

MARCH 2019

ISSUE 19-2

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

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Leadership

ON SELF PITY

From Pastor Chad

*Your words were found, and I ate them,
and your words became to me a joy
and the delight of my heart,
for I am called by your name,
O Lord, God of hosts.
I did not sit in the company of revelers,
nor did I rejoice;
I sat alone, because your hand was upon me,
for you had filled me with indignation.
Why is my pain unceasing,
my wound incurable,
refusing to be healed?
Will you be to me like a deceitful brook,
like waters that fail?*

- Jeremiah 15:16-18

Eeyore from the Winnie the Pooh stories of A.A. Milne is known for his gloomy witticisms of self-pity. For example, in an episode of the Disney version of Winnie the Pooh, Eeyore once said, "End of the road. Getting dark. Nothing much to do. Sounds like Saturday night at my house." If things weren't bad, Eeyore was the guy to let everyone know that they soon would be. He was always sure every cloud had rain. He was certain that no one wanted him around. We all have some Eeyores in our families, our work places, and our neighborhoods. Truth be told, there is a little bit of Eeyore in each of us. We all

have a tendency toward self-pity, especially when times are tough.

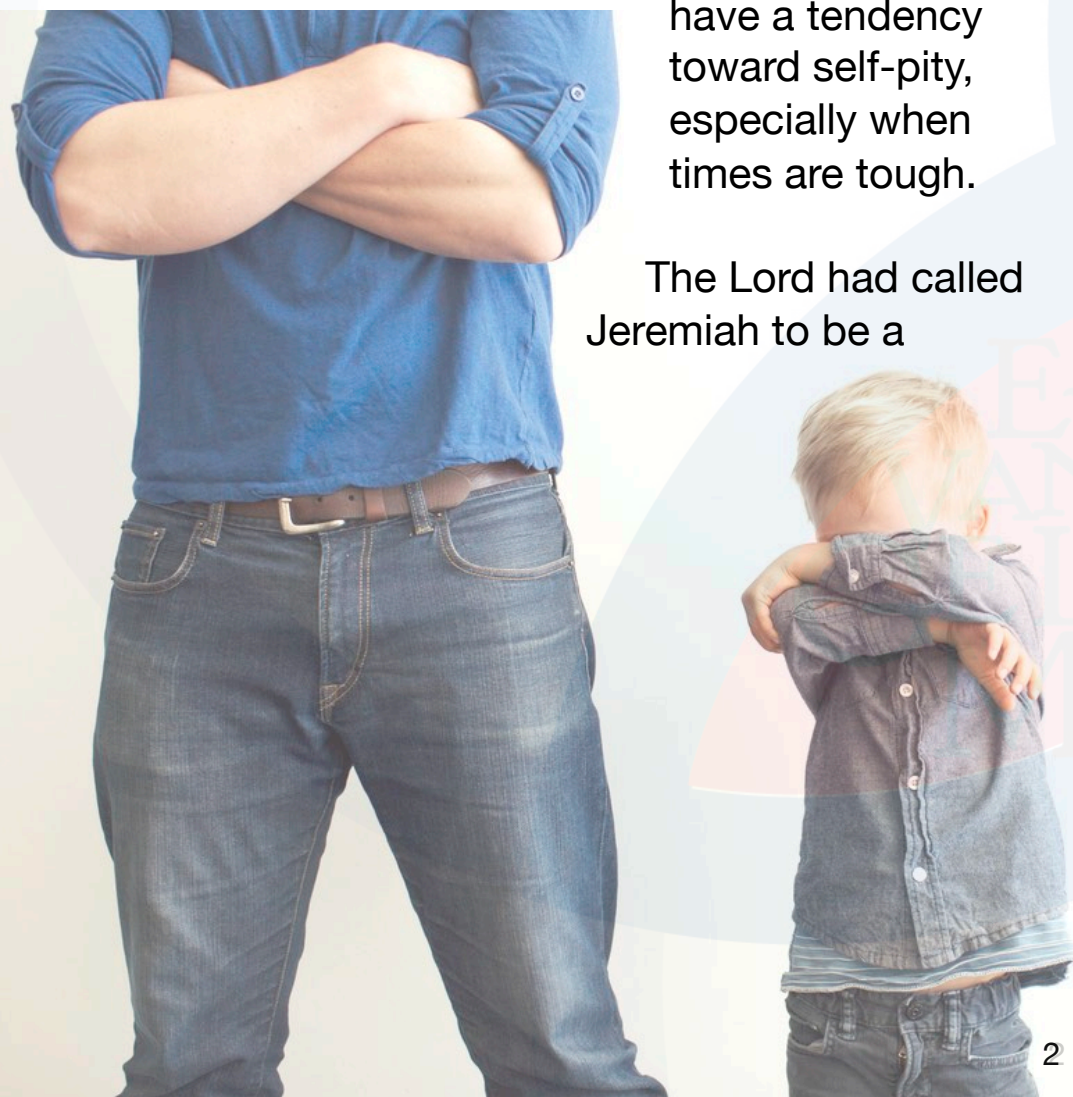
The Lord had called Jeremiah to be a

prophet, proclaiming to Judah that their apostasy was too great and had gone on too long, so God was going to bring judgment upon them and send them away from the promised land into exile. This grieved Jeremiah. He pleaded with the Lord but God would not relent. Judgment was coming, so said the Lord. God eventually promised a future return from this exile (Jeremiah 30:3) and an even greater promise of the new covenant in Christ (Jeremiah 31:31-34), but that word of hope would come a bit later. The immediate word Jeremiah was to proclaim was exile. The gospel is BAD NEWS (we are sinners, deserving of God's judgment) before it is GOOD NEWS (that Jesus died on the cross to atone for our sin and rose to new life that we might have eternal life in him). As you can imagine, this bad news did not make Jeremiah the most popular man in Jerusalem, especially since there were false prophets who were proclaiming peace and prosperity for Judah. Those prophets were invited to all the fun parties while Jeremiah was *persona non grata*.

Jeremiah had received the Word from the Lord and that initially brought him joy (Jeremiah 15:16). He also stayed holy, set apart from all the sinful revelry of the people of Jerusalem (15:17). Yet, his obedience and faithfulness to God did not prevent him from experiencing unceasing and incurable pain. In fact it was "precisely his faithful obedience that thrust Jeremiah into lifelong suffering and sorrow" (Christopher Wright). He even accused the Lord of being a "deceitful brook" (15:18). Imagine being thirsty while walking through the hot wilderness and then seeing a creek from afar. Your hopes are raised at the prospect of a cool drink but as you draw near you realize there is no water - the stream is dry. This is what Jeremiah accused God of being. The prophet was falling prey to the sin of self-pity. He was willing to serve the Lord but he wanted ministry success and social acceptance in order to affirm his own worth.

The same is often true of us. As followers of Christ we strive to do his will in our homes, our church, our community, and to the ends of the earth. We want to serve the Lord, but truth be told, many of us do so with the motivation of affirming or improving our own worth, both in our own eyes and in the eyes of others. If our efforts

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to serve Christ Jesus aren't accepted, appreciated, or (better yet) celebrated by others, and also rewarded by God with health and comfort, we are prone to feel and express self-pity, as Jeremiah did. Of course it begs the question, who are we really serving if our own worth is the end to which we strive? Certainly not Jesus. Eeyore's self-pity might be humorous in a children's story, but exhibited in the lives of God's prophets and the people of Christ it is no laughing matter. Our self-pity is spiritually dangerous to us as individuals, to the fellowship of believers as a whole, and to the unbelieving people before whom we are called to witness to the glory and goodness of Jesus.

Thankfully, in Jeremiah 15:19-21, we see that the Lord showed grace to his servant, (1) calling Jeremiah to repent by turning from his focus upon himself and back to God, that he might be restored; (2) calling him to remain faithful in proclaiming the message of judgment, promising to strengthen him; and (3) assuring

him that he would be with him, ultimately redeeming Jeremiah from the ruthless ones who opposed him and the Word he proclaimed. We know Jeremiah repented and that his faith was graciously restored because he later calls the Lord "the fountain of living water" (17:7-8, 17).

God's response to Jeremiah is good news to us as well, for those times when we give ourselves over to self-pity. We should first repent, taking our eyes off of ourselves and placing them firmly on Jesus "the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God," (Hebrews 12:2). We should remain faithful and obedient to God in Christ, whether we experience success or opposition, knowing that we can face both the highs and lows of life through Jesus who is our strength (Philippians 4:10-13). Finally, we should have hope, knowing that since we are in Jesus, who loves us, our redemption and eternal salvation are secure (Romans 8:28-39). ■

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

The elders of First Presbyterian Church meet monthly on the fourth Tuesday. The following are some highlights from the February 26 meeting.

- The Session and Diaconate are both studying the *Westminster Confession of Faith* over the next three years. The *Confession* is a summary of our denomination's theological standards. This month we looked at the first half of chapter 1 of the *Confession*, "Of the Holy Scriptures," studying, among other things, the inspiration and authority of the Word. (You can find a copy of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* on the ARP website at <http://arpchurch.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Confession-of-Faith.pdf>)
- Stewardship and Finance reported that as of the end of January 2019 tithes and offerings toward the church's general budget are at 7.26% of the annual budget. This is on par with the average of 7.81% (2014-2018) our church has historically received by the end of January. Praise was given to God in prayer for His financial blessing. The Session approved the removal of David and Deziray Noriega from the active role, as they have become members of a church in the Orlando area.
- The Session approved Mr. Frank M. Hunt III to serve as an elder delegate at the 2019 meeting of the General Synod, June 10-14, in Beaver Falls, PA, on the campus of Geneva College.
- The chairmen of the committees of the Session gave reports of the work and ministry they are overseeing (see the ministry sections of the Diligent for more on these ministries). Prayer was offered after each report, asking for the Lord's guidance and blessing.
- A season of prayer was had for various needs within our congregation, community, and world. ■

PRAYER FOCUS

MARCH 3 - Erskine College

MARCH 10 - Iglesia en Movimiento

MARCH 17 - Persecuted Church

MARCH 24 - Camp Joy

Discipleship

WE CONFESS!

From Pastor Mackay

Large organizations can only function when they are unified around shared principles. A friend once invited me to lunch at the corporate headquarters of the fast food titan Chick-fil-a. Rooted in the vicinity of the Atlanta airport, near the first Chick-fil-a restaurant, the headquarters is far more than a drab office building. It is a true “campus”: acres of lush natural space (complete with walking trails that outclass any city park) surrounding an extensive collection of ever-growing buildings. As you may imagine, the massive facility is staffed by a massive amount of people. Every professional skill imaginable is needed to make the “Chikin” business hum, thus a plurality of temperaments, backgrounds, and personalities arrive at this colony each day to work.

The critical question: work for what? On the Chick-fil-a campus, that answer is clear. Amidst all the diversity, an imposing monument stands next to the main front door. On it are these words carved in bronze: CORPORATE PURPOSE To glorify God by being a faithful steward of all that is entrusted to us. To have a positive influence on all who come in contact with Chick-fil-a.

The Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church is a diverse denomination, yet we similarly unify around a common purpose. It’s a purpose given, we believe, not ultimately by shared beliefs or a common goal, but by the Word of God. The Bible, however, is a somewhat lengthy and complex set of texts. We could perhaps boil it down to a single “corporate purpose” statement, but we also must respect what God has given us. The Bible’s complexity cannot be ignored, but must be engaged.

This is precisely what an assembly called by the English Parliament in 1643 was charged to do. England, ever since Henry VIII established the Anglican Church, had struggled to define their identity. Tensions had arisen; between Roman Catholic sympathizers and Protestant-minded folks, between the upper and middle

classes, and between the Parliament and the Crown. To work towards resolution, the Parliament wanted the governing documents of the Anglican Church revised. So, they assembled scholars and church leaders in what is now known as the Westminster Assembly (named after Westminster Abbey, where the Assembly initially met).

The result of their work, a collection of documents known as the “Westminster Standards,” is the foundational interpretation and summary of the teachings of the Bible accepted by the ARP, as well as by many other Protestant denominations. This corpus (a Confession of Faith, two Catechisms, a Book of Church Order, and a Directory of Public Worship), guides us, as a reflection of Scripture, in everything we believe and do as a church. It’s important to point out that the document itself recognizes and insists that it is subordinate to Scripture. However, as a tool for understanding Scripture, it is invaluable.



Over the next few years, the Session and the Diaconate will be walking through the Westminster Confession of Faith in their monthly devotional time. The staff has also discussed incorporating the Confession and Catechisms more prominently in our

Morning Worship. So, keep an eye out. Let me also encourage you to read the Confession for yourself. It’s a wonderful tool for your Christian life. If you ever ask the question, “What does the Bible say about _____?” Chances are the Confession addresses it, and provides Scriptural references for further study.

Would you pray that we grow in our love for these documents, insofar as they help us understand God’s Word? God has used them, and will continue to use them. B.B. Warfield, a theologian of the early 20th century, speaking of the Westminster Shorter Catechism wrote, “It is worth while to be a Shorter Catechism boy. They grow to be men. And better than that, they are exceedingly apt to grow to be men of God. So apt, that we cannot afford to have them miss the chance of it. ‘Train up a child in the way he should go, and even when he is old he will not depart from it.’” ■

EKKLESIA

There is no Ekklesia March 27th.
Enjoy Spring Break!

The Bible from 30,000 Feet,
March 6 - The Gospels
March 13 - Acts
March 20 - Romans
March 27 - No Ekklesia



SMALL GROUPS

Name and Location	Leader(s)	Current Topic
Breakfast Club Rec Room	Michael Berkau Jim Underwood	The Life of Martin Luther
Connections Family Life Ctr. Lobby	Monty Harrington	Sermon Discussion
Faithworks Gym Classroom C	David Nelson	Sermon Discussion
Graceroots Room 340	Tombo Freeland Chad Reynolds	Sermon Discussion
In Depth Choir Room	Vince Treadway	Psalms
Lamplighters Seminar Room	Pat Frankenburger	Discipleship and Mission (Matthew, Mark, Luke, Acts, Romans)
One More Mile Room 320	Daniel Hunt	Sermon Discussion
Salt Shakers Breezeway Classroom	Shelly DiNunzio	Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah
Seekers in Action Lecture Hall B	Mary Benner Jim Weaver	Sermon Discussion
Early Morning Small Group Church Library	Andy Hunt Frank Hunt III	Discipleship and Mission (Matthew, Mark, Luke, Acts, Romans) - Meeting at 8:15am
The Name TBA Group Assoc. Pastor Office	Mackay Smith Aaron Nelson	Sermon Discussion
Upper Room Gym Classroom A	John Dubois Jane Terry	Gospel of John

We currently have a twelve active Adult Small Groups. Outside of Sunday Worship (our highest ministry priority), Adult Small Groups are our chief avenue of Discipleship. They are a place where intentional, Christ-centered relationships form the framework for growth through *Teaching, Fellowship, Outreach, and Service*. Speak with Pastor Mackay to discover more about how to join in this journey with other believers.

This Sunday School quarter, the **Seekers in Action** Small Group is *Serving* the families of our church by providing a rotation of Assistants in the 4th-5th Grade classroom. This allows them to reach out to know and support younger families in the church while still being involved in the life of their Small Group. Thanks Seekers!

Missions & Outreach

CAMP JOY FLORIDA 2019

From June Ullman

Do you remember where you were 10 years ago? March of 2009 there was a group gathering together for the first Camp JOY Florida! Now Florida has TWO sessions each year: Lake Wales and a summer session in Lake Placid!

March 24-29 will mark the TENTH year of Camp JOY in Florida! Please join us, enjoy a light dessert and experience the JOY, at our 10th anniversary Talent Show on Wednesday, March 27 at 6:30 PM in our Family Life Center.

The vision of Camp JOY began forty years ago, as “Miss Ann” Brice sat on the porch of the hotel at Bonclarken (ARP denomination’s conference center in North Carolina) with her friend and together they prayed for a way to offer a camp for the students that they taught who had special needs such as Down Syndrome. The next year they gathered some teenagers who love Jesus and a group of special friends and that is how it began. Now Camp JOY has expanded to 9 weeks in 4 different states! Camp Joy is a ministry of the ARP Christian Education Ministries. As a week long residential camp, Camp Joy is designed to provide all the fun of a traditional camping experience, in a Christian

environment, for those with special needs. Every camper has the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of activities including Worship, Bible study, and a recreation with a buddy who is there

CAMP JOY TALENT SHOW FLORIDA 10TH ANNIVERSARY

**Wednesday, March 27th, 6:30pm
in our Family Life Center!**

to assist. All activities are geared toward their abilities and no camper is left out.

The above is the basic idea of Camp JOY, but what makes it such a magnificent experience? Camp JOY is much more than singing, canoe races, paddleboats, dances, talent shows, bounce houses, horseback riding, and Camp Monday Fun days! Being at Camp Joy is just a time to let loose and learn a lot about the importance of having Jesus in your life. We share this message not only in the Bible, crafts, and drama classes, but also during singing – and we sing a lot! – and worship time. An even bigger benefit is the impact camp has on the young person who is serving as a counselor or as we call ourselves, a “buddy”.

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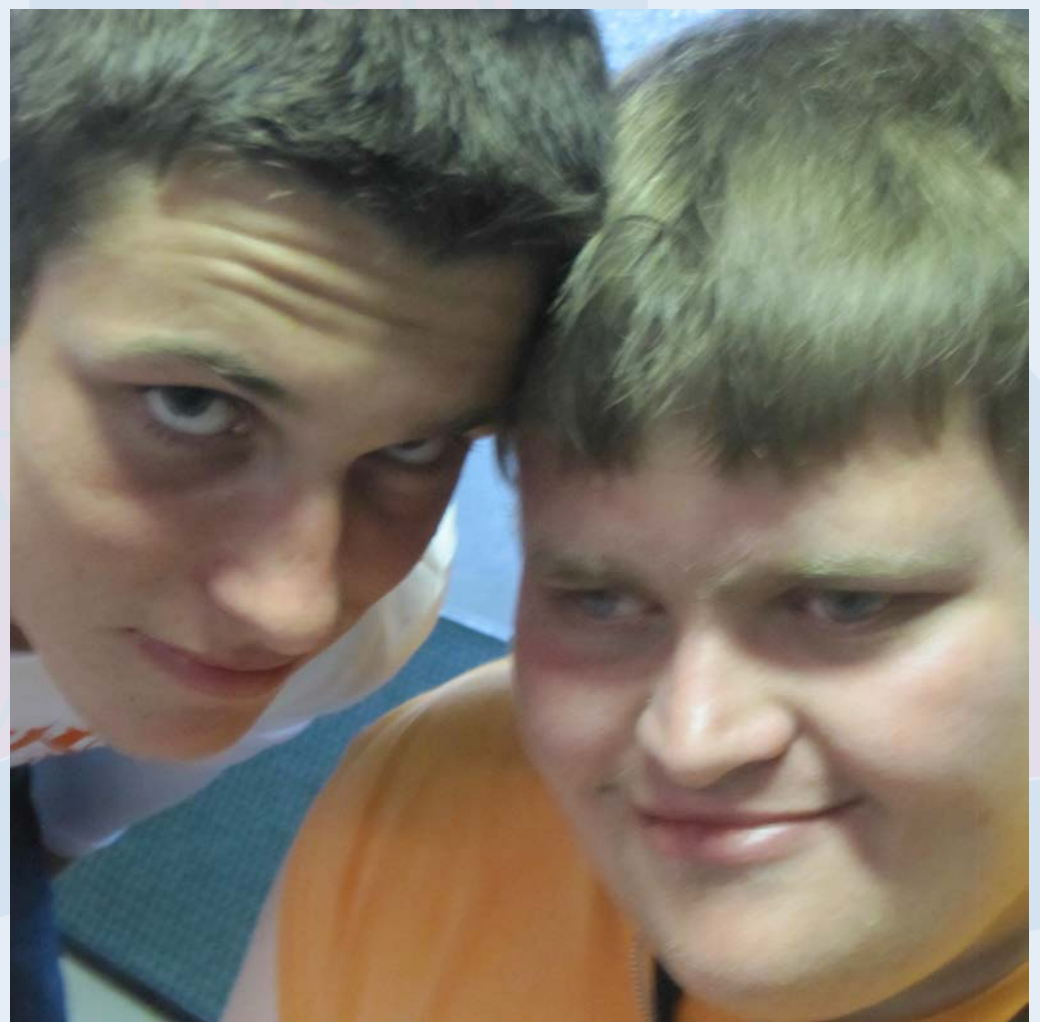
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Teenagers live in a world where they are encouraged more and more to look to themselves for the right answers. Their value and identity (worldly speaking) is based on their own merits. Their SAT scores, involvement in extracurricular activities, community service, social status, and even church involvement are things to be added to their college applications. Even in some of the “best” Christian kids, their identity can be wrapped up in what they know about God rather than actually knowing God. One of the first things we instruct counselors to do when they begin orientation is to leave their “cool” behind. This is a camp about serving and Jesus showed us what it means to truly serve. He looked out not for His own interest, but selflessly demonstrated his concern for the interest of others. He shows us what it means to serve and love unconditionally, and, like the campers at Camp Joy, we, too, should follow His example. At the closing counselor/staff meeting we hear many of our teens share how this camp has stretched them beyond what they imagined they could be; and how they saw and experienced the goodness and grace of Jesus in every song, dance, skit, walk, and worship each day.

The successful operation of Camp Joy is dependent on donations for the counselors/staff fees and for camper scholarships. This church has been a huge supporter and is very much appreciated. More important even than financial support are your prayers. Please pray for Camp JOY, for such things as the health of the campers, counselors, and staff. Pray also that Camp JOY will continue to grow throughout our denomination.

As one camper exclaimed at dinner, “I love Camp JOY! I can see and feel Jesus in everything I do when I am here!” And, from two counselors, “Camp Joy is the perfect name,” and “If I was the hands and feet of Jesus, my camper was the heart of Jesus.”

Please pray for the continued growth and support of the Camp Joy ministry. We hope you will join us on March 27th for an unforgettable, Christ-filled talent show that will be full of JOY. ■



THE LENTEN SEASON

From Vince Treadway

The Lenten season begins 40 days (not including Sundays) before Easter on Ash Wednesday, and ends on the Saturday before Easter. The exact days vary from one religious tradition to another, and the manner in which Lent is observed also varies greatly.

In the Presbyterian church, particularly the ARP, the observance of Lent is not considered part of the regulative form of worship (what is required by Scripture) and so is typically understated in practice, if practiced at all. The original purpose for the Lenten season was to provide a period of reflection, fasting, prayer, Scripture reading, and focus on the passion of the Lord Jesus Christ. While we here at FPC do not hold to a formal practice of observing Lent, we do encourage our church to take time to consider the awesome and amazing gift of Jesus Christ; His life, His suffering, His death and resurrection. It is even appropriate for us to mourn over our sin; the sin that sent Christ to the cross, and to mourn over the terrible suffering that Christ endured for us. In taking the time to reflect on Jesus Christ's passion, we renew our appreciation and love for Him, and we are reminded of the importance of living a life free of sin—the sin that sent Jesus Christ to the cross.

You will notice that the music used during Lent is more subdued and reflective. You are also invited to attend our Maundy Thursday service on Thursday, April 18 at 7:00. During the Maundy Thursday service you will hear music sung by the Chancel Choir and Small Ensemble that focuses on Christ's passion.

You will hear Scripture readings describing that period in history, you will be able to partake in Holy Communion as you reflect on Christ's suffering, and you will hear a homily by Pastor Chad on the topic of Christ's suffering. It is rare for us in our busy lives to have the time to use an entire service for such reflection, prayer, Scripture reading, and a sermon entirely focused on Jesus Christ's passion. It is our hope that you will be able to take advantage of this opportunity and join your brothers and sisters in worship and reflection with us on Maundy Thursday, April 18 at 7:00. May God richly bless you as you consider Christ's awesome gift of His own life for us! ■



SCHOLARSHIPS

From Shane Miller

Parents,

Every summer our Church participates in a summer retreat put on by Bonclarken, the conference center of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church in Flat Rock, North Carolina. The summer retreat is a “week-long opportunity for spiritual growth and development, fellowship, and teaching on pertinent information from God’s Word. The goal of this conference is to send young people out into their world, spiritually nurtured, fed and equipped to live out their faith and share it with those around them.” Quest, the Middle School retreat, is June 11-16. Horizon, the High School conference is June 18-23.

While I am currently in the process of calculating the retreat cost for this year, last year the cost was about \$500. We are aware that some students who desire to attend will need scholarships. First Presbyterian has arranged with the Care Center to work the scholarship hours through volunteering at the Lake Wales Care Center Thrift Store. For the Middle Schoolers, there will be three dates to gain scholarship hours. (The Middle School volunteer dates are posted below.) I will be working with them on these dates. The High Schoolers will be able to volunteer at the Thrift Store at any time that fits with their schedule. High Schoolers will need to complete 18 volunteer hours. If your Middle Schooler or High Schooler has never volunteered with the Care Center before, I have volunteer forms for them to fill out.

After the volunteer hours are completed, the Youth Council will meet to decide scholarship amounts for the students.

Middle School parents, if there are scheduling conflicts which will make volunteering on these scheduled dates impossible, please let me know and we can work something out.

My phone number is also posted on this note if you have any questions.

-Shane Miller
(863) 604-5204 ■



**QUEST
MIDDLE SCHOOL
JUNE 11-16**

**HORIZON
HIGH SCHOOL
JUNE 18-23**

MIDDLE SCHOOL WORK DATES

- FEBRUARY 23, 9-3
- MARCH 30, 9-3
- APRIL 27, 9-3

Church Family

MILESTONE CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAYS

March 2, Jonathan Smith
March 4, A.J. Bennett
March 4, Patti Roe
March 6, Ardy DenBesten
March 8, Ruth Miller
March 8, Monty Harrington
March 9, Jay Hershberger
March 9, Carole Miller
March 10, Penny Wright
March 12, Marilyn Fisher
March 14, Carol Grimes
March 14, Ethan Behr
March 15, Libby Matteson
March 15, Marie Hasse
March 17, Michael Matteson
March 18, Contessa Michalkiewicz
March 18, Jane Jackson
March 19, Kathy Enz
March 20, David Bass
March 20, Mason Hixenbaugh
March 22, Rob McCollum
March 23, Joan Dick
March 24, John Miller
March 24, J.B. Wynn
March 25, Janice Brandies
March 27, Jim Ayers
March 27, Mary Kunkel
March 28, Daniel Roe

ANNIVERSARIES

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

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

DEACONS

2019

Jake Cockrell
Troy Hershberger
Kevin Kohl
Michael Matteson
Wendy Moore

2020

David Bass
Lynne Hulen
Rob McCollum
David Kennedy Nelson

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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