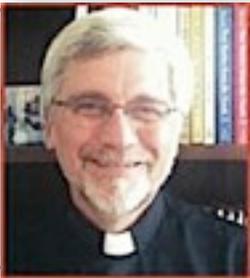




JJ White Memorial Presbyterian Church

April 2020



A Word from Our Pastor - The Reverend Bob Phelps

What Will We Remember?

It's hard for most of us to look past our immediate circumstance right now. Most of us have not experienced confinement and isolation like this before. Many who have known confinement brought on by illness or the care of others can be helpful to us. This crisis will pass. And when it does, we will remember something about it. The Good News is that we will get to determine how we remember these days.

We can choose to remember all the negatives. Deanna says she's never been so tired of cleaning the kitchen. (Usually, I cook; she cleans; don't want to be accused of not doing my part!) Many of us don't like not being able to find exactly what we want when we venture out to the store. Parents who have become teachers will have stories to tell about how math computation has changed. Our social interaction is not happening. Who can remember a time when we didn't gather for worship for this many weeks? We can focus on all that, and some will.

But there are other things on which we'll be able to look back and be thankful. Who'd have thought that we'd ever have worship and Session meetings electronically? I know some places do that kind of thing all the time, but us? We have discovered opportunities we hadn't considered before, but I'll bet we'll be thankful for them when this is over and that we'll find way to continue to use them. We have connected with people we might

not have reached before this. Hopefully, we can stay in touch. Our daily postings and Sunday online services have been widely read and watched and shared. Hopefully, they have helped us reflect on the faith we share while we are isolated from one another. Serving others is one of the distinguishing characteristics of our congregation. We weren't very far into this crisis before one called me to see if we could cook spaghetti for whoever could come down the alley to pick it up. Of course we could. And we did until it was no longer safe for even a few of us to gather. Another called to see about offering shopping assistance to folks who would have difficulty getting out on their own. Several have benefitted from that help, and, as this continues, if others need it, please let us know. We have learned to depend on one another in ways we usually don't. I am grateful for many of you who have called, texted, or emailed to see if we need something when you go to the store or if we need help of other kinds. I'm grateful for those who continue to ask how Blake's doing (He's good, just a fish out of water, wondering what comes next.). I'm thankful for those who have called to see how they can help others. I'm grateful for those who have expressed support for the difficult decisions the Session has had to make. They weren't easy. I am grateful for all who have continued to support the Church's ministry financially. With your help and faithful support, we'll come through this. Good can come from all this, if we search for it and choose to remember it.

This need not go down as the year without an Easter. Easter will come. One of you reminded me recently that if Easter is not in our hearts, it doesn't much matter anyway. The Lord is Risen. He is Risen Indeed! Let's choose to remember that. I look forward to seeing you all again soon.

Grace and Peace,
Bob



Music Notes

from Deanna Phelps, Music Director



“Be Joyful and Sing” was one of two anthems you were supposed to hear from the choir on Easter Sunday this year. Even choir members haven't heard them because we were just about to begin work on them when the virus shut down all of our activities at the Church. We'll have other opportunities to learn and to sing that song and others when this crisis passes, but the message of that anthem is one that can help sustain us until we are together again.

Sometimes I pick an anthem for us to sing because of the words. Other times, the music is what draws me to the piece. Sometimes, as in this case, the combination of words and music is powerful. Notice that the song doesn't encourage us to sing until we find joy. It says to be joyful and then to sing. That word choice is particularly meaningful this year. I miss singing together with the choir and with the congregation. Something happens to us when we sing, whether we're musicians or not. The music of Lent and Holy Week is my favorite music of the Church Year. It helps us to experience God's love for us in powerful ways. That music, though sometimes emotionally draining, plants awareness of God's love in our hearts. That love will always find a way to express itself. The joy that it plants in our hearts must come out.

Normally, after long weeks of Lent, that love gets expressed when we all sing Alleluia together on Easter morning. Bob and I always pick a lively setting of Alleluia for us to sing together several times on Easter morning.

We won't get to do that this year, of course, but I hope you'll find some time to sing something on Easter, whether it's “Alleluia,” “Christ, the Lord, Is Risen Today,” or simply “Thank You, Lord!”

Be joyful and sing on Easter and long after that day. Be joyful because God loves us. Sing to let the world know. I look forward to singing with you again when we can.

A Celebration of Baptism - John Paul Reeves IV



John Paul “Jack” Reeves IV was baptized by Reverend Bob Phelps on Sunday, March 15, at JJ White Memorial Presbyterian Church.

Jack’s parents are John Paul and Elise Reeves. Maxine Brock is his proud grandmother. Our church family shares in the joy of Jack’s family and friends in the celebration of his Baptism.

Presbyterian of JJ White

Presbyterian Women of JJ White MPC will, of course, not meet this month. However, before the “shelter in place” ruling the women of JJ White’s PW were able to complete the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance project as pictured and look forward to future *Together in Service* projects, regular meetings, and Bible study.



PW members Susan White (l) Sharon Harmon, Shelli Quayhagen, and Beverly Yates display school and hygiene kits for PDA.

On Hold, But Not Forgotten...

We can't tell you when we'll get back to something that resembles our normal schedule, but there are a few things we don't want you to forget about while we wait:

Homeless Shelter Work

We are committed to helping Mrs. Sarah Connerly in her efforts to establish a homeless shelter in East McComb. We have been in communication with Mrs. Connerly to say that our work day there will happen as soon as we decide it's safe to engage in such work. We'll need your help and will let you know when we can make definite plans. In the meantime, say a



prayer of thanksgiving for Mrs. Connerly's good heart and for all who are helping her with this important work

Graduates to Celebrate

We have four high schoolers who are anxiously awaiting word about their plans to graduate this spring. Aubrey and Megan Arnold from Bogue Chitto High School, Phillip Nance from Discovery Learning Center, and Gracie Senner from Parklane Academy have much to be proud of, and we'll celebrate with them when we can. Stay tuned for ways you can let them know you're proud of them.



Community Partners

While our focus has been mostly on church programs that are not happening, all of the other people and groups who routinely use our buildings have been shut out too. Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Knutty Knitters, the Pike County Quilters' Guild, a bridge club, and other occasional guests will all return when it is safe, and we will be happy to see them again.



The sign in front of our church currently reads, "Keeping our Community in Our Prayers." Please keep our whole community in your prayers.

Special Thanks

We express heartfelt appreciation to two special communicators during our current isolation: Suzi Drummond produces this newsletter from information she receives from staff and others.

She has also taken on the daily posting of devotions from our pastor.

Beth Wild, the Clerk of our Session, has figured out how to get our Sunday worship on Facebook Live and posts beautiful pictures with the daily devotions on Facebook.

We are grateful for Suzi and Beth's efforts to help us all stay in touch.



The Session held its regular meeting for March on the 15th following worship in the Ewell Martin Room. All members of the Session were present. Dr. Robbie DeCoux, an elder on rotation, also attended to offer medical counsel to the Session regarding the Corona virus situation. After opening the meeting with prayer, the Session took the following actions:

- ❖ offered special prayers for former pastor Steve Ramp, who was injured in a fall in Hattiesburg.
- ❖ after much discussion and counsel from Dr. DeCoux, the Session voted to suspend all gathering at the church until April 1 due to the current pandemic.
- ❖ approved minutes and financial statements.
- ❖ approved the baptism of John Paul Reeves IV.
- ❖ approved a special gift to purchase hymnbooks for the reorganizing congregation at Diamondhead.
- ❖ received a preliminary report from the Committee to Plan for the 100th Anniversary of the Sanctuary in 2021.
- ❖ heard reports from the Christian Education, Fellowship and Congregational Care, Mission, and Worship Committees.

The Session meets monthly. Please keep these who guide the ministry of our congregation in your prayers.

The Session held a meeting by Zoom Conference call on Wednesday, April 1, 2020 at 10:30 am. The purpose of the meeting was to consider how to proceed during the continuing health crisis. All members of the Session participated. Actions taken in this meeting include:

- ❖ continuing the suspension of all activities at the Church through April 30, 2020.
- ❖ agreed to continue to broadcast a sermon and prayers on Facebook Live on Sundays until we can gather again. We will also continue to post daily Lenten reflections on Facebook and distribute them by email.
- ❖ agreed to suspend the Wednesday drive-up spaghetti suppers after today.
- ❖ agreed to pay nursery workers through April.
- ❖ agreed to encourage members and friends of the congregation to continue giving to support the Church's ministry.
- ❖ agreed to check in on homebound and other members and friends with special needs.

The Session will meet again soon to assess our ongoing response to the pandemic.

Please keep the Session and one another in your prayers.



April

- 1 Dominic Cotton
- Meredith Rawlings
- 3 Sue White
- 16 Kay Robinson
- 17 Tommy Catchings
- 18 Bill Catchings, Jr.
- 19 Lee Williams
- 20 Kennon Singley
- 21 Kathy Harbour
- 23 Nicky Barr
- 27 Tom Warren Wild
- Cole Jackson
- Avery Jackson

May

- 1 Vicki Brill
- 2 Pat Randall
- 5 Greta James Barr
- 7 Helen Ray
- 9 Vicki Craghead
- 12 Haleigh Estes
- Will Ratcliff
- 13 Kathy Parker
- 14 Andrea Simo
- 18 Howard Allred
- 21 Katie Walman
- 24 Jay Johnson
- 30 Mike Belote
- Ridge Barr

