



## Sunday, May 3 - Scottish Reformation This Sunday!



Dust off your bagpipes, take your plaids out of storage and get ready for the annual Scottish Reformation Worship services on May 3. We have invited state and local dignitaries to be with us as we pray for and encourage them to carry out their responsibilities to the best of their abilities. We will have a fitting Scottish reception following the 11:00 a.m. service for you to thank our invited guests for attending and for their service.

For our sermon direction on this Sunday I will be preaching about “thin places.” Using 2 Kings 19:11 as the text. A “thin place” has been defined as a place where the veil between earth and heaven is thin. A place where one can walk in two worlds—the worlds are fused together, knitted loosely where the differences can be discerned or where the two world may become one.

The Island of Iona off the northeast coast of Scotland is considered a thin place. You feel at moments that you can almost touch heaven from there. Temple Mount in Jerusalem is also considered a thin place where Abraham took Isaac to sacrifice him to the Lord, where Solomon built the great Temple to the Lord and where today stands the Dome of the Rock Mosque. See you on Sunday when we talk about “thin places” and how they relate to our faith.

Dr. W. Glenn Doak, *Pastor*

## Sunday, May 10 - *Shiphrah and Puah*

Arguably the biggest story in the Old Testament (aside from creation) is the story of the Exodus, i.e. the liberation of the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt. In the Exodus saga we see that God is active in the nitty-gritty of life (including social and political life) working for justice and wellbeing. Not only is God active, but powerful, effecting outcomes that would seem impossible.



We are right to remember Moses as the key figure in the Exodus story. But before Moses there are two women, Shiphrah and Puah, who play a critical role (See Exodus 1:8-22). On Mother’s Day we will remember these two Hebrew midwives and consider the surprising ways God may use unlikely people—including us—to bring about divine purposes.

Dr. Carol Strickland, *Associate Pastor*

## Blood Drive Sunday, May 17

First Presbyterian Church will be hosting an American Red Cross Blood Drive on Sunday, May 17 from 8:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Please join your fellow Presbyterians and give the gift of life. The urgent need for donations now until September is due to great decrease in donation when University of Georgia students leave town for the summer. You must be at least 17 years old and weigh 110 pounds, but there is no upper age limit. In general, you can give even while on medication. Call 866-236-3726 for designated waiting periods following certain drugs. To sign up directly, visit [www.redcrossblood.org/give/drive](http://www.redcrossblood.org/give/drive), or call 1-800-RED-CROSS (1-800-733-2767). You may also call the church office at 706-543-4338x217 or email [emily@firstpresathens.org](mailto:emily@firstpresathens.org), and we can schedule your appointment for you.

## Athens Area Emergency Food Bank



In April, we donated 402 food items to the Athens Area Emergency Food Bank. For our collection on May 3, the Food Bank needs canned pasta and snack items (chips, granola, or fruit bars). Thank you for your donations!

## March Finances

Revenue Received	\$99,832
Anticipated Revenue	\$95,281
Expenses Actual	\$130,227
Budgeted Expenses	\$125,931
YTD Revenue	\$306,571
YTD Expenses	\$325,631
Budgeted Expenses	\$332,853

The Finance Committee of the Administrative Commission brought a motion to the Session at the April 14 meeting to make a \$600,000 principle payment against our Capital Improvement Debt reducing the debt to \$5,000,000. April 30 marks the end of year one of the three year Capital Campaign program. Thank you for your faithful giving to the Capital projects.

## Mother's Day Offering

The Mother's Day offering is designated to be collected and distributed to The Presbyterian Homes, Inc. The mission of The Presbyterian Homes, Inc., and its communities is to provide senior adults with caring and high quality services in support of their physical, intellectual, social and spiritual well-being. PHI provides independent living, assisted living, Memory Care and skilled nursing care within a community of friendship with others of similar age and diverse interests. Our communities offer a culture of exploration, challenge and relaxation through informative tours, cultural events, conferences, wellness/fitness programs, study and other activities. There are two current locations in Georgia, Austell and Quitman with a third one planned in our own community here in Athens. This offering gives us all an opportunity to provide much needed support to a local mission which is greatly needed to help support our fast growing senior population. Please give generously.

### Save the Date

2016 Women's Retreat  
April 15-17, 2016  
Camp Fellowship

## Youth Sunday 2015



This year's Youth Sunday was a powerful reminder of the promise for our future and a challenge for us to "Do Something" now to share God's love with the world. I am so proud of the leadership and faithfulness that our youth showed in all aspects of worship. May we always seek justice, and love kindness and walk humbly with our God.

## Presbyterian Homes

On Monday, April 20, the Oconee County Planning Commission approved an application from Presbyterian Homes of Georgia to rezone the property south of the Crystal Hills Development and north of Hog Mountain Rd. on Route 441. The application will now move on to the Oconee County Commissioners at their meeting on Tuesday, May 5 at 7:00 p.m. at the Oconee County Courthouse.

If approved by the County Commissioners the property can then be developed by Presbyterian Homes of Georgia as a Continues Care Retirement Community (CCRC). It is hoped that development of the community would begin in 2017 and it may open in late 2018/19. The community will allow for independent living in apartments, single and duplex houses, assisted living apartments, memory support apartments and skilled nursing care.

Letters and emails of support to the county commissioners of Oconee County would be helpful. Our session approved a resolution of support for this project at its April session meeting.

## Music Notes by John Coble



We have been or will be hearing about the Good Shepherd and Psalm 23 on Sundays in April and May. The fourth Sunday of Easter is known as "Good Shepherd Sunday," when we hear John 10, "I am the good shepherd." Perhaps the best-known passage of scripture is Psalm 23, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want." I read in a recent meditation that this psalm is cherished because it provides the assurance we need throughout our lives. God is looking after us, quenching our thirst, preparing the way for us, and is with us even in the darkest times. The hymn "The King of Love My Shepherd Is," includes many wonderful images, such as being found by the Shepherd after our foolish straying: "And on his shoulder gently laid, and home, rejoicing, brought me." On Scottish Sunday, the choir will sing "Brother James' Air," a Scottish setting of Psalm 23. (If you don't know who Brother James is, you'll have to come to church on May 3 to find out!) Also on Scottish Sunday, we'll sing the hymn, "My Shepherd Will Supply My Need," which ends with Isaac Watts beautiful words of being brought home to God, "No more a stranger, or a guest, but like a child at home." The Lord is our shepherd, what more could we want?

## Happy Birthday to:



*Happy Birthday*

	<b>May 3</b>	Janet Carter, Maria Johnston, Sara McArthur, Gilbert Milner, Corky Sams	<b>May 8</b>	Michael Earl, Lynn Swanson
	<b>May 4</b>	Skeets Baldwin, Jennifer Poole, Madeline Van Dyck	<b>May 9</b>	Ashley Epting, Caroline Harris
<b>May 5</b>		Joyce Lu, Jenny Walsh	<b>May 10</b>	Greg Holcomb, P.F. Price, Caroline Strobel
<b>May 6</b>		Jennifer Carr, Richard Lane, Don O'Steen, Maggie Bergmann	<b>May 11</b>	Jennifer Holcomb, David Mendenhall
<b>May 7</b>		Patrick Marshall, Mixon Robinson, Karen Thompson	<b>May 12</b>	Jerry Crisp, Luke Osborne
			<b>May 13</b>	Kai Nekongo, Ray Schofield
			<b>May 14</b>	Chandler Crosby, Jamie Dove, Ruby Freeman
			<b>May 15</b>	Katie Boardman, John Cullens, Mimi DuBose
			<b>May 16</b>	Dan Nadenicek

## Small Groups for Women are Forming



I am happy to report that Sunday, April 19 we had a great organizational meeting for women interested in starting a small group. The following groups were established and open for joining:

**Share and Prayer** plans to meet at 2:00 p.m. on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month for one hour at Talmadge Terrace beginning May 19.

**Right Brain Group** will meet once a month at 5:30 p.m. on either Tuesdays or Thursdays at church or some other neutral place.

**Crafty Christians** plans to meet once a month either on a weekday evening (6:30 – 8:30 p.m.) or on Saturdays (1-3 p.m.). The first get together will be at 7 p.m., May 5 at Panera on Atlanta Highway.

**Book Group** plans to meet twice a month on either a Monday or Wednesday morning.

**Lunch and Book Group** will meet on second and fourth Thursdays at 1:15 p.m. at area restaurants.

The following ideas for groups were expressed by women who could not be at the meeting:

**Runners' Group** (alternating between running road and trail routes with all levels welcome. It would last about an hour and be at a "talking" pace);

**Single Women's Group** (meeting on Saturdays with other happily single women; yoga, perhaps?).

Please note that there is currently a new PW circle being formed:

**Circle #8** – meeting for Bible study, fellowship, and support of mission (more information at <http://horizons.pcusa.org/bible.htm>). This circle will meet on a Saturday night (6:30 – 8:30 p.m.) the first Saturday of the month in the Bride's Room.

If you are interested in one of the above options and did not sign up at the meeting, please email or call Carol Strickland at [cstrickland@firstpresathens](mailto:cstrickland@firstpresathens) or 706-543-4338x205 by May 7. If you don't see what you want/need here, please let Carol know, and we can float your idea. Feel free to invite a friend to join. Small groups are a terrific place to grow, find encouragement, practice vulnerability and make friends.



## Flower Dedications

In May 2015, the following date is available to dedicate flowers for Sunday morning worship: **May 31**. The cost for two arrangements is \$100. Please contact Lucy Bell at [lbell@firstpresathens.org](mailto:lbell@firstpresathens.org) to schedule a date.

## Our Church Family

### Congratulations:

- To Molly and William Towles III on the baptism of their son, William Marks Towles IV on April 26, 2015.

## Register for Children's Ministry Assessment Event

The Education and Discipleship Commission of our Session is in the process of reviewing our children's ministry program. We invite you to come to one of several listening groups administered by Ministry Architects on May 15 & 16. We need you to share your thoughts, concerns, expectations, ideas, and insights about the children's ministry program. Each listening group will meet for approximately 75 minutes. To register for a listening group, visit <http://www.volunteerspot.com/login/entry/46771068409>.

## Bible Readings

<b>May 3</b>	<b>2 Thessalonians 2:13-17</b>
<b>May 4</b>	<b>Luke 7:36-50</b>
<b>May 5</b>	<b>Jeremiah 32:16-25</b>
<b>May 6</b>	<b>Romans 13:1-14</b>
<b>May 7</b>	<b>Luke 8:26-39</b>
<b>May 8</b>	<b>Deuteronomy 8:1-10</b>
<b>May 9</b>	<b>Romans 15:1-13</b>
<b>May 10</b>	<b>Matthew 13:24-34a</b>
<b>May 11</b>	<b>Deuteronomy 18:9-14</b>
<b>May 12</b>	<b>James 1:16-27</b>
<b>May 13</b>	<b>Luke 12:22-31</b>
<b>May 14</b>	<b>Ezekiel 1:1-14</b>
<b>May 15</b>	<b>Hebrews 4:14-5:6</b>
<b>May 16</b>	<b>Luke 9:37-50</b>



**Sunday, May 3 - Scottish Reformation Sunday**

- 4:00 p.m. Children's Choir, Choir Room
- 5:00 p.m. Mission & Outreach Commission, Moses Waddel Room
- 5:00 p.m. Celebration Singers Pizza Party, meet in Chancel Choir Room

**Monday, May 4**

- 11:30 a.m. Circle 2, home of Betty Shuford, 1355 Timothy Rd.
- 1:30 p.m. Staff Meeting, Staff Conference Room
- 5:30 p.m. Handbell Choir rehearsal, Room 205

**Tuesday, May 5**

- 1:30 p.m. Knitting Purls, Bride's Room
- 2:00 p.m. Circle 3-4, home of Diane Adams, 450 W. Cloverhurst Ave.
- 7:00 p.m. Circle 6, home of Ann Dunn, 425 Southview Dr.

**Wednesday, May 6**

- 9:30 a.m. Presbyterian Youth Director's Group Meeting
- 10:00 a.m. Tai Chi Group, Room 310
- 12:00 p.m. Our Daily Bread, First Baptist Church
- 5:00 p.m. Fellowship & Evangelism Commission Meeting, Staff Conference Room
- 5:00 p.m. Prayers for Healing, Sanctuary
- 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir, Music Suite

**Thursday, May 7**

- 10:00 a.m. Thursday Morning Bible Study, home of Josephine Paine, 640 Riverview Rd.
- 2:00 p.m. Mellows, Athens Heritage, 960 Hawthorne Ave.
- 5:00 p.m. Congregational Care Commission Meeting, Children's Ministry Suite

**Sunday, May 10**

- 5:30 p.m. Youth Fellowship, The PIT

**Monday, May 11**

- 10:30 a.m. WDS Pre-K Graduation, Sanctuary/Fellowship Hall
- 1:30 p.m. Staff Meeting, Staff Conference Room
- 5:15 p.m. Finance Committee Meeting, Moses Waddel Room
- 5:30 p.m. Handbell Choir rehearsal, Room 205
- 6:00 p.m. Stated Session Meeting, Moses Waddel Room

**Tuesday, May 12**

- 1:30 p.m. Knitting Purls, Bride's Room

**Sundays**  
*at First Presbyterian*

**Sunday, May 3**

**Scottish Reformation Sunday**

**Worship at 8:45 and 11:00 a.m.**

**Dr. Doak preaching,**  
*Walking in a "Thin" Place*

**Sunday, May 10**

**Worship at 8:45 and 11:00 a.m.**

**Dr. Strickland preaching,**  
*Shiphrah and Puah*

**May 3 & 10**

**Sunday School** for all ages, 9:45 a.m.

**Children's Church** Children, ages 4 through grade 2, may leave worship service with Misse Mallino for activities in the Children's Ministry Suite.

*Columns News* is a bi-weekly publication. For up-to-date, weekly letters emailed directly to your inbox, please either sign up at the church website ([www.firstpresathens.org](http://www.firstpresathens.org)), or contact Emily McBride via email at [emily@firstpresathens.org](mailto:emily@firstpresathens.org) or call at 706-543-4338 x217.

Return Service Requested