

Looking Upward, Reaching Outward: 2021 by Gerrit Dawson, Senior Pastor

We made it! 2020 is no more. If only turning the calendar would automatically restore the world. Change is coming, we know that. We have high hopes that the Covid vaccine will dramatically limit the virus. But will we ever go back to “normal?” A new presidential administration will certainly be different. Will it be good for the people of Christ who hold to our historical values? The tension about race and equality will tighten. Will it resolve in more harmony? It’s a new year and I’m daunted by the challenges already!

Thankfully, the church of Jesus does not retreat when the future seems uncertain. Your leadership certainly hasn’t. We are deeply committed to proclaiming the ancient gospel in a way that addresses the concerns of these times. We believe our highest purpose is public worship of the Triune God in word, song and prayer. We have good tidings to make known, a Lord to glorify and love to share. On January 24, you will hear our new officers take their ordination vows, committing themselves to the Lord Jesus, to his Word and to the work of his church. I’ve read their testimonies and heard their faith: you will be so moved by this upward call!

The session recently made commitments to direct nearly a million dollars over the next three years to fund our mission priorities. We are blessed to have endowment income through the McLaurin Trust and the church Foundation. Our policy is to never use such funds for the general mission, ministry and operation of the church: that’s the joyful job of current members. Rather, we push endowment income outward. So, we intend to

support Gardere Community Christian School with \$100,000 a year. We purpose to give \$100,000 yearly to church planting, including \$75,000 annually to the Church of the Resurrection, our thriving daughter church in New Orleans. And we plan on designating \$125,000 a year for the Session Income Allocation Committee which makes recommendations for funding future leaders going to seminary as well as supporting other missions in our community. We’re determined to reach outward.

Meanwhile, your faith, participation and funding energizes the daily work of the church. Our partnerships with 30 local ministries continue to flourish (We’ve got a Habitat House to build in 2021!). And our members increasingly enter the mission field of their lives (whatever they are doing) with an awareness that they are Christ’s ambassadors in word and deed. A stellar staff team leads ministry with and to every age as we press into Christ and his Word. In fact, we want to raise the level of our commitment to children, youth and their families. The session recently approved a search for an Associate Pastor to energize and oversee that work.

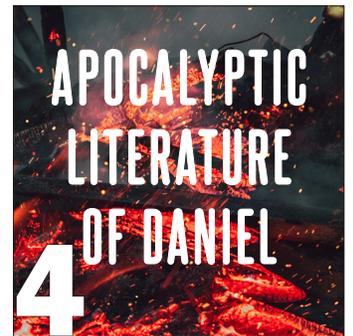
By God’s grace and in the Spirit’s power, we’re propelling forward, dear church. We know how important it is that we hold tight to one another, sharing life in all its joys and pains as only a community of Christ can. I’m so glad to be traveling with you!



Gerrit

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Church Office Closed	JAN 1
Contemplative Prayer Mtg.	JAN 11
Women's Bible Study Begins	JAN 13-14
Congregational Meeting	JAN 17
Ordination Sunday	JAN 24
Contemplative Prayer Mtg.	JAN 25

MARRIAGES:

December 12, 2020
Audrey Demand and Egor Sukharutski

IN MEMORIAM:

December 6, 2020
Mary Anderson Bourgeois
Mother of Blaise Bourgeois

December 12, 2020
Linda McAdams: Wife of James McAdams

December 15, 2020
Carla McClelland

December 22, 2020
Dwight Sylvest: Father of Brenda Salassi

December 26, 2020
Jane Oliver: Mother of Parish Oliver

BAPTISMS:

November 8, 2020
Connor Robert Hart
Parents are Kathyne and Ryan Hart
Grandparents are Pam and Robert Downing

December 20, 2020
Eleanor Ramsey Dawson: Parents are Rachel and Micah Dawson
Evelyn Louise Dawson: Parents are Ashley and Jacob Dawson
Eleanor and Evelyn's grandparents are Rhonda and Gerrit Dawson

SANCTUARY FLOWERS

The Chapel and Sanctuary flowers are placed . . .

JAN 10 . . . to the glory of our Lord and Savior and in loving memory of Dana Baker Othmer by Hans, Devan and Jacob Othmer.

JAN 17 . . . to the glory of God and in loving memory of Mr. and Mrs. Frank L. Norwood, Jr. and Larry Charles Musgrove, Sr. by Chrystal Norwood Musgrove and family.

JAN 24 . . . Open date.

JAN 31 . . . 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.

The 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, please contact Kathy Mullins at 291.3095.

A Brighter Christmas! by Whitney Alexander



The outpouring of love from everyone has made for a brighter Christmas for the children in Iowa, Louisiana. We have blessed 600 families with gifts that included bicycles, Barbie dolls, sports equipment, puzzles, books, board games and a variety of toys. The love continued with the purchase of food for 75 Christmas boxes which were delivered to the poor in Iowa. These residents were overwhelmed with your generosity this Christmas. Thank you from everyone in Iowa and especially for supporting all of our efforts the past four months in hurricane relief cleanup. A huge thank you to all of the volunteers who have traveled with me since August 30 and to our First Presbyterian Church family for donating money and resources to help our brothers and sisters in southwest Louisiana after two hurricanes! Relief work resumes January 6.



Bringing Hope! Sharing Hope! Growing Hope! by Annette Lamond



January is National Mentoring Month. With joyful thanks to our God and the 18 FPC Mentors and Prayer Partners, Kids Hope USA celebrates its partnership with Gardere Community Christian School. We do not always know what these children are going through but we do know your generous gifts of prayers, time and attention to a caring relationship brings much HOPE to make a remarkable difference for these children!



How do we see the difference? It is seen in the teacher who gratefully shares, "I can really see a difference in my students." In the many "thank yous." In the smiles. In the increased effort to do better academically. In the student's excitement to meet with their mentor. In the chance to be heard and encouraged. In character growing. In the joy of playing a game. In the security of being safe. In the casual conversations. In the prayers, the hope and so much more!

Please join us in prayers of thanks and praise for the three remaining 1st grade students hoping for a mentor, for additional building space for GCCS and for Kids Hope USA to continue to be embraced, to expand and to excel.

Thank you for sharing the love of Christ and bringing HOPE!

"This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God" [2 Corinthians 9: 12].

CONTACT

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 First Presbyterian Church
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kidshopeusa.org

Our Mission:

Kids Hope USA builds life-changing relationships one at a time: One Child. One Hour. One Church. One School.

Our Belief:

We believe in Jesus' way.

Our Values:

Children: Because every child matters.
 Relationships: Because love is only possible person to person.
 Faithfulness: Because if I say I will, I will.
 Prayer: Because it is our language of hope.

Jesus loves the little children,
 all the children of the world . . .
 . . . they are precious in his sight!

SUNDAY WORSHIP

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

JANUARY SERMON TEXTS

Texts are subject to change.

JANUARY 3, 2021
 Jonah 1: 1-17

JANUARY 10, 2021
 Isaiah 6

JANUARY 17, 2021
 Luke 5: 1-11

JANUARY 24, 2021
 Luke 5: 12-16

JANUARY 31, 2021
 Luke 5: 17-26

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
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Daniel's Apocalyptic Literature Study by Jaime Carnaggio, Women's Ministry Director

Our study of the first half of Daniel has come to a close, but we move forward this spring into the second half with renewed energy and anticipation as the book transitions from narrative to apocalyptic literature. David Helm says, "It's as if we've been reading a book or hearing a story, but now we're about to watch a movie!" These chapters are very visual with lots of pictures and imagery drawn from the symbolic world of the ancient Near East. Daniel looks beyond the near future (as many prophetic texts do) to events of the end times. They point

us forward to the book of Revelation; to Jesus' second coming. Many people are intimidated by apocalyptic literature and give up reading Daniel at this very point. But to do so would be to miss out on so much heavenly revelation, on a pulling back of the curtain on God's coming kingdom. And I know us, and ladies, we are not quitters! So we will press forward as expectant and unafraid students of the Word, ready to receive all that God reveals to us!

For the next seven weeks, join us as we push into the last six chapters of Daniel, which record his four apocalyptic visions, all of which recognize that God's people experience oppression in the here and now, but at the end of time, he will intervene to rescue us. The age of conflict will be

replaced with the final age of peace. We will be moved to yearn for the coming of our warrior God who will defeat the forces of evil and establish his everlasting kingdom.

This study of Daniel's Apocalyptic Visions kicks off January 13-14 and concludes March 3-4. As usual, there are two ways to participate in this study.



WEDNESDAYS
6.30 pm via ZOOM
ZOOM link available at fpcbr.org

THURSDAYS
9.30 am live in the Sanctuary