



FEBRUARY 2023

ISSUE 22-2

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.”

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Leadership

THE GREATEST HOPE OF ALL

From Pastor Mackay

Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. 3 And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure. - 1 John 3:2-3

What is the Christian's hope? As people made with an imperishable soul, it cannot be overstated how comforting, freeing, energizing, and life-giving it is to know that God's salvation in Jesus brings with it the promise of eternal life in God's presence. In the intermediate state (before Jesus' return), that presence is in a place God called Heaven. Once God's work is complete, and we are raised to life at Jesus' return, that presence is known in a New Heaven and New Earth. Through such hope, God brings unassailable joy even in the darkest places of this earthly life. The Christian always has something to look forward to.

But, what *precisely* is the substance of that hope? For a child to look forward to "a vacation" is one thing. But, for a child to know the vacation will be at the beach, and will bring swimming in the ocean, playing in the sand, eating ice cream in the sun... well, that's excitement!

Often, we think of Heaven in earthly terms. That is to say, we anticipate Heaven as a place where all the bad things of earth are gone, and all the good things of earth are present. Heaven is a place where there are no more tears, pain, disease, or death. We also look forward to a lack of strife, anxiety, and poverty. Such things we will not miss. It also will be filled with amazing things: mansions, streets of gold, and a church potluck beyond imagining!

Yet, to think of Heaven only in this way can actually decrease

our hope of it. For one, earth can be pretty wonderful, too. Some people enjoy years of incredible health, wealth, and opportunity. Many non-Christians reach the end of their life and say things like, "I couldn't have asked for more!" So, if Heaven is only a maximizing of earthly life, so to speak, is it really worth all that we have and all that we are to pursue? Why not just focus on this world? After all, there's no time like the present!

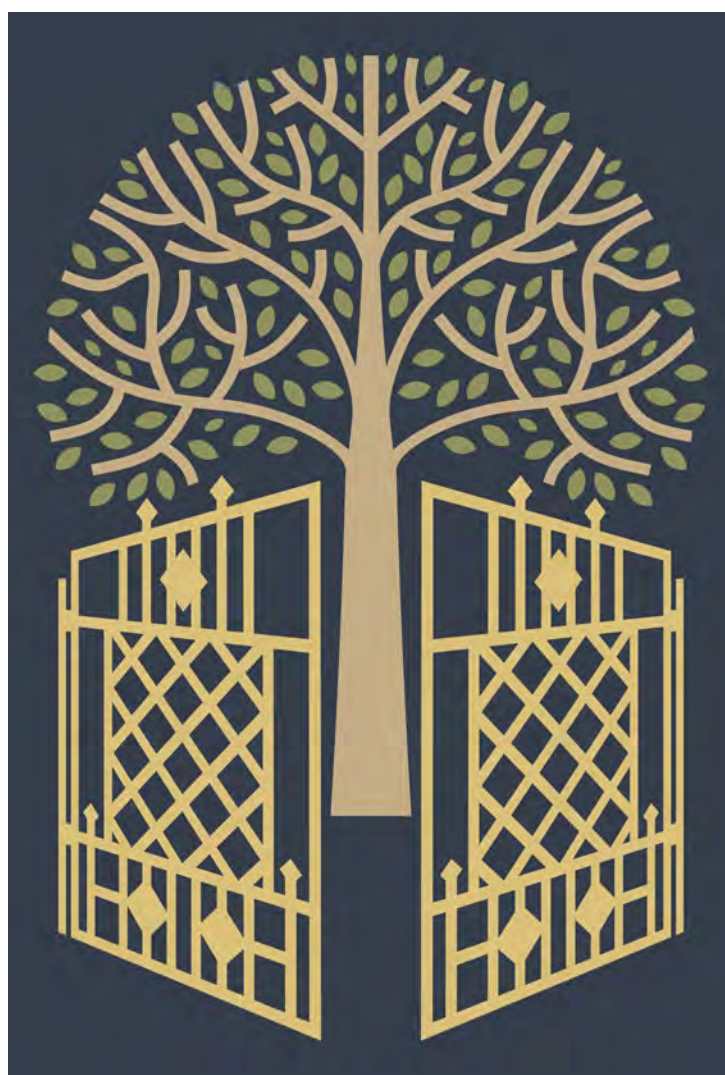
Also, consider how our hearts are insatiable! No thing or quality of life is enough to satisfy us. One rightly wonders if even the infinite benefits of Heaven are enough to satisfy.

Heaven will be wonderful for all these "worldly" reasons, but its true blessings extend infinitely beyond them. The mature Christian knows that while the lack of pain and death will indeed be a blessing beyond our wildest dreams, exponentially better will be the lack of sin! Our greatest need to be unburdened from that which God hates; to finally be free of the weight that clings so closely to us.

The lack of sin will be our most precious freedom and Jesus himself will be our most precious possession. It is seeing and knowing Jesus face-to-face that will hold us mesmerized for all of eternity. All that we do and say will be infused with the endless delight of his loving

presence. All the joy, fellowship, peace, and security that we long for in this life will be ours forever.

The presence of Jesus without sin; this is our greatest hope. Let us pray that God would convince us more and more of this. Sin clouds our judgment such that we become so short-sighted about what will truly fill us. Thus, until the day that we see him, we must exercise our faith. The more we set our course to enjoy God now, the more he will be a delight to us. May God bless us as we seek to know and savor his goodness together. ■



SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

The elders of First Presbyterian Church meet monthly on the fourth Tuesday (usually). The following are highlights from the meeting on January 24.

- The session continue to work toward a plan of intentional shepherding in our congregation. Inactive elders will be engaged for their cooperation in caring for our families.
- Prayer was given for our the needs of our congregation and the ministries of our church.
- The session continued to discuss staff support for family ministry (discipleship of parents and children). The search for an associate pastor continues, and the session is open to exploring other possible avenues.
- Stewardship and Finance reported on the final figures from 2022. Total general fund collections were \$934,378, representing 95.4% of budgeted income. (This does not include gifts to the trust fund or other directed giving.). Our total expenses for the year were \$802,782, meaning the year finished with a significant surplus in the general fund. Our general fund ended the year at \$350,639. Thanks was given to God for his generous provision!
- Committee rosters were approved and committee structure changes made based on recommendations from the annual leadership retreat.
- Committee chairs reported on their various ministry efforts.
- Pastor Mackay will be on study leave Feb 6-10. Reid Thayer (youth ministry director and student of Florida presbytery) was approved for pulpit supply on February 12.
- The next Session meeting is February 28. ■

PRAYER FOCUS

FEB 5 - Discipleship

FEB 12 - Erskine College

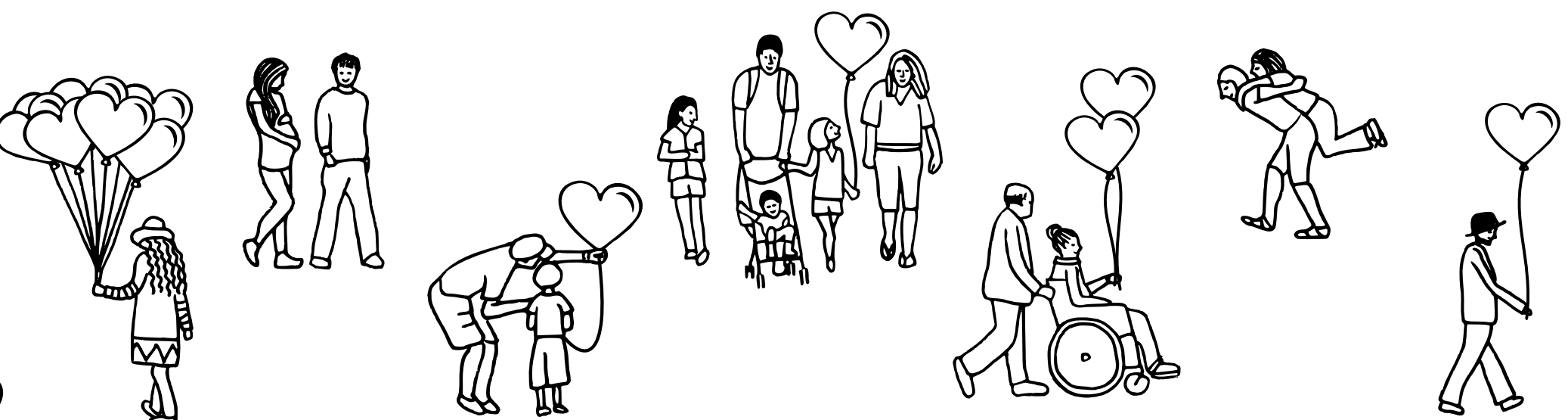
FEB 19 - Choices Pregnancy Center

FEB 26 - Iglesia en Movimiento

INQUIRERS CLASS

Pastor Mackay will teach a four-week overview of the Gospel and how it guides us in church membership. The class also explores membership at First Presbyterian. Open to any interested in membership and any current members who'd like a review.

The class meets Feb. 12, (Feb 19 is Choices Baby Shower), Feb. 26, March 5 and March 12 in room 299. Contact Mackay with any questions.



Discipleship

ROCK ON WEDNESDAYS

Wednesdays in Fellowship Hall

February Events

Feb 1 - Potluck and Missionary Report from Bridge: Europe

Feb 8 - Breakout Night.

Large Group study: *Twelve Ordinary Men* study led by an elder rotation.

Women's study: *Jesus Through the Eyes of Women* led by Rachel Smith

Feb 15 - Prayer Meeting and Hymn Sing

Feb 22 - Proverbs Bible Study led by Pastor Mackay

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

ADULT SMALL GROUPS

The *In Depth* small group meets in the Choir Room and is now studying R. C. Sproul's book entitled, *What Do Jesus' Parables Mean?* This study focuses on finding the meaning in the parables given by Jesus in Matthew and Luke that are sometimes challenging to understand. All are welcome to join!



Missions & Outreach

Shower & Potluck Brunch

Sunday, February 19

Fellowship Hall - Following Service

Guest Speakers
Joy Hoverkamp & Christy Johnson
Learn About CHOICES - Hear Their Testimonies

*Celebrate Mothers
Who Choose Life*

-- Bring New Items to Fill a Baby Basket --

Crib Blankets & Sheets • Receiving Blankets • Diaper Bags
Diapers Sizes 0-6 • Towels & Washcloths • Bibs
Baby Bottles • Baby Wash, Shampoo, Lotion & Wipes
Clothing Items For BOYS & GIRLS 0-24 Months
Amazon Gift Cards • Checks Payable: Lake Wales Care Center

Joyfully Benefiting
**CHOICES
Pregnancy
Care Center LW**

Music Ministry

JOHN AND CHARLES WESLEY HYMNWRITERS

From Vince Treadway

John Wesley (1703-1791) and his younger brother Charles Wesley (1707-1788) were important figures in the development of hymnody and worked together to produce over 6,000 hymns. This output is unmatched by anyone. Most of the credit for hymn writing goes to Charles, and more of the translation credit is given to John. John and Charles' father, Samuel Wesley (1662-1735) also wrote some hymns.

John began the Methodist movement in Oxford, England in 1729. He and Charles traveled to Georgia in the United States during the years 1735-1738 at the request of then Governor Oglethorpe to the Savannah Parish in an attempt to reach native Americans, but the attempt was considered unsuccessful. After that experience they returned to London and were heavily influenced by the Moravians. John published *Collection of Psalms and Hymns* in 1737 contained five translations of German hymns. John secured the Foundery at Moorfields which remained the headquarters of the London Methodist Society, and in 1742 published the *Foundery Tune Book*, which was considered the first collection of Methodist church music.

Charles' passions were the celebration of the church year and hymns exalting the glory of Christ and the bliss of conversion. Charles used Scripture to illuminate poetry and included some eighty different meters compared to a handful by Isaac Watts. Charles did not hold completely to his brother, John's

Methodist theology, and remained true to the Church of England. Charles was considered a powerful preacher as well as hymn writer, and was married to Sarah Gwynne who accompanied him during his itinerate preaching travels.

One of the unique features of the hymnody of the Wesley's was its "secularity." They had no problem plundering the carnal lover for tunes, and so adapted popular and operatic tunes to religious words. This shocked the church at large, but was extremely popular with the people. John boasted of the superiority of Methodist singing in the following statement:

When it is seasonable to sing praise to God, they (the Methodists) do it with the spirit and the understanding also. . .all standing before God and praising Him lustily and with good courage.

There are over 25 hymns by the Wesleys in the *Trinity Hymnal*, including *O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing*, *Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus*, *Hark! the Herald Angels Sing*, *Christ the Lord Is Risen Today*, *Arise My Soul, Arise*. May our praise to God also be known for being *in spirit and with understanding*, and *praising lustily and with good courage!* ■



John Wesley



Charles Wesley

Children's Ministry

SAVE - THE - DATE

King Singer's Musical
May 7 @ 11am

MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL

Student Fellowship with Frostproof ARP.
February 12th at 4pm.

First Presbyterian, Frostproof (101 N. Palm Ave).
Students (parents welcome) will gather for gaga ball,
fellowship, supper, and a Bible study.
Contact Daniel Hunt if you need a ride.

MILESTONE CELEBRATIONS

Church Family

BIRTHDAYS

February 2, Lee Turnquist
February 4, Laureen Beck
February 4, Katy-Grace Hixenbaugh
February 5, Laura Pace
February 6, Norma Schaffer
February 9, Ann Cone
February 10, Carl McCollum
February 10, Randy Portwood
February 11, Lori Loveless
February 12, Adele Black
February 12, Janet Thullbery
February 15, Maddie Lippert
February 17, Ansel Buhrman
February 18, Betty Baust
February 20, Angie Bachman
February 20, Sophia Lewis
February 20, Jim Smith
February 21, Susan Alexander
February 24, Sharon Bevis
February 26, Cisco Martinez
February 27, Brenda Wise
February 28, Abigail Wunker

ANNIVERSARIES

Joe & Caroline Swanson, February 15
Larry & Pearl Oliszewski, February 20
Bryah & Joel Knepper, February 29





First Presbyterian Church of Lake Wales
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 Phone: 863.676.0711
 fpclw.org

CHURCH OFFICERS

ELDERS

2023

Scott Crews
 Doug Pace
 David Falk

2025

Tony Woods
 Jim Underwood

2024

Daniel Hunt
 David Nelson
 Andy Hunt

2026

Stewart Hurst
 Ed Lamb
 Jimmy Seay

DEACONS

2023

Susan Coyne
 Bob Hulen
 Michael Matteson
 Karla Campbell

2025

June Ullman
 Cindy Turner

2024

Leah Gibson
 Dan Miller

Moderator: Rev. Mackay Smith
Clerk of Session: David Nelson
Chairman of Deacons: Karla Campbell
Deacon Secretary: Lea Gibson
Chm. of the Congregation: Jim Weaver
Treasurer: Michelle Hurst
Asst. Treasurer: Daniel Hunt