

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 ~ JANUARY, 2023

FROM THE PASTOR

My friends in Christ, we have turned the calendar to another January. A new calendar year has begun. Yes, there is something exciting about the month of January -- the clean calendar that lies before us and the plans we have to be "better" at everything we do -- taking care of our physical selves, attending to our spiritual nourishment with more intentional actions, and seeking new ways to love and serve God as we love and serve one another.

Still, January can be a month when we suffer from the "blahs" and feel wearied by the world around us. The days can be cold and dreary. We long for the Daylight Savings Time to hasten to give us more light! But we do find January an exciting month. We resolve to do new things. We commit to new projects. And we find as church people that right at the beginning of the year we have an opportunity to remember our baptism!

On Sunday, January 8, we celebrate Baptism of the Lord, remembering the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River. This celebration always presents a time for us to renew our own baptism vows. Many of us were baptized as babies. So we are especially thrilled to have the opportunity to hear and answer questions such as this one, which is a part of the ritual of baptism:

Question: Will you be Christ's faithful disciple, obeying his Word and showing his love?

Response: **I will, with God's help.**

Acknowledging the need for God's help is crucial as we seek to be "faithful disciples" who obey God's Word and show God's love in the way we live our lives in the world. In baptism, we acknowledge that we cannot be Christians all by ourselves. We depend not only on God but also on each other.

When we gather with one another for worship and fellowship, we find the nourishment God provides for his church. God provides that nourishment in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit as we hear together God's Word for us, always fresh and new; and we grow in love and affection for one another as we share our joys and our struggles. Come to worship!

Thanking God for you, I pray for God's abundant blessings upon you always,

Joan

CHRISTMAS DAY AT THE STEWPOT



Amelie, Nicole, & Roan Harris (above left) and Calvit Ratcliffe (above right) prepared Christmas dinners of turkey, potatoes, vegetables, and brownies for the Stewpot.



Other volunteers (left) delivered meals to those who are homebound.

First Presbyterian volunteers gave their Christmas Day to Stewpot service this year, and from all accounts it was a big, beautiful, successful day! Many thanks go to Nicole and Lance Harris and their children, Amelie and Roan; and to Catherine Ratcliffe and Calvit Ratcliffe. Those volunteers prepared and served the crowd that came for a delicious Christmas Day dinner at the Stewpot and prepared the boxed meals that went to the Stewpot clients who depend upon delivery. Thank you, everyone!

Thanks also go to the many volunteer cooks at First Presbyterian who cooked turkeys, sliced the turkeys and placed them in bags for Stewpot volunteers to have for the delicious holiday meal prepared. Thank you, all of you volunteer cooks. Your work made a big difference in the lives of many people that day.

NEW PLAYGROUND IS INSTALLED FOR THE PRESBYTERIAN PLAYSCHOOL

As the new year begins, we often reflect on the blessings of the previous year. One blessing for the children of The Presbyterian Playschool is a fantastic new playground.

The project began when Aretha Davis, Playschool Director, applied for and was awarded a Child Care Stabilization Grant to be used for the benefit of the students.

After months of hard work, the project has been completed, much to the delight of the students and parents. The committee responsible for planning the playground, staying in budget, conforming to regulations, completion of the project and any other tasks as needed were Aretha Davis, Playschool director; Chris Borum, Playschool board chairman; Rev. Dr. Joan Gandy, pastor; Mary Ann Peoples, Financial Secretary; Helen Smith, board member; Anne Vidal Davis; Floyd Gardner; and Rosemary Hall.

There are two sections of the playground: a toddler area and a play area for ages 2 through 5. Elements include slides, a ladybug, a crawl tube for toddlers, tunnel climbers, a trike track with new trikes, benches, and canopies.

Watching the children enjoy their new playground is an occasion for joy. Come see for yourself!



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 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.

STEWARDSHIP AND COMMITMENT

Thank you to all who have made pledges for the year 2023 and have turned in your pledge cards. For those who have not yet made that commitment, please do so as soon as it is possible. You may send your cards to the church office in care of the Financial Secretary or drop them in the offering plate any Sunday.

You will also see that pledge envelopes for 2023 are ready to pick up. They are located on the table by the front doors of the church.

JANUARY MEETINGS

Thursday, January 5

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

Friday, January 6

10 a.m. Finance Committee meeting in the church library

Monday, January 9

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

CHURCH STAFF MEETINGS

Mondays, January 9, 23, 30

10 a.m. Church staff meeting in the library

MEN'S PRAYER BREAKFAST

Tuesday, January 10

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

REBEKAH CIRCLE

Wednesday, January 11

10 a.m. Rebekah Circle in the Parlor (Lesson 4)

ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

Sunday, January 15

10:30 a.m. Installation of Officers during the service

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S LUNCHEON

Wednesday, January 18

11:30 a.m. PW Luncheon in Fellowship Hall

OFFICERS RETREAT

Saturday, January 21

9 a.m. Officers' Retreat in Fellowship Hall and the church library

HOLIDAY BREAKS

The church offices and the Playschool will be closed Monday, January 2, for New Year's Day, and Monday, January 16, for Martin Luther King Day.

COMING IN FEBRUARY: THE AFRICAN CHILDREN'S CHOIR

Join us for an immersive Worship Experience through song, dance, and video storytelling! The Just As I Am tour combines traditional hymns with African cultural sounds and a stunning visual story of God's faithfulness. Don't miss out on this uniquely immersive experience in the Sanctuary on Friday, February 17, at 7 p.m.

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!

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 January 23.

FPC's Stewpot Service Fellowship will serve lunch at the Stewpot this month on January 22. 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.

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

January 1	Archie Willett, Larry Holder, Colby Costa
January 12	Judy Stahlman
January 16	Matt Kidder
January 18	Jon Borum, Buddy Rhodes
January 20	Olivia Edgin
January 21	Esther Jeffus
January 22	Everard Baker
January 31	Edie Christian

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

Elders-elect:

Class of 2025: Chuck Borum, Sandra Burkes, Marc Doyle, Jay Fitch, and Sammy Gore

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

Deacons-elect:

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

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

Wonderful Wednesday: 5:15 in Fellowship Hall

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 10:30 Worship service Epiphany of the Lord	2 CLOSED New Year's holiday	3 11 a.m. Bible Study Noon ACOA No handbell rehearsal	4 Noon AA meeting 5:15 p.m. Wonderful Wednesday Supper 6 p.m. Sanctuary Choir Bible Study	5 5:30 p.m. Deacons' meeting	6 Noon AA meeting	7
8 10:30 Worship service- Communion Baptism of the Lord	9 10 a.m. Staff meeting 11:30 a.m. Prayer group Noon AA meeting 4:30 p.m. Finance 5:30 p.m. Session 7 p.m. Boy Scouts	10 7 a.m. Men's Prayer Breakfast 11 a.m. Bible Study Noon ACOA No handbell rehearsal	11 10 a.m. Rebekah Circle 10 a.m. Food Boxes Noon AA meeting 5:15 p.m. Wonderful Wednesday supper 6 p.m. Sanctuary Choir Bible Study	12	13 Noon AA meeting	14
15 10:30 Worship service Ordination & Installation of Officers	16 CLOSED MLK holiday	17 11 a.m. Bible Study Noon ACOA 5:30 p.m. handbell rehearsal	18 11:30 a.m. PW Luncheon Noon AA meeting 5:15 p.m. Wonderful Wednesday Supper 6 p.m. Sanctuary Choir Bible Study	19	20 Noon AA meeting	21 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Officers' Retreat
22 10:30 Worship service Stewpot Sunday	23 10 a.m. Staff meeting 11:30 a.m. Prayer group Noon AA meeting 6 p.m. Book Club 7 p.m. Boy Scouts	24 11 a.m. Bible Study Noon ACOA 5:30 p.m. handbell rehearsal	25 Noon AA meeting 5:15 p.m. Wonderful Wednesday Supper 6 p.m. Sanctuary Choir	26	27 Noon AA meeting	28
29 10:30 Worship service	30 10 a.m. Staff meeting 11:30 a.m. Prayer group Noon AA meeting 7 p.m. Boy Scouts	31 11 a.m. Bible Study Noon ACOA 5:30 p.m. handbell rehearsal				