

# THE SPIRE

## LENT 2023



### THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF SEATTLE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH VOLUME 87, NO. 2

Dear SFBC Family,

This year's Lenten theme is "Embracing Our Humanity." Honestly, as I write this on Valentine's Day, humanity seems particularly tender and vulnerable. In the past seven days, the church has gained three more saints; my friend gave birth to a healthy baby boy; gun violence claimed more lives at Michigan State University, a place where I grew up and where my parents have worked for almost 40 years; a beloved colleague in American Baptist life completed suicide; and a train full of toxic chemicals derailed and burst into flame in eastern Ohio, causing an airborne toxic event, the consequences of which we have not even begun to grasp. This and more and more and more. Beloveds, it can be so tiring to be human. It can be so beautiful to be human. It can be so complicated to be human. But, dear ones, know that you are so loved. You are so precious. You are needed in this world, and it is a gift to do life alongside you.

As we travel through the Lenten season, we will be engaging with the wisdom of Cole Arthur Riley, the creator and liturgist behind "Black Liturgies," a space on social media where she shares spiritual practices, breath prayers, quotes from Black literature and tools for embodied spirituality focusing on Black bodies. Ms. Riley is also on staff with Cornell University's Office of Spirituality and Meaning Making, and she works with The Center for Dignity and Contemplation. We will be reading together and shaping our worship around the themes in Ms. Riley's 2022 book *This Here Flesh: Spirituality, Liberation, and the Stories That Make Us*. Each Sunday, we will focus on the stories of Jesus in this season through the lenses of chapters in *This Here Flesh*, such as Dignity, Place, Lament, Belonging, and Memory. Our Lenten calendar

this year includes a reading guide for those following along in the book, as well as a daily quote to ponder as you go about your life. On Sunday mornings during Lent, we will have the opportunity to gather in the parlor and discuss themes and quotes from the book as well as share our own life stories together.

Please make a plan to get the book for yourself so you can follow along and dive into Ms. Riley's wisdom and writing. There will be a few copies available in the church office. Ms. Riley is inspired by Audre Lorde, Octavia Butler, James Baldwin, Thomas Merton, Toni Morrison, Maya Angelou, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Julian of Norwich. (learn more at [colearthurriley.com](http://colearthurriley.com)) Ms. Riley will be a Romney Lecturer in June, and so I encourage you to explore her work as we prepare to be good hosts and welcome her to SFBC.

Beloved church, your humanity is beautiful and amazing. I pray that with each day in this Lenten season, you will find ways to live expansively, inviting wonder and awe into your day, breathing deeply and fully, and spending time appreciating the breadth of life on this planet.

I love you, and I love being your pastor.

—Rev. Anita

*Your mental health is important. If you or a loved one are contemplating suicide, please reach out and contact the suicide hotline by dialing 9-8-8.*

## For the Young-in-Age and Young-at-Heart in Lent

During Lent, each Sunday during the Time with Children in worship we will hear a Godly Play story! All kids and youth are invited to come forward for the story and to share wondering with each other. Then, those who want to can go to the Wiggle Room to pick up some “work” that they might do with the story for the rest of worship. Kids are always welcome to stay in the sanctuary and sit in the pews or on the floor towards the front.

As a reminder, all kids who use the Wiggle Room must be accompanied by an adult. Nursery is available from 9:30-12:00 on Sundays! Our volunteer Tia McLoughlin will be staffing the nursery—so please use it if you need it!

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### Holy Week Services and Events

Good Friday Worship will be Friday, April 7 at 7pm in the Sanctuary. This will be a service in the “tenebrae” style, with a gradual extinguishing of candles as we read the story of Jesus’ last moments. This will be a time of sacred quiet, a time set aside for holy remembering, and a time to embrace the grief and lament that are part of what make us human.

Easter Bunny Meet and Greet. Saturday, April 8 from 10am-12pm on the corner of Harvard and Seneca! Kids of all ages welcome to take a photo with the Easter bunny, do a craft and share Easter treats!

Easter Sunday Worship will be April 9 at 11am in sanctuary! Join us for a joyful and liberative Easter Worship, where we will tell stories and sing songs and remind each other to practice resurrection!

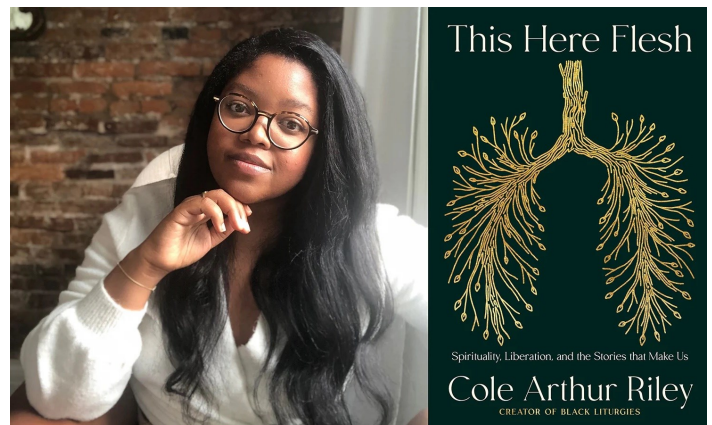


### Join Us 9:30am Sunday Mornings For Coffee Chats

Every Sunday morning during Lent (February 26-April 2) we will be gathering informally with Pastor Anita and others in the Parlor for coffee, continental breakfast and conversation around tables. The prompts for our “chats” will come from the book that we as a congregation are following throughout Lent—*This Here Flesh: Spirituality, Liberation, and the Stories That Make Us* by Cole Arthur Riley. Riley will be our Romney Lecture Series speaker in June and will lead us in worship while she is here. This is our chance to become acquainted with her through her book. If you haven’t read the book yet, get a copy from your favorite bookseller or the public library (if that is prohibitive for you, contact [smallgroups@seattlefirstbaptist.org](mailto:smallgroups@seattlefirstbaptist.org) or call the church office [206-325-6051] and we will see that you get a copy). You will be challenged, inspired, blown away. This is not one of those overly dense theological treatises. It is thoroughly approachable and absorbing. You just may find yourself wanting to read it again!

Even if you do not read the book, you will find plenty to talk about as we explore brief passages each Sunday morning. Make this one of your Lenten practices!

### Lenten Coffee Chats Sundays 9:30-10:30am in the Parlor Coffee and Continental Breakfast Served



**Songs of Freedom  
with Larry Green  
New Small Group During Lent**



*Photo by Lupe Carlos III*

Perhaps you know him as the occasional soloist who knocks your socks off. Or the guy who led Time With Children at worship recently. Or the man who wowed us at Jazz Vespers in early February. Or maybe you served with him on the Long Range Planning Team or have sat with him and had one of those deeply meaningful conversations interspersed with such humor that it was hard to leave.

That's Larry Green. And in the midst of completing a new musical project, fixing up his house to put it on the market and preparing for an international move, he has agreed to lead a small group called Songs of Freedom. This is not one to miss, so put it on your calendars now. On Zoom for four consecutive Thursday evenings during Lent, this group will find Larry leading us through the musical landscape of Black Christian America. Be sure to open your emails on Thursday to check out our e-newsletter *This Week* for more details.

**Songs of Freedom  
Thursdays 7-8pm on Zoom  
February 23-March 16**

**<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89542327834>**

**New Group to Meet at Optimism Brewing Co.**



*Marv Kvamme*

Another new Small Groups Ministry leader—Marv Kvamme—has stepped up to offer a time for gathering in a relaxed atmosphere, having fun and getting to know one another better. He chose Wednesday evening (once a month on the 2nd Wednesday) 5:30-6:30pm specifically because many people come for choir rehearsal at 7pm and this provides an opportunity to socialize before that. However, the group is open to the choir-curious and anyone else as well. Optimism Brewing Co is just east of the church on the corner of Broadway and Union. Both alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages are available for purchase. They do not serve food, but you are welcome to bring your own meal or snacks to share. Put it in your calendar!

**SFBC Optimism Hour  
2nd Wednesday of Each Month 5:30-6:30pm  
At Optimism Brewing Co.**

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**Outreach Work Party  
Save the Date**

The next big Outreach Work Party will be Saturday May 13, Noon to 4pm. Everyone is welcome!

## Embracing Our Humanity:

### Lent with Seattle First Baptist Church 2023

During the Lenten season, we are engaging with the wisdom in *This Here Flesh: Spirituality, Liberation and the Stories That Make Us* by Cole Arthur Riley.

If you choose to read the whole book as your Lenten practice, you are invited to read along with other church members according to the reading guide provided here. Each Sunday morning from 9:30-10:30, you are invited to gather in the church Parlor to discuss the weekly theme, important quotations, and to share our stories with each other (over coffee, of course!)

If reading a whole book is too much, that's ok! A quote is provided for each day. This quote can be an invitation to prayer, meditation, artistic expression or a conversation-starter. However you feel inspired to be present with the daily quote is ok. You may wish to journal or take a photo each day while pondering these quotes.

In the introduction to the book, Cole Arthur Riley writes that "contemplative spirituality is a fidelity to beholding the divine in all things. In the field, on the walk home, sitting under the oak tree that hugs my house. A sacred attention." (p. X)

May you find the spaciousness within yourself to pay sacred attention during this holy season.

**2/22 Ash Wednesday** Dignity and Place; Joel 2:1, 12-17, 21-22; pgs. 3-10 "How can anyone who is made to bear likeness to the maker of the cosmos be anything less than glory? This is inherent dignity." (p.7)

**2/23** pgs. 10-15 "Some theologies say it is not an individual but a collective people who bear the image of God. I quite like this, because it means we need a diversity of people to reflect God more fully. Anything less and the image becomes pixelated and grainy, still beautiful but lacking clarity. If god really is three parts in one like they say, it means that God's wholeness is in a multitude." (p.7)

**2/24** pgs. 16-20 "Place has always been the thing that made us. We cannot escape being formed by it." (p.18)

**2/25** pgs. 20-27 "I have known that my devotion to this place rests on my willingness to release any pretense that it belongs to me more than it is making me." (p.26)

**2/26 Lent I** Wonder and Calling; Genesis 2:7-9, 15-17, 21-25; 3:1-7 "What is shalom but dignity stretched out like a blanket over the cosmos?" (p.8)

**2/27** pgs. 28-30 "I think awe is an exercise, both a doing and a being." (p.31)

**2/28** pgs. 30-35 "To encounter the holy in the ordinary is to find God in the liminal—in spaces where we might subconsciously exclude it, including the sensory moments that are often illegibly spiritual." (p.33)

**3/1** pgs. 35-38 "When we wonder, we loosen the cords that restrain our love. And the people most in love with a thing are prone to become its fiercest protectors." (p.38)

**3/2** pgs. 38-41 "To be a human who resembles the divine is to become responsible for the beautiful, for its observance, its protection, and its creation. It is a challenge to believe that this right is ours." (p.40)

**3/3** pgs. 42-48 "Some callings come to you only in memory. Some come only on the mouth of someone you trust. Some don't need to be heard in order to be lived. And not all calls come from outside of you." (p.44)

**3/4** pgs. 48-55 "Don't forget this: nothing is truly ever ordinary." (p.55)

**3/5 Lent II** Body and Belonging; Matthew 14:13-21 "I don't know much about heaven, but I have no reason to believe it won't be made right here." (p.58)

**3/6** pgs. 56-60 "We were never meant to dismember our selfhoods. My face is my soul is my blood is my glory." (p.60)

**3/7** pgs. 60-64 "I cannot see the face of God by rejecting my own." (p.68)

**3/8** pgs. 65-68 "For me, the story of God becoming body is only matched by God's submission to the body of a woman. That the creator of the cosmos would choose to rely on an embodied creation." (p.57)

**3/9** pgs. 69-73 "We were made for belonging. I don't need a verse in Genesis to tell me that it is not good for one to be alone. Not always." (p.70)

**3/10** pgs. 73-75 "No one ever perceives the doorkeeper as needing an invitation themselves." (p.75)

**3/11** pgs. 76-81 "At the intersection of belonging and choice, you'll often find friendship." (p.78)

**3/12 Lent III** Fear, Lament and Rage; Matthew 5:21-26 "We don't just welcome you or accept you; we need you. We are insufficient without you." (p.73)

**3/13** pgs. 82-90 "...and if God himself has been afraid, I have to believe he is tender with our own fear." (p.85)

**3/14** pgs. 90-94 "I have never felt closer to God than when he has tears running down his face. I don't delight in this, but by this, I know that I am seen." (p.98)

**3/15** pgs. 95-99 "We should not blame ourselves for hoping." (p.89)

**3/16** pgs. 99-106 “Our hope can be only as deep as our lament is. And our lament as deep as our hope.” (p.101)

**3/17** pgs. 107-111 “I have no interest in protecting the ignorance of the violent.” (p.110)

**3/18** pgs. 111-119 “It is easy to mistake oppressive anger for holy anger when you believe that you are worthy of more than someone else, that your dignity depends on this.” (p.118)

**3/19 Lent IV** Justice and Repair; Matthew 12:46-50 “We cannot trust a society that makes judgements on the morality of a person without taking personal responsibility for how its own morality has instigated the conditions that call for such desperate decision-making.” (p.121-122)

**3/20** pgs. 120-124 “This is a world that demonizes those who transgress the system but has great sympathy for the system itself.” (p.122)

**3/21** pgs. 124-130 “Seeing a person or piece of creation trampled should always disrupt something in us. It should always do something to the soul. And when you trace that trampling back across generations and systems and powers, a quiet sorrow is born in you.” (p.128)

**3/22** pgs. 130-134 “Everything should be called by its name.” (p.134)

**3/23** pgs. 135-138 “When wounders, finally becoming exhausted of their dominion, dismantle their delusion of heroism or victimhood and begin to tell the truth of their offense, a sacred rest becomes available to them.” (p.137)

**3/24** pgs. 138-143 “Reconciliation cannot be forced if it is to last.” (p.142)

**3/25** pgs. 143-146 “The most beautiful thing about the human body to me is regeneration.” (p.144)

**3/26 Lent V** Rest; Matthew 26:6-13 “To rest is a special kind of power.” (p.148)

**3/27** pgs. 147-151 “To cultivate habits of rest, we must discern what noise has found a way to penetrate our soul.” (p.150)

**3/28** pgs. 151-154 “Rest is not the reward of our liberation, nor something we lay hold of once we are free. It is the path that delivers us there.” (p.151)

**3/29** “If Christ walked away, so can I.” (p.153)

**3/30** pgs. 154-157 “We are expected to feel deeply lucky and even indebted to a society that allows us to work, even if that work cannot satisfy our most basic needs.” (p.152)

**3/31** “You were never meant to prove your dignity.” (p.157)

**4/1** pg. 157 “As we move toward liberation, it is our responsibility to do what we can to liberate everything in our path, even the earth beneath us.” (p.133)



## CONCERT SPOTLIGHT

**Nelda Swiggett  
in Megabopolis**

**March 5, 2023 at 6:00pm**

Travis Ranney—tenor saxophone, Michael Van Bebber—trumpet, Clif Swiggett—

trombone/bongos, Nelda Swiggett—piano/vocal, Max Wood—drums, and Michael Glynn—bass

Swingin', well-crafted arrangements and tight ensemble work produce a rich “big band” sound from this jazz sextet’s three-horn front line. Megabopolis is led by OA2 recording artist and award-winning composer Nelda Swiggett, and performs many of her original compositions and arrangements.

Megabopolis features some of Seattle’s finest jazz musicians, passionate about their craft, who have collectively performed at many top clubs and festivals throughout the Northwest and beyond, including the Earshot Jazz Festival, the Port Townsend Jazz Festival, Bumbershoot, Dimitriou’s Jazz Alley, the North Sea Jazz Festival, the Montreux Jazz Festival, and the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., to name a few.

Seattle Jazz Vespers presents secular concerts of professional jazz music, for those who love jazz, with an inspirational message, the first Sunday of every month, October through June at 6:00pm.



## SMALL GROUPS SCHEDULE for LENT



### SUNDAYS

**Lenten Book Study—This Here Flesh** 9:30-10:30am in the Parlor, February 26-April 2 (*see separate article*)

**Gay Men's Group** 2nd Sunday of the month 12:30-1:30pm in the Parlor (*for all men who identify as gay*)

**Friendship Circle** 2nd Sunday of the month 2:00-3:00pm on Zoom (*women coming together for fellowship, spiritual support and a focus on justice*)  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87396272439>

**Reproductive Justice and Faith** 1:30-3:00pm in Fridell and on Zoom (*open to all genders and beliefs; learn about justice issues related to reproductive freedom, and how this all relates to faith; find out about actions you can take*)  
<https://washington.zoom.us/j/98270878634>

**Interfaith Climate Action** 4th Sunday of the month, 6:30-8:00pm on Zoom (*for those who wish to learn more/do more about the climate emergency*)  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9831359120>

### MONDAYS

**Brave Space** 1st & 3rd Mondays of the month, 6:00-7:00pm on Zoom (*for white-identified folks who wish to learn more about racism, the systems that support it, and skills for addressing it*)  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81180960514>

### TUESDAYS

**Prayer Group** Weekly on Tuesdays 12:00-12:30pm on Zoom (*a brief time for reflection, prayer and sacred community in the middle of the day*)  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86776242649>

**Legacies** 1st and 3rd Tuesdays 1:30-3:00pm on Zoom (*A group where the stories of our lives are shared. A different prompt is used each time.*)  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86065659153>

This Lenten season offers a multitude of opportunities to engage spiritually and interpersonally in small group settings. Maybe instead of giving up something for Lent (*depriving yourself*), you might think about gifting yourself participation in a group. All of our groups and their meeting times are listed below. Two new groups are starting during Lent (*see separate articles about them*). All groups are open to new members. If you have ideas for other groups you would like to see happen, or you are willing to lead a small group, please email [smallgroups@seattlefirstbaptist.org](mailto:smallgroups@seattlefirstbaptist.org) or call the church office (206-325-6051).

### WEDNESDAYS

**Optimism Hour** 2nd Wednesday of the month 5:30-6:30pm at Optimism Brewing Co on the corner of Broadway and Union just east of the church (*where choir members, the choir-curious, and anyone else who wishes can spend some relaxed social time prior to choir rehearsal*). Non-alcoholic and alcoholic beverages available for purchase. Bring your own food or snacks to share if you wish.

### THURSDAYS

**Bible Study** 12:00-1:00pm weekly on Zoom (an exploration of the coming Sunday's scripture; provocative discussions; progressive commentary)  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86761779225>

**Songs of Freedom** 7:00-8:00pm weekly February 23-March 16 on Zoom (*see separate article*)  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89542327834>

### SATURDAYS

**Men's Group** Weekly 10:00am on Zoom (*where SFBC men come to know one another*)  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81095038488?pwd=RlpydDZ0cERLVFhtcEFPSWMzSlQzUT09>

**Women's Conversations** 2nd & 4th Saturdays, 11:30am-12:30pm (*where women of the church get acquainted and strengthen friendships*)  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82388737061>

**Play Reading Circle** 1st Saturday of the month, 3-5pm on Zoom (*different play read each time; follow This Week e-newsletter or contact [smallgroups@seattlefirstbaptist.org](mailto:smallgroups@seattlefirstbaptist.org) to find out what is being read and how to obtain a copy of the script*)  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85424372570>

## STAFF DIRECTORY

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## Our Mission Statement

*We are a community of faith united in exploring what it means to follow the way of Jesus Christ, to be a people of God, and to love and care for our neighbors. As a church we will know no circles of exclusion, no bridges we will not cross, and no loyalties above those that we owe to God.*

## 2023 COUNCIL OF MINISTRIES

### OFFICERS

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**Vice President:** Megan Walker

**Treasurer:** Inola de la Cruz

**Secretary:** Eric Watness

### MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

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Corey Clemons

Bob Sittig

David Young

Nirmala Jeldi

Roem de la Cruz

Sue Ross

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contact@seattlefirstbaptist.org

Service at 11 a.m. in-person and online

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Submissions for the Spire are due by the 20th of the month prior. All submissions should be sent to  
editor@seattlefirstbaptist.org.

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SEATTLE, WA 98122-4261

THE ROMNEY COMMITTEE PRESENTS

# Zen and Quaker Meditation Practices

with Genjo Marinello

SATURDAY, APRIL 29, 2023



seattle first baptist

