



In This Issue

[Letter from our Pastor](#)

[From the Treasurer](#)

[G2G Kids & WOW](#)

[St. Andrews Youth](#)

[Volunteers Needed](#)

[March Birthdays and Anniversaries](#)

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Letter from our Pastor

Lenten Sermon Series begins next Sunday *Unity, Reconciliation, and Diversity - The Call of the Confession of Belhar*

The season of Lent is a time for a probing consideration of our human condition, including sin and its deadly consequences for both individuals and society. Lent is also a time for an equally intense consideration of the new possibilities offered to us in Jesus Christ and their implications for practical living. Confession is always an important part of a faithful observance of Lent as we prepare ourselves for Easter. By spending time with a confession of faith we can gain new insight into what we are called to do and be.

The Confession of Belhar is the Presbyterian Church's newest confession of faith. Arising out of South Africa in 1986 as a response to Apartheid, *Belhar* calls for reconciliation, justice, and unity. Join us as we learn from its wisdom for our own time and place as we explore reconciliation of broken relationships; the work of justice for all people, in the neighborhood and around the world; and the work for unity as the church by lovingly and compassionately accepting those with whom we differ.

March 5

Confession Matthew 28:16-20

March 12

Unity Ephesians 4:1-16



March 19

Reconciliation Ephesians 2:11-22

March 26

Justice Amos 5:21-24

April 2

Benediction Matthew 16:13-20

April 9

Palm & Passion Sunday

Matthew 21:1-11; 27:11-31

April 16

Easter

Matthew 28:1-10

What is *The Belhar Confession*? The Confession of *Belhar* is a powerful confession of Christian faith that emerged in South Africa during the years of Apartheid. It is named for the city in South Africa where it was first adopted. It is a statement that focuses on three themes, Unity, Reconciliation, and Justice, in a church environment where racial separation made it impossible for brothers and sisters in Christ to worship together or come to the Lord's Table together. Churches around the globe have recognized the power and theological insight of *Belhar* as an expression of Scriptural truth for their own contexts. In 2016 the 222nd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) formally adopted the confession into Part I of our constitution, *The Book of Confessions*.

Who wrote *the Belhar Confession* and why? *The Belhar Confession* was originally adopted by the Dutch Reformed Mission Church as it protested the sin of apartheid which had been present within the church itself. Just a few years later it became the confession of the Uniting Reformed Church of Southern Africa, the reunion of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church and the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa. The two principal authors were Russel Botman and Dirk Smit.

From the Treasurer

Financially the church is in good shape. In February our income was \$31,456.00, and our expenses totaled \$28,608.52. The year-to-date figures are \$62,891.86 income and \$64,415.95 expenses. We do have a year-to-date deficit of \$1524.09, which is not unusual for the beginning of the year.

Currently we have a mortgage balance of \$483,358.20. We have \$114,302.87 in our

mortgage fund, and a monthly payment of \$4111. Thus we have funds on hand to cover about 28 months of payments.

Our cash holdings at the end of January amount to \$302,494.73. These are for our Designated accounts, including endowment funds, mortgage funds, operating reserve, and many others.

Let me know if you have any questions.

Al Smith, Treasurer

WOW - March 15

Glory to God Kids (G2G) and What's On Wednesdays (WOW)

We will have a kid-friendly meal with a program for adults and worship arts workshops for the kids. Adults pay \$5 for the meal, but the kids eat free. Everyone is dismissed by 7:30 p.m. G2G Kids is open to children pre-K through 5th grade. For more information, please email Phyllis Bearden, pbearden47@bellsouth.net or call at 404-580-8679.

Adult Programming

Jesus was a refugee. There modern refugees in our midst. Alla Yoonis, Community Outreach AmeriCorps member at New American Pathways will speak to us about their work with the refugee population in Clarkston and the greater Atlanta area. Come find out about the programs and resources New American Pathways offers to new refugees in our areas and ways you can be involved in their efforts.

St. Andrews Youth

St. Andrews youth are preparing for a June mission trip to Mobile Bay. During Lent, Caring for Creation offers an opportunity to learn about the water ways that feed Mobile Bay and the challenges associated with maintaining clean, healthy water and clean, healthy, economically viable land along this water system.

Water that flows into Mobile Bay may begin in Georgia! In northwest Georgia near Rome (and as far south as the northern parts of Atlanta) the Oostanula

and Etowah Rivers converge and become the headwaters for the Coosa River. Water flows in a westward direction for 30 miles into Alabama before flowing south past Gadsden and Childersburg, joining the Tallapoosa River just south of Wetumpka to form the Alabama River. The total drainage area for the Coosa basin is 10,161 square miles. Approximately 4,400 square miles are in Georgia and Tennessee with the remaining area in Alabama.

The Tallapoosa River also begins in northwest Georgia, south of Rome and including Carrollton. The Tallapoosa tributaries flow through 4 Georgia counties into Alabama. The Alabama River, formed by the joining of the Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers, flows through 18 Alabama counties before joining the Tombigbee River to form the Mobile River which flows into Mobile Bay.

Along their route river systems provide drinking water, water for municipal and industrial usage, energy, agriculture, impoundments and recreation. During Lent, discover this river system, learn the challenges faced by local communities and consider ways to help maintain the river systems that feed both bodies and souls.

<http://garivers.org/other-georgia-rivers/coosa-river.html>

Nursery Volunteers Needed

We Need Your Help! Beginning January, 2017, we have been staffing our nursery on Sunday mornings with St. Andrews volunteers only, as we are no longer using a paid nursery worker. We need two volunteers in the nursery room each Sunday morning from 8:55 until 11:15 am and so far this transition has gone well, thanks to our current volunteers: Monica Komi, Deby Brooke, Mary O'Brien, Farah Ranaivoarisoa, Corinna Papotto, Rachel Ellingson, Natalia Papotto, and Victoria Ashby. Thank you for your dedicated loyalty.

However, we could really use some additional volunteers! We need to make sure we always have enough volunteers to continue to provide this important service for our congregation.

If you think you might be interested, please
communicate with Jill Jarvis at
jilljarvis18@comcast.net or call 770-923-3370

March Birthdays

1st- Julie Todd
3rd- Olivia Held
8th- Phyllis Bearden
9th- Cassie Westbrook
10th- Brendan Phillips, Chris Fuller
13th- Jane Wentz
19th- Tom Evans
20th- Sarah Slusher
21st- Carol Gordon
22nd- Arch Baker
25th- Ted Heffner
31st- Pam Kachmar

March Anniversaries

20th- David & Mary McCowen
Peter & Sharon Shenkman
23rd- Mike & Phyllis Bearden
26th- Dave & Mary Jentoft
