



Tuesday, September 26, 2006



## The Presbytery of the Mid-South

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### Introduction

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We lost a large number of our members [to] yellow fever . . . Our churches have shown a determination to keep up their organizations and in their poverty they seem willing to make sacrifices to continue their service and prayer meetings. During the prevalence of the fever, our churches were to a great extent scattered, but we see a tender spirit on the part of the church members” (Presbytery Minutes, December 1878).

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First Presbyterian Church, established in 1828 as the second congregation in Memphis and a mission to the Chickasaw Indians, sits in downtown Memphis two blocks from the Mississippi River. Ravaged by yellow fever itself, the church lost its minister, the Rev. Henry Bowman, whom they buried on a Sunday. Grieving members barely escaped their own deaths when the sanctuary ceiling caved in while they were at the cemetery for his burial.

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First Presbyterian rose from the devastation of the Civil War, yellow fever, fire, and membership migration to the suburbs. Today a growing congregation, First Church incorporates the past in its new vision of ministry. “No matter who you are, you are welcome. There’s every kind of person here—working class people, gay people, straight people, couples with children, couples with no children. I don’t think anyone feels out of place,” says the Rev. C. V. Scarborough, the senior pastor. And many come to First Church because of the outreach to people living on the street. The Rev. Ellen P. Roberds, associate with outreach responsibilities, has been instrumental in initiating and maintaining ministry opportunities through the soup kitchen, the clothes closet, vouchers for local shelter stays, and most recently, the birth certificates and state identification program, which helps people obtain identification to get jobs and social services.

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The tender spirit cited in 1878 prevails at First Presbyterian Church, Memphis. To God be the glory.

The Presbytery of the Mid-South has 69 churches with 11,841 members.

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**Let us join  
in prayer for**

Elder Linda D. Scholl, member, GAC

**Presbytery Staff**

Rev. Jimmie Lancaster, executive presbyter

Linda Scholl, stated clerk

Lucy Cummings, associate executive presbyter

Audrey Anders, administration/finance

Judith Wilson, resource center director

Carmen Simmons, resident manager, Pinecrest

Nelle Kennon, food service director

Jim Hogan, maintenance director

**PC(USA) General Assembly Staff**

Simon Puche, MSS

Crystal Pulce, DEDO

Elder Michael Purintun, CMD

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**Scripture**

I will give thanks to your name, O Lord, for it is good (Ps. 54:6).

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**Lectionary**

Ps. 28, 54, 99, 146

Esth. 5:1-14

Acts 18:12-28; Luke 3:15-22

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