



## EASTER SPARKS

from the FLINT

April/May 2017

### GOD'S OWN GREEN THUMBS

by Rev. Debra T. Bibler, Executive Presbyterian

During the time before Easter, I was repeatedly drawn to this phrase in John's resurrection story:

*"supposing him to be the gardener" (John 20:15)*

Mary's first encounter with the risen Lord is replete with tiny details and layered images, but it's Jesus' mistaken identity as gardener that has captivated me this past season.



Why? **Because triumphant Jesus, King of Universe, looked like a scraggly gardener to disciple Mary.**

Do you recognize the incredible irony and the boundless hope wrapped up in this detail?

**Gardening is a messy and time-consuming business, requiring both imagination (*to see what is possible*) and perseverance (*to do what is necessary*).**

Our Savior Jesus Christ battled death and darkness and emerged victorious, *but not unscathed or unchanged*. Chances are he had more than a little dirt under his nails as he planted resurrection life in the very heart of all that we fear most. Mary's assumption that Jesus was the gardener doesn't seem that far-fetched to me. And then, when we remember that Scripture begins with the Garden of Eden and ends with the Tree of Life, Mary's assumption seems more fitting than ever.

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As we enter this Easter season, may we find ways to witness anew to our risen Lord, God's own green thumb. **And may we become green thumbs in our own right, cultivating congregations which are readily recognizable by their life-giving fruits (Galatians 5).** May we sow love with extravagant persistence, plant hope with imaginative abandon, and seed forgiveness with unshakable courage. Finally, may we then prune away whatever has become dead and lifeless in order to make room for new growth and fresh joy. Unpredictable weather, persistent pests, and unexpected weeds will always plague us. All the more reason to "dig in," trusting God to enfold every known challenge and unspoken fear with providence and love.

Christ is Risen!

May that truth tendril around our hearts; *and may we be changed not for our own sake, but for the healing of the world.*

Easter Blessings,

Deb

## *Pathfinders*

*a new, experimental resource available for our congregations*

**Presbytery Pathfinders** invites your questions and concerns about effective ministry in the 21st century.

We are members of FRP who are willing to meet and discuss the possible needs of your congregation as you seek to be fruitful witnesses to Jesus Christ. We explore demographics, generational issues, congregational strategies and leadership adjustments.

If you wish to meet, do contact the Presbytery Office with your needs and dates. We look forward to a discussion over a meal, a Bible Study, Sunday School, or a fellowship event.



From left to right: Fred Richmond, an elder at Americus, Rev. Jerry Little, honorably retired, and Jim Rodgers, a CRE at Camilla

**April/May 2017 Calendar**

**plus a link to our year-long calendar including committee dates and presbytery meeting dates!**

*\*All events are held at the presbytery office unless otherwise noted\*.*

**APRIL**

1 - 5		Deb Bibler on vacation
6	11:00 am - 4:00 pm 10:00 am	Reformation Project - Lake House Tornado Relief
8	10:00 am	CME, at FRP office
14		Closed - Good Friday
20	9:30 am	CPM
20 - 22		Finding Joy (education & evangelism events) in Albany, Columbus, & Macon
25	9:00 am - 3:00 pm	Board of Pension Educational Event, Columbia Theological Seminary
27	2:00 pm	Finance, Americus

**MAY**

1	11:00 am - 4:00 pm	Columbus Reformation Project
2	10:30 am	COM
4	10:00 am	CME
4	11:00 am - 4:00 pm	Lake House Reformation Project
4	12:00 noon - 2:00 pm	Central & South Clergy Cluster Lunch
6	10:00 am	COF, Presbytery
8 - 12		Deb Bibler, EP Continuing Education with Presbytery Leader formation
11	12:00 noon	NE Cluster Lunch
18	11:00 am 1:00 pm	Church Relations & Administration Team AB
26		FRP packet goes out
29		Closed - Memorial Day

**\*\* [2017 Annual Calendar](#) \*\***

available here with all known meetings for the year

AmazonSmile -- an easy way to give back to FRP

**Remember, always start at <http://smile.amazon.com>  
and Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible  
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<http://smile.amazon.com>

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