



Current Updates

WORSHIP SERVICES

Corporate worship continues via livestream at our regular service times: fpcj.ms/livestream and on Facebook Live.

CHURCH EVENTS

- All church-related events and activities are canceled through June 4.
- No Midweek activities through June and July.

STEWARDSHIP NEEDS

Without gathering on Sundays and passing the offering plate, we ask that our members and regular givers consider alternative ways of sending offerings:

- Give online: <https://www.fpcjackson.org/about/giving-and-stewardship>
- Download our app on IOS and Android (FPC Jackson) and click "giving".
- Send your offering through the mail to the church office (1390 N. State St).
- Give by text: Text [fpcjackson](https://www.fpcjackson.org) to 779-77.

NEEDS

Email needs@fpcjackson.org or call the church office at 601-353-8316 if you are able to help others, if you or your neighbors have tangible needs, to volunteer or help in other ways.

MISSION FIRST

Mission First is distributing food to families in need. To help them, please bring non-perishable food items to the box by the nursery door at the church.

CHURCH STAFF INFORMATION

The church staff is working regular hours. Please feel free to contact staff members via email, direct line, or by calling the receptionist at 601-353-8316.

Each person can access voice mail if still working remotely.

NEW STAFF MEMBER



Lee J. Webb is the new Director of Finance and Facilities at FPC. He was raised in Jacksonville, FL, and Virginia Beach, VA. After graduating from UVA, Lee J. commissioned as an Army Field Artillery Officer and subsequently led a platoon for a year-long combat deployment in Iraq. He left active duty in 2011 to move to Nashville, TN, to marry the love of his life, Molly. He taught government and economics at Montgomery Bell Academy and received an MBA from Vanderbilt. Lee J. then managed a single-family investment office in Jacksonville, FL, focused on real estate. Molly is a physician beginning a second residency in dermatology at UMMC this summer. They have three children, Meade (4), Mary Bea (2), and Whit (4 Months).

SOCIAL MEDIA

Youth

Email youthhouse@fpcjackson.org
Instagram @FPCYM

Children's

Facebook: FPC Jackson Children's Ministry
Instagram: @fpcjchildrensministry

Young Adults

Email youngadults@fpcjackson.org
Instagram @fpcjxnyoungadults

Women's

Instagram @fpcjacksonwomen
Facebook @FPC Jackson Women's Ministry

College

Email collegehouse@fpcjackson.org
Instagram @fpccollege
Facebook FPCJ College

In Sympathy

Please pray for Allen Holiman in the death of his mother.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1390 North State Street, Jackson, Mississippi 39202-2095
(601) 353-8316 | fpjackson.org

Return Service Requested

NON-PROFIT
ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
JACKSON, MS
PERMIT 122



The First Epistle

SPECIAL EDITION

MAY 28, 2020 | ISSUE 10

SUNDAY SERVICE ON WLBT AT 10 AM
STREAMED ONLINE AT FPCJACKSON.ORG/LIVESTREAM | SUNDAYS AT 8:30 AM, 11 AM, AND 6 PM

fpcjackson.org 1390 N. State Street, Jackson, Mississippi 601-353-8316

SPIRITUAL HOMESICKNESS

by David Strain, Senior Minister



Checking out at the grocery store has become a curiously embarrassing experience for me ever since moving, some twelve years ago, to Mississippi. A typical encounter goes like this. Shortly after repeating something, really anything, to the uncomprehending cashier, I am instantly and invariably interrogated: "Where y'all frawm?" On one occasion, which lingers now in my memory like a childhood trauma, the cashier called over to the person bagging the groceries nearby to inform her in awed tones that I was from Scotland. This news was greeted with as much wonder as if she had said I was from Jupiter. The 'bagger' then raised her voice, and shouted across the store to her colleagues that I was from Scotland and that they should come at once. Now with a small crowd blocking my exit, she turned on me once again and, like Peter speaking for the disciples, pressed on me the desire of the whole group: "Say sut'm!" Once I had deciphered what she was saying, I blushed furiously. "How embarrassing!" I mumbled. Apparently, nothing produced grins and exclamations of wonder in a Mississippi grocery store quite like a naturally rolled "rrr." I fled.

Situations like these remind me that, however comfortable I have come to be in my adopted country, I remain a stranger in a strange land. In fact, they often leave me in a reverie, remembering my hometown. A gritty, former ship building city, historically Glasgow was "the second city of the Empire." Today, it is a bustling, cosmopolitan place. Lacking the scenic beauties of its rival, Edinburgh, the Glasgow of my youth always felt just a little dangerous. Riven by deep sectarian division, the Roman Catholic and Protestant populations rarely mixed and often clashed. Hard looking working men staggered, drunk, from the pubs onto the black streets shiny from the rain to yell incoherently at flocks of grimy pigeons or the double-decker buses as they rumbled past. Gangs of foul-mouthed youths loitered on street corners like hyenas looking for opportune prey. I always found waiting for a bus home at night in Glasgow city center a slightly scary enterprise.

But my Glasgow was also a place of discovery. There, my parents fostered artistic sensibilities. There, I came to faith in Christ while a student at Bannerman High School. And there I was disciplined in the loving embrace of Carmyle Parish Church, a small, mainline Presbyterian congregation whose evangelical pastor mentored and encouraged me ceaselessly. Its membership was at that time overwhelmingly elderly and female, yet there I learned the value of Christian fellowship. There I watched my minister exemplify the kind of pastoral diligence to which I continue to aspire today. Sitting under the preaching of Eric Alexander at St George's Tron in the city center, I came to harbor a deep love for the exposition of God's Word. For good and for ill, my deepest programming was put in place in Glasgow, and so it will always hold a place in my heart.

But I've had to learn what is familiar to any who've moved away from home: you can never really go back. The Glasgow of my youth doesn't exist anymore. The streets don't look the same. Attitudes have changed, albeit many for the better. It is always good to visit, of course. But when I go back, I am filled with gratitude that I live here and not there. Funny how our hearts long for home, but not while we are living in it! When I'm here, I think often of Scotland. When I'm in Scotland, I long to be back in Mississippi.

But then, perhaps that is part of the divine design. We are all hard wired for Home, just not the home we are living in now, for, as Hebrews 13:14 puts it, "here we have no continuing city." In the words of St. Augustine's famous prayer, "our hearts are restless 'till they find their rest" only in God. In these days of pandemic, when nothing is as it should be, I hope we've become more open to a pilgrim life. I hope that our attachment to home-here has been loosened, at least a little. For, in the gospel, we are being called to long for home-hereafter. May God awaken in us a kind of spiritual homesickness that pushes us all back to Christ. He is, after all, our only way Home!

LIFE TOWARD GOD

Thanks for viewing Life Toward God. Many of you have expressed your appreciation. Last week marked the end of Season 1 of Life Toward God. We will break for the summer and hope to return in the fall.

For past devotionals and resources please visit:
fpcj.ms/ltg

Women's

Take Five

Grab your Women's Ministry Directory, pray for the five names listed below your own, and then call or write each one. Let's pray for and draw closer to each other - even from a distance!

Children's

Drive-Thru Pick-up for Children's Sunday School Lessons

Wednesday, June 3, Children's Sunday School parents can pick-up their children's Sunday School lessons for June, July, and August. This allows our young families to have their children's weekly lessons at home while FPC's Sunday School is on pause. The drive-thru times for pick-up will be from 10-1 and 4-6 on Pinehurst Street at the Kindergarten Suite door. Parents may drive up and their child's materials will be handed to them curbside. If parents are unable to pick up then, the materials will be available at the FPC office using the Nursery door entrance. FPC staff will use gloves and face masks when distributing materials.

Thank you to Volunteers

Children's Ministry would like to thank the many volunteers who serve weekly as Sunday School teachers. During this time apart, these teachers have made extra efforts to stay connected with the children they teach in various ways, including emails, calls, letters, and video recordings.

Missionaries

Aaron & Rachel Halbert – Church planters with Mission to the World in Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

Email: honduranhalberts@gmail.com.

Prayer requests:

- For our church in this season of separation.
- Those who have lost jobs.
- Wisdom about assisting ministries.
- The ability to visit and care for the sheep during this pandemic.
- The salvation of our neighbors.

Thanksgiving:

- Potential growth of the church after the pandemic.
 - No one in our congregation has gotten sick.
- “Grace grows best in winter.” Seeing our people grow spiritually during this time.

Caroline Cotten – RUF Intern at Wofford College

Thank you for your generous support of RUF at Wofford College. My work there is impossible without you, and because of you I am able to meet with literally hundreds of students. I am taking time to reflect prayerfully and gratefully on my first year supporters. The people who make up First Presbyterian Church have been faithful to care for me since I joined forever ago. I feel your support and prayers in Spartanburg, even 8 hours away!

Pray:

- For fundraising for my second year.
- For extra patience and grace with myself during this strange time.

Lifeline Children's Services – Jackson, MS
Pray:

- In God's providence, babies keep coming. We've had two placements since we have been on work-from-home status which is more challenging for us. Pregnancy counselors are not allowed to be with birthmoms during delivery so that's is hard on both of them.
- Babies go from hospital, to one of our interim care families, then to their adoptive families, in a matter of a few days. Everyone is clean and careful, but that is a lot of exposure for a brand new baby.
- We are seeing a downturn in giving since this virus situation got more serious. Pray that those will all be restored when things get normal again or that God will raise up new sources of support in this period.

Resuming In-Person Worship Services

We are very glad to announce that we will worship in person again beginning June 7, 2020. We have missed being together and are glad to get the chance to see one another face to face. As everyone likely anticipates, things will be different for now. We have received the governor's reopening guidelines, consulted with doctors, and spoken with other churches. With all this in mind, we have created the following plan for resuming worship services in person at First Presbyterian Church. We've organized this information around some frequently asked questions, but if you have any other questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us at the church office at 601-353-8316 or receptionist@fpcjackson.org, and we will direct you to the appropriate staff member.

Should I stay home?

We want to assure anyone who might feel safer staying home and worshiping via livestream that you should feel no guilt or shame in doing so.

If you have any of the following symptoms, please do not attend: fever, chills, body aches, cough/congestion, recent loss of taste or smell, or if you are generally unwell. Based on current medical advice, we strongly encourage those who are in categories of increased risk of hospitalization from COVID-19 due to underlying health issues, low immunity, or age, also to consider refraining from attending worship services right now.

What will Sundays look like in general?

- Worship will remain at normal times: 8:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m., and 6:00 p.m.
- We will resume worship services only. There will be no meetings of Sunday School classes on Sundays.
- There will be no nursery available. All children are very welcome in the worship services.
- There will be no choir. For now, music will be led by small groups or soloists.
- Based on the latest medical advice, we discourage corporate congregational singing during the services at this time. The words of the hymns will be provided, so that you can follow along as they are sung from the platform. This isn't ideal, and we hope to change it soon, but we are trying to follow best practices for the good of all, and we ask for your patience and understanding.
- We will continue to stream our services online. We also broadcast the service from the week prior at 10:00 a.m. on WLBT.

What about the details?

In order to resume, we will need to follow a number of guidelines to keep everyone as safe as possible, including the following:

- From the parking lot to the pew, we ask that everyone practice social distancing.
- We will be limiting capacity at each service. We ask that all congregants sign up in order to attend the service.
- To avoid bottlenecks at the entrances, we'd ask that you please arrive 15-20 minutes early.
- The ushers will be available to help everyone find a responsibly-distanced seat.

This may not be your "usual" seat. We'd ask that you follow the ushers' directions while we work to keep everyone safe. People who live in the same home can and should sit together.

- After the service is over, please remain in your seats, and the ushers will help dismiss everyone in sections.

How do I sign up?

During this phase of reopening, we will need everyone to register for worship services. It is a sad consequence of our situation that we will have a limited number of spots for each service in order to accommodate appropriate social distancing. Here are the details:

- [Register at \[fpcj.ms/register-for-worship\]\(https://fpcj.ms/register-for-worship\) for each week's worship service.](https://fpcj.ms/register-for-worship)
fpcj.ms/register-for-worship.
- If you would prefer to register via phone, please call the church office at 601-353-8316.

What are we doing to keep everyone safe?

Here are a few other best practices that we will implement:

- Everyone should wear a face mask throughout the service. We will have some available, but we recommend you bring your own.
- The sanctuary will be sanitized following each service.
- Bathrooms will be available for use in the Greeting Courtyard and between the Sanctuary and the Library and will also be cleaned between services.
- We ask that no one drink from the drinking fountains.
- Hand sanitizer will be available.
- We will have bulletins placed on seats waiting for your arrival. Please take them with you when you leave.
- Instead of passing offering plates, our ushers will be standing by the doors in the sanctuary to collect your tithes and offerings at the close of each service. Online giving is also available through our website and our church app.

Resuming Ministry Activities

Ministry activities will resume to varying degrees in the weeks following the resuming of Sunday services. More info will follow regarding specific ministry activities.