

Deeper in Christ... further into the world.

fpc NEWS



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JULY CALENDAR

Prayer for the Nations	Each Wed., 5.30 pm
WiM Psalms of Ascent Study Begins	June 30
Missionary Appreciation Dinner	July 1
Church Office Closed	July 3
One 10.30 am Worship	July 5, 12, 19 & 26
Community Outreach Meal	July 5
VBS Volunteer Meeting	July 5
VBS Family Night	July 6
VBS	July 7-10
WiM Summertime Luncheon	July 14

UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER

Buddy Greene Concert	August 23
Men's Ministry Fall Study Begins	Sept 17
Habitat for Humanity Build	Sept 24 - Oct 10
Parenting Conference	Oct 9-10

Head for the Hills!

GERRIT DAWSON, SENIOR PASTOR

Our elders have graciously given me a precious gift this summer: some extra time for writing. I'm hoping to take the material from our Lenten guide and turn it into a more thorough exploration of what it means that, for us, Jesus descended into hell. I know that doesn't sound like a light summer project! But I'm excited to dive into deep thoughts about our Lord: they always fill me with the refreshment of praise. I'd appreciate your prayers for insights, fidelity to the task and a smooth flow of words.

While we're in the mountains, we'll be celebrating the 80th birthdays of Rhonda's parents. So we anticipate an epic feast and family gathering. Also during July, I get to conduct the wedding of my god-niece down in my old hometown of Miami. She's marrying a Coast Guard captain and the wedding is in the middle of Biscayne Bay! So four weeks will fly by.

Be sure, though, that Rhonda and I will be missing you, our beloved congregation. You are deeply woven into our hearts.

I'm excited for the combined services this July. They sound lush, textured, faithful, interesting and authentic to our personality as a church. I know you all will keep attendance strong and the mission rolling. Our great pastoral team, elders and staff will make sure we don't miss a beat. (In fact, they might really enjoy having the old curmudgeon out of the office!)

Thoughts on Marriage

Wedding season has been full this year. Each time, I love to say the introduction to Christian marriage. One line strikes me: "The bond and covenant of marriage was established by God in creation." This is a foundational statement, built upon Genesis 1 and 2. The definition of marriage

flows from the Creator who made us in his image. Before we were made, God determined that we would live and fill the earth through his gift of marriage between a man and a woman.

Jesus reaffirmed this ancient definition as he declared, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh?'" (Mt. 19: 4-5).

The Christian understanding of marriage flows from the Triune God our Creator as he has spoken in his magnificent word. No state or government can change this. As Psalm 100 declares, "It is he that made us, and not we ourselves." We don't self-define. The God who is love, who knows what makes for human flourishing, speaks to us in his ordering of our relationships.

I write these words before we've had any court rulings on states' ordering of marriages in our society. Fundamentally, whatever is ruled changes nothing in our core. If we must become out of step with prevailing cultural norms, or even laws, then so be it. Jesus suffered under Pontius Pilate. His church need expect nothing less. You may be confident that last fall your elders reaffirmed this understanding of marriage in our congregation and denomination. Meanwhile, we have work to do, bringing the transforming power of the gospel to a broken world hungry for forgiveness, hope and love. We have marriages to encourage, children to teach, and healing to offer in Jesus' name.

In Memoriam:

June 1, 2015
Alan Vaughn, nephew of Yvonne Pickett

June 13, 2015
Romona Martinez

Births:

June 16, 2015
Gigi Elizabeth Bryant
Parents are Emily and Matt Bryant
Grandparents are Marti and David Bryant

Baptisms:

June 21, 2015
Henry Joseph Lapeyrouse
Parents are Amelia and Jeremy Lapeyrouse

Weddings:

June 20, 2015
Sarah Lunceford married John Woods

June 27, 2015
Lindsey Gould married Jayson Santos

Change Through God Via Community by Derek McCollum

How do people change? We talk often about going “deeper into Christ,” but it’s important to remember how it happens. How do people come to know Jesus, and how do those who know him get to know him better? How do we begin to see change in our lives, in our communities and in the society around us?

One of the most fundamental claims of the Christian Church for the last two millennia is that God’s revealed Word, the Bible, is the foundation for change in people, communities and societies. David writes these words in Psalm 19:

*The Law of the Lord is perfect,
reviving the soul.
The testimony of the Lord is sure,
making wise the simple;
The precepts of the Lord are right,
rejoicing the heart.
The commandment of the Lord is pure,
enlightening the eyes.*

He goes on to say that God’s Word is sweeter than honey and more desirable than gold. Why? Because God’s Word has the power to change us for the better. The New Testament echoes the same teaching. Paul writes in 2 Timothy 3: 16 that “all Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness...” And in Romans chapter 1, we read these wonderful words: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes...” The Power of God is in the Gospel! God’s Word has power to change us!

But there’s another piece that we also need to remember. As a preacher, I wish the formula looked like this—preach the truth and everyone will change. Unfortunately that is not always the case. We know that for change to happen, the Holy Spirit must be at work enabling that change. And what we see throughout the Bible is that the Holy Spirit most commonly works that change in community. It’s in people learning, working, loving, crying, questioning together that God’s Word seems to take the firmest hold. In his loving wisdom, the Lord created us to need each other, even in the process of Spiritual growth. So we can revise the formula to look more like this: The Truth, when processed and experienced in community, leads to change. If this is true, what should we do? That part is actually pretty easy: we connect. First, connect to the Truth; read his Word, be active in gathered worship and focus your attention on the person and work of Jesus Christ revealed through the whole Bible. And secondly, connect to others; get into a group to study the Bible, pray or just fellowship. Connect to your neighbors and to those who don’t share your faith (God works through them as well) and welcome them in to the hope that you have come to know. And thirdly, look for gradual change in your life and the opportunities for change around you. Serve. Create. Empower.

That’s how people grow. The Truth of the Gospel at work in, among and through the community of God’s people. Truth. Community. Change. Amen!

Preparing Children for Worship by Audra Cato

It is that time of year again when we prepare to move our children up a grade level! Bittersweet, I know! Here at First Presbyterian, our pastors welcome children at the 1st grade level to sit with their parents in church. Beginning August 16, your 1st grader will officially begin his/her grade level Sunday school. Summer is a great time to start practicing!

to a sermon. Talk to your children and prepare them for the transition. Practice at home!

2. Bring one or two simple activities. Let them bring a Bible, some paper and a pencil.
3. Don't be afraid to ask for a helping hand. We are in this together! Also, if the child needs discipline, carry them to a quiet place to talk with them.

Hope to see you all this coming Sunday!

We will have two books for sale at our Connection Center to help your child during this transition: *Joy Journal* and *God Cares for Me* coloring book. Both of these resources will be helpful for your child to bring into the church service along with some crayons or a pencil. *Joy Journal* is \$5.00 and *God Cares for Me* coloring book is \$1.

SANCTUARY FLOWERS

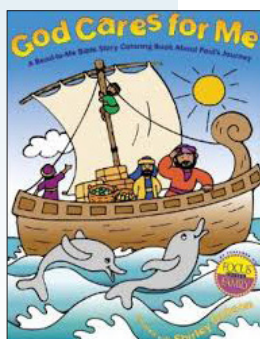
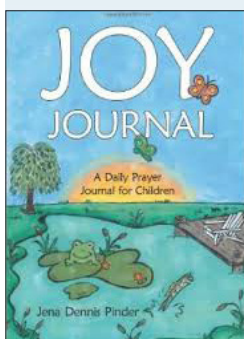
Sanctuary flowers serve to honor a departed loved one or celebrate with thanksgiving cherished people or events. The flowers are placed in the Sanctuary ...

July 5 ... to the glory of God and in loving memory of Kay Spaht Hutchinson and Homer Dale Spaht by Sue Spaht and family.

July 12 ... to the glory of God and in celebration of their third anniversary, by Grace and Joe Scoggin.

July 19 ... to the glory of God and in loving memory of Thomas Cole Main Jr., Thomas Cole Main III, Shelby Main Harris and Milton Harris Sr. by Mrs. Milton Harris.

July 26 ... to the glory of God and in memory of loved ones by Melissa and Mike Thibodeaux.



Let the children come! Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven." ~Matthew 19: 14

Here are some helpful tips to prepare your children for worship...

1. Begin at home. Start with small increments of time sitting quietly and listening

Singer/Songwriter, Buddy Greene at Worship and in Concert



Sunday, August 23, Nashville recording artist and songwriter Buddy Greene will join us for worship at the 9 & 11 sanctuary services. Sunday night Buddy and his keyboardist, Jeff Taylor, will perform a concert in the sanctuary at 6 pm. Buddy delights audiences of all ages with great musicianship, crossover style and a passionate faith. He is most famously known for writing the Christmas hymn, "Mary Did You Know?"

On Saturday, August 22, Buddy will teach a workshop called "How to Worship Well and Lead Worship Well." Those interested in learning more about leading worship can join us in the sanctuary from 3 pm to 4.30 pm. Cost is free, but it is essential to sign up online (fpchr.org) for the workshop and childcare (4 years and younger). You may also register at the Connection Center.

July 1 Missionary Dinner

The Global Missions Committee invites you to dinner in the reception room on Wednesday, July 1 at 6.30 pm. The Botros and Magruder families will update us on their ministries in more detail. Please register at the Connection Center for dinner and/or childcare. Dinner is \$7 per person to be paid at the door.

The King Is Coming: VBS 2015, July 7-10

Camper, volunteer and childcare registration at fpchr.org.



All VBS volunteers should meet in the Chapel on Sunday, July 5 after the Acoustic Communion service at 12.15 pm.

Wanted! July 5 Singers!

Come join the worship team and chancel choir as they come together for one service on July 5. Rehearsal is on Wednesday, July 1 at 7 pm in the sanctuary. Contact Nancy Spiller for more information: nancy@fpchr.org.

Combined Worship and Sunday School in July

During the four Sundays of July, First Presbyterian will come together for one single 10.30 am worship in the sanctuary. At 9.30 the adults will gather in the Chapel for a study on Colossians. Communion will be on TWO days of the month: July 12 and July 19. And then for added fun and fellowship, we'll have a Mexican fiesta lunch after worship on July 12 and a BBQ Bash after worship on July 26. We encourage you to invite a friend for these blended services.



Women in Ministry is having its second summertime luncheon on Tuesday, July 14 from 11.30 am to 1 pm. All women of the church and their guests are invited to come have lunch and hear a lesson from WiM director, Elizabeth Parker. Please RSVP for the lunch and/or childcare at the Connection Center, online at fpchr.org or call the church office: 387.0617. \$10 per person.

THE PSALMS OF ASCENT

Eugene Peterson describes the Psalms of Ascent as both a celebration of the literal journey by the Israelites to the temple in Jerusalem and a metaphorical ascent that acts out a life lived upward toward God as they (and we) develop in spiritual maturity. Join us in our study of these uplifting psalms that will press us to wait for the Lord and hope in him always.

THE PSALMS OF ASCENT: A five-week Summer study using a team-teaching approach.
Tuesday Evenings: June 30-July 28, 6.30 - 8 pm
At the home of Alice Martty, 3620 Ridgetop Drive

Bring a friend!

SUNDAY WORSHIP @ FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

Come Worship with Us!
 Each Sunday in July will have one combined 10.30 am sanctuary worship service.

July 5, AD 2015
 Genesis 38
July 12, AD 2015
 Genesis 39
July 19, AD 2015
 Genesis 41
July 26, AD 2015
 Genesis 44

PASTORAL STAFF

Gerrit S. Dawson
 Senior Pastor
Richard "Dick" Gates
 Associate Pastor for Global Missions and Pastoral Care
M. Whitney Alexander
 Associate Pastor of City Ministry
Derek McCollum
 Associate Pastor for Discipleship and Young Adults
Barry Phillips
 Ministry Executive
Josh Maddin
 Associate Pastor of Student Ministry



☎ PH: 225.387.0617
 FAX: 225.338.1010

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✉ 763 North Boulevard
 Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Mother's Day Out and Preschool:
 225.620.0245

Baton Rouge Christian Counseling Center:
 225.387.2287

www.brchristiancounseling.com

Officer Nominations for the 2018 Class

The First Presbyterian Church Officer Nominating Committee nominates Elders and Deacons by receiving suggested names of members from the congregation, prayerfully preparing a slate, and presenting the slate at the annual October congregational meeting for election. Please submit names of members to serve as church officers. Suggestion cards are located in the pews and at the Connection Center. Place in the offering plate or mail to the church office after completing by the end of July.

Community Outreach Meal - Sunday, July 5

We love to serve the homeless of Baton Rouge. On July 5 at noon, we will cook hamburgers and hot dogs at the church and serve them at Open Air Ministries. Volunteers are needed to help cook and serve. For questions, contact Mike Salassi (msalassi@agcenter.lsu.edu).

Manners of the Heart Seeking Volunteers

Manners of the Heart is having a volunteer work week, July 20-25, beginning at 8 am each day. Over 310 kits need assembling which will reach 7600 children in 15 EBR Parish public schools. These new kits help kick off new superintendent, Warren Drake's, implementation of the "Manners" program. Come help our fellow member Jill Garner and her team prepare these kits. Assembly will take place in the sanctuary basement middle school classrooms. Contact Jill Garner for further information: jrigby@mannerstheheart.org.

Project S.T.A.R.S. Sports Camp Needs Volunteers

The Abounding Love Ministries summer soccer/basketball camp needs 20 volunteers. Camp will go from Monday, July 6 - Friday, July 10, from 8 am - 12.30 pm each day. Please contact Whitney to volunteer: whitney@fpabr.org or 225.810.2607.



Mission Trip to Lebanon

Whitney Alexander is co-leading a Presbytery-wide Lebanon mission trip in September. Please prayerfully consider this trip.

Details: CSP/GSP Lebanon Mission Trip
September 4-13, 2015

Please contact Whitney Alexander if interested before July 22 for more details: whitney@fpabr.org.