

# THE FIRST POST

*Summer Commitments | July 2023*



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## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

BY STEPHEN WILLIAMS

I am always grateful to the Session each summer when I am able to spend time away on an island twelve miles off the coast of Maine. It is a family time and a chance to play and read and reflect. This year it is in two parts, a week around the holiday weekend when I will preach at the island church and then a little later for three weeks before returning in time for Rally Day in mid-August when the church year will shift into high gear.

The Pulpit Harbor Church where I will be leading worship on July 2 was organized in 1804 and its tidy clapboard building dates from the 1840s. But for an historic congregation, its members are mostly interested in the future. That is how it should be. We should know and honor our heritage since this is how identity is strengthened. But keeping eyes too much on the past leads to traditionalism, which is an unhealthy way to relate to the past. Then nothing can change.

How does First regard the future? Do we pray to the God who was helpful in ages past but oppose the God who is the hope for years to come? The summer is a good time for us to consider where we are going as a church before a new program year begins on August 20. I hope First is always ready to try something new. It is significant that the ministries that rate the highest participation, for example the justice advocacy ministry called JUST, are among our newer ministries. An openness to the future requires a vision for ministry that is broadly shared.

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

*Continued*

General Assembly moderator, Marge Carpenter, preached at First several years ago. She said a church's mission could be superbly summed up by Jesus in the Great Commission and the Good Samaritan. The Session might take that biblical vision and sketch what it means for our time and place. There needs to be excitement about First's future—our worship and fellowship should get our hearts beating faster. We do not need to think alike about every point of our common life, but we can strive to love alike in order to love as our Lord loves with a comprehending love for all people.

A while ago I came across a book, *Beyond the Ordinary: Ten Strengths of U.S. Congregations*, written by Cynthia Woolever and Deborah Bruce and published by Westminster/John Knox Press. They link this future orientation with three other qualities of congregational life that we should cultivate. Church members tend to embrace the future to the extent that they: 1. Have a strong sense of belonging to the community of faith, 2. Are involved in the leadership of the church and thus feel like "stakeholders" and, 3. Have members who believe the congregation's greatest opportunities for mission are in the future. A Facilities Task Force chaired by John Tatum is working diligently to assess our aged campus with several deferred maintenance issues. That is a necessary springboard as we begin to explore new ministries that will command our attention if we are to fulfill the mandate of the Great Commission and follow the example of the Good Samaritan. A sampling of possibilities include more small groups for study and fellowship, more extensive outreach to our neighbors, and greater collaboration with Butler Church.

Grateful for the refreshment of summer and the slower pace of the season, I look forward to mid-August when we can think together about the future. Psalm 138 challenges us: "You answered when we called. You built up strength within us. You will do everything you have promised us. Complete the work you have begun."

--SCW

## REMINDER: SUMMER CHOIR



If you want to sing but are too busy for Wednesday rehearsals, the Summer Choir is for you! Rehearsals will be held on Sundays at 10:15 a.m. in Room 111. Come join a core group of Chancel Choir members to lift your songs of praise to God in worship. For more information contact [jeff@savannahfpc.org](mailto:jeff@savannahfpc.org)

# SUMMER PREACHING SCHEDULE

**July  
2**

BRIAN CHILDS, MERCER  
UNIVERSITY'S SCHOOL OF  
MEDICINE

**July  
9**

STEPHEN WILLIAMS

**July  
16**

STEPHEN WILLIAMS

**July  
23**

ALAN BAROODY, FORMER  
GENERAL PRESBYTER OF  
SAVANNAH PRESBYTERY

**July  
30**

NANCY AND SHELVIS SMITH-  
MATHER, MISSION CO-WORKERS  
IN SOUTH SUDAN

**Aug  
6**

LAURIE KRAUS,  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR  
OF COMPASSION, PEACE  
AND JUSTICE,  
PRESBYTERIAN MISSION  
AGENCY

**Aug  
13**

STEPHEN WILLIAMS

**Aug  
20**

RALLY DAY! A NEW  
PROGRAM YEAR BEGINS!  
STEPHEN WILLIAMS

**Aug  
27**

STEPHEN WILLIAMS

# A ZOOM VISIT WITH MONTEFLORES

TUESDAY, JULY 11 @ 7PM



Since 2018, First has developed ties with a partner congregation, Monteflores Presbyterian Church in San Juan, Puerto Rico. First has sent four mission trips to San Juan and hosted the Monteflores minister and her family and other church leaders in Savannah. Join the Zoom and learn more about our friends at Monteflores by emailing [mallory@savannahfpc.org](mailto:mallory@savannahfpc.org) for the Zoom meeting link.

## ADULT CLASS

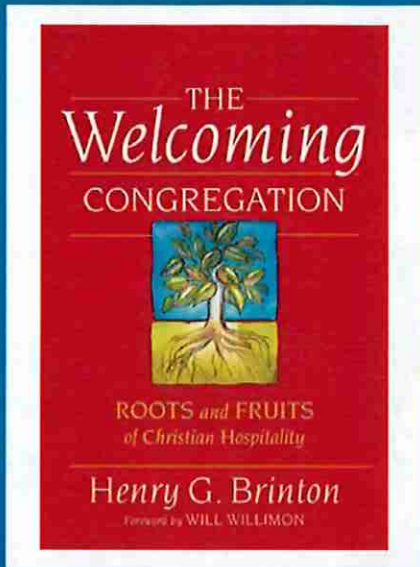
SUNDAYS, JULY 2 - AUGUST 13 | 9:30AM

Led by Bob Morgan will study "Ezekiel: Glorious Urban Renewal!" on Sundays, July 2 through August 13 at 9:30 a.m. in Room 115. Learn about the task of razing a degraded Jerusalem, to clear a site for a new Jerusalem--fit for God's glorious name. Attend as many classes as your schedule permits. Newcomers are invited.



# THE SUMMER READ

## THE WELCOMING CONGREGATION, BY HENRY BRINTON



Imagine a dozen or more First members and friends reading the same book this summer? What fresh ideas will blossom as a few people discuss the same topic? Email [mallory@savannahfpc.org](mailto:mallory@savannahfpc.org) to order your copy of *The Welcoming Congregation*, by Henry Brinton, a Presbyterian minister in Fairfax, Virginia. The books discuss the biblical basis for Christian hospitality and how it is practiced in mainline denominations today.

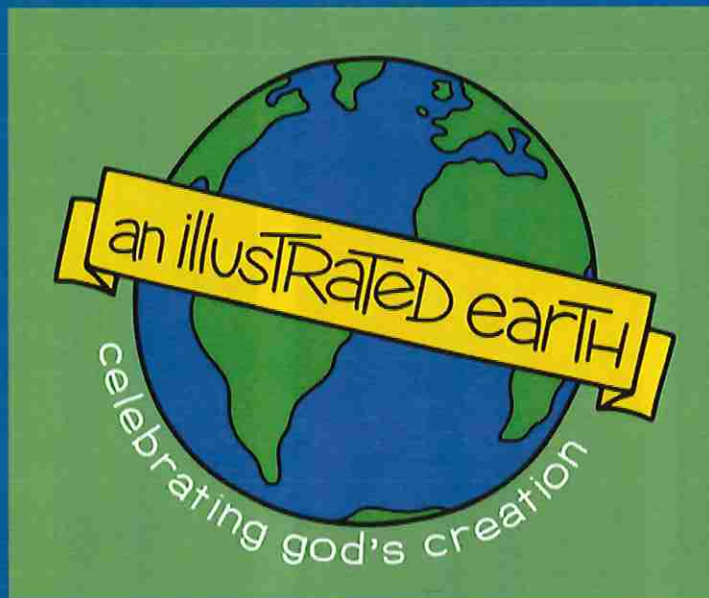
## IDEAS FOR SUMMER

Like all seasons of our lives, summer time can be a time for our spiritual growth—if we are willing to be intentional about it. Here are some ideas that might help:

- Commit to read the Bible or a book on a religious topic during those time you might hae at the pool or beach or or the porch.
- Resolve to use These Days devotional to spark your reflection and prayer.
- When your are traveling out of town, worship with a church on Sunday and enjoy that we are not alone as children of God. We have many brothers and sisters in the faith.
- Remember that our commitment to God's work in the world is just as important when you are away from First. The cost of ministry does not stop when you are away. Be sure to maintain your financial offerings to the work of the congregation. We count on you!
- Your attendance at worship is ever more encouraging during the weeks when others are out of town.
- Enjoy time to be still, or rest, or play with your family.
- Be alert for opportunities to serve God by helping those in need. Begin with small things and you will be more available for the big things when they present themselves.
- Slow and enjoy the life God gives you.

# CHILDREN ON SUNDAY MORNINGS

All children 5th grade and under are invited to join us during Extended Session time as a part of 11:00 am worship for our Summer program, "An Illustrated Earth: Celebrating God's Creation."



## NEW MEMBER CLASS

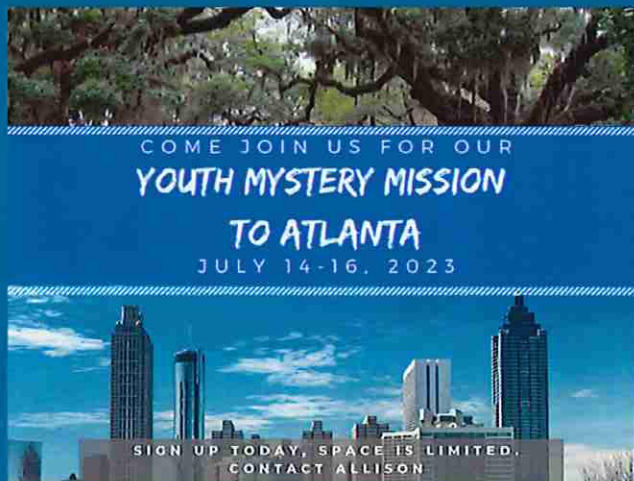
SUNDAYS, JULY 9 & 16 | 9:30AM



Held on Sundays, July 9 and 16 at 9:30 a.m. in the John Knox Room led by Jim Baker. There will be an overview of Presbyterian history and polity along with highlights about particular ministries of this congregation. New members will be welcomed during worship on Sunday, July 16 during the service of worship at 11:00 a.m. Email [mallory@savannahfpc.org](mailto:mallory@savannahfpc.org) for more information or to indicate interest in the class.

# YOUTH MYSTERY MISSION WEEKEND TO ATLANTA

FRIDAY-SUNDAY, JULY 14-16



- Friday-Sunday, July 14-16
- For all 6th - 12 th graders
- Space is limited, sign up today!
- Contact Allison if you are interested in attending.

# VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

MONDAY - THURSDAY, JULY 10-13



Monday-Thursday, July 10-13

9:00 am - 12:00 pm

Exciting Bible stories, crafts and music will develop the theme "Changemakers Lab."

Sign up for VBS. Use this form to register:

<https://forms.gle/QP5VqFKHLjZKeAP88>

Can you help as a youth or adult volunteer?

<https://forms.gle/bRACuCbe3WV9bZyC6>



# PILGRIMAGE

## Day Trips

We are offering three daytrips to learn and unpack the impact of local historical events in each of Savannah Presbytery's three districts and how they impact our current time. The trips will be led by Nobis Project which coordinated our trip to Montgomery and are open to anyone 13-years-of-age and older. Each trip will be a full day beginning around 8:30 AM and ending after 4:30 PM.

### District I - September 9th

- Meet at First Presbyterian Savannah at 9 AM
- Owens Thomas House & Slave Quarters
- King-Tisdell Cottage
- Nobis Big Ideas and Group Reflection activities
- Includes lunch

Registration Deadline: August 3rd/ Cost \$125 per person

### District II - October 14th

- Meet at Willow Hill Heritage & Renaissance Center at 9 AM (4235 Willow Hill Rd, Portal, GA 30450)
- Red Summer Memorial Walk
- Nobis Big Ideas and Group Reflection activities
- Includes lunch

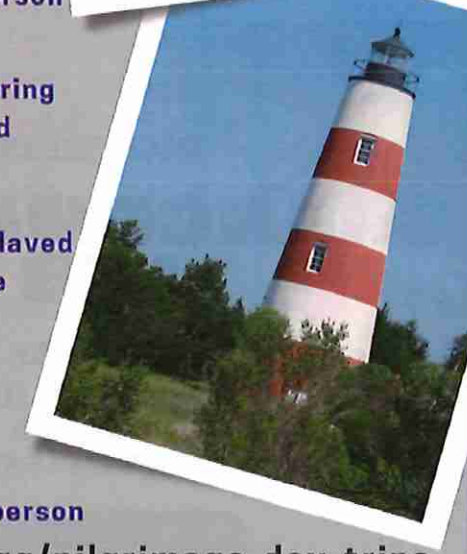
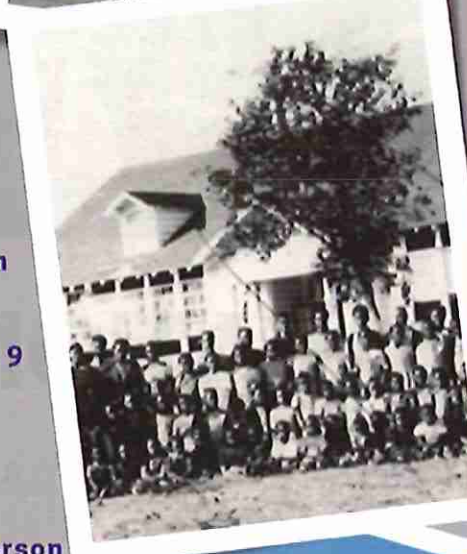
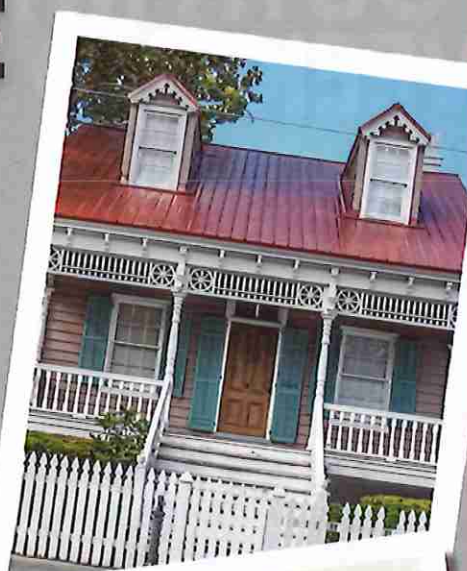
Registration Deadline: September 8th/ Cost \$135 per person

### District III - November 4th

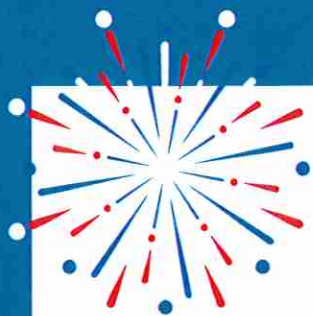
- Pre-trip video, reading assignments and Zoom gathering
- Meet Sapelo Island Ferry at 8 AM (1766 Landing Road Southeast, Darien, GA 31305)
- Do not be late - Ferry will NOT WAIT
- Sapelo Island Tour led by a direct descendant of enslaved Africans brought to island in early 1800s to work the plantation.
- Basket Weaving Demonstration
- Discussion with Descendants
- Nobis Big Ideas and Group Reflection activities
- Includes catered lunch on island

Registration Deadline: September 27th/Cost \$150 per person

Register online at [www.savannahpresbytery.org/pilgrimage-day-trips](http://www.savannahpresbytery.org/pilgrimage-day-trips)







## JULY BIRTHDAYS

**1st Lewis Miles**

**2nd Josh Brooks**

**5th Danny Cohen, Bonnie O'Leary**

**6th Lauren Milmine**

**7th Jim Shirley**

**8th Sara Bromley**

**9th Judith Crawford**

**10th Stephen Layden, Larry C. Miller, Katherine (Kate) Toftness**

**12th Sealey Roberts**

**13th Peggy Gilpin**

**14th Kelly Hiltzheimer, Ernest Rogers**

**15th Betsy Tate Barrow, Jaye Young**

**18th Terry Yon**

**19th Isabella von Trapp**

**20th Nell Graham, Deihpi Sian**

**23th Abigail Nance**

**25th Sarah Isabel Alexander**

**28th Linda Wittish**

**29th Mabel Griffith, Margaret Griffith, William (Bill) Keightley**

**30th Binda Jr. Binda, Pascal Binda, Pearl Spaulding**

**31th Allison Johnson**

