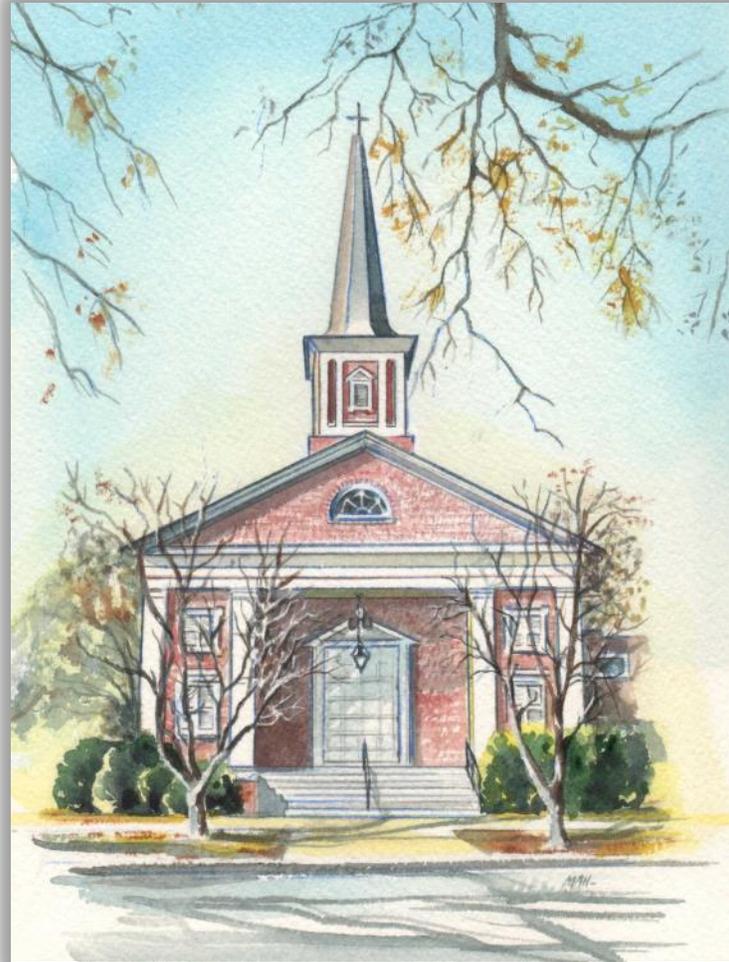


Second Sunday of Epiphany

January 19, 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

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."

*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

Ephesians 3:20-21

Leader: *Hear God Speak to YOU:* Now to the One who by the power at work within... us is able to do far more abundantly than all we can ask or imagine, to God be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever.

...and all God's people will say:

Unison: Let us worship the God of our salvation!

† HYMN of PRAISE

To God Be the Glory

#485

† PRAYER OF CONFESSION

James 4:8-10

O Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world. Have mercy upon us as we make our confession. We grow lax in our discipline. We grow tired in our obedience. Our faith in Christ becomes flabby when put to the test. Our joints stiffen when we are called to act. Our courage vanishes in the face of temptation. We profess loyalty, while our bodies deny commitment. Our desire is to do your will, O God. But when misfortune presses in, our diligence fails. When tempted by the vain promises of an easy life, we cave into temptation. O God, You alone are our help and salvation. Come to our aid, this very day, in the name of Christ Jesus, even as we pray in silent confession... Amen.

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."

† ASSURANCE of PARDON

Acts 2:38-39

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.

NOTES:

MUSIC of PREPARATION

Be Strong

Choir

PASTORAL PRAYER & LORD'S PRAYER

† *Those who are able, please stand.*

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

SCRIPTURE

I Thessalonians

ANTHEM

On Jordan's Stormy Banks

Choir

HOMILY "Tomorrow's Victory - Today's Hope" Rev. Richard Brooks

SENDING OF GOD'S PEOPLE

OFFERTORY

Exodus 25:1-2

† 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

Footsteps of Jesus

See Insert

† BENEDICTION

James 5:7-8

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

You shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace. The mountains and the hills will break forth before you. There'll be shouts of joy and all the trees of the field will clap, will clap their hands. And all the trees of the field will clap their hands, the trees of the field will clap their hands. The trees of the field will clap their hands, while you go out with joy. While you go out with joy!

Postlude

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.

† *Those who are able, please stand.*



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**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

D. Ann Norris,
Clerk of Session

Class of 2019

Tom Caddell
Aylett Dickman
Ramsey Huffman

Class of 2020

John Edington
Charles Howard

Class of 2021

Parker Moore
Debbie Gibson

LITURGIST

Ramsey Huffman

USHERS

Nancy Moss
Todd Newton

**SESSION WILL NOT
MEET TODAY**




*Rev. Richard and Susan Brooks
announce the birthday of their
first grandson*

*Born January 17, 2020 to
Gray Brooks and wife, Erie Meyer*



**Make a
Note**

**Choir rehearsal
now begins at
6:00 p.m.**

Come Join Us!

Agility, Balance, and Strength*



ABS program for
individuals in our
congregation and
the community.

Monday, Wednesday,
and Friday
10:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.

(follows the school system
weather policy)

*A ministry of Senior Connection

In Our Thoughts and Prayers . . .

Our Homebound:

- Shirley Coleman
- Juanita Dukes
- Lynn & Ann Fowler
- Jerry Garth
- 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 . . .

January

- 01 - Charles Howard
- 03 - Juanita Dukes
- 06 - Will Compton
- 07 - Shirley Malone

February

- 03 - Sue Murphree
- 04 - Carolyn Shelton
- 09 - Mike Smith
- 19 - Ran Pickell

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

“Tomorrow’s Victory – Today’s Help”

1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:2

by Richard Brooks FPC-D

BIBLICAL EXPOSITION & ANNOTATION:

Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant (*ἀγνοέω [ag-no-eh'-o] not to know; English agnostic*) **about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of those who have no hope** (*ἐλπίς [el-pece'] expectation, confidence, trust in future*). **We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him...**

For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise... ..so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage (*παρακαλέω [par-ak-al-eh'-o] invite, exhort, comfort, console*) **each other with these words.**

Now, brothers (and sisters), about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

The word of the Lord; Thanks be to God!

HOMILY:

Knowing that you have victory with Christ tomorrow positively shapes your struggle today.

Carly Simon’s song *Anticipation*, **“We can never know about the coming days, but we can think about their victories in many ways.”**

St. Paul’s letter to the Corinthian congregation, your trials will be **“swallowed up in victory”**

Hope offers tomorrow’s vision today.

Billy Sunday **“the devil says you’re out; God says you’re safe.”**

Footsteps to Follow

“Tomorrow’s Victory – Today’s Help”

1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:2

BIBLICAL EXPOSITION & ANNOTATION:

Today we begin walking in "The Footsteps of Paul". Over the coming weeks and months, we will review the unquestionable Biblical writings of Saint Paul. (There are 13 correspondences in the New Testament attributed to Paul. Others wrote some on his behalf, but all scholars agree that these 7 were from Paul's pen.) We will take these letters in what is believed to be chronological order. This and the context of the letters will help us understand the primary purpose of each writing. (I hope that you will take the handout and write through Paul's Epistles for personal guidance, as we study then for our collective understanding.)

Paul came to Thessalonica from Philippi, as described in Acts 17. The City of Thessalonica had a population of around 200,000, considered a large city by their standards. The city was strategically located along known trade routes and contained an active harbor. Generally, Thessalonica was a highway of prosperous commerce and, unlike most New Testament cities, is still in existence today.

Paul stayed in Thessalonica for 3 weeks establishing a church and teaching the kingdom of God. Due to persecution from the local synagogue, Paul left prematurely wondering if he had given this new church sufficient root. When Timothy later joined Paul in Athens, Paul sent Timothy back to Thessalonica to see how things were going (1 Thessalonians 3:1-5). Timothy reported back that things were generally good, but there were some concerns. These concerns are addressed in Paul's letters, now known as First and Second Thessalonians. Other than mentioning various specific topics, Paul's letter refers repeatedly to the power of Christ's second coming and the victory we will have in Christ.

Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant (*ἀγνοέω [ag-no-eh'-o] not to know; English agnostic*) **about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of those who have no hope** (*ἐλπίς [el-pece'] expectation, confidence, trust in future*). **We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him...**

For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise... ..so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage (*παρακαλέω [par-ak-al-eh'-o] invite, exhort, comfort, console*) **each other with these words.**

Now, brothers (and sisters), about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

The word of the Lord; Thanks be to God!

HOMILY:

In preparing for this message, I turned to the great reformer of the 16th century. I read Martin Luther's sermon on this very same passage. It was enlightening but boring. His sermon was written in 1522. It must have been long for the sermon went on for 23 pages!

My message is consistent with Luther's. Knowing that you have victory with Christ tomorrow positively shapes your struggle today.

As Carly Simon wrote in her song *Anticipation*, "We can never know about the coming days, but we can think about their victories in many ways."

Paul's oldest letter, probably the first of the New Testament writings, is to a church discouraged. The purpose of the correspondence is to comfort, console, and reassure that victory is coming.

There will be struggles. There will be challenges. There will be setbacks, but the final victory is assured. Paul will discuss this often and later tell the Corinthian congregation that all their trials will be "**swallowed up in victory**" (I Corinthians 15:54).

Knowing that the end will come on the upswing can bring comfort. Hope offers tomorrow's vision today.

It is like knowing the ending of a book as you read the mysterious early chapters.

It is like watching a scary movie that you already know the final scene.

It is like playing a hard-fought game while having foreknowledge of your victorious ending.

Make peace with your maker today. Accept God's love and peace offered, especially in the sacrifice of Jesus for all people. Receive assurance that the end will be fine, and today's struggles will become manageable.

Billy Sunday was a professional baseball player 150 years ago. He played in Chicago and Philadelphia for 17 years in the late 1800s. He received a conversion at a Presbyterian church and began a renowned evangelist. He often opened his revival by running on stage and sliding like to second base. He would proclaim, "the devil says you're out; God says you're safe."

The struggle is still there. A sweated effort is yet required. Setbacks are to be expected. But all is done with fundamental confidence that you know in the end, victory is ours.

My goal as your leader: You will remember the reassuring, warm winds of God's hope. That they will lift you up when you feel despair; push you forward when you are discouraged and need perseverance; blow to from your starboard and port sides to guide you; and that God's winds will swill above you forming a soft white cloud against a crystal blue sky that beckons you toward his kingdom now and into eternity.