

GABRIEL'S HORN

First Congregational United Church of Christ

April 2018



No Experience Contains It All!

By Rev. Audrey Price. Ph.D.

April Showers bring May Flowers is a cute saying I remember from my childhood. The last few weeks of March have brought many rainy days. The forecast for the first couple of weeks of this month call for several rainy days. As I rush out the door and am hit by another rainstorm—that has caught me by surprise because I didn't bother to check the weather forecast before venturing out—I sigh in exasperation.

Another rainy day! As I am driving through the rain, commute twice as long because of the precipitation, I am trying to be in good spirits about the rain. Just when all hopes of a smile darkening my face in the midst of cloudy skies, rain, and traffic have faded, *April Showers bring May Flowers* sings its way into my mind. I then smile, take the rain as it comes because in that moment I am reminded, this rainy moment is part of bringing forth beautiful life. Not only is it a part of the life cycle, it is also necessary! Without the rain showers, there would be no blossoming flowers.

Such it is with the seasons of life. We have our wintry cold times; fall circumstantial changes; rainy, and cloudy days culminating with bright, sunny hot days. Participating in the fullness of life means experiencing and engaging each life season remembering *no experience contains it all*. That's right! No one season contains the totality of your life experience. *April Showers bring May Flowers*.

During this liminal season of transition with a supply senior minister, this is our planting season. Let us wisely plant, by tilling the soil, fertilizing, de-weeding and watering so that First Church might yield a great harvest upon the call of a settled pastor. The harvest is a fresh and budding ministry... *May flowers*. Howard Thurman reflects,



In the entire gamut of our relationship with one another this experience of man is written large. There is a time when we dream of the perfect relationship—the perfect union, the perfect friendship, the perfect love standing in the first full flush of the newness of love— we are often so overcome by the vast release of life and joy that we are convinced that what others have felt only dimly, is ours in all its glory and completeness. This is good! This is wonderful! There is more to our feelings than we are expressing, there is more in our vision of love than we are experiencing—however slowly something else begins to emerge. We cannot escape the sure persistent sense of inadequacy—however hard we try. Even when our offering of the self is completely accepted and we are to another person far more than he ever dreamed that anyone would or could ever be to him, the fact remains that what we are giving is only partial, what we are sharing is less, much less, than is our desiring... There is ever the hope that what the mind searches for today but does not quite succeed in finding, will be its strength and stay tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow.

So through the rainy days, know that tomorrow the beautiful flowers can and will come. Don't experience the uncertainty of today as the fullness of what is to be. Rather, see the moment as a temporal season that cannot overshadow the dawning of a bright new day. Fresh, blossoming and beautiful life is only a season away!

(Title is taken from Howard Thurman, "6. No Experience Contains All" in *The Inward Journey* (Friends United Press: Richmond, Indiana, 1961), 20-21.)



MARCH & APRIL 2018

LENT, EASTER, EASTERTIDE

First Congregational United Church of Christ
945 G Street NW, Washington DC
www.FirstUCCDC.org

All events at First Congregational unless noted below.

Throughout Lent, February 14 – April 1

Lent Break Away: a 30-minute Meet-up for Meditation: Every Wednesday, 12:15 – 12:45 PM.

Ash Wednesday, February 14

- 8:00 AM **Putting on the Ashes**
In front of First Church, as people leave Metro, head to work, hang out on street.
- 12:00 Noon **Union Ash Wednesday Service**
Lincoln Temple United Church of Christ.
- 6:30 PM **Ash Wednesday Service:** worship stations, ashes, candlelight.

First Sunday in Lent, February 18

10:30 AM **Reflect, Repent, Renew:** Worship, Rev. Dr. Audrey Price preaching.

Second Sunday in Lent, February 25

10:30 AM **The Good Fight of Faith:** Worship, Rev. Dr. Audrey Price preaching.

Third Sunday in Lent, March 4

10:30 AM **Authenticity and Sacrifice:** Worship, Communion, Rev. Dr. Audrey Price preaching.

Fourth Sunday in Lent, March 11

10:30 AM **Extravagant Welcome:** Worship, Membership Sunday, Rev. Sam McFerran preaching.
11:30 AM **Inquirer's Gathering:**

Fifth Sunday in Lent, March 18

10:30 AM Worship, Communion, Dwight Davis preaching.
12:00 Noon **Nurture:** Dialogue on Gun Control and School Safety

Palm Sunday, March 25

10:30 AM **Palm Sunday Procession and Worship:** Parade of Palms, Membership Sunday,
Rev. Dr. Audrey Price preaching.

Holy Week Service, Thursday, March 29

6:30 PM **"From Table to Garden, Cross to Tomb,"** Middle Eastern Meal and Holy Week Service.

Easter Sunday, April 1

10:30 AM **Easter Celebration Worship,** Trumpets, Special Music, Rev Dr. Audrey Price preaching.
11:30 AM **Annual Pancake Breakfast** and **Children's Easter Egg Hunt.**

Second Sunday of Easter Sunday, April 8

10:30 AM **Worship,** Rev. James Ross preaching.

Third Sunday of Easter Sunday, April 15

10:30 AM **Worship,** Frederick Douglass speaks (reenactment) & Special Music

Fourth Sunday of Easter Sunday, April 22

10:30 AM **Earth Day Worship,** "Celebrating the Anacostia River" Reflections and Photo display

Fifth Sunday of Easter Sunday, April 29

10:30 AM **Worship,** Rev Dr. Audrey Price preaching.



Seabury Celebration of Service

April is National Volunteer Appreciation Month and each year the UCC Potomac Association partners with Seabury Resources for Aging to honor the older adult members of our congregations who enrich us with their service and volunteer work. Each spring, Seabury Resources for Aging[®] co-sponsors a service honoring the contributions of older adults to their congregations and the community.

The Seabury Celebration of Service will take place at Washington National Cathedral at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, April 24, 2018. A reception will follow next door at St. Alban's Episcopal Church. At the Seabury Celebration of Service each honoree will receive a special certificate acknowledging their contributions to our collective ministry.

I am delighted to announce that First Church has nominated D. Bruce Hanson. I will accompany Bruce at the service and celebration as he receives his certificate. Members of First Church are invited to attend the worship service as well. RSVP to Pastor Audrey, xtremejoy@gmail.com if you plan to attend.

A little about Bruce...

Bruce began a career of service and justice work in college, working for a summer at the East Harlem Protestant Parish in New York City. While attending Union Theological Seminary, he was named to be an Amherst-Doshisha Fellow by Amherst College and spent a year in Japan at Doshisha University living with undergraduates.

Upon graduation from Union he was ordained at First Congregational Church UCC in Washington DC where he served as Assistant Pastor for three years. In his third year he was given a leave of absence to organize orientation and training sessions for students going to Mississippi to do voter registration and other civil rights work. The National Council of Churches (NCC) Division of Religion and Race sponsored this training. Following that summer, Bruce continued on NCC staff, to support the civil rights struggle principally in the south, and never got back to working at First Church.

In 1971 he was hired to work for The Center for Community Change, a recently formed national non-profit based in Washington DC. For the next 29 years Bruce worked on the Center's mission of strengthening low-income and mostly minority community organizing and community development groups through the country, providing technical assistance and helping such groups identify resources and allies in the quest for justice and equal opportunity. The groups were urban and rural, predominantly African-American, Mexican, Mexican-American, Native American or working-class white. They worked on such issues as voter education and registration, low income housing, and improving working conditions.

Upon retirement in 2000 Bruce continued to support the National Farm Worker Ministry, an ecumenical group committed to justice and dignity for farm workers, including the right to organize. He also served on the board of DART, based in Miami, Florida, which has organized some 20 church groups in six states to work on justice issues. Also in retirement, Bruce served as a volunteer for the United Church of Christ Pension Board as an Annuitant visitor calling on retired clergy and assuring they were receiving their benefits and advocating for them when they needed special help from the Board. In addition to these ongoing acts of service, he was also "the Perfect Minister's Husband" supporting his wife in her ministries.



Bruce in Mississippi
1963

Care of Parish Commission



Volunteers Needed!

Want the joy of caring for others without the fear of being trapped in a long-term relationship? Care of Parish has just the opportunity for you. Care of Parish is seeking people of any and all ages who want to join our list of volunteers to help with a single event or service. Maybe you would like to call or visit one of our homebound members; send out cards (from the comfort of your own home) to those who are celebrating; drop flowers off for someone who is grieving; or bake a cake for a memorial service. Join our cadre of beloved “irregular” volunteers by emailing Mary Alice Ball at maryaliceball.phd@gmail.com. Make sure and let us know if you have a special interest. Thank you!

April Coffee Hour Hosts:

April 1	Mary Alice Ball	Susan Saudek		
April 8	Karen Byrne	Peter Byrne	Elizabeth Warren	Lance Warren
April 15	Anisa Heming	Hilary Oat-Judge	Chris Barr	
April 22	Geneen Massey	Aaron Dorfman		
April 29	Marian Drake	Mark Jensen	Amy Dugan	Susan Saudek



Easter Pancake Breakfast

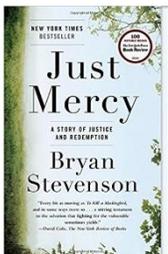
Plan to join us for the annual Easter Pancake Breakfast immediately following the Easter Sunday Service in the Community Hall. Care of Parish is currently organizing this event and is looking for specialty pancake makers, help with set up and clean up, and a master chef to make all of the regular pancakes.

Third Annual First Church Easter Egg Hunt April 1, 2018 at 12:30 in the Sanctuary

Hopping all the way to DC, the Easter Bunny will be dropping off lots of eggs for the First Church Easter Egg Hunt. As the pancake breakfast winds down, the children will be invited to participate in an Easter Egg Hunt in the Sanctuary! Bring your Easter baskets and join the fun for this fun filled Easter tradition. Contact Sam if you have any questions at mcferran.sam@gmail.com.



Christian Education Commission

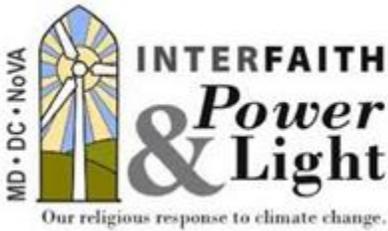


Theology Book Discussion, April 17 at 6:30 PM

The Theology Book Discussion Group will discuss Bryan Stevenson’s *Just Mercy* on April 17 at 6:30. This book is a celebrated account of representing suspects accused of capital offenses. David Cole wrote in the NY Times: “*Just Mercy* is a remarkable amalgam, at once a searing indictment of American criminal justice and a stirring testament to the salvation that fighting for the vulnerable sometimes yields.”

Social Action and Awareness Commission

April Second Sunday Offering on April 8



As in past years, the April Second Sunday offering will be split between two important environmental stewards. Interfaith Power and Light provides a “religious response to climate change” by working with hundreds of congregations of all faiths across Maryland, DC, and Northern Virginia to save energy, go green, and respond to climate change. For example, their speakers and teachers offer guest sermons, text studies, adult forum presentations, youth group programming, and skills workshops on green themes in our congregations. In partnership with Groundswell Energy, they organize clean energy group purchases for congregations and for residents to buy clean energy at a discounted price. They support green leaders who are undertaking solar projects so that more congregations can receive “energy from heaven.”

The mission of the Anacostia Watershed Society is to protect and restore the Anacostia River and its watershed communities by cleaning the water, recovering the shores, and honoring the heritage. The Anacostia Watershed Society was founded in 1989 by a small group of concerned individuals who decided that the environmental needs of the Anacostia River and its watershed communities required serious attention. Over the past 20 years, the staff and programming efforts have expanded significantly to encompass efforts in environmental education, stewardship, and recreation, as well as engaging the community through public affairs.



Please give generously. Agencies and efforts like these are facing difficult circumstances as the new administration seeks to reset federal priorities away from measures that protect the environment for future generations



Earth Day on the Anacostia at First Church By Katherine Antos

Earth Day is April 22, a day to celebrate God’s creation and find ways to become better stewards of this gift. Protecting the Earth isn’t just about plants and wildlife, it’s also about caring for our neighbors who are most vulnerable to the harmful effects of a polluted environment. Countless studies have shown lower income and minority residents are disproportionately harmed by air, water and toxic pollution.

Within our city, the Anacostia River demonstrates the painful history of environmental injustice but also the power of restoration. The river flows through four of the District’s eight wards and has long been a dividing line. Depending where you are, you can enjoy the Anacostia from one of the hottest new restaurant scenes, or cross train tracks, a six-lane highway, and vast parkland that used to be the site of the District’s open-burn dump just to reach its shores. Substantial income disparities exist between east and west of the river.

The Anacostia’s industrial history and poor sewage infrastructure made it one of the most polluted rivers in the country, but it is coming back. The District and the National Park Service are leading efforts to address

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contamination in the river and its surrounding lands. As I write this, DC Water is about to turn on massive, subway-sized tunnels underneath the river that will capture and treat raw sewage and storm water during rain events, eliminating 81% of the sewage overflows into the Anacostia. The Clean Rivers Project will eliminate 98% of sewage overflows to the Anacostia by 2025. The river may be swimmable in the not-so-distant future. The District has regulations, incentives, and capital investments to reduce urban runoff, the third major source of pollution. Yet as the river is restored, it is imperative that a revitalized waterfront does not exacerbate gentrification and displacement.

I have been drawn to water my entire life. As my career moved from the federal and nonprofit sectors to local government, I have become increasingly focused on the interconnection between healthy waterways and healthy communities. I am honored to work with many dedicated individuals who are striving to restore the Anacostia and support surrounding neighborhoods, and I look forward to celebrating Earth Day together at First Church.

Here are ways you can be a steward of God’s creation:

- Participate in the Anacostia Watershed Society’s [Earth Day Cleanup](#) on April 21
- Don’t over-fertilize your lawn – “In the fall if at all”
- Pick up after your pet
- Drive your car less – it’s good for the air, public health, and our waters
- Recycle and compost. Learn more at <https://zerowaste.dc.gov>
- Green your property. The District’s [RiverSmart](#) programs can help
- Don’t litter. Trash in our streets ends up in our creeks, rivers and oceans
- Get out and enjoy nature. Learn more about fun events around the Anacostia River in 2018 at www.yearoftheanacostia.com

Teaching DCPS students how to paddle on the Anacostia River



Our family loves to adventure on the Anacostia, including being pirates in Anacostia Park





**CENTER FOR CONGREGATIONAL SINGING EVENT
AT FIRST CHURCH
Saturday, April 7, 2018
9:00 AM - 3:30 PM: Educational Event
6:30 PM: Hymn Festival**

Come join us on Saturday, April 7, for a daylong educational event, culminating in a beautiful hymn festival as we celebrate the opening of The Center for Congregational Song. This newly formed national organization is sponsored by The Hymn Society and is having inaugural events throughout the United States and Canada to highlight its beginning. The Center for Congregational Song is dedicated to providing resources and educational opportunities to all those who work toward the uniting of people in singing and song. The Center prides itself in being non-denominational and representative of a wide range of diverse people.

The plenary address will be by acclaimed song-leader, Ken Nafziger, and work sessions will be led by Brian Hehn and Andrea Baxter. The concluding hymn festival will be led by a children's choir under the direction of composer John Horman and children's choir expert Kyle Miller. The educational component of this event begins at 9:00 am and a concluding intergenerational hymn festival, "Road to Emmaus" will take place at 6:30 pm. It is our delight and privilege at First Church to host this important musical event. Attendees should feel free to attend a portion of, or the total event. The cost is \$25 for adults.

For additional information:

<https://congregationsong.org/event/centered-song-washington-d-c/>



Live! *Coming this spring...*

at 10th & G

Check the Live! at 10th & G Facebook page for more information:

<https://www.facebook.com/liveat10thandg/>



Washington Bach Consort Presents *The Musical Offering*, April 6 at 7:00 pm. One of the most ambitious projects of his final years, Bach's expanded treatment of the "Royal Theme" displays the full extent of his unparalleled contrapuntal mastery. [\\$10-35.](#)



Centered in Song - Washington D.C., April 7 at 9:00 am. Celebrate the opening of The Center for Congregation-al Song. The plenary address will be by acclaimed song leader, Ken Nafziger, and sessions will be led by Brian Hehn and Andrea Baxter. The concluding hymn festival will be led by a children's choir under the direction of composer John Horman and children's choir expert Kyle Miller. \$25 for adults.



Immigrants Welcome: A UCC Response to Attacks on Immigrants and Refugees, April 20 at 10:00 am. Join us as we hear from pastors, lay leaders and immigrants responding to the needs in their communities. Hear best practices and meet UCC colleagues who can support you and your congregation as we strive to live out our call to be an immigrant welcoming denomination. Free; lunch provided.

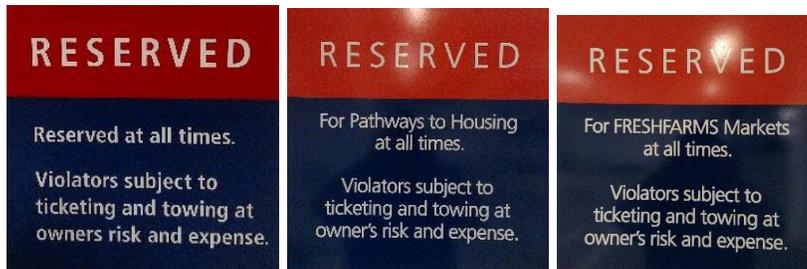


Burns Brass Recital, April 27 at noon. Bill has performed as principal horn of the Rome Festival Orchestra, the Washington Chamber Orchestra, and the CUA Symphony Orchestra and Wind Ensembles, and currently is principal horn of the Maryland All State Community Band and a member of the Capital Wind Symphony. He is a familiar face at First Church. Free.

Parking at First Church

First Congregational United Church of Christ is part of a multi-use development that includes a multi-level, underground parking garage. The garage entrance is at the back of the building; use 980 G Place, NW, for GPS directions. There are 95 non-reserved spaces available. Drive down the ramp, press the button on the kiosk to get a ticket and raise the arm, drive into the garage and park in any lined space that is **NOT** marked reserved. Bring your ticket upstairs with you to validate it.

Please note that there are some spaces that you should not park in. If a space is signed with one of the following reserved signs, **don't park in it**. You will be parking in a space that someone is paying for 24/7 access to and you may get towed.



Disabled or driving a low emission vehicle?

You may park in one of the six parking spaces (two on each level) reserved for those with disabilities if your vehicle has disability plates or you have a disability hanger for your rear-view mirror.

You may park in one of the six spaces reserved for low emission and fuel-efficient vehicles if your vehicle fits that description. These six spaces are at the top of the garage, just inside the gate arm.



At the bottom of the garage, on level P3, there are two spaces signed as being reserved for the church. These spaces are usually used by the pastor and the building manager during the business day. But if you're here during the day, there are no other spaces available, and one of these is, take it! But if you do so, please let someone in the church office know that it is your vehicle.

Can't find a space during the business day?

Parking during the business day is tight. If the garage is particularly full, drive back up to the top and ask the attendant, Tibebe ("Mr. Tee") Tadesse, to park your vehicle for you. Be sure to tell him that you are with the church. Mr. Tee is a delightful, charming man with an uncanny ability to always be able to squeeze yet another vehicle in.



Garage hours

The garage is open – i.e., the steel gate at the top of the ramp at G Place is up and there is an attendant in the parking office next to the parking ticket kiosk at the bottom of the ramp –Monday through Friday from 6:30 am until 11:00 pm and on Sundays from 8:30 am until 1:30 pm.

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Where Is the Validator?



On Sundays and occasions of all-church events, the validator can usually be found near the coffee pots or on the desk in the Narthex. Otherwise, the validator sits on Cindy's desk in the church office. Simply insert your parking ticket into the validator with the magnetic stripe aligned with the sample ticket taped to the top of the machine. Make sure the light turns green and you're good to go.

Validation problems?

If the light doesn't turn green, make sure your ticket is not folded or crinkled and try again. If it still doesn't turn green, you'll need to explain the problem to the garage attendant, sign your ticket, and the attendant will let you out.

How do I get out?

When you leave, you insert your validated ticket into the kiosk, the arm goes up and you depart. If the attendant has left, the G Place gate will be down but once you get to the top of the ramp, a sensor will activate the gate and it will go up.

I need to park and the garage is closed...

If you arrive when the garage is closed (usually only if you're coming to the church for something on a Saturday and we're not paying to have the garage opened and attended), you will need to use your access card or fob on the card reader on the left side of the G Place garage opening to raise the gate.



Biking to church?

If you bike to church, you can secure your bike in one of the two bike storage cages at the foot of the garage's entrance ramp. You will need your Datawatch card to enter either cage and you are advised to chain your bike inside.



How did we use our building in March?	
Use	Hours
Worship & Meditation (Sunday, Break Away, Maundy Thursday)	10.5
Christian Ed – children & teens (Sunday School, child care, movie night)	14.3
Christian Ed – adults (Nurture, Bible Workbench, white privilege discussion))	10.0
Music Program (rehearsals and practice time)	23.0
Meetings of Council, Commissions, Staff, Committees, etc.	28.0
Fellowship	10.0
Service to Others (Drop-In Center)	15.0
Contracted Users (C100, Pathways, Table Church, Encore)	66.0
Occasional Use (conference, seminars, lectures, concerts)	47.5



Remembering Brooks Pumphrey

As some of you know, Jennie Hunt and Bob Crossley join us for Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, and birthday celebrations every year (Jennie's birthday is April 8 and mine is April 14). This meant that we got to know Jennie's brother Brooks from the time he came to Washington until ill health confined him to assisted living and finally nursing care. All of us were very happy about that.

Brooks was, to put it bluntly, a miracle. That he survived at all was miraculous. That he lived a long, loving life, full of adventure and service, was more than many of us without his disabilities have achieved. He had an insightful and wicked sense of humor, an interesting viewpoint on many different subjects, and a true appreciation of family and friends. And he loved to eat, which was a great boost for whoever was cooking dinner!

While he was able to work, he was a source of quiet kindness and help for many, many people in need. Someone said that no act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted. If that is true, Brooks truly made the world a better place 20 times a day for many years.

I think the fact that Brooks was able to live his best life speaks volumes about the quality of love and care Jennie and her family gave him. Until the day he died, Brooks knew he was a valuable part of the world. I treasure what I learned about loving from Brooks and Jennie and hope I can live up to their example.

Barbara Berman

A celebration of Brooks' life was held at First Church on February 11, 2018.



Sanctuary Task Force

The Sanctuary Group at First Church has been steadfastly accompanying the Immigration reform movement here in DC. We were well represented at the March 5 Dreamer's action on the grounds of the US Capitol, where we joined other faith groups including Jewish and Islam, speaking out, carrying butterflies and hundreds of "hopeful paper flowers."

The Monarch butterfly (Mariposa in Spanish) has become the symbol of the immigrant movement. It stands for transformation, metamorphosis, and freedom. From caterpillar to chrysalis to butterfly, change is a natural process for this creature. With each transformation, the butterfly emerges stronger, lighter, and more beautiful.

We will be introducing our own Mariposa in April as we proudly host a national discussion at First Church of "A World Uprooted," part of Ecumenical Advocacy Days.

Calendar

Sunday, April 1

- 9:15 am Bible Workbench
- 9:30 am Choir Rehearsal, *Sanctuary*
- 10:15 am Child Care provided, *Ed. Suite*
- 10:30 am Sunday School, *Ed. Suite*
- 10:30 am Morning Worship, *Sanctuary*
Audrey Price preaching
- 11:30 am Pancake Luncheon, *Comm. Hall*
- 12:30 pm Easter Egg Hunt, *Sanctuary*

Monday, April 2

- 6:00 pm Downtown Drop-In Center
for Homeless Youth
- 6:30 pm Sanctuary Task Force, *Comm. Hall*

Tuesday, April 3

Church Office Closed

Wednesday, April 4

- 12:15 pm Break Away Meditation, *Chapel*
- 7:00 pm Worship Comm., *Chapel*

Saturday, April 7

All Day Center for Congregational Singing

Sunday, April 8

- 9:15 am Bible Workbench
- 9:30 am Choir Rehearsal, *Sanctuary*
- 10:15 am Child Care provided, *Ed. Suite*
- 10:30 am Sunday School, *Ed. Suite*
- 10:30 am Morning Worship, *Sanctuary*
James Ross preaching
- 11:30 am Coffee & Fellowship, *Narthex*

Monday, April 9

- 6:00 pm Downtown Drop-In Center for
Homeless Youth

Tuesday, April 10

- 6:30 pm Church Council, *Living Room*

Wednesday, April 11

- 12:15 pm Break Away Meditation, *Chapel*

Thursday, April 12

- 7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal, *Sanctuary*

Sunday, April 15

- 9:15 am Bible Workbench
- 9:30 am Choir Rehearsal, *Sanctuary*
- 10:15 am Child Care provided, *Ed. Suite*
- 10:30 am Sunday School, *Ed. Suite*
- 10:30 am Morning Worship, *Sanctuary*
- 11:30 am Coffee & Fellowship, *Narthex*

Monday, April 16

- 6:00 pm Downtown Drop-In Center
for Homeless Youth

Tuesday, April 17

- 6:30 pm Home for All Task Force, *Chapel*
- 6:30 pm Theology Book Group, *Living Room*

Wednesday, April 18

- 12:15 pm Break Away Meditation, *Chapel*

Thursday, April 19

- 7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal, *Sanctuary*

Sunday, April 22

- 9:15 am Bible Workbench
- 9:30 am Choir Rehearsal, *Sanctuary*
- 10:15 am Child Care provided, *Ed. Suite*
- 10:30 am Sunday School, *Ed. Suite*
- 10:30 am Morning Worship, *Sanctuary*
Earth Day
- 11:30 am Coffee & Fellowship, *Narthex*
- 12:00 pm Adult Nurture: Karl Racine

Monday, April 23

- 6:00 pm Downtown Drop-In Center
for Homeless Youth

Wednesday, April 25

- 12:15 pm Break Away Meditation, *Chapel*

Thursday, April 26

- 6:30 pm Facilities Comm., *Chapel*
- 7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal, *Sanctuary*

Sunday, April 29

- 9:15 am Bible Workbench
- 9:30 am Choir Rehearsal, *Sanctuary*
- 10:15 am Child Care provided, *Ed. Suite*
- 10:30 am Sunday School, *Ed. Suite*
- 10:30 am Morning Worship, *Sanctuary*
Audrey Price preaching
- 11:30 am Coffee & Fellowship, *Narthex*

Monday, April 30

- 6:00 pm Downtown Drop-In Center
for Homeless Youth

First Church Youth Lift Up Their Voices on Gun Violence



On Sunday, March 18, youth Patrick Darling LaGamma, Raine Anderson, Breanna Dugan, and Marylse Nguouabe helped lead a powerful conversation on gun violence as a lead up to the March for Our Lives.

The youth shared their stories about school walkouts and how guns are talked about at their schools and among their peers. They provided common sense gun control proposals, and shared ways that schools. They can create a stronger sense of safety, belonging and community to everyone. We are so proud of who these young adults are becoming!

First Church Children Have a Blast at Game Night!



On Saturday, March 17, First Church had a fun Winter Game Night!

16 children and youth had a wonderful night of board games, relays, crafts, and "Steal the Bacon" at First Church. Following the games, pizza and cupcakes left everyone happy and tired!

We are grateful for everyone's help to make this a success!

Public Forum with Attorney General Karl Racine

DOING JUSTICE IN DC:

How Communities of Faith Can Advocate with Marginalized Citizens



Sponsored by the
Homes-for-All Task Force
of First Congregational and Cleveland
Park Congregational UCC churches.

Join faith communities from throughout the District of Columbia at a public forum featuring Attorney General Karl Racine. AG Racine will talk about:

- The AG's role in enforcing the city's laws and regulations, particularly those related to low income housing and tenants' rights;
- Landlord-tenant relations, including the suits his office has filed against slumlords;
- Some of the challenges District officials face in ensuring bad actors are penalized; and
- How communities of faith can support the AG's work to help our DC neighbors in need.

Please RSVP to
homesforalldc@gmail.com

Sunday, April 22, 2018 – 12:30 pm

Light refreshments available before program starts.

First Congregational United Church of Christ

945 G Street, NW



Making Circles of Welcome Out of Gatherings of Strangers

*Beloved, teach us to open our shuttered hearts
and our portioned and boarded up spirits
with bold generous and with courageous hospitality.
Estranged and alienated so often and from so much,
sustain us in making circles of welcome out of gatherings of strangers.
Around the table of wonder, meet us in abundance,
drawing out our stories and showing us how to weave together community with steadfast love.*
(part of a prayer by Rev. Naomi King, and posted on *The Wonderment*. <http://thewonderment.typepad.com/>)

First Church and a group of dedicated volunteers, are presently partnering with the non-profit Sasha Bruce Youthwork, and the Downtown Business Improvement District (BID), to “make circles of welcome out of gatherings of strangers.” This magic happens as we host a Drop-In Center in the Narthex and Living Room of the church for DC youth. Every Monday night, from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm, First Church provides a safe haven for youth to relax, eat, socialize, and connect with supportive services through Sasha Bruce, Inc. Connecting youth with supportive services is especially challenging for many reasons. As Dr. Natasha Slesnick, professor of human sciences at The Ohio State University, explores these reasons in an article titled “The Best Way to Help Homeless Youth is Hardly Ever Used,” published in the online periodical *Phys.org*. Dr. Slesnick writes that “teens without homes, many of whom have suffered at the hands of those entrusted with providing them care and kindness, often refuse to seek warmth and nourishment in shelters. She continues that “many kids won’t go to shelters because they’re hiding on the street. They’re avoiding the service system because they’ve been abused and betrayed by everyone who is supposed to love them.” Dr. Slesnick proved in 2016 that “Drop-In Centers – safe havens with fewer rules and no older adults – could open doors to jobs, sobriety and housing that is safe and secure.”

Recently, Drop-In Center volunteers were asked to share their experiences for this article. Here is what some volunteers say about their volunteer experience:

I find the Drop-In Center to be a place, where people from all walks of life come, meet, exchange each others’ views. This itself is another way to develop a stronger community.

The Drop-In Center is a place of connection. There are conversations going on everywhere, usually over pizza. My (Sasha Bruce) co-workers and I usually set up a board game (often Scrabble) and use the game to initiate conversations. The atmosphere is always humming and I leave feeling excited about what’s going on in this space.

My initial involvement in the Drop-In Center was strictly as the “Cookie Lady.” I came one night shortly after the church started working with Sasha Bruce, and was dismayed to see they were eating store bought cookies, and decided that baking and bringing cookies would be my way to show the young people that First Church cared about them.

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A year ago I began coming a couple of Mondays a month. It has been so satisfying to serve these young homeless people, who are anonymous when they are on the street. I try to learn their names and know what kind of pizza they prefer. When they come to First Church on Mondays, I am able to say, "Hi John, how are you tonight?" or "Willie, the cookies in the red container have nuts, so make sure you eat the other ones."

It is inspiring to see so many different groups of people—youth, Sasha Bruce Staff, Stand-Up for Kids volunteers, and members of the (First Church) congregation come together for the shared purpose of honoring each others' humanity and creating a space that is fun and warm for all.

Whether it's watching a movie, playing a board game, goofing off with friends or connecting with services, there's something for everyone here. Having a space that is specifically designed for the purpose of connecting and having fun with each person there is so energizing, and I feel very grateful to be part of this community.

There's room for you to "make circles of welcome out of gatherings of strangers," in this special community of volunteers, whether you come on Monday nights, or donate snacks or toiletries. Please contact Rev. James Ross at jamesdrossii@gmail.com for more information about helping and joining this special volunteer community.



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