

First Presbyterian Church
117 S. Pearl Street
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THE LINK ~ OCTOBER 2022

FROM THE PASTOR

The Psalms offer up a poem for every season and setting.
Search and you will find every life experience and emotion there.
Study the rich vocabulary and borrow words to help you pray.

As summer turns to fall, imagine bits of cotton that fall alongside the roads when trucks take cotton to the gins. And picture behind many a Natchez house and in unexpected places around our community, gardens that are ripe with fruits and vegetables that do not give up until the first frost comes.

How blessed we are to live in a place so bountifully erupting in God's goodness – lakes and rivers, bluffs and rolling hills – a land of fertile soil and towering trees, of awe-inspiring sunsets and sunrises.

As the earth tilts and the sunlight takes on its autumn slant, explore the joyful words of praise found in Psalm 65, especially these:

"You crown the year with your bounty; your wagon tracks overflow with richness. The pastures of the wilderness overflow, the hills gird themselves with joy, the meadows clothe themselves with flocks, the valleys deck themselves with grain; they shout and sing together for joy." (vv. 11-13)

With its joyful praise of God for creating the bountiful earth, this psalm also offers reminders of God's care of our souls, bending to bathe us in forgiveness when we succumb to thoughts or deeds outside God's bounds:

"When deeds of iniquity overwhelm us, you forgive our transgressions ... By awesome deeds you answer us with deliverance, O God of our salvation." (vv. 3 & 5)

Make Psalms a regular stop in your day when you pause for prayer or meditation. Share the joy and lament found there. Experience God's mighty power rising in front of you: "By your strength you established the mountains; you are girded with might" (v. 6). And sense God's loving kindness touching your heart: "O you, who answer prayer! To you, all flesh shall come" (v. 2).

Always grateful to walk beside you on this journey,

Joan

MUSIC NOTES

Dear First Presbyterian Church family.

It is my great pleasure to be able to introduce you to our newest Choral Scholars serving in our choir: Miss Kyra Watson, Miss Aavriel Smith, and Mr. Gregory Richards.

Continuing with us this year is also our dear Miss Jimmia Exum who has been with us for the past few years. These young musicians come to us from Alcorn State University and are all accomplished musicians who add so much to our choir, not the least of which is their joyful spirit. In addition to their considerable music skills, they also become a part of our choir family and the larger church family. I encourage you on Sundays to introduce yourself and make their acquaintance. You will be delighted!

This program, started many years ago by this very church, benefits the church by having young voices in training to provide leadership in their section of the choir and enhance the experience of our volunteer singers. It also benefits the students themselves by providing performance opportunities, rehearsal time with a professional music director, exposure to a vast array of the sacred choral repertoire, and of course, honorariums to help defer the cost of attending school.

Please do take a moment to extend a hearty First Presbyterian welcome to these wonderful young people! Rev. Gandy will introduce them to you on Sunday.

It also is my great pleasure to announce that I have invited our dear Becky Meason Jones to take over the direction of the Handbell Choir, and she has graciously and enthusiastically accepted! As many of you already know, Becky has a long history at First Presbyterian Church and is a very well trained and experienced musician. One of her particular gifts is the formation and direction of Handbells, and I look so forward to hearing the joyful peals ringing forth in the sanctuary.

Vincent Bache III, Director of Music and Organist

HANDBELL CHOIR

The Joyful Noise of a new Handbell Choir is preparing to commence! Tuesday evening, October 18th, 5:30 to 6:30, upstairs in the Sanctuary, will be our first lesson (rehearsal) to prepare newcomers and oldcomers, alike. I do ask you to call the church office (601)442-2581, or me, Becky Meason Jones, (601)660-1812, if you have any interest or have a slight inclination of being a member of a small group of 11 ringers and 2+ subs.

If you have never participated in a handbell choir you are in for a treat! We learn to read music; we practice getting along well with others; we get an opportunity to give back to God a small token of the gifts bestowed on us!! Call the Church or me! See what it's about!

Blessings on your heads!

Becky

WORSHIP NEWS

Fall is in the air, FPC family!! Backpacks have been blessed, our Confirmation class was confirmed and it has been so lovely having our pews full worshipping together. We are beyond grateful to each and every one of you worshipping with us in our beautiful Sanctuary and online! If you are able, please plan to worship together in the Sanctuary.

Let Everything Praise the LORD—Psalm 150

Praise the LORD!

Praise God in his sanctuary;

praise him in his mighty heavens!

²Praise him for his mighty deeds;

praise him according to his excellent greatness!

Sunday Morning Services

8:30 a.m. Early Worship in Stratton Chapel

9:15 a.m. Sunday School

10:30 a.m. Worship - Sanctuary*

*Communion First Sunday of the month and on special feast days.



Our latest FPC Front Porch Greeters: Claire and Mac Calhoun.

If you are interested in greeting and/or ushering, we would love to have your assistance. Please feel free to call the Church office to be added to the list.

Our Live Stream worship services: <https://youtu.be/K0UUX2HdDk4>. The video is also available on First Presbyterian Church's Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/FirstPresNatchez/videos/2856520137731201>.

Many Blessings,

Cara Moody, Chairman FPC Worship Committee

CHURCH STAFF MEETINGS

The Church staff meets every Monday morning at 10 in the library.

OCTOBER MEETINGS

Tuesday, October 4

7a.m. Men's Prayer Breakfast meets in Fellowship Hall.

Thursday, October 6

5:30 p.m. Deacons' meeting in the church library

Monday, October 10

5:30 p.m. Session meeting in the church library

Wednesday, October 12

10 a.m. The Rebekah Circle meets in the Parlor.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

On Saturday, September 24, Presbyterian Women convened at First Presbyterian for the Presbytery of Mississippi Fall Gathering with more than fifty in attendance in the church sanctuary. Lunch was served afterwards in Fellowship Hall. Many thanks to all who contributed to the success of this event in the life of our church.



Above left: Catherine Ratcliffe, Phyllis Mashburn, Annette Holder, & Sherry Jones preparing for the PW Fall Gathering luncheon. Above right: Edie Christian, Sue Savino, & Kristen Abney helping at the registration table.



Myra Cook presents a Presbyterian Women life membership award to Susan Sumrall, Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Mississippi.



Many of the attendees gather for a group picture.

Moving forward into the 2022—2023 PW Year, officers were installed at the September Circle Meeting: Sandra Burkes (Moderator), Phyllis Mashburn (Vice-Moderator), Edie Christian (Treasurer), Sue Savino (Secretary), Leigh Anderson (Together-in-Service), Dana Dent (Spiritual Leadership), Donna Edwards (Historian), and Judy Kelly (Circle Leader). We invite you to join us for our Rebekah Circle Meeting, October 12, at 10:00 a.m. in the church parlor. If you haven't gotten yours yet, the PW yearbooks may be picked up in the church office.

Sandra Burkes, PW Moderator

EVANGELISM COMMITTEE

One of the long-standing important outreach missions of our church is the Gandy Photo Gallery in Stratton Chapel.

Visitations, of course, were limited during the pandemic. However, this year, visitations have grown significantly. Right now, with the riverboat cruises and the fall Pilgrimage, we are seeing more and more visitors.

We need volunteers who can work a shift at the State Street door to Stratton Chapel to meet and greet our visitors to the Gallery. Please consider volunteering to help with this important church mission. Please contact Rosemary Hall or the church office to volunteer.

The Evangelism Committee is involved with a new Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) initiative called Vital Congregations. This is a two-year process, involving several levels of church leadership, that "takes us deeper into following Jesus Christ, making disciples and being the vital community of Christ throughout the world."

Right now, we are studying, mostly by zoom meetings, the "Seven Marks of Vital Congregations." As the process evolves over the next two years, our entire church community will be engaged in this renewal initiative.

Lane Feltus and Marc Doyle, Chairmen

OPERA REHEARSALS IN OUR GYM

The FPC gym in the education building will be filled with music for ten days this month. From October 12 to October 26, Opera Mississippi singers, musicians, and technicians will rehearse for two short operas to be performed first in Natchez on October 27 (as a kind of dress rehearsal) and then in Jackson. The cast and crew will have morning, afternoon, and evening rehearsals. They will be at work on Saturdays and on Sundays after 2 p.m. Arrangements have been made for those who regularly use the gym and fellowship hall to be accommodated in other spaces. We welcome this opportunity to share our space with Opera Mississippi and the Natchez Music Festival, which will benefit from the sale of tickets to the Natchez performance of the operas.

PRESBYTERIAN PLAYSCHOOL

"Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it." ~ Proverbs 22:6

Greetings,

Fall is in full swing! We are planning fun fall-themed activities for our students this month. We will be excited to share photos with you all through Moms of First Presbyterian Playschool Facebook page. Our students will be enjoying nature walks as well as working on seasonal curriculum activities.

Halloween, one of most celebrated holidays of the year here at our playschool, is just around the corner. This special day will offer opportunities for fun and exciting activities where you will see orange and black colors, jack-o-lanterns, pumpkins, and scarecrows. Our classrooms will be celebrating Halloween by doing crafts, playing outdoor games with their classmates, and wearing their costumes on our first Trunk-or-Treat on Friday, October 28, starting at 10:00 a.m. The children will parade through the school's parking lot and collect treats from different stations.

To make this event that much more fun, our staff will be entering a contest giving parents and church members the opportunity to select the BEST Halloween decorated door/window! The winner will get a classroom pizza lunch and other treats and prizes.



We invite all parents and church members to participate by providing the class with fall decorations for the contest and treats for the children that we'll hand out at the parade.

Aretha Davis, Playschool Director

A big day for one of our Playschool families! First day at Playschool for 2-month-old Baylor Gilbert. Baylor's brother, 2-year-old Tripp, also attends Playschool. Baylor and Tripp's parents are Lynsey and Craig Gilbert.

FPC CHOIR REHEARSALS

The Sanctuary Choir meets on Wednesday evenings at 6 p.m. in the choir room upstairs.

FOOD BOX MINISTRY

Each month, volunteers prepare boxes for the 36 families who will receive the boxes that month. On the days when the boxes are distributed, volunteers may assist by greeting the families who come, offering a smiling face to show the love of Christ that goes into the gift boxes each month. Call the church office if you would like to assist in this ministry.

PASTOR'S BIBLE STUDY

You are invited to join Rev. Gandy every Tuesday at 11 a.m. in the Parlor in Stratton Chapel for Bible study. Scriptures to be studied are announced each Sunday in the bulletin.

WONDERFUL WEDNESDAYS

Join us for Wonderful Wednesdays. Supper begins at 5:15 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. The adult Bible study, children's activities, and Sanctuary Choir begin at 6 p.m.

MEN'S CULINARY EVENT

One of the most popular fundraisers of First Presbyterian is back! The Men's Culinary Event will be Friday, October 28, 5 to 7 p.m., at Hawthorne, 23 Hawthorne Place, home of Bettye Jenkins, 23 Hawthorne Place. Bettye and her family are excited to offer their spacious grounds for the event. Please put this date on your calendar.

Men, polish your cooking tools and get your recipes lined up! It will be a great evening. *Tickets will be \$20 and are available from Mission Committee members and in the church office.* All proceeds will go toward FPC mission projects.

CHILDREN AND WORSHIP

A nursery is provided for young children and infants on Sundays and at appropriate times for all other church functions. We do, however, welcome children of all ages in our services!

COMMUNITY OUTREACH: Please pray for these ministries.

Boy Scout Troop 157 meets Monday at 7 p.m.

AA Meetings: Open Gates AA Meeting meets Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 12 noon in the downstairs meeting room in Stratton Chapel. These are open discussion meetings; anyone interested in attending is welcome!

The Natchez Book Club meets at 6 p.m. in the Parlor on the fourth Monday of each month. This month's meeting is October 24.

FPC's Stewpot Service Fellowship will serve lunch at the Stewpot this month on October 23. If you would like to be part of this ministry, please contact Marcia Hall, Nicole Harris, or the church office. Many members also deliver Stewpot meals throughout the month.

The Mat Pilates Class, led by Sandra Burkes, meets in Fellowship Hall from 8:30-10 a.m., Mondays and Wednesdays. Classes are free and open to all. Bring your own mat. For more information, contact Sandra at 662-816-5459.

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

October 3 **Mae Holyoak**
October 5 **Alina Sharp, Adair Carey**
October 8 **Ralph Loe, Joey Willett**
October 9 **Judy Stahlman**
 Bonnie Carter
October 17 **Sherry Jones**
October 19 **Lynn Britt**
October 25 **Shelley Dearing**
October 28 **Cara Moody**
October 31 **Marvin McDonald**

Church Staff

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

Officers of the Church

ELDERS:

Class of 2022: Marc Doyle, Rosemary Hall, Danna Mooney, Helen Smith

Class of 2023: Lane Feltus, Mary Lessley, Catherine Ratcliffe

Class of 2024: George Bates, Stratton Bull, Bobby Meason, Cara Moody

DEACONS:

Class of 2022: Sandra Burkes, Rusty Jenkins, Sarah Smith

Class of 2023: Ken Price, Ryan Sharp, Gwen Washington

Class of 2024: Kristen Abney, Everette Ratcliffe, Hubert Smith

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Sunday services: 8:30 in Stratton Chapel; 10:30 in the Sanctuary

Wonderful Wednesday: 5:15 in Fellowship Hall