



## THE LINK

August, 2017

### BE STILL . . .

I am enjoying my time with you in Natchez so very much! Thank you for your prayers, your hospitality, and for the things you are teaching me about your church and your town. When I was asked to contribute to the August newsletter, I thought an article that talked about snow might be welcome as we make our way through the heat of a Mississippi summer.

People ask me if I miss the snow of northern New England. Sometimes I confess that I do. Even as I give thanks that I am not shoveling, pulling on boots, or rearranging plans, I remember how lovely the flakes looked coming down. I never tired of seeing the snow falling and falling to make a pointed hat on the lamp post light out front. I retained a Southerner's fascination with the way snow transformed ordinary things and softened the landscape. I could never resist getting out my yardstick when we got a foot or more of powder (or even the wetter heavier snow of spring). After growing up in Jackson peering at the streetlight hoping to see a few snowflakes, Vermont was a delightful experience even when the winters seemed awfully long.

The thing I miss most about snow, however, is the quiet. The kind of quiet that comes with a true snow storm is hard to describe. Sometimes the only sound was the whisper of icy flakes on windowpanes. There was the occasional rumbling of the furnace coming on or snowplows working to keep ahead of the storm, but snow could bring a beautiful white cocoon of quiet. Over the years, I came to appreciate that part of life in Vermont especially after a long season of emergencies or busyness. With school, meetings, and ball games cancelled and most people who could do so wisely staying off the roads, snowstorms became for me a special time. If the phones went out, people knew where to find me in case of a real emergency and there were certainly times

when I was out slowly making my way to Cottage Hospital or Dartmouth-Hitchcock or getting a ride to a home or hospital with someone who had 4-wheel drive. It should be said that snow storms were *not* a restful time for those who plowed the roads and driveways, milked and fed cows, dealt with frozen farm equipment, or negotiated arrangements for children home from school and loved ones with health issues. My limited experience with driving through storms kept me mindful that with the quiet I welcomed came danger and difficulty for many. A big storm for me, however, usually meant simply staying put.

More than once such a storm found me lighting a candle in the living room where I could sit in the Morris chair to read, pray, or write and still see the snow falling on hills in the distance through the wide front window. As a storm moved through, the snow piled up on yard and street and window box. It was not lost on me that, but for the storm, I would probably have been at a ball game at the school or out visiting at hospital or home or in someone's barn. When we love what we are called to be and do, life can easily become crowded.

In Psalm 46:10-11, we read: "Be still, and know that I am God; I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth." The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge." Only recently have I connected the psalmist's words with those quiet snowbound days in the North Country. Just limiting normal activity is not the point. (It was possible to be snowed in and still be very busy.) Derek Kidner observes that the "Be still . . .!" in Psalm 37 is less a comfort for the harassed than a rebuke to a restless and turbulent world. He likens it to the words of Jesus when he commanded the sea to calm as his disciples cowered in the storm tossed boat. In the psalm, the end in view is not in terms of human hopes, but in terms of God's glory. "I will be exalted in the heavens." The psalmist's confidence and peace come from stopping to realize how great God is. The LORD is greater than any foe or threat and worthy of both worship and trust. For the disciples, who saw Jesus stop the storm, there was probably not only relief but awe, not a little fear, and a growing recognition that the rabbi with whom they broke bread was no ordinary man (Luke 8:22-25). Wherever we live, we need to let the Lord who stilled the

waves make for us a place amidst the storms and demands of life in a broken world to just be still and know that God is GOD – to be still before the One to whom we belong in life and death.

I am experiencing a new rhythm of life since moving home to Mississippi. The rhythm has changed some as God has led through chaplaincy training at Baptist Hospital, time with the Briarwood congregation, work as a hospice chaplain, and now to the weekly trips to First Presbyterian in Natchez. Though the responsibilities change, life continues to be very full of things I enjoy. It is still a challenge to find the times of quiet I had learned to protect before I moved home. Many of you, like me, have unpredictable schedules and responsibilities in numerous directions. Others may have available time but difficulty knowing how to use it for true quiet time, or have trouble settling down amidst the distractions we can experience when we are alone in a quiet place. But God is with us even as we learn to be still in God's presence.

I have a young friend in Vermont named Emily. When she was a young child, she often called me "Be Still" because she associated me with a song I sang with the children every Sunday before the Children's Sermon. One day as they passed the Ryegate Corner Church, she asked her mom, "Is that where 'Be Still' lives?" I am still learning to live into the name with which Emily christened me all those years ago.

I pray for all of us some "snow day" times when God quiets the demands or puts us in a place to be quiet in spite of them - to think about how great is the God to whom we belong; to rest the way God intended us to rest - with worship and reading the Bible; with physical rest or something relaxing and enjoyable that feeds our souls. We are able to live (and able to rest) not in our own strength but in God's greatness and merciful love. Being still is an important part of our lives with God. As important as community and service and work are, it is often in the quiet that we learn to love and follow Jesus more closely until the Lord returns or calls us home. As with human friends or family, knowing God takes time. Some of that time needs to be spent in that touchable quiet that is God's gift to those who wait and who ask for God's help.

Thankfully, the very struggle to make time to pray or read or just be still is part of God's work with us. As we wait on the God who stilled the sea, we can pray for that touchable quiet that is God's gift. Even as we learn to be still, we can experience the quiet and comfort of God's presence with us here on earth. ~ Dr. M. Catherine Cook, Pulpit Supply

### UNIT MEETINGS

**Monday, August 7**

Noon—Worship Unit meeting

**Sunday, August 13**

11:30 a.m.—Session Meeting

**Monday, August 21**

5:30 p.m.—Deacons meeting

### WORSHIP UNIT – NEW STAFF MEMBER

We are pleased to announce that Victor Zurck will be joining the FPC staff as our new music director. Victor was born and reared in Brazil. He came to the United States to study music. He has over 20 years of experience with piano performance and 10 years of choir experience, and has studied organ as well. We are all looking forward to having Victor here with us, leading our music program.

### AUGUST WORSHIP INFORMATION

We are happy to have Dr. M. Catherine Cook back as our supply pastor for August! She will continue to preach at both the 8:15 and the 10:30 services.

### SPIRITUAL LIFE UNIT

Spiritual Life Unit (formerly called Christian Education) is in the process of exploring curriculum options with the guidance of our visiting pastor Dr. M. Catherine Cook. As we seek to encourage one another in Christian growth, the unit also requests suggestions from all interested church members. Please send ideas and offers to help or to serve on this unit to Helen Smith at [mosssmith@aol.com](mailto:mosssmith@aol.com).

Everet Washington has been accepted to the 2017-2018 class of Teens 4 Christ, the leadership program for exceptional youth in the Presbyteries of South Alabama and Mississippi. The first of three weekend conferences he will attend begins August 27 at Baytreat in Fairhope, Alabama. Upon completion of the program, the group will be going to Guatemala on a mission trip, probably in July 2018. We are proud of

Everet and excited to be supporting his commitment to this program.

*"The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple." ~Psalm 119:130*

### CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

#### Blessing of the Backpacks & Sandwich, Salad & Sundaes

Join us at the 10:30 service on Sunday, August 20 for the Blessing of the Backpacks. School-aged children are asked to bring their backpacks with them to church. They will be recognized during the service and special prayers will be given, asking for blessings for them as they begin the school year.

Following the 10:30 service on this day, FPC will have a Sandwich, Salad & Sundae Luncheon in Fellowship Hall. Bring your favorite dish, your family and friends. The church will provide beverages and all the "makings" for fabulous ice cream sundaes! All are welcome!



### 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)*

If you would like to volunteer to read to some of the Playschool classes, please contact Aretha Davis, FPC's Playschool Director, at 601.445.0700.



### YOUTH

Last month, five of our youth attended Montreat youth conference in Montreat, North Carolina. They were Katie Borum, Ginny Borum, Alina Sharp, Everet Washington, and our visitor from France, Cecile Croquet. Our adult advisors were Chuck and Chris Borum. We stayed in a cottage just steps away from the conference center. We started the day off with fun dances to wake us up and a keynote that dealt with the theme of the week. In the afternoons, we spent most

of our time with our small discussion groups. Each youth was placed in a group with about 20 other youth from different groups. We finished the day by attending a worship service. During our free time, we participated in many interactive games provided by the conference. Rev. Denny Read and Ethan Read visited us one day. We enjoyed our time at Montreat and are looking forward to continuing in our spiritual journey and bringing what we learned to our church. ~ Katie Borum



### PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

**Wednesday, August 2**

9:30 a.m. PW Coordinating Team

**Tuesday, August 8**

10:30 a.m.—Rebekah Circle

Noon—Ruth Circle

**Wednesday, August 9**

Noon—Lydia Circle



### CARE MINISTRIES

#### Prayer Shawl Ministry

**Tuesdays, August 1 & 15**

2:00 p.m. For location, contact Judy Moody (601.442.9573)

#### BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS & COVERED DISH SALAD, SANDWICH & SUNDAE LUNCHEON

Sunday, August 20, FPC will have the Blessing of the Backpacks during the 10:30 service. School aged children are invited to bring their backpacks to church for a special prayer to be offered as they begin the new school year.

Following the 10:30 service, join us in Fellowship Hall for our annual Salad, Sandwich and Sundae luncheon. Bring your favorite sandwiches or salads; the church will provide all the ingredients for the sundaes, as well as beverages.

## MEN'S PRAYER BREAKFAST

Tuesdays, August 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29

7:00 a.m.—Men's Prayer Breakfast

## FPC 200<sup>th</sup> Birthday Ornaments

Ornaments commemorating the 200<sup>th</sup> Birthday of FPC are available in the church office for \$15. They make great gifts and are wonderful keepsakes!



## CHILDREN AND WORSHIP

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

*Matthew 18:5*

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!



## AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

August 1    Marc Doyle  
August 2    Frances Meason  
August 4    Barbara Rhodes  
              Kay Jenkins  
August 4    Hattie Poole  
August 5    Sarah Hanson  
August 6    Rosemary Hall  
August 11   Beverly Aldridge  
August 12   Courtney Aldridge  
August 17   Chris Borum  
August 19   Sandra Burkes, Jasper Seale, Mimi Miller  
August 24   Joan McLemore  
August 27   Lacey Metcalfe  
August 29   Beverly Ratcliffe  
August 30   Ken Andermann  
August 31   Chesney Doyle



**First Presbyterian Church**  
400 State St., Natchez, MS 39120  
601-442-2581  
[fpcnatchez@bellsouth.net](mailto:fpcnatchez@bellsouth.net)

## FPC OFFICERS

### ELDERS:

#### Class of 2017

Tanna Davis, Marc Doyle, Ralph Loe, Aaron Shermer

#### 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

### DEACONS:

#### Class of 2017

Donna Ball, Sandy Lane, Susanna Sharp

#### Class of 2018

Jon Borum, Diane Hammers, Esther Jeffus

#### Class of 2019

Sandra Burkes, Denise Seale, Sarah Smith