

THE FIRST POST

He is Risen | April 2023



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EVEN THE STONES WILL SING!

BY STEPHEN WILLIAMS

I always think of Palm Sunday as a day of celebration and happiness, a kind of dress rehearsal for Easter. As a child, I remember the day and its story of a palm parade with all its enthusiasm and excitement. When you think of a parade you probably have in mind Savannah's great spectacle for St. Patrick—with a caravan of colorful floats and high stepping bands. In contrast, the parade in Jerusalem on that holy day was barely noticeable in some respects.

Jerusalem probably saw fewer parades than we do, and I suspect that the one we remember today was barely noticeable in some respects. The streets of the Old City are so narrow, the gates so cramped. It was more like an impromptu protest march. Luke tells us Jesus came to town riding on a donkey. It was not meant to be flashy and polished. In some ways it was more like enacting a church play hastily thrown together and written by the prophet Zechariah. "Your king comes to you, triumphant and glorious, riding on a donkey." And Jesus fulfilled this prophecy. The words the crowds say are scripted too, lifted from Psalm 118. "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna, save us, we beseech you."

Expectations were running high that day among the crowds, but the way Luke tells the story there is a sub-theme as well, an under-plot that overlays the events of that day. Coming to Jerusalem was risky—both the religious hierarchy and the Roman authorities were uneasy about anything that would upset the status quo in Palestine. But at this point, Jesus is a man determined. He has a cause and becomes a cause that is the salvation of the world.

EVEN THE STONES WILL SING!

Continued

On the day that Jesus rode into Jerusalem, his disciples shouted their welcome and praise, and had they been silent, Luke remembers Jesus saying even the stones would have cried out. As he made his way into the city and faced crowds who greeted him with palms and hosannas, he knew that at that very moment in some carpenter shop in a military barracks, crossbeams were already being hewed and nails already being forged. The crowds will soon shout, "Crucify!" and another injustice, the greatest injustice of this world will be done.

Add your voice to our Palm Sunday hosannas and plan on staying for the congregational luncheon. Then join us the following days as we remember the solemn events of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. Return on Easter when there will come another shout, a joyful expression of resurrection, the life-transforming truth that rings through the centuries after the stone is rolled away from the tomb.

So we come home, you who are weary and carrying such heavy burdens that you never stop to rest. Come home, you who are bright and energetic, who have your life ahead of you, challenged by all that is coming your way. Come home, you who are young and worried what life will bring, discouraged that whatever it is you are supposed to have you don't have enough of it. Come home, you who are facing illness, struggling with pain, unsure which is worse, the disease or the treatment. Come home, you who are getting older feeling as if life is passing you by and there is not much joy left in life. Come home, you who are walking the valley of the shadow of death and feeling alone.

God has been this way, walked our journey, known our life, carried our sorrows, forgiven our failures, faced even the worst the world can do and has triumphed victoriously. For our sake, and for our salvation, Jesus enters Jerusalem this Palm Sunday, into the city where he will die and, behold, on the third day rise again! Come home this holy week to hear the message that God is love and nothing can separate us from that love, ever. --SCW

TENEBRAE SERVICE

FRIDAY, APRIL 7 | 7PM

Tenebrae, an ancient service of darkness, recalls the events of Holy Week on April 7 at 7:00 p.m. Members of the Confirmation class will read Scripture and lead prayers, and the Chancel Choir will sing as the Sanctuary gradually descends into darkness. When the Scriptures record the Lord's crucifixion and his dying words, the final lights are extinguished, and the "Strepitus" is sounded, a loud, clanging cymbals. It is a moving service that conveys the sacrifice of Jesus and the cost of our salvation.



PALM SUNDAY PROCESSION

SUNDAY, APRIL 2 | 10:15AM



Gather for refreshments, followed by a procession to Atlantic Promenade with First Christian Church. The entire congregation is invited to process with a live donkey and choir.

WEDNESDAY DINNERS AND PROGRAMS DURING APRIL

April 5 No Dinner/Program due to Maundy Thursday Dinner and Worship service on April 6

April 12 No Dinner/Program

April 19 Dinner at 6:00 p.m. followed at 6:45 p.m. by “Why Literacy is a Justice Issue” presented by the JUST team at First in preparation for the Nehemiah Action on Monday, April 24 at 7:00 p.m. at First African Baptist Church.

April 26 Dinner at 6:00 p.m. followed at 6:45 p.m. by an “All-Hands-on-Deck Intergenerational Event” that concludes the Spring Series of mid-week programming.

EASTER EGG HUNT

SATURDAY, APRIL 1 | 10AM AT TIEDEMAN



Join us for our annual egg hunt with our neighborhood. Refreshments are provided. *Easter Egg donations are needed. Please bring in 1 dozen candy-filled eggs per child.*

Special Parking Instructions:

Washington Ave. from Bee Rd. to Habersham St. will be blocked off due to a marathon. Use Paulsen St., E. 46th & Atlantic Ave. to access the park.



EASTER SUNDAY CHILDREN'S SERVICE & BREAKFAST

SUNDAY, APRIL 9 | 10AM

Any youth and adults interested in

ANNUAL CHURCH PICNIC

SUNDAY, APRIL 16 | 12PM AT TIEDEMAN PARK



Join us as the Hospitality Committee hosts the annual church picnic in Tiedeman Park on Sunday, April 16th at Noon. Dress casually and plan on enjoying a feast of grilled hamburgers and hotdogs, baked beans, potato chips, and dessert. And for children, there will be relay races and games with a huge parachute in the park. \$6/adult; \$2/children under 12 All are welcome



CHILDREN'S BOOK SALE TO BENEFIT BACKPACK BUDDIES

APRIL 16-19 | STEWART HALL

All books are gently used and looking for a new home. Hardcover \$1 and Paperback 50 cents.

All proceeds will benefit our Backpack Buddies program

YOUTH MISSION TRIP

JULY 15-22 | 6TH-12 GRADE



We will work with Frontera de Cristo at the Arizona/Mexico border.

After 5 days of mission work, we will have an opportunity for a pilgrimage to the Grand Canyon.

Housing: The group will stay in a dormitory at Frontera de Cristo and then at a nearby home to the Grand Canyon.

Cost: Cost of airfare to Tucson (Fundraising, scholarships and mission budget will cover the other 2/3 of trip cost.)



THINKING OF YOU

Condolences to Felix Etinge, whose uncle, Imbia Joseph Moria, died in Kumba, Cameroon, on January 18.... Condolences to the family of Ann Glendenning, who died on March 15 in Savannah... Condolences to the family of Mary Ellen Nicol, who died on March 27 in Savannah

WOMEN'S CIRCLES

TUESDAY, APRIL 11 & THURSDAY, APRIL 20



- > Grace and Joy Circle will not meet in April due to Holy Week and the retreat.
- > Jubilee Circle will meet in the John Knox Room on Tuesday, April 11th at 10:30 AM.
- > Agape Circle will meet Thursday, April 20th at 7 PM in Imlay House.

SHAVON STARLING-LOUIS TO PRESENT FOOTE SERIES

SUNDAY, APRIL 30 | 9AM FORUM, 12PM RECEPTION

The annual Foote Series will be held on Sunday, April 30 and feature Shavon Starling-Louis, co-moderator of the General Assembly speaking on, "Becoming a Matthew 25 Congregation." This is an initiative of the denomination to address three broad areas of concern—Congregational Vitality, Structural Racism and Systemic Poverty. Rev. Starling-Louis will speak at an All-Church Forum at 9:30 a.m. and preach at the 11:00 a.m. service of worship. She served as a seminary intern at First and Butler the summers of 2011 and 2012. A graduate of Columbia Theological Seminary, she is the minister of Memorial Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, NC. The Foote Series is an endowed program that brings outstanding church leaders to speak in Savannah and remembers the generosity of William Foote, whose bequest largely paid for the construction of the church building on Monterey Square in 1972.

YOUTH GROUP

SUNDAYS, APRIL 16, 23, 30



- **April 2 and 9**- No Youth Group due to spring break and Easter holiday
- **April 16, 23 & 30**
All 3 Youth Groups
4:45 pm Music
5:30 pm Dinner
6-7:30 pm Games, Bible Study & activities



ANNUAL PW CHAT 'N CHILL

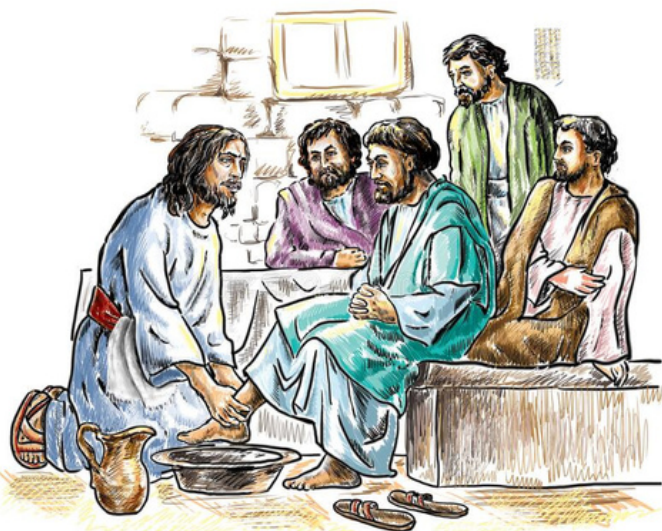
THURSDAY, JUNE 8 | 5PM
DUTCH ISLAND POOL

Bring your own dinner and libation, avoiding glass containers. If you have something to share that's good, but don't worry-just chill!
Please RSVP to Ellen Tate
(emtate1950@gmail.com) so she can call in a gate pass for you.

MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE TAKES US TO THE UPPER ROOM

THURSDAY, APRIL 6 | 6PM

Maundy Thursday will include a buffet dinner in Stewart Hall, followed at 6 by a 45-minute service of worship in the Sanctuary where Rev. Ronald Newsom, a retired minister in the American Baptist Churches, USA denomination, serving churches in Indiana, New York and Wisconsin, will preach. The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be celebrated. Maundy Thursday takes its name from the "mandate" to love one another that Jesus issues to his disciples in the Upper Room.



COUNTDOWN TO THE NEHEMIAH ACTION

MONDAY, APRIL 2 | 7PM

The Nehemiah Action will be held at First African Baptist Church on Franklin Square. Registration begins at 6:15 p.m. JUST, an interfaith advocacy group with 22 houses of worship participating, will meet with public officials about ways to reform education and promote affordable housing in the city. Our congregation is a leader in this effort and we seek a large turn-out of members and friends for this assembly. The church shuttle bus will depart at 6:30 p.m. Call First to reserve a place on the bus or to request childcare at the church. Email belindapwalters@gmail.com for more information about the event.



GAME NIGHT

WED., APRIL 26 | 6PM

Join us in Stewart Hall for a night full of fun, food, and laughs! Bring the whole family.

VARIETY SHOW & AUCTION YOUTH FUNDRAISER

MAY 7 AT 12:00 PM
STEWART HALL

JOIN US FOR LUNCH, A VARIETY SHOW AND SILENT AUCTION
TICKETS: \$10 ADULTS, \$5 CHILDREN

ALL PROCEEDS WILL SUPPORT YOUTH ATTENDING OUR
SUMMER MISSION TRIP WITH FRONTERA DE CRISTO.

Do you have an item you can donate to our auction? Please contact Allison.

BACKPACK BUDDIES UPDATE

THURSDAYS, 10AM - 12PM | FIRST: TUESDAYS 6-7:30PM

First is Packing with PACK Savannah!

<https://www.packsavannah.com>



PACK with Us
ALL AGES WELCOME!

Come to:
4 Mall Terrace,
Savannah, GA

- PACK Thursdays 10a-12p
 - First Pres.-Bi-Monthly
 - Tuesdays 6-7:30p
- See our [SignUpGenius!](#)



click the image above to sign up! with First

Volunteer

- Want to help with PACK deliveries? Contact Arnie Correa: 912-661-0713
- PACK has opportunities to provide for at-risk, homeless, prevocational, and foster children! [CLICK HERE](#)



Donate

First will continue our generous financial and physical contributions at church.

- Donate non-perishable foods, pop-top fruits and vegetables cups, and single-serving cereal boxes to the church office



Click the image above to sign up with PACK



Do MORE Annually!

- Summer Boredom-Busters
- Christmas Books & teacher cookies
- "Back to School" Backpacks!

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING NEEDS OUR SUPPORT

For more than sixty years, the church has been receiving a special mission offering on the highest holiday of the Christian year—Easter. In recent 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.

It is important for those people to receive these gifts and it is important for us as followers of our Risen Lord, to make these gifts. God wants us to learn to share our abundant blessings.

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. 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. Please be generous.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN UPDATES

THANK YOU!

J Thank you to the amazing women of First Presbyterian Church for showcasing their talents on Sunday, March 12th at our International Women's Service celebrating women. The reflections were moving, the prayers thoughtful and the music powerful. This was truly a memorable service thanks to Anne McNair, Allison Shearouse and Christina Fenstermaker and their insightful reflections that served as the sermon. A shout out to Jeff Lewis for incorporating just the right music (including Anne McNair's anthem) to tie everything together and to Linda Barnes for writing such a strong prayer. A special thank you to the men for preparing and serving a delicious brunch once again!



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN BIRTHDAY GATHERING

The Presbyterian Women's Birthday Gathering will be held Thursday, May 4th, at 6 PM in the Imlay House. Please rsvp to Allison Johnson at AJSellsSavannah@gmail.com. The Honorary Lifetime Pin for 2023 will be given, and there will be a service to welcome the new officers of the Presbyterian Woman Coordinating Team for the next 2 years. Please bring an appetizer/finger food to share.

WOMEN'S RETREAT

SATURDAY, APRIL 22 | 8:30AM - 3PM

An email invitation has been sent out with all the details and how to register. If you did not receive the email or have any questions, please contact Allison Johnson at 912.308.3020 or AJSellsSavannah@gmail.com.



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

July 10-13

It's time to sign up for this year's VBS. Use this form to register:

<https://forms.gle/QP5VqFKHLjZKeAP88>



MIDDLE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE FOR 6TH-8TH GRADE.

Stay in the home in Montreat with a middle school small group. The week would include Montreat Keynote & Worship as well as Clubs adventure programs. Our group will do a mid-week service project together as well.

Cost: \$425 (all-inclusive with registration fee/food/housing/church transportation)

To register, let Allison know via email: allison@savannahfpc.org

MONTREAT FAMILY WEEK

Families with children 5th grade and under would stay in the home in Montreat. We would offer group meals in the home, devotions, hikes, with art classes available. Montreat Worship services would be available to join in. Children can be enrolled in the Montreat clubs program. To register, let Allison know via email at allison@savannahfpc.org

Cost: \$200 per person (food/housing/church transportation)

Clubs Registration Fee: \$190

Register children for Clubs program here on March 1. <https://montreat.org/events/clubs-23#:~:text=The%20Clubs%20program%20is%20a,age%20counselors%20supervise%20each%20group>

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

SUNDY MORNINGS AT FIRST



Fidelis-Covenant Class (Room 115)
with Bob Morgan

Sojourners (Room 209) with Howard
Crawford and Peter Foley will use
FaithLens and then transition to their
spring study.

Timothy Class (Imlay House) with Eric
McManus uses FaithLens to guide
their Bible study and discussion

Do Justice



CHILDREN & YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL

SUNDAYS AT FIRST

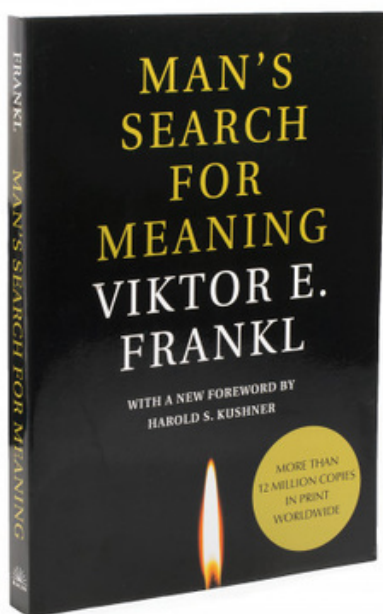
Follow Me "Do Justice" curriculum
Babies to Age 3- Nursery
3's-Kindergarten- Room 8
1st & 2nd Grades- Room 202
3rd-5th Grades- Room 221
6th-12th Grades- Room 212

MEN'S BREAKFAST AND STUDY

MONDAY, APRIL 17 | 7:30AM



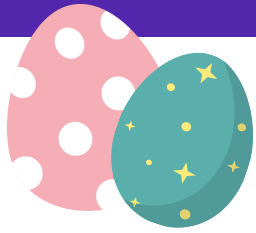
International House of Pancakes with Rich Wittish as the presenter



MEN'S BOOK STUDY

TUESDAY, APRIL 18 | 5:30PM

Men's book study meets on Tuesday, April 18, at 5:30 p.m. in room 115
peter foley will lead a discussion of Victor Frankl's, "Man's Search for Meaning."



APRIL BIRTHDAYS

2nd Melissa Cobbs

4th David Hodge, Kimberly Rowden

5th Lyle Mackenzie, Thomas Russell (Tom) Taylor

6th C. Thomas, Jr. Snipes

9th William Young

10th Boyd Stanley, Larry Stuber

11th Sharon Eswine

12th Peter Nelsen

13th Elliot Andrew Chase, John Tatum

14th Brian DeRosa, Alison Larrousse

15th Piper Lanier

17th Linda Barnes, Scarlett Kempf Lange, Carter McRae

18th Jackson Chase

21th Beck Turbiville

24th Fitz Hiltzheimer

25th Monica H. McMasters, Ralston Sparks

26th William Szczecinski

27th Benjamin Jouffrault, Bertha Rogers

28th Rozella Rimes

