



THE SPIRE

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS 2024



THE NEWSLETTER OF SEATTLE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH VOLUME 88, NO. 7

Greetings, beloved church, as we enter the season of Advent and celebrate the beginning of a new church year.

This year's advent theme is "Words for the Beginning." Life is filled with beginnings: babies being born, naming ceremonies, fresh starts, creativity and new friends and neighbors to meet and build community with. And life is also filled with endings: deaths of loved ones, giving up independence, eras coming to a close, the sunseting of programs and ministries that have served their purpose. And sometimes, as the Godly Play story teaches us, the beginnings are like endings and the endings are like beginnings.

We are in a time where beginnings feel like endings. Watching the election returns on that Tuesday evening, I felt so deeply that it was as if I was numb. The storm clouds loomed, heralding the end of reproductive rights, of humane immigration policy, of integrity in the highest offices, of environmental protection for our common home the Earth.

But I also hope the end of the current presidency can also be the beginning of community-building with renewed vigor. Filled with the knowledge that we need each other to survive, we can make it through if we build and strengthen circles of trust, love, accountability and justice. As Pastor Leigh said in her impassioned sermon on November 10, "Even though Empire would rather we think we have to go it alone, we will not. Jesus is there with us holding out his hand to us, reminding us that before we are anything else in this world, we belong to him. We are his followers, his disciples, and that is our primary identity. Our primary identity is not as citizens or residents of the United States of America, but our primary identity is in Christ alone, as beloved, uniquely made in the image of God,

children of God. The work we have to do we will do hand in hand with Jesus and with each other."

So hear the words that will guide us through our advent journey in this church family, these words for the beginning of whatever comes next: You are beloved. We can't, and won't, go alone. Do the good that is yours to do. Hope is worth the risk. Love knows your name. May these words enfold you, embolden you, comfort you, guide you, galvanize you, and hold you.

There are several ways to journey through Advent with this church family. An Advent word-a-day calendar will be available to you prior to the start of advent, and you can choose to engage it in multiple ways: meditation on the word, using the word, or taking a photo of something that reminds you of the word. There will also be an Advent devotional booklet that you can pick up that has a reflection and prayer for each day during the season. Pastor Leigh is compiling another of her famous playlists that offer songs from many genres to match the season's themes. Each Sunday morning during advent, I will be facilitating a Godly Play space in the Parlor, where you can experience these stories that we hear every year in a new, wondrous, enlivened way. All ages are welcome. And you also can participate in a collaborative art project led by Kris Garratt, where we will make stars that will adorn the sanctuary for Epiphany—we will be making these paper stars all throughout Advent in the Parlor. Stop by any Sunday after worship to help create a star!

Beloved church, may these words for the beginning carry us through this season and whatever may come with grace, resilient hope, and fierce joy as we are in communion with one another and with the Holy.

I love you, and I love being your pastor.

—*Pastor Anita*



**ADVENT GODLY PLAY
SUNDAYS, DECEMBER 1, 8, 15, 22
9:30AM IN THE PARLOR**

Godly Play is a style of storytelling based on Montessori-method. Using simple language and inviting wondering, together we explore Bible stories, what they mean to us, and how they help us live our faith in this world.

We will gather for fellowship, storytelling, creativity and celebration of this important season in the life of our church. All ages are welcome to join!

LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE

The holiday season can be a time when grief feels particularly heavy. We feel the loss of ones we love a bit deeper. We hope you will join us in the chapel on Thursday, December 19th at 6:30pm for a service or prayer, hymns, Scripture, and reflection. We will gather to hold the grief together and to remember that even on the longest night of the year God is with us.

YOUTH GROUP DATES

December 8: Youth Group will participate in the Celebration of Light & Joy together
December 22: Youth Group

ADVENT PLAYLIST

As you read in Pastor Anita’s letter, our Advent theme this year is “Words for the Beginning.” Advent is the beginning of the church calendar for the year. It is the season where we wait in anticipation for the birth of Jesus. There are many beginnings in our lives—new relationships, new babies, new jobs, new homes, new cities, new schools—the list is endless. Sometimes a beginning is exciting, and other times a beginning is scary. Other times something ends, and you have to pick up the pieces and begin again. We hope this playlist will be a welcome soundtrack in this season of beginning.

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/4nT3IM0rSQjhwLvvgtuK6j?si=4f96e0784c1449a9>



**COME HELP US FINISH
OUR EPIPHANY STARS**

A project is underway to complete a cluster of large paper stars to be hung in the sanctuary for the season of Epiphany. We could use your help to complete the design at the center section of each star. The project involves cutting out and gluing a simple paper quilt pattern. We will meet for several Sundays after worship in the parlor beginning December 8th. Need more information? Please contact Kris Garratt, garrattarts@gmail.com.



ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS AT SFBC

Sunday, December 1 **Church Christmas Decorating** after worship

Sunday, December 8 **Celebration of Light and Joy** 12pm in the Fellowship Hall and Sanctuary

Thursday, December 19 **Longest Night Service** 6:30pm in Hintz Chapel

Tuesday, December 24 **Christmas Eve Candlelight Service** 5pm in the Sanctuary

Sunday, December 29 **Lessons and Carols** 11am in the Sanctuary



**CELEBRATION OF LIGHT AND JOY
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8, 12:00–2:00PM**

All are welcome to Seattle First Baptist Church for our 5th Annual Celebration of Light and Joy! We welcome our members, friends and neighborhood to join us on Sunday, December 8 at noon for a Lunch with Santa followed by a Christmas Carol-Sing with choir and brass in our beautifully decorated sanctuary! Children and youth are especially welcome to take a photo with Santa and share in the joy of the season!

SEATTLE FIRST BAPTIST'S 5TH ANNUAL

Celebration of Light and Joy

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2024

12:00–2:00PM

LUNCH WITH SANTA CLAUS

**CHRISTMAS CAROL SING-ALONG
WITH CHOIR AND BRASS**

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC



SEATTLE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
1111 HARVARD AVENUE
SEATTLE, WA
seattlefirstbaptist.org



**ADVOCACY 101 WORKSHOP
SUNDAY, JANUARY 5
1:00-2:00PM IN THE PARLOR**

An important aspect of justice work is advocacy—calling our elected officials, letter-writing, offering public comment at city council meetings, and more. If you’ve never done it before (or even if you have), it can feel overwhelming. With that in mind, we hope you will join us after worship on Sunday, January 5th for an Advocacy 101 workshop with Elizabeth Dickinson from Faith Action Network! Lunch will be provided. Please RSVP to Pastor Leigh (including any dietary restrictions) if you would like to attend.

**HOW TO END CHRISTIAN
NATIONALISM SMALL GROUP**

Sundays, February 9, 16, 23, and March 2 and 9
9:30-10:30am in the Parlor

Christian Nationalism is an ever-growing threat in the United States. It is insidious and is being used to strip people of their basic human rights and dignity. As followers of Jesus our faith demands that we work to dismantle Christian Nationalism in all its forms. As Baptists, we are committed to defending religious liberty for all people. But, how do we do it? Join Pastor Leigh for 5 Sundays in February and March to read and discuss the book *How to End Christian Nationalism* by Amanda Tyler. Amanda is the executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty and the lead organizer for the Christians Against Christian Nationalism Campaign. Reading the book is encouraged, but all are welcome whether or not you have read the book. You can purchase the book at your local bookstore or on Amazon.

Reading schedule:

February 9: Introduction and Chapter 1

February 16: Chapters 2 and 3

February 23: Chapters 4 and 5

March 2: Chapters 6 and 7

March 9: Chapter 8 and Conclusion

PASTOR ANITA’S 2025 SABBATICAL

Seattle First Baptist Church has received a grant of \$60,000 to enable one of its ministers, Rev. Anita Peebles, to participate in the 2025 National Clergy Renewal Program. Seattle First Baptist Church is one of 168 congregations across the United States selected to participate in this competitive grant program, which is funded by Lilly Endowment Inc. and administered by Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis. Established by the Endowment in 2000, the program’s

grants allow Christian congregations to support their pastors with the gift of extended time away from their ministerial duties and responsibilities.

Ministers whose congregations are awarded the grants use their time away from the demands of daily ministry to engage in reflection and renewal. The approach respects the “Sabbath time” concept, offering ministers a carefully considered respite that may include travel, study, rest, prayer and immersive arts and cultural experiences.

Through the National Clergy Renewal Program, congregations apply for grants of up to \$50,000 to support renewal programs for their pastors. Collaborative in nature and implementation, the program allows congregations to partner with their ministers in developing experiences that address their unique renewal needs and aspirations. Recognizing that ministers’ families are subject to the stress and demands placed on pastoral leaders, the program encourages pastors to involve their families in renewal activities. Congregational needs during the minister’s renewal experience also are considered. Up to \$20,000 of the grant may be used to support interim pastoral leadership during the pastor’s retreat, as well as renewal activities within the congregation. Since the National Clergy Renewal Program’s inception, more than 3,350 congregations have participated in the program, including the 168 congregations receiving grants in 2025.

Pastor Anita’s sabbatical will be mid-May to mid-August, 2025. She is planning her sabbatical around the theme of “Knowing Where You Come From In Order To Know Where You’re Going.” She will explore family ancestry as well as spiritual ancestry. She will travel to the UK, spending time in England, Scotland and in the Scottish Borders area, completing a walking pilgrimage and spending time at Iona Abbey. Pastor Anita will also spend time in the places that have formed her around the USA: Michigan, Ohio, Tennessee, Illinois and Washington. She looks forward to this time of rest and renewal for herself and her family.

While Pastor Anita is away, Pastor Leigh will be assisted by pulpit supply preachers from our Evergreen Region. The church also has an opportunity for a retreat at Camp Burton on Vashon Island, provided with grant funds.

“Pastors play an important role in nourishing the spiritual lives of individuals and in guiding the work of the Christian congregations they serve,” said Christopher L. Coble, the Endowment’s vice president for religion. “Through these grants, we seek to honor pastors for

their extraordinary service and enable them to engage in a brief period of rest and renewal. We have learned that such experiences invigorate the leadership of pastors and bring new vitality to their congregations as well.”

Dr. Robert Saler, director of the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Programs, noted that the National Clergy Renewal Program integrates key attributes of healthy congregations, including a mutual respect for the renewal needs of both ministers and the congregations they serve.

“The program provides an opportunity for congregations to express appreciation for their ministers’ service and leadership,” Saler said. “At a time when leaders are often praised for their pace of innovation and productivity, the National Clergy Renewal Program pays homage to the timeless wisdom embedded in the practice of reflection and renewal.”

Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis also directs the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations through its Center for Pastoral Excellence.

WHAT’S YOUR WHY?

The theme for this year’s stewardship season was “What’s Your Why?” which encouraged us to consider reasons for our commitment to and support of our church community. In the Pledge Sunday worship service on November 10, Cherry Johnson shared her amazing list of “why’s.” In case you missed it, her list is printed here:

I pledge:

- Because I treasure being part of this community—where I know I am loved and where I love you right back.
- Because this is a theologically diverse community where I’m not required to believe any certain way, and where I am even free to rage against the God I was taught to believe in.
- Because this community challenges me to grow, to confront my shortcomings, to be an agent of change.
- Because this is a place where two women can serve as co-pastors.
- Because a man as gentle and faithful as Bruce Chittick graced my life here.
- Because this is a place where a man like Marv can become family to a boy like Alex.
- Because this church believes that absolutely

EVERYONE deserves a place at the table.

- Because Brent’s wild clothes and tasty treats are worth the price of admission.
- Because families like the de la Cruzes and the Zauggs, the Tollefsons, the Guttierrezes and the Reis/Steeles bring a multigenerational presence which enriches us all.
- Because this is a place where I’m free to be queer, where we value the union of Phil and Eric as much as that of Phil and Belle, where Comet is a welcome and important part of our family.
- Because this is a community that gathered at Lake Union for Victoire’s baptism.
- Because this is a place where Megan and Aaron bring their ever-expansive family.
- Because granddaughters like Mila make it possible for grandmothers like Barbara to navigate the twists and steep slopes of this old building.
- Because we are gifted with great preaching.
- Because Lorraine’s wardrobe always cheers me up.
- Because watching Eleanor and Nola and Norah and Ella and Sam and Mazie and Delia and Spencer grow from infancy into thoughtful, kind young people gives me hope.
- Because the music fills me every week.
- Because we are a Baptist church which includes Buddhists, Jews, former Catholics, former evangelicals, agnostics, atheists and seekers of all kinds.
- Because our small groups ministry provides important touchstones in my day-to-day life.
- Because going to Rainbow Lodge for retreats replenishes me.
- Because I love singing together.
- Because Janet and Karen and Theresa and Kyra are my legacy.
- Because Darren and Bob show up anywhere, any time and will do anything that is needed.
- Because Carole quietly tends to anyone in need.
- Because I am always aware of the cloud of witnesses surrounding us.
- Because we frequently take time to share a meal, which is just another form of communion.
- Because Susan and David and others of generations younger than mine help keep me educated and on my toes.
- Because I love to hear Brooke interject a “Dear God” into a sermon.
- Because our community is becoming more

global—with people like Catherine and Bonnie and Larry and Heidi joining us from afar.

- Because I look forward to John’s ordination.
- Because what would our world look like without Companis?
- Because Nene has the greatest smile.
- Because CJ can sing in the choir again thanks to the accessibility renovation!
- Because I know I will see Bo in the back corner every Sunday.
- Because we have an increasing number of young adults who make this church more colorful, more energetic, and more relevant.
- Because this sanctuary is, to me, a sanctuary.
- Because, together, we strive to follow the Way of Jesus—which is what it’s all about.

And of course, if you haven’t already done so, it’s not too late to submit your pledge for 2025. Even if it’s just a continuation of your previous financial giving, letting the Finance Committee know your intentions helps us with our budget planning. It can be as simple as filling out the pledge form online here <https://www.seattlefirstbaptist.org/give/2025-pledge-form/> or sending an email message to darren@seattlefirstbaptist.org.

For information on the location of this gathering, contact Joanne Hjort, Cherry Johnson or the church office (or email smallgroups@seattlefirstbaptist.org).

INTERGENERATIONAL DIGITAL WELLNESS CLASS

Coming in January and February (exact dates TBD)

Ask any tween or teenager in your life if they are learning digital security and media literacy in school, and they will probably tell you yes! But for those of us 35 and up, our education happened before we started to walk around with supercomputers attached to the palms of our hands. This winter, we’ll have 4 sessions before church to review Media Literacy and Digital Security together.

The themes of the sessions will be:

1. Scams and Security: How we stay safe in a Digital World
2. Truth Discernment: How we fact check in the Information Age
3. Connections: How we treat each other as a Beloved Online Community

The last session will be a bit of a wrap-up, unless we feel bold enough to try to tackle Generative AI together! Aaron Burkhalter, Bob Sittig, Rev Leigh Curl-Dove, and Susan Blythe-Goodman will lead presentations and facilitate discussions.

RECLAIMING PEACE IN OURSELVES TO BETTER SERVE THE WORLD

In late October and November the Exploring Contemplation Small Group focused on helping participants deal with anxiety about the upcoming election. It is now clear that this must be a focus for the long term.

Our contemplative ancestors often faced suffering and threats to their safety. One such person was Etty Hillesum, a young Dutch Jewish woman who was imprisoned, and ultimately murdered, by the Nazis during World War II. During her confinement she wrote letters and kept a diary. These were preserved and published after the war. Following is a favorite quote from her:

“Ultimately, we have just one moral duty: to reclaim large areas of peace in ourselves, more and more peace, and to reflect it toward others. And the more peace there is in us, the more peace there will also be in our troubled world.”



SEASONAL NOSTALGIA WITH THE PLAY READING CIRCLE

On Saturday, December 7th from 10am to noon (NOTE TIME CHANGE), the Play Reading Circle will be gathering IN PERSON to usher in the Christmas season with a little party.

Please plan to bring finger food to share. We will be reading a radio play version of *It's a Wonderful Life*, complete with radio-ready sound effects.

If this sounds like fun, we'd love to have you join us—as a newcomer or an old faithful. No experience required.

Using a combination of music, written and spoken words, and meditation, our group will focus on reclaiming peace in ourselves so that we can better serve our world. Join us online at 11 a.m. on the first and third Fridays of each month.

GIVING THANKS AND GIVING BACK TO THE EARTH

In this time of giving thanks and giving gifts, Interfaith Climate Action encourages all of us to think about the abundant gifts of the earth and what we can do in return to save her. We give thanks for the air we breathe, the water that sustains us, the trees and plants that nourish, clothe, and house us. What can we—must we—give in return? Below are some ideas to reflect on. Which steps have you already taken? Which are within your ability to offer now?

- Eat fewer animal products. Make a plan that works for you. Consider removing beef and lamb (the foods with the largest greenhouse gas emissions) from your diet. Find new proteins to enjoy—nuts, beans, lentils, tofu, etc. Try going vegan once or more per week and making a vegan meal for friends. Eating vegan has a huge effect on reducing personal greenhouse gas emissions. Follow the 5-a-day plan for fruits and vegetables as a win for your health and the health of the planet. Switch from cow's milk to oat milk. And shop locally when you can to reduce emissions from long-distance transport.
- Reduce your fossil fuel consumption in small and large ways. As you are able, take Metro, walk, and carpool. (Interfaith Climate Action members can help you connect with other SFBCers to travel to church together.) Enjoy a staycation rather than taking a carbon-intensive flight or cruise. Install an electric heat pump in your home if you are able to do so. Replace an old appliance with an electric hot water heater, an induction stove, or a heat pump clothes dryer. Go car-free or replace your gas-burning car with an electric—prices, especially for used ones, have come down dramatically.
- Refuse plastics when other products are available. Each year more than 8 million tons of plastics enter the ocean, most of them made from fossil fuels. As a gift of thanks to all creation, choose alternative products: cloth bags, paper takeout containers, bamboo toothbrushes and floss, natural greenery and dried fruit for Christmas decor, metal refillable drink bottles, cardboard detergent

boxes, paper-wrapped cookies and pastry, cotton clothing, and glass containers for soap and lotion. When possible, bring your own containers and shop at stores that sell in bulk: Mimi's Zero Waste Market, Town & Country, PCC, Central Co-Op, etc.

- Join with others. Climate change activist Bill McKibben says, "The most important thing an individual can do is be a little less of an individual and join together with others in movements large enough to make change." One place to start is with our Interfaith Climate Action small group, which meets on the 4th Sunday of the month online (next meeting, January 26 at 6 p.m.) and holds book discussions throughout the year. In the group you will learn about other, larger groups to join and many essential ways to give to our precious earth.



HOW TO WRITE AN OBITUARY FOR A FAMILY MEMBER, FRIEND, PET, OR YOURSELF THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5 AT 6:00PM

Seattle Public Library Greenwood Branch
8016 Greenwood Ave. N.

Join us to learn how to write an obituary that will help your loved one's melody linger on, as Irving Berlin wrote. Parking is free in the garage and on nearby streets.

Rebecca Morris is the bestselling author of eight true crime books and a memoir. Before she began this part of her career, she was a broadcast journalist in NYC, Portland, and Seattle. She has taught at Hugo House and North Seattle College, and mentors many other writers. She appears often on television and in documentaries as a crime expert. Rebecca lives in Greenwood.

SEATTLE JAZZ VESPERS
JOVINO SANTOS NETO QUARTETO
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1 AT 6:00PM
SFBC SANCTUARY

Jovino Santos Neto—piano, flute, melodica;
Ben Thomas—vibraphone, bandoneon;
Tim Carey—bass; Mark Ivester—drums



Seattle Jazz Vespers is excited to welcome back, three-time Latin Grammy nominee Jovino Santos Neto, a master pianist, composer and arranger, who is among the top Brazilian musicians working today.

Currently based in Seattle, Washington, he has throughout his career been closely affiliated with the Brazilian master Hermeto Pascoal. He was an integral part of Pascoal's group from 1977 to 1992, where he fine-tuned his artistry, performing around the world and co-producing several legendary records.

Jovino's personal style is a creative blend of energetic grooves, deep harmonies, telepathic improvisation, lyrical melodies and great ensemble playing, always inspired and informed by the colorful richness of Brazilian music. His compositions include samba, choro, baião, xote, forró, marcha and many more styles, rooted in centuries-old musical tradition while pointing to new and adventurous harmonic languages.

Currently, Jovino leads his Seattle-based Quarteto after teaching piano and composition at Cornish College of the Arts for 26 years. He can also be heard around the world as a piano soloist, working with symphony orchestras, jazz big bands, chamber music groups, and in collaboration with musicians such as his mentor Hermeto Pascoal, Bill Frisell, Paquito d'Rivera, Airto Moreira, Claudio Roditi, David Sanchez, Joe Locke, Marco Granados and many more.

Jovino's compositions have been performed by the Seattle Symphony, NDR Big Band in Hamburg and by numerous jazz and chamber music groups. Jovino has received commissions by the Cheswaty Foundation, IAJE, ASCAP, CMA/Doris Duke Foundation, Jack Straw Foundation, the City of Seattle, 4Culture, Artist

Trust and Meet the Composer. He has been artist in residence at some of the most prestigious music schools in the world. In 2012 he was inducted into the Seattle Jazz Hall of Fame and in 2011, 2012, 2015 and 2018 the Jovino Santos Neto Quinteto won as Best Northwest Acoustic Group in the Golden Ear Awards by Earshot Jazz. He also was awarded an Artist Trust Fellowship in Music in 2012.



SEATTLE UNIVERSITY CHOIRS
“CREATION SINGS”
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6 AT 7:30PM
SFBC SANCTUARY

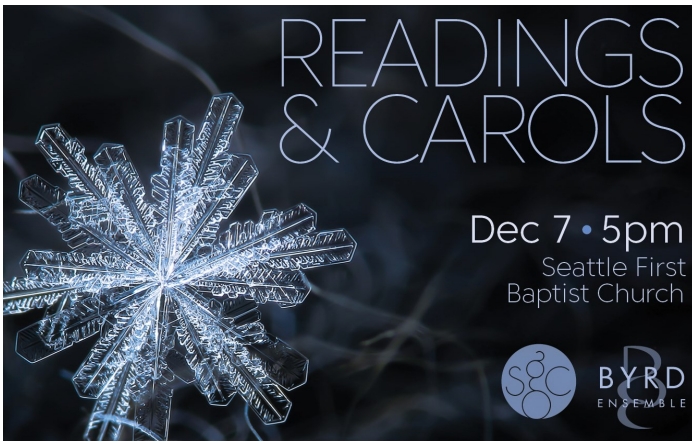
Tickets: \$10 General Admission/\$5 SU Community

The Seattle University Choirs present “Creation Sings,” a holiday celebration in word and song, Friday December 6, 7:30pm at Seattle First Baptist Church. The choirs will be accompanied throughout the concert, and on the new cornerstone cantata *Light of Peace* (Karen Marroli), by a vibrant Celtic band comprised of locals players Henry Lebedinsky (guitar, bodhrán), Tracy Doyle (Irish flute), and Elise Snoey (fiddle). Join us for seasonal favorites, old and new!

SEATTLE GIRLS CHOIR
WITH THE BYRD ENSEMBLE
“READINGS & CAROLS”
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7 AT 5:00PM
SFBC SANCTUARY

Tickets available here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/readings-carols-tickets-1015659152867>

Seattle Girls Choir is proud to present Readings & Carols, featuring Cantamus and Allegra alongside the Byrd Ensemble. This one-hour program consists of nine seasonal readings, each paired with a traditional carol performed by the choir, as well as a few carols sung together with the audience.



The program pays homage to “A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols” popularized by King’s College since 1918—with a twist. Instead of exclusively lessons from Scripture, SGC pairs our carols with a diverse set of readings that celebrate the magic of the winter season, including excerpts from works by medieval poet Hildegard von Bingen, “A Charlie Brown Christmas,” and American writers E.E. Cummings, Langston Hughes, Amanda Gorman, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and more. Bring the whole family for a joyful celebration of winter, the holidays, and the coming new year!

**“THE GOSPEL MAGNIFICAT”
BY KENT STEVENSON
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14 AT 7:00PM
SFBC SANCTUARY**

Tickets available at the door: \$25 Adults/\$15 Students

Through the ages, across many cultures, there have been numerous depictions of Mary, the Blessed Mother, through visual art, sculpture and architecture. Similarly, in music, over the centuries, Mary has been celebrated in a treasure of Marian hymns—from Ave Maria to the majesty of the Bach Magnificat. And so, this season, you are invited to a contemporary celebration: “The Gospel Magnificat: A Gospel/Jazz Setting of the Canticle of Mary.” In addition to the gospel and jazz elements, the music embraces a palette to include the spirituals, blues, Middle Eastern themes, and Brazilian rhythms. Also featured are guest vocalists and musicians, and a concert choir with voices from six faith traditions, as well as voices from The City Cantabile Choir and The African American Cultural Ensemble.



**SEATTLE PRO MUSICA
“NOWELL: WINTER IN THE
BRITISH ISLES”
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21 AT 3:00PM &
7:00PM IN THE SFBC SANCTUARY**

Tickets available here: <https://seattlepromusica.thundertix.com/events/234906>

Celebrate the holidays with enthralling choral music from the British Isles. You’ll hear traditional favorites by Herbert Howells and William Walton, future classics from some of Britain’s rising female composers, and Roderick Williams’s gentle jazz-inspired setting of Now winter nights.

We will also feature works by Kerensa Briggs, Rebecca Dale, Joanna Marsh, Lucy Walker, Gabriel Jackson, Philip Stopford, and more.

Their performances of Nowell at Seattle First Baptist Church will include introductions from choir members and Karen P. Thomas, and audience members will be encouraged to applaud as they are moved to do so.



**NORTHWEST BOYCHOIR
“A FESTIVAL OF LESSONS & CAROLS”
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22 AT 7:00PM
SFBC SANCTUARY**

Tickets available here: https://northwestchoirs.easy-ware-ticketing.com/assignedseating/E8j4e1rO8_q98rwzrrGa_A

The Northwest Boychoir celebrates its 46th annual presentation of “A Festival of Lessons & Carols” this December. These holiday concerts showcase the 80-member combined chorus of the Northwest Boychoir and Vocalpoint! Seattle.

Patterned after the Christmas Eve observance at King’s College in Cambridge, England, “A Festival of Lessons & Carols” is a holiday tradition for thousands of families in the Puget Sound region. This 90-minute classical performance consists of nine Christmas readings, each followed by traditional carols performed by the choir and audience.

**SEATTLE JAZZ VESPERS
BEN THOMAS JAZZ TANGO PROJECT
JANUARY 5 AT 6:00PM
SFBC SANCTUARY**

Ben Thomas—bandoneon;

Eric Likkel—clarinet; Libby Phelps—violin;

Gabe Hall-Rodrigues— piano; Steve Schermer—bass

Dr. Ben Thomas is one of the most in-demand vibists in the Pacific Northwest. Known for combining virtuosic technique with flowing lyricism, Thomas’s music spans from pyrotechnic improvisations to delicate soundscapes.



In addition to leading jazz and tango ensembles, he performs as a sideman on mallets, percussion, and bandoneon with a wide variety of groups throughout the United States, including the Jovino Santos Neto Quinteto and the Atlas Tango Project. He currently has five albums of original compositions available on Origin Records: “Triskaidekaphobia”, “The Mystagogue”, “The Madman’s Difference”, “Yet What Is Any Ocean...”, and “Eternal Aporia.”

After falling in love with both tango music and dance, Thomas started playing bandoneon in 2006, traveling to Argentina and working with tango musicians from across the world. He was guest artist with the Eugene Opera in 2018 as the bandoneon soloist for Piazzolla’s “Maria de Buenos Aires”. He tours regularly with the Atlas Tango Project and can be heard on their most recent album, “Estaciones y Sueños.”

Thomas completed his Doctor of Musical Art in Percussion Performance at the University of Washington in 2007. His dissertation was on the development of Cal Tjader’s early Latin Jazz vibraphone style. Thomas received his Master of Music with Honors in Improvisation from the University of Michigan in 1994. While in graduate school, he directed the University of Michigan’s Jazz Composers Orchestra and worked with composer Stephen Rush. Thomas also graduated from Swarthmore College, where he majored in mathematics and music.

Over the years, Thomas has performed at the Stowe Tango Music Festival, Ballard Jazz Festival, Earshot Jazz Festival, Detroit-Montreux Jazz Festival, Bumber-shoot Arts Festival, Issaquah Jazz Festival, Anacortes Arts Festival, Ellensburg Jazz in the Valley Festival, Tacoma Maritime Festival, Bellingham Art of Jazz Series, and the Juneau Jazz and Classics Festival.

As a composer, Thomas has written for chamber groups, big bands, jazz combos, dance and theater. Thomas is currently chair of the Music Department at Highline College, where he teaches music theory, composition, and performance.

SMALL GROUPS MINISTRY SCHEDULE FOR ADVENT & CHRISTMAS



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

SUNDAYS

Friendship Circle 2nd Sundays (no meeting December 8), 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, 6:30-8pm. 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.

TUESDAYS

Parents of Adult Children with Mental Illness 3rd Tuesdays, 7-8:30pm. Meets online at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82549534986?pwd=I09c1CB9Uts0V2hR3yYhiKenZ2gkbO.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.) 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, 12-12:30pm. 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, 7-8:30pm. 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 1st & 3rd Tuesdays, 6-7:30pm on Zoom (December 3). 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*.

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. Held at Stoup Brewery, just east of the church on the corner of Broadway and Union.

THURSDAYS

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

FRIDAYS

Exploring Contemplation 1st & 3rd Fridays, 11am-12pm. 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, 11am-12pm. Meets online at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81095038488?pwd=RlpydDZ0cERLVFhtcEFPSWMzSIQzUT09>. Where SFBC men come together to get better acquainted and support one another.

Play Reading Circle 1st Saturdays, 3-5pm (special event December 7, see p.). 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 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.

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

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