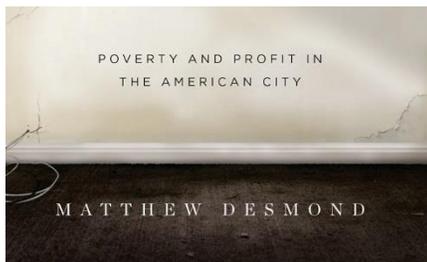


# GABRIEL'S HORN

First Congregational United Church of Christ

July/August 2018



## “Without a Home, Everything Else Falls Apart” from Evicted by Matt Desmond

The Home for All task force is offering a year-long set of activities for members of the congregation and friends to understand the housing plight of low income families, based on the critically acclaimed book by Princeton’s Matt Desmond, “Evicted.” We will learn together in many ways, including:

- Read the book – the library has three copies to check out. It is a powerful work, weaving individual stories with hard data. (See more about the book below)
- Visit the exhibit at the National Building Museum – Karl Racine, in his visit to First Church, recommended this immersive exhibit. It is a succinct but intense and moving way to grasp the stories and facts presented in the book. The exhibit is here until May 2019.  
<https://www.nbm.org/exhibition/evicted/>
- Join a First Church group to visit the museum. Home for All task force members will lead groups to the museum on selected Sundays after church. It takes less than an hour to see the exhibit, and groups may get lunch or refreshments at the Firehook Café. A calendar with dates of these outings and sign up will soon be posted.
- Come to a nurture where we will explore these issues as they manifest in Washington DC and the implications for First Church’s work. Keep an eye out for the schedule.
- Watch this YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qBT8GGhh2Tg>

If you have ideas or questions, and experiences or learning resources you’d like to share, please reach out to Janneke Ratcliffe, Dana Bartolomei or any Home for All task force member.

More about the book:

“... A landmark work of scholarship and reportage that will forever change the way we look at poverty in America.

Even in the most desolate areas of American cities, evictions used to be rare. But today, most poor renting families are spending more than half of their income on housing, and eviction has become ordinary, especially for single mothers. In vivid, intimate prose, Desmond provides a ground-level view of one of the most urgent issues facing America today. As we see families forced into shelters, squalid apartments, or more dangerous neighborhoods, we bear witness to the human cost of America’s vast inequality—and to people’s determination and intelligence in the face of hardship.

Based on years of embedded fieldwork and painstakingly gathered data, this masterful book transforms our understanding of extreme poverty and economic exploitation while providing fresh ideas for solving a devastating, uniquely American problem. Its unforgettable scenes of hope and loss remind us of the centrality of home, without which nothing else is possible.”

## Care of Parish Commission

### August Potluck Luncheon on August 19

Rather than the first Sunday of the month, as is our custom, the August potluck luncheon will be on Sunday, August 19, as we welcome our new senior pastor, Rev. David Grishaw-Jones. Please be sure to bring a favorite dish and join us in welcoming him!



## Social Action and Awareness Commission



### Downtown Drop-In Center for Homeless Youth

As we head toward our THIRD year of operating the Downtown Drop-In Center at the church each Monday night, I want to thank you for the generous and heartfelt support you offer. Whenever we have had a request, you have come through.

Today, I offer an invitation: an opportunity to join in the hands-on, hearts-on work of serving as a volunteer for the program. I am tremendously grateful that we have a small cadre of extremely dedicated servants in this program. We need more.

If you are willing to assist in showing God's love and the care of this congregation to our young guests at the Drop-In Center, please plan to participate in an upcoming training/orientation session. We are working to schedule two -- one on a Saturday morning and the other on a Monday night. Potential volunteers may choose the training that works for them. The training will be informative and concise on both days. The bonus of attending on Monday night is that you will be able to spend some time in the environment to learn more about how we operate. You also will be able to interact with the young people who attend.

Our plan is to establish the training dates based on the availability of the participants. **If you are interested in participating, please let me know and I will share with you a doodle poll to find out what works best for you.**

The Drop-In Center meets an important need for young people who are housing or in unstable housing situations. Weekly attendance ranges from 40 to 70 guests.

As a reminder, the Center is open from 6 until 9 p.m. on Monday nights. We ask volunteers to arrive by 5:30 p.m. and to stay until closing duties are completed. If you can't arrive that early or need to leave before then, no worries. We can work with your schedule. Also, you don't have to be here every week. You serve only on the nights when you tell us you are available. But I can assure you that once you get started, you will want to come as often as you can. I look forward to hearing from you!

## Second Sunday Offerings in July and August



### July 8: Strengthen the Church

Today's Second Sunday Offering supports Strengthen the Church (STC), an offering of the United Church of Christ to reimagine and build the future of the UCC. Shared at the conference and national levels, STC largely supports youth ministries and full-time leaders for new churches in parts of the country where the UCC voice has not been heard.

Following Pentecost, we reflect on how God calls our congregations to be the "church" in new ways. Your generosity will –

- Seed new churches that bring hope to people on the margins who might not set foot in church otherwise.
- Help established churches launch projects working with refugees and immigrants.
- Fund creative ideas experimenting with new ways Christian millennials are gathering.

Strengthen the Church funds will also be used to award grants to help congregations communicate the "God is still speaking" message.

**August 14 Second Sunday offering** will be split 50/50 percent between *Life Asset* and *Just Neighbors*.



The mission of Life Asset is to help alleviate poverty in Washington, DC by empowering people through affordable financial products (e.g., microloans), services, and education, thereby promoting self-help and self-respect and expanding social and economic opportunities for lower income residents. The target population is low-income entrepreneurs in the Washington DC area, who are underbanked and underemployed and are having difficulties qualifying for an affordable loan to start or expand a business. The program serves the unemployed (57%), women (80%), single mothers (40%), immigrants (57%), ex-offenders (>5%), seniors (23%), and homeless people (13%).

Life Asset provides microloans that have a 97-98% repayment rate. They couple that with training to low-income entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs report a 30% (on average) increase in revenue due to Life Asset loan and training. They have also provided credit building loans which increased credit score by 30 points (on average) after 6 months.

The Second Sunday offering would support the development of a Loan Loss Reserve. Life Asset receives loans from the Small Business Administration (SBA) to expand the loan fund and provide more loans to low-income entrepreneurs. One of the requirements for this SBA loan is a set-aside of 15% in a "Loan Loss Reserve Fund" for every dollar that Life Asset borrows from the SBA. For example: If the Second Sunday offering amounts to, say, \$525 for the Loan Loss Reserve, SBA will lend Life Asset \$3,500 – this would allow 3 low-income entrepreneurs to each receive a \$1,000 loan. Obviously, more than \$525 leverages even more loans. And assuming a 98% loan repayment rate continues, the offering would continue to support more entrepreneurs over time, as loans are being repaid.

Please give generously. The Social Action and Awareness Commission is excited to be able to leverage our congregation's offerings like this. To learn more, go to [LifeAsset.org](http://LifeAsset.org).



## Just Neighbors

Just Neighbors is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization that serves and supports the immigrant community of Northern Virginia. Just Neighbors provides immigration legal services to low-income immigrants and fosters mutual understanding between immigrants and the larger community.

Just Neighbors was founded in 1996 by pastors and attorneys of the United Methodist Church, and is uniquely positioned to partner with and serve the low-income immigrant population of Northern Virginia. As such, it set out to provide accurate, reliable information and services to immigrants, who are often exploited by unscrupulous legal practitioners. Since that founding, they have delivered much-needed immigration legal services to more than 7,000 low-income immigrants from more than 115 countries.

Just Neighbors cultivates partnerships with social service organizations and law firms, and is also part of a network of volunteers, churches, police departments, and many other groups in Northern Virginia and Washington, D.C. They work together to provide reliable and necessary aid to immigrants living in Northern Virginia. Just Neighbors personnel understand the legal challenges facing immigrants within the broader context of social and legal service, and provides critical, nearly free legal help to the immigrants who are most in need.

Just Neighbors' dedicated team of staff and volunteers offers hope and help as immigrants navigate the immigration system and access benefits that enable them to become self-sufficient and contributing members of the community. They help clients secure work authorizations, obtain permanent residence, gain security and status independent of an abusive spouse, and reunite with family members. They also assist DREAMers—young adults who arrived in the United States as children—under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. Further, through community outreach efforts and volunteer programs, Just Neighbors provides enriching experiences that bring people together and enhance the northern Virginia community.

Just Neighbors is able to respond to the changing immigration legal framework because of their unrestricted resources from private foundations, donors, corporations and faith communities. As they maintain their focus on those who are least likely to get help elsewhere, please give generously to support this work. To learn more, go to [www.justneighbors.org](http://www.justneighbors.org).



## A Victory for Workers

The message below is from WIN on June 27. Thank you to all of you who attended WIN actions and Council hearings, sent emails, made phone calls, etc. Involvement by each congregation matters and it's good to see interest and participation from our congregation. Let's keep it up.

"DC Council passed a \$140M, 5-year contract with RAPT Dev for maintenance and operation of the DC Circulator buses. WIN, because of your work in alliance with ATU 1764, a multinational corporation was forced to think about a local workforce's wages and benefits, and DC Council and DDOT had to face the destructive effects of privatization on DC workers and do something about it. The contract and a written letter to the council include assurances that current workers keep their jobs, union representation and current collective bargaining agreement (including the raises won in 2016). Also, the contractor is required to meet Service Contract Act wages and benefits which could mean workers get raises to be in compliance with this federal law. Finally, before the vote multiple councilmembers including Cheh and Nadeau clearly re-affirmed their desire see the Circulator ultimately brought in-house and articulated that the contract could be exited at any time."

## Facilities Commission

### Building Use Etiquette

If you're using church space for a meeting, please be sure to check with Building Manager Byron Adams at [badams@firstuccdc.org](mailto:badams@firstuccdc.org) to have a room assigned **AND to be sure that air conditioning will be scheduled.** And . . .

- If you use your access card to come in the front doors, do not let anyone you do not know into the building behind you.
- After your meeting is over, please:
  - Discard your excess papers and trash,
  - Push your chairs in,
  - Turn off the lights, and
  - Close the door of the room you were in (except) for Chapel/Meeting Room.
- Check that the door to the church office is closed.

Thanks in advance for your help with these matters which help keep our building secure and operating efficiently.

## Outreach & Membership Commission



### Want to Learn More about First Church? Join the Inquirers Gathering on Sunday, July 22

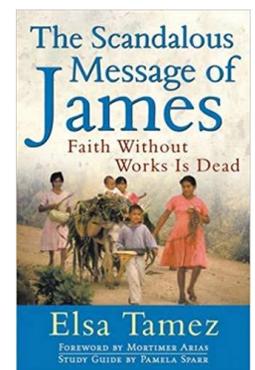
Please join Rev. James Ross and members of the Outreach and Membership Commission on July 22 in the Chapel at noon to learn more about First Congregational Church and opportunities for engagement. Everyone is welcome no matter where you are on your church journey.

## Christian Education Commission

### Theology Reading Group: July 17 at 6:30 PM

The Theology Reading Group will meet next on Tuesday, July 17 at 6:30 PM (always the third Tuesday) to discuss Elsa Tamez, *The Scandalous Message of James*, a study of the Epistle of James, which is a key scripture for social justice Christianity. We plan to read Tamez's book minus the "study guide" (p-. 89-146). We will also read the Epistle itself, which is not long. Everyone is welcome!

There are used versions of the book for sale through Amazon.



# Calendar

## Sunday, July 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, July 16

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

## Wednesday, July 18

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

## Sunday, July 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*
- 11:30 am Coffee & Fellowship, *Narthex*
- 12:00 pm Inquirers' Gathering, *Chapel*

## Monday, July 23

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

## Wednesday, July 25

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

## Thursday, July 26

- 6:30 pm Facilities Commission, *Chapel*

## Sunday, July 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*
- 11:30 am Coffee & Fellowship, *Narthex*

## Monday, July 30

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

## Wednesday, August 1

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

## Sunday, August 5

- 9:15 am Bible Workbench
- 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*
- 12:00 pm Christian Ed. Commission,

## Monday, August 6

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

## Tuesday, August 7

- 6:30 pm Worship Commission, *Chapel*

## Wednesday, August 8

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

## Sunday, August 12

- 9:15 am Bible Workbench
- 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, August 13

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

## Tuesday, August 14

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

## Wednesday, August 15

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

## Sunday, August 19

- 9:15 am Bible Workbench
- 10:15 am Child Care provided, *Ed. Suite*
- 10:30 am Sunday School, *Ed. Suite*
- 10:30 am Morning Worship, *Sanctuary*
- 11:30 am Potluck Luncheon, *Comm. Hall*

## Monday, August 20

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

## Wednesday, August 22

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

## Thursday, August 23

- 6:30 pm Facilities Commission, *Chapel*

## Sunday, August 26

- 9:15 am Bible Workbench
- 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, August 27

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





**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

Ministers – Friends & Members of the Church  
Minister of Faith Formation – Rev. Sam McFerran  
Minister of Justice Formation – Rev. James D. Ross, II  
Director of Music – Mr. John Horman  
Building Manager – Mr. Byron Adams  
Administrative Assistant – Ms. Cindy Dobbs  
Members in Discernment – Dwight Davis, Lynaya Morris  
Nursery & Childcare Staff – Luis Murillo, Timur Murillo, Grace Stohr

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