



# HAPPENINGS



## on the Hill

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH • STARKVILLE, MISSISSIPPI • FEBRUARY 2016

## Leap Day, Lent, Lincoln, Love & Lord's Table!

Dear Church Family and Friends of FPC,

God's gospel is the sure news of His amazing grace in Jesus Christ. The Son ***emptied Himself and died for our sin*** [Philippians 2:6-8, 2 Cor. 5], so that we could be ***filled and live*** in His Spirit. God saves and blesses believers in Jesus as God's children [John 1:12], .... to the point that our ***"cup runneth over."*** [Psalm 23:5]

This month marks the start of an "early" Lenten Season.\* We prepare for Lent on **Transfiguration Sunday (Feb. 7)** and then highlight Lent's beginning on **Ash Wednesday (Feb. 10)** -- with the Sunday and Wednesday services each including the covenant seal of God's amazing grace: **the Lord's Supper**. By the way, the day that Christians call Transfiguration Sunday and most Americans call "Super Bowl Sunday," our S.O.S. children will receive offering in canned food and cash to support food ministries to the poor and hungry through the **Souper Bowl of Caring**. In addition, the secular celebration of St. Valentine's Day and our national remembrance of Lincoln, Washington, and others on Presidents' Day can all serve to direct our ultimate attention back to the sacrificial love and leadership of our Lord and Savior -- Who gave His life to set us free in his amazing grace.

On that note, FPC is blessed again to co-sponsor the **Veritas Forum** at Mississippi State University as part of our Outreach through our FPC University Ministries Mission. Please see the article on Page 5 of this *Happenings on the Hill* to read more about the **Second Annual Veritas Forum at MSU on February 25, 7-9 p.m., in the Bettersworth Auditorium**, and **Dr. Chris Clark's further talk at the Breakfast Fellowship on February 26, hosted by our FPC Men of the Church**.

Finally, the concluding "extra gift" this month of *Leap Day* (Feb. 29) reminds us that, in fact, *every day* is amazing grace from God. Every day we live is an "extra" "gift day" that flows from God's amazing grace.

What a month to praise our God and to grow in His gospel mission! I look forward to seeing you in worship and fellowship.

*\*We are on an "early" Christian Worship Year in 2016, all related to an "early Easter" of March 27. Western churches (Catholic and Protestant) celebrate Easter on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the spring equinox (March 21). This year, the first full moon after the equinox is March 23, so Easter is March 27.*



**"Frozen Chosen" - FPC Beautiful in February 2015.** / snapped this photo late last February of snow beautifully highlighting our Sanctuary's front entrance.



**Natalie and Tyson Langston -- charter members of our FPC Childcare Center PTO -- helped provide the "Trunk or Treat" event for Childcare Center children Oct. 30, 2015. Tyson also has served as Chairman of the FPCCC Board of Directors since January 2015, helping to lead and support a year of groundbreaking advances for our church's mission through FPCCC.**

## Nurturing Joyful Faith & Compassionate Service

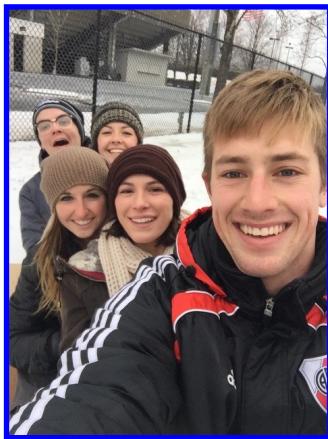
(Continued from page 2)

**FPC Childcare Center Mission Is Alive & Active! Silent Auction Fundraiser and Other Activities Led by FPCCC Board, Staff and new PTO.** As I have in previous newsletters commended our FPC Childcare Center ("FPCCC") staff and the Mississippi Building Blocks non-profit program ("MBB") staff -- now I want to commend the members of the FPCCC Board of Directors and our new Parent-Teacher Organization ("PTO") for their leadership in the renewed teaching and support activities that are revitalizing this central mission of FPC. Our congregation devotes over 10% of our church budget each year (over 10% of God's money we give to His Church) to support and make possible the existence and mission of FPCCC. Now, suplemenatal support from MBB has greatly bolstered our church's mission through FPCCC -- providing equipment, room up-grades, coaching of the FPCCC staff, and encouragement for the start of a PTO.

Last fall, I shared a photo from the "kick off" fellowship for the PTO; now, just a few months later, the PTO is fully active. All FPC parents, as well as parents in FPCCC, are invited to the next meeting of the PTO, on Monday, February 8 (5:30 p.m.). That meeting will feature MSU doctoral candidate Roslyn Miller -- speaking on how parents can help children learn math concepts. That night will also begin this month's Silent Auction fundraiser spearheaded by the PTO for improvements to our Children's Playground. *(There will be tables for the Silent Auction in Fellowship Hall from Monday, Feb. 8, through Friday, Feb. 19. To learn more about how to support the Silent Auction or, specifically, to donate items, contact either Amanda Corley in the FPCCC Director's Office or one of the members of our FPCCC Board.)*

Speaking of the Board and PTO, I give special thanks for the service of Tyson Langston (a) as Chairman of the FPCCC Board of Directors that has overseen these excellent developments, and (b) as our Board liaison to the PTO. In fact, Tyson and Natalie Langston are active leaders in the PTO as parents of FPCCC children.

**Will There Be Any Sledding in Starkville This Month?** Finally, record levels of snow blanketed parts of the Southeast and the Eastern Seaboard of our nation in late January, and young people (such as my daughters in the Carolinas) made the most of the bad conditions by going sledding. Meanwhile, our local schools closed early on January 22 because of weather concerns, but no significant snow accumulated. All this begs the question: will Starkville see serious snow and go sledding this winter, perhaps this month, as in 2015? I suppose we shall see.



**Faith's Sled Team.** My daughters, Grace and Faith, were able to take advantage of the fun side of snowfall in the Carolinas last month. Photo: With fellow Wofford soccer player Matt Arednik -- Faith (in the dark brown cap) and other friends sled down a hill behind the Wofford soccer stadium Jan. 22, 2016. Will we once again sled in Starkville this February?

Your pastor in his grace,

*Martin Lifer*



**Hindering Hopes at the Hump last February.** Several inches of snow accumulated in Starkville Feb. 25, 2015, just before the MSU Men's Basketball Team was to host the #1-ranked Kentucky Wildcats. Neither the hoped-for record attendance nor the hoped-for upset happened. Photo: Nancy took this photo of me as on our way through a snow-covered parking lot outside Humphrey Coliseum shortly before the game.

## 2016 Shepherding Assignments

The deacon and elders have been installed and ordained for the new year. Each officer has been assigned members of the church family to provide personal and spiritual care and concern. Our Lord, Jesus Christ, directs his officers to care for the flock and FPC uses ministry as an important way to serve Christ. If you have any questions, please contact session member: Janice Kinard or diaconate member: Tracey Millsaps.





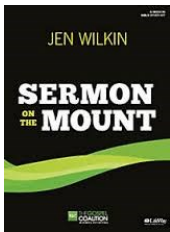
# MEMBER NEWS



**Holy Communion will be celebrated February 7 at the 8:30 and 11:00 services, and at the 6:30p.m. Ash Wednesday service February 10.**

Join Friends and Family Fellowship, Studies, and Children's Programs each Wednesday. Give yourself and your family the blessing of mid-week manna through our Wednesday Night Friends & Family Ministries:

- \*Dinner Served from 5:15 – 5:45 p.m.
- \*Children's Bible Studies and Children's Choirs, 5:50 – 7:00 p.m.
- \*Women's Bible Study Group (Parlor) and Co-ed Discussion Group (led by Pastor Lifer in Fellowship Hall), Sermon on the Mount, 5:50 – 7:00 p.m.
- \*Youth Group (gathers initially with Randell Foxworth in Fellowship Hall and concludes at Christy's Restaurant), 5:50 – 7:30 p.m.
- \*Chancel Choir (Music Room, 3rd Floor, Sanctuary bldg.), 7:00 – 8:00 p.m.



*Wednesday Adult Bible Study Groups: Orly Hardin will lead our Women's Group in Jen Wilkin's Gospel Coalition Women's Study, Sermon on the Mount, including Jen's engaging teaching on DVD. Pastor Lifer will teach and lead a Co-ed Study of the Sermon on the Mount following the same schedule and including highlights from Jen Wilkin's study, together with other Biblical resources and insights.*

SOS—Secrets of the Seed—is for children in grades 3-6. Our congregation has a unique opportunity to nurture the seedlings of their faith and help them grow strong roots that will serve them throughout their spiritual journey. SOS is on Wednesdays and about once a month on Sundays. The beginning of a new year begins with some new curriculum. If your child wasn't able to join SOS in the fall, this is an ideal time to plant a seed as they study the Bible to become more adept at using and understanding the word of God. Field trips on Sundays include rock climbing, art museums, Camp Hopewell and local historic sites related to the congregation of FPC. For more information contact Michelle Jones, [gmwj@aol.com](mailto:gmwj@aol.com) or 662.323.7095.



**Scouting Sunday will be celebrated by First Presbyterian Church Starkville on Sunday, February 7, to recognize the contributions of young people and adults to Scouting. Scout members of FPC will be involved in the worship services that day. If your child is a Scout, please contact Michelle Jones ([gmwj@aol.com](mailto:gmwj@aol.com) 662-323-7095) so that we can get them involved.**

**COME TO THE WATERS Bible Study** – We continue the new year of 2016 on Lesson 6 – presented by Janice Kinard

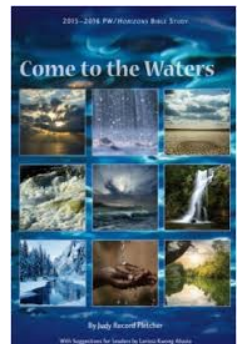
“Waters of Justice and Righteousness – Justice”

Scripture: Amos 5: 21-24

**DATE: February 25 – 4th Thursday**

Time: 6 pm

Location: Choir Room – 3rd floor of the Sanctuary Building







# MISSION & OUTREACH NEWS



Dear First Presbyterian Church Family,

I would like to thank everyone for showing me such incredible support, both financially and spiritually, during the preparation for my recent mission trip to Guatemala. Your contributions made this trip possible for me, and I feel certain that your prayers were responsible for our safety and for the success of the trip. It was truly a trip that left a lasting impression on me and strengthened my faith. Thank you again for helping me to have the chance to spread God's love to a few of those in need.

Sincerely,

*Matt Jones* (FPC member and MSU student)

As I mentioned in a previous letter, during spring break, March 12-17, I will serve the Lord on a mission trip to the Dominican Republic. I will be distributing water filters to those without clean water access as well as sharing the gospel with each community. The organization I am going with is Reel Life International, and I will be going with college students across the South. I am beyond excited to go; however, the trip is an expense. The trip will be completely funded by donations, and every donation will go towards the funding for the trip and to the people of the Dominican Republic. I am beyond grateful to those who feel led to assist me financially and would be just as grateful for prayers as I continue to plan and depart. Thank you so much!

Checks may be made out to Reel Life International and sent directly to me at 7 Middleton Court, Starkville, MS 39759. If you have questions, here is my contact info: [kas796@msstate.edu](mailto:kas796@msstate.edu) or (662) 722-2626. To learn more about the mission, visit <https://vimeo.com/143027317> (password: filterofhope)

In Christ,

*Kathryn Stringer*

Matthew 28:18-20

*And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

## Children's Ministry

I am so excited to be working with the children of our church. On January 20th, we started our new Wednesday night program. We will meet each Wednesday from 5:50-7:00 pm. Parents, please bring your children to the Education Building, and pick them up there as well. Our program is called TeamKID (Kids In Discipleship). The focus is teaching the children to be disciples of Christ. The TeamKID motto is "Learning about God, Using the Bible, and Living for Jesus." We sing songs, learn Bible stories and verses, discuss and learn about missions within our own church, and have tons of fun! There are two classes. Three-year-olds and four-year-olds meet in one class, and kindergarten through second grade are in the other. The cost for the semester is \$15, which includes a TeamKID T-shirt and an Activity Book that will be used each Wednesday. Please pray for us as we teach these precious children about Christ. If you have any questions, please contact me at 662.312.9884. —Ashleigh Murdock





# 2016 Miss State Veritas Forum

The second annual Veritas Forum at Mississippi State University will be held February 25, 2016, from 7 to 9 pm in the Bettersworth Auditorium of Lee Hall. For the second year First Presbyterian Church will co-sponsor the Veritas Forum at MSU with the Christian Faculty-Staff Forum and the James W. Criss Trust.

The topic for discussion is "Can We Have Martin Luther King's Dream Without His Faith?" The forum will be a conversation on the topic between Dr. Christopher Clark, Assistant Professor of Political Science at University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill and Dr. Christopher Snyder, Dean of the Shackouls Honors College and Professor of History at Mississippi State University. Dr. Susan Seal, Assistant Professor of Human Sciences at Mississippi State University will moderate the conversation. The format will also include questions from the audience.

Members and friends of First Presbyterian are invited and encouraged to participate. Another chance to participate will be a Men of the Church Breakfast on February 26 at 7:30 am in our Fellowship Hall featuring Dr. Chris Clark from UNC. He will speak about his faith and career path. Look for more details on the breakfast as the dates get closer.

The Veritas Forum at Mississippi State is an evangelical outreach effort by FPC to touch MSU students and faculty with the Gospel in an intellectual and non-confrontational way. Christianity has much to offer our modern life, and this forum helps put Christ before the University community.

You might ask, "What is the Veritas Forum"? (Veritas is Latin for "Truth.") Here is how the Veritas organization answers that question...Where does morality come from? Isn't science rapidly approaching a complete explanation of nature? Do you ever have doubts about your views? College students around the world are asking themselves and their friends these questions, but there is often no real place to explore these questions alongside brilliant faculty and leading thinkers. And, despite His undeniable prominence, Jesus is almost never brought into the picture. The Veritas Forum exists to change that landscape.

Veritas Forum began in 1992 at Harvard University. Since then, Veritas Forums have been held at Universities worldwide. Many have been held at SEC schools. This spring Veritas Forums are currently scheduled at SMU, University of Florida, University of Texas, Rice University and many more. For more information, a schedule of Forums planned and video of many previous Veritas Forums visit [www.veritas.org](http://www.veritas.org). For more information also see the Mississippi State Veritas Forum on Facebook.

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## Tejeras Meal Program

During February, meals for the children have been sponsored by the following donors:

February 3: Paul and Tracey Millsaps

February 5: A member of our congregation

February 10: Living Faith Sunday School Class in honor of Philip Gruchy and Dero Ramsey

February 12: Thomas and Elcy Philip

February 17: Pat and Laura Bryan in honor of Mary Ann Maddin's 87<sup>th</sup> birthday

February 24: Audrey Scales in memory of Paul Scales

February 26: Wesley and Emily Ferguson in honor of Hayes' birthday



# From FPCCC workers and children

Thank you for the gifts. It truly was a blessing to my children. I was a little down because I wasn't sure if I could buy anything for my children. Thank God for good and generous people who bless other's and in return God blesses you. Once again I'm truly thankful for all you have done!!

Yotina, Gatesha, Tenaya

I would like to Thank FPCCC Church members for participating in the angel tree by giving from the heart. My daughter LOVES EVERYTHING!!! Especially the orange shoes. Lol, I can't get her to take them off.

Thank you,  
Ms. Angie

Thank for all that you all have done for me and my family. We love each and everyone of you and we greatly appreciate everything. May God Bless You and Your Families.

Thank You,  
Adrienne Jackson &  
Family ☺

Thank you so very much! We are very thankful for the Christmas gifts. Words can't describe how thankful/blessed we are. May God bless you and may he continue to bless you. Ms. Jessica, Abigail Isabella, Family

Be Blessed and  
Blessed more Abundantly  
From the mom of child #19  
I'm so lucky  
you are always  
so great to me!

God Always have a  
way to bless. Thanks so  
much for the kindness  
shown toward my son.

If I had a Million  
Tongues, I couldn't

Thank you enough. The smile  
on his face christmas day was.  
Priceless. I pray God bless each of  
you Naturally as well as Spiritually

I Was #19 and  
Thanks for everything  
you guys gave me. I +  
Us, a great help for  
all the things I Wanted,

Sincerely

-Josh



I would  
like to thank you  
so very much for the kin-  
ness that you have shown me  
and my family which has truly  
been a blessing from God.  
And from the bottom of  
the Burnside family we  
thank you so very much.  
I will continue to pray  
for you, and you do the  
same for me and my  
family love you  
all!!

I'm so happy  
to be apart of this  
family!  
...adds the warmest glow  
to the Christmas season.

Have a  
Wonderful Holiday  
May God  
continue to bless  
each of you. Love  
Sandra Burnside  
family



# FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH WOMEN'S MINISTRY

## With Christ's Love from the PW Coordinating Team!

February brings the “day of love,” and we want to show our love to all our new babies at First Presbyterian Church. We'll be having our annual “Sip and See” at February's Family Night Supper on Sunday night February 21, in the Fellowship Hall at 5:30. This is our regularly scheduled 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday night Family Night Supper – we're just using the program slot to celebrate all our babies born since late 2014 through 2015. Bring a dish with enough for you and another family, and we'll have plenty to eat. Then we'll introduce all our new babies and their families!

### Circles Meetings & Reminders:

February Mission – Military Youth Ministry (Aretta Zitta)/Least Coin

February Lesson – *Gomer: Learning to Accept Unconditional Love*

Lesson Leader – TBA

2/01 5:30 PM – PW Coordinating Team meeting – Johnson Room

2/07 8AM – Sunday AM Circle – Parlor

2/08 1:30PM – Monday Daytime Circle – Parlor

2/09 6PM – Tuesday Evening Circle – TBA

2/15 7PM – Monday Evening Circle – TBA

2/21 5:30 PM – Family Night Supper & “Sip and See” our 2015 babies!



—Michele Rackley

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## From the Adult Discipleship Team

### Theology and The Importance of Biblical Doctrine

What is theology? By definition, theology is “The study of God”. Everyone is a theologian, that is, everyone ought to have at least a recognition of the existence of God. There is sound theology and there is unsound theology. Sound theology adheres to *Biblical Doctrine*. Our theological (doctrinal) position affects our lives in every way. Unsound theology obviously draws us away from God. Sound theology draws us toward God. Sound theology gives us hope. It gives us assurance of salvation. It enables us to bear good fruit, fruit of the Holy Spirit, and we therefore serve and glorify God as witnesses to Jesus Christ. Sound theology learns of God or about God but more importantly, sound theology is *knowing* God; that is, having an intimate relationship with Him as opposed to simply developing a moral character. Our goal, then, is to get to know God and “...glorify God and enjoy Him forever” (WSC Q&A 1). How? As disciples (learners), by attending church worship services; having daily devotionals and Bible reading; participating in a Sunday School class and/or Bible Study group and by getting involved in other activities sponsored by our church.

—Allen Johnson



# Sunday School Classes

**New-Year Opportunity to Grow in Faith & Personal Fellowship: Sunday School Study & Fellowship at FPC!** If you are not already teaching Children's Sunday School or already a member of an Adult Sunday School Class – a great new addition to your 2016 will visiting and joining one of the following excellent Bible study and fellowship groups.

## Adult Sunday School Groups – Winter 2016 (each Sunday, 9:45-10:30 a.m.):

**The Cross Community Class** is our newest class, comprised mainly of young adults (college-age through early 30's -- couples *and* singles), with current Bible studies led by John Michael & Avent Van Horn and Will Rackley. *The Cross Community Class meets Sunday mornings in Room S-6 on the main Sanctuary Building Floor (S-6 being the room down the hallway beyond the Chapel and restrooms on organ-side exit of the Sanctuary) and also has periodic small group fellowship gatherings on weekday nights in members' homes.*

**The New Covenant Class** is taught by Jim Beaty with varied topics of Bible Study and faith & life questions, and is just beginning a study of the New Testament Letter to the Ephesians. The class is comprised of mainly of young-adult to early-middle-age couples with young children. *It meets in the large room behind the Sanctuary Balcony.*

**The Living Faith Class** -- led by John & Carmen Rodgers, Laura Downey, and Briar & Michelle Jones -- is an "around the table" Bible Study and Life Application discussion class, comprised of mainly of young-adult to early-middle-age individuals and couples. The class is currently is doing week-by-week Bible discussions from the **Wired Word** series. *The Living Faith Class meets in the first room up the stairs on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor of the Education Building.*

**The Discovery Class** – taught by Bob Daniels – is our smallest yet most demographically diverse class (from young adult singles to grandparent couples). Bob is currently leading the group in a Bible Study of the Book of Hebrews. *The class meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor of the Sanctuary Building, across the hall from the music room; take the elevator or stairway on the north side of the Sanctuary Bldg.)*

**The Chapel Class** – Robert Green, lead teacher – is comprised of middle-aged and retired individuals and couples, and is currently studying the Book of Acts. *The Chapel abuts the north side of the Sanctuary.*

**The Crusader Class** – Jack Forbus, lead teacher – FPC's largest class, is comprised of middle-aged and retired individuals and couples and is beginning a new study of the New Testament Letter to the Romans. *The class meets in the Fellowship Hall, on the floor below the Sanctuary.*

**The JOY ("Jesus, Others, Yourself") Class** – Phil Gruchy, lead teacher – is a Bible Study class comprised of middle-aged and retired individuals and couples. *This longtime class meets in The Parlor, which is the room on the lower or fellowship Hall floor, below the front, main entrance of the Sanctuary Bldg.*



# HAPPENINGS

on the Hill

## **First Presbyterian Church PCUSA**

307 University Drive

Starkville, MS 39759

Phone: 662-323-1994

Fax: 662-323-1999

E-mail: [staff@fpcstarkville.org](mailto:staff@fpcstarkville.org)

### **Church Staff**

Dr. Martin Lifer.....Senior Pastor

Vicki Schramm.....Church Administrator

Kim Beatty.....Church Secretary

Amy Aarhus.....Children's Ministry  
Coordinator (on leave through March)

Ashleigh Murdock.....Acting Children's Ministry  
Coordinator (through March)

Dr. Craig Aarhus.....Music Director

Kathy McGill.....Children's Choirs

Jennifer Blackburn.....Organist

Ellen Mauldin.....Church Librarian

Amanda Corley.... FPC Child Care Director

### **Sunday Schedule**

Worship (Sanctuary) - 8:30 a.m.

Sunday School - 9:45 to 10:30 a.m.

Fellowship - 10:30 to 11:00 a.m.

Worship (Sanctuary) - 11:00 a.m.

### **Deadline for next issue:**

Wednesday, February 17th by 5:00 p.m.

E-mail articles/photos to:

Kim Beatty: [kbeatty@fpcstarkville.org](mailto:kbeatty@fpcstarkville.org)

Or

Liz Stringer: [estringer@eastms.edu](mailto:estringer@eastms.edu)

First Presbyterian Church

307 University Drive

Starkville, MS 39759

## **EASTER LILY ORDER FORM**



Easter Lilies will decorate our Sanctuary for our Easter worship services and are available to order at a cost of **\$14.00** each. If you would like to buy a lily in honor or memory of someone, please complete the information below, make your check payable to First Presbyterian Church, and place the form in the offering plate.

**March 13 is the deadline for ordering.**

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_ **PHONE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**NO. OF LILIES:** \_\_\_\_\_ **AMOUNT PAID:** \_\_\_\_\_

**NAME(s) for HONOR or MEMORY** (*Please circle one*):

View the newsletter online at [www.fpcstarkville.org](http://www.fpcstarkville.org); click on Bulletin & Newsletter; then click Select by Date to find the newsletter for the current & previous months.