

February
2017

The News



*Greater love has no one than
this, than to lay down one's
life for his friends*

John 15:13

*For God so loved the world that he gave His one and only Son, that whoever
believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

John 3:16

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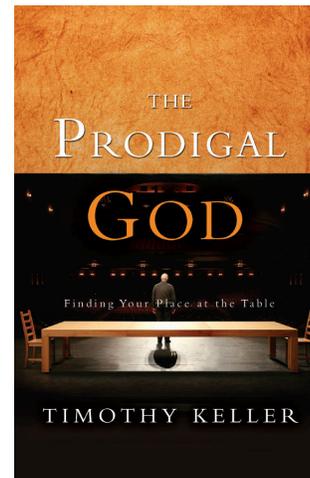
Production by the **Tom Fowler Group**

The Prodigal God Small Group Experience for Lent

Pastor Rich McDermott

Why do this small group study?

Has anyone ever told you that “religion” is diametrically opposed to the gospel of Jesus Christ? Timothy Keller, in his book and video called *The Prodigal God*, says that very thing. You can begin an unforgettable journey of discovering one of the most powerful yet most misunderstood parables of the Bible - The Parable of the Prodigal Son. *The Prodigal God* curriculum and small group experience will help you uncover the essential message of the parable: that the gospel is neither religion nor irreligion, neither morality nor immorality, but something else entirely. If your experience of church and religion has been mostly about obeying rules and trying to become a good and moral person, then this study is for you. Timothy Keller writes, “*The Prodigal God is for both curious outsiders and established insiders of the faith as it is meant to lay out the essentials of the Christian message, the gospel. If the teaching of Jesus is likened to a lake, this famous parable would be one of the clearest spots where we can see all the way down to the bottom.*”



Coming Soon New Series: *The Prodigal God*

One son kept the rules religiously. One son broke them all. One father loved them both beyond anything they could ever imagine. *The Prodigal God* is a dramatic teaching film, sermon series and group study resource based on Jesus’ great parable – The Prodigal Son.

Join us in rediscovering the heart
of the Christian faith.

How can I get involved?

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, on March 1, 2017, and is completed on Easter, April 16, 2017, a period of six and a half weeks. You can: 1) *lead*, 2) *host*, or 3) be a *member* of a small group that meets

weekly for six weeks during Lent. We are hoping that most of our small groups will meet in homes or offices or restaurants where we can invite people (“*curious outsiders*”) that might be hesitant to come to a church building. Books and Discussion Guides will be made available for purchase for each participant. The DVDs will be provided to those leading the small groups and a brief training will be provided for those leading and hosting. Leaders and Hosts can decide the best time and place to meet for six weeks. Sermons will be related to the six weekly themes: 1) The Parable; 2) The People Around Jesus; 3) The Two Lost Sons; 4) The Elder Brother; 5) The True Elder Brother; and 6) The Feast of the Father. If you would like to be a part, please contact Kim Lewis in the church office at 817-274-8286, or email her at kim@firstprestexas.org. There will also be opportunities to sign up on Sunday mornings. May the Lord use *The Prodigal God* to draw us closer to Him and to one another!

Missional Event



I'm excited to attend my first Fellowship Community event this month. FPCA is sending some elders along with me to Lakeland, Florida, for the 2017 National Gathering. The theme this year is “Deep & Wide: Making Missional Disciples.” The purpose of the gathering is to equip churches to form Jesus followers who live as God’s people sent into the world. Through inspiring worship, preaching, presentations, and panel discussions led by missional practitioners and theologians, we will learn:

- How spiritual formation and discipleship relate to missional transformation
- What theological, institutional, and programmatic changes are important in moving churches from an attractional to missional mindset
- What are some of the best missional practices and experiments we can glean from within our network of Fellowship Community churches and beyond

Hopefully some of these themes sound familiar through the preaching and instruction Pastor Rich and I have been sharing recently. I'm most grateful for the elders who have committed to attending this year. It is exciting that excitement for these kingdom purposes is spreading and I look forward on discerning with them and our leadership how to best implement these ministries. Pray for us – safe travels, inspiration, and for the kingdom work God has planned for us!

Live Forever,

Pastor Chris

Didja Know?



Have you left a coat, jacket, or sweater somewhere at church? Perhaps a stylus for a smart phone or tablet? Do not give up hope!

The church maintains a lost-and-found box in the conference room. You are welcome to come by during office hours (9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday) and have a look.

Sharing the Love of Christ through Service

Adrian Rodriguez

It is such a joy to be a part of a church that loves serving those within our community. I had the pleasure of witnessing this first hand here recently. Our very own members, Allen and Carole Ray, have set up a five-year program at Carter Jr. High where they will donate computers to two deserving students each year. These computers will help them with their studies and much more.

This year's recipients of the computers were two of the most deserving students you could ever meet. Their stories will move you to tears. One student recently had to deal with the passing of her father, and their family has spent some time being homeless.



So to see Allen and Carole step in to bring some sense of hope for these students just shows how much our church loves to show the love of Christ to our youth and community. We look forward to finding ways we can help these students and their families and ultimately sharing Christ with them. Please keep them in your prayers.



Gifts of Hope Update



Thanks to everyone who participated in the Gifts of Hope alternative gift market! This Advent season, 138 gifts were purchased, totaling \$1553.50, which will be given to local and international outreach organizations.

This total represents 25 ducks, 10 chickens, 17 packets of seeds, 3 hot meals, 1 blanket, 4 child care kits, 2 action packs, 8 Bibles, 19 weeks of meals for families, 7 pairs of winter socks, 25 paperback books, 6 reams of paper, 7 birthday cakes, 2 parenting classes, 5 months' worth of school supplies, and 2 weeks' worth of school lunches.

Thank you for giving these gifts in the spirit of Christian love. They will bless people in need both locally and internationally.

February Puzzle

1 Corinthians 13

T V I D B I E L O R T D C Y S
J W N E M R F V U R H D V R E
E E A B L R U Z O T X N E T V
P R C S L I A X R L E S T C E
S R H A H T W T M U E B T Q I
X L O J Z A J Z K N G N L J L
Q O U P K B J C T D E Y M Q E
T A X Z H L O F N I B X W N B
B N M R S E U R T S E P O H T
Y O A L Z L C A N V V C S Y R
V I A G P X P I D Z E S D K U
G A J S O E G D E L W O N K T
F Z S Y T R T U J S Y D I P H
L T Y A X G R T O M E H K N H
E N D U R E S A A K N O T S A

ARROGANT BEARS BELIEVES BOAST ENDURES
ENVY HOPES IRRITABLE KIND KNOWLEDGE
LOVE PATIENT PROPHECIES RESENTFUL TRUTH

PrintableBibleWordSearch.com

Belize Mission Team Update

Less Than 2 Months to Go!!

The Belize Mission Team is gearing up for our trip March 12 to 19! Thank you to the congregation for your support. Our 365-Fundraiser raised over \$8,300 toward the mission trip. This is a significant amount and we are very grateful. Through your generosity, we have the funds for supplies for our construction project and activities with the students, travel, lodging, meals, and a field trip for the students at Youth Enhancement Services (YES). Our team consists of

12 people – 5 youth and 7 adults – ranging in age from 11 to 66 years old. We are excited to have this intergenerational team. It is truly a blessing that God has called a diverse team for this mission. In the next 2 months, we will be finalizing our plans for the construction work and the daily activities with the students at YES. We plan to share the Gospel message with the current students and reach out to the YES program for teenage mothers.

The next 8 weeks are a very busy time. The mission team is meeting every 2 weeks together to pray, study God's Word, and train for the mission. There is a flurry of planning, organizing, paperwork, and packing. As in previous years, we plan to post to the mission team blog during our trip. Look for an email in March with the blog URL so that you can read our daily updates! The team requests your prayers for the following items:

- Pray for safety in travel to and from Belize as well as during our week in country.
- Pray that the team would be flexible and open to God's leading both as we prepare and especially when we arrive in Belize. God is already there working, we are going to help where He leads.
- Pray for the people of Belize that God would open their hearts and minds to receive His message and His love as we meet with them.
- Pray that our team members would see the opportunities to share God's love each day as we interact with people in Belize and in our team.
- Pray for Youth Enhancement Services director and staff as they work to support the students and teen mothers. YES is in a transition year and is looking to begin a residential program next year – so there is construction and distractions this year.
- Pray that in everything we do we would glorify our Lord, Jesus Christ.



We have seen the power of prayer demonstrated in past mission trips and are very grateful that the congregation will be supporting us through prayer. Thank you for your prayers and support.

Music Ministry

youth ||:cue

For the past five years, our youth choirs have participated in YouthCUE Festivals at Baylor University to enhance our church's youth choral experience. This year, we have made a step into missional music ministry by inviting singers from Carter Junior High to sing at this year's festival, which is February 24 to 26.

One of the stated goals of the YouthCUE organization is, "providing church for students in the present tense." That goal resonated with me as I asked the 7th and 8th grade choir students at Carter if they were interested in singing with a group of 300 other junior high and high school students from across Texas and surrounding states.

The idea here is that First Presbyterian Church is

supporting these young singers in doing something that will change their lives by planting seeds of faith, and give them an opportunity to broaden their perspectives of music.

As I was introducing the idea of singing in a 300-member chorus to the boys' class, I played a video of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir singing one of the pieces that they will be singing at the YouthCUE festival. One of the boys reacted to the impressive wall of sound produced by a full orchestra and large chorus. "We will NEVER sound like that!" My response to him was quick: "I want you to come and see what it's like to be a part of something like this. I want to prove you wrong." What I couldn't say in a public school classroom setting was, "I want you to feel the love of Jesus through singing words of scripture. I want you to be touched by the hand of Christ as you meet Christians who have gathered to praise the name of the Lord in song. I want you to be transformed."

Ministry through music is God's calling in my life, so I am excited (and a little scared) to be able to reach out to our neighbors and invite them to participate in this new adventure. Our church is covering registration, hotel, and meals for the students, and the response has been surprising. Over twenty students have expressed interest, and registrations are still coming in. If you would like to help support this ministry effort, donations to the Music Fund would be appreciated. The concert is at 3 p.m. on Sunday, February 26, at the McCrary Music building on the Baylor campus in Waco. Please contact Kim in the church office if you are interested in carpooling to the concert.

If you have other questions, please contact Russell Farnell at russell@firstprestexas.org or 817-274-8286.



Children's Ministry News

Preschool Sunday School

The month of candy hearts and oversized stuffed bears has arrived. It's the month we set aside each year to celebrate our love for those we hold near and dear. And what says "I love you" better than a box of chocolates or cards that play music when you open them?

As thoughtful as these things are, Jesus has a few different ways of showing us how much He loves us.

Jesus shows His love for us by simply wanting to spend time with us. Jesus wants us to come to Him - anytime, anywhere - just come. Jesus shows He loves us by helping us. And, Jesus loves us no matter what.

Jesus' love is SO BIG! That's what we want our preschoolers to walk away knowing this year. Jesus loves them with a love that is bigger than they can imagine!



Elementary Sunday School

Love is a reflection of the character of God. God is love. As we read through God's One Big Story in the Bible, we see an epic love story unfold that started in a garden with a perfect relationship between God and His creation. When Adam and Eve sinned and broke that relationship, God didn't give up on creation. His love for us drove Him to make the ultimate sacrifice: sending His one and only Son, Jesus to pay the ultimate price to make it possible for us to be with God forever.

Because we are created in God's image, we have the capacity to love. Every time we choose to treat others the way we want to be treated, we show others a glimpse into the perfect love God has for each and every one of us.

Jesus is the ultimate example of love. When God sent Jesus to earth, Jesus showed us exactly what it means to love. Jesus prioritized love above everything else. When the Pharisees asked Jesus about the greatest commandment, He reached into the 600+ laws of the Old Testament and took a law that existed about your neighbor and He linked it to loving God. Jesus said, *'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul. Love him with all your mind . . . and Love your neighbor as yourself,'* (Mark 12:30 -31 NIV). Our relationship with Jesus changes how we love God, love others, and even love ourselves. Love, above all else, was what Jesus stressed most.

That's why we think it's important for us to help our kids and families discover more about **Love - choosing to treat others the way you want to be treated.**

Our memory verse for February comes from 1 John 4:10. In **1 John 4:10**, we read, ***Here is what love is. It is not that we loved God. It is that he loved us and sent his Son to give his life to pay for our sins. (NIRV)***



We want our families to learn a verse that gives them the essence of why love is important. Love isn't just something we demonstrate because it's a good thing to do. Love doesn't even start with us. We love because God loves us. Love is an essential part of who God is and how God interacts with the world. We love others because of the capacity He put within us

to love. His love drove Him to sacrifice His only Son on our behalf to make the relationship between us right again.

We will spend the month of February taking a closer look at the way love shows up throughout the Gospels in how Jesus interacts with others.

- Week 1** Bottom Line: **Love others because Jesus loves you.**
- Week 2** Bottom Line: **Comfort others who are hurting.**
- Week 3** Bottom Line: **Give to others who are in need.**
- Week 4** Bottom Line: **Love others because they matter to God.**

Save the Date

Kids Night OutFebruary 10 and 24

Spring Festival.....April 8

Vacation Bible School.....June 5 through 9

Quick Reminder – 66th Annual Men’s Conference

For the last several years, a group of men from FPCA have attended the Mo Ranch Men’s Conference for a God-filled weekend in the wide-open spaces of the Texas Hill Country, along the banks of the Guadalupe River. The dates for this year are May 5 to 7.

Please make your reservations now. For more information, contact George Morey at 817-789-3772.

First Presbyterian Online

Check out the new look of the First Presbyterian website (www.firstprestexas.org). Plenty of information is there, and it's not hard to find. What are you looking for? The main menu is across the top of the home page and features several options.

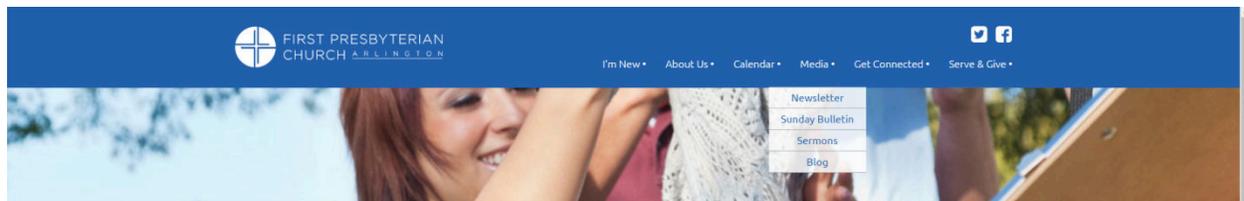
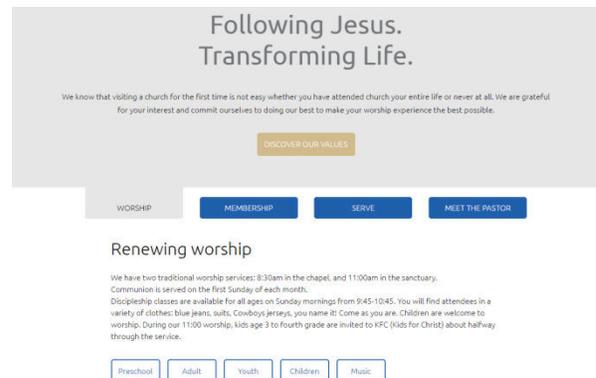


Click on **I'm New** (even if you aren't) to gain access to all the basic information about FPCA.

Click on **About Us** for our location, beliefs, history, staff, or church officers. **Calendar** is pretty self-explanatory.

Media requires a bit more clarification. If you are looking for *The News*, the weekly bulletin, or weekly audio sermons, Media is the place to go.

Another choice on the Media menu is Blog. If you want to see pictures of FPCA activities, select Blog. You can see pictures of the Festival of Tables, sponsored by the Women's Ministry Team. You can also see pictures of the Thanksgiving Dinner and the 2016 Bazaarnival. New pictures will be added regularly so be sure to check out the Blog often!



Get Connected provides information on church activities and membership. You can find out about Sunday school classes for all ages, youth and children's activities, the music ministry, and the preschool. **Serve & Give** allows you to sign up for service opportunities or to contribute.

The new look may be sleeker and more sophisticated, but it's still about warm and friendly people striving to live out our mission statement in our daily lives.

This Month



Bible Studies

Men's Bible Study

The Men's Bible Study group meets every Wednesday morning at 7:00 a.m. in the parlor. Men of all ages meet to study the book of Genesis and enjoy great fellowship and a prayer session. All men are invited to join this study.

Women's Bible Study

The Women's Monday Night Bible study is open to all women. The next meeting is at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, February 20, in the parlor.

Tuesday Morning Bible Study

Men and women of all ages are invited to meet in the Bride's Room every Tuesday morning at 10:00 a.m. The current study is *Twelve Ordinary Men* by John MacArthur.



Music Ministries

Chancel Choir

This is the primary worship leadership ensemble for the 11:00 service. The choir also sings for special services around Christmas and Holy Week. It is more than just a great choir, it is a caring fellowship. Rehearsals are on Wednesdays from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. *Nursery care is provided during rehearsals.*

Ring of Praise Handbell Ensemble

This intergenerational handbell group rehearses Wednesday evenings from 6:15 until 7:15 p.m. If you are interested in ringing, please contact Russell Farnell (fpcamusic@yahoo.com or 817-274-8286).

Agape (Youth) Choir

This group of youth in grades 6 to 12 meets on Sunday, 4:30 to 6:00 p.m., in the choir room. This year the focus of our youth choir is to engage singers at Carter Junior High by inviting them to participate in the YouthCUE Choir Festival in Waco. This is a combined choir of 300+ singers from all over Texas and surrounding states. The festival is February 24 to 26, and ends with a grand concert on Sunday, February 26.

Children's Music Ministries

The children's choirs meet Sundays, 1:30 to 2:30 p.m., during the school year. These choirs strive to impart God's love through His gift of music. The focus is on ministry to children rather than on performance. Children ages 4 (when school starts) through grade 5 participate in activities including music/singing and bells/chimes, instruments, and listening activities. There are two sections, divided by age, and both participate in the 11:00 worship service twice per year, usually in December and April.



Church Leadership

Deacon Meeting

Thursday, February 9, at 6:00 p.m., the Diaconate meets in the parlor to oversee the Congregational Care, Hospitality, and Fellowship ministries.

Team Meeting Night

Thursday, February 9, at 6:45 p.m., all teams meet for worship in the chapel with subsequent gathering into respective teams for ministry planning and coordination.

Session Meeting

Thursday, February 23, at 7:00 p.m., the Session meets in the parlor to oversee the ministry of the church. The work of the Diaconate, church administration, and all Discipleship, Worship, Facility Management, and Mission and Evangelism ministries will be discussed.



Discipleship

Library Team

The library team works the first Wednesday of each month, from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. Anyone interested is welcome. No particular skill is required, the work is easy, and we always have a good time as we process books to be added to our inventory. If you would like to be involved in library work but cannot come at that evening time, please contact Sandy Thomlinson and special daytime work sessions can be arranged.



Fellowship

Happy Quilters

This group meets Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m. to quilt, sew, knit, crochet, embroider, and just enjoy being together. Bring your project and join in!

Saints Alive!

Church seniors will meet for a potluck lunch on Thursday, February 16, at 11:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Bring a casserole, salad, or dessert and enjoy a fun and interesting afternoon.

Contact Bev Koch (817 -261 -3202) for details.

First Presbyterian Church
1200 S. Collins Street
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Deadline for the March issue of The News is February 15!

Prayer Ministry

Prayers for those with health and other concerns: Esther Albright, Chona Pacot Anwar, Yvonne Babb, Polly Baugh, David Boice, Shirley Bragg, James (Andrew) Bridges, Crystal Castaneda, Kevin Chin, Jerry Colleps, Lee Carol Copeland, Dorothy Curtis, Ted Dysart, Ken Floyd, Tom and Bobbie Fowler, Lila Glenn, David Goff, Susan Graham, Dick Haney, Margery Harrant, Ken and Edna Harris, Brandon Hay, Bill Hayden, Doyle Malone, Allen Miller, Mary Ellen Miller, Pat Mingle, Barbara Mooers, Ruth Moore, Bill Moulton, Bill Olsen, Jim L. Quick, Albert Ross, Eulabel Sheldon, Linda Smith, Al Smithson, Bob Spriggs, Brooks and Connie Taylor, B. J. Thomas, Jerry Thomas, Allen Underwood, Donna Vickers, Jessica Villarreal, and Mary Jane Wright.



Prayers for our family serving in the armed forces: Aaron Alonso, Sean Ansley, Ben Boughton, Riley Curnutt, Austin Curran, Eric Dill, Jeff Grimes, Nathan Haerer, Damien King, Mike Mancini, Jack Murtha, Colin Peden, Jason Polk, Ryan Powell, Ryan Regalado, Christopher Young, and Robbie Wallace.

Pray for our homebound members.

Pray for those who do not know Christ!

Please contact Pastor Rich McDermott at the church office at 817 -274 -8286 if you have any congregational care needs. For questions about specific concerns of those listed above, please contact Juanice Young at juanicey@gmail.com or 817 -794 -5626.