

DEC/JAN 2024

ISSUE 24-12, 25-1

# The Diligent

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, ARP LAKE WALES, FL

“...a Christ-centered fellowship of believers devoted to glorifying God through true worship, personal evangelism, discipleship, and servanthood.”

## AT A GLANCE

### Pg. 2, Leadership

*“Preparing for a New Year in God’s Word”, Session Highlights, Prayer Focus, Congregational Meeting, Advent Series, Leadership Retreat 2025, Office Hours, Feeding The Highlanders Pictures*

### Pg. 5, Discipleship

*“How Faithful Christian*

*Living Imitates the Incarnation”, Christmas Parade Cookie Hospitality, ROW, Fellowship Dinners*

### Pg. 9, Music Ministry

*“Anticipation”, Upcoming Christmas Dates*

### Pg. 10, Family Ministry

*“Words from Walker”, ThanksLiving Picture,, December/January Calendar*

### Pg. 12, Church Family

*Milestone Celebrations*

# Leadership

## PREPARING FOR A NEW YEAR IN GOD’S WORD

### From Pastor Mackay

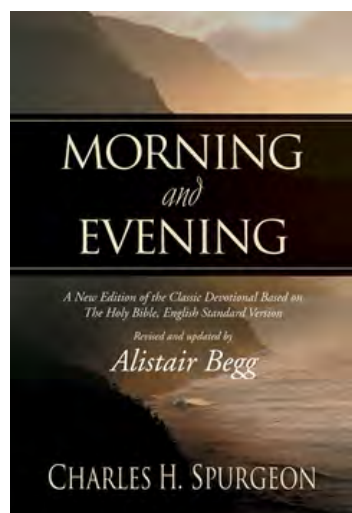
*Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.  
- John 17:17*

“Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance.” You’ve heard it a hundred times, and so have I. There is truth to this maxim, and now is the time to do your “prior planning” for reading God’s Word in 2025. There are countless reading plans out there to guide you through the Bible (I recommend the “Blue Letter Bible” app Chronological Reading Plan, the Robert Murray M’Cheyne, or the ESV Reading Plan from Crossway Publishers.), and here are a few selected devotionals for you to consider for next year. Get one for yourself, and grab one as a gift for a family member or friend!

In all that we do, let us remember to prayerfully and humbly, “Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established.” (Proverbs 16:3)

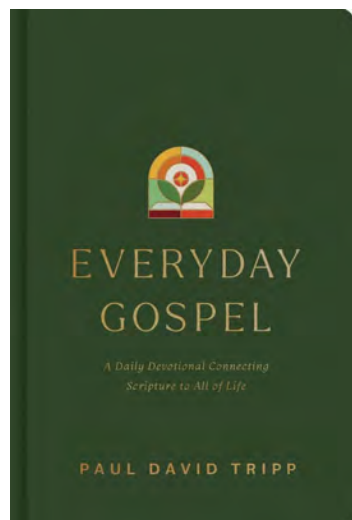
#### **Morning and Evening** Charles H. Spurgeon

This time-tested classic was refreshed with a 2003 edition revised by Alistair Begg and published by Crossway. Each day features a short Scripture text, and a meditation on that text like only Spurgeon (the 19th Century “Prince of Preachers”) could produce. This is best used *in addition to* a Bible reading plan, as the daily



#### **Everyday Gospel** Paul David Tripp

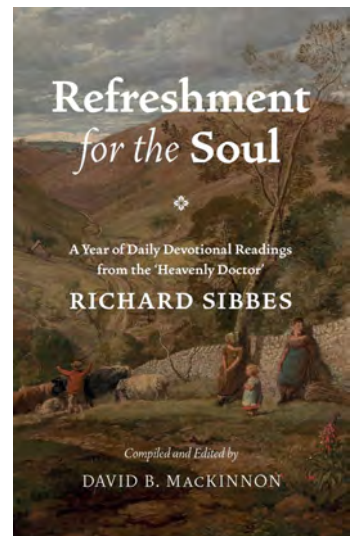
This new volume is “on deck” for my personal Bible reading next year. Tripp is a respected author and pastor, who has



written devotions for each daily reading of the ESV plan.

#### **Refreshment for the Soul: A Year of Daily Devotional Readings from the ‘Heavenly Doctor’ Richard Sibbes**

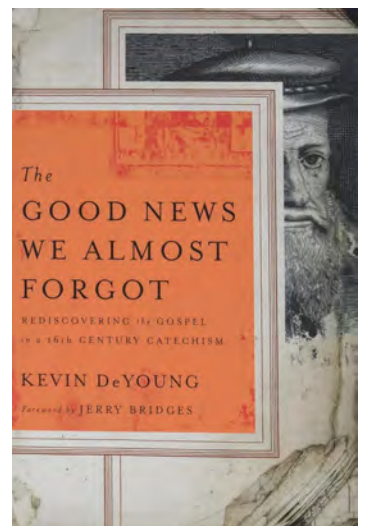
ed. David B. MacKinnon



I often find myself reaching for this volume if I’m suffering some midday drowsiness. Sibbes is considered by many to be the “quintessential Puritan minister” (from the Introduction), and this daily devotional breaks down his works into digestible tidbits.

#### **The Good News We Almost Forgot: Rediscovering the Gospel in a 16th Century Catechism**

Kevin DeYoung



Here’s a fun idea. After reading through the Heidelberg Catechism as a church over the last several months, why don’t you use it as a weekly devotion by going through this book? The questions and answers of Heidelberg are divided up into “Lord’s Days,” meaning that for each week of the year, you can dwell on the Biblical truths that are expounded by each section.

I can think of no better Christmas gift for yourself and your family than to encourage regular, prayerful time in God’s Word. I’d love to talk with you more about any of the books above, or how I can be praying for you.

Rachel, our girls, and I wish you all a very Merry Christmas, and all God’s richest blessings in the new year!

- Pastor Mackay ■



## SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

The elders of First Presbyterian Church meet monthly on the fourth Tuesday. The following are highlights from the meeting on November 19, 2024.

- Officer candidates were interviewed by elder teams, and the nomination slate was certified. (See slate below in Congregational Meeting announcement)
- Prayer was given for our the needs of our congregation and the ministries of our church.
- The Stewardship and Finance committee reported total October revenues of \$75,503 and expenses of \$98,815. As of 10/31, the General Operating balance sits at \$189,936, and Escrow Reserves at \$480,644.21. ■

### PRAYER FOCUS

**DECEMBER 1** - Advent Season

**DECEMBER 8** - Advent, Christ's Glory

**DECEMBER 15** - Advent, Congregational Meeting, Church Officers

**DECEMBER 22** - Advent, Christmas: Families and Salvation

**DECEMBER 29** - Keeping our First Love in the New Year

## Christmas Breakfast & Congregational Meeting SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15

The session has called the annual congregational business meeting for election of church officers and the approval of the 2025 budget for Sunday, December 15 following worship. Any questions regarding the budget should be addressed to Daniel Hunt (elder, Stewardship and Finance chair), or Michelle Hurst (congregational treasurer).

### Officer Candidates are:

Elder class of 2028: Scott Crews, Frank Hunt  
Deacon class of 2027: John Dubois,  
Bob Hulen, Karen Steverson

*New church officers will be installed January 19, 2025.*



## Advent Series: The Son of Promise

Our Advent series is, "The Son of Promise," and will examine the glorious names prophesied of Jesus in Isaiah 9:6-7. For each name, we will use an Old Testament text to consider what God's people would have understood in Isaiah's words about this Counselor, God, Father, and Prince. Pray that God would bless us as we consider the glories of Emmanuel.

## LEADERSHIP RETREAT 2025

All church officers will gather January 18th for our annual Leadership Retreat. On this Saturday morning, elders and deacons will gather to discuss the year of church ministry, review committee responsibilities, and begin their committee work.

## OFFICE HOURS

The Church Office will be closed Dec. 25-27, and Dec. 31-Jan. 1.



# FEED THE HIGHLANDERS!

A few weeks ago a group of FPCLW folks gathered together to feed our Lake Wales High School football team before their game. We served fried chicken and the Highlanders went on to win their game!





# Discipleship

## HOW FAITHFUL CHRISTIAN LIVING IMITATES THE INCARNATION

### From Pastor Myers

Christmas celebrates a stunning reality. The Divine Son of God, Second Person of the Holy Trinity, has taken to Himself a true human nature. The Word who was with God and was God (John 1.1) has become flesh (John 1.14). Without in the least being stained by sin, and without his divine and human natures being in the least confused, changed, divided or separated, Jesus Christ has entered our world of frailty, weakness, pain and death in order to become our perfect and sympathetic High Priest (Heb 4:15). And he has commissioned every Christian to spread the aroma of such love and grace that is constitutive of his character as well (2 Cor 2.15). In that sense, every Christian is a minister (Eph 4.12)

Ministry is a glorious privilege. We have an infinitely rich treasure which we get to give to a desperately poor world. We have a glorious light with which to shine in a bleakly dark world. It is nothing less than the life and power of Christ in his resurrection that we give.

But the way in which we give this treasure in this life does not imitate Christ's glorified state. It imitates Christ's incarnation and his passion.

We do not have this treasure in golden chests. Instead as we read in 2 Corinthians 4.7, we have this treasure in jars of clay.

What is the experience of Christian ministry?

It is the experience of carrying a priceless commodity in an ordinary container (much like a man who is also a God-man). It is the experience of carrying treasure in jars of clay.

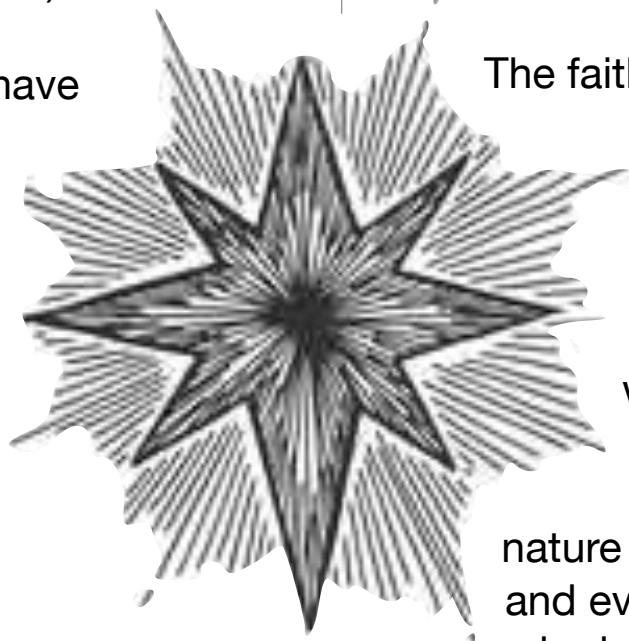
Scholars inform us that these jars that Paul refers to were not expensive. They were actually quite cheap and fragile. They were weak and breakable, kill-able we might say. And as Jesus Christ became human in order to die (Mark 10:45), so

too have non-Christians become Christians in order to die (Matt 16.24-25). The incarnation is an event that cannot be fully understood apart from the shadow of the cross that hangs over it.

Paul continues to develop the strength-in weakness theme, the anti-triumphalism thrust of Christian ministry in v.8-10 of 2 Cor 4:

“We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed, always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.”

This is the experience of Christian ministry in this life. It is the experience of weakness and suffering.



The faithful sufferings of Christians do not hide the glory of Christ. They showcase the glory of Christ. For we do not serve a God we make inferences about and reason up towards from nature. We serve a God who has revealed Himself to us.

And has not just revealed Himself in nature but also without nature, above nature and even against nature. We worship a God who has revealed Himself most fully not in the form of a luxurious King, but in the form of a servant who was born in a manger and would go on to die an ignominious death for sinners.

This is the experience of Christian ministry. As God saw, so he sent. And as God sent, so we share. We work life in others while carrying death in ourselves. It's as Paul says in v.12 “death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.”

This brings glory to God, because it demonstrates that the surpassing power for salvation belongs to God and not to man. This is how all Christians in their walk with God and in their service to others imitate the incarnation.



# IT'S COOKIE WRAPPING TIME!



Join us to wrap cookie packages during ROW on December 4

\* Come pass out cookies to our community during the Christmas Parade on December 14

Enjoy fellowship with your church family !

It's the time of year again when we practice hospitality among our Lake Wales community! On December 4 during ROW we will wrap 500 packets of cookies to be passed out during the LW Christmas Parade.

On December 14 we will gather at 4:30pm to set up and then serve cookies, hot chocolate, and water to our neighbors. All our welcome to come serve or simply enjoy the parade which begins at 6pm. It's a great time of service and fellowship.

QUESTIONS? REACH OUT TO RACHEL SMITH (8632246224)

## ROCK ON WEDNESDAYS

Wednesdays in Fellowship Hall

### PROGRAM ROTATION

**1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday - Potluck and Family Fellowship**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday - Breakout Night & ROW Kidz**

ROW Kidz- "The Greatest Story"

Youth Bible Study- "The Bible Project"

Adult Study- "The Righteous Shall Live by Faith: Romans 1-8"

**3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday - Prayer Meeting**

**4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday - Breakout Night & ROW Kids**

ROW Kidz- "The Greatest Story"

Youth Bible Study- "The Bible Project"

Adult Study- "The Righteous Shall Live by Faith: Romans 1-8"

**5<sup>th</sup> Wednesday - ROW will NOT meet on 5th Wednesdays.**

**LAST ROW FOR FALL-  
December 11**

**ROW RESTARTS-  
January 8**

Please remember to RSVP for your meals.

1. Online at [fpclw.org](http://fpclw.org). 2. Friendship pad on Sunday **OR** 3. Call the Church Office





**SIGN UP TODAY!!**

# **Dinner Fellowship**

**Spring**  
SEMESTER

**Calling all New  
and Return  
participants!**

No need to sign  
up again if you  
have already.

**HOW IT WORKS? Led by a host, your assigned group will  
select three times to share a meal together over the  
Spring Semester. Breaking bread together is a powerful  
way to build connection with your church family!!**

**Sign up online at [FPCLW.ORG](http://FPCLW.ORG)  
or contact Karla Campbell  
(918) 639-6789  
[KARLACAMPBELL48@ICLOUD.COM](mailto:KARLACAMPBELL48@ICLOUD.COM)**



# WHAT'S GOING ON IN OUR ADULT SMALL GROUPS?

Our adult small groups meet weekly and are a great way grow together in Christ while enjoying fellowship and service opportunities. Reach out to Pastor Myers to get plugged-in.

**Seekers, adult small group, filled 32 Samaritan's Purse boxes for Christmas delivery**



**Eagle's Wings, adult small group, gathering during the Sunday school hour to enjoy a BBQ lunch. The re-covered children's play area was enjoyed by a gaggle of happy kids!**



# Music Ministry

## ANTICIPATION!

From Dr. Teresa Irwin

As we enter the sanctuary each Sunday, we do so with the anticipation of meeting face to face with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We seek to lay aside the profane world from whence we came and redirect our thoughts and hearts as we prayerfully step into His Holy presence. This profane world is reflected in the wilderness about which Isaiah wrote, "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord." May the special season of Advent, or "arrival," permeate each of our hearts as we prepare to hear God's Word, take part in the Holy Sacraments, and praise Him with thankfulness in our hearts as we sing Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual songs. May the glory of the Lord be revealed to each of us, as we celebrate the coming day when all flesh shall see it together!" ■



**DECEMBER 1**  
First Sunday of Advent

**DECEMBER 15**  
The Christmas Festival of Lessons & Carols

**DECEMBER 24**  
Christmas Eve Service, 6:00 pm



# Family Ministry

## WORDS FROM WALKER

### From Walker Kirkpatrick

Hey everyone,

As we approach the remainder of the Holiday season we have a lot planned with the Student Ministries. We are going to have a flurry of events, game nights, a fundraiser, and even some retreats!

Speaking of the Fundraiser, thank you all who were able to help support our Student Ministries in this way! We have a lot of orders to pack and fill!

Pickup for these Cookies in a Jar will be during ROW on December 11th (6-7:30pm).

If you are unable to make this time slot please reach out to Walker Kirkpatrick.

Please look below for the upcoming Student Ministries schedule and reach out to Walker if you would like more information!

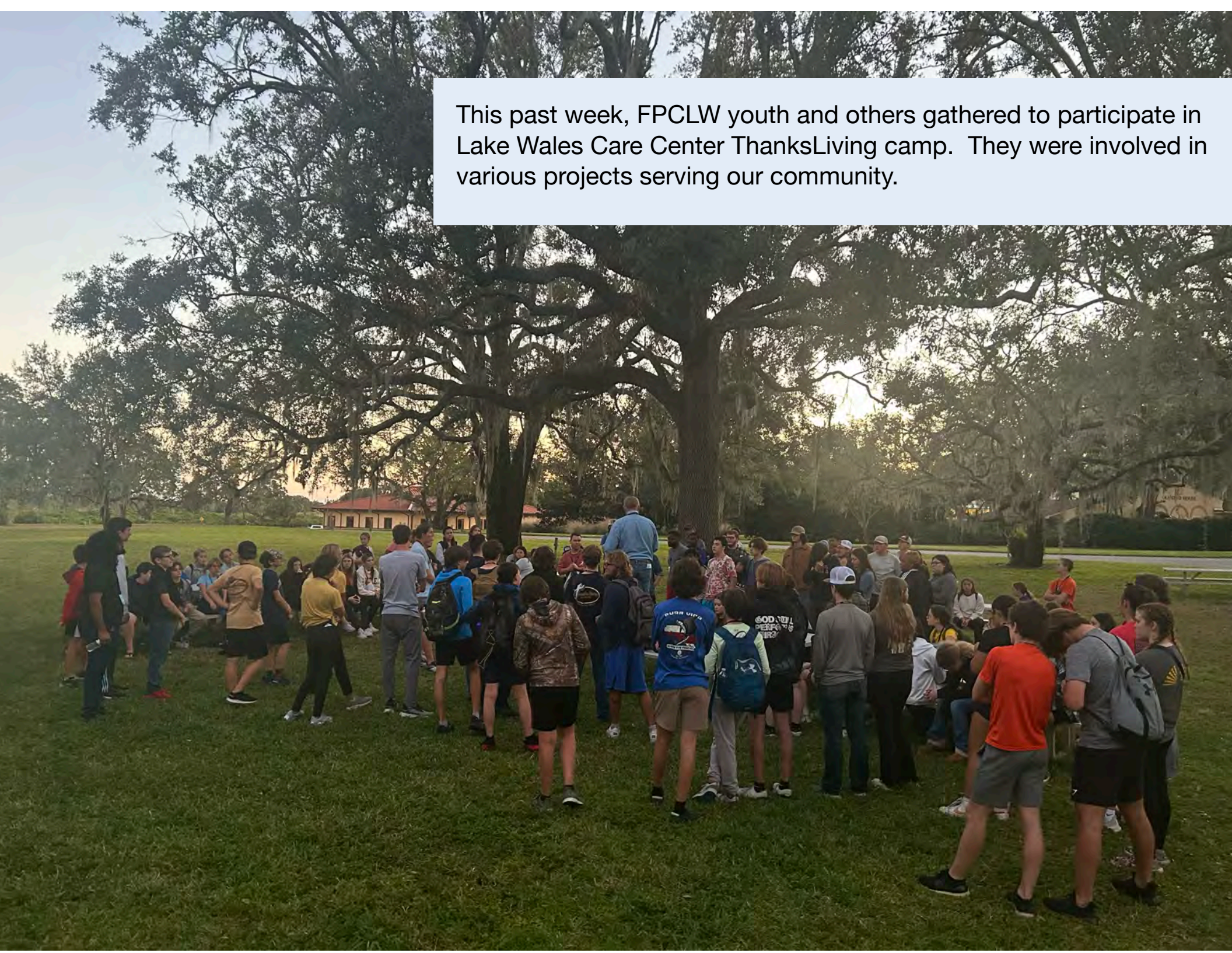
God Bless,

Walker K. ■

### STAY CONNECTED: LINKTREE

Look at the link below to find the Youth Instagram, Facebook, FORMS and so much more!

<https://linktr.ee/youthfpclw>



This past week, FPCLW youth and others gathered to participate in Lake Wales Care Center ThanksLiving camp. They were involved in various projects serving our community.



# December 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 NO Youth S.S. or Youth Group  Final Day for Cookie Orders	2	3	4	5	6	7
8 Youth S.S. & Youth Group  Cookie Jar Packing Day	9	10	11 ROW & Youth Bible Study  Cookie Jar Pick Up Day! 6:00-7:30pm	12	13	14  LW Christmas Parade Cookie Pass out
15 Youth S.S.  Youth Christmas Party (White Elephant Gift)	16	17	18	19	20	21
22 Youth S.S.  NO Youth Group	23	24	25	26	27	28
29 Youth S.S.  NO Youth Group	30	31 Youth New Years Eve Party	January 2025			
JAN 5  Youth Sunday School & Youth Group	6	7				
JAN 12 <div></div> Youth S.S. No Youth Group	13	14	JAN 8  Youth Bible Study & ROW	9	JAN 10 <div>Middle School Winter Retreat January 10-12</div>	JAN 11
JAN 19 Youth Sunday School & Youth Group	20	21	JAN 22  Youth Bible Study & ROW	23	24	25
JAN 26 Youth Sunday School & Youth Group	27	28	29	30	31	



**MILESTONE  
CELEBRATIONS**

**Church  
Family**

**BIRTHDAYS**

December 4, Charlotte Lewis  
December 6, Ann Mann  
December 7, Julie Smith  
December 8, Birdie Cockerel  
December 8, Frank Hunt III  
December 9, Stewart Hurst  
December 10, Scottie Smith III  
December 10, Joyce McCollum  
December 14, Kathe Galloway  
December 15, Kay Weaver  
December 18, Michelle Hurst  
December 19, Elenor Freeland  
December 21, Bill Schaffer  
December 21, Rachel Smith  
December 23, Evelyn Smith  
December 26, Cindy Turner  
December 28, Wyatt Caldwell  
December 29, Patty Falk  
December 29, Lily Wunker

January 4, Chandler Crews  
January 4, Julie Seay  
January 9, Jimmy Kahler  
January 10, Darlene Krpata  
January 15, Kelly Wheeler  
January 18, Chris Waters  
January 18, Sara Wynn  
January 19, Mary Campbell  
January 19, Mary Roberts  
January 19, Barbara Sebring  
January 20, Maria Herman  
January 21, Emily Bass  
January 21, Mary Benner  
January 22, Cole Hixenbaugh  
January 23, Caleb Eckstein  
January 25, Wendy Moore  
January 27, Audrey Hunt  
January 30, Billy Kahler  
January 30, Jaclyn Miller  
January 31, Laura Hunt

**ANNIVERSARIES**

Lori & Tony Woods, December 2  
Katie & Gerald Lippert, December 3  
Beth & Ansel Buhrman, December 3  
Christie & Lorin Bice, December 7  
Nancy & Jim Ayers, December 12  
Donna & Chip Carter, December 22  
Debbie & Willard Pearce, December 23  
Norma & Bill Schaffer, December 25  
Dionne & Kevin Kohl, December 30  
  
Danielle & Dan Miller, January 4



*The Nativity* by Gari Melchers circa 1891





First Presbyterian Church of Lake Wales  
16 N 3rd St, Lake Wales, FL 33853  
Phone: 863.676.0711  
fpclw.org

CHURCH OFFICERS

ELDERS

<b>2024</b> Daniel Hunt David Nelson Andy Hunt	<b>2026</b> Stewart Hurst Ed Lamb Jimmy Seay
<b>2025</b> Tony Woods Jim Underwood	<b>2027</b> Chuck Loveless Willard Pearce Fox Rawlings

DEACONS

<b>2024</b> Leah Gibson Dan Miller	<b>2026</b> Aaron Nelson
<b>2025</b> June Ullman Cindy Turner	

**Moderator:** Rev. Mackay Smith  
**Clerk of Session:** David Nelson  
**Chairman of Deacons:** Dan Miller  
**Deacon Secretary:**  
**Chm. of the Congregation:** Jim Weaver  
**Treasurer:** Michelle Hurst  
**Asst. Treasurer:** Daniel Hunt