



APRIL 2023

ISSUE 23-4

# 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

## A BRIEF REFLECTION ON NASHVILLE

### From Pastor Mackay

*For the Lord will not cast off forever, but, though he cause grief, he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love; for he does not afflict from his heart or grieve the children of men.*  
- Lamentations 3:31-33

The news of the shooting at the Covenant school in Nashville, TN this week hit very close to home. Here are our PCA brothers and sisters! Here is a pastor's family, who give all of themselves for the benefit of this congregation, bereft of their precious daughter. Truly, words cannot express such heartbreak and sorrow.

Many have and will reflect on the reality of such horrendous suffering in this sin-sick world more fully than I, but I am reminded once again of the text above; one that I go to many times.

The puritans called suffering God's "alien work" based on this text, and that is a phrase we would do well to remember. Yes, in some mysterious, deep way, it was the Lord's will to bring such utter destruction to these families. He did not in any way *cause* the sin that blossomed into such noxious fruit in those terrifying 15 minutes, but it was under the control of his sovereign hand.

Yet, we must not let our gaze stray from this fundamental truth. Suffering befalls Christians, indeed, deep suffering. But, such suffering in a true way does not reflect the heart of our loving Father. His "leaning" is not toward destruction, but love and life. He causes grief, but "he will have compassion according to the

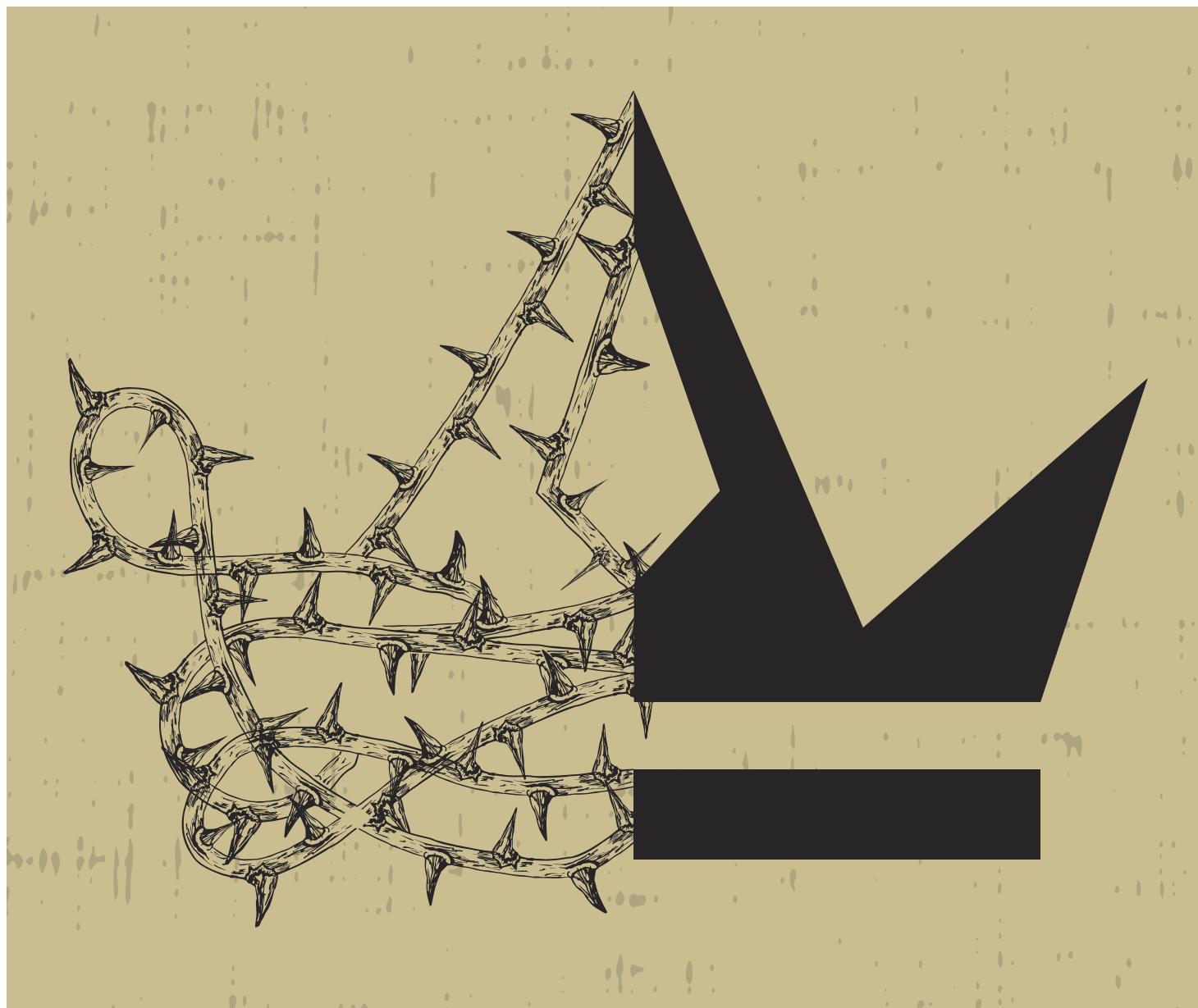
abundance of his steadfast love."

God did not enjoy or relish the tragedies of the last Monday in March, nor does he enjoy any suffering in the lives of his people. Hard things need to happen for reasons often known only to God, but God is truly and deeply grieved at the pain. Did Jesus not weep at the death of Lazarus? So the Father who truly brings pain truly mourns it.

And, in Jesus, God has secured a brighter day. The quote released by the pastor of Covenant church, who lost his only daughter, points us to it: "Through tears we trust that she is in the arms of Jesus who will raise her to life once again." In what must be days of utter agony, what a steadfast and sure hope.

Today, the wrong seems strong. But for all eternity, Christians will rejoice in the eternal bliss of gazing at the face of Jesus. And this pain, yes even this pain... and your pain, and my pain... will be but more of the infinite reasons we have to worship our Savior, for he is victorious.

Mackay ■



# SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

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

- The session continues its goal of beginning intentional shepherding ministry in fall of 2023 through shepherding groups.
- A time of prayer was offered to God for many of our congregation.
- Stewardship and Finance reported. As of the end of February, revenues year-to-date stood at \$173,405 (budgeted \$161,598), and expenses \$155,941 (budgeted \$161,598)
- The Associate Minister for Family Discipleship search committee continued a discussion about exploring the hire of a Director of Student Ministry in addition to an Associate Minister. The session agreed that two positions could potentially strengthen our discipleship ministry in a helpful way. The committee reported that candidates for each position are in the interview process, and will be visiting Lake Wales soon.
- Elder chairmen reported on the work of their various committees.
- Kim Duncan has been approved as Nursery Coordinator.
- Florida Presbytery will meet on April 25 in Tampa .■

## PRAYER FOCUS

APRIL 2 - AP Search Committee/Families

APRIL 9 - Easter

APRIL 16 - World Witness

APRIL 23 - Florida Presbytery

APRIL 30 - Widows/Widowers



# Discipleship

## ROCK ON WEDNESDAYS

Wednesdays in Fellowship Hall

### February Events

**April 5** - Potluck and Missionary Report from Bridge: Europe

**April 12** - Breakout Night.

**April 19** - Prayer Meeting and Hymn Sing

**April 26** - 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



*Easter Sunday*  
**April 9**

## Flowering of the Cross

Join First Presbyterian Church members and friends in this meaningful Easter tradition. Please bring fresh flowers from your garden or purchased to decorate the cross outside the Family Life Center before the Easter worship service.

*Great for Easter Family Photos*

Flowering of the Cross is a centuries old tradition symbolizing the new life that comes from Jesus's death on the cross to His resurrection.

# Missions & Outreach



YOU ARE INVITED

## WORLD WITNESS FELLOWSHIP DINNER

Friday Evening, April 14, 2023

In the fellowship hall of

First Presbyterian Church

16 N 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Lake Wales, FL 33853

**Reception** begins at 6:30 p.m.

**Dinner** begins at 7:00 p.m.

**RSVP** BY  
FRIDAY, APRIL 7  
online at [worldwitness.org](http://worldwitness.org)  
or call 864-233-5226

Reservations required.



**SCAN** to register now

# Music Ministry

## O COME AND MOURN WITH ME AWHILE

From Vince Treadway

It is entirely appropriate for God's people to mourn. This is a topic that is often ignored and shunned as inappropriate because we don't want anyone to feel bad. Often when planning music for a funeral I am told, "I don't want anything sad! I just want happy music." While we as believers have joy in knowing that our loved ones that knew the Lord as Savior are with Him, and know that they are rejoicing in heaven, it is still appropriate for us to express sorrow for our loss. We approach one of the greatest seasons for mourning, and that is the time that we remember Christ's ultimate sacrifice—His own life—to pay the penalty for sins He did not commit in order for us to have eternal life! Hallelujah! What a Savior!

Maundy Thursday is the day in the church calendar that we recall Christ's passion, and our Scripture readings, hymns, anthems, and sermon all reflect the mourning that we all appropriately feel and express. Remembering the sacrifice of Christ helps us to better appreciate the glorious gift of salvation! Did you know that many of the Psalms are Psalms of lament? If it were not appropriate for us to mourn or lament, there would not be so many of the Psalms that do just that.

Psalm 22 is particularly poignant during Lent because it expresses some of the very events of Christ's death even though it was written hundreds of years before Christ died!

*I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death. vv. 14-15. I can count all my bones—they stare and gloat over me; they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots. vv. 17-18.*

One of the hymns in The Trinity Hymnal, #262 is "O Come and Mourn with Me Awhile," and the lyrics read,

*O come and mourn with me awhile; O come ye to the Savior's side; O come, together let us mourn: Jesus our Lord is crucified!*

We have the opportunity to remember the passion of our Lord this coming Maundy Thursday, April 6, at 7:00 p.m. The entire service will be devoted to the awful and wonderful sacrifice of our Lord. I hope that you will come and join us and "mourn with [us] awhile." ■



**MAUNDY THURSDAY**

**April 6, at 7:00pm**

# Family Ministry

## Children's Ministry

**SAVE - THE - DATE**  
**King Singer's Musical**  
**May 7 @ 11am**

## MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL

**Student Fellowship**  
**Youth Lake Day**  
**Sunday, May 21st.**  
**Stay tuned for more details.**

## MILESTONE CELEBRATIONS

### BIRTHDAYS

April 1, Gail Frankenburger  
April 1, Amber Merwitz  
April 1, Jimmy Seay  
April 2, Nolan Hunt  
April 2, Diana Smith  
April 4, Bear Brewer  
April 4, Bill Johnson  
April 4, Mackay Smith  
April 6, Debra Mullins  
April 7, Carolyn Barnhardt  
April 9, Paul Benner,  
April 9, Matthew Crews  
April 9, Sarah Owen  
April 11, Stacey Butcher  
April 14, Edward Enz  
April 14, Jayne Linton  
April 15, Kay Clegg  
April 16, Hunter Matteson  
April 16, Colby Pike  
April 16, Heather Wilson  
April 17, Evelyn King  
April 18, John Steensma  
April 19, Adrijana Hunt  
April 19, Reid Pike  
April 19, Lori Woods  
April 21, Lynne Hulen  
April 23, P.J. Lewis  
April 24, Joey Swanson  
April 25, Emery McCartney  
April 26, Kenzie Cockrell  
April 26, Blake Wise  
April 27, Willa Campbell  
April 28, Natalie Kahler  
April 30, Shelby Loveless-Cushing

### ANNIVERSARIES

Sue & Ron Campbell, April 11  
Cindy & David Nelson, April 20  
Kathe & Tom Galloway, April 24  
June & David Ullman, April 28

# Church Family



To Rev. Mackay Smith and the Congregation of  
First Presbyterian Church of Lake Wales,  
Thank you all so much for the remembrances  
expressed on my 95th birthday. Only by the grace  
of God am I still healthy enough to be able to attend  
church and Small Group every Sunday.

This is such a loving congregation and  
especially caring for its older members.

May each of you be blessed by God to the  
fullest.

Thankfully,  
Marilyn Fisher



To our church family,

Stacey and I very greatly appreciate the  
generous Christmas gift that was given to us by our  
church family.

We both have enjoyed getting to know many  
of the members and we count it as a blessing to  
work in the nursery with your sweet little ones.

Love,  
Kim & Stacey







First Presbyterian Church of Lake Wales  
 16 N 3rd St, Lake Wales, FL 33853  
 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