



# *SPRING HILL MESSENGER February 2022*

**"I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?  
I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." – Isaiah 43:19**

## **A Thriving Congregation**

Dear Spring Hill Presbyterian Church Family,

Last year, Montreat Conference Center in North Carolina received a sizable grant from the Lilly Foundation to develop a program for the support of congregations in their mission and ministry. Montreat then partnered with the Black Mountain School of Theology and Community to develop something very exciting: the **Thriving Congregations Initiative**. They launched the initiative last fall by inviting 10 congregations from around the Southeast to participate (free of charge). This initial cohort was developed by Montreat identifying Presbyterian Church (USA) congregations that they considered to be "thriving." The list includes churches from Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and one from Alabama...**Spring Hill Presbyterian!** What a wonderful external recognition of the great work that this church family has been doing for years!

Each church was charged with putting together a team comprised of the pastor and 4 church leaders. Our team consists of Ryan Mahtani, Edwin Perry, Vera Lynn Sheets, Leslie Sweeney, and myself. Over the 2.5 years of the program, this team travels to Montreat, NC every six months to receive training and to share our work with other congregations. Between these in-person cohort meetings, we also receive coaching and support from the faculty of the program.

The main thrust of the first six-month season is to practice deep, intentional, holy listening within the congregation and the community. Our team has already begun conducting one-on-one listening conversations with members and others outside of our church. In February we will begin holding small group discussion sessions that are open to everyone in our church family. **So, mark your calendars for the "BIG WEEK" at the beginning of February when you can participate in this exciting conversation.** We will conduct small group listening sessions at the following times:

**-Sunday, February 6 at 4:00 PM.**

**-Wednesday, February 9 at noon.**

**-Thursday, February 10 at 6:00 PM.**

**Please sign up for ONE of these sessions, whenever it fits your schedule best.** You can sign up in the narthex, hallway or by emailing [lsweeney400@gmail.com](mailto:lsweeney400@gmail.com). During this time, as a church family, we will engage in a process of intentional conversation (for one hour). We will listen for the passion and excitement among our members. We will listen for the energy and momentum of our congregation as a whole. We will listen for how the call of the Holy Spirit is leading us into our next chapter of life together. Our church's Thriving Congregation Team does not come to these meetings with answers, but with questions and a commitment to listen deeply. It is our hope that this process will be both relational and transformational for our church family.

In the weeks surrounding these conversations, we will also launch into a "mini-series" of sermons exploring stories from the Bible when communities and groups were transformed through intentional conversations and holy listening.

I know that God is up to something truly special in this church family, and I am deeply grateful that you are a part of our story of thriving!

Grace and Peace,

Dear SHPC Friends,

Recently, I have been holding onto these lyrics, "Bind us together, Lord. Bind us together with cords that cannot be broken. Bind us together, Lord. Bind us together, Lord. Bind us together with Love." This is my prayer—that God would bind us together, especially right now. While we have been bound together in this community, the pandemic has disrupted our normal patterns. Over and over, we must be bound back together, knitted into the fabric of our faith and community.

Beginning March 6 and continuing throughout the season of Lent (until April 10), we will be bound together in a Common Read, exploring the book *An Altar in the World* by Barbara Brown Taylor. We will divide up into small groups of 8-10 people and facilitators will help guide conversations around this book (our common read). Barbara Brown Taylor will be in Mobile March 27 at Dauphin Way United Methodist, so we will caravan over to hear her. Most groups will meet in person at the church on Sunday mornings at 9:00 am, but we will also have a Sunday morning 9:00 am Zoom option, as well as a mid-week Wednesday evening option (at 7:00 pm). We have recruited facilitators. We have ordered books. Now we just need you to commit to joining us.

This is an opportunity to get to know people in our congregation better or even meet new people—this pandemic has made it hard to be connected to one another, and so it is our hope this Common Read will build community.

*An Altar in the World* explores spiritual practices in our everyday lives and challenges readers to think how we engage with our faith throughout our daily lives. Taylor asks, "What is saving your life now?" She writes, "No one longs for what he or she already has, and yet the accumulated insight of those wise about the spiritual life suggests that the reason so many of us cannot see the red X that marks the spot is because we are already standing on it. The treasure we seek requires no lengthy expedition, no expensive equipment, no superior aptitude or special company." "In a world of too much information about almost everything bodily practices can provide great relief. To make bread or love, to dig in the earth, to feed an animal or cook for a stranger—these activities require no extensive commentary, no lucid theology. All they require is someone willing to bend, reach, chop, stir." Spiritual practices help us see what it means to be human. Come share and explore how we foster our faith seeing God in the "Ordinary Holy" within our lives. Buz and I will be taking Scriptures from the book to preach throughout the season of Lent. Inspired by Taylor, we are calling this series, "Ordinary Holy." Come see God standing in your midst. Let's take off our shoes, knowing that we stand on holy ground.

Ready to join the journey? Look for our sign-up table before or after church starting Jan. 30 and continuing through February to sign-up and buy the book (\$10). Also check out the flyer in the newsletter.

Speaking of building community and fostering connections, women don't forget to check out the information about **Women's Connection at Montreat, August 11-14**. It is now time to sign-up, so that we can get a great house to stay in!

Grace and Peace,

Anna



## APPRECIATION FOR CHRISTMAS ACTS OF HOPE



SHPC's 2021 Angel Tree and Alternative Gift Market were both successes, thanks to all who participated. Your generosity and care provided for 20 children and 20 senior adults in the Mobile area, and your donations to AGM (\$9370.00 total) provided gifts of hope to six local agencies (Victory Health Partners, Wings of Life, Penelope House, McKemie Place, Home of Grace, and Family Promise) and two international organizations (Heifer Project International and our Presbyterian Mission Agency). Without your participation, these annual mission projects wouldn't be possible. Thank you.

### The Word in the Week

Join us Jan. 12-Feb. 23 as we explore the character of Peter throughout the Gospels and Acts. This weekly engaging Bible study will meet from 12:00-1:00 pm on Wednesdays in the Fellowship Hall. You are welcome to bring your own lunch for this "brown bag" style study. We will look at the person of Peter exploring his call story, walking on water, his confession of Jesus as Messiah, the Transfiguration story, Peter's denial in the shadow of the cross, his resurrection affirmations, Pentecost, jailbreak, and more!

### Christian Education

February will be a busy and exciting month in our church! Executive Presbyter, Bob Madsen, will be at Spring Hill on Sunday, **February 6** to discuss presbytery issues including his goals and his vision for the presbytery. He will be speaking during the 9:00 Sunday School hour.

Get ready to sign up to participate in the church-wide read. Beginning on **January 30**, members of the congregation will be able to sign up to read Barbara Brown Taylor's book, *An Altar in the World: A Geography of Faith*, and to purchase a paperback copy of the book for \$10. Tables will be set up in the narthex and the back hall on January 30 and each Sunday in February, volunteers will be there to assist members in signing up and purchasing the book. We need everyone to participate in this church-wide read! Small discussion groups will meet each week to discuss the two chapters that have been read that week. One group will be a Zoom only group, another will meet on Wednesday evening and all others will meet during the Sunday School hour. When you sign up, you will be able to choose the time that is best for you. The first small group meetings will begin the week of **March 6**. This book is also available on Kindle and audio versions are available at a discount on Audible if you are a Prime member. The highlight of our common read will be to go and hear Barbara Brown Taylor speak at the Dill Lecture Series at Dauphin Way United Methodist Church on **March 27**. We plan to meet behind the Chapel at 4:30 and all go together via bus or van, depending on the number of people who want to attend. The last common read small groups will meet the week of **April 10** and we will close this time together with a church-wide reception on Easter morning, **April 17** at 9:00 a.m. Please plan to be part of this unifying read as together, we

## February Sunday School

### February 6- Special Sunday School Speaker

Meet Rev. Bob Madsen, our new Regional Executive Presbyter for the Presbytery of South Alabama. Bob will join us to share some of what is going on in our presbytery and excitement for the days ahead. This special, combined Sunday School class will meet in the Fellowship Hall at 9:00 AM on **Sunday, February 6.**

<b><u>February 13</u></b>	Bible Discovery Current Issues  BLAST	Making God's Light Visible    Matthew 5:14-16 Ongoing Challenges with Climate Change in Mobile    Casi Calloway, City of Mobile Chief Resilience Officer
<b><u>February 20</u></b>	Bible Discovery Current Issues	Informing, Transforming Faith    James 1:19-27 Addressing Local Gun Violence Issues, Jim Barber, Chief-of-Staff for Mayor Sandy Stimpson
<b><u>February 27</u></b>	Bible Discovery Current Issues	The Great Commission    Matthew 28:16-20 Citizen Test on Gun Violence in America and ABC video clip Rick Stout

THE PRAYERS AND SYMPATHY of the congregation are with Steve Forwood on the death of his father, Fred Nelson (Ted) Forwood, on December 27.

### MEMORIALS

*Neil Howell    Ted Forwood    Randy Smith  
Tut & Harry Smith*



Bill & Susan McGuire  
Sandra & Ashley Hudson  
Dick & Lila Pennington

### Prayer List

Coco Anderson, George Barton, Norma Baymiller, Kaye Bradshaw, Frank Callahan, Janet Clarke, Edith Cox, Matt Coleman, Ruth Fitzgerald, Amy Britton Foshee, Ann Hafner, Caleb Harrison, Charles Hartley, Jackie Martin Haskew, Lauren Henson, John Langus, Celia Ledbetter, Kay Korb, Donna Massa, Sue McLean, Marilyn Michel, Margaret Miller, Betty Minto, Mary Owen, Sherry Porter, Bill Rawson, Carol Rawl, Cort Schlichting, William Shreve, Gladys Sheets, Ransome Sheets, Janie Sims, Patricia Trammell Stinson, Pat Stoll, Connie Trawick, Gayle Underwood, Nicholas Vrakelos, Babs Warren, Helen Wells and all our military members: Haley Harrell, Susanna Hedrick, Ashton Rubio, Stuart Rubio; The children in our Big Brother/Big Sister program: Eddie, Krystyn, Maylasia, & Milaishia.

### Statement as of December 31, 2021

Total Annual Budgeted Revenue	\$ 825,987
Year-to-date Received	\$ 773,681
Other Receipts	\$ 37,937
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>\$ 811,617</b>
Benevolences	\$ 54,614
Salaries and Services	\$ 482,562
Programs	\$ 29,058
Office Expenses	\$ 22,726
General and Plant Ser-	\$ 214,841
Other	\$ 33,003
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 836,803</b>
<b>Excess Receipts over (under) Expenses</b>	<b>\$ (25,186)</b>

## Women's Connection 2022 at Montreat

**Aug. 11-14, 2022:** Seeking personal time for renewing rest, spiritual nourishment, and inspiration? For details, see the *Women's Connection 2022 Participation Form* in the back hall or the below. Registration and housing fees are \$442. Step 1 is paying the \$200 housing fee to SHPC by February 20, 2022. Be sure to mark your payment "Women's Connections".

## Thriving Congregations Listening Sessions

Our Thriving Congregation Team will be hosting a series of one-hour, small group listening sessions for our church family the week of February 6. We want to hear from as many people as possible about the passion, energy, and direction of our church in the coming years. Please sign up in the narthex or main hallway and select the time for a listening session that best fits your schedule. The meeting times will be as follows: **Sunday (2/6) at 4:00pm, Wednesday (2/9) at noon, or Thursday (2/10) at 6:00pm.**

## WOMEN'S CONNECTION 2022 at Montreat

Participation Form Please **complete two forms:** one for SHPC, one for YOU

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Women's Connection 2022** will be a time for women to connect with old and new friends, a time to care for yourself; a time for space and Sabbath. As in years past, we will do this together through powerful and authentic worship led by women, space for honest and faithful conversation, and allowing time for discernment and renewing rest. Our hope is you will experience spiritual nourishment, inspiration, and discernment. Sarah Bessey is the key leader, NYT best-selling author of *The Rhythm of Prayer*. More about Sarah at SarahBessey.com.

### Schedule:

**Thursday, Aug 11** We will drive from SHPC to Montreat (about 9 hours)

\_\_\_\_\_ Are you willing to drive?

\_\_\_\_\_ If yes, how many passengers can you take, in addition to yourself?

*We plan to divide into teams to prepare our 8 meals while there.*

\_\_\_\_\_ Food allergies? \_\_\_\_\_

**Friday, Aug 12** Registration 4-6 pm, with Opening Worship at 7:30 pm

**Saturday, Aug 13** 9 am to 9:30 pm with breaks for meals and free time

**Sunday, Aug 14** 9am Closing worship. Drive back to Mobile (ETA 7 pm)

### Registration and Housing Fees total \$442:

**Housing \$200** – Your check payable to SHPC due by 2.20.22

(We will rent a house together for our 3-night stay.)

**\$200 Deposit:** Date \_\_\_\_\_ Check # \_\_\_\_\_

**Commuter Conference Fee \$242** before 6.28.22 (\$267 after 6.28.22)

Montreat Registration opens 2.1.2022. You will need to **click on the link below to register and pay** for your own attendance as a "commuter registration."

LINK to register <https://montreat.org/events/wc-2022>



## Youth Ministry

**Montreat Youth Trips:** The deadline for Montreat has past. If you haven't signed up but want to, please see Anna if you are planning on attending. Montreat High School is for youth who are currently in 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades and will be June 4-11, 2022. Middle School Montreat is for youth who are currently in 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades and will be July 20-24, 2022. The total cost is \$300. The remaining \$200 is due Mar. 1.

**SHPC and GSPC Youth Lock-In, March 4-5:** We had to postpone our lock-in, but it's back! We can't be at Baytreat, but we will still have fun at SHPC! Save the date for a lock-in for 6:00 pm Friday-noon on Saturday. We know this is the weekend after Mardi Gras, but hope this provides something fun for those in town! Cost is \$20. Sign-up using our Google Form: <https://forms.gle/TVbHegrW2ghpDy4y5>

## Youth Save the Dates

February 20: Confirmants Attend Worship Elsewhere

March 11: Confirmation Retreat (5:30-9:30 pm)

March 27: Youth Sunday—Want to help with Youth Sunday? Let Anna know now. We are starting to prepare.

May 1: Confirmation Sunday

May 15: Graduation Sunday June 4-11: High School Montreat

June 27-30: Vacation Bible School July 20-24: Middle School Montreat

## Children's Ministry

**Open Play, Feb. 5 and March 5:** Children and their families are invited to join us Saturday, Feb. 5 and Mar. 5 from 8:30-9:30 am for some open play time on the playground! We will have coffee for the adults and donuts for everyone. We hope that this is a time for fellowship, play, and fun!

**Souper Bowl of Caring, Feb. 13:** It's that time of year again... Souper Bowl! The youth and children will be collecting donations for a local feeding ministry Sunday, Feb. 13 before and after church. As we prepare to watch the Super Bowl Sunday night, we hope you will also remember those who are hungry! Children and Youth will have soup pots at the exits of the Sanctuary following worship where you can give.



**Save the Date! Vacation Bible School, July 20-24:** Vacation Bible School kicks off Monday, July 20 and will be through Thursday, July 24 from 9:00-11:30 am. We are starting to recruit volunteers, so if you are interested in helping talk to Dianne Oveson [mo-biledi@bellsouth.net](mailto:mo-biledi@bellsouth.net). Our theme is

Compassion Camp, changing the world through loving kindness. Registration for VBS will begin March 6.

Thursday, Apr. 7: Easter Egg Hunt

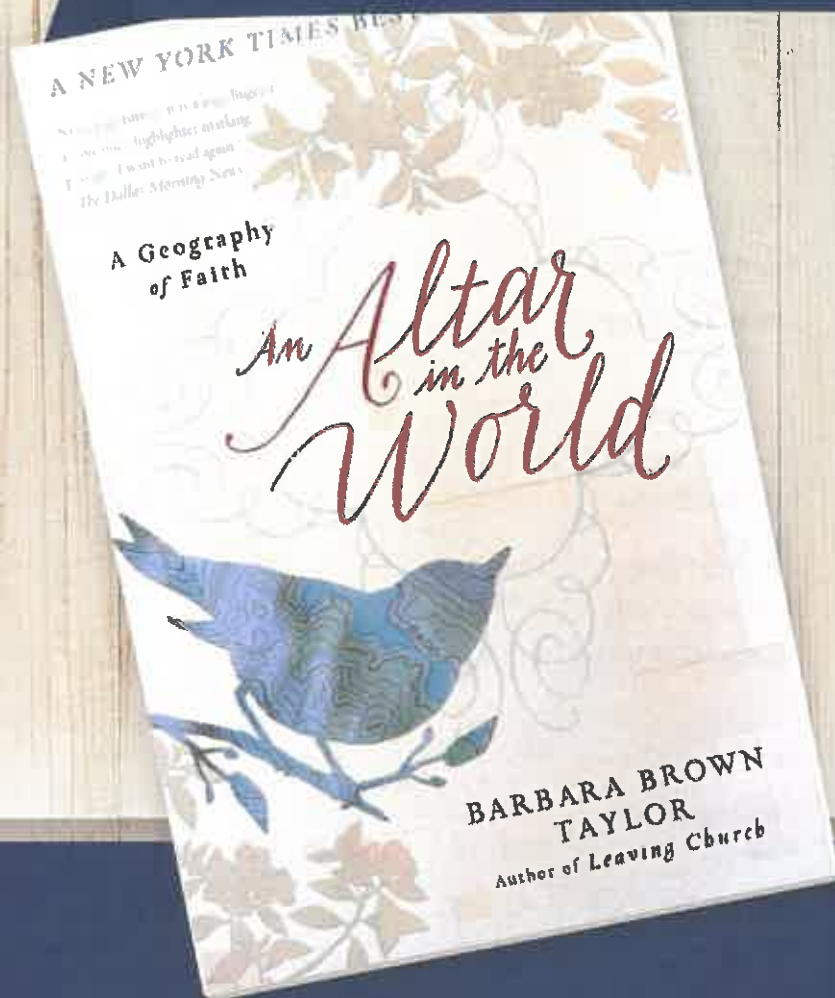
July 20-24: Middle School Montreat



**COME ONE! COME ALL! COME JOIN THE CHILDREN'S CHOIR!**

Children's choir rehearsals have begun for 2022. Our next rehearsal will be Sunday, February 6th at 4:00 p.m in the fellowship hall. We are learning new music so it is a great time for new singers to join. The children will not only learn songs of scripture, but they will take part in playing many different instruments while learning to read music. Feel free to call or email us ([shoitt@springhillpresbyterian.org](mailto:shoitt@springhillpresbyterian.org)) with any questions or to learn more. We would love to hear from you!

# A COMMON-READ JOURNEY



*Will this be a  
turn-the-page  
moment for you?*



## A COMMON-READ OPPORTUNITY WITH SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

*"Taylor serves up beefy soul food."*  
-ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION

6 SESSIONS: MARCH 6, 13, 20, 27 & APRIL 3, 10

# February 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Committees	2 PWCT Word in the Week Spring Hill Ringers	3 AA	4	5 AA Open Play
6 Worship- Communion  Youth/Children Choirs Thriving Congregations	7 Outreach  MSC	8 MSC	9 PW Day Circle Thriving Congregations PW Night Circle Spring Hill Ringers	10  Thriving Congregations	11	12 AA
13 Worship-Souper Bowl of Caring Youth/BLAST	14 MSC <i>Happy Valentine's Day</i>	15 MSC  Session Diaconate	16 Congregational Care  Word in the Week Spring Hill Ringers	17 Newsletter Deadline  AA	18	19 AA  Yeoman Workday
20 Worship  Youth/Children Choirs	21 MSC   Presidents' Day	22 MSC	23 Word in the Week Spring Hill Ringers	24 Writing Group  AA	25	26 AA
27 Worship ( No Activities)	28  Office Closed for Mardi Gras		Worship starts at 10:30 AM Sunday Schools are at 9:00 AM Youth/ Blast are at 11:30 AM Youth/Children's Choirs are at 4:00 PM			
					Word In the Week-Noon MSC-Mobile's Singing Children	