

FPC NEWSLETTER

Deeper in Christ, Further into the World



WOULD YOU DANCE AT THIS WEDDING?

By Gerrit Dawson
Senior Pastor

This Advent our theme is the *wedding feast of the Lamb*. Every Christmas we celebrate the first advent of our savior. That's when Jesus wedded himself to human flesh and came to us as a baby. We also look forward to the *second advent* of Jesus. He will return again to this world. And he's coming back for a wedding. Our wedding! The marriage of the church to the Lamb of God. The celebration that Christ our bridegroom will come to wed his beloved bride, all those who have been united to him in faith.

It's no accident that Revelation wraps up with a wedding celebration. New life comes from marriage, in all the ways a committed love blesses the world. The return of our bridegroom Jesus will make all things new. He will set everything right, wiping away tears, destroying death, restoring relationships and renewing the whole creation. That's reason to rejoice. That's reason to dance at this ultimate wedding reception.

So you won't want to miss *Dancing Day*, our Christmas cantata on December 8 at 9 and 11 am. This service features original music by Chris Phillips, an orchestra, the full voices of our combined choir and worship team, and, of course, dancers! This is a great service to bring guests with you.

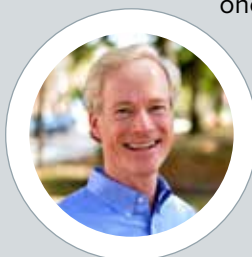
We love to keep Christmas with you. So once again we'll host the Live Nativity in our terraced garden on Friday, December 6 at 5.30 and 6.30 pm. Animals, angel dance and a full cast of characters bring the beloved story to

life. On Christmas Eve, we'll have our usual three festive services at 11 am, 4 pm, and 6 pm. I'll preach on the theme, "It is Good That You Exist!" On December 29, we'll have a cozy, casual single service at 10.30 am.

Christmas Offering

Every year, in a very understated way, we make available a special offering to undergird two ministries beloved to our church. Every year, quietly, you shatter giving records and send the ministry leaders soaring into the new year with hope.

The Christian Outreach Center, led by Brian Sleeth, helps thousands of people through the year with basic needs for food, clothing, shelter and electricity. But more, the COC offers effective programs in job readiness, financial literacy and even re-entry from prison to a contributing life. The Gardere Community Christian School, led by Lauren Darden, educates 160 students from pre-K to fifth grade. This multi-ethnic Christian school consistently sees dramatic improvement in students' test scores, outpacing both public and charter schools in its area. Most importantly, Gardere effectively forms this little ones in the love and story of Jesus. Both ministries light many flames of hope, and it's a joy to support them.



Gerrit

2 ADVENT
CELEBRATIONS
CALENDAR

3 GET READY:
2025 MISSION
CONFERENCE

3 1 & 2 TIMOTHY
WOMENS'
STUDY

4 MORE
WAYS
TO GIVE

DECEMBER CALENDAR

- 1 First Sunday in Advent
- 4, 11 & 18 Mid-Week Advent Worship
- 6 Live Nativity
- 8 "Dancing Day!" Cantata
- 8 Downtown Pilgrimage
- 10 Prime Time Christmas Luncheon
- 14 Women's Advent Brunch
- 21 IFP Ladies' Tea
- 24 11 am, 4 pm & 6 pm Worship
- 29 10.30 am Worship

UPCOMING EVENTS

Jan. 24–26 Missions Conference

IN MEMORIAM

October 28, 2024
Charles Lambert
Father of Laurence Lambert

November 12, 2024
Brent Ramirez
Son of Beverly Freneau

November 15, 2024
Alfred Shelton
Beloved Sexton Emeritus

November 23, 2024
Grey Spiller
Son of Rick Spiller

BAPTISMS

November 10, 2024
Oliver Shepherd Black
Parents are Selene & Christopher
Grandparents are Mary & Frank Brost

Robert Thomas Davis Jr.
Parents are Mary & Robert
Grandparents: Paige & DJ Davis
Kim & Bucky Powell

Everett James Landreneau
Parents are Devyn & Jean Paul
Grandparents are Johanna & Kevin Landreneau

Amelia Lee Rodeheaver
Parents are Brennan & Mitchell Rodeheaver

BIRTHS

November 15, 2024
Vivian June Maranto
Parents are Emily & Justin

ADVENT CELEBRATIONS

MID-WEEK ADVENT WORSHIP

First Presbyterian is offering Wednesday noon Advent services for the first three weeks of the season. Worship, which will include communion, will be 12 to 12.45 pm on December 4, 11 & 18. Our scriptural focus will be on Matthew 25 as Jesus gives three memorable teachings on his second coming, a fitting focus for Advent. The services will be held in Dunham Chapel and will include special music perfect for the season. Join us for a time of quiet joy with our family of faith!

LIVE NATIVITY



On Friday, December 6, downtown Baton Rouge will be alive with the sights and sounds of Christmas for the Festival of Lights. Plan to join us in the beautiful Terraced Garden at 5.30 or 6.30 pm to see the story of Jesus' birth as recorded in the Gospels come to life. Shepherds, Angels, Wisemen!

"DANCING DAY" CHRISTMAS CANTATA



On Sunday, December 8, the choir, orchestra and dancers will perform "Dancing Day", a Christmas cantata. This celebration of the royal wedding between Jesus and his bride includes original music by Chris Phillips inspired by J. S. Bach and Chris Tomlin. Join us at either the 9 or 11 am service. The Chapel Communion service will not meet. Join us for a special gathering between services in the Reception Room when the children's choir will lead us in carols.

ANNUAL DOWNTOWN PILGRIMAGE



The music ministry at First Presbyterian is excited to be a part of the annual Downtown Christmas Pilgrimage on Sunday, December 8. The journey begins at 5.30 pm at Mount Zion Baptist Church and usually arrives at First Presbyterian at 6.30 pm. We'll walk

together to several beautiful downtown churches and hear wonderful Christmas music.

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA ORDERS

All are invited to help decorate the Chapel and Sanctuary by purchasing a poinsettia in memory or celebration of a loved one. The cost is \$35 per plant. Please place your order by Wednesday, December 11 by using the order form outside the Chapel, at the Connection Center, or online. Those who purchase a poinsettia are welcome to take it home after the 6 pm Christmas Eve service.

WOMEN'S ADVENT BRUNCH



His name will be Immanuel, which means God with us (Matthew 1:23). From the beginning of time, God was with us. He was with Adam and Eve in the garden. He dwelt with his people in the wilderness on their journey to the Promised Land. He was with Joshua in Jericho. But with the birth of Jesus, God was "with us" in a way he had never been before. He wasn't just with us. He became like us. He came low in order to bring us up, so that we could be with him always. This Advent, may we marvel at his name, *Immanuel*, and rejoice that God was, is, and always will be . . . with us. Join us for food, fellowship on Saturday, December 14 at 11 am with a special devotion led by Lindsay Stratman. Please register at fpcbr.org. \$10 per person.

LADIES' CHRISTMAS TEA WITH INTERNATIONALS



International Friendship Partners invites all ladies to a Christmas tea at 10.30 am on Saturday, December 21 at the Wilsons' (2007 Ramsey Drive). Let's celebrate the peace and joy of Christmas time with our international friends. Let us know if you are coming by emailing Lee Ann Kozan (leannkozan@gmail.com).

Continues on page 4

WE'RE GETTING READY FOR THE 2025 MISSIONS CONFERENCE

Proverbs 29:18 says, "Where there is no vision, the people perish, but blessed is the one who keeps the law." It could be that we need our vision exanded, or maybe even a new vision bestowed upon us by our Creator. During our last weekend in January (25–27), we are privileged to draw from our missionaries, Greg & Elizabeth Mook (Lebanon) and Browning Wood (Africa) who are earnestly engaged in the visions our Savior has bestowed upon them.

We global mission enthusiasts would like to see full engagement by First Presbyterian in the Great Commission for all nations. We long to discover new pathways for this engagement while maintaining our focus on the least reached. So clear away any diversions, and come enlarge your vision. And it is Whitney Alexander's last weekend with us!

1 & 2 TIMOTHY: FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT

Women's Ministry begins its next Bible study the week of January 6 on 1 & 2 Timothy. In these letters to his young friend and protégé Timothy, the apostle Paul reminds believers of the commitment to, and behavior towards, the Church, the "pillar and foundation of the truth." In a world marked by false teaching, moral decline and spiritual compromise, we are called to guard the gospel of Jesus Christ and live it out in practical and visible ways. Join us at one of our three weekly offerings (Tuesdays at 7.15 am, Wednesdays at 6 pm, or Thursdays at 9.30 am). May we feel a renewed sense of responsibility and confidence to fight the good fight of faith.

MOTHER'S DAY OUT CHURCH MEMBER REGISTRATION



Church member priority registration for the Mother's Day Out 2025-2026 school year is Monday, January 27. Contact Whitney Weiner at mdo@fpcbr.org or 225.620.0245 for more information.



Many thanks to Mary Ann and Steele Yeargain for hosting our Deacon Christmas party. Back Row (L to R): Robert Arnold, Scott Kirkpatrick, Bob Olsson, Jess Concienne, Annie Kelly, Parish Oliver, Bill Johannessen, Mark Lamond, Jonathan Schellack, Ben Hunter. Middle Row: Mary Ann Yeargain, Rosemary Beall, Mitzi Barber. Front Row: Claire Zak, Cheryl Lott, Ryn Jones, Shawn Mills, Cate Heroman, Sherry Kadair, Pat O'Donoghue.

SERMON TEXTS

Texts are subject to change.

DECEMBER 1
Revelation 20:1-2, 4b-5, 12, 15

DECEMBER 8
Revelation 19:6-16

DECEMBER 15
Revelation 21:1-8, 22-27

DECEMBER 22
Revelation 22:1-5, 12-17, 20

DECEMBER 24
To be determined

PASTORAL STAFF

GERRIT DAWSON
Senior Pastor

WHITNEY ALEXANDER
Associate Pastor of Missions

DARIN TRAVIS
Associate Pastor for Discipleship

SCOTT GRAHAM
Associate Pastor for
Pastoral Care and Prayer

COLTON UNDERWOOD
Associate Pastor of Children,
Youth and Families

CHAPEL AND SANCTUARY FLOWERS

The Chapel and 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 2025, please contact Kathy Mullins at 603.4735.



225.387.0617
fpcbr.org

763 North Boulevard
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Mother's Day Out and Preschool
225.620.0245

BR Christian Counseling Center
225.387.2287
brchristiancounseling.com

CHRISTMAS WORSHIP



December 24: Three festive Christmas Eve services of carols, candlelight and communion at 11 am, 4 and 6 pm.

December 25: No Worship

December 29: 10.30 am Worship

ALL THEY WANT FOR CHRISTMAS!

First Presbyterian Church has generously stepped up to adopt the teachers of our ministry partner McKinley Elementary. But we still have **NINE** teachers who would love an Encourager! Please consider adopting one of our remaining teachers and being a blessing to them this school year. Sign up at the Connection Center or contact Laura Shaw (387.0617, laura@fpcbr.org).

4

BRINGING THE LIGHT OF JESUS TO GARDERE STUDENTS

The message of hope, love and light of Jesus Christ is to be shared all year long. That is why Kids Hope USA is hosting an after-Christmas Epiphany event at Gardere Community Christian School. On either Wednesday, January 8 or Thursday, January 9 (date to be determined) Kids Hope USA will share Cate Heroman's creative message of "the light that cannot be stopped" using Scripture, finger lights and various crosses. Volunteers will reflect God's love to each Gardere classroom in teams of three but we need help! Contact Annette (annette@fpcbr.org) if you would like to be one of the much needed 10 volunteers.

MORE WAYS TO GIVE

We are very blessed to have a congregation full of gracious givers. Did you know that First Presbyterian can accept various forms of giving? Additional ways to give include gifts of Appreciated Securities or Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs). Your tax advisor will be able to assist you in determining if either of these fits your personal situation.

DEACONS ARE HERE TO HELP

The Diaconate has a growing passion to help the home bound and needy within our congregation. If you have a need, know of a need or would like to participate, please contact Laura Shaw (225.387.0617 or laura@fpcbr.org).