



First Baptist Church in Ithaca

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Bees on Butterfly Weed in FBC's Pollinator Garden

Photo by Amanda Ufford

Experiential Peace Camp a Great Success

A three-evening August Peace Camp at First Baptist offered participants a diverse selection of experiences. The first night of Peace Camp Laura Ward and daughters Addy and Kai Aittama shared food, crafts and stories from Guatemala, and Baruch Whitehead led music activities with Orff instruments to the campers in the FBC community room. The second evening took place at the Peter De Mott Ithaca Catholic Worker house on Plain Street where Leslie Schultz lives. The third day was back at First Baptist where youth learned about our connection with West Africa, made some West African food and learned how to tie children on their backs to carry them. Many thanks to Laura, Addy, Kai, Baruch, Leslie, Bill and Mai Phelan and Lydia Dolch for their leadership in providing young campers with these unique experiences.

From Leslie Schultz

The First Baptist Church Peace Camp this summer included a dinner and work party at the Peter De Mott Ithaca Catholic Worker house on a rainy Friday evening. I live at the ICW house and, along with the ICW community, offer hospitality in a variety of ways including a living space for an unhoused person and non-perishable and perishable food, available 24/7 in outside cabinets and refrigerators. It was a privilege to share space and time with 7 young folks, Pastor Debbie, and Lydia Dolch, and our current guest. As the campers arrived, community folks were filling the refrigerators and cabinets with food and others were coming by to get food for themselves, their families, and friends.

The Friday Peace Camp began with dinner and getting to know each other better as is often the case when sharing a meal together. After dinner, I talked with the kids about poverty, that is, what does it mean to be poor, why people are poor in the first place, and what does Jesus tell us about poverty and how to actually "love one another." We then got to work packaging and bundling non-food items like personal care products and socks! The youth were super enthusiastic about this work and were very eager to place the items in our outdoor cabinets for the folks who come by for food. The campers also took some of the items we packaged with them to give out as they encountered folks in need.

Thank you, dear campers, for your sweetness, enthusiasm, and loving energy. I thoroughly enjoyed our time with each other and look forward to more time together.



Young camper learning to play the xylophone under the direction of Baruch Whitehead on Day 1 of the First Baptist Church Peace Camp.



Intent campers make crafts at the Catholic Workers House on Day 2 of FBC Peace Camp.



Lydia Dolch, left, and campers make fried bananas in the kitchen of FBC on Day 3 of the FBC Peace Camp.

Report on Guatemala trip coming during worship on September 15th.



Tina Hilsdorf 's July 12th Communion Table Bouquet

New FBC Directory Now Available

Many thanks to Anne Farrell who spent countless hours updating the First Baptist Church directory which is now available with names, member status, address, telephone/email, and birth dates (if you wish).

Anne asked that each of us take a moment to check the new directory to make sure that all the information is correct. Please send our Office Manager Janice Nigro corrections and/or additions.

For instance, if your family has two or more last names and you would like your last name, first name and then spouse entered separately, please let Janice know. For instance Tony and I would like our names listed under Eymann, Susan & Tony Lister AND Lister, Tony & Eymann, Susan.

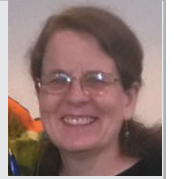
Again, thanks to Anne for all her hard work.

First Baptist Church in Ithaca is a nurturing and inclusive community. Guided by Jesus' Teachings, we strive for Social & Ecological Justice and embrace the Baptist tradition of Bible, Soul, Church and Religious Freedoms.

From Your Pastor Debbie Bennett Reynolds

Dear Friends,

September is here! I hope you've had a good summer with activities you enjoy and chances for summer pleasures like gardening, swimming in lakes, flowers, fresh vegetables, and just being outdoors. I know a number of us have traveled to visit with family and friends or to see new places. But, summer is ending, college students are back in town, K-12 students head back to school, and we are all turning toward autumn.



Rev. Debbie Bennett Reynolds

As a church family, we head into the fall with many things to celebrate. To name a few – our building has a new tower roof and repaired stones, a much more climate-friendly heat pump system, and a high efficiency boiler being installed this next week. We are transitioning into a new and much improved church database and have a newly designed logo being introduced on page 5 that we will be able to use in all our publicity. The group of youth and adults who went to Guatemala had a very meaningful trip and will be sharing their experiences in worship and education time on September 15. We continue to be blessed with newcomers who are getting involved and sharing their gifts in a variety of ways.

Good things are happening at First Baptist in Ithaca! I am grateful for each of you and the way you share your energy and gifts to make us who we are. We can look forward with joy and anticipation to this coming year of our life together.

On a personal note, my family is excitedly awaiting the birth of our daughter Anna's first child the end of September. I am very grateful for all the support I am receiving to be with them in Saudi Arabia for this special event. I am scheduled to be away September 24-October 17 (unless baby James comes early, in which case I might leave a bit sooner). Thank you to everyone who is saying Yes to preaching, leading worship, providing pastoral care, and covering for my absence in various ways. We are blessed with so many capable, gifted leaders! I know all will go well while I am away.

Let's embrace the opportunities and challenges of this coming season. The Spirit of God is always at work in us and in our world. Thanks be to God!

Peace,
Debbie



Laura Peters Memorial Service, June 29th, 2024. Friends and family filled the sanctuary at First Baptist June 29th for a memorial service for Laura Peters, a bright spirit who found a home at First Baptist a year ago. The moving tribute included words of remembrance by her family and friends, special music "Adirondack Moon" by Laura Peters, and "In Memoriam: Laura Peters" composed by Christopher Morgan Loy, a poem "What Is For You Is For You" by Janie Bibbie, words of faith & hope by FBC Pastor Debbie Bennett Reynolds, "Alleluia Round" performed by the FBC choir and "Caravan" by Terry Burns, Ron Kristy, and Rich DePaolo.

3-Day August Peace Camp Offers Variety of Experiences



Day 3: Learning about West Africa



On Day 3, campers learned about FBC's connection to West Africa including how to hold babies on their backs and make fried bananas.



Day 1: Guatemala Report & Music

Baruch Whitehead, a specialist in Orff music education, leads music on Day 1 of the August Peace Camp. Orff refers to a specific approach to music education developed by Carl Orff during the 1920s, which combines music, speech, movement, and drama into music lessons that are very similar to the way a child plays naturally. Also, on Day 1, Laura Ward, Addy and Kai Aittama shared food, crafts and stories from their trip to Guatemala.



Day 2: Social Justice



Day 2. Leslie Schultz challenged the campers to think what it means to be poor, why folks are poor and how one can love one another as Jesus taught before the enthusiastic campers got to work packaging and bundling non-food items to distribute to those that need support.

The Shakuhachi

By Tony Lister



Tony Lister demonstrating the meditative tones of the shakuhachi.

On Sunday, August 25th, I played a musical offering during worship on the shakuhachi flute. I offered a meditative chant-like piece called Choshi, which is one of the many special musical compositions for the shakuhachi collectively called honkyoko.

The shakuhachi, a five-hole Japanese bamboo flute, has long been used by monks in Buddhist temples as a form of meditation. Centuries ago, each temple developed a distinct musical composition called honkyoko. For a long time these compositions existed only as an oral tradition until a shakuhachi master visited each temple and, after learning the piece, wrote the notes down. He transcribed over 60 such pieces.

As part of my study of the instrument over the past two decades I was taught each of these meditative honkyoko. They are not like most songs in that there is not a melody or tune, but rather, they are more chant-like, with pauses or silences between each note. The notes often fade away into the silence. Playing a honkyoko piece is not a "musical performance," but an effort to immerse myself in the sound of the tone and the following silence, opening myself up to the mystery of being.

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Arabella Sanford Baptized

On June 23rd, during the annual First Baptist worship service and picnic at Taughannock State Park, in the presence of FBC members and friends and her own extended family, Arabella Sanford was baptized in Cayuga Lake by Pastor Debbie Bennett Reynolds, officially becoming a member of First Baptist Church.



On the left, FBC's Youth and Children's Ministries Coordinator Laura Ward introduces Arabella to the assembly on the shore of Cayuga Lake. On the right, Arabella's dad speaks elegantly about how meaningful her baptism is.



On the left, FBC's Pastor Debbie Bennett Reynolds baptizes Arabella. On the right Pastor Debbie introduces Arabella as a new member of First Baptist.



During the June 23rd picnic at Taughannock State Park, young folks delighted on-watchers, and had great fun acting out the Biblical passage from Matthew/Mark as Pastor Debbie read of Jesus calming the troubled waters of Lake Galilee

"But Jesus was sleeping. The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!" He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm."

Matthew 8:23-27 (NIV)

First Baptist Church in Ithaca Introduces A Logo

The Council of First Baptist Church in Ithaca is delighted to introduce a new logo that represents the heart and soul of our First Baptist congregation. Creation of this logo was driven by our need to have a visual identity that reflects the values, mission, and spirit of our community. A well-crafted logo is essential for more effectively unifying communications, enhancing our visibility, and engaging with our diverse audience. After a thoughtful and collaborative process, initiated by the Welcome and Outreach Committee and including members of the Communications Subcommittee, we have selected a contemporary design that embodies the core values and vibrant spirit of First Baptist.



The Design and Its Meaning

Our new logo is a visual embodiment of Micah 6:8: *“What does the Lord require of you? To do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God,”* a scripture that captures the essence of our mission, our commitment to love, peace, and justice.

Its rainbow-colored blocks encircle a bright red heart that signifies that love is at the center of First Baptist. The design includes the words “Faith, Justice, Freedom”— values that we hold dear. “Freedom” invokes the American Baptists’ four tenets: Bible, Soul, Church, and Religious freedoms. The rainbow colors symbolize our welcoming and inclusive spirit, embracing diversity in all its forms, especially our commitment to the LGBTQ+ community, as we seek social justice and equality for all.

The logo’s circular shape also reminds us of our annual labyrinth, a journey or pilgrimage to our spiritual center and back out into the world. The path’s twists and turns symbolize the ebb and flow of all life holds, the joys and concerns in our physical, spiritual, and emotional journeys.

The circles in our logo represent more than just unity. Their open nature represents not only a place where people come together, but also room for growth. They symbolize our individual and collective spiritual growth, grounded in faith and extending outward to make a positive impact in the world, including our immediate community, state, region, nation, and the entire planet. This expansive vision, much like a circular garden, aligns with our commitment to environmental justice. As we strive to create a world of abundance, beauty, and harmony, we seek creation of a sustainable and just world for future generations.

Vibrancy, Visibility, Versatility

The logo’s vibrant colors and dynamic design will make it a standout feature on our banners for the annual Ithaca parade, as well as on our emails, social media accounts, correspondence, website, and newsletter.

The design is flexible, allowing the editing of words around the circle to accommodate subgroups within the church, such as our active committees, youth education or various ministries. This adaptability ensures that the logo will remain relevant and meaningful across different contexts and platforms for years to come.

Love, Inclusion, Peace

In conclusion, the logo’s unique and timeless quality communicates First Baptist’s message of love, inclusion, and peace. With this beautiful logo, we can carry forth the legacy of First Baptist Ithaca with a continued sense of purpose and unity.

How the Logo Came About

Steve Farrell, Chair, Welcome and Outreach Committee

Last fall our Welcome and Outreach Committee brainstormed ways to enhance our outreach efforts, including the ways in which we represent ourselves in the community. Updating our external signage to project a more modern and progressive image came up in this conversation, and we agreed that having a professionally designed logo to be used on new signs, as well as other external communications, would be helpful. As a committee, we submitted a request for funding, which was included in the approved 2024 budget, to engage a designer and replace the signs on Court, Buffalo, and Cayuga Streets. An unanticipated benefit of having a logo is its application in our new church database software, including our online directory and smart phone app.

After receiving three bids for the project, we chose True Creative based on its affordability and the Dorothy Cotton Jubilee Singers’ positive experience working with this firm to design their logo. The designer worked with Susan Eymann and Janet Hansel, members of our Communications Sub-Committee, as well as Anne Farrell and Pastor Debbie Bennett Reynolds to create a visual that conveys the spirit and values of First Baptist Church. The reaction of my fellow committee members, Alicia Dixon-Garrard and Baruch Whitehead, upon seeing the logo for the first time was, “I love it!” We hope you will, too.

Sanctuary Family Update

From Anne Horst

Our sanctuary guest family, Jenny, Edgar, Greicy, & Fiorela continue to work, learn, and give back to the broader community in many ways.

Housing continues to be a pressing need as the family eagerly awaits their work permits within the next month. Our collective goal is to enable the family to live independently while they undergo the asylum process. Affordable housing is hard to come by in the Ithaca area, and the family does not currently have a car. Perhaps you know of someone taking a sabbatical leave who would like a house-sitter? Perhaps you spend the winter/spring in a southern climate and your house is sitting empty? Perhaps you created an apartment option for your aging parents and it's not currently in use? Our Sanctuary family would be perfect for any of these opportunities! Edgar is incredibly handy with fixing things/handyman tasks, and Jenny is passionate about cleaning. They would be dream tenants. Even a few months of housing would be beneficial as they save up for monthly rent. Minimum requirements: 2 bedrooms, a full bath, and kitchen privileges. If you have a lead on housing, please reach out to Kristen Brennan, or Cyndi Slothower.

Jenny and Edgar's farming at Groundswell, and at their Community Garden plot continue to thrive. They are beginning to harvest their huge crop of potatoes, but critters have been nibbling on their watermelons.

Greicy and Fiorela are enjoying the end of summer and looking ahead to the school year. They have been to the Science Center, lots of volleyball with school friends for Greicy, and an outing to the Cat Café. They are looking forward to joining the FCCI Youth and Families who are heading to the Seabreeze amusement park at the end of August!

Edgar recently passed his NYS Driver's Permit test. He is a good driver (having driven for years in Peru), but needs to learn the meaning of the road signs in the US. Reach out if you'd like to go driving with Edgar!

To volunteer contact Anne Horst.

First Baptist Picnic

DATE: Sunday, September 1, 2024

TIME: 10:45 AM Gathering
11:00 AM Worship & Picnic Lunch

PLACE: Taughannock Falls State Park – Central Shelter

WHAT'S PROVIDED

Burgers (Beef & Plant Based) & Dogs
Cold Beverages & Coffee

WHAT TO BRING

- Your own plates, silverware, and cups
- A generous dish to share—salads, veggies, chips, desserts
- Lawn chairs, hearty appetites, games, swimsuits, etc.

Remember we take out everything we bring in!

Park Entrance Fee: \$9.00 per vehicle*

Email fbithaca@gmail.com if you need a ride or want to carpool; those carpooling meet at the church at 10:20 a.m.

***Arrangements have been made with the park for FBC to pay the entrance**

Call for Mali Education Support

The Service & Social Justice Committee reminds those that wish to contribute to Mariam and Pastor Andre's children's (Jokebed and William) education for the next academic year to make the check out to First Baptist Church and write in the memo line: "Mali Ed." This is not one of our FBC regular collections but completely voluntary in support of the Thera family who serve God through church ministry and pre-school education ministry for neighborhood children of all religions.



From left to right, Pastor Andre Thera, Jokebed, William and Mariam Keita

Five Wishes

In his 2014 bestseller *Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End* Atul Gawande, MD talks about how medicine can not only improve life but also improve the process of dying.

In modern times, medicine has transformed birth, injury, and infectious disease from often tragic circumstances to manageable ones, but our medical system often seems to contradict the interest of the human spirit during the inevitable, natural process of aging and death. Doctors are honor-bound to extending life rather than considering the realities of aging and death, and finding ways to make the experience less painful.

Old age is inevitable and is often accompanied by increased vulnerability. It therefore is important to talk about death and dying while advocating for a more humane and holistic approach to this stage of life.

One way is to know what the dying relative, friend or patient would like.

Here are Five Wishes to ask that person.

1. Who do I want to make care decisions for me when I can't?
2. What kind of medical treatment I want or don't want?
3. How comfortable do I want to be?
4. How do I want people to treat me?
5. What do I want my loved ones to know?

<http://www.fivewishes.org>

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FBC Pollinator Garden Flourishes



Butterfly weed abounds in pollinator garden

Photo by Barb Fry

Variety of Options for First Baptist Membership

From the 2023 Bylaws

Membership

Any person accepting God as revealed through Jesus Christ may be recommended for membership by the Church Council and welcomed into membership by affirmation of the Congregation. Admission to the church can be through: 1) baptism, upon profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, 2) letter of transfer and recommendation from any Christian church or 3) profession of Christian faith by experience. Prospective members will be guided by the Pastor whose responsible it is to bring potential members to the Church Council. The Hospitality & Nurture Committee will help welcome, introduce and integrate new members to the congregation.

Members will participate in the life of the Church by striving to:

- Give of their time, talents, and resources to the work of this Church in advancing its Core Values;
- Attend as regularly as possible the worship services of the Church;
- Work for the spiritual growth of the Church through group and individual study & personal commitment.

Associate Members

Persons who are members of another church may affiliate with FBC and become as-ociate members. This desire can be discussed with the pastor, acted on by the church council, and affirmed by the congregation. Associate members have all the rights and responsibilities of regular members, including the right to vote.

Friends of FBC

FBC welcomes persons as Friends of FBC who participate in the life and missions of FBC and are part of the FBC Church family, without formal membership.



Please keep in your prayers:

- Lil Barron
- Kris and Danny Scott
- Zeta Pederson
- Suzanne Kilgore
- Kendrick Kemp
- Ron Drummond
- Abraham Phelan
- Anthony Halman & family
- James (Nico) Schultz
- Don and Kathy Lawrence

*"Instructions for living a life.
Pay attention.
Be astonished.
Tell about it."*

MARY OLIVER

~ ~ ~ ~ ~
~Perhaps the most radical act of
resistance in the face of
adversity is to live joyfully.

ARI HONARVAR



Communion Table Bouquet

The Visitor - August 2024

Editor/publisher: Susan Eymann
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 Photos: Tony Lister, Bill Phelan, Amanda Ufford, Barb Fry, David Caughey,

*What does the Lord
require of you?
To do justice, love
mercy, and walk humbly
with your God.*
Micah 6:8



From left to right, Tina Hilsdorf, Debbie Allen, Cindi Zorokong and Louise Mudrak host an information session about pollinators gardens in front of FBC's own trail blazing garden. See more photos on Page 7.

FBC Organization (updated June, 2024)

First Baptist Staff

Pastor: Rev. Debbie Bennett Reynolds
 Office Manager: Janice Nigro
 Organist: Christopher Morgan Loy
 Choir Director: Belinda Adams
 Youth and Children's Ministries
 Coordinator: Laura Ward
 Nursery Care Coordinator: Carol Fleming
 Nursery Care Assistant: Sarah Zipfel
 Custodian: David Hopkins
 Native Plants Garden Specialist: Sarah Zipfel

Elected Leadership

Council Trustees

Judy Kennison: Moderator
 Carolyn Young: Vice Moderator:
 Margie Latham: Clerk
 Brian Baker: Treasurer

Council Committee Trustees

Josie Zanfordino: Ecological Justice
 Debbie Allen: Education
 Anne Farrell: Hospitality and Nurture
 Bill Fry: Resource
 Bill Abeles: Service and Social Justice
 Steve Farrell: Welcome and Outreach
 Tony Lister: Worship, Music and Spiritual Life

Council Member-at-Large

Susan Eymann

Non-Council Officers

David Caughey: Assistant Treasurer
 Marlene Sack: Financial Secretary
 Elizabeth Pia-Miller: Assistant Financial Secretary

Nominating Committee

Susan Eymann (chair), Bill Fry, Margie

Latham, Louise Mudrak, Josie Zanfordino, Alice Grow

Pastoral Relations

Judy Kennison (chair), Bill Abeles, (2025)
 Carolyn Young; (2026): Lil Barron, Barbara Pease; Barb Fry, Baruch Whitehead (2027).

Reps to Affiliate Organizations

Two Delegates each for Rochester Genesee Region & ABC-USA
 Anne & Steve Farrell.
 Rich and Lil Barron;
 ACT (Area Congregations Together): Shella Chace
 AWAB: Shella Chace
 Baptist Peace Fellowship: Leslie Schultz
 Cornell Campus Ministry: Brian Baker
 Kitchen Cupboard: Amanda Ufford; Sue Hemsath
 Sanctuary Alliance: Anne Horst (chair), Bill Abeles; Barb Fry; Anne & Steve Farrell, Tony Lister, Jan Butler.

Council Committees

Ecological Justice
 Josie Zanfordino, Louise Mudrak (Co-chairs); Barbara Pease, Alice Grow, Amanda Ufford

Education Children's and Youth:
 Debbie Allen (chair), Debbie Allen.

Christian Ed Teachers: Baruch Whitehead; Sarah Zipfel; Meg Gillard

Hospitality and Nurture:

Anne Farrell (chair); Shella Chace; Meg Gillard; Tina Hilsdorf; Bruce Chandler, Andrea Staffeld; Steve Farrell; Alice Grow, Craig Riecke

Resource Committee

Bill Fry (chair); Brian Baker, Rich Barron,

Lou Carlucci, Dave Caughey, Steve Hilsdorf, Mark Lawrence, Bill Phelan, Marlene Sack, Kris Scott, Carolyn Young, Josie Zanfordino

Service & Social Justice

Bill Phelan, Bill Abeles (co-chairs), Amanda Ufford, Shella Chace, Hope Decker, Cindi Zorokong

Subgroup

Circle of Care: Linda Caughey (chair)
 Amanda Ufford; Sue Hemsath

Welcome and Outreach:

Steve Farrell (co-chairs). Anne Farrell, Alicia Dixon-Garrard, Baruch Whitehead,

Subgroup: Communications:

David Caughey; Mark Lawrence; Craig Riecke; Susan Eymann; Amy Bean Stowell; Lisa Kilgore, Janet Hansel

Worship, Music & Spiritual Life:

Tony Lister, Biz Pia-Miller (Co-chairs); Barb Fry, Kris Scott; Edie Reagan; Hope Decker; Debbie Allen, Bronywn Evans

Subgroups

Flower Committee: Barbara Fry; Tina Hilsdorf; Andrea Staffeld, Carrie Stearn
Labyrinth: Kris Scott

Sound/Audio Ministry: David Caughey; Bill Fry; Bill Phelan; Leslie Schultz

To correct listing, contact Susan Eymann (susan.eymann@transonic.com)