



The

TOWER

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH • TUPELO, MISSISSIPPI

400 Jefferson Street • P.O. Box 1725 • Tupelo, Mississippi 38802 • (662) 842-5681 • www.firstprestupelo.org

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

First

Presbyterian Church (USA)

400 W. Jefferson St.

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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

Friends

Visits with one of our homebound invariably include the topic of friendship. This person has a deep appreciation for people known over the years, who have become close friends. These include both individuals who live far away and those close to home. There are expressions of deep appreciation for these friendships. Some of them are distant family, and others are through church and connections in the community. When this homebound talks about these friends, there is a genuine love expressed for them. There is a bond that has lasted over the years, and one that will be there until death.

I am reminded of what a fellow student said to me while we were in seminary working on our Doctor of Ministry Degree. He stated that if we come to the end of life with five close friends, we are blessed. I had never considered having close friends that were hard to find. As I grow older, I wonder if my fellow student may be right. The challenge of finding friends may best be described as “you win some and you lose some.”

From what I have been told by the homebound I visited, this person is truly blessed, because it sounds as though there are many more than five friendships developed through the years. A Irish Proverb has it that, “A good friend is like a four-leaf clover; hard to find and lucky to have.” During one visit, I was identified as a friend. If all the other friends are treated like this homebound treats me, each of this person’s friends could feel like being the only four-leaf clover in the pasture. My impression is that this homebound treats every friend with a loving heart, making each one feel special.

This fits with what I believe to be the real reason for having friends as exemplified by Jesus in John 15:15: “I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father.” By being a friend, Jesus could best communicate his love for his disciples. In this case, friendship becomes a resource for our faith as I learned to be the case with the homebound I visited. If so, making friends may well be the answer to our world’s problems.

Ron Richardson
Parish Associate for Pastoral Care



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/UChRsd9_u5JZ1SEV5LsUnJUQ

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: 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.

Sympathy

Christian sympathy is extended to the family of **Judy Armentrout**, who passed away on December 1. She was the mother of Lynne Johnson.

Christian Sympathy is extended to the family of **Robert Wayne Monaghan**, who passed away on November 23. He was the father of Gil Monaghan.

New Members

We rejoice in welcoming several individuals to our church family:

- **Linda Lehman**, who comes to us by reaffirmation of faith.
- **Ed and Leigh Carol Neelly and their son, Wallis (8)**, who come to us by letter of transfer.
- **Mark and Janice Reynolds**, who come to us by letter of transfer. Janice is the daughter of Jimmy Crockett.
- **Mel Whitfield**, who comes by reaffirmation of faith. Mel is the wife of Lewis Whitfield.

Youth

“Advent means coming...” I’m pretty sure this was the first line of the wreath lighting liturgy, but it resonates in my head every year at this time. It was said over and over as I grew up in this congregation, and I guess it just stuck.

But what’s coming? Surely a little bit of stress, maybe a little more “quality time” with loved ones than we’d prefer, likely a few more sweets than we should indulge in, and maybe overspending on what we hope is the perfect gift. Yeah, these things are probably right around the corner!

What else? Maybe this year brings seeing it all through the eyes of a child again! Surely there will be wonderful conversations, nights snuggled on the couch with a fire and your favorite Christmas movie! Let there be lights and cookies and presents and Christmas cards and all the things that make Christmas feel like Christmas! Goodness knows, this year we need Christmas to be more special than it has ever been.

But is that it? What else is “coming”? Hope. Because God will keep his promises. Peace. Because God offers a peace beyond all understanding. Joy. Because God wants us to experience true joy despite all that surrounds us. Love. Because Jesus loves us so much he came down here to live among us and demonstrate this love. Let Christmas come!! Decorate big! Cook big! Give big! Love big! Because we need it this year! But even more than that, we need hope. Peace. Joy. Love. As we look for glimpses of these gifts around us, let us make sure we are the glimpses those around us see!

Melissa McDuffie
Director of Youth and Christian Education

Session Digest

Administrative

- Administrative Committee approved the locking of the church office door. If admission is needed the person entering would need to knock first and then be asked the purpose of their visit; make sure they were wearing a mask; and make sure they are told they must wear the mask once inside.
- Pleased with strong financials and hope for a strong stewardship season.

Christian Education

- Sunday and Wednesday night youth continue to go well. Senior high attendance overall is very strong this year.
- We had nearly 15 families signed up to participate for pumpkin decorating, and we still were able to pass out packets to families during the drive-through meal
- Heather Crotwell plans to start WeeKirk up hopefully in the next 2-3 weeks. She also plans to use Illustrated Ministry for curriculum and Advent material.
- November 11 will be the last meeting of the *Jesus* Bible study we have been doing by Max Lucado. I have received the next study entitled *Hebrews: Grace and Gratitude* scheduled to begin November 18.
- *Hope-Full Living: Celebrating the Season of Advent* as an Advent devotional resource for adults will be available at in-person worship on Sundays and mailed out to members.

Congregational Care

- Delivered 29 meals to members of the congregation the night of the October Church Supper

Fellowship

- The Thanksgiving Drive-Thru Meal scheduled for Wednesday; November 18 has been postponed. Any FPC member contacted for home delivery of a meal will still be receiving a food delivery.

Outreach/Mission

- Photography weekend fundraiser went very well. Raised over \$1,000 for youth and missions.
- Boxes for Operation Christmas Child were turned in last week

Property and Grounds

- Sanctuary renovations continue moving forward. Also new lighting in the gym.
- Bryan Ellis has also had the contractors follow up on some other issues: Front Door, a leak in the men's bathroom, the glass window in the breezeway, and the wall in McFadden Hall. Hopeful for completion of work by the second weekend in December.

Security Team

- Tom Billups and security are doing a great job, Bob and Mary and medical are doing a great job.
- Continue to need more volunteers. Contact Buddy Stubbs if interested.

Worship

- Baptism of Joseph Henry Hutto, III, son of Hank and Maddin Hutto, will be Sunday, December 20, 2020.

Fellowship Committee

Fellowship Committee helped with the preparation and packing of the suppers delivered to church members on November 18. We will meet again in January if needed.

Ann Godwin, Chairman

Re-Opening Committee

Dear Friends:

The Worship Committee is excited about the continuation of our in-person worship services. Due to sanctuary construction, the services are being held in Stuart Garden. If there is inclement weather, the service will be moved to the gym.

Registration for the December 13 service begins Monday, December 7 at 8:00 A.M. An email will be sent early Monday morning with instructions and the link, which is also on our [website](#). You may also call the church office to register.

If the service is moved to the gym, we will reduce the limit from 75 to 50 to allow the necessary social distancing for safety purposes. For gym services entrance will be through the gym doors that are used for Wednesday night dinners/programs.

Please understand that we are making every effort to keep all of you healthy and safe by following CDC guidelines as we plan our in-person services. We want to thank you all in advance for your patience and understanding as we navigate through this challenging time.

When attending an outdoor service, please remember the following:

The service begins at 10:00 A.M. Enter the service through the Southwest Corner (Main Entrance) of the Stuart Garden. Every person is required to check in and register their attendance at the table located inside this en-trance. This greeter station will open 30 minutes prior to the service for check-in and will close 10 minutes after the service begins. Please arrive early to allow extra time for the check-in process. Please use the hand sanitizer that will be available. After registering, an usher will show you to your seat(s).

Everyone two years and older is required to wear a mask for the entire service. Please bring your own mask or pick one up at the greeter table.

Households, please sit together and maintain social distancing for the entire service.

At the conclusion of the worship service, please do not exit until an usher directs you. This will help to maintain social distancing as everyone leaves.

We ask that you carefully consider the state of your health and that of your family when considering returning to in-person worship services. Those individuals who may be immunocompromised or vulnerable to illness are encouraged to stay home.

If you registered for the service but are unable to attend, please email churchsecretary@firstprestupelo.org as soon as possible so that we might accommodate those on our waiting list.

Sunday's in-person worship service will be uploaded to [YouTube](#) and available for viewing at 6:30 P.M. on Sunday.

Our indoor service, which is [streamed online](#) on Sunday mornings, can be viewed on Sunday at 10:00 A.M. by those unable to be with us.

If you have any questions please contact Richard Hastings at rihasti@comcast.net or Bob Taylor at bob1981@comcast.net or call the church office at 662-842-5681.

Richard Hastings, Chairman



Memorials, Gifts, & Honoraria

IN MEMORY OF:

Russell & Katy Bryson

Anonymous (Sunday School Fund)

Freddie Chiles

Bobby & Martha Dale (Cuba Mission Fund)

Jenny Hewitt

Anonymous (Congregational Care Fund)

Jim & Nancy Ingram

Anonymous (Handbell Fund)

Ray Thornton

Anonymous (Pastor's Discretionary Fund)
Judy Armentrout (Undesignated Memorial Fund)
Dan & Frances Brasfield (Undesignated Memorial Fund)
Mike & Kathy Ferris (Building/Capital Fund)
Ferris Sunday School Class (Building/Capital Fund)

IN HONOR OF:

Travis Abney

Anonymous (Chancel Choir Fund)

Eddie Baker

Anonymous (Property & Grounds Fund)

Bill & Camille Caples

Anonymous (Congregational Care Fund)

Evelyn Croxton

Anonymous (Music Fund)

George & Wanda Dent

Anonymous (Guatemala Mission Fund)

Robin & Cindy Faucette

Anonymous (Cuba Mission Fund)

Mildred Grubbs

Anonymous (Sunday School Fund)
Judy Armentrout (Undesignated Honorarium Fund)

Jackie Haguewood

Anonymous (Congregational Care Fund)
Judy Armentrout (Undesignated Honorarium Fund)

Kristi Hillhouse

Anonymous (Congregational Care Fund)

Bob & Sheree Lence

Anonymous (Scouts Fund)

Toni Martin

Anonymous (Congregational Care Fund)

Olin & Jim McBride

Anonymous (Pastor's Discretionary Fund)

Buddy & Lou Ann McCarty

Anonymous (Pastor's Discretionary Fund)

Melissa McDuffie

Anonymous (Youth Fund)

Mark & Helen Monts

Anonymous (Pastor's Discretionary Fund)

Margaret Anne Murphey

Anonymous (Music Fund)

Sam & Mary Pace

Anonymous (Property & Grounds Fund)

Ron & Deanna Richardson

Anonymous (Pastor's Discretionary Fund)

Alice Rogers

Anonymous (Food Services Fund)
Judy Armentrout (Undesignated Honorarium Fund)

Buddy & Mary Stubbs

Anonymous (Communications Fund)

Jack & Aubre Wells

Anonymous (Sunday School Fund)

Notes from Financial Secretary

- Honoraria and Memorials that need acknowledgements sent before Christmas need to be received in the office by **December 6**.
- Any receipts that have not been submitted for reimbursement need to be submitted by **December 9**.
- Please remember that to receive contribution credit for 2020, your contributions must be received in the church office by, or postmarked by, **December 31, 2020**.

December

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4 12:00 p.m.—A.A.	5
6 10:00 a.m.— Streaming Worship and In-Person Worship	7	8 9:00 a.m.— T'ai Chi Chih 7:00 p.m.—A.A.	9	10	11 12:00 p.m.—A.A.	12
13 10:00 a.m.— Streaming Worship and In-Person Worship	14	15 9:00 a.m.— T'ai Chi Chih 7:00 p.m.—A.A.	16	17	18 12:00 p.m.—A.A.	19
20 10:00 a.m.— Streaming Worship and In-Person Worship	21	22 9:00 a.m.— T'ai Chi Chih 7:00 p.m.—A.A.	23	24	25 CHRISTMAS DAY	26
27 10:00 a.m.— Streaming Worship and In-Person Worship	28	29 9:00 a.m.— T'ai Chi Chih 7:00 p.m.—A.A.	30	31		

December Birthdays

1 Taylor Neal	14 Holly Walker Corey Littrell	26 Lacy Lockett Mark Cobb
2 Jackson Caldwell Bert Hershfelt	15 Carl Comer	27 Bob Lence
6 Peggie Reput Rick Jones	18 Jane Black	18 Emma Claire Wallace
7 Tim Posey Cannon Rogers	19 Jack Price	29 Mary Shea Rogers
10 Butch Cockrell Barbara McCullough	21 Jennifer Martin Carson Clark	30 Mollie Gratz Maggie Gibens
11 Ruby Kathryn Patterson Ben Gibens Olivia Reynolds	22 Kirk Biddle	31 Helen Monts Liz Rose
12 Glen Davidson, Jr.	23 Joe Sheffield Garra Owens Barry Walker Kelsey Whitten	
13 Doyce Deas Tom McDonald Sheree Lence Sarah Hardison	24 Kirsten Bolton Amy Fagan	

December Anniversaries

3 Joey & Michelle Hutto	19 Corey & Anne Marie Littrell	27 Jeff & Mitzi Moore
11 Roy & Sarah Parker	20 Bill & Scarlett Reeder	28 Bobby & Martha Dale
12 Aubrey & Ruby Kathryn Patterson	21 Paul & Amanda Perry	Steve & Becki Depew
14 Rud & Debra Robison	23 Jerry & Carolyn Burkett	29 Andy & Lacy Lockett
18 Barry & Holly Walker	26 John & Carolyn Gaston	31 Ron & Deanna Richardson