March 2026 Issue 3-26

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."

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God the List Maker

From Pastor Mackay

A sermon I heard on Joshua, the ongoing work of your Session to shepherd the people of our church, and my own reading through the first chapters of Numbers have all had me pondering afresh that God is a maker of lists. There is perhaps nothing less interesting to a modern reader than the long censuses, tribal divisions, and other detailed accountings in the Old Testament, but these reveal vital truths about our God and call us to respond to Him intentionally.

At multiple points in the Old Testament, God calls for the counting of His people Israel (Exod. 30, Num. 1, 26). In Joshua, detailed accounts of conquests and various tribal distributions are recorded (Ch. 13ff). God makes lists.

These connect to God's most gracious and glorious list of all: the Lamb's book of life. God accounts for the birth of all people (Ps. 87:6), and keeps a list of all those who belong to Him. Malachi recounts one perspective on this book as a "book of remembrance" (Mal. 3:16). God records the righteous deeds of those who fear Him by grace. Even if their reward seems long delayed, eventually they will receive it through the finished work of Jesus.

Indeed, their faithfulness is not a result of their own goodness (Eph 2:8-10), but God's gracious inclusion of all His people in His Book of life. Revelation tells us that in the Last Judgment it is those God has chosen, those written in the Lamb's Book of Life, who will enjoy life with Him forever (Rev. 21:27). God has known His people from all eternity past. They are listed in His book! In Jesus He has saved them; by the Spirit He has called them.

God's list-making proves that He knows and loves each one of His people. Have you ever heard a commercial that states customers are, "more than just a number?" Well, God's people are infinitely more. God knows each one of His people by name.

Iain Duguid sums up the Christian's response to God's list-making in the title of a chapter of his Numbers commentary, "Stand Up, and Be Counted!" We who are known and saved individually are set free to live for this God, and obedience requires us to stand up and be counted!

As a church, we seek to reflect God's individual-love by keeping an accurate list of all those who have stood up to be counted for Jesus. Our elder-shepherds care for our families individually. If you are not a member of our church, we stand ready to hear your profession of faith in Jesus. That is, we are ready for you to stand and be counted!

In Luke 10, Jesus instructs His disciples that above the privilege of being God's chosen apostles who act with His authority, they ought to give thanks that their "names are written in heaven." We can so prioritize our own thanksgiving in the way that we stand up to be counted for Jesus. Responding to God's love means professing our faith, attending to His Word and worship, and desiring to grow in spiritual fruit.

So, are you living like you are on God's list? Does your life reflect a celebration of God's saving love? If you have given yourself to Him in repentance and faith, you can trust that you are listed. So, stand up and live in the remarkable truth that God knows and love you! ∎

CHURCH DIRECTORY

Each individual or family who sits for a picture will receive a free 8x10 photo and a directory. There is no cost to the church. Families will be given the opportunity buy additional photos. Church directory photo dates: Friday April 3rd and Saturday April 4th

To register visit:
https://schedule.ucdir.com/

Log In Code: FL1104
Password: Photos

Welcome **Tommy Wunker** as our new Administrative Assistant (part-time) beginning March 2! Tommy will be in the church office in the mornings, and will be responsible for communications, church database management, and office support. Our Director of Administration, Mark Markham, continues in his role with reduced hours and a flexible schedule. He will focus on office management, facility management, and staff support.

Pray for the Lord's work through both of these men.

Prayer Focus

March 1 - 10for10 Florida Presbytery Church Planting
March 8 - FPC Music Ministry
March 15 - Schools/Teachers/Parents
March 22 - Ministry of the Word in Lake Wales
March 29 - Local Missions and Evangelism

Session Highlights

The elders met in Session on February 24th.

- The Session continues it's study of Harry Reeder's book, *From Embers to a Flame*
- Prayers were made on behalf of the congregation.
- The Worship Committee reported work begin done towards Maundy Thursday and Easter, and the Children's Musical
- Discipleship Committee reported on positive Middle and High School retreats, and much discussion regarding summer programs.
- The Missions and Evangelism Committee updated the Session on March into Missions.

The Stewardship and Finance committee reported January 2026 numbers:
- Operating Income (Member Contributions and other): $92,064 vs a budget of $81,215
- Total Expenses: $70,903 vs a budget of $88,657
- Total cash: $881,296

- Pastor Myers will be on vacation March 8-14; Pastor Mackay will be on vacation March 16-23 ∎

Discipleship

Marching Into Missions

From Pastor Myers

Our Lord Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, stood among His disciples and declared, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you” (John 20:21). The sending of the church for the world flows out of the sending of the Son to the world. Before there was a Great Commission, there was an eternal commission—the Father sending the Son in the fullness of time (Gal. 4:4). The Son came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many. Now, united to Christ by faith and indwelt by His Spirit, we share in His mission—not as redeemers, but as witnesses.

This missionary calling is woven throughout Scripture. The Lord promised Abraham that in his offspring “all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Gen. 12:3). The psalmist longs for the day when “all the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord” (Ps. 22:27). The prophets foresaw the nations streaming into the House of where the Lord would be named. And our Savior’s final earthly words were clear: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:18–20).

As those who confess the sovereignty of God in salvation, we are not hindered but compelled in missions. Because the Lord has His elect from every tribe and tongue (Rev. 5:9), we labor in hope. Because faith comes by hearing, and hearing through the Word of Christ (Rom. 10:17), we prioritize the faithful proclamation of the gospel. And because Christ is King now, we go with confidence that His Word will not return void.

Throughout March, we will highlight the work of both local and international missionaries and church planters we support. We will host Jeff Allers of World Witness at our mid-week discipleship program on March 4th, Lee Shelnut of the Seed ministry to raise up pastors for the global south, to preach on March 8th, David Griffin, Field Director of the ARP work in Pakistan, Naina Mall from Pak7 as well as other opportunities to pray, support and serve. We will hear reports of the gospel’s advancement, the fields white for harvest, and consider how each member—in koinonia with Christ and with each other—participates in Christ’s body as instruments of his love, grace and mercy for sinners.∎

VBS 2026

SAVE THE DATE

June 1-5 I Mon- Fri

QUESTIONS? Reach out to Rachel Smith or Pastor Myers

ROCK ON WEDNESDAYS

Wednesdays in Fellowship Hall

ROW MEAL SCHEDULE CHANGES - Due to MARCH into MISSIONS

i. **March 4th – BBQ Dinner (Not Potluck)**
ii. **March 11th – Pancake Breakfast (Youth Serving)**
iii. **March 18th – No ROW (Spring Break)**
iv. **March 25th – Local Missions Night (Potluck Night)**

MARCH into MISSIONS

MARCH 2026

The Missions and Evangelism Committee invites you to join us next month to learn about God's work here in Lake Wales and around the world.

WEDNESDAY
MARCH 4

Rock on Wednesday

JEFF ALLERS

World Witness Missionary

SUNDAY
MARCH 8

Sunday Worship

Preaching:
REV. LEE SHELNUTT

Q&A in Chapel

World Witness Missionary
SEED :Training Pastors in the global South

SUNDAY
MARCH 15

Small Group Hour

REV. DAVID GRIFFIN

Field Director of ARP work in Pakistan

SUNDAY
MARCH 22

Small Group Hour

Zoom Meeting with NAINA MALL

Pak7

WEDNESDAY
MARCH 25

Rock on Wednesday

Local Ministry Fair

Music Ministry

Easter Schedule

From Dr. Teresa Irwin

"Blessed is He
who comes in the Name of the Lord!
We bless You from the house of the Lord."
Psalm 118:26

How blessed are we to have God's Word
fill our hearts and minds each Sunday!
We look forward to worshiping with you
during this glorious season as we remember
the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Palm Sunday, March 29th

Covenant Kid's Choir
King's Singers Choir
Handbell Choir
Chancel Choir
Pipe Organ & Piano

Maundy Thursday, April 2nd

Chancel Choir
Handbell Choir
Cello
Pipe Organ

Easter Sunday, April 5th

Chancel Choir
Brass Ensemble
Strings & Percussion
Pipe Organ

Youth Ministry

Words from Walker

From Walker Kirkpatrick

Hey Everyone!
First, I want to share a quick recap from our High School Winter Retreat. We had an incredible weekend away focused on the story of Jonah. Through many conversations and games, we grew closer to Christ and each other. Retreat weekends always remind me of the simple promise I say so often to our students, “The Lord is at Work”. It has been awesome to see the growth in students over the past few years, and the comradery that has continued to grow throughout the whole group!

As we move into the spring, I am also encouraged by the simple but fun hangouts we have. We have had girls paint nights, guys video games nights, spontaneous get togethers, and more. This is one avenue of ministry my whole family has grown fond of as we often have many students and youth volunteers in our house filling it with laughter.

Looking ahead to this summer I am excited to announce that we have been able to nail down a destination for our Domestic Mission Trip. This summer we will head to Cayce ARP Church in Cayce SC, (just south of Columbia) to help lead a VBS style outreach and hopefully assist in some other projects in the area. Our high school students will be helping with a lot of the preparation, set up, and day-to-day operations. This is very similar to something I did all throughout my high school years, and it was foundational in my life and growth as a Christian. Not only did I take on a leadership role, but I was able to practice preparing and leading a Bible study, sharing my testimony, and interacting with people I didn’t know with the goal of loving, serving, and ministering to them. Please pray for myself, Pastor Brad Anderson, and all of us as we continue in planning out the details. Ultimately pray that the Lord would go before us and that this trip would be one of great encouragement for our students and leaders, but also for Cayce Pres and the surrounding community!

Finally, on a personal note, thank you. The love and encouragement you showed our family when Hudson was baptized meant more than I can express. Seeing our covenant family rejoice with us and pray for him was uplifting. Moments like that remind me why I’m so grateful to serve here.

Thank you for loving our students so faithfully and for loving my family so well.

God Bless,
Walker K.∎

High School Winter Retreat

Church Family

Milestone Celebrations

Birthdays

March 1, Mallie Smith
March 9, Carole Miller
March 11, Penny Wright
March 12, Marilyn Fisher
March 14, Carol Grimes
March 15, Libby Matteson
March 17, Ezra Hernandez
March 17, Michael Matteson
March 18, Tori Kirkpatrick
March 18, Sawyer Matteson
March 20, Mason Hixenbaugh
March 22, Rob McCollum
March 24, Rick Wright
March 25, Janice Brandies
March 26, Bryah Knepper
March 28, Debbie Tyus
March 27, Jim Ayers
March 27, Mary Kunkel

Anniversaries

Jim & Shelley Underwood, March 15
Donald & Kathleen Krpata, March 20
John & Charles DuBois, March 21
Tom & Alison Freeland, March 21
Laura & Frank Hunt, March 26

Someone missing?
Contact the church office so we can update our database!

2nd Annual Chili Cook-off & Bake -Off

Chili Winner- Debbie Pace
Bake-Off Winner - Bob Hulen

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Church Officers

ELDERS

2026
Stewart Hurst
Ed Lamb
Jimmy Seay

2027
Chuck Loveless
Willard Pearce
Fox Rawlings

2028
Frank Hunt
Scott Crews

2029
Daniel Hunt

DEACONS

2026
Aaron Nelson
Pat Frankenburger

2027
Bob Hulen
John Dubois
Karen Steverson

Moderator: Rev. Mackay Smith
Clerk of Session: Ed Lamb
Chairman of Deacons: Aaron Nelson
Deacon Secretary: Karen Steverson
Chm. of the Congregation: David Nelson
Treasurer: Daniel Hunt
Asst. Treasurer: Michelle Hurst