



First Press

The First Presbyterian Church Newsletter

May 2005

Rev. Dr. Conrad Sharps - Senior Pastor
Rev. Hope Lee - Associate Pastor
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by Reverend Dr.
Conrad C. Sharps

The Joy of Pentecost

It had been three very hot and very frustrating days in Paris. Although we tried, there was a language barrier and what appeared to me to be a growing cultural barrier. In fact, to be quite honest I found most of the cab drivers unhelp-

ful and less than polite. I was even beginning to share the bias that I had so often sensed from other tourists concerning Parisians.

Tired of touring and trying to get a four member family into "three passenger only" cabs, we decided to change our plans one afternoon and just walk the two short blocks from our hotel to the park that lay nearby the Eiffel Tower. Sitting to eat our lunch we allowed our daughter and son to go to a nearby playground. As I sat and grumbled about the inhospitable atmosphere, I began to hear laughter and the joyful noise of children playing. My son had found a friend, a little Parisian boy named Alexander. In their youthful innocence they had overcome what I had not been able to overcome. They communicated quite well with one another despite both language and cultural differences, because they communicated with the innocence of the heart.

I believe this is the kind of heart we need to hear the message of the gospel. We need the Spirit of childlike faith and trust to hear good news and to see others as children of God. Pentecost is the remembrance and celebration of the gift of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the church. Paul described the coming of the Spirit like the sound of a violent wind that filled the

house where the disciples were sitting and what appeared to be tongues of fire resting on each one of them. All were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in tongues.

So often we tend to only celebrate the miraculous if not eerie account of the gift of the Holy Spirit. What remains truly miraculous to me, however, is not the astounding sights and sounds of this historic event, but the result. The disciples not only spoke in tongues -- witnesses there heard them speaking in their own language. They heard as the scripture tells us the "Wonders of God." People from different nations and cultures; people who struggled to understand one another understood in their own tongues and beheld the wonder and the power of the Almighty. Yes, some simply wrote it off as a drunkenness -- but others allowed the Spirit to open their hearts and to understand what the disciples were communicating.

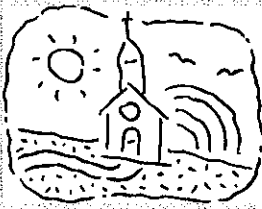
This is a message our world needs today! Just like me in Paris, there are many examples of deafness and frustration between peoples: between rich and poor, between white and brown and black, between young and old, male and female, between Republican and Democrat. It's not that we always speak a different language. It's that we do not always hear (we do not listen) with our heart. May we open our hearts to the power of God's Holy Spirit today in order that we might hear God's Word and one another. May we know the joy of Pentecost and celebrate the presence of God in our relationships with others.

"Utterly amazed, they asked: 'Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language?...'"
(Acts 2:7,8)

Please submit articles for the newsletter as early as possible, but no later than the 20th of each month.

Site Plan Update Task Force

A committee has been formed to review the plans developed by the Site Planning Committee and accepted by the congregation that eventually led to our Commitment 2000 Campaign. The current committee is tasked with reviewing our physical plant needs in order to better serve the growing ministry and outreach of FPC.



The Task Force has reviewed Historical District Guidelines for rehabilitation, new construction, parking requirements, current zoning ordinances, etc. We're discussing various ideas, concepts and options that would best accommodate our current congregation size as well as looking to future growth (approximately 10 years out).

As always, the church family will be kept fully informed and asked for input. The Task Force is comprised of 10 members who have ties to every aspect of our church family, and we're approaching our tasking prayerfully, cautiously and lovingly.

Thanks for everything

The Christian Education Committee would like to thank the many people who helped make this year's Easter Egg Hunt a huge success:

- ♥ Lisa and Joe Waas
- ♥ Joyce and Ed Mathews
- ♥ Steven Whitman
- ♥ Mike Rangel
- ♥ The middle and high school youth

We're Having a Birthday Party!

On Pentecost Sunday, May 15th, our church family will celebrate the birth of the church at 5:30 p.m. in JTH with a family night dinner.

There will be a surprise performance in honor of the event.

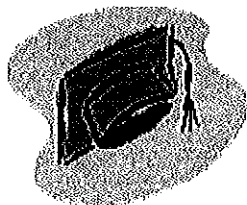
Meat, dessert, and beverages will be supplied, but please bring a dish to share and please call the church office to reserve your place before 5 p.m. on Thursday, May 12th.



CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!

Our congregation congratulates our graduating seniors and will recognize them during the 11 a.m. service on May 8th.

- ♥ Kyle Rowland
- ♥ Lauren Byrns
- ♥ Amanda Linzy
- ♥ Kurt Foutz
- ♥ Alison Whitman
- ♥ Jennifer Sapp
- ♥ Rachel Underwood
- ♥ Megan Mathews
- ♥ David Stanley
- ♥ Jared Barrows
- ♥ Thomas Cripe
- ♥ C.J. Cripe



National Day of Prayer

Tickets are available in the church office for The National Day of Prayer Breakfast at 7 a.m. on Wednesday May 11th. It will be held at the Ritz Carlton, and Call Thomas will be the keynote speaker. Tickets are \$15 each.



Presbyterian Women's News

All women in our church are invited to the Annual Birthday Tea on Sunday, June 5th at 2:30 p.m. Please mark your calendars for this special celebration. It's the day to wear a hat and attend a High English Tea.

A sincere thank you to all who supported the Networkers Malaria Prevention Program by donating money for Mother's Day cards. We save lives of pregnant women and young children through this mission outreach.

All women of the church are welcome to join any of our circles. Feel free to visit any circle that fits your schedule. May meeting times and places are as follows:

- ♥ Elizabeth Circle, May 12th at 10 a.m., Jim Thomas Hall.
- ♥ Esther Circle, May 12th at 1 p.m., Jeannie Langley's home, 616 South Fletcher Avenue.
- ♥ Hannah Circle, May 12th at 7 p.m., June Harris' home, 333 South Fletcher Avenue.
- ♥ Lydia Circle, May 9th at 6:30 p.m., at Joy Drewry's home, 5483 Florence Point Drive.
- ♥ Martha Circle, May 11th at 10 a.m., Margaret Pinchback's home, 110 Ocean Ridge Drive.
- ♥ Ruth Circle, May 11th at 10 a.m., at Georgette Giles's home, 2705 Benz Place.



PRESBYTERIAN
WOMEN

Low Country Boil for 50's and Over

Come for a super time on Thursday, May 19th, at 11:30 p.m. in Jim Thomas Hall. Please have your reservations in before 5 p.m. on Thursday, May 12th. The cost will be \$12.00 per person.



Memorial Day Origins

Memorial Day emerged from the grim shadows of the American Civil War. Before the close of the war, women began decorating the graves of soldiers who had died in that war. The practice quickly spread, and a few years later May 30, 1868, was designated as Decoration Day — a day for placing flowers on the graves of Union and Confederate soldiers throughout the United States.



In 1882, Decoration Day became known as Memorial Day, and soldiers who died in other wars were also honored. Over the years, it has become a day when all loved ones who have died — in war and otherwise — are remembered. In 1971, the United States Congress declared Memorial Day a national holiday to be observed annually on the last Monday in May.

On this Memorial Day, remember those who gave their lives for our country. But also pray for those who continue serving to keep America free, especially those who are in harm's way.

New Video Study

The Saltshakers Adult Sunday School class began a new video study, "The Assurance of Salvation." In this series, Dr. R.C. Sproul addresses the importance of living in pursuit of holiness over easy believism. Please join us for this six-part study at 10 a.m in our Jim Thomas Hall classroom.

Summer Sunday School Teachers

Please get a sign up sheet from the Deacon's Table and prayerfully consider volunteering as a summer Sunday school teacher for a week or more. Two people are needed in each area except Children's Church for Kindergarten and 1st grade.

Session Notes - April 19th Meeting

The Session discussed the following significant items at the April 19th Stated Meeting include:

- The Session agreed to endorse the Choir's Mission Trip in May-June, 2006. Fund raising projects will be conducted with approval of the Finance Committee.
- The Site Plan Committee recommended that FPC consider sponsoring a new church in the Yulee area. The Session agreed to consider starting to set aside seed money during the next budget year and to establish a committee to look further into this matter.
- The Session also approved hiring an architect to assist in assessing the future needs of the church.
- The Finance Committee reported that they have obtained sufficient moneys to purchase the new organ. The contract has been signed and the organ should be installed in approximately four months.
- The Personnel Committee reports that Anthony "Tony" Brewer has been hired as the new Sexton. He will begin working May 9th.
- Landscaping plans are being considered for the church grounds.
- The stabilization of the sanctuary is being pursued and should be accomplished shortly.

The Congregation is invited to attend Session Meetings which are held the third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. in the Original Adult Sunday School Classroom of Jim Thomas Hall.



Flower Calendar

- ♥ May 1st - Margaret Pinchback in memory of her husband, John.
- ♥ May 8th - Ann and Jim Thomas in memory of their mothers, Ms. Mae Walters and Ms. Treatie Thomas.
- ♥ May 15th - Terri Korn in honor of her daughter-in-law, Kathy Davis on her birthday.
- ♥ May 22nd - Bill Tucker and Martha Ratchford to the Glory of God and in honor of their church family.
- ♥ May 29th - Ed and Joyce Matthews in loving memory of their son, Scott.



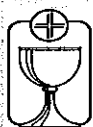
Thoughts on Prayer

Most Christians pray daily, but one day a year is set aside as a National Day of Prayer. The first Thursday in May is designated as a day for the people of the United States to offer prayer and meditation at churches, in groups and as individuals. Here are some thoughts on prayer:

- We must come out from prayer the most rapturous and sweet, only to do harder and ever harder works for God and our neighbors.
—St. Teresa of Avila
- More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice rise like a fountain for me night and day.
—Alfred Lord Tennyson, "Morte D'Arthur"
- Prayer is not an old woman's idle amusement. Properly understood and applied, it is the most potent instrument of action. ... Prayer is not asking. It is a longing of the soul. It is daily admission of one's weakness. ... It is better in prayer to have a heart without words than words without a heart.
—Mahatma Gandhi
- Our prayers should be for blessings in general, for God knows best what is good for us.
—Socrates

May Communion

Communion will be served on May 15th at both services.





KINGDOM OF THE SON SAFARI

JUNE 13 – 17, 9 a.m. to noon

First Presbyterian/Memorial Methodist VBS Registration

Student's Name _____
 School Grade going into Fall '05 _____
 Address _____
 Phone _____ cell/work# _____
 Allergies _____
 Parent or Guardian _____
 E-mail _____
 Emergency contact _____ phone _____

This year VBS is June 13th thru 17th from 9 till noon. We're headed to Africa to the Kingdom of the Son where we will explore the Lord's Prayer through story telling, recreation, arts and crafts, and music. Grab your safari gear and join the fun! You may register between services beginning May 8th through May 29th, you may send in the sign up in this newsletter, or you may call the church office. There can be no registration after May 30th. All children who will be in kindergarten this fall through fifth grade are welcome and nursery and pre-school will be provided for children of adult volunteers.

First Press is published monthly as part of the ministry of First Presbyterian Church.

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Bulk Rate
 U.S. Postage
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Permit No. 10
 Fernandina Beach
 FL 32034

The *Grace*
 of *God* is
 with *you!*

Sunday Worship Hours: 8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.
Sunday School: 9:50 a.m.
Thursday Morning Prayer Group: 8:00 a.m.