



First Presbyterian Church Hazlehurst, MS

October 2023 Newsletter

Calendar

November 2 – Holiday, Wedding, and Event Extravaganza-An event sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce. We will serve chili at this event from 4:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.

November 12 – Joint evening worship at First Pres. Crystal Springs. The service will begin at 5:00 p.m. and will be followed by a time of fellowship.

November 22 – Community Wide Thanksgiving Service at Antioch Baptist Church

December 3 – Christmas Parade 3:00 p.m.
Carols, Cookies, and Cocoa 5:00 p.m.

December 10 – Fellowship Breakfast 9:30 a.m.

December 17 – Lessons and Carols 5:00 p.m. followed by our Christmas Fellowship Meal.

December 24 – Morning Worship 11:00. We will not have Sunday School or evening worship but will have coffee and fellowship before the service.

We will suspend our Wednesday prayer meetings starting Nov. 22. Prayer meetings will resume Jan. 3.

Children and Youth



Before the start of school, our youth and the youth from First Crystal Springs beat the heat by taking a tubing trip down the Bogue Chitto. We had a great day on the river and plan to return in the future.



Men's Bible Study –

This fall we began a weekly Bible study which meets on Thursdays at 10:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Currently, we are studying the letter to the Romans. We have a core group of men who attend weekly and have had several other men join us when able. The discussion and fellowship have been a great blessing.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believe to the Jew first and also to the Greek (Rom. 1:16).

Reflections on Matthew 25:13

Are You Ready?

“Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.” (Matt. 25:13).

This is how Jesus concludes a parable about the kingdom of heaven. We commonly refer to this parable as *The Parable of the Ten Virgins*. This parable comes after Jesus has already been teaching about the end of the age and his return to the earth. Let’s briefly look at the point Jesus is making.

You’re familiar with the story. There are ten virgins who went to meet the bridegroom as he made his way to the marriage feast. We’re told some very important information about these virgins. First, they all had lamps. These lamps required oil to burn as fuel so they would stay lit. We are also told that, of the ten virgins, five were foolish and five were wise. The reason is given for why they are divided in to these two groups. The foolish took no oil with them but the wise took flasks of oil for their lamps.

We’re not told why, but the bridegroom was delayed. This delay was so long and late in the night, that all ten virgins became drowsy and fell asleep. But at midnight, they were awoken by a cry and a command, “Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.”

The response to the call testifies to the wisdom of the wise and foolishness of the fools. The wise, who were prepared, put their lamps in order so they could be lit and could join the procession of the bridegroom as it made its way to the marriage feast. The foolish, were not prepared. They had no more oil for their lamps and knew they needed to have their lamps lit if they were to join the procession. They ask the wise virgins for some of their oil but are told by the wise that there is not enough for them both. We might push back here and think, why are the wise virgins not more giving? Aren’t they being a little selfish? No, and that is not the point of the parable. They are not being selfish. Everyone must prepare themselves for the bridegroom to come, which is the point of the parable. The wise tell the foolish to go and buy oil for themselves from the dealers, and while the foolish do this, the wise join the bridegroom and go with the procession to the wedding feast where (after they enter with him) the door is shut.

Later, the foolish virgins arrive at the feast and seek entry saying, “Lord, lord, open to us.” The response they receive is simply, “I do not know you.” The parable ends with those who were prepared for the wedding and the arrival of the bridegroom at the wedding feast and those who were not left outside unable to enter. Jesus then says, “Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”

Recent events on the world’s stage, in particular in Israel, have caused many to believe that the return of Jesus is close at hand. Perhaps that is true. Believers should look forward to the return of Christ with great anticipation. We should live our lives as the wise virgins who are prepared. This is what Jesus calls us to. We don’t know the day or the hour, but we know he will come again in glory. The day of his return is fixed. In a real sense, his return is closer now than it has ever been. However, it has been well over 2,000 years since he ascended into heaven. With such a long “delay,” we are at risk of being like the foolish virgins who were unprepared. Which is why Jesus gives us this warning. We are to “watch” and be ready for when our savior returns.

How do we do this? Jesus tells us in the next parable which we call *The Parable of the Talents*. We may look at that parable in a future newsletter, but for now, let me briefly share how anyone can be ready for Christ’s return. You must know Jesus as he is offered to us in the gospel and be resting in him alone for your salvation. This is the work of the Holy Spirit in your heart. This is the new birth that Jesus tells us must take place. If you have been born again to this living hope, you will bear the fruit of one who is prepared and ready for Christ’s return.

Questions for reflection.

How do I know Jesus loves me?

Do I love Jesus?

Why do I love Jesus?

How do I show my love for Jesus?

Am I ready for Jesus’s return?

RTS Has a New Location

Rev. Perry McCall with Reformed Theological Seminary and Pastor at Carolina Pres. visited us on September 27 during our prayer meeting to share with us an update on RTS and its move to Northeast Jackson. Perry also thanked First Hazlehurst for having supported RTS through the years.



RTS made the move from Clinton Blvd. to its new location on I-55 North right off Meadowbrook. Classes began there over the Summer of 2023.

Supported Missionaries and Ministries

Mark Horn – Hope Presbyterian Church
Plant PlantHopeOS.org

Johnny Williams – Sons of the King

Brett and Valerie McAlpin – Leeds
England

Joint Worship with First Crystal Springs



Our brothers and sisters from Crystal Springs joined us for worship and fellowship on August 20. Reverend Chris Willet preached during the worship service from Galatians 3:23-4:7 delivering a sermon on how Christians are “Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.” We look forward to worshipping together again on 11-12-23.

Regular Weekly Schedule

Sunday School – 9:45 a.m.

Sunday Worship – 11:00 a.m.

Children and Youth Bible Study – 2nd and 4th Sundays 4:00 p.m.

Choir Practice – 1st and 3rd Sundays 4:30 p.m.

Sunday Evening Worship – 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday Prayer Meeting – 5:30 p.m.

Men’s Bible Study – Thursday 10:30 a.m.

Ladies’ Bible Study – 1st 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– The Hard Sayings of Jesus

Lower Elementary – Joshua

High School and Middle School –The Epistles

Wednesday Prayer Meeting – John’s Epistles

Ladies’ Bible Study – A study through Colossians and Philemon

Men’s Bible Study – Romans

When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, “Repent” (Mt 4:17), he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance. This was the first of Martin Luther’s 95 Theses, the posting of which, (according to historians) began the Protestant Reformation on October 31, 1517.

From Our Confessional Standards

When considering Jesus's command to "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour," we can benefit from looking to the Westminster Confession of Faith.

Chapter 33 Of the Last Judgment

3. As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there shall be a day of judgment, both to deter all men from sin; and for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity: so will he have that day unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come; and may be ever prepared to say, Come Lord Jesus, come quickly, Amen.

The confession tells us there are two reasons our Lord wants us to know, with certainty, that he will return-bringing with him a day of judgment. First, that all men would be deterred from sin. The coming judgment, which all men are aware of, is cause for them to believe in Christ and repent of their sins. Second, to encourage the godly as we persevere in a world that hates Christ and all who are united with him.

We are also told why this day is unknown to men. First, that we would put no security in the things of this world. Second, that we would always be watchful and, being watchful, would always be prepared.



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