

FPC NEWSLETTER

DEEPER IN CHRIST, FURTHER INTO THE WORLD



ALL THE THINGS TO LOVE

By Gerrit Dawson

Senior Pastor

All the Things to Love is the title of a book we used to read our children. It had beautiful pictures of many ordinary sights in which we can find beauty and joy. Serving God through his church is just like that. There's so much we can do. Much of it seems obvious and ordinary. Until we think about it. Then realize, "Oh! This is a way I give glory back to God for the grace he has given me!" From arriving ten minutes early to speak to people to singing to teaching little ones to looking over the church finances to joining a mission team to visiting a homebound member to setting up communion . . . there is a cascade of ways we offer ourselves to God by participating in the life of the church. And when we ponder it for just a minute, we realize we *love* these activities.

This autumn, we've been enjoying the weekly videos in which our members joyfully share the ways they steward God's grace in our church. We've also distributed a catalog on the hundreds of ways we serve—the hundreds of opportunities there are for all of us.

This has all been preparation for a special day of dedication, **Sunday, November 12**. By now you will have received a dedication card to fill out. We want everyone (yes, you!) to use these cards to make note of how you're stewarding God's grace. That is, to write what you are doing and what you'd like to do. Then we'll offer that card to God as part of worship. It will be a way of recommitting ourselves

to Christ, together, as people united at First Presbyterian.

That card will also include a way to offer our estimates of giving for the coming year. That's a crucial part of your leadership's planning process. I love to share that your elders are *prudent*: we don't plan to spend more than we can expect. But your elders are also *visionary*: we put into play *all* the resources we can expect. That way every gift, all year long, truly counts.

We know how much God has blessed us in Christ Jesus and through our church. I believe that November 12 will release joy as we intentionally dedicate ourselves, together, in worship at each service. Please make every effort to be there! I eagerly look forward to this day because, as ever, I love being your pastor!

Gerrit



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3 MID-WEEK ADVENT WORSHIP

3 ADVENT EVENTS

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NOVEMBER EVENTS

rEcess NOV 3
 Daylight Saving Ends NOV 5
 Dedication Sunday NOV 12
 Thanksgiving NOV 23
 First Sunday of Advent NOV 26
 Mid-Week Advent Worship Begins NOV 29

DECEMBER EVENTS

Live Nativity DEC 1
 Women's Advent Brunch DEC 9
 Lux Beata Cantata DEC 10
 Pilgrimage DEC 10

BIRTHS

October 12, 2023
 Bonnie Claire Voelker
 Parents are Claire and John Voelker

October 14, 2023
 Milo Maverick Gabriel Agosta
 Parents are Amy and Gabe Agosta

October 19, 2023
 Lillian Pearl Maranto
 Parents are Kaitlyn and Jacob Maranto

IN MEMORIAM

October 17, 2023
 John Frierson
 Father of Trent Frierson

FLOWERS

The Chapel and Sanctuary flowers are given to the glory of God . . .

NOV 5 . . . and in loving memory of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Dean Glisson and Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Wesley McLean by Linda and Mike Glisson and family.

NOV 12 Open date

NOV 19 . . . and in loving memory of her parents, Florence and Mack Gregorie, and in honor of her dear Aunt, Nita K. Harris, by Ann K. Gregorie.

NOV 26 . . . and in loving memory of Jolie Berry who faithfully served the church as Deacon, Elder and Presbytery Moderator by her husband Gene and their children Katherine Hearn and David Berry.

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 GIVING QUILT by Candace Walker, Director of Children's Ministry

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10).

Immersed in the powerful words from Paul to the Ephesians and leading up to Dedication Sunday, the children of First Presbyterian have learned what it is to be loved by God before the creation of the world and what it means to be his craftsmanship.



In children’s church, little ones have viewed and discussed works of art including Da Vinci’s *Last Supper* and Monet’s *Water Lilies and Japanese Bridge*, learning that they, even more so, are priceless masterpieces. While singing songs, the children enjoyed a game of freeze where they struck a pose and said, “I am God’s masterpiece!” As God’s beautifully created workmanship, they learned that they can steward the grace given to them by serving others with their unique gifts out of love for Jesus.

And so the idea of the giving quilt was born.

“Children need to hold something tangible,” says Cate Heroman, lifelong educator and frequent collaborator who volunteers in ministries at First Presbyterian. “When children give something that they have created and have held in their hands, it impacts them.”

Beginning in October, the children of First Presbyterian began designing quilting squares during the Sunday School hour. On each square, a child draws a picture that depicts their spiritual gifts and how they can use these unique gifts for Christ, stewarding God’s grace that has been given to them. Some painted themselves singing and praising God with others. One drew himself sharing an umbrella in the rain. Others painted hearts, hands and feet to show that they can be greeters at church, pray for others and go share the good news of Jesus with the world. In addition to the quilting squares, stories from *The Gospel Story Bible* curriculum have been woven into the theme of stewardship throughout the nurseries and classrooms on Sunday mornings.

Culminating November 12, the giving quilt showcasing the spiritual gifts and handiwork of the children will be incorporated into a combined Kingdom Kids Sunday School class with Cate Heroman as the guest storyteller. The quilt is the children’s contribution to the church and ultimately to Bethany Centre in Uganda, an orphanage and school that First Presbyterian children learned about in August during the Global Missions Conference.

Your turn. Freeze . . . strike a pose and say, “I am God’s masterpiece!” Celebrate giving out of the grace we have been given.

Christmas Bags for Malachi Dads

Items are being collected for Christmas bags to be distributed to the Malachi Dads (prisoners) at Angola and Hunt Penitentiaries. Please consider making a donation and dropping it off at the Connection Center: Irish Spring soap, anti-perspirant, toothpaste/toothbrush, shampoo, lotion, body wash, socks or baby powder. Cash donations also accepted.

Singing for Jesus, the Light of the World

Would you like to sing in the choir for a limited time, no strings attached? Consider singing in this year’s Christmas Cantata. Rehearsals begin Wednesday, November 1 at 7 pm. Come and sing of Jesus, the Light of the World! No audition nor any previous experience required. For more information, contact Chris Phillips (chris@fpcbr.org).

ADVENT AT FIRST**Mid-Week Advent Services Begin November 29**

NOV 29 FPCBR will be offering Wednesday noon Advent services for the first three weeks of the season. Worship, which will include communion, will be 12-12.45 pm on November 29, December 6, and December 13. Our scriptural focus will be on Mary's song in Luke 1:46-55, as a marvelous preparation for the coming of Jesus Christ. The services will be held in Dunham Chapel and will include music fitting for the season. Join us for a time of quiet joy with our family of faith!

DEC 1 **Live Nativity:
The Tradition Continues**

Friday, December 1, downtown Baton Rouge will be alive with the sights and sounds of Christmas for the Festival of Lights. Plan to join us in the beautiful Terraced Garden at 5.30 or 6.30 pm to see the story of Jesus' birth as recorded in the Gospels come to life. Shepherds, Angels, Wisemen! With no speaking required and just one night of rehearsal, you can be a part of the Live Nativity and share the Gospel story with many who gather downtown for the Festival of Lights. For more information or to volunteer, contact Lauren Honea (lauren@fpcbr.org).



DEC 9 **Women's Advent Brunch**

With the news of Jesus' birth, the shepherds rejoiced. All who heard about it were amazed. "But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart" (Luke 2:19).

Mary internalized this moment. She wanted to savor it and preserve it in her heart.

Christmastime can be so easily externalized. Sometimes it feels like we are just going through the motions. We put up the twinkling lights. We decorate the tree. We buy the presents. We make the cookies. We wear the ugly sweater. We go to church. We sing. We eat. We open the gifts. And then we take down the twinkling lights. Aren't we missing something? Don't we long to be like Mary and treasure Jesus' birth internally, in our hearts?

Please join us for the Women's Ministry Advent Brunch where we will enjoy food, fellowship and a special devotion led by Lauren Fowler, based on Luke 2:15-20.

May we meditate on the beauty and wonder of Jesus' birth. May we treasure it in our hearts.

Christmas Poinsettia Orders

DEC 10 All are invited to help decorate the Chapel and Sanctuary by purchasing a poinsettia in memory or celebration of a loved one. The cost is \$35 per plant. Please place your order by Sunday, December 10 by using the order form outside the Chapel or at the Connection Center. Those who purchase a poinsettia are welcome to take it home after the 6 pm Christmas Eve service.

SERMON TEXTS

November 5, 2023
Ephesians 4:7, 11-16

November 12, 2023
Ephesians 4:17-24

November 19, 2023
Ephesians 4:25-32

November 26, 2023
First Sunday of Advent
Genesis 1:3-5, 14-16;
Revelation 21:22-25

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



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763 North Boulevard
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Mother's Day Out and Preschool
225.620.0245

BR Christian Counseling Center
225.387.2287
brchristiancounseling.com

LAGNIAPPE

Angels Are Here!

Please stop by the Reception room to receive the name of a child whose parent is incarcerated. You can bless them with Angel Tree gifts on behalf of their parent this Christmas. If you have questions, please contact the Angel Tree Coordinator, Ryan Castle (ryanecastle@gmail.com) or 225.773.4769.



Come On, First Presbyterian!

15 Teacher Encouragers Are Needed!

There are 15 teachers at our adopted McKinley Elementary who would love a Teacher Encourager. A kind note or a "happy" gift goes a long way in lifting the spirits of these dedicated teachers.

Email Laura Shaw to volunteer (laura@fpcbr.org).

Romania in December

Our third annual Christmas mission trip to Romania is fast approaching (November 30–December 13). Please call Whitney Alexander as soon as possible if you are interested in joining him on the trip (225.810.2607). FPC has had the pleasure of partnering with the Smiles Foundation of Oradea for over twenty years! After almost 16 mission trips, we look forward to providing Christmas cheer to the least of these.

