

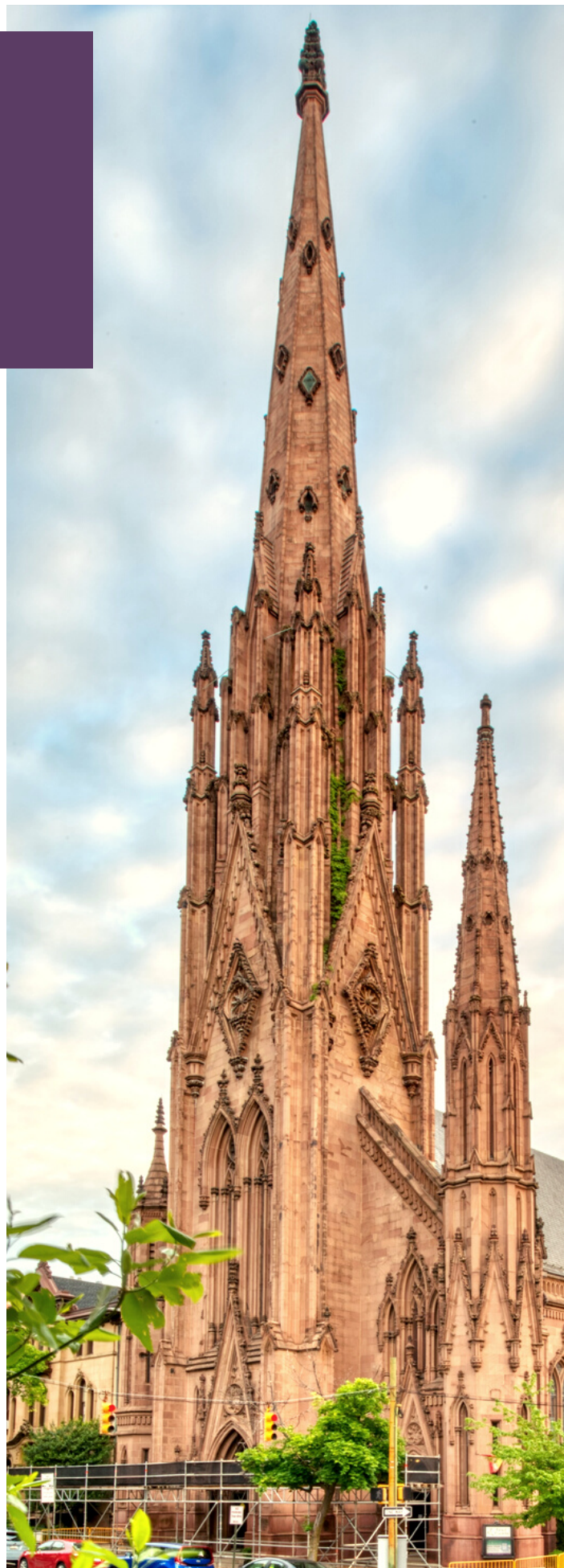
FEBRUARY 2024 NEWSLETTER

# FIRST & FRANKLIN

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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## WELCOME REV. MARK PHILLIPS

On January 14, 2024, the congregation of First & Franklin called Rev. Mark Phillips to be our new pastor. If you were not able to meet Mark and his husband Larry on the weekend of Jan. 13/14, you can watch a fun interview, read a bio, and watch his sermon from the Sunday service.

Visit [www.firstfranklin.org/WelcomeMark](http://www.firstfranklin.org/WelcomeMark)

Rev. Phillips will be sharing Lenten Meditations and newsletter articles with us in the coming weeks before he officially joins us after Easter, on Sunday, April 21.

You can find lots of photos from January 14 at the end of this newsletter.

## A WORD FROM REV. MARK PHILLIPS



Greetings, new friends at First and Franklin! Larry and I cannot begin to thank you for the warm welcome so many of you shared with us last month. The weekend far exceeded any expectations that I had. I will never forget the worship service that we shared together on January 14 ... the music, the spirit that was present and tangible ... the vote of the congregation to call me as your new pastor ... and again, the spirit that I felt as I re-entered the sanctuary after the vote. Just as the search for a new pastor has been a journey for the members of the Pastor Nominating Committee and for you the congregation, it has been a journey for me as well. I am looking forward to beginning my ministry with you in mid-April. I covet your prayers as I bring my ministry here in Dearborn to a close, as we look for a new home in Baltimore, and as we sell our home here. To be totally honest, I can't wait to be with you again on Sunday, April 21.

Speaking of journeys, we begin our Lenten journey this month on Ash Wednesday, February 14. Lent isn't the most exciting idea the church ever had. It's forty days of introspection, prayer, and sacrifice. That doesn't really sound like a good time. At least Advent was upbeat, and it culminated with all of the joy of Christmas. Lent culminates with a ride into Jerusalem where Jesus gets beaten – almost to death – and then hung on a cross to finish the job. It's no wonder that the marketing departments of every retailer in the world have decided to leave Lent alone. Unlike Christmas, this is a hard sell.

It is striking that the early church observed Lent centuries before it came up with Christmas. The season of Lent is forty days, not counting Sundays. As Christ spent forty days in the wilderness preparing for his ministry, Lent offers us a period of sustained spiritual renewal that we may be ready to follow our Lord into the passion of cross in order to encounter the joy of the resurrection. Apparently the custom originated in the Early Church as a period of study, prayer and fasting by candidates for adult baptism. At the conclusion of these forty days, the sacrament of baptism would be administered on the Saturday night before Easter. When the member of the church saw the changes in the lives of those participating in the Lenten program, they eventually decided that they all could use some renewal in their spirituality. That's when it became a regular part of the church year. (cont. on next page)

(cont.)

No one can really understand the amazing delight of Easter (the first celebration of the church) without taking Lent, or something like it, very seriously. To be risen to a new life with Christ is to experience something so totally different that you have to prepare yourself to really understand it. So as unexciting as Lent sounds, it's really all about opening our eyes to the most exciting message the church has to offer. We are called to new life. Lent is only a way of pushing aside the distractions that prevent us from seeing this delight.

A blessed Lenten journey to all of you.

Rev. Mark Phillips, Pastor-Elect

## LENT @ FIRST & FRANKLIN

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 14. We will hold a candlelight service in the Sanctuary at 6 pm that day. There will be quiet music, reflections from church elders, and the opportunity to receive ashes as a sign of our mortality and of our faith.

The timing of Lent this year coincides with a particular time of transition for our church. Bridge Pastor Steve Nofel is already committed full-time to serving another congregation, and Pastor-Elect Mark Phillips will not join us until after Easter. For this reason, we are not holding our usual Wednesday evening services this year. Instead, we hope all members and friends will set aside some time each Wednesday for Lenten meditations which Steve and Mark have written for us. These beautiful, short contemplative readings will allow us to ponder and pray together as a church family, even when we're not together in person. The first will be distributed on Ash Wednesday, so that some of us will be able both to read it at home and to attend the service at 6 pm.

Please check your inbox every Wednesday for the pastoral meditations, and blessed be the tie that binds us.

John C. McLucas, Elder  
Chair, Worship, Music, & Arts Committee

### LENT & EASTER SERVICES

**Ash Wednesday**  
Wed, Feb. 14 @ 6:00p

**Palm Sunday**  
Sun, Mar 24 @ 10:30a

**Good Friday - Tenebrae**  
Fri, Mar 29 @ 7:00p

**Easter Sunday**  
Sun, Mar 31  
Prelude: 10:10a  
Service: 10:30a



# FEBRUARY 2024 CALENDAR

Sundays @ First & Franklin

9:00a | Adult Education (Reid Chapel) - no class 02/04 or 02/11

9:15a | Multi-Age Sunday School (Backus House) - no class 02/11

10:30a | Worship (Sanctuary)

## Annual Congregational Meeting - Sunday, Feb 11 at 11:30a

Please join us February 11th immediately following worship for our annual congregation meeting. We will elect new officers, receive an overview of the budget, and hear about the great work being done by our committees and ministries.

02/01 Thu 7:00p-9:00p | Choir Rehearsal (Reid Chapel)  
02/02 Fri 12:00p | Al-Anon (Backus House)  
02/03 Sat 10:30a-12:00p | 12-step NA Meeting (Reid Chapel)  
02/03 Sat 1:00p-3:00p | Food Pantry (Backus House)  
02/06 Tue 6:30p-8:00p | Session (online only)  
02/06 Tue 7:00p-8:00p | Peacemaking Committee  
02/08 Thu 7:00p-9:00p | Choir Rehearsal (Reid Chapel)  
02/09 Fri 12:00p | Al-Anon (Backus House)  
02/10 Sat 10:30a-12:00p | 12-step NA Meeting (Reid Chapel)  
02/10 Sat 1:00p-3:00p | Food Pantry (Backus House)  
02/14 Wed 6:00p-6:45p | Ash Wednesday Service (Sanctuary)  
~~02/15 Thu 6:30p-7:30p | Building & Grounds Committee canceled~~  
02/15 Thu 7:00p-9:00p | Choir Rehearsal (Reid Chapel)  
02/16 Fri 12:00p | Al-Anon (Backus House)  
02/17 Sat 10:30a-12:00p | 12-step NA Meeting (Reid Chapel)  
02/17 Sat 1:00p-3:00p | Food Pantry (Backus House)  
02/21 Wed 5:30p-6:30p | Finance & Stewardship Committee  
02/22 Thu 7:00p-9:00p | Choir Rehearsal (Reid Chapel)  
02/23 Fri 12:00p | Al-Anon (Backus House)  
02/24 Sat 10:30a-12:00p | 12-step NA Meeting (Reid Chapel)  
02/27 Tue 6:30p-8:00p | Session Meeting  
02/29 Thu 7:00p-9:00p | Choir Rehearsal (Reid Chapel)

## FEBRUARY CELEBRATIONS

### ANNIVERSARIES

1 - Haswell & Madge Franklin

5 - Betty & Jim Schroll

10 - Sonce & Jeremy Reese



### BIRTHDAYS

1 - Sonce Reese

7 - Gail Rice

10 - David Rice

14 - Davis Bradley

18 - Bonnie Thomson

14 - Jan Trammell-Savin

20 - Miriam Costa

20 - David Harris

21 - Zhenya Gnezdilova

22 - Muddassar Iqbal

23 - John Wolford

25 - Becca Hollaway

## ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS MARKET THANK YOU



To the wonderful congregation of First and Franklin Presbyterian Church,

Thank you so much for your donation of \$425 to Roca Baltimore Director of Development, Roca Baltimore in honor of our participation in the Christmas Market! We felt privileged to be a part of your compassionate neighborhood tradition, and your generosity will make a great difference to our young men who have experienced trauma and disadvantage throughout their lives.

On behalf of the entire Roca Baltimore team, thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

With gratitude,  
Carolyn O'Keefe  
Director of Development, Roca Baltimore

Thank you so much for your kindness and prayerful energy. We cannot emphasize how important it is to us that you were able to support our program. The blessing you have bestowed on us will come to back to you tenfold. We extend a special thank you to the Steward's and Children's Ministries for their support.



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Your contribution helps our efforts to support the community's physical, psychological, and financial health. The future is brighter because you helped light it!

We hold our roots in love, support, and community. That's the organization that our founder Cornelius Scott built, and those are the principles we continue to foster in our neighborhood's homes, yards, and tables, ensuring the needs of our community are addressed, met, and filled at all times and stages of life.

The effects of your thoughtful contribution will be felt throughout our entire community, with longstanding reverberations. We are so thankful for you and your presence in our world. It is with your actions and your showing up that we are able to build our community. It is a great privilege to be able to do so together. I look forward to continued partnership with you and your organization, now and in the years to come!

Yours in Solidarity,  
The Team at Family Survivor Network

## THE SPIRE SERIES

There are four outstanding concerts coming up as we round out the 2023/2024 season of The Spire Series. Please mark your calendars and plan to join us (invite a friend or two as well!) as we welcome some truly phenomenal artists to our sanctuary.

More information and tickets are available at [www.firstfranklin.org/SpireSeries](http://www.firstfranklin.org/SpireSeries)



**Friday, March 8 | 7:30p**  
Karen Slack, soprano  
Mark Markham, piano

**Friday, April 12 | 7:30p**  
Svet Stoyanov, percussion  
Marina Piccinini, flute



BALTIMORE SCHOOL  
*for the* **ARTS**

**Thursday, May 23 | 7:00p**  
Armstrong Honors Recital  
(no tickets required)

**Sunday, June 2 | 3:00p**  
Paul Bisaccia, piano  
Annual Prelude to Pride Concert



















