



FPC Chronicle

First Presbyterian Church
Crystal Springs, MS



December 2020

WIC NEWS

I hope everybody has recuperated from Thanksgiving and is ready for December. Please put the following dates on your calendar:

Dec 1st was the deadline to order poinsettias in memory of or honoring someone. We will decorate the sanctuary for Christmas using them. You will be able to take them home following the Christmas program.

Dec. 4th– Decorate Church sanctuary for Christmas @ 9am. Please come if you would like to help.

Dec. 5th- Chili Supper at the church (we will eat outside) before the parade @ 5pm. Movie outside by the Manse after parade. Bring a chair and blanket.

Dec. 20th– Christmas Service @ 5pm

The Missions Committee and the WIC are participating in sending personal care items to the men and women at the Central MS Correctional Facility. Beverly Hood has gathered all the items and we may need to help her package them.

We will help Erns Jones again this year with a Christmas Box. The box is in the Fellowship Hall. He wears size M clothes. He needs socks, shirts, paper products, soap, scent free detergent and easy microwave dinners, cokes and soups. Thank you so much in advance for helping with his gift. Beth/Jimmy Dickson along with Austin Curtis check on him regularly.

The Fellowship Sunday School Class and WIC are donating money to Palmer Home to help five children for Christmas.

Sanctuary Flowers: 6 Sue Lee; 13, 20, & 27 Christmas

Nursery Schedule: 6 Katie Ashlyn/Sharon Lee; 13 JoAnne & Todd Davis; 20 Amy & Tim Blair; 27 Dianne Ham/
Stacey Lee Birthdays: 4-Shannon Smith; 8-Mary Posey

Youth News

Life has been busy for me the last few weeks with final papers, wedding preparation, and going to weddings!

Last month, the youth completed a study on the first twelve questions of the Westminster Shorter Catechism dealing primarily with the doctrine of God. Over the next few years, it is my hope to complete a survey of the entire Shorter Catechism.

We are now several weeks into a study of the Christian Worldview, primarily dealing with apologetics (the defense of the Faith). Of foundational importance to Christian apologetics is rightly understanding the nature of truth. Jesus asserts that he is the Truth (John 14:6), and that he is the only way to God the Father. Paul later asserts that all the treasures of knowledge and wisdom are hidden in Christ (Colossians 2:3). All truth is God's truth, truth is objective, and because of sin, truth matters little to this world. Jesus came to testify concerning the Truth (John 18:37), and for this he was crucified. We as Christians are called to testify to the Truth as ultimately embodied in Christ (Matthew 28:19), and since all truth is God's truth, we are under obligation to objectively discern and promote truth against all falsehood (Exodus 20:16, WCF LC. 143-145).

Facts are important to promoting the gospel, but the way in which we determine facts is governed by our underlying commitments. We as Christians are committed to God's Word first and foremost because God has given us his Word as ultimate (WCF SC. 2). The unbeliever has rejected God's Word as truth because he has trusted in himself as ultimate (Romans 1). Since the unbeliever rejects Christ, he rejects his claim on all facts, such rejection being the hallmark of foolishness (Psalm 14:1, Proverbs 1:7). What the unbeliever is most in need of is not facts but a change in the way he views facts, that is, renovation of the heart by the Holy Spirit. Apologetics is then by nature an extension of evangelism. The unbeliever will believe nothing we say unless God first rescues him from unbelief.

CHRIS-CROSS WORD

"It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas." This is a line from one of my favorite classic Christmas songs sung of course by the great Bing Crosby! Every year as the decorations begin appearing, often too early in my opinion, this song comes to mind. However, as this happens something else takes place as well. I begin thinking on memories of past Christmases and reflections on the past year. Here are just some of these reflections and memories.

The current COVID pandemic causes me to recall the large family and church gatherings we would all look forward to each year. With family, these were times to catch up on life, share your favorite jokes and trips, "discuss" why our particular team had been playing the way they were, and as kids do our prognostication of which toys would soon be ours. While with Church we had parties, progressive dinners, simple gift exchanges, and the singing of Christmas carols in each other's homes. I look fondly on those memories and know we'll be back to those eventually.

Yet, there are other memories that are even more special. Gathering at my grandfather's house where he chose a different family member each year to read out loud the account of Jesus' birth from Luke 2:1-20. Candlelight Services at church where all took time to rest on and find comfort in the power and hope found in Jesus put vividly on display at this time of the year! All of these and more come to my mind and I'm sure many similar things come to yours as well.

But what of this Christmas? In a few days we will have our Church Christmas Party (socially distanced and outside), we're in full swing preparing for our Candlelight Service on the 20th, and Jennifer is busy setting out our Christmas décor around the manse. Yet, with all these activities and with all the social restrictions one thing remains steadfast, still, and encouraging. That is the message that is declared to the world. The long-awaited Messiah, the Savior of the lost was born!

Though we know Christmas Day is not the actual birthdate, the purpose of this day is to reflect on and remember the real historical moment. In truth, there was a day nearly 2,000 years ago when God took on human flesh. There was a real day when the prophecies telling of the promised deliverer were fulfilled. That day marked the countdown to the greatest moment in all of human history when Jesus would do just as the angel declared to Joseph about Mary, "*21 She will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.*" Matthew 1:21, ESV)

The birth of Jesus, the incarnation of the Son of God, fully God and fully Man set into motion the very hope that you and I have today. Because Jesus was really born, He was able to truly represent you and I. Because Jesus was really born, we truly can be at peace with God. Because Jesus was really born, yours and my eternity are forever sure. Why? Because Jesus' birth led to His perfect life which paved the way for His willing death on the cross leading to His triumphant rising from the grave. All that results in salvation being bought and secured for us who are now sealed by the Holy Spirit until Jesus returns once more!

So, while it is beginning to look like Christmas, the greatest reflection and memory we can hold to is this, our God, in history past, gave the greatest gift we could ever hope to receive. Eternal forgiveness, hope, sins washed white as snow, and life with Him forevermore! Merry Christmas! May you reflect on the great peace and joy that is yours so that this and all your Christmases be filled with His great Joy!

Deacon Elections

The congregational meeting to elect Deacons and present the 2021 budget will be December 6, 2020.

Missions Minute

This month we sent \$1500 to French Camp and \$300 to "Engaging Disability With The Gospel". The Mission Committee and the WIC are taking 48 gifts to the prison inmates at the Rankin County Prison. Ms. Tommie Barnhart retired from serving on the Mission Committee after serving for more than 40 years. We are very grateful for her faithful service and wisdom these many years.