

# FPC NEWSLETTER

DEEPER IN CHRIST, FURTHER INTO THE WORLD



## How Can I Find Easter Joy? by Gerrit Dawson, Senior Pastor

That's a real question. We get excited for the celebration on Palm Sunday and the joyful services and family gatherings on Easter. We get really busy preparing. But sometimes we may wonder why this holiday does not touch us more deeply. Jesus is risen. Where's the gladness?

I'd like to suggest a counter-intuitive path to Easter joy. Push more deeply into the passion! The key to Easter is the cross. The ugly, loud, defeating, disgusting crucifixion of Jesus unlocks the vault of resurrection hope. Too often we have skipped from Palm Sunday to Easter without a stop at Golgotha. That cheapens our celebration. But who really wants to press into the most horrible method of punishment yet devised? Besides, the rest of the world barely acknowledges Easter, so games and matches and deadlines steal our attention from Holy Week. That's not a judgment, just a diagnosis of why Easter joy eludes us so often. Here are 5 ways to follow Christ more closely this Holy Week.

**1) Ponder the Passion.** Read the accounts of Jesus' agony in the Garden, his arrest, scourging, trial, crucifixion and burial. Spend ten minutes a day with one of the gospels open to these accounts. Visualize. Feel. Pray with Jesus in his suffering. You might even want to check out my article "Break the Hardness in Me" going live April 4 at [desiringgod.org](http://desiringgod.org).

**2) Spend Time in Week Six of "Come and See."** Days 36 to 42 will take you to the drama of Jesus' final day and the release of his rising. Whatever you might have missed along the way, this Holy Week engage week six with your full attention.

**3) Attend the Service of Shadows.** On Holy Thursday, April 6 at 7 pm, we will move through the passion story with a feast of visual, musical and spoken offerings. We'll stop along the way to the cross to ponder six magnificent paintings, vividly displayed on our high definition screens. We'll have communion, extinguish candles and conclude quietly at the garden tomb. Together, we can viscerally experience the passion at a new level.

**4) Curate Your Own Set of Images, Essays, Poems and Reflections on the Meaning of Jesus' Passion.** Google or Bing are amazing tools for mining the treasure of Christian art, literature and theology. The more you try searches such as "the thief on the cross" or "why they gave Jesus vinegar on the cross," the better you will get at excavating jewels of our faith.

**5) Change Your Rhythm.** Skip something during Holy Week. Reduce your schedule. Get up a half hour early. Take a walk with one phrase of Scripture to ponder. Read passages with your family. Watch *The Chosen*. Fast for a meal. Invite someone to talk about the cross with you.

We have an immense storehouse of grace. But accessing it doesn't just happen. We press into the passion, with all the emotional, spiritual and intellectual effort it takes. Then, only then, does the release of joy on Easter become ours.

So glad to be on this journey with you,

*Gerrit*



2 PASTORAL  
COUNSELING &  
SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

2 BUILDING UP  
ADDS SMILES  
AS PARTNER

3 LENT GIVES  
WAY TO  
HOLY WEEK

3 DISCOVER  
FIRST  
DINNER

**APRIL EVENTS**

Theology of the Body MAR 31-APR 1  
 Palm Sunday APR 2  
 No Weds. Lent Worship APR 5  
 Service of Shadows APR 6  
 Office Closed APR 7 & 10  
 Easter APR 9  
 rEcess APR 14  
 Discover First Dinner APR 23  
 Ladies' 20s/30s Social APR 25  
 C4C Marriage Workshop APR 28-29  
 IFP APR 28  
 Joyful Noise "Amazing Grace" APR 30

**BAPTISMS**

March 12, 2023  
 Charlotte Marie Barr  
 Parents are Adelaide and Andrew Barr

**WEDDINGS**

March 17, 2023  
 Justin Maranto and Emily Chauvin

March 25, 2023  
 Anna Brost and Eric Haitz

**IN MEMORIAM**

February 25, 2023  
 Christopher Moore

March 8, 2023  
 Ted Roeling, Sr.  
 Father of Lewis Roeling

March 18, 2023  
 Anthony Lacombe: Son of Michelle Lacombe and Grandson of John Weld

**FLOWERS**

The Chapel and Sanctuary flowers are given . . .

APR 2 . . . to the glory of God and in loving memory of Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Lamar Boydston, Ms. Martha Wilbourne Nabers and Mr. Fred Foster Nabers, Jr., parents of Nan and Herb Boydston.

APR 9 . . . to the glory of God and in memory of Norman Saurage III, Maude and Norman Saurage Sr., Alma Lee and Norman Saurage Jr., and Flora and Gustave Spaht by their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

APR 16 . . . to the glory of God and in loving memory of Donald Cunningham by his grandchildren, Mary Michael and Robert McDuff.

APR 23 . . . to the glory of God and in grateful appreciation for the ministry of Rhonda and Gerrit Dawson given by Dadie and Princeton Bardwell.

APR 30 Open date.

**Pastoral Counseling and Spiritual Direction** by Scott Graham

Many of you know that I am your Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care. This means you're likely to see me if you're in the hospital, homebound or in a Senior Care or rehab facility. But the other part of my title is Associate Pastor for Prayer which includes aspects of spiritual formation. This includes prayer, obviously, and numerous other spiritual disciplines, such as meditative reading of scripture, fasting, and retreats. Two other responsibilities under this heading are pastoral counseling and spiritual direction, which are often confused with each other. What is the difference?



**Pastoral Counseling** typically involves a defined focus on a life challenge, such as a relationship difficulty or a behavior where change is desired. Scripture, prayer in various forms, anointing with oil, and theological reflection and a recognition that the worshiping church family is a resource for healing are usually included in pastoral counseling at some point. We are blessed to have an outstanding team of Christian counselors right here on the third floor at the Baton Rouge Christian Counseling Center, and typically I will make a referral to one of our licensed therapists if

more extensive work is needed. Yet there are certainly times when counsel with a pastor is the right approach, or a good beginning.

**Spiritual Direction** is an opportunity for intentional, set-apart, prayerful presence, usually in a one-on-one setting, where the director creates and holds open space for the directee to notice God's presence and the voice of the Holy Spirit in a more attentive and developed way. The goal is to shape the directee into fuller life in Jesus Christ. Meeting with a director can be helpful when one is facing a new "chapter" in life, such as an empty nest, a change in jobs or retirement, or a reevaluation of life due to a dramatic life event or a 'tug' from God through a sermon or prayer time. My doctoral work at Gordon-Conwell is in Pastoral Theology in Practice, which focuses on these two related, but distinct, pastoral responsibilities. Consider this a friendly invitation to meet with me over coffee or in my office if you want to explore either of these options in your adventure of Christian faith, as we follow Jesus, who has come "that you may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10: 10).

**Building Up Adds Smiles As a Partner**

The session approved adding a ministry in Romania to our partnerships in the *Building Up Campaign* for mission. For twenty years we have sent teams to Cihei, Romania to work with Smiles, a gospel centered ministry to the poor. Smiles has undertaken to build Sunset House, a residential facility for the elderly and disabled (the government of Romania does not provide this kind of care). Thanks to your generosity with *Building Up*, we were able to give \$250,000 for Sunset House. If you saw their director, Kevin Hoy, receive this gift at worship recently, you know the joy that got created. Meanwhile, of course, we can fully fund our original partners and add a new local partner in the future.

**Joyfully Racing Toward Jesus**

The Joyful Noise and JAM children's ensembles are excitedly preparing "The Amazing Grace Race," a play where racing contestants try to cross the Great Divide. Join us in the Sanctuary as Rich Man, Muscle Man, Church Lady and Beautiful Woman learn that they cannot make it on their own assets or skills. Luckily, Jesus is on the sidelines waiting for them to reach out and ask for help. Will they learn that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life and successfully cross the Great Divide? Race to the church on April 30 at 5 pm to find out! Reception to follow.



## Lent Gives Way to Holy Week and Easter

### Palm Sunday

We joyfully welcome back our annual Palm Sunday festival on April 2. The congregation will process around North Boulevard promptly at 10 am followed by a combined worship celebration in the Sanctuary. Join us for a crawfish boil lunch after worship with fun activities for the children: egg hunts, face painting, a balloon artist and a petting zoo. Casual dress is encouraged. Overflow parking will be available in the Old Governor's Mansion lot on North Boulevard.

Crawfish Pricing: 12 and younger: \$10; 13 and older, \$15  
Register by scanning the QR code or visit [fpcbr.org](http://fpcbr.org).



Crawfish Code



### Maundy Thursday Service of Shadows: April 6 at 7 pm

We observe the Thursday before Easter as a sacred day remembering Jesus initiated the sacrament of communion on that night and washed his disciples' feet, giving them the commandment to treat each other the same way. We will move through the passion story with a feast of visual, musical and spoken offerings. We'll be stopping along the way to the cross to ponder six magnificent paintings. We'll have communion, extinguish candles and conclude quietly at the garden tomb.

### Easter Sunday

We gather around the empty tomb in the Terraced Garden April 9 for a brief sunrise service at 6.30 am followed by breakfast. We will also have two festive worship services in the Sanctuary at 9 am and 11 am. If rain, the sunrise service will meet in Dunham Chapel. Sunday school classes will meet as usual. Don't forget to bring fresh flowers to decorate our Easter cross which will be on North Boulevard.

### Calling All Ladies in Their 20s & 30s!

Join us for our next social on April 25 from 6 pm to 8 pm at the home of Bonnie Kate Zoghbi where we will have food, fun and fellowship. Please bring a desert or a beverage of your choice! RSVP to Jaime Carnaggio ([jaimc@fpcbr.org](mailto:jaimc@fpcbr.org)). We look forward to having you!



### Energizing Marriage Seminar, April 28 & 29

FPC will host Dee and Pete Adams leading a Created for Connection marriage seminar Friday, April 28 and Saturday, April 29. Past participants describe the weekend as "enlightening, encouraging, revealing, hopeful, powerful, safe, loving and renewing." Sign up at [createdforconnectionbr.org](http://createdforconnectionbr.org). 50% discount to FPC church members. Just email [jaci@fpcbr.org](mailto:jaci@fpcbr.org) to let us know you're attending.



C4C Code

### Discover First Dinner, April 23

Senior pastor Gerrit Dawson hosts a Discover First Dinner several times a year. 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 is Sunday, April 23. 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).

### SERMON TEXTS

APRIL 2  
10 am Worship  
John 12: 20-32

APRIL 9  
6.30 am, 9 am and 11 am Worship  
John 14: 1-7

APRIL 16  
Romans 8: 37

APRIL 23  
John 20: 19-23

APRIL 30  
John 21: 15-19

### PASTORAL STAFF

GERRIT DAWSON  
Senior Pastor

WHITNEY ALEXANDER  
Associate Pastor of Missions

BARRY PHILLIPS  
Ministry Executive

DARIN TRAVIS  
Associate Pastor for Discipleship

SCOTT GRAHAM  
Associate Pastor for  
Pastoral Care and Prayer

COLTON UNDERWOOD  
Assistant Pastor of Children,  
Youth and Families



PH: 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)

**College Scholarships.** The FPC Women's Ministry College Scholarship Fund is a unique fund established in 1955 for all students who wish to further their education. Its purpose is to offer financial assistance to church members who anticipate having difficulty meeting the obligations of continued education. The administration of the fund is the responsibility of the Memorial Scholarship Committee and honors particular need-based guidelines. Rather than academic achievements, aid is intended to be a helpful supplement in the student's pursuit of higher education. The application deadline is June 30, 2023. Please visit [fpcbr.org](http://fpcbr.org) for an application.

**Share Your Love of Cooking.** So many of us who live in Louisiana love to cook. If you would like to volunteer to prepare and deliver a meal to individuals or families in need, please contact Emily Viguerie ([emily@fpcbr.org](mailto:emily@fpcbr.org)). First Presbyterian's Meal Ministry provides meals and welcoming hospitality to those in need. A focus is placed on developing a sense of community among our members, guests and partner ministries as we live out our mission to go deeper in Christ and further into the world.

**Purple Cow Receptacle at FPC.** Now is a great time to donate furniture, clothing and housewares to the Purple Cow. These thrift stores provide significant funding for the Christian Outreach Center, one of our core ministry partners. The COC assists walk-in visitors, leads job training workshops and teaches financial literacy. The COC offers a hand up, not just a hand out! To make it convenient, a purple receptacle will be placed in the church gym in mid-April.

### **Youth RYM Summer Conference**

RYM strives to serve the Church through summer conferences which are God-centered, Word-driven and Gospel-focused. Students will be encouraged and challenged by the Word of God, grow closer together as the body of Christ, and enjoy times of fun and fellowship. Details and registration are now online at [fpcbr.org](http://fpcbr.org).

### **Lake Forest Ranch Camp**

Kingdom Kids children ages 7-12 are invited to join us as we head to Macon, MS for camp at Lake Forest Ranch. LFR's mission is building relationships for eternal impact. Your camper will experience life-changing messages, uplifting worship and high energy recreation. Camp dates are July 17-21. Contact Karah Guillory ([karah@fpcbr.org](mailto:karah@fpcbr.org)) for more information.