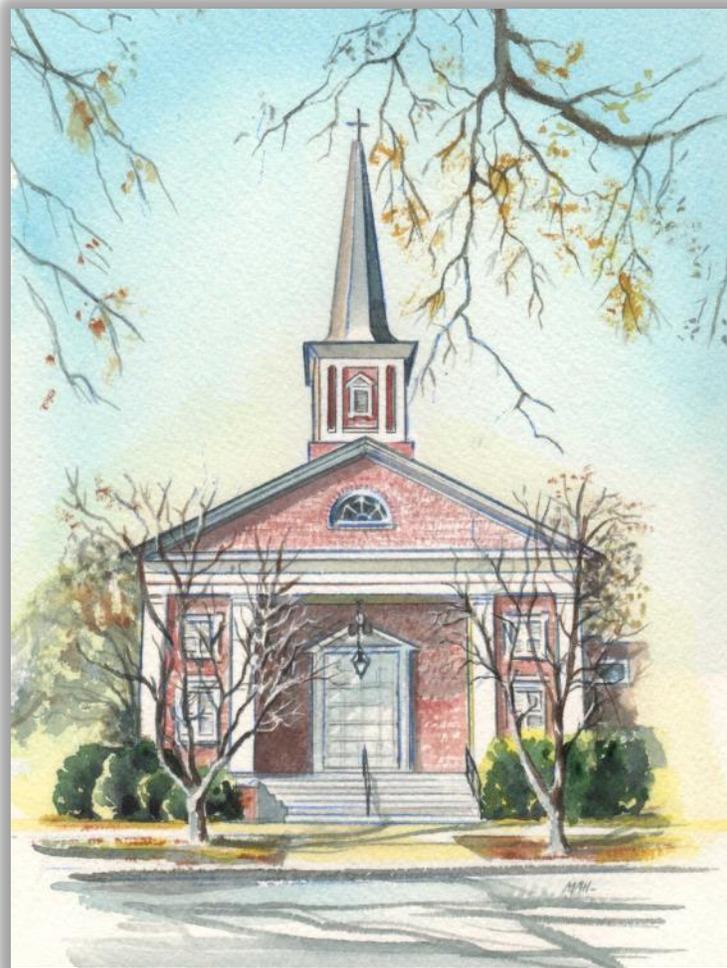


First Sunday in Lent

March 1, 2020



Historic First Presbyterian Church Decatur, Alabama Est. 1853

THE REV. RICHARD H. BROOKS, PASTOR

*Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ,
who love God, love one another, and serve the world.*

THE SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

Welcome to all who come to worship God

Welcome & Prelude

INTROIT

Blessed Be the Name

O for a thousand tongues to sing: Blessed be the name of the Lord!

The glories of my God and King: Blessed be the name of the Lord!

Blessed be the name, blessed be the name; Blessed be the name of the Lord!

Blessed be the name, blessed be the name; Blessed be the name of the Lord!

GATHERING OF GOD'S PEOPLE

CALL TO WORSHIP

1662 Book of Common Prayer

Leader: *Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open... all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord.*

And all God's people said:

People: Let us worship the God of our salvation!

† HYMN of PRAISE

God of Grace and God of Glory

#420

† PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Revelation 3:20

Gracious God, whose mercy is higher than the heavens, wider than our wanderings, and deeper than all sin: Forgive our folly and excess, our coldness to human sorrow, our envy of those who prosper, and our passions for the things of the moment. Forgive our indifference to those treasures of the spirit, which are life and peace. Forgive our neglect of your wise and gracious laws, which offer guidance and direction. So change our hearts and turn our desires to your way that we may do that which you command, and with strength and resolution walk in uprightness and with charity serve others. We seek forgiveness and mercy in the name of Jesus, the Christ, even as we offer our silent confessions... Amen.

† ASSURANCE of PARDON

I John 1:8-9

Leader: Friends, believe the Good News of the Gospel!

People: In Jesus Christ we are Forgiven!

† GLORIA PATRI & SHARING the PEACE of CHRIST

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. A-men. Amen.

MUSIC of PREPARATION

What a Friend

Choir

THE LORD'S DAY:

From its beginning, the Christian Church has gathered on the first day of the week to hear the scriptures proclaimed and celebrate the Lord's Supper. This day has significance as it was "the first day of the week, following the Sabbath" when Jesus' followers discovered the empty tomb and met the risen Lord. The Lord's Day, therefore, is the very center of the church calendar and the lives of those following Jesus as "the way of truth and life."

CONFESSION & PARDON:

Scripture calls people to confess the reality of sin in personal and corporate life. Confession is an acknowledgment of unworthiness, except by God's grace and love. Reclaiming God's forgiveness in scripture, people can let go of past failures and claim renewal in Christ Jesus. Having been reconciled in relationship to God, people are invited to share renewal in expressing forgiveness, acceptance, love, and unity to others in "the peace of Christ."

NOTES:

† *Those who are able, please stand.*

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

SCRIPTURE

II Corinthians 5

ANTHEM

Thanks Be to God

Choir

HOMILY

“Happiness to You”

Rev. Richard Brooks

COMMUNION HYMN

Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart #326

HOLY COMMUNION with the Great Thanksgiving

See Insert

SENDING OF GOD'S PEOPLE

OFFERTORY

Deuteronomy 16:16-17

† DOXOLOGY

† AFFIRMATION of FAITH

The Apostle's Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord. Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

† HYMN of COMMITMENT

My Faith Looks Up to Thee

#383

† BENEDICTION

II Thessalonians 2:16-17

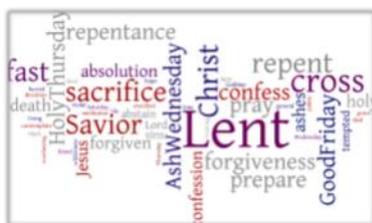
Wherever we are, God has placed us there. Wherever we go, God will lead us there. God has a purpose for our lives, from our going out and our coming in, now and forever. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

† CHORAL RESPONSE

Choir and Congregation

The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord lift His countenance upon you, and give you peace, and give you peace; The lord make His face to shine upon you, and be gracious, and be gracious; The Lord be gracious, gracious unto you. Amen.

Postlude



† *Those who are able, please stand.*

SCRIPTURE & SERMON:

The Bible is a collection of books written over 1,000 of years and preserved as Holy Scripture. Scripture is proclaimed as the community of faith seeks to hear God's Word speak to the daily life and current world events. The God who acted in biblical history acts today. Through the Holy Spirit, God speaks to those who open to hearing and seeing. The proclamation of God's Word invites a response of faith through prayer, song, an affirmation of faith, prayer, and offering.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH:

The people respond to the proclamation of the Word by affirming their faith. Creeds seasoned by the historical church since 325 A.D. express the faith of the church. The Apostles' Creed is a statement of core Christian beliefs developed initially as a baptismal rite in the early church. Its term "catholic" refers to the wholeness of the universal church.

CHARGE & BENEDICTION:

A formal dismissal concludes the service with **God's blessing** for life, **Christ's call** to obedient, and the **Holy Spirit's power** to be strong in a broken world. Our confidence in God's providence is spoken in unison, reminding us that God will guide us through the storms of life together.



First Presbyterian Church

701 Oak Street
Decatur, AL 35601
256-353-0253

FPCdecaturAL@gmail.com
www.FPCdecaturAL.org

**LEADERSHIP AT
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

Rev. Richard H. Brooks, Minister
RichardHBrooks@gmail.com

Karen Thatcher Moore, *Music Director*
Kevin Long, *Music Outreach Coordinator*
Rob Corn, *Social Media Outreach Coordinator*
Amber Stewart, *Office Administrator*

RULING ELDERS

Bob Sparks,
Clerk of Session

Class of 2020

John Edington
Charles Howard

Class of 2021

Parker Moore
Debbie Gibson

Class of 2022

Donna Huffman
Bob Sparks

LITURGIST

D. Ann Norris

USHERS

Mike Curl
Nancy Curl

**Session Meeting
March 22
Following Morning
Worship
Lunch Provided**

In Memoriam...
Jerry Wallace Pitts Garth
11/06/1927 - 02/27/2020



**A LENTEN TAIZÉ
PRAYER SERVICE**

*You are invited to an evening of
contemplative prayer,
scripture and singing to celebrate
The World Day of Prayer*

Friday, March 6 at 6:00 p.m.
Gideon Blackburn House
First Presbyterian Church
307 Gates Avenue, Huntsville

In Our Thoughts and Prayers . . .

Our Homebound:

- Betty Brownlee
- Shirley Coleman
- Juanita Dukes
- Nancy Fabisinski
- Lynn & Ann Fowler
- Barbara Martin
- Dicky Maynor
- Sue & Charles Murphree
- Liz Pilgrim
- Jane Rowe
- Caroline Taylor
- Anne Thornhill
- Jean Vernon

Our Family Members in Military Service:

Peyton Davis - Army, Fort Bragg, NC
(nephew of Luke Pryor)

Happy Birthday . . .

March

- 05 - Bob Sparks
- 08 - Parker Moore
- 09 - Charlie Guyton
- 20 - Donna Huffman
- 20 - Nancy Moss

For Your Calendar . . .

Monday

ABS 10:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.
Mat Weaving 12:15 p.m.

Wednesday

ABS 10:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.
Choir Rehearsal 6:00 p.m.

Friday

ABS 10:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.

Sunday

Coffee Fellowship 9:00 a.m.
Sunday School 9:15 a.m.
Worship 10:30 a.m.

Footsteps to Follow

“Happiness to You”

2 Corinthians 5, 9

by Richard Brooks FPC-D

BIBLICAL EXPOSITION & ANNOTATION:

Chapter 1: ³ Praise be to the God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God of compassion and all comfort, ⁴ who comforts (*παρακαλέω [par-ak-al-eh'-o] encourages consoles*) us all in our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble...

Chapter 5: ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, that person is a new creation: The old (*ἀρχαῖος [ar-khah'-yos] original, primitive, ancient*) has gone, the new (*καινός [kahee-nos'] fresh, novel*) is here! ¹⁸ All this is (a gift) from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that means God was reconciling the world (*κόσμος [kos'-mos] universe; all inhabitants of the world*) to himself in Christ (meaning God is not counting people's sins against them).

And God has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

Chapter 9: ⁶ Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. ⁷ Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves (*seeks wellbeing*) a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to bless (*show favor*) you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

The word of the Lord; Thanks be to God!

HOMILY:

- (1) God comforts in all our troubles, so that we can comfort in any troubles
- (2) God calls us to live refreshed each and every day, in each and every way
- (3) Paul again wrote “You reap what you sow”

Happiness is a by-product of your pursuit to love others

Footsteps to Follow

“Happiness to You”

2 Corinthians 5, 9

by Richard Brooks FPC-D

BIBLICAL EXPOSITION & ANNOTATION:

The Corinthian letters were written to the church in Corinth, Greece. Corinth is well known in secular, as well as in Biblical history. Corinth has been referred to as "the bridge of Greece," "the Vanity Fair of the ancient world," and "the lounge of Greece." A glance at your map will show Corinth's significance and the reason for its greatness.

Corinth is located near the southern part of Greece. The southern-most part of Greece is almost an island. All that connects this southern tip to the rest of Greece is a little isthmus only four miles wide. On that narrow neck of land straddles the City of Corinth.

With such a strategic location, it was inevitable that Corinth would be a city of great trading and commercial importance throughout history. All traffic from Athens in the northern part of Greece came by way of Corinth. Shipping traffic often found it more accommodating to have cargo shipped across this four-mile stretch of land by Corinth rather than keeping it aboard a ship around the southern tip of Greece.

Due mainly to its location, Corinth was a rich and prosperous city, one of the tremendous commercial trade cities of the ancient world. Corinth was known not only for its greatness. It was equally notable for its worldly and evil lifestyle. The very name "Corinth" was synonymous in the ancient world with debauchery.

Interestingly, such a prosperous and evil city would be the city where Paul had the greatest success in his ministry. Paul stayed in Corinth longer than in any other town, except for Ephesus. We know that he came to Corinth after escaping from Macedonia, where he was forced to leave very quickly due to the persecution that arose after just three weeks of preaching. He crossed over to Athens first and then to Corinth. The whole story of his 18-month stay is told in Acts 18:1-17. Paul's ministry in Corinth occurred around the year 52 A.D.

Chapter 1: **³ Praise be to the God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God of compassion and all comfort, ⁴ who comforts** (*παρακαλέω [par-ak-al-eh'-o] encourages consoles*) **us all in our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble...**

Chapter 5: **¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, that person is a new creation: The old** (*ἀρχαῖος [ar-khah'-yos] original, primitive, ancient*) **has gone, the new** (*καινός [kahee-nos'] fresh, novel*) **is here! ¹⁸ All this is (a gift) from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that means God was reconciling the world** (*κόσμος [kos'-mos] universe; all inhabitants of the world*) **to himself in Christ (meaning God is not counting people's sins against them).**

And God has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

Chapter 9: **⁶ Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. ⁷ Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves** (*seeks wellbeing*) **a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to bless** (*show favor*) **you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.**

The word of the Lord; Thanks be to God!

HOMILY:

Happiness to you. St. Paul was writing to a church community in Corinth, Greece. It was a church community that had been heavily divided and absorbed in confusion. His first letter dealt mostly with instructions. This his second was more comforting.

Paul in this letter pointed the way toward contentment, peace, and some happiness. I do the same with you this morning.

(1) God comforts in all our troubles, so that we can comfort in any troubles

God provides comfort in all our troubles so that we can provide comfort to others in any of their troubles.

Have you noticed that people who have troubles are often more empathetic to others who have problems? It is hard to be empathetic to another's pain if you have not felt the pain yourself.

Followers of Christ are called to be wounded healers. In our wounds, we discover the remedy of God's comfort. It is then our job to share that healing comfort with others.

This is truly one of the keys to contentment and happiness. There is purpose and ministry in suffering. Let us understand that pain and troubles in life are opportunities to receive God's peace and comfort. We are thus challenged to heal the wounds of others.

(2) God calls us to live refreshed each and every day, in each and every way

We are called to newness, a fresh beginning to live each and every day, in each and every way. The old is gone in the new has come. We rejoice in this freshness and newness of life.

Like a clean hot shower after a dirty day of work; Like a new school year after nearly failing the previous year. Like a new day's dawn after a miserably dark night – God refreshes us and renews us to become a better self in wholeness and health.

Consequently, we no longer look at other people in the same old ways. We look at each person with respect and potential. We look at others through the eyes of God who does not condemn, but loves and trusts.

(3) Paul again wrote “You reap what you sow”

The third direction toward happiness, peace, and contentment Paul offers to the church community is to remember life is an investment. Paul wrote the same to the Galatian churches. You reap what you sow.

If we sow just a few seeds, a meager crop is all that can be expected. I lay awake at nights concerned about our crop. As a farmer must, we too must put our trust in God, providing the sun and rain to bring forth the abundance. In the meantime, we must sow as many seeds as possible and pray for God's blessings on our efforts.

Let us remember that we are a small church in a massive worldwide Christian community. Our job is to be faithful, to love each other, respect even the stranger, and continue to sow seeds of God's kingdom and righteousness. We believe (trusting confidence) that our labors are not in vain. We believe (trusting confidence) that God is at work through us reconciling the world.

Happiness is a by-product of your pursuit to love others

Happiness is not something you can seek and find. Happiness is a by-product of your pursuit to love others. You can spend your life in pursuit of selfish interests only to find emptiness and loneliness. On the other hand, you can spend each day looking for ways to share and give toward the common good. Your reward will be a rich and bountiful life of contented happiness. Amen and amen