NOVEMBER 2026

FPC NEWSLETTER

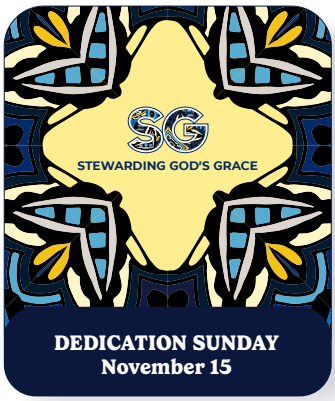
Deeper in Christ, Further into the World

LOVE IS THE MOTIVATOR

By Scott Graham
Interim Senior Pastor

What a glorious Kirkin' Sunday we enjoyed! I do hope you were able to be with us for the beautiful weather, the "pipes," the procession, the voting and welcome of our incoming elders and deacons, and a wonderful lunch afterward. One long-term member texted me afterward that it was the best Kirkin' that he could remember. It was certainly wonderful from where I sat!

Part of our congregational meeting included the kickoff of our annual stewardship campaign. Kyle and Rosemary Beall provided a humorous but significant launch to this important part of our life together. As we worship together this November, Jesus in the Gospel of Luke will provide insight to our life with him as overseer of the financial resources we've been given. I recognize that each of us are at different places in our thinking and our experience of giving to the Lord's work in this way. Consider where you are, and how Jesus' teaching can lead you one step further in your trust and financial discipleship.



Beginning. Luke 8:1–3 show the disciples, which include several women, starting their direct involvement of helping by doing so financially. The first step of giving is often the most difficult. Jesus welcomes and appreciates financial gifts of all sizes, as they demonstrate trust in his provision (Mark 12:41–44). If you've never taken the step of planned giving to FPC's work before, pray about doing so for 2027.

Intermediate. If giving has been a part of your discipleship for awhile, you may have experienced both the joy that comes from seeing God work as you give, but also the temptation to worry that what you've promised will be too extravagant or difficult to do without. Jesus describes money as having a spiritual power similar to a rival god ("Mammon," Luke 16:9, 13). If we are blind to this, we can give into serving it (Luke 12:13–21). Yet if we submit Mammon's power to the lordship of Jesus Christ, we find real freedom (Luke 19:1–10).

Advanced. Many Christians know that the standard of financial giving in the Old Testament is 10% of our income; the tithe (Leviticus 27:30–31). Yet this word is not used in the New Testament. Rather, Paul calls the Corinthians to be "cheerful givers" (2 Corinthians 9:6–14). Is there a standard for giving in light of the new covenant? As people who are saved by grace through faith, I would say, "not necessarily." Duty is not

Continues on page 8

2 PASTORAL SEARCH UPDATE
3 GATHERED AROUND THE TABLE
3 200TH ANNIVERSARY DEVOTIONAL
4 ONE YEAR STRONG!
5 ADVENT AT FIRST PRES

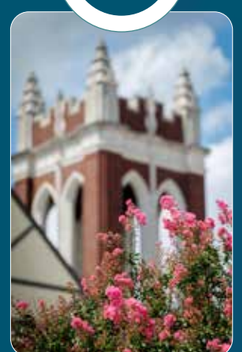
NOVEMBER EVENTS

1	Daylight Savings
5	Caring to Love Banquet
15	Surviving the Holidays
15	Dedication Sunday
17	Women's 30s/40s Social
20	IFP Open House
20	Bethany Centre Art Show
22	Visit with Kevin Hoy
26	Thanksgiving
26 & 27	Church Office Closed
29	First Sunday of Advent

UPCOMING DECEMBER EVENTS

5	Live Nativity
12	Women's Advent Brunch
2, 9 & 16	Mid-Week Worship
13	Cantata & Pilgrimage

fpc HISTORY



PASTORAL SEARCH UPDATE

The Pastor Search Committee covets your prayers as we try to patiently discern God's will for the next Senior Pastor to lead First Presbyterian Church in the coming years. Our church has been truly blessed with 40+ years of strong evangelical pastoral leadership in Russ Stevenson and Gerrit Dawson. We know that God has First Presbyterian in the palm of his hand and he will continue to bless us going forward.

Here is a bit about our search process. We meet regularly as a committee to consider applications and referrals of candidates, and we also independently look throughout the EPC and other evangelical denominations for strong pastors who might be at a stage in their ministry where they would consider a move. With the availability of online worship services, we have the opportunity to watch services and listen to the preaching of sermons given by the various candidates. We have listened to hundreds of sermons. While the ability of a pastor to preach the Gospel in a fashion that is relatable is of paramount importance, preaching on Sunday mornings is only one of the criteria we must vet. The job of the Senior Pastor at First Presbyterian is much more than just preaching—he will be head of a staff of 20 full-time and numerous part-time employees, he has responsibility for coordinating the Christian education programs of the church, stewardship and budgeting, counseling our members in need, and a host of other responsibilities. All of these facets must be considered when making a call for our next pastor.

Most importantly, we are trying to be patient and listen to God. So far, we have not discerned God's will for First Presbyterian; however, we have every confidence that by being patient and trusting God, we will present the best possible candidate for consideration.

DEDICATION SUNDAY IS NOVEMBER 15

Stewarding God's Grace

On November 15, we want to rededicate ourselves as a reply to Christ's beautiful grace. We'll make our financial commitments, and we'll also offer places where we might like to serve. Estimate of Giving cards will be in the pew racks and online at *fpcbr.org*.

POST-CIVIL WAR RECOVERY *By Zora Olsson*

FPC Church History: Continued from the October 2026 Newsletter

First Presbyterian Church began rebuilding more than its congregation after the Civil War. Under the leadership of the Rev. R. F. Patterson, church activities resumed, the Session began meeting regularly, and records were once again faithfully maintained. After years of uncertainty and disruption, the church found its footing and looked toward the future.

Throughout those early decades, one man stood as a remarkable example of steadfast faithfulness: Parmelee A. Walker. Ordained as an elder when the church was founded in 1827, Walker served for 46 years, until 1873. Though little has been written about his personal life, his enduring commitment to First Presbyterian speaks volumes. Through seasons of growth, financial struggles, and the turmoil of war, he remained a steady presence in the life of the congregation. He was, in many ways, a pillar of the church.

As Baton Rouge continued to recover and grow, First Presbyterian entered another chapter of ministry. The Rev. Joseph Y. Allison was called in 1884, bringing renewed leadership to the congregation. The church's history records this period as one of stability, growth, and service to the community.

At the turn of the century, First Presbyterian welcomed the Rev. Eugene L. Siller of Lexington, Mississippi, who served from 1900 to 1903. His ministry carried the congregation into a new century, building upon the foundation of faith laid by those who had come before.

NOVEMBER 2026

GATHERED AROUND THE TABLE *By Cate Heroman*

Gathering around a table is woven into our faith. Jesus shared meals with welcome and grace. At the Last Supper, he gave his disciples bread and wine, telling them to remember him. When we gather at the Communion table, we remember Christ's love and sacrifice and are reminded that we belong to him and to one another.





Then and now: Making room for one another. Across generations, gatherings at First Presbyterian have helped us build friendships, extend hospitality, and find a place in our church family. TOP PHOTO: Palm Sunday Crawfish Boil, 2025. BOTTOM PHOTO: Thanksgiving Congregational Dinner, 1998.

Something special happens when we gather around a table. We slow down long enough to listen. Newcomers find a welcome. Familiar faces become friends. We come to know one another and find a place to belong.

Thanksgiving has long been a time to express gratitude by caring for others. In *By These Stones*, Virginia Lobdell Jennings described First Presbyterian members who welcomed college students unable to go home into their family holiday celebrations. Sunday school classes and women of the church prepared food baskets for neighbors in need.

In 1962, the church began a new tradition with a Wednesday evening Thanksgiving dinner. Mrs. Elizabeth Rabalais and her staff prepared a meal for more than 500 people. Mrs. Floyd Crawford's committee helped serve the large crowd that included members of St. Joseph's Cathedral. In later years, the welcome extended to other downtown churches and residents of the Catholic-Presbyterian apartments.

That spirit of fellowship continues today, from family suppers in the Gym to multi-generations sharing crawfish in front of the church on Palm Sunday. Each gathering offers an opportunity to make room for guests, deepen friendships, and minister to each other's needs.

This November, we give thanks for those who have made room for us in their homes, at church gatherings, and in their lives.

In December, *Rooted & Reaching* begins our celebration of 200 years of God's faithfulness. Through the months ahead, we will reflect on what has sustained us, what endures, and consider what we will pass on to the next generation.

Perhaps that begins around your Thanksgiving table. Consider who you could invite to share a meal with your family. Share stories of those who welcomed you or helped your faith grow. Invite someone younger to listen and share a story of their own. The welcome we have received can become the welcome we pass on.

ROOTED & REACHING: 200TH ANNIVERSARY DAILY DEVOTIONAL

As we prepare to celebrate 200 years of God's faithfulness, we invite you to join us on a special journey through God's Word with our Rooted & Reaching daily devotional. Written by our own FPC members, this devotional offers an opportunity to grow together in faith, reflect on God's goodness, and celebrate the spiritual heritage that has shaped our congregation for generations. The first of three volumes begins Sunday, November 29, and continues through Lent. Each daily reading will encourage us to deepen our roots in Christ as we continue reaching toward the future God has prepared for us.

Devotionals will be distributed Sunday, November 22 giving everyone time to prepare for the first reading on November 29. This special publication is just one of the many ways we're celebrating our Rooted & Reaching 200th anniversary. We hope every member of our church family will participate as we spend time in God's Word together, giving thanks for the past and looking forward with faith to the generations ahead.

200TH ANNIVERSARY CHRISTMAS ORNAMENTS!

Celebrate 200 years of First Presbyterian Church with a special Rooted & Reaching Christmas ornament! Designed by local artist John Marc Anderson, these beautiful ornaments feature our historic Sanctuary and are miniature replicas of the artwork presented to Gerrit upon his retirement. Proceeds will help support publications and events celebrating our 200th anniversary. Visit the Connection Center or *fpcbr.org* to place an order. Ornaments are $35 each.





GriefShare "Surviving the Holidays"

Join us for a meal, followed by GriefShare's "Surviving the Holidays" on November 15 from 5 to 7 pm. This program will help people navigate grief during the holiday season with practical tools, supportive discussions, and expert guidance. This evening is free but please let us know you're coming.

ONE YEAR STRONG, BY GOD'S GRACE! *by Pastor Ron Hicks*

On Sunday, September 7, 2025, The Sanctuary of Baton Rouge, an FPC church plant, held its first service, beginning a journey of faith, ministry, and service to God's Kingdom. Through the collective leadership, dedication, and faithful service of Pastor Ron Hicks, our members, volunteers, ministry partners, and supporters, we celebrated one year of God's faithfulness and grace.

Our mission, "Find, Equip, and Send" reflects our shared commitment to reaching people, equipping disciples, and sharing the love of Christ.

As we celebrate our first-year anniversary as a church plant, we thank First Presbyterian Church of Baton Rouge for its generosity and partnership. Your support and encouragement have blessed The Sanctuary and helped make this journey possible.

We also thank God for every member, family, friend, volunteer, ministry partner, and supporter who has contributed through prayer, generosity, encouragement, and faithful service. Together, you have strengthened The Sanctuary and helped advance its mission.

For the remainder of this year and throughout 2027, we will continue to reach people, equip disciples, and share the love of Christ. We look forward with faith and expectation to all God has in store for The Sanctuary!







LEFT: The Sanctuary's first worship service, September 2025. CENTER: Family Day in the Park, March 2026. RIGHT: One-year anniversary worship service, September 2026

NEARLY $86,000 RECOMMENDED FOR MISSIONS AND MINISTRY

This month, the Session voted to send **nearly $86,000** from the Session Income Allocation Fund to support seminary education, plant churches, and invest in mission projects locally and around the world.

Seminary Training: Support would help Timothy Smith, a missionary in Vietnam, pursue his Master of Divinity at Knox Theological Seminary.

Church Planting: Four EPC initiatives would receive support: The Bridge in Ferguson, Missouri; Ro Taylor's church plant in Hattiesburg, Mississippi; Alfredo Forhans' bilingual church plant in San Antonio, Texas; and Norberto "Pachy" Quesada's church planting ministry in Cuba and the Caribbean.

Mission Projects: Funding would help Providence Road Outreach Mission in Baton Rouge mentor at-risk youth. Support for EduNations in Sierra Leone would address transportation needs and urgent school safety repairs benefiting about 1,000 students and teachers.

Together, these investments extend First Presbyterian's gospel-centered mission through leadership development, outreach, and education.

ADVENT 2026

Angels Are Landing!

Help us to bless the children of incarcerated parents this Christmas. Volunteers are needed to provide a Christmas present for children or to help with gift delivery. Visit Scott Kirkpatrick at the Connection Center in mid-November to pick up the name of a child. You may also contact him at *k.scott.kirkpatrick@gmail.com* or 225.978.0803 for details.

Advent Poinsettia Donations

All are invited to help decorate the Chapel and Sanctuary by purchasing a white poinsettia in memory or celebration of a loved one. The cost is $35 per plant. Please place your order by Monday, December 14 by using the order form at the Connection Center or online at *fpcbr.org*. Those who purchase a poinsettia are welcome to take it home after the 6 pm Christmas Eve service.

Mid-Week Advent Worship

First Presbyterian is offering Wednesday Advent services at noon for the first three weeks of the season (December 2, 9 & 16). 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!

Calling All Shepherds, Angels, and Wisemen

Would your family like to be a part of sharing the gospel in this year's Live Nativity? One rehearsal. No speaking parts. All ages. To serve as a member of this year's cast, contact Lauren (*lauren@fpcbr.org*) or Chris (*chris@fpcbr.org*). Rehearsal is on Friday evening, December 4. Performances are at 5.30 and 6.30 pm Saturday, December 5.

PRIME TIME — A YEAR OF BLESSINGS AND A CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION!

Who says life slows down after 60? Certainly not Prime Time! As we look back on 2026, we are reminded of just how richly God has blessed our Prime Time ministry with wonderful experiences, laughter, friendship, and Christian fellowship.

What a year it has been! We hit the road for a delightful bus trip to beautiful Rip Van Winkle Gardens, learned a thing or two at our fascinating Birds & Bees lecture, and enjoyed a tropical getaway without ever leaving town at our Hawaiian luau, complete with a ukulele orchestra! And who could forget the laughter and encouragement shared with Christian humorist Dr. Dennis Swanberg?



Through every adventure, every laugh, and every gathering, we have been reminded that God's blessings come in many forms—and some of the sweetest are the friendships we share.

But wait! We're not finished with 2026 just yet! It's time to celebrate the Christmas season together at our annual Prime Time Christmas Luncheon! Join us Friday, December 4, 2026 11.30 am–1.30 pm at Mike Anderson's Restaurant. The cost is $35 per person. Come enjoy delicious food, wonderful fellowship, and the joy of celebrating our Savior's birth with friends. Online registration will be available soon, so watch for details!

Stay Informed: FPC's Response to the EPC Ordination Standards Issue

We've created a unique communications group for members who wish to receive updates regarding our response to the EPC's ongoing discussions about ordination standards. Scan the QR code or email Kelly Wood to join (*kelly@fpcbr.org*).

SERMON TEXTS

Texts are subject to change.

NOVEMBER 1
Luke 12:22–31

NOVEMBER 8
Luke 10:25–37

NOVEMBER 15
Luke 16:1–13

NOVEMBER 22
Luke 7:36–50

DEATHS

October 26, 2026
Marisa Hensley
Mother of Lauren Hogue

CHAPEL & SANCTUARY FLOWERS

November 1: Open date

November 8: The Chapel and Sanctuary flowers are given to the glory of God 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.

NOVEMBER 15: Open date

NOVEMBER 22: The Chapel and Sanctuary flowers are given to the glory of God 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 and Nancy Sue Burton.

Chapel and Sanctuary flowers may be donated by contacting Kathy Mullins (225.603.4735).

BIRTHS

October 15, 2026
Andrew Nyman
Parents are Mollie & Drew

BAPTISMS

October 11, 2026
Eleanor Anne Smith
Parents are Elizabeth & Adrian

Shawn “Spencer” Ortego
Parents are Caroline & William

WOMEN’S MINISTRY HAPPENINGS

Advent Brunch
Saturday, December 12



Gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Three gifts presented to Jesus by the wise men, each pointing us to something beautiful about who he is and why he came. Join us for our Women’s Advent Brunch as we reflect on the significance of these gifts and what they reveal about Jesus as our King, our Great High Priest, and our Savior. As we prepare our hearts for Christmas, may we celebrate the greatest gift of all—our Lord Jesus Christ.

Saturday, December 12
11 am to 1 pm
$10 per person
Registration Coming Soon

Friendsgiving Social
Tuesday, November 17



Gobble gobble! Ladies, join us for an evening of food, friendship, and fellowship at our 30s/40s Friendsgiving Social on Tuesday, November 17, from 6–8 pm at the home of Anna Katherine Bardwell (3616 Stanford Oaks Ave.). Turkey sliders will be provided; just bring an appetizer, dessert, or beverage to share! While this gathering is geared toward women in their 30s and 40s, all ages are welcome. Bring a friend and enjoy an evening of connection and gratitude! RSVP to *jaime@fpcbr.org*.

SPECIAL NOVEMBER EVENTS FOR KINGDOM KIDS & QUEST PRETEENS

Kingdom Kids and Quest Preteens have two special Sunday school events planned for November!

On Sunday, November 8, at 10.10 am, children in grades 1–5 and their families are invited to Room 36 on the lower level of the Sanctuary Building for a special Veterans Day celebration featuring Jay High, James Burcalow, and Darrell White.

Then, on Sunday, November 22, at 10.10 am, join us for a festive Advent kickoff featuring Chrismon ornaments as we prepare our hearts for Christmas!

THANKS FROM GERRIT AND RHONDA



At the reception on our last Sunday, we received a gift from an anonymous group of church friends on behalf of all: a trip to the British Isles. We’re just back and so grateful for this dreamy, honeymoon-like adventure. Yes, we saw Van in London, felt the majesty of the Cliffs of Moher, and walked beloved ancient streets in Edinburgh. We gave thanks for you often, and pray for you constantly. We miss you!

BETHANY CENTRE ART SHOW
Friday, November 20

Mission partner Bethany Centre in Uganda is having a group art exhibit to benefit the primary and high schools. Please come for an evening of art, music, and refreshments to VanGuard Gallery within the Stephen Wilson Stained Glass Studio on Friday, November 20, 6–9 pm. Local and regional artists, including some members of First Presbyterian Church, are selling their creations that reflect “Beyond the Horizon,” and proceeds support the schools. Bethany Centre Alliance is the circle of friends in Baton Rouge that helps keep classrooms, meals, and teachers going. There are currently upwards of 750 children attending the schools which was founded by native Ugandan Peter Kiwanuka who attended FPC while studying at LSU. The studio address is 1469 Laurel Street in Mid City. All are welcome! Email *swsglass@gmail.com* if you have questions.

THE WORLD AT OUR DOORSTEP:
International Friendship Partners

Decades ago, a prayer published in an InterVarsity student magazine proposed an unusual approach to sharing the gospel around the world: What if, instead of sending missionaries to distant countries, God brought people from those countries to us? What if they came as students, eager to learn, build friendships, and experience life in our communities?



Today, more than a million international students study in the United States. God has brought people from around the world right to our doorstep, including here in Baton Rouge! Through International Friendship Partners (IFP), we have the opportunity to share Christ’s love by welcoming our international neighbors, building meaningful relationships, and extending genuine hospitality.

There are three simple ways to get involved: become a prayer partner, a hospitality partner, or a friendship partner. And one of the easiest ways to begin is by joining an IFP gathering!

You're invited to IFP’s International Open House on Friday, November 20, from 6 to 9 pm at the home of LeeAnn and David Kozan (3565 Cole Drive). Held in conjunction with Mid City White Light Night, this festive gathering will bring local and international friends together for light refreshments, a hot chocolate bar, coffee, tea, and fellowship.

Come enjoy the evening, make a new friend, and discover how God is bringing the nations to our neighborhood! For more information about IFP or ways to get involved, contact David Kozan (*davidkozan@hotmail.com*) or Valerie Gastinel (*vgastinel@yahoo.com*).

KEVIN HOY TO VISIT FPC SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22
Director of Smiles Foundation

Join us Sunday, November 22, in the Parlor between worship services for a special informational meeting with Kevin Hoy of The Smiles Foundation. Learn more about our church’s partnership with this important ministry and hear about upcoming mission trips to Romania. Discover how you can get involved, serve alongside The Smiles Foundation, and make a meaningful difference through this mission partnership!

MCKINLEY ELEMENTARY MINISTRY UPDATE
Encouragers Needed!

Thanks to all those who have adopted a teacher this school year. What a wonderful response we’ve had from our congregation. **But, we still have EIGHT teachers who would love to have an Encourager!** Please consider adopting a teacher today by stopping by the Connection Center or emailing *laura@fpcbr.org*.

MALACHI DADS CHRISTMAS DONATIONS

Items are being collected for Christmas bags to be distributed to the Malachi Dads (prisoners) at both Hunt Correctional and Angola State Penitentiary. Please consider making a donation and dropping your items off in the bin next to the Connection Center. Items more desired by the prisoners: Irish Spring bar soap, toothpaste, antiperspirant (not deodorant), white socks, and Gold Bond powder, or generic body powder. Please do not donate any liquids or aerosols. Cash or check donations are also welcomed, as this will allow us to purchase what we need to fulfill the needed quantities. Rest assured that the prisoners look forward to the day we come and distribute these items. It makes a huge difference to them. They feel the ***love***!



MOTIVATOR, *continued from page 1*

the motivator; love is. Christ gave sacrificially for our eternal benefit (2 Corinthians 8:9). Here is one question among others to consider, “what financial amount would represent a change of lifestyle for me, a gift of gratitude that will move my heart?” Jesus’ encouragement is, “where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Luke 12:34).

Wherever you are in your journey of faith with Jesus, money can be a practical and exciting way to measure it. This may be why Jesus talks about it so often! I am praying that the Lord will encourage us in light of his goodness to walk together in this way, wherever we find ourselves, as stewards of this gift.

I am grateful to be your pastor in this season, and look forward to all the Lord has in store for our family of faith.





First Presbyterian Church
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