Sunday Schedule

9:00am Sunday School
10:30am Worship
11:30am Deeper
4:00pm 7th Ave Worship Meal

January 2017

I am the vine, you are the branches.
He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.

John 15:5

Rev. Dr. Michelle McClendon
Associate Pastor

Robert & Annette Hudson
Music Directors

Rev. Gail Coulter
Pastor Emerita

Artist Unknown
From the desk of Michelle McClendon. . .

“Pastoral Hodgepodge”

So much swirling in my heart and mind today. Time to focus on any one thing is at a premium! Sunday’s coming. So many things to do. My immediate family has imminent and unexpected needs. There are other people with needs in Greenville and Hendersonville. Some of my framily is moving to Washington, DC today. LOTS on the pastoral plate. That’s really how I like it, too, by the way.

Over the years, I’ve come to embrace the reality that pastoring is a ministry of interruption... HOLY interruptions that shape life and render sacred the ground on which we walk. I’m grateful for the example of Jesus. His was a ministry of interruption. He constantly did the loving thing in and through the interruption, the unplanned, the moment. And he was able to stay centered in the midst of the needs, the criticisms, the need to teach others, the demands. Jesus lived from his center, humbling himself, walking with God.

This Proclaimer article for February was due a week ago, and when Davina kindly reminded me again that she needed my article, I decided to see it as a holy interruption. I also decided that my center was being stretched at the moment, so this article is a pastoral brain dump designed to center me and pull all the fragments of thought swirling around into a more coherent whole. Maybe this attempt at centering my heart and mind in the midst of the holy interruptions of my life will be of some help to you, too!

So in no particular order:

- You have to listen to Carrie Newcomer’s new album: *The Beautiful Not Yet*. And her song, “Lean In Toward the Light” is a true gift of hope and affirmation. Here’s the phrase that caught me and drew me in: “Today is now, tomorrow beckons. Lean in toward the Light. Keep practicing resurrection. The shadows of this world will say, There’s no hope why try anyway? But every kindness large or slight, shifts the balance toward the light. “I needed to hear that. It’s another way of framing Micah 6:8: “What does the Lord require of you? Act justly, love mercy, walk humbly with God.” I think those words guided Jesus’ life on this earth. I want them to guide mine too. This prophetic charge sounds simple. It isn’t. Carrie’s words give me hope: “every kindness large or slight shifts the balance toward the Light.”
• The season of Lent is upon us. Here is the list of groups we will offer this year. I’m really excited about these groups and grateful to those who have said ‘yes’ to leading them!
  ▪ Dutch Coulter will lead a study of Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s “Psalms: The Prayerbook of the Bible”
  ▪ Evan Beasley will lead a discussion of readings from the book “The Christ-haunted Landscape: Faith and Doubt in Southern Fiction” by Susan Ketchin
  ▪ Ardie Gallant and Glenda Tapper will lead a study of Barbara Brown Taylor’s “An Altar in the World”
• On February 26, we will host Odja Barros Santos and Wellington Santos. Odja and Wellington are Brazilian Baptists, actively involved in the Alliance of Baptists of Brazil. Wellington is senior pastor and Odja is associate pastor of education at the Baptist Church of Pinhiero, Brazil. Odja has also taught in Brazilian seminaries and Wellington has served as President of the Alliance of Baptists in Brazil and is currently the regional coordinator for Northeast Brazil for the Latin American Theological Fraternity. Odja is currently in the states on study leave. She has developed several Bible study methods and is a writer. Wellington has a beautiful voice, in addition to his leadership and pastoral gifts! They will be with us for the Sunday School hour beginning at 9, speaking, and teaching. They will be worship leaders on Sunday and join us for the lunch and church conference on the 26th. I hope you will make time to hear them. Gail Coulter will be preaching that Sunday too! Transfiguration Sunday will be a high and holy day!
• Our values emphasis continues as Alfredo Oviedo preaches this Sunday. His text is I Corinthians 3:1-9. I hope you will read that passage and meditate on it before Sunday morning. The value on which he is speaking is “Growth” and his sermon title is “The Eco Green Movement: A Metaphor for Congregational Growth.” On February 19, Eric and Katie Gash will be our guests. Eric is preaching our providence value of “Hospitality.” This series on our values has plowed up new and even unsettling ground in my soul. My prayer is that we can use the insights from the outside to lead us to examine our values and live more fully into the identity they shape.
• Finally, in honor of Black History Month, I will close with this poem by Howard Thurman, an influential African-American author, philosopher, theologian, educator, and civil rights leader. In “The Growing Edge,” Thurman reminds us of the hope that we hold in days when life overwhelms, darkness seems to prevail, and the going grows difficult.
The Proclaimer

The Growing Edge by Howard Thurman

All around us worlds are dying and new worlds are being born;
All around us life is dying and life is being born:
The fruit ripens on the tree.
The roots are silently at work in the darkness of the earth
Against the time when there shall be new leaves, fresh blossoms, green fruit,
Such is the growing edge!
It is the extra breath from the exhausted lung,
The one more thing to try when all else has failed.
The upward reach of life when weariness is upon all endeavor.
This is the basis of hope in the moments of despair,
The incentive to carry on when life is out of joint.
And men have lost their reason; the source of confidence
when worlds crash and dreams whiten into ash.
The birth of a child—life’s most dramatic answer to death—
This is the Growing Edge incarnate.
Look well to the growing edge!

Please join us!
Lunch and Business Meeting
February 26
after church in the Fellowship Hall.

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that bears no fruit, He takes away. And every branch that bears fruit, He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean through the word which I have spoken to you. Remain in Me, as I also remain in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it remains in the vine, neither can you, unless you remain in Me.”
John 15:1-4 (MEV)
Brazilian Pastors to be our guests—February 26

Wellington Santos and Odja Barros Santos will be our guests on Sunday, February 26. Wellington and Odja are Brazilian Baptist pastors—senior pastor and associate pastor in education—of the Baptist Church of Pinhiero, Brazil. Both are leaders in the Alliance of Baptists of Brazil. Odja has taught in Brazilian seminaries and developed Bible study methods that are being used in Baptist churches in Brazil. She is currently studying in the United States. Wellington is a recognized leader in the Alliance of Baptists in Brazil and serves at the Regional Coordinator of Northeast Brazil for Latin American Theological Fraternity. He is also a wonderful musician. They will be leading Sunday School on February 26, and offering worship leadership. There will be a time during the lunch and church conference to ask them some questions and learn more about their work.

“You shall love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” Those most likely to befriend strangers, in other words, are those who have been strangers themselves. The best way to grow empathy for those who are lost is to know what it means to be lost yourself.”
— Barbara Brown Taylor, An Altar in the World: A Geography of Faith
Lenten Groups for 2017

Lenten study groups have become a tradition at Providence. The Adult Equipping Team has been at work on our groups for 2017 and are pleased to offer three book study/discussions that will begin after Ash Wednesday (March 1).

- “The Christ-haunted Landscape: Faith and Doubt in Southern Fiction” by Susan Ketchin ~ Discussion facilitated by Evan Beasley ~ Thursdays, March 2 - April 6, 6:30pm ~ Beasley residence

"Old-time religion" has been and still is a uniquely potent force in shaping the imaginations of southern fiction writers. A little more than a generation ago, Flannery O’Connor made a startling observation about herself and her fellow southerners: "By and large," she said, "people in the South still conceive of humanity in theological terms. While the South is hardly Christ-centered, it is most certainly Christ-haunted. The Southerner who isn’t convinced of it is very much afraid that he may have been formed in the image and likeness of God." Still earlier in the century H. L. Mencken wrote that the South consisted of a "cesspool of Baptists, a miasma of Methodists, snake charmers, phony real estate operators, and syphilitic evangelists." This book explores the roles that various strands of southern religion, most prominently Evangelical Protestantism (both black and white) and Catholicism, have played in shaping contemporary southern fiction. The Christ-Haunted Landscape collects works by twelve southerners living and working in the South…. Susan Ketchin has included a descriptive profile and an original interview with each author, critical commentaries on each author's works as a whole and representative fiction (short story or excerpt from a novel). Her introduction discusses the religious and cultural forces that have impact on today's imaginative writers whose fiction is enhanced by the legacy of Faulkner, O'Connor, and Percy." (From Goodreads.com)

- “Psalms: The Prayerbook of the Bible” by Dietrich Bonhoeffer ~ Study facilitated by Dutch Coulter ~ Tuesdays, March 7 - April 11, 10-11:30am ~ Providence House

“In this beautiful little book, Bonhoeffer guides the Christian to the Scriptures for lessons in how to pray. He affirms that the Lord's Prayer is the primary prayer of the Christian, which he asserts contains every prayer that a Christian ought to pray. Bonhoeffer also makes a startling but wise claim that jolts us out of the narrowness of our focus in prayer: "The richness of the Word of God ought to determine our prayer, not the poverty of our heart." Thus we find the book of Psalms to be a rich treasury of prayers that are part of God's inspired word, and therefore a true place to learn how God would have us pray." (From Goodreads)
“An Altar in the World” by Barbara Brown Taylor ~ Study Facilitated by Ardie Gallant and Glenda Tapper ~ Begins Wednesdays, March 8 - April 12, 6pm ~ Tapper and Allen residence

“An Altar in the World” by Barbara Brown Taylor ~ Study Facilitated by Ardie Gallant and Glenda Tapper ~ Begins Wednesdays, March 8 - April 12, 6pm ~ Tapper and Allen residence

“I’m not so sure where I was going,” Barbara Brown Taylor said of her decision to leave the full-time ministry and become a professor. In her critically acclaimed memoir, Leaving Church, she wrote about the decision that stretched the boundaries of her faith. Now, in her stunning follow-up, An Altar in the World, she shares how she learned to encounter God beyond the walls of any church.

From simple practices such as walking, working, and getting lost to deep meditations on topics like prayer and pronouncing blessings, Taylor reveals concrete ways to discover the sacred in the small things we do and see. Something as ordinary as hanging clothes on a clothesline becomes an act of devotion if we pay attention to what we are doing and take time to attend to the sights, smells, and sounds around us. Making eye contact with the cashier at the grocery store becomes a moment of true human connection. Allowing yourself to get lost leads to new discoveries. Under Taylor’s expert guidance, we come to question conventional distinctions between the sacred and the secular, learning that no physical act is too earthbound or too humble to become a path to the divine. As we incorporate these practices into our daily lives, we begin to discover altars everywhere we go, in nearly everything we do.” (From Goodreads)

“To register for Lenten groups, email info@providencecongregation.org or use the sign-up sheets on the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall or register online via E-News beginning February 15. Sign up for as many groups as you want to attend. Please indicate when you register if you would like the church to order a book for you.

SUNDAY SCHOOL BEGINS @ 9:00am!
All ages welcome! Adult classes available plus classes for Children & Youth at Providence House. Nursery care provided for the little ones.

DEEPER
Sundays following worship. Refreshments and conversation in Fellowship Hall.

“If we are to pray aright, perhaps it is quite necessary that we pray contrary to our own heart. Not what we want to pray is important, but what God wants us to pray.” — Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Psalms: The Prayer Book of the Bible

“The problem is, many of the people in need of saving are in churches, and at least part of what they need saving from is the idea that God sees the world the same way they do.” — Barbara Brown Taylor, An Altar in the World: A Geography of Faith
FREE FOR ALL
Every Tuesday @ 8:30am at Mike's On Main
All are welcome as we discuss the upcoming Sunday's scripture.

MID-DAY PRAYER
Every Tuesday @ 12:00pm at Providence House
Join us once a week for a time of prayer, song, and reflection.
All faiths welcome to rest and reconnect!

CHOIR REHEARSAL
Every 2nd and 4th Tuesday at 7pm in the sanctuary.
The Ensemble welcomes new members.

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS AT PROVIDENCE
On the 1st & 3rd Wednesday @ 5:30pm join us for a POTLUCK supper and program. See weekly e-news and worship guide for details. Nursery provided.

WOMEN’S FELLOWSHIP LUNCHEON
Meets Bi-monthly at various locations, check weekly e-news for invitation.
If you would like to host, contact Joyce Faye Myers 828.595.4347

MEN’S FELLOWSHIP BREAKFAST
Meets the 2nd Friday of every month @ 8:30am at Blackberry Mountain Café
All ages are welcome to join in fellowship and conversation.

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS
1  Adah Beasley
3  Kathie Thomas
5  Robert Hudson
9  Kaelyn Wilmoth
13 Bill Strobel
16 Michelle McClendon
18 T Thomas
28 Ashley Newbrough

IAM DONATIONS
Pantry Focus: Powdered milk, cereal, canned fruit, canned beef stew

Clothing Focus: Towels, wash cloths, pillows, pillowcases, bedsheets

Drop items in the bin near the main entrance of the church.

Our Values
Going to the Other
Growth ~ Hospitality
Inclusiveness
Simplicity ~ Worship