

RISE

ST. SIMONS
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

Winter 2019

rise

Issue 01

Reflect

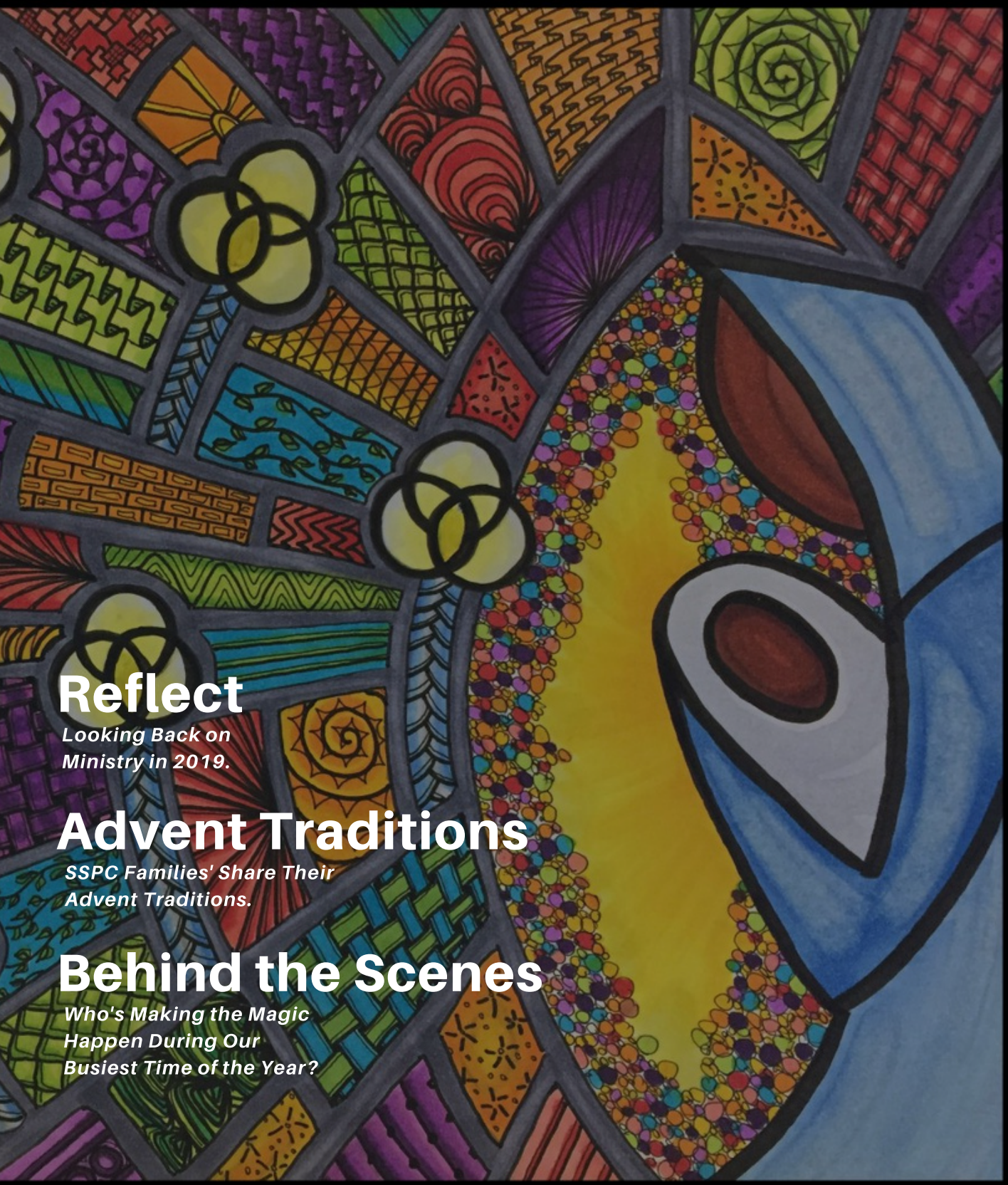
*Looking Back on
Ministry in 2019.*

Advent Traditions

*SSPC Families' Share Their
Advent Traditions.*

Behind the Scenes

*Who's Making the Magic
Happen During Our
Busiest Time of the Year?*



RISE

table of contents

01 Pastor's Corner

02 Traditions

04 Reflect

06 Behind the
Scenes

07 Volunteer
Spotlight

08 New Member
Spotlight

09 Kidz Crew

10 Youth

11 Congregational Life

12 Worship & Music

13 Your Donations at
Work



rise

A Publication of
Saint Simons Presbyterian Church
205 Kings Way, St. Simons Island, GA 31522
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PASTOR'S CORNER



"The extraordinary thing that is about to happen is matched only by the extraordinary moment just before it happens. Advent is the name of that moment."

Welcome to the newest platform in St. Simons Presbyterian's communication tool-belt. The magazine you are holding is a labor of love. The goal of these pages is to share with you the stories of God's transformative love at work in the people and ministry of our church. While our weekly email newsletter will continue to keep you informed about upcoming events and happenings, RISE is intended to take us deeper into how those activities are impacting lives and transforming the community around us with the grace of Jesus Christ. It is a worthy goal particularly in the season we are about to begin: Advent. In his book *Remarkable Ordinary*, Fred Buechner writes of Advent as being a time of quiet anticipation, the waiting right before something big. "The extraordinary thing that is about to happen," he writes, "is matched only by the extraordinary moment

just before it happens. Advent is the name of that moment." Advent is that time every year when we are invited to listen and look for God's movement in our midst before the full hubbub of Christmas – the parties, the holiday soundtracks, the candlelight services – set in. Our hope is that these pages will help you in your attentive listening this Advent. That in exploring the stories that make our church "church", you might notice the "extraordinary thing" God is doing in our midst even now. A special thank you to all of the contributors to this edition and especially to Ada Owens, our church communications director who dreamed up, designed, and made RISE rise.

Peace,

TRADITIONS

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS

What are the traditions that mark the Advent and Christmas seasons for you? Members Kate Buckley and Kashey Odum take a moment to share some of theirs.



Written by Kate Buckley

It's not accidental, I don't think, that our two holiest seasons in the Christian calendar are filled with darkness and waiting. In the season of Lent, we wander for forty days with ashen (literally) faces, praying for hope and belief and the light of an empty tomb. In the season of Advent, the days are shorter and the darkness crowds in as early as 5 o'clock. We wait in the darkness for the light of the whole world to come under the flicker of the star in the East.

There's no denying the glamour and the luster of holiday caroling and the magic of cozy fires and giddy children at Christmas season. It's the time for holly berries, fir scents, hot cocoa and fleece pajamas and slippers. The soups are stirred, the tree picked out, the presents wrapped. Frosty the Snowman, Rudolph the Reindeer, jingle bells everywhere. It really has a vivid twinkle to it, when you live the Advent season through the eyes of a child.

Through the eyes of a parent of young children, I'm in this in-between sort of space. I remember the magic of my own childhood. The Christmas short stories and the familiar carols. It's like wearing an old pair of comfortable shoes; it's fun to remember with clarity the exact moment of hanging up stockings on our mantle when I was a child.

But I'm older now. Life isn't quite as simple as it used to be when I was starry-eyed and hope-filled. Christmas still houses a magic that I see reflected in the eyes of my children. But I feel the bright lights of department stores and the busy-ness of all the "to-do"s crowding in on top of the special time that is to be set apart for sitting and waiting for Christ to enter the world.

Relationships with friends and family by the time you reach your 30s have seen ups and downs. Life has started to happen with an uncomfortable sort of unplannedness. Disease happens. And death shows up. The sadness of broken promises and failed expectations creep into life. People lose jobs, suffer illness, and part ways. What does Advent look like now? It can really feel dark.

But the darkness is not in vain. There is a promise that is steadfast. Born into a wooden manger in order to die upon a wooden cross. It is a love that conquers the darkest of our places. If we have the courage to hang on in the waiting and in the dark. And we can remember from our children's faces how to wait with hope, peace, joy and love for the baby that changes everything. The Light who changes us from the inside out.

The kids are really the ones who get it the best. We older ones with our complicated selves don't do the teaching in Christmas season. We do our best to stay close to the little ones and catch their joy and their light and their Spirit. The bubbly kind that is contagious and reaches out. I'm most excited this year about watching my children put on their shepherds' robes and angels' wings on the front lawn of the church. They will stand on Kings Way with their arms outstretched. In a spotlight on a dark night, they will preach with their sweet little faces to a community watching in the darkness. I think I'll catch their hope again this year. Just in time to greet Jesus.

A CHRISTMAS IN KODIAK

Written by Ada Owens
& Kashey Odum

I recently had the pleasure of sitting down with long time member of St. Simons Presbyterian Church, Kashey Odum. This season of Advent and Christmas will be Kashey's 95th, so I knew she may have a story or two to share with her church family. Kashey's childhood took place during the Great Depression, an era that most people in today's world cannot even begin to fathom. I imagine a Christmas during the depression may not have been so merry and bright, and perhaps that's why Kashey opted to share a happier memory, from a time when her own family traditions were just beginning to take root. She took me back to 1949, when she was living in Kodiak, Alaska with her husband, Roscoe, and daughter, Carol. It was her first Christmas as a mother, with Carol only nine months old. Roscoe had been stationed in Kodiak earlier that same year and they were living in an apartment on the Naval Station. With the Navy's permission, Kashey and Roscoe ventured out into the woods behind the base and cut down the biggest fir tree they could fit into their home. They placed it in an empty corner, ready to be spruced up for the holiday. However, they had no ornaments for the tree or Christmas decorations of any kind, for that matter, so Kashey made a trip to the local trade-post and purchased some colorful glass ball ornaments to hang on their tree. A bit of tinsel was added for good measure and voila, Christmas cheer! The gifts were kept simple as well. For Carol, she remembers ordering a rattle and a baby doll from a Montgomery Ward catalog. More gifts were sent from the grandparents and other family members, but Kashey pointed out that at nine months old, Carol just didn't need much. She also remembered that she and Roscoe were trying to save money to buy a car so they could come home to "the states". This reference to "the states" caught me off guard. Alaska is, after all, the 49th state of the USA. However, in 1949 Alaska was still just a territory! It wasn't until 1959 that Alaska entered the union. With my history lesson complete, Kashey continued her story. They had a neighbor across the hall who was from Macon, GA. This neighbor was in her 40s and taught

Kashey all about southern cooking. Kashey laughed for a moment, looking off in the distance, and then says to me, "I remember thinking at the time that 40s were old!" Together, Kashey and her "old" neighbor cooked a turkey dinner and invited over some of "the boys" who were off duty that day and didn't have any family nearby. They all gathered around the table, gave thanks and dined on a genuine southern meal with the tree dazzling in the background. As Kashey wrapped up her story, the emotions from that Christmas in 1949 flooded the room. The feeling was pure joy and it wasn't coming from her recollection of gifts or decorations. It was coming from the memory of a turkey dinner in her home, with mostly strangers gathered around the table, who came together on a naval base, in a US Territory, with a shared love for Christ and a deep desire to celebrate the birth of our one true King.



REFLECT

2019 IN REVIEW

What an incredible year we've had at St. Simons Presbyterian Church! As we prepare to ring in a new year, let us give thanks for the memories we've made and joys we've shared together, both here in our church and community. Here are a few pictures to highlight 2019 at SSPC. Thanks to every single member of our congregation and beyond for sharing in our joy this year!





BEHIND THE SCENES

Volunteers Working Magic

Written by Ada Owens

It's a busy time of year. We find ourselves caught up trying to attend every party, mailing Christmas cards, running errands, preparing meals, mailing more Christmas cards in response to those we've received, volunteering, and trying to pick out the perfect gift for those we love and care about. It's a busy time of year... did I already say that? And perhaps it's easy to assume that working for a church during a season like Christmas must be exhausting. All of this busyness is stemming from the true reason for the season. A celebration for the birth of Jesus Christ. And there's a lot to do to get ready. In the church office, there's more writing, printing, posting, decorating, planning, and welcoming than any other time of year... although Easter brings a strong competition!



But even with our workloads increased, the level of stress in the church office never seems to follow suit and there's a big reason for that: Volunteers. We're blessed with the most faithful and dependable volunteers you could imagine. And I don't just mean during our busy season. Did you know that every Tuesday, throughout the year, a volunteer comes in at 9:30 am sharp to answer calls during our staff meeting? Ever wonder who staples the worship bulletins for Sundays or maybe who folds, labels and mails out newsletters? Volunteers. Every single week. Even as their own schedules fill up with the chaos of the season, they still make time to step through the office doors of SSPC and help make magic happen. We couldn't do it without them. On behalf of the entire staff and congregation, thank you! We appreciate you more than you know.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

MARY MARGARET & JEFF SHIVER

Church is not the only place we can serve. Mary Margaret Shiver shares her family's experience volunteering with Blue Skies, a ministry dedicated to providing an exciting and relaxing week long retreat for pediatric cancer patients and their families. Lifting them above the clouds of cancer and back into blue skies.

We cannot remember a more meaningful week for our family. The goal of Blue Skies is to offer families who have a child diagnosed with cancer a week long beach retreat. The hope is that each family will feel "normal" for a week. The kids in treatment are often exhausted, the parents frayed from worry and the siblings tired of competing with cancer. Each guest family is paired with a volunteer host family. The host family tries to make their guest family feel welcome, included and cared for. Volunteers are split into three teams: Care, Food and Recreation. The Care team washes guest laundry, cleans their rooms, washes their towels and makes sure they have what they need every night. They leave nice notes on the guest pillows, turn down service at night and even read bed time stories to the small kids. The Recreation team sets up all recreation at the pool and beach. Two beach trips are taken, one to Mexico Beach and another to Cape San Blas. Each family has their own chair, umbrella and refreshments set up. This year the kids (and many dads) spent a lot of time fishing from the beach. The Food team prepares lunch and dinner every night. Themes include Italian night started with a welcome party where each

family is announced and cheered like rock stars, a BBQ hoe-down (where kids and parents dance and play games after dinner). One evening includes an awards ceremony for each child. Guest families line up while each child is announced and walks down a red carpet where they are acknowledged with thunderous applause for being brave kids in treatment or supportive siblings. The kids in treatment are celebrated and given medals. Many kids say this is the only award they've ever received. It is an indescribable experience to see these kids beam as they are being called out for being special and acknowledged. Blue Skies director, Melinda Mayton, shared that she's been to many funerals where the child was buried wearing the Blue Skies medal. A humbling reminder that this week long "mission trip" is so much more to these kids. The last night is a parade around the small square complete with a fire truck and police cars. The guest families line the streets and cheer for the kids. Even though it is a small square, the volunteers have to run across the square after the parade passes so there are people cheering when the parade gets to the other side. For us, the parade is when we realized how special BlueSkies is. Cheering for the kids and seeing them smile as they rode in the police car or fire truck is an image we won't forget. Volunteers running around the square to cheer for the kids was so sweet and silly it drove home the point that these kids need more silly and less serious. The parents too. We wish we could adequately convey the spirit of BlueSkies and the week spent loving on these families.

www.blueskiesministries.org

Member Spotlight

THE BROOKS

St. Simons Presbyterian Church is privileged to know and love the Brooks family. Pictured below are Tyler, Kelsi, & Abiney. Here are some questions Kelsi graciously answered so we can get to know them better!

How did you meet your significant other?

Taylor, being from this area, was living in Atlanta at the time. I, Kelsi, a native Texan, lived in the same community as Taylor's family in Gonaives, Haiti. It was 2014 when we locked eyes for the first time outside the airport in Port au Prince. His family was picking me up after a trip home for Christmas. I was essentially an honorary daughter and a close friend of his sister by this point. Taylor and I hit it off right away but then he flew back to Atlanta the next day. Within a year, I moved back to the states, we started dating long distance, got engaged on the mountain tops of Rocky Mountain National Park, and got married. We decided to live in Atlanta for our first year of marriage, then decided to do some traveling. While finishing up work in Texas we prayed about the next place for us to land and stay a while. We prayed separately and came back together to discover we both felt St. Simons Island and we both felt the same date, October 21, 2017. That is how we landed here! This is home for Taylor but life looks a little different now, this time he has a wonderful wife and precious baby girl! ;)

What first brought you through the doors of SSPC?

Our good friends, Evan and Megan Beard, introduced us to the idea of visiting this church. They are friends of the Dyers and wanted to come check it out. We agreed we would like to see what happens at the end of our street (yes, we live on Ashantilly). After all, could it be more convenient?! Our first few visits we felt a warm connection.



Taylor and I both grew up Baptist, then transitioned to Charismatic churches in our adult life, and we can honestly say it wasn't the beautiful building, the well designed programs, or the presbyterian calendar we felt drawn to. We felt the kindness of Jesus in the people. Every person we met, and still continue to meet, have felt like family. From the elders to the women in the nursery, every person has been incredibly kind and inviting. We feel wanted here, we feel like we belong, and that is a gift.

What is your favorite thing about SSPC?

It feels really good to have people welcome you in a new space with kindness and generosity, but it feels incredible to know you can take your child to that place and she is always welcomed, always cared for, always safe, and always loved. I am a new mom and my baby girl is almost 1. She has grown up in the nursery and attends Mother's Morning Out during the week. Whether it is Sunday or a weekday, we always love seeing familiar faces in the church. Our baby gets so excited when we walk up to the building and it warms my mama heart to hear "there's our girl" as we walk through the door. It is the sense of belonging that has kept us coming back and eventually becoming members. The people really make this place a space where we want our family to grow in all capacities. We also love Alan and Erin. The way they live their life for God is evident through their community and they are a family we want to be led by.

WELCOME ALL NEW MEMBERS

Joined in 2019

David Keen
Linda Johnston
Pattie Boykin
Phil & Lysa Allison
Sally Baldwin
Jim & Sally Dyer
Ann Lee
Bobby & Jane Buckler

Ped & Jeannie Drawdy
Taylor & Kelsi Brooks (*Abiney*)
Mike & Nancy Fixx
William Whatley
Greyson Kellis
Chris & Amy Bone
Martin White & Brandy Spasaro
(*Nathan & Bailey White*)

Roger & Brooke Budd (*Four*)
Jeff & Courtney Roberts (*Lily*)
Dwight & Jan Payne
Stephen & Whitney McConnell
(*Stephen Michael & Vivian*)



Children Ministry aims to nurture our youngest at SSPC as they grow in stature and in their relationship with Christ. Our children's programming gives them the building blocks for a lifetime journey of faith. How do we do this? With a lot of love and the Holy Spirit!

When children come to SSPC.....

What do they see?

- Smiles from their friends in Christ... big and small.
- God's beautiful world.

What do they taste?

- Yummy snacks on the Veranda.
- Bread they made for world communion.
- Supper with their families and friends.

What do they hear?

- Joyful sounds in music
- Giggles and laughter through skits and games as we learn God's Story.
- Silence during Worship.

What do they say?

- Jesus Loves Me... this I know!
- This is the Word of the Lord! As they lead Worship with Children's Sunday.
- Love your Neighbor! During KidZ Care camp.

What do they feel?

- Hugs and care in our wonderful Nursery.
- The Love of Christ in their hearts.

FRIEDA WARNER

Director of Christian Education

YOUTH

SSPC Youth Ministry helps guide our teens in a closer relationship with Christ through fellowship, worship, service, devotion and art. They meet regularly on Sunday mornings for Sunday School, Youth Group on Sunday evenings and Youth Devotion at Chick-Fil-a on Tuesday mornings. We also see our youth as volunteers on Wednesdays at KidZ Crew, at our Church service projects and as Sunday Worship leaders.

Our theme for 2019-20 is...

In the Beginning... Amen.

Going through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation... from in the beginning to the last Amen.

FRIEDA WARNER

Director of Christian Education



CONGREGATIONAL LIFE



With an eye on the physical, mental, spiritual and social needs of our older adult members, the members of the Congregational Life Committee have put together a great year of ministry together including meals, service opportunities, fellowship events, time to play, educational trips and offerings, artistic endeavors, chances for spiritual stretching and deepening as well as travel to places near and not so near.



Our year began on Sunday Evenings in January with two Family Fun Nights (intergenerational gatherings); these were bowling at Strike Zone and enjoying Dinner and a Movie together. Our next activity was the Love One Another Luncheon in February. This was a nod toward Valentine's Day



for everyone, not just couples, with a great meal and warm fellowship following church in the Britt Dining Room. For our more adventurous members, we loaded up our bikes and explored Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge. It was a cool and blustery day but we had a blast together and then went to Two Way Fish Camp for a delicious repast. Our next adventure led us to Kingsley Plantation in Jacksonville for a tour of this historic monument



followed by a trip on the Ferry to Mayport and a lunch at historic Singleton's Restaurant. Our quarterly intergenerational Bingo Nights were a church family favorite, with great food (potluck) and prizes for

everyone! Another delightful intergenerational event was our Kick and Pick event at Mallory Park, with Kickball and a delicious Picnic provided by our members. This was a great way to kick off our summer activities. Sapelo Island Kayak Adventure was an exceptional week spent exploring one of the beautiful and historic barrier islands of Georgia. We learned much and were immersed in the beauty of God's Creation.



The Try Something New Group joined forces with the Music Ministry of SSPC to afford our members the opportunity to attend the Montreat Worship and Music Conference. There is something for everyone at this conference: worship, music, art, food, fellowship, exploration and hiking to name a few possibilities.

In closing, our recent trip on the Lady Jane Shrimp Boat reminded us again of the amazing beauty in this world and how God continues to surprise and amaze us if we will be attentive.



These are but a few of the wonderful opportunities provided by the Congregational Life Committee for our lives to be knit together through warm fellowship in Christ.



NAT SCOTT

Director of Congregational Life

WORSHIP & MUSIC



Carry On

"Keep Calm and Carry On" was a poster developed in Britain during World War Two along with several other posters to reassure the public. It was kept back, thinking that it was too abstract for people. Recently, it was found again and is now being used all over the world with different words and phrases. Very shortly after WW2, St. Simons Presbyterian Church was founded by a group of grateful people. With the war over and many of the soldiers coming home, there was a need for a Presbyterian Church on the island. Since then, the church has gone through many changes, carrying on with ministry through the years. Very soon, we will celebrate 75 years of ministry and service. I will be forming a history group to update our history and plan for this landmark occasion in 2021. →

For the past few months, preparation for the renovation has been an organized machine under the leadership of Leslie McCracken. The RTT (Renovation Transition Team) started planning in earnest in May of this year. Being organized throughout this process has helped us "carry on" our ministries, especially the music ministry. The addition of the connector from the Youth Suite to the Music Attic has allowed us to use our choir room again. Those that have trouble with the stairs are able to easily get there via elevator. The Social Hall has been transformed into a worship space through the talents of Suzanne Morrison and Nat Scott. I have been most impressed by the ability of our congregation to "Keep Calm and Carry On." Isn't that what this church has always done? More blessing can occur and ministry can happen when this is the case, especially when something is born out of gratitude.

RHONDA HAMBRIGHT

Music Director

SOUND BITE:

The first organist/choir director of SSPC was Mrs. E. H. Langston. She was lovingly referred to as "Mother Langston."



YOUR GENEROSITY AT WORK



Looking back over the first three quarters of the year, the generous spirit of giving can be felt among the members of St Simons Presbyterian. Because of your gifts to the operating budget for 2019, food has graced the tables of those in need through the Hunger Action Team ministry, Manna House, and Sparrow's Nest. The love of the people of HIS Church has reached out to those in crisis as well, with financial resources blessing the ministries of Grace House, House of Hope, Saved by Grace, Morning Star, Safe Harbor, and CASA, just to

name a few. US PCA missionaries are encouraged and supported by gifts of your financial resources. The 2019 stewardship theme of "The Generous Life - giving freely of our time, talent and resources" was embraced and lived through the special offerings received for Presbyterian Homes on Mother's Day and Marion Medical Mission on Father's Day. While these are just a small sampling of the ways giving your financial resources can bless those in need whether near or far, these gifts can also build the Church, or as in this case, deconstruct it and then rebuild it stronger and fuller with your "Heart and Soul". As we move into the final quarter of 2019 and prepare for the season of Advent, we are also called to pray and commit once again to support Christ's mission as St Simons Presbyterian continues "Building - to Serve, to Worship, to Connect". May the Holy Spirit fill you each with gratitude for what has been given and achieved in the last year and prepare you for the gifts and blessings yet to come!

Your Servant in Christ,

JEANNINE TORBERT

Church Administrator



BUILDING

Stewardship 2020
St. Simons Presbyterian Church

To Serve
To Worship
To Connect

As we enter into the month of December, please continue to remember the church in your end-of-year giving as well as make your pledge towards the 2020 mission budget. Thank you for supporting the mission and ministry of your church!

ST. SIMONS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Advent Calendar

WED, NOVEMBER 20	ADVENT FESTIVAL - 5 PM
WED, DECEMBER 4	LADIES CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON - 11:30 AM
SAT, DECEMBER 7	MESSIAH (WESLEY UMC) - 5 PM
SUN, DECEMBER 8	KIDZ CHRISTMAS MUSICAL - 11 AM
	THE LONGEST NIGHT: A WINTER SERVICE HOPE & HEALING - 5 PM
	YOUTH PROGRESSIVE DINNER - 6:30 PM
SUN, DECEMBER 15	CHANCEL CHOIR CHRISTMAS PRESENTATION - 11 AM
WED, DECEMBER 18	CAROLING ON THE TROLLEY - 4:30
FRI, DECEMBER 20	LIVE NATIVITY - 6 PM & 7 PM
SAT, DECEMBER 21	LIVE NATIVITY - 6 PM & 7 PM
SUN, DECEMBER 22	CHANCEL RINGERS - 11 AM
TUES, DECEMBER 4	LESSONS & CAROLS SERVICE - 5:30 PM
	CHRISTMAS EVE COMMUNION - 10 PM



Winter 2019

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