

Coming Home for Holy Week

PALM SUNDAY, APRIL 9 at 11:00 A.M.

SERMON: "Ride on to Die!" TEXT: Matthew 21:1-11 and 27:32-37

Stephen Williams, preaching

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

CHURCH-WIDE LUNCHEON at NOON

TUESDAY, APRIL 11 at 6:00 P.M.

MUSICAL MEDITATION ON HAYDN'S "THE SEVEN LAST WORDS"

William McNair, playing

MAUNDY THURSDAY, APRIL 13 at 6:45 P.M.

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

William Shelburne, Sr., preaching

GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 14 at 7:30 P.M.

SERVICE OF TENEBRAE

SUNRISE EASTER SERVICE, APRIL 16 at 6:54 A.M.

ISLE OF HOPE MARINA PAVILION

William Shelburne, Sr., preaching

EASTER SERVICE LED BY CHILDREN, APRIL 16 at 10:00 A.M.

READINGS, PRAYERS AND SONG

EASTER SERVICE WITH CHANCEL CHOIR AND BRASS, APRIL 16 at 11:00 A.M.

SERMON: "Make It As Secure As You Can" TEXT: Matthew 27:65 – 28:10

Stephen Williams, preaching

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING NEEDS OUR SUPPORT

For more than fifty years, the church has been receiving a special mission offering on the highest holiday of the Christian year—Easter. For the last few years, the Mission Committee has received the offering on Palm Sunday and Easter, and while we have not doubled the offering, it has given more of our members a chance to contribute during a very busy time of the year. The OGHS funds vital ministries in our country and around the world through three denomination-wide programs: Presbyterian Disaster Relief, Self-Development of People and Hunger Program. It is important that many poor and hurting people benefit from receiving this aid. They find hope and relief thanks to the gifts we make to this offering.

But I want to suggest how important it is for us to give these gifts. Felix Etinge and I recently returned from a trip to his home village in Cameroon. It was a rugged experience in many ways—challenging roads, uncertain vehicles, simple homes with no running water—but what was amazing was the welcome and generosity of the people.

At the Sunday worship service, which was standing room only, there was a baptism and an offering was received. There was also communion, and the minister announced, "In the interest of time, we will combine the communion offering with the regular offering today." Imagine, that church in a remote village was prepared to receive three offerings! They seemed to know that the secret to abundant living was to give, with open hands and open hearts.

This is a profound pattern for our spiritual life. We are not meant to save and dole out sparingly the grace with which God continually blesses us. A central message of Jesus' life and teachings is that love and humility are more enduringly powerful than any of the forms of wealth and power the world has to offer. And there is a related truth—that in sharing God's love and blessings with others we can remain alive to their mystery, while in taking them for granted and trying to hoard them, we begin to lose our capacity to enjoy them.

This church has a tremendous record of mission giving—more than most we are very aware of the chronic poverty and illiteracy, the hunger and disease that ravage the human family. The gifts we contribute to OGHS this Palm Sunday and Easter will make it possible to respond not only to the immediate pain of disasters—whenever and wherever they happen during the next year—but also to the long-term conditions that keep people in poverty and hunger.

I encourage you to join us on Palm Sunday for lunch after worship where the children will perform. I hope you will attend the lunch and I hope you write a generous check for OGHS. As we ponder Christ's costly sacrifice, may we take to heart the words of the old hymn, "Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all." --SCW

MAKE GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE A PRIORITY!

The Good Friday service on April 14 at 7:30 p.m. is called Tenebrae or "shadows" recalling the passion of Jesus Christ. The most striking feature of the service is the gradual extinguishing of lights while the passion account is read. The bare table and unvested pulpit emphasize the starkness of the events recalled. The Chancel Choir will sing and members of the Confirmation class will read the Passion account. Here is what some of our members say about this service:

"Good Friday is the holiest and most somber day on the Christian calendar. Unless we fully experience Good Friday, we cannot truly comprehend the joy of Easter morning. To me, the only way to experience the depth, beauty, and reality of Christ's sacrifice is through music and prayer. Our conversation with God on this day is too important to miss."

"The Good Friday Service brings to life the great sacrifice that Christ made for us. It puts me in awe that God would love me enough to do this for me. This service really sets the mood for the anticipation of the Easter resurrection to come."

"Each year, the service on Good Friday is that instant when the meaning of Easter fully sinks into me. Between the breaking of bread on Thursday night and the celebration of Jesus' resurrection on Sunday, there comes that moment when the lights are extinguished and one feels a distinct sense of isolation and separation. As one walks out of the sanctuary in the dark, the reality of Jesus' sacrifice comes home."

PITCH IN AND HELP WITH ANNUAL SPRING CLEAN-UP

"A short horse is soon curried" and "Many hands make light work!" Help spruce up our church building and campus on Saturday, April 8, 9:00 a.m. – noon. All ages and all skill levels will find something helpful to do. If you can bring rakes and hedge trimmers, cloths for window washing, and paint brushes, that is great! Just wear some old clothes and spend the morning getting the Lord's house ready for Holy Week. The event is sponsored by the Property Committee.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE STATED SESSION MEETING

The Session meeting on Monday, March 27 began at 7:00 p.m. with a study of the third and fourth ordination vows. These vows ask about how the confessions of the church will inform and shape decision making. This year, the stated meetings begin with a presentation about the nine ordination vows of the Presbyterian Church. The time of study concluded with prayer. The Finance Committee reported overall income for the first two months of the year against expenses. There were some unusually large expenses early in the year that accounted for a deficit. Committees made reports including worship plans during Lent and Holy Week. The next weeks will be busy ones as elder-mentors meet with members of the confirmation class, First hosts Savannah Presbytery and we hold an end-of-the-year appreciation luncheon for the faculty of the Savannah Arts Academy. The meeting closed with prayer at 8:10 p.m.

PRACTICE CENTERING PRAYER ON FRIDAYS

Join us during the season of Lent, to practice centering prayer in the church library – 12:00 Noon, March 3 - April 14. Centering prayer is a method of Christian meditation which facilitates closer communion with God. Centering Prayer includes 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.

PALM SUNDAY LUNCHEON

Sunday's lunch will include singing by the children's choirs under the direction of Anne McNair. The entrée will be baked ham, potatoes au gratin, green beans and dessert. \$6/adults, \$2/child under 12. Everyone's invited.

JOIN IN THE PALM PARADE

The annual parade will be April 9 on the esplanade north of Tiedeman Park. Sunday school classes for children and adults will dismiss at 10:05 a.m. in order to join First Christian Church in a festive palm parade.

YOUNG ADULT GATHERING PLANNED FOR APRIL 28

The young adults of First Presbyterian Church will gather for a "Mix & Mingle" at Imlay House from 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. on Friday. There will be plenty of great conversation, good food and free childcare. Please bring an appetizer to share. For childcare reservations contact Will Shelburne...will@savannahfpc.org or call 354-7615.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday, April 9	9:30 a.m.	Sunday School, Confirmation Class
	First Ringers, Room 111
	10:05 a.m.	Classes Dismiss for Palm Parade
	10:15 a.m.	Palm Parade
	10:30 a.m.	Coffee Fellowship, Chancel Choir
	11:00 a.m.	Worship Service
	12:00 p.m.	Palm Sunday Luncheon
	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, April 10	9:00 a.m.	Knitting Prayer Shawls
Tuesday, April 11	7:30 a.m.	Morning Missions at Emmaus House
	10:00 a.m.	Jubilee Circle, John Knox Room
	6:00 p.m.	Musical Meditation by William McNair
Wednesday, April 12	1:30 p.m.	Jail Ministry
Thursday, April 13	5:30 p.m.	Kinder/Children's Choirs Combined
	6:00 p.m.	Maundy Thursday Dinner
	6:45 p.m.	Maundy Thursday Communion Service
	7:30 p.m.	Chancel Choir
	Friday, April 14	12:00 p.m.
	7:30 p.m.	Good Friday Tenebrae Service
Sunday, April 16	6:54 a.m.	Sunrise Service, Isle of Hope Marina
	9:30 a.m.	Sunday School
	10:00 a.m.	Children's Worship Service, Stewart Hall
	10:30 a.m.	Coffee Fellowship, Chancel Choir
	11:00 a.m.	Worship Service
	No Youth Activities
Monday, April 17	7:30 a.m.	Men's Prayer Breakfast
	9:00 a.m.	Knitting Prayer Shawls
	7:00 p.m.	Session Meeting
Tuesday, April 18	7:30 a.m.	Morning Missions at Emmaus House
Wednesday, April 19	1:30 p.m.	Jail Ministry

PRAYER CONCERNS, RECORD OF OUR FAITHFULNESS, ETC.

March 26: attendance at worship: 104 ; Sunday School attendance: 40 ; visitors: 11 . April 2 offering: attendance at worship:184 ; Sunday School attendance: 63 ; visitors: 13..... Big thanks to the church member that mulched the planting beds in the courtyard beside Stewart Hall.