

July 2021

# The Lighthouse

## The First 70 Years of First Presbyterian Church

First Presbyterian Church is celebrating 130 years of ministry in Biloxi this year. The church began in 1891 with 15 members. Dr. G.S. Roudebush became stated supply and preached the first sermon in the original presbyterian church building on East Howard in 1893.

Dr. Roudebush was one of Mississippi's great educators. When Mississippi A&M (Now Mississippi State) was formed he was a finalist to become the first president. He lost the vote to General Stephen D. Lee, but was made the first professor of the institution, chairing the English Department. He was also instrumental in starting what is now the Mississippi University for Women in Columbus, Mississippi. In Biloxi, he worked mainly as an educator, opening a boarding school for boys called Seashore Academy. He served as stated supply for the church until July 1894. The school continued under his leadership for a few more years.

In January 1895, an arrangement had been made for the Rev. N. Keff Smith to become the pastor for the Biloxi Presbyterian Church and the Ocean Springs Presbyterian Church. Rev. Smith weekly alternated Sunday morning services between the two churches. There were other notable pastors in the early years. Regular weekly services began under the third pastor, Rev. D.L. Barr (1898-1900). The Rev. W.C. Lindsay (1900-1903), Rev. Hervey McDowell (1904-1909 who later pastored the Handsboro, Pass Christian, and Pineville churches), and Rev. William Megginson (who left to be the Dean at what is now the Presbyterian School of Christian Education connected to Union Seminary in Richmond, VA.) raised the prominence of the Presbyterian church in the eyes of the city of Biloxi. The newspaper articles of the day reflected an increasing respect and influence these men had through their pulpits and their civic activities. Some of their sermons were even printed in the paper to glowing reviews! Dr. Benjamin Morgan Palmer filled the pulpit, and President Woodrow Wilson attended services while on vacation.

In 1915, Scotsman Rev. John Campbell took over the pulpit and remained there for 15 years. He came back in 1935-36 to fill the pulpit after his successor, Rev. Archie Smith (1930-35) left. Rev. Campbell remains the pastor with the longest tenure in the history of the church. In 1941, the church building was moved to the corner of Howard Avenue and Hopkins.



During the war years the pulpit was filled with a retired pastor and former missionary, Rev. L.C Vass II. Rev. Vass had been a missionary in the Belgian Congo for 11 years until malaria had taken its toll on his health. The missions work was far in the interior of Africa and had its own steamboats which Reverend Vass oversaw. Sarah and I are friends with his granddaughter and her husband who is also a minister.

By 1947, the church had grown to about 150 members. The church really took off in the 1950's under the ministry of Rev. Maynard Miller (1948-1953) and Rev. Victor Augsburger (1954 -1963). By 1960, the membership was at 376. Looking at the statistical reports, there was a lot of moving in and out of the church. Certainly, some of this was due to the growth of Keesler Air Force Base and the church's move to our current property so near the base in the mid '50's.

History is interesting (at least to me!). We should learn from it. If we look back at the history of our church we find ourselves at a membership that is comparable to the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. By the 1920's and '30's, the church was about 100 members. It is interesting that at this time, liberalism and modernism were taking hold in the church. If you read some of the conservative theologians and churchmen of that day, you will find that their writings resonate with our current state of affairs. I mention this as an encouragement. The struggles of the 1920's and '30's gave way to the church growth of the 1950's.

May God grant us to be faithful in our day that he might use each one of us to build his kingdom here on the Mississippi Gulf Coast!

Grace & Peace,

Tim

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*Stay Tuned for our  
latest Missionary  
update...*

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# MINISTRY TO STATE NORTH CAROLINA

*Reaching Those who Serve in Government with  
the Gospel*

Darin Stone - State Capitol Minister

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## What's happening with MTS - North Carolina?

The past few months have proven to be the busiest and most fruitful time of ministry thus far at in Raleigh. **What does a typical week of ministry amongst those who serve in government look like?** Here's a snapshot:

- **Introducing myself to a Democratic Senator who is also a minister.** I then spent an hour in his office talking about his life, his political endeavors, and the Lord. We prayed together and he has listened to a few of my sermons. He is now a friend and someone to whom I'm praying that Jesus will enable me to minister.



- **Dropping by a Republican Representative's office after hearing his opening prayer to the day's legislative session.** It was a solid, biblical prayer and I came to find out that he has a committed follower of Christ. I've been able to connect with him on several other occasions before and after sessions to support and encourage him in the Lord. He even spoke to my wife's third grade class as they were learning about government in their social studies unit!
- **Praying for a Legislative Aide** whose brother had recently suffered a serious injury landing him in the hospital. He and I have developed a friendship where we not only discuss politics and the happenings in state government, but in which we also talk about the Lord and how we can pursue him in the midst of our respective positions in life.
- **Sharing the gospel with a lobbyist** I happened to be sitting next to while waiting for the House session to begin. It was the first time I had met him. He spoke about God and attends church, but that's all I know. The development of this relationship will, Lord willing, provide me with the opportunity to minister to him.
- **Meeting with an Executive Office holder and her staff to support and encourage them in the Lord.** Their office has endured some public criticism by the media even though the decisions that were made were out of the purview of their office's authority. Dealing with public criticism - which is often falsely attributed - is a struggle for many of those in politics. So I had the opportunity to minister to and pray for them as they pursue God's glory and the public good in their position.



There is more I could share. I remain grateful for the opportunity to serve as a minister and missionary to those who serve in government.

## How you can pray

**1. Pray that I would remain prayerful and dependent upon the Lord in this work:** Specifically, pray that I would depend on Christ in all my engagements, that I would be prayerful as I go about meeting people, and that God would answer my prayers for opportunities to minister to those in elected office.

**2. Pray for our family:** My wife and kids are most important earthly relationships and my greatest area of ministry. We want to lean into the love and grace of Jesus at home and I want to lead my family well in this area.

**3. Pray for your elected officials in state government:** Look them up (see the link below). Pray that I would have the opportunity to minister to them. Pray that they would repent and believe in Jesus. Pray for their families. Pray that they would govern with wisdom, integrity, and truth. Reach out to them with a friendly email and tell them you are praying for them. It will mean the world!

**4. Pray for work of the PCA's General Assembly in St. Louis next week:** There are significant issues for the ministry and mission of our denomination coming before the Assembly and I'm sure I speak for all of the commissioners in asking you to pray for wisdom, discernment, faithfulness, unity, love for God, his church, and the lost. And pray that the PCA would remain diligent in remaining true to her motto: "*Faithful to the Scriptures, True to the Reformed faith, and Obedient to the Great Commission.*"

## Summer schedule

I have also been busy preaching and publicizing the MTS ministry as of late. Here are my summer plans:

**June 27:** Presenting MTS at Sovereign Grace PCA, Charlotte

**June 29:** Co-leading a seminar, "Cultivating Gracious Conversations in the Church Amongst the Political Diversity," at the PCA General Assembly in St. Louis, MO

**July 11:** Preaching at New Hope PCA in Clemmons/Winston-Salem

**July 18:** Preaching at Arden PCA in Asheville

**August 1:** Preaching at New Hope PCA in Clemmons/Winston-Salem

**August 8:** Presenting MTS and Preaching at Back Creek ARP in Charlotte

**August 15:** Presenting MTS at Peace PCA in Cary/Raleigh

**September 12:** Presenting MTS at Church of the Redeemer PCA in Indian Trail/Charlotte

**September 26:** Presenting MTS and Preaching at Cornerstone PCA in Columbia, SC



# Words to Consider

THE WHOLE SYSTEM

*of my politics is summed up in*

THIS ONE VERSE, "THE LORD REIGNS!

*let the nations tremble!" psalm 99:1*

-JOHN NEWTON (1725-1807)





# HAPPY BIRTHDAYS for JULY

Sarah Horn 5th  
Kayla Clark 5th  
Steve VanderKooy 9th  
David Allen 12th  
Andy Bagby 31st

## Dates to Remember for July

July 3 Men's Breakfast at 8:00am  
in the Fellowship Hall

July 4 Communion

July 4 Join us on the 4th of July at 6:00pm on the front lawn  
of the church. Grills and drinks will be provided.  
Please bring your own lawn chairs and a side dish to  
share and anything you would like cooked on the  
grill. Fireworks at 9pm. Due to this event we will  
not have our monthly luncheon in July.

\*\*\* If you can come a little early about 5:15pm to help set up it would  
be appreciated.

July 17 Hymn & Psalm Sing First Presbyterian Gulfport,