

MAY/JUN 2017
VOLUME 96
ISSUE NO 4

BUILDER



AFFIRMING | AUTHENTIC | THEOLOGICALLY INCLUSIVE

MAY/JUN 2017 | VOLUME 96 | ISSUE NO 4



pastor's notes

The month of May is certainly eventful. This is the time of final exams and graduation ceremonies. Children and teachers are counting down the days to summer vacation while parents are figuring out how to keep the kids busy all summer. And then there's Mother's Day which can be filled with memories and emotions both happy and sad. Before we know it we are bringing the month to an end with Memorial Day services and the unofficial start of picnic and swimming season.

In the church calendar we are still in the season of Easter. Our focus in worship is on what comes next. After the resurrection what did it mean to be followers of Jesus? What does it mean to be church in the world today? The world really does "keep on turning" and changing and it doesn't matter whether we think that is good or bad. It is our reality and we can benefit from reexamining our identity, our purpose and our goals both as individuals and as a congregation. Come join in as you are able as we worship, pray and minister together in Christ's name.

spring choral concert

The Church at Ponce and Highland Sanctuary Choir presents, "Mercy and Grace" on Sunday, May 12 at 2:00 PM in the Sanctuary. Donations will be accepted at the door and childcare will be provided in the second floor children's room.

may/june birthdays

Darrel Charles 5/6 Chidke Thomas 5/13
Bradley Phillips 5/13 Ethel Jansson 5/18
Kimberly Clark 5/20

Jeanne Shaw 6/01 Lola Greer 6/09
Lisa Walton 6/11 Suzanne Smith 6/16
Larry Marcinko 6/21 Elias Crosby 6/26
Georgia Bedford 6/28

prayers

Please pray for our special members:

Doris Berry
Beth Carter
Ethel Jansson
Grace Jarrell
Mary Kerr
John Phillips
Georgia McClure
Carole Strickland
June Zwald

get involved:

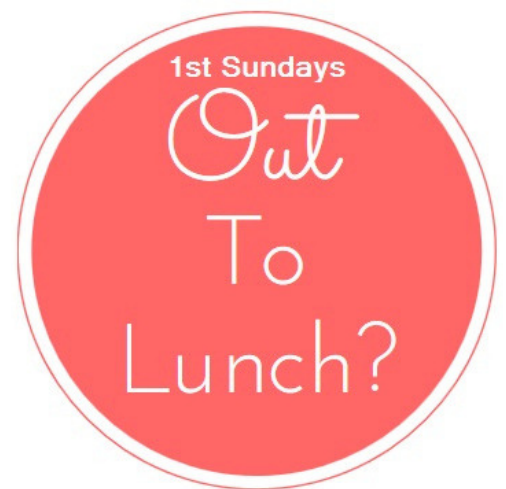


Spanish Class
Every Wednesday, at 5:30 PM in the Conference Room for anyone interested in working on their language skills.
\$10 per class



WRITING AS A SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Spiritual writing group meets every Wednesday at 7:00 PM in the parlor.



1st Sundays: Out to Lunch?
Join us the 1st Sunday of June after worship as we go to local eateries with one another.

regular sunday schedule:

9:45 AM sunday school

11:00 AM worship & children's church

2:00 PM choir rehearsal

CALENDAR



Wednesdays at 7:00 PM

the Spiritual Writing Group meets in the parlor & Spanish Class meets in the Conference room

Sunday, May 12

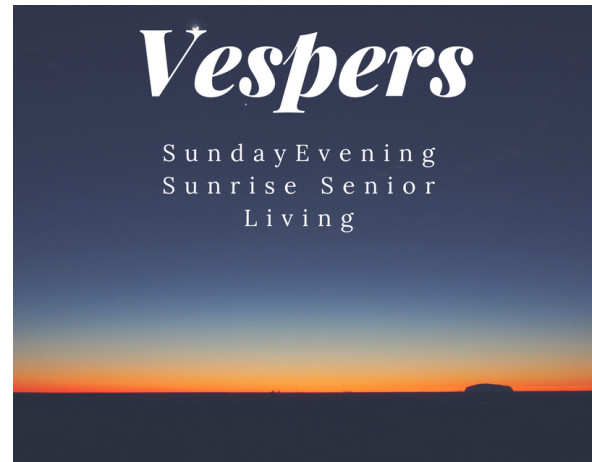
Deacons meeting after worship in the parlor.

Sunday, May 12

Spring Choir Concert at 2:00 PM in the Sanctuary. "Mercy and Grace" music reflecting pleading and forgiveness throughout the ages.

Sunday, May 28

We will lead a Vesper service at 4:00 PM at Sunrise Senior Living Buckhead. Come join in sharing God's love with the residents.



Tuesday, May 30

Finance Committee Meeting at 7:00 in the conference room.

Sunday, Jun. 4

Pot Luck Lunch & Business Meeting after worship in the Parlor. We will vote on the new budget that will start in July and have reports from our ministries and Teams.



Building Authentic Community for Women

Rev. Carra Greer, Minister to Families

There is an obvious void in the Baptist church when it comes to issues regarding sex and sexuality, which affects most directly women and acknowledgement of women's issues. These include infertility, infant mortality, pre-term labor, prolonged bed rest, high-risk pregnancies, abnormalities of the fetus, lactation issues and post-partum depression (to name a few). Broader issues like rape, abortion, sexual assault, adoption, teenage pregnancy, same-sex parenting, menopause, safety of transwomen and birth control are almost never discussed. If the former issues are brought to light, it is usually through a women's circle group or prayer list. These issues, however, are not for women to face alone, feel shame or secrecy about. They are certainly not "just women's issues." While it can be extremely difficult to navigate the privacy and openness of each woman, it is important to support women in more tangible and public ways.

There is no "one size fits all" model for this type of support or ministry, especially because each woman and her experience with these issues are different and occur at varying ages and stages in a woman's life. One thing is certain, women and mothers need more support.

I have heard congregants make statements about speaking about such issues only in private or not in "mixed company," but it's this antiquated view of sexuality perpetuating this myth that women's issues are "icky," "gross" and "TMI," especially for men. Yet, too often men in leadership are comfortable making or supporting rules and regulations that make choices for women concerning their bodies. These are not political issues, these are ethical issues, spiritual issues and extremely personal decisions women should be supported in making. A woman's church should be her greatest support, affirming for her God loves and values her.

*Originally published in Ethics Daily on May 9, 2017.

[continued on pg 5]

CHURCH @ POND & HIGHLAND

community spotlight

For decades, churches have had men's and women's groups, but it is my fear that these groups' main focus will be social (which there is a healthy space for) rather than taking the time, energy and thoughtfulness to address difficult issues going on in the lives of the women and men attending. Many churches in Atlanta have Alcoholics or Narcotics Anonymous groups that meet weekly in their facilities. These groups are doing messy, honest and transformative work - often meeting the needs of our community in more tangible and authentic ways.

Church folk usually struggle to admit the adversity they are facing. This denial means churches are silent on

major issues afflicting our communities, and women and men must seek solace and support elsewhere. Churches have made positive steps in addressing issues related to divorce, death, and aging and palliative care, and these ministries are usually well attended and accepted (dare I say popular). This popularity proves these ministries have an audience that longs to listen and be heard.

In this new political climate, where labels come before names and Christians so often use the Bible as a tool to punish and judge women and the issues they face, it is my hope churches can open not only their doors but their minds to women who need more support, care, love, understanding and community. Turning these ideas into a practical ministry takes time and small steps. Here are a few ideas:

1. Do you have women on your staff or in leadership roles? If not, that will be your first hurdle. Women want to hear from other women when it comes to these issues. If you do have women on staff, what care and support does the church offer them in regard to parental leave, counseling, childcare, mental health days, support groups and so on?

2. Male pastors and associate

pastors should have an honest conversation with their spouses concerning these issues. This exercise helps develop true compassion and empathy, which pastors need to begin to understand the struggles in which they have not and never will have first-hand experience.

3. Build support for women in your congregation with an open, safe dialogue in your church or community where women of all ages can come together to express their needs and what support would look like.

4. Holistic worship planning will only take place if men and women plan services together. Find ways to incorporate the struggles of women in your church through pastoral prayers, litanies or more creative ways. This public recognition gives value and merit to our pain.

5. Find a local nonprofit that supports women and learn more about partnering and volunteering.

6. Encourage a layperson to start a small group. While some issues are more common for women at certain ages/stages of life, there are great benefits from having a wide range of ages.

If churches want to make a difference in their communities, they cannot shy away from the difficult & delicate conversations affecting their people. Women, more specifically mothers, are looking for support and authentic community to share their experiences with.

A word from our Finance Committee

In 2016 our church crossed an amazing threshold. For the first time in many years, the upkeep of the physical building didn't exceed our budget. We took bold steps in 2014 to turn this around as a community and renovated our property to become more efficient. We streamlined almost every aspect of how we operated and today, we find ourselves at a wonderful open doorway few churches are able to experience. Today, our offerings, our pledges, our weekly giving go to funding our ministries! This is a gift! Take in a deep breath, appreciate the renovated building, the efficient heating and air-conditioning, the beautiful children's rooms, parlor, classrooms, elevator, restrooms and yes, new windows to come! Also, recognize the history of this community has made

it possible for us through our endowed resources to take care of the renovated building. We are at the place of dreaming and living into that dream of where our ministries here at the Church at Ponce and Highland can extend the love of God!

When you are sitting in church and you see the offering envelope in the pew rack in front of you, notice that it reads "General Fund." In reality, your giving is very specific and personal. When Carra gathers our children around her to teach our little ones the ways of faith that is where General Fund giving goes. When Alan Jones works with the neediest in our community, your General Fund giving makes it possible. When our Choir members need new sheet music for their concerts, your giving is there. When

the Missions Team visits Guatemala or Mexico after working so hard learning Spanish and holding all the fundraisers, know your weekly giving helped them to represent us as a church from this corner of Atlanta to the world. When your Pastor makes her hospital and community visits, prepares her sermons, and works with our committees and teams, it is because you make it possible. Our Hospitality team, provides the ambiance and events that we cherish so much, it's because you gave your offering.

On Sunday, June 4, we will have our church-wide luncheon to enjoy fellowship and vote on a new budget for the 2017-2018 budget year. We urge you to prayerfully consider what you can pledge to our Church's General Fund this year.

Ministry Team

Rev. Mimi Walker, Senior Pastor	4/422-6867 (cell)	mimi.walker@dhbc.org
Rev. Carra Greer, Minister to Families		carra.greer@dhbc.org
Mr. Chris Massie, Music Director		chris.massie@dhbc.org
Mr. Jim O'Connell, Financial Secretary		jim.oconnell@dhbc.org
Mr. Jim Wright, Facilities Management Director		jim.wright@dhbc.org
Mrs. Leisa Smith, Church Pianist		lcds64@aol.com

We are an affirming, authentic, and appreciating church that offers a fun and nurturing environment to anyone seeking faith. Our partnership and collaboration within the whole Atlanta community allows us to be theologically inclusive through the arts, ministry, activism, and community partnership.



1085 Ponce de Leon Ave.
NE
Atlanta, GA 30306

Office: 404.874.5721

Website:

[www.churchatponceand
highland.org](http://www.churchatponceandhighland.org)