

VOLUME 50, ISSUE 8

August, 2020

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE CONGREGATION AND FRIENDS OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, TUPELO, MS

## A New Normal Sabbath?

When was the last time someone said to you, “I missed you in church, Sunday?” Think about that. It has been a while, right?

We started worshipping online Sunday, March 15, 2020. What a blessing to offer this experience during such a time as this. The good thing is, most churches’ online streaming has improved greatly, including ours, since March 15. Such a convenient way to worship. The bad news is, most churches’ online streaming has improved greatly since March 15. Such a convenient way to worship. **Did you catch that?**

I predicted a large number of viewers the first month or so, and I also predicted a noticeable decline after months of online worship. We and many other churches are witnessing this, and church statisticians are beginning to analyze and write about this fact. Some are even suggesting that this pandemic will further erode the connection between God’s people and the earthly church. I pray that will not happen, but many see this occurring as I write this article.

Worshipping as a body of believers seems to be more convenient than ever. A good thing? Maybe and maybe not. I offer no answers—just find it interesting as well as challenging.

The first six weeks of online worship at FPC averaged 464 viewers weekly (the last few Sundays of Lent and the beginning and end of Holy Week). All of this was so fresh and new in many respects, this being such a novel approach to church. Many, not only Presbyterians, were posting pictures on social media as we celebrated communion at home on Palm Sunday. Do you remember? The excitement of Palm Sunday and Holy Week seemed to disappear faster than usual this year. I totally understand some of this.

Now Easter is behind us. The average number of viewers for the past six weeks has been 213. This trend is being witnessed among so many churches that are depending on online worship to proclaim the Gospel—not just FPC. I have no solutions, nor am I ready to analyze the situation. I only pray that the human **church on earth** is not becoming something similar to a TV show in its last year or two of production. The words of Matthew do bring comfort: *You are Peter, a rock. This is the rock on which I will put together my church, a church so expansive with energy that not even the gates of hell will be able to keep it out.*

I conclude my rambling with some words from the book of Hebrews: *So let’s do it—full of belief, confident that we’re presentable inside and out. Let’s keep a firm grip on the promises that keep us going. He always keeps His word. Let’s see how inventive we can be in encouraging love and helping out, not avoiding worshipping together as some do but spurring each other on, especially as we see the big day approaching.*

“I missed seeing you in church, Sunday.”

Olin

## When Are We Expected to Worship Again In Person?

**Great question!** We have no idea. FPC is taking a different approach than most churches. So many have phases of reopening, but we feel that is confusing. We do plan to consider small “approved” group meetings in our facility based on CDC guidelines, but we are not ready for that to occur as of yet.

We will consider in-person worship in the sanctuary when we witness a significant decline in new Covid-19 cases. Most experts are encouraging at least a 21-day decline in order to begin safely reopening faith-based organizations.

We continue to welcome you into the office if needed. Of course, be sure to wear a mask.

### First

## Presbyterian Church (USA)

400 W. Jefferson St.

Tupelo, MS 38804

[www.firstprestupelo.org](http://www.firstprestupelo.org)

662-842-5681



### Ministerial & Program Staff

The Reverend Olin McBride, Pastor

The Reverend Ron Richardson

Dr. Bob Taylor

Helen Curtis

Melissa McDuffie

Dr. Ray Harris

Danielle Ratliff

Kay Stanford

Eddie Baker

### Mask

While visiting with our older adults via phone these Covid-19 days, the conversation usually includes concerns about feeling safe when being around other people apart from family. The first words spoken when describing these situations is, “I have on my mask.” There is some relief in knowing there is less and less resistance in the general public about wearing a mask. Mandates and rising numbers affected by Covid-19 have been motivating factors. Of course, another means of feeling safe is abiding by the rule of social distance.

Everyone is looking forward to the day when a mask is not required and a handshake or hug can be a part of the greeting. We are growing weary of the divisiveness in our world today. The issues surrounding Covid-19 have added to divisions present before this pandemic. Assigning labels has become convenient for claiming our territory and seeing those different from us as our enemies. Labels such as liberal, conservative, Republican, Democrat, black, white, foreigner, rich, poor, educated, or uneducated serve to put people in their place. Labels mask the true identity of people as children of God. Jesus was very aware of these pitfalls of life.

For example, in the Gospel of John (4:5-15) Jesus had an encounter with a Samaritan woman whom he saw as hiding behind her mask. Her assigned place in the society of that day was one of inferiority, an outcast, and not even regarded as a person in her own right. She was stripped of her personality and given a one-size-fits-all label. Jesus, instead, saw a person. He treated this woman as an individual, a real human being. By doing so, this Samaritan woman had to face herself.

By seeing through the mask of this woman, Jesus could see a greater need, a greater thirst than what the water from the well could satisfy. The fear of what might happen if Jesus saw her for who she thought she was almost blocked her from the greatest moment of her life.

We are too often blinded by our prejudices, such as in racism, ageism, sexism, and nationalism. Fear of the unknown takes so much from us to the point there is nothing more deadly to receiving the Spirit of God than a mind and heart sealed in fear. We find God in our lives when we are honest with ourselves, with who we really are, and with who others are as well.

Some people have called the Samaritan woman the first evangelist in the church. She found in Jesus the freedom to be herself. Many from her village came to be followers of Jesus Christ because of her testimony. This Samaritan woman dared to step away from her comfort zone behind the mask. For a taste of the water that will become in us a spring of water gushing up to eternal life, it is worth the risk to step away from behind the mask we wear and be ourselves—a child of God.

***Ron Richardson***  
***Parish Associate for Pastoral Care***

# Session Digest

1. The session met via Zoom Monday, July 20.
2. The session approved Lisa Nichols as Clerk of the Session.
3. Many thanks to Cindy Faucette for her dedication and 12 years of faithful service as Clerk of the Session.
4. The session approved Church Office Coronavirus Guidelines.
5. Heather Crotwell is continuing to do weekly videos for WeeKirk. She is using the lectionary text to determine what she will be teaching and is finding appropriate music to go along with it.
6. Melissa McDuffie is still meeting with the youth weekly, along with texting them as much as possible. Montreat has officially been canceled for this year. Melissa is not planning her annual back-to-school trip at this time but hopes to come up with something as time goes on and cases begin to steadily taper off.
7. The Christian Education committee voted unanimously to cancel the “Backyard Bible School” that was planned for this month.
8. The Marthas have been emptying their freezer, to the benefit of many members of congregation.
9. Outreach/Mission committee approved to participate in a facemask distribution project with food banks and free clinics.
10. Due to COVID-19, rather than feeding meals at the Salvation Army, the remainder of the 2020 budget was donated directly to Salvation Army.
11. Also due to COVID, international mission trips aren’t occurring for now. We approved moving forward with an installation in a school in Guatemala when trips are restarted.
12. The session approved opening of CASA at First Presbyterian for a maximum of 30 children. There is an extreme need for childcare for those that have returned to work. CASA will be following CDC guidelines and cleaning daily. Children will be limited to the gym and bathroom facilities.
13. We welcome new members Susan Marsico by Reaffirmation of Faith on July 5, 2020 and Josefina Rayburn by Reaffirmation of Faith, July 12, 2020. New member welcome bags were delivered to new members by Congregational Care Committee.
14. We celebrate the birth of Joseph Henry Hutto, III on July 7, 2020. He is the son of Hank and Maddin Hutto and is the grandson of Joey and Michelle Hutto. A rose was placed in the sanctuary honoring his birth.
15. Thanks to members who have helped hand out meals in the community.
16. Eddie Baker has been instrumental in maintaining the buildings and deserves recognition.
17. Task Force to Reopen FPC – There are currently no plans to reopen the church without a significant decline in the number of COVID-19 cases in our area.

## Committee Chairmen for 2020

**Administration** - David Williams  
**Christian Education** - Kristi Hillhouse  
**Congregational Care** - Joel Zimmerman  
**Fellowship** - Ann Godwin

**Outreach/Mission** - Sally Kate Collins  
**Property & Grounds** - Glenn Thomas  
**Worship** - Richard Hastings

## Sympathy

**Christian Sympathy is extended** to the family of **Sue Shepherd**, who passed away July 24. She was the wife of Clarence Shepherd and the mother of Justin Flaherty and Sally Kate Collins. Private services were held Thursday, July 30.

**Christian Sympathy is extended** to the family of **Chris Thompson**, who passed away July 30. Services were held Saturday, August 1.

## Memorials, Gifts, & Honoraria

### **IN MEMORY OF:**

#### **Betty Black**

Steve & Lucy Nash (Pastor's Discretionary Fund)

#### **Billy Burks**

Jackie Haguewood (General Fund Memorials)  
Steve & Lucy Nash (Pastor's Discretionary Fund)

#### **Elizabeth Faison**

Steve & Lucy Nash (Pastor's Discretionary Fund)

#### **Jenny Hewitt**

Steve & Lucy Nash (Pastor's Discretionary Fund)

#### **Shirley Quay Joiner**

Steve & Lucy Nash (Pastor's Discretionary Fund)

#### **Gray Megginson**

Steve & Lucy Nash (Pastor's Discretionary Fund)

#### **Penny Nichols**

Freddie & Mary Ann Chiles (Undesignated Fund)  
Jackie Haguewood (General Fund Memorials)  
Steve & Lucy Nash (Pastor's Discretionary Fund)

#### **George Michael Ray, Sr.**

Freddie & Mary Ann Chiles (Undesignated Fund)

### **IN HONOR OF:**

#### **Tom & Judy Billups**

Ron & Deanna Richardson (Cuba Mission Fund)

#### **Cindy Faucette**

The Robbins family (Cuba Mission Fund)

#### **FPC Office Staff**

Jackie Haguewood (General Fund Honorarium)  
Steve & Lucy Nash (Pastor's Discretionary Fund)

#### **Friends at FPC**

Jackie Haguewood (General Fund)

## Youth

The youth will begin August with a bang! Our Junior High will have a swim party to welcome our upcoming sixth graders to our group and our Senior High will have a swim party to give a proper farewell to our graduated seniors. We will continue to meet on Sunday nights to enjoy a meal together, fellowship, and devotions. As school starts back, I hope to settle into a new routine with our youth group.

Our Cherub and Elementary Sunday School teachers continue to work hard to connect with our children. A packet will go out to our children in early August. We hope it is a reminder that they are dearly loved and missed by their teachers!

Whether the plan is to attend traditional school or participate in a distance learning model for the Fall semester, our children will start back to school in the coming weeks. We will have a Blessing of the Backpacks during our YouTube worship on August 9. We hope you and your children will join us as we give special blessing to all the students and educators gearing back up for class!

*Melissa McDuffie*  
*Youth and Christian Education*

## Fellowship Committee

The Fellowship Committee met in June to plan our fall activities. The first one is Friday, September 18 when we feed the THS football team. We did not meet in July but will meet on Sunday, August 2 at 5:30 in the Stuart Garden. We will look at other activities at this meeting.

Upcoming Fall events are UKirk Meals, Trunk or Treat in October, Thanksgiving Lunch on November 22, and the Christmas Parade on December 5. Please mark these dates on your calendar as we will need candy, decorators, and various foods from the congregation. Thank you for your help.

*Ann Godwin*  
*Chairman*

# Need a Mask?

Cindy Faucette has been busy sewing some useful and fashionable masks. Lots of FPC members have enjoyed their protection as they are out and about. She also has some cute, printed fabrics that are especially for children! If you would like a mask, please call Cindy at 662-231-6827 or Robin at 662-401-4510, or you can email Cindy at [cfaucette@bellsouth.net](mailto:cfaucette@bellsouth.net). CDC guidelines recommend wearing cloth face coverings in grocery stores, pharmacies, and other public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.

# CUBA WATER MISSION

*We received the following email from Yeymis Garcia Montero, an elder in the Cienfuegos church where we installed a water system three years ago. The system not only provides pure drinking water for the church and surrounding community, but also for a nearby nursing home and children's hospital. Thanks to your support, the church in Cienfuegos is producing over 72,000 gallons of "clean water" per year. Please continue to pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ in Cuba during this difficult time.*

## **Special Blessings in the Name of the Almighty Jehovah**

Dear Brothers in Christ,

Thank you for helping us make a dream come true of helping our community in a practical and free way. Today our local church is recognized not only as the one that worships God, but also as the one that serves others. What a joy to experience how our neighbors solve the problem of having drinking water in a city where it arrives in terrible conditions.

This project has had an impact that is difficult to quantify. I remember when we used water in the hospital how much astonishment and gratitude could be seen in the family and the sick. There is nothing more comforting than serving.

All this would not have been possible without you, what a blessing to have a water treatment plant in the very center of the city of Cienfuegos, which at the same time is close to the provincial hospital, nursing home and a children's circle and also to the provincial Pediatric hospital.

Almost three years have passed since the plant was inaugurated and we can say with satisfaction until now, that the project has been a total success, 217,535 gallons of drinking water have already been delivered, and what do we say, glory to God and eternal gratitude to the entire Aguas de Vida team.

We wish you all the help of heaven and the richest blessings in the present and future, long life for the Living Water Project. Amen, Hallelujah...

Sincerely,

Elder: Yeymis García Montero

# SCOUTING NEWS

Here are some scenes from our most recent camping trip, July 10-12.

Although it was hot, the Scouts worked diligently on their orienteering skills, hiking cross-country using map and compass. As always, we cooked and ate well!

Scouting is open to any boy, ages 11-17. We currently meet in the Stuart Garden at 7:00 P.M. on Monday nights. Come by and check it out!

**Bob Lence**  
*Scoutmaster*



We recently delivered 48 cases of water for Tupelo's homeless assistance program! Pictured with Olin and Emma are Robert Lukes and Ethan Nolan with *Mississippi United to End Homelessness*. Thanks to everyone who made this huge water delivery possible!



# YOUTH FUN

Our youth have been meeting outside on Sunday nights! We recently decorated masks. It was hot, but we had lots of fun!



## First Presbyterian Church

Invites You to Join Us  
Each Sunday Morning at 10:00 A.M.  
for Our Online Worship Service

*Streaming on Our YouTube Channel:*

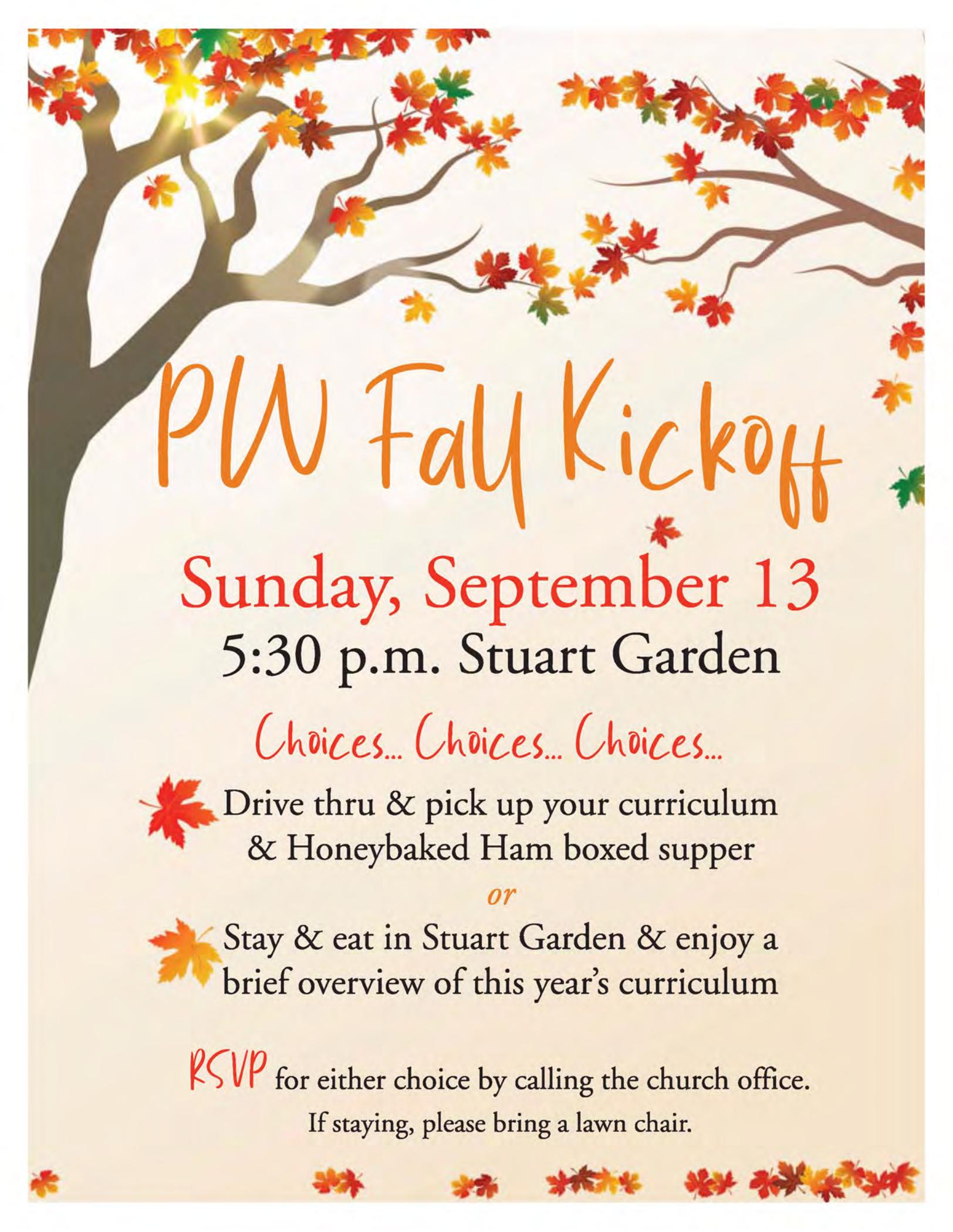
[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbRsd9\\_u5JZ1SEV5LsUnJUQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbRsd9_u5JZ1SEV5LsUnJUQ)

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: [www.firstprestupelo.org](http://www.firstprestupelo.org)  
or First Presbyterian Church, Tupelo, MS on Facebook

Is your contact info up-to-date?



Do you have a new address? Email? Phone number? Please update your new information with the church office by calling us at 662-842-5681 or sending an email to: [churchsecretary@firstprestupelo.org](mailto:churchsecretary@firstprestupelo.org).



# PW Fall Kickoff

Sunday, September 13

5:30 p.m. Stuart Garden

*Choices... Choices... Choices...*

 Drive thru & pick up your curriculum  
& Honeybaked Ham boxed supper

*or*

 Stay & eat in Stuart Garden & enjoy a  
brief overview of this year's curriculum

**RSVP** for either choice by calling the church office.

If staying, please bring a lawn chair.

# AUGUST

| SUNDAY  | MONDAY   | TUESDAY   | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY  | FRIDAY    | SATURDAY  |
|---|--|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|   |  |   |           |           |           | 1         |
| <b>2</b><br>10:00 a.m.—<br>Streaming Worship<br><br>5:30 p.m. - Fellow-<br>ship<br>Committee<br>—Garden | <b>3</b><br>7:00 p.m.—<br>Boy Scouts—Garden  | <b>4</b><br>9:00 a.m.—<br>T'ai Chi Chih—<br>Garden  | <b>5</b>  | <b>6</b>  | <b>7</b>  | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>9</b><br>10:00 a.m.—<br>Streaming Worship  | <b>10</b><br>5:30 p.m.—<br>Committee Meetings<br><br>7:00 p.m.—<br>Boy Scouts—Garden | <b>11</b><br>9:00 a.m.—<br>T'ai Chi Chih—<br>Garden | <b>12</b> | <b>13</b> | <b>14</b> | <b>15</b> |
| <b>16</b><br>10:00 a.m.—<br>Streaming Worship   | <b>17</b><br>6:00 p.m.—<br>Session Mtg.<br><br>7:00 p.m.—<br>Boy Scouts—Garden       | <b>18</b><br>9:00 a.m.—<br>T'ai Chi Chih—<br>Garden | <b>19</b> | <b>20</b> | <b>21</b> | <b>22</b> |
| <b>23</b><br>10:00 a.m.—<br>Streaming Worship<br><br>5:30 p.m.—PW<br>Coordinating<br>Team—Garden        | <b>24</b><br>7:00 p.m.—<br>Boy Scouts—Garden   | <b>25</b><br>9:00 a.m.—<br>T'ai Chi Chih—<br>Garden | <b>26</b> | <b>27</b> | <b>28</b> | <b>29</b> |
| <b>30</b><br>10:00 a.m.—<br>Streaming Worship   | <b>31</b><br>7:00 p.m.—<br>Boy Scouts—Garden   |   |           |           |           |           |

## August Birthdays

|                  |                  |                 |
|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 1                | 12               | 23              |
| Walker Gibens    | Tatum Dabbs      | Jason McDuffie  |
| 3                | Marion Linde     | Trey Phyfer     |
| Vivian Fleming   | John Parker, II  | 24              |
| 4                | 13               | Robert McAuley  |
| Camp Hunter      | Wanda Dent       | 26              |
| Audrey Robertson | Bill Reeder      | Julia Monts     |
| 7                | 14               | 27              |
| Kevin Rose       | Travis Abney     | Betty Henson    |
| 8                | Lindley Gibens   | Debra Robison   |
| Greg Burks       | 15               | 29              |
| Ivy Wells        | Chris Rogers     | Marie Bush      |
| 9                | Sue Shepherd     | 30              |
| George Dent      | 16               | Reid Hardison   |
| Toni Martin      | Marshall Jenkins | 31              |
| 10               | 17               | Judy Armentrout |
| Nannette Comer   | Eric Johnson     |                 |
| Kory Hunter      | 18               |                 |
| Hugh Luckett     | Michael Gable    |                 |
| 11               | Jan Taylor       |                 |
| Alice Fagan      | 21               |                 |
| Margaret Parker  | Anne Crotwell    |                 |

## August Anniversaries

|                         |                           |                       |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1                       | 12                        | 26                    |
| Dan & Frances Brasfield | Mark & Kim Burleson       | Rudy & Jala Caldwell  |
| 7                       | Sam & Mary Pace           | 31                    |
| Rick & Judy Smith       | 13                        | Chauncey & Ann Godwin |
| 9                       | Carl & Nannette Comer     |                       |
| Bob & Jane Black        | 21                        |                       |
|                         | Richard & Leslie Hastings |                       |