

FAITH CHRISTIAN ACADEMY PRESENTS

# THE LION'S CIRCLE

A PLACE FOR STORIES, UPDATES, AND SUPPORT



ISSUE 08

faith.  
CHRISTIAN  
ACADEMY

MARCH 2026

## STAFF SPOTLIGHT

With 30 years of experience teaching grades 6-12, Lisa Fields loves working with students and partnering with families. She spent 14 years as a National Honor Society adviser and has been honored as FCA Teacher of the Year and a Step Up for Students Teacher of Excellence. A proud UCF graduate and loyal fan of the UCF Knights and the Dallas Cowboys, she's most at home encouraging young people and walking alongside families as they grow and thrive.

### **How has your time at FCA shaped the way you support families?**

My time at FCA, both in the classroom and now as the Homeschool Coordinator, has shown me just how unique every family's journey can be. Families come to homeschooling for many different reasons and in many different

seasons: academics, athletics, flexibility, health needs, faith, or a desire for deeper connections within the family. Those experiences have shaped my heart for serving families with support, flexibility, and encouragement. I aim to make homeschooling feel less overwhelming and more like a partnership. Families feel confident, supported, and never alone as they walk this path.

### **What do you enjoy most about walking alongside homeschool families in their journey?**

What I enjoy most is walking alongside families as they follow God's direction in their homeschool journey. I love encouraging parents, supporting students, and watching confidence and character grow along the way. Being able to pray with families, work through challenges together, and celebrate each milestone is a gift and one I don't take lightly.

### **How do you help homeschool students feel connected and fully part of the FCA community?**

Two of my main goals when I stepped into the Homeschool Coordinator role were to help create a strong sense of community within the FCA homeschool community and to deepen the connection homeschool students feel to the school. I'm intentional about giving homeschool students opportunities to build relationships with each other through monthly gatherings and homeschool field trips, but I am equally as intentional about encouraging them to attend chapel, participate in extra-curricular activities, and engage in school-wide events. I want every homeschool student to know they are a full and valued part of the FCA family.

### **What has been most rewarding for you during your time serving at FCA?**

I can't believe this is my sixteenth year at FCA! One of the most rewarding parts of serving here is seeing students grow while they are here and then welcoming them back for a visit later. There's something really special about reconnecting with former students, hearing what they're doing, and knowing I played a small part in their journey. I love them all, and it's a joy to watch how God continues to work in their lives long after they leave my classroom.

### **What is your favorite verse, and why?**

One of my favorite verses is Romans 12:12: "Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer." It's a reminder to keep perspective when things feel hard, to hold onto hope, and to stay rooted in prayer no matter the season.



*Mrs. Lisa Fields*

# FEBRUARY HIGHLIGHTS

February was filled with meaningful opportunities for our students and families to connect and grow. Our elementary students participated in Spiritual Emphasis Week, while our juniors stepped away for a powerful time of bonding and reflection at their retreat. We celebrated community through the Q & U Wedding, Homeschool Gathering, and STUCO Winter Olympics. The month concluded with an incredible musical theater production of *High School Musical* that showcased our students' talent and dedication.



Junior Retreat



Team Building at the Retreat



Winter Olympics



Winter Olympics



Musical Theater

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Our FCA community celebrated Black History Month in unity, reflection, and celebration. Students shared their talents through music, dance, storytelling, and an African Fashion Show. Highlights included performances by Christian Malcom and Kalani Derilus, Jewel Young-Jack, the Step Team, the FCA Choir, and Sunny Collins, who shared a heritage story.



## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: Gia Griffith



### ***RAISING THE STANDARD***

#### **FHSAA CLASS 1A STATE CHAMPION – TRADITIONAL & OLYMPIC TITLES**

Gia Griffith, an FCA 10th grade Athletic Hybrid Student, won the FHSAA Class 1A 139 lb State Championship on Friday, February 13. She captured both the Traditional title (bench press and clean & jerk) with an impressive 375 lb total and the Olympic title (snatch and clean & jerk) with a 345 lb total. Gia was also named the FHSAA Class 1A Top Traditional Lifter across the entire state tournament, an outstanding accomplishment that reflects her discipline, focus, and commitment to excellence.

#### **What did it mean to you to win both the Traditional and Olympic state titles?**

Winning both titles meant a lot to me. It showed me that this is just the beginning. It proved that I'm capable of competing at a high level and that I belong here. Winning state isn't the finish line; it's one step toward bigger goals. I'm ready to compete against champions from other states at nationals and continue leveling up until I reach the highest level possible.

#### **You were named Top Traditional Lifter in the state. What set you apart this season?**

My mentality set me apart. I stayed focused on what I needed to improve and didn't let distractions get in my way. I analyzed even the smallest mistakes and worked to fix them. I was willing to do the uncomfortable things others avoid because that's what builds greatness. I didn't follow the standard; I pushed myself to set it.

#### **Walk us through your training routine leading up to State.**

I trained seven days a week. Five days focused on heavy compound lifts, and two days dedicated to accessory work to strengthen weaker areas and prevent injury. I also incorporated CrossFit training to build muscle endurance for heavy lifts. Outside of training, I studied elite Olympic weightlifting techniques to improve my form and efficiency. Every day had a purpose: building strength, sharpening technique, or developing mental toughness.

### How did FCA play a role in your journey as a student-athlete?

FCA played a huge role in my journey. Being part of a community that values faith and excellence helped me stay grounded and focused. I learned to turn to God whenever I felt nervous about a lift or anxiety started to creep in. The coaches and staff supported me not just as an athlete, but as a person, especially Coach Mo and Coach Gio. Representing FCA motivates me to compete with integrity, discipline, and gratitude. I'm proud to represent my school on such a big stage.

**"I LEARNED TO TURN TO GOD WHENEVER I FELT NERVOUS ABOUT A LIFT OR ANXIETY STARTED TO CREEP IN."**

### What advice would you give to younger FCA Lions who want to compete at a high level?

Expect it to be hard. Competing at a high level requires mental, physical, and emotional sacrifice. There will be moments when you feel tired, frustrated, or even want to quit. Growth happens in those moments. Be patient, trust the process, and remember how far you've already come. The journey is challenging, but the reward makes it worth it.



Gia Griffith powers through a championship lift



State Champion. Record Breaker. Standard Setter.

### What are your goals for next season and beyond high school?

I want to continue raising the standard. My goal is to break the state record in the clean and jerk and set a mark that lasts for years. I plan to compete at nationals and push toward the highest levels of the sport. Long term, my dream is to make it to the Olympics and show what an athlete with a CrossFit background can accomplish in Olympic weightlifting.

## STATE CHAMPIONSHIP RESULTS

- FHSAA Class 1A **139 lb** State Champion
- Traditional State Champion (Bench Press & Clean and Jerk) - **375 lb Total**
- Olympic State Champion (Snatch & Clean and Jerk) - **345 lb Total**
- FHSAA Class 1A Top Traditional Lifter (Entire State Tournament)
- Date: **February 13**

# CAMPUS HAPPENINGS



*Animals within Scripture*

**THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 2026  
11:30 AM - 2:30 PM**

Please park in Lot 2 or 6 | Event is in Lot 8

Join us for a vibrant arts festival featuring chalk art, face painting, live music, food trucks, art exhibits, interactive art stations, pop-up shops, and a special time of worship.

## FCA STRINGS SHINE

Six FCA strings students recently represented FCA with excellence at the FMEA District 8 Solo and Ensemble Festival at Luminary Middle School. **Luis Bonilla, Zoë Cervantes, Elisha Forshee, Rebekah Gould, Luke Perez, and Naomi Tuley** participated and earned outstanding ratings, including multiple Superior with Distinction honors, as well as Excellent ratings for their solo performances. Two duets also received Superior ratings, reflecting the dedication, discipline, and preparation these students demonstrated. We are incredibly proud of these students for using their talents to glorify God and represent FCA so well. Their hard work, commitment to growth, and passion for music continue to strengthen our fine arts program and inspire our school community.



## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Since graduating in 2018, Cassandra has built a career in publishing and now serves as an Associate in Publicity at Simon & Schuster. After studying at the University of Florida, Cassie's journey led from internships to literary agencies and into publishing.

### From FCA to New York Publishing

When I was in my senior year at UF, I applied for a remote internship with a New York-based literary agency, assisting three book agents. I spent most of my days going through the slush pile and offering feedback on manuscripts under consideration. After interning at UF's university press, I landed my first full-time role as a royalties and contracts assistant at a literary agency. A year and a half later, in Spring 2023, I transitioned to Simon & Schuster as a Publicity Assistant, and this past December, I was promoted to Associate.



**MISS. CASSANDRA PEREZ**  
**CLASS OF 2018**

### A Day in Publicity

I balance assisting other publicists as well as working on my own titles. A lot of my day-to-day includes pitching books to journalists and writers, planning book tours and author events, booking and scheduling interviews for my authors, and mailing advanced reader copies (ARCs) to newspapers and magazines for review consideration.

### A Full-Circle Moment

Last fall, I worked on a memoir by New York director Abel Ferrara, whom I am personally a huge fan of. He directed *King of New York* starring Christopher Walken! You guys are probably too young to have seen it, but it's great. Ferrara is a funny guy who is known for being kind of crazy. Getting to email with one of your favorite directors is not something a lot of people can say they've done.

### FCA Impact

Mrs. Fields, of course, inspired my love of literature (I'm still saving that cookie voucher for a rainy day!), but I have to give credit to all my teachers for believing in me so ferociously: Mrs. Elvers, Mr. Spence, Mrs. Feliciano, Mrs. Badillo, Mrs. Gullige (& more). I left FCA feeling that I was a baby genius! Definitely not true, but very good for confidence and morale.

### Her Advice

Don't let anyone deter you from studying English! Or anything that interests you that isn't "lucrative." All the software engineers I know are terrified that AI will take their jobs, not me! AI hasn't learned humanity yet.

### Favorite Verse

"Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you." - 1 Peter 5:7

Living and working in New York brings its share of pressures, but this verse continues to anchor my perspective.

## BIBLE CORNER

### LET DOWN THE NET

We often talk about wanting to experience the dramatic moments of faith, like Peter stepping out of the boat and walking on water. But sometimes, our most meaningful encounters with God happen in much quieter ways. One day while driving, I felt a simple prompting in my heart: Pray about the meaning of your name. It seemed small. I had already searched online years ago. I knew the cultural meaning. I had “fished” through websites more than once. After all, we live in a world where answers are only a few keystrokes away. We even call it surfing or fishing the internet.

At the time, I felt like Peter after fishing all night and catching nothing. In Luke 5, when Jesus told him to let down his nets again, he obeyed, and only then were the nets filled. So I prayed, asking God what He wanted me to know about my last name. Then I went about my week.

Nearly a week later, I felt another gentle nudge to pray. As I prayed quietly while working in my kitchen, the Holy Spirit began to impress something deeper on my heart, not just the definition of my name, but what it meant in light of Scripture. He directed me to look up verses in the Bible. It was as if God were saying, “You’ve searched for information. Now let Me give you revelation.” He knew exactly what I needed in that season. Just like Peter’s nets, my understanding was filled when I obeyed.

God is intentional with us. When we feel uncertain about our identity or purpose, or overwhelmed by life’s situations, and we seek Him rather than rely on our own understanding, we enter into a tangible, experiential relationship with God. It is not intellectual information that changes our lives. The Bible says, “Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.” Our heavenly Father loves to build us up with divine intelligence that is far superior to any artificial intelligence. Sometimes we fish all night online or on social media and come up empty. But when we cast our nets at His Word, He fills them in ways we could not have imagined.

If you are searching for answers, pause before opening another app or browser tab. Ask the Lord. He still speaks.

“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” — Proverbs 3:5-6 (KJV)

By Sophia Lilyquist, International Program Director

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## WORK AT FAITH CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

- [Elementary Dean & Student Life Coordinator](#)
- [Head of School Administrative Assistant](#)
- [Aftercare Staff](#)
- [CDL School Bus Driver](#)

# FINANCIAL INFORMATION

## 25-26 TUITION & FEES INVOICE DUE DATES

### TUITION

Next payment is due **March 5, 2026**

### INCIDENTAL INVOICES

Next payment is due **March 20, 2026**

### IMPORTANT DEADLINES

- **Mar 1:** Homeschool Application open
- **May 31:** Tuition Assistance Applications close
- **June 15:** New Student Applications close

### THE SCHOOL APP



Our IT department is currently working on updating the school app. In the meantime, please access your account through the FACTS Family Portal website using your existing login credentials.

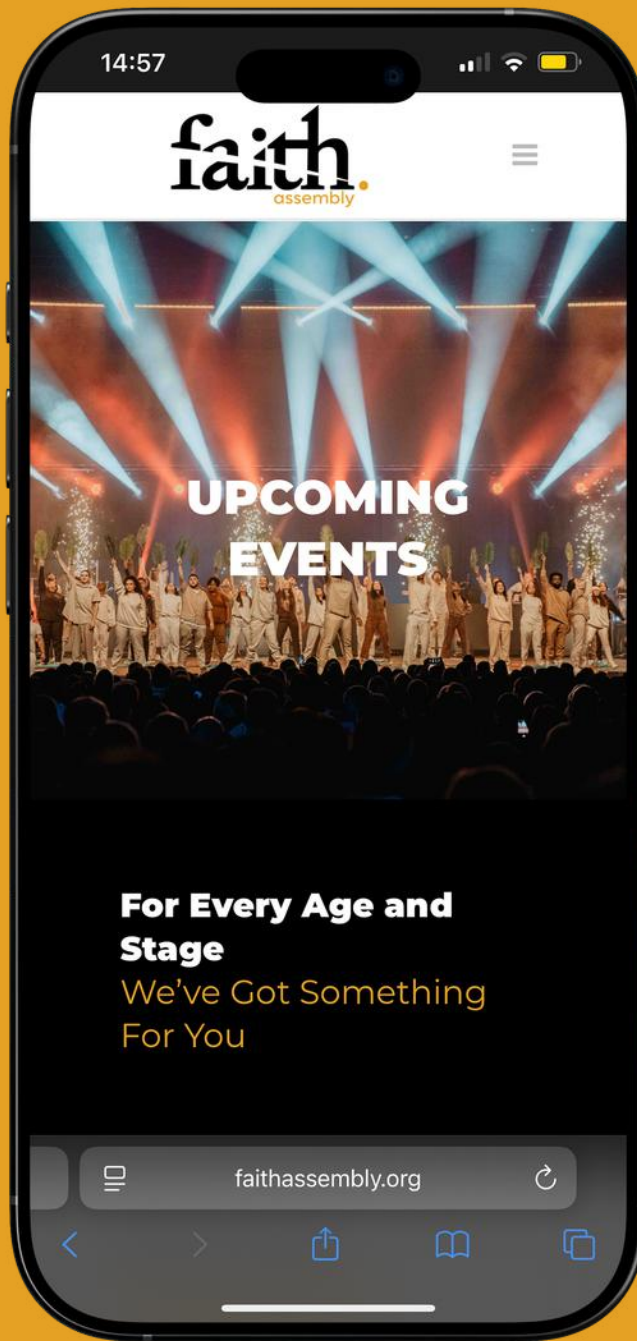
District Code: FT-FL

**FACTS Family Portal**



### DATES TO REMEMBER

- MAR **4** 2026 PSAT 8TH/9TH  
10TH GRADE FIELD TRIP
- MAR **6** 2026 9TH GRADE FIELD TRIP
- MAR **10** 2026 SENIOR BREAKFAST
- MAR **11** 2026 SAT 10TH/11TH
- MAR **12** 2026 CREATIVE ARTS FESTIVAL
- MAR **13** 2026 NO SCHOOL
- MAR **16-20** 2026 SPRING BREAK
- MAR **27** 2026 JR/SR FORMAL PROM  
7 PM - 11 PM



## CHURCH COMMUNITY

### Upcoming Events at Faith

March 6 | Guys Night

March 25 | Night of Prayer

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*Learn more about our church by scanning the QR Code!*