23rd February 2021

Dear Members and Friends of Second Baptist Church:

We have once again returned into the season of Lent. This coming Sunday (the Second Sunday in Lent), we will pass an anniversary of sorts: we will have completed an entire Liturgical Year in quarantine. As we pass this date, I invite you to prayerfully remember the more than 500,000 people who have lost their lives in this time. As well, I hope you will consider and give thanks for the efforts of people who have worked for the public good in this time, as well as reflect on the moments of goodness and hope you have seen as we have endured this time together, yet apart. And may we remember that, wherever we find ourselves, God is there if we but chose to hope our hearts to God’s presence. May we remember the words of Psalm 139: 7-12.

Where can I go from your Spirit?

Where can I flee from your presence?

If I go up to the heavens, you are there;

I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

If I rise on the wings of the dawn,

if I settle on the far side of the sea,

even there your hand will guide me,

your right hand will hold me fast.

If I say, “Surely the darkness will hide me

and the light become night around me,”

even the darkness will not be dark to you;

the night will shine like the day,

for darkness is as light to you.

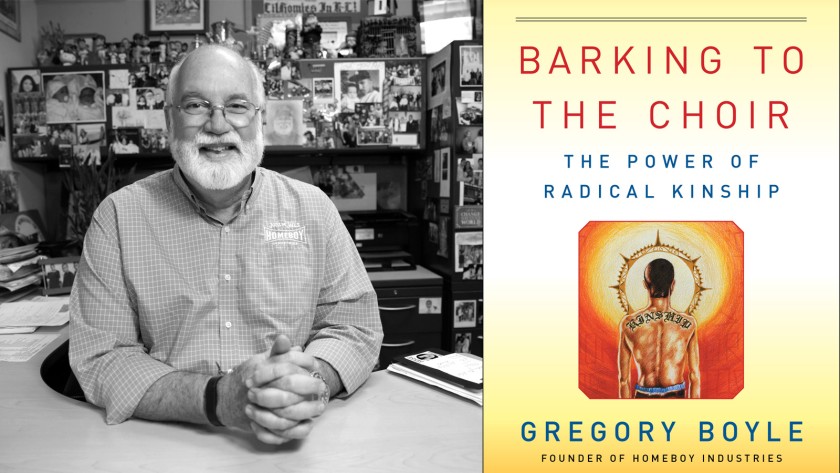
**A few announcements:**

At 12:30 pm today (Tuesday, February 23, 2021), we will be having our final ***Chat and Chew*** meeting. I’d like to continue the practice of having an open office hour at some point during the week, such as this, but at a time in which more people can join. Maybe we can rotate this hour throughout the year? Maybe a Tuesday night tea-time for a few weeks next. Please let me know if that opportunity interests you via email, so we can have a time to connect socially and spiritually.

This Thursday, February 25, the *Reflections on the Heart* ***Small Group*** will meet at 7:00 PM. This curriculum is intended for all ages and is beautiful. Each week throughout Lent, we will have a guided meditation and reflection, followed by a coloring activity, I can send you the PDF for the curriculum, or I have a few complete printouts of the curriculum available in the Church Office. I will need to email you a Zoom link to participate – so **please email me if you want to take part**– last week, we had 4 friends attend. It is also a great opportunity to invite a friend who may not be part of our congregation to come get to know us!   
  


The ***Wednesday Worship from Home*** series also continues this week. This is a collaborative effort of the pastors at First Congregational Church, Suffield; Rocky Hill Congregational Church, and us. These are set to premiere at 5:00 PM on Wednesdays throughout the Lenten Season. It is the sincere hope of the four of us clergy who are participating that this will compliment your spiritual journey throughout Lenten Season.

***The Book Group*** is another great way to get and stay involved with our friends in this season. They have just announced their next book, entitled “Barking to the Choir.” They will be starting their discussion about the first four chapters on March 21st via Zoom. David Battle will be the point person for this small group, so please reach out to him for the invitation or more information!



**Green Tip for this Week***Substituting wool dryer balls (all natural, chemical free) for dryer sheets, like Bounce, in your clothes dryer reduces drying time. They have no artificial scents, won’t make towels less absorbent, and last 2-4 years. They save energy, money, and don’t take up space in landfills. They’re available on line, in stores like Bed, Bath and Beyond, Target, and Walmart. You even can make your own.*

-Submitted by Linda Isham on behalf of the Green Team



**Prayer Requests**

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Fewer active prayer requests have come in so far this week. We have good news to share in that George Bernier and his daughter, Robin Blount’s family, are recovering, so we offer prayers of gratitude. Please continue to hold Lin Remington in your prayers, as I know she appreciates them in this time of waiting and uncertainty. Bob and Gail Davis’ relatives, Jody and Doug, continue to need prayers as they face serious health concerns. And, please pray for the people of Myanmar/Burma, as the endure political upheaval and violence, once again.

As we continue on our Lenten, let us embrace this time as an opportunity to assess our lives, our witness as Christians, and our willing to do the work for the Kingdom that Jesus challenges us to do. Where do you find your opportunities for balance where there may currently be excess? Where do you find the things undone that you believe you ought to have done? Where are you longing for more connection with God and humanity, and what tools do you have in your own being to make that happen? Within that, trust that God is there in your discernment, giving you all that you need for the journey.

In closing, I offer a poem by Edwina Gateley, entitled *Called to Say Yes* (1996).

We are called to say yes.

That the kingdom might break through

To renew and to transform

Our dark and groping world.

We stutter and we stammer

To the lone God who calls

And pleads a New Jerusalem

In the bloodied Sinai Straights.

We are called to say yes

That honeysuckle may twine

And twist its smelling leaves

Over the graves of nuclear arms.

We are called to say yes

That children might play

On the soil of Vietnam where the tanks

Belched blood and death.

We are called to say yes

That black may sing with white

And pledge peace and healing

For the hatred of the past.

We are called to say yes

So that nations might gather

And dance one great movement

For the joy of humankind.

We are called to say yes

So that rich and poor embrace

And become equal in their poverty

Through the silent tears that fall.

We are called to say yes

That the whisper of our God

Might be heard through our sirens

And the screams of our bombs.

We are called to say yes

To a God who still holds fast

To the vision of the Kingdom

For a trembling world of pain.

We are called to say yes

To this God who reaches out

And asks us to share

His crazy dream of love.

Praying that you find blessings on your journey into the wilderness this week and joy in living into the questions.

Peace,

Pastor Rachael

SBC Office Hours (from home): 9-5 (Tuesday and Thursday)

and as needed for emergencies or by appointment.

413-221-1582 (Cell, available until 8 PM every evening)

Rachael Lawrence (she/her) is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Chat and Chew with Pastor Rachael

Time: Jan 12, 2021 12:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Every week on Tue, until Feb 23, 2021, 7 occurrence(s)

Jan 12, 2021 12:30 PM

Jan 19, 2021 12:30 PM

Jan 26, 2021 12:30 PM

Feb 2, 2021 12:30 PM

Feb 9, 2021 12:30 PM

Feb 16, 2021 12:30 PM

Feb 23, 2021 12:30 PM

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

Weekly: https://ministrelife.zoom.us/meeting/tJ0pdOitqT8pGdR5nHR9UTmBEwOMcWJoFgQ5/ics?icsToken=98tyKuChqjgrH9ORsxqHRox5BojCd-\_wtilejadvyRHNMXlmVg7UE\_VtH7FIOtf2

Join Zoom Meeting

https://ministrelife.zoom.us/j/99431574330?pwd=MndHMzdXd3M4YzlaSzNEaE02SkZNQT09

Meeting ID: 994 3157 4330

Password: 578361

One tap mobile

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Dial by your location

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington D.C)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

Meeting ID: 994 3157 4330

Find your local number: https://ministrelife.zoom.us/u/acJCE1aumE