

SERVICES FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD
SUNDAY, JANUARY 15 at 11:00 A.M.
SERMON: "The Power of Expectation"
Stephen Williams, preaching

SUNDAY, JANUARY 22 at 11:00 A.M.
SERMON: "On the Loose"
Paul Timothy Roberts, Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary, preaching

COME HOME IN THE NEW YEAR

If you read this essay as someone who has been on the sidelines of church life for a while, consider this an invitation to come home to First. It is too easy to fall into the habit of filling our days with many important things and neglecting the most important – our spiritual life. A twist on the old aphorism is, "You can't go home again, but you can always go back to church."

The first half of the aphorism, "You can't go home again," is a variant on the lesson that you cannot set the clock back. Just as you cannot undo what is done, so you cannot become again what you no longer are. Among other things, that truth protects parents whose children want them to keep their past intact, so that the children, from time to time, can wander through it nostalgically. That desire is unfair, because as much as our children, parents need to keep growing and oriented to the future.

"You can't go home again, but you can always go back to church." Does this mean any old church? No, for as we grow up we need to be part of a church that takes seriously the gospel claims on our lives where we are called to respond to God's love rather than God's power.

It means we need a church that encourages the life of the mind, where we believe in thinking and wish to think in believing. Nor do we want to go back to a church full of people who make worship an optional activity and neglect the life of the spirit. We don't want to go back to a church that lacks the fervor of fellowship, the joy of discipleship, the sharp-edged excitement of learning for all ages.

First is a church to which you can return in the New Year or at any time, a church that seeks to put God's love into action. I like to think we are a church whose members rejoice to show forth their faith, not only in words but in deeds, and count faithfulness as the true measure of success.

Of course, it is for God and not us to say if all this is so. I confess that I have found the Spirit moving here. I confess that time and again I have found the primacy of love here. I confess that my Christian convictions have been repeatedly renewed here. And so I confess that I hope you will find a pew and add your voice to our prayers and praise this Sunday so early in the New Year. –SCW

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday, January 15

9:30 a.m. Sunday School
10:30 a.m. Chancel Choir, Coffee Fellowship
11:00 a.m. Worship Service
12:15 p.m. Hospitality Committee Rm 110
5:00 p.m. Youth Handbells
5:30 p.m. Youth Supper
6:00 p.m. Youth Fellowships and Choirs

Monday, January 16

7:30 a.m. Men's Breakfast
9:00 a.m. Knitting Prayer Shawls

Tuesday, January 17

7:30 a.m. Morning Missions at Emmaus House

Wednesday, January 20

1:30 p.m. Jail Ministry
6:30 p.m. First Ringers in Room 215
7:30 p.m. Chancel Choir in Room 111

Saturday, January 21

6:00 p.m. William Foote Series Dinner
7:00 p.m. Program

Sunday, January 22

9:30 a.m. Sunday School
10:30 a.m. Chancel Choir, Coffee Fellowship
11:00 a.m. Worship Service
4:00 p.m. William Foote Series Program
5:00 p.m. Reception - Stewart Hall

Monday, January 23

9:00 a.m. Knitting Prayer Shawls
12:00 p.m. Lunch Bunch – Driftaway Cafe

Tuesday, January 24

7:30 a.m. Morning Missions at Emmaus House

Wednesday, January 25

1:30 p.m. Jail Ministry
5:30 p.m. Children's Choir – Kickoff
6:00 p.m. Children's Choir Dinner
7:00 p.m. Children's Choir Crafts
7:30 p.m. Chancel Choir in Room 111

Saturday, January 28

9:30 a.m. Savannah Presbytery PW Fall Gathering

PRAYER CONCERNS, RECORD OF OUR FAITHFULNESS, ETC.

January 8: attendance at worship: 189; Sunday School attendance: 60; visitors: 12. The Session received a thank you note from the principal of Pulaski Elementary School thanking the church for our Backpack Buddy ministry which provides food to thirty children attending the school. Before the Christmas break, First also delivered to the teachers' lounge trays of home baked cookies and each child received a card and gift wrapped book.....The Savannah Morning News named a church member one of Savannah's "young professionals and philanthropists."

Wednesdays Become Wonderful in February. The mid-week dinners and programs resume on February 1st.

Foote Series

Paul Timothy Roberts
Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary

"Paradigms for Christian Engagement"

Saturday, January 21 – Dinner at 6pm and Program at 7pm

Sunday, January 22 – Sermon at 11am and Program at 4pm

JANUARY TERM ATTRACTS STRONG INTEREST

The series, "Wisdom Literature of the Bible," has attracted strong interest among the four adult Sunday school classes. The series will continue through January in Stewart Hall from 9:30am to 10:30am. with "The Psalms" on January 15, "Ecclesiastes" on January 22, and "Solomon" on January 29. The course replaces the individual adult education Sunday School classes.

NEW MEMBER CLASS SCHEDULED FOR BEGINS

Those considering church membership are encouraged to attend a series of orientation meetings planned for Sundays, January 22, 29 and February 5 at 9:30 am in Room 207. These orientation meetings will provide an overview of Presbyterian history, Reformed theology, and ministries available at First Presbyterian. New members will be received on Sunday, February 5.

CONTRIBUTE TO THE CONCERT GRAND PIANO

In the New Year, we encourage you to consider helping the church to fund our newly acquired Steinway grand piano for our sanctuary. The cost of the instrument is \$45,000. We are grateful for the contributions of previous generations to the instrument we have used for the past 40 years. Our session has approved a fundraising initiative to accept donations for this upgraded instrument. Please consider donating what you are able! Make checks payable to First Presbyterian Church, marked: for piano.

CHILDREN'S CHOIR TO KICK OFF 2017

Children's Choir will kick off 2017 with a combined rehearsal for children ages 3 through second grade on Wednesday, January 25 from 5:30 – 6:00 in Room 215. At 6:00, a simple child-friendly dinner will be served followed by children's crafts activities from 6:30 – 7:00. A church member will lead the activities. The following week, beginning February 1, we will return to the normal Wonderful Wednesday schedule with the Kinder Choir meeting from 5:30 – 6:00 before dinner and the Children's Choir meeting from 6:30 – 7:15.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE STATED SESSION MEETING

The Session welcomed a new class of elders to their first meeting on Monday, January 9 at 7:00 p.m. with opening prayer and a study. This year the Session will study the orientation vows, and they began with the foundational question: "Do you trust in Jesus Christ your Savior, acknowledge him Lord of all and Head of the Church, and through him believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit? The Session approved several mission offerings scheduled throughout the year, elected commissioners to Presbytery meetings, voted on the membership of Session committees and approved the calendar for Holy Communion. The Finance Committee reported a balanced budget for 2017. Despite the expense of repairing the Resurrection stained glass window and control issues with the HVAC system in Steward Hall mid-summer, the year ended in good shape. Thanks to the generosity of First's members, very robust giving more than met these challenges. Overall income for the year against expenses was presented. The surplus will be set aside in a designated Reserve Fund. The operating budget for 2017 was announced. It was noted the important role of the Endowment since endowment income helps underwrite our mission and ministry every year. Everyone is encouraged to consider remembering First in their estate plans. With prayers for our church and the world the meeting concluded at 8:15 p.m. just in time for the Alabama/Clemson football game!

RISE CHOIR

The RISE Choir will hold a fundraising event in the narthex during their rehearsal on Monday, January 23 from 3-6 p.m. Come hear them rehearse and purchase items from Lularoe Trunk Show to support their spring tour.

DINNER GROUP

Folks will gather at Bowtie Restaurant, 6724 Waters Avenue on Friday, January 27 at 6:30p.m. Already there are 18 members and friends of First signed up! Join the annual pilgrimage to Mrs. Wilkes Dining Room on Thursday, February 9 at 6:00p.m. Invite friends and neighbors to this mecca of Southern style cuisine served family style. Reservations are required and checks, in advance, need to be made payable to the church. The deadline is Monday, February 6. Total cost \$25/person includes tax and tip. Email judith@savannahfpc.org for more information and to reserve a place on the shuttle bus which will leave the church at 5:45 p.m. Everyone is invited!!

Music with a Mission
Sunday, January 29 at 3:00 p.m.

Brian Lockett, classical guitarist, will present a program of music sure to delight! He will be joined on some of the selections by Allen Henderson, baritone. This concert will benefit the Ronald McDonald House Charities of the Coastal Empire.

YOUTH HEAD TO MYERS PARK FOR A MISSION WEEKEND

On January 20-22, First's youth will be going to Myers Park Presbyterian church in Charlotte, NC to participate in their CROSS Missions program. A group of 13 youth and adults will head to Charlotte to participate in a weekend of mission, fellowship and worship. The group will drive up Friday afternoon, serve at two different mission sites on Saturday, and then worship at Myers Park before returning on Sunday. You can find out more about the CROSS Missions program at Myers Park at <http://cross.myersparkpres.org/>.

ALL WOMEN ARE INVITED TO THE ANNUAL MEETING

Savannah Presbytery's Annual Meeting of Presbyterian Women will be held on Saturday, January 28 at First Presbyterian Church in Midway, GA. The address of the church is 672 North Coastal Hwy, Midway, GA 31320. Lunch will be served – registration is \$10.00. The shuttle bus will depart the church at 9:15a.m. Please call to reserve a place for you at lunch and a seat on the bus.

SAVANNAH PRESBYTERY HOLDS LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

The annual Leadership Development Conference sponsored by Savannah Presbytery will be held February 17-18 at Epworth-by-the-Sea, St. Simons Island, GA. The keynote is "Improvising with God". The speaker is The Reverend MaryAnn McKibben Dana. She is a writer, ordained Presbyterian minister and speaker living outside Washington DC. The LDC brochure and registration materials are at www.savannahpresbytery.org. Please check this website for the "Early Bird Registration" and cost for rooms and meals. Checks should be made payable to First Presbyterian Church.

SPONSOR CHANCEL FLOWERS ON SUNDAYS

The Chancel flowers add to the beauty of worship on Sunday mornings and then later are made into smaller bouquets and taken to homebound members. Call the church office, 354-7615, to reserve a particular Sunday or complete the flower chart calendar that is located in the narthex. Make checks payable to the church for \$50 to sponsor an arrangement.