

MAY 2025

FPC NEWSLETTER

Deeper in Christ, Further into the World



IN THE SEASON OF ASCENSION

By Gerrit Dawson
Senior Pastor

I'm still basking in the wonderful Lent and Easter we had together. I'm filled with gratitude for all the interaction we had over *Golden Threads*. So many conversations as you quested ever more deeply into the heart of Scripture! We distributed 2100 copies of the book, and it's pretty hard to scare up an extra copy anywhere. Astoundingly, we had more than 8165 listens to our podcast! More than 30 community groups met weekly and our full worship services felt so vibrant.

Now, even as the light grows daily longer and stronger, the church of Christ rises in anticipation. We soon celebrate his ascension to heaven and the sending of the Holy Spirit. In worship, we will take up the Book of Acts, considering what happened as the disciples bore witness to the risen Jesus. But also, your church is ascending in fulfilling our strategic plan. Read on!

Architects for Master Campus Plan

Last year, in our congregational survey you identified facilities and parking as a high priority. We put together a very skilled team to coordinate the development of a ten year master plan for our campus. Chaired by Scott Bardwell, this task-force includes Will Adams, Sally McBride, Laurie Lemoine, Heather Kirkpatrick, Dan Zito, Allision Keppinger, Pat Kerr, Keely McMillan, Brett Furr, and Debbie Copeland. The team has been meeting since January. We reviewed carefully the priorities of the strategic plan. We explored the theology of the built environment, asking what facilities represent to our mission and discipleship.

Then we set out to find the architectural firm that could best help us design the plan. After extensive interviews, we settled on Tipton Associates, a local firm with more than 145 years of experience. They will lead us through a congregational process of identifying what matters most to us in any renovations or expansions. I look forward to your participation in this clarifying process. Just by the way, we are all committed to preserving the architectural integrity and beauty of our historic campus! The central questions relate to security, people flow, updates, parking, gathering, and best use of our spaces for ministry.

The Sanctuary of North Baton Rouge

We're now in our second year of beginning a church plant in north Baton Rouge. We've identified a store front for our church. It's in a center off Florida and Donmoor. Ron Hicks recently joined our church and our staff. He is busy meeting people in the neighborhood, nurturing his core leaders, and preparing for an official launch toward the end of the year. Meanwhile, we hope to do some appealing renovations at our new site to prepare it for worship. Please keep this project in your prayers. A church plant that lasts for years takes years to establish! After all, our own First Presbyterian took 13 years to get chartered!

Much more will be coming our way this summer, but for now, know that I always love being your pastor,

Gerrit



2 RETURNING
HEARTS
CELEBRATION

2 WELCOME
BONNIE!

3 CHURCH
HISTORY
FUN FACT

3 PRIME
TIME CLUB
LUNCH

4 REGISTER
FOR
VBS!

MAY CALENDAR

- 2 rEcess
- 4 H.S. Senior Sunday
- 4 Confirmation
- 17 Returning Hearts Celebration
- 23 High School Lock-in
- 25 10.30 am Worship
- 26 Church Office Closed
- 29 Prime Time Club Luncheon
- 31 VBS Volunteer Training Day

UPCOMING JUNE EVENTS

- 8 Discover First Dinner

BAPTISMS

April 20, 2025
Fletcher Nolan Miller
Parents are Shelby & Connor

FLOWERS

The Chapel and Sanctuary
flowers are . . .

May 4 . . . given to the glory of
God in loving memory of Mary
Crosby McDuff and Martha Ann
Ellison Cunningham by Ann &
Michael McDuff.

May 11 . . . given to the glory of
God and in loving memory of
three mothers, all very special
to our family: our mother, Jackie
Lee Airhart; her mother, Claudia
Lee Tisdale; and Kristen's
mother, Becky Richardson,
by the children of Jackie Lee
Airhart.

May 18 . . . giving God all the
glory for the blessings he has
placed upon the Robert S.
Miller family.

May 25 Open date.

KEEPING UP WITH MISSIONS

RETURNING HEARTS CELEBRATION

MAY 17

After an almost five-year hiatus, LifeLine Global's Returning Hearts Celebration is back! This event is a key component of prison ministry that helps reconnect Angola prisoners with their families and most importantly, their children, for fun and activities. This is a special day of celebration for these men for two reasons: they have the rare opportunity to fellowship with their loved ones, and they have completed the Malachi Dads program necessary to participate in the Returning Hearts Celebration. Malachi Dads helps these men understand the issues of fatherlessness and generational incarceration by attacking the issue head on. Volunteers are needed for the festivities on Saturday, May 17. Please visit fpcbr.org for a link to register as a volunteer.

ROMANIA MISSION OPPORTUNITIES

2025

We have two mission opportunities in Romania with The Smiles Foundation. A summer mission May 22–31 and a Christmas SOS (Sack of Smiles) mission December 11–20. Come along for a hands-on mission experience where we will assist families in need through community outreach, visit elder care residential homes, help with children's outreach, work in the Glasshouse and much more. There is something for everyone, whatever your interest or gift. For more information contact Carol Lazar (clazar@cox.net) or Peter Lazar (plazar3@cox.net).



DISCOVER FIRST DINNER

JUNE 8

Interested in becoming a member of our church? Join us for the Discover First Dinner on Sunday, June 8, a welcoming and informative evening designed to help you learn more about our mission, beliefs, and ministries. Enjoy a meal while meeting pastors, staff, and others exploring membership. This is a great opportunity to ask questions and discover how you can get connected and grow in your faith journey. We'd love to walk alongside you as you take your next step! Contact Emily Viguerie for more information (emily@fpcbr.org).

Welcome Bonnie!

BONNIE ADAMS

Kids Hope USA
Director



Bonnie has been at First Presbyterian since 2000 when she was a student at LSU. Her degree and teaching experience in elementary education, coupled with years of teaching Sunday school, confirmation class, vacation bible school, and leading elementary aged girls Bible studies have prepared her for her role with Kids Hope USA.

Bonnie met her husband Will, at First Presbyterian in 2006. They were married in the church and have enjoyed raising and baptizing their two daughters, Bailey and Kate, in the church as well.

Bonnie has been our Kids Hope Coordinator for the Gardere Community Christian School for several months. She moves into the role of Director in late May with the retirement of Annette Lamond. We are excited for the new opportunities and adventures that await Annette in retirement and are confident she will continue to shine and make a positive impact. Farewell Annette!

SOME SUMMER HAPPENINGS

MEMORIAL WEEKEND WORSHIP AND OFFICE HOURS

We will have one combined service on May 25 at 10.30 am in celebration of Memorial Day. There will be no Sunday school. The church office will be closed Monday, May 26. Would you like to reach a pastor after hours? Please call the church office (387.0617) and press 5 to be connected to the pastor on call.

MAY PRIME TIME CLUB LUNCH

Howdy there, Prime Time Club Folks! We hope that you are ready to kick up your heels for a hootin', hollerin' good time on Thursday, May 29 from 11.30 am to 1.30 pm in the Reception Room. There just might be some lip smackin' BBQ vittles, indoor horseshoes, rope slingin', corn hole competition, a photo booth, and country line dancin' with our own Garland Goodwin Wilson! So, bless your hearts, y'all get this on your calendar 'cause we are fixin' up a good time! The cost is \$20 per person which includes a buffet lunch provided by Cou-Yon's. You may register for the event online at fpcbr.org or at the Prime Time Table on Sunday, May 11, 18 and 25. Registration deadline is May 25 at 11.55pm. If you miss those opportunities, please call Brenda Salassi at 225.241.4916 by May 25.

COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS ARE NOW ONLINE

The FPC Women's Ministry College Scholarship Fund is a unique fund established in 1955 for all students who wish to further their education. Its purpose is to offer financial assistance to church members who anticipate having difficulty meeting the obligations of continued education. The administration of the fund is the responsibility of the Memorial Scholarship Committee and honors particular need-based guidelines. Aid is intended to be a helpful supplement in the student's pursuit of higher education. The application deadline is July 14, 2025. Please visit fpcbr.org for an application.

MOTHER'S DAY OUT IS HIRING!

Mother's Day Out is hiring a caring, energetic teacher for our 2-year-old class. Candidates should have experience with toddlers, a nurturing spirit, and a passion for early childhood development. Join our supportive team and make a lasting impact in a loving, faith-based environment. Contact Whitney Weiner to inquire (mdo@fpcbr.org or 620.0245).

SERMON TEXTS

Texts are subject to change.

MAY 4
Acts 2:1–13

MAY 11
Acts 2:22–41

MAY 18
Acts 3:1–16

MAY 25
Acts 4, selections

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



Our Church History: 1785

What was it like to be a Protestant in early Baton Rouge 40 years prior to the founding of First Presbyterian Church?

Under Spanish rule, according to orders issued by Governor Gayoso around 1785, adult Protestants in Baton Rouge (Western Florida territory) prior to Spanish control, were allowed to worship in their own way provided no more than eight were in attendance. All children of Protestants were required to be baptized by a Roman Catholic priest and reared in the Catholic faith. Protestant ministers were not allowed to preach, to baptize, perform marriage ceremonies or funeral rites. A lot will change between 1785 and 1827 when FPC was founded. Stay tuned for more next month.



CONTACT INFORMATION

225.387.0617
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

CHILDREN'S & YOUTH NEWS

VBS REGISTRATION IS OPEN!

VBS Dates: Monday, June 9–Thursday, June 12, 2025
Registration Closes Thursday, June 5, 2025 at midnight

Come hear Bible stories from a seasoned storyteller, learn to make amazing crafts as apprentices of master craftsmen, interact with the kinds of people Jesus did when he walked the streets of Jerusalem and bring your tough questions when you visit the synagogue to learn Biblical truth from a local rabbi. We will worship together, eat together and have fun together! Come join us! There is a \$10 charge for each camper to attend. Volunteer positions are available for 7th through 12th graders and adults. Further details and registrations are online at fpcbr.org. Or scan the code.



HIGH SCHOOL LOCK-IN

MAY 23 at 6 pm

Join us for an epic night at the church lock-in! There'll be games, food, music, and real talk about life and faith. Come hang out with friends, have fun, and grow closer to God. It's a night you won't want to miss—bring a friend and be there! Our annual lock-in is for current 8th-12th graders. Contact Jessica for details (jessica@fpcbr.org).

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MAY 4, A SPECIAL DAY FOR YOUTH!

High School Senior Sunday, May 4. We are excited to celebrate our seniors with a slideshow and special gift on Sunday, May 4 at the 9 and 11 am services. We hope you can join us as we send them off with prayer and best wishes.

Confirmation Celebration

Sunday, May 4. Our 6th grade students prepare all year to make their public profession of faith at a special worship service. On Sunday, May 4 at 4 pm in the Sanctuary, they will profess Christ and be confirmed as active members of our church. Come support them at this celebratory service! A reception follows.