If you aren’t one, you probably can’t spell it. If you are one, you probably can’t explain it.

After all, if I sent you to the churches where two of my dear colleagues in town pastor, you’d probably say, “Well, that seemed familiar. Same message. Same gospel, just a bit different style.” That’s true of the historically orthodox faith, the deep main stream of Christianity: we have the same core, even though Bradley Aucoin at Christ Covenant is a Baptist and Drew Rollins at St. Alban’s is an Episcopalian!

So what’s distinctive about Presbyterians and why does it matter?

Well, from my point of view, I love being Presbyterian because you can’t fire me in one meeting! Nor can a bishop just move me to another location. The presbytery has to consent to any hirings or firings of pastors, and it can’t force such moves.

What’s a presbytery? The meeting of churches in a region who are interconnected through voluntarily pledging themselves to mutual accountability and submission over the essentials of the faith and the way of church government.

There are about 35 churches in our Gulf South presbytery and we consider that the mission of one church is the mission of all. You might ask, “So why would our whole pastoral team take a Tuesday to drive to Gulf Shores for a meeting with a dozen other Presbyterian pastors? After all, our guys already support each other. Don’t we have enough work to do together here?” Because we belong to one another. We care for one another. We hold each other accountable and encourage one another. “Why would Rebecca and Nour Botros go visit dozens of Presbyterian churches when we support them here?” Because we belong to each other. And now the Botros’ mission belongs to hundreds of others along with us.

If Presbyterians didn’t think beyond their walls, we wouldn’t be here. After all, almost two hundred years ago, the presbytery of Mississippi looked out and realized a gospel mission was needed down here on the Bayou. At great cost and effort, they sent teams to found our church. And because we looked out, Broadmoor, University, River and River South churches came into being. Because we look out, churches grow in our country and around the world.

We belong to a denomination that wants to bring the gospel back to our nation. Research tells us that the most effective way to reach nonChristians is through new church plants. We belong to a presbytery that spans the region of the Gulf South. The elders have pledged sacred oaths to uphold one another. In the near future, we will be working together to bring the gospel to our region through new churches. That’s what we do as Presbyterians. We have a high view of God, a God of the whole earth and indeed the whole cosmos. We see how his great commission calls us beyond ourselves. If that wasn’t true, we wouldn’t even be here!

So I’m proud to be a Presbyterian. And not just because we’re stuck with each other! After all, I love being your pastor,
In Memoriam:
August 2, 2015  
Joyce Dobbins, mother of Ruth Bennett
August 3, 2015  
Spec Lewis, father of Jason Lewis
August 20, 2015  
Carol Jennings
August 22, 2015  
Jane Pickett, daughter-in-law of Yvonne Pickett

Baptisms:
August 9, 2015  
Emma Hardin Jones  
Parents are Christy and Andrew Jones
August 9, 2015  
Gracie Ivana Grosch  
Mother is Mary Anne Grosch
August 9, 2015  
Holland Elise Comeaux  
Parents are Brittany and Janny Comeaux

We Want our Children to Live for Him!
by Audra Cato

The cry of our Children’s Ministry is, “that in everything Christ might be preeminent!” (Colossians 1:18) Here at First Presbyterian we teach our children what it means to have a Christ-exalting life by equipping them with the tools they need to get there: prayer, gospel love and theologically sound lessons that point our kids to Jesus in every story. We want our kids of First Presbyterian Church not just to know about God but to know him in a deep way, such that they would rely upon him in all things. We want our kids to know that Jesus is our all and all so that they may turn to him, pray to him, believe him, trust him and live for him! This is our mission and our prayer.

We teach our children of First Presbyterian about our Triune God, so that they may learn how God the Father creates and watches over us, how God the Son saves and sustains us and how God the Holy Spirit plants faith in our hearts in order to grow it. Our children see the healing mercies of Jesus and how he provides for his people. We, as a church, model this to our little ones and model it well, by God’s grace. We show our kids what it means to engage in his mission and what it looks like to take up our cross in order to serve him wholeheartedly. Our church loves our children and they flourish in this place where they are "so loved" and nurtured! Just as our beloved Pastor Gerrit teaches our congregation to return the blessing to God by boldly reading Scripture aloud, the children are reciting and reading Scripture out loud. What music to the ears of our Father in heaven this must be!

So as you observe our Children’s Ministry program here at First Presbyterian Church, look for Christ. He is on the move! You can see him through our many volunteers pouring into the lives of our little ones. You can see him when you see prayer cards the children have written out on Sunday mornings. You can see him when our children are offering their only coins and dollars, or simply touching the offering plate giving himself or herself to God. You can see him in the attentiveness as they receive gospel-centered teaching in Sunday school. Their hearts are hungry and we want to all take part in equipping these little ones early so that they may know him and accept him as their personal Savior.

I am honored and truly blessed to take part in the life of each child—your child. My family and I reap the blessing of this God-given mission every day. I am grateful to walk alongside you as a sister, parent and friend. May Jesus Christ be praised!
Women of the Word (WoW), our Circle Ministry, is rich with fellowship and Scripture. These once a month meetings are a time to gather with other women, pray, study a Scripturally based book and even provide service opportunities. In a desire to have the title of ‘circle’ more fully represent the content of the meetings we have decided to include the title "women of the word" (WoW) to show that our primary focus is the study of the Word of God. We have also included next to the Circle (WoW) numbers the location of each meeting to be more descriptive in our branding and therefore more convenient to a woman seeking a group.

**CIRCLE 1:** Meets in various homes on the 1st Tuesday of the month at 9.45 am. For more information contact Sharon Dixon awsad@bellsouth.net.

**CIRCLE 2:** Meets in various homes on the 1st Tuesday of the month at 9.45 am. Contact Peggy Anderson for more information, 344.0127.

**CIRCLE 3:** (Downtown WoW) Meets at First Presbyterian in the education building room 201 B on the 1st Tuesday of the month at 10 am. Contact Eugenie Burglass, eburglass@cox.net, for more information.

**CIRCLE 4:** (Highland WoW) Meets at the home of Amanda Boggs on the second Tuesday of each month at 6.30. Contact Bonnie Adams for more information, adams.b@me.com.

**CIRCLE 5:** (Garden District WoW) Meets at the home of Rachel Williams (2142 Oleander) the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 11 am. Contact Bonnie Peden for more information, 456.5255.

**CIRCLE 6:** Meets in various homes the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 10 am. Contact Judy McGimsey for more information, jmckimsey@cox.net.

**CIRCLE 7:** (Garden District WoW) Meets at the home of Sarah Blankenstein the 1st Friday of the month at 2 pm. Contact Virginia Simeral for more information, 275.5535

**CIRCLE 8:** Meets in various homes the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 6.30 pm. Contact Elizabeth Rennhoff for more information, erennhoff1@gmail.com.

**CIRCLE 9:** Meets at different restaurants on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 6.30 pm. Contact Ann Gregoire for more information, 926.7042.

**CIRCLE 10:** (MidCity WoW) Meets at Bistro Byronz the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 5 pm. Contact Pat Canfield for more information, 295.0084.

**CIRCLE 11:** (Downtown WoW) Meets in the church library the 1st Thursday of the month at noon. Contact Tootie Perry for more information, 939.4265.

**CIRCLE 14:** (Bocage WoW) Meets in the home of Kristen Carney (3561 S弁vons Dr.) the 2nd Monday of the month at 9.30 am. Contact Kristen Carney for more information, 229.4087.

**CIRCLE 15:** (Zachary WoW) Meets at the home of Jess Concienne (22721 Hickey Ct.) on the 1st Monday of the month at 7 pm. Contact Jess Concienne for more information, 892.3212.

**CATH/PRES:** Meets 2nd Monday of the month. Contact Lisa Head for more information, lisa@fpcbr.org.

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**SEPTEMBER CIRCLES**

Women’s Bible Studies

**Bible studies will begin the week of Labor Day.**

**Tuesdays, 6:30 pm:** Elizabeth Parker will teach a 10 week study on Ephesians for women of all ages. Meet at Elizabeth’s house, 2502 McGrath, Apt 6. Contact Elizabeth for more info, and for her apartment gate code (elizabeth@fpcbr.org).

**Weds. at 2 pm:** Elizabeth Parker will teach Ephesians at the home of Sally Graves, 6 Oak Alley. Please contact Elizabeth for more information (elizabeth@fpcbr.org).

**Weds. at 6:30 am:** This study on 2 Samuel is for women of all ages and is taught by Lisa Head and Liz Thurston. Contact Lisa for more info (lisa@fpcbr.org).

**Thurs. at 9.30 am:** See below for the three Bible study offerings at the church.

**Ephesians:** Elizabeth Parker will teach to women of all ages in EB 202.

**Ephesians:** Jaime Carnaggio will teach to Mother’s of Little Ones (MOLO) in the library.

**Hebrews:** Robyn Zartman and Barat Travis in the bride’s room beside the chapel. This group meets every other week.

**Thanks for the Memories**

by Melvin Hale

My dear friends--my family in Christ, it is very hard to say goodbye to you. During my ten years at First Presbyterian you have become a part of me. You will always have a place in my heart that no one else can fill. I will remain a true friend of the church and will use every opportunity to stay in touch with you.

I have been called to serve as Music Director of Grace Episcopal Church in St. Francisville. I feel led by God in this endeavor and I have accepted the call to Grace Church. But I have wrestled with the decision because of my deep devotion to you - the congregation of First Presbyterian. In short, it breaks my heart to leave you.

That said, why do I feel compelled to leave? I am Episcopalian and my faith is deeply rooted in the Anglican tradition. I am not getting any younger and realize that this organist/choirmaster position at Grace Church is very likely the last opportunity I will have to serve an Episcopal church through the ministry of music. Please keep me in your prayers as I embark on this new phase of my ministry. I assure you that all of you will remain uppermost in my thoughts and prayers. Love to you all!

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**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**
Associate Pastor of Student Ministry
Fall Ministry Opportunities

Put your faith into action this fall in as little as an hour a week:

**Jobs for Life:** Weekly mentoring of a person participating in this life skills program of the Christian Outreach Center. Begins Thursday evening September 15.

**Gardere Community Christian School Fall Banquet:** September 15 at 7 pm, Renaissance Hotel.

**Buchanan Volunteers:** Reading friends, mentoring, teacher encouragement. Begins week of October 5.

**Habitat Build:** Swing the hammer, create a home. Thursday - Saturday, beginning September 24.

For more information, visit the Connection Center or contact Whitney Alexander: whitney@fpcbr.org.

September FAS Crowd

Come kick off the new FAS Crowd season and join us for lunch at Portobello’s Grill. (Bocage Village at the corner of Jefferson Hwy. and Old Hammond Hwy.)

Monday, September 14 at 11.30 am

RSVP to the church office by Thursday, September 10, 387.0617.

Come prepared to share your ideas and suggestions for the new season.

Appetizer, entrée and drink: $14.50 per person plus tax and tip. (to be paid at the restaurant)

$5 optional dessert

Assessing the Needs of Our Members

Meeting the needs of the flock can be challenging. There may be a need for food, visits, rides, handymen projects, etc. If you know of anyone who needs assistance, please call the church office. Also, we need you to volunteer. A buddy system can be arranged. God bless you for praying and considering this meaningful outreach. For additional information, please contact Pastor Dick Gates, dick@fpcbr.org or 573.9149.

SIAC Accepting Grant Applications

The Session Income Allocation Committee of First Presbyterian Church will begin accepting requests for the fall 2015 grants for ministry/mission opportunities beginning Sept. 1 and ending Sept. 28. Applications are available at fpcbr.org or by calling Jaci Gaspard, 620.0221. Applications should be sent to First Presbyterian Church, Attn.: SIAC/Jaci Gaspard, 763 North Blvd., BR, LA 70802.