

www.gspcmobile.org * (251)432-1749 * 300 Government Street, Mobile, Alabama 36602

What Is Homecoming?

by Ryan Jensen
Director of Discipleship Formation

When considering homecoming, a few questions are easy to answer. Where and when? Government Street Presbyterian Church, at 300 Government Street. Sunday school begins at 9:30, worship at 11:00, with lunch following at 12:00. As for the “what,” that one is a little more difficult to answer. Perhaps we should first begin with what homecoming is *not*.



About fifteen years ago, I served as the homecoming chairman of my fraternity. Among other things, I was charged with the theme and construction of our yard display (this being a stationary float of sorts). There was also the coordination of an evening social event, homecoming points to accumulate by participating in university and neighborhood affairs, and other events that all culminated in a Memphis vs. Opponent football game. To be sure, our church homecoming will include **none** of these specific activities.

Another more menacing image of homecoming might resemble a special Sunday, whereas regular church members stand on the ready to pounce upon visitors and less regular members with bundles of brochures and unlimited questions. “How are you? Where have you been? Here’s a pledge card. Do you believe in predestination?” Conversely, perhaps this day could also be perceived as a kind of “Amnesty Sunday,” when people visit or return with no questions asked. “Come in and please sign your name. Or don’t. Just come in and we promise not to notice you too much.” Again, homecoming is *not* about anything mentioned above.

I even confused myself about the meaning of homecoming. At first, I thought that we needed to put on a big show. There would be lots of music and entertainment, with presentations designed to showcase the fullness of the past, present, and future of Government Street Presbyterian Church. All of this

after a full hour of worship, no less. In short, this kind of event would be impossible. For one, I have not been here very long. My understanding of this particular congregation is still forming. Who am I to suggest such a display anyway? More importantly, such a display would dishonor God as well as who we are called to be as disciples.

For Homecoming to be truly meaningful, it should begin with worship, and hopefully Sunday school before that. It is in these spaces where God’s word is freely proclaimed and where God’s revelation is hoped for. During worship, we pray together, sing together, and confess our weaknesses together. God is the beginning, middle and end of who we are, with prayer to God at the heart of our worship. Homecoming without these things will surely be misguided, if only to a small degree. We must begin with God and include the Holy Spirit in the essence of our hopes and plans. By doing that, we will escape shallow displays and return to things of grace and wonder.

So come one and come all! Yes, you will be greeted, welcomed and maybe even hugged. You will receive a wonderful meal (for only \$5.00) and have the opportunity to witness a slice of GSPC life through the means of a video presentation. Yes, there will be all of that. But more importantly, we will have the opportunity to humbly and boldly respond to the blessings that God continues to provide. We will have the chance to enjoy fellowship, stories and laughter. We will all continue to do our part as equal participants of the church universal in sharing the miraculous story of Christ. Additionally, we will do our best to discover together what all of this means: for ourselves, our families, and our community.

That beats a traditional homecoming and football game any day. At least through God, Christ and Holy Spirit, we have a guaranteed victory. This is the good news to remember when considering GSPC’s Homecoming as a place to begin, return, or continue. What is Homecoming? Let us all awake to God’s presence and find out together.

Christian Education

UPDATE ON EQUIPPING THE SAINTS CLASS OF 2009



Pictured: Cindy Rigby and Stephanie Crowe

by **Stephanie Crowe**

As many of you know, John Ashbee, Sally Ericson and I have been attending a 2-year Seminar Retreat called **Equipping the Saints**. The class takes 2 years with 2 retreats each year. Attendees come from many Presbyterian churches in the region. I have just finished the 3rd class which focused on reformed theology (which is what we believe) and it was fantastic. Our leader was Cindy Rigby who is a Professor of Theology at Austin Presbyterian Seminary, and the Memorial Lecture Series speaker in 2006. This retreat has helped me understand more fully what it means to be a Christian and specifically, a reformed Christian. Cindy is one a most skillful and joyful teacher. It was most inspiring and insightful, and as Cindy would say, I had many AHA! moments.

I want to thank GSPC for the opportunity to participate in **Equipping the Saints** and am grateful that the church values theological education. I look forward to sharing some of the truths I have come to understand.

Stephanie Crowe, Deacon

PYC ~ Kara Olson, Director of Youth & CE

- **Save the Date! Women's Retreat at Baytreat March 27 & 28th**
- PYC ~ January 18 ~ Bible study at GSPC, 5:30 p.m.~ Revelation

Amanda Murray, Director of Children's Ministries

- **Sunday School** has resumed at 9:30 am for all children ages 18 months to 5th grade. Join us each Sunday as we explore the Bible together!
- The children are continuing to raise money and awareness for the **Ministry of Hope Crisis Nursery**. Please support their mission.
- **CLUB 345** meets this Sunday Jan. 18, at 2:30 pm in the GSPC parking lot. We are going to see the movie, **Hotel for Dogs**. Please bring \$5.00. All friends are invited! We should return to GSPC parking lot by 6 pm.
- As we begin this winter in Children's Sunday School, **I want to thank our teachers and helpers for their continued time, effort, and support**. Thanks to Charlotte Crockett, Trenée Bain, Margaret Sue Browning, Carolla Hider, Dorothy Morrison, Caroline Etherton, Joy Gardner, Jennifer Jameson, and Camille & James Crumb. We thank you and look forward to a great spring and fall of learning the stories of the Bible.
- The nurseries are a wonderful place for our babies to play. We take great pride in keeping it safe and clean. **If you happen to visit our nursery during the weekday, please help us keep it clean and safe by cleaning up thoroughly after your children.** We appreciate your understanding.

- **LUNCH SERVED TO THE CHILDREN THIS SUNDAY!**

Our Annual Cong. Meeting will follow worship at Noon in the sanctuary. Lunch will be provided at Noon in the Children's Sunday School rooms for **all children ages 5th grade and younger**.

Children who stay for worship may leave the sanctuary and join Mrs. Amanda in the children's church room for lunch at the close of worship. We will have peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, fruit, chips, drink, and a cookie. Please, feel free to bring a lunch for your children (if they do not like the menu) and for those with small babies, please provide something for them to eat. If you have any questions feel free to contact Amanda at 432-1749 or 666-3744.

Urban Ministries

Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN)/ Family Promise

GSPC will host IHN the week of **March 22-28**. **We need 98 volunteers** in order to fill all the necessary slots and make the week a success. Volunteers are needed for:

- Set Up & Clean Up
- Evening Hosts
- Laundry
- Meals
- Overnight Hosts

Please contact **Michon Trent** at (251) 432-4264 or the church office at (251) 432-1749.

Meals on Wheels

Sara Bryan is retiring after many years of driving for Meals on Wheels. We are so thankful for her faithful service.

We wish to welcome **Brian Naylor** as our newest volunteer driver.

Meals on Wheels is one of our longest running and most needed services to the community. If you are interested in becoming involved, please call Sally or David Pearsall at 344-2903.

*Honor your loved one
with a Sunday
Sanctuary Flower
arrangement.*

*Contact Sara Bryan at
471-1036 to reserve a
date. Available dates
are Feb. 1, 8 & 22.*

Lectionary Readings for January 18:

1 Sam. 3:1-10 (11-20);
Ps. 139:1-6, 13-18;
1 Cor. 6:12-20;
John 1:43-51

Congregational Life

Meet Our Newest Members

by Denise Lamby



Dawn Collum

Dawn was born and raised in Mobile, except for a few years in her youth when she lived on a farm in Lucedale, MS. She lived several years of her adult life in Atlanta, Georgia but “returned to my roots in 1980.”

She is an only child with much older half-siblings. She is unmarried and lives now with her two dogs. She is very close with a half-sister who also lives in Mobile.

In 1997, Dawn changed professions after 20+ years in banking to work for a real estate development company. In the fall of 2005, she resigned her real estate position to become her mother’s primary caregiver. After her mother’s passing, she

returned to work as a Leasing Assistant for White-Spunner & Associates.

Regarding her hobbies, Dawn is “beginning to venture into uncharted territories: I’m in a book club and I’m getting ready to learn how to knit. Also, I was asked to serve on the Evangelism & Membership Committee at GSPC. I collect the 3 Wise Monkeys (‘see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil’) and have them all over my home and desk at work.”

She started visiting GSPC in the summer of 2008 “with my best friend Holly Carrigan. I have been looking for a church home for some time and feel I’ve found one. I joined GSPC in the fall of 2008. Since I’ve been at GSPC, I’ve met some very nice people and am enjoying being a part of a church family again.”

Dawn has several friends who make up for not having any family. “They are most precious and I am blessed for having them. I look forward to being a part of GSPC and serving the Lord in whatever capacity I can.”

Congratulations!!

John Leach, a GSPC Elder and a partner in the law firm of Helmsing, Leach, Herlong, Newman & Rouse, will serve as President of the Mobile Bar Association this year. The Mobile Bar Association, which will celebrate its 140th anniversary in March, is the oldest bar association in the state and one of the oldest in the country.

Congratulation to grandparents Fran and Joel Danley. **Anna Aldridge Danley** was born on January 8 to Franklin and Leigh Ann Danley in Birmingham. Anna weighed 7 lbs and 9 oz.

Christian sympathy is extended to the friends and family of **Dorothy Pitts**. Dottie died January 10th while visiting her son in Kansas. She was 96. Dottie was born and raised in Mobile, and spent all but the last three years in active discipleship at Government Street Presbyterian. She had been living for the past three years with her daughter, Terry Pitts, in Jackson, MS.

A Memorial Service is planned for Friday, January 16, 11:00 am, at GSPC. A reception in the Parlor will follow the service.

GREEN NEWSLETTER OPTION NOW AVAILABLE!

The office staff of GSPC would like to offer an on-line version of this weekly newsletter to those of you who would prefer an e-mailed version instead of a paper copy.

Please e-mail: laura@gspcmobile.org if you would like to make this change.

Thank you!

GOVERNMENT STREET LUNCH FORUM

Thursdays Noon to 1 PM
in Fellowship Hall, Lunch—\$5

January 22: Bethany Kraft

Bethany is the Executive Director of the Alabama Coastal Foundation, a non-profit environmental education and habitat restoration organization founded in 1993 with a mission to improve and protect the quality of Alabama’s coastal resources by identifying and solving problems through education, cooperation and participation.

A graduate of Texas A&M University, Bethany worked previously as an enforcement coordinator for the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and in the office of Mobile County Commissioner Stephen Nodine. Her work with the Alabama Coastal Foundation provides for citizen participation through issue resolution forums, volunteer water quality monitoring programs, public education seminars, habitat restoration projects and through direct participation in governmental planning.

Bethany is the 2009 co-chair of the Environment team for Envision Coastal Alabama, and is a member of the board of the Mobile County League of Women Voters. She lives in mid-town Mobile with her husband Alex and their dog Moby.

Next Thursday, January 29
Dr. Semoon Chang, Professor
of Economics at the U.S.A.

IN OUR PRAYERS AT NURSING HOMES AND IN THE HOSPITAL

Allen Memorial: Mary Marvin Anderson

Somerby of W. Mobile: Kitty Harris

Gordon Oaks: Thyrsa Jones (rm 239), Harriet Norville (rm 241) and Warren Norville (rm 27)

Westminster Village: Ben Hutson (rm 562)

Cogburn (Dauphin Con.): Winnie Counts, and David and Betty Mechler

Mobile Infirmary West: Blair Newman



The Presbytery Meeting at GSPC—Feb 27 and Feb 28

GSPC will host the Presbytery of South Alabama Meeting on February 27 & 28, 2009. Ryan Jensen will be examined at this meeting before his ordination on Sunday, March 1. If you can help in any of the following areas, please fill in the sign up sheet with your name and the task(s) you would enjoy doing, tear off and return the slip to the office, Dot White, or M.R. Andrews.

SET UP: Friday, Feb. 27, 10:30 AM—set up for evening dinner and decorate tables, rooms for small group meetings (Bibles, pens, paper) and registration area

REGISTRATION Friday late afternoon: Five people needed to manage registration tables

GREETERS for *Friday evening and Saturday*

USHERS for Worship Services Friday Evening and Saturday: Sanctuary preparation & ushering during the services

CLEAN UP AND SET UP FOR SATURDAY after dinner Friday evening: laundry of tablecloths, set up for continental breakfast Saturday morning

SOUND SYSTEM personnel for both worship services and the general meeting

SET UP FOR NOON LUNCHEON Saturday mid-morning

CLEAN UP AND SET UP Saturday afternoon: clean up of Fellowship Hall and rooms used for small group meetings, reset for Congregational Lunch on Sunday, March 1

Name _____ Phone _____

I will help with: _____
