



APRIL 2026

ISSUE 4-26

# 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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# Leadership

## READY IN WEAKNESS

From Pastor Mackay

*I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.*  
-Philippians 1:12-14

In many areas of life, we equate effectiveness to preparation and strength. If there's a final exam on the horizon, I want to be studied up and well-rested. Even in daily life: work, home, and play, we strive to be in positions of strength. When life brings difficulty, we often look to "circle the wagons," limiting contact with others and turning our attention to ourselves and those closest to us.

We apply that math to spiritual matters, as well. There are moments when I'm in a great book or feeling close to God that I think, "OK, now I'm ready to do something for the Lord!" More often, though, I find myself bemoaning my lack of preparation and readiness when opportunities to evangelize, speak a wise word, or pray come along in life. I often assume that my weakness is a sure path to ineffectiveness.

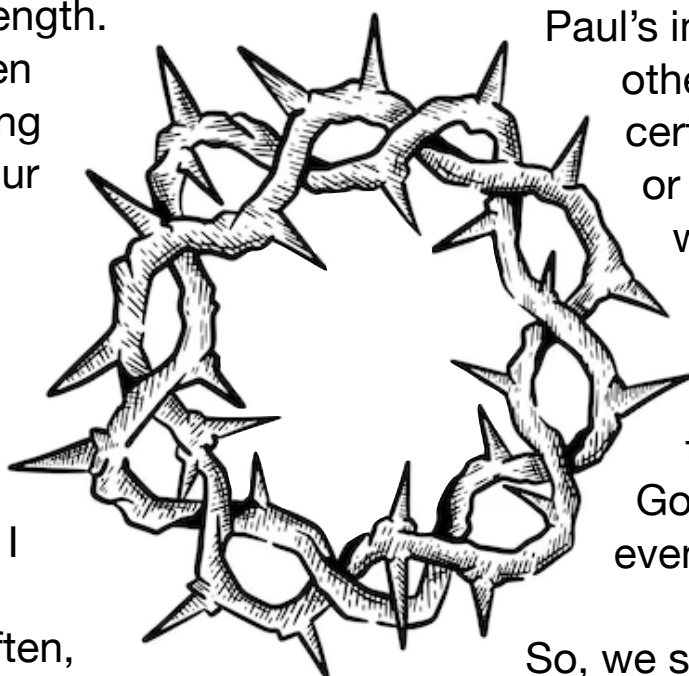
Paul and his ministry partners founded the church in Philippi, and they did so in a wave of God-given power. While their ministry began humbly; among a group of women gathering to pray, Acts 16 relates the dramatic riots and earthquakes that shook the prosperous city to its core and left no person unaware of God's might.

As Paul writes his letter, things have changed. He is in prison! He's no longer the "Bringer of Quakes," but the one "Bound in Chains." He has been brought low. He is in a position of weakness, even one that is being exploited by others (see Phil. 1:15ff).

We may expect Paul to become introspective and brooding in a time such as this; prayerful, silent, sedate. Yet, Paul encourages the

Philippians that God has continued his powerful Gospel work.

God has used Paul's position to reach the highest levels of the Roman army. The Imperial Guard was Caesar's personal Secret Service, charged with guarding a so-called god among men. Paul's imprisonment is God's means of reaching them with the Gospel. They know that he is imprisoned for Jesus, thus Paul's chains are a direct witness to Jesus' cross. While no doubt some might think, "What sort of a god allows his followers to be chained?" Others must think, "What sort of God is worth serving, even to the point of imprisonment?"



Paul's imprisonment had emboldened other believers. Just like us, we certainly don't *want* to be imprisoned or persecuted for our faith. However, when we see our brothers and sisters so oppressed, and then see how God uses that imprisonment to do mighty things, we have positive proof that God does not abandon his people even in the lowest moments.

So, we see that God works through Paul not in spite of his imprisonment, but *because* of his imprisonment. Paul's position of weakness is not a hindrance to God, but a means for him to continue to advance the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Let's take that view of our weaknesses, too. Is God's Word telling us that we should abandon our families and self-care when hard times come? No, but I doubt many of us are in danger of becoming *too* sacrificial. When we aren't sure what to say, when we aren't feeling great, when the house is messy, when we just don't want to deal with people; those moments of weakness are often when God uses us in the most powerful ways. Pray that God would turn our eyes out in those low moments. Jesus did not exploit his equality with God in a selfish way, but became a servant by making himself lowly (2:5-11). May God help us follow his perfect example. ■



# MAUNDY THURSDAY

WORSHIP SERVICE, APRIL 2<sup>ND</sup>, 7:00PM

## SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

The elders met in Session on March 27th.

- 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 on preparation toward Maundy Thursday (April 2), Easter (April 5), and the Children's Musical (May 22)

## PRAYER FOCUS

**APRIL 5** - Easter

**APRIL 12** - World Witness (Reflecting on March into Missions)

**APRIL 19** - Faithful Stewardship

**APRIL 26** - Widows/Widowers

- Discipleship Committee reported on finishing the ROW season on April 22nd with potluck.

- The Missions and Evangelism Committee reported on the successful March Into Missions 2026.

### **The Stewardship and Finance committee reported February 2026 numbers:**

- Operating Income (Member Contributions and other): \$209,024 vs a budget of \$162,430
- Total Expenses: \$180,616 vs a budget of \$177,314
- Total cash: \$902,799

- The Session is awaiting information from the City of Lake Wales regarding the 3rd Street Trail project.

- The Deacons are drafting a long-term facility maintenance plan to be considered in the budget planning season. ■

# Discipleship

## BREAKING NEWS: PROTESTANT PASTOR RECOMMENDS HAIL MARY (THE MOVIE)

### From Pastor Myers

Miracles do happen. Having recently gone to see the newly released Sci-Fi film “Project Hail Mary”, I myself, a confessionally Reformed Presbyterian Pastor, heartily recommend it to Christians and their families. I won’t summarize or spoil the film, but will only note a few reasons why I find the film to be a family appropriate flick and especially why it’s worth watching as a Christian.

For one thing, the movie is visually impressive. In an age of increasingly pervasive a.i.-slop and the low-quality retreads of beloved franchises through sequels, prequels and spinoffs (I’m looking at you, Stephen Colbert), it is a breath of fresh-air to see a new story hit the silver screen.

The film is based on a novel by Andy Weir (who also authored “The Martian”). One can tell that the creators took the creative process seriously with this one and didn’t phone it in. There are impressive set-pieces, gorgeous galaxy shots, and fascinating p.o.v sequences which put the viewer into the perspective of a rock (no literally, a rock). That’s one reason to go see it.

Another reason to go see it is, again, it’s family appropriate. With perhaps one exception (involving miscommunication and double entendre surrounding the phrase ‘fist-bump’), there is nothing in this film in the way of inappropriate language or content. I couldn’t remember one instance of politically charged content one way or the other, so no need to worry about “woke”ness or anything of the sort. The film

also has a distinctly upbeat tone overall. It’s not frightening, ironic, cynical, or annoyingly self-referential. It doesn’t go for the lowest common denominator and it also doesn’t glamorize mouthing off to mom and dad. At the heart of the movie is an endearing friendship that is difficult not to root for.

But by far the biggest reason to go see “Project Hail Mary” has to do with the plot and message itself. Although Andy Weir is an agnostic, he is no fool when he actually sits down to try and write a good story. He, like all good story tellers who are unbelievers (Twain, Huxley, Orwell etc.) must put aside his unbelief in order to write a story that actually holds together, one that actually speaks poignantly in the arena of the human heart.



And by the time the plot culminates to its crisis, it becomes clear to the Christian viewer that Christianity is the borrowed capital that Weir uses to pull off his highly satisfying resolution (the denouement might have been a tad long but it was still serviceable). Again, without spoiling anything here, suffice it to say that the embodiment of grace travels in a vessel called Mary to save the world through the sacrifice of himself. Let the reader and viewer understand. ■

**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL  
AT FPCLW**

**FAITH EXPEDITION**



**JUNE 1-5**

**Volunteers Needed!**

**Contact Rachel Smith at (863) 224-6224**

# VBS★Wishlist

This year's Vacation Bible School theme is "Faith Expedition", and we're transforming our space into an exciting adventure!

To help create an immersive experience for the kids, we'll be decorating our facilities—and we'd love your help! Below is a wishlist of items you can donate to bring this theme to life.

## Items to donate

- Cardboard Boxes
- Poster board or foam board
- Rope
- Painter tape, masking tape, or duct tape
- Artificial greenery
- Green & Brown Streamers
- Green black blue & brown plastic tablecloths
- Backdrop/bulletin board paper
- Fabric (earth tones/neutrals)

Baskets, crates or woden boxes

Brown, black, blue, or green large paper rolls

## Items to borrow and return

- Camping lanterns
- Tents or canopies
- Barrels, trunks or other large adventure props
- Globes
- Old balance scales

If you'd like to contribute, please contact  
**Tori Kirkpatrick at  
(828) 332-7727**

# ROCK ON WEDNESDAYS

Wednesdays in Fellowship Hall

Weekly Rotation

1st Wednesdays - **Potluck and Fellowship** (meat and dessert is provided)

2nd Wednesdays - **Bible Study**

3rd Wednesdays - **Prayer Meeting and Singing**

4th Wednesdays - **Bible Study**

Rock on Wednesday does not meet on 5th Wednesdays.

The last ROW meal and program for this school year is **APRIL 22** (are!)

# Music Ministry

## ALL GLORY, LAUD , AND HONOR

From Dr. Teresa Irwin

The first hymn we will be signing during this glorious season of worship is, “All Glory, Laud, and Honor.” This wonderful text first and foremost gives us the opportunity to praise our Redeemer King by acknowledging that He should receive ALL glory, ALL laud, and ALL honor! It is in this hymn that we are reminded of Christ’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem as He was celebrated by the people and the children who made, “Sweet hosannas ring!” The word, “hosanna,” comes from the Hebrew phrase, “hoshiah na,” which means, “save, I beg you.

The text for this hymn was written around 820AD by Theodolph, the Bishop of Orleans, who had been imprisoned by King Louis le Pieux of France. Tradition has it that one day while King Louis was outside the prison he heard the bishop singing this hymn and was so very moved that he freed the bishop and decreed that, “All Glory, Laud, and Honor,” be sung on all subsequent Palm Sundays.

**Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth! Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!**  
**Psalm 100:1 ■**



# Youth Ministry

## WORDS FROM WALKER

### From Walker Kirkpatrick

March was a full and encouraging month for our student ministries, filled with fellowship, service, and preparation for what's ahead!

#### **Youth Guys and Girls Hangout: "Galentines and Brotato Night"**

We ended off February with a fun and relaxed hangout night for both guys and girls. It was a great opportunity for students to connect, build friendships, and enjoy time together outside of our regular programming. The girls had a painting night where they followed along to a Bob Ross painting video, and the guys played video games together. It was a blast to have a lowkey night of relatively unstructured fun!

#### **Rock On Wednesday – Pancake "Brupper"**

One of the highlights of the month was serving Pancake "Brupper" (breakfast-for- supper) at Rock On Wednesday. Our students helped prepare, cook, and serve the meal. Doing so definitely opened our eyes and made us all (myself included) more thankful for all the work that goes into prepping, cooking, cleaning, and everything else that goes on each Wednesday.

#### **Parent Meeting – Looking Ahead to Summer**

We also gathered with parents this month to begin preparing for the summer season. It was a great time of worship, fellowship, fun, and a

flood of information as we look ahead to the summer. We're thankful for supportive families and are looking forward to all that summer will bring. Please be in prayer for God to lay the groundwork for connections to be furthered and relationships, especially the relationships with Christ to grow throughout all we have ahead of us!

#### **What's Ahead**

With that in mind we're excited about what's coming up in the next couple of months! Be sure to mark your calendars for our Family Fun Day: Kickball Game, which will be a great time for children, students, families, and adults alike to come together for fun and fellowship. We will be meeting Sunday, April 12 th at First Presbyterian Church Frostproof at 4:30pm for our annual Kickball game. All are encouraged and welcome to join in on the fun!

Additionally, our **Youth Bible Studies** will be continuing in May. Even though ROW comes to a close we will have 2 more Bible Studies with our middle and high school students. This will still take place on Wednesday nights, and the schedule will be roughly the same as that of ROW. We plan to finish out our teaching series on The Holiness of God by R.C Sproul during that time!

Thank you for your continued support and prayers for our student ministry! See some of the pictures attached to get a glimpse into what we've been up to! ■



**BROTATO NIGHT : Guy's Hang Out**



**Pancake Brupper at ROW**



**GALENTINE'S : Girl's Hang Out**

## MILESTONE CELEBRATIONS

# Church Family

### BIRTHDAYS

April 1, Gail Frankenburger  
April 1, Jimmy Seay  
April 2, Diana Smith  
April 4, Mackay Smith  
April 6, Debra Mullins  
April 9, Paul Benner,  
April 9, Sarah Owen  
April 11, Stacey Butcher  
April 14, Jayne Linton  
April 15, Kay Clegg  
April 16, Hunter Matteson  
April 16, Heather Wilson  
April 17, Evelyn King  
April 18, John Steensma

April 19, Adrijana Hunt  
April 19, Lori Woods  
April 21, Lynne Hulen  
April 24, Joey Swanson  
April 25, Emery McCartney  
April 26, Kenzie Cockrell  
April 26, Blake Wise  
April 27, Willa Campbell  
April 30, Shelby Loveless-Cushing

### ANNIVERSARIES

Sue & Ron Campbell, April 11  
Cindy & David Nelson, April 20  
June & David Ullman, April 28



Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

**1 Peter 1:3-5**



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## CHURCH OFFICERS

### ELDERS

#### 2026

Stewart Hurst  
Ed Lamb  
Jimmy Seay

#### 2028

Frank Hunt  
Scott Crews

#### 2029

Daniel Hunt

#### 2027

Chuck Loveless  
Willard Pearce  
Fox Rawlings

### 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