

FPC NEWSLETTER

DEEPER IN CHRIST, FURTHER INTO THE WORLD

PRAYING ALONGSIDE JESUS

By Gerrit Dawson

Senior Pastor

What if we could pray *with* Jesus? Not just *to* him, about *our* concerns. What would happen if we stood next to Jesus, offering up the same prayers he made to his Father? What if we joined Jesus in the events of his life, then pressed close to him by sharing in his emotions? What if we spent *our* prayer time being engaged about what mattered in *Christ's* life?

I can tell you what happened to me. I grew to love Jesus more. And I felt *his* heart getting formed more inside *my* heart. I got energized by the urgency of his mission. I came to admire Jesus more than ever. Adoring him creates a profound effect in me. Peace. Passion. Hope. Wonder.

Could that happen to you? I mean, what if the best way to change *us* is actually focusing on Jesus? As it turns out, getting inside Jesus' prayer life lights up our prayers. Tucking up close to his heartbeat in the events of his life transforms our hearts. The closer we draw to him, the more Jesus gives life to us.

But how? Is there not an impossible gap between Jesus and me? Aren't the events of his life lost in the past? We don't know what he prayed so how can we join him? I know. It sounds presumptuous and not a little crazy.

But there is a bridge. A reliable, compelling, available bridge. It's built of two interconnected parts, the Psalms and the Gospels. Jesus knew and prayed the psalms. We can pray those same psalms as we participate spiritually in the events of his life recorded in the Gospels. It could be like nothing you've ever done!

That's the adventure we'll be on together this Lent. I pray you will be transformed by learning to pray alongside Jesus.

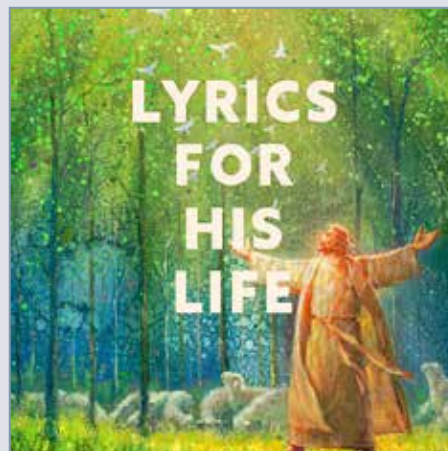
Five Ways to Participate

1) *Lyrics for His Life: Praying the Psalms with Jesus*. On February 18, we'll distribute copies of this beautiful, full color, 238 page book. You'll find reading and prayers for the 42 days leading to Easter. Yes, you can grab copies for friends, and yes some advance copies will be available February 11.

2) *Daily Podcasts*. Prefer to listen while you go about your day? Sign up for the daily podcast link. Lauren Honea and Scott Graham join me in bringing you each day's readings.

3) *Daily Emails*: Prefer to read on your device? Find each day's reading in your inbox! It takes 22 seconds to sign up via our website!

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2 COMMUNITY GROUPS:
NEW NAME,
SAME MINISTRY

3 MEN'S, WOMEN'S,
CHILDREN'S AND
YOUTH NEWS

4 TWO NEW
MEMBER
PORTALS

FEBRUARY EVENTS

- FEB 1 Women's 40s/50s Social
- FEB 2 rEcess
- FEB 5 Men's Lunch
- FEB 11 Youth Super Bowl Party
- FEB 12-13 Church Office Closed
- FEB 14 Ash Wednesday Worship
- FEB 18 Congregational Meeting
- FEB 18 Lent Guides Distributed
- FEB 18 Joyful Noise Choir Resumes
- FEB 25 H.S. Seniors Class with Gerrit

UPCOMING MARCH EVENTS

- MAR 2 Men's Skeet Shoot
- MAR 24 Palm Sunday
- MAR 28 Maundy Thursday
- MAR 31 Easter

IN MEMORIAM

January 9, 2024
Wendell Brumfield

January 11, 2024
Susan Jones
Daughter of Barbara Henry

January 18, 2024
John Camp
Father of Patti Galey

January 16, 2024
Ray Floyd
Son of Sandy Floyd

FLOWERS

The Chapel and Sanctuary flowers are given . . .

FEB 4 . . . to the glory of God and in loving memory of Helen and John Waldie (parents of Joann Thurston) and Robert Moore Thurston (father of Scott Thurston) given by Joann and Scott Thurston.

FEB 11 . . . to the glory of God and in loving memory of Mr. and Mrs. Warren Munson by Sarah Anne and Richard Creed.

FEB 18 . . . to the glory of God and in loving memory of James Howard and Emogene S. Elliott by their family, Dr. and Mrs. Louis Cenac (Elizabeth Elliott) and Dr. Clifton O. Bingham III.

FEB 25 . . . to the glory of God and in loving memory of our father Mack Gregorie Sr. by Ann K. Gregorie and Nancy Sue Gregorie Burton.

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

FPC COMMUNITY GROUP MINISTRY



You might ask, "What's in a name?" I can tell you; Shakespeare doesn't have the market cornered on why it's important to ask. We are blessed that the Lord is doing much in our midst. Because of what he is doing in our small group ministry, I'm pleased to announce that we are changing the name of our groups from "small groups" to "community groups." The name change reflects a more accurate and honest representation of what the Lord has been building for some time. A few years ago, we shifted how we recruited for groups—from a sign-up based on zip codes to tasking group leaders with the responsibility of filling their own groups. This decision wonderfully allowed for far more consistency in attendees from one season to the next which has come to produce a much deeper community. Because of the love and fellowship found in our groups, many have grown in number as well. The desire to change our ministry name can be illustrated well by considering Bill and Cherie Peters' group. Calling this group of over 25 people a "small group" was becoming a stretch! They wondered if they should split into two groups for fear of becoming too large. However, the Lord led them to a clear decision. This group had deep intimacy and community even with large numbers. The problem wasn't the size of the gathering, it was the limiting name. At First Presbyterian, developing deep community has been the goal, not to necessarily keep them small in number. For this reason, we're thrilled to announce the name change and invite you to join a community group this Lenten season!

Starting February 18, we will have groups of varying sizes all over the city welcoming people into deep community while we draw near to Christ. We will study the Lenten guide that Pastor Gerrit has written using the Psalms to show us Jesus. It will be a fantastic season of study. If you don't know which group to join, do not fear. Contact Kelly Wood (kelly@fpcbr.org) and together we'll trust the Lord to lead us to the perfect group for you to flourish in.

COMMUNITY LIFE EVENTS



ASH WEDNESDAY AND MID-WEEK LENT WORSHIP

The season of Lent begins February 14 with a traditional service of the reception of ashes and the Lord's Supper, followed by a light lunch in the Reception Room (\$5 per person). Wednesday noon services will continue throughout February and March in Dunham Chapel without lunch.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18

The session has called a congregational meeting for Sunday, February 18 at 10.10 in the Sanctuary. The purpose is to receive a report on 2023, hear a presentation from The Foundation, propose the 2024 budget, elect at-large members to the nominating committee and conduct any other business that is before us. These annual meetings give us a great opportunity as one church to give thanks for all that God has done and is doing in our midst. There will be no adult Sunday school that day.

MINISTRY NEWS

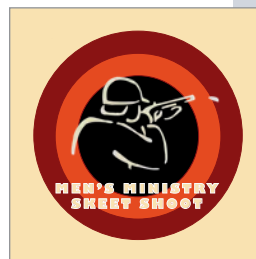
MEN'S MINISTRY

WHAT CHRISTIAN MEN NEED MOST

Join Men's Ministry Monday, February 5 at 11.45 am for lunch and a presentation by Pastor Steve Savelich. Pastor Savelich is a popular speaker who travels the world teaching about Jesus Christ. He will help our men focus on life's most important priorities. Register online for the \$10 lunch.

2024 FPC MEN'S SKEET SHOOT

Get your shot guns ready, the FPC Men's Ministry Annual Skeet Shoot is happening March 2, 2024! It's hard to get much better than a beautiful Louisiana morning while enjoying the sport of shooting. Add in some great fellowship with brothers from First Presbyterian and a delicious lunch and this event will be hard to beat. We'll gather at Dr. Chat Kleinpeter's working farm in Saint Francisville which is some of the most beautiful farmland Louisiana has to offer! Please arrive at 8 am. The competition will begin shortly after. We will have teams of four competing at multiple shooting stations with fun prizes to celebrate the day. The cost \$65 for shooters and \$15 for non-shooters. Check the website for registration and more information about teams and food.



WOMEN'S MINISTRY

WOMEN'S 40s/50s SOCIAL

There is no agenda! This is just an opportunity to gather together outside of the church walls for food, fellowship and fun. Our next social for 40s and 50s is on Thursday, February 1 at Jenny Civello's house from 6 to 8 pm. This will be a Mardi Gras themed social with Mardi Gras inspired appetizers and a variety of king cakes. Feel free to bring a beverage of your choice! Please RSVP to Jaime Carnaggio (jaime@fpabr.org).

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

JOYFUL NOISE CHILDREN'S CHOIR RETURNS FEBRUARY 18!

Join us for a whole new year of children's choir! Joyful Noise is for children ages K-5th grade and prioritizes building a heart for worship. Children build this desire through experiencing God's Word through music. Beginning on Sunday, February 18 at 4 pm, we will sing the psalms and bring other Bible stories to life through music. Lower Elementary (K-2 grade) will meet in the Kingdom Kid's basement. Upper Elementary (3-5 grades) will meet in the choir room on the 2nd floor of the Sanctuary. If you're interested, please email Lauren at (lauren@fpabr.org). Hope to see you there!

YOUTH MINISTRY

YOUTH AND FAMILIES SUPER BOWL PARTY

All youth students and their families are invited to a picnic-style Super Bowl Watch Party Sunday, February 11 at 5 pm in the Terraced Garden. Please bring an appetizer, folding chairs and blankets. Let Colton know if you're coming (colton@fpabr.org). Surprise halftime announcement!

HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS SUNDAY SCHOOL WITH GERRIT

Starting February 25, Gerrit will be holding his world-famous high school seniors Sunday school classes. These classes will take place Sundays from February 25 to March 17. SAVE THE DATES!

SING!

**SUPER
BOWL**

SERMON TEXTS

FEBRUARY 4

Revelation 5:1-12

Guest preacher David Mathis,
Executive Editor of Desiring God

FEBRUARY 11

Ephesians 6:10-23

FEBRUARY 18

Psalms 104:1-2, 19-24, 27-31

FEBRUARY 25

Psalms 103:1-13

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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225.620.0245

Baton Rouge Christian
Counseling Center
225.387.2287

brchristiancounseling.com

ALONGSIDE JESUS, *continued from page 1*

4) *Community Groups*: Reading, discussing and praying with others always takes us deeper. Join the more than 300 who participated last year meeting in homes, praying together and sharing life going deeper in Christ.

5) *Weekly Worship*: Each week through April, we'll focus on a particular psalm Jesus prayed and consider what it might have meant to him. We'll learn to pray alongside our Lord as we press in to the events of his life, death and resurrection.

6) *Wednesday Noon Services*. Beginning with Ash Wednesday on February 14, we'll meet each week for worship and communion, focusing on a psalm Jesus prayed. There will even be opportunities for more experiential prayer times.



Gent

TWO NEW CHURCH PORTALS

FPC has launched two new, safe and secure sites to help you manage your church membership data online: the Member Portal and the Giving Portal. Links to each are at fpcbr.org or the church app. Separate login information is required for each site. Contact Laura Shaw (225.620.1222) if you have issues setting up your account.

YOU DID IT!

A huge thank you all who volunteered to be a Teacher Encourager at McKinley Elementary. All 49 teachers and staff members now have an encourager!



**THANK
you!**