



Fill a Bag . . . Feed a Family

by Nancy Long

As hard as it may be to believe, there are many people in our community – men and women, boys and girls, young and old – who are hungry each and every day through no fault of their own. From a Christian perspective, these are our mothers and fathers, our sons and daughters, our grandmothers and grandfathers, our sisters and brothers, our aunts and uncles, even though we may not know their names.

This October, we are once again asking for your help in meeting the very real, very basic needs of those who are the hungriest in our larger community. You can do this by picking up a simple brown bag with a “shopping list” stapled to it in the Courtyard following the Sunday worship

service. You may choose to “shop for” the listed items, but any canned products or boxes of non-perishable unopened products you can provide will be greatly appreciated.

Food may be left in the Narthex during the week or on Sunday mornings throughout the month of October. Not a shopper? Donations are also appreciated. Checks may be made out to “CROS Ministries” and placed in the collection plate on Sunday mornings throughout the month.

The greatest gift of all may be that we, as a church community, are able to give of ourselves, in a meaningful way, to others. Thank you for all you do to help those in need in our community.



*Your Mission
Outreach Committee*

INSIDE . . .

End Hunger Walk	Page 5
Blessing of the Pets	Page 7



From My Heart to Yours

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



Who Needs God?

“But the centurion replied, ‘Lord, I don’t deserve to have you come under my roof. Just say the word and my servant will be healed.’”
Matthew 8:8 (Common English Bible)

Living without God is not a recent invention. From the beginning of history women and men have heard the whisper, “Who needs God?” It was there in the third chapter of Genesis when Satan – having taken the form of a snake – asked the question of the woman, Eve. The question has disturbed every person since that fateful day in the Garden of Eden. How many of us can honestly confess to a desperate need for God? How real a factor is the thought of God in the common moments of each day?

It is my experience that for many people, God resides in the peripheral rather than occupying a central place in their lives. If our felt need for God becomes only occasional we learn, moment by moment and day by day, to live without God. Eventually, it isn’t a big step to live entirely without any thought of God. Many who have moved to this place may reject having someone identifying them as an atheist but, in truth, God is no longer real. David H. C. Read once shared that some people in his New York City congregation have confessed that having missed worship and prayer for extended months, life went on much as usual. The question presses, “Who needs God?”

Perhaps the real question in play is, “What is important to us?” If we decide in our hearts that material success, the acquiring of wealth and comfort, is to be our supreme goal, then God may be irrelevant: we don’t need God. Make no mistake; there is nothing at all wrong with success – even financial success. It is a question of what is most important. Do we seek to be caught-up in something bigger than ourselves; to be fully engaged with the purposes of God or do we ultimately live for ourselves? If we are totally dedicated to material success, asserts David H. C. Read, then we don’t need God. We have one.

Here in Matthew’s Gospel a centurion realizes a need for God. One of his servants is desperately ill and there is nothing that the centurion’s wealth, position and power can do for the servant. The centurion realizes that he is without the resources that are required. The centurion approaches Jesus and asks for a word of grace, a word that would do for the servant what the centurion is incapable of doing. When the centurion declares to Jesus, “Lord, I don’t deserve to have you come under my roof,” it is a declaration that the centurion has been living without God. Now he has awakened to the need that has been there all the time. The centurion needs God. And at that very moment the servant was made well.

Reprinted from Dr. Hood’s September 19, 2014 blog posting. ❖

Church Staff

W. Douglas Hood, Jr., D.Min.
Senior Pastor
Vice-Moderator – Presbytery of Tropical Florida

Jessi Higginbotham, M.Div.
Associate Pastor

Jo Garnett, M.C.E.
Associate for Pastoral Care
Minister to Children and Families

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

James K. Poch, S.M.M.
Associate Director of Music

Nancy Fine, CA
Office Manager

Christine Davis Paula Hare
Accountant Secretary

Aaron Strippel Rita Avery
Head Custodian Custodian

First Presbyterian Church
33 Gleason Street
Delray Beach, FL 33483
phone: 561-276-6338
fax: 561-272-8505
e-mail:
administrator@firstdelray.com
web page: www.firstdelray.com

The Spire

EDITOR:
Tim Knapp

LAYOUT:
Char Conklin

PROOFREADER:
Barbara Vanderkay

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.

DISCIPLESHIP MATTERS

Of What Use Is Spiritual Progress?

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

Many who sit in Christian churches Sunday after Sunday have little inclination as to why. For some it simply feels right, raised by parents who instilled a sense of duty or obligation that this is a responsible course for one's life. Some are present because of a gnawing sense that something is missing in their lives – they are genuinely looking for that something whatever that something may be. Others may have come with someone else, present in worship because it is important to the person they came with. Though it is fair to say that some have come for excellent music or an inspiring sermon, the question remains, what is it that the music and sermon bring to the table of the individual life? To offer the answer that music and sermons advance the spiritual progress of the person fails to answer, of what use is spiritual progress?

It is a common question in this practical age. Whether the question has been clearly fashioned in the mind or remains a rather nebulous vapor seeking shape doesn't really matter. It does not matter if the question hides in the shadows of the mind or stands unashamed upon center stage stripped of all pretenses. The question betrays a particular point of view: God is a utility that is available to serve needs. This is a deeply flawed point of view and may answer why there is such complacency among many church members. God sits on the spice rack of life. We reach for God when life needs a little seasoning or flavor. God's purpose is to advance our life in whatever direction we chose.

Friendship will not open its door to the one who keeps asking of others, "Of what value can you add to my life?" Attempts to use people for personal advancement betray sincerity and ruins friendships. Marriage will not afford access to its rich blessings to the one who asks, "Of what advantage will this spouse provide my life?" The use of a spouse for personal gain or advancement degrades marriage. To approach the holiest relation of them all – fellowship with God – with the expectation of personal enrichment or value bars the communion of God and personal spirit.

Naturally, friends often prove of greatest service, and a spouse can often be of incalculable enrichment but these are gifts of a companionship that is sought for its own sake and not as an opportunity. The pursuit of a relationship with God also presents various gifts. But, as with friendships, to pursue a relationship with God solely or primarily for the benefit it may provide ruins the relationship. As Barbara Brown Taylor has wisely observed, the most important thing we get in prayer is God. Properly understood, prayer is less about obtainment of

wishes and personal advancement. Prayer is about taking the journey of life with another – sharing life's journey with God. This practice of prayer rejects God as utility, a force like electricity or microwaves to be harnessed for our ends. As someone once observed, that is magic, not religion. God desires a personal relationship with us and that relationship seeks trust and love, not the tapping into a source of power for personal desires.

Let us return to our original question: of what value is spiritual progress? I propose that the value of spiritual progress is the deepening of a personal relationship with God – for relationship sake only. From what we have explored above, we must dismiss the pursuit of a relationship with God as an aid in achieving personal or social goals. That places the goal first and God second, even in a subordinate and auxiliary place to the goal.

As friendships develop and marriages mature, there is present a healthy and natural dynamic; a growing shared interest and concern for one another. Shared interests develop and common pursuits are sought. They are not the objects for which a relationship is forged but, rather, the fruit of relationships that grow and mature. This dynamic is true for a relationship with God. As that most holy of relationships deepens and matures, so emerges the realization of God's international intention – to bind all people of every nation into one holy communion under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Further, the heart and mind becomes conscious that God pursues that international intention through the gifts, talents and energy of those who accept God's invitation to a life-long relationship.

Of what use is spiritual progress? Simply, it is to enjoy that most holy of all relationships with another, to know God and enjoy God's companionship in the journey of life. Yet, as in any relationship, we are changed as a result of paying attention to God, as a result of our life rubbing-up against the life and activity of God. Awareness of what God values – the upmost well-being for all – becomes important to us. We discover that our own little life projects become increasingly insignificant as we participate more and more in God's project in the world. Then, one night we close our eyes and prepare to take our rest from our labors and we realize that we have discovered – and lived – our divine destiny.

Reprinted from Dr. Hood's October 31, 2013 blog posting. ❖

Once a Deacon . . . Always a Deacon

by Mary Martinéz

Last month, we introduced you to two of our new, first-time Deacons. We also have Deacons who have served multiple terms – and have come back yet again to assist us. This month, two of these individuals share their experiences and provide some interesting facts about their lives in, and outside of, First Presbyterian Church of Delray Beach.

First, I had the honor of spending some time learning more about Etta Wilkinson. I knew she was a veteran because I saw her stand on Memorial Day, and I was proud to see that we had an African American woman veteran in our congregation. Little did I know that Etta has defied stereotypes throughout her career, traveling the world as a communications expert for the Department of State. Etta joined the congregation in 1989, upon her retirement – which didn't last long. She was subsequently called back to service in 1990 and served through 2008, but this didn't stop her from being a Deacon from 2005 – 2011. During this time, she had another member cover for her in the six months that she spent each year on assignment at embassies and consulates around the world. Among her assignments during

her career have been posts in Laos, Cambodia, Kuwait, Lebanon (Beirut), Saudi Arabia, China (Beijing), South Africa, and Lithuania. She says that Saudi Arabia, where she had to conform to the rules of dress and separation of genders, was most limiting for her as a woman. But it was in South Africa during apartheid that she made headlines when she was refused entrance to a whites-only restaurant.

Etta, who also enjoys working on the Rummage Sale and Christmas Bazaar, and in the past helped with the Adopt-a-Family projects, finds that looking after her flock members is the most rewarding part of being a Deacon. To new Deacons, her advice is to persevere, and be adaptable, as the little routines of our Sunday morning duties are always changing!

Another very experienced Deacon, and I suspect one of our more senior current Deacons, although I promised not to share his age, is Ron Fleck. Ron has been a member at First Delray for at least 20 years, and has previously served two terms as a Deacon here, as well as having served at the Church of Christ in Oakbrook, IL, where he attended before moving to South Florida. Ron says that he was happy to take on the mantle of Deacon again as he sees it as “his calling.” Having experienced many challenges to his health over the years that have

strengthened his faith (he is a bit of a “bionic man” at this point, with the numerous repair parts that he's had installed!), he welcomes the opportunity to share with others the trust he has gained in the Lord. When they are facing tough times, Ron encourages his flock to “keep trying; don't give up,” a lesson he has learned from his own experience. He believes that being open and comfortable in talking to people is an important talent for a Deacon – a skill he honed back in his days in marketing at DuPont. Ron's advice to those thinking of becoming a Deacon is to give it some thought, pray about it, and do it out of a desire to serve.

What you may not know about Ron is that he has been an avid builder of large scale airplane models since his youth, having built 50 or so over the years. While he specialized in WWII planes earlier in his modeling life, he now likes to build jets, like the F18 flown by his grandson. He also enjoys reading historical novels, among other types of books.

It was a joy to hear both Etta and Ron's enthusiasm and thankfulness for their lives, their openness to changing and growing as our congregation and its mission change, and their heart-felt desire to keep on serving God's people.



Women's Monday Book Group

by Linda Prior



The Women's Monday Book Group will resume in November. They meet the first Monday of the month at 12:30 p.m. in the Christian Learning Center from November through April.

All are invited to join the discussion and encouraged to note the dates and titles of this year's selections. For more information, contact Linda Prior at 330-0245.

November 3, 2014

The Goldfinch

By D. Tartt

December 1, 2014

The Invention of Wings

By Sue Monk Kidd

January 5, 2015

The Language of Flowers

By Vanessa Diffenbaugh

February 2, 2015

Me Before You

By Jojo Moyes

March 7, 2015

Once We Were Brothers

By Ronald Balson

April 4, 2015

Orphan Train

By Christina Baker Kline

20th Annual End Hunger Walk (C.R.O.S. Walk)

You are invited to join walkers on Flagler Drive in West Palm Beach for a 3.1 mile/5K intracoastal walk. This is great for families and fellowship. Wagons and strollers are welcome. Walk, run, or jog on Sunday, October 12th at 3 p.m. (rain or shine). The meeting location is Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, 211 Trinity Place, West Palm Beach (Exit Okeechobee east, to Chase, turn left). To participate in the walk or to make a donation, please sign up in the Courtyard following the Sunday morning worship services or contact Jeanne Heavilin, at jcheavilin@gmail.com. ❖



Church Improvement

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!

by Barbara Vanderkay

You may think this greeting is a bit early, but not for the crafty Holly House ladies. They have been working all year creating beautiful decorative items and all sorts of gifts for their Holly Days Bazaar. It will be held Friday, November 7th and Saturday, November 8th from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Holly House on Bronson Avenue, north of the Sanctuary. The usual Presale for members and loyal church attendees will be held on Thursday, November 6th from 2 to 4 p.m.

Come and see the beautiful wreaths, small trees, tree skirts, special ornaments, toys, hostess gifts,

and JEWELRY. Of course, there will be the always busy bakery sale with homemade mango chutney and jam. Because the bazaar is so popular with our church members and the community, the ladies are urgently requesting help from church members, both men and women. Please remember to bring in your



unwanted costume jewelry ahead of time so it can be checked and priced. Please complete the form enclosed in the Bulletin and place it in the offering plate or make sure Edna Fisher or Donna King get it. Any and all help will be greatly appreciated.

If indeed you miss the sale on the 7th or 8th, don't worry. The sale continues on Tuesdays and Saturdays from Tuesday, November 11th through Saturday, December 13th from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Holly House.

We hope to see you there!

World Communion Invitation

Sunday, October 5th – 10 a.m.

“People will come from east and west, north and south, and sit down to eat in God’s kingdom. Look! Those who are last will be first and those who are first will be last.”

(Luke 13:29-30 CEB)

We come to Christ’s Table aware of our human frailty and our sin. Our world has been shattered by selfish and foolish pride. We also come knowing that God’s healing love can restore wholeness and welcome us home.

At Christ’s Table, we are made one with Christ and one with each other. We also are united with the Church in every time and place. The unity of the Lord’s Table is a sign of the unity that God wills for all of creation. From Christ’s Table, we can go out with joy as witnesses of God’s love to work for the healing and the reconciliation of God’s world.

Join Christians around the world at the great celebration. Take your place at the Lord’s Table on Sunday, October 5th, at 10 a.m. and know the feeling of what it is like to be one with Christians everywhere.



Wonderful Wednesday

by Kathy Smith

Join us in Fellowship Hall 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 programs run from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. and have different speakers and topics each week. The Kids' Choir practices with Mr. Poch while the adults enjoy a program.

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 reservation on our website www.firstdelray.com under Upcoming Events, call the church office (276-6338), or sign up in the Courtyard following the worship service on Sunday morning. Reservations are requested by Monday at 5 p.m. You will need to make your reservation each week.

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

October 1st: Dr. Steven Sapp, Professor of Religious Studies, University of Miami "From the Beatles to Buffett: Images of Aging in Popular Music". We will explore the role that popular music plays in influencing attitudes and behavior toward aging. We will share our interpretations

of the songs and contribute their perspectives on both lyrics and music. It will be a fun time to reminisce and reflect on some important things.

October 8th: Joe Gillie, Executive Director/CEO of Delray Beach Center for the Arts at Old School Square. Joe has been the guiding light of the arts in Delray for 22 years. He will enlighten us on all the activities and events at Delray Arts Center, his pride and joy. You will appreciate his enthusiasm and devotion.

October 15th: Marjorie Ferrer, Director of Delray Downtown Development Authority (DDA). For 21 years Marjorie has been a leading force in the evolution of Downtown Delray as DDA Director. Marjorie will give you inside story on how tax dollars have created the bustling energy of our thriving downtown.

October 22nd: Barbara Curtis from the Memory and Wellness Center at Florida Atlantic University. Barbara will give us insight into memory impairment treatment and assistance to caregivers.

October 29th: Rev. Amalie Ash, Director, Presbytery of Tropical Florida. A former member of our congregation before being ordained, we are excited and pleased that she has accepted our invitation.



Blessing of the Pets

We hope those of you who have pets have marked your calendars, and invited neighbors or friends to come along, to the Blessing of Pets on Sunday October 26th at 4 p.m. in the Courtyard. The offering taken here is dedicated to the Deacons' Scholarship Fund which provides assistance to deserving high school seniors who have demonstrated their love and dedication to God and our church. This event is one of the Deacons' yearly projects.



DISTINGUISHED PREACHER SERIES

We are pleased to announce that Dr. Thomas Long and Dr. William Carl, III, have accepted our invitation to preach as part of our Distinguished Preacher Series in January 2015

Dr. Thomas Long, Bandy Professor of Preaching; Coordinator of the Initiative in Religious Practices and Practical Theology at Chandler School of Theology will preach on Sunday, January 11, 2015. A distinguished author and preacher, he is a frequent contributor to *The*

Christian Century and the *Journal for Preachers*, and a popular presenter at preaching conferences worldwide.

Dr. William Carl, III, is the President of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary as well as a professor of homiletics. Prior to coming to the seminary, he served as pastor of the 1,700-member First Presbyterian Church in Dallas. He is the author of eight books and multiple scholarly articles and reviews. ❖



Emerging Artist Organ Recital

by Don Cannarozzi, Director of Music

Jonathan Rudy, the 2014 winner at the National Young Artists Competition in Organ Performance will be the featured artist in this year's Emerging Artist Recital. On Sunday, October 19th at 4 p.m., come to this concert sponsored by the Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade chapters of the American Guild of Organists. The concert is free; a free-will offering will be collected. ❖

Celebration of Eternal Life...

Our Deepest Sympathies as a congregation is extended to the family of the following member upon the death of their loved one:

Jeanne Strong
August 15, 2014



We Welcome to Our Membership . . .

Arlene Faranda
Jay and Nadine Magee
Irene (Reni) Velez
Courtland Weisleder
Lauren Willard
Patrick and Lorraine
Zimmerman



Welcome

*Donate to Macedonian Ministry and
Renew Pastors, Strengthen Churches &
Positively Impact Communities*

A gift to Macedonian Ministry is a gift that will renew the lives of pastors, strengthen the effectiveness of their local churches and positively impact the communities they serve. Pastors all over America are burning out at an alarming rate. Over 20,000 pastors left the ministry in 2010 and a recent survey by the Francis Schaeffer Institute indicates 71% of pastors serving churches today are burned out and battling depression beyond fatigue. The survey also showed that 48% would leave their churches today if they could get other jobs.

This alarming rate of discouragement among pastors is felt by their churches. The Growing Vital Church Network has found that presently 90% of all congregations in America are either stagnant or declining. Only 10% are growing. There is a direct correlation between the spiritual health of pastors and the churches they serve. Local congregations simply cannot have a strong missional impact upon their communities with discouraged pastors.

The name Macedonian Ministry comes from Acts 16:9, where the Apostle Paul hears a call in a dream from a man in Macedonia to “come over and help us.” The purpose of Macedonia Ministry is to “come over and help” local pastors – to encourage them and increase their leadership capacity for high-impact ministry.

Macedonian Ministry renews pastors through a three-year mentoring program that addresses the isolation and depression that increasingly affect clergy while bringing alongside a seasoned, effective pastor to equip them with leadership skills that are not adequately taught in seminary. With a proven curriculum that builds skills for a high impact ministry, what are forged are dynamic learning communities as well as a close-knit supportive community that vitally impacts pastors and the churches they serve.

Your gift to Macedonian Ministry will be used here in South Florida to renew pastors, strengthen churches and positively impact communities with God’s tangible presence and work. Make a difference today with a gift to Macedonian Ministry.

Given by _____

I would like to make a gift to Macedonian Ministry in the amount of \$ _____

Please make your check payable to First Presbyterian Church of Delray Beach and place it with your form in the offering plate, drop it off at the church office, or mail it to First Presbyterian Church, 33 Gleason Street, Delray Beach, FL 33483.

*Remember the
Church When . . .*

*Estate
Planning*

Our Endowment and Remembrance Funds are two excellent opportunities for your giving consideration, be it your will, stocks, or as a named beneficiary of an insurance policy. This financially wise method of stewardship helps ensure the long-term financial stability of the church and provides a planned means for the church to continue its role in the lives of our members and those to whom we reach out, in our community and beyond. For more information on long-term giving, call the church office (276-6338).



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 morning as we worship the living God together.

Church School

Worship Hour Sunday School 10 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.