



NOVEMBER 2025

ISSUE 25-11

# 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**

*“A Loving Father,” Budget Pledge, Congregational Meeting, Erskine Invitation, Session Highlights, Prayer Focus*

**Pg. 4, Discipleship**

*“The Church’s One Anchor of Thankfulness Through Many Storms”, Rock on Wednesday, Care Center Food Pantry*

**Pg. 6, Music Ministry**

*A Christmas Festival of Lessons & Carols*

**Pg. 7, Church Family**

*Milestone Celebrations*

# Leadership

## A LOVING FATHER

### From Pastor Mackay

“I have loved you with an everlasting love...”  
- Jeremiah 31:3

There is little more impactful to our daily thought lives than the way that we actively perceive God. When you think of God, how do you view him?

It's a vital question. For example, if we view God as angry and thirsty for punishment, we will live each day either desperately trying to stay on his good side or (more likely) trying to avoid him altogether. Consider also how our perception of God impacts how we treat others. If we serve a deity eager for vengeance, won't we also be eager for vengeance upon others? We will have no patience, no love for sinners, and lack the grace to forgive the slightest offense. Furthermore, we could chalk this all up to “godliness,” for this is how we mistakenly view our God!

All this argues for how much we need God's Word to shape our view of him, and God's Word reminds us over and over that for the Christian, we must look to God as our loving Father. He is our God who knows us, who cares for us, and whose eternal love for His people led Him to solve the problem of our sin by the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Consider these words from 17th century English theologian and pastor John Owen.

*Do not see the Father as one who is angry, but as one who is most kind and gentle. Let us see the Father as one who from eternity has always had kind thoughts towards us. Is it a complete misunderstanding of the Father that makes us want to run away and hide from him. The Psalmist said, “They that know you will put their trust in you.” How sad that we cannot stay long with God in spiritual meditations! The Father loses the company of his people because they are so ignorant of his love to them. His saints keep thinking only of his terrible majesty, severity and greatness, and so their hearts are not drawn to him in love. We must*

*learn to think of his everlasting gentleness and compassion. We must remember his kind thoughts towards us which have been from eternity. Let us remember how eager and willing he is to accept us. If we did this, then we would not be able to bear one hour's absence from him. Instead, we find it difficult to spend even one hour with him. **Let then this be the first thought that we have of the Father, that he is full of eternal love to us.** Let our hearts and thoughts be filled with his love to us, even though many discouragements may lie in our way.*

Is this the God that you serve, Christian? Do you view each and every moment of your day as a gift from the hand of a loving Father? Even the discouragements, the difficulties, and the annoyances... they are there (at least in part) that you might be weaned from your love of self and know more the infinite vastness of God's love for you. Pray that part of your discipleship as a Christian will be remembering the vast love of God each day. ■



Rembrandt's "Return of the Prodigal Son"

# Pledge to the 2026 BUDGET

Summaries of the 2026 Budget are being delivered by mail with pledge cards. Full budgets are available from the Church Office

**Officers and Staff -**

November 9

**Congregation -**

November 16 and 23



## SAVE the DATE Congregational Meeting

Following worship on  
December 14th in Fellowship  
Hall.

### Join Rev. and Mrs. Mackay Smith for BBQ and... **An Evening with Erskine**

with Erskine President and First Lady

**Dr. and Mrs. Steve Adamson**

**Monday, November 10th at 6:00pm**

First Presbyterian Church - 16 N. 3rd St., Lake Wales, FL

Reserve your free plates: **call 863-676-0711**

or **text 704-813-9006** with name and # of guests

## SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

The elders met in session on October 27, 2025.

- The Session is studying *From Embers to a Flame* by Harry Reeder.
- 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 Session acted on the recommendation from the Stewardship and Finance Committee and the Deacons to approve the the Ministry Budget for 2026. The congregation will vote on the budget at the December 14th annual congregational meeting. A budget summary and pledge cards are being distributed to the congregation. Officers will pledge toward the budget on Nov 9, and the congregation is invited to pledge at the Nov 16 and 23 services.
- The Nominations Committee reported on their ongoing work. Nominees for office will be interviewed and certified at the November Session meeting.

## PRAYER FOCUS

**NOV 2** - Stewardship / US Elections

**NOV 9** - Veteran's Day

**NOV 16** - Local Missions

**NOV 23** - Grief and Loss

**NOV 30** - Thanksgiving/Thanks-living

# Discipleship

## THE CHURCH'S ONE ANCHOR OF THANKFULNESS THROUGH MANY STORMS

**From Pastor Myers**

*What I've noticed in re-reading through 1-2 Kings.*

Towards the beginning of 2025, the Hub Discipleship Class taught a series called "A Few Good Kings". This was a series in which we studied the good kings of Old Testament Israel after Solomon.

Needless to say, this was not a particularly long series. For one thing, not only were there exceedingly few good kings in the southern kingdom of Judah (only 8 if one doesn't count Manasseh) but there were precisely zero good Kings in the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

While reading through 1-2 Kings recently, I got to take note of just how evil some of these evil Kings were. There were multiple political assassinations, brutal reigns of oppression and often total suppression of God's word and His people.

Perhaps the most shocking instance of evil (to me anyway), came not from a King but from a queen, namely, queen Jezebel, Ahab's wife. When Ahab saw the vineyard of a man named Naboth and offered to pay Naboth a great sum of money in exchange for that vineyard, Naboth refused, leading Ahab to break down in a rather pitiful display of a childish temper tantrum. In response,

Jezebel had Naboth falsely accused of blasphemy and subsequently stoned to death. In the style of Lady Macbeth herself, Jezebel exchanged the the milk of human kindness for the gall of raw ambition and pettiness.

Jezebel exceeded Ahab in wickedness (which was no easy feat). And the history of the Kings is (mostly) filled with stories such as these. God's people seemed to almost never see the light of day. And yet God was with them nevertheless. He provided prophets, revivals and he preserved a remnant of faithful Israelites who refused to bow the knee to Baal.

And what a take-away for the church today! Today, as back then, does it not seem as though the Church in America can never see the light of day? Does it not seem as though the good fight of being a Christian on the straight and narrow path is more of an uphill battle today than it was 2,3 generations ago? This may well be the case, and almost certainly is. But the God who was with Joseph in the years of plenty and famine alike is the same God who promises to be with us in the years of plenty and famine as well. The same God who raised up David is the same God who is the same God who is with us now, He who is the true David by the Spirit. We can and should be thankful in all circumstances because even while the church sojourns through what seems like defeat after defeat, in God's providence we will one day somehow be amazed at how God meant for good what the evil one meant for evil (Gen 50:20).

## ROCK ON WEDNESDAYS

Wednesdays in Fellowship Hall

Join us for our weekly mid-week Discipleship Program

Weekly Rotation

1st Wednesdays - **Potluck and Fellowship** (Bring a side to share!)

2nd Wednesdays - **Bible Study & ROW Kids**

3rd Wednesdays - **Prayer Meeting and Hymn Sing**

4th Wednesdays - **Bible Study & ROW Kids**

Rock on Wednesday does not meet on 5th Wednesdays.

**Want to help?**

**Contact Pastor Myers**

if you'd like to help with...

- Kitchen crew/clean-up
- Children's programming
- Fellowship Night programs

FPCLW MERCY MINISTRIES

# CARE CENTER

## FOOD PANTRY SHORTAGE

THE CARE CENTER HAS RECENTLY EXPERIENCED A SHORTAGE IN THEIR FOOD PANTRY. PLEASE PRAYERFULLY CONSIDER WHAT YOU AND YOUR FAMILY COULD BRING TO HELP .

DONATIONS CAN BE PLACED INTO THE TWO LARGE CARE CENTER BARRELS ON OUR CHURCH CAMPUS



MATTHEW 25:35

FOR I WAS HUNGRY AND YOU GAVE ME FOOD, I WAS THIRSTY AND YOU GAVE ME DRINK, I WAS A STRANGER AND YOU WELCOMED ME

# Music Ministry

## CHRISTMAS DATES

From Dr. Teresa Irwin

**A Community  
Event!**

# **A Christmas Festival of Lessons & Carols**

**Sunday, Dec. 14<sup>th</sup> at 6pm**

**First Presbyterian Church of Lake Wales**



# Church Family

## MILESTONE CELEBRATIONS

### BIRTHDAYS

November 2, Jake Cockrell  
November 6, Susan Ebel  
November 8, Dayle Dierks  
November 8, Ellie Lippert  
November 8, Niven Owings  
November 9, Madison Campbell  
November 11, John Rollins  
November 13, Beau Cushing  
November 13, Shelley Paros  
November 14, Leah Gibson  
November 18, Susan Coyne  
November 18, Jane Terry  
November 19, Jim Weaver

November 22, Loren Furland  
November 23, Susan Lamar  
November 23, Shelley Underwood  
November 29, Esther Rose Lippert  
November 29, Jim Underwood  
November 30, Cortland Kohl  
November 30, Nancy Turnquist

### ANNIVERSARIES

Angie & Scott Crews, November 10  
Kaitlyn & Aaron Nelson, November 17  
Penny & Rick Wright, November 17  
Adrian & Daniel Hunt, November 19

Happy  
Thanksgiving





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

## CHURCH OFFICERS

### ELDERS

#### 2025

Tony Woods  
Jim Underwood

#### 2026

Stewart Hurst  
Ed Lamb  
Jimmy Seay

#### 2027

Chuck Loveless  
Willard Pearce  
Fox Rawlings

#### 2028

Frank Hunt  
Scott Crews

### DEACONS

#### 2025

June Ullman  
Cindy Turner

#### 2026

Aaron Nelson

#### 2027

Bob Hulen  
John Dubois  
Karen Steverson

**Moderator:** Rev. Mackay Smith  
**Clerk of Session:** Tony Woods  
**Chairman of Deacons:** Aaron Nelson  
**Deacon Secretary:** June Ullman  
**Chm. of the Congregation:** Jim Weaver  
**Treasurer:** Daniel Hunt  
**Asst. Treasurer:** Michelle Hurst