



“. . . for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” ~ Galatians 3:28

Volume 1, Issue 4

July 2010

On Being Presbyterian

I wonder what you think about when you read “Presbyterian” in our church name? Do you think about infant baptism? Do you think of it as our “team” in a world which is awash with different denominations? Do you think of our system of church government? Do you think of anything at all? Perhaps you don’t think about why that word is in our name. However, to say that we are Presbyterian is not just an arbitrary marker to set us apart from the other churches on St. Simons, or throughout the country, but rather this one word is loaded with theological and historical meaning.

Historically, to be Presbyterian means that we stand on the shoulders of giants as heirs to the legacy of the Southern Presbyterian Church, the Scottish Presbyterian Church and the Continental European Presbyterian Church. We are the heirs of men like John Calvin, John Knox, Charles Hodge, and B. B. Warfield who, among many others, crafted and shaped the system of theology that characterizes our church. To be a Presbyterian church means that we are committed to the system of theology that is known as Reformed theology.

What this means is that we are committed to a way of understanding God and His work that begins with God, and not with us. Perhaps the best summary of our system of doctrine is contained in the historic Five Solas:

Sola Scriptura. Scripture alone, as opposed to Tradition, is our only rule of faith and life. Although the traditions of the Church can help us understand Scripture, we do not think that Tradition has any authority on its own. Our only source of authority is the Bible; and so it informs everything in the life of our church – from our church government, to our worship practices, to our interpersonal relationships, to how we use our money, everything!

Solus Christus. We hold, as the Bible teaches us (!), that the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross is the only atonement for sin, and it is perfect. We don’t believe that our good works earn us our salvation, or any favor with God, rather we do good works because of our salvation through the sacrificial death of Jesus. We are accepted, therefore we obey, not we obey, therefore we are accepted.

Sola Fide. This is closely related to Solus Christus – we are united to Christ, and His saving work, through faith alone. We realize that we will never be good enough to earn favor with God – we can never do enough good works, or keep the commandments perfectly enough that we convince God that we are worthy of being saved by the work of Christ. We are saved simply by believing the Gospel. It is by faith alone, apart from works that we are saved.

—Continued on next page

July Calendar

- 7/4 Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper (AM Worship)
- 7/5 Independence Day Holiday observed—*Church Office closed*
- 7/7 Women of GIPC—Monthly Meeting (6 p.m., Evelyn Williams’ home)
- 7/12 GIPC Stated Session Meeting (6:30 p.m., at IPC/Savannah)
- 7/14 & 28 Midweek Fellowship & Bible Study (Chilton home, 6:30 p.m.; light supper incl.)

Come Worship With Us!

— Sunday —

9:30 a.m. Sunday School

“Covenant Overview” led by Mr. Alexander Brown

10:30 a.m. Morning Worship

Current series: *Mark*

6:00 p.m. Evening Worship

Current series: *Ephesians*

Children’s Church, Nursery available (AM Worship)

Be sure to pick up
and make use of the
weekly Prayer List
found in Sunday’s bulletin!
(Extra copies available
in the Church Office.)

On Being Presbyterian

(continued from previous page)

Sola Gratia. At the root of our faith, and salvation in Christ alone, is the bountiful grace of God. Our salvation does not rest on how strong our faith is, but on how strong our Savior is. Salvation is completely an act of God – He provides the perfect sacrifice, He opens our blind eyes so that we see Christ and have faith in Him, and all this is motivated simply by His grace!

Soli Deo Gloria. And what is the purpose of all this? That God would receive the glory! By seeing that all that we are in Christ has been freely given to us by God, because of His grace, and nothing of ourselves, we are driven to declare “to God alone be the glory!” As Reformed Christians we live, not for ourselves, but in order that Christ gets the glory. Some have said that if you tell people that salvation is freely given – that it is by faith alone, in Christ alone, through grace alone – then there is no motivation for people to live good lives, or keep the commandments. But the Reformed answer has always been that if someone truly grasps the wonder of salvation by grace through faith, then their heart can do nothing but seek to live for their Lord! We are compelled by His love to live for His glory, whether we eat, or drink, or whatever we do!

It is my prayer for Golden Isles Presbyterian Church that in addition to being committed to the Bible, and obedient to the Great Commission, we would be a church marked by its commitment to the Reformed Faith, magnifying God, and declaring with our forefathers, in imitation of John the Baptist, “He must increase, and I must decrease.”

*Your servant in Christ,
Alex.*

Building & Grounds Update

If you were out at the church this past week you may have noticed a lot of work going on — Saint Simons Christian School (www.sschristianschool.com) is in the process of moving two of the portable units down to their new school building. They have run out of space, and so are taking one of the classroom buildings and the bathroom portable to their campus. The portables will be moved on Thursday, July 1st and Friday, July 2nd.

Significant Sessional Actions

- Approval was given for the development of a new church website (which should be online this week), and a new church logo.
- A request from Saint Simons Christian School to drop the shared expense for lawn care was approved.

The Session, consisting of all teaching and ruling elders, meets monthly on the third Monday evening; however, during July the meeting has been scheduled for the 12th. (TE Alexander Brown, TE Brad Waller, TE Brannon Bowman, RE Dan Reed, RE Gary McArthur)

Women in the Church (WIC)

The Women of GIPC meet to pray each Monday at 1:30 p.m. at the home of Evelyn Williams. Regular monthly meetings are always the first Wednesday of each month. **All women are encouraged to attend the next monthly meeting on Wednesday, July 7th, 6:00 p.m. at Evelyn Williams' home.**

Summer Break—no monthly meeting in August

Adult Sunday School

9:30 a.m.

“Covenant Overview”

It is easy to think of the Bible as sixty-six separate books, or having a major division between the Old Testament and the New Testament, which can cause us to wonder how it all applies to us in 21st century America. This class is intended to help us get a grasp on the Bible as one continuous story, revealing God’s plan of redemption through Jesus Christ. Over the course of eight lessons we will see that all of Scripture is unified by the relentless march to the Cross and the fulfillment there of the redemption which God promised in Genesis 3:15. *Led by Mr. Alexander Brown.*

Midweek Fellowship & Bible Study

2nd & 4th Wednesday

All are invited to attend the Wednesday evening Bible study that meets at Nick and Diane Chilton’s home on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month. A light supper is available at 6:30 p.m. followed by Bible study and prayer. Child care is provided.



Faith Promise for world missions

GIPC utilizes the Faith Promise method of giving in order to support a number of families involved in U.S. and foreign-based church-planting, discipleship, evangelism, and medical missions work. All gifts intended for missions support should be designated for “Faith Promise.” Missionary newsletters are available in the church foyer. 2010 Commitments (*what we are trusting God for*): \$39,010; receipts through 6/30: \$12,500 or 32%.

Mark your calendars!

**Plans are underway for
GIPC’s 15th Annual
World Missions Emphasis Week
to be held
November 7-14, 2010.**