



Sunday School Starts September 11th



Faith and Fun for Families and Children

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

Our children and youth will be using a curriculum called *Growing in Grace and Gratitude* which has been crafted by the PCUSA. This curriculum focuses on God's relationship with humankind, which is grounded in a covenant of grace and love. The Bible stories will give us a glimpse into the heart of God. We will learn about love, betrayal, trust,

and reconciliation. We will see that God makes unlikely choices in a way that dares us to trust in God!

Children will have access to activities to do at home via online resources. There will also be a downloadable e-book for ibooks and kindle which is intended for families to use at home!

There will be two Sunday School classes this year. The children's class will be a multi-age group of 1st through 5th grade which will be led by Grace Hood. Middle/High Sunday School youth will be led by Kim Dykstra. All ages will be dismissed following the Time with the Children during Sunday worship.



World Communion Sunday

World Communion Day is Sunday, October 2nd. Millions of Christians around the world come to the Lord's Table that day from before the sun rises to well past the sunset. The Invitation to the Table is given in hundreds of different languages. Different types of bread are used that reflect each country. There are so many differences in faces, languages, cultures, and clothes. What brings us together is that we break bread in communion as we remember what God has done for the world.

On this World Communion Sunday, we will have several families present breads from their backgrounds as we remember that in our differences, we are united around the Table of the Lord.



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From My Heart to Yours

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



SHARING OUR FAITH STORY

“Let the redeemed of the Lord say so.”

Psalm 107:2 (New Revised Standard Version)

Our daily conversations do more than provide a running narrative of our lives; such conversations shape our experiences, practices and life with one another. As we speak, our thoughts and understandings are more deeply formed and clarified. Through speech, we do so much more than transmit information to another. We process that information in a manner that deepens our convictions. When that conversation turns to matters of faith, my friend Thomas Long, brilliantly observes, “When we talk about our faith, we are not merely expressing our beliefs; we are coming more fully and clearly to believe. In short, we are always talking ourselves into being Christian.”¹

It is uncertain that this is the conviction behind these words from Psalms. What is certain is that God’s people are directed to speak of their faith; are commanded to share their faith story with others. It is the duty of every person of faith. The man or woman who has been “redeemed” by the Lord must become a busy person. They are to be messengers of God’s love and transformative power. It is this kind of witness that captures the interest of ordinary people and wins their verdict. Clergy are expected to speak of holy things. But when ordinary people speak of God the testimony takes hold with arresting strength and considerable surprise.

But, argues Tom Long, such conversation serves a sacred interest. Speaking with another person about our faith confirms experience; it sustains it and enriches it. Any experience which is denied expression speedily fades away, such as a second language that is never used. The loss may be imperceptible at first but, over time, more and more is lost until little remains. Yet, when voice is given to matters of faith, faith quickens and is given strength. A powerful dynamic is released: as we take hold of our faith, our faith takes hold of us. Doubts melt away like mist when we go public with our testimony of what God has done for us.

The Bible is filled with miracle stories. They are the stories that shape the contours of our faith and reveal God to us; stories that bear witness to God’s power. But they are not the stories that are the most vital for living a transformed and transfigured life. The miracle that is most vital, that is most urgent today, is not the miracle that is read about but the one that walks about in every believer who gives confession of their belief. The Lord says, “Let the redeemed of the Lord say so.” That is the Lord’s command. The world is waiting for our obedience. ❖

¹ Thomas G. Long, **Testimony: Talking Ourselves into Being Christian** (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2004). 7.

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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

Nurture Faith

I am inviting you to join me each week for an intentional practice for nurturing your faith. Here's how it works: Each Sunday, locate in the back of your worship bulletin, a meditation I have prepared for that week. **Do three things:**

- Read the Bible passage printed and my meditation that follows.
- Reflect on three provocative questions that move toward life-application. Write your reflections into the space provided in the worship bulletin.
- Pray the prayer located at the end. Pray slowly and thoughtful, making the prayer your own.

To increase the value of this practice, invite a spouse or friend to join you. Complete the reflection questions privately and then come together and share your responses with one another. Both the sharing of your own reflections and listening to another's reflections creates a rich learning experience. Whether you do this privately, or with one or two other individuals, your relationship with God will deepen. Over time, this practice will transform your faith!

Why not start right now?

Read the meditation on the inside cover of this newsmagazine. The column is, *From My Heart to Yours*. Then answer these three questions, writing your answers right here in the space provided:

1. How has this scripture or meditation spoken to you?

2. What insight can you apply to your life this week?

3. What one specific act do you intend to take, an attitude to change, a person to see, or a prayer to pray?

Prayer: *Lord of life, may my knowledge of you grow from more to more. Transform my desires and give me the words to share with others my hope that is found in your Son, my Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.*



OGHS Update

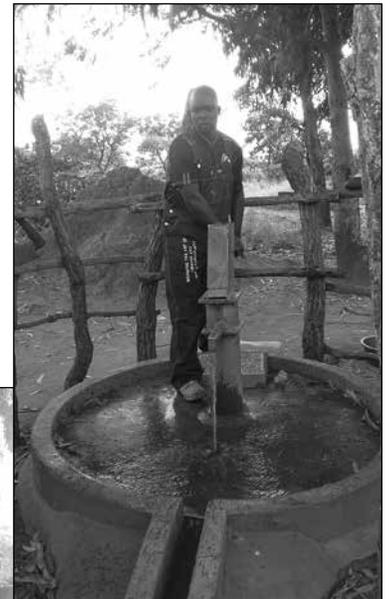
by Jeanne Heavilin, Mission Outreach Co-Chair

This year, our One Great Hour of Sharing Offering was designated to providing wells in Uganda through Freedom in Creation which was established by Andrew Briggs. Andrew has a long-term relationship with this congregation as his late grandmother, Phyllis Evans, was a member.

I recently received the following update from Andrew and wanted to pass it along to you.

Dear Friends at First Presbyterian of Delray Beach,

We have just completed the first of a number water projects we expect to complete with support from First Presbyterian Church of Delray Beach. These photos depict our team -- including a high school age boy, Walter, whom we are mentoring and will soon put into a good school - rehabilitating a well in Gulu, Uganda. The well is situated at a Catholic Church and serves an estimated 420 people from the congregation and surrounding community. Before the well was completed, the people were drawing water from our farm and, along with our 11 staff, 9 interns, 50 children (during program times), 68 goats, 10 cows, etc. things were getting hectic.



Church Improvement

by Eileen Robinson

SAVE THE DATE!

Annual Holly Days Christmas Bazaar

November 11 and 12, 2016

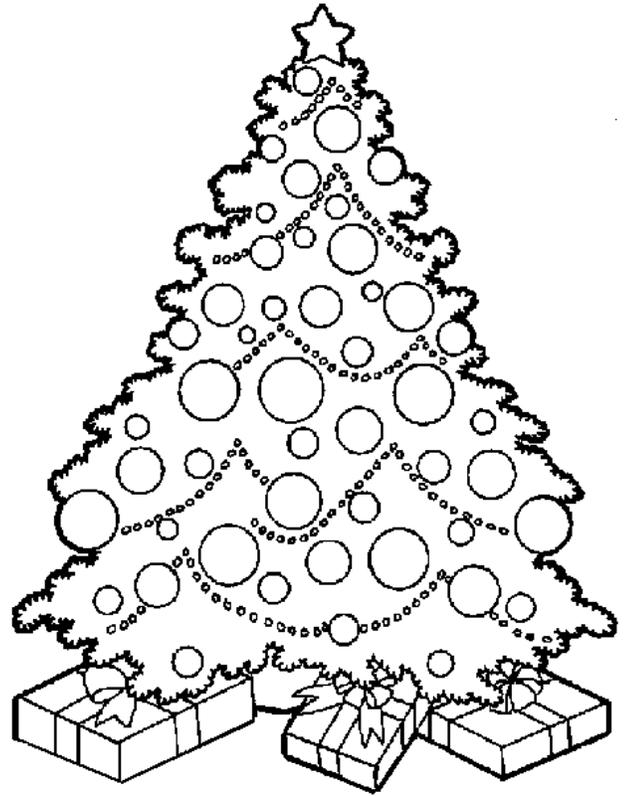
Friday and Saturday - 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

in the Holly House

DONATIONS HELP! Please keep bringing in donations for the bazaar. The Jewelry Department is looking for donations of unwanted costume jewelry.

DO YOU LIKE TO BAKE? We need lots of goodies to sell during the bazaar, so please donate your favorite baked goods. Just bring the baked goods Friday morning (November 11th) and/or Saturday morning (November 12th) to the Holly House. Have the item(s) wrapped and labeled so we know what your delicious treats are called. We can't have enough of these items so please bake away!

WOULD YOU LIKE TO VOLUNTEER? We are looking for helpers to work morning or afternoon shifts, either Friday or Saturday in all departments. Complete the volunteer form that will be available later this month in the Sunday bulletin.



All helpers are treasured and are promised a great opportunity to share in fellowship as we help our church. For more information about being a helper or donating baked goods. Contact Donna King at 523-6091 for more information.

See You at the Holly Days Christmas Bazaar!



Thank You!

I would like to thank everyone for their prayers, cards, and support during my illness. It has meant a lot to me knowing that my church family cares.

Jane Amme



Deacons' Corner

by Mary Martinéz

A FallLook Back . . . And Forward

Catching Up with Our 2015 Deacons' Scholarship Awardees

This month, we are checking in with one of our former scholarship awardees, Amanda Tidmore, who has completed her first year in FAU's Commercial Music program. We are lucky to still have Amanda in the local area, and many of you who have children see her frequently as she continues on the staff of our church Nursery. While she works several part-time jobs, and even took courses this summer at FAU, she has managed to slip in time for volunteering in the community: she says that her faith has played an important role in her ongoing service at the Habitat for Humanity Restore Store. Amanda, who has been continuing to live at home while attending FAU, noted that getting up early and driving there in time to get a good parking space has been a challenge, as has the stress of exams in the college environment. She is grateful for the support she has gotten from friends, family, and her boyfriend, in managing the pressure. Apparently she has not been daunted by transitioning to college – her grandmother told me she got all A's in her very first semester. Amanda shared

with me that she sometimes had time to volunteer at Habitat for Humanity because she did so well on math quizzes that she did not have to attend class. Keep up the great work, Amanda!

One other note, one our 2015 grads, Carley Meeks, in a lovely "thank you" for her scholarship, told us that she will be saving her award to help cover her semester abroad – a wonderful way to grow and learn.

One of Our Signature Events: The Blessing of the Pets

No, this isn't a "non sequitur" – there is a strong connection between supporting our college youth and the upcoming Blessing of the Pets. This long-standing project of the Deacons, which this year will be held in the church Courtyard on Sunday, October 2nd at 4 p.m., makes a significant contribution to funding the scholarships we are able to offer our graduating seniors each year.

While this celebration is directly related to St. Francis of Assisi and his love for all of God's creatures, have you ever noticed that animals are everywhere in the Scriptures. They help to tell the story of the Bible all the way from creation to that donkey's cameo appearance on Palm Sunday (and I suppose after that, but I haven't researched it!). Animals give us a point of connection with people and

events and provide parables to which we can relate. They remind us of the completeness of God's created world and our responsibility for its stewardship.

In addition, the animals in our lives bring out our humanity because they often seem to experience some of the same emotions we do. They recognize our moods and needs, bringing us a special kind of comfort or enhancing the joy that we may be feeling when we step out into a beautiful spring morning or gather with friends and loved ones around a campfire. When we ask for a blessing for them, we are also acknowledging the blessings they bring to us and celebrating all the experiences they have shared with us.

Please join us for this very special event next month: bring your pets, bring your neighbors and their pets, bring friends you know who don't have a pet but love animals and love life! If your pet can't travel to us, bring a picture. Stuffed animals are also welcome! We will have a wonderful message from Rev. Garnett, individual blessing of the pets, and special pet goodies for purchase – which, along with your donations, help make our Deacons' Scholarship Fund possible. And don't forget that all pets must be on a leash or in a carrier or container.

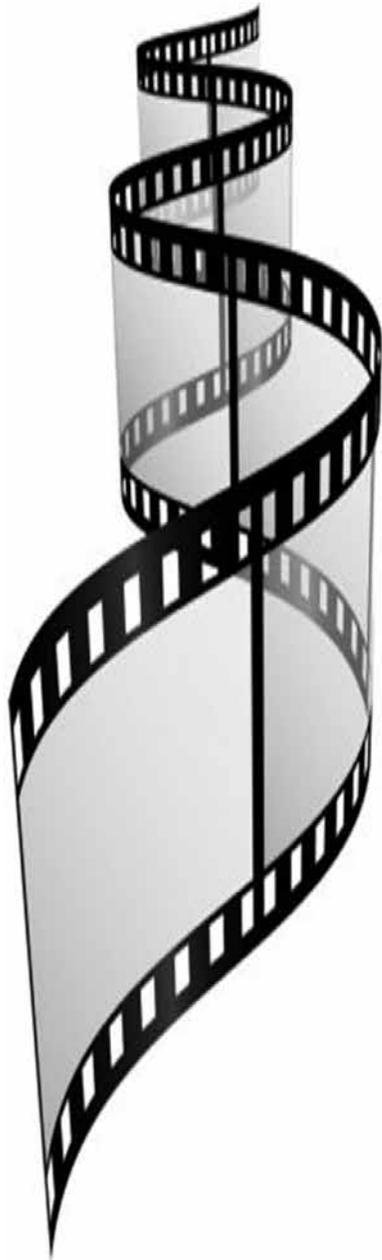


WORTH WATCHING

Ben-Hur (2016)



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



It was either a very bold or very stupid move to remake William Wyler's *Ben-Hur*. The sprawling, three-and-a-half hour adaptation of Lew Wallace's 1880 novel not only won a record eleven Academy Awards, not only featured Charlton Heston's most iconic performance, and not only dethroned *Gone With the Wind* (1939) as the quintessential big-budget Hollywood epic (at least until George Lucas and Steven Spielberg came to town), it has been hailed by many as one of the greatest films ever made. The climactic chariot scene alone entrenched itself as an immediately recognizable piece of American pop culture. You might as well remake *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) or *The Godfather* (1972).

Whether through inadequate marketing, a lack of interest, or blockbuster burn-out, the American public stayed away from Timur Bekmambetov's *Ben-Hur*. At the time of writing this, the film has been out internationally for almost two weeks yet still hasn't managed to recoup a quarter of its \$100 million budget. Analysts are already marking it down as one of the biggest flops of 2016.

But did it deserve to flop? The world didn't need another *Ben-Hur*, but that doesn't mean that another version couldn't come along with a new vision

and interpretation of the story. After all, the immortal 1959 version was no less than the third adaptation of the novel, the first two being silent films from 1907 and 1925.

The film's story goes like this: Judah Ben-Hur (Jack Huston) is a Jewish prince living in Roman-occupied Jerusalem with his adopted brother Messala (Toby Kebbell), a native Roman and grandson of one of the conspirators behind Julius Caesar's assassination. Determined to regain his family honor, Messala joins the Roman army and swiftly rises in the ranks. After a Zealot hiding in Judah's home tries to kill a Roman dignitary under his protection, Messala betrays Judah, blaming him for the attack. Accused of treason, his wife and family are imprisoned and he spends five years as a rower in a Roman slave ship. After escaping his ship in the midst of a naval battle, Judah is rescued by Sheik Ilderim (Morgan Freeman), a wealthy Nubian who teaches him how to race chariots. Judah defeats Messala in a deadly chariot race after discovering that his wife and family have become lepers during their internment. After encountering Jesus of Nazareth on the streets and witnessing his crucifixion, Judah reconciles with Messala. The rains accompanying the storm that announced Jesus' death washes the leprosy from Judah's family, making them clean once more.

continued on page 8

Ben-Hur (2016)

continued from page 7

Having seen the film, I have come to the blasphemous conclusion that I liked Bekmambetov's new version more than Wyler's. There are several reasons; let's begin with the most immediately apparent. Bekmambetov's film condenses the sweeping story into a tight two hours and gives it an emotional immediacy noticeably lacking in Wyler's version. In keeping with early Hollywood's obsession with grand spectacle, Wyler's film seems oddly detached from the story, pulling the camera back so the audience can soak in the expansive sets and legions of costumed extras. Much of the acting feels better suited for the stage than for the screen. But Bekmambetov keeps his camera close and intimate; there are relatively few long-distance shots of cities, battlefields, or chariot racing. Bekmambetov wants the audience to

understand the emotions of its hero: his confusion during his betrayal; his fear during the naval battle—almost the entire sequence is filmed from inside Judah's ship, giving us only occasional glances of the carnage through his tiny peephole; his terror during the chariot race. We don't just witness the film, we experience it as Judah does.

But the other reason why I prefer the new *Ben-Hur* is how it handles the inclusion of Jesus Christ. Wyler's *Ben-Hur* relegates Jesus to only two or three scenes; we never even see his face. The overall effect is that he was shoehorned in. But Jesus is a constant presence in Bekmambetov's *Ben-Hur*. We see him in the streets of Jerusalem before and after Judah's betrayal, preaching love and compassion as tools to fight Roman oppression. Roman officers

and politicians discuss him with disgust and fear as a revolutionary force potentially more powerful than a full army of armed Zealots. We see Judah's betrayal, Jesus' arrest, and his crucifixion. And there are little touches that bespeak his presence: in one scene where Judah returns to Jerusalem to speak with his wife, we see people in the streets joyously carrying palm fronds. But most importantly, Jesus has a thematic purpose. His sacrifice seems to symbolize the reconciliation denied Judah and Messala—indeed, it is after he dies that the two brothers forgive each other. His death signals the beginning of a new life, both for the human race and Judah's family. Unlike Wyler's *Ben-Hur*, Jesus isn't a supporting character: he's the crux of the film.



We Welcome to Our Membership . . .

Alan Beck

Jean Blonder

Mike Kessler

Miguel and Edna Koschil

Ursula Meyer

Marilyn Scrizzi

Carol Swezey

Jeannie Zbarsky

Carol-Anna Zolcinski



Welcome

World Communion Invitation

Sunday, October 2nd – 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 2nd, at 10 a.m. and know the feeling of what it is like to be one with Christians everywhere. ❖



Snapshots of Our College-Age Members

Since the day that he was baptized as an infant in this church, Dalton Lee Davis has literally grown up in the nurturing and caring environment of this great congregation. Throughout his childhood he received much guidance and love from everyone in the church and this involvement has had a very positive role to play in his spiritual and mental development.

Since his graduation in 2014 from Saint Andrew’s School, he has gone on to attend Bard College in Annandale-on-the-Hudson, New York where he has become an impact Lacrosse player for the school. Bard College is widely recognized as one of America’s top academic institutions and was voted as having the “The Best Classroom Experience”, by the Princeton Review magazine.



Dalton Lee Davis in Bard Black and Grey versus Skidmore.

Dalton is currently entering into his junior year and will be attending the Bard College’s Berlin campus next summer to study German as he prepares to potentially enter into the executive management trainee program in the auto industry upon graduation. He is passionate about the automotive industry and he is currently being mentored by church members Paul and Andrea Miller about the auto business. Just another example of First Presbyterian Church of Delray Beach playing a crucial role in Dalton’s life ! Wherever life takes him, he knows he will always have a spiritual home at this church. ❖

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.

Prayer Ministry Team

Oswald Chambers said, "Prayer does not fit us for the greater work; prayer is the greater work." Here at First Presbyterian Church of Delray Beach we believe this is true. We intend every ministry of the church to flourish in the rich soil of prayer. And since a praying church is made up of praying people, we want to encourage and equip our membership in the vital ministry of prayer.

The Prayer Ministry Team meets once a week, on Wednesdays. from 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. in the Christian Learning Center. These meetings are for the purpose of honoring prayer requests that come through our worship services or through the church office. Each request is handled with respect, confidentiality, and care. If a request includes a name and address, a card will be sent to confirm that prayer was offered during the week the request was received. You are invited to join this prayer ministry team simply by calling Sharon Koch (414-9165). Sharon will be happy to provide additional information about this ministry and welcome you to participate.