

First Christian Church  
800 Beech Street  
Elizabeth City, NC 27909

Newsletter  
March 2023

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March 2023

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



Portia Copeland, Interim Admin Assist  
Nina Gregory, Choir Director &  
Organist

office@fcec.org  
fcec.org  
(252) 338-6506

### UPCOMING EVENTS FOR MARCH 2023

Sundays	Sunday Morning Worship in Sanctuary & Facebook Live	11:00 am
Sundays	Sunday School in Fellowship Classroom	10:10 am
Mondays	Weight Watchers	5:30 pm
Tuesdays	Weight Watchers	12:30 pm
Wednesdays	Bible Discussion	5:45 pm
Wednesdays	Choir Rehearsal	7:00 pm
March 1	NC Dept of Transportation (Gym)	3—9 pm
March 2	Christian Women's Fellowship	noon
March 6	Board Meeting	7:00 pm
March 11	All-You-Can-Eat Pancake & Sausage Breakfast	7—10 am
March 13-19	Setup, sort and price garage sale items (volunteers needed)	10 am—2 pm
March 14	Card Ministry	12:00 pm
March 14	Prayer Gathering	6:00 pm
March 16	Republican Party—Education Bldg	6:00 pm
March 16	Christian Men's Fellowship	6:30 pm
March 23	Backpacking Sorting	6:00 pm
March 24	Garage Sale & Breakfast Items (volunteers needed)	8 am— 2 pm
March 25	Garage Sale & Breakfast Items (volunteers needed)	8 am— 2 pm
March 26	Baptism service during worship	11:00 am
March 26	Deadline for ordering Easter Lilies	noon
March 28	Card Ministry	12:00 pm
March 28	Prayer Gathering	6:00 pm

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Dear FCC Family,

Talking about Jesus outside of the church building isn't easy for all people. The vast majority of people within our church want new people to come but we're discovering that few people are inviting people. I want to share with you five easy ways to create a culture of invitation at First Christian Church.

**1. Make Sunday Service a priority.** We need people who simply ask other people to come along with them. I will help you in reaching those people with the Word. We will be prepared in music and in children's church, too. Sunday is important because the people who attend (and especially guests) are important.

**2. Practice Hospitality.** It's easy to be hospitable. Look around on a Sunday morning and ask: Who is standing around alone? Is anyone looking around trying to find where to go? They're likely new. And that's a great opportunity for you to go up, greet them and introduce yourself. That's it! Just welcome them and ask them about themselves. Tell them how we donate money to the Food Bank in exchange for their info on our connect cards. That's a good start.

**3. Be Involved.** It's easier than ever to stay home. Human connection is a vital part of a healthy life. Broaden your horizons. Put yourself out there in order to meet new people whether that's through an art or exercise class, taking your dog to the park or maybe even volunteering. You may meet people with whom you have a lot in common! Plus, you'll run out of people to invite and love on if you're not meeting new people.

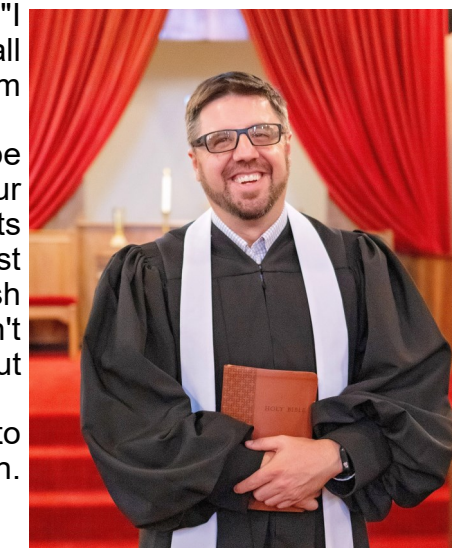
**4. Be inviting in all places.** When you're talking to someone, whether in church or anywhere else and you here phrases like, "things are NOT going well," "I was NOT prepared for...", or "I am NOT from here," those are all great opportunities to sow into people, minister to them, let them vent and give them an invitation to a church service.

**5. Share events.** If you're really not a talker, you can still be someone that invites. It's easier than ever to share a link to your church's website or simply share events or inspirational posts from your church's Facebook or Instagram page. Just this past Wednesday, I created a quick post inviting my friends to our Ash Wednesday service and I was floored to see a friend I hadn't seen in about 2 years come! Personal invitations work best but passive ones online are still good.

I share all this because I'm sure that we all want our church to grow. It can happen but we all are needed to make it happen. Let's start by creating a culture of inviting.

Your Pastor & friend,

TJ Long, Jr.



## February, 2023 Board Report

The official board of First Christian Church met in the Fellowship Classroom on February 2, 2023, at 7:00 P.M. Teresa Moore, moderator, called the meeting to order and opened with prayer. Our pastor and 15 board members were present. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Portia Copeland provided the January check register as well as account balances as of January 31, 2023.

**WORSHIP COMMITTEE:** During the month of February we will be supporting the Outreach Committee with the Souper Bowl of Caring and Week of Compassion. We will also have an Ash Wednesday program with a small lunch afterwards. The prayer group will take over at 1:00 P.M. that day and keep the sanctuary open for our participation in the Lenten prayer chain of our denomination. Thanks to all who participated in the Laity Sunday program. Lent begins on the 22nd of February and goes to April 6th. The following are the dates for April: 2nd, Palm Sunday, Cantata; 6th Maunday Thursday night service; Easter, Cross of flowers; and April 9TH - May 27th EASTERTIDE Betty Sawyer, Worship Chairperson

**EDUCATION COMMITTEE:** No report

**MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE:** A Super Bowl fellowship gathering is being planned for Sunday, February 12 at 6:00 P.M. Come and enjoy the fellowship, finger foods, and watching the Super Bowl together. A light lunch will be provided after the Ash Wednesday service. Garage sale with breakfast biscuits will be on Friday and Saturday, March 24th and 25th. Portia Copeland, Membership Chairperson

**OUTREACH COMMITTEE:** On January 5th the food for the backpack program was delivered and that evening a group of people that sponsor the individual schools met in the Education Building to separate the food. On Tuesday of the next week, Teresa Moore, Joy Rhodes, Arlene Bruce

and Larry, Jeff Bush and Paula Crawford came out to help sort the food for the next four weeks of deliveries to Pasquotank Elementary. Thank you for all of your help! On February 4th Louise Berry and I delivered items that were crocheted by Arlene Bruce to SOULS. Melodi Robbins, Outreach Chairperson

**STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE:** No report

**PROPERTY COMMITTEE:** The AED (automated external defibrillator) sales representative contacted me about the replacement of batteries and pads for the two AED's that we have. The pads and batteries are good for five years. To replace the batteries for two units and two adult, 2 pediatric pads is \$841.00. Request for the use of the gym has been made by Next Generation Academy's leader, Howard Williams. A new ice maker has been ordered. Cost to be covered by the men's group. The Republican Party (Pasquotank County) has made payment for both dates scheduled and has provided insurance documents. I want to emphasize that we are not endorsing a political party and, as such, any group may request use of our facilities as long as they do not conflict with our faith. Tom Sawyer, Property Chairman

**MEMORIAL COMMITTEE:** Gail Hobbs, committee chairperson, reported three memorials given in the month of January.

**ELDERS:** June Gibbs, Head Elder, reported that the elders from 2022 and the elders currently serving met with the pastor on January 12, 2023, and discussed some upcoming events and other issues of concern.

**DEACONS:** No report

**DEACONESSES:** No report

**CMF:** Tickets are now available for the March pancake breakfast. Six of our members attended the District meeting in Plymouth.

**J. P. Rich, CMF Representative**

### March Birthdays

- 4 Donna Crain  
Sonya Longest
- 5 Billy Gallop
- 6 Leslie Watts  
Gwen Williams
- 7 Christie Bray  
Makayla Martel
- 9 Mark Williams  
Anna Keaton
- 10 Blake Simons  
Kristin Lassiter
- 11 Jon Van Dalsum
- 12 Elizabeth Brown
- 14 Norma James
- 17 Lisa Pipkin  
Landon Wayne Bray  
Carol Rich
- 21 Pat Wice
- 24 Tighe Simons  
Brayden Vance Meads
- 26 Finn T. Gregory  
Allie Stevens

- 27 Corbin Thompson  
Kacey Weatherly  
Richard Woble



### March Anniversaries

- 1 Paul & Carolyn Dunwell
- 10 Ray & Betty Jo Raby  
Stacey & Debbie Foster
- 16 Jon & Melba Van Dalsum  
J.P. & Carol Rich
- 17 Rudy & Sharon Warden
- 20 Jimmy & Terry Cahoon
- 26 Jerry & Donna Crain

### Serving in March

<b>Elder:</b>	Vance Meads	Norma James
<b>Deacons:</b>	Portia Copeland J. P. Rich Gene Scott	Sandra Riggs Tommy James
<b>Deaconesses:</b>	Kathy Gray	Mary Ann Scott
<b>Greeters:</b>	Mar 5 Roberta Williamson & Gene & Mary Ann Scott Mar 12 Justin & Ashley James & Meg Bennett Mar 19 Jeff & Teresa Moore & June Gibbs Mar 26 Jean Etheridge & Peggy Humphries & Meg Bennett	
<b>Acolytes:</b>	Mar 5 Ava Long & Asher Long Mar 12 Ryland Lassiter & Zoey James Mar 19 Lilly Lassiter & Emily Gordon Mar 26 Allie Stevens & Morgan Stevens	

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**Finance Report January—February 19th**  
**If anyone has any questions, please call Treasurer, Portia Copeland, 252-335-4447.**

<b>January</b>		<b>February</b>	
Budget Income	\$ 22,154.99	Budget Income	\$ 6,445.43
Designated	\$ 8,437.00	Designated	\$ 899.95
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 30,351.99</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 7,345.38</b>
Expenses	\$ 7,352.58	Expenses:	\$ 11,174.45
Attendance		Attendance:	
January (4 Sundays)	= 50 avg	February (3 Sundays)	= 49 avg
Children	= 7 avg	Children	= 9 avg

**Easter Lilies**



We are offering Easter lilies in memory or honor of a loved one at a **cost of \$15 each**. The deadline for ordering Easter lilies is Sunday, March 26th. You can choose a monetary donation to your favorite church fund in lieu of lilies. All are welcome. A list of Easter lilies will be published in the Easter Sunday bulletin and the April newsletter. Easter lilies can be picked up after worship service on Easter Sunday.

**Sympathy**

Our prayers and sympathy go out to the family of NancyLee Cozier who passed to her heavenly Father's home on February 19th. Mrs. Cozier is the sister of Paula Crawford and aunt of Jeff Bush.

**Altar Flowers**

- 5th** The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in loving honor of our children and grandchildren by Tommy and Melissa Copeland.
- 12th** The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Donald Etheridge by his family  
  
The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Mrs. Gracie White by Millie Sweetham and Tom and Martha White
- 19th** The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Mr. and Mrs. W. E. "Mutt" Scott and Mr. and Mrs. James E. White Sr., by Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Scott family and Nina Gregory.
- 26th** The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Thomas S. Sawyer Jr. by Betty and Tom Sawyer, Jennifer and Lisa.  
  
The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Ferrell by Betty and Tom Sawyer, Jennifer and Lisa.

**CWF:** We celebrated Christmas at our January 5th meeting with seven ladies present. After some discussion, pots of soup and sandwiches were volunteered for the Week of Compassion Soup Luncheon. Nancy Tatum led a study on "Just Love - Mobile Church." The church provided Christmas to two families and a church member. Our gifts totaled \$550.93. We met on February 2nd. Card Ministry was changed to meet on the first Tuesday (2/7) so that Valentine cards might be sent. Nancy Tatum led a lesson from the denomination's Justice Primer on Micah 6:8. Portia Copeland, CWF President

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** The congregation vote was unanimous in favor of an emeritus elder, deacon, or deaconess being allowed to continue to serve even after having that honor bestowed upon them.

**NEW BUSINESS:** A constitution committee was formed to look at the constitution and bylaws. Portia Copeland, Nina Gregory, J. P. Rich, and Tammy Sawyer were suggested to be members of that committee. Discussion of the two sessions of the 2023 N. C. Regional meetings which take place in April in Charlotte and the second in October at Barton College in Wilson. We need three voting delegates and three alternates for each meeting.

Next Generation's request to use the gym will be offered a trial period April-May of this year for \$300/ month. A motion was made by Portia Copeland and seconded by June Gibbs that in the trial period the gym will be used Tuesday, Thursday, Friday evening and Saturday mornings. The motion was approved by the board.

A motion was approved to purchase the new batteries and pads for the AED. Tom will call the rescue squad about updating our training in use of the AED. The Fat Tuesday Pancake Fellowship was cancelled. Six resumes have been received for the position of church secretary.

**MINISTER'S REPORT:** During January, I visited with six of our church family: Martha Best, Gene & Mary Ann Scott, Bonnie Arnold, Cecil Speight and Deloris Meads. I attended a Stewardship

Committee meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> where it was the consensus decision to pursue another candidate for Administrative Assistant. I've taken on a few extra roles of completing slides as well as updating the website and Facebook pages for the church. I created and boosted a job ad on Facebook that has yielded six viable candidates that the Stewardship Committee will consider over the next week.

We have seen a steady growth in Open Gym. We had an average of 8 students & young adults present (ages ranging from 14 to 25). Our Bible Discussion group is currently reading through 1 Chronicles, 2 Samuel and the book of Psalms.

Within our Prayer Gatherings, we have completed six chapters of our new book "How to Pray." Our prayer group will be taking part in the Disciple Home Mission's Chain of Prayer hosting a vigil on Wednesday, February 22 from 1-5pm. Each member of the prayer group will be inviting individuals to pray with them during their hour of watch.

During MLK Community Cleanup day on January 16<sup>th</sup> we had 5 present as we picked up approximately 300 pounds of trash from the neighborhood immediately surrounding the church.

I met with the NC Commission on Ministry on January 10<sup>th</sup> and was unanimously recommended for ordination. Saturday, April 1<sup>st</sup> was chosen for the service of ordination

Here are my goals for February: 1) To assist in hiring another Administrative Assistant, 2) making and executing plans for Lent as well as a 3-week baptism orientation course between February 26<sup>th</sup> and March 12<sup>th</sup>, 3) to help with Souper Bowl drive and Week of Compassion offering as well as supporting Membership in putting on a Super Bowl party and 4) to coordinate in planning the ordination service.

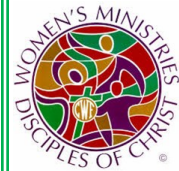
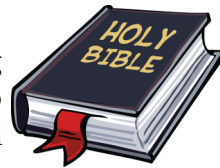
T.J. Long, Jr.

There being no further business, Portia Copeland made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Betty Sawyer. Our pastor dismissed us in prayer.

## Bible Discussion on Wednesday Nights

5:45-6:45pm in the Fellowship Hall

This month we will dive into 1 Chronicles, 2 Samuel & Psalms. We are reading through the whole Bible by reading 6 chapters a week together. No lectures, no curriculum! We discuss and question various aspects of each chapter. We laugh some and learn from each other! Come and join us!



## Christian Women's Fellowship

The Christian Women's Fellowship will meet at **noon on Thursday, March 2nd**. We will continue our Just Women Bible Study. Feel free to come and join us.

## Christian Men's Fellowship

Christian Men's Fellowship meets on the third Thursday of every month! The next meeting is **March 16th at 6:30 pm**. Dinner is provided!



## NO Open Gym Basketball

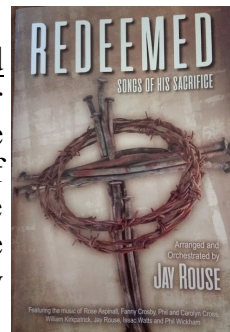
There will be NO Open Gym during the month of March!!



**Volunteers Needed!**  
Volunteers are still needed to help with Children's Church on Sunday mornings during the Worship Service. If you are able to help, please contact Norma James or you can email her at [education@fccc.org](mailto:education@fccc.org).

## REDEEMED: SONGS OF HIS SACRIFICE

A Morning Like This, When I Survey the Wondrous Cross, The Solid Rock...these are a few of the familiar songs, along with new tunes you will hear during the Chancel Choir's Palm Sunday celebratory program. Through the spoken word, the beautiful melodies and harmonies infused in the creation of this collection of beloved songs, we are assured you will be filled with the love of God's greatest gift to mankind, His Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. Please come and enjoy a spiritual Palm Sunday service that will begin to inspire Holy Week for you and your family.



## Baptism

We are so excited to have Jackie and Emily Gordon on their faith journey with a baptism service on March 26, 2023



## ALL YOU CAN EAT PANCAKE AND SAUSAGE BREAKFAST

Mark your calendar. The Christian Men's Fellowship will be having an All-You-Can-Eat Pancakes and Sausage Breakfast on Saturday, **March 11 from 7 am until 10 am** at \$8 each. You can get advance tickets from any of the CMF men or the Church office. Come out and enjoy the great fellowship and food. Invite your neighbors, friends, co-workers and strangers you meet.



## Yard and Breakfast Sale – March 24-25, 2023

The church is planning a yard sale for **Friday and Saturday, March 24 & March 25, 2023 from 8 am to 2 pm**. The gym will be set up with tables immediately after the Pancake breakfast. We will be accepting items for the sale on Monday thru Saturday, March 13th thru 18th from 10 am until 2 pm and Sunday afternoon after worship. It would be a great help if you priced your items for us. Volunteers will be needed to set-up and price items during the March 13th week and to work Friday and Saturday on the sale. In addition, we will have breakfast items – sausage biscuits; cheese biscuits; coffee and apple jacks for sale. Looking forward to receiving your items and your help. Sign up sheets are in the lobby for you to volunteer some of your time.

## Memorial Garden Bricks

If you would like to order a brick in memory or honor of a loved one for Easter, Mother's Day, Father's Day or for a Graduate, please place your order by Sunday, April 16th. Order forms can be found in the parlor or on the church website [www.fccc.org](http://www.fccc.org). If you have questions, you can call the church office (338-6506) or email [office@fccc.org](mailto:office@fccc.org).



## ORDINATION

First Christian Church cordially invites you to the ordination service of our minister, T.J. Long, Jr., on **Saturday, April 1 at 3pm**. Members of the Regional Office including Bishop Valerie Melvin, Regional Elder Mary Williams and the chair of the North Carolina Commission on Ministry (Baylee Smith) will be in attendance! Rev. Karen Kelly will be the host pastor and Pastor Gordon Dove of Life Church in Richmond, VA will be the guest speaker. There will be a reception to follow in the Fellowship Hall. Kindly RSVP by email ([office@fccc.org](mailto:office@fccc.org)), phone (252) 338-6506 or by sign up sheet in the lobby.

