

fpcNEWS

Deeper in Christ, further into the world.

February 2016 Volume 50-02

Lift Up Your Hearts!

By Gerrit S. Dawson, Senior Pastor

Lift up your hearts! I love to hear those words in communion! They call us to look up from our lives to see the Jesus who is giving himself to us by the power of his Holy Spirit.

“Lift Up Your Hearts: Questing for Christ” is our theme for Lent this year, which begins February 10. We’re going to answer the “upward call” of God in our lives.

On Sunday, February 14, every person will be given a 42-day guide for reading and prayer. (You can also sign up to receive the daily readings by email.) We’ll start our seven week sermon series and all will be invited to be part of a small group studying the daily readings together.

As usual, each day will contain three sets of readings. The first will be a story or teaching from Scripture about how God calls us upward to meet him. The first week we look at the mountains of God in the Old Testament. The second week we look at the mountains of Jesus (you’ll be amazed by how important mountains were in the story of Jesus!). Then we’ll consider how Jesus ascended to heaven and the way he enables us to be spiritually united to him now.

The second reading every day will be a psalm that connects us in prayer to the

day’s theme. Not surprisingly, we’ll read all 15 of the psalms of ascent, those prayers the pilgrims made while journeying up the hill to Jerusalem.

The third reading will be a quote from some great writings, prayers or hymns from throughout church history, taking us deeper into the theme.

Every week, pieces of great art will enable us to consider our themes through the eyes of Christ’s artists through the centuries.

The day’s work can be done in 20 minutes

and I’m encouraging everyone to commit now to take a journey upward toward Jesus this Lent. For 42 days, let’s seek him by lifting up our hearts together!

I’m looking forward to taking my place with our other great small group leaders in meeting with you each week for discussion and prayer. You can sign up for both the readings and the groups today.

I love that we get to go on a quest for Christ every year in preparation for Easter, because as ever, I love being your pastor.

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FEBRUARY CALENDAR

Vivaldi's <i>Four Seasons</i>	Feb 4
rEcess	Feb 5
Community Outreach Meal	Feb 7
Church Offices Closed	Feb 8-9
Ash Wednesday	Feb 10
Weekly Lenten Services Begin	Feb 10
BRSO Concert	Feb 11
Lent Small Groups Begin	Feb 14
Discover First Class	Feb 21
Congregational Meeting	Feb 28

UPCOMING DATES

Youth Gala	Mar 11
WiM Retreat	Mar 18-19

IN MEMORIAM:

- January 10, 2016
Roy Hill
- January 11, 2016
Boots Garland, stepfather of Mitzi Barber
- January 15, 2016
Pat Adams
- January 18, 2016
Marilyn Smith, Brenda Richards' mother
- January 20, 2016
Mother of Delanea Gates
- January 21, 2016
Helen Waldie, mother of Joann Thurston

BIRTHS:

- January 4, 2016
Rachel Elizabeth Struppeck
Parents are Roxanne and Bobby Struppeck

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 ...

Feb 7 ... to the glory of God and in loving memory of Mr. and Mrs. C.W. Cabbage and Mr. and Mrs. Frances G. Frazier, parents of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Anderson by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Anderson.

Feb 14 ... to the glory of God and in loving memory of James Howard and Emogene S. Elliott by their family, Dr. and Mrs. Louis Cenac and Dr. Clifton O. Bingham III.

Feb 21 ...to the glory of God and in loving memory of Helen and John Waldie, parents of Joann Thurston and Robert Moore Thurston, father of Scott Thurston given by Joann and Scott Thurston.

Feb 28 ...to the glory of God and in loving memory of Mr. Norman Goebel Sr., by Barbara Goebel, Norman Goebel Jr., and Charles and Byron.

An Inside Look at MDO By Whitney Weiner, Director, Mother's Day Out

Sharing God's love with others through our MDO ministry:

If you have visited our church during the week, you have probably seen and heard children laughing, playing and learning. It is our desire that our MDO ministry provide families with a safe, nurturing Christ-centered environment where their children can develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and socially just as Jesus did. "And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man." Luke 2: 52.

It is also our hope that our children and families truly see and feel God's love at MDO whether it is through smiling faces, loving arms, excitement in learning and exploring, thoughts and prayers for our families and much more. Each Monday in Chapel with our children, we have a Bible story and lesson, praise God through song and learn scripture. We are thankful for the opportunity to partner with parents to plant tiny seeds in the hearts of our little ones that we pray will grow deep as they truly know the depth of our Heavenly Father's love for each one of them. We pray they also come to know our Lord and Savior personally.

How wonderful it is to hear how God is at work through our MDO ministry:

A parent sharing, "We are so thankful for MDO, a place where our daughter is loved, nurtured and can continue to blossom into a sweet, caring and confident little girl. We truly feel like



you and the teachers at MDO are an extension of our family, taking care of our little girls."

A mom who posted a video of her son on Facebook retelling the story of Easter that he learned in Chapel with Pastor Gerrit.

A MDO teacher who recently said, "I am so grateful for my job and First Presbyterian and all the blessings you all have bestowed on my life and my family. God truly is at work at MDO!"

Currently our MDO program is full and ministers to 77 families (28 of which are church families) with 97 total children enrolled in our program. Several of our MDO mothers that are non-church members attend a Thursday morning Bible Study here at First Presbyterian, MOLO - Moms of Little Ones.

It truly is a blessing to be a part of our MDO ministry, sharing God's love with our little ones and watching them grow and learn. If you are downtown, stop by and see what is going on at MDO!

Vivaldi's Four Seasons Comes to First



Thanks to our special friendship with Borislava Ilcheva, Concertmaster of Baton Rouge Symphony, Magnolia Strings will be performing the beautiful *Four Seasons* in our Sanctuary, Thursday, February 4 at 7 pm. This is an excellent outreach opportunity for gathering friends, neighbors and coworkers. The beauty of the music in our magnificent Sanctuary on a dark February night will light a flame for all who come. After the concert, all are invited to stay for coffee and dessert. Thanks to a generous member, there is no charge for admission.

Community Meal for the Homeless

You can help feed hungry bodies, minds and spirits by volunteering at the next *Open Air Meal for the Community* on Sunday, February 7. We meet at the corner of Florida Blvd. and 17th Street from 12-1 pm.

Are You Anchored in Truth? Anchored in Community?

First Presbyterian Church Women in Ministry is excited to welcome Sarah Ivill as our teacher for a two-day retreat in March 2016. Sarah lives in Matthews, NC right outside of Charlotte and is a dear friend of Elizabeth Parker, FPC Women in Ministry Director.

We'll gather for a time of fellowship, relaxation and excellent teaching, unpacking what it means to be anchored in truth and anchored in community.

Many women today are reaching out to false, futile saviors not realizing the lifeboat that could secure them is right in front of them: Jesus Christ, the heaviest anchor. Maybe no one told them that community, not isolation, reflects God's image.

SAVE THE DATE! Further details and registration opportunities to follow soon.

Anchored in Truth, Anchored in Community Women's Retreat

Friday, March 18-Saturday, March 19 Wesley Center, Woodworth, Louisiana



Weekly Lent Worship Begins Feb. 10

Wednesday Lenten Noon Communion services begin on Ash Wednesday, February 10. All are welcome to join us in the Dunham Chapel then stay for a \$5 light lunch.

Youth Gala 2016

Youth Ministry is very excited to announce the date and location for the 2016 annual Gala. Save the date for Friday, March 11 and join us at the Shaw Center. Further details and reservation opportunities are coming soon.

Discover First Class

Join Gerrit and Derek on Sunday, February 21 from 4-7 pm for this lively and informative look at what it means to join our church. We will explore what we believe, what we expect from members and how to get more involved. Dinner and childcare are provided. Visit Sherry at the Connection Center for more information.

Annual Congregational Meeting

The session has called for the annual meeting of the congregation to hear reports on the amazing work of God in our midst in 2015, to hear a report on the 2016 budget, to elect at-large members of the officer nominating committee and attend to any other business pertinent to our life together. Join us Sunday, February 28 at 10.15 in the Sanctuary. There will be no adult Sunday school.

SIAC Scholarship Applications. The Session Income Allocation Committee is accepting applications between February 22-March 21 for financial grants for individuals interested in seminary. Please contact Jaci if you have questions (387.0617).



February Circles

1ST MONDAY, FEB 1

WoW Circle 14 Ingrid Medford's @ 9.30 am
7662 Sevenoaks Ave. (329.5662)

WoW Circle 15 Roxanne Struppeck's
10814 Hwy. 959 (683.9997)

1ST TUESDAY, FEB 2

WoW Circle 1 LaNelle Johnson's @ 9.45 am
12416 Lake Sherwood Ave. N.
(292.5005)

WoW Circle 2 Barbara Goebel's @ 9.45 am
433 Shadow Oak Drive (753.8038)

WoW Circle 3 FPC Room 201 @ 10 am

1ST THURSDAY, FEB 4

WoW Circle 11 Church Library @ noon

1ST FRIDAY, FEB 5

WoW Circle 7 Sara Blankenstein's @ 2 pm
2030 Terrace Ave (344.7911)

2ND MONDAY, FEB 8

WoW Circle 13 CP Apts. @ 2 pm

3RD TUESDAY, FEB 15

WoW Circle 4 Michelle DeSimone's @ 6.30 pm
2055 Old Carriage Ln (349.8598)

WoW Circle 5 Bonnie Peden's @ 11 am
8041 Old Normandie Ln.
(456.5255)

WoW Circle 6 Rose Kyle's @ 10 am
6725 Rue Bocage (924.4009)

WoW Circle 8 Gerry Arnold's @ 6.30 pm
2244 Glenmore (344.6567)

WoW Circle 9 Albasha on Corporate @ 6.30 pm
Contact Ann Gregorie (937.0488)

3RD WEDNESDAY, FEB 16

WoW Circle 10 Bistro Byronz @ 5 pm
5412 Government St.

SUNDAY WORSHIP @ FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

COME WORSHIP WITH US!
7.45 am Chapel Communion Service
9 am Contemporary Service
11 am Classic Reformed Service
11 am Acoustic Communion

FEBRUARY SERMON TEXTS

February 7, 2016

"Twelve Years Healed"
Luke 8: 40-56

February 14, 2016

"The Upward Call"
Colossians 3: 1-3; Philippians 3: 14

February 21, 2016

"The Mountains of God"
Exodus 3: 1-8a; 19: 1-6

February 28, 2016

"The Mountains of Jesus"
Matthew 4: 8-10; 17: 1-13

PASTORAL STAFF

Gerrit S. Dawson

Senior Pastor

Richard "Dick" Gates

Associate Pastor for Global Missions and Pastoral Care

M. Whitney Alexander

Associate Pastor of City Ministry

Derek McCollum

Associate Pastor for Discipleship and Young Adults

Barry Phillips

Ministry Executive

Josh Maddin

Assistant Pastor of Student Ministry



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225.620.0245

Baton Rouge Christian Counseling Center:
225.387.2287

www.brchristiancounseling.com

The Good News About the Good News In Our Schools

Join us for our Heart in Hand Gala to celebrate what you and Manners of the Heart are doing in East Baton Rouge Parish schools on Friday, February 26 at 6.30 pm at the Rural Life Museum! Mr. Warren Drake, EBRP School Superintendent, along with the entire WAFB Morning Show crew, will honor our school, educator and volunteer of the year. MOH students will share the "teaching" songs they've learned and you'll meet our 4th and 5th grade writing contest winners who will share their original Merryville Stories on the topic of forgiveness. Come hear the good news about the Good News that's in our schools! For details, call our office, 383.3235.

Blessing Heritage Ranch

Please join us in blessing Heritage Ranch in an official work day on March 5 from 8 am-12 pm. We will meet at the church at 7.30 am sharp. See you there in your work boots and cowboy hats!

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From Judie and Dick Gates

From the bottom of our hearts we are so very grateful for the incredible opportunity to serve all of you here at FPC and will miss you more than you know. We pray God's richest blessings upon you as we leave for our new home and family.

In Christ, Judie and Dick Gates

New Address in Arizona:

3728 W. Abrams Dr.
New River, AZ 85087

He Is Risen Signs

Let's share the joy of our Lord's resurrection with our neighbors. "He Is Risen" yard signs are available for purchase at the Connection Center. Before Easter turn the blank side toward your street. After Easter turn it around to reveal "He Is Risen." The \$5 per sign covers the cost of this Children's Ministry project.

Lift Up Your Hearts! *continued*

Financial Notes

This past Christmas, you gave more than \$48,000 in our special offering! That's astounding. Brian Sleeth of the Christian Outreach Center and Nancy Zito from Gardere Community Christian School both report how overwhelmed with gratitude they feel toward our church.

Meanwhile, the session has approved a balanced budget for 2016 of approximately \$3.5 million, built upon your regular, sacrificial tithes and offerings. The finances undergirding our ministry will be presented at the annual meeting of the congregation on Sunday, February 28 at 10.15 am in the Sanctuary.

Gent

Children's Choir Moves to Wednesdays

The Joyful Noise Choir is moving to Wednesdays at 7 pm.