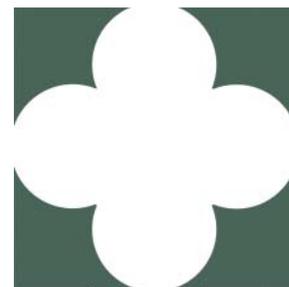


the spire

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January 2018

Exploring what it means to follow the way of Jesus Christ



seattle first baptist



Glory Days

By Pastor Tim Phillips

As the choir was singing that brilliant John Rutter, *Gloria*, in concert on December 16 and 17, I found myself thinking about “glory” in the context of our life together. As I mentioned at the concerts, the glory of the Christmas story in Luke 2 – “the angel of the Lord stood before the shepherds and the glory of the Lord shone around them” – is an echo of Isaiah’s dream, “Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together.” In both cases, glory is something that shines around us and, at its best – or our best – it is seen by everyone together. Glory in this full sense is not about an individual and isolated experience. It is something that shines all around us and can be seen by us together.

As we move into 2018, I am inviting us to look together for the glory that shines all around us. Certainly, there are things that may have lost their luster. Perhaps there is some “faded glory” we have to let go of. When I arrived here nine years ago I was concerned that we might spend too much time being distracted by the “glory days” of the past. Or that we might be too enamored of fantasies about the “glory days” yet to come. I was convinced that my first task was to help us see together the glory that shines all around us now. I’m still convinced of the importance of that task. It’s true that when the shepherds caught that first glimpse of glory that shone around them, they were terrified. Perhaps there is some fear in those moments when we realize the life we are living right now is infused with a brilliant glory we cannot always see. What if our life together is more than we can see? If there is glory we are missing, might there be darkness too? Yes! Of course. But fear of the darkness shouldn’t blind us to the glory.

So, what am I witnessing of the glory that shines all around us?

First, I see the glory of children. The energy and exuberance of children in our life together opens us up to the promise of both Isaiah and the angels in Luke 2 that “unto us a child is born.” Children remind us that we cannot afford the luxury of

despair. The glory that shines around us through them gives us reason to fear but also to hope. The gospel of John doesn't give us a birth story but it does have a prologue that includes the promise: "The Word became flesh and lived among us and we beheld its glory." All those words we share about our hopes for the future have been taking on flesh in the glory of our children and families. And this year we will continue this journey to call a Pastor for Next Generation Ministries who will lead us into the glory of those words made flesh. I am so grateful for the ongoing work of the Search Committee and I look forward to a new partner in ministry sometime this spring. At the same time, it has truly been a glorious time to work with Pastor Jennifer. Her energy, faithfulness, and innovation have been brilliant! I am so glad that she will stay with us through Easter – another glorious time in our life together. And I am also grateful for the work of our Godly Play staff and volunteers who bring that sense of glory and mystery to the spiritual lives of our children every Sunday.

Second, I see glory in the faces of one another. II Corinthians has this amazing line about "all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror [and] being transformed into that same image from one degree of glory to another" (II Cor. 3.18). It may seem a little overly-optimistic about our human condition and a little mystical. But looking for glory in the faces of one another can make us realistically optimistic about our fellow humans and can keep us from boxing in the mystery that we all are. Often I am a mystery to myself and there can be something glorious about that. It reminds me that there is more to my life than I can see. It leaves open possibilities that I have not yet imagined. Remember that the Psalms version of the creation story is that God created human beings and "crowned them with glory and honor" (Psalm 8). Looking for the glory that shines all around us through each other tilts our relationships toward respect, dignity, and connection. I have loved working with Pastor Harriet because she is really good at that. The time and attention she gives to her conversations makes them shine with a joy and a respect that is ... well, glorious. And I think honoring her work among us by cultivating that sense of glory "with unveiled faces," is a perfect way to move into 2018. In the same way, we will continue the work of retiring pastor, David Kile, by cultivating a spirit of humility, humor, and the glory of those old gospel songs.

Third, this is the season that I can't help but have the music of Handel's Messiah running through my head. So, I can't think of glory without that final chorus imagining a new world of "blessing and honor, glory and power" from Revelation 5. Glory as an expression of worship and imagination and the arc of justice coming together can be a powerful thing. Geoffrey and Amy Boers helped us move along after the powerful ministries of Vicky Thomas and Michelle Horsley. Their thoughtfulness about music and worship was a beautiful way to get us ready for the process that has brought Ben Luedcke (Choral Director) and April Kuhr (Organist) to us. Music among us has been truly glorious, rousing, inspiring, and comforting. It does shine all around us when the world is dark and the powers that be are disappointing and destructive. And I am especially grateful to Theologian-in-Residence, the Rev. Dr. Patricia Hunter, who has given permission for that inner urge to cry out "glory!" to be freed in worship. Dr. Hunter has helped create a worship climate in which "amen" doesn't just come at the end of prayer and words of encouragement can be spoken by people from the pews as well as from the pulpit. Dr. Hunter's wisdom and faith continue to teach me lessons that are long overdue for my own life. I am thinking about the beginning of Psalm 63: "O God, you are my God, I seek you; my soul thirsts for you ... So I have looked on you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory; because your steadfast love is better than life." I think the best thing we could ever say about worship together is that it is "glorious."

Finally, there is the glory of creation. Isaiah says that "the whole earth is full of God's glory" (Isaiah 6.3) and I suspect that means that one of the most spiritual things we could do – perhaps a primary act of worship – is to recognize and to honor the glory of the Earth. The values that we affirmed this year - and are trying to live in the year ahead - call us to care for the Earth and its peoples. Those values aren't just a wish list or a set of platitudes. They are a promise we are making to one another and the world about how we will live together. I have heard from several people outside our community that these values have inspired them and their congregations to either adopt them or identify their own values. And so we are back to item one and the words becoming flesh and beholding their glory. Seeing that glory together is made possible, in part, by the hard work of Jim Segaar whose wisdom, creative eye, and steady hand have brought to light the glory that shines all around us and in us. Thank you, Jim. And thanks to Kellie Whitlock for the beautiful production of the monthly Spire and our videos. Thanks also to Lupe Carlos for beautifully capturing those images of our life together. And if you have ever seen the Spire lit up at night or walked into the Sanctuary dressed for Christmas or watched the huge number of people come and go from our building, you must know that the stewardship of this place we call "home" is faithfully managed by Darren Hochstedler, Paul Fellner, Tim Dean, and Judy Scott. Sitting incognito in the Sanctuary before this year's Saturday evening Christmas concert, I heard someone say: "Wow! What a beautiful church!" Well it is. But the glory of this place is something that we have not only inherited but must care for - and part of its glory is all that happens here beyond the lovely wood and stained glass. All of you are part of that.

That brings me back to the "glory days." I said at the concert that, for the shepherds in the Christmas story, "glory" became "glorifying." After their visit to the mystery in the manger, "they returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had seen and heard." In a world that glorifies greed and violence and racial privilege, what we glorify and the places we find glory make the biggest statement about who we are. Our glory days are not in the past or a fantasy of the future. Our glory days are now. As the blessing of Ephesians says: "Now to the one whose power is at work in us to accomplish far more than everything we can ask or imagine, be glory in the church." Well all I can say to that is "glory!"

Celebrating Pastor Harriet



Interim Associate Pastor Harriet Platts has been accepted to the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation in the area of Contemplative Group leadership. She plans to begin this long-distance program in January 2018. She will complete her service as Associate Pastor at SFBC this month. She will remain in our community, and will serve as the Vice President of the congregation going forward.

Please join us after worship on Sunday, January 28, for a lunch in Harriet's honor. The lunch will begin immediately after our Annual Meeting. That will be a great time to say "Thank You" to Pastor Harriet for all she has done for us.

Words of Wisdom in January

By Pastor Tim Phillips

As we move together into 2018, leading the way will be the wisdom of some very special friends.

On the first Sunday of Epiphany, January 7, Imam Jamal Rahman will be preaching. Jamal is no stranger to us and to our pulpit. He is a renowned Muslim Sufi teacher and the spiritual leader of Seattle's Interfaith Community Sanctuary. He is also the author of several books, including *Spiritual Gems of Islam*, *Sacred Laughter of the Sufis*, and *The Fragrance of Faith: The Enlightened Heart of Islam*. With Rabbi Ted Falcon and Pastor Don Mackenzie, Jamal is one of the Interfaith Amigos traveling and speaking about interfaith understanding and cooperation.

The following Sunday, January 14, as part of our remembrance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Rev. David Bloom will preach on "Walter and Martin," reflecting on the connection between the great social justice preacher, Walter Rauschenbusch, and the civil rights preacher and activist, Martin Luther King. David is a former associate director of the Church Council of Greater Seattle; the founding director of the Rauschenbusch Center; adjunct faculty, Antioch University – Seattle; and a member Seattle First Baptist.

Our Theologian-in-Residence, Dr. Patricia Hunter preaches on January 21, reflecting on the call to nonviolent resistance from Mahatma Gandhi to Dr. King. The last Sunday in January, the 29th, will be our Annual Meeting following worship and we encourage all our members and friends to be present. Following the meeting we invite you to lunch honoring the work of our Interim Pastor, Harriet Platts. Get this New Year started right with words of wisdom and the challenge of renewing our work in the world.

Remembering the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

This year the Evergreen Association of American Baptist Churches will continue its tradition of honoring Martin Luther King Jr. with a joint Worship Service on MLK Day, Monday January 15, at 6 p.m.

The service will be at New Beginnings Christian Fellowship, 19300 108th Ave. SE, Kent WA 98031. The special guest preacher will be the Rev. Dr. Robert Michael Franklin, the James T. and Berta R. Laney Professor in Moral Leadership at Emory University and President Emeritus at Morehouse College.

Singers are invited to join the mass Gospel choir for the event under the leadership of the Rev. Sam Townsend. Remaining rehearsals will be:

- At SFBC - from 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. on Saturday, January 6
- At New Beginnings - from 7 – 9 p.m. on Tuesday, January 9 and from 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. on Saturday, January 13.

Please contact the SFBC church office if you are interested in singing.

Thank you Pastor David and Pat Kile!

A note from David and Pat Kile:

Thanks for the recognition of our 40th anniversary and the gift of the telescope. We look forward to our continuing relationship in retirement and finding new ways we can be part of the SFBC community. We spotted a bald eagle this week with the telescope.

...and a Blessing for the Rev. David Kile from the Rev. Dr. Robert D. Nicholson, a colleague and a friend.

Blessed are you, O God, that you have brightened and blest our path with the gift of your son and servant David

In his 40 years of life, love and leadership among us in Seattle, we have seen "energy, intelligence, imagination and love" in action.

He has evidenced your Presence with Us, at Bedside, Graveside, Fireside, Curbside, in his prayers and sermons by the church door and in our homes and places of work.

Eternal God, through all the years of our lives your love had protected and guides us.

Now grant to David a time for refreshment and rest, reflection and rejoicing, and the fullness of your peace. Through your Holy Spirit bless each of us Amen.



Pastor David and Pat Kile chat with their friends, the Greens, during their retirement celebration.

If Not Now, When?

By Cherry Johnson

Has the ME TOO (or the MEN TOO) movement given you pause? Has it brought up pain from your own life, caused you to question your behaviors or responses, made you wonder Why Now?

Borrowing from Rabbi Hillel the Elder, the Adult Education Commission is sponsoring a three-week series called IF NOT NOW, WHEN?. Please join us for this important conversation led by Bettie Williams-Watson of the Faith Trust Institute, who has been a trainer, speaker, advocate, writer, community organizer and counselor in the field of domestic and sexual violence for twenty years. She is the Founder/Executive Director of Multi-Communities (MIC), a nonprofit organization dedicated to addressing domestic, youth and sexual violence, as well as chemical dependency, in predominantly African American faith communities in Seattle and beyond. This organization has received local and national awards.

Ms. Williams-Watson also appears in the videos *Broken Vows* and *Wings Like a Dove* and has published articles in *Creating Partnerships to End Sexual Violence* and *Wineskins* magazines. We hope to see you at 9:30 a.m. January 14, 21 and 28 in the Parlor!



Bettie Williams-Watson

Administrator's Corner

By Darren Hochstedler

The provisional 2018 SFBC operating budget will be available for review at the welcome table beginning January 7. Please stop by and pick up a copy. If you have comments or questions, you may contact me in the church office, any member of the Stewardship Commission or attend the Diaconate meeting on Thursday, January 18 at 7 p.m. in the parlor. The final vote on the budget will be at the Annual Congregational meeting after worship on Sunday, January 28.

American Baptist Women's Ministries News

By Shirley Wilkinson and Imogene Williams

Even after Christmas there still are people in Seattle with big needs! Remember to put your coins (or bills) in the Penny Project jars in Fellowship Hall after church. Mary's Place will put them to good use.

There are two interesting articles by our missionaries in Lebanon in the quarterly newsletter put out by International Ministries (IM). The publication is posted on the ABW Ministries bulletin board by the women's rest room.

No meeting of Friendship Circle or Mt. Carmel Circle in the month of January.

In November Friendship Circle had a fascinating meeting with Merletta Roberts, who is a professional clown! She grew up in Indiana, there were cousins, music nights, and a sense of belonging! At dinner the theme would be "what funny thing happened to you today?" It takes an hour to put on her clown make-up!

The Bake Sale brought in \$480, to contribute to Mary's Place shelter for homeless women and children.

You're Invited to a Winter Retreat

By Patrick Green

University Baptist Church /Seattle First Baptist
At Cascade Meadows
Presidents Day Weekend, February 16—19, 2018



Join in the fun and adventure of a long weekend at Cascade Meadows. This is a time of relaxation, reading, beauty, snow exploration, sledding, good food and conversation. This year Seattle First Baptist is co-sponsoring the event with folks from University Baptist. There is no programming for this retreat; just an opportunity for fun. It's a very family-friendly event with plenty to keep the kids busy. Cascade Meadows is an American Baptist Camp 14 miles east of Stevens Pass. There is a beautiful, rustic lodge with several bunk rooms, two common areas, a kitchen and restrooms with showers. There are several smaller buildings at various distances from the lodge that sleep 8-10 people.

This is a DIY weekend. We will be bringing in the food; meals and tasks are shared cooperatively. Everyone will be expected to help with cooking and cleaning--this actually is part of the fun and is a good way to get to know other people. Cost is \$110 for Friday dinner through Monday breakfast. Space is VERY limited. For information and registration materials contact Patrick Green, patrickgre@comcast.net.

Taking responsibility for our part in climate disruption

By Keith Ervin

To be an American in the 21st Century is to be implicated in altering Earth's climate. Our carbon-intense lifestyle pumps greenhouse gases into the atmosphere with every ounce of meat we eat and every mile we drive.

Seattle First Baptist Church, like each of its members, also contributes to the climate crisis. For the past three years, Interfaith Climate Action - First Hill has been monitoring the energy use of our building complex.

We've found that our natural gas consumption puts 100 tons of carbon into the air each year. According to one conservative calculation, each ton of carbon causes \$37 of damage to current and future generations in the form of fires, floods, disease and declining food production. Thus our annual natural gas use is causing \$3,700 of harm to children and adults around the world.

I hope we can find a way to replace our natural gas heating system with a clean energy source. Exploring the options will take time and a solution will not be cheap.

In the meantime, Social Justice Ministries and Interfaith Climate Action - First Hill are purchasing carbon credits that reduce emissions elsewhere. In 2015, a portion of the SJM budget was used to buy credits from a solar power plant in China. In 2016, we supported a wind-power project in South Dakota.

This past fall, we helped protect an endangered forest on the edge of Zambia's Lower Zambesi National Park. This project is particularly exciting because it involves the residents of 28 villages as decision-makers in the creation of jobs in reforestation, brick-making, food production and other enterprises.

Savings and loan groups are supporting small businesses, while villagers learn sustainable farming and charcoal production methods, guard the forest from illegal tree-cutting, and cultivate edible mushrooms.

We're all connected.

Our carbon-intense lifestyle fuels West Coast wildfires, Gulf Coast hurricanes and Mediterranean droughts. SFBC's purchases of verified carbon credits help bring green energy online and help impoverished Zambian villages find new sustainable incomes.

The bigger challenge is not simply to offset the damage we cause, but to find ways not to cause that damage in the first place.

If you would like to become part of Interfaith Climate Action - First Hill, join us at our next meeting, at 7 p.m. on Sunday, January 7, in the Bet Alef "Living Room" one door down from the SFBC office entrance.

Taste of Evergreen

We are all invited to a food-taster's delight, benefitting Evergreen Association of American Baptist Churches. The Taste of Evergreen takes place on Saturday, February 24, from 4 – 8 p.m. at Panther Lake Community Church, 106330 SE 204th, Kent, WA 98031.

This is an all-caucus event, a chance to give us a taste of your culture. To sign up to contribute food representing your culture, contact Sandy Stice at 425-442-2638 or [jsstice@gmail.com].

Entertainment is planned for the evening, and a Silent Auction. Contact Merletta Roberts at 253-517-9391 or Humor4U@mac.com to donate items for the auction.

Cost for the event is \$10 per person or \$25 for three or more in a family. Contact Merletta with general inquiries.

Did You Get Cologne for Christmas?

If you did, please enjoy wearing it—but not at church. Many members, friends, and visitors live with breathing conditions that are worsened by perfumes and other strong scents. Also please avoid wearing cologne and scented lotion when you attend meetings at SFBC. In a meeting room, it may be difficult for people with a breathing problem to get far enough away from the scent to breathe comfortably. Thank you for your kind consideration.

Mikel Rollins | Momentum Jazz Quartet - In Concert at SJV

Sunday, January 7 at 6 p.m.

Momentum Jazz Quartet, with Mikel Rollins (sax/flute/percussion), Gregg Robinson (keyboards), Sylvia Rollins (electric bass) and Mark Jelsing (drums).

“Momentum” is defined as “the force that keeps an object moving or an event developing after a start has been made.”

The band Momentum is a force which will definitely keep us moving. Momentum is a versatile jazz focused group that well satisfies a variety of music needs. The antics of band leader, Mikel Rollins, as he goes out into the crowd playing sax, which is such a contrast to his sweet flute playing, the joy of Gregg Robinson's enthusiastic piano interpretations, Sylvia Rollins' solid bass support, and Mark Jelsing's skilled finesse on the drums, all add up to Momentum's fun and satisfying musical experience.

January 2018 Calendar of Events

Monday, Jan. 1 **New Year's Day**
Office Closed

Wednesday, Jan. 3
6 p.m. Community Dinner - Fellowship Hall
7 p.m. Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, Jan. 7
9:30 a.m. Adult Learning - Genjo Marinello, Abbot of Cho Bo Jin Zen Temple on Beacon Hill, will continue a conversation about Ritual and Transitions - Parlor
10:15 a.m. Family Fellowship Hour in Youth Lounge, 3rd Floor
11 a.m. Worship and Communion with Imam Jamal Rahman preaching
After Worship - Young Adult New Year's Potluck after worship service in the Youth Lounge (3rd Floor). Please come even if you don't bring a dish. Contact: Pastor Jennifer

Deadline: Material for the Annual Report must be submitted no later than today

6 p.m. Seattle Jazz Vespers presents Mikel Rollins | Momentum Jazz Quartet - Sanctuary

Wednesday, Jan. 10
6 p.m. Community Dinner - Fellowship Hall
7 p.m. Choir Rehearsal

Friday, Jan. 12
Annual Reports due. Send to editor@seattlefirstbaptist.org

Sunday, Jan. 14

- 9:30 a.m. Adult Learning - *If Not Now, When?* with Bettie Williams-Watson - Parlor
- 10:15 a.m. Family Fellowship Hour in Youth Lounge, 3rd Floor
- 11 a.m. Worship with David Bloom preaching on "Walter and Martin"
- 4 p.m. Labyrinth - Fellowship Hall

Monday, Jan. 15 Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Office Closed
TBD - Evergreen Association combined service

Wednesday, Jan. 17

- 6 p.m. Community Dinner - Fellowship Hall
- 7 p.m. Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, Jan. 18

- 7 p.m. Diaconate - Parlor

Sunday, Jan. 21

- 9:30 a.m. Adult Learning - *If Not Now, When?* with Bettie Williams-Watson - Parlor
- 10:15 a.m. Family Fellowship Hour in Youth Lounge, 3rd Floor
- 11 a.m. Worship with Theologian in Residence Patricia Hunter preaching

Wednesday, Jan. 24

- 6 p.m. Community Dinner - Fellowship Hall
- 7 p.m. Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, Jan. 28 - Annual Meeting Sunday

- 9:30 a.m. Adult Learning - *If Not Now, When?* with Bettie Williams-Watson - Parlor
- 10:15 a.m. Family Fellowship Hour in Youth Lounge, 3rd Floor
- 11 a.m. Worship with Pastor Tim Phillips preaching
- Following Worship - Annual Meeting of the Congregation
- Following Annual Meeting - Lunch in honor of Pastor Harriet Platts, who is concluding her interim ministry as an Associate Pastor at Seattle First Baptist.

Wednesday, Jan. 31

- 6 p.m. Community Dinner - Fellowship Hall
- 7 p.m. Choir Rehearsal



Online Extras

In his lead article for this issue of the Spire, Pastor Tim Phillips recalled being inspired by the Rutter Gloria during our annual Christmas Concert, and the glory of our entire seasonal celebration. Here is a collection of photos from the season. You can see more and hear music from our Christmas Concert on our website: <http://www.seattlefirstbaptist.org>



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