
AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2020

The SPARKS

Flint River Presbytery's E-Newsletter



A sunrise in Deb's neighborhood.

A Sparkler from the EP

Deb Tregaskis, Executive Presbyter

In the highly-acclaimed and widely-known musical Hamilton, the well-heeled Aaron Burr advises the penniless but ambitious Alexander Hamilton, "Smile more. Talk less."

I love this line! Years before a COVID pandemic was a reality, I loved this line!

Although offered as a recipe for sure-footed success, this line's strength lies in its subtle reminder that wisdom often rests in **intentionally-chosen joy and deliberate brevity.**

Not bad advice! Particularly during a global pandemic and national crises.

All of us are wading through a myriad of unparalleled opportunities and exceptional challenges.

At our very best, our beloved friends of Innovation and Imagination, Curiosity and Creativity accompany our decisions, conversations, and daily habits.

At our very worst, we assume that Fear has staying power, that Blame creates solutions.

In the midst of this tsunami where hope and hurt swirl around us in equal measure, it's easy to feel as if we have lost our footing.

So, beloved ones, let's take it one step *at a time* as we journey in the Way of Jesus.

- Be deeply tender with yourselves and one another.
 - *This season can make us softer and stronger or bitter and brittle.*
- Bless one another with second chances. Apologize easily.
- Listen more. Judge less.
- Take a chance; learn something new to stretch your mind and heart.
- Take a chance; give away more than you think reasonable.
- Stay awake to the suffering of your neighbors near and far.
- Stay awake to the place where your passion and your neighbors' pain meet.
- Savor Scripture.

It remains an honor to serve with you!

As a new season begins, hold your sister churches and campus ministries in the light of prayer.

Reach out to one another.

Above all.....

Stay curious.

Stay compassionate.

Stay connected to Jesus,

Deb

*"Be kind to one another,
tenderhearted, forgiving one
another, as God in Christ has
forgiven you."*

-Ephesians 4:32

TOP FIVE : Albums

Every issue, we're asking our serving pastors to contribute to this new segment, **Top Five**. We're working alphabetically and will be asking for a list of your favorites, whether titles of books, poetry, heroes of the Bible, paintings, recipes -- whatever! -- in order to share for our mutual enjoyment.

This installment is from **Joshua Bower**, pastor of First (Albany). To all who choose to dispute this ranking, Josh says, "Come at me!"

- 5) Guns and Roses, "Appetite for Destruction" 1987
- 4) Michael Jackson, "Thriller" 1982
- 3) Nirvana, "Nevermind" 1991
- 2) The Beatles, "Revolver" 1966
- 1) **The Beatles, "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" 1967**



Need a Bible Study?

Deb recently wrote a complete Bible Study of Habakkuk, a minor prophet who has a lot to say to us during this pandemic. Designed for pastoral leaders, this Bible study can be used by anyone!

Please share and use. Let us know what you loved and whether you'd like more.

[Click Here: Bible Study on Habakkuk](#)



Inspiration On the Go

Pray as You Go is a 10-12 minute daily prayer session based on Ignatian Spirituality and produced by a number of Jesuits in Britain and beyond.

Ignatian Spirituality is designed for everyday life and insists that God is present -- and active -- in our world. This type of spirituality offers practices which create pathways to deepened prayer, keen discernment, and active service.

For daily inspiration, download "Pray As You Go" at your App Store.

We Are Connected

"I am the vine, you are the branches." John 15:5



A warm welcome to **Sarah McClelland-Brown** who is now serving as the stated supply at First (Warner Robins). A 2013 graduate of Columbia Theological Seminary, she is married to Jonathan, who serves as an associate pastor at Vineville United Methodist in Macon. Together, they enjoy the daily antics of their toddler Camille, while also expecting their newest addition in late August!

Many thanks to **Bryan Whitfield**, professor of religion at Mercer University, who continues to bless us with his scholastic rigor and pastor's heart. He is currently serving as a temporary supply at **Fort Valley** until the academic season begins.



Charlotte Caldwell, commissioned ruling elder at Beth Salem and **Raymond Guterman**, interim at Donalsonville both suffered mild strokes on Sunday July 19th. Please hold both colleagues and their congregations in prayer as they make full recoveries.

Remember the family and friends of **Jerry Voye**, who served as our Executive Presbyter in the 1990s. [His obituary can be found here.](#)

Speaking of former execs, please continue to remember **Paul Luthman** who underwent another back surgery in mid-July. He is on the road to recovery, but prayers and cards are always appreciated.

If you'd like to include information about your pastoral leader in our next SPARKS, [please email Elizabeth Cantrell.](#)



Singing (or Not) During a Pandemic

Brian Hehn, who served as our lively and engaging musician at our last two *Celebration of Faith* events, participated as Director of the Center for Congregational Song (a division of The Hymn Society), with an ecumenical group in consultation with the CDC to release ["Resuming Care-filled Worship and Sacramental Life During a Pandemic."](#)

Please take a minute to read about how we can all contribute to keeping each other safe during the pandemic.

And [don't forget about the countless resources available around COVID on our website](#) to help your session determine the wisest way forward **during** this time.



Did You Miss It?

Now, for the first time, you can [register and experience the Presbyterian Association of Musicians' \(PAM\) recent Worship and Music Conference after it has ended.](#) You can view all 96 recordings of PAM's conference content whenever you like – including worship, Routley Lectures, art workshop, concerts, choral and handbell master classes, programs for children/youth, and more. These recordings demonstrate what physically distant worship can look like and can help supplement your church's programming for the fall.