



DECEMBER '22 & JANUARY '23

ISSUE 22-12

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

WANT TO KEEP CHRIST IN CHRISTMAS?

From Pastor Mackay

Therefore, let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

- Colossians 2:16-17

Let me begin by acknowledging two things. One, like all of you, this time of year brings such a temptation to busyness. There are family matters to attend to, opportunities to spend time with friends we want to take advantage of, not to mention gifts to purchase. It's a good time of year. It's a busy time of year. Christmas morning may have a sacred schedule that your family has kept since time began. I get it.

Secondly, I get that I'm the guy who has to work on Sundays. My motivations to be in our sanctuary for church on December 25 include some that you do not have: like feeding my family and answering God's call to be a pastor in our church.

Those things granted, I want you to ask yourself this question: "If Jesus is the reason I celebrate Christmas, why *wouldn't* I worship him together with his people on Christmas morning?" If Jesus' birth is the "beginning of the end" of the story of our salvation, why wouldn't we come together to rejoice in "the end of the end": his resurrection and reign in Heaven?

In Colossians 2, Paul speaks to the church against those who dictate Jewish regulations onto Christians. Paul's comments lead us to the freedom that is ours in Christ. We are not bound to any kind of church calendar of feast. We are free from manmade rules that regulate our worship.

Yet what should this freedom look like? If God has set us free in Jesus, wouldn't we want to come together to praise him? We rightly live out our freedom in Christ when we live as slaves of

righteousness (see Romans 6). We are liberated from sin, but liberated to serve our good and gracious Heavenly Father.

Dr. Kevin DeYoung gives some great thoughts on Christmas Day church in a recent blog post. It's addressed to pastors, but I find some of his thoughts weigh on our calling to worship together as well, so I write the following thoughts with his thoughts in my mind (I'll link to his article below).

Family is so very important, and one of God's greatest gifts to us, yet what better gift (on a day of giving) than to testify to those you love so deeply that God's worship is the greatest privilege of all? Do you want your children and grandchildren to know and serve Jesus? Then encourage them by your word and example (though Christmas may be the day they are most resistant), to know and serve Jesus by worshipping the Living God.

Let's also think about those who will gather for worship on Christmas. Perhaps Christmas morning will be the day when someone from out of town comes to worship at our church for the first time. It might be the day when God will answer your prayer to serve others for Jesus' sake.

The bottom line: Christmas is on Sunday, the Lord's Day. Let's keep the Lord's Day primary, and other observations (as fun and helpful as they might be) secondary. If we pride ourselves in "keeping Christ in Christmas," let's put our hearts and our feet where our mouths are this year. I'll see you in church on Christmas morning!

Rachel and I wish each one of you a very Merry Christmas!

In His Love,
Mackay

Dr. DeYoung's article can be found at <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/a-plea-to-pastors-dont-cancel-church-on-christmas/>

Advent Sermon Series

THE MAJOR GOSPEL OF THE MINOR PROPHETS

Advent is a time to worship God who is faithful to his promises. This year, we will look together at those promises through the lens of the minor prophets. In these unique voices we find the darkness of human sin, the grace of a loving God, and the hope of his chosen Savior who would be born in Bethlehem. Every Sunday we celebrate that Jesus has come and he is coming again. Come and worship!

December 11

December 18

Saturday, December 24 at 6:00pm
(Candlelight Service)

December 25

January 1

Jonah 3

Habakkuk 3

Zechariah 9

Micah 4:1-7; 5:1-5

Joel 3

God's Mercy on the Nations

Waiting on the Lord

A King is Coming

A King Born in Bethlehem

Judgment and Salvation

LEADERSHIP RETREAT 2023

All church officers will gather **Saturday, January 21st** for our annual Leadership Retreat. Elders and deacons will discuss the year of church ministry, review committee responsibilities, and begin committee work.

- Potential officer candidates were interviewed by elder teams, and the nomination slate was approved. (See slate below in Congregational Meeting announcement)
- Prayer was given for our the needs of our congregation and the ministries of our church.
- The 2023 church budget was approved for a congregational vote, and the annual congregational business meeting was called for December 11 after worship.
- The Session and Deacons will meet jointly on Dec 13, followed by the next stated Session meeting.

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

The elders of First Presbyterian Church meet monthly on the fourth Tuesday (usually). The following are highlights from the meeting on November 15.

- The Associate Pastor search committee reported good conversations continue. The congregation is asked to continue to pray!

PRAYER FOCUS

DEC 4 - Relationships

DEC 11 - Congregational Meeting/New Officers

DEC 18 - Christ's Glory

DEC 25 - Christmas: Families and Salvation

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The session has called the annual congregational business meeting for election of church officers and the approval of the 2023 budget for **Sunday, December 11** following worship.

Officer Candidates are:

Elder class of 2026: Ed Lamb, Stewart Hurst, Jimmy Seay

Elder class of 2025 (unexpired term): Jim Underwood

Deacon class of 2025: Cindy Turner, June Ullman

New church officers will be installed January 8, 2023.

Chairman of the Congregation: Jim Weaver

Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer: Michelle Hurst and Daniel Hunt

Discipleship

ROCK ON WEDNESDAYS

Wednesdays in Fellowship Hall

This Wednesday is our Potluck night beginning 6:00pm.
We will be packing cookies for our Christmas Parade outreach

**Rock on Wednesday will not meet on December 21 & 28.
WE WILL RESTART JANUARY 4, 2023**

Want to help?

Contact David Nelson

(Discipleship Committee chair)
if you'd like to help with...

- Kitchen crew/clean-up
- Children's programming
- Fellowship Night programs



LW Christmas Parade Outreach

We are bringing back the Christmas Cookie and Hot Chocolate hospitality to our community against this year!

During the Christmas Parade we will set by the Central Ave portico and pass out cookies, hot chocolate, and water to our neighbors watching the parade.

How can you get involved?

- Join us on Wednesday, Dec 7, during R.O.W., to organize and package cookies.
- Set up on Dec 10 at 4pm before the parade and help serve.
- Come Dec 10 at 5:30pm to watch and enjoy the parade with us! It begins at 6pm.

Missions & Outreach

GO HIGHLANDERS! LWHS FOOTBALL TEAM DINNER

THERE'S JOY IN SERVING!

Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

-Colossians 3:23-24

First Presbyterian members joyfully donated funds, prepared food and served a pregame meal to nearly 100 Lake Wales High School football team players, coaches and athletic staff recently.

On Friday, November 11, Pastor Mackay shared the gospel, words of encouragement and the blessing. Then, a team of First Presbyterians served the team's "dream meal" of fried chicken, baked beans, mac 'n cheese and cookies.

The Highlanders won the regional championship on November 25 and will head to the FHSAA State Final Four!

Head Coach Tavaris Johnson, "We believe your sponsorship of a meal along with your fellowship during these pregame settings can help provide spiritual, social and educational experiences for our student athletes and coaches they can remember for a lifetime."



Music Ministry

FRIDAY FELLOWSHIP DINNERS

From Vince Treadway

Everyone has an opportunity to participate in our newly formed “Friday Fellowship Dinners” which will begin in January 2023! If you would like to get to know folks in our congregation better and enjoy food and fellowship, please sign up for our Friday Fellowship Dinners.

You can pick up a sign-up form in the Parlor, the church office, or on-line at our website at www.fpclw.org and click on the “Friday Fellowship Dinners” button. You can sign up as a host, a co-host, or simply to be included as a guest! Hosts will provide the home and the main dish for a party of eight. Co-hosts will help the host with preparations and clean up. Guests will bring a dish to share for eight; a vegetable, salad, dessert, or whatever the host needs. Each group of eight will meet once a month for three months, and then everyone will be shuffled into new groups to provide opportunities to get to know a new group of people.

If you have any questions about Friday Fellowship Dinners, please feel free to contact Vince Treadway at the church at 863-676-0711x 108 or at vince@fpclw.org or on his cell phone at 863-978-7071. We look forward to a great time of fellowship, food, and getting to know each other better for the glory of God! We need to have your information by January 1, 2023 to be included in the first round of FFD! ■

Lessons & Carols

Sunday, December 11
during Worship, 9:30am



BALL BROTHERS CONCERT PICTURES



MILESTONE CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAYS

December 2, Dorine Bullock
December 4, Charlotte Lewis
December 6, Ann Mann
December 7, Julie Smith
December 8, Birdie Cockrell
December 8, Frank Hunt III
December 9, Stewart Hurst
December 10, Scottie Smith III
December 10, Joyce McCollum
December 14, Kathe Galloway
December 15, Kay Weaver
December 18, Michelle Hurst
December 19, Carson Pike
December 21, Bill Schaffer
December 21, Rachel Smith
December 23, Evelyn Smith
December 24, Gary Estes
December 26, Cindy Turner
December 28, Wyatt Caldwell
December 29, Patty Falk
December 30, Nancy Huntsman

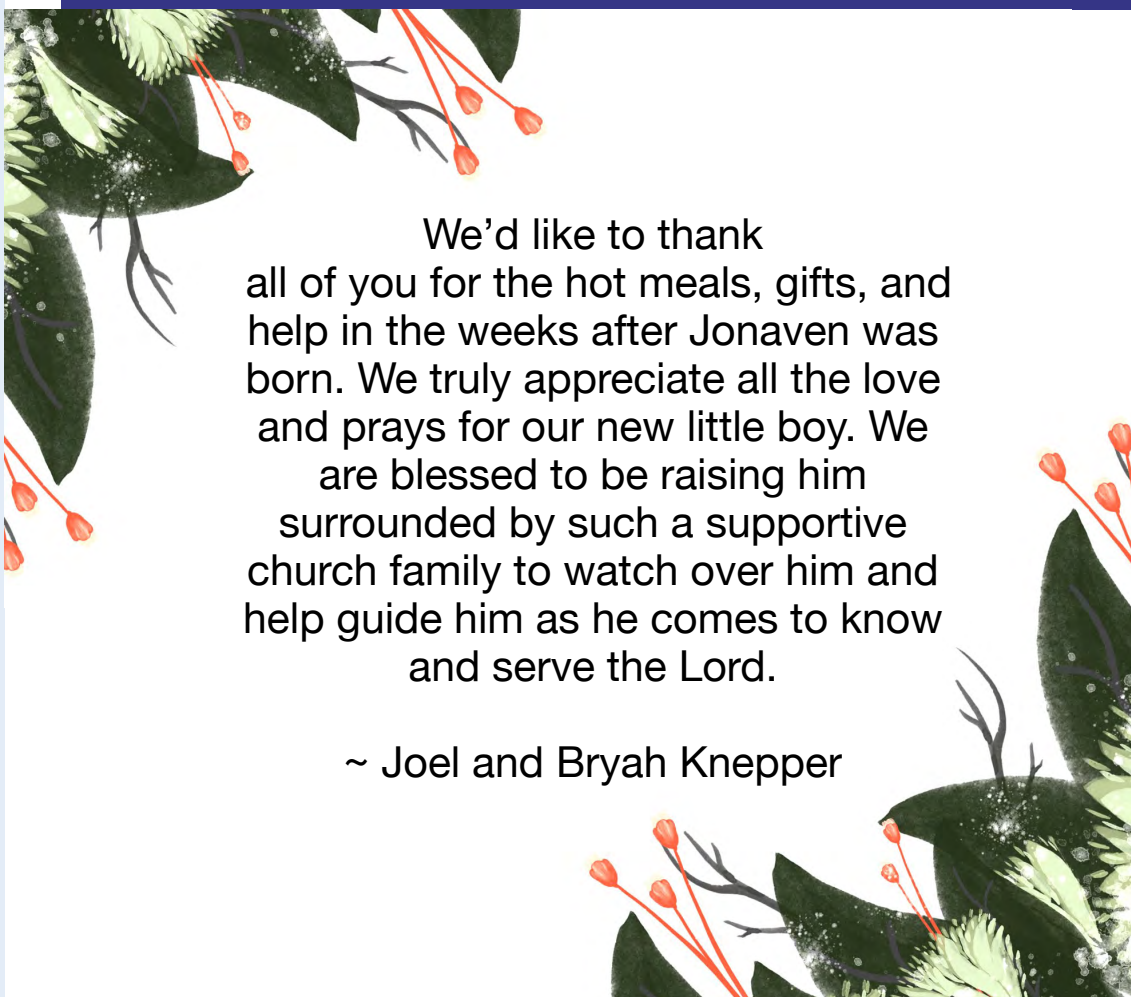
January 4, Chandler Crews
January 4, Julie Seay
January 9, Jimmy Kahler
January 10, Darlene Krpata
January 15, Kelly Wheeler
January 18, Chris Waters
January 18, Sara Wynn
January 19, Mary Campbell
January 19, Mary Roberts
January 19, Barbara Sebring
January 20, Maria Herman
January 21, Emily Bass
January 21, Mary Benner
January 22, Cole Hixenbaugh
January 24, Irene Nelson
January 25, Wendy Moore
January 27, Audrey Hunt
January 30, Billy Kahler
January 30, Jaclyn Miller
January 31, Laura Hunt

ANNIVERSARIES

Lori & Tony Woods, December 2
Katie & Gerald Lippert, December 3
Beth & Ansel Buhrman, December 3
Lorin & Christie Bice, December 7
Nancy & Jim Ayers, December 12
Donna & Chip Carter, December 22
Norma & Bill Schaffer, December 25
Dionne & Kevin Kohl, December 30

Danielle & Dan Miller, January 4

Church Family



We'd like to thank all of you for the hot meals, gifts, and help in the weeks after Jonaven was born. We truly appreciate all the love and prayers for our new little boy. We are blessed to be raising him surrounded by such a supportive church family to watch over him and help guide him as he comes to know and serve the Lord.

~ Joel and Bryah Knepper

Lessons & Carols

Sunday, December 11
during Worship, 9:30am

Christmas Eve

Candlelight Service
December 24, 6pm

Christmas Day

Morning Worship at 9:30am
No children's or youth Sunday school.
Talk to your adult Small Group leader to see if your group is meeting.

Congregational Meeting

Sunday, December 11
Small Group Hour





First Presbyterian Church of Lake Wales
 16 N 3rd St, Lake Wales, FL 33853
 Phone: 863.676.0711
 fpclw.org

CHURCH OFFICERS

ELDERS

2022

Frank Hunt III
 John Matteson
 Vince Treadway

2024

Daniel Hunt
 David Nelson
 Andy Hunt

2023

Scott Crews
 Doug Pace
 David Falk

2025

Tony Woods

DEACONS

2022

Bea Meeker
 Aaron Nelson
 Laura Hunt

2024

Leah Gibson
 Dan Miller

2023

Susan Coyne
 Bob Hulen
 Michael Matteson
 Karla Campbell

Moderator: Rev. Mackay Smith
Clerk of Session: Frank Hunt III
Chairman of Deacons: Aaron Nelson
Deacon Secretary: Susan Coyne
Chm. of the Congregation: Jim Weaver
Treasurer: Michelle Hurst
Asst. Treasurer: Daniel Hunt