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## **JULY 2021 LINK**

### **FROM THE PASTOR**



Dear Church Family:

A good and blessed day to all of you! Good news of big change at First Presbyterian comes to us in the beginning of this new month. As of today, July 1, Vincent Bache will join our ministry team as Director of Music and Organist. He has written a letter to you that you will find in this issue of the Link.

Vincent in recent months has filled in as organist for a couple of services, including two funerals. Already he is planning a marvelous music program for the rest of the summer. He soon will be in touch with return choir members and seeking new ones.

Vincent has some excellent suggestions for using music in ways that will inspire all of us in new ways to glorify God in worship as well as to follow Christ as disciples in the world.

Please attend worship on Sunday, July 4, so that you can welcome Vincent to this church family. He is truly excited to become a part of your fellowship. We will honor and welcome Vincent appropriately with a joyful reception after worship on July 11. Please plan to be present to give him a big welcome and help him to get to know all of you! Many of you already are his friends!

This is a day I am remembering some words from the apostle Paul. His words inspire the church today. Listen to what Paul says in Ephesians 2:19-22:

"You are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God."

From ages before Christ was born to minister among people on earth, the prophets of old spoke to the people of God's love and mercy; those servants laid the strong foundation of an earthly temple for God. In God's time, Jesus Christ himself became the cornerstone for that building project that continues today.

Paul goes on to tell that early group of Christians at Ephesus – and now tells us – you are prepared to be a place where God's Word dwells and from which God's Word can be proclaimed. Paul encourages us today to live into their calling, to live out their faith "with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (4:2-3).

I pray for your peace, faith, and unity as you continue to grow according to God's good will for his church everywhere! Give thanks today for God's many blessings upon us and especially in this day for the gift of music and ministry that Vincent, our brother in Christ, will bring to us.

Love and blessings to all,

*Joan*

## MUSIC NOTES:



Dear People of God,

Allow me to introduce myself as your new Director of Music and Organist. My name is Vincent Bache, III- some call me Vincent, some call me Vince- either one is fine with me! I am delighted and humbled to be selected for this position and offer my gifts to God and you in this wonderful place. I have spent many years in the field of Church Music, starting as Organ Scholar in High School, studying organ and piano in College, and into adult professional life in several different churches- my most recent being a very long tenure of 30 years. My firm belief is that music is a unique means of grace by which people encounter the glory, majesty and loving nature of God. I also believe our music for worship should be the very best that we can give, utilizing our unique talents and resources available. This is not to say that anything must be perfect, but rather that it should be the best we can create. I also believe in having fun in the creation of this offering, for though we may have to work hard on some things, the load is lighter when we do so with joy and a family camaraderie.

I am blest to know some of you already, and I look forward to meeting everyone in the coming months and learning what your favorite hymns are! I also wish to extend a hearty welcome to all who would like to give choir a try, and a very special 'welcome back' to any who may have been in the choir before, taken a break, and wish to return- all are welcome! Blessings to you all.

## PROPERTY COMMITTEE

In preparation for the Photo Gallery reopening, we had the upstairs in Stratton Chapel and all the bathrooms in the church deep cleaned. It was definitely needed and well worth it as the Gallery had been closed up for over a year! In addition to the daily maintenance, we have also arranged for all the bathrooms in the Church and the Education Building to be thoroughly cleaned every 2 weeks.

The Memorial Garden has also been cleaned up, as have the beds around the Education Building. You may also have noticed the flowers in front of the church and two new trees on the playground.

Volunteers are needed to help clean the kitchen in the Education Building. If you would like to help, please call Anne Willett at 601-807-1219.

Anne Willett and Catherine Ratcliffe, FPC Property Committee

### **MISSION COMMITTEE: FOOD BOX PROGRAM**

**Stewpot Service Fellowship (and food delivery):** the group prepares and serves food one Sunday a month. FPC members deliver food every Sunday. FPC donates \$100 monthly from the Clara Chamberlain fund. (See note from Stewpot Director Amanda Jeansonne on page 7 of the Link.)

**Food box ministry:** Food boxes with \$15 gift certificates are provided to people in the community who are in need. 35 boxes per month. About 150 people are being served on rotating and as needed basis. George and Linda Bates order the food and fill boxes. They have made significant financial donations and other funds come from the discretionary fund (cash from Sunday collections) \$1800 monthly. Pam and Deon keep up with the distribution. This mission is about 2 years old and there have been good experiences and feedback.

**Yearly Monetary Donations:** \$500 to Boy Scouts (plan to increase to \$1000 in 2021), \$1000 Natchez Stewpot (in addition to the \$100/month), \$1000 Natchez Children's services, \$1000 Guardian Shelter (donations will be repeated before the end of 2021).

**Men's Culinary Event/Gumbo fundraiser:** If Covid-19 situation allows it, we would like to have the culinary event. It may be a cook and pick up function if we are not able to gather in a social gathering. We would also like to plan on another Gumbo fundraiser. \$3000 was generated at end of 2020 and divided between two Haiti Missions.

**Haiti Missions:** We are not able to send members to Haiti at present because of political dangers. The activity of Fantom 509 gangster/crime organization and other groups is making it too dangerous for travelers to Haiti. Meanwhile, we plan to provide financial assistance.

**Brazil Mission:** Our church receives donations for Brazil, and we recently sent \$4800 to two churches in Brazil. They are providing food boxes. George Bates hopes to organize a trip to Brazil in 2022 if the Covid pandemic allows.

**Mexico Mission:** We still send \$300 monthly to Pastor Fernando in Mexico in the Yucatan.

**Habitat for Humanity:** We expect new construction to begin this year. Our members have assisted in projects.

**Blessings School Alliance:** The pandemic has interfered with this program. Walter Tipton and Kristen Abney had been involved in that and will reevaluate for starting again in August if in-person classes start back in the public schools.

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Our wonderful Jamaican choir section leaders served beautifully as day camp counselors during June. They shared their creativity in song, art, and games.

*Below: Each morning, the camp begins in Stratton Chapel with a Bible story and lesson.*



*Below: Time for arts and crafts*



*Below: Helen Smith, Elder and Chair of the Christian Education Committee, helps the campers with a painting project.*



One week our counselors shifted gears and worked as volunteers teaching music, English, math, and more with the Joe and Dianne Good neighborhood ministry in Natchez. It was a perfect match of their gifts, talents, and passion for service to the needs of the local children. As a result of that experience, we feel that God has answered our prayers for guidance and has opened wide a new door. We are excited to announce that instead of camps at the church in July, the counselors will spend those weeks in ministry with the Goods.



*Above: Sonya Faulknor (1<sup>st</sup> row, left), Antoin Marshall (4<sup>th</sup> row, right), & Ashley Palmer (3<sup>rd</sup> row, right) with the children they are tutoring.*

Anyone interested and able to participate in this highly successful local mission program may contact me or the church office for information about how to do that.

Helen Smith, Chairman, FPC Education Committee

### EVANGELISM COMMITTEE

The recent major focus of the Evangelism Committee has been the safety and care of the congregation in response to the Covid pandemic. As the local impact of the pandemic gradually recedes, our work in this arena is shifting to maintaining a safe environment for our Sunday worship service as well as for the rest of the FPC campus. We anticipate supporting the congregation late this fall and winter when there will likely be a nationwide effort to distribute vaccine booster shots to the general population.

The live-streaming of our worship services, as well as the quality of the audio experience for those attending in-person, remains an active part of the work of the Audio/Visual Outreach ministry segment of the Evangelism Committee. We would like to train some new folks in the skills required for this outreach ministry. It is a very interesting and satisfying service to our community. I would invite anyone who has an interest in this important mission work to discuss your interest with Lane Feltus or me.

Deacon Rusty Jenkins has joined a new evangelism effort to enhance the outreach impact of our Natchez in Historic Photographs gallery. This too is an ongoing and important mission. We need more folks to join this outreach effort and would encourage anyone who can staff the welcome desk for the Gallery, or provide any other services related to the Gallery, to please reach out to Lane or me. Thank you.

Marc Doyle and Lane Feltus  
Co-Chairs, Evangelism Committee

### REPORT FROM THE DEACONS

The deacons of First Presbyterian Church have been remarkably busy these past months! We each do home visits and hospital visits, too, when permitted. We take food, send cards, and make calls. We are in the process of having all the deacons send birthday cards to everyone in our church!

We offer up prayers to those on the prayer lists. We have also been reaching out to members who have not been coming to church due to Covid or other issues, letting them know how much we miss their smiles and their presence in the church sanctuary.

We also have some deacons working with the property committee, fixing and maintaining the church and grounds.

The deacons will also be hosting fellowship luncheons on the following Sundays after the 10:30 worship service: August 8 (Rally Day); September 12 (The Fall Gathering); October 10 (Harvest Festival); November 12 (Thanksgiving); and December 12 (Christmas luncheon).

We look forward to seeing you soon!  
Frances Meason, Deacon Chair

## PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

What fun we had on June 16! The PW Board was so glad to at least have one Luncheon this year! We had a good turnout. Everyone brought their own sandwiches and we had drinks and wonderful cookies which Susanna Sharp made for us. A good deal of business was relayed, but our meeting was kept within the hour. Dana Dent was introduced as our new Spiritual Leadership Developer/Offering Interpreter. The board is so happy to have her join our team. We finally painted those rocks with encouraging phrases that will be given to the elementary school children that the church is providing with backpack snacks in the fall. A good time was had by all!

We are now setting our sights to fall. We will crank back up in September with our circle meeting. We'll study the book from this past year that everyone had paid for, and we weren't able to enjoy. It is *Into the Light, Finding Hope Through Prayers of Lament* by our own Mississippian the Rev. Dr. Lynn Miller. We are hoping to get Lynn to return in January and speak to us on this study at the luncheon. At the September luncheon we hope to have the yearbooks completed and a fundraising project selected. I hope you all have a marvelous summer. We'll see you in the fall!

Blessings to All and Stay Safe,  
Phyllis Mashburn, PW Moderator

## STEWPOD NOTE FROM AMANDA JEANSONNE, DIRECTOR

Summer is going well at the Stewpot. Our dining room at 69 E. Franklin Street will reopen on August 1 for our guests to eat in. (The Stewpot dining room was closed for months due to the pandemic.)

If you would like to get involved, here are some ways that you can help:

We have a need for volunteers who can commit to helping prepare the meal one or two days a week, from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. We also need help unloading and shelving food from the Mississippi Food Network truck twice per month. This requires some heavy lifting. If you know of anyone that may be interested, please contact Amanda Jeansonne at 601-807-2654.

We also have a need for large cans of vegetables and kitchen knives of all sizes. These can be dropped off at the Stewpot any time between 7:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday.

The continued support of First Presbyterian Church is greatly appreciated.

## REPORT FROM THE PRESBYTERIAN PLAYSCHOOL

I hope everyone is having a wonderful and relaxing summer break!

We are continuing to improve our curriculum and programming, as well as add to our hands-on learning experiences. How, you might ask. By doing the following things.

1. Implement a science curriculum
2. Tech Time: added segment to our curriculum to promote basic skills in technology operations and concepts using desktops (K4)
3. Implementing the Elements of Art

We are so excited for our students to start enjoying the benefits of these new additions!

We will be closed Monday, July 5, for Independence Day.

On July 15, seven of our Preschoolers will be graduating via zoom from the Waterford Up-Start program.

Aretha Davis, Playschool Director

## NATCHEZ IN HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS

**The Natchez in Historic Photos** in Stratton Chapel is now open! Please consider donating a couple of hours to the museum as a docent. The exhibit is open Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Call the office to let us know what days and hours you will volunteer, or stop by and sign up.

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

**The Men's Prayer Breakfast** will meet Tuesday, July 13 at 7 a.m. in Fellowship Hall.

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

**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 next Session meeting** is Monday, July 12, at 5:30 p.m. in the church library.

**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.

### JULY BIRTHDAYS

July 1        John Goodrich  
July 6        Bob Flurry  
July 12       Jim Lessley  
July 16       Alston Doyle  
                 Archer Doyle  
July 21       Paul Benoist  
July 22       Kennedy Ann Jones  
July 26       Gwen Washington  
July 27       Dana Dent  
July 28       Lane Feltus  
July 29       Donna Ball

### 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

### FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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