

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 ~ NOVEMBER 2022

FROM THE PASTOR

In a season of thanksgiving, let us remember the many ways we are blessed and called to bless others. The psalmist reminds us: "My soul is satisfied as with a rich feast, and my mouth praises God with joyful lips." (Psalm 63:5)

It is not the sensual pleasure of food the psalmist lifts up. Rather, it is the soulful, spiritual flourishing of his heart when he remembers the feast of God's bounty, the goodness that surrounds him, God's word and generous love that never fail to show up, again and again, at the right time.

The psalm meshes beautifully with God's words spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

"Come, all of you who are thirsty, all of you who are hungry! Come and eat the food I have prepared for you. Come and buy food that doesn't cost any money! Eat what is good! Delight in rich food. Don't work your life away for the things that will never satisfy you." (See Isaiah 55:1-2)

God's word and God's presence feed our souls.

One day when Jesus was teaching and gathering big crowds following along with him, he was reminded by the disciples that the time was getting late, that he should be concerned about the hunger of the crowd. Maybe they should be fed; but there was no food at hand.

But Jesus found just enough -- just a little bread and a little fish; and it was enough to feed everyone. How do we teach others what it means to enjoy God's rich feast of love and grace?

Rich feast? Many people in the world know nothing about the rich feast prepared by God for all people of the world. They know nothing about that. So here is another way we deliver the gospel message -- telling how Jesus feeds us; telling about the rich food that feeds our lives and our souls.

We put what we have in the hands of Jesus. We put our gifts of money and our gifts of time and talent into the hands of Jesus. Jesus gave his best for us -- his very life. He calls us to give our best to others in his name.

And when we give our best, even when it seems meager, it is enough. It is enough -- like the bread that began with just a little bit and grew to be enough to feed thousands that day.

You are invited to God's rich feast, and he asks you to invite others.

Joyfully making this journey with you,

Joan

WORSHIP NEWS

Fall has arrived and preparations are being made for a glorious month ahead!

All Saints Day service on November 6, with our beautiful All Saints Ribbon Cross to assist in reminding us of our departed loved ones. We will celebrate the Lord's supper.

Christ the King Sunday on November 20, we can look forward to the Sanctuary being filled with beautiful music to fill our hearts and minds, thanks to Vincent Bache, Director of Music and Organist.

November 27 is the **First Sunday of Advent!** Prepare your hearts!

We are beyond grateful to each and every one of you worshipping with us in our beautiful Sanctuary and online! Seeing your smiles in person as we worship together is an incredible way to start the week and we thank you for being there.

Let Everything Praise the LORD

Psalm 150:

Praise the LORD!

Praise God in his sanctuary;

praise him in his mighty heavens!

Praise him for his mighty deeds;

praise him according to his excellent greatness!

Sunday Morning Services

8:30 a.m. Early Worship - Stratton Chapel*

9:15 a.m. Sunday School

10:30 a.m. Worship - Sanctuary**

*Communion every Sunday

**Communion first Sunday of the month

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, Worship Chairman

NOVEMBER MEETINGS

Thursday, November 3

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

Saturday, November 12

9:30 a.m. New Officer Training in the church library

Monday, November 14

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

MEN'S PRAYER BREAKFAST

Tuesday, November 8

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

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!

CHURCH STAFF MEETINGS

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

THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

The church offices and the Playschool will be closed Thursday, November 24 and Friday, November 25 for the Thanksgiving Holiday.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

We are closing in on Stewardship Season and our commitment to Christ for the coming year. Please prayerfully consider what you are able to do both financially and physically to support the many missions of First Presbyterian Church. We look forward to worshipping together on November 20, Commitment Sunday.

Bobby Meason, Finance Committee Chairman

EVANGELISM COMMITTEE

In an earlier Link article, we reported that First Presbyterian Church is participating in a Presbytery-wide project called the "Vital Congregations Initiative." Three members of the Session are participating in this project. The results of our participation will become clearer to our entire church community over the course of the next two years. I thought you might enjoy reading a formal description of the project.

"How important is your congregation to the surrounding community? If you were to close your doors permanently would anyone notice? How well do you know your neighbors? Vital - full of life and vigor; exuberant; robust; vibrant. As we do more work with the Vital Congregations Initiative, we are learning that it's not a "one size fits all" approach, but that there is a lot of freedom in how each congregation may customize the suggestions to their own needs. The program is not about the number in the pews or the amount in the offering plates but how we are living out the call of Christ in our lives and congregation."

As you know, FPC is actively engaged on many fronts, with our larger community. After all, our formal mission is: "Following Christ. Serving Everyone." That's the business we are in. Serious and committed as we are about serving, we are called to strive to be better and more productive in our mission.

We will continue to report, from time to time, on the Vital Congregations Initiative. We have also reported recently on the activity-level at the photo gallery on the second floor of Stratton Chapel. As more visitors visit our town, the gallery's popularity continues to grow. In September we had about 300 visitors. We are always in need of volunteers to meet and greet the tourists who come to visit the gallery. Please contact Pam in the front office or Rosemary Hall if you can spare a couple of hours to help this popular outreach mission of our church.

Finally, we have a brief update on our digital outreach mission; our live and delayed streaming of our 10:30 Sunday service. In September, we had about 650 followers/subscribers on Facebook and YouTube. On average, over 100 people see all or part of each of our services.

Lane Feltus and Marc Doyle, Evangelism Committee Co-Chairmen

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

On Wednesday, November 9 at 10:00 a.m., the Rebekah Circle will meet in the church parlor. Please join us as we study *Celebrating Sabbath*.

The holidays are fast approaching and Presbyterian Women hope to make the season jolly with several events. Our annual Christmas Coffee will be held Wednesday, December 7 at 10:00 a.m. in the FPC parlor. Goodies and fellowship promised for all. Also, our Christmas Mission Project for Senior Citizens will take place on Wednesday, December 14. Holiday goodie bags will be distributed at the Senior Citizens Center on that day. Monetary contributions to help defray costs of these Christmas bags are welcome and may be turned in at the Church office or to Sandra Burkes (662-816-5459). There will be no Circle meeting in December.

Sandra Burkes, PW Moderator

THE NATCHEZ STEWPOT: OPPORTUNITY FOR SERVICE

In 1985 the Natchez Community Stewpot opened its doors to help alleviate hunger and assist with meals for the elderly, handicapped and home bound citizens of our community. The organizers were members of various churches, civic groups and social services.

First Presbyterian Church members have made the commitment to deliver meals every Sunday since the inception of the organization. More recently we committed to prepare and serve the meal on the fourth Sunday of the month. There are several ways in which you can be of service.

- Drivers are needed for Sunday deliveries. We pick up meals at the Stewpot on Franklin Street on or before 11:30, and we are finished by 1:00. When two people share the route this time is cut in half. The current drivers will be happy to have you ride along to experience the joy that comes from serving people and receiving smiles in return. Please call or text Rosemary Hall (601-443-1599) if you feel called to participate.
- You may join a cooking team to prepare and serve meals on the fourth Sunday. Please call or text Marcia Hall (601-597-0119) or Nicole Harris (225-276-7300) to join a cooking team.
- There is a need for restocking the pantry and freezer at the Stewpot, especially with the holidays approaching. You can donate a large #2 can of vegetables, a turkey, or a ham at 69 East Franklin Street from 8:30 am until 1:00 pm Monday through Saturday. For more information contact Melinda Laird, chairperson of the Natchez Community Stewpot board, at melindalaird12@gmail.com

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,

October was such a busy month filled with lots of exciting activities. The students enjoyed showing off their wonderful costumes and the annual visit from the Natchez Fire Department were highlights. We also had our Fall Fundraiser. Thank you so much for your support; the money made will go a long way.

As the leaves continue to fall, we welcome the month of November. The ghosts and goblins of Halloween have disappeared and we turn our focus towards Thanksgiving. This month, we will focus on family and gratitude. This time of the year is a great opportunity to teach and model gratitude to our students in many ways. As they grow older, I pray that they will begin to express appreciation for abstract qualities such as friendship and kindness.

On November 10 at 4 p.m., we will place American flags around our playground. On November 11, our center will show gratitude to all the men and women who served in our Armed Forces. Please help us honor our heroes by wearing something red, white, or blue on this special day.

Thanksgiving is a time of togetherness and gratitude. We will host our annual Thanksgiving luncheon on Friday, November 18, from 11a.m. – 12 noon.

We hope you all have a Happy Thanksgiving and enjoy the time with your family and friends,

Aretha Davis, Director

Below: Presbyterian Playschool parents and staff prepare for the annual Trunk or Treat.



All set and ready to go!



Playschool parents and staff had a wonderful time decorating for Trunk or Treat!

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 opportunity to pray for those people and things that are on your heart. Men and women are invited and welcome.

FPC CHOIR REHEARSALS

The Sanctuary Choir meets on Wednesday evenings at 6 p.m. in the choir room upstairs. The choir will not rehearse November 23.

HANDBELL CHOIR REHEARSALS

The Handbell Choir meets on Tuesday evenings at 5:30 p.m. upstairs in the Sanctuary. The Handbell choir will not rehearse November 22.

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. This month, on November 9, we have a special treat. Hattie Poole will prepare a festive Thanksgiving supper! The adult Bible study, children's activities, and Sanctuary Choir begin at 6 p.m. Wonderful Wednesdays will not meet on November 23.



Wednesday night supper and fellowship.

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 November 27. 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.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!



Tuesday, November 1, Mary Jo Gunde celebrated her 100th birthday!

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

November 1	Bettina Coffey
	Mary Jo Gunde
November 11	Kathy Fitch
November 13	Cooper Brumfield
November 14	Shields Brown
November 17	Stella Sharp
November 18	George Bates
November 20	Vidal Davis
	Judy Flurry
November 24	Kaylin Fredrickson
November 28	Joan Gandy
November 29	John Holyoak
November 30	Betsy Feltus
	Sammy Gore

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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Wonderful Wednesday: 5:15 in Fellowship Hall