



Youth Sunday

by Rev. Jessi Higginbotham, Associate Pastor

The youth of our church would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to you all for attending and participating in our Youth Sunday Worship Service on February 22nd. This year our theme was “God Provides” and our youth explored ways in which God provides for us even when we least expect it – like turning five loaves of bread and two fish into enough food to feed thousands. You might have noticed our youth read the same story, the feeding of the 5,000, from all four gospels during this worship service. This was no coincidence. We wanted to emphasize that this story is very important, it’s so important it is one of very few stories found in all four gospels. And each of these four stories are almost identical. We hope you enjoyed Youth Sunday and we hope you will continue to ponder how God provides in your own life each and every day. ❖



Holy Week Worship Opportunities

Palm Sunday Worship Services

in the Sanctuary
Sunday, March 29th – 9 & 11 a.m.

Maundy Thursday Worship Service

in the Sanctuary
Service of Communion
and Tenebrae
Thursday, April 2nd – 7 p.m.

Good Friday Music & Meditation

in the Sanctuary
Friday, April 3rd – noon

Easter Sunday Worship Services

in the Sanctuary
Sunday, April 5th – 9 & 11 a.m.



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From My Heart to Yours

by **Dr. W. Douglas Hood, Jr.**
Senior Pastor



Pelicans

***“When we were utterly helpless,
Christ came at just the right time and died for us.”***

Romans 5:6 (Common English Bible)

Florida has two pelicans, the Brown Pelican who is present year round and the White Pelican who is a “snowbird” and only arrives in the winter. An exciting bird to watch, the pelican has a very large bill with a rather large pouch used to gather food. Most days they can be seen from the beaches of south Florida diving from great heights, crashing into the water and emerging seconds later with a satisfying meal of fish. I have sat on Delray Beach and counted as many as fourteen flying together along the shoreline overhead. For me, watching pelicans in flight is a most satisfying experience!

The early Christian Church often used images of the pelican as a symbol of caring and self-sacrifice. This was because of a misunderstood practice of pelicans as they cared for their young. While feeding her babies a mother pelican often presses her bill onto her chest in order to fully empty the pouch. The early church thought that the mother was wounding herself - providing her own blood from her chest - when no other food was available. The Dalmation pelican has a blood-red pouch in early breeding season and this may have contributed to this misperception. As a result, the pelican came to symbolize the death of Jesus that we might have forgiveness and life.

Here in this sentence from Romans, Paul speaks to God’s character and achievement, in particular, Jesus sacrificing himself - accepting wounds on his own body - for a people who were utterly helpless because of their sins. Christ’s own suffering and death on a cross shows God’s gracious, surprising love for us. The careful reader will notice that God’s love is not conditional. God doesn’t ask anything in return before dying for us. What is abundantly clear is that it was at that point “*we were utterly helpless*” that God did what was necessary for us. For anyone who inquires of the character of God, that is what God is like. God loves us first.

The self-wounding pelican for her young is a legend. More careful observation has taught us much about pelicans. Yet, this legend provides hope, encouragement and strength for me. Each time I am on the beach enjoying a beautiful day I look for pelicans in flight overhead. When I see one - or many - I am reminded of the legend. And that legend is all I need to hear the words again in my heart, “*Christ came at just the right time*” for me. ❖

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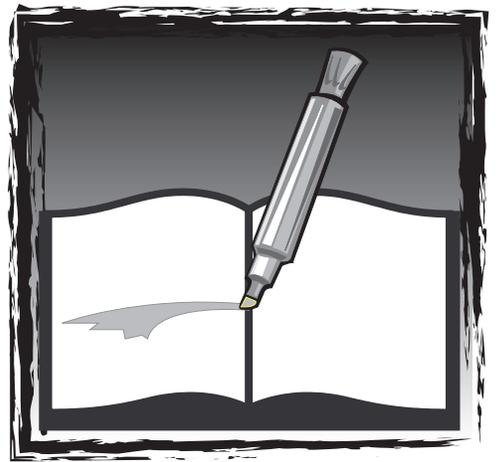
SPECIAL THANKS:
Printers Choice

**If you or a family member
are hospitalized, please
notify the church office.
Even if you give the name
of the church upon
admission, the hospital
will NOT notify us.**

UNDERScoreD:

Thoughts on Living Faithfully

by Dr. W. Douglas Hood, Jr.
Senior Pastor



Paul Was A Pastor

“Paul was a pastor, by any definition. If to love and long for the people and to love them with the compassion of Christ is to be a pastor, then Paul was a pastor. If to feel the burden of all the lost and confused people is to be a pastor, then Paul was a pastor. ‘As God as my witness, my heart’s desire for them that they be saved’ (Romans 10:1). ‘I could almost wish myself to be dammed if it would save my people’ (Romans 9:30). If to be anxious about the condition of the church is to be a pastor, Paul was a pastor. In addition to the many bruises and stripes, shipwrecks, chases, jails and hatreds that he endured, if daily anxiety about the condition of the church is to be a pastor, he was a pastor. If to get angry is to be a pastor, then he was a pastor. If to pray for the people all the time is to be a pastor, he was a pastor. ‘I make mention of you continually in my prayers’ (Romans 1:9). If knowing when to use the milk of the gospel and when to use the meat of the gospel is to be a pastor, then Paul was a pastor. If to be hurt by the very people whom you minister is to be a pastor, then Paul was a pastor.”

Fred B. Craddock, Craddock on the Craft of Preaching

“The assumption of spirituality is always that God is doing something before I know it. So the task is to become aware of what God is doing so that I can respond to it and participate in it.”

Eugene Peterson

“The church which ignores needs, ignores Jesus.”

Elizabeth O’Connor

“It is spiritual lust to seek answers from God instead of seeking God, who is our answer.”

Oswald Chambers

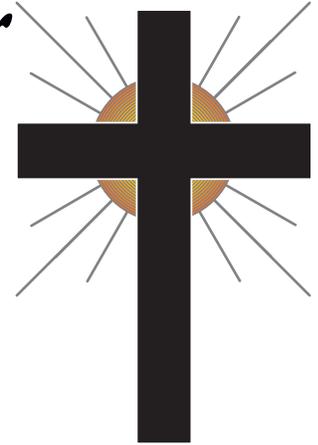
“There are many routes which lead to an encounter with the divine realm and to knowledge of God’s presence and nearly all of those involve facing the harsh and painful realities of life.”

Diogenes Allen

Deacons' Corner

by Mary Martinéz

Deacons Are Here for You – Get to Know Them Better



Our congregation is growing! But every member, no matter how new to our church community, is part of a “flock” assigned to one of our Deacons. As the roster of members change, and Deacons step down after one or more three-year terms, and new Deacons are added, your Deacon may change. However, there is always someone there to help, comfort and support you.

March is the time when new Deacons join us, and others “retire,” so it’s the perfect time to introduce or re-introduce ourselves. To provide an opportunity for congregants to meet and chat with their individual Deacons, we host an annual “Meet Your Deacon Sunday” event. We hope that everyone will join us in the Fellowship Hall for a reception on Sunday, March 22nd after each of the worship services. There will be lots of tasty tidbits for refreshments, contributed by the Deacons themselves. We will have lists available so you can find your Deacon’s name, and as many Deacons as possible will be in attendance and anxious to say hello and get to know their flocks better.

It’s also a good time to remind everyone about our role in the Church. In addition to the obvious efforts Deacons undertake as a group (the Christmas Tree Project, the Scholarship Fund, ushering), Deacons help in many ways behind the scenes. Here are a few examples:

If someone who is homeless or appears to be in need comes into the Narthex on Sunday morning, it is the Deacons’ role to talk to the person, suggest resources they might tap for help, and provide them with a small bag of food.

When there is a medical emergency on Sunday mornings, it is Deacons to the rescue! We have a fully equipped First Aid kit, as well as a Defibrillator for use if needed, and a number of Deacons are trained in First Aid. Falls are fairly common, and a number of congregants have used our bandages!

Each Sunday, Deacons collect the flowers that have beautified our Sanctuary and make sure that they get to shut-ins and those who are ill. One of our Deacons even takes the time to split up the arrangements into separate smaller bouquets so that more people can have the cheer of receiving fresh flowers.

In addition to calling and visiting people who may be experiencing illness or other life challenges, and ensuring that our elderly and less mobile congregants are taken care of in case of a hurricane, Deacons support the members of our flocks through prayer.

We are here to serve, and we hope that you will think of us when you need help in navigating life’s ups and downs. Let us support you in times of trouble and celebrate with you in times of joy. Come meet us on March 22nd!

“Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them... if service, in our serving...the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness... Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.”

from Romans 12:6-8, 15



Youth Spaghetti Dinner

by Rev. Jessi Higginbotham, Associate Pastor



Every Spring the youth spend an entire day thinking about all the members of our congregation. Well actually, they spend an entire day cooking dinner just for you! On Wednesday, March 11th, the youth will host our Wonderful Wednesday Dinner and serve you our homemade spaghetti. Cooking the spaghetti sauce is a wonderful event for our youth group. We gather together in the kitchen of the Christian Learning Center and everyone gets a job. Some chop onions, garlic and mushrooms. Some cook ground beef and some mix tomatoes and spices. It is a lot of fun and our youth love feeling connected to all of you. As you look at your calendar please consider joining us on March 11th at 5:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Dinner is \$7 per adult, \$5 per child, and \$20 per family. Reservations may be made on our website www.firstdelray.com under Upcoming Events, in the Courtyard on Sunday mornings, or by calling the church office (276-6338).

In addition to a delicious meal, there will be entertainment to delight you. Vinny and his Bells, accompanied by Jim Poch on piano, will fill the room with music.

All the money collected from this event will benefit our Youth Mission Trip Fund. The youth of this church are blessed to be able to travel to Montreat and on Mission Trips every summer; the funds from this dinner will help make that possible in 2015. We look forward to seeing you all at this wonderful event! ❖

Thank You

From the bottom of my heart and the hearts of my daughter, her husband, and my grandsons, I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the Emergency Fund established by the church. As Dr. Hood mentioned during the March 1st worship service, I owned a home in Missouri that I provided for my daughter and her family to live in. On February 17th, the home was completely destroyed due to an electrical fire. Though we lost two dogs and two cats, by the grace of God, my grandsons had slept out that night. My daughter and her husband were able to get out of the house when the fire started. However, everything they owned, including the house, was destroyed.

It was after the fire that I found out that I was severely underinsured. The family is living in a travel trailer with no running water while we figure out how to rebuild. I have several trips already booked to manage the details of how to begin again.

Please know that I can feel the love and the prayers of each and every one of you. And I know that the outcome of this tragedy could have been completely different.

On behalf of my daughter, Beth, her husband, Jacob, and my grandsons, Devon (age 15) and Shane (age 10), I would like to say thank you for your concern, love, support, and prayers. You will always be in our hearts.

Nancy Fine
Church Administrator

Upcoming Family Events

by Grace Cameron Hood,

Director of Children and Family Ministry



Eggstra Eggciting Easter Eggstravaganza

Remember to put March 29th, 5 p.m. on your calendar for an Eggstra Eggciting Easter Eggstravaganza. Come as a family with your children and youth for a fun-filled evening of pizza, an egg hunt and some great activities! We will meet in the Youth House at 5 p.m. to get things rolling! Reservations can be made on our website www.firstdelray.com under Upcoming Events and are requested by Wednesday night, March 25th.



Welcome to the Lord's House

As we welcome our youngest worshippers into church, it is important for them to understand what is happening. In the month of May, families are invited to come to church an hour early for a time for children and parents to be introduced to worship in the Lord's House. This event will focus on children from five to eight. More details to come!



Vacation Bible School

Put VBS on your calendars now! Monday, June 8th to Friday, June 12th from 9 a.m. to Noon. Spoiler alert ... we might be using a time machine to travel back in time to learn more about God's love for us!!! If you would like to participate in the planning of this great week, email: gracehood@firstdelray.com.



Opportunities to show God's love...

Substitute teachers are needed for Bible Bunch, Sunday School and the Nursery. Wonderful people have committed to leading these classes but subs are important to have. If you would be available occasionally to help out please email: gracehood@firstdelray.com. Lesson plans and supplies will be ready for you! All you have to do is come prepared to share God's love!! ❖



We Welcome to Our Membership . . .

*Karen Clouser
Elizabeth Fisher
Chase and Chelsea Redden
Craig and Julie Whiting
Joan Yannessa
Richard Yerg*

Welcome



Wonderful Wednesday

by Kathy Smith

Join us each week for Wonderful Wednesday. At 5:30 p.m., there is a time to catch up with old friends and make new ones. Dinner is served from 5:45 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. There is a time of music and prayer. The program runs from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. with different speakers and topics each week.

The cost for dinner is \$7 for adults, \$5 for children, and \$20 maximum per family. Reservations are requested for the dinner each week so that the cooks know how much food to prepare. You may make your reservations on our website www.firstdelray.com under Upcoming Events, call the church office (276-6338), or sign up in the Courtyard following the worship services on Sunday mornings. You will need to make your reservation each week.

Come join us during March for delicious dinners, delightful conversation, and dynamic programs. Menus, locations, and program details can be found in the weekly bulletin or on the church website.

- March 4th** - Dr. Stephen Sapp, "To the Barricades! Ethics, History and Film"
- March 11th** – Youth Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser featuring Vinny and His Bells
- March 18th** – Our Church Missions / Meet our New Members Potluck Dinner
- March 25th** – Long Range Strategic Planning Committee Presentation ❖

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

by Jeanne Heavilin, Co-Chair, Mission Outreach Committee

Fisher House

We have seen and heard a great deal about the plight of wounded veterans and their families lately. We are proud to announce that this year's One Great Hour of Sharing offering, dedicated on Palm Sunday, March 29th, will be donated to the West Palm Beach Fisher House.

The Fisher House program provides free lodging to wounded veterans and their families while they undergo outpatient treatment. Keeping families together during what is sometimes a long period of recuperation is a vital part of the healing process. Shared living areas and kitchens help family members create a support network with others who are going through the same experience.

Without Fisher House, many families of veterans would not be able to make the commute to the hospital to visit. Or they would be unable to afford the cost of a lengthy hotel stay for the family.

The 64 Fisher Houses throughout the United States served 25,000 families with 5.8

million days of lodging in 2014, saving the families \$282 million dollars. In West Palm Beach last year, Fisher House accommodated 968 families of veterans with a total of 3,001 nights of lodging. This 5,000 sq. ft. house features guest suites and has a capacity of 16 individual guests.

All of the programs and services of Fisher House are funded privately through the Fisher House Foundation. Help us support our veterans on Palm Sunday. ❖



My Thoughts on Youth Sunday

by Elizabeth Landes

“Everything won’t be handed to you in life. You must put in the time and effort which will require determination and dedication to acquire what you are setting out for.”

I must start off by stating that the planning of Youth Sunday is a very long process. Everything has to have a starting point, correct? That’s how we were starting off. Everything was just ideas on top of ideas and we took those ideas and made them into something greater.

This service wouldn’t have been how it was without our awesome Youth Advisory Board. And I mustn’t forget about Rev. Jessi Higginbotham who is the one person who kept all fourteen Tweens and Teens in check and kept us moving in the right direction. She is beyond amazing. She started planning six months in advance before introducing the skits and ideas.

Then the two months of practicing at every meeting in youth group happened. The number one priority was that “we understand the scripture and the

message we are portraying. This is far more important than a perfect hour long service.” No one is perfect, everyone makes mistakes but as long as you understand the message than that’s all that matters.

We have become a close family by working through all the problems we faced and conquering them together. When you think something may not come together causing a catastrophe, that’s when things are actually coming along great!

Elizabeth is a freshman at Boca High School. She enjoys babysitting and youth group. She looks forward to going to college and plans on working with young, disabled children one day.



Maundy Thursday Service of Communion and Tenebrae

The service of Tenebrae, meaning darkness or shadows, has been practiced in the Church since medieval times. Join us on Thursday, April 2nd at 7 p.m. as we walk with Christ with music and Scripture through the seven events of Good Friday. Communion will be served.

At each stage a candle will be extinguished until only the Christ candle remains and the communion table will be covered with a black cloth. The Christ candle will be carried into the Sanctuary on Easter Morning (April 5th) as we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord.



The Community Church by the Sea
33 Gleason Street, Delray Beach, Florida 33483

This newsletter is available online at www.firstdelray.com. If you are interested in receiving an electronic copy of this newsletter, please email Nancy Fine at nancyfine@firstdelray.com

Sunday Morning Worship Service

9 a.m. & 11 a.m.

Please join us on Sunday mornings as we worship the Living God together.

Church School

Adult Sunday Forum 10 a.m.

Sunday School for Children 11 a.m.

Youth Fellowship

Middle School

5 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Senior High

6 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Our Pathway of Ministry & Mission



This is our ministry of connecting people with Jesus Christ and the church. Jesus' priority for the church is to share the Christian faith in such a way that people place their trust in Jesus and participate with Jesus in His ongoing work through the local church.



We were never intended to remain the same. Through this ministry, we engage people in intentional processes for growing in the character of Jesus.



Implanted deep within the nature of men and women is the hunger to serve others. Through this ministry, we engage people in a process that helps them discover, develop and deploy their God given gifts for service to Jesus in the local church and community.



One of the distinctive teachings of the Christian faith is that we are called to live in community. In community, we support, encourage, hold accountable and care for one another so that no one has to make the journey of life alone.