

# FPC NEWSLETTER

DEEPER IN CHRIST, FURTHER INTO THE WORLD

## WHY DO WE KEEP TIME?

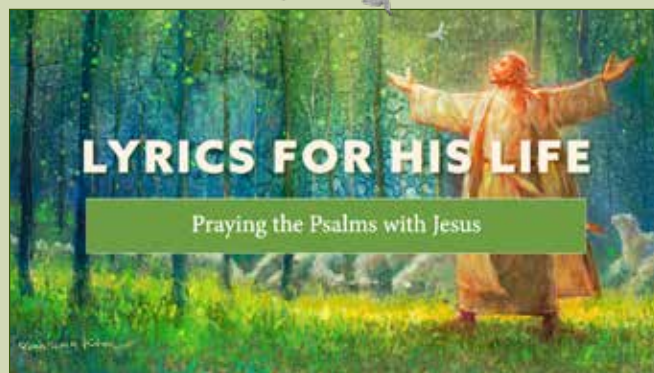
**By Gerrit Dawson**

Senior Pastor

I had a wonderful time visiting with Caroline Breard's third grade class at Dunham. She asked me to come talk about what Lent means. So I asked the children how long before their birthdays they actually started thinking about their birthdays. Some said a month, some said all year! I asked the same about Christmas. We agreed that anticipating a celebration makes it all the better.

Every spring, Christ's people celebrate his resurrection. But for centuries and centuries, we've been making plans to think more about Jesus *before* Easter. We get ready to celebrate by taking more time to think about his life and death.

We also talked about football games (how can you not in Baton Rouge??). They agreed that a great game is *not* a 72-0 blow out against a junior college. A great game is a close struggle. The greatest games include come backs, when it looked like all was lost. That's why we think about Jesus' death before we celebrate his resurrection. It was the greatest struggle of all time. And it looked like the game was over when Jesus died. But then in the most wonderful surprise, the Father raised Jesus. The more we think about his ministry and his dying, the more joy we have at Easter.



These are sharp kids. They got it. We get it too. We keep time with Jesus during Lent so that we can join our story to his story. So his victory over death can be our victory.

I'm so proud of you when I think how you are pressing in close to Jesus this Lent. Connecting psalms with events in Jesus' life, and praying alongside him takes energy, imagination and discipline. But you're doing it! As an early Easter arrives at the end of this month, keep preparing, dear church. We're going to have quite a celebration.

You'll want to plan now for the fun of Palm Sunday, March 24, the deep passion of the Service of Shadows on March 28, and the release of Easter joy on March 31. I love being your pastor, especially at this time of year.

*Gerrit*

**2** SHEKINAH:  
A GARDERE  
SUCCESS STORY

**3** HOLY WEEK  
EVENTS

**3** TAKE A SELFIE!

**MARCH EVENTS**

Wednesdays of Lent Noon Worship  
 MAR 1 rEcess  
 MAR 2 Men's Skeet Shoot  
 MAR 14 Women's 20s/30s Social  
 MAR 15 Lagniappe Ball  
 MAR 23 Girls' Retreat  
 MAR 24 Palm Sunday  
 MAR 28 Service of Shadows  
 MAR 30 Holy Saturday  
 MAR 31 Easter

**UPCOMING APRIL EVENTS**

APR 13 Women's Spring Picnic

**BAPTISMS**

February 11, 2024  
 Gabriel Kollmeyer  
 Parents are Rachel and Josiah

**BIRTHS**

February 17, 2024  
 Paul Granger Harpe Jr  
 Parents are Celia and Granger

February 20, 2024  
 John-Lloyd Mayo  
 Parents are Sarah and Erik

February 23, 2024  
 Oliver Shepard Black  
 Parents are Selene and Chris

**IN MEMORIAM**

February 11, 2024  
 Dolores Martin  
 Mother of Beverly Setliff

February 12, 2024  
 Doris Carver

February 24, 2024  
 Barbra Cutrera  
 Mother of Debra Ayres

**SHEKINAH** by Cheryl Lott, Development and Marketing Director, Gardere Community Christian School

The word “Shekinah” literally means “that which dwells,” but is commonly used to denote the glory of the divine presence of God, often represented as light. What a beautiful and apt name for this young lady. Shekinah, now in fifth grade, was in Kindergarten when her family found Gardere Community Christian School. Her loving nature and infectious smile lights up a room and warms the hearts of all who meet her. Her story exemplifies the three pillars of the school—academics, spiritual instruction and family.



Shekinah is a high-achieving student who challenges herself to grow academically. This past year, she scored “Mastery” in reading and “Advanced” in all other subjects on state standardized testing. She also participates in many programs that the school offers, including Manners of the Heart, Girls on the Run, Bible study group, Crochet Club, piano lessons and the GCCS/ Kids Hope USA mentoring program. She even shares her joy of learning with younger children as a volunteer at Story Time Saturdays.

Spiritually, Shekinah shines the light of Jesus. She is a dedicated Bible reader and loves Chapel. Her favorite subject is Bible class where she and her classmates dig into Scripture analyzing passages and making historical connections. She even participates in an out-of-school Bible study taught by one of the school’s teachers. The partnership between GCCS and Manners of the Heart offers Shekinah tangible ways to share God’s love with manners and respect.

Shekinah’s family has found a home at Gardere Community Christian School. Her mother began as a volunteer and is now an assistant teacher in one of the GCCS preschool classrooms. Showing much promise, she was encouraged to pursue higher education. This young mother will receive her bachelor’s degree in Early Childhood Education soon. Shekinah’s older brother and sister graduated from the school and are now on scholarship and on the honor roll at Parkview Baptist School. The future shines bright for this family!

While Shekinah’s story sounds ideal, it is not as uncommon as some may think. On the 2023 state tests, GCCS students scored 30% higher than the district average and almost three times higher than the two other public schools in the vicinity. Our students are going on to find success all over the city. So far, all GCCS graduates have stayed in school, getting their high school diploma or its equivalent, and 87% of those graduates are enrolled in college. Additionally, GCCS has encouraged and helped several parents get their degrees and currently have six parents employed at the school.

The Gardere Community Christian School is a shining light in a community that struggles with so much darkness. Our First Presbyterian Church family plays a key role in fueling that light with your prayers, your time as volunteers and your financial support. Thank you!

There are so many ways to get involved:

- Commit to pray for our families, our teachers, and our leadership

*Continues on page 4 . . .*

**CHAPEL AND SANCTUARY FLOWERS**

The Chapel and Sanctuary flowers are given . . .



MAR 3 . . . to the glory of God and in loving memory of Linda and Wayne Barker’s parents, Helen & Wayne Harvey Barker and Christine & Sam Orwin, as well as Wayne’s sister, Kitty Barker.

MAR 10 . . . to the glory of God and in loving memory of Bart Bennett by Ruth Anne, Claire, Adriane and Sarah.

MAR 17 . . . to the glory of God and in loving memory of Donald Cunningham by his grandchildren Mary Michael and Robert McDuff.

MAR 24 . . . to the glory of God and in memory of Kathryn Leake Graving, James W. Leake and Dr. and Mrs. Julius H. Mullins Sr. by Kathy and Julius Mullins.

MAR 31 . . . to the glory of God and in memory of Norman Saurage III, Maude & Norman Saurage Sr., Alma Lee & Norman Saurage Jr., and Flora & Gustave Spaht by their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

## HOLY WEEK

### PALM SUNDAY

We joyfully welcome back our annual Palm Sunday festival on March 24. The congregation will process around North Boulevard promptly at 10 am followed by a combined worship celebration in the Sanctuary. Join us for a catfish fry lunch after worship (\$5 for children 12 and younger; \$15 for those 13 and older) with fun activities for the children: egg hunt (further details below), 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 Blvd.

**Easter Egg Hunt:** If you would like your child in third grade and below to participate, please bring 12 plastic filled eggs per child and place in the large baskets stationed at various entrances to the church prior to 10 am. Please make sure your eggs are lightly taped shut. NO candy with nuts or peanut butter. Remember that chocolate candy tends to melt in warmer weather. You are welcome to put Easter stickers or other non-edible treats inside eggs if you like. The hunt begins following the service. We ask that parents assist their children by limiting their finds to 12 eggs per child. More details to come.

### MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE OF SHADOWS: MARCH 28 AT 7 PM

Before we join our Lord in celebrating the glorious joy of his rising from the dead, we must endure with him the agony of the cross. In this special service, we will meet with Jesus in the upper room and hear him say, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover meal with you before I suffer." In remembrance of him, we will come to the table of holy communion. In hushed reverence, we will see him laid in the tomb.

### EASTER SUNDAY

We gather around the empty tomb in the Terraced Garden March 31 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.

### LET'S FIESTA!

#### WOMEN'S 20s/30s SOCIAL

Come out for the 20s/30s Ladies Social on Thursday, March 14 (6-8 pm) at the home of Claire McVea. Mexican-inspired appetizers provided. Bring a beverage of your choice if you'd like. Please RSVP to Jaime Carnaggio ([jaime@fpcbr.org](mailto:jaime@fpcbr.org)). Hasta luego!

### MASQUERADE BALL FRIDAY, MARCH 15!

Lagniappe Historic Dance and Pastime Society reenacts the social pastimes of the 18th and 19th centuries, including dance. All members of FPC are invited to join the Society for a Masquerade Ball in the Reception Room on Friday, March 15 at 6 pm. Contact Roxanne Struppeck for details on the ball or for free historic dance lessons available prior to the ball (202.6044 or [roxannestruppeck@gmail.com](mailto:roxannestruppeck@gmail.com)).

### VBS REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!

Parents, did you know that VBS registration is open for children entering kindergarten through 6th grade? 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](http://fpcbr.org).

### TAKE A SELFIE!

Did you know you can update your photo in the church database? Just log into your account in the new membership portal, click the pencil (edit button) in the upper right corner, then follow the prompts in the picture section. Contact Laura Shaw (225.620.1222) if you have issues accessing your account.



### SERMON TEXTS

MARCH 3  
Psalm 27:1-6, 11-14

MARCH 10  
Psalm 69:6-13

MARCH 17  
Psalm 41:5-9  
Psalm 55:12-14, 20-21

MARCH 24, PALM SUNDAY  
Psalm 118:19-29

MARCH 31, EASTER SUNDAY  
Psalm 30

### 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

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

Baton Rouge Christian  
Counseling Center  
225.387.2287  
[brchristiancounseling.com](http://brchristiancounseling.com)

**SHEKINAH**, *continued from page 2*

- Become a Kids' Hope USA mentor or help out around the school with campus upkeep and classroom support.

- Join us for our Share Your Heart 2024 Luncheon on April 19 and bring a friend. Get your tickets at <https://www.gardereschool.com/syh2024>.

- Take a Tag-Along Kit from the Connection Center or request one at the above link. The kit gives you and your family the opportunity to adopt a class and let them (or at least a cut-out of them) "tag-along" on your family's adventures. Take pictures with the class cut-out and send them back to the school with a donation. It's easy!

I'm happy to talk through these opportunities as well as share more about the needs of the school ([cheryllott@gardereschool.com](mailto:cheryllott@gardereschool.com)).

4



**PARKING FOR MISSIONS!** Did you know that Whitney Alexander, Julius Mullins and Jeff Shaw collected over \$5516.00 for missions last month? Just by charging parade-goers to park in our Convention Street lot as well as charging \$5 for the all day use of portalets we rent, the Spanish Town Parade offers a fabulous opportunity to collect funds for feeding the homeless, mission trips and disaster relief.