

## SERVICES FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD

PENTECOST, JUNE 4 at 11:00 A.M.

SERMON: "Rivers of Living Water" TEXT: John 7:37-39

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

SERVICE OF CONFIRMATION

Church-Wide Luncheon Will Follow at Noon

TRINITY SUNDAY, JUNE 11 at 11:00 A.M.

SERMON: "Finite Words, Infinite God" TEXT: Matthew 28:16-20

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### AS A FIRE EXISTS BY BURNING SO A CHURCH EXISTS BY MISSION

Last week, Charles Hardwick from the General Assembly preached a service of worship that commenced the Savannah Presbytery meeting and then led a program that lifted up marks of faithfulness for a church. The worship service was inspiring—not least because of the beautiful singing by the children's chorus from St. Andrew's School—and the program that followed was engaging and generated a lot of discussion.

By offering the hospitality of Christ, we bring others into contact with the church, and through worship, God works to change their hearts and redirect their priorities. People grow in faith and love through opportunities for faith development. Part of what Hardwick called "incarnational ministry" is putting into action Christ's compassion through risk-taking mission.

When churches turn inward, using all their resources for their own survival and caring for their own people, spiritual vitality wanes. Certainly a church depends on basic Christian service that causes people to volunteer to teach Sunday school or sing in the choir, visit the homebound or spend a morning answering the phone in the church office.

But "mission" describes how church service turns outward. Mission reminds us that Christ's compassion, grace, mercy and love extend to the entire world. Mission refers to the difference the gospel makes in the lives of people beyond the circle of the church. Nearly every page of Scripture throbs with the example of people serving God by serving others. Nothing is more central to faith and to the church's purpose than reaching out with sympathy and mercy and love of neighbor. The life of service flows naturally from the teaching of Jesus and no church can avoid the blessing and the obligation of God's call to love and serve others.

Our church has a long record of risk taking mission. For example, years ago we were the first church in Savannah to sponsor the construction of a Habitat for Humanity house. Our own members are encouraged to volunteer but also we involve newcomers and visitors. Service projects can become an entry point into the church and into life in Jesus where we discover that discipleship moves us closer to suffering, not farther away. We are not supposed to walk around suffering, ignoring it and denying it like those made forever famous in the Parable of the Good Samaritan. We hear in the human need of our neighbors the clear call of God.

Consider some of the risk taking mission that sets the tempo of our ministry at First: teaching the Bible at the county jail, helping the homeless with Family Promise (our next week of service begins July 9), resettling a refugee family from Syria, spending Tuesday mornings at Emmaus House, providing food with Backpack Buddies to children at Pulaski Elementary School, hosting international students at Christmas, and advocating for the hungry through Bread for the World. The church believes so strongly in mission, that more than \$104,000 in 2017 has been earmarked for local, national and international missions. Every October, our mission emphasis series brings missionaries and international church leaders to our church where we learn about their work and support their ministry overseas.

What is the opposite of risk taking? Safe. Predictable. Comfortable. Certain. Convenient. Fearful. These words do not describe the ministry of Jesus Christ who said, "For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their

life for my sake will save it" (Luke 9:24). The practice of risk taking mission reminds us that the church is not an end in itself, but a resource God uses to change lives and transform the world.

Hands-on, face-to-face mission not only transforms the lives of people in need, but it shapes the life of the church and fills our own lives with purpose and meaning. Emil Brunner declared, "As a fire exists by burning, so the church exists by mission." On this Pentecost, which recalls the mighty flames of the Spirit, let's rededicate ourselves to such mission—marked by compassion, mercy and justice—which bears witness to the living Christ. --SCW

### **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*. To sign up this week, email Will Shelburne or call the church office – 354-7615.

### **PLAN ON ATTENDING A LOW COUNTRY BOIL**

A low country boil is planned for Wednesday, June 14, 6:30 p.m. at the Isle of Hope Marina Pavilion, 50 Bluff Drive. We have a church member that will be turning 104! Plus we will salute everyone who celebrates a birthday in June and July. Chris Desa of the Folk Music Society will provide entertainment. The cost is \$13/adult; \$4/child under 12 (*Chicken fingers for children*). Reservations are required. Email [Judith@savannahfpc.org](mailto:Judith@savannahfpc.org).

### **HELP OUR SYRIAN REFUGEE FAMILY RELOCATE TO TEXAS**

A year ago First began sponsoring a family of refugees from Syria. They need our financial assistance in order to relocate to Dallas, Texas to be near close friends from Syria. They plan to leave Savannah on June 10 and the Session has approved a fundraising goal of \$3,000 to cover rental of a trailer, lodging, food and other travel expenses, as well as a deposit on an apartment in Dallas. A church member who wishes to remain anonymous will match every dollar contributed up to \$1,500. In other words, if the congregation responds generously and contributes \$1,500, we will achieve the goal of \$3,000! Please write a check to the church with the notation, "Refugee Family" and mail it to the church office today. Also, plan on attending a farewell dinner for the family on Wednesday, June 7 at 6:00 p.m. in Stewart Hall. The menu will be Middle Eastern-themed and a check will be presented to the family at that time.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday, June 4	9:30 a.m. .... Butler/First Adult Summer Study at Butler ..... Summer Sunday School for Children and Youth
	10:15 a.m. .... Chancel choir
	10:30 a.m. .... Coffee Fellowship
	11:00 a.m. .... Worship Service
	12:15 a.m. .... Congregational Luncheon
Monday, June 5	9:00 a.m. .... Knitting Prayer Shawls
	9:00 a.m. .... Vacation Bible School
Tuesday, June 6	7:30 a.m. .... Morning Missions at Emmaus House
	9:00 a.m. .... Vacation Bible School
Wednesday, June 7	9:00 a.m. .... Vacation Bible School
	1:30 p.m. .... Jail Ministry
	6:00 p.m. .... Farewell Dinner for our Syrian Refugee Family
Thursday, June 8	9:00 a.m. .... Vacation Bible School
Friday, June 9	9:00 a.m. .... Vacation Bible School
	11:00 a.m. .... Prime Timers
Sunday, June 11	9:30 a.m. .... Butler/First Adult Summer Study at First ..... Summer Sunday School for Children and Youth
	10:15 a.m. .... Chancel Choir
	10:30 a.m. .... Coffee Fellowship
	11:00 a.m. .... Worship Service
Monday, June 12	9:00 a.m. .... Knitting Prayer Shawls ..... Preschool Summer Camp
Tuesday, June 13	7:30 a.m. .... Morning Missions at Emmaus House
	9:00 a.m. .... Preschool Summer Camp
Wednesday, June 14	9:00 a.m. .... Preschool Summer Camp
	1:30 p.m. .... Jail Ministry
	6:30 p.m. .... Low Country Boil, Isle of Hope Marina
Thursday, June 15	9:00 a.m. .... Preschool Summer Camp

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

May 21: attendance at worship: 136; Sunday School attendance: 35; visitors: 6. May 28 attendance at worship: 126; Sunday School attendance: 30; visitors: 12..... Many thanks to the many who helped host the 620<sup>th</sup> session of Savannah Presbytery when they met at First on May 23. That helping included the children's chorus from St. Andrew's School who sang at the morning service of worship, catering of the luncheon, and provision of the tableware...

### LIFT UP YOUR VOICE AND SING

Join the summer choir, which rehearses on Sundays at 10:15 a.m. in Room 111 – there are no mid-week rehearsals. Sing as many Sundays as your schedule permits. Questions? Speak to Anne McNair, director of music.

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 sinners 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 25 at First**

Dividing Theological Issues and Reformations Today

**PENTECOST WILL CELEBRATE FOUNDERS’ DAY**

Everyone is encouraged to wear something red for Pentecost, June 4. A Spirit-filled day, worship will also observe Founders’ Day when the church remembers its history of being organized on June 6, 1827. A service of confirmation will be held and the Sacrament of Holy Communion celebrated. The annual church-wide photograph will be taken following worship. A gala luncheon will follow where members of the confirmation class will be guests of honor.