

FEBRUARY 2026

# FPC NEWSLETTER

Deeper in Christ, Further into the World



## SURREAL!

By **GERRIT DAWSON**

Senior Pastor

How can I have announced my retirement? How can 22 years have blown by so fast? How can we possibly pull away from these beloved relationships? Now that it's real, it just doesn't seem like it could be real. We will savor every day of these next three months. And, as you will see below, we are preparing for a great Lenten season together.

### **Lent: Windows and Wounds**

On February 8? we will begin distributing copies of *Rich Wounds: The Countless Treasures of the Life, Death and Triumph of Jesus*. This book by our friend David Mathis, contains 30 pithy reflections on the person and work of Christ. Reviews affirm this study is "sweet balm for your heart," and "beautiful and deeply edifying." David is executive editor for *desiringgod.org* and preached for us in 2024.

To go along with the book, Scott Graham, Lauren Honea and I will return to Jacob Struppeck's recording booth to create daily podcasts. These will be informal 10 to 12-minute conversations inspired by each day's reading. Be sure to subscribe through Apple Music, Spotify and YouTube.

As ever, weekly community groups will form to discuss our daily readings and grow in our connections together in Christ.

On Sundays, I'll be preaching a series called *Windows on the Cross*. We will look at six Biblical perspectives on the meaning of Christ's death. From "peace" to "justice" to "atonement" to "victory," we'll take a sounding of the deep truths of resurrected life that arise from Jesus' crucifixion. It should be a rich season!

As ever, I love being your pastor,

*Gerrit*



From our new building to your earbuds! Lent podcasts are being recorded in "Jacob's studio," one of the offices of in our newly purchased building!  
Left photo: Jacob Struppeck and Gerrit Dawson. Right Photo: Lauren Honea and Scott Graham.

2

IS THIS THE YEAR  
YOU JOIN A  
COMMUNITY GROUP?

2

ASH WEDNESDAY  
WORSHIP AND  
LUNCH

3

WAIT, WE'RE  
HAVING A  
GALA?

4

BRAND NEW  
QUICK AND EASY  
VOLUNTEER FORM

## FEBRUARY EVENTS

1	An Evening of Brass
4	Prime Time Luncheon
6	rEcess
8	Israel Trip Meeting
12	Women's 20s/30s Social
18	Ash Wednesday
18	Lent Groups Begin
20	IFP Game Night
28	Family Pickleball Night

## UPCOMING MARCH EVENTS

29	Palm Sunday
----	-------------

## BIRTHS

January 2, 2026  
Harvey Wayne Caldwell  
Parents are Laura Beth & Jasper

## CHAPEL AND SANCTUARY FLOWERS

The Chapel and Sanctuary flowers are . . .

February 1 . . . given to the glory of God and in loving memory of James Howard and Emogene S. Elliott, by their family, Dr. and Mrs. Louis Cenac (Elizabeth Elliott) and Dr. Clifton O. Bingham III.

February 8 Open date.

February 15 . . . given in loving memory of my wife, Doris Carver, and my son, Bobby Carver, by Jim Carver.

February 22 . . . given to the glory of God and in loving memory of our father Mack Gregorie Sr., by Ann K. Gregorie and Nancy Sue Gregorie Burton.

Please contact Kathy Mullins if you would like to donate flowers (603.4735).

## IS THIS THE YEAR? JOIN A COMMUNITY GROUP

Lent is almost here and at First Presbyterian Church, that means it's time to gather, grow, and go a little deeper together. Beginning the week of February 18, our Lent Community Groups will kick off across the church, inviting everyone into a season of meaningful connection and thoughtful reflection. Whether you're already plugged into a group or have been thinking, "This might be my year," Lent is the perfect time to jump in.

All Community Groups will be journeying together through *Rich Wounds: The Countless Treasures of the Life, Death, and Triumph of Jesus*, a 30-day devotional by David Mathis. This study invites us to slow down, sit with the story of Jesus, meditate on his sacrificial love, and appreciate the significance of his wounds. Copies of the book will be provided to the entire congregation on Sunday, February 8 so that everyone can start the journey together.

Don't know the group options? Scan the code, let us know your preferences, and our discipleship team will reach out to you very soon. If you need childcare in order to join a group, don't worry. Several groups handle childcare in creative and easy ways, and there is even an option with free childcare for groups that meet at the church on Sunday nights. The Sunday night group shares dinner together and then breaks into smaller discussion groups, but please note: registration is required for all Sunday evening attendees, including children. Visit the Church Center app or [fpcbr.org](http://fpcbr.org) to get connected to the Sunday evening group.



We can't wait to be together this Lenten season—to fellowship, to reflect, and to dwell on the *countless treasures* of Jesus' rich wounds.

## ASH WEDNESDAY NOON SERVICE, FEBRUARY 18

The season of Lent begins with a traditional service at noon in the Sanctuary followed by a gumbo lunch in the Reception Room. Lunch is free but we do need you to please RSVP online at [fpcbr.org](http://fpcbr.org) or the Church Center app. Wednesday noon services will continue throughout Lent in Dunham Chapel without lunch.

## 1827: REVS. DORRANCE, CHASE, AND CHAMBERLAIN TEAM TOGETHER Church History, Continued from January 2026 Edition By Zora Olsson

In 1827, Rev. John Dorrance, a Presbyterian missionary sent by the Mississippi Presbytery, helped shape the early Christian community in Baton Rouge. Soon after his arrival, he began regular preaching and encouraged organized religious instruction.

By April 1827, a Sunday school had been established, and worship services were first held in the parish courthouse, then in a small-framed building. On May 13, 1827, a local tract society was organized to distribute religious literature in cooperation with the American Tract Society, a national Protestant organization founded to publish and circulate Christian tracts for evangelism and moral education.

As interest continued to grow, plans were made to organize a church. Dorrance was assisted by Rev. Benjamin Chase and Rev. Jeremiah Chamberlain of Jackson, Mississippi. Dorrance's leadership helped establish enduring patterns of worship, education, and outreach in Baton Rouge's early years.

To be continued in next month's issue of FPC News



## WHAT'S HAPPENING? PRETTY MUCH EVERYTHING!

### Wait, We're Having a Gala?

Get ready for a night to remember! On Friday, April 17, First Presbyterian Church turns up the celebration with a high-spirited gala honoring the extraordinary ministry of our beloved Gerrit Dawson. This joyful farewell will be filled with gratitude, laughter, and sharing some powerful stories from years of faithful leadership. But it's not just a goodbye—it's a bold step forward. Together, we'll rally support for facility renovations that will renew our spaces and fuel ministry for years to come. Come dress up and be part of an unforgettable evening that celebrates legacy, launches the future, and brings our church family together in style. Further details coming soon, so stay tuned.

### FPC Trip to Israel

Interested in a trip to the Holy Land? Join us on February 8 at 10:10 am in the Chapel to learn more! At this informational meeting, you'll meet Dr. Jim Parker of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary who will lead the trip. We'll address common questions such as: Is it safe to travel to Israel, and is now a wise time to go? What will the cost be? What will we see, and what can we expect for accommodations? Come join us on a spiritual pilgrimage to the birthplace of Jesus!

### Women's 20s and 30s Galentine's Social

There is no agenda! This is just an opportunity to get together, have some apps and just hang out. Our next social for 20s and 30s is on Thursday, February 12 at Emily Viguerie's house (614 Woodstone Dr.) from 6 to 8 pm. Please RSVP to Jaime Carnaggio ([jaime@fpcbr.org](mailto:jaime@fpcbr.org)). Feel free to bring an appetizer or beverage of your choice.



### Fun for the Whole Family, and Includes Pizza!

Join us for fellowship and games Friday, February 20 from 6 to 8 pm, in the FPC Gym. Give a warm welcome to internationals and have fun playing games together. It is a great way to break the ice, share laughs, and make international friends. We will have board games, toss games, ping pong and indoor badminton set up. Bring your favorite table game! And, pray about next steps when you have an encounter with internationals. Could you have a next step? Coffee? Dinner out?



Volunteers for this event are always needed and this is an easy way to plug into church life. Opportunities include set up, greeting, registration, food and beverage service, and clean up. Contact LeeAnn Kozan ([leeannkozan@gmail.com](mailto:leeannkozan@gmail.com) or 850.899.5444) to volunteer or with questions about the event.

### Family Night at Court to Table

First Presbyterian Children, Youth and Families Ministry invites you to join us for a night of great food, fellowship, and pickleball on Saturday, February 28! Family members of all ages are welcome to attend! There will be a doubles tournament to crown First Presbyterian champs! \$10 per person (free for 9 and younger). Visit [fpcbr.org](http://fpcbr.org) or the Church Center app to register.



### Vacation Bible School Registration Is Open!

Step back in time at Jerusalem Marketplace VBS—a Bible immersion adventure kids will never forget! Designed for children entering kindergarten–6th grade, this living-history experience brings Scripture to life through storytelling, hands-on crafts, music, food, and conversations inspired by the streets of Jerusalem. Kids will worship together, eat together, ask big questions, and have big fun. Older students can serve as tribe helpers, and adults and teens are invited to volunteer. Cost is just \$10 per camper, with free registration for volunteers' kids. Spots are limited—register now on the Church Center app or [fpcbr.org](http://fpcbr.org)!

## SERMON TEXTS

*Texts are subject to change.*

FEBRUARY 1

2 John 1–13

FEBRUARY 8

3 John 1–15

FEBRUARY 15

Jude 1–25

FEBRUARY 22

Romans 5:6–11,  
2 Corinthians 5:15

## PASTORAL STAFF

GERRIT DAWSON

Senior Pastor

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

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)

## YEP, THERE'S MORE . . .

### PRAYING FOR THE PASTORAL SEARCH

As we continue the search for our next senior pastor, we invite you to keep praying with hope and trust. Pray for wisdom, unity, patience, and clear guidance for the search committee—and for God's leading hand to prepare both our church and our future pastor.

### HAVE YOU UPDATED YOUR CHURCH DIRECTORY PHOTO?

Have you discovered the new FPC Church Center app? Scan the code to get started. You'll find better ways to get connected to your church community: chat with your group, check in your children, sign up for events all in one spot. You can even update your photo, your address, and opt-in to text messaging. Check it out and get connected.



### NEW ONLINE QUICK AND EASY VOLUNTEER FORM

Getting involved at church just got a whole lot easier—and more exciting. Our new online volunteer form is your front door to meaningful connection at First Presbyterian Church. Whether your heart beats for Community Life, Worship, Greeter Ministry, or the Pew Rack Guild, there's a place for your gifts to flourish. From behind-the-scenes helpers to front-line leaders, every role matters, and every "yes" makes a difference. Ready to take the next step? Scan the QR code to get started or visit [fpcbr.org](http://fpcbr.org) to explore opportunities and jump in. Your church needs you—and we can't wait to serve alongside you.



### SLIDE OPERATORS NEEDED!

Did you know that everything you see on the screens is controlled by a slide operator? This vital, yet unseen, ministry is in need of more volunteers. The commitment is one Sunday a month at a Sanctuary service of your choosing. Contact Lauren ([lauren@fpcbr.org](mailto:lauren@fpcbr.org)) for more information!