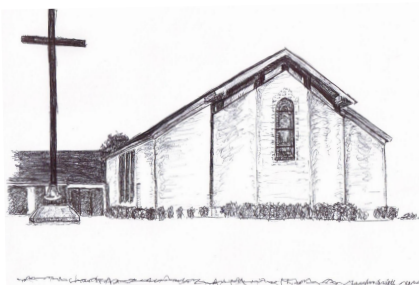


# Presby News

FEBRUARY 2023



## FROM THE PASTOR . . .

This is one of my favorite times of year! No. It's not just because of King Cake. Although, I do love the season of King Cake! This is the time of year that I watch the Japanese Magnolias and azaleas. We have finished with Christmas and New Year's, life is just beginning to settle back down, and the world seems gray and cold. But just look around! Look around at the trees. At first glance all we see is the bare limbs and gray bark of the trees on the backdrop of a gray sky. However, if we look more closely, we will see the small buds on the Japanese Magnolias. The promise of spring is there!

I can hear my professor lecturing on time management telling us that the trees may look cold and dead, now. But just wait. The trees will be budding, the bees buzzing, and spring will be here before we know it. Every year I remember his words and every year, I watch the buds turn into beautiful pink and purple blossoms. Even as we are getting this newsletter ready today, I've seen several trees already blooming and boasting of a soon coming spring. Right behind these deep purple magnolias comes the azaleas! Spring is coming soon!

It makes me think of the fig tree in Matthew 24:32. <sup>32</sup> "Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near." Jesus uses the fig tree as one of many teaching moments to encourage us to stay ready for God's kingdom to pop up around us. Jesus was giving some warnings about the not-too-distant future for the early church. It's my opinion that these warning were to prepare the early church for some very dark days. Others tend to see these warnings as a prediction of the days before the rapture. It could be. However, the focus is for us to always be ready! We should always be ready for that day when Christ "will come again to judge the living and the dead." But we should also be very watchful for those moments when the kingdom shows up right next to us. We should watch for those moments when we can offer a word of hope to remind someone that God has never failed us yet, and he won't fail us now. We should always watch for the moment when those, in a moment of despair, ask why they face such trouble and how will they continue. We can speak a word of God's power and presence to remind them that God loves them and somehow will see them through.

But we can also be very watchful for signs of God's kingdom aimed at our benefit as well. We don't always have to be on the serving side of the kingdom to see how close it really is. When you suddenly get an email from that old friend who has never stopped being your friend, but just remained quiet, THAT could be the kingdom reminding you God's love and family are near. When you get that unexpected card in the mail that simply says that you came in someone's mind, and they whispered a prayer for you today. Or maybe it is as simple as reading a church marquee or billboard that reminds us that God is as close as our breath, our whispers, our prayers.

This time of year certainly seems to be the coldest and most drab for sure. But I am watchful. I see the buds turning into blooms. I see the signs that things are turning. And it gives me great excitement and encouragement. I pray that you will be watchful as well. I hope that you will see the kingdom around you both to serve others and to let others serve you too! May God's blessing be poured out on you, pressed down, and overflowing!

Grace and Peace,  
Bro. Greg

## Valentine's Day Blessing

*Love one another;  
as I  
have  
loved  
you,*

*John 13:34  
(KJV)*

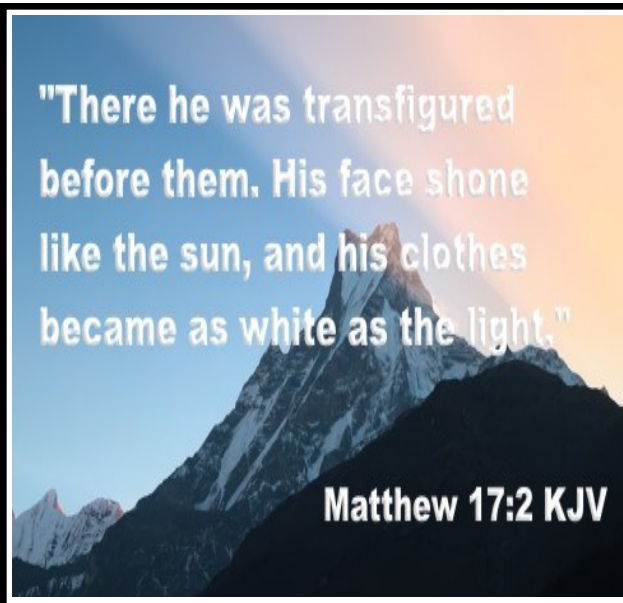


## SPECIAL DATES

February 5	Brookdale Worship Worship/Communion
February 14	Happy Valentine's Day!
February 19	Transfiguration of the Lord
February 22	Ash Wednesday
February 26	First Sunday of Lent

"There he was transfigured  
before them. His face shone  
like the sun, and his clothes  
became as white as the light."

Matthew 17:2 KJV



# South Africa Mission Work

By Elizebette Kennedy



Things are going well. We arrived in Philippolis with a bad storm and a 3 day without electricity deal. We are in 'camping' mode, but most people here have adjusted to all the unpleasantness of load shedding and every other day of water supply. More about that later.

Last Sunday my daughter and I were invited to go and have lunch at the church in the Bergmanshoogte community. They were very hospitable and thanked First Presbyterian for all the support and help that they cannot do without. After Pastor Carin's death, they had a very rough time, but things are looking up and they are growing and planning a lot of new projects with their youth. They have a huge youth catechism class starting now. They also started with classes for the small kids. Of course the feeding programs are of vital importance and they are planning to recruit more out of their own members to have their very limited potlucks (mostly consisting of bread or porridge ) and of course the soup kitchen in winter..

For each one to contribute a spoonful of butter, a slice of bread, a bowl of porridge and then put it together to provide a church meal share thing.

They invited us again to worship with them this morning and we had an informative meeting after church. They want to be very transparent and of course want us to know about all their progress and plans.

Anyway, I will be glad to talk more about it once I am back. God willing.

Love in Christ,  
Elizebette

## *February Responders Schedule*

	<b>Usher Narthex</b>	<b>Monitor</b>	<b>Communion Servers</b>
<b>February 5</b>	Robert Kennedy	Bill Higgins	<b>Communion Team:</b> Elizebette Kennedy & Bill Higgins (Alternate Monthly)
<b>February 12</b>	Robert Kennedy	Bill Higgins	
<b>February 19</b>	Robert Kennedy Elizebette Kennedy	Bill Higgins	
<b>February 26</b>	Robert Kennedy	Bill Higgins	



**Frank & Gayle Hempen**

**2/20**



**Thank you for your generous donation to the  
South Africa Mission.  
A wire transfer was sent  
Monday, January 9, 2023.**

## **First Presbyterian Church**

357 Windermere Blvd. Phone: 318-443-7229

Alexandria, LA 71303 Fax: 318-443-5965

[office@alexandriafpc.org](mailto:office@alexandriafpc.org)

[www.alexandriafpc.org](http://www.alexandriafpc.org)

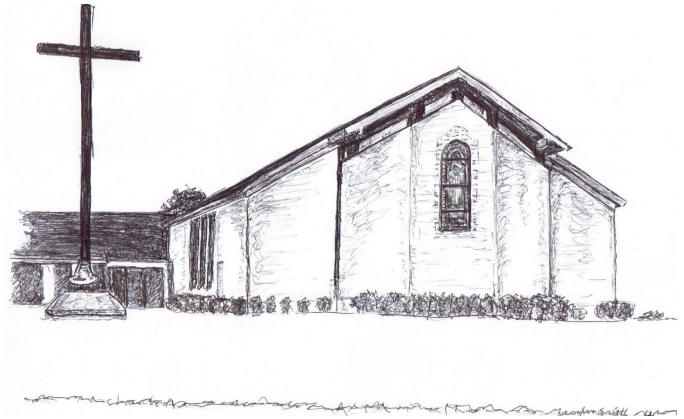
Greg Carroll, *Interim Pastor*

Aaron Rogers, *Music Director*

David Berrocal, *Pianist*

Carolyn Sterne, *Administrative Assistant*

Charles Bell, *Sexton*



First Presbyterian Church

357 Windermere Blvd.

Alexandria, LA 71303

**Come experience God's love at First Presbyterian Church**

Sunday School—9:45 a.m., Worship—11:00 a.m.