



Journey Off the Map Unknown to Us, Known to Him



*by Grace Cameron Hood,
Director of Children and Family Ministry*

While exploring uncharted territory, kids will discover that Jesus is the Ultimate Guide.

They will learn that, even when faced with the unexpected, they can know how to listen for God's direction.

**Monday, June 8th through Friday, June 12th
9 a.m. to Noon**

Ages 3 through completed 5th grade

Register online at www.firstdelray.com under Upcoming Events

Adult and Youth guides are needed. If you would like to lead an adventure for the children of the church and would like to discover more about our Guide...contact Grace Hood at gracehood@firstdelray.com.

Come Join the Adventure!!



One Worship Service at 10 a.m.

Starting
Sunday, May 3rd,
we will begin holding
only one
worship service at 10 a.m.

Check the
Sunday Bulletin for
education class schedules.

We will resume
two services
in November.



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From My Heart to Yours

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



SEA GLASS

“My brothers and sisters, think of the various tests you encounter as occasions for joy. After all, you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. Let this endurance complete its work so that you may be fully mature, complete, and lacking in nothing.”

James 1:2-4 (Common English Bible)

Since moving to South Florida from Pennsylvania several years ago, my wife, Grace, has developed a new hobby, collecting sea glass from the beach. Finding sea glass often requires a careful eye and quick reflexes to collect from the coastline before a wave washes it away. But the effort is handsomely rewarded. Sea glass is simply beautiful and makes even more beautiful and rather expensive jewelry.

Sea glass begins as normal shards of broken glass. Bottles, jars and even fine china which, in ordinary use become shattered, are discarded into the ocean. Years and years of persistent tumbling in the depths of the sea, often for fifty years or more, results in a smoothing and rounding of the sharp edges. Additionally, this process transforms the once slick surface of the glass to a beautiful frosted appearance. It is this rather turbulent and long process that produces such beauty. Naturally, no two pieces are ever identical, making each one a unique treasure.

James, the brother of Jesus, invites us to re-imagine the various trials and difficulties we encounter in life. Much like sea glass, we often become broken in our common life together. Some may even feel that they have been discarded by the world into the depths of the sea. But the promise of scripture is sure, nothing, not brokenness or being thrown away by others will ever separate us from the love of God. Though God is not the author of hardship and trials, God will remain with us in the deep places of the sea, smoothing our hurts and polishing our frailties until our lives take on the beautiful luster and color of sea glass.

In life we may experience brokenness, but if we trust in God, what we will discover one day is that we have been fashioned into a people who are fully mature, complete, and lacking in nothing. And the beauty people see in us will be Christ’s glory; glory that resides in One who considered every test of life as an occasion for joy. ❖

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Moderator – Presbytery of Tropical Florida

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Associate Pastor

Jo Garnett, M.C.E.
Associate for Pastoral Care

Donald J. Cannarozzi, M.M., J.D.
Organist | Director of Music

James K. Poch, S.M.M.
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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.

DISCIPLESHIP MATTERS

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

“Spiritual growth and vitality stem from what we actually do with our lives, from the habits we form, and from the character that results.”

(Dallas Willard)



A Basic Approach to Spiritual Growth



Formative Practices

Worship Regularly
Pray Daily
Learn & Apply God's Word
Participate in a Ministry
Give Financially



Time in Solitude with God

Identify a regular time each day to be alone with God for a minimum of twenty minutes reading the Bible and prayer. Also helpful is the use of a devotional guide such as Dr. Hood's *Heart & Soul* available from the church.



Time in Community with Others

One hour each week, spend time with one or more people reading the Bible and discussing the application to life today. Also share how your faith is growing or faith challenges you are facing. This may be done with a spouse, children, or friends. Make it enjoyable with a beverage and snacks.



Time Sharing Your Faith with Another

Our faith expands richly by sharing with another person how we are personally experiencing God or what we are discovering by our personal reading of the Bible. Be intentional and do this once or twice each year with different people like colleagues at work or friends in social circles.

© W. Douglas Hood, Jr.

Deacons' Corner

by Mary Martinéz

“All Things Are Made New”

Easter reminded us that we, as Christians, individually and collectively, are constantly in the process of rebirth, renewal and change. As Deacons, we are very much in the midst of changes that affect the congregation at First Presbyterian Church of Delray Beach, and our collective and individual activities reflect our efforts to respond to our members' needs, joys and concerns.

You probably know that one wonderful change that is occurring is the growth of our congregation. Since Dr. Hood's arrival in 2013, 165 new members have joined our church. This addition of new members, and the inevitable loss of some older congregants, recently led to the complete reorganization of our Deacon “flocks.” While it was hard to see some of our flock members reassigned, this has given all of the Deacons new people to meet and new ways to be of service. We hope you know who your Deacon is, have heard from him or her during the past month or two, and met them in person, if possible, at our March “Meet Your Deacon” Sunday event. We are here to help our members meet the changes that come their way, so please call on us if we can be of service. If you do not know who your Deacon is, just contact the church office and they will give you the information.

Another change we are involved in as Deacons is the maturation of our congregation's young people. Thanks to everyone's generous contribution to the No Talent/Talent Show and Auction, which netted approximately \$5,000, we have more resources to support the graduating seniors who apply for the scholarships we offer each year. Youth who are church members and participants in our Youth Group activities have been invited to apply for a scholarship. Applications are being reviewed, and the announcement of this year's recipients will be made sometime in June.

Not only does our congregation change, but we continually have new Deacons joining us – sometimes in pairs! This month, I'd like to introduce you to another husband and wife Deacon team, Pat and Lorraine Zimmerman. Both of them hail from Michigan and graduated from Wayne State University. They moved to Florida in 1983, and have two “wonderful” children and three “fantastic” grandchildren. When asked what drew them to First Presbyterian Church of Delray Beach, the list was long. Among my favorite comments were: “The ministry is superb,” “Staff could run the government,” and “The Deacons are warm, wonderful, caring, dedicated and devoted people.” Besides their glowing opinion of the Deacons, they felt called to join us when they learned from Dr. Hood's class on “Discovering God's Vision for Your Life . . . You and Your Spirituals Gifts”

that they both possess God's spiritual gift for serving others. They commented that, “When we were asked to be Deacons, it seemed like God had laid out a path He wanted us to take.”



Just a reminder: The lion's share of the day-to-day work done by the Deacons is supported by your offerings to the Deacons' Fund, using the designated envelopes in your envelope boxes. One of the opportunities to give was on Maundy Thursday, and if you did not use that tan envelope in March, we ask that you might think of us in June.

As we, the congregation, move forward from the Easter experience, striving to be people who reflect the hope of a risen Christ, remember that the Deacons are here to help you meet the changes and challenges that we each experience as we live out God's plan for our lives.



Twenties and Thirties in Church

by Rev. Jessi Higginbotham, Associate Pastor



It's not easy moving to a new place. Even if you have a spouse or family with you, moving can still be lonely, isolating and difficult. Lots of questions arise as you adjust to your new setting. Where do you get your hair cut? Which is the best dry cleaner?

The young adult population in the United States is the most transient it has ever been. Relocating for work, family or finances is more common than ever before. Travel is easy, quick, cheap and sometimes effortless but jobs may be hard to come by and therefore more and more young adults are choosing to move away from their hometowns.

Palm Beach County has started to see a flux in its young adult population over the last 10 years. We're no longer just a great place for retirement, we're becoming a great place for families and young people. Besides, who wouldn't want to live in this beautiful setting?

Our church is also seeing a flux in young adult attendance. Our young adult group (TnT) is strong and growing. Not only this, but young adults are attending worship – and not just on Sunday mornings. Special worship services like Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday are heavily attended by young people. Why? Because they truly care about their spiritual growth and because they are living into traditions started in their lives

very early on. Many of our young adults attended church as children and even though they may have taken the college years off, they are returning in their late twenties and thirties for those deep and rich traditions they experienced as children.

How can we support and love our young adults? Providing them with a spiritual community of peers is a wonderful start. Our TnT program grows and thrives because we provide a time and space to talk and explore our faith together. If there is someone in your family or life who you think would benefit from such a community, please let the church office know! We would love to reach out to them and offer them what so many young people need during this time in their lives. When you see young adults in church, extend a hand of welcome, ask if they know about our program and introduce them to Rev. Jessi, Rev. Jo or Dr. Hood. This is a ministry for us all to do together as a community of Christ! ❖





WORTH WATCHING

The Flavor of Faith: a Film Review of “*Babette’s Feast*”

A Movie Review by Nathanael Hood, MA, New York University

Together, they sip and slurp dainty glasses of amber Amontillado sherry and pale Veuve Cliquot champagne. Servings of buckwheat cakes slathered with caviar and sour cream give way to quail stuffed with hearty glops of foie gras and truffle slices all cooked in puff pastry shells. Then comes sponge cake spritzed with rum, peppered with figs and candied cherries. Happy mouths stuff themselves with figs while juicy fingers seize slices of pineapple and swollen grapes. As the night dwindles down, their spirits soar up. Their hands full of cups of freshly-ground coffee and glasses of cognac courtesy of Rémy Martin, the dour Danish villagers sing and weep, laugh and pray. Just hours ago, this cloistered community on the frigid coast of Jutland had been mired in dreary stoicism; trapped in a faith borne more of habit and tradition than genuine conviction. Yet with a lavish meal, the characters of Gabriel Axel’s *Babette’s Feast* awaken once more to the beauties of food, of life, of each other.

Babette’s Feast is one of the most poignant and meaningful religious films of the last 50 years. Rich in Christian imagery and themes, the film

has proved itself a true rarity: an overtly religious movie embraced by both people of faith and secular critics. In addition to winning a score of international awards (including the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film), *Babette’s Feast* holds the distinction of being Pope Francis’ favorite film. It centers on the eponymous feast prepared by Babette Hersant (Stéphane Audran), a Frenchwoman who fled the bloodshed of the French Revolution to Denmark where she worked as the housekeeper of Martine (Birgitte Federspiel) and Philippa (Bodil Kjer).

The daughters of a prophet who founded a Pietistic conventicle, Martine and Philippa eschewed the material world and devoted themselves to caring for the few remaining elderly members of their dwindling community. Dressing in severe black-and-white clothing and subsisting on a flavorless diet of dried cod and bread soaked in ale for so long that it becomes a nauseating brown paste, their little community has devolved into a purgatory of blandness. As such, internal arguments and petty squabbles divide the tiny community of believers. When Babette learns that she has miraculously won 10,000 francs in a lottery, she begs the sisters to allow her to prepare an authentic French dinner for the community.

Unbeknownst to them, Babette used to be one of the greatest chefs in France. The opulent ingredients of the feast horrify the abstemious community: a box of live quails, crates of colorful fruit, a gigantic live turtle, etc, etc. In a panic, the community decides to ignore the taste of the food lest it lead them to temptation (one of the sisters even has an absurd nightmare that Babette, a Catholic, intends to use the feast as a platform for a Satanic ritual). But as the villagers move from succulent dish to succulent dish, a transformation occurs: they begin to talk with sincere joy about their faith for the first time in years. Old grudges are forgiven, enemies are reconciled, and the community comes together in a spontaneous celebration of Christian love and fellowship. With the feast over, the sisters make a ghastly discovery: Babette had spent all of her winnings on this one meal, making any possible return to her homeland of France financially impossible. The film ends with an exchange of heart-breaking poignancy:

Martine: “Now you will be poor the rest of your life.”

Babette: “An artist is never poor.”

There are numerous Christian interpretations of *Babette’s Feast*:

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WORTH WATCHING

(continued)



Babette is a Christ figure who sacrifices everything she has to redeem a community of believers; the feast is a metaphor for the Last Supper (indeed, there are twelve feasters, thirteen when you include Babette); the villagers' diet of fish and bread paste (i.e. the loaves and fishes with which Jesus fed the multitudes) is replaced with a feast which nourishes more than just their physical needs, but their spiritual ones as well; a "dead" community is "resurrected" by an incomprehensible act of love. But I would recommend a different reading of the film. Too often faith is seen as a flavorless list of laws and restrictions which take all the flavor out of life. But the key to Christian living is realizing that in following Christ's teachings we enter into a new life; one of joy and fellowship protected against many of the ruinous temptations and pitfalls of life. Yes, restraint and regulation are important parts of Christian living, but they are safeguards designed to improve life, not stymie it. When we devote ourselves to abstinence for abstinence's sake, not only do we risk retarding our own development as Christians, we risk missing out on the many wonderful gifts, the many wonderful *tastes*, that God has given us in this life."



Handbell Ringing for Beginners

by Jim Poch,
Associate Director of Music

Handbell ringing for beginners will be offered during late May through June, one evening per week. The exact time and day will be determined by the convenience of interested participants. No performances are planned and new ringers are not obligated to continue beyond this mini-course. If, on the other hand, participants love ringing and wish to continue, they can be accommodated. Contact Jim Poch (276-6338, ext. 24 or jimpoch@firstdelray.com) for more information.



Welcome to the Lord's House



*by Grace Cameron Hood,
Director of Children and Family Ministry*

As we welcome our youngest worshippers into church, it is important for them to understand what is happening. On May 31st and June 7th, from 9 a.m. to 9:45 a.m., there will be a time for children and parents to be introduced to how and why we worship in the Lord's house. This event will focus on children from five to eight. In September this opportunity will be repeated for older children. ❖



Celebration of Eternal Life...

Our Deepest Sympathies as a congregation is extended to the families of the following members upon the death of their loved ones:

James Berry
March 20, 2015

Richard Yerg
March 21, 2015

Milton Stearns
March 30, 2015

Mary Ella Alfring
April 12, 2015

Wonderful Wednesday

by Kathy Smith

Year two of Wonderful Wednesday has come to a close. It has been a successful and enjoyable program embraced by approximately 50 people each Wednesday this last season. We plan to resume on September 16, 2015 and run for twelve weeks, ending with Hanging of the Greens just after Thanksgiving.

Our Wonderful Wednesday Chefs have created delicious delicacies. Thank you to: Les and Ann Heilakka, Ed and Gail Jessell, Joe and Maryann Rana, and Arnold and Kathy Smith. Also, a big thank you to our food prep helpers: Joanne Gimmy, Linda Prior, Pat and Lorraine Zimmerman, Marilee Shore, Barbara Henn, Bill and Jane Amme, Mike and Betsy Owen, Jim and Edna Fisher, Merrill Beveridge, and Donna Bos. Program developers, Linda Prior and Bruce Gimmy certainly gave the Wonderful Wednesday diners food for thought.

It takes collaboration and vision to keep Wonderful Wednesday going. It would not be possible without the help from all of our church staff. A very grateful Thank you to: Rev. Jo Garnet for her dedication and the motivation behind this program, Dr. Hood for his wonderful programs and support for this event, Jim Poch for his musical talents and making us feel the harmony, Aaron Strippel the best there is, everything he does, he does well, and Nancy Fine and Paula Hare for their attention to the details that keep us organized!

We are already working on the programing for next fall. Please email kathysmith004@aol.com with any suggestions for next season. ❖

Church Improvement Committee

by Barbara Vanderkay

The Holly House workshops are now in full swing, making items for our November Bazaar. We hope you can join us. We meet in the Holly House, just north of the Christian Education Building, every Tuesday and Thursday at 9:30 a.m. Bring your lunch and socialize with the friendly women from our church family. Remember, we meet most of the summer when winter activities have stopped and a lot of people have gone north.

Our "Show and Tell" meeting in April produced some interesting new ideas for craft projects we can make. (We'll be happy to hear of any more you can come up with.) Our meetings are informal and open to new and old Presbyterian women and their friends. Just come when you can. Walk-ins are welcome, no appointments necessary.

Please do remember to bring any unwanted jewelry whenever you come. It takes time for the jewelry ladies to clean, sort and price things for the November Bazaar and the February Rummage Sale.

Donna King will be glad to answer any questions at 523-6091.

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Presbytery Youth Retreat at First Presbyterian Church of Delray Beach

The Presbytery of Tropical Florida extends a heartfelt thank you to First Presbyterian Church of Delray Beach for allowing us to host our annual Spring Youth Retreat on your campus. We are blessed to have you and your generosity in our Presbytery. Over the weekend of April 10-12, almost 80 youth and adults gathered here to worship and celebrate God together. Our retreat was a wonderful success thanks to you, your parents and volunteers, and your lovely campus. Thank you again and God Bless!

The Youth Task Force of the Presbytery of Tropical Florida ❖



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

10 a.m.

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

Church School

Sunday School for Children 10 a.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.