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MARCH 2021

ISSUE 21-3

# 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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## REFLECTIONS

### From Pastor Chad

*I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.*

*-Philippians 1:3-11*

This will be my last Diligent article as the senior pastor of the First Presbyterian Church. I have been reflecting quite a bit over the past few weeks on my time in serving the Lord Jesus together with you and in ministering to you in his name. Following are just a few of my reflections in that time.

I have had the privilege to preach over five hundred Sunday morning sermons since July 2009. In addition to these, I was also able to preach on other occasions, regularly teach from the Scriptures at Ekklesia, write articles and devotionals on passages from the Bible, and shepherd frequently from the Word in counseling settings. In reflecting on all of this Bible-based ministry, I am comforted in knowing that God's Word does not return to him empty, but accomplishes all that he intends for it to accomplish. Such promises from God's Word give me great confidence and hope that "he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Christ Jesus." It is my sincere hope and prayer that in my time here you have grown in your hunger for the Word, increased in your knowledge of the fullness of the Gospel, developed a discernment for how to live for the glory of God in all manner of circumstances, and cultivated a Spirit-led love for God and others. It is also my prayer that you will continue in these

things, even flourishing all the more through the ongoing ministry of the Word here at First Presbyterian Church under Pastor Mackay's interim leadership and the next senior pastor to come.

Our time together has not always been easy. We have been through some pretty difficult matters together. Some of those have been personal and family circumstances. Illnesses, deaths, marital strife, difficulty in child rearing, and relational struggles with brothers or sisters in Christ are just some of the situations in which I have been called to minister to you throughout the years.

Sometimes I was there to bring a word of comfort and encouragement. Other times I had the difficult task of bringing a word of correction or even rebuke. Inasmuch as I loved you in Christ and was faithful to the Word at such times, I can look back with joy and see the fruit of his work in you, even through the hardship you faced.

Admittedly, there were occasions that I was not as dependent upon the Spirit and the Word as I should have been. I ministered to some of you in my own strength and wisdom at times (which are really just weakness and ignorance at best). I have repented of some such occasions to you personally, but there are no doubt other circumstances where I have not gone back to acknowledge my error and to more fully point you to Jesus. I hope that in Christ you can forgive me if so.

We have walked together through struggle, but we have also been blessed to love one another through life's great joys too. Weddings, births, meals (in homes and at FPC), baptisms (infant and adult), triumphs over besetting sins, and more abound in my mind and heart as I think of you and our time together since August 2004 (when I first arrived as associate pastor). I have found myself smiling and even laughing out loud on more than one occasion in the recent weeks as I have pondered these times of gladness with you. The Lord has been good and gracious to me and my family in sending us to you and allowing us to love and be loved so well by you these last sixteen or so years. I am thankful that such memories will continue to be a source of joy for me, and I hope for you as well. God is faithful, so I know that new times of great joy await you with a new pastor and me with a new congregation. But these joys we have had together have been precious sealed with the affection of Christ, and for that I am grateful. ■

# SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

The elders of First Presbyterian Church meet monthly on the fourth Tuesday. The following are highlights from the meeting on February 23.

- The Session approved of Karla Campbell's nomination to serve as deacon in the class of 2023. Karla will be put forward for election by the congregation along with Laura Hunt as deacon (2022) and Andy Hunt as elder (2024) at a called congregational meeting following Sunday worship on March 7.
- Stewardship and Finance reported that as of the end of January 2020, tithes and offerings toward the church's 2020 general budget are at \$131,292, which is 13.7% of the 2021 budget. This is above the average of 8.7% (2016-2020) our church has historically received by the end of January. Our expenses were \$84,903, 9% of the budget, for a net gain of \$49,764. Praise was given to God in prayer for his financial blessing.
- The chairmen of the committees of the Session gave reports of the work and ministry they are overseeing. Prayer was offered after each report, asking for the Lord's guidance and blessing.

## WEEKLY PRAYER FOCUS

- MARCH 7** - Iglesia en Movimiento
- MARCH 14** - FPCLW Nominations Committee -  
Forming slate of nominees for Pastoral Search Committee
- MARCH 21** - Persecuted Church
- MARCH 28** - Reynolds Family

•A season of prayer was had for various needs within our congregation, community, and world.

•Session has met at other times in recent weeks with regard to the pastoral transition. Information from these meetings has been communicated to the congregation through email and other formats, including the called congregational meeting on February 21.

## NOMINATIONS FOR PASTORAL SEARCH COMMITTEE:

The Pastoral Search Committee will be composed of 8-10 persons, with at least half of the total members being elders (F.O.G.9.54). The congregation will nominate names of elders and church members to the Nominations Committee until Mar 7, then the Nominations Committee will prepare a slate of names to present to Session for approval. Once approved by Session, the Pastoral Search Committee will be presented to the congregation for final approval.

### Nominations for the Pastoral Search Committee can be made in the following ways:

- Nominations can be given directly to Nominations Committee members: Doug Pace, Bob Hulen, Josh Behr, Bea Meeker, David Nelson, and Rachel Miller.
- Nominations can be emailed to the committee at [pastoralsearch@fpclw.org](mailto:pastoralsearch@fpclw.org).
- Nominations can be written on a card and placed in a nomination drop box located in the church parlor.

# Discipleship

## ON PRAYER AS A STRUGGLE

From Pastor Mackay

Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.

-Colossians 4:12

I've thought a great deal about Epaphras lately. Who is Epaphras, you ask? Well, as you see above, Epaphras was one of Paul's companions who added his name to Paul's letter to the Colossians. The Colossians were Epaphras' people, and he wished to send them a greeting from their fellow countryman and fellow saint.

What has caught my attention about Epaphras is the way Paul characterizes him. He is said to be a man of prayer, but notice why he is so characterized. Paul doesn't say that Epaphras is "regularly" in prayer or "deeply" in prayer. He says that Epaphras struggles in prayer. The Greek verb Paul uses (which sounds like the English word "agony") denotes fighting and striving. We translate one form of this word as "athlete" in 1 Cor. 9, referring to someone who subjects themselves to rigorous training. Epaphras, then, was truly a "prayer warrior."

Often, I hear Christians remark that prayer seems like something that should be easy, but it is, in fact, a quite difficult thing to do. Paul's characterization of Epaphras shows us that! On the one hand, prayer is objectively a free and even simple thing. Jesus has opened the way to God, such that we might approach "with confidence," as the author of Hebrews puts it (Heb. 4:6). God hears every word that we utter to him. Yet, as we all find, prayer is also something that requires a struggle. Martin Luther wrote that to pray "is the hardest work of all... a labor above all labors, since he who prays must wage a mighty warfare against the doubt and murmuring excited by the faintheartedness and unworthiness we feel within us." Indeed, perhaps we should wonder why we don't think of prayer as a struggle? We are weak people who are strongly obsessed with ourselves. Thus, to turn our attention away from ourselves and to focus on

God, much less bringing before him the needs of others, is one of the most alien things we can do!

Let us remember, then, how it is that we are able to pray. We've already said that Jesus has opened the door for us to the Father. Yet, it is also the work of Jesus through the Holy Spirit that enlivens our hearts to pray. True prayer, after all, is a matter of the heart. Jesus prefaces the Lord's Prayer with a warning that it is not the length of our prayers or the posture we take in prayer that matters (Matt 6:5-8). What matters is that prayer is issuing from a heart that loves its Heavenly Father. We can only receive such a heart by God's grace. We don't drum up the ability to pray in ourselves, but the Spirit, given by God, cries out with our spirit to the Lord (Rom. 8:26). We have access to God in Jesus, and a new heart enflamed with the Spirit. What more do we need to pray? Our God has provided all we need.

So, let us take heart at the example of Epaphras. We must struggle in prayer. No ounce of energy in prayer is an ounce wasted (James 5:16). Even if you don't think there's anything you can do for the people you love, to pray for them is more consequential than anything else! Joel Beeke writes, "The best way that we can love one another as believers is to pray for each other and to identify with each other so that we weep and rejoice together."

You don't hear of anyone named Epaphras anymore, but may the Lord raise up many of his ilk in his church. ■

## EKKLESIA

There will be no Ekklesia, Youth, or Ekklesia Kidz on March 24 due to Spring Break. Adult Bible study will continue their study through the book Isaiah.

## SMALL GROUP LEADERS

Join us for our bi-monthly Zoom discussion on Sunday, March 14, at 4:00 pm. Please note the time change!

# Music Ministry

## A CHEERFUL HEART: FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN

From Vince Treadway

*A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.*

*-Proverbs 17:22*

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) said, "Since God has given me a cheerful heart, he will forgive me for serving him cheerfully." I wonder about how many of us that could be said? One might say that Haydn had the advantage of having the world's greatest gig as the principal musician at the palace of Prince Esterhazy at Eisenstadt for 30 years. It is no wonder that he was cheerful! But apparently, it was simply Haydn's nature to be cheerful. In fact, his music has even been "criticized" for being *too* happy! Imagine that!

Haydn's life was not always a bed of roses, though, and his raw talent was the source of his great compositions more than musical training, as he received very little. Haydn's father was a wheelwright and a harpist, and his mother a cook. He grew up in humble circumstances, but his mother and father recognized his musical talent early and encouraged him to pursue his talent. Haydn sang so beautifully as a child that he was taken to Hainburg to study violin and clavier, and at age eight went to St. Stephen's in Vienna, where he sang in the boy choir. Haydn spent 20 years in Vienna, and there he met many musicians, noblemen, and celebrities.

In 1761, Prince Esterhazy offered Haydn a position at his palace in Eisenstadt, where he served for 30 years. During this period, his music flourished, and Haydn became known as "Papa Haydn" and befriended Mozart. He was permitted to travel to

London, which he did many times, and received an honorary doctorate from Oxford. At age 66, he wrote his masterpiece, *The Creation*, and Haydn said that it "was written to inspire the adoration and worship of the Creator." Haydn was loyally devoted to his faith and was quoted as saying, "All human destiny is under God's guiding hand...all talents come from above." Not only did Prince Esterhazy provide Haydn a good living, but he also provided him a pension! Haydn wrote a wide variety of works including masses, oratorios, cantatas, choruses, dramatic works, instrumental works, piano works, concertos, and much more!

What a wonderful testimony to the Lord and to the world to be known to have a cheerful heart and to give glory to God because "all talents come from above." May it be said of all of us that we serve our Creator cheerfully and with a grateful heart! ■



## ONE GOSPEL, ONE BODY

From Shane Miller

The Youth Ministry, in submission to the plurality of elders at First Pres Lake Wales, is to do the following:

- Build discipleship bridges between the young people of First Presbyterian Church in Lake Wales to that of the larger Church body.

In the past several youth articles for *The Diligent*, we've been examining the purpose of youth ministry, asking, "What is the role and function of the youth ministry within our church?" At the outset of this article, I'll admit that as we're looking at individual goals of youth ministry, besides preaching the gospel, this is the biggest one. As the above statement hopefully represents, youth ministry is simply not an end in and of itself but a means by which students may connect to the larger church body.

Inadvertently, sometimes a church's youth ministry can become another church body within a church, and this can be for several reasons. First of all, we might view youth ministry as church with training wheels. With this mindset, we use terms like 'adult church' and 'kids church' with the understanding and hope that students grow and mature from the latter to the former. Secondly, the gap between youth and adults is not just one of age but culture. Younger and older folks each operate with different cultural mindsets, values, and even languages. Bridging a cultural gap is always intimidating, no matter how large or small.

It is important to point out that the apostle Peter speaks to the first point of division in a powerful way: "For the promise (that is, the promises of God fulfilled in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ) is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself" (Acts 2:39). As the apostle Peter taught at Pentecost, there is one gospel for adults and for young people alike for entrance into one church body. There is not one gospel for adults and another for a young person. Thus, there are not separate churches with separate entryways. This being the case, when we disciple

young people, we aren't simply training them for something that comes later. The gospel of God, which is for them, offers them a place and ministry in his one church now.

To the second point of division, the well-known Pauline passage of Galatians 3:28-29 says: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." It is important to note that Paul did not write this part of Galatians because there is no division in the church. On the contrary, the church is full of division, and Paul realized this. God's people are diverse, representing differences in gender, social class, nationality, ethnicity, and even age. This is an aspect of beauty when it comes to the bride of Christ. Yet, even in division, there is unity, not in the commonality of personality, culture, or life circumstance, but in Christ. As we claim the promises of God as our own in Jesus, then any cultural barrier (even generational) is already broken down through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Thus, including young people in the body life of the church can be an act of faith and obedience as adults confidently rest in the work of Christ.

The attempt to include young people into the local body of Christ might be more crucial than we think. One author on Twitter tweeted an insightful point: "If a student ministry is run like a 'church within a church,' then, when a teen graduates out of that student ministry, it feels like they're having to go join a different church. That's why many leave." Perhaps this is why sociologists find that multigenerational worship (an example of a church that includes young people in the life of the church) is the "silver bullet" to disciple students in staying with the church long after the youth group season is over.

There are many ways to accomplish this goal. If you are interested in how being included in such a vision, please reach out to me. A big start on the journey is prayer. "Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain..." (Psalm 127:1). Let us pray that as we build our house to have a culture of including young people in our local church family, the Lord would be empowering and equipping us to accomplish just that. ■

# Children's Ministry

## SEEMINGLY SILLY ACTS OF SERVICE SHOW LOVE

From Kelly Harrington

*You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities and to those who were with me. In all things, I have shown you that by working hard in this way, we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'*

-Acts 20:34-35

Teaching our children to love, serve, give to, and care for others is a lifelong ministry for parents to show through seemingly silly acts of service. As I think of the stages of parenting that I have gone through so far, from the time our infants were placed in our arms, through childhood, teenage years, and launching young adults, it seems to be my and their father's actions they remember much more clearly than our words. Perhaps they are keeping our great words of wisdom deep in their hearts and saving them for when they, too, are parents one day. But for now, the lessons we have attempted to teach our kids are generally given back to us as humorously remembered and acted out tales of our most embarrassing behaviors. To be completely cliché, our actions have spoken louder than our words, especially those with some personal, embarrassing fault to them, which are securely anchored in our kids' minds forever!

Teaching our children to serve others without expectation of reward or compensation is counter-cultural! Hardwired for self-preservation, we naturally seek first to care for and comfort ourselves. Once we have done that, we naturally turn to our neighbor to care for him, right? Wrong. We seek to secure ourselves and comfort for the future! If uninterrupted, ensuring our future comforts becomes our lifelong purpose. What, then, is a good enough reason to stop, except that which calls our attention up and away from ourselves? Therefore, it is seemingly silly in the eyes of the world for us to look to comfort, care for, and help secure "your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:31). It is only by the work of the Holy Spirit in us that we can break free from our determination to take care of ourselves and begin to notice others (Romans 8:5).

As parents, the words we speak to our children are only as good as the actions that follow them. And for that, we must rely on the grace at work in us

through the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:25) that we can to carry out the actions of the words we all repeatedly say to our children: please help your sister, please mow the lawn, please wait your turn, please share your snack, please give what you have, please sit patiently and listen, please..., please..., please...

How seemingly silly are these things we are asking our kids to do? They could seemingly be ridiculous, in fact, if my kids do not see any evidence of my words in me? Do they see me modeling help, service, and sharing? Do my kids see me patiently listening to others? Do they see me making food for our neighbors? Do they see me giving the BOGO items to the Care Center? Do they see me driving across the county to take a church member to the doctor? Do they see me joyfully going to church committee meetings? What do they see me doing?

Paul's passionate parting words to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:17-38 gives us a testimony in serving others. Before leaving Ephesus for Jerusalem, where he knew danger and imprisonment awaited him, he said the elders there, "You yourselves know how I have lived among you...serving the Lord with all humility..." (Acts 20:18-19) I can imagine him holding out his hands as he said, "...these hands ministered to my necessities and to those who were with me. In all these things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak..." (Acts 20:34-35). Paul's actions were congruent with his words, and, therefore, the message in his words (and his ministry) was not jeopardized by his actions!

This passage is great encouragement in my efforts to teach and model service to our family. For all of the imperfect, sometimes hastily-made meals our kids have helped me deliver to neighbors, time spent meeting a stranger's needs, or bringing people unexpectedly into our home, I hope that these seemingly silly things have pointed our kids to Jesus. Parents, in the messiness of life and service to others, may we always model for our kids that we look to 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" (Heb 12:2). In the eyes of the world, wasn't that a seemingly silly act of service for us? And yet, for us as Christians, we understand and receive it as the *greatest* act of service ever! ■

## MILESTONE CELEBRATIONS

# Church Family

### BIRTHDAYS

March 2, Jonathan Smith  
March 3, Susan Jahna  
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, Larry Adams  
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, Marilyn Newell  
March 20, Mason Hixenbaugh  
March 22, Rob McCollum  
March 23, Joan Dick  
March 24, John Miller  
March 24, J.B. Wynn  
March 24, Rick Wright  
March 25, Janice Brandies  
March 27, Jim Ayers  
March 27, Mary Kunkel  
March 28, Daniel Roe  
March 28, Debbie Tyus  
March 28, Lesleigh Miller  
March 31, Andy Bennett  
March 31, Morgan McCollum

### 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

## Reynolds Family Farewell Walk-Through Reception

Join us on Sunday, March 28, from 3 to 5 p.m. to say goodbye to Pastor Chad, Laney and their kids at a walk-through reception in the Family Life Center Portico on Central Avenue. Fresh, individually packaged, vintage donuts and individually packaged chilled juices will be served to guests as they walk through the receiving line to say farewell, take pictures with the family, and share in one last memory-making activity with the Reynolds.

## FIRST AID, CPR, & AED TRAINING SATURDAY, MARCH 13

FPC volunteers are invited to attend the upcoming training session for administering emergency assistance in First Aid, CPR, and Automated External Defibrillator (AED – we have two on campus) on Saturday, March 13, 8:30 am to 12 pm. All children's and youth ministry volunteers are strongly encouraged to attend the training, as well as other volunteers who are interested in learning or refreshing their knowledge in emergency assistance. Updated safety procedures due to COVID will be included in the training, including using a personal safety mask for CPR which you will keep from the training. There is no charge to FPC volunteers and space is limited. Please call the church office to make your reservation by Tuesday, March 9.





First Presbyterian Church of Lake Wales  
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 Phone: 863.676.0711  
[www.fpclw.org](http://www.fpclw.org)

## CHURCH OFFICERS

### ELDERS

#### 2021

Mike Berkau  
 Paul Benner  
 Pat Frankenburger

#### 2023

Scott Crews  
 Doug Pace

#### 2022

Frank Hunt III  
 John Matteson  
 Vince Treadway

#### 2024

Daniel Hunt  
 David Nelson

### DEACONS

#### 2021

David Caldwell  
 Michael Kahler  
 Carl McCollum  
 Tony Thomas

#### 2023

Susan Coyne  
 Bob Hulen  
 Michael Matteson

#### 2022

Bea Meeker  
 Aaron Nelson  
 Mary Youmans

**Moderator:** Rev. Chad Reynolds  
**Vice Moderator:** Rev. Mackay Smith  
**Clerk of Session:** Doug Pace  
**Chairman of Deacons:** Bob Hulen  
**Deacon Secretary:** TBA  
**Chm. of the Congregation:** Josh Behr  
**Treasurer:** Michelle Hurst (2020-2021)  
**Asst. Treasurer:** Daniel Hunt (2020-2021)