Sundays of March and April. Bring your sack lunch and join us in Peacemakers Room (at the end of the hallway that leads up the ramp and out of Fellowship Hall) at 12:30pm for fun,

fellowship and a chance to make or nurture supportive connections.

**Women’s Group  
4th Sundays of the Month: March 24 & April 28  
12:30pm in the Peacemaker’s Room  
Bring a Sack Lunch**

**SEATTLE JAZZ VESPERS PRESENTS  
MARK LEWIS QUARTET  
APRIL 7, 2024 at 6pm**



Saxophonist, Flutist, Composer, Educator Seattle area native Mark Lewis is a well-traveled saxophonist and flutist who has created a large body of jazz music over the past four decades. He’s been a part of jazz scenes from Seattle and San Francisco to Rotterdam and Paris.

His latest album, *Naked Animals*, was recorded in 1990 with his Quartet from the Netherlands. It's an important historical recording of a working neo-bop Quartet that had an enthusiastic following for more than a decade. His 2017 release *The New York Session* features piano legend George Cables, veteran bassist Essiet Essiet and drummer Victor Lewis. Mark was rated number two for alto saxophone (after Richie Cole) and number three for flute (after Charles Lloyd and Hubert Laws) in the 39th Annual Jazz Station Awards for his work on this album.

Recent awards include *Cadence Magazine* Top Ten Critics Poll for 2021 for his album *Naked Animals*, and #2 on alto sax (after Richie Cole) and #3 on flute (after Charles Lloyd and Hubert Laws) in the 39th Annual Jazz Station Awards for his album *The New York Session*, a collaboration with piano legend George Cables, bassist Essiet Essiet, and drummer Victor Lewis.

Music writer Ted Gioia, known as a leading global guide to music past, present and future, says of Mark Lewis: “You listen to the guys with the primo recording contracts on the very top labels, and in my opinion, they’re not in Mark’s league.”



## SMALL GROUPS MINISTRY SCHEDULE FOR EASTER

All groups are open to new members unless otherwise stated below. Drop in to see if they're a good fit

for you! For more information on any of these groups, see the church calendar or The Spire, or email [smallgroups@seattlefirstbaptist.org](mailto:smallgroups@seattlefirstbaptist.org). The schedule below is accurate to the best of our knowledge at the time of publication.

### SUNDAY MORNINGS

**Lenten Bible Study** with the pastors continues through Palm Sunday (March 24th) Sunday mornings 9:30-10:30am in the Parlour.

**Protecting & Caring for the Earth** All Sundays in April 9:30-10:30am in the Parlour. See separate article for details about each Sunday's focus. Sponsored by Interfaith Climate Action.

### SUNDAY AFTERNOONS

**Gay Men's Group** 3rd Sunday of each month (February 18th & March 17th) 12:30-1:30pm in the Parlour. *(A time of fellowship and co-support for all who identify as gay men.)*

**Women's Group (New)** 4th Sundays of March & April (March 24th & April 28th) in the Peacemaker's Room. *(A social & support group for women, trans women and those who identify as gender queer or non-binary.)* See separate article.

**Friendship Circle** 2nd Sunday of most months; 3rd Sunday in March (March 17th & April 14th) from 12:45-2pm in the Peacemaker's Room and on Zoom. *(Women coming together for fellowship, spiritual support and a focus on missions.)* <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88288815847>

### SUNDAY EVENINGS

**Exploring Contemplation** 2nd Sunday of each month (April 14th) 6:30-7:30pm on Zoom. *(Monthly gathering of all interested in contemplation. Music, meditation. Newcomers to meditation welcome. Leader is on screen 15 minutes prior to start time to orient newcomers or answer questions.)* <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87508105511>

**Interfaith Climate Action** 4th Sunday of each month (March 24th & April 28th) from 6:30-8pm on Zoom *(A group for those who wish to collaborate with others to learn more/ do more about the climate emergency.)* <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83474603114>

### TUESDAYS

**Prayer Group** Weekly on Tuesdays 12-12:30pm on

Zoom. *(A brief time for reflection, prayer and sacred community in the middle of the day)* <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86776242649>

**Parents of Adult Children Living with Mental Illness** On the 3rd Tuesday of each month (March 19th & April 16th) 7-8:30pm in the home of a member. For further details or to obtain the address for the meeting, email [smallgroups@seattlefirstbaptist.org](mailto:smallgroups@seattlefirstbaptist.org) or call the church office at (206) 325-6051. *(A peer support group for parents impacted by the mental illness of their adult children)*

**Young Adults Group** 4th Tuesday of each month (March 26th & April 23rd) 7-8:30pm. Different location each time depending on activity. *(A group where SFBC young adults ages 21-40 meet to connect with one another and have fun.)* For more info email [smallgroups@seattlefirstbaptist.org](mailto:smallgroups@seattlefirstbaptist.org) or monitor the *This Week* Thursday e-newsletter for up-to-date information as dates are flexible.

### WEDNESDAYS

**Optimism Hour** 2nd Wednesday of each month (April 10th) 5:30-6:30 at Stoup Brewing on the corner of Broadway and Union. *(A time for fun and socializing at a nearby brewery before choir rehearsal. Choir members, the choir-curious and anyone else welcome! Alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages are available. No food served, but you can bring your own and there is a food truck outside the bar.)*

### THURSDAYS

**Bible Study** 12-1pm weekly on Zoom. *(An exploration of the coming Sunday's scripture; provocative discussions; progressive commentary)* <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86761779225>

### SATURDAYS

**Intergenerational Baking Group** 3-4 times a year on a Saturday. (Monitor the *This Week* Thursday e-newsletter for up-to-date information.) 10am-2pm in Fellowship Hall & the church Kitchen. *(Come to bake cookies for distribution to organizations serving our unhoused neighbors.)*

**Men's Group** Weekly 10am on Zoom. *(Where SFBC men come together to get better acquainted and support one another)* <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81095038488> [pwd=RlpydDZ0cERLVFhtcEFPSWMzSIQzUT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81095038488?pwd=RlpydDZ0cERLVFhtcEFPSWMzSIQzUT09)

**Play Reading Circle** 1st Saturday of the month (April 6th) 3-5pm on Zoom. *(Full-length plays read over two sessions; sign out your copy of the script at the Welcome Table on a Sunday morning or contact [smallgroups@seattlefirstbaptist.org](mailto:smallgroups@seattlefirstbaptist.org) or the church office (206) 325-6051 to have one mailed to you.)* <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85424372570>

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**Stephenie Simmons** *Chef*

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Sunday service at 11am in-person and online

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