

First Friday Club *of* Chicago

www.firstfridayclubchicago.org



Please Join Us

2021-2022 Season Begins October 1st



A Hybrid Season of Great Speakers



DR. NGOZI EZIKE

Director of Illinois Department of Public Health

- **October 1, 2021**

HEIDI STEVENS & SHAKA RAWLS

Leo High School Principal & Chicago Tribune Columnist

- **November 5, 2021**

BARBARA MAHANY

Journalist, essayist, & collector of stories

- **December 3, 2021**

Welcome!



MAUREEN MURPHY
President, FFCC Board

Hello Friends,

One of the board members of the First Friday Club of Chicago characterized the monthly speaker events as “edifying.” I agree, and it is one of the reasons I am honored to serve as president of this organization. For 36 years, FFCC has remained true to its mission to provide a forum for men and women to make a connection between work, faith, values, and issues that affect our daily lives. Even in the midst of the pandemic, we heard, albeit virtually, from an exceptional group including: Father James Martin, Eboo Patel, Carol Marin and Mary Ann Ahern, Cardinal Wilton Gregory, and so many more. We continue our tradition of extraordinary speakers by kicking off this season on Friday, October 1st with Dr. Ngozi Ezike, Director of the Illinois Department of Public Health. Dr. Ezike will be appearing LIVE in a Zoom webinar, with a chance for audience participation.

While we hope to meet in person during the 2021-2022 season, we will continue presenting you with thoughtful, inspiring speakers, whatever our format. If you’ve missed one of our outstanding speakers or would simply like to listen again, go to the website and click on Podcasts,

where you will find a collection of podcasts from the last several years.

Please continue to connect with our organization. Join us for a live Zoom webinar, where you can send in your questions to the host. If we are able to return to in-person events, meet us for lunch at the Union League Club. Check out our podcasts for speakers you’ve missed or would like to hear again. I also ask that you continue to invite friends, neighbors, colleagues, family members and anyone who might appreciate the “edifying” experience of participating in these events. And I humbly ask that you consider supporting this organization with a financial gift. You may do so online. Go to the website, choose the amount of your gift, and complete your transaction in minutes. Your support is needed now more than ever as we continue to navigate these difficult times while incurring all of the costs required to maintain our programming.

Thank you again for your part in the great success of the First Friday Club of Chicago. I look forward to being with each of you, whether in person or virtually, over the course of the next year.

Sincerely,

Maureen Murphy

Board President, First Friday Club of Chicago

A Note from the First Friday Club Chaplain



Here we go again. When we gather on October 1, 2021, we will begin the 36th season of the First Friday Club of Chicago. Over all those years, we've been provided some "food for thought" by a menu of remarkable First Friday speakers coming from the Chicago area and beyond. These speakers are representative of the vast arenas of life with which we interface with on a regular basis.

To view for the first time or refresh your memory of the list of past speakers and topics, go to first-fridayclubchicago.org/past-speakers.

The First Friday Club Board has been busy developing its list of speakers for the 2021-2022 season. Our hope was to have an in-person season at the Union League Club, beginning October 1st. However, with the Delta variant gaining momentum, the first speaker of the season, Dr. Ngozi Ezike, Director of the Illinois Department of Public Health will *not be presenting* at the Union League Club. Instead, she will come to you LIVE via our Zoom webinar format.

The First Friday Club's board will continue to assess the Covid-19 risks and provide updates via the weekly e-blasts as to "where and how" the remaining scheduled speakers will present.

Regardless of "how" we gather for Dr. Ezike's presentation, you don't want to miss this conversation. She will share her own personal story as a daily media fixture during the darkest days of the Covid-19 lockdown. We were lucky, then and now, to have such a competent physician keeping us focused on personal and social health during a very difficult time. And unfortunately, we need to look to her again as Covid-19 is reappearing with renewed intensity.

The October 1st live webinar format, via the Q & A function, will allow you to thank her for the hard work, leadership, and hope which she communicated to us almost on a daily basis during those quarantined days of 2020 and 2021.

The board and I believe there is continued value in having an important speaker presentation on the first Friday of the month, running October through May. And as we found out last season, it doesn't matter how we stay connected. We do, however, need your support through memberships, which will go a long way to keep this successful event called **the First Friday Club** alive and doing well.

I still have hope of returning to the Union League Club later this season. In the meantime, though, as we begin our 36th Season, please gather with us via our Live Zoom webinar on Friday, October 1st at 12 noon.

Stay well & God bless,

Fr. John Cusick

Chaplain, First Friday Club of Chicago

2020-2021

Highlights from our 35th Season

Mary Ann Ahern & Carol Marin | November 6, 2020



What Just Happened?

“Thelma & Louise” stop by the First Friday Club to discuss events surrounding the November 2020 Election

Only three days had passed since one of our country's most tumultuous presidential elections in history. Remember, we still didn't know who the actual winner was, as many ballots in a number of states remained uncounted.

Into the breach on Friday, November 6 stepped Carol Marin and Mary Ann Ahern, political reporters for NBC Chicago. Colleagues, friends, and giants of Chicago journalism, the pair are sometimes also known as Thelma and Louise, a nickname they were given by Barack Obama's press secretary (and not as a compliment). They appeared live on Zoom with the First Friday Club, moderated by Mike Cahill, to discuss the outcomes of state and national races and to field audience questions. The presentation was presciently titled, “What Just Happened?”

The pair [Ahern & Marin] are sometimes also known as Thelma and Louise, a nickname they were given by Barack Obama's press secretary (and not as a compliment).

Coincidentally, November 6 was also the day Carol Marin was retiring from NBC Chicago, so the FFC audience was doubly honored by her appearance on her last day of work.

In their wide-ranging discussion, Ahern and Marin addressed:

- The defeat of Governor J.B. Pritzker's graduated income tax amendment, which Marin claimed sprang from the public's deep distrust of Illinois politicians, with perhaps a side dish of dislike for Mike Madigan.
- The re-election of controversial State's Attorney Kim Foxx, after getting herself and her office entangled in the Jussie Smollett affair.
- The outcomes of several state Congressional races, such as Sean Casten's re-election, and Jim Oberweis's early claim that he had defeated Lauren Underwood (Underwood ended up winning, however).
- The interesting fact of Fox News being the first network to call Arizona for Biden, bringing much heat down on them from the political right.
- With presidential election still hanging in the balance, Marin said, “I think there is a huge and growing investment on the part of Republicans and Democrats to find a tally and put an end to this.... The whole world is watching.”

2020-2021

Highlights continued

Mary Ann Ahern & Carol Marin | Continued

- A question from Father John Cusick about whether there might be any people willing to stand shoulder to shoulder to address the deep divisions in the country. While Ahern rejected any false optimism and mentioned divisions even in her own family, she said that any progress would come down to individual responsibility to call out lies when they hear lies.
- Several audience-member questions, including “To what extent do you think our national divisions are rooted in racial hostility and resentment?” and another about the trend of some non-Cuban Hispanics turning out for Trump.
- The possibility of new young leadership in Illinois politics. While Marin mentioned

the enduring fraternity house vibe of Springfield, both journalists also noted the presence of smart young legislators, both women and men, waiting for an opportunity to lead.

Ahern paid a touching tribute to her mentor Marin, calling it “the honor of a lifetime to have shared this beat with Carol Marin.”

“Oh, stop it!” said Marin with a smile, who said what a privilege it had been to work with her longtime friend.

Submitted by
FFCC Board Member
Catherine O’Connell-Cahill

NOW PLAYING

*A First Friday Video Conversation with
Mary Ann Ahern & Carol Marin*

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ANYTIME & ANYWHERE

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firstfridayclubchicago.org/ffcc-videos

GRAB SOME POPCORN & ENJOY!



Rabbis Evan & Ari Moffic | April 9, 2021



Faith and Religious Traditions: Will They Be Relevant to Future Generations?

Rabbis Evan and Ari Moffic, married and parents of two children, joined the First Friday Club live via Zoom in April. They shared their insight on the relevance of faith and religious traditions which have been the common thread of worship shared by many religious groups and generations of families.

Addressing this complex topic, Evan and Ari drew on their extensive work with interfaith families who have been challenged to find a common denominator between two different religions while keeping their faith and traditions alive.

Rabbi Evan Moffic is the rabbi and spiritual leader of Congregation Solel in Highland Park, Illinois, with a strong commitment to interfaith families. Rabbi Ari Moffic is a rabbi-educator who partners with families to inspire learners of all ages and backgrounds to incorporate Judaism into their lives. Ari is currently the Director of Congregational Learning at Temple Beth-El in Northbrook, Illinois.

When asked what initially sparked an interest with interfaith work, Ari said that while in rabbinic studies, she participated in a wedding ceremony of an interfaith couple, offering them a blessing. As for Evan, while working with two Christian faith communities during his tenure at Chicago Sinai Congregation, he realized the richness and challenges shared by all faith groups.

The couple went on to further discuss the increasingly diverse and secular world in which we live. Change is ever rampant and rapid, impacting our faith lives, families, communities, and houses of worship. Our definitions of faith, religion, and worship have changed, thus reshaping our faith and religious traditions.

For instance, what does it mean today to be religious and spiritual? In the case of those who check the “none” box when asked for their religious affiliation, they attribute themselves as spir-

itual yet not necessarily tied to a particular faith tradition and/or faith community.

“Less than 50% of Americans are affiliated with any kind of religious organization ...”

However, it’s important to note that we are all born with and develop an inner need for connection, community, and meaning in our lives. We want to belong to something larger than ourselves. Which brings us back to why faith traditions in the past have been the answer to this quest. But in an increasingly secular society, our sources go beyond faith and religious traditions.

2020-2021

Highlights continued

Rabbis Evan & Ari Moffic | Continued

Discussion continued, with the Moffics providing suggestions to help better understand another person's faith journey, especially when it involves a different religion from your own.

- Explore through the following reading material: ***Being Both: Embracing Two Religions in One Interfaith Family*** by Susan Katz Miller (Beacon Press, 2013), a story which provides a benchmark of one family's interfaith journey.
- Face the fear and threat of another religion by exploring another faith tradition on an official online site and/or by attending a study group, worship service, or social/cultural event. Engage in conversation with a member of another faith through interfaith events like First Friday Club, and keep an open mind (the aim is not necessarily to leave your own faith tradition).

- When a family member no longer wants to participate in a faith tradition, engage in conversations by exploring what's at issue. Be open to understanding how the family member is searching for and/or engaging in his own meaning of life and sense of community. Explain the importance and meaning of the rituals/practices of your own faith tradition while remembering that *forcing* a family member to participate in your traditions usually does not end well.

From the comments received after this presentation, it's clear that more conversation is needed on this topic. The Moffics not only engaged our minds and hearts, but they addressed and made connections between work, faith, values and issues that affect our daily lives and our faith.

Submitted by
FFCC Board Member
Terrill L. Stumpf, PhD, MDiv, CHPV



*A First Friday Video Conversation with
Rabbis Evan & Ari Moffic*

**TO VIEW THE MOFFIC VIDEO, GO TO
THE FOLLOWING LINK:**

firstfridayclubchicago.org/ffcc-videos

2020-2021

Highlights continued

Fr. James Martin, S.J. | May 7, 2021



Back to the Future:

How a Visit to the Places Where Jesus Lived, Taught & Prayed Changed Everything

Even though Jesuit Father James Martin was writing a book about Jesus, he didn't really want to go to the Holy

Land. He thought it might be touristy. It might ruin the images in his mind's eye of the Gospel places where Jesus walked.

Boy, was he ever wrong.

Father Martin appeared on Zoom with the First Friday Club on May 7, 2021 to talk about his best selling book, *Jesus: A Pilgrimage*. Moderated by Mike and Cathy O'Connell-Cahill, the Zoom discussion "smashed" the First Friday Club record by attracting more than 500 audience members.

Martin began by describing his quixotic search for the Bay of Parables, where Jesus preached from a boat along the Sea of Galilee. ("Never heard of it!" said many of the people he asked on his first trip to the Holy Land, but Martin was undeterred.) When he finally found it, what did he see? Rocky ground, thorns, and fertile ground. Sound familiar? Right out of Jesus' parable of the sower. This discovery helped Martin realize that oftentimes something we don't "get" in the gospels has a real-life explanation we just don't realize.

"When Jesus was preaching his parables," says Martin, "he was not preaching about things in general, or about theories or concepts, like 'Imagine these people are like rocks,' or 'Imagine these people are like thorns.'" Instead, Jesus was preaching about things right in front of him.

"He probably said, 'Those people are like those thorns right behind you,' and the people turned around.... It grounded Jesus in a way I never could have imagined, and reminded me again how Jesus is fully human and fully divine.... He lived in a particular time and place."

Martin says that for him, the most meaningful place in the Holy Land was the Sea of Galilee: not only for its great beauty but also for the astounding realization that Jesus was actually there, that he saw the same things people see today. He says that many pilgrims tell him that while they knew the gospel stories set near the Sea of Galilee, it had always seemed "like a fairy tale, a mythical place." And then suddenly, there it is, in front of them. "It's kind of shocking, and it takes a while to process it," says Martin. "It's really important to me in a way that I can't really even articulate."

In response to a question about the church's treatment of LGBT Catholics, a topic about which

2020-2021

Highlights continued

Fr. James Martin, S.J. | Continued

Martin has often written and spoken, Martin pointed to Jesus' response to the Roman centurion, who comes to ask Jesus to heal his servant. This was a man on the margins, says Martin—not a Jew, he doesn't even believe in God. Yet Jesus "listens to him, encounters him, does a great favor for him, and then he praises his faith." So, says Martin, "this is how Jesus treats people on the margins, with respect and compassion and sensitivity. And this is the way we should be treating people on the margins. So

the gospel stories tell us how we should be treating LGBT people."

"I would never say this about any retreat or anything else, but going to the Holy Land will change your life," says Martin. "When you understand the geography better, you understand the story better.... Someone said to me ... it's like knowing a good friend of yours. You know him well, but you'll know him better when you go to his house where he grew up. You just will."



Submitted by
FFCC Board Member
Catherine O'Connell-Cahill

*A First Friday Video Conversation
with Fr. James Martin, S.J.*

TO VIEW THE MARTIN VIDEO,
GO TO THE FOLLOWING LINK:

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Rich Beddome | Looking Back & Moving Forward

Rich Beddome, former board president, reflects on First Friday, the pandemic, & hidden graces



Richard Beddome
Former President, FFCC Board

On July 1st, I handed “the President’s gavel” to the First Friday Club’s new President, Maureen Murphy. Maureen is the perfect candidate to lead the Club forward as we begin our 36th season on October 1, 2021.

Maureen is a capable individual who you’ve already met on two of our streaming luncheons this past year. She was the host and moderator for our opening speaker, Charles Matthews, at the start of this past season in October 2020. Then in February, she stepped up again to moderate the program with our speaker Richard Moore, who joined us remotely from Ireland.

When the former FFC President Paul Gillespie handed me “the President’s gavel” in 2016, the world was a very different place. The club also operated quite differently than it did this past season.

What hasn’t changed is First Friday’s core mission statement. For over 35 years, the executive board has aimed to showcase speakers who will relate their experiences in the fields of religion, politics, media, business, and public service in a way that helps us to make connections between

our work, faith, and the issues of the day. This, we believe, is the reason for our continued success.

There is an old saying that wherever you spend your time and money, is where your heart is. If that’s the case, many of you, our dedicated members, have continued to share your hearts with us. Despite this pandemic, which resulted in the cancellation of in-person luncheons at the beautiful Union League Club where friends and co-workers could gather, you were loyal attendees and supporters of our First Friday video conversations. Any uncertainties the board had regarding a live webinar format quickly dissipated when registration for events met or exceeded our average luncheon attendance numbers! Your participation is a vote of confidence and confirms the continued need for people of faith to share their values. It’s also a sign of hope in difficult times. Thank you for staying connected!

As we move into the new season, Father John Cusick will continue in his role as Chaplain of the Club (since 1986), along with Judy Murphy as our administrator. As for me, I’m not leaving the board just yet! I will step into the role of treasurer, which was held by Judy Josephs for well over 30 years. (See article about Judy Josephs below.)

Judy has been and continues to be one of First Friday’s biggest supporters and has dedicated many hours to the club. Judy will no longer serve on the board, but will continue as “treasurer emeritus,” lending her years of wisdom when needed. Thank you, Judy, for your many years of dedicated service!

Rich Beddome *continued*

It's been an honor and privilege to have served as the Club President, and I'm grateful for the support and devotion of our distinguished members of the Board of Directors.

Take care, stay well, and I look forward to seeing everyone soon!

Sincerely,

Rich Beddome



Treasurer Emeritus: *Judy Josephs*

First Friday's treasurer and board member Judy Josephs has "retired" after serving the club for over 33 years. Taking her place will be Rich Beddome, past president of the board. Like Judy, Rich has an accounting background but readily admits that Judy leaves behind some big shoes to fill.

During her long tenure on the board, Judy not only provided the club with a wealth of accounting experience but spent countless hours filling in before, during, and after the many speaker luncheons. Her connection to the club started back in 1987, when she received a simple invitation to attend a First Friday luncheon as Fr. John Cusick's guest. This introduction would connect her to other volunteers, with whom she found lifelong friendships. It was also a catalyst which formed Judy into First Friday's biggest supporter. Judy has been and will always be a true ambassador for the First Friday Club of Chicago.

Thank you, Judy, for your gift of time and talent!

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2021-2022

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Stay Connected with FFCC

The Mission of the First Friday Club of Chicago is to provide a forum for men and women to make connections between work, faith, values, and issues that affect their daily lives. First Friday will be connecting again this season with its members and friends but with a hybrid format, still delivering thought provoking presentations whether virtually or in person.

The 2021-2022 season, which kicks off on Friday, October 1, will deliver its initial presentation via a **live webinar format**, to be viewed directly in your home. Depending on the pandemic, we may or may not continue to present online for the remaining speakers.

But first a little history: FFCC was founded in 1986 by Father John Cusick, and today he continues his service as Club Chaplain. Joseph Cardinal Bernardin was FFCC's first speaker.

Our members and friends of First Friday receive all communications via e-blasts which contain information on and links to our speakers, along with information and links on how one can donate to First Friday. Because of the uncertainty surrounding Covid-19, we will present a hybrid format this season, which means some presentations will be delivered via live webinar or possibly at the Union League Club. Please watch your weekly e-blasts for changes in format and location.

For more information on First Friday, go to FFCC's website at firstfridayclubchicago.org to view the latest Annual Report, a current list of Board members, contact information, and all Podcast links.

You can also stay connected with FFCC on Facebook. FFCC's Facebook account has photos, announcements, quotes from luncheon speakers, links, and comments. Go to facebook.com/FirstFridayClubChicago to view and post your own comments.

Last but not least, please consider becoming a member of First Friday Club. We run on a tight budget and rely heavily on memberships/donations to help pay for our rising administrative and webinar costs along with luncheon fees (when we go back to the Union League Club).

To help cover our expenses, we simplified and changed the **MEMBERSHIP NAMES & DONATION LEVELS to the following: BRONZE, SILVER, GOLD, and PLATINUM.** Each membership level includes at least one discounted luncheon.

A **Donation** can also be made where **you CHOOSE THE AMOUNT, with the option to have it made in honor or memory of someone.**

To learn more about memberships and how to donate, go to the FFCC website at firstfridayclubchicago.org/become-a-member and click on **Membership**, then click on **Become a Member/Make a Donation.** Follow the prompts to complete payment online.

Through the support of individuals like you, the club will continue to thrive.

**THE MISSION OF
THE FIRST
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To Provide a Forum for Men & Women to Make Connections between Work, Faith, Values, & Issues that Affect Their Daily Lives.

Membership List | 2021-2022*

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November 5, 2021



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Journalist, Essayist &
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December 3, 2021

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First Friday Club *of* Chicago



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