



Stockbridge Presbyterian Church

Rev. Susan Bennett, Pastor

NOVEMBER 2015



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 All Saints' Day Daylight Savings Time Ends 12:15 Youth Meeting (Lee Hart)	2 12:00 OA Mtg. 7:00 AA Mtg.	3 12:00 PW#1 Circle Mtg. 7:00 Boy Scouts	4 7:30 AM AA Mtg. 5:00 G&G 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	5 9:00 Prayer Group 10:00 Women's Bible Study 7:00 AA Mtg.	6 7:00 Girl Scouts	7
8 Veterans' Day Service 12:00 Congregational Meeting	9 12:00 OA Mtg. 7:00 AA Mtg.	10 9:00 Presbytery Meeting 12:00 GRG-Annual Mtg. 7:00 Boy Scouts	11 Happy Veterans' Day 7:30 AM AA Mtg. 5:00 G&G 6:00 Prayer Group 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	12 10:00 BFB 7:00 AA Mtg.	13 7:00 Girl Scouts	14 6:00 - 10 PM Bonfire at Stephanie Dunn's House (Youth)
15 (TBD)	16 12:00 OA Mtg. 7:00 AA Mtg.	17 9:00 Early Risers 7:00 Stated Session Mtg. 7:00 Boy Scouts	18 7:30 AM AA Mtg. 5:00 G&G 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	19 10:00 Women's Bible Study 7:00 AA Mtg.	20 7:00 Girl Scouts	21 11:00 (Youth) Thanksgiving Gala Event
22 (Aaron Roberts)	23 12:00 OA Mtg. 7:00 AA Mtg.	24	25 7:30 AM AA Mtg.	26 Happy Thanksgiving! Office Closed 7:00 AA Mtg.	27	28
Thanksgiving Break - School's Out						
29 12:15 Advent Craft Sale (TBD)	30 12:00 AA Mtg. 7:00 AA Mtg.	 <p>Friends, the Session is calling our congregation to a season of prayer and intercession for our church. There will be 2 times of group prayer: the first Thursday morning of every month at 9:00 A.M., and the second Wednesday evening at 6:00 P.M. So we'll begin by meeting on Thursday, November 5, 2015 at 9:00 A.M. in Fellowship Hall, and also Wednesday, November 11, 2015 at 6:00 P.M. in Fellowship Hall. These dates and times are negotiable, but the Session's hope is to make these group prayer times available both to those who have jobs and those who are retired.</p> <p>What will this all look like? We'll be praying that each of us will seek and find a renewed passion for God in our own lives. We'll ask God for direction for our church, for him to remind us always that he alone is our Rock and foundation. We'll pray for the elders, pastor, and Clerk of Session specifically and by name. We'll pray for each of the unique ministries God has given us as a church. We'll pray for the future -- 2016 and beyond. And we'll ask God to show us his Spirit and his will in all that's said and done and decided around here.</p> <p>I'll be at both of these prayer times every month and I'm already praying that YOU will see how crucial prayer is right now for SPC, and do your best to come to one or both groups. Let me know if you have questions/ideas. Let's get busy praying!</p> <p>Love to each of you -- Susan</p>				



Nov 8 Gene Park
 Nov 9 Sally Smith
 Nov 10 Carrie Keller
 Nov 14 E.G. Mani
 Nov 14 Diana Taylor
 Nov 16 Barbara Anne Bailey
 Nov 17 Aaron Roberts
 Nov 20 Bettye Cochran
 Nov 27 Michael Bennett
 Nov 27 Justin Palmer
 Nov 30 Don Dunlap

SPE SPOTLIGHT

The Church At The Bridge

From My Heart To Yours

I hate to be predictable, talking about gratitude in Thanksgiving season, but I'm going to do it anyway. There are a few things about gratitude that I absolutely believe are true. A lifestyle of gratitude is more than just saying "thank you" when someone is kind to us, or being grateful to God for our material blessings – although those things are hugely important. But some people seem grateful no matter what's happening; they seem thankful practically all the time. A simple word of praise thrills them. They're delighted when their friend gets good news. A sunny day makes them smile. And a grateful heart, a life of gratitude, can lower our blood pressure, relax our tummy aches, cause us to laugh a lot (always a good thing) – and, best of all, help us feel closer to God in no time at all.

Gratitude happens when a kindness exceeds our expectations, or when we receive a kindness we know we don't deserve. When a kindness is also a surprise, gratitude is the laughter of our heart. Gratitude brings joy.

Joy is my favorite place to be.

When a couple comes to me for pre-marital counseling, I always make sure to spend a lot of our time discussing expectations. Because, as I'm fond of saying, expectations will kill us – especially unspoken expectations. The groom may never say it, but his expectation may be that his wife will do all the housework and child care with minimal participation from him – just like his mother. The bride, on the other hand, is likely expecting that she and her husband will both work full time and share equally in household responsibilities. However, her father always provided extravagant gifts for her mother, so she may expect that, as well. She may expect to be coddled when she's sick. He may expect the freedom to be gone most weekends during hunting season. Each of them enters the marriage with a truckload of expectations about how things will be. The honeymoon period is wonderful and everyone's on good behavior. Then, inevitably, expectations collide. Disappointment is deep. The fighting starts. And if the marriage is going to continue, expectations must be continually lowered or dropped altogether. Without bitterness. OUCH.

It's not just a problem in marriages! Any time our expectations are high, we're going to be disappointed. I took a train from Atlanta to Baltimore last year, expecting it to be just like it is in the movies – private compartments, a lovely dining room, friendly people. HA! What a mess! It was about 20 hours each way of complete, unrelieved, noisy misery. Was I feeling grateful for ANYTHING? Nope, not even for a second. My high expectations bit the dust within minutes of boarding, and I was NOT happy.

Which brings me to my point. If we kind of enjoy being disappointed and resentful, we should keep our expectations of life and the world HIGH. If we want to be grateful and happy, we need to keep our expectations LOW.

A little bit of honest self-reflection will help with this. We're not perfect, are we? We make mistakes, we say or do mean

or dumb things sometimes, we procrastinate: we're sinners! My guess is that anyone with high expectations of US is going to be pretty disappointed from time to time. So, since we're not perfect, how can we expect perfection of others?

Pride and being critical and judgmental of others will stop gratitude in its tracks. But if our expectations of others are low, we're delighted with any good thing that comes our way. It's not that we think poorly of each other! There's nothing negative about this at all. We're simply being realistic and compassionate. We're all just human, most of us doing the best we can in lives that are rarely, if ever, easy.

So here are the things about gratitude that I believe are true:

It's a choice. We can decide to stay grumpy and negative. Or we can decide to be grateful for whom God is and how kind and wonderful he is towards us. Even when our lives are difficult.

Gratitude thrives when we quit expecting people to perform to our high expectations, and simply love them as they are.

Being grateful to God no matter what will help us to be healthier physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually.

Do you yearn to experience the actual presence of God? Say "thank you" to him. Remind yourself of the blessing and abundance he's poured into you and into your life.

You're going to pretty quickly feel better if you do this.

In fact, you're going to be JOYFUL.

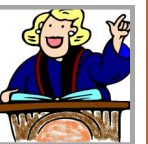
Lowering our expectations of those around us is a gift we give them. Goodness knows, it's a gift that God gives each of us all the time! Let's invite gratitude into our hearts and lives. And our celebration of Thanksgiving will be more meaningful than ever.

Love to each of you – see you in church!

Susan

UPCOMING SERMONS

- NOV 1 All Saints' Sunday
Isaiah 25:6-9
Revelation 21:1-6a
"Then and Now and Later"
- NOV 8 1 Samuel 3:1-10
Hebrews 10:11-25
"A Passion for God"
- NOV 15 Mark 12:38-44
Psalm 127:1-2
"When the Lord Builds the Church"
- NOV 22 Thanksgiving Service of Music and Testimonies
- NOV 29 First Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 40:1-11
Luke 1:5-25
"Reclaiming Hope"



YOUTH NEWS

Hello to all,
 What do I have to be thankful for? This year and the last couple of years have been doozies...and I often find myself asking that question. Then I look at my family and friends, my life and ability to live it well, and I realize that I have way more to be thankful for than I ever deserve. And I know that God is truly so good to me.

Thessalonians 5:18 says:
 Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus. - This verse says that it's God's will for everyone who believes in Jesus to be thankful. There are some things that happen in our lives that we are truly thankful for. We are thankful for our family, friends, love, and good health. But some things that happen are really difficult. We might have a chronic illness, the death of a loved one, divorce, or some other sad event. How can God expect us to be grateful for those things? Some might think that this verse says to be thankful FOR all of our circumstances. But the verse actually says to be thankful IN all circumstances. The original Hebrew word for IN that is used here means "in the middle of" or "during."

In other words, no matter what is happening in your life, you can be thankful. The Bible gives us a long list of things we should be thankful for. These are the things that never change, no matter what is happening in your life. We are to be thankful:

That God is good. (1 Chronicles 16:34); That His love lasts forever. (Psalm 106:1); For God's amazing grace. (1 Corinthians 1:11); For the wonderful things God does. (Psalm 107:8); Because God answers prayers. (Psalm 118:21); For His perfect laws. (Psalm 119:62); Because God gives us wisdom and reveals His truth to us. (Daniel 2:22-23); For other believers. (Philippians 1:3)

And most of all, we should be thankful because God gave His Son, Jesus, to save us from the punishment of our sin, and give us new life! (1 Corinthians 15:57) God has saved all who believe in Jesus; He has taken our sin and given us His righteousness.

The Bible says that being thankful brings honor to God (Psalm 50:23). God actually commands us to be thankful. When we thank God, we acknowledge that He deserves the credit. He has done for us what we could not do for ourselves. When others see you thank God, you point them to Him.

Giving thanks also helps us, because it makes us focus our attention back to the One we are thanking! Giving thanks is like putting on spiritual eyeglasses that help you focus on God. It will remind you that God is in control of everything. He never changes and He only allows what is good for you. You can have FAITH in God's goodness, and not FEAR the things around you. No matter what is happening in your life, give thanks to God in the middle of your circumstances. (Bible.org)

So when we are giving thanks for the wonderful blessings in our lives, remember above all, give thanks to God no matter where we are in our circumstances. Have a wonderful holiday.

Love to all,
 Stephanie



The Fuzzy Tree will soon appear because Christmas time is getting near!

CHRISTIAN ED

Sharing is something we're taught very early (hopefully). I never had any siblings, so I only had to share when friends came over, and I don't remember struggling with that, though my parents may tell you differently. But in my head, I was always good about sharing with those around me. The same should be true with God's love. Paul says in his second book to the Corinthians that "God loves a cheerful giver." We are blessed to have found a church in Stockbridge Presbyterian where sharing is a way of life. Mission opportunities are embraced here, and so many of our members dive in eagerly to lend a hand. Our Youth Group absolutely loves their summer mission trip, and not just because they get a week's break from their parents and responsibilities. Goodness and Groceries continues to steam ahead, and those who attend enjoy it each week. Of course, with Christmas less than two months away, our Christmas Basket ministry is back again. We will be helping more kids than ever this year, but the immediate response you've provided is VERY encouraging.

We also share God's love with each other each Sunday. Passing the peace of Christ is probably a favorite of many in our congregation, and it offers a convenient way for our late arrivers to be seated. It's a win for everyone! Our choir, music leaders, liturgists, children sermonizers, and pastor all share their talents with us every week. The crowd that attended our recent Youth Group chili luncheon was cheerful and talkative, sharing fellowship while relaxing after church ended. Once you've found a group you love, it's easy and enjoyable to share with them. We've got that in SPC, so now we've got to figure out what to do with all this goodwill INSIDE our church. It'd be downright selfish to keep all of God's love to ourselves inside our church walls, so let's continue to reach out and let it spread. There's plenty to go around and the supply appears unlimited.

Aaron Roberts

November Youth Events

- Nov 1** Meeting at Church 12:15 until 2 PM
- Nov 14** Bonfire at Stephanie's house 6:00 - 10 PM (Saturday night)
- Nov 21** Thanksgiving Gala - Feed the Homeless Meet at the Church @ 11:00 AM

The month of November the Youth are having a canned food drive for the "Thanksgiving Gala Feed the Homeless" Event.



WITNESS



ADVENT SALE

Mark your calendars for our first annual Advent Sale, **Sunday, November 29, 2015**, immediately following the worship service. You will be amazed at the number of hand made items your Church family and friends have made for you to purchase. What better way to do some Christmas shopping and support our outreach ministries here at SPC? We will open the sale to the public at 2:00 PM, but we wanted our church family to have first choice. So be sure to head straight for the Fellowship Hall after the worship services. You can shop for a few minutes or a few hours. There will be something for everyone, so bring your Christmas list. Some of the items are: Christmas ornaments; school teacher gifts; crocheted and knitted lap blankets, baby blankets, bibs, burp clothes, baby bonnets; doggy coats; handmade jewelry; delicious baked goods of all sorts; bird houses and bird feeders. These are just a few of the things that will be available. Come out and support our efforts, God smiles when He sees us together! Hope to see each of you November 29th.



Our annual Christmas Basket Ministry is officially underway! This year we have more kids than ever in need of help, so please volunteer to adopt a child and shop for presents as soon as possible. We are

asking that each adoptive congregation member spend \$75.00 for each child, and this will cover clothing and presents. I have A LOT of experience buying items for children, so yes, \$75 will buy quite a few goodies for a child at Christmastime. Please contact me, Arlene Lathrop, Kim Seal, or the church office to volunteer. Thank you SO MUCH and Merry Christmas!

Aaron Roberts



Attention Church Members 50 + Gold Rush Gang November Annual Meeting & Pot Luck Luncheon Tuesday, November 10th 12:00 Noon in the Fellowship Hall

The Gold Rush Gang Annual Meeting is drawing near. And we hope you'll be there! To help plan the exciting events For the 2016 year! We'll elect officers too, And maybe one of them will be YOU! And then there's lunch! The best cooks are in this Gold Rush Gang Bunch! So come and meet and give Your support and time. Because without your help this could be the Gold Rush Gang's last rhyme! You'll enjoy the food and fellowship with everyone! At the end of the meeting we know you'll say "That sure was fun!"



WORSHIP



Word from Ward

Below is a letter that I sent out recently to some choir prospects. I thought it might be helpful or at least informative to make everyone aware of our status as per music.

You certainly have noticed that our congregation and choir have shrunk lately, something that Susan has been preaching about recently and with good reason.. Our beloved choir has lost two long-standing choir members to death this year; those, of course, being Jack White, tenor, and Allison Johnson, alto. Then, there is Cindy Strong, another excellent alto who moved to a church closer to her home.

Tami Pass wants very much to sing alto with us too, but she is with child and cannot be as regular as she would like. We have made necessary adjustments like moving Arlene to alto, but fact is, we need more singers, especially for Christmas.

I worry that one day we might not even have a choir. Of course, at that point there would really be no reason for me to stay. Too bad, because I love it at SPC. I have never experienced such a loving fellowship, and I have worked at a lot of churches. It is my hope that ours is my last one.

So, I am making a heartfelt request that you consider at least singing with us on a temporary basis for Christmas. I know you enjoy sitting with your friends in the congregation, but surely they would understand our need. Maybe some of them could join us too, just for Christmas. Music readership is not required, and I provide convenient recordings for folks to practice at home, too.

Finally, please pray for our choir. And let me know if I can help in any way.

Devotedly,
 Ward

P.S. We rejoice in the addition of Dorothy Clark as our new organist and bell choir director. We will be hearing more about the beginnings of the bell choir right after Christmas.

A Note from Dorothy

Thank you all so much for welcoming me into your congregation as I come to serve as your organist. You are a warm and friendly group of folks, and it is a great pleasure to serve the Lord alongside you. I got a kick out of one dear lady when she asked me what denomination I am. When I said "Presbyterian. I'm a member at Columbia Pres. in Decatur," she exclaimed, "I knew it, I just knew it! You play the organ like a Presbyterian!" That cracked me up and pleased me no end!

Now I come to some arm-twisting: Ward and Susan have been good enough to let me be the hand bell choir director when we get that ministry going in the new year! Hand bells are one of my passions, and as I told them when they interviewed me, I am a hand bell freak! Although we have been gifted with four octaves of bells, I would like to start by ringing two octaves. That calls for eight ringers. (Do you feel your arm beginning to twist?) Or if eleven of you want to ring, that is the number to ring three octaves. (Twist, twist!)

In order to ring hand bells, you do not have to be a musical genius or read music like a pro. A year or two of piano lessons when you were a kid or a stint in your high school band would have given you everything you need to know. If you have always want-

SESSION/STEWARDSHIP NEWS

Clerk's Report

The Session received a letter from Thornwell Home for Children requesting our continued financial support.

The Session received a letter from Presbyterian Homes of Georgia thanking SPC for our contribution of \$95.00 to the Caring Hands Fund. The Consent Agenda was approved for September.

Jim reminded the committees of requirements for the 2015 annual report and 2016 activities calendar.

Susan reported on the August Presbytery meeting. **Resources Committee** August 2015 financial statements were reviewed.

Witness Committee

No issues or recommendations.

Worship and Education Committee:

The Session approved the use of our sanctuary as a neutral pulpit on Sunday, 9/27/15 for the Conyers Presbyterian church pastor search committee.

The Session approved a love offering to be collected surreptitiously for Zachary Smith and presented to him on his final Sunday at SPC.

Pastor's Report:

Susan discussed a training opportunity presented by the Presbytery on "Deepening Spiritual Leadership in the Church".

New Business:

The Resource Committee presented a proposal from someone who desires to donate a van. The Committee recommends not accepting the offer due to maintenance upkeep costs, insurance cost, and not having enough ministries to justify the van. After discussion the Session approved not accepting the van.

The Session approved accepting a donation to replace the side doors entering the education building.

The Session approved a 2% cost of living and up to a 2% performance based raise for a maximum raise of 4% for all church employees.

Donations Needed

We are collecting travel size toiletries for our G&G kids, who attend Stockbridge Middle School. The items needed are:

- Deodorant
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrushes
- Brushes
- Combs
- Washed Clothes

There will be a box located in the Narthex for your donations, and also in the back left corner of the Fellowship Hall. Thank you for your amazing generosity!

(Note from Dorothy con't)

ed to be a part of a music group at SPC but aren't much of a singer (that's me!), handbells may be just your opportunity! Anyone who reads music even a tiny bit and is high school age or older is welcome to check out our new handbell choir. Watch for announcements in upcoming newsletters and bulletins and think about becoming a part of Dorothy's Ding-a-lings!

FELLOWSHIP



Every Sunday morning at 9:00 AM a delicious breakfast is served in the Fellowship Hall. This is a wonderful time of fellowship.

Please consider signing up to prepare a breakfast one Sunday. The sign up sheet is located on the refrigerator in the fellowship hall.



Day Light Savings Time Ends Nov. 1, 2015



OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

BEADLE

- Nov 1** Jason Howard
- Nov 8** Cooper Keller
- Nov 15** Linda Roberts
- Nov 22** Ron Scheer
- Nov 29** TBD

ACOLYTE

- Nov 1** Sydney Holloway
- Nov 8** Breana Huggins
- Nov 15** Isabella Newsome
- Nov 22** Marie Anna LaFaye Coutin-Baxter
- Nov 29** Elle Roberts

LITURGISTS

- Nov 1** Lee Hart
- Nov 8** Stephanie Dunn
- Nov 15** TBD
- Nov 22** Aaron Roberts
- Nov 29** TBD

CHILDREN'S SERMON

- Nov 1** Tami Pass
- Nov 8** Sue Scheer
- Nov 15** John Dunn
- Nov 22** Stephanie Dunn
- Nov 29** Betsy Sierra

CHILDREN'S WORSHIP WORKERS

- Nov 1** Greg Lathrop
- Nov 8** Tami Pass & Alisa Newsome
- Nov 15** Kirubanithy Mani
- Nov 22** Phyllis Howard & Kime Seal
- Nov 29** Diana Taylor & Stephanie Dunn