

fpcNEWS

Deeper in Christ, further into the world.

April 2017 Volume 51-04

A Universe Reborn!

By Gerrit S. Dawson, Senior Pastor

The ancient church came to understand three days as one grand event. From Maundy Thursday night to Easter morning Jesus engaged his testing, his trial, his crucifixion, his death and his resurrection. He underwent a great passage through death into new life. Over the years, Christ's church came to call this event the Holy Triduum (literally, "three days"). No part works without the other parts. All of them fit together. Interlocking episodes in one extended event.

The fate of the universe as we know it rested on the shoulders of one Galilean carpenter. Contradictions smash together.

*We tried to save our own skins.
Jesus knelt and washed our feet.
We betrayed and fled.
Jesus gave us his broken body and
outpoured blood.
We mocked him.
Jesus prayed we would be forgiven.
We hung him up to die.
Jesus committed his spirit to his Father.
We buried him, sealed him up out of
sight.
Jesus rose victorious never to die again.*

By his dying and his rising, new creation began, humanity was remade and the

universe reborn. Such is the promise to those joined to him by faith.

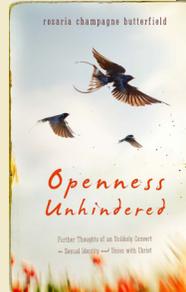
The Triduum is the event of events. These are the days of all days. We bring the power of these once-and-for-all events into the present as we enter the sacred time of worship. Maundy Thursday we keep watch with him as he is led away. Sunday at dawn, we become witnesses that the stone is rolled away. Sunday in full morning light, with the trumpets resounding, at the height of spring, we proclaim, "The Lord is risen! He is risen indeed."

Identity in Christ/Sexual Identity

This is the great discussion of our day. What defines my identity? Do I define myself by my preferences? By my passions? Or do the events of the Triduum lend a deeper meaning? Does Jesus claim me deeper than and beyond what holds me and molds me now?

Questions of identity are at the heart of current cultural discussions about sexuality. The church has lost the culture war. So how do we address our culture with gospel grace and truth when we are no longer heard if we just say, "Thus says the Lord?"

Dr. Rosaria Butterfield



Dr. Rosaria

Butterfield, in her book, *Openness Unhindered*, calls the church to a radical hospitality toward all people, particularly toward people identifying as homosexual. Dr. Butterfield herself knows the gay community from the inside out. She was drawn out of atheism and into Christ by the welcoming love of a Presbyterian Church. Formerly a professor of English at Syracuse University, Rosaria is a gentle, articulate, deep advocate for traditional views expressed through churches that are truly welcoming and loving in Christ's name.

We have a rare opportunity to hear her speak twice, Friday, May 5, 7 pm and Saturday, May 6 at 9 am in our Sanctuary. No registration is necessary. We're hosting this seminar in conjunction with South Baton Rouge Presbyterian Church and Christ Covenant Church. A portion of the expenses are underwritten by a gift from the Ed Grant Enrichment Fund.

Gerrit

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APRIL CALENDAR

rEcess Apr 7
 Palm Sunday Apr 9
 Maundy Thursday Apr 13
 Good Friday - Office Closed Apr 14
 Easter Sunday Apr 16
 Office Closed Apr 17
 BRSO Concert Apr 27
 Senior Recognition Sunday Apr 30
 IFP Potluck Dinner Apr 30

UPCOMING MAY EVENTS

Rosaria Butterfield May 5-6
 Confirmation Sunday May 7

IN MEMORIAM:

March 2, 2017
 Doyle Whittington
 Father of Ryan Whittington

March 3, 2017
 Van Wilson, father of Steve Wilson

March 8, 2017
 Stevey Myer

BAPTISMS:

March 27, 2017
 Elliott Alston McCollister
 Grandparents are Cheryl and Robyn Tyler

BIRTHS:

March 22, 2017
 Abigail Rose Beall
 Parents are Rosemary and Kyle Beall

WEDDINGS:

March 11, 2017
 Hillary Hullett and Jordan Amedee

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 . . .

Apr 2 . . . to the glory of God and in loving memory of my parents, Jeanne and Marlin Drake, Jr. of Shreveport, by Lauren Teague Phillips.

Apr 9 . . . to the glory of God and in loving memory of the parents and grandparents of Linda and Wayne Barker.

Apr 16 . . . to the glory of God and in memory of Norman Saurage III, Maude and Norman Saurage Sr., Alma Lee and Norman Saurage Jr., and Flora and Gustave Spaht by their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Apr 23 . . . to the glory of God in loving memory of Reverend Dellic Alphonse (Jack) Martin, father of Beverly Setliff, by Beverly and Richard Setliff.

Apr 30 Open Date.



Middle School Years: Yikes!

by Thomas Zak, Assistant Director of Student Ministry

I have always found aversion to middle school (those pre-teen years) quite humorous. Whether working with middle

schoolers or personal memories of being a middle schooler, perceptions for most people fall somewhere along the lines of “gross,” “miserable,” or “never, ever, again.” Why this aversion? Why this distance from that (albeit awkward) brief history of time?

Scripture tells us to “put off our old self, which belongs to your former manner of life” (Ephesians 4: 22). In a sense, this is nothing new to how we’re wired. We are naturally drawn to rid ourselves of that which we don’t favor; that which is old. When we’re dirty, we take a bath. When we’re tired, we long to sleep. When we gain a few extra pounds, we have a desire to lose them. Humans are built with a tendency toward improvement. Whether or not we tap into that, all of us are constantly striving, in one direction or another, toward whatever the next step may be. One way we do this is with our memories; we try to forget what we did not cherish.

Considering this, it makes sense that people would shy away from their pre-teen experience; monotonous growing pains, generally bad haircuts, braces that double as disco balls, overdependence on cheap “cologne.” Yikes! No wonder we tend to avoid those thoughts. Yet that which discomforts us is not our old self. Grace will not let us throw these years aside. A God who tells us to “become like little children”

will not have us ignore them (Matthew 18: 2-4).

There are many stories of young people doing great things for the Kingdom, yet I’m most drawn to John 6, when Jesus feeds the multitudes. Known only in the story as “the boy,” he is the only one among 5,000 adults who thinks Jesus could do the impossible. While the many sit and wait circus-like for the Messiah to act on their behalf, he humbly shows his faith by offering his small portion for the possession of the many. This was no giant affair, no great task, no “hard thing,” but a simple act of obedience led by an inquisition that only a teenage boy could have: “I wonder what would happen if I did ____.”

This same wonder we see today. It shows itself in Sunday school, youth group and Bible study when our kids try to play kickball in the Sanctuary, yet also when a life-altering question is asked merely out of the curiosity to know the reason for all things. It shows itself at camps, when they try to pull pranks in the middle of the night, yet also when they discover that life is not about themselves, but Someone much greater. It shows itself on mission trips, where windows are broken amidst dorm-held wrestling matches, yet also when they see need, hopelessness, despair and realize that they’re broken too.

It’s this amalgam of the profound yet immature that compile the pre-teen experience. It’s a sense of wanting to know all there is but not knowing how to get to that knowledge, of which I have the glorious privilege of being their guide. Come join us.

Youth Testimonies

Each year Student Ministry takes a trek to Colorado for 5 days amid the beauty of God’s creation to do some skiing. It is a wonderful time to play in the snow, connect with the Lord and learn the delight that is snow skiing.

Here is an issue a lot of us struggle with. Our eyes stay down, our ears constantly have white wires attached to them, we only look at what is directly in front of us. We weave through life, trying to maintain some idea of control, but frequently fall short. It’s only when we take a second to step back, to catch our breath, to look up and see our surroundings that we find our place in God’s plan again. Everyday problems weigh us down, they draw our attention from the bigger picture and force us to forget the much greater purpose we have. We must remember to take a break every once and awhile, to look around at the world he has given us, to reaffirm ourselves in his plan, and then to keep skiing forward - this time with our eyes ahead.

-Bennett Franz, 11th grade, Baton Rouge High School

continues on page 4 . . .



Whitney Alexander (left) and Robert Toney (right)

Whitney Alexander Receives First Robert Toney Service Award!

What an honor it was to attend the Awana Lifeline Awards Banquet held on March 23 at Healing Place Church. The Robert Toney Award was named in honor of Chaplain Robert Toney who served as Chaplain at Angola State Prison for 17 years until he passed away in October 2016.

Who better to be honored with the first award than our very own Whitney? We all know of Whitney's tireless ministry in so many areas around our city, state and truly all over the world. However, the prison ministry at Angola has a very

special place in his heart. The Malachi Dads endeavor that was started at Angola to train and equip incarcerated fathers so they can spiritually train their children is dear to him.

So it comes as no surprise that Whitney was recognized for his faithful service to these men, as well as recruiting other men, in his wide ranging sphere of influence, who are now involved with the Malachi Dads ministry! Big congrats Whitney on this very well-deserved award!

Upcoming Worship

Sunday, April 2 Worship at 9 am. Of Moving Colors dancers will be back to perform "The Lion and the Lamb" with the worship team. We want you to experience the same powerful performance that warranted a standing ovation at the 2016 Christmas Carol Pilgrimage. It is very moving to experience these professional dancers praising the Lord with their God-given talent. Our own Garland Wilson is the director!



Palm Sunday, April 9: Combined 10 am Worship. Our annual Palm Sunday festival is April 9, beginning at 9.50 am with our procession around the newly

renovated North Boulevard. We will initiate our newest staff member, Darin Travis, as he plays the role of Jesus leading the donkey. A jam-packed combined worship service occurs after the procession. Egg hunts, pony rides, facepainting, a balloon artist, a crawfish boil, hot dogs and snow cones will follow worship. You'll want to dress "crawfish casual." Save your fancy attire for Easter. Lunch is \$5 per person (\$20 max/family). No Sunday school.

Easter Egg Hunt, Palm Sunday. Children's Ministry will continue to provide the Easter eggs. Please bring an Easter basket for each child. The Easter Egg hunt will take place in our terraced garden and is for children up to 3rd Grade. Our Quest Kids (4th and 5th grade) get to help hide eggs during service! Please contact Jaime Carnaggio (jaime@fpcbr.org) if your 4th or 5th grader would like to help hide eggs.

fpcbr.org) if your 4th or 5th grader would like to help hide eggs.



of Matthew, recounting his arrest, trial and death through the service of shadows. We end the service in silence in the terraced garden where the stone is rolled over our newly designed tomb (thank you, Keith Morris). Children are welcome to this moving service. Childcare available for ages 5 and under due to the dramatic nature of the passion reading.



Easter Sunday. Join us as we celebrate the risen Lord at one of our three worship services. 6.30 am Sunrise takes place in the terraced garden followed by light breakfast. The 9 am Contemporary service in the Sanctuary will feature the Foto Sisters. These three sisters are blessed with many talents and worshipful hearts for the Lord. The 11 am service will meet in the Sanctuary with Easter music including the singing of Handel's *Halleluiah Chorus*; members of the congregation are invited to join the choir for this special selection. Service music for brass, percussion and organ will feature our own Steve Gustafson. Sunday school classes will meet at their regular times.

SUNDAY WORSHIP @ FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

COME WORSHIP WITH US!

7.45 am Chapel Communion
9 am Contemporary
11 am Classic Reformed

APRIL SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Texts are subject to change.

April 2
Matthew 18: 21-35

April 9 - Palm Sunday
TBD

April 16 - Easter Sunday
Revelation 1: 4-8; 17-18

April 23
1 Chronicles 29: 10-13
Revelation 5

April 30
TBD

PASTORAL STAFF

Gerrit Dawson
Senior Pastor

Whitney Alexander
Associate Pastor of Missions

Josh Maddin
Assistant Pastor of Student Ministry

Barry Phillips
Ministry Executive

Jim Solomon
Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care & Prayer

Darin Travis
Director for Discipleship, Men's Ministry and Young Adults



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Youth Testimonies, cont.

“The mountains were magnificent, with their snow caps and purple bases. When I first saw those mountains, I saw God’s greatness, power and glory. It shows me how he wants to rule my heart and help me keep him at the center of my life. Just looking at all the surroundings, I saw God. He created all of it and it strengthens my faith in him because he created such beautiful things, just like you and me. During this trip, we did daily devotionals. I really took away from the Saturday devotional about the difference between amazement and faith. I really related to it because it showed me how I was not living by faith, but by amazement.”

*-Kathlyn Capone,
10th grade, Dutchtown High School*

2017-2018 College Scholarships

College scholarships are available for entering or continuing students through the Women in Ministry Memorial Scholarship Fund. Applications can be emailed to interested students or are available online at fpcbr.org. The deadline to apply is June 1. Contact Jaci Gaspard for more information (jaci@fpcbr.org or 620.0221).

International Friendship Partner Potluck

Sunday, April 30, 1 pm

Join us for a potluck and relaxing afternoon of friendship-building with internationals. Our international friends especially appreciate opportunities to mingle and make American friends. It’s great fun and a cultural adventure for the whole family. Kids are welcome too! Further details and RSVP to Valerie Gastinel, vgastinel@yahoo.com.

Celebrating
THE LIFE OF

ANNA LAPORTE

April 4, 1926 - March 19, 2017

Anna was a staff member of the former Presbyterian Childhood Development Center (PCDC) for many years and a dear friend

to many families of

First Presbyterian Church.