

A Christmas to Remember and a Year to Forget! by Gerrit Dawson, Senior Pastor

Ever since I was old enough to understand the concept, I've been sad when one year passes to another. But this year, well, I'm ready to be done with 2020! We've seen a ridiculous amount of upheavals followed by more upheavals. Fresh start, please!

Thankfully, Christmas is coming. I'll be pining for standing room only packed out live nativities and Christmas Eve services. But we can't do any sardining now! Still, we've had our creative caps on trying to figure out how we can get all the people who want to keep Christmas with us attending in a safe way. Details are to follow, but we're deep into exploring having outdoor services run concurrently with indoor services! Including one with animals! We're considering implementing a ticket system so we don't have to turn people away, but can offer folks a seat at that the service they choose in the venue they choose with good distancing. Yes, it's going to be different. But when I think about being in the terraced garden, with a fire blazing in the fireplace, bundled up and raising our candles in the dark, it sounds pretty Christmassy to me! Pray for your elders and staff as we make decisions, and watch our website and bulletins for more details.

Our December sermons will be built around *Lost Verses of Famous Carols*. We had a lot of fun several years ago uncovering seldom sung lyrics in beloved Christmas songs. Well, we've found some more little known words from *O Little Town of Beth-*

lehem, Silent Night, O Come All Ye Faithful and Hark! the Herald Angels Sing. So we not only get to sing these great carols, we get to dive deep into their content.

I'm very excited about the new advent calendar that's been created for our daily readings during this sacred month. Beautifully designed by Katie Robinson, Katie Forsthoff and Mitzi Barber, the readings are coordinated with our sermons and include lovely breath prayers to take you deeper.

Meanwhile, we look forward to a special Sunday of music on December 13. The worship team and chancel choir will combine with an orchestra to present "Hail the Blessed Morn," a program highlighting the rich musical tradition we have at our church through Christmas favorites.

Movies You're Not Supposed to See

Tired of formulaic Christmas movies? Want to think more deeply about what's going on in our society? I have three movies for you that challenge the status quo. Each is disturbing, provocative and rousing. I believe you can't not view these films as part of the ongoing dialogue in our culture. Each one makes a well-produced, captivating watch. *Unplanned*. This is the story of Abby Johnson, a former Planned Parenthood clinic director who discovered the economics of the abortion industry,

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Women's Advent Brunch	DEC 12
Christmas Concert (9 and 11 am)	DEC 13
Christmas Offering Taken	DEC 13-27
Poinsettia Orders Deadline	DEC 14
Single 10.30 am Worship	DEC 29

UPCOMING EVENTS

Church Office Closed	JAN 1
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IN MEMORIAM:

November 9, 2020
Anne Lord
Mother of Nancy Cuccio

November 10, 2020
Thomas Medford Hogg
Father of Jim Hogg

NEW BIRTH:

November 6, 2020
Claire Turner Webber
Parents are Claire and Rawley Webber

SANCTUARY FLOWERS

You are invited to contact Sherry McKinley by December 14 (387.0224 or sherry@pcbr.org) to purchase a poinsettia in memory or celebration of a loved one. Poinsettias will be placed in the Chapel and Sanctuary. \$35 each.

The Sanctuary flowers serve to honor a departed loved one or celebrate with thanksgiving cherished people or events. If you would like to donate flowers for a particular Sunday in 2021, please contact Kathy Mullins at 291.3095.

Christmas in Southwest Louisiana by Whitney Alexander, Assoc. Pastor of Missions

The children's, youth and missions ministries of First Presbyterian Church are teaming up to bring joy to the children in southwest Louisiana and especially in IOWA, Louisiana. This area of our state is full of children and teens who have lost personal items, books and toys (indoor and outdoor) from two devastating hurricanes this fall.

These children are hoping Santa will bring some new replacements! However, Santa is stretched extremely thin with deductibles, repair costs for their homes, replacement costs, reduced hours of work and the delivery trucks are running slow this year.

We need gifts for kids! New toys, puzzles, games, sports balls, jump ropes, etc., as well as items for teens (girls: purses, jewelry, etc., and guys: sports balls, electronics, teen stuff). Packages of new t-shirts, socks, pajamas,

sweaters, hair bows will also be helpful for all ages. We deeply appreciate your help in blessing others who have been devastated.



Please deliver gifts wrapped with a tag indicating the appropriate age and sex of the child. Please drop your gifts off **no later than Sunday, December 20** to the gym where the hurricane tables are located. Please contact Whitney Alexander if you have any questions (225.810.2607).

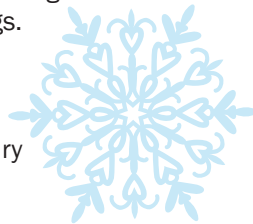
Annual Advent Brunch: Celebrating Christ's Arrival

The word Advent stems from a Latin word that means "coming" or "arrival." The season of Advent re-centers our hearts and minds both on the anticipation of Christ's birth and on the expectation of Christ's return. In the early 1800s, Christians began the tradition of displaying an Advent wreath to help them remain focused on the purpose of this season. They would light four candles nestled around the wreath, one on each Sunday leading up to Christmas, and we still continue that tradition today. What does each candle represent? How do they move us forward in anticipation of Christ's birth?

Join us for the Women's Ministry Advent Brunch, where we will take a deep dive into each Advent candle's meaning and uncover the hope this season brings.

Saturday, December 12
11 am - 1 pm
At the home of Hattie Guidry
*Boxed brunch provided

*10 per person
*If you don't feel comfortable joining in person, we would love for you to join us for the devotional via Zoom (link on website) at 12 pm.



Musical Celebration of the Incarnation: December 13



Worship ministry is excited to present *Hail the Blest Morn: A Musical Celebration of the Incarnation* on Sunday, December 13 at 9 and 11 am. Through ancient texts and modern poetry and with various musical styles, we will bring together the many talents in our church to illuminate the great and wonderful mystery of the incarnation of our Lord.

"Brightest and best of the sons of the morning, Dawn on our darkness and lend us thine aid. Star of the East, the horizon adorning, Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid."

Contemplative Prayer Hour by Katie Forsthoff

Our Contemplative Prayer Hour takes place in the Sanctuary every other Monday at 10 am. This quiet hour features guided silent prayer based on the reading of Scripture as well as a brief reflection on the Sunday sermon. Leaders Katie and Ryan Forsthoff welcome all to this refreshing, centering hour before the Lord and his Word.

What is this contemplative prayer you ask? Well . . .

In 2017, we created this meeting to fill the desire most of us have to experience the presence of Jesus through prayer in deeper and more focused ways. We met in various homes around the city and saw beautiful things happen as we consistently guarded quiet space for people to meet with the Lord.

Now more than ever we need intentional injections of peace and truth in our lives! We invite you to join us in this sacred hour of prayer as we build on Senior Pastor Gerrit Dawson's powerful Sunday sermons. We will enjoy exploring the momentum of Scripture and messaging we hear from the pulpit in quiet contemplation.

During our time together we will lead the group through a guided prayer time between you and the Lord. It will be a time of less

talking and more listening and receiving from God. This will be a Holy Spirit led process that is between you and your Savior. We merely hope to be quietly positioning you through prayer. There is no teaching or assignments given. Simply prayer.



Adults only. We ask that you please make arrangements for your children to stay home.

This is NOT a closed group. If you feel led to bring a friend, please do. Although we will focus on Scripture and sermon theme, we welcome all of our friends from around the city! It will be very accessible and easy to follow.

There is no pressure or expectation of attendance. Come as frequently or infrequently as your life/schedule allows.

We are committed to following the Spirit's lead as this group grows and develops—we are excited to see where/what that is! And we look forward to being drawn more deeply into HIS presence with you all!

Buchanan Elementary Ministry Update

All they want for Christmas is an Encourager! It has been a rough year for teachers and our congregation has generously stepped up to adopt the teachers at our ministry partner Buchanan Elementary. But we still have two teachers who would love an Encourager! Please consider adopting Chyna Barges or Alyssa Hernandez and being a blessing to them this school year. Contact Laura Shaw at 387.0617 or laura@fpcbr.org for more information.

2020 Christmas Offering

Our annual Christmas offering goes directly to support two of our key ministry partners, both of which are making possible meaningful, long-term transformation in our city: The Christian Outreach Center and Gardere Community Christian School. We receive this offering from December 13-27. In the joy of the season, we support those who are bringing Christ and his love in tangible ways to others. Donations can be made by check (write Christmas Offering in the memo line) or online at fpcbr.org.



SUNDAY WORSHIP

9 am and 11 am Sanctuary worship. Livestream on YouTube or Facebook.

DECEMBER SERMON TEXTS

Texts are subject to change.

DECEMBER 6, 2020
Luke 2: 7

DECEMBER 13, 2020
John 1: 18

DECEMBER 20, 2020
Ezekiel 37: 1-6

DECEMBER 24, 2020
Titus 2: 11-14

DECEMBER 27, 2020
Luke 2: 14

PASTORAL STAFF

GERRIT DAWSON
Senior Pastor

WHITNEY ALEXANDER
Associate Pastor of Missions

BARRY PHILLIPS
Ministry Executive

JIM SOLOMON
Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care & Prayer

DARIN TRAVIS
Director of Discipleship,
Men's Ministry & Young Adults



PH: 225.387.0617
FAX: 225.338.1010

fpcbr.org

763 North Boulevard
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Mother's Day Out and Preschool
225.620.0245

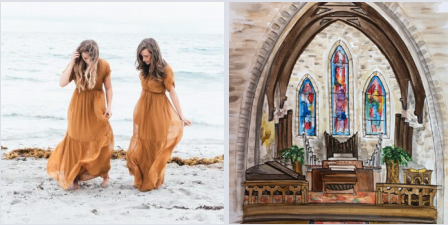
Baton Rouge Christian Counseling Center
225.387.2287
brchristiancounseling.com

Christmas Poinsettia Orders

Members are invited to contact Sherry in the church office (387.0617 or sherry@fpcbr.org) to purchase a poinsettia in memory or celebration of a loved one. Poinsettias will be placed in the Chapel and Sanctuary. \$35 each. The deadline for orders is Monday, December 14.

CDs and Notecard Sets

FPC notecard sets (\$20) and Foto Sisters CDs (\$10) both make great stocking stuffers. Visit the Heritage Room to make a purchase.



Christmas Bags for Malachi Dads

Items are being collected for Christmas bags to be distributed to the Malachi Dads (prisoners) at Angola Penitentiary. Please consider making a donation and dropping it off at the Connection Center: soap, antiperspirant, toothpaste/toothbrush, shampoo, lotion, body wash, white athletic socks or baby powder. Cash donations also accepted.



Year to Forget, *cont. from pg. 1*

the dehumanization of women clients, and the horror of the procedures. *Uncle Tom: A Narrative History of Black Conservatism*. Prominent African Americans challenge the narrative of dependence. *The Social Dilemma*. Former creators and executives from Google, Instagram and Facebook warn of the monster they created through the algorithms of manipulation on our favorite media sites. A chilling warning. I'd love to hear how you respond.

Yes, 2020 may be a year to forget, but it only makes me more eager to keep a joyful Christmas with you dear flock!



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