

The Main Thing

August 2026

MSPC



You Will Grow What Is Planted

A few weeks ago, I mentioned in a sermon the patch of wildflowers we have been trying to grow along the fence in our backyard.

It has taken more effort than I expected. We cleared the ground, scattered seed, watered it, and waited. For a while, there was very little evidence that anything was happening. The grass kept trying to reclaim the space, and the flower bed looked more like bare dirt than a garden.

Then the flowers began to appear.

Now we have orange, pink, purple, and red flowers growing along the fence. The bed is not especially neat or carefully arranged, but there is something beautiful about seeing all that color in a place that had once been bare.

The most surprising thing growing among the flowers, however, is a pumpkin vine.

I did not plant pumpkins there. I did not prepare a place for them or intentionally put pumpkin seeds in the soil. Nevertheless, a vine appeared, blossoms opened, and now small orange pumpkins are growing beneath the grass.

Somewhere along the way, a pumpkin seed made its way into that patch of ground. I do not know how it got there. But once it was planted and given the right conditions, it began to grow.



Jesus often used planting and harvesting to teach us about the kingdom of God. In the parable of the sower, a farmer scattered seed. Some fell along the path, some on rocky ground, some among thorns, and some on good soil. The seed was the Word of God, and the different soils represented those who heard it.

The parable reminds us that God ordinarily works through the sowing of his Word. Pastors preach it. Parents teach it. Friends share it. Christians read it, speak it, sing it, and pray it.

But we cannot make it grow.

A farmer can prepare the soil, scatter seed, pull weeds, and water the ground. He cannot command the seed to germinate or force roots to appear. He plants faithfully and depends upon God to do what only God can do.

Paul said, “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth” (1 Corinthians 3:6).

Paul preached the gospel. Apollos continued teaching. Both had important work to do, but neither could create spiritual life. The growth belonged to God.

That is an important distinction. We are responsible for faithfulness, but we are not sovereign over the results.

We can teach our children the Scriptures, but we cannot give them new hearts. We can invite a neighbor to church, but we cannot open that person's eyes to the glory of Christ. We can encourage a struggling believer, but only the Holy Spirit can preserve and strengthen faith.

This truth humbles us because it leaves no room for boasting. When fruit appears, God deserves the glory.

It also encourages us because the harvest does not finally depend upon us.

There are seasons when we sow and see very little. We repeat the same truths, pray the same prayers, and wonder whether anything is happening. We may be tempted to think that our labor has been wasted.

But the seed may already be beneath the soil.

At other times, God brings fruit we never expected. That pumpkin vine is growing in a place where I did not knowingly plant it. I did not plan for it, and I cannot take credit for it. It is simply there, producing fruit among the wildflowers.

Sometimes God's providence works like that.

A conversation we barely remember may stay with someone for years. A child may recall a Scripture lesson we thought had been forgotten. A sermon may take root in a heart without the preacher ever knowing it. A prayer offered in weakness may be answered in a way we never imagined.

There is mercy in that mystery. God often does more than we can see or predict. He uses ordinary conversations, imperfect efforts, and small acts of faithfulness to accomplish his purposes.

So keep sowing.

Plant the Word in your own heart. Teach it to your children. Speak it to your friends. Encourage one another with it. Pray over it.

Do not become discouraged when growth seems slow. Do not become proud when fruit appears. Be faithful in sowing and trust God with the harvest.

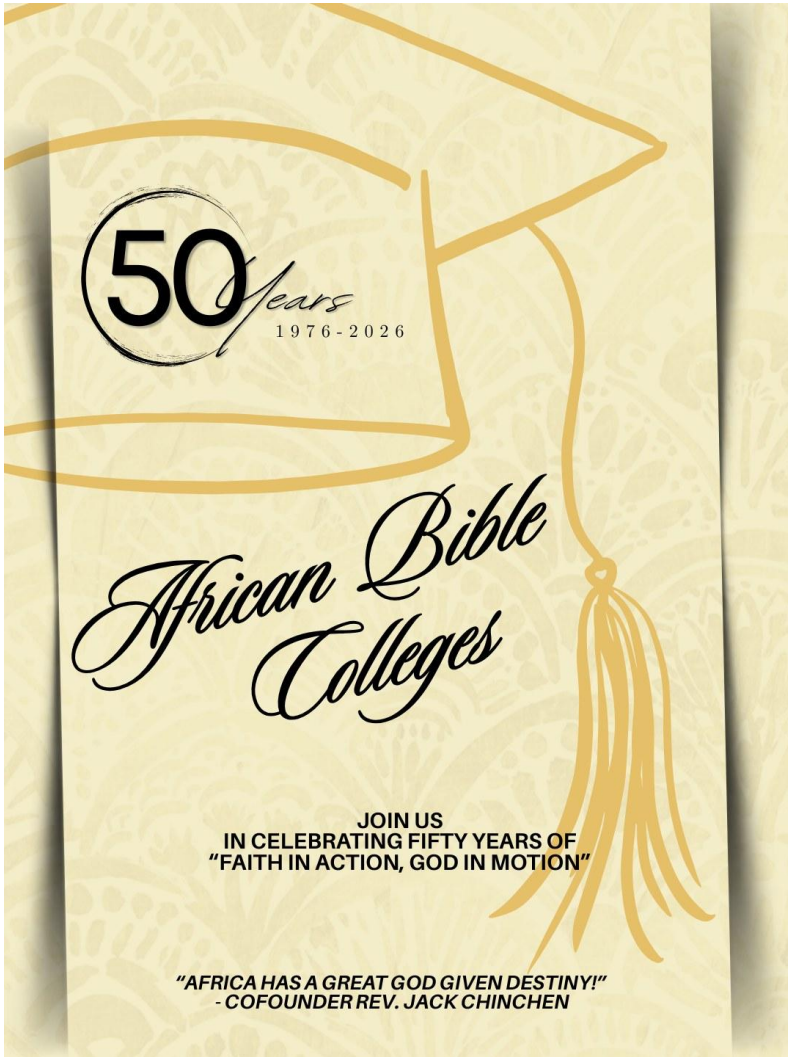
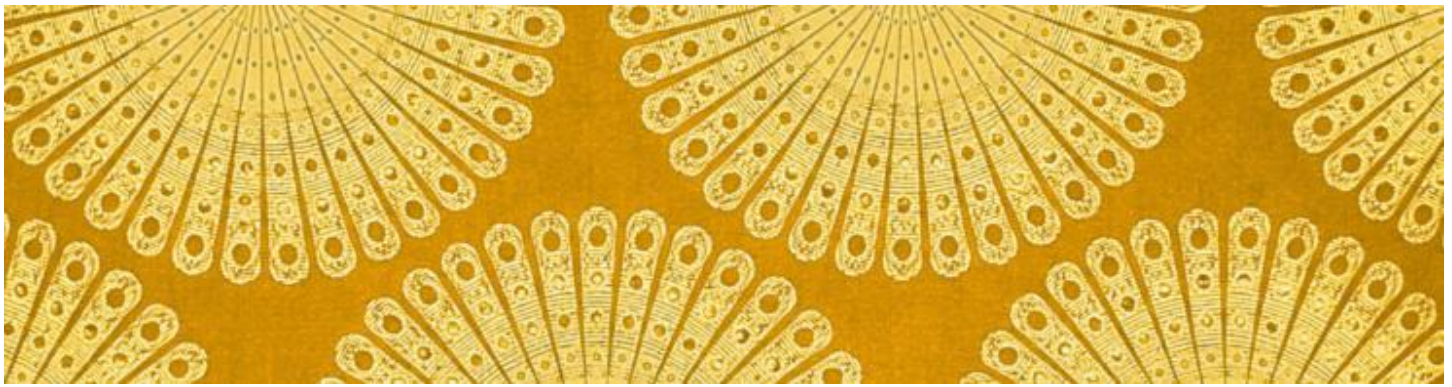
God sends the rain. God supplies the light. God gives life to the seed. God produces the growth.

And every now and then, by his mercy and mysterious providence, he may even give you a pumpkin in the middle of your wildflowers. And when he does, take a moment to smile and wonder at the great kindness and love our God has for us.

In Christ,

Pastor Aaron





Dear ABC Family,

For the past 50 years, God has faithfully guided African Bible Colleges through every season of growth, challenge, and transformation. Through Christ-centered education, compassionate care, and discipleship, countless lives have been impacted across Africa and beyond.

As we celebrate this milestone, we give all glory to God for His faithfulness and are deeply grateful for the students, faculty, alumni, supporters, churches, and mission partners He has used to advance His kingdom through this ministry.

Faith in Action, God in Motion

The story continues on the next two pages



Featured Story by Dr. Jack Chínchen

The following excerpt is taken from the Epilogue of *Faith in Action, God in Motion*:

A Devotional Commentary on Joshua by the late Dr. Jack Chínchen, published in 2021

On my darkest day in Africa, I knew God's message to me was, Stay! So I said, "God, I'm with you. I'm not going to run away, you need me."

My darkest day became my brightest day. So, we stayed in Africa. It's been almost fifty more years now.

It's been a storybook life. Nell and I would not have traded a day of it for anything else in the world.

The first thing I did was paint the words from Isaiah on the side of our Cessna 337 Skymaster, "Go ye swift messengers." Soon after this God gave the vision for African Bible Colleges.

This, I realized, was Nell's and my African destiny. As well as the destiny of ABC: To raise up Christian leaders for Africa.

Why am I convinced this Isaiah passage (Isaiah 18) is about Africa?

Because the people of Africa are hungry for the gospel like no other people in the world.

When we visited Liberian President Tolbert as we were preparing to build the first African Bible College, he said to us, "Bring to Liberia as many missionaries as you can. Africa is eager to hear the gospel!" This is the day for the swift messenger.

I discovered this text in 1972, almost 50 years ago - and what a difference 50 years can make.

At the time this passage seemed impossible, illogical. Africa was in chaos. Idi Amin was driving missionaries out of Uganda. Apartheid plagued South Africa. Missionaries were being killed in the Congo. Wars raged in Namibia, Angola, and Mozambique. Then our 22-building campus in Liberia was destroyed by the Cobra Battalion in the civil war, and we watched the country be decimated as the war dragged on for fifteen years.

How could Africa have any God-given destiny?

As the years passed, however, we saw Africa begin to shine. We watched thousands of our African Bible College graduates fan out across Sub-Saharan Africa - founding schools, planting churches, establishing Christian non-profits, leading in government and business... I began to see God's destiny for Africa become a reality.

We are watching it happen with our own eyes. Anyone who travels to Africa can see what is happening: peace is spreading and the Kingdom of God is spreading across Africa like nowhere else in this world. When we first built the African Bible College campus in Malawi in 1986, I could not wait to tell everyone in my PCA denomination that there were 600,000 Presbyterians in the country. Today that number is 1.2 million!

In 2005 when Liberia's civil war finally ended, we rebuilt the entire 22-building African Bible College campus in Yekepa - and invited Franklin Graham out to give the dedication address.

(continued on the next page)

African Bible Colleges Celebrating 50 Years Continued

After the dedication, Nell and I flew with Franklin in his Samaritans Purse helicopter back to the Monrovia for him to hold a crusade, like his father Billy Graham used to. They held the event in the national stadium, which seats about forty thousand. When we arrived, I saw something that I'd never seen before: my guess is somewhere around 70,000 people jammed on the field and in the seats... to hear about Jesus.

At the end of Franklin's message, he gave an invitation to receive Christ and the response was unbelievable. Thousands began swarming the stage to pray. They climbed over fences by the thousands... and they ran! I have never seen people run to meet Jesus. The second night was the same - thousands more climbed over fences and ran to the cross! The third night, the same thing again. People running to Jesus.

About forty or fifty years ago, Fuller Seminary's missions department began to draw on a map the direction of the center of Christianity was moving - to track it. Of course, it started out from Europe and crossed the Atlantic Ocean - very nice in a straight line in the 40s and in the 50s and in the 60s and in the 70s and 80s, and even into the 90s. And, by the way, those are all the years that Billy Graham was around, and he did so much to bring our country alive spiritually.

Then, all of a sudden, 10 to 15 years ago, the center of Christianity began to make a turn. And today it is going southeast, headed straight towards the heart of... Sub-Saharan Africa! And their prediction is that within twenty to twenty-five years, Africa will be the global center of Christianity!

It's right out of the scriptures of Isaiah - the infallible word of God, the truth of God is being fulfilled. Isaiah, the great prophet who prophesied the coming birth of Christ, who prophesied all about his crucifixion... is prophesying in Isaiah 18 about Sub-Saharan Africa.

These are the people who are going to greet the Lord Jesus Christ when he returns. We do not read of this kind of prophecy for any other people group anywhere in scripture - except for Sub-Saharan Africa. It fits with Christ's words, "The last shall be first and the first shall be last."

When the Liberian man on the street asked, "Why are we always the last?" I wish I had known what I know now, because I would have confidently answered, "Don't worry my friend, with God you have a destiny, you will be the first... to welcome Christ!"

People ask us, why do you keep going back to Africa - why do you keep going back, and back, and back again? Because Africa has a God-given destiny. This is why Nell and I have given our lives to serving God on this continent that we love. It is my hope that when this all happens - when Africa runs to welcome Christ when he returns - that those of us who have prayed for Africa for so many years, and served in Africa, and who love the African people, will have the joy and the privilege of running shoulder to shoulder with the people of Africa.

African Bible Colleges: Faith in Action, God in Motion





Happy Birthday Mrs. Nell!

In August, Mrs. Nell Chinchin will turn 100. She is still actively working with ABC. She spent over half her life sharing Jesus with the people of Africa as she and her late husband, Jack, founded African Bible Colleges in Liberia, Malawi, and Uganda.

Main Street has been partnering with them for the entire journey.





MINISTRY TO THE MILITARY NEWS

9 July 2026

Friends,

A few months ago, I asked for financial help to cover a short-term specific need for Covenant Presbyterian of Okinawa. www.okinawacovenant.org So many people came through and supported this cause and covered the expense of a pulpit supply (interim) pastor in Okinawa. Pastor Mark Moore, who was the pastor in Okinawa for 13 years came, without his family, for 3 months and shepherded the flock. This is Mark's last Sunday in Okinawa and he returns to the States and will be reunited with his family. On a personal note, Mark is a friend of mine. He is an excellent preacher, and a wonderful and caring shepherd. He is also a loving husband and father. I'm sure that I speak for the congregation and our MMI Commission by saying "thank you" to Mark and his family who stayed behind in the US as Mark ministered without them.

Pastor Daniel Jarstfer will once again come to Okinawa to serve for 3 months. We, of course, ask for additional giving to support the Okinawa church during this continued transition period. It costs approximately \$9,000 per month to cover the travel expenses, housing, rental cars, and a small expense allowance for an interim pastor. This does not include the cost of the rental facility. The 3-month limit is based on visa requirements. Longer-term stays in Japan requires paperwork to secure a long-term visa with the Japanese government.



Going forward, we are still seeking the right man to take this call. This church has been in existence since 2004 on an island with 26,000 US military members plus their families and US government civilians. In addition, there are a few local families who attend. Ideally, a retired military chaplain or a current Reservist with at least 5 years pastoral experience is what we are seeking. This church, despite a lot of military moves this year, is averaging over 40 in morning worship. Most of the big departures for this year have occurred and now we are praying for new families to come—**WOULD YOU PRAY WITH US FOR NEW FAMILIES?**

Perhaps your church would like to take on any of our MMI churches as a mission work. It is very easy to provide continued support—prayer, encouragement, and giving. Also, if you know of anyone moving to any of our church locations, tell them of our works.

Once again, we truly thank each and every one of you who support this ministry.

Chester Replogle, Director
www.MMiChurches.com





Welcome to a new school year!

I hope all of our families are well rested and ready for that 8am drop-off.

Main Street has a few changes this year, including a new communication and billing system through BrightWheel, an extended school day with pick up starting at Noon, and an extended school year with the last day of school being May 14th !

Returning this year is Lauren Younger, Brittney Fulper, Desiree Krieger, Judy Woolbright, Cathy Duncan, Tara White, and Kailee Chilcutt. The teachers will start back on Aug 17th .

We will have Meet the Teacher on August 21st . We are so excited for the parents and children to come meet their teachers and the other students in their classes. The first day of school will be August 24th .



In other Main Street news, our Prayer Buddy signup sheets will be going home the first week of school. We would love for each parent to allow a member of Main Street Presbyterian Church to pray for your student this school year. In return, your child will be able to send paintings, drawings, and notes to their assigned Prayer Buddy.

Please pray we have a wonderful school year full of learning, playing, and most importantly growing closer to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Eagerly awaiting your arrival,

Justina Johnson, Director

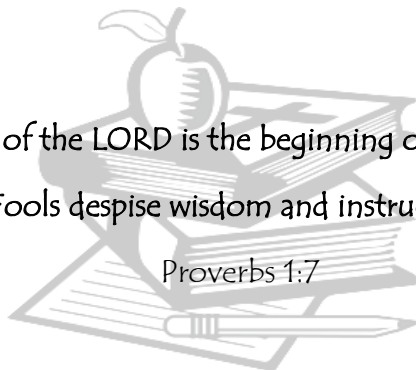


August 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 Communion Lisa Suber	3	4 Silas Zarandona WIC 10:30	5 William Laws	6	7 Dan & Janie Williams	8
9 Church Picnic 5:00 Lake Norris	10 Pat Russell	11 Karen Livingston	12	13 J.B. Dyer Ladies Night Out 6:00 TBD	14 Karmel Crandall	15 Sophie Marble
16	17 Nancy Franks	18	19 Linda Simpson	20	21	22
23 Michelle Mancill	24 Ivy Harris Kathy Newton MSCS 1 st Day of School	25	26 Laurie Chilcutt	27 Henry & Sandra Pilkinton	28 Marcus Stone	29 Dan Williams
30	31					

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge;
Fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Proverbs 1:7



Nursery Volunteers



August 2026	8/2/26	8/9/26	8/16/26	8/23/26	8/30/26
Coordinator	Hannah Nail	Pat Russell	Janie Williams	Frances Glenn	Lisa Suber
Nursery Volunteer	Camille Pittman	Meryl Fisackerly	Robin/Katie Tait	Sarah Bean	Savannah Baxter
Nursery Worker	Tara White	Tara White	Tara White	Tara White	OFF
Nursery Worker	Destiny Spraggins	Destiny Spraggins	OFF	Destiny Spraggins	Destiny Spraggins
Toddler Sunday School	Alice Talley	Alice Talley	Alice Talley	Alice Talley	Alice Talley
Sunday School Monitor	Dan Williams	Jay Nail	Brinton Fisackerly	Dan Williams	Jay Nail

August Counter

**Henry
Pilkinton**

Budget Report

June 2026

(all tithing
including online)

\$100,880

August



August 2: **Henry Pilkinton**, JB Dyer, Marcus Stone, Tyler Cofield, Larry Burleson

August 9: **Jay Nail**, Key Pittman, Jesse Duncan, Jacob Wright, Josh Wodrich

August 16: **Jack Chilcutt**, Sammy Clemons, Danny Williams, Tom Tait, Luke King

August 23: **Brinton Fisackerly**, Joseph Crandall, Jon Zarandona, Mike Meharg, Phillip Goodwin

August 30: **Bryant Bean**, Russ Russell, Nick Hairston, Allan Brewer

*Please be
Praying for...*

- ❖ MSPC Elders, Deacons, and Pastors
- ❖ Karen Livingston, John Mark Russell, Nicki Leggett, Oop Swoope, Jane Berry, Abigail Beard, Rachel Lucas, Debbie Jenkins, John Rogowski, Kathy Forester, and Christ Presbyterian Church Misson
- ❖ Washington Officials, President Donald Trump
- ❖ State, City, and County Officials
- ❖ Governor Tate Reeves, Mayor Stephen Jones, Police Chief Garland Ward, Sheriff Eddie Hawkins
- ❖ Helping Hands, Life Choices Pregnancy Center, Palmer Home, all Columbus Churches and Pastors

Main Street Presbyterian Church

701 Main Street

P. O. Box 26

Columbus, MS 39703



Main Street Presbyterian Church

(A Presbyterian Church in America Congregation)

Sunday Schedule

9:30 a.m. Sunday School

10:40 a.m. Morning Worship

5:00 p.m. Evening Study: Psalms