

SERVICES FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD

SUNDAY, MARCH 12 AT 11:00 A.M.

SERMON: "It's Grace and More Grace"

TEXTS: Genesis 12:1-4 and John 3:1-17

Stephen Williams, preaching

Tent Reception will follow worship

SUNDAY, MARCH 19 AT 11:00 A.M.

SERMON: "Going to the Well Alone"

TEXTS: John 4:3-30, 39-42

William Shelburne, Sr., preaching

MAKING THE MOST OF LENT

"One who attempts to act and do things for others or for the world without deepening one's own self-understanding, freedom, integrity and capacity to love, will not have anything to give others. One will communicate to them nothing but the contagion of one's own obsessions, aggressiveness, ego-centered ambitions, delusions about ends and means, doctrinaire prejudices and ideas. There is nothing more tragic in the modern world than the misuse of power and action to which persons are driven by their own Faustian misunderstandings and misapprehensions." Thomas Merton, *Contemplation in a World of Action*.

Lent is a good time to reflect on Merton's profound words. We are called to think deeply about the spiritual as we engage the world. Where do we go to develop the capacity for love that he suggests? Where do we come face to face with our obsessions and ambitions? The place to begin is the church—where together we worship, study, nurture and serve. As the church reads the Bible and prays, we hold each other to account, challenging and building up each other.

Especially during the season of Lent we need to touch the deeper streams of God's power and will. I imagine we all find ourselves experiencing what Merton suggests. We get torn and worn and need interior strengthening. We too often neglect the interior strengthening we need. We overlook the meaning of events in our lives; we fail to interpret our heart's longing in relationship to God, we gloss over the eternal reality; we turn Sabbath rest into just another weekend of busyness.

The church is here to help us use the season of Lent wisely. There is a Sunday morning prayer service with Communion where elders read Scripture and lead prayers. The service is held at 9:00 a.m. Mid-week, following dinner at 6:00 p.m., two church members offer meditations on the topic, "Summoned, Called and Named" during a worship service at 6:45 p.m. Centering Prayer led by Gwen McKee and Carolyn Neely is held Fridays at noon in the library. And Robert Bennett is coordinating a study using Tim Keller's new book about Lent on Sundays, 5:30 – 6:30 p.m. in Imlay House. And don't miss the service of worship at 11:00 a.m. that includes outstanding music by the Chancel Choir.

The church library is a valuable resource during this season. We'll find there books that help us focus on the personal and interpersonal dimensions of life before God as well as the dimension of life that focuses on serving God in the world. Frederick Beuchner's little book of daily readings is titled *Listening to Your Life*. He has an imaginative way of noticing how God comes to us—in a relationship, in nature's beauty, an embrace, an event. Another book is Parker Palmer's *Let Your Life Speak* which deals with vocation. *Practicing Our Faith*, edited by Dorothy Bass, gives attention to forgiveness and discernment, as well as the practice of Sabbath observance, which most of us do badly.

What would happen if you read a book or two about the spiritual life during these weeks of Lent? What if you commit to reading the daily devotional booklet, *These Days* (available free in the literature rack by the offices) and accompanying Bible verses between now and Easter?

As we pay more attention to our spiritual life, we'll be stretched and strengthened to see how God's sovereign love gives pattern to our hopes. When we connect with what God is already doing in the world, we discover the excitement and joy that derives from authentic life—abundant life—offered to those who are followers of Jesus Christ. This Lent, perhaps as never before, we can truly seek to live up to our catechism's high calling: "Our chief end is to glorify God and enjoy God forever!" --SCW

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday, March 12	9:00 a.m.	Lenten Prayer Service
	9:30 a.m.	Sunday School, Confirmation Class
		First Ringers, Room 111
	10:30 a.m.	Coffee Fellowship, Chancel Choir
	11:00 a.m.	Worship Service
	5:00 p.m.	Youth Handbells
	5:30 p.m.	Youth Supper
	6:00 p.m.	Youth Choir
	6:30 p.m.	Junior Choir
	Monday, March 13	9:00 a.m.
Tuesday, March 14	7:30 a.m.	Morning Missions at Emmaus House
	10:00 a.m.	Jubilee Circle, John Knox Room
Wednesday, March 15	1:30 p.m.	Jail Ministry
	5:30 p.m.	PW Coordinating Team Mtg
	5:30 p.m.	Kinder Choir
	6:00 p.m.	Wonderful Wednesday Dinner
	6:45 p.m.	Children's Choir
	6:45 p.m.	Lenten Service
	7:30 p.m.	Chancel Choir
Friday, March 17	12:00 p.m.	Centering Prayer, Library
Sunday, March 19	9:00 a.m.	Lenten Prayer Service
	9:30 a.m.	Sunday School, Confirmation Class
		First Ringers, Room 111
	10:30 a.m.	Coffee Fellowship, Chancel Choir
	11:00 a.m.	Worship Service
	5:00 p.m.	Youth Handbells
	5:30 p.m.	Youth Supper
	6:00 p.m.	Youth Choir
	6:30 p.m.	Junior Choir
	Monday, March 20	7:30 a.m.
	9:00 a.m.	Knitting Prayer Shawls
Tuesday, March 21	7:30 a.m.	Morning Missions at Emmaus House
Wednesday, March 22	1:30 p.m.	Jail Ministry
	5:30 p.m.	Kinder Choir
	6:00 p.m.	Wonderful Wednesday Dinner
	6:45 p.m.	Children's Choir
	6:45 p.m.	Lenten Service
	7:30 p.m.	Chancel Choir
Friday, March 24	12:00 p.m.	Centering Prayer, Library

PRAYER CONCERNS, RECORD OF OUR FAITHFULNESS, ETC.

February 26: attendance at worship: 194; Sunday School attendance: 68; visitors: 21. March 5: attendance at worship: 147; Sunday School attendance: 50; visitors: 16....

Lent is a 40-day period starting with Ash Wednesday leading to Easter Sunday. Sundays are not included in Lent as each is considered a “little Easter”. All are invited to these Lent and Easter events at First Presbyterian Church. To learn more about any event, please call the church, 354.7615, or check the website, www.savannahfpc.org. Whether you are a lifelong churchgoer or are new to the life of faith, you are welcome at First.

Prayer service with communion is Sunday at 9:00 a.m. in the sanctuary. The ministers and elders lead a brief service of prayers, Scripture reading and communion, March 5 - April 2.

Mid-week Lenten services follow the fellowship supper on Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m. Attend a forty-minute service in the sanctuary that will include reflections by two First members along with prayers and special music. March 8 - April 5. The theme is “Summoned, Called and Named”.

Practice Centering Prayer during the season of Lent by attending Centering Prayer on Fridays at noon in the church library, March 3 - April 14. Centering prayer is a method of Christian meditation which facilitates closer communion with God. Join us for a series of 45 minute sessions which will use readings, video and audio to explore the practice of resting in God’s presence. You are welcome to bring a brown bag lunch.

Join a small group study for five sessions, Sundays, March 12 - April 9 at 5:30 p.m. in Imlay House. Using Tim Keller’s latest book, “A Journey Through Lent,” there is a DVD component and a study guide that looks at Psalms linked to the season.

First Presbyterian Preschool will hold their annual Little Lambs Spring Consignment Sale on March 10 and March 11. Friday the sale is 9:00 am – 1:00 pm and 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm. Saturday, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm.

Dinner Group will meet at Tybee Island Social Club, 1311 Butler Avenue on Friday, March 31 at 6:30 p.m. One review gushes, “A great relaxed setting and the shrimp and grits are perfect!” Some will want to stay and enjoy Jason Salzer performing at 8:00 p.m.

Join the Social Concerns Committee on Sunday, March 12 at 4:30 p.m. in Imlay House for a discussion of the video, “Locked In a Box: Immigration Detention.” The video, produced by Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, sheds light on the immigration detention system in the United States where close to 500,000 immigrants were detained in 2016. It promises to be an interesting and lively conversation.

Men’s Breakfast and Bible Study is Monday, March 20, 7:30 – 8:15 a.m., at the Holland House, 601 East 68th Street. The food is delicious and the fellowship warm!

Mark your calendar for the annual spring clean-up morning, Saturday April 8 9am-Noon. The pattern is to clean up the church and grounds on Saturday before Palm Sunday so we are ‘spruced’ up for Holy Week.

Wednesday Evening Lenten Services 2017

“Summoned, Called, and Named”

March 8: Abraham Genesis 11:27-12:5
Mary Luke 1:26-38

Hymn: To Abraham and Sarah, #51
Solo: Canticle of the Turning,

March 15: Moses Exodus 3:1-12
Joseph Matthew 1:18-25

Hymn: Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah, #65
Solo: My Song is Love Unknown

March 22: Isaiah Isaiah 6:1-8
Peter, Andrew Mark 1:16-20
James, John

Hymn: Here I Am, Lord, #69
Solo: God Is Calling Through the Whisper #410

March 29: Jeremiah Jeremiah 1:1-10
Zacchaeus Luke 19:1-10

Hymn: Will You Come and Follow Me, #726
Solo: Do Not Be Afraid, #76

April 5: Jonah Jonah 1:1-3, 3:1-5, 4:1-4
Paul & Ananias Acts 9:10-22

Hymn: Jesus Calls Us, #720
Solo: We Lift Our Voices, #710