



## Listening Through the Crack by Gerrit Dawson, Senior Pastor

What if you found the door to the divine throne room left slightly ajar? What if you could listen through that crack to overhear what the Father, Son and Holy Spirit were saying to each other? And what if you discovered they were talking about us?!

*Hidden Conversations: Overhearing the Trinity* is the theme for three special presentations January 31/February 1. We call it a “Stay-Treat” because it’s like a retreat: we eat together, hang out together and study the Word together. But we get to go home and sleep in our own beds! Friday evening and Saturday morning, Dr. Matthew Bates will lead our explorations of conversations recorded in Scripture between members of the Trinity. Often overlooked entirely, these amazing passages led the early church to realize that the one God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We actually get to overhear the Trinity talking about how to save us! Mark your calendars now! You will never read Scripture the same way again! All this, plus a great dinner Friday night, yummy desserts and a special track for kids. Also, I’ll be leading an intro session to the topic in the Crossroads Class January 5, the

Kingdom Builders class January 12 and the Essentials class January 19 to help get us ready.

### Hellos and Goodbyes

As the New Year begins, we say goodbye to some faces we love and hello to some faces we will grow quickly to love. Elizabeth Parker has concluded her five and a half years with us, and we give thanks for dedication among our women and in the ministry of the Word. Nancy Spiller is concluding her second tour as a worship director.

We’re so grateful she postponed her retirement to step in last summer when we had a critical need. There’s only one Nancy! And we welcome Chris Phillips as our new Director of Worship.

Chris begins January 12. He is moving here from Jackson, MS along with his wife Virginia and son Benjamin. I know you’ll be delighted to meet the Phillips.

**HIDDEN**  **overhearing the trinity**  
**CONVERSATIONS**

And I’m delighted to begin another new year with you, beloved congregation!

*Gerrit*



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MEDIA

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Church Offices Closed	Jan 1
rEcess	Jan 3
Prayer Gathering Resumes	Jan 5
Women's Bible Studies Resume	Jan 8
Polar Thang MS Retreat	Jan 17-19
<i>Hidden Conversations Stay-Treat</i>	Jan 31-Feb 1

## ONGOING EVENTS

Evening Prayer Gathering resumes January 5

## UPCOMING FEB EVENTS

Men's Skeet Shooting and Chili	Feb 8
Parenting Seminar - Children with Anxiety	Feb 9
Youth Houston Mission Trip	Feb 21-26

## MARRIAGES:

December 21, 2019  
Mary Kathryn Powell to Robert Davis

## BAPTISMS:

December 22, 2019  
Declan Page Kurtz  
Parents are Leah and Tyler Kurtz  
Grandparents are Rhonda and Gerrit Dawson

## IN MEMORIAM:

December 14, 2019  
John Starring  
Father of Reneé Furr

## SANCTUARY FLOWERS

The flowers are placed in the Sanctuary to the glory of God and . . .

JAN 5 . . . in loving memory of Dana Baker Othmer by Hans, Devan and Jacob Othmer.

JAN 12 . . . in loving memory of Mr. and Mrs. Frank L. Norwood, Jr. and Larry Charles Musgrove, Sr. by Chrystal Norwood Musgrove and family.

JAN 19 . . . in loving memory of Allison Poché Brumfield by her family.

JAN 26 . . . 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.

The Sanctuary flowers serve to honor a departed loved one or celebrate with thanksgiving cherished people or events. If you would like to donate flowers for a particular Sunday, please contact Kathy Mullins at 291.3095.

## "Hidden Conversations: Overhearing the Trinity" Stay-Treat

The early church discovered the Father, Son and Holy Spirit discussing our redemption! These prophetic "scripts" in the Old Testament reveal the drama of the Triune God's saving work. Dr. Matthew Bates will guide us through these overlooked passages which enshrine the mystery of God's loving nature.

Join us for our winter Stay-Treat. Friday evening, January 31, 6-9 pm; Saturday, February 1, 8.30-Noon. Three dynamic presentations, dinner, fancy dessert, continental breakfast, a children's track and infant care. Early bird special: \$10 per individual or \$30 per family if you register on or by January 25, 2020. After January 25, the price increases by 50%. Fee applies whether you attend all or part of the Stay-Treat.



## Right Now Media Darin Travis, Director for Discipleship

Have you ever been to a holiday party and received a gift that was a re-gift? Sometimes those gifts can be a little less desirable, but I have great news. First Presbyterian Church is giving you a gift that you are going to love receiving again! As the director for discipleship at our church, I want you to have the gift of Right Now Media (RNM). I announced two years ago that I had purchased a church-wide account for all who love FPC, but I think it is time to remind you of what a great treasure trove of godly material it is.



RNM is a lot like a Christian version of Netflix but with a much greater emphasis on teaching. There are plenty of entertaining videos for kids, such as *What's in the Bible* and *Adventures in Odyssey*. But where RNM really stands out is its teaching for adults. Whenever I want to study a book in the Bible, I love going to RNM and watching a *How to Read* summary of the book. For example, type in the search bar "Psalms," then scroll down to the customizable training section and click on Tim Mackie's *How to Read Psalms*. It is a powerful 9 minute summary!

If you're looking for Bible study content for personal or small group use, RNM has tons of content from some of the most recognizable Christian teachers today. If it's a topic that you're curious about, such as parenting, you will be amazed how many great videos can be found on the topic.

With this announcement of a gift you already have, I did want to make you aware of a couple of things that have improved with RNM since 2017. Some new users can get overwhelmed with how much content is on the site. To help with this, I have created a FPC "Channel" that will have specific content that I think our church will enjoy including a "Staff Favorites" section. (Continue to check the FPC channel as we'll be adding new content to it all the time.) The other greatest improvement to RNM is your ability to access it. Before you had to sign-up via the invitation that I sent to the email our church has on file for you. If you lost that email, I had to manually create another invitation for you to join. Now, all you have to do is go to our FPC website, find the RNM link, and from there you will be able to directly create an account. Now that's a pretty easy gift to unwrap!!!

Enjoy the new year and when you have time to catch your breath, check out RNM. My hope is that the teaching found there will complement the excellent teaching we receive every Sunday from the pulpit—and that we may walk deeply with Christ together as a body!

## A Farewell Benediction by Elizabeth Parker

One of my favorite passages of Scripture is this benediction Paul offers to the Ephesians (Eph 3: 20-21): "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen."

I wait with excited anticipation as I think of God working out in our lives more than we could ever ask or imagine. As I leave First Presbyterian, I pray that you will be perceptive to the power that is at work in you. That you will know the presence and love of God as he guides and leads you. I pray that your life, and mine, will glorify this God that can do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine. May we serve him well! I love you.

**2019 Ministry Executive Report** by Barry Phillips, Ministry Executive

As our new year begins, you should know that our special Christmas Offering for the Gardere Christian Community School and the Christian Outreach Center was extraordinary. These two ministries represent mission opportunities that each have a tremendous return on investment. They are personally impacting people who would otherwise be jobless and homeless or “at risk” children and their families in ways too numerous to list.

There is a passage of Scripture in 2 Corinthians, Chapter 8 about giving. You’d recognize it as including the verse about the cheerful giver. The Bible translation The Message puts it this way:

I want you to take plenty of time to think it over, and make up your mind what you will give. That will protect you against sob stories and arm-twisting. God loves it when the giver delights in the giving . . . This most generous God . . . gives you something you can then give away, so that you can be generous in every way, producing with us great praise to God.

I am so gratified to be part of a church where there are not “sob stories” or “arm twisting.” We know what it means to participate in God’s economy. Our generosity enables us to actively participate in over 30 local ministries, financially support over 20 missionaries and worship our Lord in glorious ways, teaching our children about the love of Christ. Our 2020 budget will enable us to continue living our faith in these ways.

Your church’s Finance Committee, Session and department heads are trying hard to bring to a close their work on the operating budget for 2020. As was the case last year, we enter the new year with about 100 of our fellowship having not yet turned in Estimates of Giving. This represents a significant sum. It would be a great help to receive those soon.

I wish for you all a most blessed New Year. May our Lord bless you and keep you and cause His face to shine upon you. May your new year be full of opportunities to participate in God’s economy.

**New Beginnings in 2020!** by Nancy Spiller, Creative Arts Director

Well, this is it!! It’s really here. My last Sunday to lead worship at FPC is January 5. It has been great to have had these extra 6 months with you! God surely has a sense of humor when it comes to the plans we make. He is in control!

It has been my honor and God’s blessing to serve as Creative Arts Director and Worship Team director for almost 30 years. I know that is rare. We had the utmost fun to the very end, closing the 2019 year with “The Best Christmas Pageant Ever”, Live Nativity, and amazing Christmas Eve services, because it’s all about Jesus. I have always known that. He saved me, changed my life, and directed my music career and path to this church many years ago. My children were raised by many of you, I met my husband Rick here, and we were married in the Dunham chapel 25 years ago this past November!

I want to say a very, very special thank you to the worship team, and all of the creative arts friends that have volunteered to be in productions all of these years. Some of you have been with me for many years. I would name you, but I am afraid I will leave someone out. We really have been a “team”, and teams that work hard and pray hard together will cherish good memories and remain friends forever. But I will miss working alongside you very much.

My hope and prayer for you personally and to the body of Christ in this church has always been that our worship be pleasing and acceptable to God, and that we reach out to our community in creative ways that give people opportunities to come to the foot of the cross of Jesus. So keep pressing on, don’t ever give up, and I look forward to seeing you again, but maybe it will be from the balcony!

Philippians 3: 14 “I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.” Thank you so much.



**SUNDAY WORSHIP**

7.45 Chapel Communion  
9 am Contemporary  
11 am Classic Reformed

**JANUARY SERMON TEXTS**

Texts are subject to change.

JANUARY 5, 2020  
Matthew 7: 12; Ephesians 4: 32-5: 2

JANUARY 12, 2020  
Philippians 4: 4-9

JANUARY 19, 2020  
Ephesians 4: 1-3; Colossians 3: 12-15

JANUARY 26, 2020  
1 Timothy 6: 6-10; 17-19

**PASTORAL STAFF**

GERRIT DAWSON  
Senior Pastor

WHITNEY ALEXANDER  
Associate Pastor of Missions

BARRY PHILLIPS  
Ministry Executive

JIM SOLOMON  
Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care & Prayer

DARIN TRAVIS  
Director of 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

## **Focused Fellowship: Through the Decades!** by Jaime Carnaggio

Each month, Women's Ministry organizes focused fellowship targeting women in specific decades. There is no agenda! These are simply extra opportunities to gather together outside of the church walls for food, fellowship and fun.

Did you grow up on Pearl Jam or own a BFF bracelet? The 20s/30s gatherings are for you! Meets in January & June.

Did you own leg warmers or dance to Whitney Houston? The 30s/40s gatherings are for you! Meets in April & October.

Did you grow up with the Jackson 5 or own a pair of bell bottoms? The 40s/50s gatherings are for you. Meets in February & August.

Did you own a pair of go-go boots or rock out to the Temptations? The 50s/60s gatherings are for you! Meets in May & November.

Did you own a poodle skirt or swoon over Elvis Presley? The 60s/70s+ gatherings are for you! Meets in March & September.

Do you identify with all of the above? Then don't worry about your age and come to any or all of the gatherings! Anyone is welcome! Bring a friend! Stay tuned for dates and locations. Or you may contact Jaime Carnaggio ([jaimc@fpcbr.org](mailto:jaimc@fpcbr.org)).

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## **Romania Mission Trip Meeting**

Interested in learning more about the 2020 Romania Mission trip? Join Whitney Alexander for an important informational meeting Sunday, January 19, 6-7 pm at John and Donna Schwab's house (2446 June Street).

## **"Kingdom of God" SS Series**

The "Kingdom of God" is found in over 100 places in the New Testament. Scholars agree. It is the governing motif in the NT. And although not mentioned in the OT, the idea is firmly rooted there. But what *is* it? Is the kingdom of God really "within you?" Is it internal, a divine spark in our hearts? Or is it external—a future heavenly dimension, or an earthly realm to be established now? Or is it something else? Jesus' teaching left many scratching their heads. It has come, yet lies in the future. It is about to happen yet is still far off. Come join this 6-part adult series on "What the Bible Says about the Kingdom of God" taught by Lloyd Lunceford. The class will emphasize Scripture, feature famous works of art and include Oscar winning film clips. Beginning on January 12 at 10.10 am in the Crossroads class, Education Building, room 202.