

# FPC NEWSLETTER

DEEPER IN CHRIST, FURTHER INTO THE WORLD

## 100 Days in John! by Gerrit Dawson, Senior Pastor

New Year’s Opportunity: Let’s take a plunge into the beautiful, mystical, poignant, Gospel of Jesus Christ according to John. No book explores more fully the identity of Jesus as the God who became man. What fascinated me in preparing this study was how much insight into Christ is *conveyed through the conversations* he had. Jesus revealed his identity through his real interactions with ordinary people. In many cases, Jesus prompted our questions, enticing us to go deeper. The more we contemplate these conversations, the more intrigued with the Lord we become.

I hope you’ll read through the Gospel of John as we start the messages January 8 with Christ’s first miracle recorded in John 2 as part of a conversation he had with his mom. When we get to Lent in mid-February, we’ll have a beautiful new guide called *Come and See* that will take us daily through the questions people asked Jesus.

### Stay-Treat February 3-4: Five Mysteries in John

John’s Gospel gives us titles for Jesus found nowhere else. These simple words contain ocean depths of meaning. They are mysteries made known. Secrets that are open. Easily understood on one level, intriguing for a lifetime of exploration at deeper levels. There’s great stuff in John that we can’t get to in the Sunday messages.

So we’re hosting a stay-treat; time set apart for focused study, worship and fellowship where you still get to sleep in your own bed! Friday night includes delicious dinner, presentations and wonderful dessert. Saturday morning includes a light

breakfast and three exciting presentations. There’s even a kids track!

The five mysteries include The Word, The Footwasher, The Vine, The Helper and the Triune Gift. Presenters to be revealed. But I can tell you this. They’ll be scintillating! Mark your calendar today!

### Ministry Grants

Your elders distributed over \$79,000 in grants to seminary students and ministry partners this past fall. Thanks to the generous distributions from our church Foundation, we are able twice a year to fuel mission over and above our usual programs. Seminary student Noah Pourciau received a grant. So did Abounding Love Church. Front Yard bikes teaches at-risk students how to repair bikes as a way to learn work skills and life skills, as the gospel comes wrapped in the work. We’re contributing to a program to support fathers in North Baton Rouge, a mission which brings *The Jesus Film* by motorcycle into remote parts of Africa, and an EPC church on the Mexican border that is creating a sanctuary. Rejoice in the bounty your church gets to spread around the world!



It’s my abiding pleasure to walk shoulder to shoulder with you through a life spent seeking to know, worship and serve our lovely Savior.

*Gerrit*

2 FAITH DRIVEN ENTREPRENEUR GROUP

3 SAYING GOODBYE TO EVERYTHING FAMILIAR

3 MDO REGISTRATION

4 POLAR THANG

**EVENTS**

Combined 10.30 Worship      JAN 1  
 Mark Study Resumes          JAN 9  
 Polar Thang Retreat          JAN 13-15  
 Discover First Dinner        JAN 22  
 H.S. Seniors SS with Gerrit   JAN 22

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

Stay-Treat                      FEB 3 & 4  
 Parents' Social                FEB 9

**WEDDINGS**

December 17, 2022  
 Sydney Field to Geoffrey Tallis

**IN MEMORIAM**

December 7, 2022  
 Jackie O'Quinn  
 Mother of Mike O'Quinn

**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 given . . .

JAN 1 . . . Our Advent poinsettias will remain for one more Sunday.

JAN 8 . . . 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.

JAN 15 . . . to the glory of God and in loving memory of Mr. and Mrs. Frank L. Norwood, Jr. and Larry Charles Musgrove, Sr. by Chrystal Norwood Musgrove and family.

JAN 22 Open date

JAN 29 Open date



**Faith Driven Entrepreneur Small Group**

Faith Driven Entrepreneurs is a new group of business owners and entrepreneurs seeking to establish a supportive community with other business leaders. As current and retired entrepreneurs, business owners, and C-level executives, we strive to grow spiritually while expanding our influence beyond spreadsheets.

While many "business" groups exist to assist owners with the mechanics of running their companies, Faith Driven Entrepreneurs of Baton Rouge focuses on equipping its members with intangible personal and leadership skills based upon biblical principles. We study topics that are unique to entrepreneurs and intended to deepen our identities as followers

of Christ, while also providing a supportive social network of peers. You don't have to be alone in your entrepreneurial journey—join us!

Starting Friday, January 13, we will begin an 8-week foundational study exploring what it means to let faith lead your business. After completing the 8-week study, the group plans to move to a monthly meeting schedule. Meetings will be held 7.30-8.30 am at the City Club of Baton Rouge 355 North Blvd, Baton Rouge, LA 70801. Park in the lot immediately behind the building at the corner of Convention St. and N. 4th St. Please contact Mike Norris ([mike@workcompdude.com](mailto:mike@workcompdude.com)) for further information.

**Small Groups: Save the Date + Leader Request**

What better way to faithfully prepare your heart for the Lenten season than with a community of believers? Our small groups will begin studying the *Come and See* guide the week of February 26. More information will be available next month. If you're not in a small group already, this will be the time to join! Also, if you're interested in leading a small group through the Lenten study, please contact Kelly Wood ([kelly@fpcbr.org](mailto:kelly@fpcbr.org)) or Darin Travis ([darin@fpcbr.org](mailto:darin@fpcbr.org)).

**Parents' Social: Nursery Parents on February 9**

Parents of So Loved (nursery aged) children, it's your turn! Join us for a laid-back evening of gathering together with other parents in the same stage of life on Thursday, February 9. No agenda; just fellowship and food (of course)!

Email Jessica Saffell ([jessica@fpcbr.org](mailto:jessica@fpcbr.org)) to RSVP. Please bring a dessert or bottle of wine. We will provide appetizers and finger food! Location TBA.



**Mark Study Resumes January 9**

The Women's Ministry spring Bible study kicks off the week of January 9 with a continuation in the Gospel of Mark. Please contact Jaime Carnaggio ([jaime@fpcbr.org](mailto:jaime@fpcbr.org)) with questions.

Mondays @ 7.30 am in the FPC Library  
 Wednesdays @ 6.30 pm via Zoom (link on [fpcbr.org](http://fpcbr.org))  
 Thursdays @ 9.30 am in FPC Room 202 (childcare offered by request)



**Men's Ministry Fly Fishing Trip**

Men's Ministry is in the middle of planning a FPC fly fishing trip for either the first weekend in March (March 2-5) or sometime later in April. The details are still coming together. The plan is to drive north to Heber Springs, Arkansas on Thursday, spend Friday and Saturday fly fishing, and drive home Sunday. Depending on interest, we'll book a large Airbnb house and hope to have 15 to 20 in attendance. If you're interested, please email Darin Travis ([darin@fpcbr.org](mailto:darin@fpcbr.org)) which time works best for you!

**Saying Goodbye to Everything Familiar** by Scott Graham

What would cause an apparently sane pastor and his beautiful wife to say goodbye to everything familiar in western Pennsylvania and move 1200 miles to Baton Rouge?

Before I answer that question, let me share a little more about myself. My wife Kristina and I are Midwesterners, and met in music school at Northwestern, outside Chicago. We've been married 33 years, and have three grown children: Jessica, married to Taylor, and their darling 1 year old daughter Ruby, who live in Tacoma, WA; son Emerson, in Pittsburgh; and our youngest, Ian, and his wife Sarah, who reside in Washington DC. Our only companion at home currently is our black sheepadoodle, Schubert, who is an excellent social coordinator and face licker!

Kristina and I enjoy hiking, music and concerts of all sorts, conversations over open Bibles and good food, and traveling. In fact, I would say we've developed a healthy sense of adventure over the years, based on following God's call, what the Iona Christians in Scotland several centuries ago called "chasing the wild goose." My Masters of Divinity was gained at Fuller Seminary in Pasadena, California, with a year of post-graduate study at Blackfriars, Oxford University, a Dominican (Catholic) priory. I tell people that year I felt like Julie Andrews in reverse! I've been in ordained pastoral ministry since 1992, serving Presbyterian churches in the Cincinnati and Pittsburgh areas. I've also had the opportunity to do some mission teaching in Albania and Sierra Leone, and am currently serving as board chair for an organization called Eduinations, which

has been planting EPC churches as well as schools across several rural villages in West Africa, presenting the gospel to several tribes that have never had the opportunity to hear of Jesus Christ's saving love before.

My role at FPCBR is Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care, Prayer, and Spiritual Formation.

Kristina and I were mostly minding our own business one evening when an email popped up on my screen from Gerrit Dawson. I certainly knew and respected Gerrit and First Presbyterian from a distance (my only previous time in LA was when you hosted the 2012 EPC General Assembly!), but I had never considered pastoral work in the south, much less THIS far south! Yet when the search committee sent the job description my way, we could tell the Lord was very much at work. I am extremely grateful for Biblically grounded, excellent preaching. I rejoice over gifted choirs and praise teams glorifying God with the congregation. I insist on being a part of

a community of faith committed to mission both locally and internationally. But I also recognize that for many, growing in faith and trust in God's character come when we are faced with difficulty or suffering. Pain, loneliness, grief, or crisis often provide the richest soil for biblical faith to flourish (see Hebrews 11). So, to answer my opening question: we're in a new place because we're excited to participate in the adventure of faith, hope, and love in Christ with you. Our Triune God is doing his wonderful work in the sanctuary, around the dinner table, and even by the hospital bed. It will be a joy to sit beside yinz/y'all as he does!

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**Mother's Day Out Registration**

Spread the word about First Presbyterian MDO and Preschool registration! In January, we begin registration for the 2023-2024 school year. As always, we will register current families first, prior to church members, alumni and new families. More information will come following the Christmas holidays. Pre-kindergarten registration starts in mid-December. Contact Whitney Weiner at [mdo@fpcbr.org](mailto:mdo@fpcbr.org) or 225.620.0245 for more information.



**SERMON TEXTS**

January 1  
Ecclesiastes 1

January 8  
John 2: 1-12

January 15  
John 2: 13-25

January 22  
John 3: 1-15

January 29  
John 3: 16-21

**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  
Assistant Pastor of Children,  
Youth and Families



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

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



## **Polar Thang 2023!**

January 13-15, 2023

Polar Thang is our annual Confirmation class and middle school winter retreat to Twin Lakes in Florence, MS. Join us for a weekend of fellowship in the great outdoors. We will play games, worship, learn and even take the dreaded polar lake plunge!

Tuition assistance is available. Families capable of paying full tuition are asked to help us reserve scholarship funds for those in need. Please contact Colton Underwood for further information. Registration will be limited to 80 (work crew and students combined). Further information and registration is available online at [fpibr.org](http://fpibr.org). Please register by January 7.



## **Help Needed to Prepare Youth Group Meals**

Youth Group is a fun and exciting time for students to share a meal, fellowship and hear God's Word opened up. Would you like to volunteer to provide a meal? We meet at 5 pm on Sundays. Colton would love to hear from you ([colton@fpibr.org](mailto:colton@fpibr.org)).

## **H.S. Seniors Class with Gerrit**

Starting January 22, Gerrit will hold his world-famous high school senior Sunday school classes. These classes will take place in Gerrit's office each Sunday from January 22 to February 12. Please contact Jessica ([jessica@fpibr.org](mailto:jessica@fpibr.org)) for more information.

## **Jan. 22: Discover First**

Senior pastor Gerrit Dawson hosts a Discover First Dinner several times a year. This is an opportunity for you, in a smaller setting, to learn more about how you can be part of our mission and ministry. The next Discover First Dinner is Sunday, January 22. If you are interested in attending or would like more information, please contact Emily Viguerie ([emily@fpibr.org](mailto:emily@fpibr.org) or 225.333.9084).

## **FPC and Social Media**

Sanctuary services are livestreamed on the web and we frequently post photos on social media of members engaged in fellowship at our small groups, worship services and events. If you have any questions, contact Katie Robinson ([katie@fpibr.org](mailto:katie@fpibr.org)) or Jay High ([jay@fpibr.org](mailto:jay@fpibr.org)).