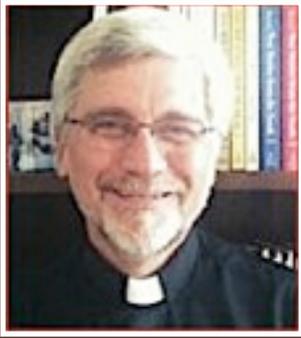


JJ White Memorial Presbyterian Church

January 2016 Newsletter

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:
The old has gone, the new is here!" 2 Corinthians 5:17

~ Happy New Year! ~



a word from our pastor...

The Reverend Bob Phelps

Worship Among Strangers—or Were They?

While we were away from you last week, I went to worship in a church where I knew no one. As is often the case on the Sundays after Christmas and Easter, times when I usually get to worship somewhere else, it really didn't matter whether I knew anyone or not. The preacher was gone (as I was); the organist/choir director was gone (as Deanna was); the choir didn't sing, and the people leading worship were apparently not accustomed to those responsibilities. I arrived early, before the assigned greeters were in their places, but they sought me out when they arrived and made sure I was welcomed, had a bulletin, and was ready to worship. A couple about my age came in and sat behind me. They offered a warm greeting, and when they found out I was a pastor from out of town, they immediately began apologizing: "Oh, we're so sorry you won't get to hear our pastor; he's excellent in the pulpit." "And we're sorry you won't get to hear our regular organist or the choir; they're great, too." I assured them that I understood and that I had left a congregation here in the same situation (although the preacher I left behind was much better than the one I heard.) Attendance was down that Sunday, and they apologized about that, too. We were worshipping in a beautiful old sanctuary. When we stood for one of the hymns, when the man behind me grabbed onto the end of the pew, it fell off in the aisle. As they moved to the stable end of the pew, they apologized all over again. We were in the middle of a hymn when that happened, so I waited until after the service to invite them to come down and worship with us sometime, and told them that while I thought the pews would hold together, they'd have to be on the lookout for falling plaster!

I could have found all kinds of reasons not to go to worship at all that morning. It was cold. I knew I wouldn't know anyone there. I had done some online reading about the church before I went, but I

still wasn't altogether sure what brand of Presbyterianism I was going to hear when I got there. But it was Sunday, so I went to worship. Even though I still don't know anyone there, something wonderful happened when the service began. Yes, the worship leader was obviously nervous and ill-prepared; the preacher was not the best I've ever heard (neither was she the worst by any stretch); and the special music was played on the organ, a tenor saxophone, and a cello, so that was, shall we say, interesting! But we prayed together in forms that made sense to me: we gave praise to God, we confessed our sin and were assured of God's forgiveness. We prayed for sick people I didn't know, but folks there did. Their concern for their members and friends was obvious in the way they prayed for them. We sang hymns that were familiar and appropriate for the season. When the service ended, the visiting preacher stood among us and assured us of God's love for us as we begin a new year and sent us out to do God's work. In short, we worshiped, and I was glad I had been there. Jesus was onto something when he assured his followers that whenever even two or three gather in his name, he is among them.

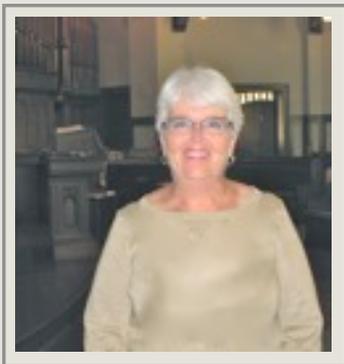
I see that there were visitors among you when you worshiped this past week. I hope that you warmly welcomed them and that you spent more time being welcoming than you did apologizing for my absence or the absence of other regular things. I look forward to worshipping with you this Sunday as we ordain and install three new elders and as we continue telling the story of Jesus and the difference he makes in our lives. That's what I heard among strangers in Indiana on Sunday. They don't feel quite as much like strangers anymore.

Grace and Peace,
Bob

Remember Your Session in Your Prayers

This is an important time for the members of our Session. Elders Jose' Simo, Whitney Rawlings, and Noggin Wild have completed their terms on the Session and will rotate out of active involvement. All of them will, of course, continue to be involved in various parts of the ministry of our church, but their current terms on the Session have ended. I'm sure you'll see each of them again in future years. Please express your appreciation to each of them for their service.

Newly elected elders Ally Allred, Kathy Harbour, and Kennon Singley will assume their places on the Session this month. We will ordain and install them on Sunday, January 10. Please keep them in your prayers as they begin their service. Pray for the entire Session. Continuing members who join Ally, Kathy, and Kennon on the Session are: Bob Arnold, Melisa DeCoux, Wayne Hutchison, Robbie DeCoux, Pat Randall, and Margy Wicker. The Session will meet for a day-long planning and visioning meeting on Saturday, January 16. Please keep all the elders and our Moderator, Pastor Bob, in your prayers as they guide our ministry in 2016 and beyond.



Music Notes from Deanna Phelps, Music Director

Church musicians are, by definition, forward-looking people. I was so thankful for the gifts of our choir during Advent and Christmas this year. They worked hard and led us in worship in wonderful ways during these important services. Now that those services are behind us, I can admit that while I was fully engrossed in preparing and leading those times of worship, I was looking ahead to the Lenten and Easter seasons, which will begin very soon. Ash Wednesday is February 10 (Yes, that means Mardi Gras is Tuesday, February 9, just five weeks from now!), and Easter comes early this year on March 27. So in the midst of polishing up the beautiful music of Advent and Christmas, my mind was also running ahead to what we'd sing for Lent and Easter. Some of you know that we share music pretty freely with a church in Alabama. They buy some; we buy some, and we share back and

forth. That means I have to plan ahead so that my friend there and I can pull music to share and to get it to one another. I'm glad we can share and help one another.

That means, of course, that about half-way through Lent, I'll be looking ahead to summer, inviting folks both familiar and new to sing with us then, and to fall, when we'll start all over again.

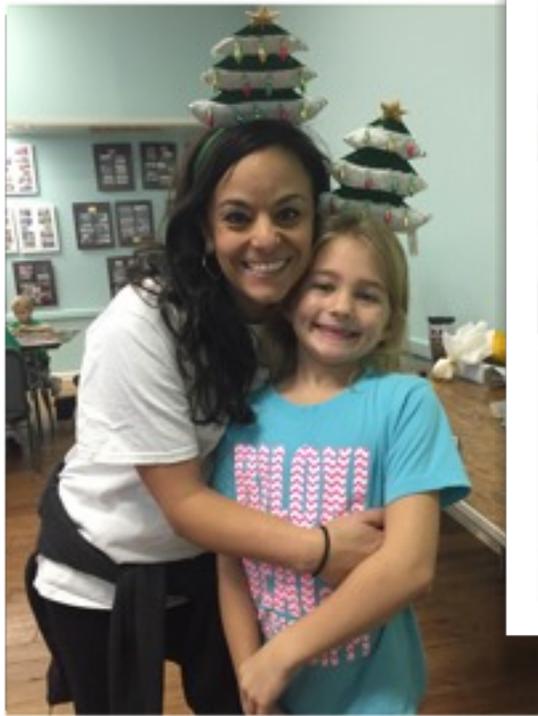
The wonderful thing about looking forward is that God is always out there ahead of us, calling us to new experiences and equipping us to praise him in new and wonderful ways. I hope you enjoyed the music of Advent and Christmas as much as I did. And I hope that the music of every season in this new year leads us to new understandings of God's love and grace.

White MPC's Christmas 2015

Children and Youth Brought Us Joy!



Children's "Adventure"...



Lighting of Advent Candles and
Lovely Decorations...



Thank you to our choir, Deanna,
Roger, and Jennifer for the
beautiful music throughout the
Christmas season.
Thank you to Beth for the lovely
decorations in our sanctuary.
Surely, God was glorified
through your work!

Youth Update...

Dear JJ White MPC church family,
Thanks to all who contributed to our Christmas project to adopt a family in need. Your donations of gifts and money helped us to make the kids who received those presents very happy.

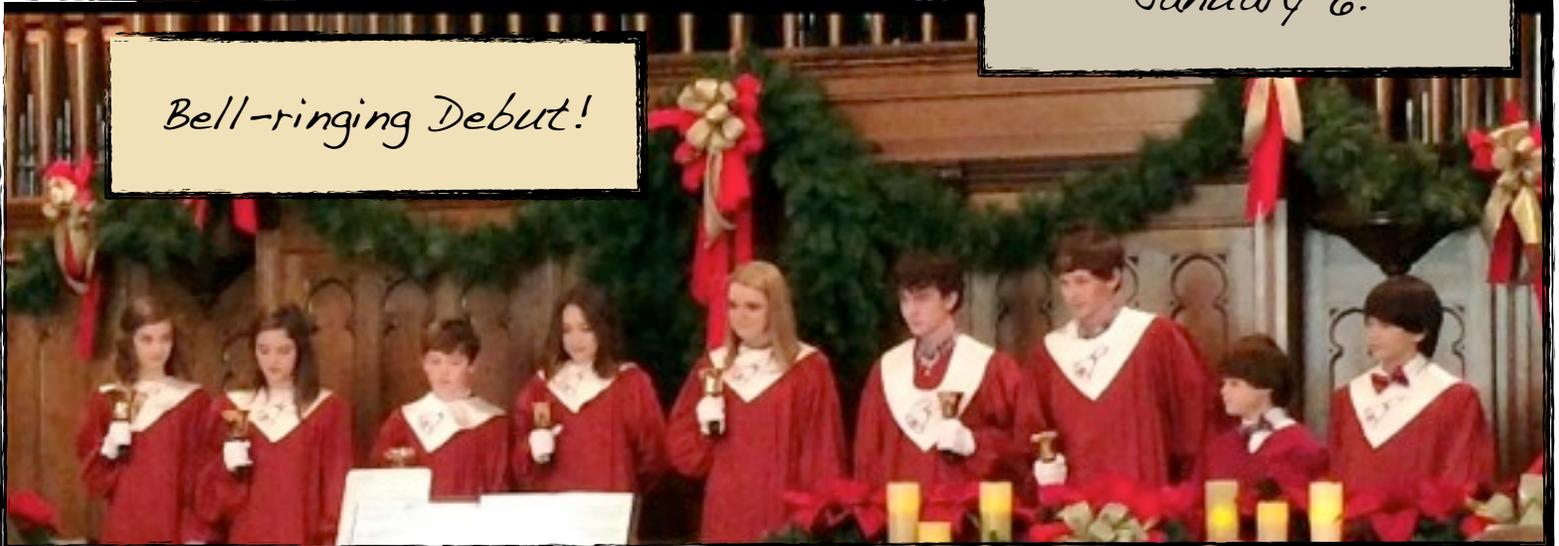
Happy New Year,
JJ White MPC Youth



Pictured are some of our youth members who, on a recent Saturday, worked on a community service project. Front row: Alleigh and Lily; 2nd row: Steven and Charlie; Top row: Britt

Youth activities will resume on January 6.

Bell-ringing Debut!



(l.-r.) Andrea, Alleigh, Charlie, Emily, Gracie, Steven, Britt, Conner, and Carson

Presbyterian Women of JJ White



Reverend Bob Phelps was a special guest for JJW Presbyterian Women's December meeting.



Presbyterian Women of JJ White met on December 8th with Reverend Phelps leading a special Advent devotional. The luncheon was truly "potluck" but miraculously seemed like a planned menu as there was a delicious variety of food provided by the women. The group was happy to have Rev. Phelps as a special guest for lunch following his Advent message and appreciated his time with them.

Bess Simmons, longtime PW member, presented each woman with a two dollar bill asking each person to use it in an act of caring toward someone.

The PW's Annual Winter Retreat for women of the Presbytery of Mississippi is on January 15-16 at St. Mary of the Pines in Chatawa. Deanna Phelps and Suzi Drummond plan to attend the event.

The PW of JJ White meets the second Tuesday of each month with their next meeting to be on January 12 at 11:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. The lesson this month will be "Dangerous Waters - God's Deliverance" (Joshua 3; Psalm 69:1-3). A light lunch is served.

All women are invited and encouraged to come!



HAPPY NEW YEAR!

JANUARY SCHEDULES

Elder of the Month

Wayne Hutchison

Sunday Morning Breakfast

- 3 Sharon white
- 10 Mary Ann Ratcliff
- 17 Beth Wild
- 24 Bill Mitchell
- 31 "Hutchison Girls"

Flowers

- 3 Christmas
- 10 Sue Nunnery
- 17 Bryan Harbour
- 24 Joan Kennedy
- 31 Debbie and Clem Stovall

Children's Church

- 3 Sara Beth Williams, Alison Allred
- 10 Libby Simo, Lee Williams
- 17 Susan White
- 24 Carol Rawlings, Keri Gatlin
- 31 Meredith Singley

Men's Interdenominational Breakfast Group

- 6 Jimmy C. Robertson, Whitney Rawlings
- 13 Bob Phelps, Kit Stovall
- 20 Bill Mitchell, Jim Alford
- 27 Randy Burris, Tommy Ratcliff

Ushers/Greeters

- Tommy Ratcliff, Captain
- Robbie DeCoux
- John Drummond
- Stacey Moak
- Mark Statham
- Johnny Nance



**Happy
Birthday
to...**

January

- 2 Nancy McElwee
- 3 Beverly Nelson
- 7 Joan McDaniel
- 9 Lily Warshauer
- 10 Ann Jackson
Toni James
- 15 Mark Statham
- 17 Tommy Morgan
- 18 Prudence McGehee
- 23 Ralph Brock
- 25 Tommy Ratcliff
- 30 Bill Jones
- 31 Henry Gibbs IV
Roger Nickerson

February

- 13 Emily Austin
- 14 Roger Price
- 20 Donna Smith
- 20 Susan F. Gibbs
- 21 Margaret Ann Morgan
- 21 Sam White
- 22 Hannah Catchings
- 25 Tom Gatlin
- 27 Phyllis Turner
- 28 Hayden Williams
- 28 Henry Williams

January 2016

*This bright new year is given me
To live each day with zest
To daily grow and try to be
My highest and my best!
- William Arthur Ward*

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

					1 Happy New Year! 2016	2
3 9:00 light breakfast 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Morning Worship	4	5	6 7:15 a.m Men's Breakfast 5:30 supper 6:00 activities for all ages 6:30 choir	7 Bible Study with Rev. Phelps 10:30 am Knutty Knitters 7:00 PM	8	9
10 9:00 light breakfast 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Morning Worship Sacrament of Communion	11	12 Presbyterian Women 11:30 a.m Fellowship Hall	13 7:15 a.m Men's Breakfast 5:30 supper 6:00 activities for all ages 6:30 choir	14 Bible Study with Rev. Phelps 10:30 am Knutty Knitters 7:00 PM	15 PW of Mississippi Presbyterian Annual Winter Retreat at Chatawa Friday-Sat. noon	16 Session's Annual Planning Retreat
17 9:00 light breakfast 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Morning Worship	18	19	20 7:15 am Men's Breakfast 5:30 supper 6:00 activities for all ages 6:30 choir	21 Bible Study with Rev. Phelps 10:30 am Knutty Knitters 7:00 PM	22	23
24 9:00 light breakfast 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Morning Worship	25 Synod of Living Waters meets in Tennessee. Rev. Phelps attending as delegate from Mississippi Presbytery	26	27 7:15 am Men's Breakfast 5:30 supper 6:00 activities for all ages 6:30 choir	28 Bible Study with Rev. Phelps 10:30 am Knutty Knitters 7:00 PM	29	30
31 MICA 9:00 light breakfast 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Morning Worship						