

FPC NEWSLETTER

DEEPER IN CHRIST, FURTHER INTO THE WORLD

Say Whaaaaaat?! Gerrit Dawson, Senior Pastor



Have you ever thought about what kinds of things people asked Jesus? They made all kinds of requests. They had all kinds of questions. Pharisees, demons, disciples, sick people, rich and poor, seekers and cynics, even Jesus' own mother and the devil

himself made asks. Some tried to deflect him from his mission; some just needed mercy. As a reader, I've thought with surprise, "I can't believe you just asked that!" Many times, of course, there was a question within the question. There was another layer of meaning beneath the surface. Jesus always answered the deeper need. He always addressed the true motive. And his replies always opened a way for transformation.

I had not spent much time thinking about this gospel category of requests and replies. But once I did, I felt like I encountered Jesus in a fresh, compelling way. I'm very excited that you will soon receive *Asking Jesus*, our 2022 Lent book. You'll be invited to join me in exploring 42 requests made of Jesus. I predict you will discover that many of these questions are *your* questions. You'll realize, as I did, that we make all these same requests today. So Jesus' replies relate directly to our lives. This Lent, we'll be able to meet Jesus

again, but as if for the first time. All in about 20 minutes a day during the season of Lent.

Once again, your elders and deacons will be hand delivering your books. (Those who live outside the metro area will have their book mailed. If we miss you, please let us know!). There will also be extra copies at the church. Day One is Sunday, March 6, and our sermons will be related to our readings. You can also get connected to a home group to take your explorations even further. And, of course, you can sign up to receive the daily readings sent to you (or 1000 of your friends) by email. Visit fpcbr.org to subscribe.

I love to keep Lent with you by intensifying our focus on our loving, saving Lord. Further up and further in dear flock!

Welcome Emily Viguerie!

On March 7, Emily Petty Viguerie will begin as our Director of Community Life. Emily has been a member of FPC since joining with her family in 2007. She graduated from Dunham and then LSU. Last year she married Russ Viguerie. She has been active in a women's Bible study for 20-somethings, and brings a love for Christ, for people and for the ministry of our church. We're thrilled to find someone who knows our church culture and brings fresh energy for welcoming new members and connecting long-time members.



Lent

2 ROMANIA AND COLOMBIA MISSION TRIPS

3 MEET OUR DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY LIFE

3 LENT SMALL GROUPS

4 IFP GAMES GALORE

MARCH EVENTS

Ash Wednesday Worship MAR 2
 Games Galore MAR 5
 First Sunday of Lent MAR 6
 rEcess MAR 11

ONGOING EVENTS

Wednesday Noon Lent Worship in Dunham Chapel

APRIL EVENTS

Palm Sunday APRIL 10
 Maundy Thursday APRIL 14
 Easter Sunday APRIL 17
 Created for Connection APRIL 29-30

BIRTHS

January 18, 2022
 Annie Frances Miller
 Parents are Shelby and Connor Miller
 Grandparents are Connie and Robert Miller

January 20, 2022
 Nima Ruth Hoek
 Parents are Deki and Chris Hoek

IN MEMORIAM

January 14, 2022
 Austin Bridgforth

FLOWERS

The Chapel and Sanctuary flowers are . . .

MAR 6 . . . to the glory of God and in loving memory of Dr. Michael A. Teague by his children Sean, Ashley and Travis.

MAR 13 . . . to the glory of God and in loving memory of Samuel Eugene Field III given by Dr. and Mrs. Samuel Eugene Field, Jr.

MAR 20 . . . to the glory of God and in loving memory of Bart Bennett by Ruth Anne, Claire, Adriane and Sarah.

MAR 27 . . . in loving memory of our sweet angel baby, Myles Eden Logan, born February 15, 2022 and placed into the arms of Jesus on February 16, 2022. Forever in our hearts. Parents, Emily and Jarrett Logan. Grandparents, Eden and Ronnie Logan.

Why Are You Here? by Peter Lazar

“De ce ești aici?” (Why are you here?) It is June 1, 2015, and I am on my third mission trip with The Smiles Foundation in Romania. We have been led by a Smiles team leader to the third sub-basement of an abandoned Communist era hospital where some homeless are hiding. How they came to be homeless and why they are hiding are discussions for another time. I don’t know many Romanian words; the Smiles team leader is translating. At first, I think the woman asking the question is annoyed by our intrusion. No! The leader explains that she is incredulous that anyone would travel so far to care about her. I had been going on mission trips to Romania for somewhat selfish reasons. The woman’s question caused me to rethink my reasons and I would invite you to contemplate what I realized that day. It changed my perspective on mission trips.

Of course, going on a mission trip *does* cost money, time and personal risk but Smiles hosts missionaries of all ages very comfortably. I found from our trip in December that COVID exposure seems as well managed in Romania as in the USA. Still, it would be far easier as an American, wealthy by worldly standards, to just cut a check. But what I did not realize was how much it means to the poor for us to be there, especially in parts of the world with virtually no “social safety net.” These people are alone. Profoundly alone. They need human compassion as much as food. The human compassion we bring by being there means so much. I have also learned that the Smiles staff is greatly encouraged and rewarded by the company of mission visitors.

Please consider joining us on a mission trip to Romania. Trips are filled with opportunities suitable for all ages and abilities for compassion, service and joy. We depart May 26 and return June 5, 2022. You can contact me (plazar3@cox.net or 225.247.6935) or my wife Carol (clazar@cox.net or 225.247.6938) for further information.

Isaiah 43: 5–6
 Fear not, for I am with you;
 I will bring your offspring from the east,
 and from the west I will gather you.
 I will say to the north, Give up,
 and to the south, Do not withhold;
 bring my sons from afar
 and my daughters from the end of the earth . . .

Mission Trip to Colombia by Ed Middleton

Come join us this summer, June 25-July 2, as we serve with Global Transformation Ministries in Medellin, Colombia! The team will stay at Esther's Home in comfortable rooms for short-term workers. Esther's Home is located outside the bustling city of Medellin in a small mountain town providing safe refuge and a home for rescued mothers and babies. Staying at Esther's Home gives a wonderful window into the daily rhythm of the ministry and allows lots of opportunity to love on the moms and babies. Other ministry opportunities will be adjusted to the gifts and composition of the team.

One possible work project may be to begin construction of an outdoor church at Esther's Home. Other opportunities are leading devotionals or teaching Bible studies and skills-training such as financial management, time management and healthy meal preparation. We will visit the new "transitional" girls' home in Medellin that your donations to the Building Up campaign helped purchase. We will cap off our week with a dinner out with the moms and the team! This trip to Colombia is limited to 15 people. Please contact me (225.573.6982) or Darin Travis (313.574.1205) as soon as possible if you are interested in joining the team. We'd love to have you!



Lent Small Groups by Darin Travis

As the season of Lent draws near, our minds begin to think of the 40 days Jesus spent fasting in the desert prior to his public ministry. We only dare to imagine the hunger, thirst and longing Jesus must have experienced. His choice to take that first step into an arid 40-day journey without food seems like an impossible proposition to those of us that enjoy our 21st century creature comforts. More important than food, we ponder what 40 days of isolation must have felt like for Jesus. Yet, was Jesus left only to himself as he was tempted by Satan? Had the fellowship of the blessed Trinity ceased while Jesus took step after step? One author notes that we typically perceive Jesus at his weakest when he encounters Satan at the end of 40 days. But what if that was when Jesus was at his strongest? What if a month of prayer, fasting and walking in intimacy with his Father is just what he needed to conquer the greatest temptation man has ever known? After those 40 days away from the demands of life, communing with the Father, Jesus walked away from the battle with the devil completely unscathed! This is the heart of why we emphasize Lent at First Presbyterian Church. We want to commune with the Father for strength in this life that we might celebrate the ultimate victory of Jesus' resurrection.



Thankfully as part of the church, we do not have to make this spiritual journey alone. This Lenten season, we are offering a fantastic array of small groups throughout Baton Rouge that will study our Lenten guide together: *Asking Jesus: What We Requested, How He Replied*.

Small group leaders are eager to discuss the content Gerrit has prepared. Groups will meet in a variety of ways and times: coed, women's groups, men's groups, early mornings, late nights, similar stage of life, inter-generational . . . you name it! Contact Kelly Wood (kelly@fpcbr.org) for more information. Groups begin meeting the week of March 6.

Meet Emily Viguerie

I am so honored that God has called me to serve as your Director of Community Life. First Presbyterian Church has always been "home" to me; from baptism to countless retreats and youth mission trips; from high school at Dunham School to my time at LSU; from my marriage to my husband Russ to God-orchestrated friendships made within these church walls. This church has nurtured my relationship with the Lord and strengthened my faith in countless ways. I love being involved in Women's Bible Study and the Circle Ministry, and I've so enjoyed serving on the Greeter Ministry Team, which has reinforced my connection with our FPC family even more. All of this has helped me better understand that community is so important. Our spirit yearns for it. I pray that I will be able to serve you faithfully in this role, to deepen the sense of community within FPC. I pray that every individual that comes through our doors feels the love and joy of Christ that we so evidently feel for one another.



Ash Wednesday Worship

Join us March 2 as we kick off Lent with an Ash Wednesday noon service in the Chapel. Stay after worship for gumbo made by our beloved Sexton Emeritus, Shelton (\$5 suggested donation). All are welcome. Bring a coworker! Wednesday noon services without lunch will continue throughout the Lent season.

Called to Pursue Full-Time Ministry?

The Session Income Allocation Committee accepts applications for scholarship funds to attend seminary. Persons eager to prepare to serve Christ's church as pastors, counselors and chaplains may inquire by contacting Jaci (jaci@fpcbr.org). Applications are due by noon April 19.

SUNDAY WORSHIP

7:45 Chapel Communion
9 am Contemporary
11 am Classic Reformed

Livestream: YouTube and Facebook

SERMON TEXTS

Texts are subject to change.

MARCH 6, 2022
Luke 2: 40-52

MARCH 13, 2022
Mark 5: 21-24; 35-42

MARCH 20, 2022
Luke 10: 25-37

MARCH 27, 2022
Mark 10: 46-50

PASTORAL STAFF

GERRIT DAWSON
Senior Pastor

WHITNEY ALEXANDER
Associate Pastor of Missions

BARRY PHILLIPS
Ministry Executive

JIM SOLOMON
Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care & Prayer

DARIN TRAVIS
Associate Pastor for Discipleship



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brchristiancounseling.com

Go GLOCAL with IFP by Valerie Gastinel

Do global missions right here in Baton Rouge. Global missions done on a local level is part of God's plan to reach the nations. It is quite remarkable when we think about the sheer number of internationals God has brought to our city; many from the least reached people groups of the world. We have Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Chinese in Baton Rouge who have never had the opportunity to know the God that we follow and love.

Consider the responsibility, privilege and joy of being the first ambassador of Christ to them or watering the seeds others have faithfully planted. The heartbeat of the International Fellowship Partners initiative is to share in word and deed the unconditional love and good news of Christ through genuine friendship building.

God has brought them to us. An airplane ticket is not needed for this faith journey . . . just a willing heart to GO with God. God calls us to GO and make disciples of the nations. Will you GO with IFP to internationals that God has brought to our city?

Consider giving a warm Kingdom welcome to Internationals playing fun games together at Games Galore Saturday, March 5, in the Gym from 2 to 5 pm. It is a great way to break the ice, share laughs and make friends. We will have toss games, indoor badminton, ping pong and outdoor badminton (weather permitting). Fun for the whole family!

RSVP to Valerie Gastinel (225.241.1386). Let her know if you plan to bring a game or snack (individually wrapped, please). Sharing food to display welcome is an integral part of most international cultures. While food donations are appreciated, they are not required to attend.

IFP appreciates your prayers as we "reactivate" monthly gatherings with internationals after a long COVID pause. Please consider registering to be a Friendship Partner. A direct link to register is on our FPC Global Partners webpage under the Missions tab.