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Rev. T.J. Long, Jr, Pastor
Teresa Moore, Moderator
Tom Sawyer, Vice Moderator

Rana White, Admin. Assistant
Nina Gregory, Choir Director
& Organist

First Christian Church
800 Beech Street
Elizabeth City, NC 27909

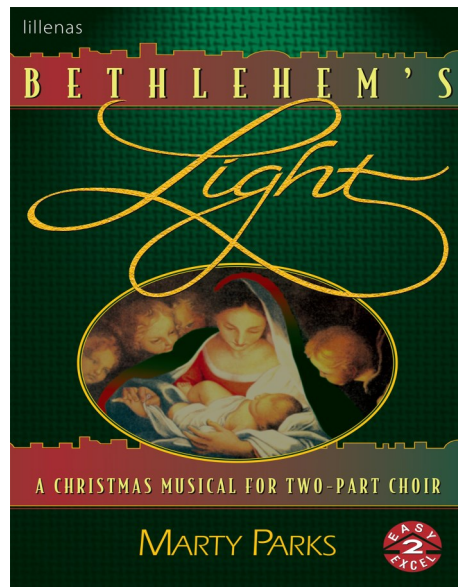
Newsletter
DECEMBER 2023

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CHRISTMAS CANTATA

Join us on Sunday, Dec. 10, at 10 am, for our Christmas Cantata Service. A great way to reflect on birth of Jesus this Christmas Season.



CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES SCHEDULE

- Friday, December 1 6:00 pm Decorating Day!
- Saturday, December 9 6:00 pm Christmas Dinner*
- Sunday, December 10 11:00 am Christmas Cantata
- Friday, December 15 6:30 pm CWF Christmas Party*
- Sunday, December 24 **10:00 am** Coffee & Early Service

*RSVP Required: Call/Text 252-338-6506

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

Sunday, December 24, 2023

- 10:00 am Coffee & Continental Breakfast
- 10:30 am Special Christmas Eve Worship Service with a presentation by our youth and children and concluding with the lighting of the Christ Candle.

Happy Advent Season, FCC Family!

This month we will make the figurative journey to Bethlehem to celebrate the birth of Christ. Hear the thoughts of Rev. David Yarborough. "We know the story well, yet we should remain humbled and amazed at the birth of our Savior. He was literally born in a barn and laid in a manger. Why? The Lord could have made reservations in the finest of hotels, but instead Jesus received a welcome into the world with, 'Sorry but there is no room in the Inn.'

God wasn't caught off guard. He orchestrated it all. For the child would be named Jesus which means 'the Lord saves' – for he would save his people from sin. The Lord arranged this to happen during a census which sent Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem – where the prophecies declared the Savior would be born.

So why such a modest entry into the world? There are several lessons to learn. In his birth, Jesus embraced poverty. Instead of being born with pomp and circumstance, he chose to be an outcast. He was not given a warm bed inside a palace. His head was laid in a feeding trough. Jesus became poor so that we could become rich. The Apostle Paul said, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich" (2 Corinthians 7:8-9). Jesus Christ stepped out of the riches of heaven and humbled himself as a man. He didn't become a king, but became poor so that we might receive the riches of God's mercy and grace.

Jesus also embraced humility. God allowed his son to be born in the humblest of circumstances; a dirty stable. The Lord announced the birth of his Son to a group of smelly shepherds in a field. For the most part, the birth of Jesus was a quiet event. Other than the Magi, few came to celebrate him. Yet, God took those humble beginnings to change the world. God uses the humble things of the world to shame the wise (1 Corinthians 1:27).

Jesus is attracted to humble things – humble places and humble hearts. God rejects the proud, but gives grace to the humble. He looks for humble hearts that will acknowledge their need of forgiveness. Many, however, will reject or ignore him, leaving no room for Jesus in their lives. God longs for us to receive the Son of God to his rightful place as the King of our hearts.

Don't shut the door of you heart and declare there is no room for Him. Remember the hymn: 'Let every heart prepare him room...' Make room. Open your heart and make room for the Lord Jesus." Receive the poor and humble as He does. Indeed, we would be good to become humble ourselves.

I pray that word blesses you as it did me.

Your Pastor & friend,
T.J. Long, Jr.

- Rev. T.J. Long, Jr.



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NOVEMBER 2023 BOARD REPORT

The Official Board of First Christian Church met in the Fellowship Classroom on Nov. 6, 2023, at 7:00 P.M. Teresa Moore, moderator, called the meeting to order and opened with prayer. Roll call by the secretary indicated that 16 board members and our pastor were present. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Portia Copeland provided the October check register as well as account balances as of October 30th. Of special note was the large check written for Wind & Hail Insurance (\$15,714) for the year. However, our church has been informed that next year that cost will be much lower while the coverage of damages will remain the same.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE: The Worship Committee met on Oct. 8. The following items were discussed:

- We will return to the organ for music except the choir anthem.
- All Saints Day will be recognized on Nov. 5.
- Veteran's Day (11/11) will be recognized on Nov. 12.
- Thanksgiving Sunday will be on Nov. 19.
- Decoration of the church on Dec. 1, at 6:00 P.M.
- First Sunday of Advent (12/3) HOPE; 2nd Sunday (12/10) PEACE; 3rd Sunday (12/17) JOY; 4th Sunday- Christmas Eve (12/24) LOVE.
- One service on Christmas Eve beginning at 10:30 A.M. preceded at 10:00 A.M. by coffee and donuts in the Fellowship Hall with assistance by membership committee.
- Christmas Eve service will include the pastor presenting the Christmas story (including carols, anthems) and the children of the church presenting a play.
- Baby dedications on Nov. 5 and Nov. 19.
- Discussed the reinstatement of the greeting moments (passing of the peace) near the beginning of worship each Sunday as all agreed it adds a spirit of fellowship.

Betty Sawyer, Worship Chairperson

EDUCATION COMMITTEE: Halloween Party/Hayride took place at the home of Jeff & Teresa Lassiter. Jeff Lassiter cooked the hot dogs. Jeremy Lassiter set up the tables and Brittany Lassiter set up s'mores. Taylor James set up the hayride. Norma James planned the event, got hay, candy, drinks and cooked mac-n-cheese and baked beans. She also picked up the supplies from the church. June Gibbs brought sweet tea. J.P. Rich brought the cake. Rev. T. J. Long, Jr. told ghost stories during the hayride. There were 50+ in attendance and 39 participated in the hayride.

Ashley James has continued as the Children's Church teacher. The Education Committee will work with the Worship Committee to direct a Christmas play, "New Star," on Dec 24. Education was also asked to get children and their families to participate in the lighting of the Advent candles.

Norma James, Education Chairperson

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE: The church Christmas Dinner is scheduled for Dec. 9, at 6:00 P.M. The menu will include meat loaf, chicken in cream sauce, rice, gravy, green beans glazed carrots, rolls, cake coffee, tea and water. Individuals are asked to bring gifts for the shut-ins at Brookdale Assisted Living and Waterbrooke of EC in lieu of exchanging gifts.

A sausage biscuit, cheese biscuit, and applejack breakfast sale is scheduled for late January. Date to be set later.

Portia Copeland, Membership Chairperson

OUTREACH COMMITTEE: Samaritan's Purse Shoeboxes are due at church on Sunday, November 12th. This month the church members donated 18 coats for the Annual Coat Drive. The coats were taken to a drop-off location on Nov. 1.

Melodi Robbins, Outreach Chairperson

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE: No updates at this time.

Gene Scott, Committee Chairman

PROPERTY COMMITTEE: No report

Tom Sawyer, Committee Chairman

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE: No memorials given in October.

Gail Hobbs, Committee Chairperson

ELDERS: Everyone was present for serving or has arranged for a substitute.

June Gibbs, Head Elder

DEACONS: All going well with the deacons.

Sandra Riggs, Head Deacon

Deaconesses: Communion cups have been replenished. Jeremy Lassiter purchased and donated communion bread.

Mary Ann Scott, Head Deaconess

CMF: Fifteen men were present at the October meeting. A great meal of Brazilian food was provided by Claudio Divino and the service led by Julian Copeland. Thanks to all who supported and helped during the pancake/sausage breakfast. 320 pounds of sausage and 60 pounds of pancake mix were prepared. \$3000 was taken in with a \$1420 overhead. Approximately \$1590 banked. The men will decide at a later meeting how they will use the proceeds. CMF's next meeting is on November 16th at 6:30 P.M.

J.P. Rich, President

CWF: The Christian Women's Fellowship met on Thursday, Oct. 5, with nine ladies present and Nov. 2 with eight ladies present. On Oct. 5, we had our JUST WOMEN's Bible study entitled "Enduring Suffering" from 1 Peter 5:10-11 led by Nancy Tatum. Treasurer's report was given. We discussed the Angel Tree and would like to provide for two families - one from PW Moore School and one from Pasquotank Elementary School. On November 2, we opened with the CWF

December Birthdays

1	Maylin Marie Cartwright
3	Cathy Taft Albertson
5	Ben Anderson
	Carolyn Dunwell
	Nancy Tatum
	Lindsey Lee
7	Sydma Hatzopoulos
8	Heather Taft Newbern
11	Donald Brown
12	Pete Gray
	Gary Taft
	Deloris Meads
13	J. W. Van Dalsum
	Ashley Jennings

18	Murlene Williams
21	Julian Revels
	Claudia Spencer
28	Peggy Manning
29	Amy Wall Petrill
30	Jean Etheridge
31	Melba Van Dalsum
	Andrea Hardison
	Kelsey Kaden

December Anniversaries

1	Richard & Pam Cobb
20	Lindsey & Sandra Lee
24	Pete & Kathy Gray
28	Glen & Rhonda Kaden

Serving in December

Elder: Norma James, Vance Meads

Deacons: Portia Copeland, Sandra Riggs, J.P. Rich, Tommy James, Gene Scott

Deaconesses: Kathy Gray, Mary Ann Scott

Greeters:

Dec 3 Roberta Williamson, Gene & Mary Ann Scott

Dec 10 Justin & Ashley James

Dec 17 Jeff & Teresa Moore

Dec 24 Jean Etheridge, June Gibbs

Dec 31 Arlene & Larry Bruce

Acolytes:

Dec 3 Ryland Lassiter & Zoey James

Dec 10 Ava Long & Asher Long

Dec 17 Lilly Darling & Emily Gordon

Dec 24 Zoey James & Jessie Spivey

Dec 31 Allie & Morgan Stevens

Altar Flowers

Dec 3 — The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Wimpy & Lizzie Stafford Onley and Ralph & Annie Rogerson Pipkin by Ken and Ella Pipkin.

Dec 10 — The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in honor of my children and their families by Melodi Robbins.

The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Shelton & Thelma Bunch, Christine Dillon Poulos, and Gladys Dillon DoBois by their daughters and nieces, Bonnie Arnold, Carolyn Lanahan, and Cynda Bunch.

Dec 17 — The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Ethel & Hester Holmes by their daughter, Glenda Guthrie.

The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Mr. & Mrs. Melvin Cartwright by Mrs. Velma Cartwright and family.

Dec 24 — The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in loving honor of our granddaughter Laurel Bright on the occasion of her third birthday by Tommy & Melissa Copeland.

The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in loving honor of our parents by Tommy & Melissa Copeland.

Dec 31 — The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Mr. Grover & Mrs. Gentry Copeland and in memory of Mr. Rufus and Mrs. Virginia White by Mr. & Mrs. Julian Copeland.

If you are interested in sponsoring the altar flowers, contact Mrs. Ella Pipkin at 252-335-4245. Flowers are sponsored at least one month in advance in most cases.

In Loving Memory...

One memorial was received in November for Mr. & Mrs. W.E. Scott by Nina Gregory and family.

If you are interested in making a memorial donation, contact the Memorial Committee Chairperson, Gail Hobbs.

S.O.U.L.S.: Then and Now

Recently Melodi Robbins, Outreach chairperson, was contacted by the SOULS leadership to invite our church to their Annual Appreciation Dinner held on Nov. 7. The celebration included appreciation by community leaders for the meals provided 365 days a year for those less fortunate.

The board minutes of November 2009, indicated that two of the Outreach committee members would be visiting a meal served at the former Elizabeth City Middle School Band Room. Local churches were volunteering to provide the meals, and our church board had an interest in being part of this group. In October, 2010, our church was on the SOULS calendar for any 5th Saturdays of the year. The Outreach Committee and CWF would work together in support of this ministry. Our first meal served was on October 30, 2010. We have continued these 13 years (still the 5th Saturdays!) with so many members giving of their money; others of their time; and still others to serve and interact with the folks being served. If you would like to have fellowship with other FCC members and join this ministry in any of these ways, contact the Outreach Committee at outreach@fcec.org.



As of July, 2023, SOULS has a new space at the Victory Praise and Worship Center on Hughes Boulevard pastored by Daniel Spence.

Nancy Tatum, Church Historian

prayer and a prayer for the captured hostages in the Middle East. Baby kits in honor of new babies in the church were discussed. Kits would be donated to Church World Service. Ladies approved a motion to pay for half of any coupons turned in at the pancake breakfast. They were distributed in the newsletter sent out in the neighborhood. Search continues for the two families to support with Angel Tree funds. We will have the needed information by Thanksgiving. The Christmas party for CWF is set for Friday, Dec. 15, at 6:00 P.M. Sign-up sheet was suggested for breakfast on Dec. 24 with plans for doughnuts, coffee, orange juice, and milk. Volunteers were asked to come for the November pancake breakfast to serve and clear tables. We closed with the CWF benediction.

Portia Copeland, CWF President

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: There was further discussion of where our church might donate 60+ Bibles. After contacting Week of Compassion, Nancy Tatum reported that there was no way to get the Bibles to places around the world. Some suggestions provided by the WoC representative were: donate to a local feeding program, contact local agencies such as Salvation Army, or give to a prison ministry. Melodi Robbins has reached out to SOULS but has not yet heard back from the leader. Our pastor reported that his prison ministry training has been pushed back several months so he has not had the opportunity to ask them. Since there is no hurry, we will wait to hear back from these possibilities.

NEW BUSINESS: None

MINISTER'S REPORT: This minister's report covers things accomplished in the month of October. I made 11 pastoral visits this past month.

Open Gym averaged 13 teens in attendance each Monday night. We concluded watching season three of The Chosen, where we averaged 10 in attendance. That same group wanted to watch "The Sound of Freedom," which we will be showing here at the church for free on Nov. 14 at 6pm. Our Bible Discussion group is currently reading through the books of 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, Isaiah, Micah and Hosea.

I volunteered as the Technology Subcommittee chair for part two of the 175th Regional Assembly on the campus of Barton College. We had 150 in attendance and were delighted to have the General President Terri Hord Owens present. Her message at the end of the assembly was inspiring. I wish everyone from our church could've heard her speak.

I attended the initial meeting for the Pasquotank Minister's Council for Education on the 24th and spent time with Principal Simona White from Pasquotank Elementary School talking about the needs her and her staff have for the school year. I will share those needs when I receive them via email.

The Blue Card training I was slated to attend to volunteer with the Pasquotank County Chapter of Kairos was postponed last month and will occur in February.

I completed our Administrative Assistant's (Rana White) six-month performance review, which has been reviewed by Gene Scott, Stewardship Committee Chair.

Here are my goals for November:

- Assist the Worship and Education committees in securing help from the children and congregation for the Advent Season as well as having another baby dedication on the 19th of this month.
- Focus on visitation with the goal of visiting 12 or more.
- Continue with the search for a part-time Children's minister/ intern.

I'm open to all feedback and I greatly appreciate all that you all do in service to First Christian Church!

Your Pastor & Friend, Rev. T.J. Long, Jr.

There being no further business, Tom Sawyer moved to adjourn, seconded by Portia Copeland. Rev. Long dismissed us with prayer.

NT/erw

Baby Dedications in November



Sunday, November 5

Dedication of Halleigh Ann James born March 20, 2023, to her parents Taylor James and Sam Delavergne.



Sunday, November 19

Dedication of Autumn Rose Segrest born October 12, 2023, to her parents Chris and Alexandra "Lexi" Segrest.

A Message from Our Moderator

During our congregational meeting on October 29, 2023, we voted on the 2024 Officers, 2024 Budget and changes to the Constitution and Bylaws. All three items passed unanimously. Thank you to all who attended this meeting and voted.

Finance Report SEPTEMBER 2023

If you have questions, please call Treasurer, Portia Copeland, 252-335-4447

Monthly Budget	\$ 15,312
Budget Income	\$ 24,485
Budget Shortage	\$ 0
Expenses:	\$ 25,429
Designated Income	\$ 566
Designated Bills:	\$ 318
Attendance:	
Sept (4 Sundays)	53 avg
Children	7 avg
Attendance:	
The Chosen	7 avg
Open Gym:	11 avg

O Come, Let Us Adore Him

The Advent/Christmas season is always a busy time in the life of our church. For 103 years we have celebrated the season with music, plays, youth activities and special services that fill the hearts of our members with the true spirit of the season: the birth of God's Son, Jesus.

Please join us each Sunday as we remember the four themes of Advent: Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. Significant events will include - The Hanging of the Greens, Bethlehem's Light, A Christmas Musical presented by the Chancel Choir and narrated by Tom Sawyer, and Christmas Eve Sunday, our youth and adult actors will present New Star. This is a play that tells the story of the First Christmas through the main characters, Old Star and New Star. This service will conclude with the lighting of the Christ Candle and our traditional singing of the carol, Silent Night, Holy Night.

Nina Gregory



December 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Social Hall Reserved (Food Delivery/Sorting)	2 Social Hall Reserved (Food Delivery/Sorting)
3 ● <i>First Sunday of Advent</i>	4 7:00 pm Board Meeting	5	6 5:45 pm Bible Discussion 7:00 pm Choir	7 12:00 pm CWF	8	9 6:00 pm Christmas Dinner
10 ● Christmas Cantata <i>Christmas Offering</i> <i>Second Sunday of Advent</i>	11	12 12:00 pm Card Ministry	13 5:45 pm Bible Discussion 7:00 pm Choir	14 5:30 pm -9:00 pm Republican Party Mtg (Social Hall)	15 6:30pm CWF Xmas Party @ The Williamson Home	16
17 ● <i>Christmas Offering</i> <i>Third Sunday of Advent</i>	18	19 <i>Newsletter Submission Deadline</i>	20 5:45 pm Bible Discussion 7:00 pm Choir	21 6:30 pm CMF	22	23
24 ● 10:00 am Coffee 10:30 am Worship <i>Fourth Sunday of Advent</i> Christmas Eve	25 Christmas Day	26 12:00 pm Card Ministry Office Closed	27 5:45 pm Bible Discussion 7:00 pm Choir	28	29	30
31 ○ <i>New Year's Eve</i> <i>First Sunday after Christmas Day</i>	NEAAAT Gymnasium Schedule: Mondays -3:30pm-5:00 pm Tuesday-Friday 4:00 pm-7:00 pm (through February 2024)					

Christmas Dinner

Saturday, December 9th, 6:00 pm

Meatloaf and chicken in cream sauce dinner with rice, gravy, green beans, glazed carrots, and roll with cake for dessert. Everyone is asked to bring a small gift for the residents of Waterbrooke in Elizabeth City or Brookdale Assisted Living. Suggestions are below. Signup sheets for dinner will be in the lobby or call/text the church office at 252-338-6506. Contact Portia Copeland at membership@fccec.org with questions or to volunteer to help.

Gift Suggestions

Gifts for Waterbrooke of Elizabeth City (67 residents) and Brookdale Assisted Living (30 women & 9 men residents including 2 married):



- Hand Cream
- Chapstick
- Candy
- Lollipops
- Anything they can hold in their hands
- Word Search Puzzles
- Fidget Bubble Toys
- Scarf
- Toiletries



Wednesday Night Bible Discussion 5:45-6:45 pm Fellowship Hall

We are reading through the whole Bible by reading six chapters a week. We discuss and question various aspects of each chapter. No lectures, no curriculum! We laugh some and learn from each other! Come and join us! A list of scriptures for each week can be found in the lobby or on our website at fccec.org.

Sample of One Week's Schedule

- Thursday, November 30 – Isaiah 24
- Friday, December 1 – Isaiah 25
- Saturday, Dec 2 – Isaiah 26
- Sunday, December 3 – Day off
- Monday, Dec 4 – Isaiah 27
- Tuesday, Dec 5 – 2 Kings 18:1-8
- Wed, December 6 – 2 Chronicles 29

FCC Outreach Activities

Outreach is once again delivering the weekend backpacks to Pasquotank Elementary School. This year there are 35 children receiving the backpacks.

Last week we turned in 22 shoe boxes for the Operation Christmas Child program. Thank you to everyone who filled a box.

Outreach Chairperson,
Melodi Robbins

