
APRIL 2025

The Messenger

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



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A MESSAGE FROM REV. DR. TAYLOR TODD

Dear Friends,

I trust you have had a meaningful Lenten journey so far. I look forward to celebrating Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Easter with you. This year your Worship Committee will be hosting two services during Holy Week, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. Both services will be offered at 5:30pm.

The word “maundy” comes from the Old French “mande” and the Latin word, “mandatum,” which means “mandate or command.” It is from the Latin word that we get the English word “mandate.”

The specific mandate or command at hand refers to the words Jesus is believed to have spoken after washing the feet of his disciples during the Last Supper as recorded in John’s Gospel Account. In Chapter 13, verse 34, Jesus says, “A new commandment I give you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.”

Prior to Jesus giving his disciples this new commandment to love one another even as Jesus has loved them, Jesus has surprised the disciples by washing their feet. This act was a sign of both service and humility. Jesus is demonstrating for us that our love for one another finds expression in humble service to one another and to those in need.

Not long after Jesus washed the feet of his disciples and sat at table with them, he hung nailed to a cross.

The Bible opens with the story of God creating all things. After each act of creation God saw that what He had done was good. So, it may strike some as odd that the day our Savior was crucified, has become known as Good Friday.

But I have to agree with my colleague Frederick Buechner, I think it is an entirely appropriate title because I believe what God did on that awful day was good.

On Good Friday the love of God was once again made manifest in a new creation, a creation made possible by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus who is the Christ.

So, while we can still celebrate God’s love on Good Friday, we are also reminded how that love stands in stark contrast to the human sin that nailed Jesus to the cross. It is as different as day is from night, as different as order is from chaos.

As we are near the end of our Lenten discipline for this season, I hope you will set aside some time to read what the Gospels writers have to say about Jesus’ final week.

You may want to have a pad of paper and pen handy to write down any words or thoughts you have as you read. Then let those words or thoughts engage you in a conversation as you go about your day. After all, we are talking about the Living Word of God.

In closing, I hope you will make plans to attend our Holy Week services as we prepare our hearts and minds to celebrate the wonder and mystery of Easter Sunday.

Grace and Peace,
Taylor



Children's Ministry

Friday, April 4 & 5

Shoals Forest School

The Morgan Family is hosting a campfire night and an optional overnight camping trip for our Children's Ministry.



Called Congregational Meeting

Sunday, April 6

The Session of First Presbyterian Church has called a congregational meeting for Sunday, April 6, 2025, following the morning worship service. The purpose of the meeting will be to hear and act upon a report from the Nominating Committee. The committee will present a list of names for the Pastor Nominating Committee. The slate of nominees includes Dick Peck, Dixie Carter, Patty Redd, Matt Dorrance, Dave Marbury, and Randy Pettus.



Women's Study Group

Sunday, April 6

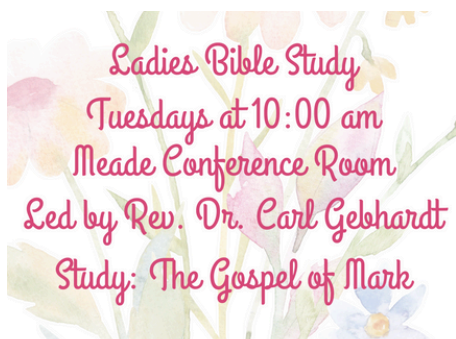
4:00 pm

"Ruth-Storyteller"

Led by Jennifer M. & Julie R.

We will meet once a month.

All women of the church are welcome!



Ladies Bible Study

Tuesday April 1 & 8

10:00 am

Meade Conference Room



Easter Lilies

Last Day to order lilies: Tuesday, April 8

As is our tradition, we will be decorating the Sanctuary with lilies on Easter morning.

You may give a lily in memory or in honor of someone. Please fill out the form and place in the offering plate or return to the church office.

Cost: \$20 Deadline: **Tuesday, April 8.**



Maundy Thursday Communion Service

Thursday, April 17

5:30 pm

Nursery will be available (infant- 2 years old only please)



Good Friday Service

Friday, April 18

5:30 pm

Nursery will be available (infant- 2 years old only please)



Easter Schedule

Sunday, April 20

9:30-10:30 Flowering of the Cross (placing flowers on the wooden cross)

9:45 Easter Breakfast/Fellowship Hall

10:30 Easter Egg Hunt

Chancel Choir Practice

11:00 Worship

Nursery

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY



CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL & CHOIR

9:45 am

Join us for Children's Choir and Sunday School.

Sunday School Teachers:

PreK teacher: Jennifer S. (and Nydia, childcare attendant)

1st-5th grade teacher: Catherine O. (and AK K., childcare attendant)

March - July 2025 Events

April 4-5 - "Shoals Forest School" Bonfire & Camping trip

April 13 - Palm Sunday Celebration

April 20 - Easter Egg Hunt

May 11 - Mother's Day Performance

May 18 - Pool Day / End of School Party

June 14 - River Day/Kayaking

July 15-17 - Vacation Bible School



EASTER EGG HUNT

Candy donations needed.
Donation basket in the
Welcome Center.



Easter Candy Donations

(we have **plenty** of plastic eggs)

The Children's Ministry is in need of donations of individually wrapped candy for our upcoming Easter Egg hunt.

The donation basket
is in the Welcome Center.

Thank you for your support and
generosity!

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH DOWNTOWN YOUTH?

A note from Tammy:

We are already in April! Summer is coming fast. Let's take a look back at March. We had three SNLs. Our biggest was the campfire/hotdog roast at Lynn McLean's. What a fun evening! We had a fun time at First Presbyterian, hosted by Jennifer and Wes Stubblefield. They provided a great taco bar, plus a good discussion on Lent, and a very competitive game of Mind the Gap. Lastly, our third SNL was scheduled at Tammy's house but moved to First Presbyterian (due to a bit of flooding in the basement at her house). We made the best of it though, with a meal and discussion on how to deal with gossip. Then, we had a fun game of Sardines.

😊 Tammy



Check out the bulletin board by the stairs to see some activities that your youth have been involved in!

Upcoming Events:

DOWNTOWN YOUTH Wednesday Nights

5:30-6:30 PM

DROP OFF BEGINS AT 5:00 PM

ALL YOUTH ARE INVITED TO TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH FOR DOWNTOWN YOUTH MEETING. FOOD WILL BE PROVIDED!



Our Wednesday nights continue to be a high point. Each week, we dive into "weird" stories from the Bible. These students are very engaged, and ask some great questions! We will not meet for regular programming on Wednesday, April 16, but you'll see DTY well represented at worship services throughout Holy Week. I encourage everyone to check the church calendars to see a full list of offerings.

We will have two regular SNLs on April 6 & 13, we won't meet for SNL on Easter Sunday, and then on April 27 we will have our After-Easter-Egg-Hunt at Tammy's house.

JOIN US FOR A DOWNTOWN YOUTH

AFTER-EASTER EGG HUNT

Date: Sunday, April 27
Time: 5:00-7:00 pm
Location: Tammy's House



We had two service opportunities in March. One was with Monday Community Meal at Trinity, and the other was with First Presbyterian's Saturday Soup Kitchen. These are both incredible ministry opportunities, and I hope our teens will continue to grow in serving others through these programs.

On April 12, DTY will be hosting a clean-up event and luncheon. We are inviting all the children and families of First Presbyterian and Trinity to participate with us. Details on where and times will be sent out this week.

April Calendar:

- 4/2 - Wednesday Night @ Trinity
- 4/6 - SNL (location in GroupMe)
- 4/9 - Wednesday Night @ Trinity
- 4/12 - Clean-up Day w/ Teens, Children & Families (location & time TBA)
- 4/13 - SNL (location in GroupMe)
- 4/14-4/20 - Holy Week & Easter Sunday
- 4/15 - 1st Beach Trip Payment Due
- 4/23 - Wednesday Night @ Trinity w/Guest Speaker
- 4/27 - After Easter Egg Hunt @ Tammy's
- 4/30 - Wednesday Night @ Trinity w/Guest Speaker

Stay in touch :

April Office Hours:

Tammy will be doing two continuing education events this month. One is the Orange Conference in Atlanta, and the second is a Sabbath Retreat for Youth ministers.

This means office hours will be pretty sporadic this month, due to all the special events. Please contact her directly if you would like to talk!

☎ (936)558-7398

✉ tammy@trinityflorence.org

DOWNTOWN YOUTH Service Project

DOWNTOWN YOUTH



ARCHIVAL ANECDOTES

Notable Florence First Presbyterians

First Presbyterian Church's Role in Florence Educational Institutions

The First Presbyterian Church has always played a major role in the educational institutions of Florence. In the 19th century Presbyterian ministers felt it was their duty to be actively involved in the education of the children in the community who were to be its future.

General John Coffee, one of the founders of Florence and of the Presbyterian Church, built the first log cabin schoolhouse on his property to educate his and his neighbor's children. In the 1830s Caroline Lee Henz, a member of the First Presbyterian Church, had a boarding school for girls called Locust Dell Academy; and a boys academy called "Prepdom" was led by Reverend James L. Sloss, minister of the first Presbyterian Church.

Dr. W.H. Mitchell, Pastor of our church during the Civil War, was also President of The Florence Synodical Female College for twenty years. The Collier Library at U.N.A. was named for Dr. C.B. Collier who was a member of First Presbyterian. In recent years our late Elder, Dr. Robert L. Potts, served as President of The University of North Alabama for ten years.

The following is a list of seven Florence City Schools named for Notable Florence Presbyterians:

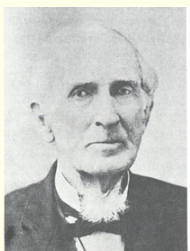
Weeden School:



Weeden School was named for Confederate Colonel John D. Weeden. After the Civil War ended Colonel Weeden taught law at the University of Alabama, eventually moving to Florence where he practiced law for twenty years; and also served as Deacon and Treasurer at First Presbyterian Church.



Patton School:



Patton School was named for Robert Miller Patton, Governor of Alabama during the reconstruction years after the Civil War. He was an Elder at First Presbyterian, and superintendent of the Sunday School for over fifty years.



Coffee High School:



Coffee High School was named for General John Coffee. Land by the school was given to the city by his descendants. General Coffee, a member of the Cypress Land Company, was one of Florence's earliest settlers. He was also one of the founders of First Presbyterian Church. In 1824 General Coffee bought the materials to build our present church and served as an Elder there.

Appleby School:

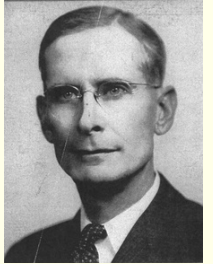


Appleby School was named for Flavius T. Appleby, an Elder at First Presbyterian Church. He was Superintendent of the Florence City School System in the 1920's and early 1930's.



Powell School:

Powell School was named for Josiah W. Powell, an Elder at First Presbyterian. When he moved to Florence he established the Coca Cola bottling Company on South Court Street. Additionally, Mr. Powell served as Superintendent of Florence City Schools for 25 years.



Richards School:



Richards School was named for poet and educator, Henry Grady Richards. He served as an Elder at First Presbyterian, and for a time taught The Gideon Bible Class for men. Richards School is now the Florence City School Technology and Professional Center.

Bradshaw High School:



Bradshaw High School was named for Henry A. Bradshaw who practiced law in Florence for many years. He was an Elder and the Treasurer of First Presbyterian Church. Mr. Bradshaw also served the community without compensation as legal counsel to the Florence Board of Education.

Session Minutes

February 25, 2025

Clerk's Report: The clerk reported a thank you letter from The Caring place for a 1-30-25 donation of \$887.96.

Treasurer's Report: The January 2025 Income and Expense Statement was distributed and reviewed by the Session. A motion was made, seconded, and approved by vote to accept the January 2025 Income and Expense statement as distributed.

Moderator's Report: Dr. Todd provided a moderator's report which reviewed the church business in which he has engaged over the past month.

Committee Reports: The minutes of the Christian Education and Nurture, Congregational Care, Engagement and Fellowship, Mission and Service, Stewardship, and Worship committees were received with no Session action required. A motion was made by Joni Willingham, seconded by Randy Pettus, and approved by vote to accept the minutes as distributed.

Unfinished Business

- Facilities Use Policy Approval – A motion was made by Tommy Bowser, seconded by Tom Gillis, and approved by vote to accept the latest version of the Facilities Use Policy.
- Update from the Interim Search Committee – Julie Rice provided an update on the interim search. The previously identified candidate took another interim position.

New Business

- Report from the North Alabama Presbytery Meeting of 2-22-25 - Commissioner to North Alabama Presbytery, Randy Pettus, provided a report to the Session.
- Report from the Personnel Committee – A report was provided by the Personnel Committee via Dr. Todd regarding the status of church staff.

Committee Minutes- March 11, 2025

Christian Education

1. Confirmation Class to be done before May 2025
2. Hired 2 new nursery workers.
3. Fingerprint in process.
4. CPR recertification and certification will be done by YMCA.

Congregational Care

No Moderator notes

Engagement & Fellowship

- Huntsville Botanical Gardens and Stovehouse trip will be Saturday, April 26. Carpools will leave the church at 12:30.
- Trip to see the Trash Pandas will be in July.

Mission and Service*No meeting***Stewardship***No Moderator notes***Worship**

- April 17 – Maundy Thursday. Service at 5:30 pm. In addition to communion by intinction, we will do the stripping of the church.
- April 18 – Good Friday service at 5:30 pm.
- The Worship Committee will nominate to the session that the summer hours do not change.

April Committee Meetings

Tuesday, April 8

4:00 pm Congregational Care/Appleby

5:00 pm Christian Education/Library

5:15 pm Worship/Meade

6:00 pm Engagement & Fellowship/Meade

Mission/Appleby

Stewardship/Library

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Ushers:

Sarah K. & Taylor J.

Acolytes:

4/6 Virginia M.

4/13 Emma C.

4/20 Maggie M.

4/27 Gresham M.



- 1 Hannah M.
- 2 Jim Z.
- 4 Jennifer St.
- 7 Carol H.
- 9 Cindy F.
- 10 Parker H. (5)
- 15 Han E.
- 19 Julie B.
- 20 William M.
- 20 Rebecca R.
- 20 Linda U.
- 23 Tom F.
- 24 Jane F.
- 24 Alice G.
- 28 Penney G.
- 30 Nancy P.
- 30 Robert S.



Easter 2022

Prayer List



Art work by Morris Cracraft

Hospitalized

Church Members in need of prayer

Family of Katrina K., no arrangements at this time. (For cards: Katrina's sister & brother-in-law's address: [REDACTED] Florence, AL, 35633)

Rich Larkins

Kelly Larkins

Phyllis Nofzinger

Michael Hasty

John Palme

Nancy Palme, cervical spine injury

Family & Friends in need of prayer

Sarah Swann, daughter of Robert & Rhonda Tyree, CCU Huntsville (hoping to be moved to a step-down bed soon), recovering from (2/27) surgery for a blood clot. Please pray for healing and rest.

Teresa Rasch, cancer, friend of Dixie Carter

Rob Tyree, home, recovering from pneumonia and flu. Son of Robert & Rhonda Tyree.

Richard Thomas, recovering from hip surgery

Grace Carter, hospital/car accident, Grace is at Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation in New Jersey. Friend of Joni Willingham. Her parents are Bob & Marsha Carter.

Bill Lupton, doing better, brother of Allison Lupton, undergoing treatment for blood cancer

Cora McCluskey, mother of John McCluskey

Kerri Putman, Glioblastoma brain tumor, friend of Candace Lewis

Randy Perkins, cancer, brother-in-law of Jo Lynn McClure

Ken Patterson, cancer, father of Rhonda Tyree

Edna Carter, sister of Mary Young

Roger LaBiche, friend of Kelly LaBiche-Larkins

Ed Smith, father of Wilder Smith

Homebound/Nursing Home/Rehab

Penney G., Lauderdale Christian Nursing Home

Sara Elizabeth D., at home

Josephine and Uhland's new address:

[REDACTED], Florence, AL 35630 (Room 115)

Visitors are welcome!

2025 April

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 10 am Ladies Bible Study	2 5:30 Youth 5:30 Handbells 6:15 Choir	3	4 Children's Ministry Shoals Forest School Campfire	5 12:00 Soup Kitchen
6  4:00 Women's Study "Ruth" 5:00 Youth 5:30 Lent Study	7 6:00 Lent Study	8 10 am Ladies Bible Study 4:00-6:00 pm Committee Meetings Last Day for Easter Lilies	9 5:30 Youth 5:30 Handbells 6:15 Choir	10	11 Church Office Closed	12 12:00 Soup Kitchen Youth Service Day
13 Palm Sunday  5:00 Youth	14 Last Day for Huntsville Botanical Garden Day Trip	15 3:00 Staff Meeting 4:00 Committee Minutes Due	16 5:30 Youth 5:30 Handbells 6:15 Choir	17 5:30 Maundy Thursday Communion Service 	18  5:30 Good Friday Service	19 12:00 Soup Kitchen
20 Easter  9:45 Breakfast 10:30 Easter Egg Hunt 11:00 Worship Nursery	21	22 3:00 Staff Meeting 5:30 Session Coordinating 6:00 Stated Meeting of Session	23 5:30 Youth 5:30 Handbells 6:15 Choir	24	25	26 Huntsville Botanical Garden Day Trip 12:00 Soup Kitchen
27 5:00 Youth	28	29 3:00 Staff Meeting	30 5:30 Youth 5:30 Handbells 6:15 Choir			