
SUMMER 2026

ISSUE 6-26



The Diligent

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, ARP
LAKE WALES, FL

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

”

Leadership

GLEANINGS FROM THE PSALMS

From Pastor Mackay ♦

This year's Bible-reading plan has recently brought me through the Psalms. Every time I read God's inspired hymnbook there are phrases, some remembered and some seemingly read for the first time, that capture my attention. Here are a few from this year:

Psalm 7:8 - The LORD judges the peoples; judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness and according to the integrity that is in me.

Here, David invites God's judgment to come upon him. He does so trusting in the righteousness God has given him; that he has received by faith. David does not set himself up as someone saved by his own perfect righteousness, but one who rests in the Lord.

This is a prayer for those who are tired of the fickle judgments of other people. We so often seek our approval and purpose in others. While the feedback of trusted friends and fellow believers is crucial for our

growth in grace, in order to fully understand ourselves we need God's perspective on our hearts. This saves us from both the sugar-coated lies of the flatterer and the unfair condemnation of the enemy.

Amazingly, in Jesus, we can go before the throne of God and find it to be a throne of grace. God's Word shows us who we really are in Christ.

Psalm 49:7-9 - Truly no man can ransom another, or give to God the price of his life, for the ransom of their life is costly and can never suffice, that he should live on forever and never see the pit.

I have seen articles recently about growing interest in technology's ability to slow (or even eliminate) the aging process. Unsurprisingly, the articles focus on people of immense wealth. They have the resources to invest in procedures and studies that look to add decades to the human lifespan. Well, there is nothing new under the sun. In Ancient Egypt, did not the wealthy fill their tombs with treasures in an attempt to live forever?

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The Sons of Korah know better. No man can, by the use of his money, save himself from death. The curse on sin is far deeper than any technology can touch.

Remarkably, later in the Psalm, a great hope is shared: “But God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol, for he will receive me.” (v. 15) While the wealthy waste their time in attempting to wash away their mortality, God Himself has paid the price for the believer. We know the nature of this payment: it was the life of Jesus Christ, God’s Son.

Psalm 56:8 - You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your book?

David wrote this Psalm in a time of great distress; far from home and in company of the Philistines. He writes in the awareness that God is not far from his difficulties. These images show us that God is not put off by our suffering. In fact, like a nurse in a hospital, God keeps watch over His people through their nights of struggle. He lovingly notes every time they toss in their beds, and collects their every tear. Even the best nurses cannot show this kind of personal, loving compassion! Struggling Christian, God sees you and your needs and you could not be nearer to His mind and heart.

The Psalms are God’s bottomless treasure trove of truth and hope. This year and every year let us immerse ourselves in them. ■



SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

The elders met in Session on May 26, 2026.

- The Session continues its study of Harry Reeder's book, *From Embers to a Flame*
- Prayers were made on behalf of the congregation. Thanks was given for the life of Willa Campbell, now with Jesus.
- Discipleship Committee Report
 - Finalized VBS preparations. 67 children were pre-registered.
 - The 2nd-5th grade Sunday school class will join the July Breather Series class.
 - Discipleship Sunday is August 16th. This is "move up" day for children. The "Triple Play" memorization program will also be reintroduced on this day.
 - Student Ministry summer events:
 - Quest - June 14-20
 - Horizon - June 21-27
 - Mission Trip (Cayce, SC) - July 11-18
 - Stay-at-home-work-camp - July 20-25
- Missions and Evangelism Committee is working on welcome bags for visitors to our worship service.
- Since the meeting, the Stewardship and Finance committee has reported May 2026 YTD numbers:
 - Operating Income (Member Contributions and other): \$508,971 vs a budget of \$410,243
 - Total Expenses: \$476,401 vs a budget of \$447,452
 - Total cash: \$911,425
- Frank Hunt is the FPC delegate to the 2026 meeting of the ARP General Synod at Bonclarken (Flat Rock, NC).

Discipleship

US AND OUR JESUS

From Pastor Myers ♦

Previewing the 2026 July “Breather” Series

In every age, the church must confront distortions of the Christian life. One of the most common distortions in our own time is the deeply rooted spirit of hyper-individualism—the idea that faith is chiefly private, personal, and self-directed. Many professing believers speak as though Christianity can be reduced to “me and my Jesus”: my quiet time, my spiritual growth, my preferences, my experience, my truth.

Yet while the gospel certainly brings each sinner into a personal relationship with Christ by grace through faith, Scripture never leaves the Christian isolated. Christ saves a people, not merely scattered persons. He gathers sheep into a flock, stones into a temple, branches into a vine, and members into a body.

Us and Our Jesus is a teaching series designed to recover this biblical vision of the Christian life. Rooted in the riches of the Reformed and Calvinistic tradition, this series explores both the blessing and the calling of belonging to the local church. We will consider the glorious truth that Jesus Christ does not

merely redeem individuals; He creates and sustains His covenant community. The risen Lord loves His church, purchased her with His own blood, and delights to dwell among His people through Word and Spirit. To belong to Christ is to be joined to His body.

Throughout this series, we will examine key biblical themes that challenge modern assumptions. Why does the New Testament place such emphasis on gathering together? Why are believers commanded to submit to elders, bear one another’s burdens, forgive one another, exhort one another, and stir one another up to love and good works? Why does Christ give pastors and teachers to the church? Why are the sacraments administered publicly among the congregation rather than privately on demand? Why is church discipline an act of love rather than oppression? These questions lead us away from consumer Christianity and back to covenantal discipleship.

We will also draw deeply from Reformed theology’s emphasis on the ordinary means of grace. God ordinarily nourishes His people not through isolated spirituality or endless novelty, but through the faithful preaching of the Word, the right administration of the sacraments, and prayer in the communion of saints. In a restless age,

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Christ calls His people into the humble rhythms of gathered worship, mutual accountability, and persevering fellowship. Us and Our Jesus is not merely a critique of atomistic hyper-individualism—it is an invitation into something better. It is a call to rediscover the joy of knowing and being known, serving and being served, loving and being loved within the household of faith. The local church is not an optional

accessory to the Christian life; it is Christ's appointed family for His redeemed people.

If you have grown weary of shallow spirituality, detached faith, or spectator religion, this series will point you toward a richer and more biblical vision. Jesus does not say merely, "I am yours." He also says to His people, "You are Mine—and you belong to one another." In Him, it is never only me and my Jesus. It is us and our Jesus. ■

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

SUMMER SCHEDULE

The YOUNGER Class
Meets every week of the summer.

The OLDER Class
Meets every Sunday in June
Will join the Breather Series in July

SUNDAYS FROM 10:30AM - NOON



Thank you, co-directors, volunteers, student helpers, nursery workers and all who have contributed time, resources and help to make 2026 VBS Faith Expedition a resounding success!

Please pray that the seeds of the gospel we planted would bloom and grow!

Sincerely,
Pastor Myers
Associate Pastor of Family
Discipleship

VBS!

Our Vacation Bible School was the first full week of June. It was a great week full of the fellowship, hard work, good snacks, and the gospel message. Enjoy these photos from our "Faith Expedition".













Music Ministry

Church Choirs SUMMER BREAK

July - August



Children and Adult Choir Rehearsals resume

Wed., SEPTEMBER 9th!

2026 Musical: “Good News Cruise” Our Young Engineers at Work



Youth Ministry

A SUMMER FULL OF GROWTH,
SERVICE AND FELLOWSHIP

From Walker Kirkpatrick ◆

Summer is one of the busiest and most exciting seasons in the life of our Student Ministries! While school may be on a break, our student ministries certainly are not. Throughout the summer, our students will have countless opportunities to grow in their faith, serve others, and fellowship with one another.

We begin the summer by celebrating another wonderful year of Vacation Bible School. By the time this newsletter reaches you, VBS will have concluded, and we are thankful for the many children, volunteers, and families who participated. Each year, VBS serves as a tremendous opportunity to share the gospel with young hearts and plant seeds that God will continue to grow. We had a number of students help out in different capacities throughout the week. From serving in the nursery, to recreation, and in different classes, it was a joy to see the students get plugged in and serve not only our church but the many children that joined us this year!

Next on the calendar is Quest, our summer camp for middle school students. Quest provides a unique environment where students can step away from the distractions of everyday life and focus on Christ through worship, Bible teaching, recreation, and fellowship. We are praying that God will use this week to strengthen our students faith and deepen their relationships with one another.

Following Quest, our high school students will attend Horizon. This camp, although similar to Quest, brings a different level of connection that has long been a highlight of the summer for many. We look forward to seeing how God will work in the lives of our high schoolers as they gather with students from across the country to learn, worship, and fellowship together.

After returning from Horizon, we will have a brief break, but shortly after that, many of our high school students will have the opportunity to assist our sister church in Frostproof with their Vacation Bible School. This partnership allows our students to put their faith into action again as they serve younger children,

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support church volunteers, and help share the love of Christ with the next generation. This week, in conjunction with our own VBS will directly benefit the students who will be joining us the following week on our Domestic Mission Trip. This is where a group of high school students and leaders from Lake Wales and Frostproof will travel to Cayce, South Carolina to help another sister church, Cayce

Presbyterian, in running a VBS. While there our students will have opportunities to lead various parts of VBS, do some service projects, have devotion times together, hear from some of their peers, and of course have a lot of fun. We are excited and hopeful to see how God uses our team both to bless the community and church in Cayce and to transform the hearts of those who participate. ■

HS/MS students helping with VBS



Church Family

SUMMER BIRTHDAYS

June 4, Angie Crews
June 5, Scott Crews
June 6, Karen Montgomery
June 7, David McKeeman
June 7, Judson Seay
June 9, Susannah Rawlings
June 10, Kim Duncan
June 12, John Matteson
June 13, Charlee DuBois
June 14, Cindy Henry
June 14, Ellis Hunt Sr.
June 16, Sandra Bryan
June 16, Pearl Oliszewski
June 17, John Dubois
June 17, Tony Woods
June 18, Roberta Cain
June 19, Adam Steverson
June 20, Cindy Caldwell
June 21, Loretta Borglund
June 27, Fran Hanrahan
June 27, Anita Maxwell
June 28, Daniel Hunt
June 30, Rhett Nelson
June 30, Chelsea Smith

July 1, Keaton Kohl
July 1, Kevin Kohl
July 2, Pat Frankenburger
July 5, Maggie Clare
Hixenbaugh
July 6, Whitney Brewer
July 6, Tom Galloway
July 7, Chip Carter
July 7, Caroline Swanson
July 8, Doug Pace
July 9, Bennet Kirkpatrick
July 13, Bob Meeker
July 17, Cash Cockrell
July 17, Alison Freeland
July 17, Faith Treadway
July 17, Jackson Wunker
July 20, Chuck Loveless
July 21, Jack Brandies
July 25, David K Nelson
July 25, June Ullman
July 26, Charlotte Nelson
July 28, David Nelson
July 29, Carol Bourdette
July 29, Charlie Henry

MILESTONE CELEBRATIONS

August 2, Tom Freeland
August 3, Steve Sorensen
August 4, Myers McKinney
August 7, Shelly DiNunzio
August 7, Marie Steensma
August 8, Keith Steverson
August 10, Amy Crews
August 10, Tom Kohl
August 14, MJ O'Reilly
August 17, Kathy Gibson
August 18, John Baust
August 22, Dan Miller
August 23, Shay Hixenbaugh
August 24, Nancy Ayers
August 24, Bob Hulen
August 27, Dave Falk
August 29, Hayes Seay
August 30, Dick Miller
August 30, Cindy NeAugust
31, Larry Oliszewsk

SUMMER ANNIVERSARIES

Gail & Pat Frankenburger, June 2
Tori & Walker Kirkpatrick, June 3
Patty & David McKeeman, June 4
Roberta & Luke Cain, June 8
Jill & Scott Smith, June 14
Debbie & Doug Pace, June 26

Diana & Jim Smith, July 13
Julia & Michael Berkau, July 24
Lynne & Bob Hulen, July 29
Joyce & Carl McCollum, July 29

Faith & Vince Treadway, Aug 2
Dawn & Rob McCollum, Aug 8
Ashley & Jake Cockrell, Aug 9
Lori & Chuck Loveless, Aug 18
Kay & Jim Weaver, Aug 20
Janice & Jack Brandies, Aug 22
Julie & Jimmy Seay, August 27
Patty & David Falk, Aug 29

Dear Church Family,

I want to express my gratitude for the time and resources given for this year's VBS. Specifically, all those who gave towards our VBS missions project. FPC more than fully funded the purchase of 50 beds for the new wing of the Mabel Lowry Pressly Girls home in Pakistan.

Your generosity allowed us to engage the VBS children in memorizing their scripture verses to "earn" coins towards the goal of providing these beds. It was a great motivator, an opportunity to share the joy of giving, and a chance to glimpse the global church of Jesus Christ.

Thank you,
Rachel Smith



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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CHURCH OFFICERS

ELDERS

2026

Stewart Hurst
Ed Lamb
Jimmy Seay

2028

Scott Crews
Frank Hunt III

2027

Chuck Loveless
Willard Pearce
Fox Rawlings

2029

Daniel Hunt

DEACONS

2026

Aaron Nelson
Pat Frankenburger

2027

John DuBois
Bob Hulen
Karen Steverson

Senior Minister: Rev. Mackay Smith
Associate Minister: Rev. Myers Mckinney
Clerk of Session: Ed Lamb
Chairman of Deacons: Karen Steverson
Deacon Secretary: Karen Steverson
Chm. Of Congregation: David Nelson
Treasurer: Daniel Hunt
Asst Treasurer: Michelle Hurst

Dir. of Student Min.: Walker Kirkpatrick
Bookkeeper: Kaitlyn Nelson
Dir. of Administration: Mark Markham
Administrative Assistant: Tommy Wunker