



## I'll Be Back! by Gerrit Dawson, Senior Pastor

Ten weeks! That's a long time. That's incredibly generous. I'm so very grateful for the sabbatical leave the elders granted me this summer. The plan is to refresh, recharge and get ready for the next seven years of ministry.

You will be in good hands. The "lads" will preach a sermon series on 1 John: Josh, Whitney, Darin and Barry will each take a chapter. In July, we will have one combined service each Sunday at 10.30. Jim will lead off with an important July 1 sermon on faith and the nation. Then we have a series of delightful guest preachers: Derek McCollum, Carmen LaBerge, Ben Cunningham and Alec Flynt will all be holding down the fort. You will be encouraged and challenged, and the time will go by in a blink.

I know I can count on each of you to keep our church strong and vibrant during this time. We have an excellent staff and great elders. As I recall, seven years ago when I got back, everything was actually running smoother than before I left! I'm sure the same will be true.

Rhonda and I will be "across the pond" as you read this, taking some time in England and Scotland. Our eldest son Micah and his wife Rachel will be joining us for part of the trip. I'll also be

attending a Torrance Retreat along the shores of Loch Tay. It's three days of discussing the theology of my treasured mentors with colleagues whom I haven't seen in years. Call me a pig in theological slop!

The rest of the time we will spend in North Carolina. I hope to do some deep reading on Jesus and the Psalms, pondering how he prayed from the same prayer book we do. Also, I've signed up for an online course called *Story for Script*. John Yorke's book on story structure has profoundly influenced the way I shape sermons in the last six months. I'm excited for the opportunity to interact with Yorke and other writers about how the deep, basic structure of stories shapes all manner of communication. We'll be enjoying

lots of family time, including the annual celebration of a lot of July birthdays.

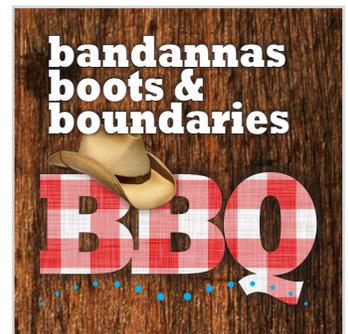
Truly, we will miss being with you. I am grateful for the opportunity to refresh spiritually without the normal work load, but oh I will miss this congregation I have grown to love so much. Keep us in your prayers and we'll be back August 5.

*Gerrit*



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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Young Adults Lunch June 3  
 Women in Ministry BBQ June 16  
 Father's Day June 17  
 "I AM" Summer Study Begins June 20  
 VBS June 25-June 29

ONGOING EVENTS  
 "12 Steps for Christians" Weds., 12.15 pm

UPCOMING JULY EVENTS  
 10.30 am Worship Each Sunday in July

BIRTHS:  
 May 11, 2018  
 Luke William Guidry  
 Parents are Hattie and Jonathan Guidry

May 20, 2018  
 Adeline Lynn Tomeny  
 Parents are Katherine and Jade Tomeny

May 27, 2018  
 Lilley Catherine McVea  
 Parents are Claire and Stephens McVea

BAPTISMS:  
 May 13, 2018  
 Milford "Mik" Wampold IV  
 Alder Rose Wampold  
 Parents are Kim and Mike Wampold

Olivia Goebel Neely  
 Parents are Sandi and Chris Neely

IN MEMORIAM:  
 May 5, 2018  
 Mary Pat Jenkins  
 Sister-in-law of Jan Jenkins

May 18, 2018  
 Pat Tomancik  
 Mother of Liz Voelker

May 28, 2018  
 Susan Spaht  
 Niece of Margery Fabré

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 . . .  
 JUNE 3 . . . in memory of Sue and Bill Edrington and Mary and Emmett Edrington by Susie and Buzzy Heroman, Leah and Billy Edrington and Lynn and Mark Edwards.

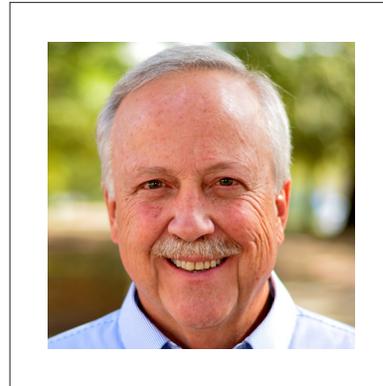
JUNE 10 . . . Open date.

JUNE 17 . . . to the glory of God and in loving memory of Jack H. Field by Sharon, David, Stephanie, Sydney and Estin Field.

JUNE 24 . . . to the glory of God and in loving memory of our parents: Joachim and Dorothy Aubert and Pete and Emma Ramos by Fé and Murphy Aubert.

## By God's Grace and Mercy by Whitney Alexander, Associate Pastor of Missions

On May 31, 2017, I was driving to New Orleans to do pre-marital counseling for three couples, but I was driving dangerously tired and did not realize my high level of exhaustion. As I drove about forty miles along Interstate 10, my eyes closed and only because of an angel did I awaken in time to keep from rear-ending an 18-wheeler. My eyes opened in time to slam into the right side of the 18-wheeler. The Lord Jesus allowed me to stay on this earth, but I received multiple breaks on the left side of my body. Through three operations and a day of radiation at OLOL, the Lord quietly began to put my heart and soul back together along with my broken body. I was crushed on the outside but my spirit was destroyed on the inside. I cried out to the Lord daily asking him to please help me through this pain.



Everything I enjoyed doing for nineteen years at First Presbyterian Church Baton Rouge came to a halt in one second. I was in ICU and did not realize the severity of my injuries for about a week. When I realized that I could not walk or get out of bed, my heart sank lower and lower. Many people came by to say hello and cheer my spirits, but the loss of my freedom to come and go came to an end for a few months. I tried to be calm and cheerful, but this was difficult as I had three plates in my body along with 29 screws. The pain was incredible, and my left leg had no feeling for about three months as nerves began to regenerate after severe injuries to my hip and pelvis. I began to experience anxiety and depression. In all my days of serving the Lord and living life to the fullest, now I had to learn how to receive and rely on hundreds of others to care for my broken body and devastated heart. But God had new plans to bring me back to him in daily quiet times and through the kindness of friends and strangers. God brought my heart back to him as I cried through reading the book of Psalms and doing my best to encourage others in the rehab hospital with me.

Why did I allow myself to be so dangerously tired on May 31, 2017? I am not completely sure of this answer but the month of May was painful as I endured the loss of my 93 year old Aunt Helen as she had a stroke and died a few days later. My heart grieved the loss of this aunt and the influence she had on my entire life. Then the sudden loss of a beautiful friend who went home to the Lord crushed my spirit again. I was feeling pain and exhaustion and did not realize the toll this was taking on my heart and soul. My body was fatigued, and I was not resting properly during a more than active Spring 2017.

As of May 31 this year, I have learned how to exercise with perseverance as I continue to go to the medical wellness facility three days a week (115 visits and counting). I have chosen to care for my body with a determination unlike any time in my life so one day I will be able to enjoy biking, hiking, and hopefully, snow skiing. I have also chosen to care for my soul in ways that I have never done before. I have read and reread *Sacred Rhythms* and am applying these spiritual disciplines in my daily life. I have attempted and failed in the past to do this, but God has given me another opportunity to grow closer to him. My one year anniversary of being renewed, refreshed and encouraged to move at a slower pace has allowed me to begin healing from the inside out. My prayer for the remainder of my life is to seek his face and pray without ceasing before choosing to move forward in any and all activities.

My family has been a tremendous blessing, and hundreds of friends continue to encourage and be cheerleaders for a full recovery. Your kind words to our family have made all the difference in my healing, and we are thankful for every visit, phone call, email, card, meal, and hug given. We have felt the body of Christ surround us with love and compassion. We love each one of you deeply!

The Great I AM by Katie Forsthoff

**Do you hunger to know more about this God of the universe?**

**Who exactly is he and what is he about?**

**Who does God say he is?**

In his infinite kindness to us and his deep desire for intimate relationship with us, God has revealed himself to us through Scripture. This Summer, we will take an in-depth look at "The I AM" Statements of Jesus in the Gospel of John. With



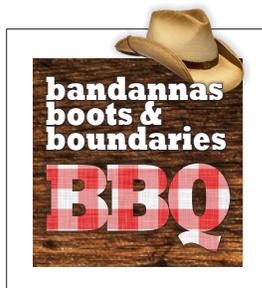
each statement, Jesus uses vivid word pictures to give us a powerful and personal understanding of who he is - and who we are in light of that.

Discover the God who wants to be known. Blessed be the Lord I AM.

**Wednesdays at 6.30 pm, June 20-August 1**  
**First Presbyterian Church Reception Room**  
 Register online for childcare at [fpchr.org/childcarereservations](http://fpchr.org/childcarereservations).

**Bandannas, Boots & Boundaries - June 16**

Ladies, pull out your schedules and mark your calendars for a Women in Ministry Summer BBQ! Whether you've been visiting First Presbyterian for 10 days or attending for 10 years we would love to have you join us! On Saturday, June 16 from 5-7 pm we will meet at the home of Kathy and Julius Mullins for some Smokin' Aces barbecue and an enjoyable time with other First Presbyterian women! There will be entertainment and a message on creating and sustaining boundaries by licensed professional counselor Sherry Kadair. Registration closes June 12. Cost is \$10 per person. We'll see you there! Register online.



**Needed: A Few Good Men!**

This year the wonderful Men's choir will lead us in worship at the 9 am service for Father's Day, Sunday, June 17. It is always a blessing to hear the men raise their voices together. Rehearsal is Wednesday, June 13 at 6.15 pm in the Sanctuary. Please consider joining us this year. Contact Nancy Spiller ([nancy@fpchr.org](mailto:nancy@fpchr.org)) if you have questions.

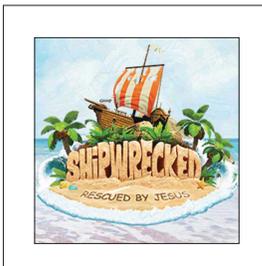


**Shipwrecked . . . Rescued by Jesus**

Get ready for an adventure to an uncharted island where kids are rescued by Jesus! Children's Ministry welcomes all members and their friends to VBS 2018: "Shipwrecked . . . Rescued by Jesus." Kids will be anchored in the truth that Jesus carries them through every storm in life. They'll learn to hold on to God's promises when they are lonely, they worry, they struggle, do wrong and feel powerless.

Campers and volunteers may register online at [fpchr.org/vbs](http://fpchr.org/vbs).

**Monday, June 25-Thursdays, June 28 9 am-2 pm (extended hours this year)**



**SUNDAY WORSHIP**

7.45 Chapel Communion  
 9 am Contemporary  
 11 am Classic Reformed

**JUNE SCRIPTURE PASSAGES**

Texts are subject to change.

JUNE 3  
 1 John 2

JUNE 10  
 1 John 3

JUNE 17  
 1 John 4

JUNE 24  
 1 John 5

**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 & Young Adults



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[fpchr.org](http://fpchr.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](http://brchristiancounseling.com)

## Gold for It!



Will Johannessen

FPC member Will Johannessen has been named The Advocate's Boys Athlete of the Year. Will competes in the Special Olympics and is looking forward to the upcoming games in Seattle where he intends to "Gold for it!"

## Young Adults Gatherings

We would love to have you (20s and 30s) join us for a meal and a chance to connect over lunch. On June 3 at 12.30 pm, we'll meet for lunch at Barat and Darin Travis' house (1914 Ingleside Drive) after the 11 am service. Children are welcome as well. The other Sunday gatherings are July 8 and August 5. Can't wait to see you!

## 2018 Youth Summer Trips



A houseboat trip to Lake Ouachita, a mission trip to Houston and The Great Escape in MS. There are lots of fun things planned for the youth this summer. Details and registration are now available online. We love it when your kids invite their friends. Spread the word!

## We're Doing It Again!



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

**FPC Podcast.** Visit the church website ([fpabr.org](http://fpabr.org). *podcast*) or the iTunes Store to download or update the First Presbyterian Church of Baton Rouge app.



## SUMMER PRAYER SERVICE

The Sunday evening prayer service is taking a break in June and July. Contact Jim Solomon for other prayer opportunities this Summer ([jim@fpabr.org](mailto:jim@fpabr.org)).