



CAN YOU HELP?

by Jeanne Heavilin,

Chair, Mission Outreach Committee

For the past twenty years, the Caring Kitchen, operated by CROS (Christians Reaching Out to Society) Ministries, has been feeding the hungry on N.W. 8th Avenue in Delray Beach. It currently serves over 8,100 meals each month to local residents who have no place else to eat.

Our congregation has been a long-time partner of CROS Ministries and a number of our members volunteer at the Caring Kitchen. CROS now needs to relocate this program. If you know of an appropriate location, preferably in Delray Beach, please contact the church office and please pray for this much needed program to continue serving the community.

The Mission Outreach Committee



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From My Heart to Yours

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

Senior Pastor



BLESS THE BROKEN ROAD

“During the journey, as he approached Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven encircled him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice asking him, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you harassing me?’ Saul asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ ‘I am Jesus, whom you are harassing,’ came the reply.”

Acts 9:3-5 (Common English Bible)

Originally recorded by the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band on their 1994 album, Acoustic, the song, *Bless the Broken Road*, has since been recorded by multiple artist including Melodie Crittenden, Selah, Jamie Slocum, and Carrie Underwood. The highest-charting rendition is by the country music group, Rascal Flatts, who released the song in November, 2004 winning a Grammy Award for Best Country Song. Here is a moving message that describes how the process of getting over a past relationship can eventually lead to a deeper love. Every lost love is described as a star, which, collectively, all point the way to the present love: “Every long lost dream led me to where you are. Others who broke my heart they were like Northern stars, pointing me on my way into your loving arms.”

Imagine a similar song was sung in the heart of the apostle Paul, a song that remained there until he took his last breath – a song of discovering, on the Road to Damascus, his one true love, Jesus Christ. In the Book of Acts, Paul self-identifies his love for God and his disdain for those who would corrupt the faith as he understood it. Chief among those Paul hated were followers of Jesus. With authority from the highest level of the Jewish faith, Paul traveled extensively, arresting “persons who belong to the Way (Christians)” and placing them in prison. Such was Paul’s passionate hate for Christians we may assume that his faith was one of considerable “brokenness” as he traveled one road after another, spewing out murderous threats against the Lord’s followers.

During one of his campaigns to eradicate the “Christian menace,” Saul traveled a road to Damascus where “suddenly a light from heaven encircled him.” That road would become the place where Saul’s confidence in his own righteousness would be shattered. Falling to the ground, a voice thunders from heaven, asking Saul why he was following a road of hatred – a hatred of such intensity it aroused fear among the people. “Who are you, Lord?” asks Saul, whose name would become Paul. The reply would forever change Saul, both his name and the direction of his life. The “Northern star” of his passionate Jewish faith directed Saul down a road that was chosen by God to point him into the loving arms of Jesus.

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Church Staff

W. Douglas Hood, Jr., D.Min.
Senior Pastor

Kernie Kostrub, M.Div.
Associate for Pastoral Care

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

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

Grace Cameron Hood, B.C.E.
Director of Children and Family Ministry

Ben Sorensen, D.Min.
Director of Youth, College and Young Adult Ministry

Nancy Fine, CA
Church Administrator

Christine Davis Mindi Cole
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

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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.

N U R T U R E
F A I T H
with
Dr. W. Douglas Hood, Jr.

Each month, this page of our newsmagazine is dedicated to providing resources for nourishing faith and advancing each of us in our spiritual progress. This month I welcome the opportunity to provide a prayer written by The Reverend Leo S. Thorne, Ph.D. Dr. Thorne recently retired as the Associate General Secretary for Mission Resource Development of the American Baptist Churches USA and is the editor of the book, Prayers from Riverside (Pilgrim Press). This prayer was written, at my request, for this edition of The Spire.

Blessed God, thank you for being the generous God of all the seasons of our restless lives, ever present, ever loving, ever inviting us to be more than we think we can be by ourselves. You have made us for yourself, faithful God, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you. Give us, we pray, the grace to find our deepest and most satisfying rest in you.

As we make our way through these hot and fun-filled days of this summer season, cause us to “fall in love” again with prayer, not with just the word but with the very act of prayer itself. Help us to make time to pray – often. Help us to pray and give thanks in our joys and sorrows, in our laughter and tears, and in our defeats and successes. Help us to pray fervently for the sick and the lonely and the lost among us. Help us to pray for our pastors and for persons who sit in the pews around us. Help us to pray for our Session and for all our lay leaders, and for all our beloved church and family members scattered far and wide.

Most of all, Merciful God, bosom friend and Savior of us all, keep nudging us to look inward and outward. We turn inward to see ourselves just as you see us, warts and all. Yet, you love each one of us, regardless of our status in life, as if there was no one else in this wide world. How empowering and humbling is that! We turn our hearts outward to shine as Christ-lit sparks, beacons of hope and justice in our increasingly dark world. May your Holy Spirit who hovered over the vast expanse of this universe at creation continue to move upon our waiting hearts, to enflame us to seek out and attend to the needs of our broken humanity drifting so aimlessly without you in Delray Beach and beyond.

Thank you, holy God, that you have promised never to leave us alone, not for one second, that your abiding presence will be with us in all the changing scenes of our lives. Give us even the tininess of mustard seed faith to trust in that promise guaranteed by the death and resurrection of your blessed Son, who sits now at your right hand as a merciful and faithful High Priest, without sleep, without slumber interceding for us. This promise we have as an anchor of the soul, steadfast and sure.

So we make this prayer in faith believing and in the strong and mighty name of Jesus Christ, whose earthly life and teachings inspire us to also keep looking upward in all seasons for his glorious return. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. Amen.





A Word from Kernie Kostrub, Associate for Pastoral Care

*by Rev. Kernie Kostrub,
Associate for Pastoral Care*

In the June issue of *The Spire*, I wrote about the role of Deacons as one important level of pastoral care provided by our church. In today's article, we focus on another level of care offered by our Stephen Ministry Program.

Dick Walgrove, one of our Stephen's Ministers, writes about his perspective on the Stephen's Ministry: Stephen Ministry began in 1975 when Rev. Kenneth C. Haugh, Ph.D., a pastor and clinical psychologist trained nine members of his congregation to be Stephen Ministers. They assisted him in providing Christian care and support to people in the congregation and community who were experiencing difficulties in their lives.

The name Stephen comes from St. Stephen who was the first layperson commissioned by the Apostles to provide caring ministry to those in need. (Acts 6) Since that time more than twelve thousand (12,000) congregations have enrolled in the Stephen Ministry Program. They represent 177 Christian denominations in all 50 states, 10 Canadian provinces, and 29 other countries. More than 70,000 pastors and laypeople have been trained as Stephen Ministry leaders who in turn have trained more than 600,000 congregation members to be Stephen Ministers. Since 1975, Stephen Ministers have provided Christian care to more than one and a half million people in one-to-one caring relationships and have also used their care-giving skills to touch the lives of millions more in other ways.

Stephen Ministry is a confidential care giving ministry with a roll of listening and caring not counseling or advising. The personal conversations are not discussed with anyone, including other Stephen Ministers.

Our church presently has seventeen active Stephen Ministers with more than a thousand hours of instruction in care-giving skills. If you are going through a difficult period in your life over the loss of a spouse or family member, a serious illness, or other problems and are ready for this kind of relationship, contact Rev. Kernie Kostrub (276-6338, ext. 18 or kerniekostrub@firstdelray.com) who will put you in touch with one of our Stephen Ministers.



From My Heart to Yours

Continued from page 2

This much I know is true," announces the song, "That God blessed the broken road that led me straight to you." For years upon years, Saul pursued a passionate love for his God, a love that was misdirected. Saul was lost, yet he kept pushing through, unaware that God was gathering all the brokenness of Saul's life for a grand purpose. "I'd like to have the time I lost and give it back to you," sounds the second stanza. We hear this in Paul's writings in the New Testament, Paul regarded everything before Jesus as of no value. Yet, "It's all part of a grander plan that is coming true." The Road to Damascus would become Saul's "broken road" where everything would now change. God blessed that broken road and led Saul straight to Jesus. God will do the same for us. ❖

Thank You!

by Nancy Fine,
Church Administrator

I would like to thank the congregation for the many notes and prayers of support which I received after the death of my mother. Over the years, my mother and I would often pray together during our evening telephone calls for members of the church. Often, she would ask me how "so and so" was doing. She once mentioned to me that she felt that she was a long-distance member. During this time, it was a blessing to me to know that I was surrounded by the love and support of my church family. Thank you.



We Welcome to Our Membership

Pamela Kent-Balasco

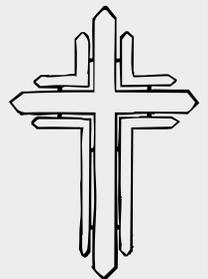


Celebration of Eternal Life...

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

– Doug Goldsmith –
June 4, 2017

– Elsie Young –
June 6, 2017



Session Report

The Session met during May and June to receive new members and approve baptisms.



Deacons' Corner

by Mary Martínéz

Reflections on (Re)Building God's House – In Each of Us!

This summer, those of us who are still in Florida are constantly made aware of the construction project taking place at our church property – closed parking lots; a Narthex with one entrance, a temporary wall, and no restrooms; a new configuration for our audio-video booth; and for the Deacons, a new temporary room next to the choir loft. The changes that have taken place have often been startling, like when we came one Sunday to find all the yellow houses knocked down, or the old parking lot completely excavated. It's a bit unsettling!

This major renovation got me thinking about how God works in our lives – if we will let him – refashioning us into splendid spiritual houses in which he can dwell. I was drawn back to the writings of C.S. Lewis, who expresses this process so perfectly in his book, *Mere Christianity*. He says:

“Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps, you can understand what He is doing. He is getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on; you knew that those jobs needed doing and so you are not surprised. But presently He starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make any sense. What on earth is He up to? The explanation is that He is building quite a different house from the one you thought of - throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards. You thought you were being made into a decent little cottage: but He is building a palace. He intends to come and live in it Himself.”

We might think of that initial house repair as akin to the first phase of construction during our current church building project: renovating the Christian Education building. When we had the windows replaced, some new flooring put down, and the restrooms spruced up, it still felt familiar. There were no radical changes that made us nervous about how it might turn out. It may be a similar scenario when we start making our faith a larger part of our lives. We come to church, we make new kinds of friends, and we begin to feel more grounded, even comfortable. While it's not the same for everyone, when we first decide to invite Christ into our lives, the changes may be of a gradual nature. Perhaps this is because we only let him get his foot in the door, not come in for an extended stay and start redesigning where the walls will be!

We may not realize, when we begin, that the small changes are only the beginning. C.S. Lewis's description of how God completely transforms us, while a bit scary, is awe inspiring. Lewis says God wants to make us into palaces. What a glorious thought, and how encouraging to realize that God has that kind of power to change our lives. But we must sign off on the construction contract. And, keeping the analogy going with an example from Habitat for Humanity, if we don't agree to help with the building, all the dramatic changes can't go forward. It's part of the deal.

Lewis also alludes to the fact that sometimes the reconstruction (our spiritual growth) may be painful. It's not necessarily all forward progress. If you ever watch those renovation shows on the HG channel, you know that they always run into unexpected problems, like mold in the walls or the need to completely rewire the whole house. We often don't recognize how deep the changes will need to be when we start following Christ. If we sign on for the complete renovation, there will be times of struggle as well as joy. But just like in those TV programs, if we push onward, with God's help, it all comes out looking amazingly beautiful – often unrecognizable.

The critical thing is sticking with God's plan – following the blueprint that is laid out for us in the Bible and that Dr. Hood reminds us of each Sunday. Read God's word, pray, strengthen ourselves through fellowship with our Christian brothers and sisters, and look for ways to do Christ's work in the world.

So, this summer and into the fall, as we see the new portico going up, parking lots being paved, and new landscaping being planted, let's remember the inner transformation that God seeks to make within each of us. Let's let him in and see what wondrous changes he can make!

Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it . . . Psalm 127:1



Help!

By Linda Prior

Holly House called. Ed Jessell responded. He formed a team to paint the six sets of shelves plus other incidentals in the Holly House. The men are Pat Zimmerman, Bill Amme, John McAnallen, Ben Tidwell, Tony Golovan, and David Lewis. They repaired the shelves and put sliders under them and the heavy tables so they can be moved more easily.



Great work team! The Holly House looks much brighter with the shelves matching the décor of the rest of the building.

Ed is there when Holly House calls. Ed, “We have Christmas trees that need pots.” Ed sinks them in plaster of paris so that they are stable. Ed, “We have a pattern for wooden Christmas trees. Will you make them to sell at the Christmas Bazaar?” Ed made ten trees and they all sold.

A big thank you to Ed Jessell and his team. When Holly House needs help, we can depend on Ed. ❖



Church Improvement

by Eileen Robinson



Holly House had a great vacation time during the first two weeks of July. Now, the Holly House is busy with new and old holiday projects.

We had two wonderful demonstrations during the past few months. One for bead design and the second for making Christmas tree skirts. Some of the “Beads Gone Wild” designs are available to view and buy any Tuesday or Thursday morning in the Holly House.



In August, Holly House is featuring a demo that you can participate in for making earrings. It will be on Tuesday, August 15th. Please come at 10 a.m. The class will last between 30 to 40 minutes. Let Cindy or Marilyn know if you plan to attend.



Everyone is invited to join in the fun at Holly House any Tuesday or Thursday morning from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Our meetings are informal, open to new and old Presbyterian women and their friends.

Holly House continues to be on the look out for **unwanted jewelry** – please drop off any items in jewelry you no longer need. The jewelry group cleans, sorts and prices the jewelry for the Bazaar.

We are also looking for any unique seashell donations for our many coastal designs we are working on.

Cindy (374-8707) or Marilyn (274-0778) will be happy to answer your questions about Holly House. We look forward to seeing you!





Faith and Fun for Families and Children

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



VBS 2017 Hero Central!

June was a busy month! Vacation Bible School was a success as the theme was all about how God has called us all to be Heroes! The chant was Heroes have Heart, Courage, Wisdom, Hope and Power! Not only did we hear about some Bible heroes such as David and Abigail, we also had a chance to meet heroes from the community. We heard from K9 Units, the Fire Department, Patrol Officers, Civil Servants, and Military Heroes! It was exciting to see how the children and volunteers all came together and experience God in a fun and powerful way. Many thanks go to all the volunteers who made the week possible.



Summer Sunday School will continue with an array of special events throughout July and August. Several special notes... July 30th will be a Scavenger Hunt throughout the campus with Head Custodian, Aaron Strippel. On August 13th, the children will be hosting Punch on the Patio. Be sure to make time for all of the special Sunday School Events!



WONDER WOMAN



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



You wouldn't think that Patty Jenkin's *Wonder Woman*, a film where an immortal super-heroine flips, kicks, punches, and brawls her way across Europe to end World War One would be one of the most theologically meaningful films of 2017. After all, the film is the fourth entry in the DC Extended Universe, a franchise involving planet-destroying aliens, old men who dress like small winged mammals to fight crime, and rag-tag teams of super-villains who do battle with sorceresses. But *Wonder Woman* is a film of many surprises, the least of which being that it's easily the best superhero film since Christopher Nolan's *The Dark Knight* (2008). While most superhero films are trapped in a cinematic arms race to see who can up the stakes, violence, and body count the highest, *Wonder Woman* seems to almost take the genre in the opposite direction, favoring character development and philosophy over action and spectacle (there are arguably only 3-5 action sequences in the whole film). Chief among all of these

considerations is a simple question: is humanity worth it?

The film follows Diana (Gal Gadot), princess of the Amazons, a race of warrior women created by Zeus tasked with protecting the world from Ares, the god of war. After Captain Steve Trevor (Chris Pine), an American spy working for the Allies, crash lands on their hidden island of Themyscira and regals them with stories of World War One, Diana decides that Ares has finally returned from the age of myth to wreak havoc across mankind. She teams up with Trevor and the two travel to the Western Front in Belgium, seeking Erich Ludendorff (Danny Huston), a ruthless German general developing a horrific new gas that can eat through gas masks. If he succeeds, millions will die on both sides. Convinced that Ludendorff is really Ares in disguise, Diana tells Trevor that if she kills him, mankind will be freed of his corrupting influence, immediately ending the war.

At least, that's what she believes. Now, I refuse to go into spoilers: everyone deserves to experience the twists, turns, and

surprises in the film's third act for themselves. But in summary, Diana becomes disillusioned with humanity. She begins to wonder if they're worth saving, if they're worth her protection. What does she owe them? She's an immortal demigoddess. She could turn her back on humanity and leave them to their own destructive devices and it wouldn't effect her in the least. Mankind doesn't deserve Wonder Woman.

But that's the point, Trevor reasons. In one of the best scenes in the film, he tells her: "It's not what you deserve: it's what you believe in." Yes, there is great evil in mankind. Yes, mankind is beyond redeeming itself by its own power. But there is still good deep down inside them. There are still men and women willing to fight and die for what they know is right. And it's that goodness, that potential that's worth fighting for. Mankind will never be perfect. But maybe with a hero, maybe with a savior, we can find our way at last. But only if we listen, only if we stop fighting long enough to look up into the sky and listen for the word of God. Or in the case of *Wonder Woman*: the gods.



Youth Mission Trip Was A Success

Thirteen youth, young adults, and chaperons loaded up four vehicles on Thursday, July 13th, and made the 4½ hour drive to Key West. Their goal was to spruce up the exterior yard and youth room at Trinity Presbyterian Church as well as feed the homeless. Thank you to the congregation for your support of the youth program which provides these young adults with memories that they will have their entire lives. ❖



Thank You!

by Jeanne Heavilin,

Chair, Mission Outreach Committee

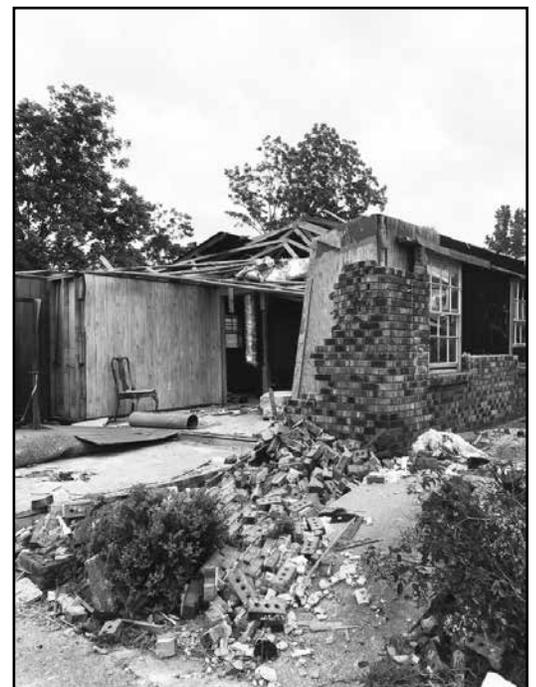
Thanks to your generous support of One Great Hour of Sharing in April, R3SM (Rebuild, Recover and Restore Southern Mississippi), partnering with Westminster Presbyterian Church in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, is continuing to rebuild and restore homes damaged or destroyed in the February tornado that hit that community.

We were able to send \$6,200 to Westminster Presbyterian to help R3SM continue their efforts to restore homes like this.

At the end of July, R3SM plans to begin the first new build since the Tornado. An elderly woman and her adult son lost their home and will be able to have a new home rebuilt.

Thank you again for sharing what you have to those in need!

The Mission Outreach Committee. ❖



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 is taking a summer break. However, prayer requests that come through our worship services or through the church office are still distributed by the church office to the prayer ministry team for individual prayer.

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.