

## Haven't You Missed It???? by Gerrit Dawson, Senior Pastor

Palm Sunday. Easter Morning. Service of Shadows. It was so weird to lead those services looking into the lens of an iPhone. But this year we're back! **Palm Sunday** is March 28. We plan to use the main parking lot for an outdoor service with palms and a procession of children. 10 am service, followed by egg hunts and a balloon artist for children in the garden areas and light snacks for the rest of us.

On **Easter morning**, April 4, we plan to use the terraced garden to its full capacity. First for the Sunrise service at 6.30 am. This will be a complete worship service including communion and then biscuits and coffee to follow. At 9 am, the festive service will be in the Sanctuary but also livestreamed to the terraced garden! Same at 11. No tickets or reservations. Come to the Sanctuary for "live" worship, come to the garden for "livestreamed" and overflow.

**Holy Thursday** will return April 1 at 7 pm with the Service of Shadows in the Sanctuary followed by a visit to the tomb in the garden. And we will keep the eerie reflection of **Holy Saturday** on April 3 at 11 am in the Sanctuary. How sweet it will be to be back!

Your elders recently spent a weekend retreat considering what it means to cultivate resistant, resilient and renovative Christian

community. We all read Rod Dreher's book *Live Not by Lies* in preparation. The book identifies our excessive focus on individualism and personal comfort as well as the rise of cultural Marxism as two key factors diminishing the church. Bouncing from that work, our task was to consider how reclaiming Christ-centered distinction not only protects the church but makes us better at reaching our community. We noted the importance of learning to recognize the worldviews which shape people and what makes the Christian worldview distinct and generative. Twelve different small groups then met to consider specific ideas for our church in areas such as discipleship, worship, children's ministry and reaching the business community. I'm looking forward to doing a vision sermon based on this retreat April 18.

Meanwhile, what a joy it is to be reading these Scriptures about being "in Christ" with you. I'm finding them nourishing and challenging all over again. Best of all, we're praying and reading *together*, wherever we are, one body of Christ. No wonder I love being your pastor,



Gerrit

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Daylight Savings MAR 14
Galatians Study Begins MAR 17-18
Palm Sunday, 10 am Worship MAR 28

UPCOMING EVENTS

Service of Shadows APR 1
Good Friday APR 2
Holy Saturday APR 3
Easter Sunday APR 4

IN MEMORIAM

January 29, 2021
Gene Owen

January 31, 2021
Bea Ferriss

February 2, 2021
Kirk Williams

February 3, 2021
Mack Gregorie, Sr.

February 10, 2021
Alan Andries

SANCTUARY FLOWERS

The Chapel and Sanctuary flowers serve to honor a departed loved one or celebrate with thanksgiving cherished people or events. If you would like to donate flowers for a particular Sunday, please contact Kathy Mullins at 603.4735. The Chapel and Sanctuary flowers are placed . . .

MAR 7 . . . to the glory of God and in loving memory of my parents, Jeanne and Marlin Drake, Jr. of Shreveport, by Lauren Drake Phillips.

MAR 14 . . . to the glory of God and in loving memory of Samuel Eugene Field III given by Dr. and Mrs. Samuel Eugene Field, Jr.

MAR 21 . . . to the glory of God and in loving memory of Bart Bennett by Ruth Anne, Claire, Adriane and Sarah.

MAR 28 . . . to the glory of God and in loving memory of our parents; Rev. James and Mary Lee Logan and Frank E. Holloway, Sr. by Eden and Ronnie Logan.

Our Tasks Before Our Time by Jim Solomon, Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care and Prayer



With doctor's orders to lie face down staring at the floor for up to two weeks following emergency surgery on a detached retina, I have become thankful to the Great Physician for not only allowing me to keep a proper posture in praying for each of you but also for all your prayers for me! I've also had some thoughts to share. Having faced 22 deaths in only 6 weeks (two to COVID), I've been asking again about each of our tasks before our time. What came to mind for myself and each of us as members of the Body of Christ and FPCBR is the difference between unity and uniformity in a culture that may have confused the two.

True unity doesn't require uniformity in meeting a common goal. God's goals may be mysterious when it comes to understanding his purpose for our particular paths in life. Yet, his goal is clear when it comes to determining his purpose for the church: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations . . ." (Matthew 28: 19-20). We can only fulfill this great commission by being empowered by the Holy Spirit individually in order to serve as God's witnesses collectively, as Christ Jesus said ". . . you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1: 8). Then we can go deeper in Christ and further into the world effectively.

Much of the power of the Holy Spirit comes in the form of the gifts from the Holy Spirit. Yet, in our use of these gifts, the saying that "united we stand, divided we fall" holds true for the church perhaps even more so than for other organizations. Why? Because Jesus himself said that non-believers will know that we belong to him not by our gifts but by our fruit (Matthew 7: 20), the fruit of love leading to unity being the greatest of them all (1 Corinthians 13: 13, Galatians 5: 22-23). This makes us true witnesses of Christ.

This great witness of Christ in us and through us as a body of believers can only take place when we have unity in the midst of diversity. Unlike uniformity, unity doesn't require that we all look, act and think the same way, nor does having one voice require that we all sound the same. Rather, unity requires that diversity doesn't become a threat but a treat. It requires that we learn to appreciate one another's differences rather than be threatened or annoyed by them. It also requires that we accept the gifts God has given us, not wishing that we had someone else's gifts, nor thinking that we can choose our gifts, but realizing that the Gift-Giver saw fit to give us just what we have in order to fulfill the purpose he has.

You are needed by the church in order for the church to fulfill its purpose, and yet, you need the church in order to fulfill yours. The church is not complete without you, and you are not complete without the church. Yet, God is sovereign in determining your role in the grand scheme of things. And although we may not understand how God picks and chooses who does what in the body of believers, we can have unity in fulfilling our purpose when we're more concerned about the "common good" (1 Corinthians 12: 7) than our own. Let's do so! And again, thank you for praying for me as I pray for y'all!

SIAC Seminary Grants

The Session Income Allocation Committee is accepting applications through March 15 for financial grants for seminary studies for individuals interested in pursuing full time Christian ministry. Please contact Jaci if you have questions (jaci@fpcbr.org or 620.0221). We encourage applicants to understand the SIAC Mission Statement and Guidelines documents posted online at fpcbr.org.



**Saved by Grace** by Jaime Carnaggio, Director of Women's Ministry

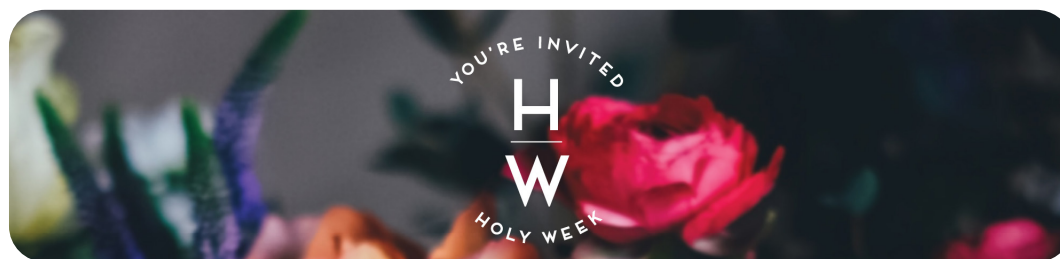
Do you rest freely in God's unconditional love and live freely in his grace? Or are you often tempted to work in your own power, work according to your own rules, and work to earn God's favor?

God's grace is unique, revolutionary and life transforming, but it's also a hard concept to fully grasp. Even after we are saved—saved by grace—there are still traces of a performance mentality that we all struggle with.

Phil Ryken says that the book of Galatians was written for recovering Pharisees who thought that what God would do for them depended on what they did for God. In a way, we are all recovering Pharisees who are constantly tempted to adopt a performance-based Christianity that denies the grace of God. Although we have been saved by grace, we don't always live by grace.

What the Pharisees failed to understand—and what we still struggle with today—is that God's grace cannot be earned; it only comes free. Grace is the favor God has shown to undeserving sinners through the death and resurrection of Jesus. And grace is exactly what recovering Pharisees need.

Beginning the week of March 17-18, Women's Ministry will kick off an 8-week study in the book of Galatians, which gives us a picture of grace that is both good and glorious. May we rediscover together that Christianity is not about what we do for God; it's about what God has already done for us in Jesus Christ.



**PALM SUNDAY**  
 March 28 at 10 am  
 One outdoor service in the Convention St. lot.  
 No Sunday school.



**MAUNDY THURSDAY**  
**Service of Shadows**  
 April 1 at 7 pm  
 in the Sanctuary.



**HOLY SATURDAY**  
 April 3 at 11 am  
 in the Sanctuary.



**EASTER SUNDAY**  
 April 4  
 6.30 am Sunrise:  
 Terraced Garden  
 9 am Contemporary:  
 Sanctuary  
 11 am Classic Reformed:  
 Sanctuary

**SUNDAY WORSHIP**

7.45 Chapel Communion  
 9 am Contemporary  
 11 am Classic Reformed  
 Livestream at 9 and 11 am on YouTube and Facebook

**MARCH SERMON TEXTS**

*Texts are subject to change.*

MARCH 7, 2021  
 Galatians 4: 4-7; 3: 26-27

MARCH 14, 2021  
 John 6: 47-51

MARCH 21, 2021  
 Ephesians 2: 13-22

MARCH 28, 2021  
 Romans 12: 3-10

**PASTORAL STAFF**

GERRIT DAWSON  
 Senior Pastor

WHITNEY ALEXANDER  
 Associate Pastor of Missions

BARRY PHILLIPS  
 Ministry Executive

JIM SOLOMON  
 Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care & Prayer

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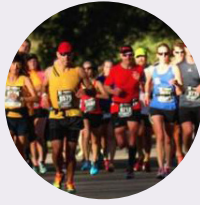
763 North Boulevard  
 Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Mother's Day Out and Preschool  
 225.620.0245

Baton Rouge Christian Counseling Center  
 225.387.2287  
 brchristiancounseling.com

### Worship Ain't No Marathon!

Beat the traffic and come to worship early! The Louisiana Marathon passes near First Presbyterian Sunday, March 7! For planning purposes, give yourself a few extra minutes. Perhaps taking Florida Blvd. or Convention St. into downtown is a better alternative to North Blvd.



### Contemplative Prayer Hour

Every other Monday in the Sanctuary at 10 am, Katie and Ryan Forsthoff lead a quiet hour featuring guided silent prayer based on the reading of Scripture, as well as a brief reflection on the Sunday sermon. All are welcome. More information at [fpcbr.org](http://fpcbr.org).

### Deacons Are Here to Help!

Perhaps you know of someone who could use a ride to Sunday worship; or an elderly member who could use occasional help with small household tasks like changing light bulbs or cleaning up their yard; or a single parent who could use a hand moving into a new house; or a home bound member who would appreciate a visit or phone call. These are examples of the kinds of small and often unspoken needs that exist within our church community and where deacons can help.



If you have a need, know of a member with a need or would like to participate, please contact Laura Shaw at the church office at 387.0617 or [laura@fpcbr.org](mailto:laura@fpcbr.org).

### Hurricane Relief Trips

We meet in the church parking lot each Wednesday and Saturday, leave Baton Rouge at 6.30 am sharp and return home that evening. Please consider joining us! Ask others to join us.



Please bring sturdy gloves, good pair of shoes to work in and a bag lunch. If you have a chain saw, please bring with you. Ice chests of cold water will be available.

Contact Whitney Alexander for further details ([whitney@fpcbr.org](mailto:whitney@fpcbr.org) or 225.810.2607).

Prayers are welcomed and needed for our brothers and sisters in Louisiana. Pace yourself and join us as you are able. We are in this for the long haul!