

First Presbyterian Church
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AUGUST 2021 LINK

FROM THE PASTOR



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

I've been working through the devotionals that I prepared for you during the pandemic year, finding some that will stand the test of time, some you might like to keep in a small book form. This one, slightly edited, is from June 2020; it caught my eye as one appropriate for the time we are experiencing now amid the many choices we have to make. Maybe there is a word for you:

God's Holy Word challenges us. We encounter hard lessons, sometimes confusing lessons. We struggle as people who want to follow Christ, love him, and love and serve our neighbors. We join many generations of people who have struggled in the same way that we do today. I like what James says about our struggles to understand:

"Who is wise and understanding among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth." (James 3:13-14)

And James goes on to say, "For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there also will be disorder and wickedness of every kind"(3:16).

Psalm 1 tells a similar message: We can choose a life that is blessed or a life that is meaningless. We can choose to live as God in Jesus Christ teaches us to live; or we can refuse that grace given so freely by our Lord. We can become like trees planted by streams of water, nourished and fed and always bearing fruit; or we can become withered and dry, unproductive like the chaff that wind blows away.

It is more than all right for all of us to ask questions about the hard teachings we find in our Holy Bible. In fact, it is essential that we ask questions. It is essential as we grow in faith together to ask questions of each other, to talk about difficult lessons, and to explore together the questions that don't seem to have answers that we understand fully. That is why we study together -- in worship, in Sunday school, in Bible studies.

We witness in Scripture what happens to the disciples when they hesitate to confront the hard questions. They begin to talk about petty things, about who is first and who is last. They talk meaninglessly about anything but kingdom building with Jesus Christ. Will you decide today to make a choice for the way of Christ? Let's struggle together.

Sending love and blessings as I proudly stand with you to serve Christ,

Joan

MUSIC NOTES



Greetings all in the Name of Jesus Christ.

As you may have noticed, our choir is back together after a year and half of being apart as a result of the pandemic. It is beyond wonderful to have all those voices and smiling faces back! We are progressing along- it's a bit like starting over in a way. We are working on lots of new choral music, reacquainting ourselves with singing together as an ensemble, and thoroughly enjoying every moment of being together. Our Sunday worship services are greatly enhanced by the choir's contribution musically I believe. I look forward to the months ahead as we continue our

good work and produce more and more beautiful music to the glory of God and in the service of God's people in this place.

I renew my invitation to anyone who might be interested in joining the choir. All that is required is a desire to sing and a willingness to be faithful in attendance at rehearsals and services. If you think you might like to give it a go, please join us any Wednesday evening at 6 p.m. in the Choir room on the second floor of Stratton Chapel. All are welcome!

Vincent Bache III

Director of Music and Organist

PROPERTY COMMITTEE



Property Chairmen Anne Vidal Willett and Catherine Ratcliffe are charged with keeping buildings and grounds in good order. Robert Joseph does many small repairs throughout the building weekly; Floyd Gardner offers his many talents in numerous property emergencies and maintenance events. Stratton Bull keeps an eye out for some of the big jobs that call for artisans such as these pictured above – working on Thursday, July 29, on the massive front doors of the church building. Getting the doors refinished not only makes them more beautiful; it also protects the fine old wood from aging

too quickly. Thanks to all who keep an eye on the property that makes up our lovely church complex. Cleaning, making repairs, replacing broken or worn-out items, beautifying with plants and flowers, repairing pews, changing light bulbs ... the list is long indeed! Call Anne or Catherine if you would like to volunteer for work on the property (building, interior, flower beds – you will know when something calls to you).

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

FPC's annual **Blessing of the Backpacks** is Sunday, August 22. , with a covered dish luncheon served afterwards in Fellowship Hall. Let's give the children a wonderful send-off as they start the 2021-2022 school year.



Top Left: David Gilzene, Ashley Palmer, Antoin Marshall, Sonya Faulknor and the children with Regina Charboneau; Top Right: Diane Good watches as Regina teaches the children how to make biscuits.

Thanks to the financial support of individuals in our congregation, our choir section leaders were able to devote themselves to the Joe and Diane Good neighborhood ministry during the month of July. Math, English, geography, and music were some of the topics explored each weekday morning. We proudly observed the excellent tutoring skills of David, Ashley, Antoin, and Sonya (pictured left to right on the back row of the first photo) as they worked with the children. The mutual affection enjoyed between our leaders and the young people was a confirmation of God's direction in making this connection between our church and the Goods' ministry.

One of the special events, enjoyed by the adults as much as by the students, was when Regina Charboneau treated the group to a biscuit making class at her shop downtown. After some hands-on science instruction involving the techniques of mixing, rolling, folding, and cutting the dough, the class ended with a feast of biscuits fresh out of the oven. Many thanks to our choir leaders, Regina, and others who made this and all of July's experiences so memorable.



On the last Sunday in July, even after leaving the sanctuary, our one-year-old Marley Borum (center in picture above) paid attention to the lesson with the same seriousness as her big sister Melody. Lillian, our nursery worker, wasn't the least bit tempted to take her to the nursery. The nursery opens at 10 a.m. for those who prefer not to bring little ones into the sanctuary.



When our youngest children leave the sanctuary on Sunday morning, they review the story which Pastor Joan has told during church, sing songs, learn something about the Bible, and lately have started memorizing the 23rd Psalm. Get ready to hear at least one of these songs when we celebrate Rally Day Sunday in mid-September.

Let me or the church office know if you would like to help with any age group in Christian Education as we kick off our fall season next month.

Helen Smith, Chairman
FPC Education Committee

MISSION COMMITTEE

Dear FPC Brothers and Sisters:

Mission Committee member Dana Dent researched the Natchez-Adams Schools lists of supplies for young children returning to school. There may be additions as the school year gets underway, but here is the list that we have so far. Since members of our church have been working with a ministry for school children during the summer, we are aware that it might be useful to provide some supplies for the coming school year.

If you would like to contribute, choose one grade level, please prepare according to the list below, put the items in a container that is easy to transport (shoe box, for example), label grade level, and bring them to the church office for distribution.

K-1st

4-pocket folders
crayons
erasers
scissors
glue sticks
gallon size freezer bag to hold student supplies

2nd

4-pocket folders
highlighters
erasers
gallon size freezer bag to hold student supplies

3rd - 5th

blue or black pens
4-pocket folders
highlighters
erasers
gallon size freezer bag to hold student supplies

(Photos of supplies are on the next page.)

You may contribute school supplies throughout the month of August.

To help you select school supplies for the children whose work we will support by our gifts, Dana Dent has prepared Ziploc bags to demonstrate! You will see below that the supplies for each grade level are put into those see-through plastic bags with zip tops. The bag to hold the supplies is one of the requests from the teachers. In the photos, the bags are separated by grade levels to show the items: kindergarten and first grade (see yellow highlight); second grade (see blue highlight); and third, fourth, and fifth grade (the only one with ballpoint pens). The four-pocket folders in all the different colors are for all age groups. Thank you for shopping for the children who will be very grateful for your gifts! The supplies will be given out through D & J Youth Ministry, led by Dianne and Joe Good. The FPC choir scholars worked with this ministry in the month of July.



REPORT FROM THE DEACONS

Each deacon has been visiting, calling, and sending notes to those members who are homebound or sick. We have also been busy planning the luncheon we will be hosting on August 22nd, with the Blessing of Backpacks and Laptops students in the church who will be returning to school.

The Deacons will meet Thursday, August 5, at 5:30 p.m. in the church library.

Frances Meason, Deacon Chairman

EVANGELISM COMMITTEE

The Covid-19 Safety Response Committee, which is a sub-committee of the Evangelism Committee, continues to monitor the status of the virus in our community. As you know, both Mississippi and Adams Co. are currently experiencing growing numbers of cases of the Delta variant. Our focus is always the safety of our church community. The next couple of weeks will determine whether any policy guidelines will be revised. In the meantime, be careful with your own risk assessment during this time of increasing vulnerability. And if you or anyone you know needs any type of assistance to get vaccinated, please contact the church office and let us know what kind of support you need. One of the members of our committee will be happy to help with arranging an appointment for a shot and/or transportation to and from a vaccine location, etc.

On another front, with the help of Rusty Jenkins, we continue to work to "build-in" a visit to our historic photo gallery for the formal tours organized by the river boat companies.

Marc Doyle and Lane Feltus
Co-Chairs, Evangelism Committee

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Presbyterian Women are setting their sights on the fall, looking past August to September and the first circle meeting of the season. Because of the interruption by the pandemic in the past season, PW members have plans to revisit the study that had to be tabled during the time of physical separation. That study is based on the book *Into the Light, Finding Hope Through Prayers of Lament*, written by our own Mississippi friend the Rev. Dr. Lynn Miller. PW members purchased the book last year but did not get to study together.

Plans for the circle study include inviting Dr. Miller to return to Natchez in January 2022 to attend the annual luncheon and to tell us more about the study.

At the September luncheon we hope to have the yearbooks completed and a fundraising project selected. Get ready for a busy PW year!

WONDERFUL WEDNESDAYS

Our Wednesday evenings at 5:15 in the Fellowship Hall have taken on more excitement. At 6 p.m. when the choir members leave for practice, and many adults join Joan Gandy for a conversational study in the library, Randy Smith now plays ball games with the children of all ages. Our meals continue to be whatever a volunteer chooses to bring (costs reimbursed by the church). We have enjoyed getting to know each other better. Some come for only the fellowship and others only for the study. We know that this would be an excellent opportunity for you to come and bring your friends or neighbors for a brief time of fellowship regardless of their church affiliation.

The Deacons will meet Thursday, August 5, at 5:30 p.m. in the church library.

The next Session meeting is Monday, August 9, at 5:30 p.m. in the church library.

The Men's Prayer Breakfast will meet Tuesday, August 17, at 7 a.m. in Fellowship Hall.

The Presbytery of Mississippi meets via Zoom on Saturday, August 21, at 10 a.m. Marc Doyle will serve as commissioner along with Rev. Gandy, who also will attend and serve as moderator.

Open Gates AA Meeting meets every Wednesday at 12 noon in the basement meeting room in Stratton Chapel.

Boy Scout Troop 157 meets at 7 p.m. Mondays in Fellowship Hall.

Wednesday Night supper and program: Join us every week at 5:15 p.m. in Fellowship Hall for supper and a program or Bible study.

The Pastor's Bible Study meets on Tuesdays, at 11 a.m. in Stratton Chapel. You may bring your Bibles or use the ones provided in the chapel.

Online Giving: For your convenience you now can give online through PayPal. You do not have to have a PayPal account. Just click the Online Donate button on our Give webpage at <https://www.fpcnatchez.org/give>. This is a great way to meet your regular commitments to the church or to make a special gift. Thank you for your faithfulness.

To have a copy of our prayer list emailed to you, please contact the church office. Hard copies are also available in the church office if you would like to stop and pick one up.

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

August 1 **Marc Doyle**
August 2 **Frances Meason**
August 4 **Hattie Poole, Barbara Rhodes, Kay Jinkins, John Henry Thompson**
August 5 **Sarah Hanson**
August 6 **Rosemary Hall**
August 12 **Courtney Aldridge**
August 17 **Chris Borum**
August 18 **Robert Joseph**
August 19 **Sandra Burkes, Jasper Seale, Mimi Miller**
August 27 **Lacey Metcalfe**
August 29 **Beverly Ratcliffe, Mac Calhoun**
August 31 **Chesney Doyle**

CHURCH STAFF

The Rev. Dr. Joan W. Gandy, Pastor
Mr. Vincent Bache III, Director of Music and Organist
Deon Buford, Sexton
Aretha Davis, Playschool Director
Pam McNeil, Office Administrator
Mary Ann Peoples, Financial Secretary

Officers of the Church

ELDERS:

Class of 2021: Chuck Borum, Stratton Bull, Cara Moody, Anne Willett
Class of 2022: Marc Doyle, Rosemary Hall, Danna Mooney, Helen Smith
Class of 2023: Lane Feltus, Hal Hicks, Mary Lessley, Catherine Ratcliffe

DEACONS:

Class of 2021: Spencer Holder, Everette Ratcliffe, Frances Meason
Class of 2022: Sandra Burkes, Rusty Jenkins, Sarah Smith
Class of 2023: Ken Price, Ryan Sharp, Gwen Washington

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