



Compelling Compassion by Jim Solomon, Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care & Prayer

What motivates us to share our faith in Jesus Christ, both locally and globally, at a time during which “religious pluralism” and “social relativism” are the norm in our society? What was it that made Jesus’ message a message of “good news” at a time when certain others viewed it as anything but good? After all, the beliefs that there were many roads that led to God and that all truth is relative, were “alive and well” during the first century AD (see John 4: 19-24, John 18: 38), as it is in the twenty-first century. This is what makes Jesus’ message, “I am the way, the truth, and the life . . .” (John 14: 6) so counter-cultural. Scripture tells us over and over again that Jesus is the One and Only way to eternal life (Romans 6: 23).

What difference does this make? All the difference in the world. Without Jesus, we are like sheep without a shepherd, harassed and helpless, seeing and yet blind, hearing and yet deaf, misleading and misled, wandering aimlessly through life with no true meaning, purpose or direction. What a sad predicament. This is why Jesus had compassion on the crowds (Matthew 9: 36). He knew that regardless of what they thought was the way, HE is the way not only to a meaningful, purposeful, abundant life (John 10: 10) but also an eternal one (John 3: 16).

Jesus could have told the crowds what they wanted to hear. But he loved them, and us, too much to do so. He could not lie,

because he not only knows the truth but he is the truth (John 18: 37).

Lost people matter to God. He does not want “anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3: 9). And that is why we are called not to coerce others into faith in Christ, but to pray for them to come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. If we are motivated by compassion for others, as Jesus had compassion for us, we will pray for them, spending even more time talking to God about them than talking to them about God. “This is good and pleases God our Savior, who wants everyone to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus . . .” (1 Timothy 2: 3-5).

What keeps you from sharing your faith with others? What motivates you to share it? Are you more concerned with proving yourself “right” and others “wrong” when it comes to objective truth, or are you more concerned for the emotional, psychological and spiritual well-being of God’s lost sheep who have not yet been found? Are you more focused on being correct than being compassionate?

Sometimes a person needs to go through a crisis before they notice the compassion that compels them to trust in Christ.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Single 10.30 am Worship	Sept 1
Church Offices Closed	Sept 2
rEcess	Sept 6
Meet & Match Small Group Mixer	Sept 8
Youth Back-to-School Bash	Sept 8
Comedy & Carbs	Sept 12
Discover First Dinner	Sept 15
Games Galore	Sept 21
Handel Concert at 11 am Worship	Sept 22
BR Concert Band	Sept 29

ONGOING EVENTS

12 Steps with Christ Jesus, Weds. at noon

Sunday Evening Prayer Gathering at 5 pm

UPCOMING OCT EVENTS

Kirkin' O' the Tartans Oct 27

BAPTISMS:

August 11, 2019
Emmaline Grace Guillory
Parents are AnnaBeth and Kevin Guillory

Zachary James Lala
Parents are Emily and Johnny Lala

SANCTUARY FLOWERS

The flowers are placed in the Sanctuary to the glory of God . . .

SEPT 1 . . . and in loving memory with thanksgiving for Van Andrew Wilson on his birthday weekend by his parents Steve and Claire.

SEPT 8 . . . in loving memory of Jerry Johnson by his wife, LaNelle Johnson and their daughters Debra Matthews, Joy Pennington and Jeri J. Cochran.

SEPT 15 . . . and in loving memory of Gay and Dick Barnett, Alice and Nye Barnett, Frances and J.B. Meadors and Irene Bearden Meadors, parents and grandparents of Leah Edrington, by Leah and Billy Edrington.

SEPT 22 . . . Open date.

SEPT 29 . . . by Donovan and Tricia Davis.

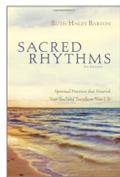
Small Group Mixer September 8th! by Darin Travis, Director of Discipleship

When we look at the Scriptures, the distinctives of the church are the teaching of God's Word, the sacraments and the presence of elders. We know that in addition to those things, the experience of being known and loved by those we meet with each week makes church great. One powerful way to connect with others at First Presbyterian is our small group ministry and we have some fantastic small groups being offered this fall. Though last year most of our small groups all studied one book together, this year we are giving our leaders the space to teach on what God is specifically laying on their hearts. Here's a short overview of a few of the options you will find at our small group mixer kickoff event on September 8:



Financial Peace University:

Dave Ramsey's wildly popular content on financial stewardship will be offered this fall at First Pres. When I was invited to attend this class 14 years ago, I arrogantly thought, "I'm pretty good with managing my money already; I don't know if I'll get that much out of this." Boy was I wrong! This class radically shaped my use of money in such a good way. I'm thrilled we have leaders who are eager to teach and host this class for our church. There is a cost of \$109 for materials but scholarships are available for anyone who might need assistance.



Transforming Communities: Sacred Rhythms:

We offered a Sunday school class on this material in July but everyone wanted more! In our hectic and splintered world, the practice of having solitude, silence and space to examine one's inner world can seem like an unattainable goal. This in-depth group will help you on your journey of

learning the sacred rhythms of life for inner spiritual vitality. We will consider topics such as *Work and Rest Through Establishing a Sabbath*, *Intimacy with God Through Prayer*, *Creating Space for God through Solitude*, and *Recognizing and Responding to the Presence of God through Discernment*.

The Smart StepFamily:



When love blends two families together, it can provide so many wonderful relationships, but it can also be a challenging journey of adjustment. Strong step-families can wonderfully heal previous hurts and provide a strong foundation for children to flourish in life. This group will use the newly revised book by Ron Deal called *The Smart StepFamily*. It combines instruction and encouragement that affirms both husbands and wives and their intent to build strong families by looking at seven fundamental steps to blended family success. Whether married or soon-to-be married, you'll discover how to communicate effectively and solve the everyday puzzles of stepfamily relationships.

Apostles' Creed In-Depth:



Do you ever leave Sunday mornings thinking, "What Gerrit just shared was so good, but I want more!" As Gerrit is powerfully preaching through the Apostles' Creed in worship, several of our small groups will dig deeper into the meat of the Creed via a small group format. These groups hope to help the Sunday morning content solidify even more in our hearts and provide a place of warm fellowship. These groups will dis

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Comedy & Carbs, September 12

On Thursday, September 12 at 6.30 pm, we will host guest comedian Shawn Reynolds in our Sanctuary for an hour of laughs! A pasta dinner before in the gym begins at 5.45. \$10 a ticket (kids under 12 years old are free). Free nursery provided for Infants-PreK. Tickets are available at the Connection Center (cash and checks only please) or online by visiting fpcbr.org. Your ticket stub is your raffle ticket. Online ticket purchasers will check in at the entrance to the event to receive their raffle ticket. You may be a winner! For more info, please contact Nancy Spiller at nancy@fpcbr.org.



September Is Buchanan Elementary Month! by Laura Shaw

Stop by the Connection Center to check out all of the service opportunities at our adopted school Buchanan Elementary.

We would love to have you join this ministry as a Reading Friend, Teacher Encourager, Classroom Storytime Reader or Special Events Helper. No previous experience is necessary – all you need is a love for children and a willing heart. The commitment is small but the rewards are great!

We are also collecting school supplies at the Connection Center. Items needed are #2 pen-

cils, glue sticks, binder page protectors (clear not matte finish), binder dividers and card stock. Classrooms can also use electric pencil sharpeners, 25x30 white Post-it Easel Pads or 20x23 Post-it Tabletop Easel Pads. (These would be great items for a Circle or Sunday school class to go in on!)

Help us make a difference in the lives of our neighbors just two miles from our church! For more information, stop by the Connection Center, e-mail Laura Shaw at laura@fpabr.org or call 387.0617.

Back-2-School Bash at Topgolf, September 8, 5-7 pm

Golf. Food. Music. Youth Ministry is having a back-to-school night at Topgolf! All youth are invited to join us Sunday, September 8 from 5 to 7 pm. Our Youth staff will greet you at the entrance wearing ice blue t-shirts. Pickup is at 7 pm. It is important that you RSVP to jessica@fpabr.org (limited space). All kids are encouraged to invite a friend. Suggested donation \$5.



Games Galore, September 21

Help us warmly welcome internationals to Baton Rouge with an afternoon of fun and games for the whole family. Join us on Saturday, September 21 from 2 to 5 pm in the gym for Games Galore.

MIX & MINGLE: Get to know a few internationals and why they're here and for how long!

ENJOY: Enjoy a diversity of cultures.

NEEDED: Children and adult games, table hosts to teach and play a game of your choice, youth to play with international kids and savory and sweet snacks.

Please pray for this gathering for God to bring those internationals he wants us to connect with to our event. Games Galore is free but we do need you to register online at fpabr.org.



Discover First Dinner, September 15

A few times a year, senior pastor Gerrit Dawson hosts a Discover First dinner. 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, September 15, 2019 from 4-7 pm. If you are interested in attending or would like more information, please contact Meagan Greene (meagan@fpabr.org or 225.454.2504).



SUNDAY WORSHIP

7.45 Chapel Communion
9 am Contemporary
11 am Classic Reformed
September 1: One 10.30 am Service

SEPTEMBER SERMON TEXTS

Texts are subject to change.

SEPTEMBER 1, 2019
Acts 17: 22-27

SEPTEMBER 8, 2019
Luke 1: 26-38

SEPTEMBER 15, 2019
1 Timothy 6: 11-16

SEPTEMBER 22, 2019
1 Corinthians 15: 1-6

SEPTEMBER 29, 2019
Acts 2: 22-24; Romans 10: 5-10

PASTORAL STAFF

GERRIT DAWSON
Senior Pastor

WHITNEY ALEXANDER
Associate Pastor of Missions

BARRY PHILLIPS
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JIM SOLOMON
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Compelling Compassion

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That is why I love leading our Good Grief Seminars (our next one takes place on November 9) and overseeing the many new ministries through which the Lord has allowed us to serve him through having compassion on others. These are listed on our church website, fpcbr.org, under Care Ministries and Prayer Ministries. Please check them out and consider where your role may be. After all, our most effective ministry to others often stems from our deepest wounds (2 Corinthians 1: 3-4).



Jim Solomon

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Baton Rouge Concert Band, September 29

This fall's free concert will take you places you've never been: The Louvre, Mt. Everest, Montana and more. "Red Machine" by Peter Graham is reminiscent of "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." Sunday, September 29 at 3 pm in the Sanctuary.

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Discuss the previous week's sermon as well as connect over additional Biblical material to provide even more teaching/context.

Several other groups are still forming, but further topics to consider are: A Ray Vander Laan study using videos of

ancient Israel for vivid understanding of Biblical material, a study on spiritual disciplines featuring many Puritan writers, an in-depth study of the Biblical character Elijah, and others still to come. Check them all out on September 8 in the Reception Room!