

# GABRIEL'S HORN

First Congregational United Church of Christ

**August 2022**



Beloved Community,

As we enter the final month of summer continuing our theme, “Faces of our Faith,” I have considered the faithful who have inspired my own life’s journey. The friend who frequently wonders aloud where God is at work in her life, the gentle professor who has so thoroughly given himself to the study of Howard Thurman that one can glimpse Thurman’s spark in his eyes, the colleague unafraid to wrestle with God, the kindness of my youngest child’s heart, which still has the power to move me to tears. I think of the etched countenances of luminaries like Frederick Douglass and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Oscar Romero and Dorothy Day, whose lives stretched our understanding of lived faith in brutal times. I see the determination of Rev. William Barber as he set his face toward Pennsylvania Ave. during June’s Poor People’s mass assembly. I think of our faithful lineage here at First Church—General Oliver Otis Howard, John Shepherd, Bruce Hanson, Ruth Shinn, and Peg Lorenz. The substance of their hope lives eternal in us.

Summer is a season when many faith communities experiment in worship, hosting guest preachers as pastors vacation or head off on sabbatical, giving the choir a rest while services are more sparsely attended. As members come and go from summer travels and we welcome visits from far flung members and old friends, we’re never sure what any given Sunday will look like. And yet at First Church we have truly enjoyed an extraordinary summer of worship! Faces of faith like the Rev. Barbara Gerlach have spoken into our grief and anger. Hands of faith like those of Mary Hayes have filled the sanctuaries of our hearts with special music. Voices like David Greer have reminded us both of the faces of love in our lives and those who have enacted real harm in the name of faith, a truth we must acknowledge. And there is still so much to come. This month we will hear a sermon from the Rev. Kaeley McEvoy and testimonies from Sandy Sorensen and Thaddaeus Elliott. We will enjoy special music rooted in American folk and blues, a brass quartet, and more, thanks to the fresh leadership of our Director of Music Ministry, Leela Koilpillai. We might look back on the summer of 2022 as one of extraordinary worship in uncertain times as we explored bold and under-told stories of the Bible. Be sure to join us in whatever way is possible for you, and please stay for our coffee hour after worship.

While there are other aspects of church life faithfully continuing behind the scenes, such as our sanctuary ministry working to meet the needs of migrants bussed to DC daily from Texas, and Christian Education outreach to families so Rev. Sam can lead planning for our fall Sunday school programming, August remains a month to enjoy sabbath rest. As you travel or behold the fresh colors of flowers blooming in your own backyard, make it your spiritual practice to consider these questions: *What spiritual ancestors have inspired your faith? From which biblical characters have you wrestled a blessing? What faces of faith in this beloved community offer wisdom and courage for the living of these days?* Perhaps in so

doing, we will rediscover our place of belonging in this faith that transcends time and place. Perhaps we will remember that we too are part of the collective face of love as the body of Christ.

In Grace,

Rev. Amanda

## Finance

### **Treasurer's Report – reminder of some ways to give financially to the church**

Lucille Dickinson

#### Stock donations

Some of you may want to make your donations to First Church in the form of a stock donations. If you do, give your broker the following instructions:

Receiving Firm Name: Cambridge

DTC Number: 0443 Pershing LLC

Receiving Account Title: First Congregational United Church of Christ, Wash., DC

Receiving Account Number: TH8912430

Please make sure your broker includes your name as the donor. Our broker will review the high and low values on the date the stocks are received and use the mean value as the value of the gift for your tax purposes. The shares will be sold (usually the next day) and the proceeds sent to the church.

#### Offering plate

When you worship in person, every Sunday an offering plate is located at the back of the sanctuary.

#### Online giving

Many of you already know about online giving. You can give online through our website at [www.firstuccdc.org](http://www.firstuccdc.org), which includes options to give through PayPal or Vanco. Please include a note about what the donation is for, consider giving via the debit option (as opposed to using a credit card) to keep the church's fees low, and consider signing up for auto-giving.

#### Mail checks to the church

You can always mail a check to the church, at 954 G Street NW, Washington DC 20001.

## **10 Reasons to Be in Church**

Reflections by Nan and Nick McConnell

1. Say hi to Amanda and Sam
2. Hear great preaching
3. Hear inspirational music by Leela and choir
4. Take a pause to reflect and be in community with liked-minded seekers
5. Fist pump the passing of the peace
6. Greet visitors looking for a justice seeking community
7. See friends and children
8. Experience outdoor coffee hour
9. Have a conversation with interesting people.
10. Experience the presence of a hopeful, living God in a world of discord and doubt

## Care of Parish



### **Coffee Hour is Back: Check Your Hosting Date**

Care of Parish has taken the liberty of signing folks up for coffee hour through the end of the year (with the exception of the July 4th weekend when there will be no coffee hour), using emails in the church directory. This is a return to our pre-COVID system of scheduling coffee hour hosts and one that has worked well in the past. You should get an email reminder for the date when you are signed up to host, but [click here](#) to take a look at get it on your calendar now. If you can't make your date, please try to either trade with someone or find a substitute. No one should be signed up more than once for the rest of 2022 unless you volunteered for a dual sign-up, but if you find that you are signed up more than once feel free to either find a substitute or let Mark Jensen, Chair of Care of Parish, know. [Click here](#) to view instructions for hosting coffee hour. Thank you for helping bring coffee hour back!

Care of the Parish

## Social Action & Awareness



### **Second Sunday Special Offering: Pathways to Housing DC**

August's Second Sunday offering will support the work of Pathways to Housing DC, an organization that seeks to end homelessness in DC and support recovery for people with complex health challenges. Founded in 2004, the group has helped over 900 people move into permanent housing. 100% of the people that Pathways to Housing helps are overcoming mental illness, substance use, or severe health challenges. Their Housing First model begins by housing people directly from the streets, without preconditions. Then mental health, addiction, physical health, employment, and educational challenges are addressed via behavioral healthcare, an

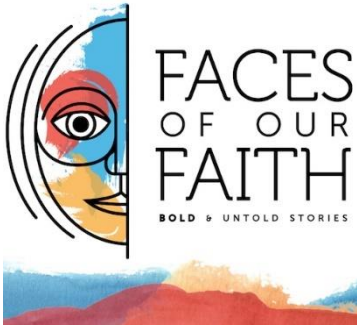
urgent care clinic, a supported employment program, and a downtown day services center. Please considering donating to Pathways to Housing DC to directly aid the most vulnerable of our citizens.



### **Reclaim our Vote Postcard Campaign: Volunteers Needed**

Reclaim our Vote is a non-partisan voter outreach campaign from the Center for Common Ground that aims to empower underrepresented voters and combat voter suppression, one voter at a time. First Church is participating in conjunction with the Potomac Association Justice & Witness Action Network. Volunteers are needed to hand-write postcards to mostly rural, elderly voters of color that have been unknowingly deregistered in voter-suppressed states to assist them in re-registering. Active voters of color also need to be contacted via hand-written postcards to request pledges to vote and to stimulate community organizing. 9 million postcards were distributed in 2020. First Church has 1,000 postcards for the upcoming 2022 elections - please email Michael Hopkins at [michael.hopkins.129@gmail.com](mailto:michael.hopkins.129@gmail.com) if you'd like to be involved.

## 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.

## Outreach and Membership



### **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 10<sup>th</sup> 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>

## Christian Education

TAKE THE  
SURVEY

### **Adult Christian Education Interest Survey**

Several months ago, a small group came together to consider how the adult education and formation offerings at First Church could be strengthened -- both helping our current program to be more visible and exploring new things. We developed a survey as a way to hear from you. [Click here](#) to take the survey now, and thank you! Karen Byrne, Peter Byrne, Andrew Hamilton, Emily Laing, John Smeltzer, with staff guidance by Sam McFerran

## Sanctuary Committee



Dear First Church,

We are writing to provide a summary and an update on our relationship with the Ashakzai family from Afghanistan (father Saeed, mother Kamila, children Bilal, Gulzar, Bibi, and Mahmoud). The church mobilized with generous gifts of funding and furniture to help them settle into their new home back in February 2022. Sanctuary committee members, several youths and their families, and other church members caravanned to the Ashakzai family's apartment in Alexandria, VA with a couch, chairs, dressers, rugs, towels and linens, sheets and pillows, and other household items. We partnered with the Gurdwara Community in

Rockville, MD on this initiative. We then used some of the funding to buy school supplies for the children, some simple games and a sewing machine and sewing supplies for Kamila. On this visit, Susan and Moira talked with the parents while Cynthia sat on the floor with the twins Bibi and Mahmoud to show them how to play the games. At the end of the holy month of Ramadan, the Sanctuary Committee also used generous funds from church donations to put together a Ramadan gift basket and delivered it to the family. Lindsay and Cynthia also met with Saeed to help him update his resume and sent it to some local contacts. He is working through August as a translator at a welcome center for Afghan families in Leesburg, VA and drives an Uber on occasional weekends, but continues to look for more permanent job opportunities.

The family has been much more self-sufficient than our committee expected. Saeed had been living for several years in the US before his family was evacuated and came to join him in late December 2021. He enrolled the children in schools, got all of their necessary medical documents and clearances completed, and found English language classes. There also are several Afghan families living in the same apartment complex as the Ashakzais and they have developed a strong community. We do check in with the family twice periodically to see how they are doing and ask if there are ways we can support them. Sadly, Saeed recently shared the news with us that his father had died, and Cynthia wrote and sent over a note of condolence. We have been informed by the caseworker that they may need assistance with their rent, and we have sufficient remaining funds to cover that expense should the need arise. We will continue to update you as new events unfold. In the meantime, please keep the Ashakzai family in your thoughts and prayers as they continue to navigate their way in our busy metropolis and mourn the loss of Saeed's father.

## August 2022

### Tuesday, August 2

1:00 pm Staff Meeting  
5:30 pm Drop-In Center

### Wednesday, August 3

12:15 pm Break Away Meditation

### Sunday, August 7

9:30 am Bible Workbench  
10:30 am Worship  
11:30 am Coffee Hour

### Tuesday, August 9

1:00 pm Staff Meeting  
5:30 pm Drop-In Center

### Wednesday, August 10

12:15 pm Break Away Meditation

### Sunday, August 14

9:30 am Bible Workbench  
10:30 am Worship  
11:30 am Coffee Hour

### Tuesday, August 16

1:00 pm Staff Meeting  
5:30 pm Drop-In Center

### Wednesday, August 17

12:15 pm Break Away Meditation

### Sunday, August 21

9:30 am Bible Workbench  
10:30 am Worship  
11:30 am Coffee Hour

### Tuesday, August 23

1:00 pm Staff Meeting  
5:30 pm Drop-In Center

### Wednesday, August 24

12:15 pm Break Away Meditation

### Sunday, August 28

9:30 am Bible Workbench  
10:30 am Worship  
11:30 am Coffee Hour

### Tuesday, August 30

1:00 pm Staff Meeting  
5:30 pm Drop-In Center

### Wednesday, August 31

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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for all  
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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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