



An Indefinable Energy by Gerrit Dawson, Senior Pastor

We had more than 30 folks at our last Discover Class. I love to hear their answers to this question, “What makes a church great?” Contained in that query is an invitation to express what one is looking for and what one has found at First. These answers thrilled me, “An indefinable energy. A feeling of positive excitement. A welcome that is real. An enthusiasm for being there. A true sense of caring.” If that is what new attendees at our church are feeling, then we can truly rejoice at what God has been doing. They describe an intangible that makes all the difference in whether one is attracted or indifferent to what is happening here. Energy. Caring. Welcome. Authenticity. That’s the report of new people who want to be part of what’s happening in this fellowship of believers.

That’s wonderful. God is doing it. And you are doing it. The church forms afresh each time we gather. How that gathering feels comes from what each person brings to our assembly. *You do that!* You show up consistently so that others can count on seeing you. You greet warmly old friends and new faces. You participate robustly in worship. You arrive having decided that this time matters significantly to you and that gets translated to others

as the indefinable, but very real, energy of a church that loves Jesus Christ, both his Word and his mission. And of course that’s the gift that these wonderful new members bring to us: their energy, their enthusiasm, their gifting and their desire to participate. We get blessed so richly when we are refreshed by their arrival. I remain so grateful and wonder-struck by the way the heart of this church gets expressed. I love to be your pastor!

Future Leaders

Our church is blessed to have an endowment that contributes significant funds to our ministry and mission. We’re also blessed to have wise leaders who determine never to use such endowment income for the day-to-day and year-to-year operating of the church—that important responsibility remains with all of us ordinary givers. We use our endowment income to do *more*, to reach further into the world and to look further into the future toward the next generation of leadership. Our endowment giving supports big projects like Gardere Community Christian School and Church of the Resurrection. We also support students training for ministry as pastors, counselors and church planters. This

month the session granted over \$78,000 in such scholarships! Would you like to meet the recipients?

Rebecca Botros is the daughter of Cynthia and elder Lloyd Lunceford. She grew up in our church and has been full time on the mission field in Lebanon for the past three years. She is pursuing a Master of Divinity at Gordon Conwell.

Cheryl Broadnax is a deacon at FPC. She teaches in the elementary Sunday school and serves on the youth committee. She is beginning her third and final year of studies for a Master’s in Counseling and hopes to work with children and youth.

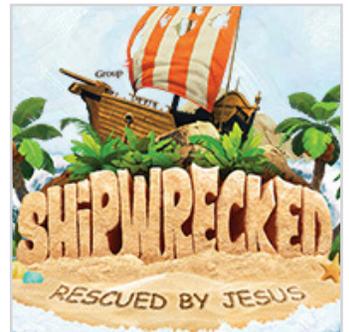
Sarah Gastinel is the daughter of FPC members Valerie and Pete Gastinel. She played violin in our acoustic communion service before moving to New Orleans where she led in worship and worked on staff at our church plant, Church of the Resurrection. She now hopes to serve Christ through Christian counseling.

Martell Hixon is the third recipient of a Russ Stephenson Scholarship for church planting residency. He will be working under Rev. Richard Rieves at Downtown EPC in Memphis, and has a passion for interracial church planting.

Continues on page 4

IN THIS ISSUE

- pg. 2 Bailey and Me
- pg. 2 12 Steps
- pg. 3 VBS 2018



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

12 Steps for Christians Small Group	May 2
Musical and Blessing Bags	May 6
Good Grief Seminar	May 12
Father/Son Fishing Trip	May 12
rEcess	May 15
Confirmation Service	May 20
Combined Worship at 10.30 am	May 27
Memorial Day - Office Closed	May 28
Houseboat Trip	May 28-June 1

UPCOMING EVENTS

Women's Summer BBQ	June 16
VBS	June 25-28

MARRIAGES:

April 7, 2018
Andy Allen married Lauren Fisher

April 21, 2018
Nancy Guillory married Peter Fontenot

BAPTISMS:

April 8, 2018
Brooks Creed Gold
Parents are Katherine and Brooks Gold

Denton Ainsley Tucker
Parents are Lauren and Douglas Tucker

IN MEMORIAM:

March 27, 2018
Judy Harris Monzyk, sister of Pam Downing

April 1, 2018
David LaBorde, son of Carolyn LaBorde

April 8, 2018
Alma Newsom

April 9, 2018
Goldie Hudson
Sonny Rose, grandfather of Rachael Maddin

April 25, 2018
Nancy Robertson, sister of Celia Filgo

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 . . .

MAY 6 . . . to the glory of God in loving memory of Mary Crosby McDuff and Jane Ellison Quinn by Ann and Michael McDuff.

MAY 13 . . . to the glory of God and in loving memory of three very special mothers: our mother, Jackie Lee Airhart; her mother, Claudia Lee Tisdale; and Kristen's mother, Becky Richardson, given by the children of Jackie Lee Airhart.

MAY 20 . . . to the glory of God and in loving memory of Peggy Smith (Mimi) by Ashley, Laurence, Trey, Foster and John Rodgers Lambert.

MAY 27 . . . in memory of Emogene and Howard Elliott. On this Memorial Day weekend, we especially want to give thanks to all our servicemen and women who have kept and are keeping our country safe. Dr. and Mrs. Louis Cenac, Jr.

Bailey and Me by Jim Solomon, Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care and Prayer

I will never forget that day. I joined several people from First Presbyterian Church in bringing healing and hope to yet another victim of last year's flood. Little did I know that, as a result, some healing and hope would be brought to me—in an unusual way. My deceased mother, who raised



Painter Kathy Stone with Jim Solomon and Bailey.

twelve children in a devout Roman Catholic family in Rhode Island, always said, through thick and thin, that "The more you give, the more you get." I understand this truth to be not just circumstantial but spiritual. Yet, although there is the usual joy that comes from helping others there was another type of joy that I gained that day which I could never have foreseen. It came through a new friend—a canine one.

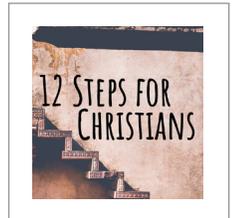
This beautiful little dog, now named Bailey, strolled into the home in which we were working in Millerville on August 24, 2016. As she had no collar, name tag or microchip, her photo was soon posted on various websites for lost pets of Livingston and East Baton Rouge parishes. Many people wanted her but nobody claimed her. The landlord of our temporary housing did not allow pets in his home. As a result, my younger daughter (also a "pet person") and I prayed that God would provide a home—or at least a foster parent—until the day came when we would have our own home, having moved here from Connecticut only one week before the flood. The answer to our prayer was a dear woman we met at a local retailer, Terry Harrington-Douglas, who became not only a foster parent to Bailey but a wonderful friend to us to this day. She kept Bailey for three months. Then Bailey moved in with us just after we moved into our new home.

Since then, Bailey and I have become a Registered Therapy Animal Team through LSU Vet School's Tiger H.A.T.S. program and are insured nationally through Pet Partners International. The evaluations, seven session course, and exams have been well worth the effort (although at one point I thought Bailey's "ordination" would take longer than my pastoral ordination!). We have since visited over 40 people, young and old, rich and poor, black and white, hospitalized and healing or in hospice care and dying. Over and over again, Bailey has brought comfort, healing and hope to those we serve together. There is a reason why dog spelled backwards is what it is—they love us unconditionally.

As a full-time Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care and Prayer, I am not only thankful but also inspired by how God often uses the ministry of "presence" to bring others divine peace—no words (or barks) necessary!

New Small Group: 12 Steps for Christians, May 2

Break free from addictions through a new *12 Steps for Christians* small group led by Bruce Stone and Jim Solomon. If you or someone you love struggles with addiction, whether alcohol, drugs, pornography, gambling or food, this group may be for you. We will discuss and pray through the book, *The Twelve Steps for Christians* written by Friends in Recovery. Join us on Wednesdays from 12.15 to 12.45 pm in EB 301 beginning May 2. There is a \$10 fee for the book.



Good Grief Seminar, May 12. On Saturday, May 12 at 10 am, we will have another Good Grief Seminar. Although we don't all grieve in the same way, we do all grieve. Won't you join us? To register for this free seminar, contact Laura Shaw (laura@fpcbr.org) indicating "grief seminar" on the subject line of your message, or call 620.0222 and leave a voice mail with your name and anyone else attending with you. Coffee and light refreshments will be served. The seminar is free of charge and open to the entire community. Childcare will be available.

VBS 2018 Shipwrecked . . .



Venture onto an uncharted island where kids are rescued by Jesus! Anchor kids in the truth that Jesus carries them through every storm in life. They'll learn to hold on to God's promises when they are lonely, they worry, they struggle, do wrong and feel powerless. Get ready for an adventure to an uncharted island where kids are rescued by Jesus! At Shipwrecked, one memorable Bible point is reinforced throughout each day. Children's Ministry welcomes all members and their friends to VBS 2018. Campers and volunteers may register online at fpcbr.org/vbs.

VBS Details:

**Monday, June 25-Thursday, June 28
9 am-2 pm, extended hours this year**

Hallelujah! He Did It! So, We Can Too!

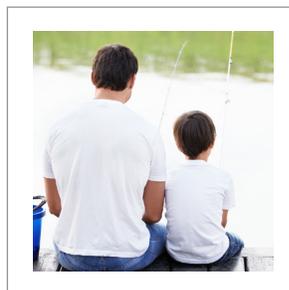
Join us on Sunday, May 6 at 4 pm in the Sanctuary for a mini children's musical, *Hallelujah! He Did It!* Christ gave such an amazing sacrifice. Because of the cross we are called to go and be a blessing. After the performance, adults and children will go the gym to assemble "blessing bags," our Family Ministry Spring Outreach project. A "blessing bag" is a collection of food, toiletry items, water and printed resources gathered in a large, clear Ziploc bag. These bags are kept in your car so when you come across someone in need they can be easily distributed.

Each area of Family Ministry will collect specific items from you, the congregation: Nursery Ministry-Gallon Ziploc baggies, Elementary-Snacks (granola bars, crackers, cookies) and Middle and High School-bottles of water. If you have not donated your items yet, bring them on May 6!

"Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!" (Psalm 100: 2)

Father-Son Evening of Fishing

Time is such a precious commodity, and the choice to invest it in our children is never wasted. Men of 2nd-5th grade boys, bring your sons to an afternoon of fishing and connection with others in our church. On May 12 at 3 pm, we will gather at Steve Woodson's 160 acre fishing camp on the Intracoastal Waterway in Plaquemine. We will fish for a few hours and enjoy BBQ together. Who knows, hopefully we'll even grill some fresh caught fish! Please RSVP to Darin at darin@fpcbr.org by May 10.



Psalmfest, May 6

On Sunday morning, May 6 at the 11 am service, the Chancel Choir will lead worship with four selections from *Psalmfest* by British composer John Rutter. As David Vernier put it, "Composer John Rutter knows how to do 'joy' and his *Psalmfest*, a set of Psalms written over a period of 20 years is nothing if not joyful. The texts certainly have a lot to do with this: virtually all are of the praise and jubilation variety. Anyone familiar with Rutter's style—the bubbly woodwinds, the fanfare-like brass, the pop-influenced, word-and-singer-friendly melodic and harmonic structures, the triplet and duplet figures—will be at home here." The Chancel Choir will be accompanied by orchestra and feature solos from our own Chancel Choir members Roxanne Struppeck, Sabrina Roberts, Francisco Ortega and Kevin Credeur.



SUNDAY WORSHIP

7.45 Chapel Communion
9 am Contemporary
11 am Classic Reformed
May 27: One 10.30 am service

MAY SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Texts are subject to change.

MAY 6

Revelation 2: 12-17

MAY 13

Revelation 3: 7-13

MAY 20

Revelation 3: 14-22

MAY 27

Text to be determined.

One combined 10.30 am service.

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

DARIN TRAVIS
Director for Discipleship,
Men's Ministry & Young Adults



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Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Mother's Day Out and Preschool
225.620.0245

Baton Rouge Christian Counseling Center
225.387.2287

brchristiancounseling.com

Women of Worship on May 13 at 9 am!

This year the ladies will lead us in worship to our Lord, as we celebrate Mother's day at the 9 am service. Mothers, daughters, grandmothers, singles . . . let's fill the choir loft! One rehearsal only on Wednesday, May 9, at 6.15 in the Sanctuary. Contact nancy@fpcbr.org with any questions.

An Undefinable Energy *continued from pg. 1*

Mary Emeline Rester is the daughter of Rhonda and Gerrit Dawson. She will complete a Master's in Counseling from RTS Jackson this January and hopes to work in private practice as a marriage and family therapist.

Hector Reynoso/Genesis Church. On the far border of our presbytery (and country), in Texas, is Genesis Church, an EPC congregation committed to Latino outreach. Genesis seeks now to construct a building for their growing congregation.

Darin Travis is Director of Discipleship at FPC. He is married to Barat and the father of five. He is working on his Master of Divinity degree from RTS and is a candidate for ordination in the EPC.

Josh Woltmann served three summers as our pastoral intern after growing up in our youth group. He expects to complete his Master of Divinity this August and begin an internship at Hope Presbyterian Church in Richmond. Married to FPC member Katy Cosby, Josh is a candidate for EPC ministry.

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College Scholarships

College scholarships are available for entering or continuing students through the Women in Ministry Memorial Scholarship Fund. Applications can be emailed to interested students and are available online at fpcbr.org. The deadline to apply is June 1. Contact Jaci Gaspard for more information (jaci@fpcbr.org or 620.0221).

2018 Youth Summer Trips



A houseboat trip to Lake Ouachita, a mission trip to Houston and The Great Escape in MS. There are lots of fun things planned for the youth this summer. Details and registration are now available online. We love it when your kids invite their friends. Spread the word!