

This Week @ First

Church Work Day: April 13

Thank you to all who helped on the church work day! We found children's chairs. If you are interested in a wooden child's chair - there are several in the courtyard as examples - you are welcome to take one, or many, home with you!

PW Mission Workshop: April 14

Join our **brown-bag lunch** in the Courtyard on Sunday and, if you can, bring a donated item to help neighbors in need:

- New Socks and M/W underwear sizes M-XL
- Small soaps and deodorants
- Individually wrapped food items of all kinds (like energy or fruit bars, cheese or peanut butter crackers etc.) to put into Snack Bags to share with our church visitors, park neighbors, and others at Grace Mission and in our community.

Visit Together in Service tables **to work on hand sewing projects or to get knitting and crocheting lessons**; learn more at our Protect the Earth tables and **get seeds or a young vegetable plant to grow in your own healthy garden**; or **send a letter** to the state environmental office telling them you support action to restore health to the Apalachicola Bay system. And while you are here, be sure to take a sample of dry sheet laundry detergent **to support reduced plastics use**.

Spiritual Formation

The Inquirer's class meets this week at 9:30 AM in the Westminster Room and by Zoom. We will continue our series on *Peaceful Practices: a Guide to Healthy Communication in Conflict*. The children's class will meet in Room 306. The Adult Bible Study will resume over the summer.

The peaceful practices we are engaging are:

Curiosity: Be curious, inviting diversity of ideas and opinions.

Discovery: Focus on what matters.

Engagement: Invite the best in yourself and others.

Dialogue: Listen together for insights and deeper questions.

Empathy: Seek to understand rather than persuade.

Authenticity: Speak from the heart, contributing your own thinking and experience.

Dignity: Consider power dynamics.

Transformation: Welcome creativity.

Worship & Music

To watch our Sunday worship at 11 AM, connect with us on [YouTube](#) (find the bulletin [here](#))! **This Sunday, April 14th**, "Re-Kindle Sunday," will be a service of Holy Communion, and we will welcome guest worship leader Eric Wall, Professor of Sacred Music and Dean of the Chapel, Austin Theological Seminary.

RE-KINDLE
SUNDAY
APRIL 14, 2024

GUEST WORSHIP LEADER
ERIC WALL
PROFESSOR OF SACRED MUSIC
AND DEAN OF THE CHAPEL
AUSTIN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Compassion & Social Justice

If you are interested in becoming part of the **Healing Racism Task Force**, please call or email Ann Westall at adwestall@gmail.com.

To learn more about our lunch snack pack ministry or to volunteer, please contact Carol Weissert.

Sign up [here](#) for the **Capital Area Justice Ministry's Nehemiah Action** event on 6:30 PM next Tuesday, April 16th at the Old West Florida Enrichment Center, 2344 Lake Bradford Rd. It's vital that we plan to attend and invite our families, friends, and neighbors. Although you can attend without registering, registration is appreciated.

First Presbyterian Church

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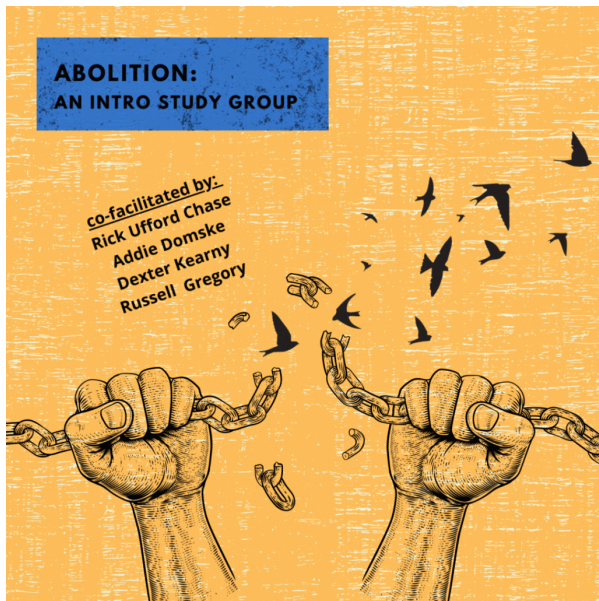
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Tally Pride Interfaith Service: "Created for Joy!"

Wednesday, April 17, 6:00 p.m.
United Church in Tallahassee, 1834 Mahan Drive



The last action at the church clean out was pulling out these chairs. Free for the taking!



For anyone interested in a deeper dive into prison abolition following our Inquirers series this Lent, Presbyterians for Abolition (a branch of the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship) is hosting a 6-week interactive study group beginning on April 20. Please visit the Presbyterians for Abolition [website](#) for more information.

To submit an announcement for an upcoming issue of *This Week @ First*, please use [this updated link](#).

Pastor's Note

"Attention is the beginning of devotion."

This Mary Oliver quote is one of my favorites. In her last book of essays called *Upstream* she remembers getting lost from her parents when they were walking through the woods. She doesn't remember the being lost part of that potential trauma, but instead the "charged moment of aloneness, the sense of going toward the source." She recognized God in the diversity found in the woods. "One tree is like another, but not too much. One tulip is like the next tulip, but not too much." She recognized God in the depth of focused attention. She ends that poem with this quote, "Attention is the beginning of devotion."

We have eight weeks left in this transitional interim period and I sense my attention being distracted by the stress of time coming to a close. First John says, "See what love that you have been given ..." and that is so true. I see that love in the time with which we have been able to tend, to give and to receive, attention with one another.

I woke up the day after the eclipse agitated. Part of me decided it was the distraction energy of the eclipse. In receiving counsel about the agitation, a helpful question emerged. Is the agitation helpful or harmful? What a great question that became as the week unfolded.

In a Zoom meeting, I became distracted when my intuition told me, "Speak up" and I didn't. That's unusual. That distraction instead of attention was harmful for the whole. So I called the leader and said, "I need to tell you about what happened on the Zoom last night because I have some lingering agitation."

And she responded, "I know. I saw it on your face. I'm glad you called."

"See what love that God has given us that we might be called children of God, ... and so we are." I learned to frame part of my agitation as the reality of grief as it settles. It is like those disciples on the road to Emmaus who stand still and look sad. I took my grief for a walk, to pay attention. Weeds are weeds, and no two weeds are the same. Light in the canopy of the trees is light, and no two breakthroughs of such light are the same. I took pictures and when I returned home, I looked at the picture and wrote a bit of a prayer. And in one picture, what I had not seen with my eye, in a purple weed, was the beauty of a honey bee.

Attention is the beginning of devotion. Indeed. God's Peace, God's Presence, Anne

