

THE SPIRE LENT 2024



THE NEWSLETTER OF SEATTLE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH VOLUME 88, NO. 1

Dear Church Family,

A few years ago, I took a pottery class. I love ceramics and have always been fascinated by the intensity of the process—the earth becoming clay, the clay being formed into beautiful and useful items, the leatherhard clay entering the kiln and fired to well over 1000 degrees then coming out white-hot! It’s amazing!

However, my class didn’t go how I thought it would. I enjoyed it, definitely, but I found that as I worked the clay and practiced slab-building and throwing on the wheel, manipulating the clay was a lot harder than I anticipated. I got tired, mentally and physically. Instead of being a joyful creative expression, it became a slog three times a week. About halfway through the class season, I decided I was done.

See, I wasn’t “a quitter.” From school to dance classes to tough relationships, I took pride in muscling through, in “making it,” in being praised for being “resilient.” But that’s not always a good thing. Sometimes, letting go is important. Sometimes, letting go is healthy. Sometimes, letting go is what is right.

The season of Lent can be understood as a time of letting go. People do this in all sorts of ways: there are many Lenten practices that challenge people to give up certain foods, swearing, gossiping, alcohol or sweets. Lenten practices can also encourage letting go of negative self-talk, of the desire for power, or of the busyness that threatens to overwhelm you.

I now wonder how my self-talk would have been different if I had reframed my “quitting” my pottery class into “embracing letting go.” I now try to see that experience not as a failure but as an important lesson in leaving behind what is life-limiting so we can pursue what is life-giving. Thinking about “embracing letting

go” feels different in my heart, because there is a sense of welcoming what comes, holding it lightly, and then embracing the release.

This year at SFBC, we approach Lent as Embrace. There is so much heartbreak and loss and grief in our world right now, instead of letting go we are choosing to lean in and embrace: embrace humanity, embrace discomfort, embrace faithfulness, embrace imperfection, embrace abundance. Throughout the Lenten season, we will practice embrace, knowing that folks within this church community are right there with us. When one cannot embrace imperfection, another will embrace it for them. We hold each other as a reminder of how God holds us: in prayer, in love, in trust, in compassionate arms.

Throughout Lent, I encourage you to embrace the power of music and explore the Spotify playlist Pastor Leigh compiled. Music has the special capacity to transcend our daily-ness and speak directly to our humanity, so follow along through the season, listening for the lyrics highlighted on SFBC’s social media.

Dear church, may you embrace what is needed during this Lenten season.

I love you, and I love being your pastor.

—*Rev. Anita*

Ash Wednesday

On Ash Wednesday, we embrace our humanity and our mortality. We remember that God created human beings from the dust of the ground, and one day, we will return to dust. It may not seem like the most festive way to spend your Valentine's Day, but what better way to remember God's love for us? In life and in death, we belong to God. There is nothing we can do and nowhere we can go, even unto death, where God is not right there loving us. We hope you will join us on Wednesday, February 14th at 6pm in the Chapel for a service of liturgy and imposition of ashes.

Good Friday

On Good Friday, we sit in the reality of death. We resist the urge to skip ahead to Sunday morning, and instead sit with the uncomfortable reality of the cross. We are met with the full impact of what might happen when we truly follow the way of Jesus. Jesus has been killed, the tomb has been shut, and we must wait in the unknown. We hope you will join us on Friday, March 29th at 7pm in the Sanctuary for our Good Friday service.

Lenten Bible Study

There are all sorts of different psalms—praise, wisdom, lament, confession, thanksgiving—just to name a few. The psalms can help us make meaning of things. They can help us to pray. They can help us to be still. They can give us words to cry out to God when we may not have many words. They can help us give thanks and praise to God. They can bring comfort in some of life's most difficult moments. Join Pastors Anita and Leigh in the Parlor from 9:30-10:30am for an exploration of the psalms each Sunday during Lent (February 18th-March 24th).



Movie Night for All: Disney Pixar's Turning Red Friday, February 16 at 6pm in the Fellowship Hall

Bring your camp chair, a cozy blanket and a friend to watch a movie! Snacks will be provided. View the movie trailer here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XdKzUbAiswE>

To volunteer to help host, contact Pastor Anita.

Youth Group

Youth Group for youth in grades 6-12 happens 6:30-8pm in the Youth Room on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month.

Upcoming dates are: 2/14, 2/28, 3/13, 3/27

Contact Pastor Anita or Brooke Rolston for more information.



Save the Date!

**Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America
~Bautistas por la Paz's 40th anniversary
Peace Camp**

July 15-20 in Mars Hill, NC

Register here: <https://interland3.donorperfect.net/webLink/WebLink.aspx?id=6&name=E350288>

Contact Pastor Anita with questions.



Save the dates for Camp Burton summer camps!

<https://www.campburton.net/>

Elementary/Middle School Camp July 21-26

High School Camp (backpacking!) August 3-10

Family Camp August 4-10

Coffee and Conversation with the Pastors

Join Pastors Leigh and Anita the first Sunday of each month in the parlor from 12:30-1pm during coffee hour for Coffee and Conversation! There will be a different topic of conversation each month. We hope you will join the conversation!



Ashes for Valentines

~ mourning death and celebrating love ~

Ash Wednesday 2024 falls on Valentine's Day. It only happens six times in this century! The first was in 1923, then in 1934, 1945, and 2018. It will happen

once more in 2029.

On February 14, 2024, we may be wearing ashes on our foreheads while we buy flowers and candy for loved ones. The stark mix of mourning death and celebrating love is something queer folks and allies know intimately and walk with daily.

Recognizing this paradoxical reality, AWAB is launching an “Ashes for Valentines” fund. AWAB would like to commemorate those who we mourn because of the loss of their life as LGBTQ+ folks and/or celebrate those who have endured.

You may donate:

- in memory of someone whose ashes came too soon because of a lack of acceptance and affirmation of who they are and/or
- in honor of someone who has shaken the dust off their feet from those who do not celebrate their sacredness.

We pray these gifts allow for healing and peace to the giver and strength and renewal to our AWAB family.

Give to Ashes for Valentines

When you give to “Ashes for Valentines,” AWAB will use the funds specifically to:

- Provide resources for LGBTQ+ leaders and church members related to Church trauma, reconciliation, healing, wellness, and positive mental health,
- Offer support to families and individuals experiencing difficulties reconciling their sexual orientation and gender identity, and
- Share stories from individuals and congregations about how they have navigated their Welcoming and Affirming journey.

Following the campaign, AWAB will include these gifts in their annual report with their donors and member congregations and on their website. Ultimately, this is a way to proclaim God’s love for all proudly.

While we’ve made much progress this century since the first Valentine’s Ash Wednesday in 1923, what do we hope will be accomplished by 2029 when it comes around again? AWAB believes a fully Welcoming and Affirming world is necessary — and possible. May this fund help AWAB work with congregations, ministers, and leaders to know they do not do this work alone.

Donate to AWAB here: awab.org/support/ashes-for-valentines/

Lent Playlist

In Lent, we often embrace new spiritual practices. A spiritual practice can be anything—reading the Bible, meditation, baking bread, daily walks, prayer, and listening to music. Like we did in Advent, we have curated a playlist to accompany the Lenten season. There is a song for every day of Lent (including Sundays). Our hope is that this playlist will be a gift to you in this season. We hope that it will offer moments of meditation, stillness, hope, joy, challenge, and peace. Each day of Lent we will share a specific song from the playlist on social media with lyrics to reflect on throughout the day. Some songs will be particular to the day. Some songs may relate to the scripture for the previous Sunday. Some songs will reflect on our theme of “Embrace.” We hope that these daily songs and lyrics will offer moments of meditation and connection with the Holy One throughout the Lenten season.

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/5SzZ3uR84zwutUsWuoGTLc?si=61e1935f92e146bf>

2/14 “Beautiful Things” —Gungor

2/15 “Dust in the Wind” —Kansas

2/16 “Let the Mystery Be” —Iris DeMent

2/17 “Atlantic City” —Bruce Springsteen

2/18 “River” —Leon Bridges

2/19 “Death with Dignity” —Sufjan Stevens

2/20 “Come on In” —Lady Wray

2/21 “Rainbow” —Kacey Musgraves

2/22 “Let it Be” —The Beatles

2/23 “The Waiting” —Tom Petty

2/24 “Hello My Old Heart” —The Oh Hellos

2/25 “Awake my Soul” —Mumford and Sons

2/26 “Where do We Go” —Solange Knowles

2/27 “Study War No More” —Pete Seeger

2/28 “The Returner” —Allison Russell

2/29 “God is God” —Steve Earle

3/1 “Wideness” —ubc music

3/2 “Blowin’ in the Wind” —Bob Dylan

3/3 “Heavy” —Birdtalker

3/4 “Give a Little Love” —The Freedom Affair

3/5 “Astrovan” —Mt. Joy

3/6 “Graceland” —Justin Townes Earle

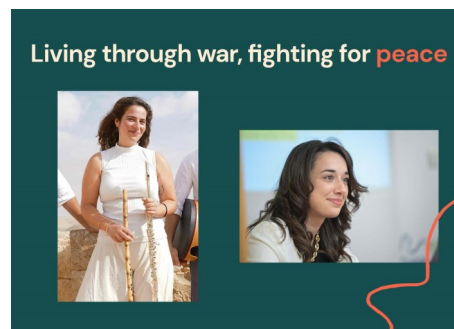
- 3/7 “Everybody” —John Prine
 3/8 “Ends of the Earth” —Lord Huron
 3/9 “Most of All” —Brandi Carlile
 3/10 “All Around You” —Sturgill Simpson
 3/11 “Look Up” —Joy Oladokun
 3/12 “Ripple” —The Grateful Dead
 3/13 “Deep Peace” —Elaine Hagenberg
 3/14 “Light of a Clear Blue Morning”
 —The Wailin’ Jennys
 3/15 “Shake it Out” —Florence and the Machine
 3/16 “The Wind” —Cat Stevens
 3/17 “A Prayer of St. Patrick” —John Rutter
 3/18 “Midnight in Harlem” —Tedeschi Trucks Band
 3/19 “Murder in the City” —The Avett Brothers
 3/20 “There’s a World” —Sufjan Stevens
 3/21 “Changes” —Joy Oladokun
 3/22 “The Maker” —Dave Matthews Band
 3/23 “Shower the People” —James Taylor
 3/24 “The Troublemaker” —Willie Nelson
 3/25 “Talkin’ Bout a Revolution” —Tracy Chapman
 3/26 “What Wondrous Love is This”
 —Josh Garrels, Mason Jar Music
 3/27 “10,000 Miles” —Mary Chapin Carpenter
 3/28 “This Time Tomorrow” —Brandi Carlile
 3/29 “Jesus Boogie” —Sturgill Simpson
 3/30 “Satellite” —Maggie Rogers

Update on the Washington Green Amendment from Lynn Gaertner-Johnston

The WA Green Amendment, which SFBC has endorsed, was not voted out of the Environment and Energy committee, so the Washington State legislature will not consider it during this short legislative session. Nevertheless, according to David Kipnis of the WA Green Amendment Strategic Planning Team, committee members are now “aware that there is significant and growing momentum for a Green Amendment in WA state.” There were 731 “Pro” sign-ins to support HJR 4210, including many from SFBC members and friends—more than double the support since the committee considered the amendment in 2022.

The purpose of the Green Amendment is to guarantee

“a constitutional right to pure water, clean air, a stable climate and healthy environments, for all people, including future generations, regardless of race, ethnicity, or socioeconomics.” You can learn more on the WA Green Amendment website: <https://wagreenamendment.org/>



Save the Date The Romney Committee presents Tomorrow’s Women Sunday, March 10

The Romney Legacy Fund is sponsoring this important event on Sunday, March 10. Everyone is invited and welcomed to attend worship that day, followed by lunch and a Q&A session that afternoon. Want to help out with this event? Volunteers are needed and welcomed. Please email Margaret Norton-Arnold at Margaretna456@outlook.com to offer your time and service. Not sure what will be needed yet, but possibilities include greeters, seaters, and assistance with lunch. Thank you in advance!

The biggest story of the moment comes alive and gets personal at Seattle First Baptist Church

October 8th.

The world was still reeling from the shock and horror of the previous day’s Hamas attack on Israel, and the unsettling feeling foreshadowing what was sure to come next.

On October 8th, 23-year-old **Israeli musician Noga Bar Oz** was scheduled to conduct the first rehearsal of the season for an Arab-Israeli youth orchestra. Practice was canceled. It hasn’t yet been rescheduled.

Elsewhere in Jerusalem on October 8th, 24-year-old **Palestinian journalist Lana Ikelan** wrote a story about journalists on the frontline, describing the escalating events between Israel and Gaza. She’s covered the war every day since.

Noga and Lana live only miles apart, but their lives as Jewish and Palestinian women are worlds apart. Yet, they share something very sacred, a transformational

experience that binds them deep in their cores. Noga and Lana first met eight years ago while bunking together at a peace and leadership-building camp tucked in the gorgeous mountains of Santa Fe, New Mexico run by the 20-year-old non-profit, Tomorrow's Women. Now, the old roommates are reuniting, leaving their war-torn and deeply divided home, to travel together to Seattle to share messages of hope and their unwavering devotion to peace.

Tomorrow's Women empowers young Palestinian and Israeli women to create change in areas of conflict by galvanizing them to build understanding, gain confidence, and become leaders. As teenagers, Noga and Lana joined the organization's Young Leader Program, which begins with a three-week intensive camp in New Mexico. Brought together for the first time outside of the conflict, the young women engage in facilitated dialogue sessions and creative training workshops. They learn the strength of their voices, how to listen compassionately, and build an understanding of their peers from the "other side." As feelings of hate and fear shift to empathy and respect, this personal and emotional growth lays the foundation for Young Leaders to return home, emboldened to create lasting impact and change in their communities.

At home, with a shared commitment to their partnership and peace, they deepen their leadership skills together through workshops, trainings, conflict resolution seminars, and by launching social justice projects.

Every year, select alumnae join the Young Leader Tour in the US to share personal stories of growing up in conflict and violence and their journeys to becoming peacemakers. This year's tour offers the **extraordinary opportunity to hear firsthand what's happening on the ground right now in the region.** With the current war and growing divisions, it is more important than ever to hear messages of hope and strength from women who imagine, and work toward, a better future, together.

Tomorrow's Women's leadership and the young peacemakers are thrilled to join the Seattle First Baptist Church community for an enriching event. Their presentation and visit aim to inform, inspire, and empower those joining to be part of the change for justice, peace, and equality for all.



**Seattle Jazz Vespers presents
Eugenie Jones Quartet
March 3, 2024 at 6pm**



A returning Seattle Jazz Vesper favorite, Singer/Songwriter Eugenie Jones is an exceptional vocalist and cleverly gifted lyricist who has released highly-praised, primarily original, vocal projects.

Her current release—*Players*—was a Best Jazz Vocal Album Grammy® contender and internationally ranked #7 on Jazz Week's top 50 charts. Jones is additionally an Earshot Jazz Vocalist of the Year award recipient and the first vocal recording artist to receive Earshot's Recording of the Year Golden Ear award.

A warm, engaging entertainer, she's described by critics as an artist that "can make you feel jazz," and she and her recordings have received favorable coverage in every major jazz publication, including DownBeat, JazzTimes, JazzIz, The Gazette/NY, and many others. Described as a "deft vocalist," Jones has also proven to be a skillful songwriter, releasing 29 originals on her recordings.

In addition to being a singer/songwriter/recording-performing artist, Jones is actively engaged in her community. She serves as the founding Board President of the Music Discover Center, a nonprofit that provides disadvantaged youth access to music instruction. For the last four years, she has also served as the Executive Producer of the Jackson Street Jazz Walk. This annual block-party community event commemorates Seattle's historic African American music history and artists, such as Quincy Jones and Ray Charles, while raising funds for local nonprofits that feed the hungry and serve the needs of seniors.

**Outreach Homelessness Work Party
Saturday, March 9**

Let's save some lives and make sure our siblings without housing or in foster care or shelters feel seen.

We'll be partnering with our long-time friends at the Window of Kindness and Aurora Commons and with new friends at Mary's Place and Treehouse for Kids

You can volunteer to:

1) bake treats (we need about 30 dozen cookies or

brownies by March 9; treats baked any time can be frozen—including those from the intergenerational baking group if you prefer to bake in community instead of solo—watch your This Week email for a date.

2) shop at a thrift store (we need just 4 shoppers to find warm clothes for adults and children...using church money...between now and March 9)

3) donate from home or purchase:

- \$15-20 gift cards to QFC or Fred Meyer,
- flashlights, batteries
- hand warmers
- blankets or comforters (twin or full) and pillows, new or gently used
- sleeping bags and other camping gear
- back packs and daypacks
- **clothes—Winter or Spring things:** all genders, infants', kids', teens' and adults' clothes, including jeans & sweats, t-shirts, hoodies, new bras/underwear, raincoats, etc.
- toys and gifts for children and teens (from Legos to basketballs, ride-on toys to young teen jewelry to headphones, skateboards to bikes)
- disposable diapers and maternity clothes
- hygiene & first aid supplies
- luggage (so foster kids don't see their belongings in plastic bags EVER)

4) join in the happy organized chaos on March 9th (we need some folks to sit and fold clothes, put stickers on gear, etc. AND some to lift and carry gear and clothing)

5) deliver clothes, treats and gear to a partner organization (we need 4 delivery drivers March 9-13)

If you can do any of these, contact Outreach@seattlefirstbaptist.org or stop by the Welcome Table during coffee hour any Sunday in February to sign up or to drop a donation.

Organizing Meeting for a New Women's Group



Women's Mission Society 1921

At the request of a number of people, the Small Groups Ministry is starting a new Women's Group - hoping to find a time that will allow for good intergenerational fellowship. Think Women's Retreat-Mini. Women of all ages are cordially invited to come together on Sunday February 25th from 12:30-1:30pm in Peacemaker's Room (1st floor of the church, past the office) or on Zoom to discuss what this group might entail, what it should be called, and when it should happen. Please come make your voice heard (if you have input but cannot attend, email your thoughts to smallgroups@seattlefirstbaptist.org).

Fancy hats, brooches and pearls, like in the photo above, are optional. But bring a snack or bag lunch if you are likely to be hungry.

Women's Group Organizing Conversation
Sunday, February 25th 12:30-1:30pm
In Peacemakers Room and on Zoom
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86065659153>

Save the Revised Date!
Intergenerational Baking Group
Saturday, March 2nd 10am-2pm
Fellowship Hall & Church Kitchen

Children, youth & adults* — Come bake cookies for distribution to organizations serving our unhoused neighbors!

Fellowship, Fun, Service

*Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult; anyone under 18 must have a signed permission form from parent or guardian unless that adult is present.

To obtain form, email smallgroups@seattlefirstbaptist.org

Living through war, fighting for peace

Friday, March 8 7:30 - 9 pm
Town Hall Seattle
 1119 8th Avenue (at Seneca Street)

On International Women's Day...

a rare opportunity to hear from young women activists traveling from Israel & Palestine

Noga Bar Oz
 Arab/Jewish youth orchestra conductor



Lana Ikelan
 Journalist



Tomorrow's Women empowers and trains young women to become compassionate leaders for change and justice.





Small Groups Ministry Schedule for Lent

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. The schedule below is accurate to the best of our knowledge at the time of publication.

Sunday Mornings

Lenten Bible Study with the Pastors February 18-March 24 9:30-10:30 each Sunday in the Parlor.

Sunday Afternoons

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

New Women's Organizing Conversation February 25th 12:30-1:30 in Peacemakers and on Zoom - one time only (*See separate article*) <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86065659153>

Friendship Circle 2nd Sunday of most months (no meeting in February; March 10th) from 12:45-2 pm in Peacemakers 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 (March 10th) 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 (February 25th & March 24th) 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>

Mondays

Brave Space 1st & 3rd Mondays of each month (February 19th, March 4th & 19th), 6-7pm on Zoom (*For white-identified persons who wish to continue their learning about racism, the systems that support it, and skills for addressing it*) <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81180960514>

Tuesdays

Prayer Group Weekly on Tuesdays 12-12:30pm on Zoom. (*A brief time for reflection, prayer and sacred communi-*

ty in the middle of the day) <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86776242649>

Parents of Adult Children Living with Mental Illness 3rd Tuesday of each month (February 20th & March 19th) 7-8:30pm in the home of a member. For further details or to obtain the address for the meeting, email smallgroups@seattlefirstbaptist.org or call the church office (206-325-6051)

Wednesdays

Optimism Hour 2nd Wednesday of each month (March 13th; no meeting on February 14th) 5:30-6:30pm at Stoup Brewing on the corner of Broadway and Union just east of the church. (*A time for fun and socializing at a nearby bar 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.*)

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 (March 2nd) 10am-2pm in Fellowship Hall & the church Kitchen. (*Come to bake cookies for church events & 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)

Play Reading Circle 1st Saturday of the month (March 2nd) 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*) <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85424372570>

Groups with an Irregular Schedule

Young Adults Group (*A group where SFBC young adults ages 21-40 meet to connect with one another and have fun*) Sunday, February 25th after church—lunch followed by candle making at Noir Lux Candle Bar in Belltown. Please contact Pastor Anita to reserve your spot. For more info email smallgroups@seattlefirstbaptist.org or monitor the *This Week* Thursday e-newsletter for up-to-date information.

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Sunday service at 11am in-person and online

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