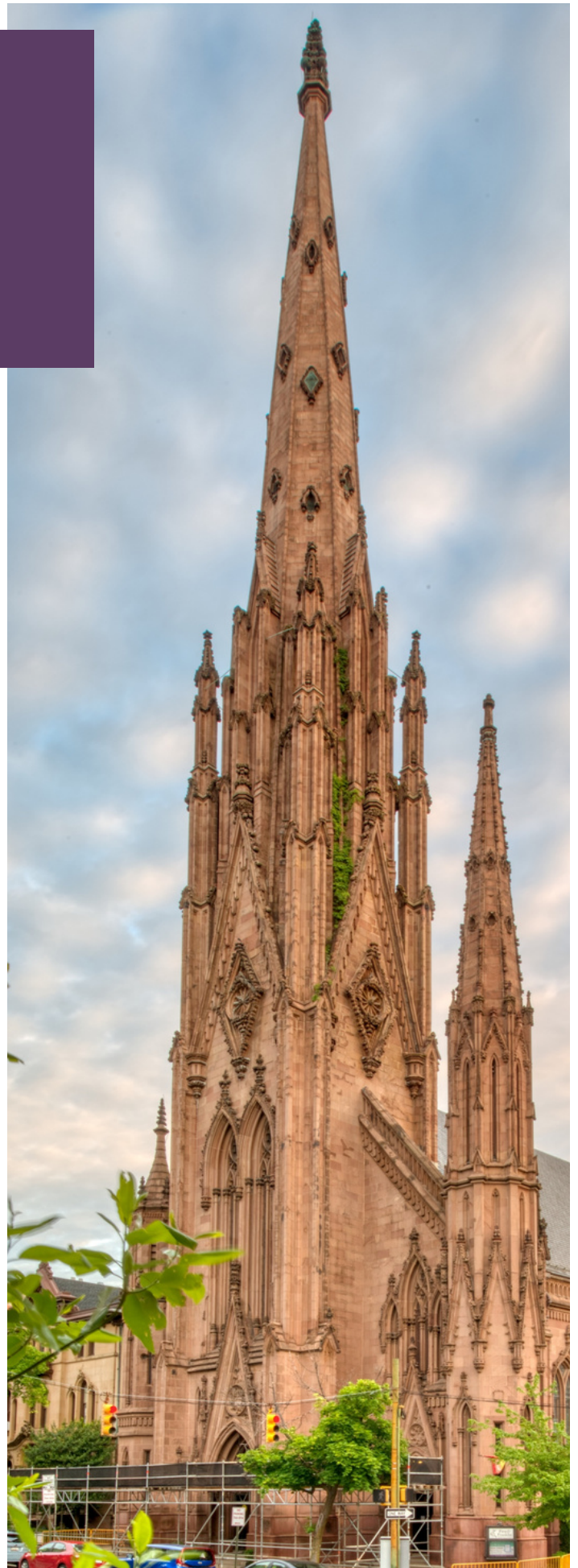


MARCH 2024 NEWSLETTER

FIRST & FRANKLIN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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THE BELIEVER'S DEFINING SONG!



I don't know if you noticed it or not, but during Lent, not a single Alleluia has escaped our lips in worship. The omission of alleluia during Lent goes back at least to the fifth century in the Western church. Based on the Hebrew word, *hallelu yah*, meaning "Praise the Lord," alleluia has been a word of great praise to God in the church's life and was prominent in early Christian liturgies. Because of the penitential character of the season of Lent in the Western church, singing or saying the word "alleluia" has historically been suspended during Lent's forty days since at least the 4th century. Some congregations even have a ritual for it—the kids make alleluias out of construction paper and glitter. During worship, they lock them away in a box, and they remain there until Easter Day, when Easter joy resurrects them.

The missing alleluia is a form of fasting. We're meant to feel its absence and to long for its return as we long for life to spring from death.

Early in Lent, I was leaving the church one Wednesday evening. Everyone had gone for the night except me and the members of the choir who were downstairs rehearsing. As I was making my way out of the building, I heard them rehearsing, and they must have been working on an Easter anthem because I heard it! On that long, dark evening, while such praise is taboo on Lenten Sunday mornings, I heard them singing "alleluia." My first temptation was to run down the stairs and burst into rehearsal as some Rambo-like liturgical police officer and arrest them for their heinous crime!

But then it occurred to me that what I heard that night was the perfect metaphor for the life of faith. The choir members were living in the reality of Lent while hoping and planning for Easter joy. We all live in a broken and imperfect reality while simultaneously hoping and praying for the day when, as Revelation 21:4 describes, "God will wipe away every tear from our eyes, and death, mourning, crying, and pain will be no more." As followers of Christ, we are called to live in the tension while loving God and neighbor until the alleluias we timidly rehearse in the darkness of night become our resurrection song by the light of God's new day.

The 4th-century North African bishop, St Augustine, called the Easter Alleluia "the believer's defining song." And so it is. right. Alleluia is our song. A song sung with lives that try to be loving and just. A song lived out against the odds. A song in the shadows or the sunshine. With or without descants and trumpets, in major and in minor keys, in harmony, in community, alongside some who belt it out and others who can barely whisper, we laugh it into the world, we weep it into the world, we do whatever it takes to sing, "Alleluia." May our great God give us grace to sing always: "Alleluia!"

Rev. Mark Phillips, Pastor-Elect

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 for more information

!!! SAVE THE DATES !!!

Sunday 21 April @ 10:30a
Rev. Phillips' First Sunday with First & Franklin

Sunday 19 May @ 3:00p
Installation Service for Rev. Phillips.

At this service, we will officially install Rev. Mark Phillips as our Pastor. We will be joined by representatives from the Presbytery of Baltimore and area churches. We will also have special music. With so many guest joining us, we'd love to have a strong, in-person, showing from the members and friends of First & Franklin. Please plan to join us for this important service in the life of our church.



DO YOU HAVE KEYS?

We are trying to account for the many keys to our church building that are currently with people.

If you have any church keys hanging around on your keyring, at your house, or in your car that you don't need any longer, please return them to the church office or to Alex Mendelsohn. We'd like to avoid the expense of having to have new keys made.

If you still need your keys, please send an email to information@firstfranklin.org with the numbers/letters that are stamped onto your keys. This will enable us to update our log of keys.

Or, if you have a master key and can work with individual building keys instead, please let Alex know so that we can swap out keys to free some master keys up for others to have.

MARCH CELEBRATIONS

ANNIVERSARIES

23 – Amanda & Kevin Jones

25 – Judy & David Dadds



BIRTHDAYS

4 – Connie Fischel
4 – Paula Snodderly
7 – Bill McCormick
12 – Maggy Griswold
13 – Bill Halsey
14 – Ruth Paradise
14 – David Sargent

22 – Ann Lucas
26 – Rachel Walsh
27 – Liz Dicembre
20 – Steve Roach
31 – Jim Peters
31 – Jeremy Reese

MARCH 2024 CALENDAR

HOLY WEEK SERVICES

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



Sundays @ First & Franklin

9:00a | Adult Education (Reid Chapel)

9:15a | Multi-Age Sunday School (Backus House)

10:30a | Worship (Sanctuary)

- Mar. 1 Fri 12:00p | Al-Anon (Backus House)
Mar. 2 Sat 10:30a-12:00p | 12-step NA Meeting (Reid Chapel)
Mar. 2 Sat 1:00p-3:00p | Food Pantry (Backus House)
Mar. 3 Sun | Sundays at First & Franklin - Third Sunday of Lent - Rev. Dottie LaPenta
Mar. 3 Sun 11:30a-12:30p | Inquirers' Class (Reid Chapel)
Mar. 5 Tue 7:00p-8:00p | Peacemaking Committee (online)
Mar. 7 Thu 7:00p-9:00p | Choir Rehearsal (Reid Chapel)
Mar. 8 Fri 12:00p | Al-Anon (Backus House)
Mar. 8 Fri 7:30p-9:00p | The Spire Series: Karen Slack, soprano and Mark Markham, piano (Sanctuary)
Mar. 9 Sat 10:30a-12:00p | 12-step NA Meeting (Reid Chapel)
Mar. 9 Sat 1:00p-3:00p | Food Pantry (Backus House)
Mar. 10 Sun | Sundays at First & Franklin - Fourth Sunday of Lent & Communion - Rev. Nofel
Mar. 12 Tue | 12:00p-3:00p Mulch Delivery - Volunteers Needed (see article)
Mar. 14 Thu | Choir Rehearsal (Reid Chapel)
Mar. 15 Fri 12:00p | Al-Anon (Backus House)
Mar. 16 Sat 9:00a-3:00p | Campus Clean-Up Day - Volunteers Needed (see article)
Mar. 16 Sat 10:30a-12:00p | 12-step NA Meeting (Reid Chapel)
Mar. 16 Sat 1:00p-3:00p | Food Pantry (Allison House/Park Ave.)
Mar. 17 Sun | Sundays at First & Franklin - Fifth Sunday of Lent - Rev. Michael Cuppett
Mar. 18 Mon 5:30p-7:00p | Worship, Music & Arts Committee (online)
Mar. 20 Wed 5:30p-6:30p | Finance & Stewardship Committee (online)
Mar. 21 Thu 6:30p-7:30p | Buildings & Grounds Committee (online)
Mar. 21 Thu 7:00p-9:00p | Choir Rehearsal (Reid Chapel)
Mar. 22 Fri 12:00p | Al-Anon (Backus House)
Mar. 23 Sat 10:30a-12:00p | 12-step NA Meeting (Reid Chapel)
Mar. 23 Sat - No Food Pantry
Mar. 24 Sun | Sundays at First & Franklin - Palm Sunday - Rev. Dottie LaPenta
Mar. 26 Tue 6:30p-8:00p | Session Meeting (Backus House)
Mar. 28 Thu 7:00p-9:00p | Choir Rehearsal (Reid Chapel)
Mar. 29 Fri 12:00p | Al-Anon (Backus House)
Mar. 29 Fri 7:00p-8:00p | Good Friday Service of Tenebrae (Sanctuary) - Rev. Dottie LaPenta
Mar. 30 Sat 10:30a-12:00p | 12-step NA Meeting (Reid Chapel)
Mar. 30 Sat 1:00p-3:00p | Food Pantry (Allison House/Park Ave.)
Mar. 31 Sun | Sundays at First & Franklin - Easter Sunday - Rev. Dottie LaPenta (prelude @ 10:10a)

EASTER at FIRST & FRANKLIN

Donations



During this reflective season of Lent, we ask you to remember friends and loved ones with a donation toward flowers or musicians this year. Your memorials and celebrations will be published in the Easter bulletin.

Flowers: While we are placing our flower order on March 3rd, we will still accept donations to help supplement our order. Suggested donation of \$20 each for each pot of flowers.

Musicians: Each year, we welcome professional musicians whose musical gifts add splendor and magnificence to our Easter celebration. Your gift will go towards our goal of \$2,000. Any amount is appreciated.

To make a donation, please write a memo with your gift, and place in the offering plate on Sunday or mail to the church office.

RSVPs Requested Easter Breakfast & Egg Hunt

On Easter Sunday morning, members Frank McNeil and Paul Fowler are generously continuing their tradition of hosting an Easter breakfast at 9:00am for our church family. Mini-casseroles and orange juice will be provided. We are asking you to consider bringing a dish to share -- something that makes brunch special for you -- deviled eggs, fruit, muffins/breads, sweet treats.

In conjunction with the brunch, we will hold the annual egg hunt in the courtyard for all the children! Invite your little ones to share in the fun hunt and enjoy the prizes so lovingly donated and orchestrated by Judy & David Dadds and their family. We are truly blessed. Everyone is welcome! Bring a friend!

To RSVP for the Egg Hunt and/or Breakfast and to sign up to bring a dish for our Easter Breakfast, visit <https://bit.ly/49zA5qy>.



BUILDINGS & GROUNDS UPDATES



A few months back, First & Franklin was awarded \$110,000 in grants from the Maryland Historical Trust and Preservation Maryland. This money will fund the first phase of a 3-phase project.

First and Franklin in conjunction with the Maryland Historical Trust published an RFP in Mid December to complete an architectural and engineering study of the spire and brownstone façades of the Sanctuary building. Three firms, Keast & Hood, Old Line Architects/Skarda Associates and Silman submitted proposals.

The next step will be for the Session of First & Franklin to consult with the Maryland Historical Trust to select the most qualified vendor. Contract award should be in the second quarter of 2024, with work complete by September 1.

Once this phase is completed, we may need a second phase of work to determine the best approach for restoring the brownstone, and a third phase will be the actual restoration/remediation work.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We have two opportunities coming up to help beautify our campus and to get some spaces ready for the arrival of Rev. Mark.

- Tuesday, March 12 - We are expecting a truckload of mulch to be delivered. If you are able to help do a bit of weeding and mulch spreading, we sure would appreciate the help. We are anticipating needing folks from about noon-3p.
- Saturday, March 16 - Campus Cleanup Day - 9a-3p - Bring a lunch, and help us get some spaces ready for the arrival of Rev. Mark. We need to declutter his new office space (downstairs in Backus). We need people to do muscular things, like move a fridge and sofa, and we need folks to do smaller tasks, like move books and files.

If you are able to volunteer a bit of time and energy on either of these days, please email information@firstfranklin.org so that we know how many people to count on.



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



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



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



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



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

FOOD PANTRY

In February, the Food Pantry was open for three Saturdays, having been closed the last two Saturdays in January. Over those three Saturdays, the volunteers distributed over 200 bags of food to our neighbors in the Mt. Vernon community

June 2024 will be the 4th Anniversary since the beginning of the pandemic.

The Pantry will relocate to the first floor of Patrick Allison House on March 12. If you would like to help cart groceries from Backus House over to PAH, please contact Corena Bridges. Food scarcity continues to be the reality for many of our neighbors. People come to line up an hour ahead of time in order to get first picks of the fresh produce and breads. Your continued support of the program is making a big difference. With Easter coming in the end of the month, consider donating a few fun items to help make a special Easter dinner: cake and muffin mixes, jello, apple sauce, canned hams, green bean casserole items, jelly beans, and Easter candy.



CUBA UPDATE



From February 7-13, Matt Davis, David Pierson, and Betty Schroll were privileged to be guests of the Taguasco Presbyterian Church. It is an amazing experience to be surrounded with love, laughter, joy, and home cooked food. We visited homes of the elderly, met with the Session, helped with a special children's fair, participated with the senior's program, joined in a fun night that included a spoof on a Cuban talent TV show, and worshiped and prayed together. They were overjoyed with the donations we delivered. Thank you all for your generosity: 3 laptops and 1 projector, sewing materials, children's art supplies, 3 rechargeable lanterns, liturgical candles, laundry detergent sheets, and medicines.

We discussed the plans with Living Waters of the World to build a water filtration system. One day we traveled to Sancti Spiritus, the capital of their province. The Presbyterian Church of Sancti Spiritus has had a water filtration system for a couple years which serves 100 people 3 times a week. It was good to see their set up and to taste good water from a tap. The 3 US churches who are partners with Taguasco are currently working together to make this project a reality

A new need which was brought to our attention was that the Cubans have good eye doctors and they have prescriptions for eye-glasses, but new glasses are not available. We are looking into the possibility of filling several prescriptions and sending them down with Hunting Ridge in April when they visit their partner church. More information to follow.

More photos from the Cuba trip can be found at the end of the newsletter.

Sisseton Learning Camp

The Sisseton Learning Camp (SLC) for Native American children is a much-needed, dynamic ministry for one week every July in South Dakota. However, the effects are lasting, the relationships deeply meaningful, and the challenges are exciting and fun! But to be fruitful, we need YOU!



This summer, we expect more children from kindergarten to ninth grade; therefore, we must have a larger staff. On Sunday, February 11th, I spoke about camp and encourage you to read more about it in the website:

www.balimoredakotalearningcamps.org, or email me or my co-leader, Chrystie Adams, or chat with me at church. I am praying too! I look forward to talking with you!

The deadline for registering for this year is April 1.

Marla Holt: marlah116@yahoo.com, (443) 416-0232 (text or leave a message)
Chrystie Adams: cladams22@verizon.net, (443) 474-2200

Egenton-Roberts Foundation

The Board of Managers for the Egenton-Roberts Foundation will be sharing news and information each month on one of the organizations for which we provide grant support. The Board is comprised of First & Franklin Presbyterian Church members and active friends. The grants support programs for girls exclusively.

The Baltimore Leadership School for Young Women (BLSYW) is a neighbor of our church. This school was founded in 2009 and was the first public charter school in Baltimore for students in middle and high school. Their aim is to offer a college preparatory program for young women in our city. Within this well rounded program, there is a focus on science, math, and technology which are areas that are typically underrepresented for women. Social emotional development is also central to the program at this school.

The Egenton-Roberts Foundation has supported this school for many years. Members of the board make visits to the school each year and have gotten to attend programs where students share their experiences. The school website states that they have had a 100% college acceptance rate for seven years and that they are currently serving more than 500 students.

This past year, our grant was used to fund two summer programs for students. Incoming sixth and ninth graders were given the opportunity to develop leadership and academic skills as well as to participate in other activities to ensure a smooth transition into the school for the current school year. Funding was also used to purchase software to support students with targeted individualized instruction in math as part of an intervention program throughout the school year.

ADULT EDUCATION

Faith in Flux

Starting on February 18, Adult Education has been exploring the intersection of faith, art, and architecture through the beautiful stained glass windows of First & Franklin church. Much in the way flux prepares the pieces of the leaded stained glass to be joined together, our examination of the Lenten themes in the windows will prepare our hearts for Easter. The first part of the series will end on Palm Sunday. After Easter, we will dive into the second part of the series which will focus on women in the bible, many of whom are memorialized in glass right in our sanctuary.

Join us at 9a either in Reid Chapel or on Zoom for this colorful new series.

Here are a couple of documents that give an idea of what you can experience in this class.

Week 1: <https://bit.ly/42VRN5b>

Week 2: <https://bit.ly/48HAENI>



MULTI-AGE CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

In March, the Multiage Class will hear special Lenten prayers each week. The class is lively & productive, as most students focus on New Testament teaching throughout Lent. The PreK student is learning about The Creation Story via The Book of Genesis. During our time together, I have learned that church school truly matters for young people! I have seen the small class become solid friends who have learned so much about the beauty and practicality of learning about the Lord.

I Googled: "Why is Church School important for families" and came up with the following points:

- It allows children to be engaged in a class with child-level examples of right and wrong
- Students receive the Gospel message,
- Lessons provide examples of what obedience to God and a relationship with God should look like.

Our Multiage class covers all of the above and reinforces that our class is an important part of our church.

If you know youngsters between Pre-k and grade 5, please invite them to join our Multiage Class that meets each Sunday at 9:15 A.M.

Each Sunday you'll find young students of the Bible learning on the third floor of Backus House!

CLUE: THE MUSICAL



The pleasure of your company is requested:

Join six kooky guests, a sarcastic butler, and a mysterious host. After-dinner entertainment will include accusation, innuendo, slapstick, several murders and of course SINGING!!

Come see Clue: The Musical at the Hippodrome theater with us between May 7-12

In order to get a group discount, at least 10 people need to sign up, and we need to know which showtime and how many people will be going pretty soon as tickets are selling fast.

Please send an email to Churchlife@firstfranklin.org with the shows you would likely be able to attend. 8pm shows: Tue. Wed, Thu, Fri, and Sat, a 2pm show on Sat, and 1 pm and 6:30 pm shows on Sunday.

LAURA OLDHAM POTTERY SHOW

First & Franklin member Laura Oldham is thrilled to invite you to the American Craft Made Show at the Baltimore Convention Center on March 15-17, 2024. She will be exhibiting her handmade, hand painted pottery along with more than 350 other artists from across the country.

Discounted tickets are available using the code: BWICRAFT50. Hours of the Show: Friday & Saturday 10am-6pm, and Sunday 11am-5pm. Laura will be in Booth #718.

American Craft Council

Turning True Studios

Baltimore Marketplace
March 15-17, 2024
Baltimore Convention Center

american craft made

Discover. Create. Collect.

Booth #718

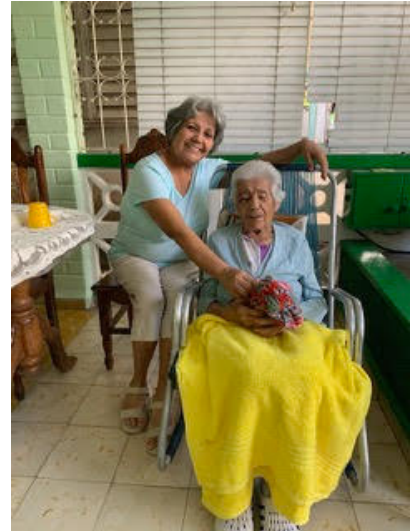
Friday 10am-6pm * Saturday 10am-6pm
Sunday 11am-5pm

Visit <http://www.craftcouncil.org>. Sign up for her email list to get more information and a chance to win free tickets. <http://www.turningtruestudios.com>

PHOTOS FROM CUBA



House visit



Lucy and her mom during a house visit



Playing dominos at a game day



Matt playing with Darian

Ailene and Camille





Water filtration system



Neighborhood children



Eating by rechargeable lanterns



Kenia, daughter, and pet dog



Unpacking donations