

Deeper in Christ, further into the world.

fpcNEWS

February 2017 Volume 51-02

No Time to “Play” Church!

By Gerrit S. Dawson, Senior Pastor

Have you been as convicted *and* energized by our study of James as I have? The apostle James blazes through his letter like a man with his hair on fire. He doesn't waste words. He doesn't pull punches. And he's not afraid to upset how we think about God, ourselves and the world. In other words, James has no time for believers who just “play” at living for Christ. His letter is strong medicine. And isn't that just the way we like it? In a culture that is largely post-Christian, dabbling with Jesus just won't do. We need the real stuff, and we need it straight. So each week I've been wading into such zingers as “Consider every trial a joy,” or “Faith without works is dead,” or “The tongue is a fire.” He slays me with truth, and, at the very same time, brings me to life with a more vital faith. It encourages me that you seem to be responding the same way. I love how our congregation always wants the truth of the gospel, even when it sizzles us.

Living from the Lord's Prayer

At the end of February, we will be switching focus from James to the prayer that Jesus taught us. Our 2017 theme for Lent is *Living from the Lord's Prayer*. I learned so much as I prepared for this study, starting way back in the summer. What can seem like an overly familiar, slightly boring prayer is actually a pipeline into the very heart and mission of God for his world.

As ever, we will be distributing the guides for daily reading and prayer, starting March 5. (some advance copies will be available the week before for those who are traveling). We will also be inviting folks to sign up for six-week home groups to study the various parts of

this brilliant prayer together. Personally, I like to have the physical book to hold and read, and I also like getting the daily readings sent to me by email so I can read them anywhere, anytime. If you don't have the church app, this is a great time to download it and get signed up for daily readings.

Ash Wednesday is March 1, and that marks the beginning of six Wednesday noon services in the Chapel followed by light lunches in the reception room. So, join me in clearing the calendar and

getting spiritually ready to take on the Lord's Prayer in dynamic, deeper ways this Lenten season.

Gerrit



IN THIS ISSUE

pg. 2 Who Sets the Table?
pg. 3 The Bench Warmer
pg. 3 Good Grief Seminar



FEBRUARY CALENDAR

BRSO Concert	Feb 2
rEcess	Feb 3
City Ministry Fair	Feb 12
Good Grief Seminar	Feb 18
Discover First Class	Feb 19
Church Offices Closed	Feb 27-28
Mardi Gras	Feb 28

UPCOMING EVENTS

Ash Wednesday	Mar 1
Noon Lent Worship Begins	Mar 1
Congregational Meeting	Mar 12

IN MEMORIAM:

January 1, 2017
Jo Marie Alston, mother of Cheryl Tyler

January 5, 2017
Louise B. Wexler, grandmother of Trey Birch

January 7, 2017
Alberta Randles Miller,
mother of Virginia Simeral

January 21, 2017
Mary Ann Bernard,
mother of Stephanie Santini

BIRTHS:

Brinley Eyreland Anders,
parents are Heather and Ryan Anders

SANCTUARY FLOWERS:

Sanctuary flowers serve to honor a departed loved one or celebrate with thanksgiving cherished people or events. The flowers are placed in the Sanctuary . . .

Feb 5 . . . to the glory of God and in loving memory of Mr. and Mrs. C.W. Cabbage and Mr. and Mrs. Frances G. Frazier, parents of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Anderson by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Anderson.

Feb 12 . . . to the glory of God and in loving memory of James Howard and Emogene S. Elliott by their family, Dr. and Mrs. Louis Cenac (Elizabeth Elliott) and Dr. Clifton O. Bingham III.

Feb 19 . . . to the glory of God and in loving memory of Helen and John Waldie, parents of Joann Thurston and Robert Moore Thurston, father of Scott Thurston given by Joann and Scott Thurston.

Feb 26 . . . to the glory of God in loving memory of Mr. Norman Goebel Sr., by Barbara Goebel, Norman Goebel Jr., and Charles and Byron. And also given in celebration of to honor Charles' birthday February 14.

Who Sets the Table? The Silent Service to the Body of Christ

by Barry Phillips, Ministry Executive

This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me . . . This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes (1 Corinthians 11).

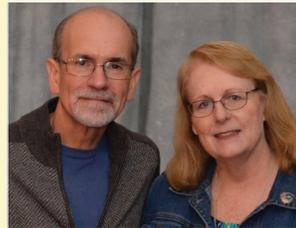
Our pastors speak these words or some variation each time they invite us to participate in communion. They are the very words of Christ to his disciples and Paul as he gave instruction to those who would partake of the body and blood of their Savior. What a privilege to receive this invitation to the Lord's table. We approach the table with humility and wonder. In this simple, sensory, tangible act we participate in a spiritual reality that transcends our ability to truly comprehend. And yet, in the doing of it, we find the wonder and comfort of God's grace, the love of his only Son and the presence of his Spirit who transforms this temporal but personal act into one of eternal substance and significance.

no reminder. They quietly, faithfully arrive, often long before you've awakened, and they assemble the elements in trays and baskets and chalices and cups. (Can you imagine pouring juice into all those little plastic cups?) They gladly serve us without fanfare or acclaim. They faithfully perform this role Sunday after Sunday, Christmas after Christmas, Easter after Easter, and they love doing it. They love serving you.

For those who don't know, Mike Salassi's "day job" is as a full professor at LSU. Joel's is working for the La. Dept. of Social Services. Beth labors for the La. Dept. of Health and Hospitals. Rosemary and Mike are in the



Mike Salassi



Beth and Joel McClain



Rosemary and Mike Dorman

But who sets the table? Christmas Eve we had over 1,600 for supper. We will have as many or more come Easter. As our church calendar plays out over 2017 we will celebrate communion almost 100 times on our church campus and almost as many times throughout our city as our elders and deacons take 'supper' to those who are unable to join us on campus. We pass the trays of elements. We partake by 'intinction,' assembling in circles or moving steadily forward dipping the bread in the cup. We approach these communion Sundays with great anticipation. But who sets the table? Who prepares the elements, pours the wine, drapes the table, cuts the bread and prepares for this 'meal' that we so look forward to?

Mike Salassi, Beth and Joel McClain and Rosemary and Mike Dorman are your primary 'hosts' behind the scenes. They are the ones who come early to prepare for your arrival. They have been doing it for years. They require

medical field. Whomever they serve in their 'day jobs' are blessed indeed. And the five of them bless us each communion Sunday.

The Apostle Paul instructs us on the nature of the Body of Christ of which we are all a part when he says, ". . . we have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us." He speaks of preaching and teaching and encouraging with our gifts and he says that ". . . if your gift is serving, then serve."

Truly Mike, Joel and Beth, and Rosemary and Mike have the spiritual gift of service. They are so faithful in their obedience to Scripture and to serving the Body of Christ in this gathering of believers we call First Presbyterian Church. The next time you see them, greet them in the name of Jesus with thanksgiving for their faithfulness. The next time you partake of Jesus' body and blood at our communion table, remember Christ your Lord and Savior until he comes again . . . and remember who set the table.

The Bench Warmer

An excerpt from the journal of Steve Hitt, following his trip to Beirut Lebanon in 2016.

When I received the phone call to join the group traveling to Beirut, Lebanon for a medical mission trip, I knew in my heart exactly how I was supposed to respond. Go. I did question my own worth and value to the team, until I was reminded from God's Word that he has been preparing me for this. I knew in my heart that I wanted to be a part of it. I knew that God wanted to do something special in my life and he did.

After arriving late at night in Beirut, I met Rebecca and Nour (last name omitted), and their lovely daughter. What a blessing they are to the refugees and all the people God sends their way in Beirut. They walk with our Lord, led and strengthened by the Holy Spirit in such harsh conditions, both spiritual and environmental. There are not enough words, particularly in my vocabulary, to explain how my heart goes out to them. By the end of the week, I also learned that the team could not have been successful without the effort, work and preparation made by this couple. Plenty

more could be said about how God is using Nour and Rebecca in Lebanon.

At each makeshift health clinic we set up at an inner city church or school, I was able to witness for myself a team of doctors, nurses and laymen, led and strengthened by God's love for those around them, caring for his children of all ages who had been exiled from their homeland. Smiles were everywhere and on almost every face. And of course, tears as it was a matter of the heart.

We won't know the physical or spiritual impact that one week made toward supporting the ministry of Rebecca and Nour. I do know over 820 refugees received health care that they wouldn't have received otherwise. Maybe a few just in the nick of time. I do know I saw a beautiful group of people both young and old who said, "Yes God, send me." I do know that I was blessed and God used this trip to Beirut, Lebanon to open my eyes, soften my heart and witness once again his greatness and his sovereignty in a lost world.

GOOD GRIEF Seminar

Are you losing sleep? Are you sleeping too much? Are you overeating or undereating? Do you sometimes think you're forgetting more than usual? Are you feeling sad? Are you feeling angry? If so, you may be NORMAL if you have experienced loss in your life.

In this special two-hour seminar, thoughts and guidance will be shared regarding not only the psychological but also the emotional, mental, physical, relational and spiritual effects of grief in our lives. Pastor Jim

Solomon will focus on steps that can be taken to rise above what would hold us below in how we deal with loss in our lives. The seminar is free of charge and is open to the entire community. To register, please contact Laura Shaw (laura@fpcbr.org or 620.0222). Please be sure to let her know the names of each person attending the seminar. Coffee and snacks will be served. Childcare will not be provided.

Details: Saturday, February 18, 10 am-12 pm in the Reception Room

Discover First Class

Join Gerrit on Sunday, February 19 from 4-7 pm for this lively and informative look at what it means to join our church. We will explore what we believe, what we expect from members and how to get more involved. Dinner and childcare are provided. Contact Meagan Greene for more information (meagan@fpcbr.org).



City Ministry Fair, February 12

Our City Ministry Fair will be Sunday, February 12 in the reception room after the 9 am and 11 am worship services. We want to highlight our local ministries and offer ways you can get involved in 2017. Interested in our local schools? Gardere Community and Buchanan Elementary will be there. Or maybe serving the homeless is your calling? Pastor Moore with Open Air Ministries can answer your questions. This is an excellent opportunity to learn more about each local ministry FPC supports.

SUNDAY WORSHIP @ FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

COME WORSHIP WITH US!

7.45 am Chapel Communion
9 am Contemporary
11 am Classic Reformed

FEBRUARY SERMON PASSAGES

Texts are subject to change.

February 5
James 3: 1-11

February 12
James 3: 12-18

February 19
James 4: 6-17

February 26
James 5

PASTORAL STAFF

Gerrit Dawson
Senior Pastor

Whitney Alexander
Associate Pastor of Missions

Josh Maddin
Assistant Pastor of Student Ministry

Barry Phillips
Ministry Executive

Jim Solomon
Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care & Prayer



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Baton Rouge Christian Counseling Center
225.387.2287
www.brchristiancounseling.com

PARENTING CORNER

My prayer for you as a parent is to have the GREATEST spiritual impact on your child. We are here to guide you along. Below are some fantastic resources. If you have any questions feel free to contact me anytime. We are in this together.

~Audra Cato, Director of Children's Ministry
(audra@fpcbr.org)

RECOMMENDED READINGS

"The Family Worship Book" by Terry L. Johnson
"Glimpses of Grace: Treasuring the Gospel in Your Home" by Gloria Furman
"Parenting in the Pew" by Robbie Castleman
"Grace Based Parenting"
by Dr Tim Kimmel
"Shepherding a Child's Heart"
by Tedd Tripp



SIAC Scholarship Applications

The Session Income Allocation Committee is accepting applications between February 13-March 24 for financial grants for individuals interested in seminary. Please contact Jaci if you have questions (jaci@fpcbr.org or 620.0221).

