

The First Epistle

Volume 54 / Issue 2 / April 2021



Phase 2

COVID-19 Guidelines — Beginning April 2

- Masks required in the building and may be removed once seated
- Social distancing observed
- Portion of the sanctuary balcony reserved for those wearing masks
- Bibles and hymnals to be replaced in sanctuary pews

Programming — Beginning April 11

- In-person programs extended including Adult Sunday School classes, Sunday evening children's programs, Midweek dinner, and the church bookstore
- Limited Midweek dinner (registration required for boxed dinner pickup)
- Adult "Age and Stage" Sunday School classes resume (April 11)
- Choir capacity incrementally increased

Phase 3

COVID-19 Guidelines — Beginning May 2

- Masks optional in worship services, Midweek, and Sunday School programs
- Portion of the sanctuary balcony to be reserved for those wearing masks and social distancing
- Offering plates to be passed again

Programming — Beginning May 2

- In-person programs extended
- All departments maintain regularly scheduled programming as introduced during Phase 2
- Choir rehearsals will resume in full as the health situation improves and wisdom dictates

For more information visit fpcjackson.org.



PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

THE DAY THE PASTOR GOT CONVERTED

by David Strain, Senior Minister

Last month my wife and I drove to New Orleans to visit the United States Customs and Immigration Service regional office. We were told to come dressed for a formal occasion, and to bring certain documents with us. When we arrived, there were about twenty other people waiting; people from Africa, Asia, and Latin America, all dressed-up and nervous. When the appointed time came, we were ushered through security, and given a seat until we were called to a short interview where we had to sign some documents. Then we were all ushered into a large hall with chairs arranged in rows. In front, there was a dais and a podium with the "Great Seal of the United States" on it. We each took our seats when two officials entered. We were then addressed on our duties and privileges, reminded of certain opportunities, and given instruction on what to do next. Then we were asked to stand and raise our right hands and swear an oath disavowing all other allegiance and pledging ourselves as brand-new citizens of the United States of America to serve our country and to do "works of national importance when called upon to do so."

It was a solemn and deeply moving experience, the terminus for us of a long and demanding process that began thirteen years earlier when we first arrived in Mississippi. Now, at long last, we are dual citizens of both the United Kingdom and the United States. I have come to love my adopted country very deeply, and while I've visited many parts of it, I've only ever lived in Mississippi. It's hot and humid, flat and forested. Its rivers are muddy, its highways long and straight. Its biggest city isn't very big at all. But its people... its

people are kind and hospitable, generous and polite, and the welcome we have received here has helped us love this land we have now come to call home. I am proud to be a Mississippian.

As we left the citizenship ceremony that day, it struck me how similar it had all been to a religious rite. It was formal and decorous, the matters discussed were weighty and joyful at the same time. We sat in rows and listened to an address celebrating our 'conversion,' and instructing us on the life we must now live. We chanted in unison the vow that brought us from one world into another. We arrived citizens of foreign lands, and we all left that day, transformed into Americans.

"For all my gratitude for my earthly citizenship in this amazing country, it is that my citizenship is in heaven that gives me greatest joy."

And yet, for all my gratitude for my earthly citizenship in this amazing country, it is that my citizenship is in heaven that gives me greatest joy. I have been enrolled in the Lamb's book of life, and welcomed into the fellowship of the people of God. The Church is our King's earthly embassy, and there something far more thrilling happens than ever could happen at a US citizenship ceremony. In the church, and through the gospel of Jesus Christ

that we proclaim, citizens of the world are made into citizens of the Kingdom of heaven. And that is more than an administrative change: we are born again into the family of God, raised to new life in union with Christ, made members of the Israel of God from the inside out. For all the relief and joy that attended the citizenship ceremony, how much more ought we to rejoice, along with the angels in heaven, over one sinner who repents! May we witness many new citizens of the Kingdom of Christ in the years ahead!

REQUEST FOR PRAYER

Please pray for the Twin Lakes Fellowship | April 5-7

- About 200 pastors from around the country will attend for worship, teaching, and mutual encouragement.
- This year's theme is *Revival*, and Dr. Joel Beeke, of Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, is the keynote speaker.
- We will meet in the outdoor pavilion. Please pray for fine weather, for no technical problems with sound and power, and for our various speakers who will bring God's word.
- Pray that this will be a blessing to the pastors and the churches from which they come and spark true revival in our denomination and across the country.

THE GOSPEL UNHINDERED | MISSION CONFERENCE 2021

At First Presbyterian Church the 2021 Global Mission Conference has ended, but the mission continues, more boldly and more joyfully than ever. As we emerge from the complexities of the Covid-19 pandemic, we have multiplied opportunities to take what we've learned and developed over the last year and use these strategies to accelerate our involvement in Christ's mission. We can now pray with more wisdom, connect with greater passion, and give with deeper generosity than ever before.

We'd like you to know that all the services, training seminars, and content from this year's conference are available online. Please take time to revisit these messages and content, or watch for the first time. You will be challenged and encouraged.

And please give prayerful thought to your financial involvement in the mission as you consider making a pledge to this year's mission engagement through our church. You may mail back to the church the pledge card

you received with the Mission Conference booklet or use the link below to make your pledge. Thank you for joining us in pursuing the mission the Lord Jesus has set before our church!

For all information regarding this year's Global Mission Conference:
fpcj.ms/mission-conference

Make your mission pledge:
fpcj.ms/mission-pledge-21



SUNDAY SCHOOL

We are excited to announce that on April 11 we will return to our adult Sunday School classes. These classes offer a place to fellowship, learn, and grow with a smaller gathering of the church body. As we look toward this launch date, if you are not a part of an adult Sunday School class, please contact discipleship@fpcjackson.org, and we will be happy to assist you in finding the right class for you and your family!

College Class
SC 215

Young Adults Class
20s
Patterson Hall

Lighthouse Class
Late 20s - 30s
SC 313

Providence Class
30s - 40s
SC 314

Salt & Light Class
30s - 40s
SC 321

Cornerstone Class
30s - 50s
MH 203

Stewards Class
40s - Early 60s
SC 310

Covenant Class
50s - 70s
WH 202

Life Learners Class
50s - Early 60s
SC 210

Pilgrims Class
50s - 60s
MH 205A

Lamplighters Class
Late 50s - 60s
Study Center Company Room

**Singles & Doubles/
Fellowship Class**
60 - 70s+
WH 204

Young Seekers Class
60s - 70s+
MH 205B

Brotherhood Class
All Ages
Study Center (First Floor) Day
School Library

Ladies Bible Class
All Ages
Parlor

Special Friends Class
All Ages
Study Center M120
(First Floor)
Contact: Betsy Chestnut



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

THE FIRST EPISTLE

1390 North State Street
Jackson, MS 39202-2095

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JACKSON, MS
PERMIT 122

“First Presbyterian Church of Jackson exists to glorify God by making disciples on the North State Street corridor, in the greater Jackson area, and around the world.”

FPCJ Vision

Join us

Easter Weekend

at First Presbyterian Church

| | | |
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| Good Friday Service 6:00 p.m. Friday, April 2 | Easter Morning Services 8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m., and 11:00 a.m. *No Sunday School on Easter Sunday | Easter Evening Service 6:00 p.m. |
|--|--|--|

MINISTERS

Senior Minister David Strain
Executive Minister Ralph Kelley
Music Minister Bill Wymond
Congregational Care Billy Dempsey
Pastoral Care Wiley Lowry & Brister Ware

Mission/Outreach Ed Hartman
Discipleship David Felker
Young Adults/College Cory Brock
FPDS Chaplain Gary Sinclair

DEPARTMENT HEADS

Business Lee J Webb
Women/Children Donna Dobbs

Students/Families Stephen Biggs
Communications Margaret McPhillips

The First Epistle is a monthly mailed publication.

Submit articles: Mary Ball, at maryb@fpcjackson.org.

Church member births and deaths: Lynn Smith at (601) 353-8316.

Change of address or name: Kristina Barnes at kristinab@fpcjackson.org or (601) 973-9101.

APRIL 2021 AT FPC

Week of March 28 - April 3

3/28 Sunday Services 8:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m., and 6:00 p.m.
New Members Received
4/1 VBS Registration Opens
4/2 Good Friday Service

Week of April 4-10

4/4 Easter Sunday
Three Morning Services and No Sunday School
Evening Service at 6:00 p.m.
4/6 Come To The Table Women's Event
4/9 Marriage Seminar

Week of April 11-17

4/11 Sunday Services 8:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m., and 6:00 p.m.
Phase 2 Programming Begins
4/12 Reach Campaign Launch

Week of April 18-24

4/18 Sunday Services 8:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m., and 6:00 p.m.
4/23-24 Evening of Life Event

Week of April 25 - May 1

4/25 Sunday Services 8:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m., and 6:00 p.m.
4/26 Senior Dinner



MARRIAGE SEMINAR

FPC will host a marriage seminar, Friday, April 9, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. Our keynote speaker will be Josh Squires, Minister of Counseling at First Presbyterian Church Columbia, SC. Whether you are newlywed or in your golden years, whether you would rate your marriage a 9 out of 10 or are in the most difficult season of your union, this weekend is for you!

For more information or to register, please visit fpcjackson.org/church-life/marriage/.



REGISTER ONLINE!

REGISTER BY MAY 10 TO ENSURE A T-SHIRT.

WEEK OF JUNE 7, 2021



FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
Children's Ministry

Backyard Bible School 2021 is happening!

To volunteer for prep days and/or during the week of June 7, contact Cassie Graves at cgraves7@gmail.com or 601-624-1987.
Register your child or teen helper for Backyard Bible School at WWW.FPCJ.MS/VBS.

BIG NEED: donations of small size glue sticks, boxes of gallon size plastic zip/press and seal bags, and 8 pack sets of crayons.



Women

MONTHLY CIRCLE BIBLE STUDIES

James: Mercy Triumphs

Circles will meet on April 12 and 13 in the locations listed below. If you are interested in joining a circle, email Lisa Oswalt at lisao@fpcjackson.org.

Monday

Circle 2: 10:00 am in PH

Circle 3: 10:00 am in
WH 204 A&B

Circle 4: 10:00 am in Church
Parlor

Circle 6: 6:30 pm at the
Home of Beth Archer

Circle 14: 12:00 noon in MH

Tuesday

Circle 9: 10:00 am in
WH 204 A&B

Circle 10: 10:00 am in PH

Circle 11: 10:30 am at the
Home of Frenchie
Graham

PH: Patterson Hall

MH: Miller Hall

WH: Westminster Hall

WOMEN'S SPRING EVENT

Come to the Table

**April 6 | 12:00 p.m. |
Miller Hall & Facebook Live**

Join us for a meal together with speaker Laura Husband. From fasting last fall to feasting this spring, this post-Easter lunch will give us an opportunity to celebrate Jesus' resurrection as we look forward to ours that is to come.

The cost of the meal will be \$8.00 and will be taken at the door. You may sign up on the FPC website or app or by calling 601-973-9115.

Please register by April 2. Nursery is available upon request at the time of registration.



Discipleship

THE EVENING OF LIFE

A Weekend Exploring a Practical Theology of Death and Dying

Speaker:

Dr. Sumner Abraham

April 23-24

Watch social media for
more details.



Men

GOLF SCRAMBLE

May 6, 2021

Men, save the date for our annual FPC Men's Golf Scramble, Thursday, May 6, 2021, at Live Oaks Golf Course. We will have lunch at 11:30 and tee off at noon. The cost is \$35 for golf and \$10 for lunch, to be paid at registration. You may register online at fpcj.ms/mens-ministry as a team of four or as an individual to be placed on a team.

Contact Discipleship Ministry at discipleship@fpcjackson.org for more information.



Students and Families

We have several events and trips coming up this spring! Sign ups for the 6th Grade Move Up Day, Junior High Spring Retreat, 9th Grade Move Up Day, Junior and Senior High RYM are all open in the app! Seniors, be on the lookout for invitations for the Senior Dinner on April 29. Midweek, Insight, and small groups are back! Check @FPCYM instagram for updates and email youthhouse@fpcjackson.org to subscribe to the weekly emails.



Children

MISSIONS IN MAY

Join us in May as we "travel" near and far to learn about being a missionary during Missions in May. This is for current three-year-olds through 5th graders on Wednesday nights in May (First floor of Study Hall) for crafts, music, and more.

Dinner: 5:00-6:00

(Dinner registration required).

Playground open: 5:30-6:00.

Lesson: 6:00-7:00.

Welcome to our World

Olivia Henderson West
born February 6
to Hayden and Anna Laura.
Grandparents
Johnny and Laura Young

Ainsley Nicole Schabowsky
born February 24
Great grandmother
Dot Weathersby

In Loving Sympathy

Prayers and loving sympathy
go to

- ♦ The family and friends of Grace Jean McClendon.
- ♦ Marty Bowen in the death of her mother.
- ♦ Emily McVey in the death of her mother.
- ♦ Robert Leard in the death of his father.
- ♦ Virginia Covington in the death of her mother.
- ♦ Ginger Tramel in the death of her father.
- ♦ Susan Uithoven in the death of her father.
- ♦ Mike and Janet Quayle in the death of their son, Brian, also the brother of Kerri Hawkins.