

FIRST FOCUS

monthly newsletter | may 2018 | vol. 8 issue 5

happy
mother's
day



a word from PASTOR OREN

Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward. ⁴ Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. Psalm 127:3-4

How do we as a church family reach generation after generation with the gospel? This is a difficult question, and even more difficult to answer. In fact, there have been countless books, articles, conferences and seminars written and hosted for decades about how to do children and family ministry effectively within the church. If the answers to those questions were easy and the effectiveness of those principles was certain, then every church would be doing it and doing it well. But that is not the case in our modern, fast-paced, entertainment driven culture where it seems the church is spending more time and resources trying to keep up with an increasingly secular society rather than keeping up with honoring God's commands.

One of the challenges that we face together is the tremendous need in our city to reach families. Let me be clear on this matter: We are not just searching for more children; we want moms and dads just as much as children. There is merit in reaching out with focused ministry directed at children, because they will at the very least indirectly involve their parents. But what I believe FBCBR must do is make a concerted and intentional effort to reach moms and dads as well as children. We want families, and we want to strengthen and encourage families for generations to come.

I want to share with you three ideas based upon **Psalm 127:3-4** about what ministry to children and families is really about. **1) We must first understand that ministry to children and families is a lifetime investment, not just a short-term program.** We are participating in Kingdom work, but it is not our kingdom, it is God's. This is why the Psalmist writes **"children are a heritage from the Lord."** The young lives that walk through our doors each and every week are God's blessing to us, and they will be his heritage for generations to come. Our children are not ultimately for us; rather

they are for God and his purposes. We must be intentional about the ways we teach and care for them. **2) The way we bless God's kingdom is by helping parents understand their eternally significant role as the warriors who have been given arrows for battle. "Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth."**

As a parent, this truth has always struck me as being so much bigger than me. The parents of children are to be God's people, like warriors, who are fighting for God's truth and glory here on earth. And in our hands we hold our greatest weapons: our children. They will one day inherit the task of fighting for God's truth, so we are to sharpen them day after day, week after week, and year after year. This is a challenge that is always before us. Therefore, we must not only train up children, but more importantly, **their parents.** Because every parent will one day send their child out into this hostile world, and they must sharpen them in preparation for what they will encounter. **3) How do we prepare our children like "arrows"? Teach them the Word of God! Parents sharpen their children by teaching, singing, and praying the Word of God.** When we teach our children to **"hide God's Word in their hearts"**, we are actively **"training them up in the way they should go."** This makes sense, doesn't it? Teach parents to train children in what God's Word commands, and when they are ready, send them out to do as God commands. This must be our priority as a church. I know these only seem like lofty concepts without any real actions, but if we don't know what family ministry is really for, then our actions will be about programming for entertainment and convenience without a purpose.

Last month we said goodbye to our dear friends David and Lindsey Jennings. For nearly 4 years they served our children and families faithfully, and we are so grateful that God brought them to us. We are also excited about what the future holds for them in their new area of ministry and we will pray for them and God's blessings upon their ministry. And we will begin our search for another minister to our children

and families. Until that person is in place, here are 3 ways you can help grow our families in the Lord. **1) Volunteers are needed to serve in Masterpiece Kids Art Camp** (July 9-13). This is the largest event we host every year, and it is an incredible opportunity to minister to new families in our community. We need everyone's help, and there is a job for everyone. Contact the church office if you would like to help in some way, and we will find a place for you to serve. **2) We need preschool and elementary age group teachers.** While Art Camp is our largest ministry event, our weekly time of Bible study with children is our most important. This is where the watering and tilling of the soil takes place in the hearts of our children and families on Sunday and Wednesday nights. We need men and women who want to **shape and sharpen** young lives to serve Christ. Please contact Ginger Conner if you are at all interested in serving as a leader/teacher for our children. **3) Finally, we want experienced families to mentor younger couples/families.** Our young adults and parents need encouragement and care to help them in their task of living for Christ and sharpening their children for life. Having wise and loving mentors is an effective way to help these families. Invite them to dinner, or offer to babysit while mom and dad go on a much needed date, or have their entire Sunday School class over for a barbeque and enjoy their company and fellowship. God has injected life into our church family through these parents and children, so let's work together to train them up for the good of our congregation, but more importantly, for the sake of the kingdom of God. These children will be our heritage, so let us do everything we can to prepare them for kingdom work. **Please get involved. Serve where servants are needed. Pray with expectation that God will bless our efforts.** We are in this together, so let's do this together with all of our hearts for God's glory.

Your Pastor,
Dren



Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

		1 WMU	2	3	4	5
6 First Sunday Fellowship	7	8 Senior Adult Luncheon	9 Day of Prayer	10	11	12
13 Mother's Day	14	15	16	17	18	19
20 Missions Lunch Deacons Meeting	21	22	23	24	25	26
27 Trustees Meeting	28 Memorial Day Office Closed	29	30	31		

Happy Birthday!

1 Melisse Campbell	9 Don Dias	14 Brice Lee	21 Kathryn McCutchen
Kaitlin Jordan	Cindy Major	Hayley Welch	Christian Kelly
3 Martha Jones	10 Larkin Harris	15 Sandra Forbes	22 Oren Conner
Richard Williams	11 Charles Arceneaux	16 Carolyn Starns	23 William Ross
4 Frank Whittington	12 Mary Elizabeth Spencer	20 Bill Lovell	24 Margaret Brumfield
6 Elsie Howse	13 Mary Lou Morrow	Glen Hale	25 Rhonda Arceneaux
Sharon May		Aaron Spring	29 Bettye Salter



This is it. My last newsletter article. If you haven't heard, I have taken a job at FBC Tuscaloosa as their children's minister. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time here, and Lindsey and I have been blessed to serve alongside each of you. We believe this is God's will in our lives, and we seek to honor Him by following where He leads. We're excited about what God has in store for us, but it's a bittersweet time as we look back at the memories and friends we have made.

I've asked Sarah to share some of our favorite pictures taken during our time here. Looking back, not only do I see fun and fellowship, but I see church members who believe in reaching the next generation for Christ. I see loving people who give of their time, money, and energy to reach families and engage them with the gospel.

I owe many, many of you thanks for your hard work and prayers. I hope that you understand my love and appreciation for you. But I would like to take a moment here and thank the wonderful staff that I have gotten to know and love over these past few years.

To our administration staff: Kay, Kathey, Sarah...thank you for putting up with my silly antics and being the first to volunteer to try out my object lessons.

To the kitchen staff: Thank you for always

going above and beyond, especially during Masterpiece Kids!

To the custodial staff: Thank you for putting up with messy crafts and last minute room swaps.

Mason has been a close friend and someone I know I could bounce even the worst ideas off of. Larkin taught me how important the relational side of ministry is. Jason showed me what sincere worship looks like, and how vital it is that we sing truth. And there are not enough words to start to describe what Pastor Oren has meant to Lindsey and me. As my boss, he allowed me freedom to grow professionally. As my pastor, he preached truth to help me grow spiritually. FBCBR truly has something special here.

I've heard a ministry leader say, "Children's ministry is a vital part of any church. If you don't have a good children's ministry, you don't have a growing church." And while I'm a firm believer that the church works together as one, I understand the importance of having a healthy and active children's ministry. And so do the members here at FBCBR. May God continue to bless you all as your reach the next generation and equip kids to be the church of today!

We are still getting things settled, but when we do, I'll be sure to share my address with you all.

Thank you for allowing me to serve you. It has been an amazing honor to be the children and family minister here. Lindsey and I will always keep you in our prayers!

David Jennings

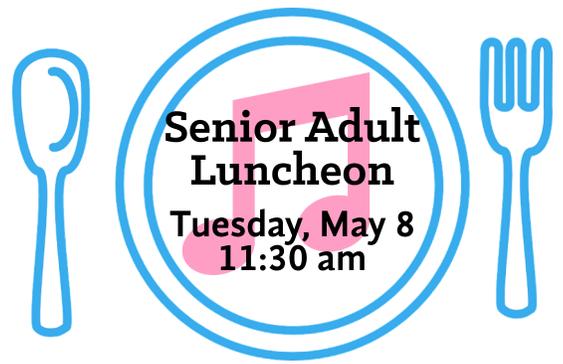




Young at Heart Singers' World Wide Tour

Ok, ok, maybe not world wide, but your FBC Young at Heart has been on tour a lot lately. They are doing a tremendous job sharing the gospel and having fun singing gospel songs. Yannah Gustafson is doing an amazing job leading them, and I am very proud of them. They sound great, and their numbers are growing as well. I serve on the Baton Rouge Baptist Association Senior Adult Committee, and at our meetings, Young at Heart is being talked about. They have developed a reputation of being a fine choir. They have recently sung at Parkview Baptist, Jefferson Baptist, and First Methodist, and they have been asked to sing for our Association Wide Senior Adult Revival in September. And Yannah has them booked for many more events coming up soon. I just wanted to draw a little attention to them today, and when you get a chance, be sure to come hear them sing. Better yet, come join them and sing! They practice on Wednesday afternoons at 4:00. Come sing with Young at Heart!

Love in Him, *Larkin J. Harris*



Come enjoy music by the University Baptist Church Hand Bell Ringers

This month, bring your cards or dominoes or board games. You are welcome to stay and play games after we clear off the tables.





When is the last time you read the Bible within your home? When is the last time you sat down with your students and had a conversation about what you have read in Scripture? These are hard questions but are very important to ask. A huge misconception within many Christian homes is the idea that students will learn everything about Christ and following him in the church setting. This idea is false and falls flat when one analyzes the amount time students spend in the home versus church. On average, our students may spend up to four hours at church each week, compared to around forty at school. We can have amazing teachers here at FBC Baton Rouge, but if students are not getting fed outside the walls of the church, the chances of them leaving the church is high. So I would like to challenge our parents and grandparents to do something bold within your home. I want to challenge you to read Scripture with your children. Teach them the goodness found in the Word of God. Teach them to

live a life devoted to Christ. As a youth pastor, my biggest fear is seeing young teens walk away from the church. I want to see them plugged in and falling in love with Jesus. I believe they can and will if we work together to teach them more about Jesus.

-Mason

Helpful blog post:

How Not to Teach Your Kids the Bible

www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/how-not-to-teach-your-kids-the-bible/



Congratulations, Graduates!



Blair R. Boles
Juris Doctorate
Louisiana State University



Ellen Farmer
B.A. in Mass Communication
Concentration: Public Relations
Minors: Business Administration
and Agricultural Communication
Louisiana State University



Matthew Foval
Bachelor of Information
Systems and Decision Sciences
Louisiana State University



Linzee S. Zeringue
Master of Medical Science in
Physician Assistant Studies
Franciscan Missionaries of Our
Lady University, formerly Our
Lady of the Lake College



LBCH is collecting NEW backpacks, duffel bags, and easy to store luggage for children in foster care!

Arrange Drop-Off with Marissa @ marissa@lbch.org



The Louisiana Baptist Children's Home is collecting *NEW* medium to large backpacks, duffel bags, and easy to store luggage for children in foster care. Often, children moving from one home to another do not have a bag of their own to carry their belongings. Please help Baton Rouge area children have a bag to call their own!

This will be an ongoing drive. All items must be *NEW* and unused.

FBC's Women on Mission is teaming up with the Children's Home to kick off this drive during the month of May, which is National Foster Care month. Everyone is invited to bring luggage for children in foster care and place it in the donation box in the hallway!



It was a joy work with our local churches, universities, and Symphony Chorus to present the Good News Gospel Showcase last month. We had a wonderful, worshipful and fun night of singing the Gospel with these various choral groups.

As we look towards summer, we are going to be learning a "new" hymn for our church that might be already familiar to you. One of the great 17th century hymn writers, Isaac Watts, has been recognized as the Godfather of English Hymnody, having written over 750 hymns. Many of these hymns are still sung today in churches around the world. Popular hymns such as *Joy to the World*, *Marching to Zion*, *O God Our Help in Ages Past*, *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*, *I Sing the Mighty Power of God*, and *My Shepherd Will Supply My Need* are all hymns we have sung here at FBC. The "new" hymn we will be learning this summer, *Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun*, was written in 1719 and comes from the 72nd chapter of Psalms. This text and tune has been called the first missions hymn.

Eric Liddell, a Scottish Olympic Gold Medalist of the 1924 Olympic Games, felt the call to missions in China with the London Missionary Society. Before his departure for China, many greeted Eric at the train station in Edinburgh. As Eric addressed the crowd around him, Eric spoke that he was going abroad to do his part in trying to unify the countries of the world under Christ. He is quoted, "Let our motto be, 'Christ for the World, for the

World Needs Christ,'" Before boarding the train, he led the crowd in two verses of *Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun*. Eric faithfully served in China until his death in 1945 in a Japanese internment camp.

In 2017, modern Hymn writers Keith and Kristyn Getty have added a chorus to this great hymn, which is a common practice in Christian hymnody today. This hymn with the additional chorus was sung on February 25th, 2018, as part of the Global Hymn Sing. On this day, over 1 million believers in 77 countries sang this great missions hymn to remind the world of our call to reach every tribe, people, and tongue with the love of Christ.

I can't wait for us to learn this "new" song as a reminder of Christ reigning over all creation and our response to this truth in praise to Him who is over all creation! Take a look at the text below!

**Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Does its successive journeys run;
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore**

Till sun shall rise and set no more.

**Blessings abound where'er He reigns;
The pris'n'er leaps to lose his chains;
The weary find eternal rest,
And all the sons of want are blessed.**

***CHORUS:**

**To our King be highest praise!
Rising through eternal days!
Just and faithful He shall reign:
Jesus shall reign!**

**People and realms of every tongue
Dwell on His love with sweetest song;
And infant voices shall proclaim
Their early blessings on His name.**

**Let every creature rise and bring
Blessing and honor to our King;
Angels descend with songs again,
And earth repeat the loud "amen!"**

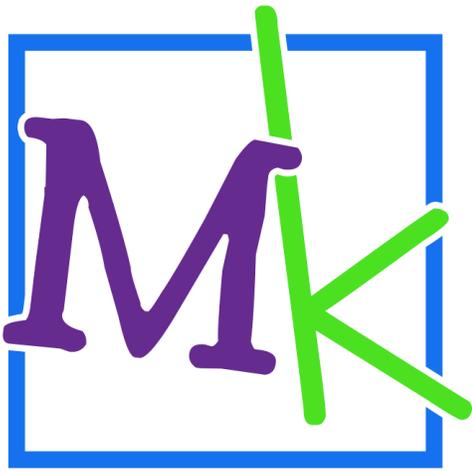
*Keith and Kristyn Getty's additional chorus.

Love, Jason



Church-Wide Crawfish Boil





masterpiece kids summer art camp

Ready for a week full of **art skills and thrills?**

July 9-13, 2018

8:15 am - 1:00 pm daily

For kids completing kindergarten to 6th grade!

A one-time \$10 fee covers lunch & snacks every day, a t-shirt, & all art supplies. Visit fbcbr.com for more info!

Volunteer to help, or register your kids today!

Weekly Schedule

Sundays

- 8:45 am**
First Sunday Fellowship Breakfast
(First Sunday each month)
- 9:15 am**
Bible Study for all ages
- 10:15 am**
Children of God Service
- 10:45 am**
Worship Service

Tuesdays

- 9:30 am**
WMU
(First Tuesday each Month)
- 11:30 am**
Senior Adult Luncheon
(Second Tuesday each month)

Wednesdays

- 4:00 pm**
Young at Heart Choir
- 4:45 pm**
Fellowship Meal
(\$7 each, \$3 for children, \$18 family maximum)
- 5:30 pm**
Prayer
- 5:45 pm**
BAM! Children's Activities
Adult Bible Study
- 6:00 pm**
College Bible Study
Youth Bible Study
- 6:15 pm**
Crafts class
Choir Rehearsal

Thursdays

- 9:00 am**
Children of God Ministry
- 12:00 pm**
Ladies Bible Study Lunch

Our Staff

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Larkin Harris, Minister to College Students & Senior Adults
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Mason Welch, Youth Minister
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Kay Fleming, Financial Secretary
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Kathy Jarreau, Ministry Assistant
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