



## God Is Love Or Love Is God? by Darin Travis

Which of these two statements is true? Our world is confused on this particular issue, but the answer is found in 1 John 4, where John says that, in fact, God is love.

Our culture, however, including our American church culture, is unfortunately lulled into the false belief that “Love is God.” Love is perceived as the ultimate ideal. Our culture screams, “Just love people!” What they mean is, “Be nice; be tolerant; don’t judge people.” But is this truly loving?

John reveals in 1 John 4 that God is love, but in chapter 1 he also says that “God is light.” In God’s character, there is no darkness. He is without blemish, perfectly pure, perfectly holy. He is pure in his character, judgments and dealings with man. As the sovereign autonomous personal being of righteousness, he is the one who gives us the law to relate to him and to others. He says, “Be holy, for I am holy. Have no other gods before me. Do not covet.” He requires obedience to his authority and stands as the judge over all those who fail to live according to his moral demands. To say that God is loving, but fail to convey that God is holy, does not do justice to the wholeness of who God is. He is loving and holy, therefore requiring justice.

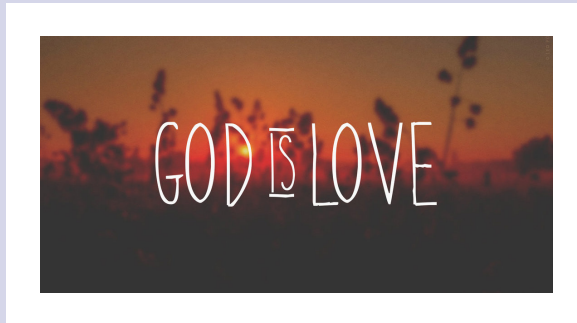
As we study the Scriptures, preaching them to ourselves and those around us, we must be careful not to present a relativistic

worldview and be ignorant of the revealed nature of God. Our world is full of half-truths. An old U.S. Navy advertisement said, “Join the Navy and see the world!” Everyone knows that if you join the Navy, you will indeed see different ports and different cultures, but you will not do so as a passenger on a Mediterranean cruise ship. “God is love” is a true statement,

but our world needs to know that he is also holy. His holiness demands that we who have sought independence from God deserve eternal separation because he is a just God. The beautiful revealed love of God is that though we deserve judgment, he has given us opportunity to draw near because he is also loving. A.W. Tozer said, “The cross is a symbol of death. It stands for the abrupt, violent end of a person. God salvages the

individual by liquidating him and then raising him to newness of life. The corn of wheat must fall into the ground and die.” The liquidation of self, the dying of self, is often a very painful death, but new life in Christ is how God’s justice is melded with God’s love. Jesus said, “For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake, he is the one who will save it” (Luke 9: 24). Let us remember that love is not the ultimate thing; God is. God is ultimate. He is love (1 John 4: 8, 16). He is light (1 John 1: 5).

*Darin*



## IN THIS ISSUE

- pg. 2 Updates on Youth
- pg. 3 Summer Schedule
- pg. 3 Miqedem



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

10.30 am Worship-Sundays in July July 1-29  
 Church Offices Closed July 4  
 Miquedem Concert July 13  
 Stay for Fellowship Lunch July 15  
 Foundation Meeting July 18

### ONGOING EVENTS

“12 Steps for Christians” Weds., 12.15 pm  
 Women’s “I AM” Study Weds., 6.30 pm

### UPCOMING AUGUST EVENTS

Stay-Treat Aug 10-11  
 Promotion Sunday Aug 12

### BIRTHS:

June 22, 2018  
 Grace Ruthie Dubnansky  
 Parents are Lauren and Tim Dubnansky

### IN MEMORIAM:

May 14, 2018  
 Andrew Jackson - father of Adraine White

May 30, 2018  
 Jean Davis - mother of Donovan Davis

June 9, 2018  
 Stan Bardwell  
 Joe Herring - father of Sandy Kleinpeter

June 19, 2018  
 Clint High - father of Jay High

### SANCTUARY FLOWERS:

Sanctuary flowers serve to honor a departed loved one or celebrate with thanksgiving cherished people or events.

The flowers are placed in the Sanctuary . . .

JULY 1 . . . In loving memory of Patricia Nickell, mother of Harry Burglass and Henry B. Alsobrook, Jr., father of Eugenie Burglass by Eugenie and Harry Burglass.

JULY 8 . . . To the glory of God and in loving memory of Jesse Furr Scoggin and John Irby Moore by Grace and Joe Scoggin.

JULY 15 . . . To the glory of God and in memory of loved ones by Melissa and Mike Thibodeaux.

JULY 22 Please call the church office if you would like to donate flowers.

JULY 29 Please call the church office if you would like to donate flowers.

## A Lot Has Happened by Josh Maddin

**JULY 22**  
 COME  
 CELEBRATE  
 THE MADDINS  
 AFTER WORSHIP

It feels like it was a just a few weeks ago that I drove over the Mississippi bridge for the first time and saw First Presbyterian on the horizon. It baffles me this scene was six and a half years ago. But a lot of life has happened in these years. We have watched our 1 year old become a beautiful young girl now heading into 3rd grade. You were there when our firecracker of a little man came into the world 4 years ago. We bought a home, started elementary school, loved on special needs students, got ordained, embarked on a doctoral program, baptized our kiddos, worked on flooded homes and traveled thousands of miles over the years with students in tow to see them go “deeper in Christ and further into the world.”

There are so many scenes that fill my head when I think about FPC and the enormous impact this church family has had on my family and me. One particular one was filling the Sanctuary after one of our dear young ones went to be with Lord. It was the church living out the great calling to love and care for the next generation by surrounding them with Christ’s love. It has been a great privilege

of my life to serve alongside you as we seek for young people to hear the good news of the gospel and surrender all of who they are to our Savior.

This summer we will be departing to serve the Lord in a new pastoral calling back in Texas. It will be an opportunity for me to preach the Word which FPC has given me a great passion for. My passion will also take the incredible things we do for students and live that out with adults, connecting them to Christ and to one another. In many ways it will be like I am serving at FPC in Texas. We love this church family and are excited to see all the ways Christ draws you closer to himself.

I cannot say thank you enough for the many blessings you have bestowed upon me. The biggest one was taking a scraggly youth guy and forming me into a young pastor with a passion for the preached word of God and seeing God’s people live out the Great Commission.

## FPC Announces New Director, Youth Family Ministries by Whitney Alexander



Paula Walker has been named Director, Youth Family Ministries and will join the church staff on August 1. Paula is no stranger to our church fellowship nor student ministries. She has been a member of FPC for seven years and has joyfully participated in a variety of ministries of our church, including our children’s and youth programs and most recently in leadership as a deacon. For the past eight years she has been on the faculty at Gardere Community Christian School, Wildwood Elementary School and as track coach at The Dunham School.

Paula earned her BA from Southern University in 2008 and her MS from Walden University in Minnesota in 2012. The résumé of her volunteer and post-graduate training experiences is long. As a gifted athlete she was awarded an athletic scholarship in track & field. As one who loves young people, she was a leader with LSU Young Life, the Big Buddy Program and Head Coach of Girls on the Run. Paula became a Christian eight years ago. She benefitted from two mentors who invested in her life and provided guidance, prayer and loving support as one of their own family. Much of the last eight years, since surrendering her life to Christ, Paula spent teaching and loving kids at Gardere and Wildwood using a variety of activities and teaching methods to motivate and stimulate while maintaining strong relationships with parents and school administrators.

Take an opportunity to get to know Paula. She is an extraordinary and most interesting and dynamic person. Her hobbies and interests include cooking, baking, photography, painting, reading, dancing, exploring all aspects of art, nature walks, picnics, outdoor activities, meeting new people and learning new things, especially about God, cultures and science. Our youth family ministry will be under the guidance of a very special person.

## Mixing Up the Summer Schedule by Darin Travis

Summer is here! As we move to a combined 10.30 am service every Sunday in July, we'll have some exciting opportunities to connect with the Lord and each other for Sunday school. Our normal classes will take a break, and we have three new options for you to choose from.

Our first Sunday school option will be an extended time with our guest preachers to teach on a topic of their choosing. July 8 will be Derek McCollum, July 15 will be Gerrit's seminary friend Carmen Fowler LaBerge, July 22 will be Ben Cunningham, and July 29 will be Alec Flynt. Each will bring plenty of insight and depth as they teach and share personal stories.

Our second option is a class on Christian parenting. Many parents, both young and old, wrestle with how to shepherd their children through these turbulent cultural times and

keep the focus on Christ. This class will be facilitated by Barat Travis. It will include a short video with some timeless truths, and we'll have a live panel of experienced First Presbyterian parents, sharing their personal insights and examples. We'll offer a time of Q&A so all glean from the wisdom from those who've been in the trenches of parenting and come out on the other side.

The third class offered during July will be on evangelism. This is a large topic, but this class will focus on how to relationally come alongside someone on their journey toward Christ. We will discuss how to ask good questions to reveal a person's worldview and how to present the beauty of Christ in a "come and see" kind of way. The class will use Randy Newman's book *Questioning Evangelism: Engaging People's Hearts the Way Jesus Did* as well as other materials.

## Welcoming Our Guest Preachers! by Elizabeth Parker

In the month of July we welcome four guest pastors to our pulpit! Some of the faces are very familiar to us. Among those we already know well are Alec Flynt and Derek McCollum. We are thrilled to see these two former FPC pastors come back to visit and preach God's Word. For those of you who are newer to First, Alec and Derek both served several years here and became dear friends to many of us. Both have been serving a call to plant churches: Alec in Mobile, AL and Derek in New Braunfels, TX. Derek preach at our combined service July 8 and Alec July 29.

Another familiar face is also a church planter; our very own Ben Cunningham! Ben serves as the pastor of our church plant in New Orleans, Church of the Resurrection. If you've been around First for a couple of years you have likely heard Ben preach before; as we love having him come up from New Orleans to bring us God's Word. Ben will be preaching at our July 22 combined service.

One guest preacher you might not yet know is Carmen Fowler LaBerge. Carmen is a dear friend of Gerrit and Rhonda and we are excited to welcome her to First on July 15. Carmen has recently published a book entitled *Speak the Truth: How to Bring God Back into Every Conversation*. She has a passion for proclaiming Christ in our culture by discussing topics such as faith and politics, faith and science, and racial reconciliation. Her book will be available July 15 and you can check her out on her radio show *Connecting Faith*. Following Carmen's sermon there will be a congregational lunch where we will have a Q&A session. So join us in welcoming back some old friends and some new ones!

**Miqedem Puts Hebrew Scripture to Modern Music.** Join us in welcoming the Israeli band Miqedem at a free concert Friday, July 13 at 7 pm right here at First Presbyterian Church in the Sanctuary. Formed in 2015, Miqedem is a band with a unique blend of Middle Eastern, Western and International music influences - all set to the original words of the Hebrew Bible. Miqedem's concerts are a unique opportunity for non-Hebrew speakers to not only deepen their knowledge of the meaning of Scripture, but to also gain a deeper appreciation of its exceptional beauty and sound - in the original form King David, King Solomon, the Prophet Isaiah, and others first wrote it. Invite your friends and neighbors. Love offering will be taken.

**Congregational Lunch, July 15.** We love congregational lunches! What a great opportunity to fellowship with members of the church you don't normally see as well as invite a guest. Join us Sunday, July 15 after our 10.30 am combined worship service for a luau lunch in the gym. \$5 per person or \$20 per family to be paid at the door.

## SUNDAY WORSHIP

10.30 am single combined worship each Sunday in July

## JULY SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Texts are subject to change.

JULY 1  
1 Timothy 2: 1-6

JULY 8  
John 20: 24-29

JULY 15  
2 Corinthians 5: 11-21

JULY 22  
To be determined

JULY 29  
Ephesians 5: 22-33

## PASTORAL STAFF

GERRIT DAWSON  
Senior Pastor

WHITNEY ALEXANDER  
Associate Pastor of Missions

JOSH MADDIN  
Director, Youth Family Ministry

BARRY PHILLIPS  
Ministry Executive

JIM SOLOMON  
Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care & Prayer

DARIN TRAVIS  
Director for Discipleship,  
Men's Ministry & Young Adults



PH: 225.387.0617  
FAX: 225.338.1010

fpcbr.org

763 North Boulevard  
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Mother's Day Out and Preschool  
225.620.0245

Baton Rouge Christian Counseling Center  
225.387.2287

brchristiancounseling.com

### Share Your Love of Cooking!

So many of us who live in Louisiana love to cook. If you would like to volunteer to prepare and deliver a meal to individuals or families in need, please contact Meagan Greene ([meagan@fpibr.org](mailto:meagan@fpibr.org) or 225.454.2504). First Presbyterian's Meal Ministry provides meals and welcoming hospitality to those in need. A focus is placed on developing a sense of community among our members, guests and partner ministries as we live out our mission to go deeper in Christ and further into the world.

### We're Doing It Again!



Save the date for September 13, 2018, our kickoff date for the FPC Habitat for Humanity 2018 build.

### Sports Camp Needs Volunteers

The S.T.A.R.S. sports camp is looking for men and women volunteers excited to share the gospel with kids in inner city Baton Rouge. We will join our sister church, Abounding Love Ministries, July 9-13 to coach kids in soccer and basketball while also leading them in gospel-centered Bible studies that correlate with our play on the field. Please contact Whitney Alexander ([whitney@fpibr.org](mailto:whitney@fpibr.org) or 225.810.2607) for more information.

### Officer Nominations

The Officer Nominating Committee nominates Elders and Deacons by receiving suggested names of members from the congregation, prayerfully preparing a slate and presenting the slate at the annual October congregational meeting for election. Please be in prayer about who you might suggest.

### Pickle What?

America's fastest growing sport and the game with the funny name, Pickleball, has come to FPC. Ten to 15 players gather each Sunday at 3 pm to play mostly doubles and mixed doubles. Pickleball is played on a court the size of a badminton court with paddles, a tennis net and a heavy whiffle ball. A combination of tennis, badminton and ping pong skills are beneficial, but the real skills needed are a willingness to just get out there, try something new and have fun. It's also a great way to exercise and keep fit! Come out and give it a try.

Oh, and by the way, when Pickleball was first played on the coast of Washington State in the early sixties, the owner's dog kept taking the ball and playing keep away. The name of the dog - Pickles! Contact Mike Glisson at 225.936.8994 or Rick Spiller at 225.278.5760.