

FPC NEWSLETTER

Deeper in Christ, Further into the World



PEEKING FROM THE BLANKET

By GERRIT DAWSON

Senior Pastor

There's something wonderful about seeing a little face wrapped in a blanket. I was once surprised with a Christmas puppy. All that peeked out from the soft towel was a pair of melt-your-heart brown eyes. I was a goner. For me, the best part of the Live Nativity is seeing one of our church infants wrapped snugly in mother's arms. Those bright eyes, all safe, greet any admirers from a cozy embrace. So I love these lines translated from a hymn that is a mere 17 centuries old:

***O that birth forever blessed,
When the virgin, full of grace,
By the Holy Ghost conceiving,
Bore the Savior of our race,
And the babe, the world's Redeemer,
First revealed his sacred face—***

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP
11 am, 4 pm and 6 pm

DECEMBER 28 WORSHIP
10.30 am

The eternal Son of God showed his face in the infant Jesus. The great mystery behind and within everything let himself be seen through the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes. Mary and Joseph, then the shepherds, then the magi got to behold "his sacred face." For centuries, people lived under the awe that no one can see God and live (Exodus 33:20). But on the first Christmas, God enacted a new covenant. A new deal. He showed himself in the flesh. Take all the tenderness an infant evokes in our hearts and multiply by eternity. This wee, frail bairn is he who set the stars in their courses! This is how the Great Unknown chooses to reveal himself to us!

"The Face We Pine to See" is our Advent theme this year. We'll follow the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation on the deep human desire to relate to God personally and in the flesh. Our Advent Contemplation on December 14 will take us into deep consideration of this mystery. The Live Nativity, with new scenes added, as well as a petting zoo, will be performed in our Terrace Garden on December 5 at 5.30 and 6.30 pm. Christmas Eve is a Wednesday this year, and we'll have our beautiful services at 11 am, 4 pm and 6 pm. The Christmas offering for Gardere School and Christian Outreach begins December 14. What a joy to get to keep Christmas together!

Gerrit

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DECEMBER EVENTS

3, 10 & 17 Mid-Week Worship
 5 Live Nativity
 11 Prime Time Luncheon
 13 Women's Advent Brunch
 14-28 Christmas Offering
 14 "Face to Face" Contemplation
 14 Downtown Pilgrimage
 20 IFP Ladies' Tea
 24 7.45 am, 4 pm & 6 pm Worship
 28 10.30 am Worship

UPCOMING JANUARY EVENTS

11 Seniors S.S. with Gerrit Begins
 16-18 Polar Thang Retreat

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, STELLA!

Stella Caracci turned 100 on November 16!

BAPTISMS

October 19, 2025
 James Grant Jenkins
 Parents are Natalie & John

November 2, 2025
 Collette Marie Maranto
 Parents are Kaitlyn & Jacob

CHAPEL AND 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 in 2026, please contact Kathy Mullins at 603.4735.

FINISHING STRONG!

As we approach the end of the year, let's commit to **finishing strong**! This is a wonderful time to reflect on God's goodness and continue supporting the mission and ministries of our church.

Recurring Gifts: We're making giving easier than ever! Please take a moment to switch your recurring giving to our new Church Center Giving portal. It's simple, secure, and helps us steward our resources well as we enter the new year. First, cancel your recurring gift in Shelby Giving. Then, set up a new recurring gift in Church Center Giving.

Stocks Up? This is a great time to realize the full tax benefits of giving appreciated stocks. What's more, the Building Fund is open and we can get a head start on making gifts for anticipated renovations as we approach our 200th.

QCDs: Did you know that First Presbyterian can accept various forms of giving? Additional ways to give include gifts of Appreciated Securities or Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs). Your tax advisor will be able to assist you in determining if either of these fits your personal situation.

Let's finish the year faithfully, joyfully, and strong! Contact Courtney Hilton if you have any questions (courtney@fpcbr.org or 620.0231).

"FACE TO FACE: AN ADVENT CONTEMPLATION" Sunday, December 14 at 9 and 11 am

What does the blindingly resplendent, forbidden-to-be-seen face of God have in common with the scrunched up, cone-headed, bright pink countenance of a newborn baby? And why does such a reality stir our deepest longing and kindle our greatest hope? Worship Arts Ministry invites you to contemplate these questions with us in worship on Sunday, December 14 at 9 and 11 am. There will be no 7.45 am worship on this day.



Reprise of "Face to Face" at the Annual Downtown Pilgrimage Sunday, December 14 at 6.30 pm

First Presbyterian Worship Arts Ministry is delighted to participate in this year's annual Downtown Christmas Pilgrimage on Sunday, December 14. The journey begins at 5.30 pm at Mount Zion Baptist Church and is expected to reach First Presbyterian around 6.30 pm. Join us for a reprise of selections from Sunday morning's *Face to Face: An Advent Contemplation*.

1822 PRESBYTERIAN MINISTER'S IMPACT ON BATON ROUGE Church History, Continued from November 2025 Issue By Zora Olsson

By 1822, Reverend Mr. Savage was sent by the Presbytery to serve as a missionary to Baton Rouge and Buhler's Plains, now known as the Plains. He was the first regular minister to serve Baton Rouge which was then a small village. He remained for approximately a year and a half. During that time, he administered the sacrament of the Lord's Supper twice at Buhler's Plains, baptized a number of children, and received two women into membership of the Presbyterian Church at large. He won a real place in the community for a Protestant minister and created interest in religion that remained after he had gone.

ADVENT ROUNDUP: LOTS GOING ON!**"THE FACE WE PINE TO SEE" ADVENT READINGS****Begin Sunday, November 30**

Many thanks to Katie, Grace, Agatha and Elinoah Schellack for developing this year's "The Face We Pine to See" daily Advent readings and prayers. Members and visitors will receive an email of the readings for the week each Sunday. Readings will also be posted to fpcbr.org, the Church Center app, and for those who prefer an old-fashioned printed version, brochures will be available at the Connection Center.

**MID-WEEK ADVENT WORSHIP****Wednesday, December 3, 10 & 17**

First Presbyterian is offering Wednesday Advent services at noon for the first three weeks of the season (December 3, 10 & 17). The services will be held in Dunham Chapel and will include special music. Join us for a time of quiet joy with our family of faith!

**LIVE NATIVITY****Friday, December 5**

On Friday, December 5, 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!

**PRIME TIME CLUB DECEMBER LUNCHEON****Thursday, December 11**

The Prime Time Club (over 60) Christmas luncheon will be held on Thursday, December 11 at Boudreaux's Catering (2647 Government Street) from 11.30 am to 1.30 pm. The menu will include chicken Florentine with sauteed fresh spinach, roast pork loin with cherries jubilee, and fried fish with étouffée, in addition to side dishes and desserts. The cost of the luncheon is \$30 per person. Register online (fpcbr.org) or on the Church Center portal app. **The deadline to register is Wednesday, December 3 at 11.45 pm.**

**WOMEN'S ADVENT BRUNCH****Saturday, December 13**

This year at our Women's Advent Brunch, we will reflect on Isaiah's four magnificent titles given to our coming King: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Sharon Gibson, Celia Harpe, Caitlyn Klingman, and Jean Rohloff will lead our time of devotion reflecting on what each title reveals about Jesus, and how we experience its truth in our lives today. Come enjoy a beautiful morning of fellowship, brunch, and devotion that centers our hearts on the one whose name is above every name.



Join us at the home of Jill Garner (7608 Copperfield Ct.) from 11 am to 1 pm. La Madeline will cater and the cost is \$10. Register online (fpcbr.org) or on the Church Center portal.

INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP PARTNERS LADIES' TEA**Saturday, December 20**

International Friendship Partners (IFP) invites all ladies to a Christmas tea at 10.30 am on Saturday, December 20. Please come celebrate the peace and joy of Christmas time with us. We will have light snacks and sweets complemented by a variety of teas. Our hostess is Garland Wilson (2077 Ramsey Drive—corner house with entrance on Churchill Avenue).

**SERMON TEXTS**

Texts are subject to change.

DECEMBER 7:
Numbers 6:22–27,
Psalm 27:7–9

DECEMBER 14:
2 Corinthians 3:17–18; 4:3–6

DECEMBER 21:
1 Corinthians 13:12,
1 John 3:1–3

DECEMBER 28:
Luke 2:22–35

PASTORAL STAFF

GERRIT DAWSON
Senior Pastor

DARIN TRAVIS
Associate Pastor for Disciple-
ship

SCOTT GRAHAM
Associate Pastor for
Pastoral Care and Prayer

COLTON UNDERWOOD
Associate Pastor of Children,
Youth and Families

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

225.387.0617
fpcbr.org

763 North Boulevard
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Mother's Day Out and Pre-
school
225.620.0245

BR Christian Counseling
Center
225.387.2287
brchristiancounseling.com

SPECIAL ADVENT DONATIONS AND OFFERINGS



Advent Poinsettia Donations

Help decorate the Chapel and Sanctuary by purchasing a white poinsettia in memory or celebration of a loved one. Orders are due

Friday, December 12 and are \$35 each. Visit the Connection Center, the Church Center app or fpcbr.org to place an order. Purchased plants may be taken home after the 6 pm Christmas Eve service.



Malachi Dads Christmas Donations

Items are being collected for Christmas bags to be distributed to the Malachi Dads (prisoners) at

Hunt Penitentiary. Please consider making a donation and dropping it off at the Connection Center. Items

needed: Irish Spring soap, anti-perspirant, toothpaste/toothbrush, shampoo, lotion, body wash, white socks or baby powder. Cash donations also accepted.



Christmas Offering Sunday, December 14 through December 28

First Presbyterian Church is pleased to receive a special Christmas

Offering in the spirit of the greatest

gift ever given—the gift of the Son of God to redeem unworthy sinners and restore them to life. Gifts to the Christmas Offering will be given to The Christian Outreach Center and Gardere Community Christian School. Contributions may be made online, by mail or by using the offering baskets. Please make checks payable to First Presbyterian Church and designate “Christmas Offering.”