

JANUARY 2019

# he Diligen FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, ARP SLAKE WALE

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

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Leadership

#### **EXODUS: SLAVERY TO PASSOVER**

SERMON SERIES, JANUARY - MAY 2019 EXODUS 1:1-12:42

#### **From Pastor Chad**

Over the past three years, from January to May, I preached through Genesis 12-50, looking at the life of Abraham (2016), the life of Jacob (2017), and the life of Joseph (2018). This year we will pick up the story in Exodus.

God had provided graciously for his people, Israel, through the life and ministry of Joseph. Joseph, having initially been sold into slavery in Egypt by his own brothers, had ascended to the right hand of pharaoh. When a severe famine set in, Jacob's family fled to Egypt looking to benefit from the store of grain that Joseph had established by the leading of the Lord. They received much more than just grain. By virtue of Joseph's position and the high esteem in which pharaoh held him, Jacob and his sons were allowed to live in Egypt, in a location prime for grazing sheep, and as

beneficiaries of pharaoh's continued provision. Of course, it was not just by chance, nor by pharaoh's good will alone that they received such provision. Rather, they were cared for by the steadfast love of God.

A day came though when there arose a king in Egypt who did not know Joseph. This new pharaoh looked upon the people of Israel with disdain and fear, seeing that they, being blessed by the Lord, had multiplied in number. So this new king ceased to provide for them, instead enslaving them and seeking to put their newborn males to death (see Exodus 1). Despite this change of circumstances, God had not abandoned his people. He was still with them, blessing them even, and was readying to deliver them in amazing fashion from their bondage.

A pharaoh may have come along who didn't know Joseph but God did not forget his people nor his covenant promises to them. In many ways we live in a day and time when the name of Jesus is not as respected by the culture around us as much as it used to be. The Church as a whole has lost some favor in the social.

political, intellectual, and artistic corridors of Western society. You could say that Jesus and the Church are no longer known by many in our day and time, but God has not forgotten his people, the Church. He still knows us and is blessing us in Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit.

This sermon series will help us to see that God is still at work, keeping all of his promises, even when our circumstances are not so favorable. From God's deliverance of the baby Moses on the Nile (Exodus 2:1-10), to his call of Moses from the burning bush (Exodus 3-4), to the provision of the Passover lamb (Exodus 12:1-28), we will see how God's redemption of his people from Egypt points us to the life and work of Jesus, our great Passover Lamb, who by his death and resurrection has delivered us from sin and death once and for all.

## SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

The Session and Diaconate of First Presbyterian Church met jointly on December 11, followed by separate meetings of the two committees. Highlights from the Session meeting include:

- Stewardship and Finance reported that we ended November at 82.91% of the annual budget. Our average over past five years (2013-2017) at this point has been 76.56%. Praise was given to God for His blessing.
- The Session interviewed and received Ethan Behr (son of Josh and Teresa), Sara Wynn, Kaitlyn Nelson (wife of Aaron), and Scott and Angie Crews into communicant membership. Received into non-communicant membership were Scott and Angie's children, Amy and Chandler Crews.
- The chairmen of our various committees gave updates on their ministries. Each committee was lifted in prayer following their report.

## CONGREGATIONAL MEETING 2018

The annual Stated Congregational Meeting took place December 16, 2018 in Fellowship Hall following Morning Worship. After a delicious potluck brunch, representatives of First Presbyterian leadership updated the congregation on our ministries and vision for 2019.

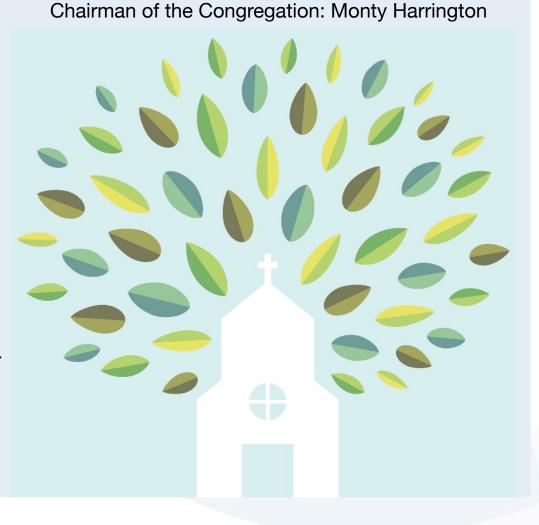
Thanks was given for the many years of faithful service that Chad Reynolds, Maria Herman, Sue Dolan, Karen Allen, and Vince Treadway have given to the Lord and to First Presbyterian.

Pastor Chad highlighted many areas of God's work in 2018, and encouraged the congregation to look forward to 2019 with eager spirits. God has blessed us with regular Sunday worship, including ministry of Word and Sacrament; the joy of supporting missionaries around the world and community ministries in Lake Wales; multiple Discipleship programs including Adult Small Groups and Ekklesia; a robust ministry to the Children and Youth of our congregation and our community; and an excellent Music Ministry to lead worship and grow the talents of many. Thanks be to God! The congregation was reminded that we are blessed to be undertaking our ministries next year supporting neither a major capital campaign nor any debt service.

After an overview of the proposed Budget by Michelle Hurst, the recommendation of the

Session to approve the 2019 Budget was approved unanimously by the Congregation. This includes funding for a full-time Director of Communication and Children's Ministry to be hired ASAP in 2019.

The recommended full slate of Church Officers was approved unanimously by the Congregation: Elder Class of 2022: Frank Hunt, III, John Matteson, Vince Treadway Deacon Class of 2021: David Caldwell, Michael Kahler, Carl McCollum, Anthony ("Tony") Thomas



## Discipleship

#### THOUGHTS ON A HOUSE

#### From Pastor Mackay

Many of you know that Rachel and I are nearing the completion of a house renovation project. We seem to be in good company. We see all sorts of contractors running all over Lake Wales, and anyone who has turned on the HGTV channel can see our culture's love of an updated house!

Our houses are places where truly important things happen. These wood and block shelters are where we raise our children, live with our spouse, spend time with friends, care for each other, read our Bibles, and pray. Their utility and comfort can be a good and godly end, as they are utilized for good and godly purposes. We can't ignore the fact, though, that a home renovation is a massive amount of time and effort to put into what is ultimately a material possession. That sort of commitment brings temptations. Here are three thoughts that have often come to my mind throughout the process.

It can overwhelm your thought life. Oh,

the decisions! Our relatively simple project brought a seemingly infinite number of choices to be navigated. The first danger of such a load is the sheer time that could be devoted to it. It could be a full-time job! Thus, Christians must be on the alert. For, if we aren't careful, we may find that our every waking moment will be spent looking only at the walls around us.

Paul encourages believers to, "Set your minds on things above, not on things that are on earth." (Col. 3:1) Our lives, he says, are "hidden with Christ in God." (3:3) Thus, to expend our mental energy on our house is strange. If our life is in Christ, how much time should we spend pondering our earthly dwellings?

It's never enough, and it will not satisfy. The HGTV age has taught us that our houses are investments, not homes. We value our properties by what we would make from their sale. As such, we make decisions based on increasing their value, "It's not a 'purchase,' it's an investment!" But, as it has been wisely put somewhere, "Once you have all your little heart desires, your little heart will find something else to desire." We will never be fulfilled by our houses.

What does Jesus teach? "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matt. 6:19-21). This is an identity assessment. Clearly, where you store your treasures is where the real "you" will be. Jesus states that one option is to lock yourself into earth. We can do that easily in our houses. However, that is unwise. On earth, things break down; fashions move on; hurricanes blow through. If our identity is built on earth, when the earth passes away, we will collapse with it. A wiser choice is to seek God's Kingdom, that we might build our treasure in Heaven. As we do so,

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#### Continued from page 4...

we'll find our identity built on something far more firm. We will be satisfied, "as with rich food" (Ps 63:5) by God's love! Our hearts will be full to bursting, regardless of the status of our kitchen counters.

It is an immense blessing, and thus is to be used for immense ministry. I doubt any of us appreciate the sheer amount of wealth we enjoy in our culture. No age in human history has experienced the amount of "disposable"

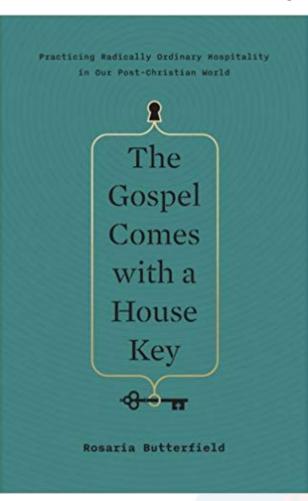
money and time that our nation affords to many, many people. In response, we ought to be on our knees in thanksgiving to God, who gives good things. Yet, we must also be on our feet in action!

There are few books that scare me to read, but knowing the level of utter conviction that will come from Rosaria Butterfield's book, The Gospel Comes with a House Key, her treatise on Christian hospitality, I admit I have been hesitant! Our culture teaches us that another motivation to home improvement is the envy of our

neighbors. Look no further than the common parlance of our home as our "castle." What does that bring to mind? A sealed space of imposing edifices and fine finishes meant to keep others out and proclaim to the world, "I am great!" Yet, Butterfield identifies the homes of Christians not as "castles," but as "embassies." An embassy is a different matter altogether. Embassies are for welcoming others as representatives of a foreign land. What nation do others experience when they come in your house? Is it the nation of "Me-topia?" Or, is it the Kingdom of God? Our homes are to be

filled with the language of the Kingdom, the habits of the Kingdom, and the priorities of the Kingdom. Such that when others step in our homes, they might soon know the one we proclaim to be great is Jesus Christ!

Our homes are precious gifts, and our faithful stewardship of them is the duty of every Christian. Yet may our prayer be that we would use this immense blessing for the glory of God.



### SMALL GROUPS

#### ADULT BREATHER SERIES - SUNDAYS THIS JANUARY

Twice a year, our Adult Small groups are invited to join together for a multi-week "Breather" lesson series. This gives our Groups the opportunity to change up their routine, to be with brothers and sisters from other groups, and to give our devoted Small Group leaders... a breather! Join us in the Chapel Sundays following Morning Worship this January.

#### BURNT OUT ON CHURCH:

#### JOY FOR ANOTHER YEAR OF SUNDAYS

Maybe you've noticed that our weekly life together follows a regular rhythm: Sunday Worship, Small Group, Wednesday Nights... it's a beautiful design meant for our growth. Yet, one of the many symptoms of our sinful heart can be a, "Been there, done that!" attitude. Join us we remind ourselves of God's design for the Church of Jesus Christ, and by His grace find a means to joy in all that we do together.

JANUARY 6<sup>TH</sup> - God's Design for His Church

JANUARY 13<sup>TH</sup> - Our Motivation and Expectations for Life in God's Church

JANUARY 20<sup>TH</sup> - God's Goals for Life in God's Church

JANUARY 27<sup>TH</sup> - God's Means for Loving Life in God's Church









## EKKLESIA

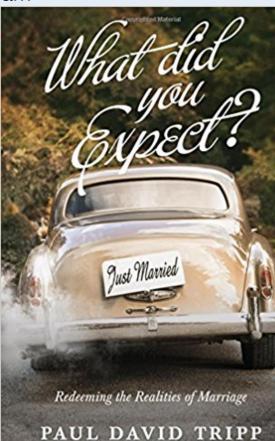
#### SPECIAL EVENT:

"Habits of a Healthy Marriage" With Dr. Paul Tripp Marriage Seminar Livestream

Feb. 8-9

Friday - 7pm - 10pm Saturday - 9am - 12pm

Every marriage is guided by a set of habits. The question is: Are they healthy habits that result in a God-honoring and joyful marriage, or are they bad habits that lead to a self-centered and strained marriage? In this new 4-lesson seminar, pastor, marriage counselor, and best-selling author Dr. Paul David will detail



the necessary habits required for a healthy marriage while identifying the bad habits that need to be uprooted.

#### Cost:

\$5 per couple, plus a Babysitter for Friday Night. Childcare:

Saturday Morning -

Nursery and Childcare (through 5th Grade)

Friday night -

Employ your favorite Babysitter!

DEADLINE: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 30TH CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE TO REGISTER.

-PICTURES-WE HAD A WONDERFUL TIME GATHERING FOR SMORES AND SINGING ON WEDNESDAY, DEC. 12. THANK YOU TO ALL WHO HELPED MAKE IT HAPPEN!

## Missions& Outreach

#### GARDENING FOR HIS HARVEST

#### From Teresa Behr

The other week I was listening to a radio program where they were likening raising kids to one of two things, wood working or gardening. A wood worker follows set plans to cut their wood to exact dimensions, pieces the wood together to get a precise outcome. A gardener on the other hand, tills the soil, plants the seeds, and tends to his garden to possibly reap the outcome he was hoping for. But, sometimes the gardener will be surprised with extra flowers popping up out of his flower bed (flowers he didn't even know were there), and sometimes the gardener will face storms and need to start his flower bed over again. The woodworker roll sounds appealing as a parent, but the gardener is really a more accurate analogy when it comes to raising kids.

While I was listening to this radio show, Chad called and asked if I would write a little something about Faith Finders. I thought that was awfully appropriate, because at Faith Finders God has given us an amazing gardening opportunity. Every Monday, about a dozen volunteers from First Pres head to one of our local public schools, Polk Avenue Elementary, to plant a garden. Well, we're not actually planting a literal garden with the 50 or so kids who come to spend an hour with us. No, we have a more important job to tend to.

Jesus, the Lord of the harvest, has opened up the doors at Polk Avenue so we can plant a few seeds and till the soil in the hearts of some of her students. We

start our hour with the kids sitting in small groups talking about their weeks and finding out what joys and hardships we can pray for. In our small groups we teach the kids a memory verse that goes along with our Bible story. This past week, one of my small first graders came to me and said, "Ms.Teresa, did I tell you when I was saying my memory verse to my dad he had memorized that same one? He could say it to me too!" Unexpected flowers popping up!

After small groups we play games, sing songs, and learn a Bible story. Some of the kids come having heard the good news before, but others are hearing these stories for the first time. And what an awesome opportunity we have to be gardeners and plant God's Word in their hearts!

As a gardener it is amazing to reflect back and see the gardening that has happened in our own hearts. Often times I leave on Mondays having new seeds planted in my own garden. Who would have thought?! And it is a wonderful experience to be a part of a team from First Pres who works together tilling the soil and planting seeds!

Faith Finders Club takes place on Monday afternoons (2:30-4:15 pm). Please pray for this important ministry of outreach. If the Lord is laying it on your heart to be more involved please reach out to Laney Reynolds.

#### PIKE UPDATE

by the people we live among in France.

Bonne Année! We wish you a Happy New Year from France and wanted to give you a quick update as we enter our fifth month.

We are grateful every day for your prayers and support for our family as we settle in France. We are also grateful to the Lord as we are continually humbled by the warmth and kindness of strangers as we make new friends here. There have been many unexpected gifts among the expected challenges of moving into another culture. God has sustained us and graciously gone before us in preparing a place for us to love and to be loved

We have been talking as a family about how Jesus forsook heaven and chose to literally be brought low for us. Our perfect Lord willingly gave up everything he deserved for the sake of undeserving sinners like us. As a result of his sacrificial love, we are blessed to be coheirs to the kingdom of God. Hallelujah, what a Savior!

Pray that we would have the humility and mercy of our precious Savior as we seek to serve Him in France. Pray that we would communicate the love of Jesus even when our speech is limited by a foreign language. Pray that the peace of Christ would reign in our hearts. Pray that the hurting world around us would receive His gift of eternal love this Christmas.

We pray the love, joy and peace that is ours because of Christ will be with you this New Year and always. Thanks, Colby & Emma ■

## Music Ministry

#### WORSHIP IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH?

#### **From Vince Treadway**

"But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship Him. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." John 4:23-24

The church needs a fresh look at the purpose of worship and the attitudes and actions that will enable them to worship "in spirit and in truth," and offer worship that is pleasing to God. A fresh look is needed because culture has borne a heavy influence on everyone, and the attitudes and practices that have become common in our culture inadvertently have spilled over into the church. Among the attitudes of modern culture that have permeated the church are consumerism (market mentality), skepticism, and relativism. Church surveys show that people are more likely to move from church to church today than in the past based upon their tastes and felt needs. This attitude leads to an escalation of demands that, if unmet, lead to a transient church population that is ever seeking a "better" worship experience. Some churches have resorted to offering coffee and snack bars in their lobbies as well as different times and styles of worship to accommodate a variety of tastes. Sadly, what has been forgotten is that worship is for God, not for the worshipper. Concern should be centered on what God will be pleased with, and not on what is a personal favorite. Some additional spillover from consumer mentality in worship includes passivity (I'm just going to sit here and watch, and not participate); lack of attention and imagination (If you don't amaze me I am going to be bored); and superficiality (I don't like hearing about bad things like sin, I only want to hear things that cheer me up). A quote from Calvin M. Johansson in *Discipling Music Ministry* states the issue poignantly:

When the methods and materials shaping our worship are chosen on the basis of pleasing the worshiper, then we have broken the first commandment: "Thou shall have no other gods before Me." Worship which purposes to make people feel good is an activity whose purpose points back to them. Even though the words might be given in praise of God, actions which

selfishly point to private pleasure tell a different story. The individual idolatrously becomes the focus of worship. p. 57

The question that needs to be considered is simple, how may I worship in spirit and in truth? Here are a few things to consider that may help your worship focus to be the Lord, and nothing else:

- 1. Prepare yourself for worship. Begin the evening before by confessing any sin and asking the Lord to be present. Ask the Lord to give Pastor Chad the words to say, and to direct all aspects of the worship.
- 2. Come to church with a positive attitude and a sincere desire to focus your attention on God.
- 3. Use the pre-service time to prepare your heart for worship by praying, reading the Scripture text, read through the hymn verses, meditate on God and His goodness.
- 4. Fully participate! Sing with the hymns, pray the prayers and recite the creeds with your mind fully engaged, follow texts of songs being sung by the choir or soloists, take notes on the sermon, write down any questions for further research. If a hymn is being sung that you don't know, read the words as it is being sung and try singing on the second or third verse as the tune becomes more familiar.
- 5. Reflect on the sermon at home and reread the Scripture reference. Discuss it with your family. Try to apply what you have learned throughout the week.

It is obvious that whenever people from a wide variety of backgrounds gathers there will be a wide variety of life experiences, tastes, and traditions. It is also true that everyone has preferences with regard to worship and music styles, and may find styles other than what they are accustomed to challenging to participate fully in. A powerful way to show love to your brothers and sisters in Christ, no matter what their background, is to realize that it is possible to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth in many different ways. While one part of worship may not be a personal favorite for you, it very well may be for someone else. So we show our love for our brothers and sisters who have different tastes by making every effort to fully participate throughout the service, even when it is not our own. We also need to remember that in the end, our worship is not for us, it is for God. God wants our worship to be sincere, from our hearts, and given for His glory and His glory alone. Soli Deo Gloria! ■



#### WHY CHURCH IS NOT SCHOOL: PART III

#### From Shane Miller

As we've observed before, (see past two Youth Diligent articles) when we look at the Youth Ministry as a whole, we might be tempted to equate it with school. Just look at a regular Wednesday night. At around four o'clock, I pick up the students with a bus. At six, we eat in a cafeteria-like setting. And at six thirty, the students congregate in the dark room to hear a 'lesson' from me out of a 'religious text book' of sorts. Certainly, the language we use regarding the ministry itself betrays our thoughts on the subject: our students go to Sunday School. On a Wednesday night we send our young people to class to hear a lecture from the Grand Master Professor Shane. (I might have added the 'Grand Master Professor' part.) This educational approach to Youth Ministry might make us wonder if we are truly taking the correct approach. I mean, don't our students hear enough lectures throughout their week? Didn't they receive enough formal, educational Bible training downstairs during their elementary Sunday School years? Shouldn't they be being trained in subjects that are more practical for them?

For the past couple of months in the Diligent articles I've been authoring, I've been laboring to show why the things we do in the Youth Ministry, while they might slightly resemble things we do at school, are not, in fact, equivalent with a school setting at all. Our 'religious text book' is actually the word of God which is able to powerfully transform the lives of rebellious sinners, something an algebra text-book is incapable of accomplishing. Furthermore, while our young people meet with their classmates on a daily basis at school, at church they meet with family, their brothers and sisters in Christ.

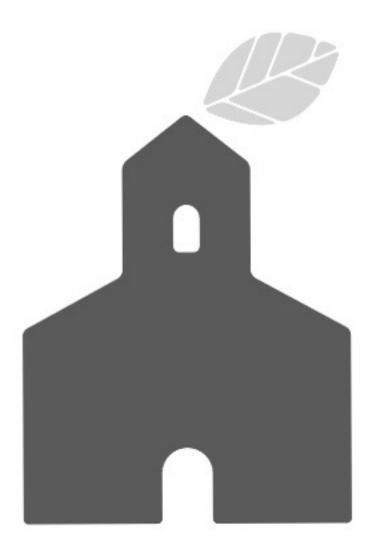
This week, I want us to look further into the teaching aspect of the Youth Ministry. In the first article, we looked at the Bible as opposed to academic textbooks. This month, I want us to ask ourselves what our purpose is in teaching the Scriptures to our young people in the first place. Bible education is certainly a point of pride for us

at First Pres. To be sure, our young people know a lot more Bible than a lot of us did at that age! Triple Play, even, gives our young people an awesome opportunity to immerse themselves in some of the basic teachings of Scripture. But how often do we ever stop and ask, "Why?" Why be so adamant in drilling Bible knowledge into the heads of our students? In a school setting, one of our goals would be for our young people to be good, wholesome, educated citizens. Students oftentimes study to get a good grade on a test or even to please their parents. Additionally, for parents, having a well-educated child is a great reflection on how well one has parented. But are these the goals we have for our young people when we instruct them in God's word? We can be sure that whatever our intentions are for exposing our young people to the truths of the Bible, God's goals are way bigger and even infinitely better for our students.

To understand what God's intentions are in the reading, teaching, and preaching of His word, it would be helpful to start in a familiar section of the Scriptures: Genesis 1-3. God created man and woman in His image for His own glory and placed them in the garden of Eden. Adam and Eve, living in paradise, were given the unique privilege and opportunity, with all that they thought, did, and said, to love God with their entire being. This privilege was exercised without the hindrance of sin. What made paradise paradise was perfect fellowship with God. Of course, following Adam and Eve's sinful rebellion against God, God expelled them both from the garden.

As much as we don't want to believe it, the Scriptures tell us that Adam's problem is our problem. (Rom. 5:12) We too are in rebellion against God. We also have been expelled from His presence. While sin, the world, and Satan deceive us, telling us that we can find paradise through our own selfish, sinful desires, what the Scriptures say of all of us, even our young people, is this sure truth: "For behold, those who are far from you shall perish..." (Ps. 73:27) What God told Adam and Eve at the very beginning in the garden was no joke: sin leads to death. In our ministry to our young people, this is our biggest dilemma: we have all sinned, and our sin has taken us far from God and towards our own deaths.

... continues on page 10



## PRAY FOR US

- We need volunteers. Please pray for volunteers. Perhaps even pray and ask if God is calling you to disciple our students.
- Pray for Winter Retreat coming up that there would be much fruit from the discipleship taking place there.

#### Continued from page 9...

In the Scriptures, though, God has given us incredible news: "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God..." (1 Pet. 3:18) We teach this good news week in and week out, not because education saves us, but because faith in Jesus saves us. "So faith comes from hearing and hearing through the word of Christ." (Rom. 10:17) When we realize that our sin has brought upon us the displeasure of God, and when we realize that there's nothing we can do to change our situation, and when we put our total trust in Jesus who lived our perfect life and died the death we should have died, our biggest dilemma is solved. We are forgiven and transformed. We are brought back into paradise.

Paul, then, in his letter to the Philippians presents to us the biggest goal of the Christian

life: "For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— that I may know him and the power of his resurrection..." Our biggest goal in Youth Ministry is not for our students to know facts about the Jesus who saves sinners. It's nothing less than that, but it is surely more. Our goal is for our young people to know, trust, and love the Jesus who saves sinners. And God powerfully uses the gospel towards this end. (Rom. 1:16-17) An important question for us as parents and leaders of our young people, then, is: do we minister to them like we believe these things to be absolutely true for us and for them?

2019 RETREAT

January 25-27 \$99 Lake Aurora, FL

## MILESTONE CELEBRATIONS

## Church Family

#### **BIRTHDAYS**

January 4, Julie Seay January 9, Jimmy Kahler January 10, Darlene Krpata January 12, Jim Armstrong January 13, Nancy Turnquist January 13, Pete Bellamy January 15, Amanda Quam January 15, Kelly Wheeler January 16, John DuBois

January 16, John DuBois
January 18, Chris Waters
January 19, Mary Roberts
January 19, Barbara Sebring

January 20, Maria Herman January 21, Emily Bass January 21, Mary Benner January 22, Susan Marks January 22, Cole Hixenbaugh

January 25, Wendy Moore January 27, Audrey Hunt January 30, Billy Kahler January 31, Laura Hunt

January 24, Irene Nelson

#### **ANNIVERSARIES**

January 1, Morgan & Patti Roe

## CHURCH OFFICERS

#### **ELDERS**

2019

Andy Hunt Daniel Hunt

David Nelson Jimmy Seay

2020

John Dubois Stewart Hurst Ed Lamb Fox Rawlings 2021

Mike Berkau Paul Benner

2022

Frank Hunt III
John Matteson
Vince Treadway

#### 2019

Jake Cockrell Troy Hershberger Kevin Kohl Michael Matteson

Wendy Moore

2020

David Bass Lynne Hulen Rob McCollum David Kennedy Nelson

DEACONS

2021

David Caldwell Michael Kahler Carl McCollum Tony Thomas

Moderator: Rev. Chad Reynolds Vice Moderator: Rev. Mackay Smith Clerk of Session: David Nelson

Chairman of Deacons: Jake Cockrell

**Deacon Secretary:** David Kennedy Nelson **Chm. of the Congregation:** Monty Harrington

Treasurer: Michelle Hurst (2018-2019)
Asst. Treasurer: Daniel Hunt (2018-2019)



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