

October 2022

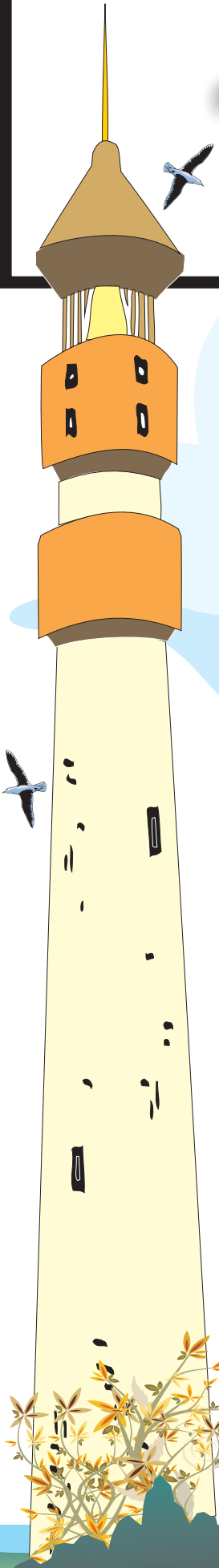
The Lighthouse

Semper Reformanda

Rev. Shannon Philio, Assistant Pastor

At the end of this month on October 31, Protestants will celebrate the Protestant Reformation. On October 31, 1517, priest and scholar Martin Luther approached the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany, and nailed a piece of paper to it containing 95 revolutionary calls for church and faith reform that would begin the Protestant Reformation. One battle cry of the Reformation was "Semper Reformanda," or "always reforming." I think of the apostle Paul's words in Ephesians 4:22-24 regarding our new life in Christ "to put off our old self, which belongs to our former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of our minds, and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness." God calls us to be holy as He is holy (1 Peter 1:15-16), holy in our thoughts, holy in our words, holy in our actions, holy in our attitudes, holy in our dispositions, holy in our inclinations, holy in our motives, holy in our desires, and holy in our entire persons. But, alas, we are like sheep, "prone to wander, Lord we feel it, prone to leave the God we love," as we sing in that great hymn of the faith, "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing." We begin to lose our salt and light as we wrestle with Satan, the world, and the flesh, the three great enemies to the Christian faith. So, from time to time, we all have to conduct spiritual inventories of our walk with the Lord to see if any spiritual "reformation" must occur.

Where do we begin in reforming our lives? God. We must have a walking, talking, living, breathing, personal and intimate relationship with God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We must go to God in prayer asking Him to show us areas in our lives which need reforming. King David prayed in Psalm 139:23-24, "Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts. See if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." James 4:3 says you do not have because you do not ask. Reformation begins with prayer.



Rev. Billy Graham once said, "Prayer is simply a two-way conversation between you and God." Pray for reformation in your lives for God's glory. Secondly, we must get into the Word. The Lord told Joshua in Joshua 1:8 to meditate upon His Word day and night that he might be prosperous and successful. Psalm 1:2 says blessed is the one who finds delight in God's Word. Psalm 119:105 says, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." Psalm 119:11 says, "I have hidden Your Word in my heart that I might not sin against You, O God." 2 Timothy 3:16 says, "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the servant of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." Trying to reform your spiritual walk in the Lord apart from prayer and the Word is impossible. When was the last time you prayed? When was the last time you opened your Bible?

Finally, but not lastly, we must be empowered by the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity, to help us reform our lives. Jesus says in John 15:5 apart from Him, we can do nothing. If we try to reform our own lives in our own strength, we will fail. Spiritual reformation can only occur by God's strength. Philippians 4:13 says we can do all things through Christ Who gives us strength. Spiritual strength does not come from within ourselves but only from God. We must apply His strength, not our own. We are weak, but He is strong. Psalm 46:1 says God is our strength and ever-present help in difficulties. The Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter 13, on sanctification, the process of putting sin to death and growing in all holiness and Christlikeness, is the working and power of the Holy Spirit. True, we have a role and part in the sanctification process. Paul writes in Philippians 2:12 for us "to work out our salvation with fear and trembling," but in verse 13 following, he writes, "for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill His good purpose." The Holy Spirit, Who is God, the third Person of the Trinity, is the fuel that fills our tanks to keep us driving down the narrow way toward Heaven's gates; thus, Paul writes in Ephesians 5:18 to "be filled with the Spirit." In Galatians 5:18, Paul says, "Walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh." Jesus says in John 16:3 that the Holy Spirit will guide us in all truth. Jesus says in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." The Holy Spirit guides us to Christ and to truth. Every day we must pray, "Holy Spirit, guide my thoughts, my words, my actions, and my entire person in all truth (Christlikeness) today which pleases, honors, and glorifies the Father. Help me, Holy Spirit, always to be *semper reformanda*, always reforming, always to be mortifying (putting to death) sin and always growing in all sanctification, Christlikeness, and holiness for the honor and glory of God."

Church Organ & Finances

A note from the Session

Dear Church Family,

We have an opportunity to purchase a new organ which is comparable to our old organ, but with updated technology and electronics. The vendor is asking \$48,500 which is \$12,500 more than we have in the organ fund. The vendor has said we could pay \$36,000 now and pay the balance in a year, but we, the officers of the church, do not want to incur any debt.

Our general fund giving has been down in recent months and we are concerned that any extra money given to the organ fund will mean less money given to the general fund. Current general fund giving is not keeping up with expenses and, unless general fund giving increases significantly, we will deplete the money we have in the general fund. That is a situation we earnestly want to avoid.

Please prayerfully consider increasing your giving to our general fund and, if the Lord provides, also giving some extra to the organ fund.

May God continue to bless our church and you. Please join us in prayer about our finances and how to proceed as we seek the Lord's wisdom. Also, please, please let us know if we can do anything for you and how we may effectively pray for you.

Most sincerely in Christ,

The Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Biloxi

Update from West Africa...



The earth is full of the steadfast love of the Lord. (Psalm 33:5b)

Dear Friends and Family,

Here in Burkina Faso, it can often be a challenge to see and feel the tangible, loving kindness of the Lord. At times, it can seem like poverty and suffering is literally waiting around every corner, especially for some more than others. But as the psalmist says in Psalm 33:5 “The earth is full of the steadfast love of the Lord.” The love of God is certainly shown every July as he brings rain which, in turn, provides nutrients for the land. The more I have worked with agricultural ministry during this season, the more I am convinced that the hope for Africa lies in the land where God most clearly shows his love.

That is what we have taught through our training in Foundations for Farming, and we are thrilled to see how this message has resonated with so many. In May, we held a training for nine local pastors about small scale farming with Foundation for Farming. And somehow from the small group our ministry exploded. From the small group we have held four more trainings for

close to 100 people. One of our trainings was even covered by the the local news station a few weeks ago. The news clip will be linked below (It is in French, though!).

Part of the success of the training seems to come from the fact that almost every single person I have met here grew up in villages. They fled their rural homes because bad farming practices and deforestation caused the Sahara Desert to continue its seemingly unstoppable growth south and has left so much land unfarmable. The fact that our training focuses on restoring the soil seemed to strike a chord here. That there is hope for Burkina to prosper on their own and that it lies in the land God has given them is an exciting thing to contemplate for the Burkinabe people.

In an effort to show the effectiveness of Foundation for Farming, we have started our own small farm near one of the churches. The work at the farm is carried out by volunteers from our church. The bad news is we have had a very dry summer, and our first attempt to plant at what normally was the start of the rainy season was unfortunately a disaster. Even though we've had a lot of humidity and days where it *almost* rained, we had a stretch of three weeks without rain at all, and much of our newly planted corn died. We decided to restart from scratch, because we need a really good harvest if we want people to adopt our method of farming. Please pray that this time, we will have sufficient rain to keep our crops growing.

Please pray that the Lord will continue to bless our our training to benefit and grow the church. We have been seeing growth recently, with the church staying full even during the rainy season and summer months. Pray that the excitement for the agricultural training will not quickly pass but be able to have a lasting impact on the people here in Burkina Faso.



Here is what BurkinaInfo presented on the news. (If the video does not play click [here](#))



The students from one of our trainings with Foundation for Farming in a nearby village.



The members of our church measuring and digging holes for planting corn.



Some of the members of our church standing in front of our newly made signs.

How Can You Give Financial Support

1. You can give online at www.MTW.org. To find us, put our account number 13727. You will not see our names mentioned because we are going to sensitive country, but any donations to that account number

will go toward our ministry. To have the support automatically taken and applied to our support account you will need to make an account with MTW.

2. Send out a check to Mission to the World (in the memo line add: account 13727) and send the check to:

Mission to the World
P.O. Box 744165
Atlanta, GA 30374



1340 Beach Boulevard
Biloxi, Mississippi 39530
228.374.6880
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First Presbyterian Church of Biloxi is a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in America. To learn more about the PCA, log on to pcanet.org

Elders

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Shannon Philio (Assistant Pastor)	228-327-3875	shannon.philio@firstpresbiloxi.org

Deacons

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Harvel Jackson	228-546-1887	harvel.jackson@firstpresbiloxi.org
Steve Lustig	608-719-9372	steve.lustig@firstpresbilox.org

Church Musicians

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Melba Sipriano	Pianist	melba.sipriano@firstpresbiloxi.org

Church Secretary

Kim Clark	228-374-6880	info@firstpresbiloxi.org
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BIRTHDAYS for OCTOBER



Sally Ann Jones 13th

Harvel Jackson 17th

Ann Pringle 19th

Tricia Gauthier 20th

Frank Genzer 24th

Dates to Remember for October

October 1 Men's Breakfast at 8:00am in the Fellowship Hall

October 2 Communion at the morning service

October 5 Ladies Circle at 9:30am in the church parlor

October 7 Crusin the Coast picnic on the front lawn at 5:30

October 9 Monthly luncheon after the worship service,
please bring a dish to share

October 16 Communion at the evening service

Oct. 2 - Oct. 9

Cruisin the Coast



Ladies are invited to the Grace Presbytery Women's Fall Retreat, Tue, Oct. 11 at 9am to 1pm. First Presbyterian Church, Hattiesburg, MS. Cost is \$15 in advance or \$20 at the door: Speaker Paula Moore and Chalk Talk by Jennie Cade. For more info call Ramona Wicht at 601-268-9990. RSVP to Kim in the church office by Oct. 6th.