

GABRIEL'S HORN

First Congregational United Church of Christ

June 2022



Acts 2:1-2 "When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting."

Beloved Community,

On Sunday, June 5th, we celebrate Pentecost, marking the birth of the early church when the Holy Spirit blew through locked doors and padlocked hearts to break down barriers and empower the followers of Jesus to create community. Last year at this time, we celebrated confirmands, the first worshipers to return through our doors on a Sunday morning as COVID infections eased. **This year will mark the first time in three years that we will be blessed, as Acts 2 says, to be "all together in one place" on the day of Pentecost.** Our children and youth will lead this special service under the leadership of Rev. Sam, and I hope you will join us. Wear red as the liturgical color for Pentecost, reminding us of the flame of the Holy Spirit.

This month also marks the launch of our summer worship theme, "Faces of the Faith," and we anticipate a summer that will include such preachers as the Rev. Barbara Gerlach, the Rev. Laura Johnson, and the Rev. Kaeley McEvoy. While you may plan to travel this summer as we all seek rest and restoration, please remember that you can always access our services through Zoom and on our YouTube channel if you cannot attend in real time. Be sure to nourish your soul and create space for the Spirit of the Living God to fall afresh in your life.

Pentecost, originally called the Feast of Harvest, was the culminating festival of an agricultural season. In Jesus' day the festival included a communal meal to which the poor were invited, so it's fitting that much of our focus this month will be on the Poor People's Campaign March & Assembly on June 18, calling for policies that improve the lives of low-wage workers and the poor. [Sign-up](#) to serve at the people's supper on Friday, June 17, to attend the memorial service for those lost to COVID at the Lincoln Memorial (also Friday evening), or to help us host the wider United Church of Christ (June 18). First Church will serve as a gathering place to pray, set-out for the rally, and provide hospitality throughout the day, particularly to those with mobility challenges. The rally will be child and youth friendly, with cooling tents and places for quiet prayer, so I encourage families with children to attend. The weekend will end with our June 19th worship service with the Rev. Amy Cantrell as our guest preacher as we also welcome members of her BeLoved Asheville intentional community.

Other exciting opportunities this month include an Inquirer's Gathering for newcomers after worship on June 12 and cluster gatherings to reconnect with the people of First Church in backyards and parks. Theologian Willie James Jennings claims in his commentary on the book of Acts that, through the church, the Spirit of God is constantly drawing us into relationships both surprising and barrier-breaking. Such community is truly radical in these times, and nurturing it is a spiritual practice. Please take part in these gatherings organized by Care of Parish to cultivate relationships and strengthen the church.

This month also marks a new start as Leela Koilpillai's music ministry gets underway. After a recent trip to India in which she reconnected with her cultural roots, cared for her father in his final months and grieved his death, she has returned to the United States eager to be with us and launch this new chapter. We are so grateful! I hope you will make a point of worshiping in person with us to greet her with the warmth and love of the First Church community. Throughout this month of worship, witness, and welcome, I pray that we will indeed encounter a sweet, sweet Spirit.

In Peace,
Rev. Amanda



Welcome our New Director of Music Ministry: Leela Koilpillai

Leela Koilpillai came to the United States at the age of six, eventually returning to study medicine in Pune, India. While in college she was offered an opportunity to lead a girls' choir and loved it so much it switched to a music major. She holds degrees in piano and vocal performance and has studied choral conducting under Robert Shaw, Helmut Rilling and Don Neuen. She has sung with the Washington Opera, and performed extensively in the Washington, D.C. area. Her soprano voice was favorably reviewed by the Washington Post as "... beautifully

crystalline."

Leela has taught and conducted every age group and level of experience, from Kindergarten to Elderhostel. Her high school choirs (Fairfax County, VA) have sung at the White House, Kennedy Center and St. Patrick's Cathedral in NYC. She is skillful as at developing, motivating, and inspiring musical groups. She formed and directed a chamber vocal ensemble in Portland, Maine, "Northern Lights," which focused on contemporary choral repertoire with an emphasis on Scandinavian and Russian music.

Leela's organ teachers include Ray Cornils and David Maxwell. In the summer of 2016 she had the honor to be one of the organists in the Kotschmar (which boasts 102 ranks, 6,862 pipes in eight divisions) Organ Day festival. She has taken organ coaching with Ray Cornils and David Maxwell (State Street Church, Portland, ME).

In Maine, Leela taught at Waynflete School, coached musicals at Greeley HS, in Cumberland, led the "Rocka' My Soul" gospel ensemble in S. Berwick while maintaining a private piano and vocal studio. She has led tours in the Eastern U.S and Europe. She loves to cook, draw, paint and write in her spare time.

Council Capsule

COUNCIL CAPSULE: MAY 10, 2022

May 10 is Amanda's birthday, so Susan asked all of us to think of one word that would describe Amanda and what she means to us. Many good words were showered upon her. Council was also excited to have Lindsay join the meeting by zoom from Liberia. Rev. Amanda opened the meeting with a poem and proceeded to her report. She reminded Commission reps that the deadline for Gabriel's Horn is May 20. After a two year Covid delay, Anthony Leonard's baptism will be on Sunday, May 22. The church is gearing up for the Poor People's Campaign on June 18 and encourages everyone to register for it and the People's dinner on June 17. First Church will serve as a launch pad for June 18 and perhaps

stream the rally/march from the Church. Amanda expressed some concern that our walk-in numbers are down considerably and invited everyone to brainstorm what we can do throughout the church to reach out to friends, neighbors and strangers to come visit with us. We know we need to grow and find ways to gently invite people we know are struggling. Personal follow up is always needed. There will be an inquirers gathering in June. Sam reported on getting the CE suite cleaned up and ready for the return of younger Sunday school participants. The youth group had a great experience at Christ Church by meeting the residents and helping to weed the property. It was a real embodiment of faith in service for them. Lucille commented on the big fluctuations in the markets and reported that the finance committee will meet to see if there are any adjustments that need to be made in our investments. Generally speaking the investment strategy is very well balanced. Susan asked that the Commissions provide her information about what they have done and still need to do in regard to the Racial Justice Audit by May 15. The Spring meeting will be on Sunday, May 22, after the service and each Commission will speak. The nominations committee is considering how it needs to restructure its process to be able to earlier identify and recruit more people to participate in leadership roles in the church. Questions arose as to whether the Council needs to create a safe church policy in regards to micro aggressions. The Anti-Racism Committee is interviewing two groups which may be able to serve the long term training needs of the Church for: Council, staff, Commissions, teachers, members. The next Council Meeting is on June 14, 2022 at 6:30 pm.

Diane Brenneman

Care of Parish



Everyone is missing coffee hour, so we are going to restart it with a caveat and an assist from the Care of the Parish Commission.

The caveat is that there will be less food and it will be restricted to the types of items at Amanda's installation: clementines and bananas that come in their own wrappers that we can individually remove before we eat them, and wrapped snacks. Baked goods and other delights will need to wait until there are fewer viruses running around.

The assist is that Care of the Parish can reimburse people for what they spend, although we would prefer that you don't get your items from a French restaurant or Ye Olde Expensive Tea House. Costco or Giant sound fine! No one should have to host coffee hour more than twice a year.

[Click here](#) to sign-up starting May 29. Given the reduced size of coffee hour, we are asking for two hosts per session. After sign-ups if there are gaps, Care of the Parish is planning to assign people to coffee hour as we did pre-Covid, with the option of saying that you don't want to be called on for whatever reason you choose. If you want to be taken off the

hosting list, contact the Care of the Parish Commission and we'll remove your name for as long as you want.

Care of the Parish

June Cluster Gatherings: All are Invited!

With thanks to our hosts, Care of Parish is organizing three outdoor cluster gatherings in different locations for the middle two weeks of June. There is no specific theme related to these gatherings, we are planning time to get together outside of church before the summer - activities may vary by location, but may include things like outside games, snacks, and of course fellowship. Kids are welcome at each of these gatherings. Please sign up in the appropriate location if you are planning to attend; we have capacity beyond 15 at Garfield Park but still would like to know who is coming.

VA: Saturday, June 11 at 10:00am (Tanaka-Dodge family hosting); [Click here](#) to sign up

NW DC: Monday, June 13 at 7:00pm (Barbara Gerlach hosting); [Click here](#) to sign up

SE DC: Saturday, June 18 at 4:00pm (Garfield Park); [Click here](#) to sign up

Questions? Contact Mark Jensen, chair of Care of Parish

Social Action & Awareness



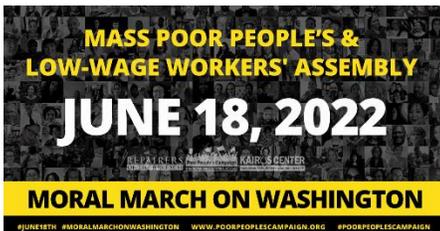
**SASHA
BRUCE**

Second Sunday Special Offering: Sasha Bruce Youthworks

June's Second Sunday offering will support the work of Sasha Bruce Youthworks, an organization that provides shelter and services to DC's homeless youth. Founded in 1974, Sasha Bruce has expanded to become one of Washington's largest youth providers, with drop-in centers, street outreach programs, shelters and residential housing, along with various educational and development programs. Many of us at First Church have found meaning in volunteering with the Drop-In Center, serving meals and building relationships with these underserved individuals. The pandemic of the past two years has created unique challenges

for Sasha Bruce and the youth it serves. This month's offering is sure to be put to good use.

Poor People's Campaign March on Washington

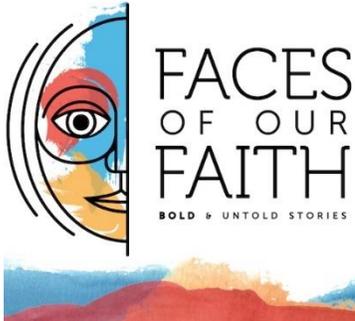


This month's second Sunday special offering, received on May 8, will support the Poor People's Campaign March on Washington, scheduled for June 18. As people from all over the nation prepare to descend on Washington, DC for a generationally transformative and disruptive gathering of poor and low-wealth people, faith communities, state

leaders, moral allies, and unions, your support will help the PPC assist with the costs of transportation, lodging, and food. This mass march aims to shift the moral narrative, build power, and make real policies that fully address poverty. On Friday, June 17th, the PPC will host a community dinner for 1,000 poor and low-wealth people in Freedom Plaza from 5:00 - 7:00 PM, followed by a 7:30 PM memorial service at the reflection pool near the Lincoln

Memorial to remember all who died due to COVID-19. Rev. Amanda is serving on the Host Committee for these events, and First Church will serve as a place of hospitality and launching space for UCC leaders and members prior to the march on June 18. [Click here](#) to register to march with us on June 18. Wish to give of your time and talents? Stay tuned for opportunities to greet marchers, provide hospitality, serve at the community dinner in Freedom Plaza, and more.

Worship Commission



Summer Worship Theme: Faces of our Faith

Beginning June 12, join us for worship as we engage the theme "Faces of our Faith," digging deep into bold and often untold stories of the Bible. As we journey with these biblical characters while also exploring those spiritual ancestors who have shaped our faith, we will enter their stories with curiosity and an openness to the wisdom we can glean for these times. We pray this summer theme will remind us that we all play a role in shaping God's story of redemption and grace.



Sign-up to Serve as Scripture Reader or Liturgist this Summer

[Click here](#) to sign up to serve as a scripture reader or liturgist in worship this summer. We welcome members and friends, local and far flung, adults, youth and children to participate. Your voice helps make us who we are, so please take a moment to sign up. Our worship is enriched by your active participation. Please note that if you are signing up to read by Zoom, you need to sign up for the dates indicated on the sign-up sheet as we will not have a Zoom Moderator every week.

Hybrid Worship Update: Seeking Volunteers

Following thoughtful conversation with our Zoom Moderator team, Council, and Worship Commission, beginning in June we will move pre-recorded content and remote worship leadership (such as scripture readers or liturgists) to the first two Sundays of the month. For the remaining 2-3 Sundays, our service will still be accessible by Zoom, and we are seeking Zoom Coordinators to open the Zoom meeting and monitor it. Please note that most people who use Zoom fluently can serve in this capacity, and our Zoom Coordinator can volunteer either from the sound booth (in the sanctuary) or from the comfort of their home. This allows our Zoom

worship
with us



Moderators (who are responsible for sound checks, pre-recorded content, and spotlighting

Zoom worship leaders) can volunteer at a more sustainable pace while still maintaining our commitment to hybrid worship and the Zoom platform. If you would like to volunteer to serve as a Zoom Coordinator, please email Rev. Amanda who will share the schedule for sign-ups and connect you to a basic how-to.

Outreach and Membership



Inquirers' Gathering: June 12

Save the date of June 12, following worship, to join Rev. Amanda, Rev. Sam, Moderator Susan Anderson, members of our Outreach & Membership Commission, and newcomers for our summer Inquirer's Gathering. This will be a time of getting to know one another, sharing stories, exploring the history of First Church and the UCC, and answering any questions about membership. All newcomers are welcome to attend! This hybrid gathering

will happen following worship both in-person (in the chapel on the 2nd floor) and on the worship Zoom call. If you plan to attend, please email Rev. Amanda at ahendlervoss@gmail.com; however, you do not have to RSVP to attend.



BE PART OF OUR EXTRAVAGANT WELCOME – SIGN UP TO BE AN USHER

Whether it's welcoming members back to in-person worship or greeting strangers when they wander in wondering just what goes on in here at 10th and G, you can be on the front lines on Sunday mornings. You don't have to have any experience: Veterans or new recruits: It doesn't matter. We need two to three usher/greeters each Sunday. If interested, please sign up using this link:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0A4FAAA72AA1FF2-first1>

Finance

Treasurer's Report

Lucille Dickinson

For my monthly report on financial aspects of the church, this month I want to highlight how the church is building up a reserve to make planned capital replacements.

To recap the big picture of the church's 2022 budget, the total budget approved by the congregation is \$787,000.

- On the income side, offerings (pledged, unpledged, Second Sunday) support 42%, building use income supports 26%, and transfers from the endowment fund support 22%. The budget approved in January projects that 10% will be covered by bequests received since late 2019 which were not placed in the endowment fund and, therefore, have very fortunately been available to support the church during the pandemic and its effects on income.
- On the expenditure side, \$403,400 is budgeted for staff, \$82,500 for major repairs and **planned capital replacements**, and \$179,200 for facilities (but note that building income of \$205,800 offsets much of the major repairs and facilities spending). The remaining \$122,600 is allocated to benevolences, mission, and parish programs.

The church and the office building owner are contractually obligated to each other to maintain our respective spaces. When the church occupied the building in January 2012, the property manager (Lincoln Property Co.) prepared **an estimate for what the church would need over 50 years to plan responsibly, replace major capital systems on a regular schedule**, and – in the process -- meet this obligation. That 2012 estimate covered all parts of the HVAC system, the elevator, and the costs of the façade and garage that the church shares with the office building owner. The estimate projected future replacement costs and set out a replacement schedule to replace the major capital systems before they broke down. The estimate provided the total that would be need at five-year intervals starting in year 15 (or 2027).

To be able to afford the needed replacement costs at the five-year intervals over the 50-year period without unduly burdening the budget in any one year, **the estimate helped us calculate what the church would need to budget each year so that, together with the annual earnings on the reserve (it is invested along with the endowment), we would be able to fully pay for the planned replacements.** We have calculated that transferring roughly \$40,000 a year from the annual budget to the reserve would, in combination with a 5% average rate of return over the 50 years, would enable the church to afford the future replacement costs during that period – almost \$4 million, according to the 2012 estimate.

In the 10-year period from 2012 through 2021 the church budgeted \$377,000 for the reserve. As of December 31, 2021, because of the rates of return on investments in those years, the reserve held \$563,000, more than the target for the end of 2021 in the original 2012 estimate. The 2022 budget includes \$42,500 for this reserve in 2022, which will be transferred later this year. The Facilities Commission is working on updating the now-10-year-old estimate of the replacement costs over the 50-year period, to confirm or adjust the total and schedule of future replacement costs and the amount the church needs to transfer to the reserve each year.

The Finance Commission and I seek broad involvement, transparency, and checks and balances in stewarding your money. Please let me know if you have any questions, lucilledickinson@aol.com.

June 2022

Wednesday, June 1

12:15 pm Break Away Meditation

Friday, June 3

2:00 pm Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, June 5

9:30 am Bible Workbench

10:30 am Worship

11:30 am Coffee hour

Tuesday, June 7

1:00 pm Staff Meeting

5:00 pm Drop-In Center

Wednesday, June 8

12:15 pm Break Away Meditation

Friday, June 10

2:00 pm Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, June 12

9:30 am Bible Workbench

9:30 am Choir Rehearsal

10:30 am Worship

11:30 am Coffee hour

Tuesday, June 14

1:00 pm Staff Meeting

5:00 pm Drop-In Center

Wednesday, June 15

12:15 pm Break Away Meditation

Saturday, June 18

8:00 am Poor People's March

Sunday, June 19

9:30 am Bible Workbench

9:30 am Choir Rehearsal

10:30 am Worship

11:30 am Coffee hour

Tuesday, June 21

1:00 pm Staff Meeting

5:00 pm Drop-In Center

Wednesday, June 22

12:15 pm Break Away Meditation

Sunday, June 26

9:30 am Bible Workbench

9:30 am Choir Rehearsal

10:30 am Worship

11:30 am Coffee hour

Tuesday, June 28

1:00 pm Staff Meeting

5:00 pm Drop-In Center

Wednesday, June 29

12:15 pm Break Away Meditation

We are an Open & Affirming congregation, welcoming all LGBTQ+ individuals and families into the full life and leadership of our church.



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**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

Ministers – Friends & Members of the Church

Senior Minister – Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss

Associate Minister – Rev. Sam McFerran

Building Manager – Mr. Byron Adams

Director of Music Ministry – Leela Koilpillai

Administrative Assistant – Ms. Trista Dunlap

Sexton – Ms. Ines Marquez

Members in Discernment –Lynaya Morris, LaTayna Purnell

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