

JJ White Memorial Presbyterian Church

September 2019



Be still and know that I am God ... Psalm 46:10



a word from our pastor....
Reverend Bob Phelps

In Context

The realtors in our congregation will recognize a familiar phrase in their business. When asked about the three most important things in selling a house, they always say, "Location, Location, Location!" And they are usually right. Bring in the right school district, near churches, health care providers, the grocery store, and other services makes all the difference in the value of a house someone is considering as a home.

Some of us who do Bible study co-opted that adage for our own purpose. When people ask us what at the three most important things to consider when trying to understand a text from Scripture, we say, "Context, Context, Context!" And we are usually right (of course!) What Scripture meant to its original readers and hearers is an important thing to consider when we're trying to figure out what it means to us. When Jesus told people that if their eye offended them they should pluck it out, most of them would have understood that as figurative language to make a point, not a suggestion for real behavior. Outside that context, some might not always understand that. Many who insist on reading only the biblical text without the aid of study helps wind up missing many important insights.

This time of year is difficult to put into context for many. Back to school sale ads continue to pop up in my email, and our kids have been in school for nearly a month. Some people seem to equate football and fall, but where we live we play football in ninety degree heat for a good part of the season. Maybe that's why those Big Ten folks don't like to play SEC teams! I went in Lowes not long ago to get some mulch I was way late in getting down, and I could barely find it for the pumpkins, mums, and scarecrows. I hope all those people who were buying up those beautiful mums are ready to stand over them with a watering can in this heat. And I don't even want to think about how those pumpkins will hold up when it hits a hundred degrees this weekend!

Of course right behind all that fall stuff the Christmas stuff is already popping up, too, and I don't even want to think about that yet.

I know about marketing, and all that goes with it, but it won't be fall for a long time yet around here, even when the calendar says it is. In our context, we have two seasons, hot, and hotter, and that hotter one will last a while yet.

Somehow we have to find a way to resist falling for the marketing ploys that try to get us to live in some time other than the one we're in. We may get the mums on the porch by October or maybe even November, but it's way too hot to care for them now. For now, we'll continue drag watering hoses around and try to keep things alive until more moderate temperatures come.

In a similar way, our spiritual health suffers when we focus only on the future and fail to see the benefit of living with God in the here and now. One of the wisest man I have ever known once said that he grew weary of people who spent all their time talking about how good it would be to walk and talk with Jesus when they got to Heaven, especially when he didn't see them doing much of that while they were here.

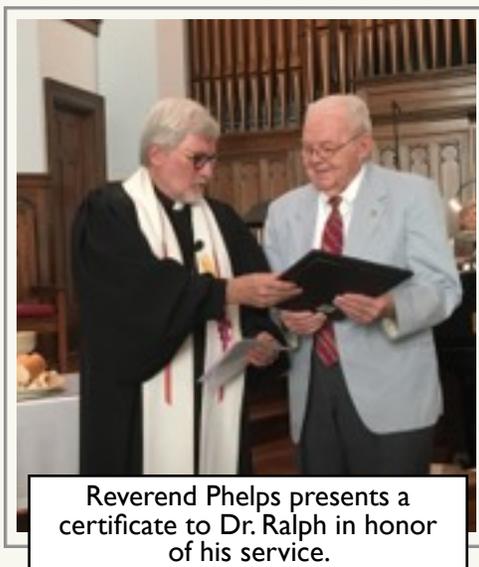
I know it's hot and doesn't feel much like fall. That's because it's not, regardless of what Wal-Mart and Hobby Lobby say. But there is life to live and ministry to do in this context, and there will be life to live and ministry to do when it does ever cool off. Don't wait for things to conform to your expectations before you consider God's claim on your life. Wherever you are on your journey, God wants to be there with you, not just when everything lines up right, but wherever you are. Thanks be to God!



Music Notes from Deanna Phelps, Music Director

Giving Thanks

By now, most of you know that Ralph Brock has retired from our choir. We were happy to honor him in worship recently, and the choir will find ways to honor him further soon. Ralph has been a fixture in our choir and in other church choirs before ours for many years. In fact, Ralph was singing in a church choir before I was born! He still has plenty of voice left, but the logistics of getting around have helped him decide to put his energies into other things. His retirement has given me pause to reflect on how our work fits into the life of the Church.



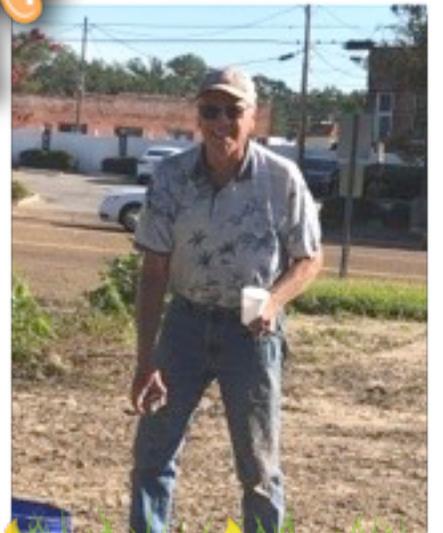
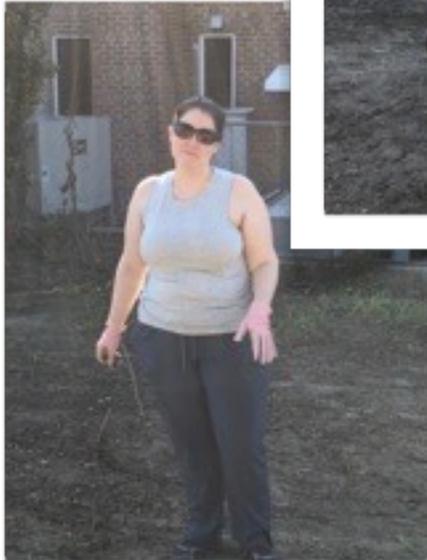
Reverend Phelps presents a certificate to Dr. Ralph in honor of his service.

When I sit down to plan for music selections for a new year like the one that stretches before us, I always look back on what we've sung recently and what we might consider singing looking forward. I keep a running log of what we sing when, and there are drawers and cabinets full of music from years and years ago, most noted with when they were sung and where. Some of you know that we also have a swap relationship with the choir at the church in Alabama where our friend, Frances, leads. When she finds something new, she sends it to us when they've finished, and when we sing new things, we share them with her choir. Just thinking about anthems that were sung here or somewhere years ago is humbling. I think about Ralph and others who sang those pieces here and how the church has continue to minister in ways that make those pieces meaningful again. I remember singing pieces with the Huntsville choir when I led them, and are grateful for opportunities to sing them again. The cycle of life in which we all live and serve is a humbling thing.

We will, of course, miss Ralph's presence among us. But we are grateful for his long tenure and his generosity in sharing God's gift of music. His departure leaves a gap. If there is a tenor voice out there I haven't found yet, I hope you'll consider bringing it to rehearsal on Wednesday nights. Other voices are welcome, too.

Thanks, Ralph, for being part of us. And thanks be to God for calling forth our praise year after year.

Work Day - Saturday, August 30
The lots look great! Good job to all who helped!
(Some escaped the camera... Photos by Carol R.)





On a recent Sunday morning in August Reverend Phelps blessed the backpacks of the students beginning a new school year. We all participated in readings and prayers to let the children know they had our support and encouragement for the months ahead. Reverend Phelps presented the students with tags for their backpacks (pictured above) which said "Peace be upon you." Our prayers will be with them through all they experience this school year.



Shelli Quayhagen introduces the new Bible study at the August PW meeting.

Presbyterian Women of JJ White will meet on Tuesday, September 10, at 11:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. The group will begin their study Love Carved in Stone with Lesson 1. The meeting will include mission planning as well as a light lunch. All women are welcome to attend and participate in the Bible study and projects of PW.



On Saturday, September 21, Presbyterian Women of the Presbytery of Mississippi will meet for their fall gathering at Pineview Presbyterian Church in Hattiesburg for a time of worship, Bible study, and updates on PW projects. A group from JJ White plans to attend. Anyone interested is encouraged to attend this gathering. A carpool is planned.

New PW Group Forming

The best ministry happens in the midst of relationships. During this summer's mission trip to Puerto Rico, Shelli Quayhagen and Cathy Salter, both of whom are relatively new to our congregation met and got to know other women in the church. As they worked and talked together that week, they discussed possibilities of continuing to meet after the trip and inviting others to join them. The result of those conversations is a new Presbyterian Women (PW) Group that will begin meeting this month. Shelli and Cathy both participate in the PW group that meets at 11:30 a.m. once a month, but several other women are at work when that group meets and are unable to participate.

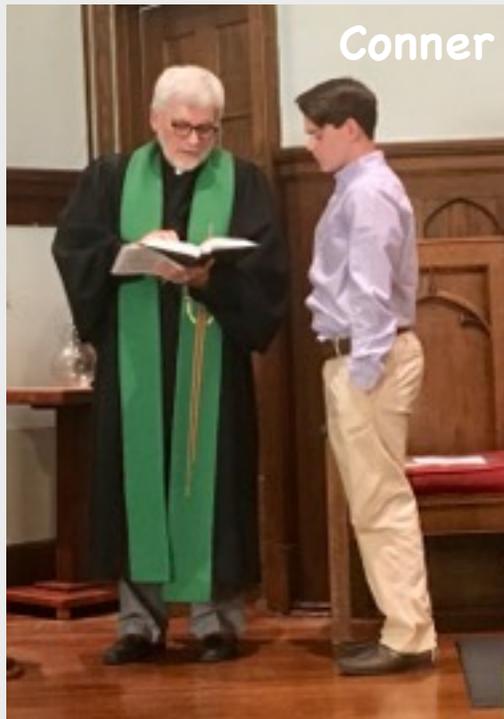
The new group, that will find a name someday, will meet for the first time on Tuesday, September 17, at 6:30 pm at Shelli's home in Summit (1064 Pine Cone Lane). The group plans to meet quarterly at first and will provide an opportunity for community building and spiritual growth for those who participate. All women are invited. Shelli and Cathy will continue to participate in the daytime group while they help to lead this evening gathering. See one of them for more information or to let them know you plan to attend on Tuesday, September 17, at 6:30 pm. .

JJW Youth Attend Back to School Event at Westminster in Hattiesburg



On Sunday afternoon, August 25, Bob and four of our youth travelled to the Westminster Church in Hattiesburg where they joined nearly forty other youth and adults from across our Presbytery for an afternoon of Back to School fun, fellowship, and Bible study. Kya Cotton, Rusten Lewis, and Andrea and Natalie Simo attended from our church. Participants came from our church, the Briarwood Church in Jackson, Westminster in Hattiesburg, First-Trinity in Laurel, and Old Town in Bay St. Louis. The kids participated in get-acquainted games, some group-building activities, and Bible study before they enjoyed a meal of barbecue, sides, and dessert. A rainy afternoon forced what had been planned for outside activities indoors but the kids didn't seem to mind. Check out the pictures of the group playing human foosball. Thanks to Christopher Crotwell and Tommy Suttle of Westminster and Jessica Lewis for planning and conducting this event. We look forward to opportunities to get our kids together with other Presbyterian youth in the future.

JJ White MPC welcomes two new members from this year's Communicates Class...



New Member Conner Simmons ...

Conner Simmons is the son of Angie Simmons and Van Simmons. He is 15 and in the tenth grade at Parklane. He stays busy with school and enjoys working out as a favorite activity, and, of course, likes to just hang out with his friends . We have all watched Conner grow up through the years and are pleased to welcome him to our membership.

New Member Kya Cotton...

Kya Cotton is the daughter of Linda Miller. She has many interests and accomplishments. She has been a part of her school dance team for four years, has been recognized as a young writer, and was one of the group referred to as the "Depot Dozen" , who wrote about railroad history in McComb. At Denman Kya was in the National Junior Honor Society. She also participates in soccer and softball and has received awards for athletics. She is 14 and is beginning her freshman year at McComb High. We are so happy to now have her as an official member of JJ White MPC.



A little bird told me to tell you to
save the date for the **90+**
Birthday Party on Wednesday,
Sept. 25, at 5:15. p.m. (Chicken &
Dumplings, birthday cake and
ice cream)



F.Y.I.

UPDATES ON OUR SESSION, OUR PRESBYTERY, AND BEYOND...

Matthew 25 Calls Us

The Matthew 25 Initiative is a denominational call for congregations to focus on ministry beyond ourselves. Matthew 25 is the text that calls us to remember that what we do for the least of those among us we do for Christ and that Christ is always present among the least and the last.



MATTHEW 25

In the summer meeting of the Presbytery of Mississippi, congregations from Canton to the Coast brought displays of ways that we are responding to the Matthew 25 call. Our display featured pictures from this summer's mission trip to Puerto Rico, our youth's efforts at a community clean-up day earlier this year, some Excel by 5 activities, some PW local mission projects, this year's Mission Conference, MICA, our support of Frontera de Cristo and their coffee project, and several other ways we serve others.

As you can see, our congregation is already well on our way to demonstrating our commitment to the Matthew 25 call. Join us as we pray and serve those in need among, around, and beyond us. You'll be hearing more about this initiative in the coming weeks.

Elder Nominating Process Begins

It's that time of year again. Time to start to think about leadership changes. Elders Suzi Drummond, Will Kimmel, and Noggin Wild will complete their terms on the Session this December.

On **Sunday, September 8**, we will hold a congregational meeting to elect this year's **Elder Nominating Committee**. That group, once elected, will bring us a slate of nominees for terms on the Session from January 2020 through December 2022. We will elect six people from various age groups and both genders to do this important work. They will be joined by a member of the Session, and the whole process will be advised and resourced by our pastor. Please plan to attend this important meeting, and give prayerful consideration to who will serve on this year's Elder Nominating Committee. The date for the election of elders is October 13.



**Session Report
for August**

The Session held its regular meeting for August on the 11th at noon in the Ewell Martin Room. Elders Andrew DeCoux, Whitney Rawlings, and Ray Salter were excused. Other elders and the Moderator, our pastor, were present.

Actions taken at the meeting include:

- ❖ approval of minutes and financial statements.
- ❖ heard a report from the meeting of Presbytery attended by Will Kimmel and our pastor.
- ❖ approved dates for upcoming events including celebrations, elder nominations, and stewardship season
- ❖ heard a report on Vacation Bible School and upcoming studies by Sunday School groups.
- ❖ upon recommendation from the Fellowship and Congregational Care Committee, rescheduled the Birthday Party for members aged 90+ for Wednesday, September 25.
- ❖ heard updates from the Property Committee.

The Session meets monthly. The September meeting will be on the 15th after worship. Please keep these who play and coordinate the ministry of our congregation in your prayers.



**Presbytery
of
Mississippi
Report**

The Presbytery of Mississippi held its second meeting for this year on Saturday, August 10, at the Prospect Presbyterian Church in Meridian. Elder Will Kimmel and our pastor joined elders and ministers from across the southern half of Mississippi for this gathering.

Actions taken at that meeting include:

- ❖ introduced the Rev. Dr. Cary Speaker, the new Regional Presbyter for South Alabama and Mississippi Presbyteries. Dr. Speaker was also the preacher for the day. He preached from Matthew 25.
- ❖ elected representatives to General Assembly in 2020 in Baltimore and to Synod in January in Tennessee.
- ❖ approved readers for ordination exams in 2020. Our pastor will be one of next year's readers.
- ❖ approved a report from the Christian Nurture Committee which included plans for several events this year and next.
- ❖ heard a report on the work of the Presbytery Cabinet.
- ❖ heard a report from the Mission Committee regarding this year's Living Water for the World trip to Cuba.
- ❖ heard an update from the Presbytery's Trustees on developments regarding the Orange Grove property on the Coast. Work on the disposition of this property continues.
- ❖ a highlight of this meeting was the exhibit of displays from several congregations in our Presbytery showing how we are responding to the Matthew 25 call.
- ❖ approved a calendar of upcoming events.

The Presbytery will meet again on February 8 at Gautier on the Coast. Our Pastor will serve as Moderator during 2020. Please keep the Presbytery's efforts to keep us connected in your prayers.

September Schedules

Sunday Morning Breakfast

1 Mary Ann Ratcliff
8 Beth Wild
15 Lee Williams
22 Hutchison Crew
29 Debbi Brock

Flowers

1 Communion
8 Prudence McGhee
15 Margy Wicker
22 Lee and Stephen Williams
29 Phylis Turner

Children's Church

1 Carol Rawlings
8 Susan White
15 Lee Williams
22 Melisa DeCoux
29 Ally Allred

Ushers/Greeters

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

Men's Interdenominational Breakfast

4 Rick, Jim
11 Bob, Clem
18 Jimmy C., Whitney, Bob Henserling
25 Fred, Warren

Elder of the Month

Andrew DeCoux

Happy Birthday

September

1 Noggin Wild
Lily Estes
3 Margy Wicker
Stephen Williams
4 Andrew DeCoux
5 Gracie Senner
6 Patti Brabham
Sara Beth Williams
10 Bonnie Hudon
Darrell Smith
13 Mary Ann Ratcliff
17 Rose Ann Johnson
19 Wayne Hutchison
20 Blake Phelps
Carolyn McKay
28 Dottie Burt
Stacey Moak

October

2 Evan Parker
4 India Warshauer
5 Katie Layne Gatlin
Linda Johnson
Bill Mitchell
Johnny Nance
Whit Williams
7 Heidi Lewis
8 Melisa DeCoux
9 Carson Simmons
11 Kya Cotton
Lola Jane Gatlin
Burke Williams
13 Bryan Harbour
13 Carri Brock Rowley
14 Maxine Brock
15 Cyndy Catchings
Anna Roberts
Susan White
20 Robbie DeCoux
25 Rusty Brill
Whitney Rawlings
Charlie White
Lou DeLoach
28 Milton McKay
29 Kent Williford
30 Keri Seago
31 Joanna Barr
David Feldman

Hello, September!

2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:00 light breakfast 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Morning Worship Sacrament of Communion	2 Labor Day	3	4 7:15 a.m. Men's Breakfast Wednesday Activities 5:30 Supper 6:00 Activities for All 6:30 Choir	5 Bible Study with Rev. Phelps 10:30 am Knutty Knitters 7:00 PM	6	7
8 9:00 light breakfast 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Morning Worship	9	10 Presbyterian Women (Day Group) 11:30 a.m. Fellowship Hall	11 7:15 a.m. Men's Breakfast Wednesday Activities 5:30 Supper 6:00 Activities for All 6:30 Choir	12 Bible Study with Rev. Phelps 10:30 am Knutty Knitters 7:00 PM	13	14
15 9:00 light breakfast 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Morning Worship Session meets	16	17 Presbyterian Women (New Evening Group) 6:30 at home of Shelli Quayhagen	18 7:15 am Men's Breakfast Wednesday Activities 5:30 Supper 6:00 Activities for All 6:30 Choir	19 Bible Study with Rev. Phelps 10:30 am Knutty Knitters 7:00 PM	20	21 PW Gathering Pineview Church Hattiesburg
22 9:00 light breakfast 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Morning Worship	23	24	25 7:15 am Men's Breakfast Meal and birthday cake to honor those 90+ years Choir 6:30	26 Bible Study with Rev. Phelps 10:30 am Knutty Knitters 7:00 PM	27	28
29 9:00 light breakfast 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Morning Worship	30					