



SPARKS from the FLINT..... January/February 2018

Shared Mission Grounds Us in Delight!

by Rev. Debra T. Bibler, Executive Presbyterian

Last year, mere days before our January tornadoes, I had reflected with my leadership coach that I thought 2017 would be a calmer year than the previous two. Enough said. And lesson learned! We never *really* know what a new year will bring.

So, I start this year with no clear idea of what the world has in store for us or what winds may blow. At the same time, I have a *very* clear idea of what God has in store for us! In a word: redemption.

Redemption, this holy art of making all things new through sacrificial love, is really a sweeping and curving trajectory, whose ending we cannot see in our communities, our congregations, and ourselves. It's just as well that our vision is short-sighted because this path may take us through dark alleyways and uncomfortable corners. Chances are, we would not follow God's lead if we knew all the places we would land.

However....

We have just visited a manger, reveled with shepherds, and sung with the angels under the stars.

We have miles to go before we land at a cross or a tomb. **The space between manger and tomb, between birthing places and resting places is, of course, rife with holy possibilities.** Unexpected detours and well-established plans all con-mingle to create a Christ-centered curve toward salvation-life for both creatures and all creation. *What stupendous Good News!*

As we continue to be the body of Christ, the community of faith that is Flint River Presbytery, let us be both intrigued by unexpected detours (which teach us resilience) and mindful of our long-standing plans (which ground us in mission).

And may we trust that our long-standing plans do not lead us to a lock-step, grim-faced stance of duty, but rather a foot-tapping and smile-inducing posture of delight. God's mission grounds us *ultimately, though not easily*, in wide-eyed wonder and deep-rooted joy.

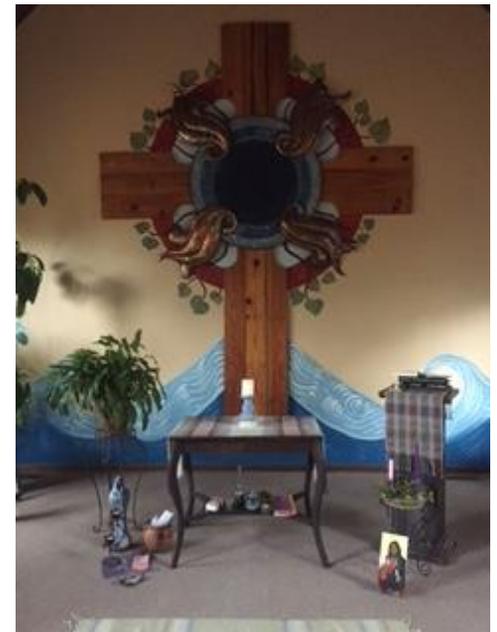
May this joyful and missional stance be our starting place for our shared ministry in 2018!

How grateful am I that we have each other and Jesus Christ our Savior, as we live into -- *and up to* -- our shared mission!

How grateful am I that Jesus does not leave us in this long and well-traveled trajectory to stumble alone. *He walks with us all the way!* May we have the eyes to see him among us and hearts ready to burn more brightly than ever, so the world may be richly warmed by faith, hope, and love.

With tremendous hope,

Deb



This photo was taken at Greenbough House of Prayer in Adrian, GA, a site which provides rest and restoration for any interested soul.

Faye and Steve, the spiritual directors there, can be contacted directly for individual retreat dates at 478.688.4758.



Welcome Our New Stated Clerk....

We are delighted to welcome **Becky Willis** as our **new Stated Clerk for Flint River Presbytery**. Becky has served as a commissioned ruling elder for 3 of our congregations over the years, most currently serving our congregations at Cairo and Dawes. In addition to serving these congregations, she moderated our Committee on Ministry during 2015 and 2016.

Prior to her retirement, she worked for the Georgia Department of Labor where she was responsible for receiving and adjudicating unemployment insurance claims, which required knowledge and application of state law to make decisions on receipt of benefits. She also managed several of the more intricate programs providing assistance to customers with special needs. She wrote policy manuals and conducted training seminars as well.

In sum, Becky brings a wealth of practical knowledge and careful wisdom to this role!

Presently, Becky can be reached at bwillis123a@yahoo.com or 229.378.0102 (cell).

Blessing of Hope (Blessing for a New Year)

So may we know
the hope
that is not just
for someday
but for this day-
here, now,
in this moment
that opens to us:

hope not made
of wishes
but of substance,

hope made of sinew
and muscle
and bone,

hope that has breath
and a beating heart,

hope that will not
keep quiet
and be polite,

hope that knows
how to holler
when it is called for,

hope that knows
how to sing

when there seems
little cause,

hope that raises us
from the dead –

not someday
but this day,
every day,
again and
again and
again.

From [A Cure for Sorrow](#) by Jan
Richardson (Used with Permission)
@janrichardson.com



*Picture outside of FRP office
post-2017 tornadoes*

Montreat Youth Conference 2018

“Lift Every Voice”

**Saturday, June 10 – Saturday, June 16,
2018**

**\$100 Deposit & Registration – Due January 10,
2018**

\$450 Balance & Final Paperwork – Due March 16, 2018

****Montreat Newsletter and Registration****

Send payment and paperwork to:
June Denney
Flint River Presbytery
826 Liberty Expressway S. E.
Albany, GA 31705



The Spark-ling Exchange

First (Valdosta) has purchased new Christmas trees for 2018 and wants to offer these gently used trees "free to a good home" for anyone who is willing to come and get them. The lighted trees are approximately 9 feet tall (and are pictured on 2 feet stands). Decorations not included.

Please contact Katie at the church office for more information at 229.242.8376.



John 10:27

"My sheep hear My voice; I know them and they follow Me."

Featuring Dr. Ralph Basui Watkins

the Peachtree Associate Professor of Evangelism and Church Growth at Columbia Theological Seminary



SAVE THE DATE! March 9 - 11, 2018

The Lodge at Lake Blackshear Resort
Georgia Veterans Memorial State Park
2459-H Highway 280 West
Cordele, GA 31015

Registration began October 21, 2017

FINAL DEADLINE IS March 1, 2018.

[2018 COF Booklet](#)

which includes EVERYTHING you need to know about this marvelous event!
A \$50 Non-Refundable registration fee must accompany your registration forms.

Flint River Presbytery January & February 2018 Calendar

ALL MEETINGS ARE HELD AT THE PRESBYTERY OFFICE UNLESS NOTED.

JANUARY		
10		MONTREAT DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION & \$100 DEPOSIT
11	10:00 am	COM, new member training
13	9:00 am 2:00 pm	Statistical Review - First, Valdosta Statistical Review - First, Bainbridge
15		Office closed for Martin Luther King, Jr
16 - 24		Guatemala Mission Trip
18	10:00 am	CPM
20	9:00 am 2:00 pm	Statistical Review - Beth Salem, Columbus Statistical Review - Forsyth
20	10:00 am - 2:00 pm	CEN
26 - 27		AB Retreat
27	10:00 am	PW, Covenant
27	10:00 am	The PresHouse Campus Ministry Board meeting, The PresHouse
31		Statistical and Terms of Call are due!

FEBRUARY		
27	10:00 am	COF
8	12:30 pm	COM with BOP visit from Clark Simmons
9		BOP Seminar
10		Presbytery meeting, Elmodel / CME Grant apps disbursed
15	11:00 am - 3:00 pm	Reformation Project, Lake House
16	4:00 pm - 6:00 pm	NE Cluster - Gathering, Mandarin Café
24		Scotland Reunion

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