The First Epistle

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FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Jackson, Mississippi

INSIDE

Meet Your Ministers: David Felker and Wiley Lowry
Seasons of Student Ministry: FPCYM
Sharing the Love of God: Short-Term Missions 2026

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Our current cultural moment is consumed with the pursuit of love. We search for it in romance, family, friendship, self-care, charity, and countless other places, yet human love so often leaves us longing for something more. This year's churchwide teaching theme, The Love of God: Vast, Unmeasured, Boundless, Free, invites us to turn our attention away from ourselves and toward the love of God, which is the foundation of the Christian gospel, the ground of Christian hope, and the joy of Christian hearts. In Scripture, we encounter a love that is steadfast and unchanging, active and creative, vast yet deeply personal; a love that knows our sin and meets us with grace, and that was demonstrated most fully when Christ died for us while we were yet sinners. Through this theme, we will explore the depths of God's love and discover in His Word the vast, unmeasured, boundless, free love for which our hearts are searching. Find out more at **fpcj.ms/love-of-god.**

SEASONS OF STUDENT MINISTRY

CELEBRATING GOSPEL GROWTH AT FPCYM

MARY BALL

The youth staff has gotten into their rhythms for fall — from Sunday School and Insight, to small-group studies and checking in with each student individually. Before they jump into the holiday season, look back with us at summer 2026 with FPCYM!

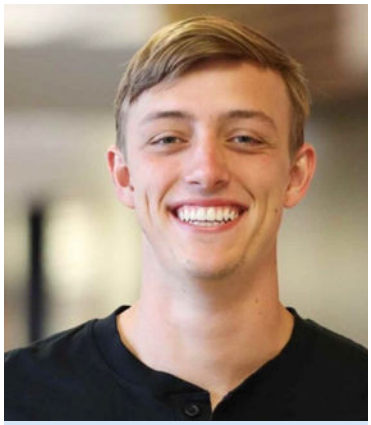
Summers in Student Ministry serve as a time for fun experiences that build relationships and provide plenty of moments for each student to internalize God's Word personally. Some of the busyness this summer included small-group Bible studies, weekly outings for sweet treats, basketball in the gym, local missions, a neighborhood run, and RYM (the annual summer youth trip).

> THE MORE MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS A STUDENT HAS WITH CHRISTIANS IN DIFFERENT GENERATIONS OF THE CHURCH, THE GREATER LIKELIHOOD THEY WILL CONTINUE IN CHURCH AS THEY GET OLDER AND MORE INDEPENDENT.

Relationship-building takes time, and members of the staff saw growth in many students as they committed to reading scripture and meeting together. Even opening the gym each week for basketball over the summer built relationships because, as the youth staff said, "the students hear you more the more you spend time with them." From Ephesians 4:15, growth and unity within the body of Christ requires speaking the truth in love. Speaking truth is not to be separated from the context of a loving relationship.



Three years ago Stephen Biggs began meeting with a group of tenth grade guys for a midweek devotional. This summer these same young men (now rising seniors) carved out time to meet and asked Stephen to teach their group this fall through a book of the Bible (they chose Revelation)! He said, "let's do it, but you have to commit to being here if I am going to do the work of preparing!" The guys agreed, so now each week this fall those seniors read a passage in Revelation, and Stephen teaches them. Please pray for our small groups to grow in grace: Stephen is with the seniors; Tucker leads the juniors; and Eliot is with the tenth grade guys. For the girls, Meg and Annie lead juniors and seniors, and Maclain leads both freshmen and sophomores.



Andrew Puhl
Director of Student Ministry

The fruit of the foundational truths these students have learned at FPC often show up in the summer. During Junior High RYM the guys had fun on the beach together. That same week numerous young men told Eliot Jones that this quote on assurance was a major takeaway for them

from the teaching sessions: “if you say God can’t save you from your sin, what you are actually saying is that God’s not faithful.” Eliot praises God even now for the ways these teachings at RYM helped these young guys internalize the truth of God.

Senior High RYM also proved to be a time when the students grew in knowledge and application of God’s truths. On the last night, the students sat on the sand and shared “takeaways” from the week. Their honesty with one another about the things that convicted them to repentance was beautiful to our youth staff because this vulnerability in a group setting is a picture of spiritually maturing young men and women.

The senior high had a local mission trip to We Will Go, and Parker Thomas said that serving there was “a special thing because what would normally be several days worth of work, we finished in just a few hours. It was a good time too, as we got to visit and spend quality time together with other Christians while making an impact on our community as well!”



WHAT’S HAPPENING IN THE YOUTH HOUSE NOW

· **Andrew Puhl**, Director of Student Ministry, joined the staff in September.

· **Meg Branning** has returned to serve our students as the Student Ministry Coordinator.

· **The Encounter Retreat**, for junior high throughout the Presbytery, will be held in November. Maclain Gleason is on the steering committee.

· **Small groups continue to meet regularly**; contact the student ministry staff for more details to loop a student into one.

· **Sunday School:** Currently, the youth staff is excited to teach unfamiliar Biblical narratives in the Old and New Testament. The Bible’s narrative of salvation in Christ alone can be found throughout the entire Bible, even in seemingly obscure passages, and the staff is loving the teaching and discussion during the Sunday School hour.

How Can The Church Family Help Our Student Ministry?

Our goal is to help these students know Christ more fully for themselves: Stephen Biggs shared this student ministry observation: the more meaningful relationships a student has with Christians in different generations of the church, the greater likelihood they will continue in church as they get older and more independent. *(Find out more at fpcj.ms/fpcym-parents.)*

Of course, FPCJ has a formalized way of doing this (hiring youth staff). But this doesn’t negate the need for a web of strong Christian intergenerational relationships. As our youth staff purposefully builds relationships with our teen members, there are many ways the rest of the church family can help.

· **Greet a student** or two regularly by name in the halls of the church

· **Pray for the youth staff**

· **Pray for the students and parents.** The teaching and leading in student ministry is designed to supplement the spiritual guidance that these students receive at home.

· **Look for volunteer opportunities:**

- **Host insight** *(You don’t have to have a child in the youth group!)*

- **Help prepare for retreats or serve at retreats** like the Junior High Encounter Retreat



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Questions? Email youthhouse@fpcjackson.org

GOD'S PERFECT LOVE | GOD'S PERFECT GENEROSITY

SEPTEMBER STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

BO GREGG

I was on a jog through our neighborhood a few years ago, getting some exercise before the sun was fully up and our children got ready for school. Ok, it was more than a few years ago. I remember praying that morning as I ran "for my daily bread" and pondering what that meant. That should not have been a complicated topic, but it was. It ought not to have been a particularly memorable prayer, but it was. See, I was running past gas streetlamps standing tall over manicured lawns with sprinkler systems engaged. The waking houses on both sides of the street sure seemed well-tended. I was dressed warmly, and wearing the latest, best shoes. I knew that I would return to a home which was blessed, bright and full.

WE ARE WHOLLY DEPENDENT ON OUR SAVIOR'S GENEROSITIES.

Was I really supposed to ask God to provide my daily bread? Was I really directed to pray for my next meal? Well, yes. Yes, I was. Yes, we are.

We are wholly dependent on our Savior's generosities. In the words of the hymnist: "All I have needed thy hand hath provided." His provision for us of our daily bread can hardly be understated. It is vital. Our gratefulness for such generous provision should well up in our hearts as we respond to Him with our own gratitude. "Remember this," the Apostle Paul writes: "... whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9: 6-7).

We serve a God who stooped from Heaven's glory to give us the most amazing gift, one like no other: Himself! This amazing gift came from such holy generosity! It was made from perfect love. And God continues to provide "according to the riches of His glory" (Ephesians 3:16). God has blessed us way past our abilities to measure. Luke 6:38 wonderfully reminds us that we will never be able to out-give Him. It's just not possible: "...give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you." Read that last verse again and imagine the blessings He has stored up for us in response to our request for our next meal.

WE SERVE A GOD WHO STOOPED FROM HEAVEN'S GLORY TO GIVE US THE MOST AMAZING GIFT, ONE LIKE NO OTHER: HIMSELF!

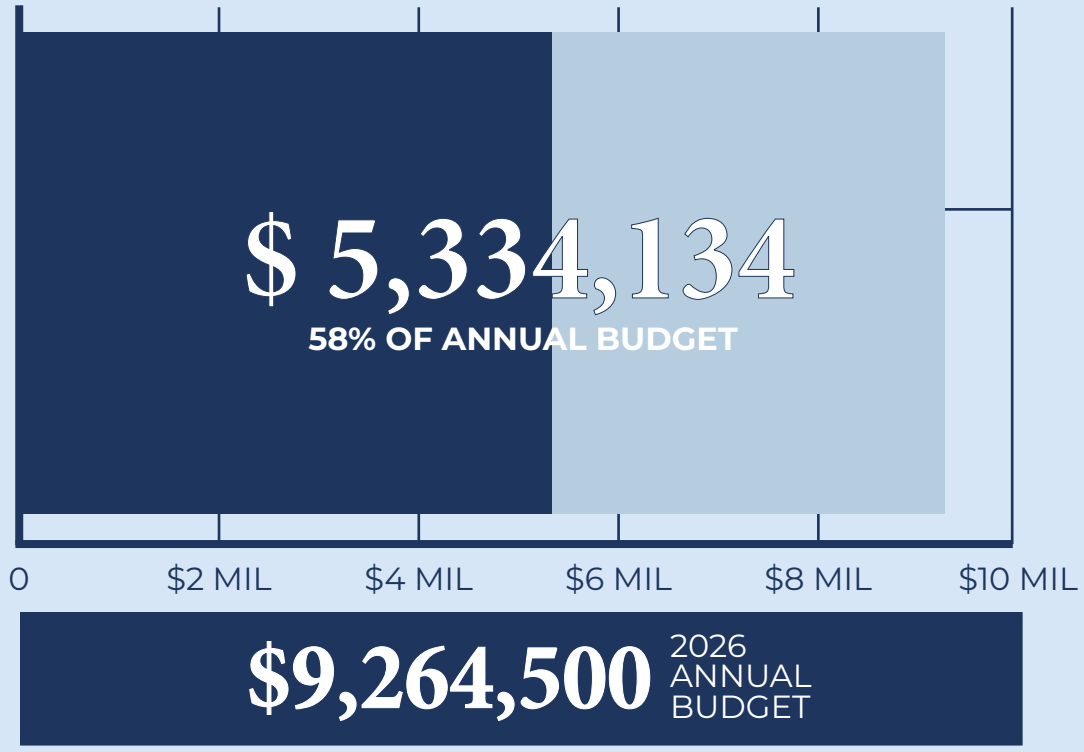
Now, I acknowledge there are legitimate reasons to give at the end of the year. And we encourage that. We should do that with cheerfulness. But, if you do, consider giving systematically throughout the year as well, and **as a response of worship**. Don't put a limit on yourself and your giving back to God. Don't get to December and discover you have passed over so many other previous weekly opportunities to give back to God in worship. And with gratitude.

Consider God's daily grace and blessings and act with a grateful response to all the gifts our God has given. We can ask for daily bread as He has given so much more. Our God is good, and He wants you. He loves you. He wants what is best for you. He will provide our daily bread.

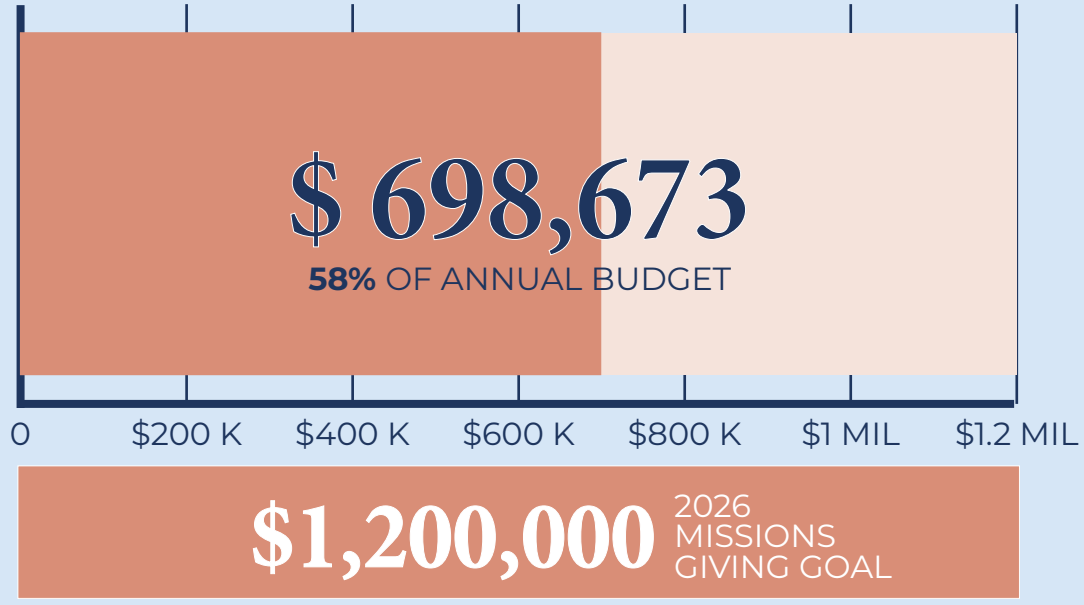
Let's be cheerful givers!

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

FPC MINISTRY GIVING — JANUARY-SEPTEMBER 2026



FPC MISSIONS GIVING — JANUARY-SEPTEMBER 2026



SHARING THE LOVE OF GOD

SHORT-TERM MISSIONS 2026

MARY BALL

First Presbyterian Church of Jackson exists to glorify God by making disciples in our neighborhood, our communities, and the world.

FPC Go is the outward-facing evangelistic ministry of FPC. We go on short-term mission trips here at FPC because we want to reflect the heart and character of our God, who has called us to Himself. Short-term trips are not the only strategy we employ. In fact, our primary way of fulfilling our mission to make disciples throughout the world is by supporting missionaries and church planters, because they are the hands and feet of the gospel. This is the biblical plan for advancing God's kingdom: through church planting and global missions. Our mission strategy has three prongs: pray, give, go.

One vital way to be involved in missions is to GO. Not everyone is called to be a long-term missionary, but how will you know if God is calling you to long-term missions if you have never taken a short-term trip? That is why we encourage everyone to look for opportunities to participate in a short-term mission trip. Go, serve, learn, and see what God may be doing through you.

This summer we had three short-term international trips and several local gospel mission opportunities. Let's look at the ways we invested in our neighborhood, our communities, and the world.

Letters from summer mission trips:



Belgium

Dear Church Family,

Our family mission trip to Brussels, Belgium, was a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Brussels is home to NATO and the European Union and is considered the de facto capital of Europe. I am so thankful the Lord allowed us to be part of the work being done at Hope International Church. Hope Church is truly a family since most congregants do not have family in the country. It was an honor and a privilege to serve with Daniel & Katy Brinks, and Julian & Rachel Bacon, church planters and FPC supported missionaries.

There is no better way to get to know and pray for our missionaries than to serve alongside them. Hope International Church of Brussels is in the process of purchasing a building and would appreciate prayers as they move forward in their outreach to the community.

I learned a new saying while there, since people continuously come and go they do not say, "Good-bye," they say, "See you in forever." My family and I now have new forever friends across the world.

God's Grace, Christ's blood, Holy Spirit indwelling.
See you in Forever,

Paige Burke



Peru

Brothers and Sisters,

During our mission trip to Peru, one young man carried his grandmother into the clinic on his back. After telling me why she was there to see the doctors, I asked if he had an ailment. He innocently replied that his back hurt....not realizing it hurt from carrying his grandmother around. This young man exhibited Christ to us even as we were attempting to do the same.

One thing you might not know about Cajamarca is car horns are used as a primary method of communication between drivers, other drivers, and pedestrians. Because blowing the horn is so deeply ingrained, they honk at all hours of the day and night! It is a busy and urban city, shaped by a long and significant history. Cajamarca's Plaza de Armas is famous for being the scene where the fall of the Incan Empire was marked with the Incan Emperor Atahualpa's execution and the subsequent beginning of the Spanish conquest of the Incan Empire.

Pray for the elders of Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Peru, 3rd Congregation of Cajamarca, as they follow up with all the people seen in the clinic and invite them to church. Pray for the patients that they seek true healing through the redemptive work of Christ.

In His Service,

Dennis Watts



Thailand

Sawasdee Khrap!,

Our team flew to Bangkok, Thailand, to primarily support Grace Community Church. Trey & Kiki Adams and Carter and Caroline McWhorter are the missionaries at that church, but we got to see five different missionary families from across Thailand who our church supports!

In Bangkok, we got to get a glimpse of daily ministry for Trey and Carter. We did a lot of praying and listening to the experiences of the missionaries. The second half of the trip was spent on the Afghan Retreat for refugees who are recent converts to Christianity. There we helped give seminars on some of the basics of Christianity and spent time in fellowship. They asked great questions about how Christianity should influence their daily life as they live amongst unconverted Afghan refugees.

During worship at Grace Community, one of the Afghan refugees was telling me how hard it was to leave his family and life behind in Afghanistan. (He was forced to flee the country because of Taliban persecution.) He said that he thought that he'd never have a family again, but God provided him a new family in the Church!

Fun Fact about Thailand: Pad Thai was invented in the 1940's by the Thai government so they could have a national dish for tourists. So even though tourists eat Pad Thai; it's not really a traditional dish.

Please pray for these things:

- that Trey and Carter would continue to care for their growing church well
- for energy/endurance as the missionaries labor in a country that is less than 1% Christian
- for the Afghan Refugees to continue growing in their knowledge of the Lord and that they would have courage to continue living out their new faith

In Christ,

Peyton Gunter



DAVID FELKER

MADE FOR MINISTRY

MARGARET MCPHILLIPS

When David Felker began his internship at FPC as an RTS student, he never imagined that he would be here 18 years later serving as Executive Minister. In fact, early into his internship, he went to one of the pastors on staff with real doubts about his gifts and whether the Lord was calling him to vocational ministry. Now, after a decade and a half in ministry at FPC, David can see that the Lord was preparing him for his current position all along.

David is the middle of three boys, and he recalls his childhood as "magical." David's father, Rockey Felker, was a college football coach, and his mother, Susan, raised the boys. He credits both of his parents with rooting him in the truths of the Christian faith at an early age. Though the family attended Baptist churches, David explains that his mother was strongly influenced by the Reformed Theology of Bible Study Fellowship. As a teenager, David went to BSF with his mom, where a teacher made a particular impact on his life.



That Bible study came at a critical time for David – he had recently moved to Fayetteville, Arkansas. David played many sports, and as the family moved with Rockey's job as a coach, he quickly found friendships in his teammates. This time, though, things were different. Shortly after this move, an injury took David away from sports. That left a void for the teenager in unfamiliar surroundings.

> MRS. ADAMS TAUGHT THROUGH THE BOOK OF ROMANS THAT YEAR AND THAT IS WHEN DAVID REMEMBERS DEVELOPING A TRUE LOVE FOR GOD'S WORD.

At the same time, David's mother remained consistent in her participation in BSF and David went with her to the study for teens. That's where he met Tracy Adams. Mrs. Adams taught through the book of Romans that year and that is when David remembers developing a true love for God's Word.

David says he has a great deal of gratitude for Mrs. Adams and credits her with first opening his eyes and heart to the doctrines of grace and helping him develop an affection for God's Word.

"As I look back, I believe the Lord brought me from death to life through the ministry of BSF. Mrs. Adams was faithful to get us into the Word, and that was a season where I began to hunger and thirst for the Scriptures, and delight in the law of the Lord like Psalm 1 talks about."

David began his college studies at the University of Arkansas and wasn't considering pastoral ministry. He was on a pre-med track while also thinking about going into coaching like both his father and grandfather. David describes himself as a "grinder" who worked hard to make good grades. But as he started to think about continuing that academic pace, he realized he was facing a good deal of academic fatigue.

As he was making the decision to shift gears away from applying to medical school, an opportunity presented itself at his parents' church in Starkville, Grace Presbyterian. David began assisting the church's youth ministry one summer while home from college. That summer of service ultimately led to an unexpected call from Grace Presbyterian when he was back in Arkansas starting his senior year: Would David consider leaving Arkansas and moving to Starkville to take the position of Youth Director?

David did accept the job and relocated to Starkville, where he finished his college degree at Mississippi State University. Even after making such a dramatic change, David still considered the position to be a transitional role, not an entry point into full-time vocational ministry.

"I did not initially sense a clear call to vocational ministry when I began as Youth Director at Grace, but I felt like I could faithfully teach Bible studies, relationally pursue kids, point them to the grace of Jesus Christ, but I was not taking the job initially thinking that I was going to be a pastor."

One encouragement to him in that season was Varner Stewart, his mother's best friend in Starkville, who first encouraged David to pursue vocational ministry. David remembers a letter she wrote to him in which she was "direct in her assessment and encouragement" that the Lord was calling him to ministry. David heeded her advice and that of others and applied to seminary at RTS.

In the winter of 2007, David was approached by FPC about a position as a college intern. He accepted the position and began his studies at RTS Jackson in June of 2008. During David's RTS studies, he anticipated that he would look for work after graduation with the denomination's college ministry (Reformed University Fellowship). But about halfway through seminary, David married his wife, Lauren. Around the time of their wedding, David was approached by FPC about staying in a pastoral role after seminary. David jokes that the timing of the offer from the church was a little suspicious. He says, "FPC never talked to me about staying here as a pastor until Lauren was in the picture! A couple of weeks after we were married, First Pres thought 'we need to keep David and Lauren.'"

Joking aside, David considers Lauren not only his partner in life but also a partner in ministry. She has served beside him with joy and grace for the past decade and a half.

"IT'S HARD FOR ME TO THINK ABOUT [MY MINISTRY] AT FPC WITHOUT THINKING ABOUT LAUREN AND ALL THE WAYS SHE PARTNERS WITH ME AND SERVES FPC IN SEEN AND UNSEEN WAYS WITH HER FULL HEART."



"It's hard for me to think about [my ministry] at FPC without thinking about Lauren and all the ways she partners with me and serves FPC in seen and unseen ways with her full heart."

Together, they remember David's years leading young adults as some of the sweetest in their ministry.

"Lauren and I look back really fondly on the Young Adult Ministry days. Those six years were a time when we were able to partner in a lot of ministry together."

From hospitality in their home, to David officiating weddings, to Lauren's ministry to young women, to premarital counseling, the Felkers were able to work together for the sake of the gospel. In hindsight David says it was an exciting time: "The Lord did more in the lives of young adults in Jackson and at FPC in those years than we could ask or think."

After 18 years in ministry at the church, David has held several different roles – intern, College Coordinator, Minister of Young Adults, Minister of Discipleship, and now Executive Minister. "The Lord has given me great joy in each of them," he says. "I probably slept best when I served as an intern! But I have great contentment and gratitude in my current role. As Executive Minister I have loved getting to be involved across all departments, serve the larger team, partner with our officers in significant ways and many ministry efforts, and seek to solve problems and align people, strategy, resources and culture across our departments. I hope I am able to be a little help to the greater health of the church in these ways."

When thinking back about what stands out most from his years at FPC Jackson, David points to the ministry of the Word and the people of the congregation.

"We love the Word-ministry and the people. After serving at FPC Jackson for almost 20 years, we have

"LAUREN AND I LOOK BACK REALLY FONDLY ON THE YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY DAYS. THOSE SIX YEARS WERE A TIME WHEN WE WERE ABLE TO PARTNER IN A LOT OF MINISTRY TOGETHER."

been shaped and formed in incalculable ways here. There are so many significant moments of our lives that have happened: I showed up single and now I'm married; all three of our children were born in Jackson and baptized at FPC; I first made membership vows at FPC, and later ordination vows here. We've also suffered and lost people who are precious to us in these years. But in and through all of these joys and sorrows, the Word Ministry at FPC has pointed us to the beauty of Christ, and the people have faithfully loved us and have become family to us."





GET TO KNOW DAVID

What are your hobbies?
Family time, golf, and pickleball. Lauren is my best friend, and I love spending time with her and finding new hobbies with her (she's gotten me into Mahjong, and in recent years we have started reading classic novels together on road trips or in the evenings … *Frankenstein, Age of Innocence, Tale of Two Cities*, and *Persuasion in the last year).*

What is your favorite sport?
In recent years, professional golf has become my favorite sport to watch and keep up with. Of course, I have a love for college athletics, as well – college basketball and college football specifically. And my kids have grown me into more of an NBA fan.

What are your favorite books of the Bible?
Genesis, Exodus, Psalms, John, Romans, Ephesians

Who is your favorite fiction author?
I love Marilynn Robinson (especially her Gilead series with *Gilead*, *Home*, and *Lila*) and Wendell Berry (*Jayber Crow*, *Hannah Coulter*, etc).

What is your favorite sweet treat?
I have a healthy diet but the wheels fall off after we get our kids to bed. That said, I love late night candy (think Nerd Clusters, Skittles, etc. or dark chocolate) or gelato.

What is your favorite beverage?
Coffee or sparkling water.

Do you have any hidden talents or are there any little-known facts about you?
My nickname in high school football was Dancing Dave.

What is your favorite restaurant?
My favorite meal is something on the Green Egg at the house… but if we are eating out then we've loved supporting the restaurants around the church in recent years and especially at the Belhaven Town Center (Elvies, Wing-Mouth, etc.) which has been such a gift to our church's neighborhood that we love.



WILEY LOWRY

ON STILL FIGURING IT ALL OUT

MARY BALL

When Wiley Lowry recounts his family's history at First Pres, he first points out a picture from the 1950's: "There's a picture in the church history book of the old Brotherhood class, the men's Sunday school class. But there is one lady in the picture, the pianist for that group, that was my great grandmother, Emily Henderson. Our family has basically been a part of this congregation from back in the 1920's, nearly 100 years ago."

Wiley now serves FPC as Minister of Pastoral Care and Teaching. He and his wife, Molly, have three children: Barnes, Henry, and Caroline. But before he felt and answered a call to full-time ministry, the Lord took him through several useful chapters of life in corporate and para-church employment.

Wiley doesn't remember a time in his life when he didn't know Molly. "We were in the same grade, starting in kindergarten at FPDS, at the same schools, the whole way through undergrad" says Wiley.

WILEY DOESN'T REMEMBER A TIME IN HIS LIFE WHEN HE DIDN'T KNOW MOLLY. "WE WERE IN THE SAME GRADE, STARTING IN KINDERGARTEN AT FPDS, AT THE SAME SCHOOLS, THE WHOLE WAY THROUGH UNDERGRAD" SAYS WILEY.



But they became friends in 10th grade through a mutual friend group, and started dating the summer after.

He began his studies at Ole Miss intending to be a pediatrician. As college progressed he realized that medicine wasn't what he wanted, but he didn't yet know that the Lord would call him to full-time ministry. He and Molly married shortly after their graduation when he earned a degree in math with a Spanish minor, influenced by his three short-term mission trips to Peru.

Wiley recalls that after graduation "even though we didn't have a compelling reason or employment in place, we moved to Memphis. Molly soon began a job in banking, and while I was looking for work, I started to volunteer through our church, Second Pres." One volunteer opportunity was at Multi-National Ministries working with Hispanic, Vietnamese, and Yemeni immigrants and refugees, mostly the youth. Wiley

THAT REGULAR PRACTICE OF DIGGING INTO THE BIBLE PAIRED WITH HIS TIME WORKING AT MULTI-NATIONAL MINISTRIES, WERE PREPARING HIM FOR A DESIRE TO GO TO SEMINARY AND A CALL TO MINISTRY.

volunteered there once a week, even after taking a job at Morgan Keegan.

One week before their second anniversary, Barnes was born. "So, with a new marriage and as a new parent at age 24, I had a convicting thought, probably from the preaching I was hearing, that as a Christian, the most important resource for guiding my life is the Bible. That's basic to Christianity, but I wasn't reading it in a consistent way. So, I went to the central Memphis Library, and in the commentary section, I found a series called the Bible Speaks Today. They were very simple and easy to read; they weren't too academic. I said, 'I'm going to read the Bible and then read a section of the commentary each morning to understand it better and know what the Bible's saying.' And I continued that practice for many years" says Wiley.

After three and a half years and the birth of their second child, Henry, Wiley quit his job at Morgan Keegan to work as a full-time employee of Multinational Ministries serving middle school and high school boys for another three and a half years. He said, "This change felt very outside of our comfort zone, and we had no long-term plan, but we felt certain that this was a step in the right direction."



LOWRY, BUZ & ANN
WILEY, RUFFIN

SO FIFTEEN YEARS AFTER LEAVING JACKSON, WILEY WAS ORDAINED AT FIRST PRES AND CONTINUED HIS MINISTRY IN PASTORAL CARE.





I CAN LOOK BACK AND SEE NOW HOW GOD WAS USING ALL THESE DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES TO PREPARE ME FOR PASTORAL MINISTRY.

That regular practice of digging into the Bible paired with his time working at Multi-National Ministries, were preparing him for a desire to go to seminary and a call to ministry. "During a road trip to North Carolina," recalls Wiley, "going to seminary became the conversation topic. And for both of us, it became clear that this was what we needed to do. We have always been thankful to get that clarity at the same time since it was such a big undertaking for our growing family." After seven years in Memphis, the Lowrys moved to Jackson for seminary at RTS. While in seminary, their daughter Caroline was born, and Wiley served as Brister Ware's intern.

"Because of my family history at First Pres, many people in the older generation who Brister was visiting and serving knew my grandmother personally, so having that personal connection was a natural fit and an easy inroad into their lives." Brister transitioned to a part-time minister during Wiley's four years at seminary and "the conversation started early on about the possibility of sliding into his role once I graduated." So fifteen years after leaving Jackson, Wiley was ordained at First Pres and continued his ministry in Pastoral Care. And five years ago, his title added Minister of Teaching to reflect that he was also adding the preaching on Sunday nights.

In looking back over where God has led him and his family so far, Wiley reflected about the various experiences that shaped him: "I can look back and see now how God was using all these different experiences to prepare me for pastoral ministry. From mission trips, to being a college student trying to figure out my major, to dropping plans of med school, to working in finance, to working in international ministry right in Memphis, to seminary, I hope and pray that the Lord continues to use this all to help me serve Him faithfully and serve our congregation well."

GET TO KNOW WILEY

What is a favorite hobby?
One of Wiley's hobbies is traveling to New Orleans: The food, the music, everything. He is fascinated with the groups that merged there to develop its unique cultures. He says, "I've read a good bit about the history, and I also love to cook New Orleans food. I like seafood, jambalaya, gumbo, étouffée, beignets, a fried shrimp po'boy or a roast beef po'boy, and barbecue shrimp. We were down there two years ago, and during lunch I looked around at the five of us eating jambalaya, gumbo, bread pudding, and, I remember sitting back and thinking 'I'm so proud. We've trained them well (at eating, at least).'"

What is a recent book that you loved?
One of his recent reads is *Playing for Keeps: Michael Jordan and the World He Made* by David Halberstam. Wiley said, "Michael Jordan and the 90's Bulls have so much nostalgia for me." Two images of Michael Jordan provide bookends to parts of his growing up: "I grew up in the Jordan era — bookended by the famous shot of him at North Carolina from 1982, in the Superdome, hitting the game-winning shot for the national championship against Georgetown, and the last shot of him against the Jazz to win game 6 of their sixth world championship. I was 18, and that image is like it marks the end of my youth. I loved reading that book; it was like reliving so many parts of the nineties."

What resource do you recommend for understanding the Bible?
The Bible Speaks Today commentary series is simple and readable for everyone.



Holidays at FPC

NOV 13 | FPDS Holiday Potpourri

NOV 26 | Thanksgiving Service & Meal

NOV 29 | Advent Sermon Series Begins

DEC 1 | MOMS at Night Christmas Dinner

DEC 2 | MOMS Christmas Brunch

DEC 3 | Men's Christmas Lunch

DEC 3 | Junior High House Hop

DEC 4 | Senior Adults Christmas Luncheon

DEC 4-5 | Belhaven Singing Christmas Tree

DEC 6 | Senior High Christmas Insight

DEC 10 | Women's Christmas Event

DEC 11 | Carols at Belhaven Town Center

DEC 15 | YA Advent Fellowship

DEC 19 | Bookstore Open House

DEC 19 | Pop Up Nursery

DEC 20 | Music of Christmas 4 PM & 6 PM

DEC 24 | Christmas Eve Service 4 PM

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1390 North State Street, Jackson, Mississippi 39202-2095
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