

THE LINK ~ March, 2018

From the Pastor:

"No one can feel hatred toward those for whom he prays."

With those words, John Chrysostom taught the people of the fourth-century church the hard lesson of praying for those we find most difficult to hold in prayer.

We might wonder whether Chrysostom (pronounced **Kris'** us tom) was thinking of words the Apostle Paul wrote to his young assistant Timothy:

"First of all, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings be made for everyone," Paul writes in First Timothy 2:1.

Or did Chrysostom remember, as we do, that Jesus himself says very clearly -- to love our enemies, to pray for those who persecute us. (See Matthew 5:44.)

As we think about saying our prayers, let's be honest. It is hard to pray for our enemies and really mean it.

Even we who feel deep devotion to Jesus Christ and his Church must be alert to prejudices that keep us from praying for those we do not like, those we consider enemies, those who are different. Indeed, God instructs us particularly to hold such people in prayer.

Pray for them because it is God's desire. It is God's desire that everyone learn this truth: "There is one God. There is one Mediator between God and humankind. That is Jesus Christ himself, who gave himself a ransom for all" (First Timothy 2:5).

We ask ourselves: Will these prayers change those people who do not know and love God? Will God take these prayers and set his Holy Spirit loose in the hearts of those for whom we pray?

We don't know. But such prayers *will* change something deep inside of the one who does the praying. And as the heart of each "pray-er" is changed, so, too, the world changes just a little bit, also.

Always holding you in my heart and giving thanks for you,

Joan

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Sunday, March 4	11:30 a.m.	Coordinating Council meeting
Monday, March 5	Noon	Worship Ministry meeting
Tuesday, March 6	5:30 p.m.	Spiritual Life Ministry
Monday, March 12	5:30 p.m.	Session meeting
Monday, March 19	5:30 p.m.	Deacons meeting

WORSHIP MINISTRY

From Monday, March 26 through Thursday, March 29, you are invited to come to the church Sanctuary at noon for a time quiet, individual prayer. Sharon Rouse will provide meditative music.

Worship for Holy Week:

Maundy Thursday, March 29

5:30 p.m. Communion Service

Good Friday, March 30

Noon Worship in the Sanctuary

Calling all Choir members! The FPC Choir will be rehearsing for special music for Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. Jim Franklin will direct the choir, with Sharon Rouse accompanying. Your voice is needed! So whether you are a "standing member" or someone who wants a "short-term commitment," this is a wonderful opportunity to come sing praises to God!

Called Choir Rehearsal Times:

Wednesday 3/21/18 at 6:00 p.m. in Stratton Chapel.

Sunday 3/25/18 at 9:00 a.m. in the choir room.

Wednesday 3/28/18 at 6:00 p.m. in Stratton Chapel.

Sunday 4/01/18 at 9:00 a.m. in the choir room.

The choir will continue to meet with Victor on other Sundays following worship or as he schedules choir rehearsals.

GENERAL INFORMATION

First Presbyterian Church is excited to host a violin concert presented by Tami Lee Hughes on March 18 (time to be announced). Ms. Hughes is a premier concert violinist and recording artist. Since making her debut with the National Symphony Orchestra, she has toured the United States, Europe, Costa Rica, and Bermuda. The concert is free and open to the public.

SPIRITUAL LIFE MINISTRY

March 7, 14, 21 & 28 Wonderful Wednesday

5:15 p.m. Supper

6:00 p.m. Bible Study led by Rev. Joan W. Gandy

New Bible Study Offered

Beginning this month, a lectionary Bible study, led by Rev. Joan Gandy will be offered each Tuesday at 11:00 a.m. and again for Wonderful Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m. The study will add explanation to the Bible passages that will be addressed in the service and sermon the following Sunday.

CHILDREN AND WORSHIP

A nursery is provided for infants through 4 years old from 8 a.m. until noon on Sunday mornings and at appropriate times for all other church functions. We do, however, welcome children of all ages in our services!

For older children, Children's Bulletins, along with activity bags filled with paper, puzzles, color pages, and crayons are provided. You may leave the bags in the pews at the end of the service and we'll replenish them for the next week!

Whoever welcomes a little child in my name, welcomes me.

~Matthew 18:5

MISSION MINISTRY

Please put Miss-Lou FUEL Ministry on your radar now. The 2018-19 academic school year will be FUEL's seventh year to reach hungry school age children in Adams County and Concordia Parish. From September through May, FUEL distributes weekend food bags to 40 area school age children who may otherwise go without food from Friday school lunch to Monday school breakfast. Annual campaigning for monetary contributions for weekend food bags begins April 1 with contributions received in-hand by May 15 determining the number of children FUEL can commit to reach the following academic year. All monetary contributions, regardless of amount, are needed, as the cost to feed one child during the academic year is about \$300.00.

This ecumenical, non-denominational ministry for the Miss-Lou was founded by Ginny Benoist, Stephanie Butts, and Kathy White, but there are many others of all ages in the Miss-Lou who support this ministry through prayer, individual and prayer group monetary donations, packing food bags, and delivering weekend bags weekly to schools in the Miss-Lou.

In the spirit of anonymous servanthood, contributor names and individual amounts are undisclosed, but the host-organization bookkeeper issues receipts to donors for their charitable donations. The current host-organization for bookkeeping and a place for staging and storage services is Natchez First Presbyterian Church.

Checks for donations should be sent to First Presbyterian Church, 400 State Street, Natchez, MS 39120, made payable to "First Presbyterian Church" with memo: FUEL. There is room for additional host-organizations in the Miss-Lou, and the founders of Miss-Lou FUEL are available to mentor new host-organizations. To schedule the Miss-Lou FUEL founders for an informational presentation about FUEL, contact Ginny Benoist at 601-445-4148.



Youth Sunday School meets each Sunday at 9:15 a.m.

Youth Bible Study and activities meet each Wednesday. Teachers: Ralph Loe & Helen Smith

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE MINISTRY

Lenten Soul-Tending Continues

FPC's "Lenten Soul-Tending" will continue each Thursday through March 22. We will have a program at noon either in Fellowship Hall or Stratton Chapel. A light lunch will follow. Donations to off-set the cost of the lunches will be accepted.

Thursday, March 1, noon Meditative Walk & Labyrinth

Thursday, March 8, noon Meditative Art & Prayer

Sunday, March 18, 11:30 a.m. Covered Dish Luncheon
honoring local heroes

Thursday, March 15 Meditative Music & Scripture

Thursday, March 22 Prayer Shawl ministry & Prayers

Honoring our Local Heroes Luncheon

On Sunday, March 18, FPC will be honoring our local heroes—policemen, fireman, sheriff's deputies, and EMT's. They have been invited to our 10:30 worship service, with a luncheon in their honor afterwards in Fellowship Hall.

MEN'S PRAYER BREAKFAST

Tuesdays, March 6, 13, 20, 27

7:00 a.m.—Men's Prayer Breakfast



PLAYSCHOOL

"Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it." Proverbs 22:6 (NKJV)

The Playschool will be closed Friday, March 30 for Easter holiday.



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore me to the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me." Psalms 51:10-12

The Presbyterian Women Casserole and Bake Sale was held on February 12. A big thank you to Sandra Burkes, Edie Christian, Phyllis Mashburn and all the others who worked to make the sale a success.

The Annual Gathering will be March 10, at Fondren Presbyterian Church in Jackson, MS. If you have never attended a gathering, it is a great experience to meet other Presbyterian women and learn about what the Presbyterian Women are doing. For more information, you may call or email me.

All women are invited to attend any Circle meeting (see schedule below) for an inspirational Bible study and fellowship.
~Barbara Colwell, Moderator

Dates to Remember:

March 10: Annual Gathering, Fondren, Jackson, MS

March 13: *Rebekah Circle*, 10:30 a.m. in the Parlor in Stratton Chapel

Ruth Circle, Noon, in the Parlor in Stratton Chapel.

March 14: **Lydia Circle*, 3:30 p.m. in the Parlor in Stratton Chapel
Contact Beverly Aldridge

**Please note the new meeting time for Lydia Circle.*

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

Tuesdays, March 6, 13, 20, 27

2:00 p.m. For location, contact Sue Ann Wilt (601-445-2242)

NEW MEMBER CLASSES

The pastor will hold classes later this month for all who are interested in learning about becoming members of First Presbyterian Church. If you are not sure this is the class for you or the route to take to membership, talk to Joan about your interest in joining First Presbyterian. We welcome you!



MARCH BIRTHDAYS

March 3 Eddie Burkes

March 4 Irvin Anderson

March 6 Sally Jones

March 7 Sharon Rouse

March 8 Sharon Sharp

March 9 Leigh Anderson

Chase Patrick

March 14 Sandy Lane

Laura Godfrey

March 15 Doris Ann Benoist

March 19 Beverly Hude

March 23 Kay McNeil

March 26 Ann Vidal Willett

March 27 Ann Carlton

Stratton Bull

March 28 Kinney Carlton

March 31 Judy Heard

Jennifer Kirk

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FPC OFFICERS

ELDERS:

Class of 2018: Chuck Borum, Sarah Carey, Mary Jo Mc Nerney, Anne Vidal Willet

Class of 2019: Rosemary Hall, Bobby Meason, Danna Mooney, Helen Smith

Class of 2020: Hal Hicks, Leigh Anderson, Phyllis Mashburn, Ken Andermann

DEACONS: Class of 2018: Jon Borum, Diane Hammers, Esther Jeffus

Class of 2019: Sandra Burkes, Denise Seale, Sarah Smith

Class of 2020: Edie Christian, Ryan Sharp, Gwen Washington