

THE FIRST POST

Summer Devotion | June 2023



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UNLESS THE LORD BUILDS THE HOUSE...

BY STEPHEN WILLIAMS

In 1 Kings 6:1 the Bible says that “King Solomon began to build the house of the Lord...” According to the Jewish historian Josephus, the date was April or May of 957 B.C., and the place was Jerusalem. It took seven years to complete and although the temple was destroyed by the Babylonians in 587 B.C., rebuilt several times over and then finally knocked down by the Romans in 70 A.D., for more than a millennium, Israel’s house of worship stood as a symbol of God’s glory and as a sacred place where people found a sense of God’s presence. It is believed that when the temple was dedicated, King Solomon offered up in gratitude those words that are now found in Psalm 127: “Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain.”

That is a good text for us to remember as we gather Sunday, June 4 to celebrate the organizing of First in 1827. We are here to offer praise and thanksgiving to God—this is God’s church and not ours. If we ever lose sight of that purpose, our efforts and all of our worship, work and witness will be in vain. But if we continue to focus our hearts and minds and lives on God, our ministry will be faithful and blessed. So it has been since the Georgia Presbytery granted a petition on June 6, 1827 to organize our congregation.

Unless the Lord Builds the House...

Continued

In those early years, we met in a public hall called the Lyceum before erecting a church structure on Broughton Street. As the congregation started to grow, we moved to Monterey Square, but construction was halted during the Civil War and the gothic-style structure finally was dedicated in 1872. It was in that sanctuary that the denomination held two General Assembly meetings, including the noteworthy, "Calvin Assembly," celebrating the 400th anniversary of John Calvin's birth in 1909.

The congregation moved to Ardsley Park in 1927 where our campus of buildings slowly grew to include the education building, a stately sanctuary, Stewart Hall and the preschool wing along with guest quarters called Imlay House. This Sunday, we will rejoice as the community of faith that calls this place home and thank God for our life together.

Think of our congregation and imagine all the baptisms, confirmations, funerals and wedding celebrations, the worship services, the fellowship meals and mission projects and the Sunday school classes, the prayers offered and the hymns sung. So this Sunday, let us gather and thank God for the firm foundation we have been given and rededicate our lives to the Lordship of Jesus Christ who is the Head and Cornerstone of this church. And a future stretches before us where new horizons of gospel service beckon. And let us never forget, "Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain!" --SCW

OUR LIFE TOGETHER

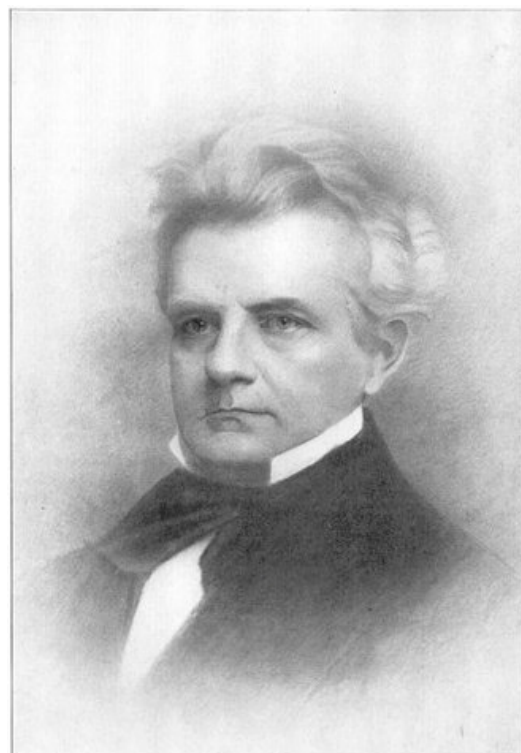
- Condolences to the family of Bonnie Harris, who died on May 22 in Savannah. A funeral service in First's sanctuary followed by a reception in Stewart Hall will be held on Saturday, June 24 at 2:00 p.m
- Wali Kareem is retiring at the end of May after six years serving as the church sexton. Happy wishes for his retirement.



FOUNDERS' DAY CELEBRATION

SUNDAY, JUNE 4

Don't sit on the sidelines when we celebrate our annual Founders' Day on Sunday, June 4! There will be a bagpipe procession, a hymn by noted hymn writer Lowell Mason, an all-church photograph on the plaza followed by a watermelon reception on the church lawn. During the reception there may be a surprise visit by Rev. David Porter. Porter was our minister from 1855-1872, although he was away during the Civil War serving as a chaplain. During worship we will sing Porter's hymn, "Praise Jehovah, Praise Jehovah!" which was written on the occasion of the dedication of the sanctuary on Monterey Square.



Lowell Mason

WHO IS LOWELL MASON?

A HYMN IN HIS HONOR

Lowell Mason was an influential teacher and choral conductor, whose hymn tunes are still widely sung. He established music teacher training and public school music in Massachusetts. He wrote or arranged nine hymns that are included in our present Glory to God hymnal, including "O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing," and "Joy to the World." Mason served as choirmaster at Independent Presbyterian Church for about ten years before becoming one of First's charter members in 1827 where he served on the Session. We will sing one of his hymns on Founders' Day.

UPDATE FROM THE FACILITIES TASK FORCE

Dear Members and Friends of First,

The Session, at its April stated meeting, appointed a Facilities Task Force (1) to prepare a comprehensive needs and condition assessment of our 40,000 square foot campus of buildings, furniture, fixtures, and equipment, (2) to prepare a master utilization plan as a guide for the future, and (3) to prepare a prioritized plan to address present deficiencies and future modifications. Task Force members are: Josh Brooks, Jordan Chase, Carter Eagle, Gay Mayfield, Eric McManus, Nan Taylor, and myself. Non-voting members are Stephen Williams, Minister, Allison Shearouse, Director of Christian Education, and Jeff Lewis, Director of Music.

The work is underway; we have already met three times and plan to meet every two weeks for the foreseeable future. We are presently in the process of preparing a list of needs and changes to consider. We recognize that completing this task will require a lot of time, hard work, dedication, and patience; and we are committed to the task. As we proceed, we remember that our church property is a gift from God for our use in God's service.

Stay tuned. We will keep you posted as we go, and bear in mind that completing this task will probably take a long time.

Your suggestions are welcomed and will be appreciated. So will your prayers. We are in the process of planning small group meetings in the future where you will have the opportunity to express your ideas.

Blessings,
John Tatum, Chair, Facilities Task Force

BACKPACK BUDDIES UPDATE



In March, 2020, I took over a project that feeds 30 food-insecure children at Pulaski Elementary School. The last day of school was Tuesday, May 23 and First, along with our incredible youth, donors and volunteers sent home 30 new bags filled with books, toys, and meals to feed a family of 4 for a week! We have recently aligned with PACK Savannah and celebrated delivering over 230 weekend meals each week. This picture is the first time many of us have ever had the privilege to see some of the children we've all loved and supported for years! Thank you First Presbyterian Church!

- [Whitney Peteranetz](#)

SPOTLIGHT ON THE CONGREGATIONAL CARE COMMITTEE

The Congregational Care Committee is dedicated to visiting our homebound members. One responsibility involves breaking down the sanctuary flowers into smaller bouquets to take along with a bulletin to the members who are not able to come to church. Debby Taylor is a committed member of the committee and does a wonderful job making lovely bouquets. Thank you for all that you do Debby!



FOUNDATIONS OF PRESBYTERIAN DISCIPLESHIP IS TOPIC FOR BUTLER/FIRST SUMMER STUDY

SUNDAY, MAY 14

To be a Presbyterian is to join a way of life informed by a particular rhythm—God call us in grace and love and we respond in gratitude. The Reformed theologian Karl Barth once said, “Grace and gratitude belong together like heaven and earth.” The series, produced by the Synod of Mid America, will introduce a particular topic with a 10-minute video and follow with a 45-minute small group and general discussion. Join us for as many class sessions as your schedule permits. Butler Memorial Presbyterian Church is an historic African-American congregation organized in 1871. Butler is located at 603 West Victory Drive, about two miles west of First.

Sunday, June 4 at Butler

“A People of Grace”

Sunday, June 11 at First

“Wicked Bad: The Problem of Sin”

Sunday, June 18 at Butler

“Jesus as Our Lord and Savior”

Sunday, June 25 at First

“Blessed to be a Blessing”

Class sessions alternate between Butler and First and meet at 9:30 a.m. The concluding session will include a fellowship breakfast served at 9:00 a.m. Cost is \$5/person; \$2/child under 12.

ATTEND THE **JUST** CELEBRATION

TUESDAY, JUNE 6 | 6:30 PM IN STEWART HALL



JUST is an interfaith justice advocacy group that presented public officials with proposals to reform education and expand affordable housing at the Nehemiah Action on April 24. Count on lots of food, music and storytelling as JUST celebrates this year's achievements. Email belindapwalters@gmail.com for more information.

MISSION MEET UPS AT P.A.C.K.

THURSDAYS, JUNE 15, 22, 29

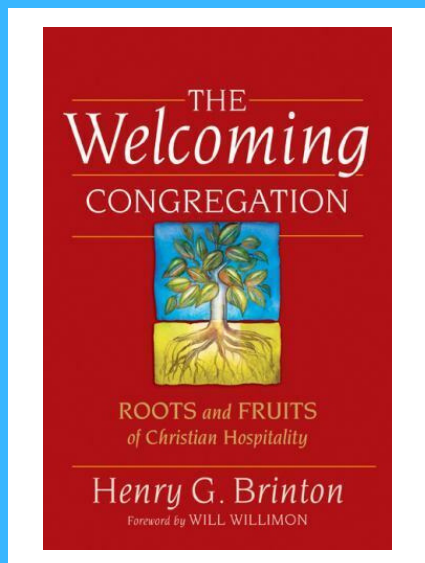


- Thursdays | June 15, 22, and 29
- 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
- Meet at P.A.C.K. Savannah (4 Mall Terrace, Savannah, GA 31406)



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 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.



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

ANNUAL PW CHAT 'N CHILL

THURSDAY, JUNE 8 | 5PM @ DUTCH ISLAND POOL



All are invited! Bring your own dinner and beverage, 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. This will be the June meeting for Grace and Joy circle.

YOUTH MYSTERY MISSION WEEKEND TO ATLANTA

FRIDAY-SUNDAY, JULY 14-16



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

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

MONDAY - THURSDAY, JULY 10-13

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL
**CHANGEMAKERS
LAB**

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, SAVANNAH
MONDAY, JULY 10-THURSDAY, JULY 13, 2023
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
AGES 3-RISING 5TH GRADE

CONTACT ALLISON SHEAROUSE FOR
MORE INFORMATION

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/bRACuCb3WV9bZyC6>

JUBILEE CIRCLE

THURSDAY, JUNE 13 @ 10:30AM



The group will meet on Tuesday, June 13 at 10:30 AM in the John Knox Room. Agape Circle will resume meetings in the fall.

Honor Sabbath

MULTIAGE CHILDREN AGES 6-10



CHILDREN & YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL

SUNDAYS AT FIRST

Follow Me "Honor Sabbath" curriculum

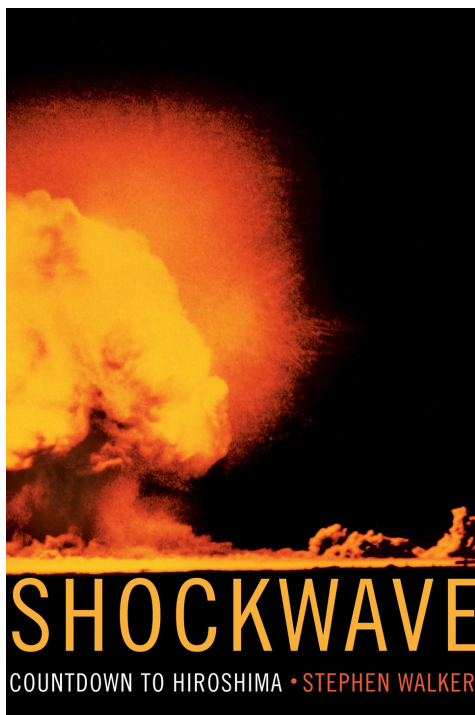
Babies to Age 3- Nursery
3's-Kindergarten- Room 8
1st & 2nd Grades- Room 202
3rd-5th Grades- Room 221
6th-12th Grades- Room 212

MEN'S BREAKFAST AND STUDY

MONDAY, JUNE 19 | 7:30AM



Men of First and friends will meet on Monday, June 19 at 7:30 a.m. in Stewart Hall for bagels and coffee. Howard Crawford will lead the study. Come enjoy a good conversation and a continental breakfast – all are welcome.



MEN'S BOOK STUDY

TUESDAY, JUNE 27 AT 5:30 PM

- Peter Foley will lead the discussion on June 27 at 5:30 p.m.
- Room 115 to
- Book: Shockwave by Stephen Walker

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

1st Sandra Correa, John H. III Pinholster, Patricia McGee Walton, Alan Williams

2nd Jo Claire Hickson

3rd Nan Bartlett Taylor

4th Lindsay McRae

5th Jessie Barre, Victoria King, Stuart Williams

6th Caroline DeRosa, Susan Piros

7th Sally Deal, Cole Longley, Anne Sellers, Donald Stuber

8th Alton Smith

9th Megan Blackburn

11th Janelle Binda

12th Gay Mayfield

14th Sam DeRosa, Laura Team Taylor

16th Elizabeth (Betty) McArthur

17th Patty Koch, Mary Miller

18th Carter Eagle, Collins Esame, Bentley Milmine, Charlie Milmine, Sadie Milmine, David Padgett

20th Ember Ashbaugh, Carol Briggs Peeples

23th Brett Lundy

24th Sharon Bromley

25th Sarah Daly

26th Mandi Lanier

27th Amy Burgett, Hayes Griffin

28th Sally Blaine, Margaret W. Brooks

30th Dawn Burdick, LaVerne Glisson