

# THE SPIRE

## HOMECOMING 2024



### THE NEWSLETTER OF SEATTLE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH VOLUME 88, NO. 5

Dear church,

In our Godly Play Sunday school a few years ago, we were looking at the circle of the church year and, as was our practice, wondering about it. We wondered at the different colors of the liturgical seasons, about which holidays are the most important to the church, and which of the special days are our favorite. And a young Norah piped up to say, “Homecoming is my favorite!”

Homecoming is an important and special day in the life of this congregation. We celebrate together the history of this church, the children and youth returning to school, the visits from church family gathered and scattered. On Homecoming, we sing that beloved hymn, “Bring Us Home,” reminding us that we are called to do what we can to make this congregation a safe and inclusive space of belonging. From “our weary night...our closed-in fears...our wasted years...our selfish views...learnings we refuse...” into belonging that looks like “highest call, sharing love with all” and “awaken[s] us to grace.” And in this church, the parameters for Homecoming Sunday are often red, reminiscent of Pentecost and the movement of the Holy Spirit within and around and through us.

What’s not to love about Homecoming? Friends and family gathering near, Spirit red adorning us, singing of the complexity of being faithful followers of the Way of Jesus in our hymns...and this year, a re-dedication of an ADA-accessible chancel and an all-church photo as well!

Homecoming Sunday is not just a normal day in worship. It is a reminder that we are called to journey through life together—from birth to death, through dangers, toils and snares, we come together. Being church together is a sacred bond we share, and we do

not take that blessing for granted, and we do not take that call lightly.

Being church together doesn’t mean that we agree on everything, theological or political or otherwise. Being church together doesn’t mean that we are always perfect with our words and actions, and that we never cause one another harm. Being church together doesn’t mean that we run and hide when any conflict is in front of us or when we get confused or when we are hurting.

Being church together means that we feel a call to share our lives with one another as a reflection of the way God has shared life abundant with us. It means that we show up for one another, whether that is at a grandkid’s soccer game or a teenager’s musical or a choir concert or a funeral or with cards and phone calls. It means that we communicate through conflict because we love one another enough to empathize and seek reconciliation. It means that we work together to do justice and love mercy and walk humbly with the Holy, because we know that even though there’s a lot we can do alone, there’s far, far more that we can accomplish together.

So this Homecoming, let’s remind each other of this precious gift that we have been given: to journey with one another, sharing joys and sorrows, working together, listening and loving, receiving mercy and extending grace. What a blessing.

Come on home, beloveds. There’s a place at the table with your name on it.

I love you and I love being your pastor.

—*Rev. Anita*

## BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS IN WORSHIP ON SEPTEMBER 8

Seattle public schools resume on September 4. For Homecoming Worship on September 8, all children are invited to bring their backpacks to church to be blessed. Additionally, all adults are invited to bring any item to be blessed that they carry with them each day: keys, water bottle, computer, phone, backpack, briefcase, purse, etc. By blessing these items that we keep with us each day, we will collectively remember that God is with us through all things, each and every day.



## YOUTH GROUP RESUMES IN SEPTEMBER

All youth in grades 6-12 are welcome to participate. Youth Group will meet on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month from 1:00-2:30pm in the Youth Room. Lunch will be provided, games will be played, learning will be fun and meaningful, and life will be shared! September meeting dates are 9/8 and 9/22. Contact Pastor Anita with any questions.

## SAVE THE DATE WOMEN'S RETREAT 2024 AT RAINBOW LODGE OCTOBER 24-27, 2024

### Wearing God: Clothing Ourselves with the Holy

\$300 for single room

\$275 for double room

In the 2015 book *Wearing God*, author Lauren Winner explores lesser-known images and concepts of the di-

vine, 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 the concepts of God in Winner's book—and we will think and dream and share about how we come to know and be present with the divine. 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 about scholarships or any questions you may have.

## MOVIE NIGHT: WON'T YOU BE MY NEIGHBOR FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 13 6:00-8:00pm IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL



Bring a chair, a cozy blanket (or perhaps your best cardigan and inside shoes!) and get ready to watch the 2018 documentary "Won't You Be My Neighbor?" about Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood. Snacks and drinks provided. All ages welcome.

## SMALL GROUPS MINISTRY OPEN HOUSE

In celebration and recognition of the second anniversary of the Small Groups Ministry, there will be an open house in the Parlour during coffee hour on Sunday, September 22, 2024.

Are there small groups you have wanted to know more about? Have you found yourself wondering what small groups are offered? Have you maybe even thought about wanting to start a new small group, but aren't sure how to do so? If so, we hope you will explore the open house. The various groups will have tables set-up so folks can stop by, learn more, and connect with

group leaders and participants. While every group may not be present, there will also be a table with hand-outs for the groups that are unable to be there. We hope to see you there!



### SFBC AT THE SEATTLE STORM SEPTEMBER 15

Do you love basketball? Have you ever wanted to watch your pastor get way too invested in an athletic event? Could you take or leave sports but enjoy hot dogs and nachos? If your answer to any of these questions is “yes,” join Pastor Leigh at Climate Pledge Arena on September 15th at 3pm for the Seattle Storm vs. the Los Angeles Sparks! Tickets are limited and available on a sliding scale of \$25-\$35 each, payable to SFBC (scholarship assistance is available). Tickets are going fast! Sign-up today by contacting Pastor Leigh.

### BAPTISTS AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Join Pastor Leigh on Sundays September 22, September 29, and October 6 in the parlour as we discuss and learn more about religious freedom and the role Baptists played (and continue to play) in ensuring religious freedom for all people. We will discuss religious freedom from both historic and theological perspectives and even touch on the legal understanding. We will talk about how we can work together to ensure faith freedom for all people. We hope you will join us!

### SFBC CHOIR

The SFBC Sanctuary Choir is open to any and all singers and the choir curious! No audition and no attendance requirements. Come sing and join in the fun when you can!

September is a great time to join in the fun: reach out to Minister or Music, Ben Luedcke, or just come show up! Our first rehearsal is Wednesday, September 4th at 7pm in the sanctuary. We then will sing every Wednesday, and every Sunday at 10:15am for the rest of the church year. We look forward to Advent when the choir will be once again leading the carol sing-a-long as part of our annual “Celebration of Light and Joy.” Please email Ben at [ben@seattlefirstbaptist.org](mailto:ben@seattlefirstbaptist.org) with any questions. Come make a joyful noise!

THE ROMNEY LEGACY COMMITTEE PRESENTS

## BUILDING LASTING BRIDGES

WORKSHOP WITH REV. KATHRYN CHOY-WONG



Free Workshop

Saturday, September 28, 2024  
9am - 2pm

Seattle First Baptist Church  
1111 Harvard Ave | Seattle, WA

Continental breakfast and lunch provided



### ROMNEY EVENT BUILDING LASTING BRIDGES WORKSHOP WITH REV. KATHRYN CHOY-WONG

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28  
9:00am-2:00pm AT SFBC

The workshop is designed for laity and leaders who desire to embark on a journey toward having authentic relationships with others who are culturally different. The workshop will examine ourselves as ethnic/cultural beings, help us acquire a better understanding of culture, ethnocentrism and cultural bias, learn to appreciate differences as we culturally uplift each other, and begin to develop tools for this journey. The workshop is interactive and requires participants to fully engage to gain valuable insights, resources, and life changing practices.

Register for this free workshop here: <https://forms.office.com/r/RqGSe7u7Aw>

Rev. Kathryn Choy-Wong will also be our guest preacher on Sunday, September 29.

### BUILDING LASTING BRIDGES THIS FALL

The work of Building Lasting Bridges is to connect as bridges do. In this small group we'll connect with ourselves and others through the lens of culture. "Lasting" refers to growing and learning as we build toward becoming a Beloved Community, sharing our experiences and learning how to engage meaningfully across different cultures.

We live in a changing multicultural community. How do we accept the changes and understand our cultures and experiences? This group is designed to provide 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 build these lasting bridges and beloved community.

The book *Building Lasting Bridges* and accompanying workbook exercises will guide us. However, this is an adventure in exploring cultures, not a book study. In February we'll dig into 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. If this small group idea sounds interesting, let's hear from you.

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.

Books: *Building Lasting Bridges* books will be on sale for \$20 (payable by check or credit card) in the Fellowship Hall on September 22 and 29. 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.)

Participants are asked to read the Introduction and first chapter before the first class on October 22.



CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF



*Janet Newell*

July 27, 1937 - June 8, 2024

Please join us to honor the life of Janet. Livestream and Zoom will be available. We will have light bites and refreshments afterwards.

September 14th, 2024 at 2 PM  
Seattle First Baptist Church  
11111 Harvard Ave, Seattle, WA 98122

## SAVE THE DATE ART HEALING WORKSHOP SEPTEMBER 15

Akiva Segan will facilitate an [art therapy oriented hands-on workshop](#) suitable for all ages of audiences. The youngest participants have been ages 4 and 5; the oldest in their 90's.

It is not a studio art learning class. It is a workshop to allow participants a safe environment to express responses to challenging subjects like the Holocaust as well as the losses everyone experiences, e.g. friends, family, classmates, colleagues, neighbors, etc.

Akiva's Drawing-for-Healing workshop grew out of a spoken word, group poetry writing for healing workshop he attended, facilitated by Leah Thorn of England, at the Second Int'l Conference on the Holocaust & Education, Int'l School for Holocaust Education, Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, 1999.

Masks will be required at this event.

## GOING CAR-FREE ON SEPTEMBER 22



Interfaith Climate Action members invite SFBC members, friends, and visitors to travel to church car-free and sustainably on Sunday, September 22. ICA's invitation is linked to the 24th Annual Global Car-Free Day.

Every Sunday before September 22 look for a map of greater Seattle either in the narthex or on a table downstairs during coffee hour. ICA members will be staffing the map and will help you flag your home location on it. The purpose of the map is to help you connect with people who live near you so you can find public transportation options together. And if going car-free isn't possible, carpooling to church is a significant step in reducing the number of vehicles on the road.

*Note:* If you can't get to church before September 22 to add the location of your home to the map, please email your location to

[smallgroups@seattlefirstbaptist.org](mailto:smallgroups@seattlefirstbaptist.org) and ask that you

be added. Please add your location to the map even if you can't come to church on September 22. That way, people can connect with you to travel (walk, bike, scooter, bus, train, or carpool) to church on other Sundays and special-event days.

World Car-Free Day is celebrated annually to encourage people to drive motor vehicles as little as possible, beginning by giving up driving for just one day. It is also to increase awareness of the negative impacts of vehicle emissions, which harm our health and contain greenhouse gases that cause climate change.

ICA members hope you will enjoy connecting with other SFBC folks to travel to church together. Traveling together sustainably may feel so good that you keep it up after Global Car-Free Sunday.

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### INTERFAITH CLIMATE ACTION INVITES YOU

Members of our Interfaith Climate Action group encourage you to mark your calendar with many climate-themed happenings this fall. They look forward to welcoming you to these events:

- Sunday, September 22: Take part in Global Car-Free Day by traveling to church car-free or by carpooling sustainably. Then at 6:30pm join ICA's monthly meeting on Zoom and get to know some regular attendees: Linda Zaugg, Keith and Cindy Ervin, Elizabeth Burton, Sarah Merner, Sandra Jones, Donna Ward, LindaAlima McCoy, Carol Cornell, and group leader Lynn Gaertner-Johnston.
- Two Sundays (TBD) in late September and early October: Join ICA members after worship to write "Vote NO on Initiative 2117" postcards. ICA members will provide postcards, stamps, instructions, and pens. Bring your enthusiasm for protecting our air and water. *Note:* Please watch for more information on the Vote NO campaign in the next *Spire*.
- Sunday, October 6, at Jazz Vespers: Thrill to "For the Birds," a brand-new climate-themed composition by Nelda Swiggert.
- 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.

A few copies will be for sale in the Fellowship Hall in late September, but feel free to get a copy on your own at your library or favorite bookstore.

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### PLAY READERS CIRCLE



You enjoy stage plays? You've wondered about being in one? Join SFBC's Play Reading Circle! Once a month, on first Saturdays, we gather on-line to read from scripts that the church has found for interested folks.

The church calendar shows the scheduled time and a link to join. On September 7, the circle will read the second half of Lynn Nottage's *Intimate Apparel*, a remarkable creation based on a real story...

*It's 1905, New York City. Esther, a black seamstress, sews intimate apparel for clients who range from wealthy white patrons to black prostitutes. They come with secrets and romances that she can only imagine. Her skills and discretion are much in demand, and she has managed to stuff a good sum of money into her quilt over the years. One day, she begins to receive beautiful letters from a lonesome Caribbean man who is working on the Panama Canal. He woos her through the mail, and persuades her to marry him, sight unseen. When he arrives in New York City, will he be the person he claims to be, or someone else? How will Esther forge her life?*

This next time the Play Reading Circle will gather an hour earlier than usual – from 2:00 to 4:00pm.

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### CONSIDER CONTEMPLATION THIS FALL

*"All will be well and all will be well and every kind of thing shall be well."*

How can anybody make a statement such as this one in a world as crazy and chaotic as ours? These words of faith are attributed to Julian of Norwich, a woman who lived from 1343 to about 1416. She lived in Norwich, England during a time of plague, continuous war, religious fanaticism, and social unrest. Sound familiar?

Julian is considered to be one of the greatest Christian mystics. Mystics are people who encounter the Divine through direct experience rather than through religious practice. Silence and contemplation or meditation feature significantly in lives such as hers.

In our Exploring Contemplation Small Group we attempt to learn what it means to live like Julian and other mystics. We use music, readings, guided meditations, and silence to encounter the divine in our own lives. Beginning on September 20, our group will meet

on Zoom at 11:00am on the first and third Fridays of each month. This is a new day of the week and time for us.

Everyone is welcome in our group, whether you have been meditating for years or have never even tried it. Together we will explore that world of silence shared by Julian and mystics from many cultures and traditions. We will take a break from Doing to simply Be, in a place and time where every kind of thing shall be well.

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## INTERGENERATIONAL BAKING GROUP



Every ingredient is important in baking, just like everyone is important in the community. Together we become greater than our parts. We welcome families, young of age and young at heart. All are welcome to bake cookies in the Fellowship Hall kitchen on Saturdays every quarter. We want to welcome anyone interested in baking. No experience is necessary. We bake

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## INTERGENERATIONAL CREATION STATION

Join Sarah Cooper and Joanne Wright at an Intergenerational Creation Station on Sunday Sept. 29 from 12:30–3:00pm in the SFBC Parlour. We will have loads of fun creating a project together using collage, drawing, color, and 3-D materials. We will work together or individually to make individual pieces that will be assembled into a communal piece of art. Please bring your own lunch! (Some snacks will be provided.) Wear clothing that can get messy!

## INTRODUCING OUR NEW LOGO



### FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Over the past few months, a small task force has been working with a media consultant to create a new website and branding package for the church. This task force is made up of Sue Ross, David Young, Aaron Burkhalter, Christian Broughton, and the pastors. We have worked closely with Christen Kinard of Digital Congregations. Christen brings years of expertise in communications and design specifically with churches. Christen has been a delight to work with and has really gotten to the heart of who we are as a church working diligently to help us authentically tell our story. While the new website is not yet ready to launch (but will be soon!), we are excited to debut our new church logo and colors. You will see this change over with Homecoming edition of The Spire. Our new logo is a modern take on the beloved quatrefoil. We are all beloved children of God made in God's image. Our new logo symbolizes this diversity and the interconnectedness of all of us as children of God. We love the new logo and all it represents, and hope you will too.

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## SMALL GROUPS MINISTRY SCHEDULE FOR FALL



### 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, spiritual support and a focus on missions.

**Women's Group** 4th Sundays, 12:30-2:00pm in the Peacemaker's Room. Intergenerational fellowship for women, trans women, and those who identify as gender queer or non-binary.

## **TUESDAYS**

**Parents of Adult Children with Mental Illness** 2nd Tuesdays, 7:00-8:30pm. 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. For more information, please call Dick Miller at (206) 330-1305.

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

**Young Adults Group** (Ages 21-40ish) 4th Tuesdays. We're thrilled to welcome you to our Young Adults group! While we took a summer break, we're excited to start back this September. Our group 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). This year, we have some exciting plans, including volunteer opportunities, house parties, and even a road trip or two. For the latest details, check the church calendar or the weekly newsletter. We can't wait to see you and share in the joy of community together!

**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*. Books will be on sale for \$20 (payable by check or credit card) in the Fellowship Hall on September 22 and 29. 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.) Participants are asked to read the introduction and first chapter before the first class on October 22.

## **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 evening (once a month, generally on the 2nd Wednesday) 5:30-6:30pm (pre-choir rehearsal). The group is open to the choir-curious and anyone else as well.

Stoup Brewery is just east of the church on the corner of Broadway and Union. Both alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages are available for purchase. They do not serve food, but you are welcome to bring your own meal or snacks to share. Put it in your calendar!

## **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, 11:00 am-12:00pm, beginning September 20. 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 on Zoom (<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81095038488?pwd=RIpydDZ0cERLVFhtcEFPSWMzSIQzUT09>). Where SFBC men come together to get better acquainted and support one another.

**Play Reading Circle** 1st Saturdays, starting September 7, 2:00-4:00 Meets online at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85424372570>. Gather with other theater-lovers to read plays together. Obtain scripts in advance from 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.

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

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