

## SERVICES FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD

SUNDAY, MAY 21 at 11:00 A.M.

SERMON: "The World is Clueless" TEXTS: John 14:15-21  
Stephen Williams, preaching

SUNDAY, MAY 28 at 11:00 A.M.

SERMON: "Sanctified in Truth" TEXTS: John 17:6-19  
William Shelburne, Sr., preaching

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## THE ADVENTURE OF WORSHIP

It was exciting when the chancel platform became crowded with families with young children for the "Blessing of the Cradle." Last Sunday's worship service lifted our hearts in praise to God. Yes, Mother's Day may not be an official holiday on the church calendar, but it always brings out record numbers of families.

Sunday by Sunday, attending worship fortifies people who find themselves stretched thin, sometimes exhausted and feeling burdened. What is at the heart of what moves people out of their beds on any given Sunday morning has a great deal to do with their spiritual hunger and their longing to find God's presence in their lives.

Let's be welcoming to the newcomers who join us for worship. People who decide to visit a church venture into what often feels like risky territory full of strangers. They decide to attend worship for many different reasons. For some, a major loss or transition such as illness or unemployment or moving to a new place, has led them to church. It is in church where their hearts and minds are limbered up to hear the call of Jesus Christ.

First's mission is to be very clear about who we are as Christians and very specific about the content of the Christian faith. Our primary task is to shape and sustain people in the life of faith. A central focus is to help people understand the faith they confess, to help them live faithful lives, and to help them appreciate the vitality of the Reformed tradition.

Our highest purpose is to worship God. Worship is the main event of the community of faith. We experienced that last Sunday, from the children choir singing the introit to the chancel choir offering a choral response after the benediction. There was a great sense of worship that opens a pathway leading to a deep encounter with the living God. Our worship finds its heart and its head in the music and prayers, in the Scripture and sermon. Especially in the sacraments Jesus Christ is known to us and worship becomes a time of wonder, love and praise.

C.S. Lewis has helped many of us understand what it means to confess Jesus as Lord and Savior. Lewis once wrote that there is all the difference in the world between reading the map of the coastline and feeling the spray of the ocean on your face. People come to church, he said, not to be taught to read maps about God's love, but to feel the spray. What a powerful image. It can happen in Sunday school.

You can count on it happening at Vacation Bible School. It has to happen during Sunday morning worship—if we are to be faithful to what God has called us to be.

If you are not feeling the spray of God's presence on your face, then it is very likely our visitors will not find it here either. But if you too are a seeker, as you sing in the choir, attend a class, share in ministries of service and compassion, and above all as you join in Sunday morning worship, then imagine what encounters with the living God might be awaiting those who come into this place and feel the spray of God's presence upon their lives! --SCW

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE STATED SESSION MEETING

The Session met on Monday, May 15 at 6:30 p.m. with the Confirmation Class, a group of eight children who have been meeting weekly for the past three months. After an opening study and prayer, the confirmands read prepared statements of faith and discussed topics such as: What it means to confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior? What does it mean to be saved by grace through faith? What makes for good worship in the Reformed tradition? How are Presbyterians organized? After an hour of lively discussion, the “examination was sustained,” a hymn was sung and the group recessed for dessert and refreshments. A huge thanks was extended to the elder-mentors who form an important component of the confirmation course. Later, the Session reviewed plans for the summer, extended an invitation to Russell Gladding, general presbyter of Savannah Presbytery, to preach on July 29 and approved Chris and Jeff Boyd, whose mission work for the denomination has focused on Central Africa, to be the presenters for the annual Mission Emphasis. Operating income for the first four months of the year was reported ahead of expenses. This surplus is important since there is a large, pending expense for roof repair. Session members were encouraged to attend the service of worship that will commence the Presbytery meeting when it gathers at First on Tuesday, May 23 at 10:00 a.m.. Dr. Charles Hardwick of the General Assembly will preach. With prayers for the congregation and the world, the benediction was pronounced at 8:10 p.m.

## NEW MEMBER CLASS TO BEGIN ON JUNE 11

Who comes to this three-week class? Typically the class will include folks from a broad spectrum of religious experiences. Often one or two in the class have not yet been baptized. Others, though baptized as infants, have never made a public profession of faith. Still others grew up in a variety of Christian churches, have drifted away from church, and now seeking to renew their Christian commitment. And we have people who are longtime Presbyterians who are wanting to transfer their membership from another congregation. What happens in the class? Participants learn about the history of the church and the many activities of our congregation. Above all they explore the basic theological affirmation that all Christians hold in common: “Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior.” This is the only theological statement required for membership in the Presbyterian church. Membership, however, is not an expectation for those who attend the class. Some people will come to the class and participate in discussion and yet are still exploring various dimensions of the faith! The class will be held Sundays, June 11, 18 and 28, 9:30 a.m. in Room 207. Those joining the church will be welcomed during worship on Sunday, June 28 at 11:00 a.m.

## JOIN US FOR VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Children ages 3 years-5<sup>th</sup> grade are invited to Vacation Bible School, June 5-9, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. The children will learn about heroes of the Bible and discover the qualities that make them and us truly heroic in God. Daily themes which discuss the qualities that God’s heroes have are: *Heart, Courage, Wisdom, Hope, Power*. Vacation Bible School requires lots of volunteers, so please contact Will Shelburne if you would like to help.

## SAVANNAH PRESBYTERY TO MEET AT FIRST

The stated meeting of the Savannah Presbytery will be at First on Tuesday, May 23. Everyone is invited to an outstanding Service of Worship, 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. Dr. Charles Hardwick, Director of Theology, Formation and Evangelism of the Presbyterian Mission Agency will preach. Dr. Hardwick holds a Ph.D. in homiletics from Princeton Theological Seminary. The children’s choir from St. Andrews School will sing and a bagpiper will play.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday, May 21	9:30 a.m.....	Sunday School
	10:15 a.m. ....	Chancel choir
	10:30 a.m. ....	Coffee Fellowship
	11:00 a.m. ....	Worship Service
Monday, May 22	9:00 a.m.....	Knitting Prayer Shawls
	12:00 p.m. ....	Lunch Bunch, Crystal Beer Parlor
Tuesday, May 23	7:30 a.m.....	Morning Missions at Emmaus House
	9:00 a.m.....	Stated Presbytery Meeting
	10:00 a.m. ....	Worship Service
Wednesday, May 24	1:30 p.m.....	Jail Ministry
	6:00 p.m. ....	PW Birthday Celebration, Imlay House
Thursday, May 25	12:00 p.m. ....	Preschool End of Year Program

Sunday, May 28	9:30 a.m.....	Sunday School
	10:15 a.m. ....	Chancel Choir
	10:20 a.m. ....	Evangelism Committee Mtg
	10:30 a.m. ....	Coffee Fellowship
	11:00 a.m. ....	Worship Service
Monday, May 29		Church Office Closed for Memorial Day
Tuesday, May 30	7:30 a.m.....	Morning Missions at Emmaus House
Wednesday, May 31	1:30 p.m.....	Jail Ministry

### PRAYER CONCERNS, RECORD OF OUR FAITHFULNESS, ETC.

May 7: attendance at worship: 189; Sunday School attendance: 65; visitors: 5. May 14 attendance at worship: 190; Sunday School attendance: 60; visitors: 15.....

### PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN WILL HOST BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

The Birthday Celebration will be Wednesday, May 24, at 6:00 p.m. in Imlay House. There will be a bounty of appetizers and a birthday cake. New officers will be installed, the 2017 Honorary Life Membership will be awarded, and the Birthday Offering which funds innovative mission projects world-wide will be received. Childcare and pizza will be available for young children. Plan to join us for an evening of fun and fellowship.

### SUMMER CHOIR BEGINS MAY 21!

Are you interested in singing, but don't have time for Wednesday evening choir rehearsals? No worries – from May 21 through August 27 we will rehearse the Sunday morning anthem at 10:15 in the choir room prior to the service. Even better, we will be in casual summer attire rather than in choir robes and will take you any Sunday that you feel the urge to sing with us! Contact Anne McNair for more information.

**Butler Memorial Presbyterian Church and  
First Presbyterian Church Summer Study**

**“Protestant Reformations:  
Martin Luther at 500 Years and Fellow Reformers”  
Sundays in June at 9:30 – 10:30 a.m.**

Using a book written by Donald McKim, a retired seminary professor and editor of the Westminster John Knox Press, the class will use the occasion of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Martin Luther’s “95 Theses” to explore several reforming movements of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and their ongoing relevance for the church. Copies of the study materials will be available in the church office and at the class sessions. A breakfast will be served at First on Sunday, June 25 at 9:00 a.m., \$4/person. All are invited.

*“For Reformation churches an appropriate slogan continues to be: ‘The church reformed and always being reformed according to the Word of God.’ This has been a part of the Reformed tradition and captures an insight that was primary for Calvin as well as Luther, Zwingli, and others. Luther sought the reform of the Roman Catholic Church. The churches that emerged from his efforts, as well as those of other Protestant reformers, were not perfect churches by any stretch. They were inhabited by sinner forgiven by Jesus Christ—but still sinners, nonetheless. This means, for us today as well, that churches continually need to be reformed. No church fully arrives in being all God wants the church to be just as none of us as Christians are ever finished works. We are always works in progress—under construction—as churches and as Christians!” --Donald McKim*

**Sunday, June 4 at Butler**

Martin Luther and the Lutheran Tradition

**Sunday, June 11 at First**

John Calvin and the Reformed Tradition

**Sunday, June 18 at Butler**

Anabaptism and Anglicanism

**Sunday, June 26 at First**

Dividing Theological Issues and Reformations Today