

# THE SPIRE

## FALL 2024



### THE NEWSLETTER OF SEATTLE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH VOLUME 88, NO. 6

Hey y'all,

“I’m so happy to live in a world where there are Octobers.”

One of my all-time favorite literary characters, Anne Shirley, says this in the book *Anne of Green Gables* shortly after she has been adopted by brother and sister, Matthew and Marilla Cuthbert. Anne is a whimsical, imaginative, freckled, red-haired orphan who is adopted by the Cuthberts. They were supposed to adopt a boy, but Anne showed up at the train station instead. They debate sending her back to the orphanage, but Anne wins them over. The Cuthbert home, Green Gables, becomes Anne’s home too.

Anne has a particular proclivity for getting herself into trouble. She loses her temper at school when Gilbert Blythe calls her “carrots” and she breaks her chalkboard over his head. She buys hair dye off a peddler on the road who promises her it will turn her hair “a beautiful raven black,” but instead it turns her hair an unfortunate shade of green. She lets her imagination wander so much while completing her chores that she often forgets important aspects. Like when Anne goes to get the plum sauce for a dessert and finds a dead mouse in the sauce because she forgot to cover it. Anne fishes the mouse out and decides not to say anything. But when the minister and his wife (whom Anne adores) are about to partake, Anne can’t take it anymore and blurts out her confession completely distraught (though the four adults at the table are completely tickled).

One of Anne’s best qualities is her imagination. Anne did not have an easy life before coming to Green Gables, but she relied on her imagination to get her through living with families who didn’t treat her well and her time in the orphanage. Anne sees the beauty

in everything before and especially after she came to live at Green Gables. She names a bit of road in the fictional town of Avonlea that has blossoming cherry trees, “The White Way of Delight.” She names the pond on her best friend Diana Berry’s family farm, “The Lake of Shining Waters.” She loses herself when she walks through fields and flowers, talking to trees and the wind.

As October dawns in Avonlea (on Prince Edward Island in Canada), the leaves are changing, the temperatures are cooling and beauty is everywhere for Anne with “plenty of scope for the imagination.” So Anne tells Marilla, “I’m so happy to live in a world where there are Octobers.” I have no doubt that Anne is happy to live in a world where there is every other month of the year too, but her words are an invitation: to embrace the beauty that is all around you.

My friends, as we enter another October, another Fall, I hope you find the happiness that October can bring. I hope that you can look around and see the beauty, in the grandiose, the mundane, and everything in between. Beauty truly is all around us.

Peace,

—*Rev. Leigh*

**BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS  
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6**

Join us on Sunday, October 6th for World Communion Sunday and Blessing of the Animals! There are important members of our families who don't often accompany us to church. They greet us when we come home. They make sure we get exercise. They comfort us when we're sad. They always listen we need someone to talk to. They bark, meow, squawk, and hiss. Some of the most important members of our families are our pets, but they rarely get to come to church with us. So bring you furry, feathered, and scaled family members to worship on October 6th to receive communion and a blessing. We will have designated sections in the sanctuary that are animal free for those who have allergies or are not comfortable being around animals. All creation proclaims the glory of God and reveal to us who God is. Join us as we bless some of the best of God's creation and give thanks for the ways they reveal to us God's love and care.

*Please note that all animals should be on leashes or in carriers.*

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**BAPTIST HISTORY AND THEOLOGY CLASS**

Baptists have a rich history and theology. There is a reason Seattle First Baptist Church is a Baptist church. If you want to learn more about the history of Baptists and why we Baptists do what we do, join Pastors Anita and Leigh on Sundays October 20th and 27th in the Parlor from 9:30-10:30am! Pastor Anita will give a brief history of Baptists on October 20th and Pastor Leigh will give an overview of Baptist theology on October 27th. We hope you will join us!

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**YOUTH GROUP DATES**

Youth Group meets on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month from 1:00-2:30pm in the Youth Room. All youth in grades 6-12 are welcome to join! Lunch will be provided, games will be played, learning will be fun and meaningful, and life will be shared! Fall dates are October 13, October 27, November 10, and November 24. Contact Pastor Anita or Brooke Rolston with any questions.

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**SAVE THE DATE  
CELEBRATION OF LIGHT AND JOY  
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8 AFTER WORSHIP**

Coffee hour and heavy refreshments, followed by a community hymn sing and Santa visits! More information to come.

**TELL ME THE TRUTH ABOUT RACISM  
INTERACTIVE GODLY PLAY-STYLE  
STORIES FOR ALL AGES**

Dear church family,

Early in 2024, I was invited by the American Baptist Home Missions Societies (ABHMS) to participate in a "train the trainers" event for a program called "Tell Me The Truth About Racism." This educational program explores the history of systemic racism in North America and Caribbean, and particularly in the USA, using an interactive storytelling methodology similar to Godly Play. I participated in this training over the course of March, April and May via Zoom, together with colleagues from a variety of mainline Protestant denominations. Together, we allowed the stories of racial oppression, prejudice, and antiracism struggles to move us and change us. This program is relatively new and the language is flexible enough to adapt to different age groups. A main focus of the curriculum is on social-emotional learning, or, how our emotional core is affected and engaged as we receive the historical stories and allow them to work inside our minds and hearts.

I invite you to join me as we act as a "test congregation" for this curriculum that is in development—and as I hone my skills to become a better facilitator and practitioner of this curriculum. We will have the opportunity to give some feedback to the curriculum writers at the end of the program.

Join me in the Parlor from 9:30-10:30am on Sundays November 3, 10, and 17.

Thank you for your company as we journey together.

—*Pastor Anita*

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**WOMEN'S RETREAT 2024  
OCTOBER 25-27 AT RAINBOW LODGE**

**Wearing God: Clothing ourselves with the Holy**

In the 2015 book *Wearing God*, author Lauren Winner explores lesser-known images and concepts of the divine, and how they might help us encounter God in everyday. Through thinking of God as clothing, God as smell, God as bread and wine, God as the laboring woman, and more, Winner encourages readers to think of images of God that give their lives meaning.

In this year's women's retreat, we will explore these concepts of God and more—and we will think and dream and share about how we come to know and be present with the divine through sensory activities.



*Homecoming Sunday, September 8, 2024. Photo by Kellie Whitlock.*

If that sounds like a lot of programming—don't worry! We will rest, be quiet, play, create, sing, craft, restore, read and share our hearts. As with all SFBC retreats, this time is for you to use as you need. All women, SFBC members and friends are welcome. Contact Pastor Anita with any questions.

Costs

\$300 for single room

\$275 for shared room

Some full and partial scholarships available, please contact Pastor Anita to inquire.

Registration link: <https://forms.office.com/r/h5jsPWfHm4>

**HALLOWEEN COFFEE HOUR OCTOBER 27**



Get ready to share in some Halloween-themed treats with your boo-tiful SFBC church family during coffee hour on October 27. Games, crafts and a photo booth will be available for some intergenerational fun!

**CHRISTMAS TREE DECORATING AT SFBC  
NOVEMBER 24 AFTER WORSHIP**

As we get towards the end of November, many of us get restless for the joy, gifts, lights and decorations of the Christmas season. At SFBC, we are blessed to get to decorate our church Christmas trees as a church family. After worship on November 24, all are welcome (particularly our younger worshippers and their families) to help us decorate Christmas trees. A simple lunch will be provided for all helpers. Contact the pastors with questions.

**ADVENT WREATH  
WORKSHOP  
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 24  
9:30AM IN THE PARLOR**



The Advent wreath is a beloved tradition for many people and churches as we prepare to welcome the Christ-child on Christmas. All ages are welcome to join this workshop as we make our own Advent wreaths to take home for the Advent season. Each household may make one Advent wreath. All materials will be provided. Contact Pastor Anita with questions.

## PLAY READING CIRCLE

Gather with other theater lovers to read *On Golden Pond*, a 1979 play by Ernest Thompson, adapted for screen in 1981. The plot focuses on aging couple Ethel and Norman Thayer, who spend each summer at their home on a lake called Golden Pond. During the year the story takes place, they are visited by daughter Chelsea with her fiancé and his son. The play explores the often turbulent relationship the young woman shared with her father growing up, and the difficulties faced by a couple in the twilight years of a long marriage.

The Play Reading Circle will meet on Saturday, October 5 from 3:00-5:00pm, when they will read the first half of the play; and on November 2, when they will read the second. Meetings take place via Zoom. You can join using this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85424372570>.

Scripts are available at the Welcome Table after worship, or you can call the church office (206-325-6051) or email [smallgroups@seattlefirstbaptist.org](mailto:smallgroups@seattlefirstbaptist.org) to have one mailed to you.

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## INTERFAITH CLIMATE ACTION INVITES YOU

Members of our Interfaith Climate Action group look forward to welcoming you to these events this month:

- Sunday, October 6 and 13: Join ICA members after worship to write “Vote NO on Initiatives 2066 and 2117” postcards. ICA members will provide postcards, stamps, instructions, and pens. Bring your enthusiasm for protecting our air and water. (Read more about these initiatives on page 5 of this issue of The Spire.)
- Sunday, October 6, at Jazz Vespers: Thrill to “For the Birds,” a brand-new climate-themed composition by Nelda Swiggett. (6:00pm in the SFBC sanctuary; admission is free.)
- Sunday, October 27: Take part in ICA’s monthly meeting at 6:30pm on Zoom. Help pick out climate-justice-themed books to discuss in 2025.
- Monday, October 28: Join ICA at 7:00pm on Zoom to discuss the profoundly important book *Saving Us: A Climate Scientist’s Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World* by Katharine Hayhoe. Even if you haven’t read the book, please join us for this provocative conversation.

ICA Zoom meetings can be accessed here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83474603114>

## BUILDING LASTING BRIDGES

We live in a changing multicultural community. How do we accept the changes and understand our cultures and experiences? Building Lasting Bridges is a small group ministry that provides a beginning point for creating community, trust, and a shared vocabulary. As we gain awareness of cultures and share our experiences we can gain humility to help us connect—to build these “lasting bridges.”

The book *Building Lasting Bridges* and its accompanying workbook exercises will guide us. However, this is an adventure in exploring cultures, not a book study. In February we’ll dig in to the second half of *Building Lasting Bridges*.

Because relationships are at the heart of this experience, participants are asked to sign up for both the fall and spring meetings. We’d love to have you join us. Contact Martha Hopley ([mshopley64@gmail.com](mailto:mshopley64@gmail.com)) or Sandra Jones ([sandra.jones2278@comcast.net](mailto:sandra.jones2278@comcast.net)) to ask questions and share your ideas. Participants are asked to read the book’s introduction and first chapter before the first class on October 22, which you can join online at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83290563542>.

*Building Lasting Bridges* books can be ordered online or from a local bookstore. The book is also available as an E-Book for \$9.99 at [judsonpress.com](http://judsonpress.com).

SFBC is committed to full access to all. If the cost of the book is a barrier for you, email [smallgroups@seattlefirstbaptist.org](mailto:smallgroups@seattlefirstbaptist.org) for assistance.



### TRAINING OCTOBER 9

#### 9AM-1:30PM AT SEATTLE FIRST BAPTIST

Join Jewish Bridge Project facilitators Kohenet April Baskin and Diana Dvora Falchuk for a training on antisemitism and Christian supremacy on October 9th from 9:00am to 1:30pm at Seattle First Baptist Church. SFBC is a co-sponsor of this program along with the Church Council of Greater Seattle and several congregations.

Why this series now? The training is designed to provide timely support for you, your communities, and all of our efforts toward racial justice. While many of us have been working to understand and dismantle antisemitism and Christian supremacy as part of our efforts to end white supremacy and bring about liberation for all, the need for this integrated approach has

increased considerably since the Hamas attacks of October 7th, Israel's ongoing massacre of Palestinians and destruction of infrastructure and basic needs supplies in Gaza in what the ICJ has called "plausibly genocide," and the rise in both antisemitism and claims of antisemitism. In our congregations and partnerships, a lack of understanding of antisemitism is fueling disconnection, rupture, and harm. We need to know what antisemitism is, how it directly harms Jews, how it gets used as a political tool, and why and how we need to dismantle it as part of our efforts toward collective liberation. This training is designed to expand our knowledge, sharpen our strategies, and practice ways of seeing, knowing, being, and interacting that strengthen our abilities to hold a wider whole as we work together to dismantle all systems of oppression.

This training is not solely for Christians, though we will focus on the role of Christians in dismantling antisemitism and Christian supremacy.

This training will cover:

- Who are the Jews, what is antisemitism, and how antisemitism harms Jews and other groups targeted by oppression.
- The role of Christian supremacy and hegemony in shaping and maintaining the system and culture of antisemitism and of white supremacy more broadly.
- What Israel/Palestine has to do with antisemitism.
- How to differentiate antisemitism from claims of antisemitism that advance anti-democratic, divide and conquer strategies and policies, and what this has to do with our upcoming legislative session.
- Why we include the work of dismantling antisemitism and Christian supremacy as part of our efforts to build racial and all forms of justice, and how we do this through solidarity rooted in care for the health and wellbeing of the whole.
- Somatic and mindful practices that can help us recognize, stay present with, learn from, and interrupt our shaping related to Christian and/or white supremacy.

This training will blend together analysis, history, and frameworks with practices, space for reflection, and dialogue that engage our minds, bodies, hearts, and spirits as we hold a wider whole to meet this moment in our world.

Contact the pastors for a registration link, as space is limited.

## SAY "YES" TO A CLEAN-ENERGY FUTURE VOTE "NO" ON INITIATIVES 2066 AND 2117



Defend the state's Climate Commitment Act and keep incentives for clean energy appliances by voting NO on Initiatives 2066 and 2117. And join with other SFBC members and friends to write "Vote NO on Initiative 2117" postcards on two Sundays, October 6 and 13, at noon in the Parlor. ICA members will provide postcards, stamps, pens, and instructions. Below is the important background information.

Members of Seattle First Baptist Church have worked for many years to defend God's Creation. We are learning to be better stewards of the Earth in our personal lives, and we advocate for effective climate action at the local, state and national levels.

Members of Seattle First Baptist Church have worked for many years to defend God's Creation. We are learning to be better stewards of the Earth in our personal lives, and we advocate for effective climate action at the local, state and national levels.

Progress has not come easily, or without opposition. On November 5, Washington voters will decide whether to roll back much of the progress we have made. We urge you to cast a "No" vote on Initiative 2066 and Initiative 2117.

I-2066 would eliminate incentives to help homeowners switch to clean electric appliances, and would nullify everything Seattle and Washington state have done to help us transition away from climate-wrecking fossil fuels.

I-2117 would repeal the landmark Climate Commitment Act and strip away state funding for ferries, buses, wildfire prevention, urban tree-planting, vehicle electrification, tribal climate initiatives, and more. The largest polluters would no longer have to pay for the damage they cause or to reduce the harm.

Join the broad coalition of community groups, businesses, tribes, and labor unions that are urging "no" votes on these dangerous initiatives funded by a wealthy hedge-fund manager.

Learn more at <https://no2066.org/> and <https://no2117.com/>.

Members of Interfaith Climate Action thank you for taking action to create a cleaner, more just world.





**SEATTLE JAZZ VESPERS  
NELDA SWIGGETT QUINTET  
“FOR THE BIRDS”  
OCTOBER 6 AT 6:00PM**

Seattle Jazz Vespers is proud to present the Nelda Swiggett Quintet “For The Birds.” A special concert featuring live music, images and poetry that invite reflection on our changing climate.



Nelda Swiggett – compositions, piano; Kate Olson – saxophone, flute; Clif Swiggett – trombone, percussion; Chris Symer – bass; Adam Kessler – drums; and the poetry of Jill McGrath.

Seattle jazz pianist and composer Nelda Swiggett is a repeat performer in the Seattle Jazz Vespers concert series. Past audiences have enjoyed her diverse musical projects, including the Nelda Swiggett Trio, Clif and Nelda’s Little Big Band, “Stringtet” (with cello and viola), the “Sisters” Duo with her sister Karin Kajita, and her high energy sextet, “Megabopolis.”

Sunday, October 6, the Nelda Swiggett Quintet will perform her all-new suite of original music, “For the Birds.” But this is not just a concert. The performance engages the power of artistic expression — live music, spoken words, images and poetry — to connect audiences deeply and emotionally to the scientific realities of climate change. Ultimately a story of hope, individuals leave the performance feeling empowered to take meaningful action.

On Earth Day 2017, Seattle Jazz Vespers and Interfaith Climate Action hosted the debut performance of Nelda’s first climate-themed work, The Alaska Suite: a story of beauty, loss and hope. This piece has been performed 36 times to date, touching nearly 2500 people across Washington State with its message of hope and call to action. This included a benefit concert for Green Buildings Now, again at Seattle First Baptist Church, in May 2022. Building on the success of The Alaska Suite, Nelda is excited to debut her new climate piece, For the Birds. And how fitting to present it at Seattle Jazz Vespers hosted at Seattle First Baptist Church.

**SEATTLE JAZZ VESPERS  
KIM MAGUIRE QUINTET  
NOVEMBER 3 AT 6:00PM**



Kim Maguire – vocals; John Hansen – drums; Chris Symer – bass; Susan Pascal – vibraphone; Jeff Busch – drums.

Kim Maguire has been a professional performer, educator, director, and producer for the past 30 years. A 2017 Seattle/Kobe Female Jazz Vocalist finalist, Kim is a mainstay in the vocal Seattle jazz scene. Described as a “stunning singer” with an authentic and charismatic presence, Kim’s style is characterized by its joy, technical skill, and a distinctive, silky-smooth vocal texture. Her performance style is a combination of classic swing and contemporary styles, creating a unique sound that is both familiar and fresh, and is known for her creative swing and elegantly nuanced ballads. Kim is a catalyst for inclusiveness and unity through shared musical experiences.

Kim says, “Jazz is my main love and offers me a chance to pull out all the stops, diving into the jewels of the American Songbook and classic jazz repertoire. Duke Ellington, Cole Porter – anything that expresses through great lyrics and engaging melodies. I love singing with the wonderful jazz artists of Seattle. It’s an amazing experience, every time. “Joyful jazz” has become a personality trait of my performances. Recently, here in 2022, I have received many thanks from listeners for giving them a holiday from the hardships of life. That’s a true compliment. I’m always honored to sing. It’s where I live.”

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**SMALL GROUPS MINISTRY  
SCHEDULE FOR FALL**

All groups are open to new members unless otherwise stated below. Drop in to see if a group is a good fit for you! For more information on any of these groups, see the church calendar 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.

## **SUNDAYS**

**Friendship Circle** 2nd Sundays, 12:45-1:45pm, in person in the Peacemaker's Room and online at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88288815847>. Women meeting together for fellowship and spiritual support with a focus on missions.

**Interfaith Climate Action** 4th Sundays, 6:30-8:00pm. Meets online at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83474603114>. Interfaith Climate Action is for those who wish to learn more/do more about the climate emergency. All are welcome!

## **TUESDAYS**

**Parents of Adult Children with Mental Illness** 2nd Tuesdays, 7:00-8:30pm. Meets online at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82549534986?pwd=IO9c1CB9Uts0V2hR3yYhiKenZ2gkbO.1>. (You will need a passcode to enter the Zoom meeting, which you can get by calling the church at 206-325-6051 or emailing [smallgroups@seattlefirstbaptist.org](mailto:smallgroups@seattlefirstbaptist.org).) Parents of Adult Children with Mental Illness is a peer-run support group that meets by Zoom the second Tuesday evening of each month. The group's goal is not to offer advice, but to provide mutual understanding of the difficult challenges we face as parents of mentally ill adult children. All discussion is strictly confidential.

**Prayer and Reflection** Every Tuesday, 12:00-12:30pm. A brief time for reflection, prayer and sacred community in the middle of your day. Meets online at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86776242649>.

**Young Adults Group** 4th Tuesdays, 7:00-8:30pm. SFBC's Young Adults Group (ages 21-40ish) meets outside of church for various social events and activities, offering something for everyone. You'll find us in the sanctuary every Sunday, seated on the left side near the front. We meet on the 4th Tuesday of each month (excluding holidays or special occasions), although this can change depending on each month's activity. Watch the weekly newsletter or church calendar for details.

**Building Lasting Bridges** Tuesdays 6:00-7:30pm on Zoom (October 22, 29, November 5, 19 and December 3, 17). Meets online at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83290563542>. Connecting with ourselves and others through the lens of culture, using the information and exercises in the book *Building Lasting Bridges*. Read more about this small group ministry on page 4.

## **WEDNESDAYS**

**Optimism Hour** 2nd Wednesdays, 5:30-6:30pm. A time for gathering in a relaxed atmosphere, having fun

and getting to know one another better. Wednesday evenings at Stoup Brewery, just east of the church on the corner of Broadway and Union.

## **THURSDAYS**

**Bible Study** Every Thursday, 12:00-1:00pm on Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86761779225>. An exploration of the coming Sunday's scripture. Provocative discussions. Progressive commentary.

## **FRIDAYS**

**Exploring Contemplation** 1st & 3rd Fridays, 11:00am-12:00pm. Meets online at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87508105511>. Twice-monthly gathering of all interested in contemplation. Variety of practices - song, silence, guided meditation. Newcomers to meditation welcome. Leader is on screen 15 minutes prior to start time to orient newcomers or answer questions.

## **SATURDAYS**

**Men's Group** Every Saturday, 11:00am-12:00pm. Meets online at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81095038488?pwd=RpYdDZ0cERLVFhtcEFPSWmzSlQzUT09>. Where SFBC men come together to get better acquainted and support one another.

**Play Reading Circle** 1st Saturdays, 3:00-5:00pm. Meets online at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85424372570>. Gather with other theater-lovers to read plays together. Obtain scripts in advance from the Welcome Table at worship, or contact [smallgroups@seattlefirstbaptist.org](mailto:smallgroups@seattlefirstbaptist.org) or the church office (206) 325-6051 to have one mailed to you.

**Intergenerational Baking Group** Occasional Saturdays; schedule variable. Everyone is invited to come together to bake cookies in the SFBC kitchen for our neighbors experiencing homelessness.



Some of the people at last month's gathering, where we made 24 dozen—which is about 300 cookies. Not counting the quality control cookies!

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#### STAFF

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Sunday service at 11:00am in-person and online

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*The Spire* is published seasonally by Seattle First Baptist Church, 1111 Harvard Ave, Seattle, WA 98122