

FPC NEWSLETTER

DEEPER IN CHRIST, FURTHER INTO THE WORLD

READY FOR A THIRD CENTURY?

By Gerrit Dawson

Senior Pastor

This time three years from now, we will celebrate our 200th anniversary as a church! We're already thinking about it! Most importantly, your leadership seeks to discern the leading of the Triune God as we round into our bicentennial.

Part of that discernment is undertaking a new long term vision process. This will lead to preparing a strategic plan to guide the next five years. We've partnered with Mesh, a local creative marketing firm who has delivered great results with other local Christian organizations, such as Gardere Community Christian School and the Dunham School. They specialize in helping groups clarify vision, then turn vision into strategy.

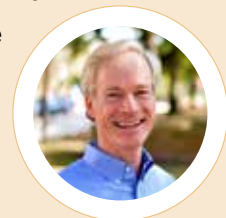
This is the fun part: *we all get to play a role!* More than 80 of us will be engaged in focus groups, including the staff, the elders and a representative at-large group. *All* of us will be invited to participate in a congregational survey. You'll receive an invitation by email. The link will take you to the brief but important survey about our priorities. You can expect this email from the church by the end of the month. We really want to hear from you! My hope is that everyone will take the survey within a week of receiving the link.

The session and Mesh will collate and review the responses from the focus groups and the survey. These provide the voice of the congregation as we prayerfully craft a strategic plan. A stellar planning committee will lead the writing effort. David Kozan, Cheryl Broadnax, Barry Phillips, Kelly Wood and Will Adams will be working with me to bring the session a document to consider for the vision and strategy that will begin our third century. The elders will then present to you the final document that the whole congregation has helped to shape.

We're working specifically in the areas of mission fidelity, preparing for next generation members and leaders, pastoral and staff support, facilities upgrades, fiscal sustainability and ministry/mission expansion.

It's a great delight and a great responsibility to stand on the shoulders of two centuries of faithfulness. As you join me in participating in the survey, please know that I love being your pastor and I rejoice to look toward our future,

Gerrit



2 GRIEFSHARE®
BEGINS APRIL 15

3 LET THE
GENERATIONS
PRAISE HIM!

4 HAPPY 100TH
BIRTHDAY TO
BEBE!

APRIL EVENTS

- APRIL 12 rEcess
- APRIL 13 Women’s Spring Picnic
- APRIL 14 “Praise Him” Celebration
- APRIL 14 Seniors’ Spring Luau
- APRIL 15 GriefShare® Begins
- APRIL 19 “Share Your Heart” Lunch
- APRIL 19 IFP Game Night
- APRIL 25–26 Man Up Conference

UPCOMING MAY EVENTS

- MAY 5 Confirmation Service
- MAY 5 High School Senior Sunday

BIRTHS

March 7, 2024
Isla Wren Swarner
Parents are Elizabeth & Jeff

IN MEMORIAM

- March 9, 2024
Dot Wallace
- March 4, 2024
Jim Douglas
- March 20, 2024
Barbara Montgomery
- March 22, 2024
Tom Greene, Father of Boyd Greene
- March 26, 2024
Jean Dozier, Mother of Denise Dupre

CHAPEL AND SANCTUARY FLOWERS

The Chapel and Sanctuary flowers are given . . .

APRIL 7 . . . to the glory of God and in loving memory of Mr. & Mrs. Lloyd Lamar Boydston, Ms. Martha Wilbourne Nabers and Mr. Fred Foster Nabers Jr., parents of Nan & Herb Boydston.

APRIL 14 . . . to the glory of God and in loving memory of Mr. & Mrs. Warren Munson given by Sarah Ann & Kip Creed.

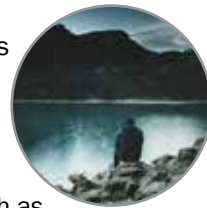
APRIL 21 . . . to the glory of God and in loving memory of Harvard Bardwell and Scott Wheaton by Dadie & Princeton Bardwell.

APRIL 28 . . . to the glory of God and in loving memory of Carla Crosby McClelland by Dr. John S. McClelland and his children.

If you would like to donate flowers for a particular Sunday, please contact Kathy Mullins at 603.4735.

GRIEFSHARE® by Scott Graham, Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care and Prayer

The death of a loved one is one of the greatest challenges we face in life. GriefShare® is a Christian program that has been used in thousands of churches over the past 25 years bringing expert counsel, alongside the love and gifts of God’s people, to provide healing and help in the midst of loss. First Presbyterian hosted its first group in the fall and is forming a new group beginning **Monday, April 15, 6.30-8.30 pm**. Chris Phillips will facilitate the 13 sessions with Phillip Juban serving as host. A well-presented 30-minute video touching on topics such as difficult emotions, loneliness, questions for God, and moving forward while remembering loved ones, coupled with discussion, prayer and support from others are important parts of the time together. Space is limited, so please let Scott Graham or Laura Shaw in the Pastoral Care office know promptly if you are interested in participating.



EXPERIENTIAL PRAYER LAUNCHED AT LENTEN SERVICES

We supplemented our contemplative prayer life at two of our Wednesday Lent services with the use of several prayer stations in and around Dunham Chapel. These stations allowed deeper reflection on several of the Psalms used in the *Lyrics for His Life* devotional, and used exercises that engaged all of our senses as well offering small “take away” items to remind the participant of God’s faithfulness throughout the rest of the week. Several First Presbyterian members make up the experiential prayer team, along with Scott Graham. Stay tuned for future stations allowing more in the church to encounter the Lord through this powerful form of prayer.



LENT COMMUNITY GROUPS WRAP-UP

“Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!” This past Lent, more of us than ever before—over 350 people!—joined together to bless the Lord by participating in a Lent community group. Thirty groups, representing a wide range of ages and locations throughout Baton Rouge, met weekly for study, prayer and praise. Leaders and participants alike reported how much more fruitful the 2024 *Lyrics for His Life* Lent Guide proved to be when shared with friends, both old and new. We heard from so many of you—from as simple as, “Our group is on fire!” to tender stories about the Lord working through groups to answer specific prayers. We’d like to especially thank all the leaders, who devoted their personal time to training, preparation, and prayer for the study. Guess what? The fun doesn’t have to stop, and there’s room for more to join! Several groups plan to continue meeting or simply gather periodically for fellowship throughout the rest of the spring and summer. If you’re interested in learning more about community groups, or want ideas for how your group can continue on, simply contact Kelly Wood (kelly@fpabr.org).



GAME NIGHT WITH INTERNATIONALS

Join us for fun and games April 19, 6–8 pm, in the FPC Gym. Help us give a warm kingdom welcome to internationals and have fun playing games together. It is a great way to break the ice, share laughs and make international friends. Bring your favorite table game. We will have toss games, ping pong and indoor badminton set up. Fun for the whole family! In the meantime, please pray about possible next steps when you have an encounter with internationals. Could you have a next step meeting with them soon after? Coffee? Dinner out? Dinner at your house? It doesn’t have to be formal!



“MAN UP!” MEN’S CONFERENCE, APRIL 25-26 AT ABOUNDING LOVE MINISTRIES

Abounding Love Ministries presents the “Man Up! Conference” Thursday, April 25 and Friday, April 26. Come worship, attend a health and finance workshop and participate in a 5K run. Details and registration online at almstarsbr.com or scan the code.



LET THE GENERATIONS PRAISE HIM! by Darin Travis, Associate Pastor for Discipleship

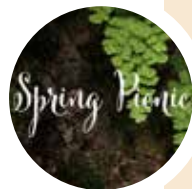
There is so much wonder and goodness found in worshiping in an intergenerational church! Here at First Presbyterian, seeing old and young come together in praise on a Sunday morning brings such joy to the heart. One trend that you might find surprising is how many young adults and young families are gravitating toward worshiping at our 7.45 am service. Why, you might ask? This generation, more than others, yearns to be connected to the ancient nature of our faith. Certainly in the beautiful Dunham Chapel, one can easily feel the heritage of 2,000 years of faithful Christian witness. Another reason young adults say they rise early for the 7.45 service is because of the intimacy of those gathered. With a smaller venue, the faces one sees week after week more easily turn into ongoing relationships.



To help these intergenerational relationships flourish at 7.45 am, we are going to have a party! In Psalm 145, the Psalmist exclaims, “One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts. . . . They shall pour forth the fame of your abundant goodness and shall sing aloud of your righteousness.” On April 14, immediately following the 7.45 am service, all are invited to a time of fellowship and praise with the intent that the generations might tell of God’s goodness. Come to room 202 of the Education Building for food and fellowship! We’re praying that bonds will deepen for 20 and 30-somethings, those in the thick of career and raising kids, as well as those who enjoy retirement share about God’s goodness in their lives.

WOMEN’S SPRING PICNIC

Christians share a bond that exceeds every other aspect of our identity; race, social status, gender and most definitely, age. We all need each other. Twenty-somethings need seniors and vice versa. Young moms need empty-nesters and vice versa. We need the balance, perspective and experience of people who are walking through different stages of life than us. Multigenerational fellowship broadcasts the beauty of our shared union with Christ. It gives testimony to the unique ways God works in and through his beloved children as we are all utterly dependent on his amazing grace.



Join us at our annual Women’s Ministry Spring Picnic where we will enjoy a sweet time of fellowship with women from all ages and stages, as well as feast on a delicious spread of salads and snacks. Come and be blessed!

Saturday, April 13 at the home of Kelli Bankston
11 am-1 pm
\$10 registration

NEWS FROM GARDERE COMMUNITY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

ART SHOW AT FCC: Gardere students have been working hard on preparing a special art show they will display in the Reception Room Sunday, April 14. As a thank you for your support, you may select one piece of art to take home with you. As a special treat, the students will sing for us at the 9 am service.

SHARE YOUR HEART LUNCH-N-LEARN: Bring a friend and learn more about Gardere Community Christian School and their amazing students when you and a friend attend the Share Your Heart 2024 Lunch-n-Learn/Fundraiser. Join our GCCS Eagles on their journey toward academic success, spiritual growth, and community and family stability. Friday, April 19, 12–1 pm. A special lunch will be prepared by celebrity guest chef Tré of Tré’s Street Kitchen!



SERMON TEXTS

APRIL 7
 Psalm 116:1–9

APRIL 14
 Psalm 24

APRIL 21
 Psalm 96:1–6, 10–13

APRIL 28
 Psalm 110:1–4

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
 Associate Pastor of Children,
 Youth and Families



CONTACT INFORMATION

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 Preschool
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Baton Rouge Christian
 Counseling Center
 225.387.2287
brchristiancounseling.com

LAGNIAPPE



BEBE FLESHMAN turned 100 in March! Several friends and family honored her with a Birthday Card Shower. Happy birthday, BeBe!

VBS VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!

Volunteer opportunities are available for adults and youth in 7th to 12th grade. Note: children of volunteers attend for free! Register online at fpcbr.org.

YOUTH NEWS

ATTENTION PARENTS OF HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS.

SENIOR SUNDAY IS MAY 5!

We look forward to celebrating our high school seniors with a special slide show at the 9 and 11 am services. If you have a senior, please email one baby photo and one current photo to jessica@fpcbr.org by April 19.

SAVE THE DATE! SPRING LUAU

APRIL 14 @ 5 PM

All high school students are invited to celebrate the Class of 2024 at our Spring Luau. Come in your best (or worst) tropical attire!

