

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 ~ MARCH, 2023

FROM THE PASTOR

Jesus calls you to live as citizens of the Kingdom of God -- where all people are honored, where those considered least of people are cherished, where there will be no prejudice, no boasting, no "ins" and "outs" but instead joyful worship of the One who created the world and everything in it.

There is always some place of exile from which God must call us, as he called his people back home from Babylon centuries ago. In what ways have we become mired like wagon wheels in the mud? In what ways do we need refreshing, restoring, reviving in the ways of our Lord Jesus?

Those are the kinds of questions we ask in Lent, a time to reflect on how we're doing as God's children. I hope you're feeling joy as you consider how blessed we are to follow Jesus Christ and learn from him.

In these weeks of preparation for the good news of Easter (April 9, 2023), the Resurrection of our Lord, let us remember that we know the Way that Jesus has taught us because someone else taught us how to listen, how to pray, how to spend time with Scripture, and how to serve God by serving others. Will you pray a prayer of thanks for those people today?

The way to Easter lies before us. God will fill any deep and dark valleys we have to cross. God will tear down all mountains of stress and strain, and he will lead us up steep climbs out of darkness into light.

God does prepare a way before us – the way to life eternal won for us by the cross of Christ. Jesus walked through the lonesome valley. He climbed the highest mountain, and he did it by himself. Nobody else could bear the cross for him. He had to do it all by himself.

And he did it for you. You are loved. You are cherished.

Praying for you to feel God's Spirit upon you in these days ahead,

Joan

MARCH MEETINGS

Thursday, March 2

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

Monday, March 13

4:45 p.m. Finance Committee meeting in the church library

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

CHURCH STAFF MEETINGS

Mondays, March 6, 13, 20, 27

10 a.m. Church staff meeting in the library

MEN'S PRAYER BREAKFAST

Tuesday, March 7

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

REBEKAH CIRCLE

Wednesday, March 8

10 a.m. Rebekah Circle in the Parlor (Lesson 7)

LENTEN SOUL-TENDING:

Lent is a time of renewal, a time of growth, a time to prune away the old and allow God's words to enrich our hearts so that His will may be planted, watered, and nurtured into new life.

You are invited to First Presbyterian Church for a series of Lenten Soul-Tending programs. Come to our Fellowship Hall four Thursdays during Lent, March 9, 16, 23 and 30. There will be a Soul-Tending "exercise" with a light soup lunch afterwards.

Thursday, March 9—Noon

Program: A Jar of Clay

Guide: Sandra Huber

Thursday, March 16—Noon

Program: Soul Gardening: A Community Garden and Planting Seeds

Guides: Eddie Burkes

Thursday, March 23—Noon

Program: Chair Yoga

Guide: Stephanie Daly

Thursday, March 30—Noon

Program: A Labyrinth

Guide: Judy and Dennis Kelly

Mark your calendars! Come to First Presbyterian Church, Fellowship Hall, beginning March 9. Join us for an inspiring Soul-Tending Lenten journey. All are welcome!

Leigh Anderson, Soul-Tending Coordinator

MIMI MILLER RECEIVES THE THAD COCHRAN HUMANITIES ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



“Mimi Miller was presented the Thad Cochran Humanities Achievement Award at the opening of the second day of the Natchez Literary and Cinema Celebration. Carter Burns, in introducing Mimi prior to the presentation of the award, said it is given each year to a Mississippian who had dedicated years of time, talent and expertise to the humanities.”

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME: Daylight Saving Time begins Sunday, March 12. Remember to spring forward!

LOCAL HEROES LUNCHEON: On Sunday, March 19, FPC will honor our local heroes—policemen, fireman, sheriff’s deputies, and EMT’s. They have been invited to attend the 10:30 worship service, and enjoy a luncheon in their honor afterwards in Fellowship Hall. Bring your favorite covered dish to share and join us!

EVANGELISM

The Spring tourism season is right on the horizon. That means that we are going to have a steady stream of visitors to the Natchez in Historic Photographs Gallery in Stratton Chapel.

The photo gallery is an ideal opportunity for us to directly connect First Presbyterian Church with many people, both local and visiting. The experience for the visitor is vastly enhanced when they are met at the door by a greeter who warmly welcomes them. We need volunteers to greet and welcome folks.

If you feel called to contribute to this mission of our church, we would greatly appreciate your help. Please contact Pam in the church office, or Rosemary Hall, to make arrangements that will work conveniently with your schedule.

Lane Feltus and Marc Doyle, Co-Chairmen

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

February is over but Presbyterian Women celebrated Valentine's Day with our annual casserole sale. Many orders were placed, giving a boost to our 2023 projects, including the Senior Citizens Center mission. Thanks to all who participated to help make this a success.

The Spring PW Gathering will be held on Saturday, March 4, at Briarwood Presbyterian Church in Jackson, MS. This is a wonderful opportunity for hands across the Presbytery to unite. Contact Sandra Burkes (662-816-5459) for information about attending this wonderful event.

A reminder: PW Circle will be held on Wednesday, March 8 in the church Parlor at 10:00 a.m. We are studying Chapter 7 of "Celebrating Sabbath." Please join us.

Sandra Burkes, PW Moderator

PRESBYTERIAN PLAYSCHOOL

Some of the highlights for this month are Celebrating Dr. Seuss's Birthday and St. Patrick's Day. Dr Seuss was one of the greatest authors of all time especially for children. His books are entertaining, educational, and enjoyable. He introduces the children to rhyming, has wonderful unique illustrations, and always has a moral to discuss in the story. We have a week of 'wacky' activities planned to mark his Birthday.

Monday – Green Eggs and Ham – wear something green

Tuesday – The Cat in the Hat – wear stripes/hat

Wednesday – Fox in Socks – wear silly socks

Thursday – Oh, the Places You'll Go – college shirt day

March is National Nutrition Month and we will incorporate activities to highlight the importance of healthy eating. We are also planning to become horticulturists and cultivate our class garden. This is an opportunity for the children to connect with nature, take care of living things with hands on interactive work and discovery. Gardening benefits young children in most areas of development including math, science, language, social and emotional skills. The children will work as a team, doing; something real; working through a process, beginning, middle, and end while enjoying both the process and product.

It's going to be a great month!

Aretha Davis, Presbyterian Playschool Director



Our children enjoy their time with Pastor Joan. On the last Sunday of February, following our time in “big” church, the younger children gathered in the education building to learn more about the temptations Jesus faced following his forty days of fasting. We are blessed with some smart children who learn quickly.



The children have learned to sing the names of the books of the New Testament. This spring, they will be sharing with the congregation a Bible passage. Pictured are Evie Chase Jones, Elise Jones, Marley Borum, Melody Marble, Mac Calhoun, Claire Calhoun, Roan Harris, and John Henry Thompson, along with our enthusiastic assistant, Maureyanu Wilson.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH: Please pray for these ministries.

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

Pastor's Bible Study: The Pastor's Bible study meets on Tuesdays at 11 a.m. in the parlor in Stratton Chapel.

Wonderful Wednesday: Join us in Fellowship Hall for Wonderful Wednesdays, beginning with supper at 5:15 and Bible at study at 6 p.m. Join the Immerse Reading Bible study.

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!

Adult Children of Alcoholics meetings: ACOA meets every Tuesday at 12 noon in the downstairs meeting room in Stratton Chapel. 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 March 27.

FPC's Stewpot Service Fellowship will serve lunch at the Stewpot this month on March 26. 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.

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

March 1	Catherine Lucas, Charles (Chick) Graning
March 3	Eddie Burkes
March 6	Sally Jones
March 7	Sharon Rouse
March 8	Sharon Williams
March 9	Leigh Anderson
March 14	Laura Godfrey
March 15	Doris Ann Benoist, Shannon Parker
March 19	Beverly Hude
March 23	Kay McNeil, Stratton Thompson
March 26	Ann Vidal Suen
March 27	Ann Carlton, Stratton Bull
March 28	Kinney Carlton, Lee Jones III
March 31	Judy Heard

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 2023: Lane Feltus, Mary Lessley, Catherine Ratcliffe
Class of 2024: George Bates, Stratton Bull, Bobby Meason, Cara Moody
Class of 2025: Chuck Borum, Sandra Burkes, Marc Doyle, Jay Fitch, Sammy Gore

DEACONS

Class of 2023: Ken Price, Ryan Sharp
Class of 2024: Kristen Abney, Everette Ratcliffe, Hubert Smith
Class of 2025: Edie Christian, Rusty Jenkins, and Randy Smith

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

**117 South Pearl Street
(Mailing Address: 400 State Street)
Natchez, Mississippi 39120
601-442-2581**

www.fpcnatchez.org

fpcnatchez@bellsouth.net

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

Wonderful Wednesday: 5:15 in Fellowship Hall

**Pilgrim Application for
Mississippi Presbyterian
Renewal (Weekend of Grace)**

**Mississippi Presbyterian
Renewal (MPR)
upcoming weekends**

**Mississippi
Presbyterian Renewal
(MPR)**

MPR #25 Friday April 21st
- Sunday April 23rd.*

MPR is held at Camp Wesley
Pines in Gallman,
Mississippi.



Name: _____
Preferred name: _____
Address: _____
City, State, Zip: _____

E-mail address: _____
Phone
number: _____

Birthdate
(month/day): _____

Male: _____ Female: _____
Marital Status: _____

Home Church: _____
Pastor: _____

Special needs:
(dietary, allergy, physical)

Hobbies/Activities/Interests/
Occupation:

T-Shirt Size (please circle
one): S M L

XL XXL



Register for an MPR weekend in
one of two ways:

Complete this form and mail to:
Mark Bailey
106 Caroline Cove
Clinton, MS 39056

OR

Register online at
mspresbyteriancursillo.com
Click "Online Pilgrim
Application"

Contact Mark with questions:
601-624-7983 or
markgbailey8654@gmail.com



*Pilgrims should make
arrangements to arrive between
4:30 - 5:30 on the Friday
evening of the scheduled
weekend. You can anticipate a
departure time around 12:30 pm
Sunday.

**A Weekend of
Grace**
Growth & Renewal in an Adult
Christian Experience





What is Mississippi Presbyterian Renewal (MPR)?

Mississippi Presbyterian Renewal (MPR) is a three-day spiritual renewal event (Weekend of Grace) designed to rekindle, deepen, and strengthen your desire to live the Christian life. (*Previously called the Mississippi Presbyterian Cursillo*). Led by lay members and clergy of the Presbyterian Church, its purpose is to inspire and equip disciples for Christian action in their homes, churches, and communities. In a thoughtful, prayerful, and joyful environment, you will enjoy fellowship with other Christians and leave with a desire to serve and live boldly for Christ.

What happens at MPR?

The weekend of grace includes conversations, singing, laughter, fellowship, worship, communion, devotional time, small group participation, and reflection.

Who attends MPR?

The weekend of grace is designed for Presbyterians who want to rekindle their faith and commitment to Jesus Christ and his body, the church. It is for adults of all ages and in all phases of faith and discipleship. The goal of MPR is to guide participants (pilgrims) into a closer and more personal relationship with Jesus, to heighten their joy, deepen their faith, and invigorate their life in Christ.

What will be expected of me at MPR?

At MPR, you will have an opportunity to listen and learn, to relax free from the distractions of the world, and to reflect on and pray about your relationship with God.

What happens after MPR?

As memorable as the weekend retreats are, perhaps the greatest benefits of MPR occur after your retreat. Since the gift of MPR is intended to last a lifetime, pilgrims are highly encouraged to join or form a renewal group with others who have attended a Cursillo or MPR weekend. These groups, called Fourth Day Groups, meet regularly to share, pray, and support one another and invite others to experience the joy of Cursillo and MPR. Several times a year, former pilgrims come together to celebrate and enjoy fellowship. Over 500 of your fellow Mississippi Presbyterians have participated in Cursillo /MPR. The friendships formed at Cursillo/MPR continue to thrive and bless us.

How do I attend MPR?

There are two ways: 1) fill out this application and send it to the Registrar, **Mark Bailey** at **106 Caroline Cove, Clinton, MS 39056**; or 2) you may register online at mspresbyterianscursillo.com. Anyone who has attended may serve as your sponsor and will be happy to answer your questions.

We encourage you to discuss your decision with your pastor. Mississippi Presbyterian Renewal stands in the center of the Reformed tradition. Churches in both the PCUSA and the EPC participate and support it. MPR is not used to advance denominational agendas. The sole agenda is to glorify God and equip disciples to spread the good news! The number of pilgrims each weekend is limited to 36.

We will let you know as soon as possible whether your application has been accepted for the next retreat. We also keep a waiting list. You will know well in advance if you will be coming, so mark your calendar and be prepared to have a wonderful spiritual experience.

How much does it cost?

We do not charge pilgrims for the retreat. The entire cost of the retreat is borne by the staff and others who have attended Cursillo/MPR. This is a gift of grace to you. That's how excited we are to offer this gift to you. Your gift is the time you will spend with us and, we hope, time in the future that you will want to spend spreading the joy of Mississippi Presbyterian Renewal.

You will not need money for the weekend.

March

2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Noon-AA 5:15 p.m.-Wonderful Wednesday 6 p.m.-Choir rehearsal	2 5:30 p.m.- Deacons' meeting	3 Noon-AA	4 9:30 a.m. Registration— PW Annual Spring Gathering at Briarwood Presbyterian Church, Jackson, MS
5 Communion	6 10 a.m.-Staff meeting 11:30 a.m.-Prayer group Noon-AA 7 p.m. Boy Scouts Troop #157	7 7 a.m.-Men's Prayer Breakfast 11 a.m.-Bible study Noon-ACOA 5:30 p.m. handbell rehearsal	8 10 a.m.-Rebekah Circle Noon-AA 5:15 p.m.-Wonderful Wednesday 6 p.m.-Choir rehearsal	9 Noon-Soul Tending program by Sandra Huber (pottery-A jar of Clay) and lunch	10 Noon-AA	11
12 Daylight Saving Begins	13 10 a.m.-Staff meeting 11:30 a.m.-Prayer group Noon-AA 5:30 p.m. Session 7 p.m. Boy Scouts Troop #157	14 11 a.m.-Bible study Noon-ACOA 5:30 p.m. handbell rehearsal	15 10 a.m. Food Box Distribution Noon-AA 5:15 p.m.-Wonderful Wednesday 6 p.m.-Choir rehearsal	16 Noon-Soul Tending program by Eddie Burkes (Community Garden and Planting seeds)	17	18
19 11:30 a.m. Local Heroes Covered Dish Luncheon	20 10 a.m.-Staff meeting 11:30 a.m.-Prayer group Noon-AA 7 p.m. Boy Scouts Troop #157	21 11 a.m.-Bible study Noon-ACOA 5:30 p.m. handbell rehearsal	22 Noon-AA 5:15 p.m.-Wonderful Wednesday 6 p.m.-Choir rehearsal	23 Presbytery Meeting, Jackson, MS Noon-Soul Tending program by Stephanie Daly (Chair Yoga) and lunch	24 Noon-AA	25
26 Stewpot Sunday	28 10 a.m.-Staff meeting 11:30 a.m.-Prayer group Noon-AA 6 p.m.-Book Club 7 p.m. Boy Scouts #157	29 11 a.m.-Bible study Noon-ACOA 5:30 p.m. handbell rehearsal	30 Noon-AA 5:15 p.m.-Wonderful Wednesday 6 p.m.-Choir rehearsal	31 Noon-AA Noon-Soul Tending Program by Judy and Dennis Kelly (A Labyrinth)		