



HAPPENINGS

ON THE HILL

DECEMBER 2016



FOCUS ON THE FUTURE USHERS IN A GREAT CHRISTMAS SEASON AT FPC... TO FOCUS ON THE FUTURE!

Dear Church Family and Friends of FPC,

For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son, so that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."[John 3:16] Christmas is a season to worship the *God The Giver*, to rejoice in his *Gospel Gift*, and to focus on the future He offers us in his grace.

Remembering, then, the real message and faith-forward perspective of Christmas, I especially thank God for your faithfulness – as so many of you responded with joyful commitment to the Lord for growing, giving, and serving in the New Year through your ***FOCUS ON THE FUTURE*** pledges. What a wonderful and appropriate way to begin the Christmas Season and then the New Year!



Photo at left: John, Ann Garvin and Kate Rush enjoy the FOCUS on the FUTURE Fellowship Brunch. At right: At our Church Family Advent Fellowship Night – Nancy Lifer and Kristen Skinner celebrate James' first Advent and Christmas Season.



As Jesus says, God is seeking those "*who will worship Him in spirit and in truth.*" Now – in response to his gift and what He has already done for us – may you offer yourselves and your cheerful commitments in true and Spirit-led Christmas and New Year's celebration. God bless you, and Merry Christmas, FPC Starkville!

Your Pastor and friend in Christ,
Martin

Christmas Season Worship Schedule at FPC:

Saturday, December 24 (Christmas Eve)
4 p.m. "Family Christmas Eve Service"

Childcare for infants and pre-school; school-age children join in worship.

6 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service

Traditional Christmas Eve Service; Childcare for infants & younger children.

Sunday, December 25 (Christmas)
11 a.m. Christmas Sunday Service

*A "COME AS YOU ARE" CHRISTMAS LATE-MORNING AT FPC
Come for a Christmas Fellowship time at 10:30 with a Birthday Cake for Jesus.*

Sunday, January 1, 2017

(New Year's Day and 2d Sunday of Christmastide)
8:30 and 11:00 a.m. Services



Photo above: At this year's Children's Christmas Musical, Hayes Ferguson and our Children's Choirs proclaim the Good News of Jesus' birth. See on Page 2 more photos from early Advent Season Worship and the Children's Musical.

EARLY ADVENT WORSHIP & MUSIC AT FPC



Photos at left and above: The Foster, Boyd, Ryder and Rackley Families, respectively, light the Advent Candle to lead the Call to Worship during early Advent Season.

On the 2d Sunday of Advent, Dr. Craig Aarhus, Jennifer Blackbourn, and Chancel Choir (photo below), and Chloe Hardin and members of our Children's Choirs sing joyful songs of the season.



CHILDREN'S CHOIRS PRESENT THEIR ADVENT & CHRISTMAS MUSICAL, CARRIERS OF THE LIGHT:

Photos below and on Page 3.





CHURCH FAMILY NEWS AND CELEBRATIONS!



God blessed us in many ways over the past month, including:
- Celebrating the **birth of Chandler Lane Baer, the first child of Dr. Nick and Dr. Hannah Baer (November 18, 2016).**



THE VOYAGE OF NOAH'S ARK AT FPC!

We give thanks for a great group of volunteers from our congregation (some of whom are in the photo below) who built our "Noah's Ark" float for the Starkville Christmas Parade. When the parade was cancelled on November 28 and not rescheduled, we redeemed the opportunity and held a *Voyage of the Ark Adventure* (photos at right) and Pizza Dinner Fellowship on November 30 for all children involved in our Wednesday Night Children's Ministry.



CELEBRATING AT THANKSGIVING TIME FPC'S LARGEST ONGOING MISSION: THE FPC CHILDCARE CENTER



Photo at left: In Fellowship Hall on November 18 – some of our FPC Childcare Center children line up to sing about Thanksgiving to their parents, grandparents, and other family members.

FPC FELLOWSHIP

FOCUS ON THE FUTURE BRUNCH FELLOWSHIP AND CHURCH FAMILY ADVENT FELLOWSHIP



**CHURCH
FAMILY
ADVENT
FELLOWSHIP
NIGHT**
*Photos at left and
below:*



FPC MISSION

SEE ALSO NEWS ON PAGE 3 FROM OUR LARGEST MISSION
EFFORT, THE FPC CHILDCARE CENTER



BE AN ANGEL THIS CHRISTMAS: ANGEL TREE MISSION PROJECT

Our Session and Missions Committee again this year is focusing our *Christmas-Presents help to individual families on the dependent children of our FPC Childcare Center Staff.*



As in past years – we are using the ANGEL TREE and TREE TAGS as the way to identify requested gifts. **Tags with suggested gifts and sizes are on the Angel Christmas Tree in the Fellowship Hall.** Please take one or more of these tags from the tree, buy and wrap the gifts, and then bring the wrapped gifts (Angel tree Tags attached) to the church office by **Monday, December 19.** The gifts will be distributed to the Child Care workers December 20.



THE CHRISTMAS MISSIONS BLESSINGS SPECIAL OFFERING

+Our Session (Board of Elders) has approved **The Christmas Missions Blessings Offering** to be directed toward additional FPC support of the following missions and missionaries that our church has supported through the years: **Starkville Habitat for Humanity; Helping Hands (of Starkville/Oktibbeha County); the Palmer Home Mission;** as well as **Aretta Zitta and Chip Bobbitt**, two “Children of the Church” who serve overseas.

Today and throughout December, feel free to give – above and separately from your regular tithe and offerings – to this special offering; checks should be made to FPC Starkville, but please designate in the check's Memo line “Christmas Blessings Mission Offering” or simply “Christmas Blessings.”

CASSEROLE KITCHEN MISSION DINNER FOR THE HUNGRY –

CONTINUES EVERY TUESDAY AND THURSDAY NIGHT AT FPC. **THANK YOU, FPC FOR YOUR SUPPORT THROUGH REGULAR GIVING AT FPC, THE “TWO-CENTS-A-MEAL OFFERING, AND THROUGH VOLUNTEER HOSTS FROM FPC!**

Above left: Our guests are served on Thanksgiving-Week Tuesday.

TEJERAS MEAL PROGRAM

Since 2007, when the Tejas Meal Program in Tejas, Honduras, began, and 2010, when FPC began sponsoring meals – hungry children living in the poorest conditions in Honduras have been fed good, nutritious meals through this Honduras Agape Foundation (HAF) mission project. HAF is a multi-denominational foundation based in Aiken, South Carolina. HAF's work began in response to destruction caused by Hurricane Mitch. HAF has moved from building houses to community help such as water systems, hygiene, fluoride and deworming treatments, medical training, church support in rural villages, and education sponsorship. Our congregation has generously supported the Tejas Meal Program for 6 years. Over the years, many FPC mission team members have visited the Tejas site and can vouch for the tremendous needs of these children.

Sign up to sponsor one or more meals in 2017 for the impoverished children of Tejas – whom we reach with nurture and the Good News of Christ twice each week through this special mission. *The 2017 Meal Sponsor/Donor Calendar will be available on Sundays in Fellowship Hall.*

When sponsoring a meal, **please make your check for \$80 payable to Honduras Agape Foundation or HAF and note on the check “Tejas.”** You may place your check in the offering plate on any Sunday, take it by the church office, or mail to the church (307 University Drive). If you have any questions about this program, please contact Michele Rackley at 662-418-2410 or rack2479@bellsouth.net.

Donors for December meals for the children:

December 2: David and Ellen Boles
December 7: Thomas and Elcy Philip
December 9: In honor of Charles and Rubye Guest's birthdays
December 14: A member of our congregation
December 16: Rebecca, Simon and Davis Banzhaf in honor of Floyd Wade's birthday
December 21: Presbyterian Women
December 23: Dero Ramsey
December 30: Melanie Mullenax in appreciation for the generous support of this mission by FPC members

FPC WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Merry Christmas from the FPC Women's Ministry team! Thanks to all who donated items and money to the East MS State Hospital for Christmas gifts to the patients. The staff of the hospital appreciates our dedication to this mission each year! There's lots going this month, so get out a pen and mark your calendar or add items to your phone calendar! We're trying something new this year to foster intergenerational fellowship and fun! Join us for our Christmas Progressive "Dinner" this Sunday, December 11, 2016 beginning at 3:30 PM in the church parlor. The first "course" of our dinner will be sponsored by the Monday Afternoon and Monday Night circles. We'll head to the home of Michele Rackley (101 Mariposa Drive) at approximately 4:00 where the Tuesday Night circle will serve the 2nd "course." The last "course" will be presented by the Sunday Morning circle at the home of Lynda Forbus (407 Canterbury Road in Sherwood Forest). We hope you'll consider coming out for food and fun this Sunday! We're planning to carpool and use the church van if there are some who don't want to drive.

Our circles are meeting this month also and each will enjoy a Christmas lesson selected by its leader or someone in the circle. See the list below for dates, times and locations. You'll notice there is food involved for every one of the meeting this month! Pick one and visit!

FPC Women's Ministry members love our church staff and will be celebrating them with a Christmas luncheon on Tuesday, December 20, 2016 at noon in the Johnson room. Circle members will be donating goodies for this meal, and anyone may attend and help with the luncheon. We'll be serving our full-time church staff as well as those ladies who have so graciously helped in the church office of late.

12/11 Sunday Morning Circle – 8AM – Parlor

12/11 Christmas Progressive "Dinner" – 3:30 PM beginning in the FPC Parlor (breakfast)

12/12 Monday Daytime Circle – 12:00 PM – Kay McReynolds: 1107 Robinhood Road in Sherwood Forest (luncheon)

12/13 Tuesday Evening Circle – 6PM – Jane Vemer: 102 S. Rosebud Lane in Greenbriar (dinner)

12/18 Monday Evening Circle – 12PM (after worship) – Caitlin Rackley: 505 Briarwick Drive in Timbercove (luncheon)

12/20 Staff Christmas Party – Noon – Johnson Room

Thanks to all of our women who donate their time and resources furthering the ministry of FPC. Your work is noticed and appreciated. Take time to reflect daily during this season using the advent messages prepared by our church officers.

Christmas blessings to all!

MEN OF THE CHURCH (MOC) - MEN'S MINISTRY AT FPC

Andrew Fountain - President, Will Rackley - Vice President, and Charlie Weatherly - Treasurer

MOC hosted a Fall Fish Fry Fellowship Dinner and Meeting at the Robinson Lake Pavilion on November 30 with over 45 men participating. MOC elected the above-noted officers, and our men shared with great excitement the new season of spiritual growth in our congregation and among the men of FPC. Specifically, men involved in men's small groups for Bible Study and discipleship encouragement shared about the great benefits of being in such a group, and MOC planned to begin more men's small groups in 2017. *If you are interested in helping form a small group or otherwise getting involved in MOC, please contact Andrew Fountain.*



*Photo at left:
Cline Kemp and
Tanner Chance
help their dads
and other MOC
members prepare
the Church
Grounds for the
Advent and
Christmas Season.*

*At right: Dr. Will
Martin, Ross
Collins, and
Edward Kemp
enjoy the MOC Fish
Fry Fellowship on
November 30.*





HAPPENINGS ON THE HILL

DECEMBER 2016

First Presbyterian Church
307 University Drive
Starkville, MS 39759

Contact or leave a message for Pastor Martin Lifer or Secretary Beckie Miller in the Church Office –Monday through Friday – at the Church Office Number (662) 323-1994, or via email to Office@fpcstarkville.org. In addition, you may reach the following ministry staff via their direct email addresses listed below:

FPC and FPCCC Ministry Staff- email addresses

Rev. Dr. Martin Lifer, *Pastor* mwlifer3@gmail.com
Ashleigh Murdock, *Children's Ministry Coordinator* aabmurdock@gmail.com
Dr. Craig Aarhus, *Music Director* aarhus@bellsouth.net
Jennifer Blackburn, *Organist* jenniferblackbourn@hotmail.com
Kathy McGill, *Children's Choir Director* katherinemcgill@hotmail.com
Ellen Mauldin, *Church Librarian* mem3@bellsouth.net
Amanda Corley, *Child Care Director* fpcccdirector@fpcstarkville.org

**MERRY CHRISTMAS, FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH FAMILY! THANK YOU FOR YOUR
GENEROSITY THIS SEASON!**



Photo above: Jim Beaty, the Aarhus Family, niece, nephew, and Amy's and Craig's mothers carry some of the OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD GIFT BOXES given by FPC members in November to bring Christmas and the gospel of Jesus to children in 3rd-World countries being reached by Samaritan's Purse Mission. God will bless you in your gracious response to this and other stewardship opportunities this season!

