



the Spire

September 2021



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by the 20th of the month prior.
All submissions should be sent to
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From the Pastor's Desk

Homecoming II: The Pandemic

By Pastor Tim Phillips



Here we are again. Another Homecoming in pandemic time and I am finally getting around to the promise I made myself in the first round – “weeding” my library. The problem is, just like weeding the garden as a kid, what looks like weeds can sometimes be a plant that was supposed to be there all along.

Among the “weeds,” I discovered a book I had inherited from my friend Elizabeth Patrick, *The Long Winding Journey Home* by Larry and Sandy Reimer, pastors of the United Church in Gainesville, Florida. It’s a collection of sermons they both have preached over the years, and it begins with an introduction titled “Homeward Bound.” Given the passion Elizabeth and I shared about “home” as a spiritual metaphor, I’m guessing this discovery was more plant than weed.

The Reimers begin: “... home is a distant image that God seems to have implanted in our hearts, our true home.” We know this every time we sing “Bring Us Home.” And the Reimers go on to say: “Our longing for this home is born from God’s deep longing for us.” It’s just as we sing, “bring us home on love’s renewing tide, to the place of our belonging.” The importance of “home” and “homecoming” isn’t just an easy platitude. It’s a call to act and imagine our own homes and communities and our world as places of love and justice, grace and peace, belonging and gratitude.

And let’s never forget, just because “home” is a spiritual metaphor, that it is absolutely connected to the lived reality of houselessness, refugee-making, and greed.

Perhaps Elizabeth and I longed for “home” because we both knew the experience of exile. It isn’t that we were looking to go back to the oppressive places we left behind. But that experience of exile taught us to move forward toward the dream of what “home” could be. There is a reason why much of the Hebrew Bible’s language about “home” and “gathering” were produced in exile.

And the truth is, as the Reimers point out, “we are all a little lost.” I’m finding myself a little lost heading into this second pandemic Homecoming. It’s disorienting to re-imagine “Homecoming” with more than half of us watching from home; greeting each other with masks; foregoing hugs; spacing ourselves away from each other. The whole idea of “Homecoming” loses something.

But the Reimers say that even though we are all a little lost, it’s “not a bad thing.” Perhaps “Homecoming II: the Pandemic” teaches us something about our hearts and that deeper longing for home; about the dangers of isolation; about the unconditioned hope of “Bring Us Home.”

The week before Homecoming, I will be in that little town in Michigan that was home for a majority of my life. We will bury my mom – the one who taught me how to tell the difference between weeds and plants. She will be interred next to my dad who taught me about loving books. And, while I have lived a lot of my adult life in what felt like exile, they both taught me about longing and looking for home. It should be no surprise that mom moved into heaven with the sounds of “softly and tenderly Jesus is calling, come home” carrying her on.

The Reimers are right. It is a long winding journey home. And we all get a little lost sometimes. But, wherever we are, there is One who is always bringing us home on love’s renewing tide. Even if the tide is out, love will bring us home. What looks like weeds may be a plant. No matter how lost you feel, you can find home in the place it has been all along – in your hearts, your “true home.”

You are always in my heart.

Tim

Growing Together

Chinatown Night Market!

Saturday, September 25, 3 p.m.

Children, youth, young adults, and families with kiddos are welcome to join Pastor Anita at the Chinatown International District Night Market, Saturday, September 25. We will meet at the Chinatown Gate at 3 p.m. Visit the Night Market website for more information: <https://cidbia.org/night-market/>. RSVP to Pastor Anita by Friday, September 24.

Godly Play Update

Stay tuned for information about Godly Play's timing and format for the fall. We are dedicated to best safety practices for children who are not vaccinated. Please be in contact with Pastor Anita and Patrick to make sure you are receiving all updates.



Young Adult Fall Retreat

October 15-17 near Cle Elum

Up to 14 young adults (college-aged to 35ish) will spend the weekend of October 15-17 in a cabin near Cle Elum in the Cascades. This retreat is unscheduled, with opportunities for hiking, biking, kayaking, crafts or just hanging around the firepit. We will cook meals together. Participation fee is on a sliding scale from \$50-\$150 per person. All attendees must provide proof of full vaccination in order to attend.

Register through this online form by October 5: <https://forms.gle/nGpD3T3GeApjvHub6>

Backpacks Blessed!

On Sunday, August 29, we blessed the backpacks and other items for our church kids and adults who are beginning a new school year. We also celebrated that we were able to donate school supplies to our neighbors at Bailey Gatzert Elementary school! AND we handed out blessing stickers for each and every person in worship. If you need one, simply stop by the office or one of the tables in the foyer before the next few Sunday services, and you can get one too!

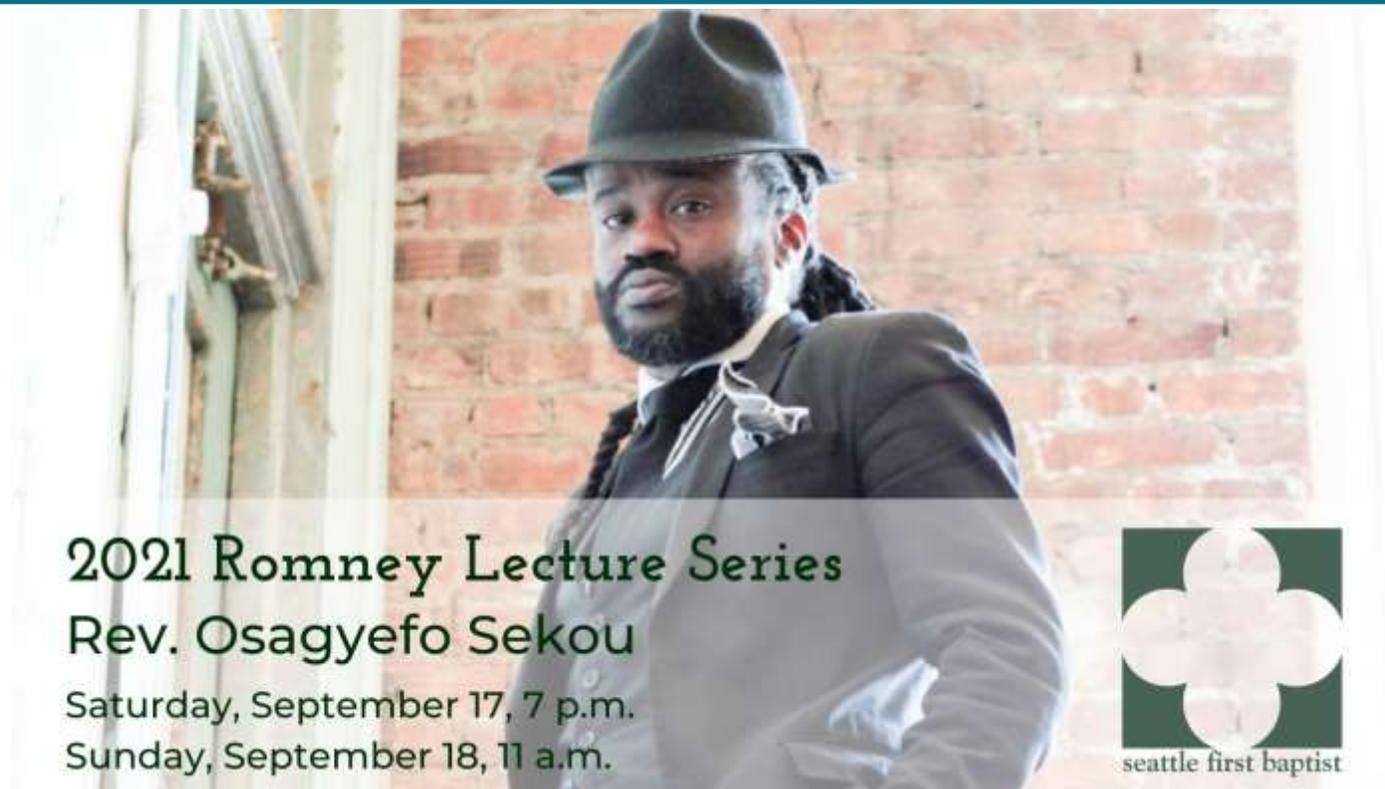


Youth Group (6-12th Grades)

September meeting is TBD. Contact Pastor Anita to make sure you and your teen are on the email list!

No Wednesday Evening Programs in September!

Our Life Together



2021 Romney Lecture Series

Rev. Osagyefo Sekou

Saturday, September 17, 7 p.m.

Sunday, September 18, 11 a.m.



2021 Romney Lecture Series: Rev. Osagyefo Sekou

Saturday, September 18, 7 p.m. - Lecture and Q&A

Sunday, September 19, 11 a.m. - Special Sunday Service Message

It sounds so simple when noted activist, theologian, author, documentary filmmaker, and blues/soul/gospel musician Reverend Osagyefo Sekou says it but it belies the incredible power and thoughtfulness of his work. "Wherever people are catching hell, I try and show up," he says of his work, which spans from concerts worldwide to in-person organizing in troubled places.

Join us for a thoughtful and meaningful dialogue with Rev. Sekou as part of our annual Romney Lecture Series. Learn more about Rev. Sekou at: www.revsekou.com

Bearing Witness

SFBC Women's Online Retreat

Saturday, October 23

10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Sadly, because of the COVID risk, the Women's Retreat at Rainbow Lodge has been cancelled for a second year. Disappointing, YES! HOWEVER, it will be possible to spend sacred time with other SFBC women on that same Saturday in October via a Zoom Retreat led by Cherry Johnson. The theme will be BEARING WITNESS, and we will be doing just that -- bearing witness to one another's stories, faith, and lives. Details will follow in the October Spire.



Our Life Together

Straight Talk about “Natural” Gas

Part 3: Gas is not healthy for children and other living things

We have long been told gas is a clean-burning fuel, but in fact it is a source of indoor and outdoor air pollution so toxic it poses health risks, such as asthma and other illnesses. Combustion products include nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide and fine particulates.

The health effects are most pronounced from gas ranges, which release toxic nitrogen dioxide into the air inside a home, sometimes at levels far higher than allowed in outdoor air, according to [a 2020 UCLA study](#). Carbon monoxide and nitrogen dioxide levels are highest in apartments, because they are usually smaller than single-family homes.

Children living in homes with gas stoves are 42 percent more likely to experience asthma symptoms than children in gas-free houses and apartments. One study found that exposure to gas appliances also may be related to impaired cognitive function and a higher risk of attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, [according to this literature review](#) from the Rocky Mountain Institute and other organizations.

Gas furnaces, stoves and hot water heaters also pollute the outdoors. In Washington state, homes and other buildings are the fastest-growing source of carbon pollution, up 50 percent since 1990, causing more pollution than the industrial sector, [the state government reports](#).

[A recent analysis of racial health disparities](#) found that Blacks, Latinx and Asian-Americans are exposed to more emissions of small particulates — the largest environmental cause of mortality — largely due to home gas use and commercial cooking.

Gas is also explosive, as we were reminded when three businesses were completely destroyed and nine firefighters injured in a 2016 gas explosion that occurred in Seattle’s Greenwood neighborhood after businesses had closed for the night.

While wealthier families can afford to decarbonize their homes, it’s more difficult for other households, businesses, and nonprofits in lower-income communities. Even though some of these changes bring long-term savings, the up-front cost can be prohibitive. That’s why Green Buildings Now has created a decarbonization fund ([donate here](#)), and why government action is needed.

If you have questions or comments, please email keithervin@msn.com.

With blessings from these members of Interfaith Climate Action - First Hill:

Joan Bowers, Elizabeth Burton, Cindy Ervin, Keith Ervin, Elizabeth Heath, Sandra Jones, Nora Langan, George Lawson, Harriet Platts, Donna Ward, Jackie Williams, Linda Zaugg

Sunday, September 12
Homecoming Sunday

Homecoming feels extra sweet this year after spending a year apart. Save the date and join us for our annual community Homecoming Celebration

Our Life Together

Seattle Jazz Vespers 2021-2022 Season

Seattle Jazz Vespers, now in our 20th season, returns after a 14-month hiatus with a new season of secular concerts of professional jazz music for those who love jazz, and an inspirational message. Come and hear Seattle's best groups in a concert setting.



Seattle Jazz Vespers is family-friendly, free and open to the public on the first Sunday night of each month (October through June) at 6:00 p.m. No tickets or reservations are needed. Doors open at 5:30 p.m., with free parking in the Polyclinic garage. Come early for best seating. We will be following the church's recommendations for distanced seating, and masks are required to be worn at all times.

The artists will perform one set and during their break a "free-will" offering will be taken to support the musicians, followed by a short nonsectarian inspirational message. The performers' second set will conclude the two-hour vespers concert.

For concert details, the latest concert news or last-minute updates, please visit our website:

SeattleJazzVespers.org

October 3, 2021

*Jacqueline Tabor
Tribute to Nancy Wilson*

November 7, 2021

Max Hatt & Edda Glass

December 5, 2021

Colin Pulkrabek Quartet

January 2, 2022

Rochelle House Quartet

February 6, 2022

Miranda Kitchpanich Band

March 6, 2022

Ranger & the Rearrangers

April 3, 2022

Duende Libre Quintet

May 1, 2022

Sidney Hauser Quartet

June 5, 2022

Dmitri Matheny Quartet

New Dawn Guatemala

As you know, your Outreach Commission has donated recently to Bailey Gatzert School, the Aurora Commons, Facing Homelessness, and All Pilgrims Church. Also again this year we're helping via New Dawn Guatemala to support a hugely important project at Nuevo Amanecer: tree planting and invasive species removal.

The community has recently begun this project as part of a larger effort to provide plentiful, potable water, 24/7. The community will plant trees and other native plants to reduce carbon, beautify the area, and create a pristine corridor that will help lure native bird species back and attract solidarity visitors. As part of this process, they will continue to remove the invasive species, especially the rubber plants which are poisonous to birds, particularly Guatemala's much threatened national bird – the quetzal.

New Dawn Guatemala has connected with local experts who have graciously advised them on the best tree species to plant to attract native birds and absorb carbon. If you have the means and inclination to add your gifts directly, beyond the amazing work you do already through your General Operating and Fellowship gifts at SFBC, go to: newdawn Guatemala.org.

Evergreen Annual Meeting

October 8-9 at First Baptist Church of Olympia

YOU are invited to the Evergreen Association of American Baptist Churches Annual Meeting! Register to attend by September 22 at <https://www.ea-abc.org/annual-meeting-2021.html>. The Keynote Speaker for Friday and Saturday will be Rev. Dr. Cheryl Dudley, who currently serves as the Executive Minister of Metro New York. Additionally, there will be workshops, caucus meetings and the business meeting that determines the direction of our region for the coming year. It is always good to gather with our siblings in Christ! Feel free to be in touch with the pastors with any questions.

Join us for our online Sunday Coffee Hour!

Sunday mornings, after service, our online community still gathers online over Zoom to chat and connect. Continue your online participation in service by hopping onto our online coffee hour!



Fall Programming

- ◆ Monday Night Brave Space Forum: Weekly at 7 p.m.
- ◆ Tuesday Prayer with Pastor Patricia: Weekly at 12:00 p.m.
- ◆ Wednesday night programming (6:30 p.m.) begins on Zoom September 15.
- ◆ Thursday bible study begins at noon on September 9th!

Sunday, September 12 - Homecoming Sunday

Thursday, September 16, 7 p.m. - Diaconate Meeting

Saturday, September 18 & Sunday, September 19 - Romney Lecture Series with Rev. Sekou

Saturday, September 25, 3 p.m. - Chinatown Night Market for all ages

Sunday, September 26, 12:30 p.m. - Open Forum regarding Small Group & Senior Ministries

October 8-9 - Evergreen Annual Meeting

October 15-17 - Young Adults Fall Retreat

Saturday, October 23 - Bearing Witness: Women's Online Retreat

It's Time to Share Your Ideas For Small Group Ministry!

By Margaret Norton-Arnold

During the long-range planning process, many members of the SFBC community emphasized the importance of small groups, and an expanded small group ministry was identified as a high priority for the church. People are eager for more opportunities to get to know one another, engage socially and intellectually, continue to build on our community relationships and increase opportunities for collaboration in social justice ministry.

The Small Group Ministry Task Force has been working since January to make recommendations on ways to expand and further develop SFBC's small group ministry. The Task Force has produced a set of DRAFT recommendations. Now is the most important part – the chance to share our draft recommendations with everyone, and to get your ideas on ways to make our recommendations better.

The DRAFT recommendations have been reviewed by the Executive Committee, the Senior Ministries Task Force, and the Anti-Racism Task Force. We have benefited from their comments and have made changes to our recommendations as a result of their feedback. And now we are opening up the feedback line to anyone who wants to comment on our ideas. After we hear from the full congregation, we will make additional changes to the DRAFT recommendations and submit them to the Diaconate for approval. The goal is to begin offering more small group opportunities in 2022.

Here is how you can review and comment on the Task Force's DRAFT recommendations:

1. **Review the DRAFT document.** The full set of recommendations are eight pages long. A one-page summary is also available. You can find those documents here: <https://www.seattlefirstbaptist.org/long-range-planning.html>
2. **Comment via email.** You can share your comments via email at planning@seattlefirstbaptist.org. The due date for all comments is September 26.
3. **Attend a meeting on September 26.** Right after worship that Sunday, Cherry Johnson will lead a session where you can ask questions and give us your feedback. This meeting will begin at 12:30 and will be held in the Parlor. A light lunch will be served and the meeting will also be live-streamed.

As you read the recommendations, you might consider these questions:

- What is most exciting to you about the Small Group Ministry recommendations? What do you particularly like and agree with?
- Likewise, does the recommendation present any issues of concerns for you? Elements you might disagree with, or that you would like to see changed?
- What types of small groups do you believe will be most interesting and helpful for our congregation? What topics will make you most eager to participate in a small group?
- What else do you want us to know? What is important for an expanded small group ministry at SFBC?

And...THANK YOU! -- from the Small Group Ministry Task Force Members:

Margaret Norton-Arnold, Cherry Johnson, Doug Beasley

Rev. Anita Peebles (pastoral liaison)

Senior Ministry Task Force Presents its Draft Proposal

After eight months of hard work, the Senior Task Force presents a Draft Proposal for an Older Adult Ministry, "The Caring Community," to be incorporated as one of the SFBC ministries, to follow the SFBC Mission Statement and Values. We want to address going deeper in faith, being present to each other and to continue exploring what it means to follow the way of Jesus Christ, engaging in the church and community, and creating a sense of belonging for our older members of SFBC. The following three items are the goals set forth that we wanted to address for this vital church membership.

1. Address an agreed need for the continued spiritual formation of older adults, exploring anti-racism and other expressions of our faith and offer opportunities for continued learning and application of our faith. We would form an Older Adult Ministry, the "Caring Community Ministry," and incorporate it as one of the SFBC ministries.
2. Form a Congregational Care Program to be administered by a Volunteer Coordinator in conjunction with the pastoral staff. Selected, trained and supported volunteer church members would form a team to be in touch with aging members who have temporary or permanent needs to be addressed by a caring community. This will foster a sense of belonging among our congregational members who are unable to regularly attend church.
3. We would like to recruit older members to have a voice in leadership. We as a church will benefit from the great wisdom, experience, vitality and compassion of our older population and it will foster a sense of belonging.

More information about the proposal is available on the SFBC website:

<https://www.seattlefirstbaptist.org/long-range-planning.html>

A forum to ask questions and discuss the proposal will take place after worship on Sunday, September 26. It will be in the Parlor, and live-streamed. A light lunch will be served. You can also submit comments and questions via email to: planning@seattlefirstbaptist.org.

Some questions to consider:

- What types of events would you like to see as part of this ministry?
- How often should events for older members be offered?

Submitted by the Senior Ministry Task Force

Darla O'Brian

Carole Cornell

Merletta Roberts

Atit Marmer

Judy Scott

Pastor Tim Phillips

Don't miss the Open Forum on Sunday, September 26, 12:30 p.m.

This will be a time to share your thoughts, offer feedback, and ask questions.

This open forum will address both Small Groups and Senior Ministry, and all are welcome to attend. A light lunch will be served and we will stream this meeting as well.