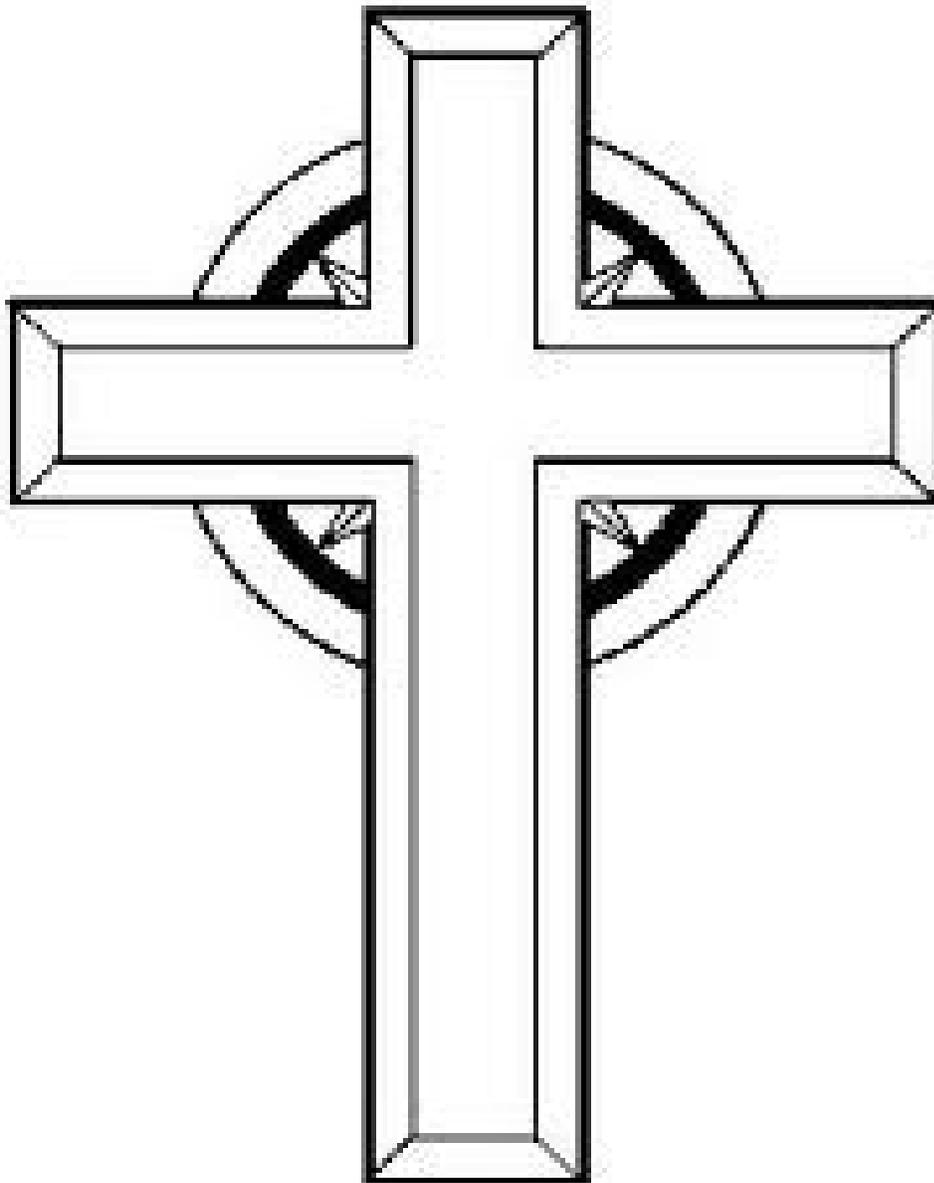


The First Word

MAY
2022

May Lectionary



May 1

3rd Sunday of Easter
Acts 9:1-6(7-20) and
Ps. 30 or Isa. 61:1-3 and
Ps. 90:13-17;
Rev. 5:11-14;
John 21:1-19

May 8

4th Sunday of Easter
Acts 9:36-43 and
Ps. 23 or Isa. 53:1-6 and
Ps. 114; Rev. 7:9-17;
John 10:22-30

May 15

5th Sunday of Easter
Acts 11:1-18 and
Ps. 148 or Lev. 19:9-18
and Ps. 24:1-6;
Rev. 21:1-6;
John 13:31-35

May 22

6th Sunday of Easter
Acts 16:9-15 and Ps. 67
or Deut. 34:1-12 and Ps.
109:21-31; Rev. 21:10,
22-22:5; John 14:23-29 or
John 5:1-9

May 29

7th Sunday of Easter
Acts 16:16-34 and Ps. 97
or 2 Kgs. 2:1-15 and Ps. 2;
Rev. 22:12-14, 16-17, 20-
21; John 17:20-26

Doubting Thomas

May 2022 Reflection

²⁴ But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe”

The first to see Jesus in the Gospel of John is Mary Magdalen. Like we heard in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus instructs her to go ahead of him and share the good news with the disciples.

On evening of the same day that Mary Magdalen tells them Christ has risen, they remain in their house with the door locked out of fear for the Jewish authorities. Christ has risen, and they can do nothing but sit in a locked room.

It appears as if they all doubted, not just Thomas. The disciples heard from Mary Magdalen that Christ fulfilled his promise of resurrection. They have received the good news, and have known it for hours, and yet we find them locked inside their house. They have heard Gospel and remain paralyzed with fear and doubt.

We often read this passage and emphasize Thomas’s unbelief when hearing of the risen Christ. “Well, if Christ *had* risen,” he might think, “what are my friends still doing locked in this room?”

Just like the disciples – all of them, not just Thomas – we lock ourselves in or others out; this is despite having heard the good news of the resurrection last week, and every week. We have its testimony second and third hand here in our very own Bible, yet we too suffer from fear and doubt.

What difference does it make that Christ is resurrected if, even with this news, we lock ourselves in? We would look out for our own safety and well-being whether Christ is risen or not.

We emphasize Thomas’s doubt without realizing that these disciples, his friends, are telling him of the resurrection, but they remain right where he left them. They’ve received the good news of the resurrection and seen Christ himself, but nothing has changed.

Think about it. If you were Thomas, and all your friends just told you that Jesus Christ who died has risen again, but they said this while saying and doing the things they’d be doing otherwise, would you believe them? What difference does it make? Today, if someone proclaimed to you that Christ is risen, but still treated others with contempt and inaction, would you believe them?

They all doubted. Thomas only wanted to experience what the rest of them claimed to experience, because if Christ was risen it didn’t look like it was making any difference to the rest of them.

We are reminded time and time again how flawed we are. In some stories we are the Pharisees, explicitly challenging Jesus’s teachings at every turn. In this story we are the disciples, instead implicitly challenging Jesus’s teachings. We are guilty of waiting for some sort of concrete assurance of what Jesus has commanded us. We refrain from the love to which we are called with fear and doubt.

Continued

It is ok to be doubtful of Christ as Thomas was; as they all were. We don't hear a word of condemnation from Jesus, only a word of Peace. Jesus does not condemn, Jesus empowers. We receive the same Spirit to go out and to do his work.

Some days we will feel empty and afraid, shut-in physically or emotionally. The good news is that even when that door is locked, Jesus finds a way in. When he does, he doesn't blame us; he offers us assurance.

What we learn from Thomas and all the disciples is that the best way you can help people believe is to show how belief in the resurrected Christ changes us.

Has it made us more forgiving or loving or patient? What are those positive things in which we are bringing about the kingdom of God? That is by far our best witness. How are we embodying the Great Commission? Are we trying to lock it away in the upper room?

I am always reminded of a quote often attributed to St. Francis of Assisi, "Preach the Gospel at all times and, if necessary, use words."

So, this month, I challenge you to think about two questions: What does it mean to proclaim life-everlasting amid this weird thing that we are experiencing? How can we continue to be the body of Christ when we cannot meet physically with one-another?

Blessings,

BJ

MAY BIRTHDAYS

Eloise Beckham	May 2
Lee Hackett	May 5
Tammy Gavin	May 9
Tom Moore Hatcher, Jr.	May 11
Clay Bowen	May 12
Allison Jones	May 14
Ben Crouse	May 17
Christy Lee	May 17
Eric Waits	May 18
Landon Bowen	May 20
Tracie Hanson	May 24
Patty Jones	May 25
B. Jay Nelson	May 27
Emmett Richardson	May 30
Harolyn Jones	May 31



prayer Requests



James Jones
Health Concerns

Diane Keen
(Carol Jones Sister)
Health Concerns

Richard Brown
Health Concerns

Gary Goodwin
Health Concerns

Toni Oakes
(Ed Oakes Sister)
Health Concerns

Scherrel Sturdivant
Recovery from Stroke

Tom Young
Recovery from Knee Surgery

Diana Revord
Health Concerns

Bridgette Beinhaur
Ed Oakes Cousin
Health Concerns

Emmagene Crunk
Continued Recovery from fall

Jane Hunt
Continued Recovery

Adele Bruchey
Health Concerns

Brennen Bowen
Health Concerns

Jon Fortman
Health Concerns

Ginny Oakes
(Ed Oakes Mother)
Prayer Request

Sandra Mims
Health Concerns

The Family of Maridith Geuder
Prayer Request

Ted Gardner & Family
In the loss of his Brother,
Jerry Gardner

Bonnie Boyd
Health Concerns

Jeff Cox
Health Concerns



Notes From The Loft to come



St. Paul's Episcopal Church May Lunch



Tuesday, May 10, 2022

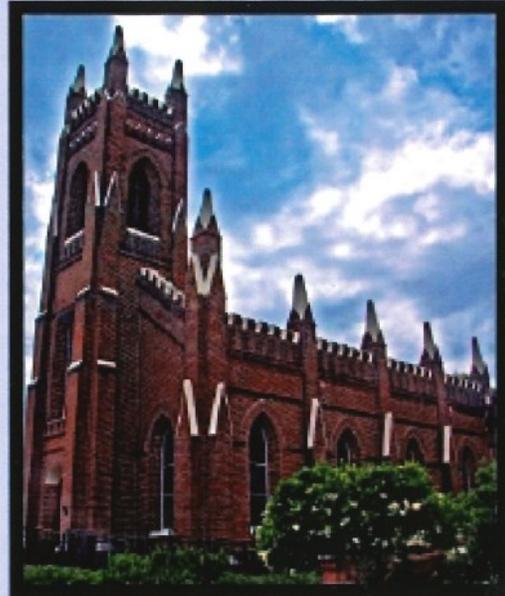
Take-Out Lunch

Chicken Salad Plate or BBQ Plate \$12.00
Cash or Check
Take-Out Only

Pick up from 11:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. at the
entrance on 4th Street South
All proceeds support local charities
Orders must be placed
by **Noon on Monday, May 9.**

To place your order call 662-328-6673 or
email: stpaulsmaylunch@gmail.com

If emailing orders, please include name,
time of pick up, number of plates and a
contact phone number.



Bake Sale

In Memory of Betty West Land

The bake sale will be located in the loggia
of St. Paul's Church. Sweet and savory
treats will be available and made by
the very talented cooks
of St. Paul's Parish.

Sale will open at 11:00 a.m.
Check or Cash Only

Please use the College Street entrance.

T & T Memorial BBQ

This event is sponsored by Bubba Tom
Wolford in loving memory of his father,
Tom Wolford, and in memory of his dear
friend, Todd Gale.

Orders must be placed
by **Friday, May 6, 2022.**

Orders for Boston Butts may be made in
addition to plate lunches or ordered on
their own. Cost is \$30.00 each.
Check or Cash only.

Pick up from 11:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. at the
4th Street South entrance.

To order call 662-328-6673 or email:
stpaulsmaylunch@gmail.com

318 College Street Columbus, MS 39701



Christian Witness Committee

The Christian Witness Committee is offering you an opportunity for "Alternative Gift Giving" for Mother's Day, May 8th. You may make a gift to honor or memorialize a special family member or friend.

Through the Loaves and Fishes program, we at First Presbyterian are committed to feeding children's hungry minds as well as their bodies. Since the beginning of the program we have distributed reading-readiness and reading books to children in our community who eat lunch at Loaves and Fishes; with your help, we would like to continue to do so.

If you would like to make a gift in honor or in memory of a family member or friend, please make checks payable to First Presbyterian Church designated for Loaves and Fishes Book Fund. Acknowledgement of this remembrance gift will be mailed to the contributor and the recipient, if applicable, and also published in the First Word. Remember to include mailing addresses.

Contributor: _____

Address: _____

In Honor/Memory of (Circle One): _____

Address of Honoree: _____



May Fellowship Potluck
Sunday, May 22nd
following Worship

Shepherding Group 3 will provide meat.
Please bring your favorite side or dessert.

As the days heat up, we want to help others who might not have proper cooling in their homes. We are accepting NEW fans or monetary donations to purchase fans for the upcoming warmer months. Thank you in advance ❤️



GOLDEN TRIANGLE REGIONAL HUB FOR VOLUNTEERS & NONPROFITS

Helping Hands
Annual Fan Drive

United Way

For more info contact Jennifer Garrard at (662) 328-8301

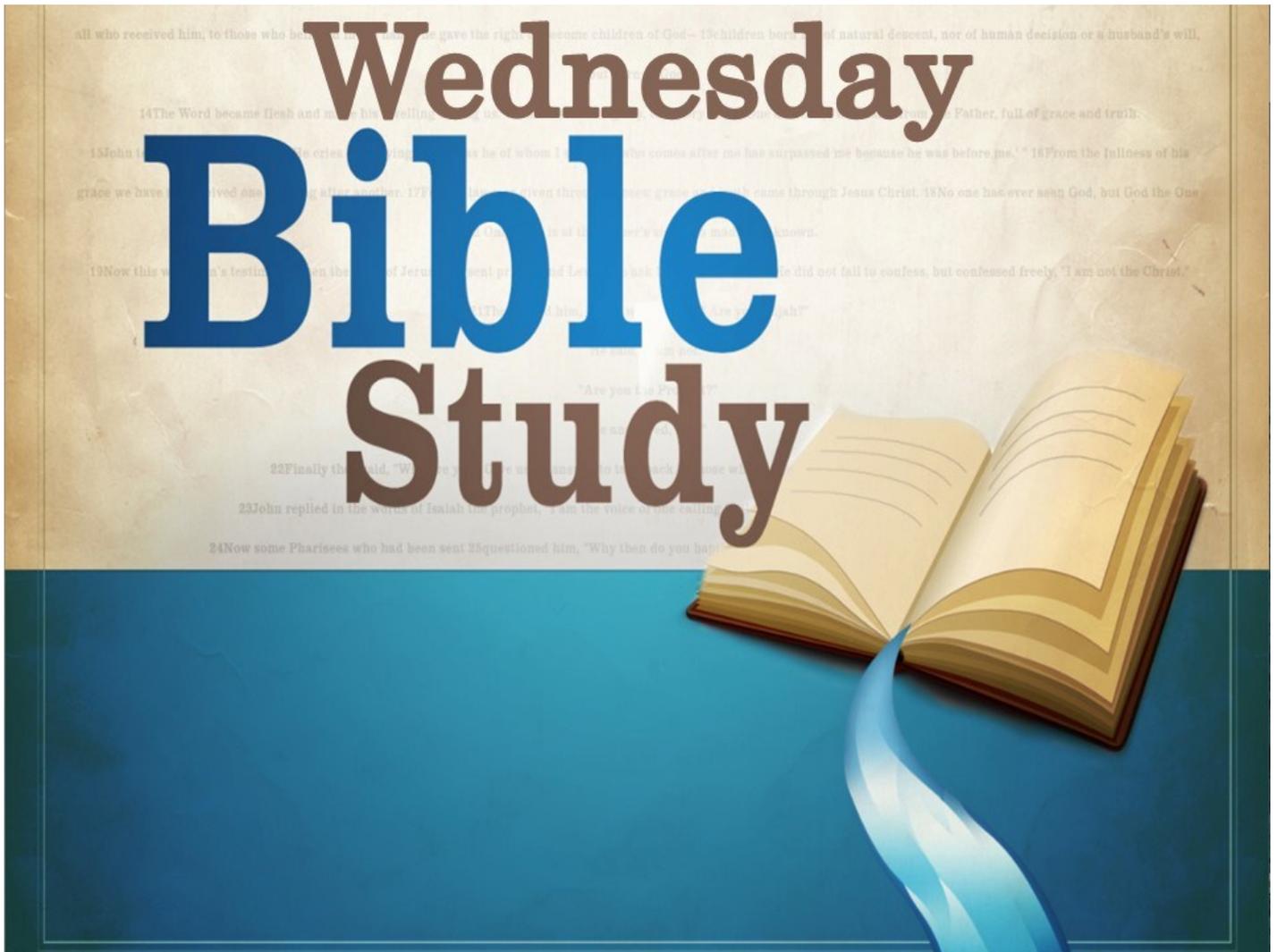
Starting now throughout the Summer, **NEW FANS** may be donated to Helping Hands Monday-Thursday from 8am-12:30pm. Monetary donations are also accepted and fans will be purchased on your behalf.

Checks can be mailed to PO Box 1241
Columbus, MS 39703

Did you know that some residents of Lowndes County will be without air conditioning this summer? Let's help them beat the heat!



HELPING HANDS OF COLUMBUS



Join us every Wednesday
@ 12:30 pm in the Parlor

Bible Study and Prayer Group
with Reverend B.J. Chain



Join us the 1st Thursday
of every month @ 6:30 am

Faith

Food

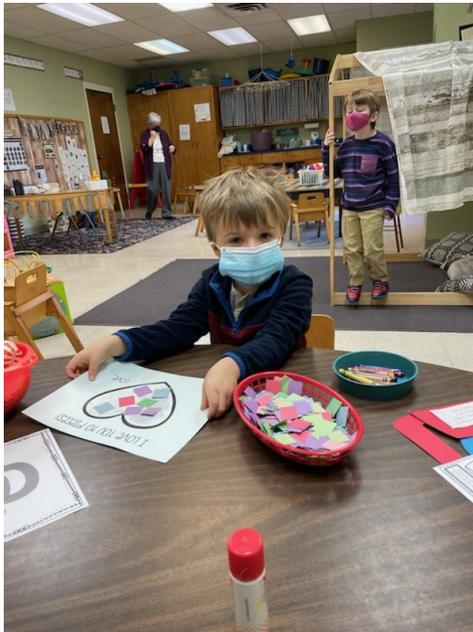
Fellowship

with Reverend B.J. Chain

Join Us every Sunday for



We have so much fun.



Ages 3 years to 5th grade
Nursery is available for Ages:
Birth to 5 years old

PCDP NEWS

Our PCDP teachers cannot believe it is already May! We had a great time last month learning about the farm, birds, butterflies, space, Easter, and transportation. May brings our units of study on the ocean and summer fun.

Spring pictures by Terren Cole are scheduled for Wednesday, May 4th at 8:30am. A huge thank you to Terren for fitting us into her schedule.

Our fantastic PCDP parents have put together a Teacher Appreciation Week breakfast for Thursday, May 5th in the church parlor. We have the best parents!!

PCDP graduation and end of year program is Friday, May 13th at 9am in the sanctuary. A reception in the fellowship hall will follow. All are welcome to attend!

We are looking forward to our summer program. The program runs Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:00 to 12:00 May 31st through July 7th.



First Presbyterian Church

P.O. Box 9681

Columbus, MS 39705
