

NOVEMBER 2023

ISSUE 23-11

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

CREEDS AND CONFESSIONS: WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE?

From Pastor Mackay

The end of every October brings the celebration of Reformation Day, the day that sparked the long smoldering wick of the Protestant Reformation. One of the great Reformation principles is *ad fontes*, a Latin phrase that means, “to the source!” We want all that we do to flow from *the source*: God’s Word, the Bible.

But, when a sticky subject comes along, how can we be sure we grasp the Bible’s entire teaching? Certainly, we should read the Bible above all else. Yet, my encouragement to you this month is to familiarize yourself with one of our great treasure troves of help: our heritage of creeds and confessions. Each Sunday, our worship includes a “Confession of Faith,” in which we together speak words that summarize what we believe. Currently, we are making our way through the Heidelberg Catechism. When

is the last time you read through one of these precious documents?

When it comes to creeds, some doubt their usefulness on the grounds that a manmade document ought never to have more importance in our lives than the Bible. In fact, you may have heard something like, “No creed but the Bible,” or, “God’s Word says it, and that settles it!” Generally honorable sentiments each, but when used to justify ignoring creeds and confessions, they fall prey to their own critique. What is, “No creed but the Bible,” but a creed? Certainly that statement is found nowhere in Scripture, but it is purported to be what any creed should be: a helpful summary of God’s Word that aids our faith and practice. Really, we all have a creed whether we admit it or not. Dr. Carl Trueman, a pastor and professor, puts it this way, “There are really only two types of Christians: those who are honest about the fact they have a creed and those who deny they have a creed yet possess one nonetheless.”

So, in a sense, we always use creeds. But, that in itself doesn’t make it right. So, let’s turn to the Bible! In Acts 13:37, we find the confession of the Ethiopian Eunuch. He summarizes the Bible’s teaching on Jesus to say “Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” In 1 Corinthians 15:3, Paul crystallizes the Bible’s teaching on Jesus’ in three simple statements: “Christ died for our sins...He was buried...He rose again.” Summaries, that is, creeds and confessions, are useful tools even for the authors of Scripture.

Hopefully, those reasons will encourage and excite you to explore our creeds. But, which ones? We believe that all creeds have the possibility of error. There is nothing infallible or inerrant about creeds. They are useful only as they accurately reflect and summarize the Bible. But, with the vast number out there, where do we start?

Start with the documents that guide our denomination (and many others): the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the corresponding Larger and Shorter Catechisms. From there, you can dive into other Reformed creeds: Heidelberg, Belgic, etc. You’ll find much richness to explore, and I encourage you to do so. *Ad fontes!*■



SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

The elders of First Presbyterian Church meet monthly on the fourth Tuesday. The following are highlights from the meeting on October 24.

- A time of prayer was offered to God for many of our congregation.
- The deacon representative reported that significant investment has been made in deferred facility maintenance this year. This work is necessary to keep our facility functioning as an excellent tool for ministry.

PRAYER FOCUS

- NOVEMBER 5** - Veteran's Day
- NOVEMBER 12** - Rev. Myers McKinney
- NOVEMBER 19**- Thanksgiving/Thanks-living
- NOVEMBER 26** - Relationships

•The Nominations Committee reported that our potential officer nominees have completed leadership training. They will be interviewed by the session and certified for a congregational vote at the next session meeting.

- The Property Insurance Ad Hoc committee has made significant progress searching for appropriate coverage for the church facility.
- The Music Committee was charged to continue working on the upcoming change in the Director of Music position. They are drafting job descriptions for publication.
- Upon a recommendation from the diaconate, the session approved the 2024 Church Budget to be placed before the congregation for a vote on December 10. A budget summary and pledge cards are being distributed to the congregation. The full budget is available as a printed handout in the Narthex or in the church office. Officers will pledge toward the budget on Nov 5, and the congregation is invited to pledge at the Nov 12 and 19 services.
- Ministry committees reported on their work.
- A service of installation and ordination for Myers McKinney will be held Sunday, November 12th at 5:00pm in the sanctuary. Dr. Steve Wise from Westminster Presbyterian Church in Spartanburg, SC will preach.
- A report of the Fall meeting of Florida Presbytery was given. ■

Financial Update - as of September 30		
	Operating Income	Operating Expense
Budget year-to-date	727,191	727,191
Actual	572,627	823,198
Difference	(154,564)	*96,007
Operating Balance = 333,002		
*see deacon representative summary in the Session		

NOVEMBER 12
SUNDAY, 5:00PM

A WORSHIP SERVICE OF

ORDINATION & INSTALLATION

FOR MR. MYERS MCKINNEY
ASSOCIATE MINISTER FOR FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

www.fpclw.org
16 N 3rd St, Lake Wales, FL
(863) 676 - 0711

Discipleship

THE LIFE AND SLAVERY OF SELF-DEFINITION

From Pastor Myers

Pastor Mackay is fond of quoting Question and Answer 1 from the Westminster Shorter Catechism in his preaching and teaching, and for good reason.

Q1: "What is the chief end of man?"

A1: "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever."

The genius of this catechism question is twofold. On the one hand, it leads us to assume a Godward orientation in all things. Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy God (emphasis on God).

Life, in other words, is not about us. It's about God. We should seek to glorify God in everything we say and do (1 Cor 10:31).

The other benefit of the catechism question is the basic posture of gift and which it (and the Bible) leads us to assume as human beings. We are made to enjoy God (emphasis on enjoy). God is not merely our sovereign Lord but he is also the giver of the greatest pleasures (Ps 16:11).

Consider, for instance the fact that

1. Jesus chose for his first manifestation of power to be the supernatural provision of wine for the gladness of a wedding (John 2:9-10).
2. That God's word is called sweeter than honey (Ps 119:103).
3. That Jesus asked the Father that His joy as the Son of God to be fulfilled (at a creaturely level) in his disciples (John 17:13).

All of these delights are gifts which God delights to give to his children. Our role in all this is not to work so as to earn these things. It is merely to receive. It is to receive God and his love and to love God and neighbor in thanksgiving for such love as God continually gives it with each new

morning (Lam 3:22-23). Life is therefore to be Godward and it is to have a distinctive posture of gift as well.

But this is in diametrical opposition to our modern age of self-assertion and self-promotion. Instead of following Eric Liddell's lead in pursuing excellence in life out of a desire to feel God's pleasure, the rage these days is about being "marketable" and "having a brand."

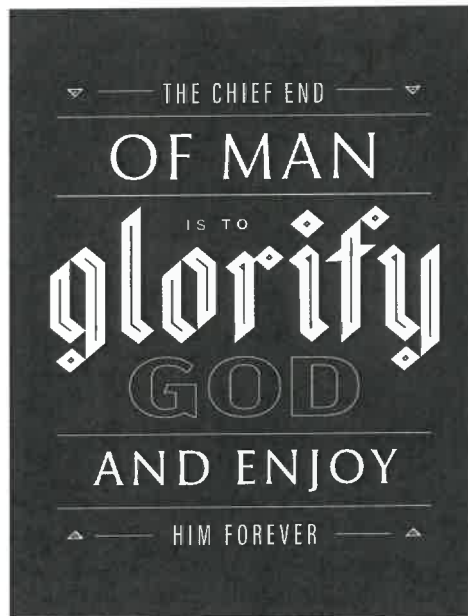
Underneath this culture of marketability is the basic human rejection of the posture of gift just described. Instead of receiving an identity from God, our culture now urges us to create our identity ex nihilo (out of nothing) and to sell that identity as best we can.

The age of marketability is therefore also a culture of self-definition, an age articulated perfectly by Justice Anthony Kennedy as the culture in which "the heart of liberty is to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life."

If we accept this as true, then life will eventually become a never-ending performance and a tortuous rat-race. No one will ever be allowed to just be himself; he must be a god that can "define his own concept of existence" as though that were a feasible or worthwhile project.

Only someone with a Napoleon Bonaparte sized ego will even attempt such a feat and no one will actually succeed.

A better approach is simply to say with Paul "by the grace of God I am what I am." (1 Cor 15:10). On the one hand, nothing is simpler than this. But on the other hand, what does this mean in the concrete? It means counteracting our culture's self-catechesis with Gospel catechesis. It means pointing out the ways in which the culture of self-definition has crept into the church and replacing that self-assertion posture with the gift posture of the Gospel. In other words, it means real, in-the-weeds, specific, discipleship. ■



ROCK ON WEDNESDAYS

Wednesdays in Fellowship Hall

FIRST WEDNESDAYS - Potluck and Fellowship

SECOND WEDNESDAYS - Breakout Night

- "Unbreakably His: Part A" Led by Pastor Myers
Pastor Myers will teach on bible narratives that illustrate tenants of Reformed Theology
- Women's Study led by Rachel Smith
- Children's program, "The Biggest Story"
- Middle and High School, "The Bible Project"

THIRD WEDNESDAYS - Prayer Meeting and Hymn Sing

FOURTH WEDNESDAYS - Lesson Series

- "Unbreakably His: Part B" by Pastor Mackay
Pastor Mackay will teach on the confessional/theological perspective of Reformed Theology
- Children's program, "The Biggest Story"
- Middle and High School, "The Bible Project"

FIFTH WEDNESDAYS - Break

Want to help?

Contact Scott Crews

(Discipleship Committee chair)

if you'd like to help with...

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



LAKE WALES COMMUNITY



Thanks Giving

S E R V I C E

TUESDAY | NOV 21 | 7:00PM

NEW DIVINE CHURCH OF GOD BY FAITH
640 BURNS AVENUE



Music Ministry

HYMN STORY: "ABIDE WITH ME: FAST FALLS THE EVENTIDE"

From Vince Treadway

*Abide with me, fast falls the eventide;
the darkness deepens, Lord, with me abide:
when other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.*

Henry Francis Lyte (1793-1847) was born in Scotland and lived in poverty as a child. Lyte's headmaster at school recognized his talents, and paid his school fees and welcomed him into his home as his own son for holidays.

Lyte studied at Trinity College in Dublin, and in 1815 took holy orders with the Anglican church. He had not really had a conversion until he attended a dying priest whose testimony of his trust in Christ as his Savior led Lyte to trust Christ himself.

Lyte suffered ill health most of his life, and the last parish that he served was in Brixham, England. Lyte's time at Brixham was very difficult due to his failing health and the difficulties within his parish, which consisted mostly of sailors and their families. He decided he would retire to Italy in hopes that a warmer climate might help his health, but on his way he stopped in Nice, France, and it was there that he knew that he would not make it to Italy.

There he penned the hymn, "Abide with Me, Fast Falls the Eventide;" a hymn that proved to

be the evening of Lyte's own "day." Lyte was buried in a small English cemetery in Nice. William Henry Monk (1823-1889) composed the hymn tune, "Eventide," which is usually used with "Abide with Me, Fast Falls the Eventide." Monk was an English organist and church musician, who also wrote the tune for the hymn, "All Things Bright and Beautiful." You can find the full text of "Abide with Me, Fast Falls the Eventide" in the "Trinity Hymnal" at number 402. ■



Family Ministry

WORDS FROM WALKER

From Walker Kirkpatrick

Hi Everyone!

The youth programs are in full swing and not slowing down. We still have weekly Youth Groups, Sunday School, Bible Studies, and other events. Please let me know if you have any questions about them! I'll be happy to answer.

For November, we will be having our Monthly "Film Friday" event where we will be watching

The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian on Nov 3rd!

Youth and families alike are able to use the church gym for Pickle Ball now, as the gym is lined and we have all the needed equipment.

Lastly, we will not have Youth Group on Nov. 12th, families and youth please come and support Myers McKinney at his Ordination and Installation Service at 5pm in the sanctuary.■

Upcoming Youth Events:

November 3rd

Film Friday: The Chronicles of Narnia,
Prince Caspian

November 5th

Youth Group

November 12th

NO YOUTH GROUP

Pastor Myers, Ordination Service

November 19th-21st

LWCC Thanksliving Camp

November 26th

NO YOUTH GROUP

MILESTONE CELEBRATIONS

Church Family

BIRTHDAYS

November 1, Karen Allen
 November 1, Jennifer Fugate
 November 2, Jake Cockrell
 November 4, Deeley Hunt
 November 6, Susan Ebel
 November 8, Dayle Dierks
 November 8, Ellie Lippert
 November 8, Niven Owings
 November 9, Madison Campbell
 November 9, Pam Estes
 November 11, John Rollins
 November 12, Luciana Abele
 November 13, Beau Cushing
 November 13, Shelley Paros
 November 14, Leah Gibson
 November 18, Susan Coyne
 November 18, Jane Terry
 November 19, Jim Weaver
 November 22, Loren Furland
 November 22, Molly Ann Lewis
 November 23, Jo Garrett
 November 23, Susan Lamar
 November 23, Shelley Underwood
 November 29, Esther Rose Lippert
 November 29, Jim Underwood
 November 30, Cortland Kohl
 November 30, Nancy Turnquist
 November 30, Rebecca Youmans

ANNIVERSARIES

Angie & Scott Crews, November 10
 Kaitlyn & Aaron Nelson, November 17
 Penny & Rick Wright, November 17
 Dawn & Rob McCollum, November 18
 Adrian & Daniel Hunt, November 19
 Janet & Rob Thullbery, November 20
 Dottie & Dick Bailey, November 23



We are sincerely grateful to our church family for all the calls, cards and especially the prayers during Gail's recent hospitalization and recovery from a fall. Thank You for your continued prayers. May God bless you and your family.

Pat & Gail Frankenburger

First Presbyterian Church,



Thank You

Thank you so much for allowing us to use your facilities for our FCCLA district meeting. We really appreciate your generosity. Sherry, Leann and Julie

Emma Alvarez
Nadine Chapman
Kimberly B...
Jessica B...
Jordan Brantley



Jessica Brantley
Co-Chair

William Nelson
Sherry
Leann
Julie



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

CHURCH OFFICERS

ELDERS

2023	2025
Scott Crews	Tony Woods
Doug Pace	Jim Underwood
David Falk	
2024	2026
Daniel Hunt	Stewart Hurst
David Nelson	Ed Lamb
Andy Hunt	Jimmy Seay

DEACONS

2023	2025
Susan Coyne	June Ullman
Bob Hulen	Cindy Turner
Michael Matteson	
Karla Campbell	
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