

# FPC NEWSLETTER

Deeper in Christ, Further into the World



## IS THIS SCI-FI OR WHAT?

**By Gerrit Dawson**  
Senior Pastor

2025! Sounds like a song from the 60's about a far distant dystopian future. Shouldn't we all be riding in sky cars like on the Jetsons cartoon? And how is the 21st century a quarter of the way finished? Our 67,000 mile per hour journey around the sun has never seemed faster. As George Jetson used to say every episode, "Jane! Stop this crazy thing!"

At the same time, each new year still brings the excitement of a fresh start. The months stretch out before us with hope that good things can be accomplished. Happy surprises can offset the inevitable difficulties. Relationships can be improved. We can grow in Christ.

That all makes me realize I am currently a prisoner in time who yet has the freedom of eternity inside my heart. I can't stop the years. But I can realize and partake of the one who is God from everlasting to everlasting. In Christ, I am free to live now with abandon for Christ, as if my life will go on forever. Because it will.

So all of that is just another way of saying the mission of our church. Rushing down time's ever rolling stream, we gather together to discover the anchor we have in heaven. In Christ, we are not going into the abyss! We are heading for the beautiful new heavens and new earth. Along the way, we offer this eternal lifeline to those who are slipping, sinking, struggling in these days. In other words, as ever, our mission is to go deeper in Christ and further into the world. I savor questing for just that with you, dear congregation!

## Celebrating Whitney through Mission

At the end of this month we will celebrate the quarter century ministry of Whitney Alexander. From youth director to missions minister, this man with the gigantic heart has shepherded people of all ages and all over the world. Some lines that captures Whitney's wonderful style of ministry could be, "Hey, why don't you come with me? I'll pick you up! In fact, I'm on the way now!" Who else could get 75 kids on a 55 passenger bus and still add one more, safely? Who else would drive a team into disaster zones the rest of us avoid? Who else would spend an evening in a Russian jail with another elder? Who else would show up at your house, in the middle of the night in the pouring rain, because somehow, some way, he heard you had a need? On Sunday, January 26, we'll have one worship service at 10.30 am. Whitney will preach about the enduring legacy of mission. Afterwards we'll have a reception in his honor. Meanwhile, he hopes we will all honor him by attending all or portions of the global mission conference that occurs that same weekend. Details are in this issue. Thank you Whitney for your years of service.

*Gerrit*



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TIMOTHY STUDY

**JANUARY CALENDAR**

5 Resume 3 Service Schedule  
 17-19 Polar Thang  
 24-26 Global Missions Conference  
 24 IFP Game Night  
 26 10.30 am Worship  
 26 Whitney Alexander Reception

**FEBRUARY EVENTS**

2 Discover First Dinner  
 2 Blood Drive  
 4 Jeffrey Marx Men's Event

**BIRTHS**

December 1, 2024  
 Ellie Klein Pourciau  
 Parents are Alyssa Beth & Davis

December 5, 2024  
 Andie Grace Ayres  
 Parents are Natalie & Andrew

December 6, 2024  
 Fletcher Nolan Miller  
 Parents are Shelby & Connor

December 16, 2024  
 Benjamin Wilder Zoghbi  
 Parents are Bonnie Kate & Max

**BAPTISMS**

December 22, 2024  
 Thomas Michael Croskrey  
 Parents are Maegan & Daniel

Ellie Klein Pourciau  
 Parents are Alyssa Beth & Davis

**FLOWERS**

The Chapel and Sanctuary flowers are given . . .

Jan. 5 . . . to the glory of God and in loving memory of Mr. and Mrs. Warren Munson by Sarah Anne and Richard Creed and family.

Jan. 12 . . . 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. 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.

Jan. 26 Open date. Please contact Kathy Mullins at 603.4735 to donate flowers.

**LORD, ENLARGE MY VISION**

By Whitney Alexander, Associate Pastor of Missions



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 expanded, or maybe even a new vision bestowed upon us by our Creator. During our last weekend in January (24-26), 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 also have an incredible blessing with the return of Ben Glenn to First Presbyterian Church on Friday, January 24 for a chalk drawing during the International Friendship Partners Game Night. This event has become a favorite with internationals, First Presbyterian members, and other church friends. There will be many games and an inspiring chalk drawing/message from Ben. Arrive hungry! There will be plenty of food, cold drinks, and sweets. So, bring your kids, your relatives and your friends for a great evening of fun!

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 my last weekend with you!

**GLOBAL MISSIONS CONFERENCE SCHEDULE**

**Friday, January 24, 5.30-8.30 pm:** IFP Game Night (Ben Glenn, Chalk Artist); Gym

**Saturday, January 25, 10 am-12 pm:** Global Missions brunch with Browning Wood (Barry Wood ministries in Africa) at the Kozans' (3565 Cole Dr.)

**Saturday, January 25, 5.30-8 pm:** Global Missions dinner with Elizabeth and Greg Mook (EPC missionaries to Lebanon) at the Fabrés' (5700 Sandalwood Dr.)

**Sunday, January 26:**

9.30-10.30 am: Adult Sunday school with Browning Wood (EB 201)

9.30-10.30 am: Children's Sunday school with Elizabeth and Greg Mook (Sanctuary Basement)

10.30 am-11.30 pm: Whitney Alexander will preach at our 10.30 am service

11.30 am-Noon: Alexanders' farewell reception

**BLOOD DRIVE | FEBRUARY 2**

You have the most precious resource of all: the ability to save a life by donating blood! First Presbyterian is hosting a blood drive on Sunday, February 2 from 9.30 am to 12.30 pm! Stop by the LifeShare blood truck before or after worship and help share this invaluable gift with someone in need.

**DISCOVER FIRST DINNER | FEBRUARY 2**

This is an opportunity for you, in a smaller setting, to learn more about how you can be part of our mission and ministry. Our next Discover First Dinner is Sunday, February 2 at 4 pm. If you are interested in attending or would like more information, please contact Emily Viguerie ([emily@fpcbr.org](mailto:emily@fpcbr.org) or 225.333.9084).

## INTERVIEW WITH PULITZER PRIZE WINNING JEFFREY MARX

By Scott Graham, Associate Pastor of Pastoral Care and Prayer

Nationally known Pulitzer Prize winning journalist, author and speaker Jeffrey Marx will be our guest at a special Men’s Ministry dinner on Tuesday, February 4 at 6 pm. Jeffrey has written for *Sports Illustrated*, *Newsweek*, *Time*, and *The Baltimore Sun*. He will be with us to talk about his classic book, “Season of Life: A Football Star, a Boy, a Journey to Manhood.” Marx’s account of Baltimore Colt turned pastor Joe Ehrmann and his ministry, *Men for Others*, is one you won’t want to miss. Marx is an in-demand speaker and we are fortunate to have him here in Baton Rouge! This is a great event to bring your son, your father or your friend from work. Dinner and door prizes will be offered. \$20 per person (increases to \$25 on Monday, January 27). Please register online at [fpcbr.org](http://fpcbr.org).

Jeffrey and our Associate Pastor Scott Graham both attended Northwestern University at the same time. Marx has lived in Baton Rouge for a number of years and their paths crossed last year leading to an opportunity for Scott to visit with Jeffrey for an interview. Please visit the church website to read about Jeffrey’s perspective on the impact his book has had on both men and women 20 years after its first printing, as well as some other thoughts related to the book.

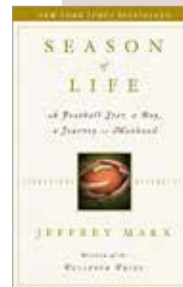
### EXCITING TOPICS FOR 2025 SUNDAY SCHOOL

by Darin Travis, Associate Pastor for Discipleship

As 2025 is now upon us, many are considering how they might grow in their Christian faith. Thankfully, we have wonderful Sunday school classes ready to challenge and equip you! Each of our classes offers excellent teaching, but two classes will offer new topics that might be of particular interest. The Crossroads class (Education Building, room 202 at 10.10 am) will study “A Case for America’s Christian Heritage” by Gary Demar. Beginning January 5, Judge Darrell White will take us on a fascinating journey that will consider how our nation’s original documents, from the Mayflower Compact to the Constitution, were constructed “for the Glory of God and advancement of the Christian faith.” Come explore how our nation’s founders repeatedly stated reliance on the overruling providence of God.

The second series that I encourage you to consider is Matthew Henry’s 17th century treatise on the godly life, “The Quest for Meekness and Quietness of Spirit.” This spiritually forming work will alert us to the focus of deliberately worshiping God. In our hurried and distracted world, to know the nature, excellence, and application of the meekness and quietness of Jesus will be nothing short of life transforming. The class begins February 2 and will be led by Denise Hatcher during the Tom & Jerry Class (Education Building, room 202 at 9 am. Note: this is an hour before our normal Sunday school time of 10.10 am).

As always, our other classes, Kingdom Builders, Journeys, and The Well will continue to gather and deliver excellent content and fellowship. So come out for Sunday school!



### SERMON TEXTS

*Texts are subject to change.*

JANUARY 5  
Matthew 3:3–17

JANUARY 12  
Luke 4:1–15

JANUARY 19  
Luke 4:16–30

JANUARY 26  
One 10.30 am Worship Service  
To be determined.

### IN MEMORIAM

December 10, 2024  
Laura Gibson: Mother of Dan Gibson

December 15, 2024  
David Ellison Jr.

December 21, 2024  
Gary Brockman  
Father of David Rudy

### 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



225.387.0617  
[fpcbr.org](http://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](http://brchristiancounseling.com)

### CHILDREN'S MINISTRY NEWS

#### WE'RE GOING TO CAMP! LAKE FOREST RANCH

Lake Forest Ranch is a camp located in beautiful Macon, Mississippi for children ages 7–12 (as of July 2025). First Presbyterian Church camp dates are July 14–18. Please check availability by contacting Candace Walker ([candace@fpcbr.org](mailto:candace@fpcbr.org)).

#### WE WILL MISS YOU, MANDI!

Thank you, Mandi Croskrey, for serving faithfully as the So Loved Team Leader in our Children’s Ministry. You and your husband John will be missed as you move to Alabama in early 2025.

## 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. May we feel a renewed sense of responsibility and confidence to fight the good fight of faith.



**Tuesdays @ 7:15 am** in the FPC Library

This study is designed for ladies in their 20s/30s.

Childcare is offered each week downstairs in the MDO Ducks classroom. Please email Jaime ([jaime@fpcbr.org](mailto:jaime@fpcbr.org)) if you will be utilizing childcare.

**Wednesdays @ 6 pm** @ the home of Suzie Thompson

Study will be 6.30–7.30pm with time before and after for fellowship and prayer.

**Thursdays @ 9.30 am** in FPC Room 202

This study will be recorded and shared online. You may also join live via Zoom: WM Spring Study - 1 & 2 Timothy (PW: 1234).

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## 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](mailto:mdo@fpcbr.org) or 225.620.0245 for more information.



## 7TH STREET PAID PUBLIC LOT MONDAY–FRIDAY

Please be advised that while churchgoers are permitted to use the 7th Street public lot for free on Sundays, it is *not free* Monday–Friday. Parking tickets are being issued.