





FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



MARCH 2025 CALENDAR

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 Sunday School 9:30 am Worship 11 am	3 Craft & Fellowship 1:00 pm	4 Beach Bible Study 9:30 am FPC Bible Study 10:00 am Fat Tuesday Dinner 6pm	5 Prayer meeting 9:30 am Soup for the Soul 11:30 am Fellowship Supper 5:45 pm/ Potluck Ash Wednesday service 7pm	6	7	8
9 Daylight savings time begins Sunday School 9:30 am Worship 11 am	10	11 Beach Bible Study 9:30 am FPC Bible Study 10 am Fellowship meeting 5pm Worship meeting 6pm	12 Prayer meeting 9:30 am Soup for the Soul 11:30 am Cong. Care meeting 4pm No Fellowship Sup- per	13 Christian Education meeting 10:30 am	14 Finance meeting 11am	15
16 Sunday School 9:30 am Worship 11 am	17 Craft & Fellowship 1:00pm 	18 Beach Bible Study 9:30 am FPC Bible Study 10:00 am Session meeting 5:30pm	19 Prayer meeting 9:30 am Soup for the Soul 11:30 am Fellowship Supper 5:45pm Choir 7pm	20 	21	22
23 Sunday School 9:30 am Worship 11 am	24	25 Beach Bible Study 9:30 am FPC Bible Study 10:00 am	26 Prayer meeting 9:30 am Soup for the Soul 11:30 am Fellowship Supper 5:45 pm Choir 7pm	27	28	29
30 Sunday School 9:30 am Worship 11 am	31 Craft & Fellowship 1:00 pm					

A Letter From Our Pastor

Friends,

Lent shall soon be upon us. And with Lent comes questions around how one observes Lent, and about what Lenten disciplines or practices one should employ. Some fast meals or treats, others add another daily devotion; some give more money or time, others add a daily walk or stroll. Here are two faithful rules for Lent, 1) “All are invited, none are compelled,” and 2) “Whatever you do or don’t do, avoid announcing or sensationalizing it.”

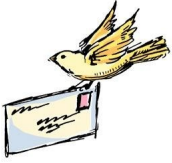
Treat Lenten rule #1 like making the sign of the cross. If a Lenten practice is for you, then do it. If not, then don’t. Speaking of which, John Calvin quit making the sign of the cross when he broke with the Roman Catholic Church, calling the practice “too superstitious.” Of course, by the time the Westminster Confession came along, it had been reclaimed as “a custom of the ancient church.” And by the 20th century, the PCUSA indicated that the custom symbolizes the Cross of Calvary by tracing the shape of the cross in the air or on one’s own body, recalling that the name of the Triune God had been placed upon us when we were adopted into the Lord’s family through Holy Baptism (in which, as St. Paul says in Romans 6.3-6, we are united to Christ’s cross and resurrection). In the ancient customs of the Christian faith, the sign of the cross affirms the grace and mercy of God on account of “Christ and him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2). This is why it is mentioned on page 22 of the *Glory to God* hymnal under *Reaffirmation of the Baptismal Covenant*. Whether we sign the cross or not is unimportant, what is important is for us is to take Lent as our time to be honest with ourselves and God about how sincerely we live into *the Baptismal Covenant*.

Treat Lenten rule #2 like waiting to announce and celebrate good news that cannot be shared just yet. Things must ripen before we can enjoy them to the fullest. The word Lent comes from the Old English word *lencten*, which means springtime. In the northern hemisphere, Lent falls during the spring. Just as seeds germinate, taking time to come to full flower, the same is true of any Lenten discipline. If you fast, which is a common Presbyterian practice, then don’t make a show of it. If you add exercise, which is a recent Christian practice, then as you exercise don’t blare a trumpet to announce it. Lenten disciplines are not about getting closer to God; they are about self-denial that makes a lasting change so that we might live more effectively into *the Baptismal Covenant*. When we live that covenant, the world sees Jesus, and isn’t that our goal? Aren’t we called, like St. John, to decrease as Christ increases? (John 3:30-35)

We pray: Loving God, you forever mark us with the Cross of Christ through baptism; by your Holy Spirit forever empower us to live into our baptismal covenant, to remember our baptism and be thankful. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Peace---JDB+

Notes and Reminders



Dear Pastor Bryant, Harriet, and First Presbyterian friends,
I suffered a serious brain injury that started around my birthday in mid-December and continued into mid-January. Treatment and time was spent in ER's, hospitals and rehab facilities in Perry, Gainesville and Tallahassee. I am now finishing a therapy program.

I was blessed to be able to attend the special Christmas program, but, more than that, you covered Peggy and me with prayers, cards, and visits. That was a wonderful blessing at a time of need. Also, being able to view the live-streamed Sunday Worship services was up-lifting. Thank you all for your God-inspired expressions of love for us.

In Christ,
Chuck Eckel

FAT TUESDAY

March 4, 2025

The Fellowship Committee invites you to a Fat Tuesday Dinner in the fellowship hall on Tuesday, March 4th, at 6:00 pm, as we prepare for the season of Lent.

The dinner will include fresh pancakes, breakfast casseroles, and king cake. The evening will conclude with a brief Dedication and Burning of the Ashes. Come and enjoy an evening of food and fellowship!



ASH WEDNESDAY

Ash Wednesday worship service is March 5th at 7pm



Lenten-Supper-&-Devotion¶

In-keeping-with-the-penitential-season-of-Lent, Wednesday-suppers-will-be-a-simple-meal-of-soup-and-bread. Pastor-John-David-Bryant-will-lead-a-short-Lenten-Devotional-during-

these-evenings. Wednesday-night-suppers-during-Lent-will-be-March-5th, March-19th, March-26th, April-2nd, and-April-9th. Come-at-5:45-pm-for-a-time-of-fellowship-and-the-meal-will-be-served-at-6:00-pm.¶

When playing music, I often wrestle with two ideas. One is the habit of excellence. The other is the idea that I use every gift I have to the glory of God. While it would be nice if my natural tendency was to merge these two concepts into something beautiful and holy, I often find myself wrestling instead.

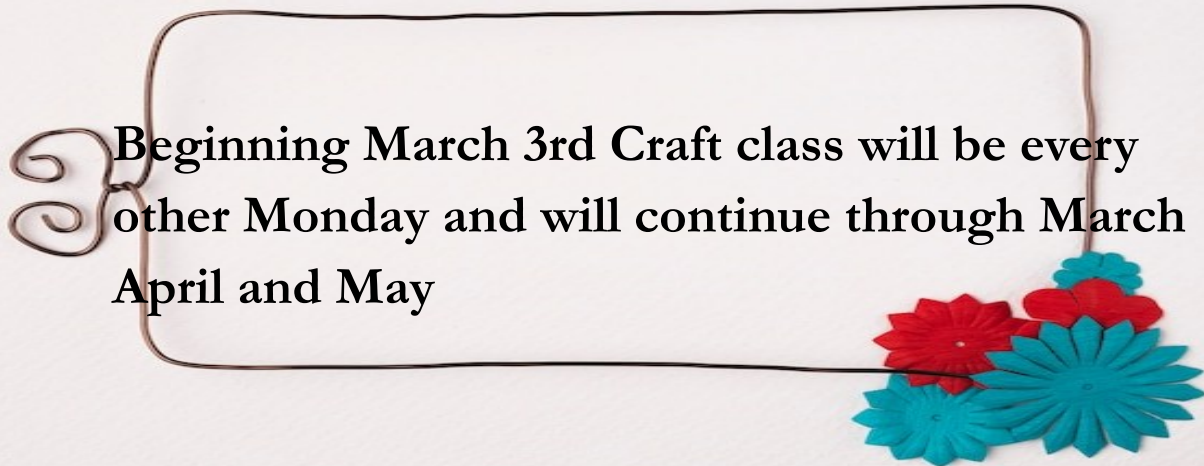
The habit of excellence, especially as it relates to music, is that everything I do must be done to the best of my abilities. And the quickly accompanying thought, albeit prideful, that immediately follows is that the best of *my abilities should be perfect. I like to think that this is a human tendency. That whatever task we put our hand to, we are naturally drawn to excellence. We appreciate beauty, art, craftsmanship. And we aren't proud to just put something, anything, out into the world. We want to create excellence. But often I find, in myself, I am not satisfied with my best. If I, if we, are not satisfied with our best, how can we be satisfied in anything? How can we be satisfied with another's best if we are not satisfied with our own?*

The second idea that I wrestle with is the idea that everything should be done for the glory of God. Yes, AMEN, I agree! Where I find myself wrestling especially is related to music. There is nothing quite so painful as bad music. There is no end until the final note of the final measure. I have sat through many services of many denominations where I had to keep my eyes on the floor and mentally pray, "Lord give me strength". I had a friend who I used to discuss my rather strong feelings about poorly done music in church. She would say "But Leah, they're doing their best!" Which would always beg the question from me, is "best" good enough, when "best" is "bad"?

My new answer, at least for myself, is.....maybe. When my best involves developing the talents that God has given me, pursuing places of growth where I know I am weak, seeking advice and feedback from others, then maybe I can accept that my best is just that. However, when my "best" is showing up knowing I don't have to work hard because I can get by without doing anything extra, maybe that isn't really my best. Maybe it is a "best" facade.

With all that said, where do I land with using my gifts, with excellence, for the glory of God? God has given me, and you, unique and unrepeatable gifts. Only the Lord knows the places of growth we each need. And only the Lord knows how we are each pursuing Him as we use our gifts. May we all continue pursuing the Lord as we develop our own gifts. May we all have hearts of compassion as those around us develop their own gifts. That like Paul, we may each say: I worked harder than any of them, *yet not I, but the grace of God that is with me!*

Leah Metzger, Music Director



Beginning March 3rd Craft class will be every other Monday and will continue through March April and May



Sunday School Classes will begin March 2nd - May 25th

Dianna Sandonato will lead a "Women's Bible Class" that explores Women of the Bible. Meeting in the craft room.

Pr. Bryant will lead a "Men's Bible Class" that explores the Theme, Bible Readings and Prayer of the Day for each Sunday, bring your worship bulletin. Meeting in the parlor.

March Birthdays

Shona Whiddon—March 3

Ron Poppell—March 6

Joanie MacNeill—March 13

Ashley Bidy—March 14

Janece Campbell—March 16

Carrie Albritton—March 18

Sheena Jenkins—March 19

Bob Lutz—March 19

John Bryant—March 31

March Anniversaries

Alex & Kristie Lutz—March 6

Steve & Jennifer Caruso —March 25

