



VOLUME 51, ISSUE 1

January, 2021

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

Incarnation Meditation

Emmanuel. God with us.

Through torn sky shepherds spy heaven singing, and through this wound, God falls into hay screaming.
Only astrologers scan outer depths to follow this bright trajectory, burning up in my atmospheres.
Cold vacuums resisting God's re-entry.

Christ. In very nature God. Stripped of all vestures of Deity.
No glory, no majesty, no power, no knowledge. Abandoned by heaven.
The almighty, become so small as to be born human.
Receives gifts, the first reminders, suggestions of an identity.

The savior of the world. Born in a two-bit village, in a cave under the family home.
Ostracized by his ancestors. His mother shamed. Ignored by the religious.
Recognized only by farm-hands and foreign astrologers.

We welcomed God in the same way we dispatched him. Deserted by friends.
Rejected by the godly. Abandoned by God. Helpless. Exposed to the elements.
And only two people to recognize him: a thief and an occupying soldier.
The underclass. The foreigner.

In birth Christ was offered three gifts. Gold for a king. Frankincense for a God.
And Myrrh for a mortal.

In birth Christ was offered three gifts. But in death all gifts were refused.
In death Christ becomes gift.

Where are we this Christmas? Are we Magi, searching in strange places for signs of God?
Are we offering gifts, unaware of their deeper meanings?
Are we the establishment, trying to shut out what we fear?

We are all of these. But we are called to become the faithful wanderer. To become the body of Christ.
Freely accepting gifts. Living and dying to become gift for others.

Olin

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

We have received 131 pledges totaling \$827,458, as of Wednesday, December 23. This makes the fourth straight year we have pledged over \$800,000 towards the life and work of FPC. This has never happened before. A blessing in many ways!

First

Presbyterian Church (USA)

400 W. Jefferson St.

Tupelo, MS 38804

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

Charged

Coming into a New Year, I find myself reflecting on this past year, as difficult as it was. Given that everyone from around the world was affected on some level by the pandemic, I was most impressed with how people in various positions stepped to the plate to help those in need. Although I could read or see on the news how people were helping others, I actually witnessed people in our church being involved with providing support to each other and to people outside our church membership.

It appeared to me that individuals in our church were charged to take care of one another. This does not mean it took a pandemic to get people involved in showing compassion. This was a major crisis affecting everyone, which called for more urgent responses. Arrangements for worship, funerals, committee meetings, session meetings, and special occasions involving food preparation took extra attention and precautions to make sure everyone stayed safe. People offering to help had an urgency about him or her that appeared as though each individual was saying, "I am charged to do something and I am ready to go into action."

I think of how Moses was charged by God in Deuteronomy 4:12-14 to teach God's people the Ten Commandments and tell them to observe the statues and ordinances in the land they were about to cross into and occupy. King David, in I Kings 2:2-3, said to his son Solomon, "I am about to go the way of all the earth. Be strong, be courageous, and keep the charge of the Lord your God, walking in his ways and keeping his statutes, his commandments, his ordinances, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, so that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn."

This New Year, no doubt, will be full of opportunities to feel charged to, again, and go into action providing love and care where support is needed for church members and people in the larger community. As followers of Christ, we are charged to observe the ordinances of God and to be the church to all people.

Ron Richardson

Parish Associate for Pastoral Care

Note from Financial Secretary

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**.



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

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 families of:

- **Judy Armentrout**, who died on December 1. She was the mother of Lynne Johnson.
- **Bert Miller**, who died on December 7. He was the husband of Maureen Miller and the father of Sarah Hardison.
- **Bert Hershfelt**, who died on December 13.
- **Denise Williford**, who died on December 18. She was the daughter of Bonnie Williford.
- **Jackie Haguewood**, who died on December 22.

Youth

Good riddance, 2020! Right? Sure, not every day of the past year was terrible, but it definitely felt more challenging than a typical year for most of us! And I'm not so naive to think that with January 1 comes a magic wand that takes us back to "normal," but I pray the coming year isn't so defined by "unprecedented times!" So, on the one hand, with that ball drop at midnight, we made it! But what about the other hand? What can 2020 teach us?

To enjoy simply "being" together. I don't think I've ever heard the words "quarantine" or "isolation" as often as I did in any given week since March. It didn't take long for studies to be done on the effects of this, and the results didn't shock anyone! Once we get back to "normal," I pray this is one thing we never under-appreciate again!

To enjoy a smiling face! I know it sounds silly, but some of the times that it hit me the hardest were the times I saw pictures of our kids at school with masks on. I completely understand why it is done, but it doesn't make it easier to see. I guess the masks just represent all the ways life has been "rocked" for them (and for everyone), and it makes me sad. I pray that we never under-appreciate being able to see each other smile!

The "little" things. Because I think this has taught us that they aren't so little! High school seniors and their parties, kindergarten "graduations," little league baseball games, eating out on Friday night, ballet recitals, and on and on and on. We missed them. I pray we never under-appreciate these "little" things again.

Being on the bus with the youth! Whether it is meeting Batesville's youth group at Hopewell for a game of Big Frizz, loading up for laser tag and dinner in town, heading up to Montreat or Montreat Middle School for the week, or spending a night on our annual "Back to School" trip, I've missed it all. I miss the laughs, the late night conversations, the honesty, the fun, all of it! These are some things I know I won't ever under-appreciate!

To worship and sing and hug and be at church! It's been said more times that I can count, but I miss this. My kids miss this. It's really that simple. I pray we never under-appreciate worship.

What else? Going forward, what will you never under-appreciate? Good riddance, 2020! Cheers to some good ole "precedented" times! I would pass on some of the memories, but let's at least allow 2020 to teach us some lessons!

Melissa McDuffie

Director of Youth and Christian Education

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED IN JANUARY

We have been approached by the St. Luke Food Pantry asking for volunteers to be scheduled for the first Thursday of the month, every month to assist with distribution. There are two time slots—7:45 A.M. until 10:00 A.M. and 9:45 A.M. until 12:00 P.M. Occasionally they can accommodate sit-down opportunities, but the vast majority of the work requires volunteers to be on their feet and to be able to walk without issue. If you are interested in this local mission opportunity and would like to volunteer or would like more information, please call or text Sally Kate Collins at (662) 871-3761.



Session Digest

Administrative

- Ending the year on a positive note – Admin continues to work on the budget; pledges are down approximately 28K from last year.
- Special thanks to Kay Stanford for her hard work on the budget and financials.
- Special thanks to Lori Robertson for her work on the stewardship campaign.

Christian Education

Committee did not meet.

Congregational Care

- 23 poinsettias were delivered to shut-ins for Christmas.
- Thanks to Mary Stubbs, who handled purchasing/organization of the poinsettias.
- Over 50 Thanksgiving meals were delivered to homebound members.
- Thanks to Cindy Faucette who organized the meal/delivery. Alice Rogers, Ann Godwin, Mary Stubbs, Leslie Geoghegan, and Cindy Faucette all helped to prepare/package the meals for delivery. Deliveries were made by members of the committee.

Fellowship

Committee did not meet.

Outreach/Missions

Committee did not meet.

Property and Grounds

- New lighting continues to be installed in the Phase 1 plan.
- All of the little "add-ons" that we and Eddie have requested from Bryan and Ben have been addressed as they continue to move forward on repairing the sanctuary wall.
- Sanctuary wall update - the exterior waterproofing has been completed, inspected and approved - a warranty will be coming. That phase is basically completed. The interior is our new focus. Our progress has had some delays, but they were expected by the committee.
- Special thanks to Bryan Ellis and Ben Hunter for all their hard work.

Security Team

Committee did not meet.

Worship

- Online worship services will be in McFadden Hall going forward until the Sanctuary work has been completed.
- Christmas Eve events:
 - * Congregational Zoom gathering at 5:00 P.M.
 - * Worship service at 7:00 P.M. from McFadden Hall.
 - * Luminaries will be placed outside the church on Jefferson street along with a banner with the wording, *"Although we are worshipping from home, the Light still shines in the darkness."*

Memorials, Gifts, & Honoraria

IN MEMORY OF:

Janice Anthony

Catherine & Cameron Howell (Christian Education Fund)
Steve & Lucy Nash (Cherub Choir Fund)
Bonnie Williford (Christian Education Fund)

Judy Armentrout

Kirk & Teresa Biddle (Choir Fund)
Mary Ann Chiles (Music Fund)
Glen & Bonnie Davidson (Undesignated Memorial Fund)
Robin & Cindy Faucette (Cuba Mission Fund)
Mr. & Mrs. Albert W. Foley (Undesignated Memorial Fund)
Sarah Hardison (Undesignated Memorial Fund)
Marion Linde (Music Fund)
Jimmy & Nancy Brown Milam (Music Fund)
Presbyterian Women (Cherub Choir Fund)
Mark, Sallie Kate, Mary Taylor & Andrew Ray (Music Fund)
Thomas E. Reed (Music Fund)
Britt & Alice Rogers (Children's Activities Fund)
Tony Tannehill (Undesignated Memorial Fund)
Jim, Cathy, and Catherine Turner (Music Fund)
Sarah Young (Pastor's Discretionary Fund)

Freddie Chiles

Mr. & Mrs. Claude Chafin (Cuba Mission Fund)
Glen & Bonnie Davidson (Cuba Mission Fund)
Sarah Hardison (Undesignated Memorial Fund)

Jenny Hewitt

Sarah Hardison (Undesignated Memorial Fund)
Her Children (Congregational Care Fund)

Bert Miller

Dan & Frances Brasfield (Undesignated Fund)
Steve & Lucy Nash (Pastor's Discretionary Fund)
Bonnie Williford (Undesignated Fund)

Robert Wayne Monaghan

Robin & Cindy Faucette (Cuba Mission Fund)
Britt & Alice Rogers (Children's Activities Fund)

Sue Shepherd

Sarah Hardison (Undesignated Memorial Fund)

Ray Thornton

Sarah Hardison (Undesignated Memorial Fund)

IN HONOR OF:

Mark & Kim Burleson

Mark, Sallie Kate, Mary Taylor & Andrew Ray
(Fellowship Fund)

Rudy & Jala Caldwell

Mark, Sallie Kate, Mary Taylor & Andrew Ray
(Fellowship Fund)

Clergy & Staff of FPC

Sarah Young (Pastor's Discretionary Fund)

George & Wanda Dent

Sarah Young (Guatemala Mission Fund)

Robin & Cindy Faucette

Sandy Henson (Cuba Mission Fund)

First Presbyterian Youth

Sandy Henson & Jim Ingram (Youth Fund)

Vivian Fleming

Sarah Young (Congregational Care Fund)

Jackie Haguewood

Sarah Young (Congregational Care Fund)

Ray Harris

Jimmy & Nancy Brown Milam (Music Fund)
Britt & Alice Rogers (Music Fund)

Jim & Heather Ingram

Sandy Henson (Youth Fund)

Olin McBride

Sarah Hardison (Undesignated Fund)
Britt & Alice Rogers (Children's Activities Fund)

Olin & Jim McBride

Sandy Henson (Pastor's Discretionary Fund)
Mark, Sallie Kate, Mary Taylor & Andrew Ray
(Pastor's Discretionary Fund)

Melissa McDuffie

Jack & Aubre Wells (Youth Fund)

Pete & Kathy McMurry

Sarah Young (Guatemala Mission Fund)

Jeff & Mitzi Moore

Sandy Henson (Undesignated Fund)
Mark, Sallie Kate, Mary Taylor & Andrew Ray
(Fellowship Fund)

Steve & Lucy Nash

Mark, Sallie Kate, Mary Taylor & Andrew Ray
(Fellowship Fund)

Ron Richardson

Sarah Hardison (Undesignated Fund)
Susan Mitchell (General Fund)

Kay Stanford

Sarah Hardison (Undesignated Fund)

Bob Taylor

Jimmy & Nancy Brown Milam (Music Fund)
Britt & Alice Rogers (Music Fund)

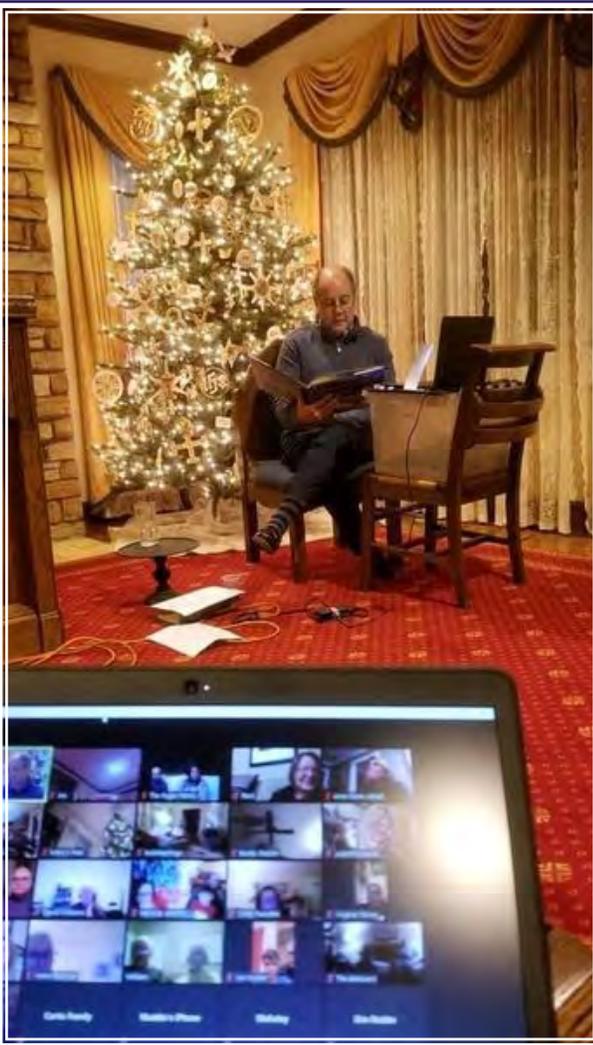
Judy Thomas

Jill White, Teresa Biddle, and Cindy Faucette
(Music Fund)

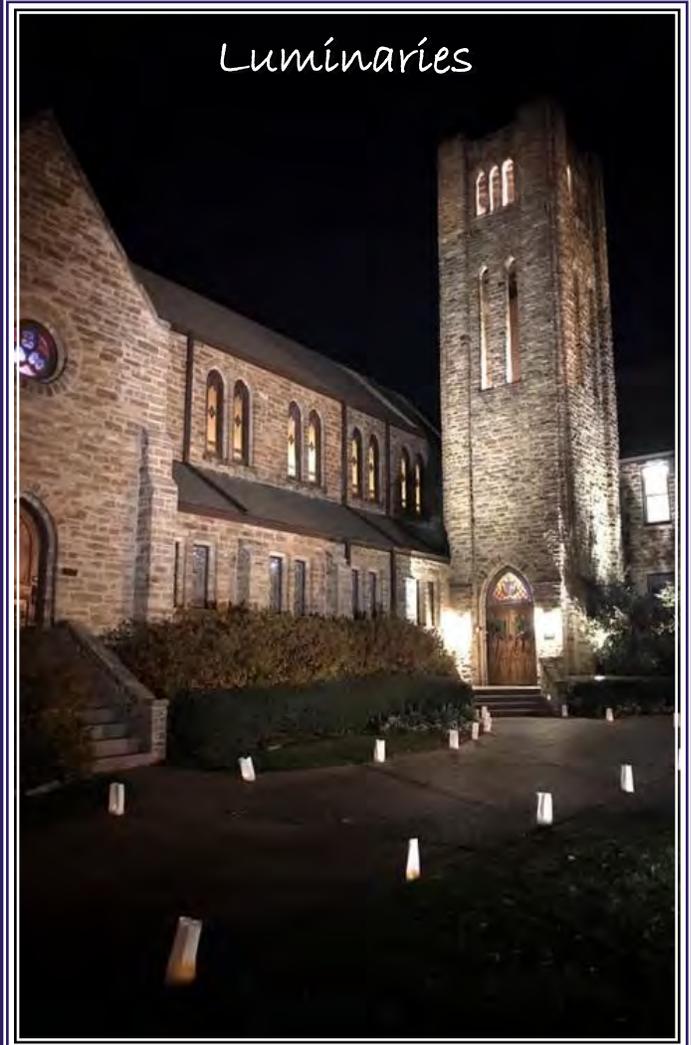
Christmas Eve 2020

The Light Still Shines...

Christmas Eve Zoom Gathering



Luminaries



January

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 12:00 p.m.—A.A.	2
3 10:00 a.m.— Streaming Worship	4 7:00 P.M. Boy Scouts	5 9:00 a.m.— T'ai Chi Chih 7:00 p.m.—A.A.	6	7	8 12:00 p.m.—A.A.	9
10 10:00 a.m.— Streaming Worship	11 5:30—Committee Meetings 7:00 P.M. Boy Scouts	12 9:00 a.m.— T'ai Chi Chih 7:00 p.m.—A.A.	13	14	15 12:00 p.m.—A.A.	16
17 10:00 a.m.— Streaming Worship	18 6:00—Session Meeting 7:00 P.M. Boy Scouts	19 9:00 a.m.— T'ai Chi Chih 7:00 p.m.—A.A.	20	21	22 12:00 p.m.—A.A.	23
24 10:00 a.m.— Streaming Worship	25 7:00 P.M. Boy Scouts	26 9:00 a.m.— T'ai Chi Chih 7:00 p.m.—A.A.	27	28	29 12:00 p.m.—A.A.	30
31 10:00 a.m.— Streaming Worship						

January Birthdays

2

Claire Leeke
Wendy Parker
Bonnie Williford

3

Emily Barber

5

Frances Brasfield
Curtis Monts
Presly Wallace

7

Patrick Hastings
Josefina Rayburn

9

Kathy McMurry

10

Lucy Wells

12

Spencer Hillhouse
Alli Monts
Laura Rogers

13

Rudy Caldwell, Jr.
Bryan Fagan
Catherine Rogers

14

Jeremy Blanchard

15

Judy Billups
Annette Thornton

17

Bonnie Davidson
Sandy Henson
Jon Timothy Posey

20

Betty Reece
Zayne Cobb
Tatum Collins

21

Gladys Wilson
Mel Whitfield
Elliot Long
Lilee Rose

22

Mary Pace

23

Mary Ann Chiles
Mamie Clark

25

Gus Depew
Gunner Goad

26

Roxie Clayton
Bronwyn Teague

27

Gregory Davidson

30

Carolyn Gaston
Ross Reeder
Loren Zimmerman

January Anniversaries

3

Gil & Ann Monaghan

5

Greg & Leslie Burks

28

Buddy & Lou Ann McCarty
Jon & Allan Smith