

**VITAL SIGNS**

**Sunday, September 3, 2023**

Sunday School Total.....387  
First Day Worship.....246 (17)  
11:00am Worship.....147 (13)  
Total.....393 (30)

**Sunday, September 10, 2023**

Sunday School Total.....443  
First Day Worship.....308 (17)  
11:00am Worship.....160 (13)  
Total.....468 (30)

**Sunday, September 17, 2023**

Sunday School Total.....460  
First Day Worship.....308 (12)  
11:00am Worship.....225 (20)  
Total.....533 (32)

**Sunday, September 24, 2023**

Sunday School Total.....438  
First Day Worship.....307 (14)  
11:00am Worship.....164 (14)  
Total.....471 (28)

**SEPTEMBER 2023 BUSINESS MTNG**

Budget YTD.....\$1,065,506.88  
Received YTD.....\$873,403.02

**Welcome to our new member...**



**Kaylin Simmons**



**Hey FirstKids and Parents!**

**October is here, and that means that it is time for our annual trunk or treat! This year, we are calling it Trail or Treat! We would LOVE for you to participate! It's going to be a REALLY fun night!! See you there!**

**-Mrs. Danielle**

**FEEDING OF THE 5,000**  
We've begun preparing for F5K on Thursday, November 16, 2023.  
We will need sweet potato casseroles, cakes, brownies, & cookies made for this day.  
Please be looking for sign up sheets to help!



**OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD**

The GA's are collecting for and packing 500 boxes for OCC this year. They need your help collecting the following items:  
Spoons, forks, butter knives (metal), Small non breakable bowls or cups, Pencils, pens, pencil sharpeners, erasers, color pencils, fishing hooks, fishing line, Sewing items— squares, yards, needles, pins, small scissors, toothbrush, soap, wash cloths, small plush toys, barbies, small games, dolls, yoyos, soccer balls with a pump, hair accessories, hats, gloves, scarves, socks, clothing items as t-shirts, play dresses.  
They also need old t-shirts to make jump ropes and bottle caps for homemade tic- tac- toe games.  
We will take these items until Sunday, Nov. 5

**Senior Adults**

**Senior Adult Luncheon on Monday, October 16 at 12:00pm in the Fellowship Hall. Bring a side dish and join us!**



**11:00am USHERS for SEPTEMBER 2023 (\* indicates prayer door)**

**October 1**

**\*Jerry Bell, Joe Brown, Shane Ard, Dee Atkins, Joe Austin, Mike Bowen**

**October 8**

**\*Mark Crenshaw, F. Bridgeman, Richie Chrestman, Phillip Cox, Roger Gentry, Wally Henry**

**October 15**

**\*Kevin Morrow, Ricky Hill, Ben Howard, Matt Koon, Rickey Littlejohn, Carey McMillen**

**October 22**

**\*Eddy Taylor, Steve Montgomery, Justin Moss, Jay Reeder, Clark Sexton, George Stegall**

**October 29**

**\*Sam Gibbs, Bryan Warren, Sam Dowdy, Chad Anthony, Jason Angle, Jody Stringer**

**\*\*If you are unable to fulfill your duty as usher, please find someone to take your place.**

**DEACONS ON CALL for OCTOBER 2023**

**October 1**

**Benjamin Hill, Kevin Koehler Jody Stringer**

**October 8**

**George Rutledge Jerry Robbins, Eddy Taylor**

**October 15**

**Tommy Wood, Jim Long Mark Vandiver**

**October 22**

**Richie Chrestman Neal Anderson, Craig Downing**

**October 29**

**Sam Gibbs, Chad Anthony Mark Griffith**



**First Baptist Church  
31 W. Washington Street  
Pontotoc, MS 38863**

**OCTOBER 2023**

**BUILDING THE KINGDOM WIDE AND DEEP**



**GENERATE CAMP**  
(summer youth camp)  
June 14-18, 2024  
at LA Tech in Ruston, LA.  
you're \$75 deposit is due at sign up.

This year we are headed back to LA TECH. Joining us this year is Rechab Gray and the Aaron Williams worship team. The total cost is \$365. There are 3 fundraisers this year  
Total spots available: 60  
First come First serve on spots  
Deposit due \$75

**rEcess**

**Saturday, October 14**  
If you would like to volunteer to help with rEcess, please contact Danielle Davis.

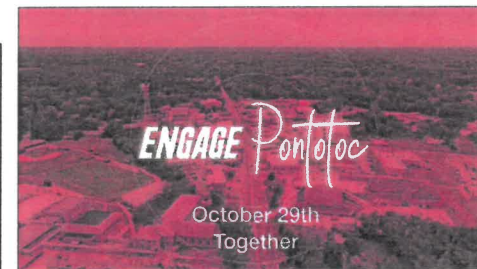
**DEACONS MEETING**

**Sun, October 15 at 3:30pm in the FH**



**LIVING WATER INTEREST MEETING**

**Sunday, October 29 at 6:30pm in the Fellowship Hall.**  
We have 2 trips coming in July. One to Africa and one to Nicaragua.



Join us for **ENGAGE PONTOTOC** (high attendance day)  
Sunday, Oct. 29

Bring some folks to worship!  
Bring some folks to Sunday School!  
Bring some folks to church with you!

**WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY**  
begins Sunday, October 15

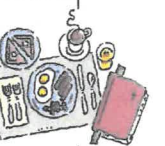
Seamless by Angie Smith will be led by Danielle Davis at 5:00pm on Sundays in the Fellowship Hall.  
The cost is \$10 and includes your book.

Join us on Tuesday, October 31 from 6:00-7:30pm at the Gateway Pavilion for TRAIL or TREAT! If you'd like to decorate a table and hand out candy, please let Danielle know! We are also collecting candy to hand out to kiddos at Trail or Treat!



**BROTHERHOOD BREAKFAST**

**Sun, October 22 at 7:00am in the Fellowship Hall.**



You are invited to a Baby Shower honoring Abby Davis on Sunday, October 29, 2023 from 1:30pm-3:00pm in the Fellowship Hall. Abby is registered at Babylist.com, The Carousel, & The Bead Shack in New Albany





# FIRST THINGS FIRST

First Baptist Church, Pontotoc, MS  
31 West Washington St.

662-489-1346 fbc@fbcpontotoc.org

Rev. Clay Stegall-  
Associate Pastor

Justin Cobb-  
Minister of Youth

Danielle Davis-  
Minister of Children

Zach Keller / Mickey Gentry-Worship Leaders

Volume 4 No. 10

Dr. Ken Hester, Pastor

October 2023

## Parson to Person

Cute won't cut it. The American Church is losing the battle. Our nation is headed to Hell and the Church is the only solution. We MUST invite people to Sunday School.

Those are hard words. Let me explain. Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Those are His words, not mine. And if I claim to be redeemed by the blood of Jesus, I must adhere to the words of Jesus. Those who don't have a relationship with Jesus don't go to heaven. Those people go to hell.

In 2010, 43.1% of Americans attended church. In 2019, just before the pandemic, 34% of Americans attended church. In 2023, now 30% of Americans attended church. We are losing the battle.

This past May, the Southern Baptist Convention boasted that since 2010 the Southern Baptist planted 10,000 new churches. I am sure that these new churches have brought people to Christ and changed their lives. And one would think that with 10,000 new Southern Baptist Churches, that we'd have Southern Baptists coming out our ears. Yet, in 2010 we have on record an estimated 16.1 million Southern Baptists and in 2023 we have now 13.6 million. We are losing the battle.

Back in 2010, there were an estimated 1,300 mega-churches. A mega-church is a church with 2,000 or more in attendance. Some of these mega-churches are absolutely huge. Some boast tens of thousands of members. In 2023, we now have 1,750 mega-churches. With more and more of these huge church congregations, one would think that the Evangelical movement is exploding across our nation. And yet, since 2010, the attendance of Americans going to church has dropped 13%. We are losing the battle.

Timothy Keller wrote that the reasons for the decline in American Evangelicalism are:

1. Distrust of institutions
2. Political polarization of culture and church
3. Cultural belief that sexual desire is central to authentic identity

And to an outsider, lost person, any First Baptist Church represents a corrupt institution with a certain strong political bearing that holds to a hateful message regarding progressive love.

And that is why we need to get people into Sunday School. We hope, we struggle, we pray, we laugh, we cry, we hurt, we heal, we help, we are helped. People won't fall in love with an institution. But they will love other people. We need each other. Sunday School provides a place of relational connection.

We need to share the Biblical truth that our true, authentic identity is found in Christ and not in our rebellion against what God has for us. We need to share personally the secret of life-fulfillment that comes in denying ourselves, taking up our cross and sacrificially following Jesus. Such hard truth can only come through the venue of a good Sunday School class that takes God's Word as authoritative. It has nothing to do with politics.

Sunday, October 29, 2023. Bring some folks to Sunday School. Last year we hit 511 people in Sunday School. Let's get at least one more. One more for the Lord.

See you then!  
Ken



# October 2023



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 <b>NATIONAL HOMEADE COOKIES DAY</b>	2	3	4 Leg Quarters, Boneless chkn, Corn, roll Salad bar dessert	5 <b>NATIONAL BE NICE DAY</b>	6 <b>NATIONAL COACHES DAY</b>	7
SENIOR ADULT TRIP TO CHATANOOGA, TN						
8	9	10 <b>NATIONAL FACE YOUR FEARS DAY</b>	11 Country Ham, Yam patties, Green beans, Turnip Greens, Roll, Salad Bar dessert	12 <b>NATIONAL PULLED PORK DAY</b>	13	14 rEcess
15 3:30pm Deacons Meeting  5:00pm Women's Bible Study begins	16 <b>NATIONAL BOSS'S DAY</b>	17	18 Chicken Strips, Fries, Salad Bar	19	20	21 <b>NATIONAL PUMPKIN CHEESECAKE DAY</b>
22 7:00am Brotherhood Breakfast	23	24	25 Roast, Potatoes, green beans, sour kraut, Salad bar	26 <b>NATIONAL PUMPKIN DAY</b>	27 <b>NATIONAL BREADSTICK DAY</b>	28
MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION IN JACKSON, MS						
29 <b>ENGAGE SUNDAY</b> 1:30-3:00pm Baby Shower for Abby Davis in FH	30 <b>NATIONAL CANDY CORN DAY</b>	31 6:00pm TRAIL or TREAT 