

First Presbyterian Church
117 S. Pearl Street
(Mailing address: 400 State Street)
Natchez, MS 39120 601-442-2581
fpcnatchez@bellsouth.net www.fpcnatchez.org
THE LINK ~ DECEMBER, 2022

FROM THE PASTOR

Come and worship in this holy season, my friends! In worship, God blesses us to hear his voice. In worship, we sense Christ's presence through the gracious power of the Holy Spirit. In worship, we lift our hands to give God thanks; and we sing powerful hymns of love and praise raised to the glory of our mighty God.

We find God. More important, God finds us.

Praise, confession, forgiveness, call, responding – the pattern of our worship every week. And it is in worship in God's presence that we may be most likely to encounter God's call to us. Let us pray that we will not miss it!

The Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit – one God forever, in continuous love, circling through and around the world, ever present and ever merciful -- seeking relationship with God's human children, created in the image of God. That is our God, on the move, hoping to redeem the world in the love offering of the cross.

Yes, Jesus promised, "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him." (John 3:16-17)

In that stunning promise, we may live in joy and in hope. It is with that promise in our hearts that we are sent out into the world where there are those who do not yet know the God we know and worship. In a world that so often seems void of grace, we know a different story: God's grace abounds now and always for those who turn and call upon his name.

As we worship God together, we can find answers to some important questions that have haunted humankind for centuries: who we are, whose we are, what we are called to do, whose power sustains us, and what we want to pass to the next generation.

As we worship God together, we begin to have confidence in a world that sometimes seems to be falling apart. We find instead that God forever holds us in the palm of his hand.

Celebrating with you as we lean into the holy light coming into the world,

Joan

DECEMBER MEETINGS

Thursday, December 1

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

Monday, December 12

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

CHURCH STAFF MEETINGS

Mondays, December 5, 12, 19

10 a.m. Church staff meeting in the library

TOGETHER ON TWO TUESDAYS

Tuesday December 6

Noon-1 p.m. Organ concert (Vincent Bache) in Sanctuary and lunch in Stratton Chapel

Tuesday December 13

Noon-1 p.m. Organ concert (Anna Rose Davis) in Sanctuary and lunch in Stratton Chapel

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S CHRISTMAS COFFEE

Wednesday, December 7

10 a.m. PW Christmas Coffee in the Parlor

MEN'S PRAYER BREAKFAST

Tuesday, December 13

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

CAROLING ON THE STEPS

Friday, December 16

5 p.m. Caroling on the Steps, front porch and steps of the church

SPECIAL WORSHIP SERVICES

Sunday, December 18

5:30 p.m. Lessons and Carols in the Sanctuary

Saturday, December 24

5:30 p.m. Christmas Eve Communion Service in the Sanctuary

Sunday, December 25

10:30 a.m. Christmas Day worship in the Sanctuary

MUSIC NOTES: A Musical December

We will have several musical offering treats during December, leading up to a glorious celebration of Christmas! There will be two noonday organ recitals on Tuesday, December 6, and Tuesday, December 13. The featured artists will be myself on the December 6, and Anna Rose Davis, organist at Jefferson Street Church on December 13. Both programs will last thirty minutes and be followed with a light lunch in Stratton Chapel, catered by Susanna Sharp.

Our annual "Caroling on the Steps" will be held on Friday, December 16, beginning at 5 p.m. This is a wonderful gathering and the perfect opportunity to invite a friend to join you! We roll the grand piano onto the porch and sing Christmas Carols, often gathering more people who happen to be walking by!

Sunday, December 18, the Fourth Sunday of Advent, we will have our service of "Lessons and Carols" at 5:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary. This is a favorite for many and features readings from Scripture and congregational carols following each reading. We will also have our handbell choir, under the direction of Becky Meason Jones, providing some beautiful music of the season.

The best offering of all? Christmas Eve of course! THE event of the season where we gather as a church family to commemorate anew the Birth of the Savior, Christ the Lord. Many extended family are in town and join us for this most meaningful celebration of Christmas. The carols will be abundant, grand organ, communion, and candlelight as we sing *Silent Night*. What could possibly top that? Please make your plans to join in on this most glorious celebration on December 2 at 5:30 p.m.

Vincent Bache III, Director of Music and Organist

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!

TOGETHER ON TWO TUESDAYS FOR ADVENT

On consecutive Tuesdays, we will host organ concerts with delicious soup and sandwiches for lunch afterwards in Stratton Chapel. Our talented FPC sister and chef Susanna Sharp will provide the food. FPC Director of Music and Organist Vincent Bache will play on December 6; and Jefferson Methodist Church organist Anna Rose Davis will play on December 13. These events are open to the community.

CAROLING ON THE STEPS will begin at 5 p.m. on Friday, December 16. Gather on the front porch and steps of the church. The piano will be in place on the porch and plenty of chairs for those who prefer to sit. Small song booklets will be available. Many will stand around the piano and others on the steps to sing favorite carols and to invite passers-by to join the caroling. Hot chocolate will be served. This event is open to the community.

SUNDAY DECEMBER 18: LESSONS AND CAROLS

At 5:30 p.m. on Sunday, December 18, First Presbyterian will offer the annual "Lessons and Carols" service. Favorite music and familiar scripture will be featured along with other liturgy of the season. This event is open to the community.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24, 5:30 P.M.: CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

The sanctuary of First Presbyterian Church will be decorated and adorned for the service dedicated to celebrating the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. "O Come Let Us Adore Him!" Come to sing along to the magnificent music of the season and to hear again the story of God's gift given to the world and heralded by the angels. All church services at First Presbyterian are open to all in the community at all seasons of the year.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25, 10:30 A.M.: CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SERVICE

A day like no other – the birth of the Christ child! Come to this Christmas morning worship service in the sanctuary at First Presbyterian Church and celebrate with us!

HOLIDAY BREAKS

The church offices will be closed Friday, December 23 through Monday, December 26, for Christmas holiday. Church offices will also be closed Monday, January 2, for New Year's Day.

The Playschool will be closed Monday, December 26, through Wednesday, December 28. Playschool will also be closed Monday, January 2.

EVANGELISM COMMITTEE

As we move into the peak of the holiday season, we expect many visitors to Natchez in Historic Photographs.

Please consider volunteering to serve as a host for our visitors this month. The Gallery is an important outreach mission for our church and being greeted by a live host makes a big difference in the experience for our visitors.

You may contact the Church office or Rosemary Hall to schedule volunteering for a block of time.

Thank you and Merry Christmas to all.

Lane Feltus and Marc Doyle, Evangelism Committee Co-Chairmen

TUESDAYS, DECEMBER 6 AND DECEMBER 13, AT 12 NOON:

"Together on Two Tuesdays" will be Advent events on consecutive Tuesdays with organ concerts and delicious soup and sandwiches for lunch afterwards in Stratton Chapel. Our talented FPC sister and chef Susanna Sharp will provide the food. FPC Director of Music and Organist Vincent Bache will play on December 6; Jefferson Street Methodist Organist Anna Rose Davis will play on December 13. These events are open to the community.

MONDAY PRAYER

Prayer in the Prayer Room, located adjacent to the sanctuary, will be held Mondays at 11:30 a.m. This prayer time will be informal and offer an opportunity to pray for those people and things that are on your heart. Men and women are invited and welcome.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

'Tis the season and Presbyterian Women are celebrating with a Christmas Coffee on Wednesday, December 7 at 10:00 a.m. in the Church Parlor for fellowship and goodies. Please join us.

Also, a reminder of our annual Christmas Mission Project for Senior Citizens. Christmas bags with sundries and treats will be distributed on Wednesday, December 14, at the Senior Citizens Center. Contributions to help defray the cost may be left at the church office or given to Sandra Burkes (662-816-5459).

There will be no Circle Meeting in December.

Sandra Burkes, PW Moderator

Annual Presbyterian Women Winter Retreat
January 27-28, 2023, Camp Wesley Pines, Gallman Mississippi

Dee Koza, a Certified Ruling Elder at Geneva Presbyterian Church in Geneva, Alabama, will be our facilitator. Many of you remember her from previous Alabama/Mississippi Women's Conferences. Our theme is "Because She Lived." Throughout the Bible, tucked carefully into the events, are women, some of whose names are given, while others remain unknown. However, these women – among them, Zipporah, Huldah and Anna -- are some of the amazing "little known" participants in the weaving of our faith story of salvation, grace, rescue, and restoration. They are people whose gallant or small actions made a difference in the outcome of biblical events.

What to Bring

We must bring our own linens or rent them from the camp. Single long sizes fit. Also bring your Bible and something on which to take notes. Check-in begins at 3 p.m. Friday and dinner will be served at 5:30 p.m.

Directions

From I-55, take Exit 65 for the Gallman/Industrial Park. Turn right onto E. Gallman Road toward Gallman/Inds Park. Keep left to get onto W. Gallman Road. Turn left onto Cleveland Street. Road names changes to Camp Wesley Pines Road. Turn left to stay on Camp Wesley Pines Road until you reach the camp.

SEND ONLY THE REGISTRATION PORTION BELOW

Please register me for the PW Presbytery of Mississippi Winter Retreat

Full Retreat: Double \$70 Full Retreat: Single \$80 Day Attendee: \$15 (Saturday lunch)

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____ Phone _____

Email _____

Your Church _____

If double, roommate preference _____

Make check payable to Presbyterian Women, Presbytery of Mississippi: Registration deadline is Jan. 6, 2023.

Mail registration to **Myra Cook, PW Retreat Registrar, 194 Lorman Lane, Madison, MS 39110; 601-940-6910, mtjhester@comcast.net**

If you need confirmation of your registration, please include email address or cell phone number to receive a text message. Thanks.

FPC CHOIR REHEARSALS

The Sanctuary Choir meets on Wednesday evenings at 6 p.m. in the choir room upstairs. The choir will not rehearse on December 28.

HANDBELL CHOIR REHEARSALS

The Handbell Choir meets on Tuesday evenings at 5:30 p.m. upstairs in the Sanctuary.

TOYS FOR TOTS

The Marine Toys for Tots Program has been delivering a message of hope to less fortunate children since 1947. One way they do this is the distribution of toys for Christmas. We have a collection box in the education building and one in the church. You may bring your *new, unwrapped* toys anytime between now and December 3. This program distributes these gifts to needy children in our community and spreads a message of hope to those less fortunate.

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. Adult Bible study, children's activities, and Sanctuary Choir begin at 6 p.m. On December 7, supper will be a potluck meal. Hattie Poole will cook the main course; please bring a side dish, salad, dessert, or your favorite potluck dish.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH: Please pray for these ministries.

Boy Scout Troop 157 meets Mondays 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 November 28.

FPC's Stewpot Service Fellowship will serve lunch at the Stewpot this month on December 25. 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.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

December 2 **Claire Calhoun**
December 9 **Todd Mooney**
December 12 **Ginny Borum, Burne Sharp**
December 13 **Wayne Murphy**
December 14 **Lee Jones**
December 17 **Wessye Heard**
December 19 **Howard Jones**
December 20 **Rusty Jenkins, Lane Rehms**
December 23 **Judy Moody**
December 29 **Ken Price**
December 30 **Daye Dearing**

Gumbo Fundraiser

Proceeds go to FPC Missions

Name: _____

Phone # _____

Email address: _____

Number of quarts: _____ (\$20 per quart)

Total paid: _____ Check # _____ or Cash _____

You can place your order in the offering plate or drop them off in the office, along with your check labeled *gumbo*.

Gumbo will be ready to pick up in Fellowship Hall after church on Sunday, December 18.

ORDER YOUR POINSETTIAS NOW

...in memory of or in honor of loved ones.

The cost is \$25 and we will place the order for you.

Just fill out this form and turn it into the church office, along with your check (labeled "poinsettias"). **Deadline: December 12**

TOTAL NUMBER of plants _____

In MEMORY OF

1. _____

Given By: _____

2. _____

Given By: _____

In HONOR OF

1. _____

Given By: _____

2. _____

Given By: _____

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

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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**Sunday services: 8:30 in Stratton Chapel; 10:30 in the Sanctuary
Wonderful Wednesday: 5:15 in Fellowship Hall**