



First Presbyterian Church
310 Plantation Road, Perry Florida



April 2020 Newsletter

Holy Week Schedule



Connect to Holy Week Events Online at www.firstpresperry.org

Thursday, April 9th 10:00 am -Children's Bible Time
10:30 am -Morning Prayer
7:00 pm -Maundy Thursday Service
Instructions for Communion

Friday, April 10th 10:00 am -Children's Bible Time

Sunday, April 12th 7:00-7:30 am -Easter Sunrise Service
8:00 am -Sunrise Breakfast
11:00 am -Easter Sunday Worship

Rev. Natasha Sudderth-Davis, Pastor



Words from the Pastor

Dear Church Family,

First let me share with you what a gift and blessing you have been for me and my family since we arrived. What a great joy to find such dedicated loving disciples of Christ, open to the Spirit of God and willing to serve. The road we traveled that brought us together was certainly a path cleared and prepared by the hand of God. It may seem an odd time to mention my gratitude. In truth, before my call here to Perry there were many days when I felt adrift, without a destination or even a clear purpose. I knew God was working, but I was frustrated. Being adrift was miserable. I longed for dry land, and stability in my life and my call to serve God.

I think that is a feeling that resonates with most people. Life has been disrupted and even things that are familiar leave a person feeling adrift in ways. Yet in a profound way our calling to be a resurrection people, has never before been lived into more beautifully. We are showing our love for one another by giving up what is precious. It is what we Christians do, we shine the light of God in times of despair and darkness. We hold our hope that these difficult days will soon come to an end, and we will once again gather together at the church. What a joyful day that will be.

The Rev. Natasha Sudderth-Davis



Lunch, anyone?

Although my commute to work was only seven minutes, I sometimes skipped the trip back home for lunch and landed, instead, in the prayer garden at my church, with a salad and a glass of sweet tea.

It's funny how people interpreted that, for I invited others to join me. "Lunch in the prayer garden?" they would repeat after I extended the invitation.

"No, I'm good," most would say, declining the invitation.

"No, I don't want to interrupt," another once admitted, as if I might chant or groan.

It's not that I'm a nun or a monk, for I'm pretty irreverent when I chew. In fact, I've been known to sing songs from The Supremes...so my friends never knew what they're missing.

The value of the prayer garden, or perhaps I should suggest that the intrinsic value of the prayer garden, is that people are rarely there, so if you want to hear yourself think, it's the perfect spot: the birds sing and a gentle breeze blows. Shade is ample in the summer, and sunny spots can be found in the winter.

When I say people aren't there, I mean living people. Other people reside there, in a memorial sort of way, and I take a minute to acknowledge their presence while they ignore mine.

There's a columbarium in the center of the garden, which is a fancy word for a granite monument which holds the equivalent of safe deposit boxes. These boxes hold ashes. Yes, of people. Remember: ashes to ashes, dust to dust.

Margaret's ashes are there, right next to Erdman's.

Nancy's remembered there.

Julia and Russell have a corner.

Eric answers roll, as does Charles.

Others have reservations, and I enjoy looking at the names which emblazon their future accommodations.

No check-in day is noted, but in the days ahead, the garden could become crowded.

Now, however, it's a peaceful spot, nicely planted with camellias and hydrangea, interspersed with azaleas, boxwoods and beautyberry. Cherokee bean has been given an area to consume, and it will, while daylilies and Easter lilies--from worship services on previous Easter Sundays--take turns surprising those who visit.

I believe my comfort level in the prayer garden has to do with my childhood years when summer holidays took us to country churches with outdoor baptisms and long tables for covered dish dinners. We would read the names on the tombstones and especially lament those with little lambs.

Nobody ever bothered us.

Nobody bothers me now; even those people I invite to go with me, will not.

It's like my own personal convent to which I retreat when I want about 30 minutes of monk-like silence.

Cars pass by on Plantation Road and I recognize a few: one friend is on her way to the grocery store, and another man--with a black Labrador Retriever hanging out the passenger window--hauls tile and more to put on floors in this town.

I hear lawnmowers in the distance, while a neighbor works on his boat, cranking the motor at intervals to check the timing.

I'm careful to leave the place as I found it, remembering the admonishment from Callaway Gardens: "Please take nothing from the garden but nourishment for your soul, consolation for your heart and inspiration for your mind."

That's enough.

One day, however, I did leave some cheese shreds from my salad. I went to pick them up and realized that an ant had beat me to it.

I'm almost embarrassed to admit that I watched that ant carry the cheese four feet for another 10 minutes, until he went underground with his groceries. I couldn't help but wonder if he entered his domicile with, "Honey, I'm home." I admired his work ethic and thought this would be a better world if we all worked that hard, before we rested.

That reminded me of my own responsibilities so I collected my trash for proper disposal. Before leaving, I always walk through and pick a weed or two, as if that might cover my admission.

Callaway Gardens, it isn't.

The Abbey at St. Bernard, it will never be.

But tucked away in the pine trees of Perry, it serves me well.

After all, everybody needs a place to eat, pray, love.

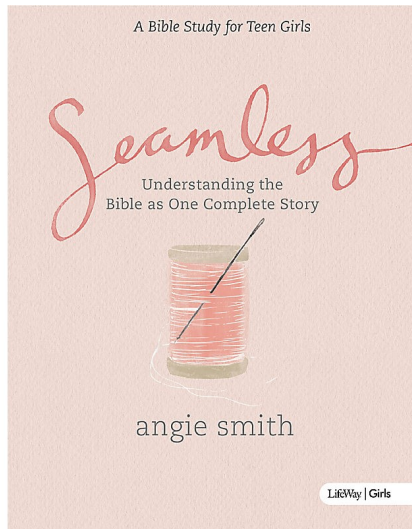
By Susan H. Lincoln

After Easter What?

After Easter what?
I'll tell you like this...
Though trials come against us
A new hope exists.
That hope is in Him
Who made heaven & earth;
Who provides for each of us
Life- a new birth.
Death has been defeated,
This we know well...
Satan and all his demons
can go back to hell.
'Cause Christ our Redeemer,
Though dead, He now lives,
And yes, we're forgiven,
Eternal life He gives.
So live out your life
Without fear, without blame,
And allow God to use you,
He's given you a new name.



Laura Early written 5/1/87



Sunday School is still in Session! Find a class that suits you on Sunday, April 19, at 9:45 a.m.: www.firstpresperry.org

The Sojourners will continue their weekly Sunday School lessons by ZOOM on April 19 at 10 a.m. as members learn from Angie Smith's "Seamless" outline.

"Opening Assembly" for Sunday School begins at 9:45, followed by small group studies.

To find your way to both, please go to the church website www.firstpresperry.org and click on Sunday Small Group.

Karl Morgan and Janece Campbell break the larger gathering into various online "rooms" for small group study.

"We will pick up with the Divided Kingdom and proceed to the prophets, but it doesn't matter if you haven't been with us the previous seven months," said Susan Lincoln who leads the Sojourners Class. "God's word speaks to us—always--and class members make the study meaningful with their thoughtful comments."

Marilyn Culpepper is another longtime Sunday School teacher. Her adult class, of couples and singles, is currently focusing on the Ten Commandments "and what we learn about God from them." Marilyn urges others to join the class and the conversation, beginning again April 19.

In addition, Kristie and Alex Lutz faithfully lead the younger set and exhibit an enthusiasm for learning that keeps any study fresh. "We are learning how to be a disciple in our everyday lives," said Kristie. "We are working on developing our relationship with God and how to seek opportunities to serve others. During Lent the youth joined us in teaching how to act out the meaning of Lent in our lives."

These days of confinement can be long, so pledge to set aside Sundays as days of study and worship.

Pastor Natasha's sermons are live-streamed each Sunday and can be found through the same website (listed above).

To God be the Glory
Great things He has done,
He's given new life-
He's given a Son.
In Him there's redemption
Full and free,
The ability to live
And just to be
The child who's loved
Accepted and blessed
With all God's goodness-
His Peace - His rest.
So to Him be all honor
All glory and praise
As we sing and give thanks,
Our voices we raise
In joy and adoration
In Honor and love
To our Blessed Redeemer
And our Father above.

Laura Early written 5/3/87



DIFFERENT TIMES, SAME STORY

The storm clouds had been gathering for a century. The force of wild political winds buffeted the hearts of the divided United States of America. The world was watching. What would the upstart of a country do that had snubbed its nose to monarchy and now turned on itself? The world was waiting to snap up the remnants of a country torn by prejudice, greed, class divide, privilege and competing economies. It was Palm Sunday, April 9, 1865. With the outstretch of two hands an agreement was fulfilled and peace was accomplished so that one nation at war with itself could rest. The world was stunned. By the following Easter Sunday soldiers were finding their ways home and the Great Leader seeking peace and unity had made his way to Glory as well. Easter was very different that Spring. Folks did not know what to do. Strong leaders and common young men bowed their heads and gave thanks.

This Easter season is very different from previous Easter Sundays. There will be no greetings of joy and exclamations of "He is risen!" in church buildings. No great hymns of victory sung with delight. The corporate worship of the triune God and celebration of victory over death and evil will be different. The nation once again seems to be at a standstill. Yes, this Easter Season will be different. Whereas at Appomattox men gave thanks for peace, this week in Taylor County six men with six red ribbons visited the six bridges which allows entry into the county by highway. They also knelt and prayed giving thanks to God for making peace with mankind. They also prayed for God's grace to be extended to Taylor County by sparing it from the ravages of the Covid-19 pandemic. They prayed for forgiveness of community sins and healing of the land and its people. Each man represented a different denomination but all were united in sincerity for the grace of God to cover Taylor County. Each site was adorned with a red ribbon as a reminder of Christ's blood spilled for Taylor County. Yes, this Easter Season is different in ways that we have not been able to imagine. So different that we are uncomfortable or even scared. God promised in 2 Chronicles 7:14 that, "If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land." Yes, this is a very different Easter season but let's give thanks to God for outstretching his hands from the cross to this very moment bringing forgiveness and peace to all peoples.

Vaughan Early

9 April 2020



“Together Though Apart”

As many of you know, I have been doing pulpit supply at First Presbyterian Church of Jasper, Florida for about a year and a half. Not every week to be sure but enough Sundays to grow somewhat close to the Presbyterians there.

I was supposed to preach in Jasper on Palm Sunday, but the COVID-19 precautions statewide changed all that. Instead of driving over and preaching, I emailed them a sermon, a sermon I wrote with the Jasper congregation in my mind and in my heart. I will send them yet another sermon this week, an Easter Sermon, along with my thoughts and prayers.

My thoughts and prayers for the Presbyterians of Jasper brought to mind the Presbyterians of Perry. To say that I have grown somewhat close to you is an understatement writ large. Over thirty years with the Presbyterians of Perry has created a relationship deeper than mere words can convey.

So, since I cannot be with you face to face this Sunday, I am sending you something by way of this newsletter. It is not an Easter Sermon. Pastor Natasha will graciously present that to us come Sunday. It's not an Easter Sermon but it is a declaration given its truth by Easter. With props to the old Apostle, “I am convinced that neither death, nor life ... nor things present nor things to come ... nor COVID-19 ... nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

God will keep us together even though we are now apart. Happy Easter to my Presbyterian Family in Perry and Taylor County! - Larry Neal

FPC,

I miss the church. I cannot wait to come back and enjoy the services once more. Please tell any of them you see I miss them and hope they are all well in these strange times. Things are well here in Georgia. We don't get much info about anything but our training has been altered due to the virus. We will still do 22 weeks total unfortunately. I'm already looking forward to getting out of boot camp and moving on.

Love, Jon Anderson



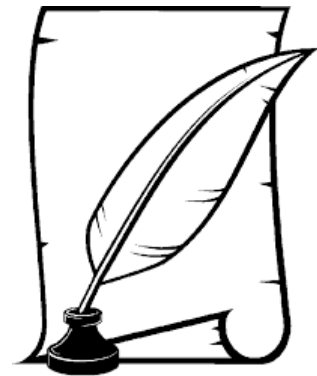
To my Dear and Loving at First Presbyterian Church,

I was so touched when I read the First Presbyterian notes. Tears came to my eyes when I remembered all my dear loved ones.

May God's continued blessing go with you.

I'm typing this because my handwriting leaves a lot to be desired. Just remember the "good old days".

Lots of love - Elvena



Wednesday - March 4, 2020



FPC Prayer List

Loisell Coleman

Hattie Adams

Betty Lou Hendry

Judy Neal

Fanette Chesser

Ben Sunderland

Shirley Erwin

Chuck Davis

THROUGH THE PRAYER CHAIN, members of First Presbyterian are given the opportunity to turn to God in supplication for others. You may start a prayer request by contacting Margaret Poppell at perryfpcprayers@yahoo.com.



First Presbyterian Church of Perry
 April 2020 Calendar
 Online Events

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Children's Bible Time 10am Fellowship 7pm	2 Children's Bible Time 10am Prayer meeting 10am	3 Children's Bible Time 10am	4
5 Small Groups 9:45 am Worship 11am Youth Group	6 Children's Bible Time 10am	7 Children's Bible Time 10am Prayer Meeting 7pm	8 Children's Bible Time 10am Fellowship 7pm	9 Children's Bible Time 10am Morning Prayer 10:30am Maundy Thursday 7:00 pm	10 Children's Bible Time 10am	11
12 Early Easter 7am Sunrise Breakfast 8am Easter Worship 11am	13 Children's Bible Time 10am	14 Children's Bible Time 10am Prayer Meeting 7pm	15 Children's Bible Time 10am Fellowship 7pm	16 Children's Bible Time 10am Prayer Meeting 10am	17 Children's Bible Time 10am	18
19 Small Groups 9:45 am Worship 11am Youth Group	20 Children's Bible Time 10am Session Meeting	21 Children's Bible Time 10am Prayer Meeting 7pm	22 Children's Bible Time 10am Fellowship 7pm	23 Children's Bible Time 10am Prayer Meeting 7pm	24 Children's Bible Time 10am	25
26 Small Groups 9:45 am Worship 11am Youth Group	27 Children's Bible Time 10am	28 Children's Bible Time 10am Prayer Meeting 7pm	29 Children's Bible Time 10am Fellowship 7pm	30 Children's Bible Time 10am Prayer Meeting 7pm		

April Birthdays

- Myrna Archer—April 5
- Natasha Sudderth-Davis—April 5
- Al Wolfkill— April 9
- Katie King—April 10
- Hailey Torres— April 11
- Mitchell Worth— April 12
- Bobby Harper— April 14
- Aliya Early — April 16
- Ella Caruso— April 19
- Don Lincoln— April 22
- Tuckie Maultsby— April 22
- Ellie Morgan — April 24
- Rachel Poppell — April 26
- David Culpepper— April 30

April Anniversaries

- Jim & Suzanne Bassett— April 9

Join us online

www.firstpresperry.org

If you have a note, announcement, or picture etc. to put in the **May Newsletter** please have your detailed info given to the office by way of email by **Wednesday, April 22, 2020.**

Email to: office@firstpresperry.org