



Season of Thanks by Gerrit Dawson, Senior Pastor

It's easy for me to be thankful for our church. We stand in a crowded Sanctuary singing "A Mighty Fortress" with the organ and brass sounding forth. I rejoice to be in the company of the saints, both the ones in that hour and all the faithful ones who have raised their voices through two centuries. I can't help but smile when I see the sweet faces of our Mother's Day Out children gathering for chapel. Practicing for the Christmas play with elementary students, I delight in their enthusiasm. Hearing the questions of confirmation students, laughing with a group of men about the foibles of our discipleship, or feeling the passion in our members doing city mission and international ministry, I'm just moved with thanks. All year long I am grateful for our life among the extraordinary believers in Baton Rouge.



Just a few highlights for particular praise. The session has called Chris Phillips to be our **new worship director**. At Belhaven University, Chris taught worship leadership for both traditional and contemporary styles. At Lakeside Presbyterian in Jackson, Chris has been designing and leading services in both accents. We look forward to welcoming Chris,

his wife Virginia and his son Benjamin in January.

The session has authorized our hosting a **third Christmas Eve worship service**. This 11 am Sanctuary program will be especially designed for families with younger children. We're trying it out this year in hopes of offering a convenient option for little ones while also alleviating some of the overcrowding we've had at the four o'clock service. More details next month.

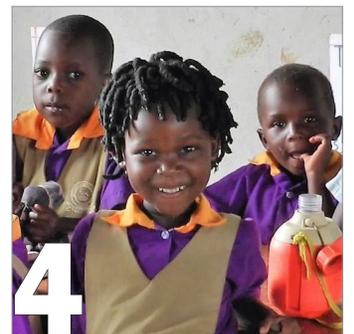


We dedicate our **Estimates of Giving November 10**. My challenge: fill out your card *before* the LSU/Alabama game! That way you will know what matters most. And if the unimaginable happens and our idols are shattered, you can remember you acknowledged God first! And if our football dreams come true, you'll be delighted to celebrate with this act of faith. Just sayin'!

As ever, I hope you can tell how proud I am of you and how much I love being your pastor,

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

rEcess	Nov 1
Women's Ruth Retreat	Nov 1-2
Daylight Savings - Fall Back	Nov 3
Good Grief Seminar	Nov 9
Stewardship Sunday	Nov 10
Foto Sisters Christmas Concert	Nov 20
Church Offices Closed	Nov 28-29

ONGOING EVENTS

Evening Prayer Gathering Sundays at 5 pm

UPCOMING DEC EVENTS

"Best Christmas Pageant Ever"	Dec 6 and 8
Pilgrimage	Dec 8
Women's Advent Brunch	Dec 14
Chancel Choir Concert	Dec 15

BAPTISMS:

October 13, 2019
Helena Grace Comeaux
Parents are Brittany and Jamy Comeaux

Callum Michael HeDi Norris
Parents are Elizabeth and Michael Norris

IN MEMORIAM:

October 8, 2019
Helen L. Gassie
Mother of Janice Warren

October 12, 2019
Georgina Bradley

October 20, 2019
Matt Bennett

SANCTUARY FLOWERS

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

NOV 3 . . . in loving memory of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Dean Glisson, Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Wesley McLean by Mike and Linda Glisson and family.

NOV 10 . . . to all Veterans who have served their country, dedicated by Albert Penny, Army Lieutenant Colonel, Retired.

NOV 17 . . . in loving memory of E. David Kendrick and Mr. and Mrs. L.S. Bridges by Bobbie Kendrick and family.

NOV 24 . . . in loving memory of Mr. and Mrs. William J. Miller and Blake Miller by the Robert Miller family.

Coping with Loss by Jim Solomon

Loss is a part of life. Some have lost jobs, some have lost relationships to breakup, divorce or death, some have lost their good health, while others grieve the loss of how things used to be.

Regardless of the type of loss you have experienced, it is significant to your Savior who loves you like none other. Someone you love may be in a better place but are you? You see, grief cannot be avoided and is something we can go through or grow through.

On Saturday, November 9 from 10 am - 12 pm, we are hosting a Good Grief Seminar. During this time, insight will be shared regarding the psychological, as well as the emotional, physical, relational and spiritual, effects of grief in our lives. We will focus on steps that can be taken to rise above what would hold us below in how we deal with loss in our lives. There will be time for Q & A.

The seminar is free of charge and open to anyone. To register, please contact Laura Shaw (laura@fpcbr.org or 620.0222). Coffee and light refreshments will be served. Childcare will be available.



Lee Strobel to Speak at Caring to Love Ministries Banquet

Lee Strobel, best-selling author of *The Case for Christ*, will be speaking at the annual Caring to Love banquet, Thursday, November 14, 6.30 at the Capitol Hilton. First Presbyterian has a number of complementary tickets; sign up at the Connection Center to enter the "lottery" for a free dinner.



Foto Sisters Concert, November 20

Foto Sisters Christmas Concert, Wednesday, November 20, 7 pm. The talented sisters we love so much will be back from Nashville to perform a Christmas program in our Sanctuary. Admission is free; a love-offering will be taken.



"The Best Christmas Pageant Ever"

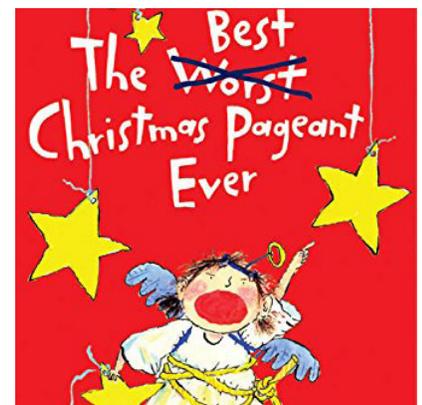
"The Best Christmas Pageant Ever" is a hilarious Christmas classic. A couple is struggling to put on a church Christmas pageant and is faced with casting the Herdman kids—probably the most inventively awful kids in history! You won't believe the mayhem—and the fun—when the Herdmans collide with the Christmas story head on and end up teaching the town the true meaning of Christmas.

Join us for this fun play directed by Ray Gaspard, produced by Nancy Spiller and featuring many First Presbyterian youth cast members.

Performance Dates:

Friday, December 6 at 7 pm:
(Same night as the Downtown Festival of Lights)

Sunday, December 8 at 4 pm (before the Pilgrimage)



Prayerful Listening by Whitney Alexander

At a Young Life Staff retreat at Windy Gap in 1991, Henri Nouwen asked, "What is it like for you to be in the presence of God? What images come to mind?" Almost immediately, the answer came from deep within me. It's like visiting my grandmother. Every Saturday from age eight till 18, I would take three buses across the city to clean her home and enjoy a Saturday lunch that was incredible. My grandmother desired spending time with me, and I loved the adventure to get to her home. After cleaning her home and having an amazing lunch, we would visit with one another, sitting in the quiet of her home playing a few games of "crazy eights or canasta." I would speak about my life and ask her about hers. Grandma listened and I listened. There were times of silence, and there was no sense of hurry, except she wanted me on the bus by 4.30 to begin the trek home to uptown Nola.

Even when I got busy with other things and came less often, Grandma didn't scold me for not coming sooner. She always greeted me as though I was the best part of her week. I don't recall her telling me she loved me or that she was praying for me, though there was no doubt that both were true. She gave me an image of God that was accepting and loving and spacious. She helped to listen my soul into being, and she pursued my heart since I was born. Grandma Thelma was my only living grandparent when I was born, and we remained very close until her death on November 15, 1989 (the same day our son Andrew came into our lives). The irony of this gift was that the Lord Jesus was in charge of the timing.

Perhaps Grandma guided my vocational life without ever speaking of it or planning it. May-

be she had a desire I would become a priest or pastor, but grandma helped to prepare me by which my spiritual life has been nurtured. Throughout my adult life through listening and talking in small groups of people, I have been seeking to deepen my life in God. These small groups have often been formed through the church and youth ministry, and became known as breakfast clubs with young men and adults. Since 1976, it has been a joy to listen to God and to others, and this has been a precious gift. It is called prayerful listening.

Henri Nouwen on this Young Life staff retreat shared of the healing that is available in prayerful listening. "Healing means, first of all, the creation of an empty but friendly space where those who suffer can tell their story to someone who can listen with real attention. Healers are hosts who patiently and carefully listen to the story. Our most important question as healers is not, 'What to say or to do?' but, 'How to develop enough inner space where the story can be received?' Healing is the humble but also very demanding task of creating and offering a friendly empty space where strangers can reflect without fear, and find the confidence that makes them look for new ways right in the center of their confusion" (*Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life*, p. 67-68).

My grandmother, in her own limited situation, without knowing the larger impact of her faithfulness, pointed me to God, who is always ready to listen, to heal, to love and to invite us into deeper places. Without a doubt, grandma was prayerfully listening to every word that I shared and our Heavenly Father does the same.

Annual Downtown Pilgrimage, December 8

Stroll from church to church downtown enjoying a short Christmas concert at each stop. Free and open to the public. The Pilgrimage begins at Mt. Zion Baptist at 5.30 pm, arrives at First Presbyterian at 6.30 with the final stop at First Baptist at 8 pm. Full schedule is online at fpcbr.org.

Angels Arrive November 17

Please stop by the Reception Room to receive the name of a child whose parent is incarcerated. You can bless them with Angel Tree gifts on behalf of their parent this Christmas. Angels are available November 17 and December 1. Coordinator is Cheryl Brodnax, 678.2448.

Be an Advent Reader

Readers are needed for special Advent worship readings. Please contact Jaci Gaspard (jaci@fpcbr.org) with the Sunday you are available.

SUNDAY WORSHIP

7.45 Chapel Communion
9 am Contemporary
11 am Classic Reformed

NOVEMBER SERMON TEXTS

Texts are subject to change.

NOVEMBER 3, 2019
1 Corinthians 12: 12-14; 26-27

NOVEMBER 10, 2019
1 John 1: 7-2: 2

NOVEMBER 17, 2019
1 Corinthians 15: 50-58

NOVEMBER 24, 2019
Romans 1: 21
1 Thessalonians 5: 16-18

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
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Water Ways Exhibit to Benefit Bethany Centre in Uganda

Peter Kiwanuka, founder of Bethany Centre Primary School in Uganda, one of our Global Mission partners, will be visiting in November. All are invited to welcome Peter at a night of art, music and fun on November 22, 5-8 pm at VanGuard Gallery in Stephen Wilson Stained Glass Studio, 1469 Laurel Street. "Water Ways" is the theme for the exhibit featuring art of different media from over 60 local and regional artists, including several church members. Lindsey Spiller and his band will be providing music and refreshments will be served. Proceeds directly benefit the school and our new partnership with Knickers for New Life. Their purpose is to raise awareness of the barriers Ugandan schoolgirls face in getting an education and improving their socio-economic options through providing underwear, sanitary supplies, improved latrines for girls and boys, hand wash stations and mosquito repellent soap for all! Please contact Claire Wilson for more information at 225.892.1364.

Exhibit Details:

Friday, November 22
5-8 pm
VanGuard Gallery
1469 Laurel St.



Christmas Poinsettia Orders

Members are invited to contact Sherry in the church office (387.0617 or sherry@fpcbr.org) to purchase a poinsettia in memory or celebration of a loved one. Poinsettias will be placed in the Chapel and Sanctuary. \$35 each.

Christmas Bags for Malachi Dads

Items are being collected for Christmas bags to be distributed to the Malachi Dads (prisoners) at Angola Penitentiary. Please consider making a donation and dropping it off at the Connection Center: soap, antiperspirant, toothpaste/toothbrush, shampoo, lotion, body wash, white athletic socks or baby powder. Cash donations also accepted.