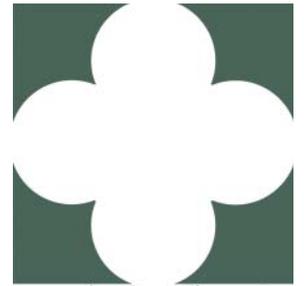


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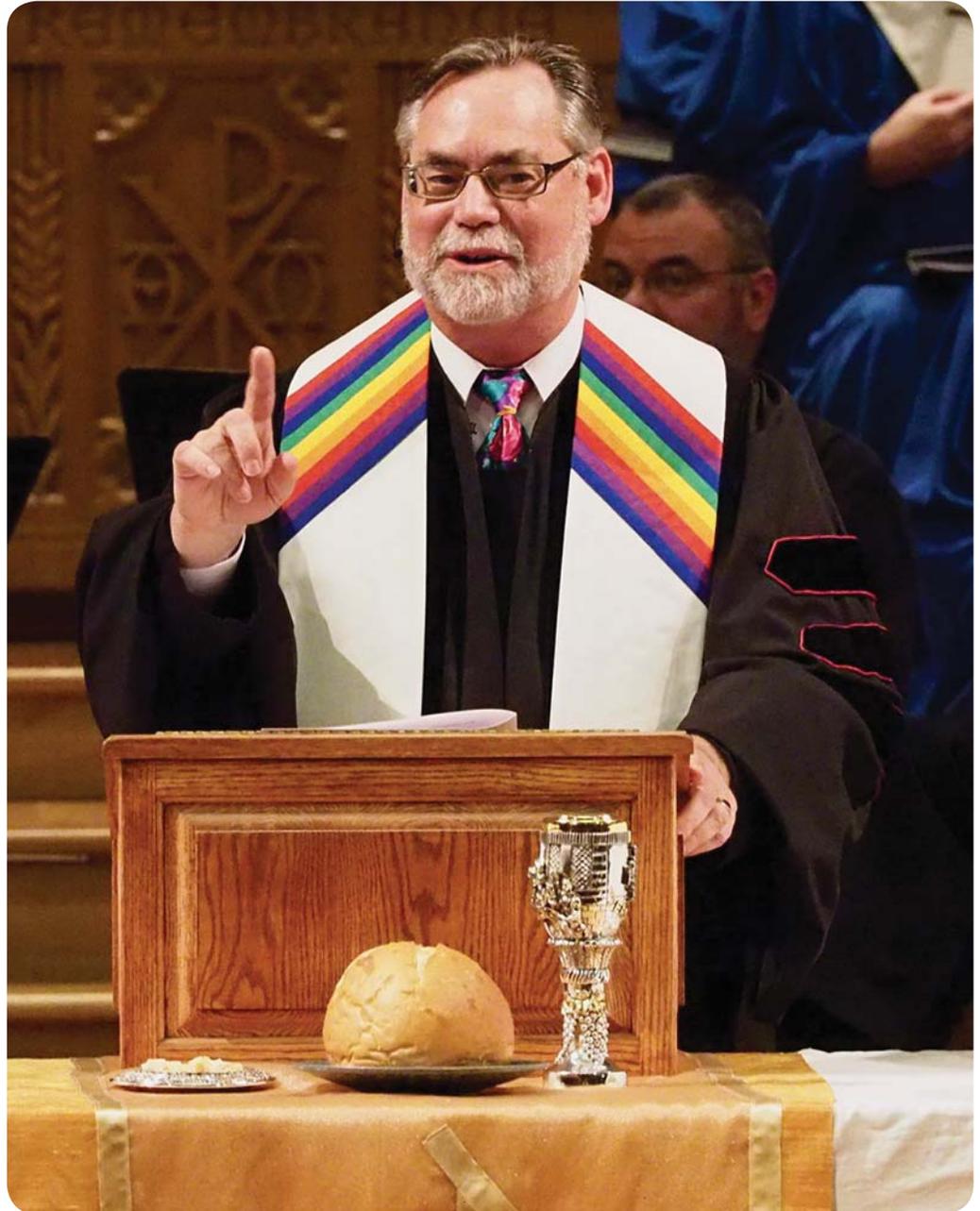
Volume 82 / Number 5

May 2018

Exploring what it means to follow the way of Jesus Christ



seattle first baptist



It Is Finished!

By (Rev. Dr.) Pastor Tim Phillips

It is finished!

These words in John 19, uttered by Jesus from the cross, may seem out of place for Eastertide. But these were the words I was assigned for the Covenant Shores Good

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Friday service a week after my doctoral dissertation was approved by my committee. Chaplain Asimakoupoulos at Covenant Shores couldn't have known the timing but it wasn't lost on me. Being assigned, "It is finished," seemed like a sign.

At the memorial service for Marilyn Pulliam I alluded to a story about the robe I was wearing. It was her husband Walt's robe and Marilyn entrusted it to me when Walt died. It was a great honor that I deeply treasure. But there was one problem. "Marilyn," I said, "I can't wear this robe until I earn those doctoral chevrons on the sleeves; I can't wear it until my doctoral work is finished."

And then she said, "Well, I better see you in it before I die."

That was my challenge. And I am sorry to say, I didn't quite make it. And it crushed me. So, I started bargaining with myself: Well, I did complete all my class work. I did send a draft of my dissertation to my committee before she died. I did *almost* finish.

I wore the robe at that Good Friday service because I wanted to honor the living legacy of Marilyn and Walt and because, as of 5:30 p.m. the previous Friday, my dissertation was approved. I was *mostly* finished. Except there were still edits to do and formatting to fix and the committee wanted me to add a new section called "next steps." This week I am preparing presentations to the faculty and to the Trustees at American Baptist Seminary of the West based on my work. Which is to say that, according to the members of my committee, this process will never be finished. If being "finished" is the criteria, perhaps I should never wear Walt's robe.

On that Good Friday, I did not mean to diminish the crucifixion of Jesus by comparing it to my doctoral process. But I do offer it as an illustration that what it means to be "finished" is slippery. In fact, the enemies of Jesus and the imperial powers hoped that it was finished; that finishing Jesus off would put an end to this resistance movement. And it would make sense that Jesus might say to himself that, in that arc of Psalm 69 and the gospel of John, he had reached the end. Perhaps Jesus was anticipating those words of II Timothy 4.7: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." But it is the testimony of Eastertide that the faith of Jesus is exactly *not* finished even if that particular race is.

When I saw Marilyn the last time I wanted her to hold on until I finished my work so she could see me in that robe – to know that it was finished; that I kept my promise. But her journey was coming to its end and I don't think finishing my work was what she cared about. Marilyn cared about another kind of work. It's the work we are all called to do. It's the work of love and justice that is a long way from finished.

There is that old line about being patient because "God is not finished with me yet." We may complete some things. Our tasks and our lives may come to an end. But it seems like the most important things are never really finished.

*I ended that Good Friday reflection at Covenant Shores with a blessing by Rob Bell that points to Easter:
Love is what God is,
love is why Jesus came,
and love is why he continues to come,
year after year to person after person ...
May you experience this vast,
expansive, infinite, indestructible love
that has been yours all along.
May you discover that this love
is as wide as the sky
and as small as the cracks in your heart
no one else know about.
And may you know,
deep in your bones,
that love wins.*

In the end, I am glad that my doctoral program has been completed and I am grateful for all those who made that possible. But it would be disappointing if the work of identifying the ways our life in God evolves over time or the ways we try to strengthen community or the way we express in worship how we belong to one another and the world was ever really finished. To be finished would mean that the forces of entrenched absolutes and division and spiritual irrelevance had finally won. In the dedication I wrote:

There would be no reason to do any of this without the community that is Seattle First Baptist Church ... I am honored to share this work of love and justice with you and to stand in that pulpit behind which my spiritual mentors have stood. I hope you know what a blessing you are not only to me but to the world. I dedicate this work to you and to the memory of Walt and Marilyn Pulliam who inspired and stood by me through many years of struggle.

This project may be completed but, inasmuch as it and our life together is an act of love, God is not finished with us yet. And, as the message of Eastertide reminds us, "it is finished" is always and only a beginning.

Come Celebrate Pastor Tim's Graduation!

Mark your calendars for Sunday, June 10. We'll be holding a special luncheon after worship to celebrate Pastor Tim's successful completion of his Doctor of Ministry program. He'll be receiving his D.Min. from the American Baptist Seminary of the West on May 19, 2018. Tim's accomplishment is a tremendous one – more than five years of study and the successful defense of his doctoral dissertation, "Evolutionary Theology and Revolutionary Worship: Worship as Orientation, Disorientation, and Reorientation in the Postmodern World" (whew!). Join us in congratulating Pastor Tim on June 10.

Congratulations, Rev. Anita Peebles!

What a wonderful outpouring of love was felt by all at the Ordination of Anita Peebles at Glendale Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee on April 15th. Bob Sittig brought greetings and gifts from our congregation which were shared during this service. We were recognized as the church that had the "immense good sense" to call Anita as Associate Pastor for Next Generation Ministries.



Adult Learning Faith Journeys begin May 6

By Steve Smith

This year the popular faith journey series will feature nine people from our congregation telling personal stories about their faith. We invite you to come to hear these narratives that can be memorable, touching, and occasionally even shocking. These classes begin 9:30 AM in the Parlor every Sunday from May 6 until July 1. The presenters will be:

5/6/18	Joanne Wright	6/10/18	Carroll Boone
5/13/18	Tim Dean	6/17/18	Patrick Green
5/20/18	Rebecca Alder	6/24/18	Imogene Williams
5/27/18	Sandra Jones	7/1/18	Linda Zaugg
6/3/18	Barbara Gutierrez		

Turkey: How Democracy Dies

May 9 Wednesday dinner, educational program, and fundraiser

By Paul Roby



Join us on May 9 at 6 p.m. for a special Wednesday night dinner. Our Turkish friends from the Pacifica Institute will present a special appeal, to help the thousands of their friends in the faith-based civil society movement called *Hizmet* (literally, "service"), who are being systematically oppressed in their home country.

The Hizmet Movement, inspired by the teachings of an internationally-recognized Islamic scholar named Fethullah Gülen, sought to bring interfaith dialog, and a ministry of education and compassion to the world, and a free and democratic society to Turkey, working within the systems of government and in accord with Turkish law. They have been good friends to the Seattle First Baptist Church congregation, serving multiple interfaith *Iftar* dinners, sharing educational presentations about Islam, and joining us in mourning the tragic Orlando nightclub shootings, among other things.

Now, bitter political battles within Turkey, coupled with military conflicts on its borders, have given rise to an authoritarian government, ruling by emergency decree. After an abortive military coup attempt was blamed on the Hizmet movement, their followers and anyone thought to be associated with them have been targeted for purges, comprising arrests, detention, prosecution on trumped-up charges of "supporting terrorism," and loss of professional jobs. News media outlets, universities, and social service agencies have been shut down by the government. Many are fleeing their homes, to seek asylum abroad.

On May 9 our friends from the Pacifica Institute will offer a presentation, testimony, and discussion of how a nominally-Islamist authoritarianism rose in their previously-democratic nation, and how it affected those who had participated in activism, or those thought to have been supporters of the movement. Their presentation, *Turkey: How Democracy Dies*, is a chilling foretaste of what could happen in any democratic nation, where forces of nationalist extremism gain power, and consolidate it through fear, xenophobia, and the systematic dismantling of democratic processes.

Our friends will invite us to question and discuss their experiences, and offer us an opportunity to individually support aid and relief efforts for the purge survivors still in Turkey, by donating to their relief fund. Donations are strictly optional. All are welcome to join the dinner and program, especially those interested in how democracy is under threat in these troubled times.

Wednesday Dinner Programs Coming

By Pastor Tim Phillips

Over the last year, our regular Wednesday Dinners have primarily been times to eat together and to share conversation. It has provided a great opportunity to get to know one another and to “commune” with each other in the widest sense. In May and June, however, we will have some focused time of programming.

See the article by Paul Roby about the special evening on May 9. Making it through the traffic on a Wednesday night can be difficult but please do make an effort to join our friends from Turkey facing threats that are not unrelated to the current political climate in the U.S.

In June, there are two very special Wednesday programs as well: June 13, a “Gratitude Concert” by our choral interns as they complete their program year with us and June 20, an opportunity to hear and to sing new Taize-style contemplative music created by Rachael Weasley. You can hear her music on YouTube. Rachael is the partner of Rev. David Weasley, a young American Baptist pastor, currently serving Bellingham’s First Congregational UCC Church.

Please make plans now to join us for these special evenings together.

Worship in May

By Pastor Tim Phillips

Coming up in May, worship will include some very important messages and celebrations in our life together.

May 6 brings the voices of Diverse Harmony, the country’s first queer-straight youth chorus, to worship. We will also be re-dedicating our sanctuary piano which has undergone some refurbishing. April Kuhr and pianists from the congregation will lead us in worship that day. Following worship, Diverse Harmony holds its annual Benefit Lunch in Fellowship Hall.

Mothers’ Day, May 13, Lynn Gaertner-Johnston, recently returned from a language study program in Central America, is preaching. She writes:

Single and 43 years old, I adopted an infant, Eva Cristina, from Guatemala. I did this because I felt I had a lot of motherly love to give, and I wanted to give it. It also helped that I had the financial resources and support system to make the dream happen. Not everyone has that good fortune. Mother’s Day is--or could be--a celebration of that motherly love and deep caring we each have to offer. But it can also be a hard day for many of us: those of us whose mothers have died or become incapacitated, those whose mothers were never particularly loving, and those who long to love and be loved in caring, supportive relationships. I asked Pastor Tim if I could deliver a Mother’s Day reflection that embraced the mother in all of us and celebrated our individual and communal love. I wrote a draft of “We Are All Mothers, Including You” before leaving for Guatemala in March. It builds on Matthew 12:46-50 (“Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?”), as well as on the children’s book “Are You My Mother?”, my experiences as a mother and daughter, and the story of a spaceship mom. Please join in celebrating the loving, motherly presence within all of us on May 13.

Also on that day we will remember Jean Reges Burn who passed away at the end of April and was a civil war researcher, puppeteer, and mother.

Pentecost, May 20, we celebrate the power of the Spirit and the promise that “I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters will prophesy; your young ones will see visions and your old ones dream dreams.” Theologian in Residence the Rev. Dr. Patricia Hunter will be preaching and we hope to be welcoming new members into our life together.

Trinity Sunday/Memorial Weekend, May 27, Rev. David Bloom will be preaching. David is a retired director of the Church Council of Greater Seattle, a social justice advocate, the founder of the Rauschenbusch Center for Spirit and Action, and a member of Seattle First Baptist.

Senior Adult Ministries – An Update

By Cherry Johnson

In the wake of Pastor David Kile’s retirement, a task force called the Senior Adult Advisory Group has been meeting to discuss the needs of Seniors in the congregation and to identify and imagine ways to address those needs (without increasing the workloads of the current pastoral staff).

In addition, significant input from members of the congregation was received at a Senior Adult Luncheon on March 18th, during which we looked at everything from pastoral care to programming and brainstormed what intergenerational activities might look like.

An identified group of people will begin taking on some of the pastoral care ministry by making hospital/home visits and phone calls to Seniors in need, and guidelines are currently being developed for this.

Senior Luncheons will continue to be planned, and this year's Senior Retreat will go on as scheduled in July, with Cherry Johnson providing leadership. If you have particular ideas, questions or concerns about Senior Adult ministries at SFBC, please drop an e-mail or note to Sue Ross, Church Nurse, who will see that they are addressed to the appropriate person or group.

Music Sunday is June 3



Music Sunday will feature the Seattle First Baptist choir and guest instrumentalists exploring the role of music in our lives. Music is a powerful force with a universal language that serves as an outlet to suffering people as well as an ally in their fight for justice, and Music Sunday will highlight this specific role of music in the fight for social justice.

Plan to join us on June 3 for this celebration of music, life, and justice.

Come to Peace Camp This Summer

By Roxana Harper

**Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America
2018 Summer Conference, July 2-7 at Keuka College, Keuka Park, NY USA**

BPFNA gathers, equips and mobilizes people of faith from across North America and the world for the work of peace rooted in justice. This annual conference is for everyone who longs for the spirituality, inspiration, skills, knowledge, and community to support a life of peace rooted in justice.

If you are interested in creating a change, we invite you to join our new pastor, Anita Peebles, in exploring the theme of "Decentering Power and Privilege: Becoming A Peculiar People" (1 Peter 2:9-10) for a week of inspiration and training that will empower our personal and corporate work for justice.



Travel expenses of your own choosing and cost:

Registration: \$425 or \$325 or \$225 — what you can afford

Campus fee: \$30

Meals for the week: \$115

Housing from dorm to apartment: \$100 - \$250

Late fee: \$10 if registration postmarked after June 8

Register by June 8, 2018; total payment is due by June 22, 2018.

Social Justice Ministries of SFBC has encouraged and assisted a number of members over the past 20 years to attend this annual "Peace Camp". Please contact Sandra Jones (SJM Convener) for a registration form and information on financial assistance or register online at: bpfna.org/gathering/summer-conference. Sandra's contact information is available through the church office.

For more information, check out this video about Peace Camp from Pastor Anita Peebles:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/12vspj7tL8DByejcdCSnRH49FNIIOWqim/view>

Faith + Ecology Film Series May 14 and 21

By Keith Ervin, Joan Bowers and Imogene Williams

Since members of Seattle First Baptist Church and Bet Alef Meditative Synagogue came together three years ago to address the climate crisis, we have worked with people from other concerned congregations and faiths. One partnership that is continuing to develop is with our First Hill neighbor, St. James Cathedral.

Together, the St. James Cathedral Care for Creation Committee and our own Interfaith Climate Action - First Hill have planned a five-part film series. We invite you to join us for these evenings that will begin with a free vegetarian meal, followed by a film screening and a discussion of the movie.

The first two films will be shown in May at SFBC. We will go to St. James for three more events in September and October.

On **Monday, May 14**, we will watch "An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power." This 2017 sequel to "An Inconvenient Truth" features Al Gore's powerful witness to the growing impacts of climate change, and his role in the global movement to protect future generations.

On **Monday, May 21**, we will watch "Being the Change: A New Kind of Climate Documentary." This 2018 film documents climate scientist Peter Kalmus's realization that he was contributing to the growing climate chaos, and his family's lifestyle changes that reduced their carbon footprint to one-tenth of what it had been.

Both events will take place in Fellowship Hall and the Parlor, starting at 6 p.m. with dinner.

We hope you will join us, in fellowship with our brothers and sisters from St. James and Bet Alef, to break bread together, learn something new, and process what we've learned.

We'll announce details later for the St. James events on Sept. 25, Oct. 2 and Oct. 9, when we'll screen the films "Sustainable," "Sonic Sea" and "Return of the River."

SFBC is Turning 150!

Our church was founded in the early days of the Seattle settlement, and our 150th Anniversary is approaching. Work is underway on one way to commemorate the event – a historical book about SFBC. Are you interested in exploring other ways to celebrate our community birthday? If you would like to be part of a fun brainstorming group on how to celebrate SFBC's 150th Anniversary please contact Sami Hoag. Her contact information is available from the church office.

ABWM News

By Shirley Wilkinson

Friendship Circle is having a donation drive to help support Elizabeth Gregory Home, a day shelter and transitional home in the University District, for women who are at-risk and homeless. Karen Hundreiser, with Companis, spoke to us at our April meeting and we were moved to want to help. Inclusive, respectful, compassionate care is their mission. They offer access to basic services, clothing, food, hygiene, counseling, life skills classes, housing referral, and employment search support. You are invited to participate! Please bring AA batteries, twin size sheets, \$5 Starbucks cards, and women's socks to the chapel on May 13 or either of the two Sundays following.

Next Friendship Circle meeting – May 8 at 5:30 pm in Fridell Lounge

Next Mt. Carmel Circle meeting – May 21 at 12 noon at Marge Edwards' new home in Edmonds

Book Group on “Active Hope”

By Keith Ervin

My generation grew up under the cloud of a nuclear apocalypse. We practiced air-raid drills in elementary school. In junior high I wondered when disaster might strike. I felt helpless to do anything about the situation. The Cold War confrontations of the Sixties eased, and we have, fortunately, avoided nuclear catastrophe.

Today we confront an equally serious -- and arguably greater -- threat. Our unabated use of fossil fuels has already fueled killer heat waves, famines, wildfires, “superstorms,” and the fatal bleaching of coral reefs. We have gone more than halfway toward a red line that scientists have told us we must not cross: global warming of 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit.

One way or another, each of us confronts this reality in some way: with denial, despair, or a spiritually grounded response. I personally have experienced all three responses. At times I feel there’s no use in our even trying to save the human race and the miraculous web of life; we’ve already lost the battle. Sometimes I want to shake people and shout, “Do you know what’s happening?!”

How do we emotionally and spiritually address the greatest and most frightening challenge of our time? That’s the fundamental question that Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone pose in their book, *Active Hope: How to Face the Mess We’re in without Going Crazy*.

The authors write, “So this is where we begin -- by acknowledging that our times confront us with realities that are painful to face, difficult to take in, and confusing to live with. Our approach is to see this as the starting point of an amazing journey that strengthens us and deepens our aliveness. The purpose of this journey is to find, offer, and receive the gift of Active Hope.”

Interfaith Climate Action - First Hill is sponsoring a book group in which we will discuss and respond to Active Hope. You are invited to participate when we meet six times at 7 p.m. in the Bet Alef Meditative Synagogue Living Room:

Monday, June 4; Monday, June 18; Monday, July 2; Monday, July 23; Monday, Aug. 6; and Sunday, Aug. 19.

Don’t stay stuck in denial or despair. Learn with us how to practice Active Hope. RSVP to Keith Ervin. His contact information is available from the church office.

20-Somethings Small Group Forming

Are you in your 20’s? This spring and summer we’re launching a new small group with activities beginning in May. If you’re interested in receiving news about upcoming events for this group email Pastor Jennifer: jennifer@SeattleFirstBaptist.org

Raising White Kids: An Anti-Racism Conversation for All of Us

May 24, 7-9 p.m. at The Well, 1606 5th Ave W Seattle, WA 98119 www.thewellqueenanne.org

Rev. Dr. Jennifer Harvey will be the speaker at The Well for this event. Tickets are available on Brown Paper Tickets for \$50, \$25 and \$15. Scholarships available upon inquiry. <https://raisingwhitekids.bpt.me>

Powerful and difficult conundrums exist when it comes to raising white children in a society that is one of the most racially diverse in the world, while also being full of racial tension and inequity. Developing strategies for raising “healthy” (by definition, “antiracist”) white kids is a critical investment in the well-being and futures of all of our children.

This plenary will map common conundrums relative to nurturing anti-racist white identity; conundrums that impact adults of every racial/ethnic group in the U.S., as much as they do our young people. Whether you have or were a white kid or just have relationships with people who used to be or have white kids—the conversation this lecture will enable us to have is for everyone.

Our Own Sarah Burkhart to Perform at Seattle Jazz Vespers

Sunday, May 6, 2018 at 6 p.m.

Dave Desrochers and the Seattle Jazz Quartet

Seattle Jazz Vespers has invited Dave and the Seattle Jazz Quartet to premiere at our May concert. This event promises excellent entertainment for those of us who love live performances in a concert setting.

Joining Dave Desrochers on sax and flute are Jeremy Bacon on piano, Paul Gabrielson on bass, and Zeppy Zittle on drums. As a special treat, also joining the quartet are two outstanding jazz vocalists, Joanne Klein and Sarah Burkhart.

May Calendar of Events

Wednesday, May 2

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

Sunday, May 6 Easter VI and Piano Rededication Sunday

- 9:30 a.m. Adult Learning - Parlor
- 10:15 a.m. Family Fellowship Hour in Youth Lounge, 3rd Floor
- 11 a.m. Worship and Communion with Pastor Tim Phillips preaching on Psalm 98. Special music featuring our recently-refurbished piano and several pianists from our congregation. Diverse Harmony and our Sanctuary Choir will also sing during worship.
- Following Worship - Diverse Harmony annual fundraiser - Fellowship Hall
- 6 p.m. Seattle Jazz Vespers Presents: Dave Desrochers and the Seattle Jazz Quartet - Sanctuary

Wednesday, May 9

- 6 p.m. Community Dinner - Fellowship Hall
- 6:45 p.m. Program featuring representatives from the Turkish community in Seattle, *How a Democracy Dies*. The evening will include a fundraiser. Please come and support our Turkish sisters and brothers who are struggling under an increasingly repressive regime.
- 7 p.m. Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, May 13 Mother's Day, Ascension Day

- 9:30 a.m. Adult Learning - Parlor
- 10:15 a.m. Family Fellowship Hour in Youth Lounge, 3rd Floor
- 11 a.m. Worship with Lynn Gaertner-Johnston preaching on Matthew 12.46-50, *We Are All Mothers, Including You*.

Wednesday, May 16

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

Thursday, May 17

- 7 p.m. Diaconate - Parlor

Sunday, May 20 Pentecost

- 9:30 a.m. Adult Learning - 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, May 23

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

Sunday, May 27 Memorial Sunday, Trinity Sunday

- 9:30 a.m. Adult Learning - Parlor
- 10:15 a.m. Family Fellowship Hour in Youth Lounge, 3rd Floor
- 11 a.m. Worship with Rev. David Bloom preaching

Monday, May 28 Memorial Day

Office Closed

Wednesday, May 30

- 6 p.m. Community Dinner - Fellowship Hall
- 7 p.m. Choir Rehearsal - last Wednesday rehearsal of the season

Saturday, June 2

- 1 p.m. Memorial Service for John Eric Rolfstad

Sunday, June 3 Music Sunday

- 9:30 a.m. Adult Learning - Parlor
- 10:15 a.m. Family Fellowship Hour in Youth Lounge, 3rd Floor
- 11 a.m. Worship and Communion - featuring our musicians
- 6 p.m. Seattle Jazz Vespers - Sanctuary



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SFBC Is For the Birds



Our beautiful sanctuary has played host to a number of interesting programs recently. Last week, the program BirdNote was recorded here. Sponsored by Seward Park Audubon, the program brought Barbara Earl Thomas and Dr. Drew Lanham to the stage to record live. Michael Stein served as master of ceremony for the evening and warmed-up the capacity crowd. BirdNote’s Mary McCann moderated the conversation that included special guest Doria, an avid birder and middle school student. The inspiring conversation looked at issues of including more people looking at birds, and the many ways people encounter our avian friends. The memorable evening concluded with Michael Stein returning to the stage. He led a crowd-based recording of two episodes of BirdNote.

Thank you to our staff who make programs like this possible. We appreciate all that you do! And thanks to Harriet Platts for passing on this information.

Online Extras

Several times a month we publish thought-provoking articles from members of our community in our blog. Check it out: <http://www.seattlefirstbaptist.org/our-blog>

