



OCTOBER 2024

ISSUE 24-10

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

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Milestone Celebrations

Leadership

WE SINGERS From Pastor Mackay

This was a big week in my personal Bible reading plan. On Sunday, Sept 30, I read the final words of the Old Testament: the prophecy of Malachi. Then, bright and early on Monday morning, what lay before me was “In the beginning was the Word...,” John’s famous prologue. The Old has passed away, the New has come. Jesus is here!

We know well that Jesus is not welcomed with pomp and circumstance; such would belie his calling as a servant. Yet, he is welcomed with much singing. Mary sings (Luke 1). The angels sing (Luke 2). This shouldn’t surprise us. When God works in a powerful way, his people sing (e.g., Exodus 15).

Singing expresses something deep. In their respective imaginary worlds, both C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien use song as a picture of creation. In Narnia (Lewis), humans from our world hear the mighty Aslan sing, and by his words, a world and its inhabitants spring forth. Tolkien’s work, *The Silmarillion*, sets forth the creation of Middle Earth in a similar way. The

great gods sing, and in their song life spring forth. The pleasant harmonies of this divine music bring forth good and beautiful things. When there is discord, darkness and evil emerge.

These two great thinkers only copy what God makes clear to us in his Word. Singing is a great gift of God that is to be deployed to the praise of God. Singing is God’s command to his people (Psalm 33:2). It is to characterize the Christian’s fellowship on earth (Eph. 5:19), and it will characterize the Christian’s eternal fellowship in Heaven (Rev. 19). Even creation itself it exhorted to sing praises to God in respond to his mighty acts of redemption (Isa. 44:23).

In God’s gift of the Psalms, we see that music is also means of expressing the complexities of life in this world. Songs enable us to voice our lament (e.g., Psalm 12) over sin and the confusion it can bring (e.g., Psalm 73).

Yet, above all else, music declares the glories of God. What a God to give us such a gift as this! Let us enjoy it as we worship together.

- Pastor Mackay ■



The Annunciation to the Shepherds by Benjamin Gerritsz Cup, 17th Century

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

The elders of First Presbyterian Church meet monthly on the fourth Tuesday. The following are highlights from the meeting on September 24, 2024.

- Prayer was given for our the needs of our congregation and the ministries of our church. Elders prayed particularly for members on their Shepherd Lists.
- The new church website has been previewed by elders and staff and is nearing completion.
- The Session discussed the budget for 2025. The Stewardship and Finance Committee, Deacons, and Elders will vote on the proposed budget next month. The congregation will vote on the budget at the December annual congregational meeting.
- The Nominations Committee reported that a number of potential nominees for church office have been contacted. Officer Training starts Wednesday, October 2, at 5pm.
- The Evangelism Committee is leading supper service for the Highlanders Football Team on Nov. 1. Contact Fox Rawlings or Cindy Turner if you are interested in serving.
- Tony Woods and Ed Lamb will serve as delegates to the October meeting of Florida Presbytery.
- The Stewardship and Finance committee reported (as of August 31), collections continue in line with previous years. The General Operating Fund is at \$71,932. Total Operating Funds (including undesignated cash reserves) are \$284,908.. ■

PRAYER FOCUS

- OCTOBER 6** - The Universal Church
- OCTOBER 13** - Bridge Europe
- OCTOBER 20** - Florida Presbytery
- OCTOBER 27** - Reformation Day

Feed the HIGHLANDERS

Our church is serving supper to the Highlanders Football team on November 1st at LWHS. If you are interested in serving, contact Cindy Turner or Fox Rawlings.



WE ARE HIRING

The session is seeking a qualified book keeper to help with our church finances to begin before the end of this year. Please contact an elder or the church office for a job description.

OFFICER TRAINING

All elders and deacons are invited to Gym C on Wednesdays (October 2, 9, 16, 23) at 5pm.

Discipleship

A GOD FOR ALL SEASONS

From Pastor Myers

I recently watched a marvelous film called *A Man for All Seasons*. I highly recommend it to you and your families as well. It is rated G.

Set during the tumultuous decades of the 16th century in Europe, the film follows Sir Thomas More as he interacts with and defies King Henry VIII's attempt to have his marriage to Catherine of Aragon annulled and his relationship with the Roman Catholic church severed. Despite intense political pressure, More stood fast against Henry's whims and despotic tendencies, even to the point of being vanquished from his high office of Lord Chancellor and subsequently imprisoned.

Refusing still to acknowledge Henry as head of the Church of England, More was stripped of everything, even his life, when he was executed as a traitor under false pretenses in 1535. His dying words echo throughout history to this very day, "I am the King's good servant, but God's first."

Now as an unabashed and proud protestant, I could not disagree more with More's staunch adherence to Roman Catholicism. The differences between Roman Catholicism and the Biblical Gospel are not smugable differences and must be reckoned with seriously, especially as we enter the month which celebrates the Reformation.

That being the case, however, I must give a tip of the hat to Sir Thomas More. I find his courage and steadfast conviction admirable and worthy of imitation by all Christians. Had almost anyone else been pressured to "just go along to get along" "just play the game", "sign the dotted line", such a person would likely have kept the fame and fancy estate and considered the violation of conscience to not be a big deal.

Thomas More, however, did consider the violation of conscience to be a big deal. Thomas More deeply believed in his heart of hearts that it is better to lose the world than to forfeit one's soul. Why? Because Thomas More truly believed that there is more to life than this world. He lived as though he actually believed in eternity. He lived as though he actually believed he lived before God

every second of every day. He lived as though he actually believed the faith he professed and that God would honor his faithfulness to Him no matter the earthly consequences. More believed that God was a God for all seasons.

It seems to me that today, large swaths of the American Church are in a crisis of courage. It seems as though there is much doctrinal and moral compromise, not just outside the church (which is to be expected) but, tragically, inside the church as well.

What is the explanation of this? There are surely many but one of the causes may well be an epidemic of spiritual myopia, a spiritual short-sightedness. Let's remind ourselves of the basics. Are we primarily setting our sights on eternity and the day in which we will meet Jesus face to face (1 Cor 13:12)? Do we live as though we actually believe we will be judged for even our idle words (Matt 12:36)? Or does the transcript of our lives reveal a tacit acceptance of John Lennon's theology, the theology which advocates that we live "only for today", that "there is no hell beneath us"? Do we live like More, willing to lose everything in the interest of truth, or do we live like Machiavelli, willing to triangulate anything in the interest of power?

Please let the seriousness of the Christian message and worldview grip you and take your soul captive even as it gripped a Roman Catholic like Thomas More. Jesus is good and will acknowledge us before the Father if we acknowledge Him before men (Matt 10:32-33). And God justifies those who believe in Christ (Rom 1:17). I am a protestant don't worry! But I pray that we would be a church of Calvinistic Thomas Mores. I pray that we would live in the constant trust that God is a God worth serving in all seasons. ■

ROCK ON WEDNESDAYS

Wednesdays in Fellowship Hall

PROGRAM ROTATION

1st Wednesday - Potluck and Family Fellowship

2nd Wednesday - Breakout Night & ROW Kidz

ROW Kidz- “The Greatest Story”

Led by Cindy Nelson & Faith Treadway

Youth Bible Study- “The Bible Project”

Led by Walker Kirkpatrick

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

Led by Pastor Myers & Pastor Mackay

3rd Wednesday - Hymn Sing and Prayer Meeting

4th Wednesday - Breakout Night & ROW Kids

ROW Kidz- “The Greatest Story”

Led by Cindy Nelson & Faith Treadway

Youth Bible Study- “The Bible Project”

Led by Walker Kirkpatrick

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

Led by Pastor Myers & Pastor Mackay

5th Wednesday - ROW will NOT meet on 5th Wednesdays.

Get Connected!

Contact Pastor Myers if you would like to help with:

-Kids Programming

-Youth

-Fellowship Nights

-Kitchen Crew

Please remember to RSVP for your dinner. You can do this three different ways.

1. Sign up on the friendship pad in your pew on Sunday Morning

2. Online at www.fpclw.org by Tuesday

3. Call the church office (863)676-0711 by Tuesday

Family Ministry

WORDS FROM WALKER

From Walker Kirkpatrick

Hey everybody!

I hope all is well with you and your families! With another month behind us we keep on moving through the school year.

Please look at the calendar below for updates about our schedule and to see what we are doing in the coming weeks.

Also, if you have any questions about Winter Retreats please reach out to me ASAP, as those are right around the corner!

Thanks so much and 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>



Silas Coker hanging out with Bennett Kirkpatrick!

**Idols Aside Ministries Retreat:
A weekend trip with students
from Lake Wales and the
surrounding area to introduce
father-less young men to Christ
and the outdoors.**



october

2024

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2 ROW Fellowship Night	3	4	5
6 Sunday School & Youth Group	7	8	9 ROW Youth Bible Study	10	11	12
13 Sunday School & Youth Group	14	15	16 ROW Prayer Night	17	18	19
20 Sunday School & Youth Group	21	22	23 ROW Youth Bible Study	24	25	26
27 Sunday School & Game Night	28	29	30	31		



**Idols Aside
Ministries Retreat**

MILESTONE CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAYS

October 2, Sue Dolan
October 5, Margaret Hunt
October 6, Kevin Knuth
October 7, Rob Thullbery
October 7, Carter Ullman
October 7, David Ullman
October 10, Ashley Cockrell
October 10, Walker Kirkpatrick
October 12, Annelise Smith
October 13, Kaitlyn Nelson
October 15, Joe Martin
October 16, Maxcy Henry
October 16, Debby Pearce
October 17, Nancy Furland
October 18, Teresa Bass
October 18, Kathleen Krpata
October 19, Catherine Ullman
October 19, Karen Steverson
October 21, Harry Nelson
October 22, Bea Meeker
October 23, Sara Grace Freeland
October 24, Dawn McCollum
October 24, Jan Kahler
October 24, Dana Lewis
October 27, Milford Myrhe

ANNIVERSARIES

Mary & Paul Benner, October 7
Kay & Charles Clegg, October 19
Bea & Bob Meeker, October 22

Church Family

“How powerful it is before God that a poor human should speak with high majesty in heaven and not be afraid before him, but know that God smiles on him with a friendly countenance on account of the will of Jesus Christ, his loving son, our Lord and Savior!”

-Martin Luther





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

CHURCH OFFICERS

ELDERS

2024

Daniel Hunt
 David Nelson
 Andy Hunt

2026

Stewart Hurst
 Ed Lamb
 Jimmy Seay

2025

Tony Woods
 Jim Underwood

2027

Chuck Loveless
 Willard Pearce
 Fox Rawlings

DEACONS

2024

Leah Gibson
 Dan Miller

2026

Aaron Nelson

2025

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