



# First Presbyterian Church Hazlehurst, MS

May 2023 Newsletter

As many of you know First Hazlehurst has had a newsletter in the past. It seemed good to bring this publication back. We hope it will once again prove useful for our church family and friends. The purpose of this newsletter is simple. We want this newsletter to encourage and inform. Each of us needs encouragement as we grow in the likeness of Christ. Our hope is that the articles, reviews, and other resources published in this newsletter will be sources of encouragement for our congregation and its friends. We also want this newsletter to clearly inform everyone as to what is going on in the life of the church. The rhythm of our week is fairly consistent, but we often have special events that everyone needs to be made aware of. We hope this newsletter meets both these goals and proves to be a blessing in each of our lives.

## Summer Schedule

Our Sunday schedule will remain the same throughout the summer. Each Sunday we will have morning and evening worship as well as Sunday school. However, in the month of June we will not have our Wednesday prayer meeting. Regular Wednesday activities will resume in July.

## General Assembly

The 50th PCA General Assembly will be held June 12-16 in Memphis, Tennessee. There will be much to celebrate as this assembly gathers to give thanks to God for his faithfulness to our denomination over the last 50 years. There is also a great deal of work to do for the commissioners who attend. Please be in prayer for the ruling and teaching elders who will gather in Memphis.

## Reformed Youth Ministries

We have a middle school and high school group going to RYM in Panama City this summer. The Middle School Conference is June 26-30, and the High School Conference is July 3-7. James will chaperone the middle school group and Megan will chaperone the high school group. We are excited that our kids have this opportunity to go to this conference and pray that God will use it to strengthen their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Pray that these conferences encourage continued spiritual growth in all the kids who attend.

## Blessings in April

On April 18 we hosted a regional men's gathering of Grace Presbytery. There were representatives from First Crystal Springs, New Covenant Summit, and New Covenant Natchez. We also had guests from the community as well as members of the Gideons present. Johnny William from Pear Orchard Pres. and Executive Director of Sons of the King led a study on Ephesians 2.

On Sunday, April 30 the Praise Troop from Pear Orchard Pres. joined us for our morning worship service. These 2<sup>nd</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup> graders led by Margaret Sprow sang the prelude and offertory. Ruling Elder Johnny Williams returned bringing a message entitled *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence* from Romans 3:1-25. We were blessed to have a fellowship hall full of family, friends, and guests who stayed for our 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Fellowship Meal.



Pear Orchard Pres. Praise Troop

## Reflections On...

### Matthew 13:44

“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.”

What do we learn about the kingdom of heaven from this short parable? The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field. Immediately we are to understand the great value that is associated with the kingdom of heaven. When I read the word treasure, my mind pictures a treasure map with a dotted line weaving around some deserted island until it reaches the “x” on the map that marks the spot. If someone has access to the map and can read it properly, they can take possession of that treasure. But that’s not the case with the treasure and the one who finds it in the parable. There is no indication from the text that the man was looking for the treasure. It is clear the treasure was hidden in the field. There were probably many who had passed by this treasure before but did not see it. Perhaps the man who finds it had himself passed by it many times before. But this, I don’t believe is the most important part of this parable. We’re not told how the man found the treasure. We are simply told that he found it. And upon finding it, he immediately recognized its value. How do we see this? Well, he covered it up. He hid it again. You may think that seems like a stingy thing to do. This isn’t even his field. Shouldn’t he go tell the owner of the field about what he found. Here again we would be missing the point of the parable. The parable is showing us the value of the kingdom. It is a treasure and the man who finds it wants to ensure that he does not lose it. He wants this treasure, he needs this treasure, so he hides this treasure. But that’s not all. He joyfully sells all his possessions so he can buy this field and take possession of this treasure. He knows the treasure that he has found is of far greater value than all he currently possessed. Parting with his possessions isn’t something he laments. It’s not difficult for him at all. He is filled with joy because he has found something better. Nothing will keep him from taking possession of this field so that he can possess this treasure.

What about you? Is this the way you feel about the kingdom of heaven? Maybe you’re asking, “What is the kingdom of heaven?” The short answer is the kingdom of heaven is the kingdom in which Christ reigns as king. It is not like the kingdoms of this world. It transcends this world. It is not temporal but eternal. “For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him” (Col. 1:16).

How does one become a citizen of this kingdom? It shouldn’t surprise you that only the king of the kingdom can let you in. He lets all who call upon him in. He isn’t a distant king living in a palace far removed. He dwells among his people. He isn’t hard to access. He is the one knocking at the door.

To become a citizen of this kingdom all you must do is open the door. What does that mean? It means realizing that you need Christ as savior and submitting to him as Lord. Citizens of the kingdom of heaven realize that it is only by God’s grace that they are citizens of the kingdom. Because they were sinners, they were enemies of the kingdom. But God sent Jesus the king to pay the penalty for their sins and bring them into the kingdom. Through faith in Jesus, we are citizens of the kingdom of heaven.

Much more can be said about the kingdom of heaven, but again let me ask, do you see the kingdom of heaven as treasure worth selling everything else in your life for? That’s what the man in this parable did. With a heart filled with joy he took possession of this treasure.

### Supported Missionaries and Ministries

**Mark Horn** – Hope Presbyterian Church  
Plant PlantHopeOS.org

**Johnny Williams** – Sons of the King

**Brett and Valerie McAlpin** – Leeds  
England

## Special Thanks

We would like to express our thanks to Robert Akin who some 20 years ago built the playset with slide and swing outside the fellowship hall as part of his requirements to earn his Eagle Scout badge. This equipment was extremely well built and has been a source of fun and enjoyment for our children. Over the past year, the session and diaconate discussed what to do to ensure that the playset would remain safe for the children who play on it. After a lot of discussion, we determined that it was best to remove the playset instead of attempting to repair it.

It was sad to see this equipment go, but again, we are grateful for all the years of use it provided and for Robert and all his hard work.

With the play set removed, the diaconate has begun to spruce up the existing swing set. Three new individual swings were added, along with a two-person porch swing (with plans to add swings to the remaining spaces). We appreciate all the work Chuck Hefner has put into this project.

### Regular Weekly Schedule

Sunday School – 9:45 a.m.  
Sunday Worship – 11:00 a.m.  
Children and Youth Bible Study – 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays 4:00 p.m.  
Choir Practice – 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays 4:30 p.m.  
Sunday Evening Worship – 5:00 p.m.  
Wednesday Prayer Meeting – 5:30 p.m.  
Ladies Bible Study – 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of each month at 9:00 a.m.

### Current Series

Lord's Day morning worship – Genesis  
Lord's Day evening worship – Luke  
Sunday School  
    Adult– A study of Christian creeds and confessions  
    Lower Elementary – Numbers and Deuteronomy  
    Middle School – The Epistles  
    High School – New Testament Survey  
Wednesday prayer meeting – 1 John  
Ladies Bible Study – A study through Joshua, Judges, and Ruth

### Camp Kamassa

We will once again feed the troops working at Camp Kamassa over the summer. On June 1 we will join with First Pres. Crystal Springs and serve the troops at CSUMC. The plan is to have the meal catered with both churches working together to provide desserts, drinks, and paper products. Look for more details to come soon.



“Christ is a refuge to us in all our spiritual sorrows and troubles (Heb. 6:18). Are you burdened with a sense of sin? Are you weighed down under the oppression of any spiritual enemy? Do we, as a result of any of these things, ‘walk in darkness and have no light’? One look at the glory of Christ will strengthen and comfort us.”

- John Owen – *The Glory of Christ*

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