



NEWSLETTER

*The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot.
The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;
indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.
Psalm 16:5-6 ESV*



TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AND COUNTING! Arrington Rhett, Church Administrator

Loleeta and I recently celebrated 25 years of domiciling in Hattiesburg! We love this community and feel strongly that it is a wonderful place to raise a family. After relocating with our three young children from Birmingham in Y2K, we joined First Presbyterian Church before the year was out. My wife and I desired for our children the benefits we both enjoyed while immersed in a community of like-minded believers (actually, one of us was “immersed” and the other “sprinkled”).



Each of our children participated in Sunday school and worship here, joined as communicants, and were active in the youth group during their teenage years. They grew in grace through the influence of teachers and mentors who befriended them and took an interest in their spiritual welfare. In recent years, Johnson, Caroline, and Lizzy were each married at First Presbyterian Church. What a privilege it has been for us as parents to have friends in the congregation cheering on our kids through their formative years and into young adulthood!

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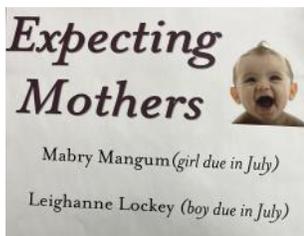
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SUNDAYS
Sunday School, 9:30 a.m. Morning Worship, 10:45 a.m.

The people of God have ministered to us through these years by their prayers and hospitality and encouragement, rejoicing with us and weeping with us during the joys and sorrows that we have experienced as we have walked through this life together. The Lord has graciously provided for our family's spiritual needs through the rich teaching and warm fellowship that we share with each of you here at FPC-Hattiesburg.

What will the next 25 years look like at FPC Hattiesburg?

One of the defining demographic characteristics of our church is its healthy mix of younger and older members. There are currently over 200 active church families, with an equivalent number of members from younger (31%) and older (31%) constituencies and the remainder (38%) from households headed by middle-aged parents.



We most always have several expectant mothers on the prayer list (the most reliable church growth strategy!). It's exciting to see so many of our young families here on Sundays

and at Wednesday night activities during the school year. And our congregation is graced with well-aged members who are faithful in Sunday school and worship and at fellowship events (and others who join in worship via Livestream broadcasts).

What are distinctives of First Presbyterian Church of Hattiesburg—things that we do well? Among the attributes that church members have told us they value are these:

Commitment to Biblical teaching and expository preaching

Intentional, family-centered ministry to covenant children and youth

Celebrating life together while loving and taking care of each other well

A vibrant outreach and missions emphasis

With an average worship attendance of 300, we are a solidly medium-sized PCA congregation. In describing the character of churches our size, Tim Keller wrote this:

“In the medium church, the primary circle of belonging is usually a specific affinity class or program. Men’s and women’s ministries, the choir, the couples’ class...all of these are possible circles of belonging that make the church fly.

How does a church like ours grow (according to Keller)?

“The key to medium-sized growth is improving the quality of the ministries and their effectiveness to meet real needs.... Classes really must be great learning experiences. Music must meet aesthetic needs. Preaching must inform and inspire.

In reflecting on the significance of church size in decision-making by church leaders, he wrote:

“The larger the church, the more it tends to concentrate on doing fewer things well....The larger church...identifies and concentrates on approximately three or four major things and works to do them extremely well....

“Further, the larger the church, the more a distinctive vision becomes important to its members....The reason for putting up with all the changes and difficulties of a larger church is to get mission done. People join a larger church because of the vision—so the particular vision needs to be clear.”

-from “Leadership and Church Size Dynamics” by Timothy Keller (2006)

As we prepare to move forward in identifying a new senior minister for our congregation, the elders are seeking to clarify the theological vision of our church in a way that positions us for both faithful and fruitful ministry. This is an important endeavor, and your patience, trust, prayers and encouragement are appreciated!

The Lord has graciously blessed First Presbyterian Church through the years, and I believe the future is bright for the rising generation as we “experience and express God’s grace through worshiping, living, and serving together.”

O may this bounteous God through all our life be near us, with ever joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer us; And keep us in his grace, and guide us when perplexed, and free us from all ills in this world and the next.

Martin Rinkart, 1636

WELCOMING OUR GUESTS

Bobby Blass,
Congregation Committee Chairman

What a joy it is to see many new faces on Sunday mornings! Maybe you've had the experience Molly and I have of introducing ourselves to "visitors" only to find out they have been attending for over a year! Adding to the challenge is that some joined during Covid when attendance was lower, and we tend to sit in "our spot" in the sanctuary.

All that to say—we want to do a better job of welcoming guests, encouraging them to attend a new members class, and helping them assimilate into the life of our church. The Congregation Committee* and the pastors have been brainstorming about such things as a welcome station, which would include an updated brochure, handouts regarding current Sunday school offerings, children's ministry and women's ministry opportunities, and all the wonderful ways we seek to love and serve both within and outside the church.

So please pray with us about this, pass along any thoughts, and look for more news to follow as plans crystalize. In the meantime, we have fellowship opportunities planned through May 2026 so please get them on your calendars!

June 2-6—VBS

June 21—Family Movie and Ice Cream Night

July 16—Children's Waterslide Night & Cook Out

October 19—FPC Fall Festival/Churchwide Fellowship

December 21—Christmas Caroling/Churchwide Fellowship

February 7, 2026—FPC Chili Cook Off

March 2026—FPC/RUF Coffee house

May 2, 2026—5K Benefiting Grace Christian Elementary School Partnership

*Committee members include:

Will Morgan, Julie Durfield, Ken Gunnufsen,
Andres Tellez, Arrington Rhett,
Steve Seales, Molly Blass, Bobby Blass

INTRODUCING OUR STUDENT MINISTRY INTERNS!

Jack Boyd



"I was born in Fairhope, Alabama and have been raised my whole life in Hattiesburg.

I graduated from PCS and recently finished my freshman year at Southwest Community College in Summit. I played soccer for Southwest and Hattiesburg Futbol Club and have been a proud member of First Presbyterian Church for as long as I can remember!"

Eliza Kate Kosko



"I was born in Jackson, Mississippi, but I've lived in Hattiesburg since I was 5-years-old.

I've attended First Pres since moving here. I went to Presbyterian Christian School, and I just finished my freshman year at Mississippi State University, where I'm studying food science and nutrition. I am so excited to be working as a youth group intern this summer!"

A good time was had by all who attended the Spring Picnic on May 18!



– FPC SUMMER EVENTS CALENDAR –

Summer Sunday School Schedule Begins

Sunday, June 1, 9:30 a.m.

Children's and adult classes will meet jointly each Sunday in June and July.

2025 Camp Narnia Vacation Bible School

Monday, June 2-Friday, June 6, 9 a.m.-Noon daily

Thanks to our volunteer adult and youth leaders and those who bring food!

RYM Middle School Conference, Laguna Beach, Florida, June 23-27

Pray for our junior high students and chaperones as they travel to the beach!

PCA General Assembly, Chattanooga, June 24-26

Pray for our pastors and elders attending this annual denominational gathering.

RYM Senior High Conference, Laguna Beach, Florida, July 4-8

A week of faith, fellowship, and fun for our senior high students!

FPC Children's Waterslide Night

Wednesday, July 16, 5:30 p.m., behind Taylor Hall

Dinner will be burgers and hotdogs on the grill.



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