



# First Presbyterian Church

CLARKSDALE, MISSISSIPPI

## NEWSLETTER

Summer 2021

### PASTOR RYAN'S LETTER

I apologize for the delay in getting a newsletter out, but here it is! Praise God that our lives are getting back to normal, including our lives in the Lord's church. There is much ministry stuff to be aware of, so give this thing a close read.

#### MISSING CHURCH

*"The danger of missing church is that soon you won't miss it."* A quote something like this circulated on social media recently and it made me wonder how truly it applies to us at FPC. In honesty, it has been a challenge to get back to the level of attendance in corporate worship we had before the pandemic. The reason I hear most often to explain this is "folks have just gotten out of the habit." I know it is easier to stay in your pjs and watch online or catch the service later on replay—and there are situations where doing so is perfectly legitimate—but let me warn you, as your pastor, against doing so as a habit.

Worship is not a show that you consume, it is a participation in the communion we share with Christ and, through Him, with one another. The toxic individualism that persuades professing Christians to consider corporate worship and fellowship as inconsequential or merely supplementary to the Christian life is, I think, one of Satan's most successful lies in our day. How often I have seen this



logic deceive people, drawing them into worldly ways of thinking and acting, derailing their growth in the Christian life.

And so, I pray that each of you would again miss missing church. I urge you, for your own sake and our church body's, to get yourself back in your pew this Sunday to add your (actual) voice to our corporate song of praise. Remember that everything we do as a church flows through and from our weekly time of worship on the Lord's Day. Even as we think about expanding our ministry to include Wednesday night programs, these are meant to build upon and not take the place of Sunday. We are "the Church" most truly when we are gathered before the Lord in worship.

*(continued on page 2)*

### CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRY

You'll remember how a few months ago I broached the topic of our church's vision and ministry direction through a series of Facebook Live posts. The feedback revealed a couple things: 1) there is no consensus about the need to alter our vision statement (which is fine with me), and 2) there is solid consensus about the wisdom of focusing on building children and youth ministry as the next step in the life of FPC.

Therefore, this Fall we are aiming to kickoff regular, Wednesday evening ministries aimed at kids and youth. We are in the process of hiring a Children's Ministry Director who will lead the ministry to kids and building a volunteer team to lead youth ministry. Our dream is to see young people from our church, our school, and our neighborhood gathering each week to learn more about Jesus and experience the community the Holy Spirit creates. We dream of Wednesday night being a door through which families enter both into Christ and the covenant community of FPC. We dream of it being a shared labor of leadership in which many discover (or rediscover) the joy of ministry, of using the gifts God has given to bless others and build up the Kingdom.

This crucial-for-the-future undertaking is one that cannot be done sustainably with just a few. We need our church members to plan to make Wednesday night at church a "given" of your weekly schedule come Fall. If you have kids and grandkids in town, start talking it up to get them excited about being involved. We promise to do everything we can to make them want to be there, but at first they will likely need your encouragement. Consider if the

Lord might be calling for you to lend a hand in these ministries. We will have dinner, bible study, and prayer opportunities for adults during this time too, so plan to be there even if you're not leading.

There are a number of summer events highlighted in this newsletter. Our big children's ministry event for the summer is our [Creation Care Camp on June 21-25](#). Please sign up your child immediately if you haven't so that we can prepare. Also we still need adults and teens to assist in leading, so talk to Leslie if you're willing to serve. In preparation for CCC, on [June 18-19](#) we'll have what I am calling our [Community Outreach Blitz](#). A group from Eddie and Jennine Wyatt's former church in Kansas City is travelling to partner with us in this effort. On Saturday morning we will gather for breakfast to do some brief evangelism training, followed up with canvassing our neighborhood in groups of 3. We want to show the hospitality of FPC by welcoming these folks and making every effort to attend.

In Christ's love,

*Ryan*

P.S....



## SERMON TEXTS

- JUNE 6: Genesis 8:1-19 (Ryan Dean)
- JUNE 13: Genesis 8:20-9:17 (Ryan Dean)
- JUNE 20: Ephesians 6:1-4 (Mark Webb)
- JUNE 27: Genesis 9:18-29 (Ryan Dean)
- JULY 4: Genesis 10:1-32 (Mark Webb)
- JULY 11: Genesis 11:1-9 (Ryan Dean)
- JULY 18: Genesis 11:10-32 (Ryan Dean)
- JULY 25: TBD (Mark Webb)



# Prayer MEETING

Every Wednesday @ 5:30pm  
Meet in Pastor Ryan's Office







A ROCHA  
**CREATION**  
CARE CAMP  
• WILD WONDER •  
CARE

The logo for "A Rocha Creation Care Camp" is a green graphic with a white border. It features three stylized evergreen trees at the top, with two birds flying to the left. Below the trees, the text "A ROCHA" is in a smaller font, followed by "CREATION" in large, bold, white letters, and "CARE CAMP" in a slightly smaller font. A green banner across the middle contains the text "• WILD WONDER •". At the bottom, a blue banner contains the word "CARE".

*Register Online @  
[firstpresclarksdale.com](http://firstpresclarksdale.com)*

JUNE 21-25  
@ FIRST PRES. CHURCH  
905 W. 2ND. ST.  
9AM-12PM  
RISING K5-6TH  
FREE AND OPEN TO ALL



**Reclaimed Community  
Center Workday  
Saturday, July 10  
Marks, Mississippi**



# Welcome New Members

• SPRING 2021 •



**Blake and Meriwether Johnson (Kimble).** Meriwether is no stranger to FPC, having grown up in our church as the daughter of Hamp and Freeland Bass. After she married Blake they established their home in Merigold, and attended a church in Cleveland. In recent years, and especially with the birth this past year of their first child Kimble, they felt the pull back to life in Clarksdale and started visiting our church together as a family. Both are joining by reaffirmation of faith, having been previously baptized and made professions of faith. We were privileged in May to baptize little Kimble as a covenant child of FPC. Vocationally, Blake farms and Meriwether cares full-time for Kimble while maintaining a business with her art on the side.



**Elizabeth Stroud (Anna, Logan).** Liz was introduced to our church through her (now) husband and our Worship Leader, Seth. It was my joy to walk with Seth and Liz through their engagement, doing their premarital counseling and officiating their ceremony. Liz has a daughter, Anna, and Seth and Liz together are the parents of Logan. Those who have interacted with Liz know what a kind and nurturing presence she has and I know she and Seth and their kids will be a blessing to our church for many years to come. In addition to mothering, she works as a manager at Hooker Grocery downtown. Liz grew up in the Clarksdale area and made a profession of faith and was baptized as a youth. She is joining by reaffirmation of faith.



**Travis and Lisa Larson (Corban, Merissa).** The Larsons are new to Clarksdale, having moved here at the end of 2019 with Image Industries, one of the new businesses that has recently relocated to Clarksdale. They moved from Wisconsin, both having roots in that upper midwest area of the country. You can imagine the challenges they have experienced with such a life change, which were made even more difficult by the pandemic. They began visiting our church at the beginning of this calendar year and have jumped in to the life of our church with both feet. What a blessing to see them plugging in, serving, and already beginning to use their gifts in service to the church! They have a home in Lyon. Travis and Lisa both entered membership through reaffirmation of faith, having both been baptized and professed faith in Christ in the past. Corban is a regular visitor with us in worship.



# Blitz

**WHEN:** Friday-Saturday, June 18-19     **TIME:** 3-7pm on Fri.; 8am-12 on Sat.

**WHAT:** There will be brief training in how to engage in evangelism on both Friday and Saturday, followed by opportunities each day to go out and practice what we've learned (or pray as others do). Friday our ministry will be in the neighborhood of the church as we go out to visit with our neighbors, pray with them, and invite kids to CCC. On Saturday we will set up in Magnolia Heights Apartments to do ministry there. Dinner on Friday and Breakfast on Saturday will be served.

**WHO:** Pastor Jesse Frazier from the Wyatt's former church in KC is bringing a group to lead us in this ministry effort. We hope to have a great group from our church participate too. We also need folks to help prepare and serve food.

**REGISTER:** It's free! Talk to Pastor Ryan or Eddie Wyatt for info or to sign up.



**First Presbyterian Church**  
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