Christian Education This Fall

Beginning Sunday, September 9th, and continuing until we return to two worship services on November 4th, our Christian Education Programming will have the following schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Educational Hour Sunday School</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 a.m.</td>
<td>Birth through Kindergarten – Nursery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st through 4th Grades – CE Bldg. Room 203</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grades 5 and up (The Reason) – Youth House</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Young Adults and Families (Friends &amp; Fellowship) – The Parlor</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Worship Hour Sunday School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 a.m.</td>
<td>Birth through 3-years-old – Nursery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-School through Kindergarten (Bible Bunch) – CE Bldg. Room 113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st through 4th Grades – CE Bldg. Room 203</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All of these classes will continue through the change to two worship services on Sunday, November 4th, with the Educational Hour classes moving to 10 a.m. and the Worship Hour classes moving to 11 a.m. Sunday Forum will move to 10 a.m. with the rest of the Educational Hour classes.

*The Sunday Forum Adult Class will begin on Sunday, October 7th at 11 a.m. in the Christian Learning Center.

Sunday School is Gearing Up

by Jen Buce
Children’s Ministry Coordinator

Sunday school is a time for the children to grow in their faith. Our volunteers and teachers are so valuable to our programs as well as the curriculum we choose. As you know, it is very difficult to have a child sit for any long period of time without getting antsy and losing interest. We want Sunday school to be a time to fulfill spiritual needs and to have fun. We use many different techniques to help with this. We act out the Bible lessons, listen to music, play games, make arts and crafts, and role play.

As I was teaching the older children one Sunday, they were working on a connect-the-dot sheet that, once it was complete, exposed the animal most associated with Peace. As they were working on this, I started on our Bible story. I felt that I was losing their interest during the story. When I finished I began to ask questions about the Bible story. They had been listening and they got it! They understood Abigail’s role in keeping the peace by sending food to David as he and his men were on his way to destroy Nabal for refusing them any help.

Our children do soak up the lessons we teach them, even when we think they are not listening! It is such a rewarding experience to know that you can make an impact on a child’s life and what better way to do it than by spreading God’s word.

The new Sunday School year will begin on Sunday, September 9th. If you have an interest in volunteering for one Sunday a month with our children, please contact me at jenbuce@covad.net.

INSIDE...

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Spiritual formation is at the heart of the church’s mission – its whole purpose for existence. The church is not another social institution among other institutions or clubs in modern society. We are not free to establish a charter of our choosing. Our charge, as Christ’s Church, is given by Christ Himself: to make disciples, baptize them and teach these new disciples to obey His commands (Matthew 28: 19-20). Christian spiritual formation refers to the intentional process of growing in our relationship with God and becoming conformed to Christ. This is always a shared effort – intentional activity on our part and the work of the Holy Spirit in us.

As a part of my doctoral studies at Fuller Theological Seminary, I identified a basic formula for spiritual formation that has been found effective by persons in four churches in the Philadelphia area. This spiritual formation process intentionally corrects the misconception that we can become “Christlike” by our own strength and resolve. Though the old question, “What would Jesus do?” isn’t a bad question, it is insufficient alone to shape us in the character of Christ. Spiritual formation always includes the work of the Holy Spirit. Yet, for the Holy Spirit to work, we must place ourselves before God in regular, intentional periods of time, participate in an accountability small group and develop the skills and ease of sharing our faith in a natural, conversational manner.

The Basic Formula for Spiritual Formation:
- A Place Alone with God in Silence & Solitude
- A Place in a Community of a Small Group for Encouragement & Accountability
- A Place for Sharing Your Faith With Another

In these places, we encounter the risen Christ much the same as the disciples did following His resurrection. It will be in these places of “engagement with God” that we will experience in our lives the animating power of God that produces change into Christlikeness.

Many of you will recall that in my first sermon as your pastor I shared that it is the personal responsibility of each person to “self-feed” – that is, not to expect that you will be adequately nourished simply by showing-up for worship. During that service I recommended a resource, Discipleship Essentials: A Guide to Building Your Life in Christ by Greg Ogden. This book may be purchased on Amazon.com or other electronic booksellers. Purchase the book, find two or three others that will purchase their own copy and follow the guidance located in the book. I know of no finer resource for beginning a vibrant experience in spiritual formation. As you participate, you will be changed, and so will the church.
In July, we purchased a template for the church website (www.firstdelray.com) so that it could be maintained “in house”. I wish to extend a sincere thank you to Les Heilakka, our previous webmaster, for his ministry to this church for the last seven years.

The new website reflects our four areas of ministry: Connect, Grow, Serve, Care. In those sections, you will find information related to our programming and ministries.

The home page is updated by Monday morning to reflect the message and Scripture for the upcoming Sunday. By mid-week, the bulletin for the Sunday service is posted. You can access our worship service video streaming so that when you are ill or traveling, you won’t miss any of our services.

In the Resource section of the site, links to our Sunday services which are streamed online, Spire issues, Dr. Hood’s Heart and Soul Weekly Mediations, donations forms, and Long-Term Giving materials can be found, along with the link to Dr. Hood’s Blog.

In the Upcoming Events section, you will find the church calendar, along with a list of all of the special events and church programs. One of the nicest features is that you can now RSVP online and the appropriate person will be notified. This allows you, at your convenience, to let us know that you will be attending.

The site is smart phone ready. Therefore, you can access the site when away from your home computer.

In late July, Dr. Hood started his Blog. You can access his blog through the church website and read his postings. Once there, you can enter your email address and subscribe so that you will receive an email with the posts. This way, you won’t miss any of his messages.

Rev. Janklow had maintained our Facebook page for the three years that he was our Associate Pastor. Upon his departure, I have taken over the posts. In an attempt to have the page more accurately reflect all of the programming and activities of our church, I am widening the posts beyond our youth activities and Twenties and Thirties group. Search for First Presbyterian Church of Delray Beach and connect with us.

In the future, I envision the church’s website and social media to continue to grow and become more relevant and meaningful, not only to our church family but also to the wider community. Check out our website, subscribe to Dr. Hood’s blog and connect with us on Facebook.
As my summer comes to a close and Deacon meetings are beginning to resume, I’m starting to think about how truly blessed I am to have had such an incredible summer. Besides going to California to celebrate my grandparents’ fiftieth anniversary and going to Slidell Louisiana to do mission work with the Epworth Project, I got to participate in the Montreat Youth Conference (MYC) in Montreat North Carolina. The theme this year was being “Perfectly Imperfect.”

Throughout the week, our group of 18 youth and advisors would be lectured through sermons and mini sermons, called “keynotes”, about different relatable situations in which we are not perfect. We learned that what we say is perfect may not necessarily be just that. The Montreat leaders showed us to look at different perspectives and what we may think is ugly, unattractive and trash, in God’s eyes may be the most precious, delicate and beautiful thing. Another concept was to be broken before God and to be shaped into an image that He wants us to be, and not someone that somebody else wants us to be.

Personally, I struggle with that sometimes; just being myself. It’s hard not to listen to other people’s comments about us, and that causes a want for change from the person that you truly are. But in the end, God loves us, and no matter what, we are His children, and He had the love and compassion to give us life and the willpower to be ourselves.

During the week period that I spent in Montreat, I met some of the best people I have ever met before. This year, was my favorite small group of all time and our group discussions were absolutely incredible. The reason Montreat is so special is that although you are in a small group of around 30 people for a week, you get so close to one another and we open up like we never would with anyone else. Small groups are just an excuse to let everything out and have that feeling that you’re not the only one struggling and going through hard times. One of the people in my group felt comfortable enough to bring up the topic of his sexuality, and this person was afraid that they were going to go to hell because of their way of thinking. He had been struggling with this fear for a long time and had continued believing in God, and His teachings, anyway.

And that’s the thing about faith; you have to take risks like that. Although my friend may be sexually imperfect, think about this: Who is perfect? Who is normal? There is not one person on the face of this planet that can say they haven’t made a mistake or some type of wrongdoing. We are “perfectly imperfect” and just the way God made us, and we shouldn’t try to mess with God’s plan because He created us in an image of Himself, and we don’t want to distort that reflection with anything less than what He wants.

I’ll end on a quote that I saw in Montreat. “Life doesn’t have to be perfect to be wonderful.” Embrace life to its fullest, and just keep in mind that nothing you do is going to be spot-on perfect and we shouldn’t try for perfection. Try to be the best you can be and make God smile with the strength of your faith and your endurance to achieve the effort to make God grin from ear to ear.
World Communion Invitation

Sunday, October 7th – 10 a.m.

“We come to Christ’s Table aware of our human frailty and our sin. Our world has been shattered by selfish prejudice 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 7th, at 10 a.m. and know the feeling of what it is like to be one with Christians everywhere.

Pennies from Heaven

Help First Presbyterian Church of Delray Beach support the battle against hunger and poverty at home and away. This simple act of thanksgiving for what we have received is also a commitment to share with others in response to Jesus’ command, “You give them something to eat.”

On Sunday, September 9th, immediately following the worship service, come to Fellowship Hall to decorate your Pennies from Heaven collection can (soup can or larger). Each family will take home a can and collect 5 cents per family member per meal each day. At the end of the month, bring your can to church where we will collect your “Pennies from Heaven” during the worship service.

Exploring Church Membership

Do you want to explore your faith? Are you curious about First Presbyterian Church of Delray Beach and how it fits with you? Then we invite you to our next New Member Class of Sunday, September 30th at 11:30 a.m. in the Christian Learning Center, the two-story building immediately south of the driveway. Signs on Gleason Street that morning will direct you to the class.

This opportunity to explore membership will last approximately 90 minutes. Lunch for adults and children will be provided, along with childcare in Fellowship Hall.

Simply complete the registration form on our website (www.firstdelray.com in Upcoming Events) or notify Nancy Fine (276-6338, ext. 10 or nancyfine@covad.net) so that we can plan accordingly.
What?
Guided Sermon Study Sheet

Why?
Many people today fail to realize that to have Christ shaped in us requires intentional effort. Spiritual formation into the character of Christ is a shared work of God, through the Holy Spirit, and intentional activity on our part.

Why this resource?
The singular greatest resource available for growth into the character of Christ is the Holy Bible. Regular reading and application of the Bible will be the most important activity you will ever do to grow as a man or woman of God. However, having others come alongside to offer understanding and fresh insight into how to apply the Bible to your life has always been valued – even in the days of the Old and New Testament.

Chosen carefully, great sermons by respected and trusted teachers and preachers of the Christian faith provide the opportunity to be “mentored” in your reading and understanding of the Bible. This Guided Sermon Study Sheet structures your time with the Bible in such a way that your reading and application of God’s Word will be more thoughtful and intentional in its application to life. Simply, this resource seeks to engage you more deeply with the Bible.

How much time will this take?
Thoughtful and intentional use of this resource should take no less than 1 hour for most people. Rushing through this resource minimizes its usefulness. Of course, each person will decide how many sermons will be studied in each week. A healthy plan of spiritual growth will include at least one sermon a week.

Where do I begin
– what sermon collections should I purchase?
Care should always be taken to select sermons from trusted preachers and teachers in the Christian faith. There is much available that is unhelpful – even potentially dangerous to a healthy faith. In doubt, ask your pastor for suggestions. I suggest that you begin with these collections, available from Amazon.com and other online retailers:

“And God Spoke to Abraham: Preaching from the Old Testament” by Fleming Rutledge

“The Collected Sermons of Fred B. Craddock” by Fred B. Craddock

Are there other considerations?
Yes. For maximum benefit, schedule a regular time of one hour each week. Decide now that you will not do this exercise “when I have a free moment.” Spiritual growth is too important to leave to chance. Additionally, think through where you will do this. This should be a place free of interruptions and distracting noises.

What is the process?
Begin with a simple prayer: “God bless this time alone with You, Your Word and this teaching (the sermon). Open my mind and heart to a fresh encounter with You and guide me to greater obedience in my life today. Amen.” Open your Bible to the passage noted at the beginning of the sermon. Read that passage. You may want to read the entire paragraph in the Bible where the passage is located. Read one sermon, selected by you from suggested books below. Read carefully, thoughtfully and at a pace that is best for you. Don’t rush through the reading or skim read. Then take the Guided Sermon Study Sheet and work carefully back through the sermon answering each question. Conclude the hour with this prayer: “Thank You, Father for this time with You today. Amen.”

What?
Guided Sermon Study Sheet

Sermon Title: ________________________________  Text: _____________________________
(Book of the Bible, chapter, verse or verses)

Author: _____________________________________

REFLECT:

1. Fresh discovery or insight on this biblical passage this sermon presented.
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

2. Illustration or image that I found most compelling or helpful.
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

3. The purpose of the sermon or contemporary issue that is addressed. The “so what?”.
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

4. Questions I have.
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

RESPOND:

1. Insight from the sermon I will apply to my life or promise that helps in my Christian journey.
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

2. One specific act I intend to take, an attitude to change, a person to see, or a prayer to pray.
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
Celebration of Eternal Life…

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

Ruth Glesmann – July 9, 2012
Haven Groening – July 10, 2012

We Welcome to Our Membership . . .
July 22, 2012
Amalie Ash
Robert Cesaria
Jenny Cesaria
August 26, 2012
Robert Buddy
Robert Detwiller
Paula Detwiller
Grace Hood
Kelly LeFaivre

Haven Groening – July 10, 2012

Dance the Night Away
Saturday, September 29th!

The Christian Education and Senior Committees have teamed up to co-sponsor a congregational night of fellowship that is sure to delight not only your taste buds with a delicious potluck dinner, but also your toes with a “Dancing with the Stars” evening event that will include a dance instructor and a “no-stress” dance competition.

So dust off your recipe books and your dancing shoes, find a partner or simply come and be prepared to have some good old fashioned fun.

• RSVP on our website (www.firstdelray.com under Upcoming Events) or with Paula Hare by phone at 276-6338 ex. 23, by Tuesday, September 25th.
• Let us know what you would like to bring for your potluck contribution.
• Watch the Premiere of the 15th Season of Dancing with the Stars on Monday, September 24th on ABC at 8 p.m. so that we have lots to talk about on the 29th.
• For more detailed information about the Dancing with the Stars Season Opener, go to:  http://beta.abc.go.com/shows/dancing-with-the-stars.
• Attire: Casual but you won’t be turned away if you wear a tux or elegant dress.
• Childcare provided.
• Show up at 5:30 p.m. on Saturday, September 29th in Fellowship Hall. No departure time has been set as it is rumored that some of you can dance all night.
• Most of all, come for the fellowship, meet new people and have fun.

See you there! ✿

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). ✿
Church Improvement

by Barbara Vanderkay

There IS light at the end of the tunnel! The roof is now on the new Holly House, the walls will soon surround our longed-for work areas and we can anticipate the November Holly Days Bazaar with enthusiasm unmixed with trepidation.

We are already offering our famous mango jam and chutney as well as watermelon pickles and zucchini relish, after church services in the Courtyard outside Fellowship Hall. We suggest you get yours soon as we have often sold out.

We expect to have our new home in very good shape by the middle of September, ready for the exciting fun of getting settled. Join us in keeping tabs on the new Holly House as it steadily moves toward completion. And remember the Coffee Klatches, the first and third Tuesdays at 9:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall.

Actively Change Tomorrow

A.C.T. (Actively Change Tomorrow) Saturdays are volunteer opportunities sponsored by the Mission Outreach Committee, held on the third Saturday of the month. They need 15-20 volunteers for each event. The next event will be on Saturday, September 15th at the Florence Fuller Center in Boca Raton. If you would like to register to volunteer, you may do so on our website (www.firstdelray.com in Upcoming Events) or contact Mission Outreach Co-chair, Jeanne Heavilin (jheavilin@bellsouth.net or 901-8714) or Emily Schreck (eschreck3@gmail.com).
In July, I had the wonderful opportunity to attend the biannual convention of the American Guild of Organists, which was held in Nashville, Tennessee. The Guild picks different cities to host these conventions. In 2010, the convention was in Washington D.C., and in 2014, the convention will be in Boston.

At the convention, I was truly inspired after hearing concerts by world-renown organists and choirs that were presented in various churches throughout Nashville. Although known for its country music, Nashville has an impressive array of world-class pipe organs, as well as a superb symphony orchestra. The final concert combined the Nashville Symphony and two great organists, Nathan Laube and Todd Wilson, in a performance of works for orchestra, organ solo, and two concertos for organ and orchestra. The concert was held in Nashville’s symphony hall and featured a new pipe organ built by the Schoenstein Organ Company.

Most music publishers attend these conventions and I spent many hours each day looking through and purchasing new music for the piano, organ, and choir. There are also many music reading sessions where attendees form a choir and sing through choral anthems. Over the next two years, when the choir does a new anthem, it most likely was discovered as a result of my music hunt in Nashville.

A great joy at these conventions is seeing people you know, meeting old friends, and making new friends. At this convention, I saw this church’s former music team, Steven and Susan Talley. They were happy to see me and were glad to hear that I am trying my best to provide the best music here at First Presbyterian Church. I also saw and heard several organists who were featured at this church at the annual emerging artist concert heard in October.

This year the convention was held during the week of July 4th. It was quite a treat to see the Nashville fireworks, which is supposedly the third largest display in the country. The fireworks were synchronized to live music played by the Nashville Symphony.

I have returned from the convention with inspiration and renewed vigor. I can’t wait for the congregation to hear some of the music I found in Nashville. I look forward to the next convention in Boston in 2014.
Can a Good Christian Say “NO”?

“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, Who is in you, Whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.” 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NIV)

Last month’s article was about how the one constant in life is change; that all change, whether “good” or “bad,” creates stress, that each of these stressful events has a “stress value” and that the impact of these individual stressful events is cumulative over time. The stressors we talked about were the normal events we encounter in life, events which are generally uninvited and not of our own making. This month, let’s take a look at a different kind of stress; the stress we bring upon ourselves in our attempt to be “a good Christian.”

We all know that salvation is not to be earned, but is rather a gift of God’s grace. However, at the same time, we also recognize that God has given each of us special gifts and that these gifts are to be used in service to others. Identifying our personal gifts and spending time developing them are ways we create a healthy sense of self worth. Helping to fix up a home in the community, supporting the Caring Kitchen, singing in the choir, setting up for the Rummage Sale, or serving as a Deacon or Elder are all ways that we can use our “time and talents” in service to our church. Giving a sick friend a ride to the doctor, remembering a birthday, helping a neighbor do some work around his yard, becoming active in a civic organization, or volunteering at the hospital are ways that we can use these talents in the broader community. All of these activities can be rewarding, but they can also be hazardous to our health.

Each of us is a spiritual being that is going through a physical experience and the special talents we discover in ourselves are really aspects of our spiritual selves. While the spiritual part of us is infinite and eternal, our physical body, that “temple of the Holy Spirit,” is anything but. Here is our dilemma: as magnificent as our spiritual gifts may be, our ability to use them in service to others is limited by the condition of our physical body. So what to do?

Some thoughts:

Before we can love anyone else, we must first love ourselves. We cannot give anything we don’t have. Take some time to love yourself, to give love and to accept love from others. Next, we need to take care of our body as if it were a temple, because that is what it is. Everything from proper diet, to exercise, to taking our medications, to relaxing and just having some fun is important. Perhaps even more important is not over-committing to requests for our time and talents because we haven’t learned how to say “No.” This is like trying to carry 10 pounds of stuff in a 5 pound bag, it just doesn’t work. The result is that we can’t effectively use our God-given talents because our body can’t handle the load. In learning to say “No” we are both accepting and respecting our physical limitations. We are also honoring God because we are being good stewards of both His temple and the special gifts He has given us. Saying “No” does not mean that we are not good Christians. Saying “No” to a commitment our physical body can’t handle really means that we are saying “Yes” to our stewardship commitment to God.
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@covad.net.

Sunday Morning Worship Services

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

Church School
Beginning September 9, 2012
Adult Church School 9 a.m.
Education Hour Sunday School 9 a.m.
Worship Hour Sunday School 10 a.m.

Youth Fellowship 5 p.m.

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.