

The Link

First Presbyterian Church

March, 2010

First Presbyterian of Natchez is a community in Jesus Christ
that is discovering and sharing God's love.

SUNDAY WORSHIP TIMES

Early Worship

8:15-8:45 a.m.

Sunday School

9:15-10:10 a.m.

Worship in

Sanctuary

10:30-11:30 a.m.

(One service at 10:30
only on Communion
Sundays—no early
service.)

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Calendar on-line www.fpcnatchez.org	

A Note from the Ministers

Author and pastor Dan Kimball wrote a very insightful and accessible book about the difficulty of being the church in this day and age. The book is called *They Like Jesus But Not The Church*. Dan interviewed college students, professors, and workers of a variety of trades and asked them two questions. The first was "What do you think about Jesus?" The answers ranged from "I believe in Jesus and his teachings are inspirational" to "I love Jesus and believe his teachings are pure." The second question was concerned with those people who make up the Body of Christ, the church: "What do you think about when you hear the word 'Christian?'" The answers ranged from "I wouldn't know one because I've never met one" to "They ought to be taken outside and shot because they don't apply the love-is-everything message of Jesus." As your pastors, we find these remarks troubling. Such remarks are variations of one common complaint against the church's members. It is that they are superficial and pious hypocrites. A charge like that should give us pause to reflect on where we have fallen short or if we have fallen short at all. Being honest about who we are is the starting place for the season of Lent.

Fundamentally, the season of Lent is about following Christ's command to empty ourselves of those things we do for personal gain rather than divine glory. Jesus is talking with a group of people who essentially have lost track of what faithful living is about. In the sixth chapter of Matthew, Jesus lifts up some of the practices of praying insincere prayers in public just to be seen by others, and giving an offering publicly just to be admired by onlookers. Jesus is speaking against what is a very human need to be af-

firmed and liked by other human beings. He calls us to the task of emptying ourselves of these human needs because our lives are not meant for accumulating public accolades. We are to live with sincerity and honesty in our relationship with God.

I'll close with a story of what happened one Sunday morning as Noelle and I led a Sunday School class focused on what the season of Lent means for the Christian Life. Amid an amazingly thoughtful discussion, one person asked the question "Why are we seeing a return to some of the old church rituals, like having ashes put on our foreheads on Ash Wednesday?" We think there is a very human need to have an experience of God through rituals that lift up who our God is and how God wants to be in relationship with us. We all want to move from experiencing church to experiencing God. The rituals of the church lead us through our senses into deeper communion with the God of Creation, the Lord of Life. The practice of having ashes put on our foreheads and hearing the words "From dust you have come; to dust you shall return" is a reminder that our lives are frail. We are known to tinker with temptation, to go against God's better judgment, and to be mired in sin while we point the finger at others who are doing the same things. When un-churched people say that we are a body of hypocrites, I am aware that we have failed to communicate to them "Yes. We can be hypocrites at times. But we are a people who depend on God's grace to move us toward greater faithfulness." With God's grace, our frail lives are strengthened. Thanks be to God.

Rev. Denny Read
Co-Pastor

Presbyterian Women's Meetings

PW Coordinating Team will meet on Friday, March 5, at 9:30 a.m. in the Westminster Room in Stratton Chapel.

Rebekah Circle will meet Tuesday, March 9, at 10:30 a.m. in the Parlor of Stratton Chapel. Sandra Tipton is the hostess.

Ruth Circle will meet Tuesday, March 9, at 2 p.m. in the Parlor of Stratton Chapel. Gail Massey is the hostess.

Lydia Circle will meet Tuesday, March 9, at 5:30 p.m. (note time change) at 118 Espero Drive. Sue LaMond is the hostess

Dear Women of First Presbyterian,
Spring and Pilgrimage are around the corner! We have a couple of events for March.

Our Coordinating Team will meet on Friday, March 5th at 9:30 a.m. in the Westminster Room. It will be our last meeting before the 22nd Annual Women's Gathering on March 13th. Please let me know if you can't come.

The Annual Gathering will take place at First Presbyterian Church on March 13th from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., including lunch. We'll need lots of help from you ladies. We are expecting lots of folks to come to the Gathering and also see the sights in Natchez at Pilgrimage. Lunch will be prepared by Susanna Sharp, but we need people to set-up, serve and clean-up. We will also have pastries and muffins at registration and can use a few people to help us early. Please call me about what you'd like to do (601-442-7758).

Yours in Christ, Beth Troutman, PW Moderator

Playschool

Happy Spring! We're hoping that positive thoughts will bring spring weather and leave the coldness behind. We are sorry that the Playschool was closed a couple of weeks ago due to the snow. This decision was not taken lightly. We always try to keep the Playschool open at the scheduled days and times; however, we do have to consider the safety of our children and staff in traveling to and from school and to ensure adequate in-school supervision.

March will be an exciting month for the Playschool. This month, the children will be focusing on the weather, rainbows, St. Patrick Day's, safety and community helpers.

The week of March 1-4, we will celebrate Dr. Seuss's birthday. On Monday, The Cat in the Hat will visit our

classrooms to read books and pass out special treats. He will also be wearing a funny hat. Tuesday we will wear something green for the Grinch, and crazy, mismatched socks. On Wednesday, we are going for a fishy theme. Thursday, we're snuggling up with a book in our jammies; Friday is western day.

We will also be having a class project contest. Each classroom will decorate their classroom doors like a movie poster of their favorite Dr. Seuss book, or create a banner. The best door will get a special treat.

It was enjoyable sharing your child's growth with you at our parent-teacher conference. Thank you for attending. On March 15-19, from 9 a.m.-2 p.m., we will hold a conference for the parents who could not attend the earlier one.

Remember to spring forward on March 14!

Birthdays

March 3	Eddie Burkes	March 11	Al Davis	March 27	Ann Carlton
March 4	Irvin Anderson	March 15	Shannon Parker	March 28	Kinny Carlton
March 6	Wade Ratchliffe	March 19	Beverly Jenkins	March 29	Ruth Colter
	Sally Jones	March 21	Candace Bundgard	March 31	Judy Heard
March 7	Stewart Mophett	March 22	Rebecca Seale		Jim Ware
March 8	Sharon Sharp	March 23	Kay McNeil		
March 9	Leigh Anderson	March 25	Jeanne Stowers		
March 10	Sarah Tillman	March 26	Anne Vidal Willett		

January Session Notes

The Session met with the Diaconate on Monday, January 11, in Fellowship Hall for their annual dinner and meeting. A quorum was present. The meeting was opened with prayer by the moderator, Rev. Noelle Read. Dinner followed.

Incoming officers were introduced and outgoing officers were recognized. New members, Brenda and Hal Hicks, were accepted into membership on profession of faith.

Staff reports were given.

Pastor's Report—The Reads gave the invocation for the State Senate. They also reported they now have a local number for the congregation to reach them in emergencies. The joint meeting was adjourned; session and diaconate met separately afterwards.

Treasurer's Report—Financial statements were received.

Clerk's Report—Reported on upcoming weddings; session approved a destination wedding on June 12, 2010.

Executive—Olan Mills has been engaged to create a new church directory. A plan was presented for streamlining the ministries into units. Session approved the changes.

Playschool—Judy Kempinska reported that the Playschool will provide and pay for nursery workers for worship services.

Administration—Jay Fitch reported that he and Denny would meet to revise job descriptions and establish appraisal formats.

Property—On a motion of Ed Colwell, session approved the purchase of blinds for the photo gallery.

No Old Business.

Meeting was adjourned and closed with prayer by Rev. Denny Read.

Next stated meeting is February 8, 2010.

New Officers



Ed Colwell, elder; Russell Butts, elder; Marcia Passman, deacon; Linda Bates, deacon; Everette Ratcliffe, elder

March Lectionary

Like many other Christians throughout the world today, our church follows what is called the Revised Common Lectionary, which provides Scripture readings for each Sunday throughout the year. We can prepare our hearts for Sunday worship by reading these texts prior to the service.

March 7—Isa. 55:1-9; Ps. 63:1-8; 1 Cor. 10:1-13; Luke 13:1-9

March 14—Josh. 5:9-12; Ps. 32; 2 Cor. 5:16-21; Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

March 21—Isa. 43:16-21; Ps. 126; Phil. 3:4b-14; John 12:1-8

March 28—Luke 19:28-40; Ps. 118:1-2, 19-29;

Isa. 50:4-9a; Ps. 31:9-16; Phil. 2:5-11; Luke 22:14-23:56; Luke 23:1-49

Holy Week

Monday, March 29—Isa. 42:1-9; Ps. 36:5-11; Heb. 9:11-15; John 12:1-11

Tuesday, March 30—Isa. 49:1-7; Ps. 7:1-14; 1 Cor. 1:19-31; John 12:20-36

Wednesday, March 31—Isa. 50:4-9a; Ps. 70; Heb. 12:1-3; John 13:21-32

Maundy Thursday, April 1—Exod. 12:1-4, 11-14; Ps. 116:1-2, 12-19; 1 Cor. 11:23-26; John 13:1-17, 31b-35

Good Friday, April 2—Isa. 52:13-53:12; Ps. 22; Heb. 1:16-25; Heb. 4:14-16, 5:7-9; John 18:1-19:42

Worship Ramblings

One of the perks of ushering on Sunday mornings is to stand at the back of the Sanctuary and observe the worship service from a different perspective. The "Processional" starts as the congregation begins the first hymn. There always seems to be a little rush or confusion at the back of the Sanctuary, but by the time the "Call to Worship" is finished everything falls into place and the "Light" starts down the center aisle, followed by the "Word", followed by one of the co-pastors.

Have you noticed how many children we have in the worship service these days? Well, one of the great things about ushering is being able to observe the children from the back of the Church. The children are participating in the service as acolytes, greeters and ushers. They are participating in "a time for Young Disciples" and Children's Choir. We have plenty of new Activity-Bags for the younger children (thanks to Beth Troutman for making them; thanks to Kay McNeil for filling them up every week!) and we have Lenten coloring books available also.

The "Congregational Greeting" takes place after the "Assurance of Pardon". What a great time. We greet those that we see often, we greet those members we may not have seen in a while, and most important of all, we

make it a point to greet and welcome those visiting. No one is left out.

We have two types of bulletins available now. Besides our standard bulletin, there is also one with large print (thanks to Dotty Stubbs for that suggestion). The large print bulletin also has copies of the Bible readings and hymns.

Another thing we do in the Worship Unit is to count the attendance in Worship on Sunday. We are averaging about 20 in the 8:15 Service and about 125 in the 10:30 Service. What is interesting is who is not in attendance. It seems that most Sundays we have approximately 50 people who are not there. These people are usually easily accounted for. We are all active and out of town often, or even on Mission Trips sometimes.

The point is that we have 195 people that are active in our Church. That is really an awesome number. Our church is active and growing. We invite you to join us in worship as often as you are able.

—Bobby Meason, Worship Chairman

Musical Notes

In early December, Dr. Jerry Yonkman submitted a proposal to the worship committee regarding usage of Stratton Chapel on Tuesday evenings for a Community Choir. He enclosed his resume which was most impressive: BA from Calvin College in Music Theory and Composition; Masters and PhD from Indiana University School of Music in choral conducting; master classes in conducting with Robert Shaw and Leonard Bernstein; it goes on and on. If anyone is interested in a copy, I'll be glad to oblige!

Since moving to Natchez a year and a half ago, he has had an idea about sharing his musical expertise with our populace. "It has been my observation that while there are a number of musical events that occur in Natchez, there is limited participation by local residents. I am hoping to establish a community choir to bring together people from all walks of life in creating beautiful music and sharing this gift with the community, Jerry writes. "Reading music is greatly appreci-

ated, but not necessary. A good ear can be equally beneficial, if not more so!" The Session wholeheartedly approved this request. The rehearsals will begin Tuesday, March 2, at 7 p.m. in Stratton Chapel. All are welcome! Esther Jeffus eagerly agreed to be the liaison between choir and church.

The Children's Choir has been working on their End of the Year Review which will be held in Fellowship Hall on Sunday, April 18th, at 5:30 p.m. The children will sing all the anthems they've learned this year, plus a few other songs they sing in rehearsals. A Family Night Dinner will follow. Please mark your calendars for this special event. Bring children that might be interested in participating in the choir next year! And bring a dish to share.

The children will sing the anthem *Forever We Shall Sing* on Sunday, March 21st at the 10:30 a.m. service. Handbells are playing on Sunday, March 7th and Palm Sunday, March 28th. —Blessings, Becky Meason Jones

PHANTOM ORGANIST PLAYS AGAIN!!

For those of you new to First Presbyterian Church, an explanation of how our organ plays by itself, in my absence, might be needed.

We restored the organ from 2002 to 2004; the first phase was to replace the obsolete mechanical parts of the console with a solid state relay system. Along with that, we got a MIDI (music instrument digital interface) installed. This is what allows the organist to record the actual music that is being played. It can be saved within the organ console itself, or on a disk, to be played back from the external MIDI machine, which is what we use, or the organ itself. This system is what allows music to be played as gathering music prior to the 10:30 service, while I am in the choir room rehearsing. Sometimes it is used when I am needed to be downstairs playing the piano for the children and don't have time to get back upstairs to start a hymn. It is especially nice to have playing during visitation time for a funeral, until I start playing for real. Also, this feature is what allows me to take a vacation day, which I did recently. There are several people to thank who can make the organ operate with the MIDI. These are

Esther Jeffus (who can also operate the sound system), Becky Jones, Larry Delaughter, and Bazile Lanneau. I would also like to thank George Bates, who filled in for me on the piano at the 8:15 service recently.

During the week of Holy Week, I will have the organ playing continuous meditative music through the MIDI from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., unless we are having a service or I am playing personally. This disk was compiled last year, and includes pieces I have recorded over the past seven years, such as *The Old Rugged Cross* and *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*. The disk runs approximately an hour and then repeats. I would like to invite you to come any time during those hours and stay for as long as you want. The public, of course, is invited.

The organ will get its semiannual tuning on March 24th, in advance of upcoming weddings and Palm Sunday.

Thank you for your support for me in my ministry as organist of our church. It is a blessing for me!
—Jeanie Lanneau, organist

XYZ

XYZ will meet Thursday, March 18, at 11:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Lunch will be provided. The program will be presented by Joann Caves, Senior Planning Consultant with the Senior Planning Group in Pearl, Mississippi. All are welcome.

TLC

TLC needs casseroles!! If you would like to participate in this ministry, we need you! Just label your casseroles (what they are, any baking/reheating information) and bring up to the church.

Casseroles are to be placed in the freezer in the storage room, across from the kitchen. For more information, please contact any of our deacons.
—Leigh Anderson, deacon

Praying through the Year—February Peacemaking



Prayer plays an essential role in our faith journey as individuals following Jesus and in our corporate life as we gather to worship. In prayer, we pour our hearts and minds out to God. In prayer, we listen to God, seeking insight and guidance for our living.

Prayer plays an essential role in peacemaking. The psalmist encourages prayers for the peace of Jerusalem (Ps. 122:6). Jeremiah urges the exiles to seek the welfare of the city where God had sent them and to pray on its behalf (Jer. 29:7) Jesus teaches us to “love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you”. (Matt. 5:44)

Prayer is the center of peacemaking: “How will peace be achieved: By disarmament? Certainly, but not only by disarmament. By global economic reform? Certainly, but not only by global economic reform. By the change of political structures? Basically, at the heart, it is a matter of the way we see the world through the eyes of Christ. It is a matter of praying and yearning. It is an inner response to God, who loves the whole world and whose Spirit calls for and empowers the making of peace.” —(192nd General Assembly—1980, United Presbyterian Church in the USA, Peacemaking.)

The Commitment to Peacemaking recognizes prayer as one of the ways we engage in peacemaking. Prayer opens us to God’s transforming grace; prayers are themselves acts of peacemaking. Laying our brokenness and the wounds of the world before God for healing is peacemaking. Joining hearts and hands with neighbors we do not like too well is an act of peacemaking. Renewing our allegiance to Jesus Christ in a world where so many human institutions and causes would claim our ultimate allegiance is peacemaking—a reminder that we are first of all, God’s children through Christ. Let us pray together each month throughout the coming year, as we work to heal God’s creation and all of His people. These prayers are all taken from *Justice and Peace Shall Kiss: Praying Through the Year*, edited by W. Mark Koenig, published by Presbyterian Peacemaking Program.

March 5-World Day of Prayer

God of our hope, we gather to celebrate your steadfast love and to celebrate new moments that this love

provides to us. You who live everywhere bind us together. Free us from our prejudice and bias. Free us from our divisions. Free us from the belief that our theology, our culture, and our way of thinking are better than those of our brothers and sisters from different places. Free us from a world culture of violence and war and instead help us to be agents of peace and reconciliation. We call upon your Holy Spirit to grant us a new and fresh look at your work in our lives and in our midst. We invoke you as we wait for new moments of even more exhilarating blessings and possibilities of love and peace in our lives, new moments for our families, new moments for our world. May your Holy Spirit touch us deeply and make us able to rejoice, to be thankful and to laugh out loud. In the name of Jesus, in whom there are no longer strangers, but friends, Amen.

—The Rev. Claudio Carvalhaes, asst. professor of Worship and Preaching, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary

March 7—Celebrate the Gifts of Women

Gracious, peacemaking God, we so often fail to be your partners in your work of reconciliation. We fail to recognize all the places in our world that need your healing. We fail to hear the ideas or see the actions of our sisters, mothers, spouses, and friends. We hear, “How beautiful are the feet of those...on your holy mountain,” and we think only of how tired and hurting are our own feet engaged in walking in heavily worn paths and habits of oppression. Like peacemakers of the Congo, Liberia, and Sri Lanka, let us hear your daughters’ voices calling for peace—a deep and abiding peace that values all your children and protects the least and the vulnerable. Help us hear voices long silenced; help us change how we are with one another that we may be welcoming of the gifts women bring to your church and society. Today, as we celebrate these peace-seekers among us, refresh us in your Spirit as it renews a passion for your work in the world and compels us to commit to your cause of peace. Grant us your grace to give to one another and to ourselves as we walk along your way. Amen.

—The Rev. Molly Casteel, minister member, Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery



New Members



Please welcome new members, Hal and Brenda Hicks, who joined FPC on Sunday, January 17. They are received into membership by re-affirmation of faith.

Hal and Brenda have been married for 25 years. Hal enjoys hunting and Brenda is an avid musician. They reside at 600 Hwy. 61 S.

We CAN Do It!

Thank you to all who contributed to the Natchez Food Pantry in January. The Playschool "built" a smiley face with the 154 cans of food donated by First Presbyterian Church and Playschool families. The Natchez Democrat photographed our happy face and included it in the newspaper Sunday, January 31, 2010.

We will continue this outreach program the first Sunday of each month. Monetary donations are also welcome! Whether you can give one can or twenty, one dollar or one hundred dollars, please give cheerfully to this ministry for our community. As Paul wrote, "You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion and through us, your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people, but it is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God." (2 Cor. 9:11-12) Dana Dent, Diaconate



Church Directory

A new church directory is in the works!

Plans have begun for a new church directory. The first step is having photographs taken for it. An Olan Mills photographer will be at First Presbyterian on Monday, April 5 and Tuesday, April 6, from 3-9:30 p.m. to take pictures.

There will be a sign-up sheet in the church soon for everyone to choose their appointment time.

Watch for details in News and Notes.

Please join us for The 22nd Annual Gathering
Presbyterian Women of the Mississippi Presbytery

First Presbyterian Church

400 State Street

Natchez, MS 39120

fpcnatchez@bellsouth.net

601-442-2581

Saturday, March 13, 2010

Registration begins at 9 a.m.

Meeting begins at 10 a.m.

Lunch at Noon--\$8.00

Please respond by March 5, 2010

Beth Troutman, Moderator

601-442-7758

dt Troutman1@bellsouth.net

For hotels, Bed and Breakfasts, & Pilgrimage information, check

www.natchez.com

March 2010

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 9 a.m. Playschool Chapel 10 a.m. Staff Meeting Noon Worship mtg. 5:30 p.m. Deacons' meeting	2 7 a.m. Men's Prayer Breakfast 12:05 p.m. TOTS 5:15 p.m. Handbells 7 p.m. Community Choir Rehearsal	3 3:30 p.m. Children's Choir 5:30 p.m. Adult Choir	4 8:30 a.m. Exercise Class Noon Playschool meeting	5 4-5:30 p.m. Girl Scouts	6
7 Communion Sun. 9:15 Sun. School 10:10 Choir Rehearsal 10:10 Fellowship Coffee 10:30 Worship	8 10 a.m. Staff Meeting 5:30 p.m. Session meeting	9 7 a.m. Men's Prayer Breakfast 10:30 a.m. Rebekah Circle 12:05 p.m. TOTS 2 p.m. Ruth Circle 5:15 p.m. Handbells 7 p.m. Lydia Circle 7 p.m. Community Choir	10 3:30 p.m. Children's Choir 5:30 p.m. Adult Choir	11 8:30 a.m. Exercise Class	12	13 Set your clocks ahead one hour! SPRING FORWARD!!
14 Daylight Savings Time Begins 8:15 a.m. worship 9:15 Sun. School 10:10 Choir Rehearsal 10:10 Fellowship Coffee 10:30 Worship	15 10 a.m. Staff Meeting	16 7 a.m. Men's Prayer Breakfast 12:05 p.m. TOTS 5:15 p.m. Handbells 7 p.m. Community Choir Rehearsal 6 p.m. Compassionate Friends	17 NO CHILDREN'S CHOIR 5:30 p.m. Adult Choir	18 8:30 a.m. Exercise Class 11:30 a.m. XYZ program and lunch	19 3 p.m. Playschool Trike-A-Thon	20
21 8:15 a.m. worship 9:15 Sun. School 10:10 Choir Rehearsal 10:10 Fellowship Coffee 10:30 Worship	22 10 a.m. Staff Meeting	23 7 a.m. Men's Prayer Breakfast 12:05 p.m. TOTS 5:15 p.m. Handbells 7 p.m. Community Choir Rehearsal	24 3:30 p.m. Children's Choir 5:30 p.m. Adult Choir	25 8:30 a.m. Exercise Class	26 6:30 p.m. wedding rehearsal	27 7 p.m. Lowe/McGehee wedding
28 8:15 a.m. worship 9:15 Sun. School 10:10 Choir Rehearsal 10:10 Fellowship Coffee 10:30 Worship 5 p.m. Taíze service of Healing and Wholeness	29 10 a.m. Staff Meeting Organ will play meditative music-----	30 7 a.m. Men's Prayer Breakfast 12:05 p.m. TOTS 5:15 p.m. Handbells 7 p.m. Community Choir Rehearsal Organ will play-----	31 3:30 p.m. Children's Choir 5:30 p.m. Adult Choir Organ will play-----			