

First Christian Church  
800 Beech Street  
Elizabeth City, NC 27909

Newsletter  
**JANUARY 2024**

Non-Profit Organization  
**US Postage Paid Permit # 9**  
Elizabeth City, NC 27909

Postmaster: Return Mail Requested

**JANUARY 2024**



**Email: office@fccec.org Facebook.com/FCCDOC Phone: (252) 338-6506**

Rev. T.J. Long, Jr, Pastor

Tom Sawyer, Moderator

Teresa Moore Vice Moderator

Rana White, Admin. Assistant

Nina Gregory, Choir Director

& Organist



## Applejack & Biscuit Sale

**Saturday, January 27th**

**8:00 am—10:00 am**

**Applejacks \$3.50**

**Sausage Biscuit \$2.50**

**Cheese Biscuit \$1.50**

Mark your calendars! Advance orders will taken by sign-up sheet beginning in January. To help with this fundraiser, contact Portia Copeland or call/text 252-338-6506 with inquiries.

Dear FCC Family,

It's 2024! Doesn't that just sound weird? Like we should be seeing flying cars and full meals in pill form by now or something. Some of you, no doubt, are reminiscing, remembering what it was like in the 50s and 60s. Before too long, those decades will roll around again, Lord willing.

I wanted to encourage all of you to do something a little different for the new year. Even though I want to make a resolution to eat healthier and be more active (those are a given), I want to give all of you an opportunity to be more active in outreach this year. I know, I know. You've heard me speak a lot about inviting people and outreach over the past few months. The flock does have to be reminded that studies show that an invite from a congregant is NINE TIMES more likely to get someone to come to church than a minister's invite.

You hold the key to church growth, not me. Another thing that inspires Gen Xers and ESPECIALLY Millennials is being a part of something bigger than themselves. "How does that apply to a church," you may ask. Most people between the ages of 27 and 42 are much more likely to devote their time, energy and resources to an organization they feel is making a difference in the world. That's why you see so few people of that generation in inward-focused churches. A church that is not known or impactful in the community will struggle greatly in attracting the younger generations.

This month (on Saturday, January 13) we're giving each of you an opportunity to impact our community with a Community Cleanup Day. We will clean the streets and sidewalks of our neighborhood for a couple of hours. We always seem to amass hundreds of pounds of trash each time. It's a great way to serve our direct neighbors. We'll have three total Community Cleanups this year and we

hope you'll take part. We'll have everything you need, just bring yourself.

Also, this year we will have more Friends & Family nights (the plan is to have 4). The purpose of these fun nights together is all in the name; it's to invite your friends and family. Two things we haven't seen a lot of at these Friends & Family nights are your friends and family. We'll take care of the food and entertainment for the evening; all you have to do is invite!

For 2024 a goal I have for First Christian Church is to inspire all of us to be more outward-focused. It hurts me to realize over and over again, that when I tell people where I pastor they have no idea our church existed. How can a 14,000 sq ft building be invisible to the community? No more, I pray. I encourage you to invite and serve so that FCC can be known, impactful and pointing people to the God who loves them and the Lord we serve.

Happy New Year!

Your Minister & friend,

*T.J. Long, Jr.*

Rev. T.J. Long, Jr.



To unsubscribe, please email office@fccec.org or call 252-338-6506 and request that your name be removed.

# DECEMBER 2023 BOARD REPORT

The official board of First Christian Church met in the Fellowship Classroom on Dec. 4, 2023, at 7:00 P.M. Teresa Moore, moderator, called the meeting to order and opened with prayer. Our pastor, TJ Long, and 11 board members were present. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Portia Copeland provided the November check register as well as account balances. She reported that things are going well.

**WORSHIP COMMITTEE:** We began the new liturgical year with the decorating of the sanctuary on Friday, Dec. 1, with much participation. We had shut-ins that had an evening out and babies that made it seem like Christmas. We had "old faithful" as well as young spirits that were able to do all the challenging tasks! The pastor incorporated the hanging of the greens in the December 3rd service. This year the first of the Advent candles was lit on December 3rd by the Lassiter family: Kristin, Jason, Lilly, and Ryland. They lit the candle of Hope, and the worship committee wants to thank them and all of the families that will light candles. We have partnered with the education committee, and they have done a great job in preparing their families as well as being the center of our Christmas Eve church service. While the Love candle will be lit first, there will also be a play organized by the education committee and the lighting of the Christ candle and singing of the traditional "Silent Night" to end the service. A Christmas Eve breakfast will begin at 10:00 A.M. followed by the service in the sanctuary.

Since last report, we have incorporated passing the peace which has worked well and adds a dimension of spirit that has been missing. The committee has asked that the upcoming week's scripture be put in the bulletin and that has been done. Naturally we celebrate the confession of faith by Cecil Speight and look forward to his baptism. We were fortunate to have two baby dedications this month also: Autumn Rose Segrest and Halleigh Ann James.

Anyone interested in serving on worship is welcomed to join. At present we have a diverse group as well as representatives from prominent committees. We meet on Sundays after service usually with a meal. The committee members for 2024 may be asked to delay their lunch on those Sundays or to bring a bag lunch.

*Betty Sawyer, Worship Chairperson*

**EDUCATION COMMITTEE:** Norma James was unable to attend, but on Sunday, Dec. 24th, there will be a Christmas Eve play during morning worship. Ashley James continues to lead Children's Church.

*Norma James, Chairperson*

**MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE:** Our congregation lost a member, Cynda Susan Bunch, on November 23, 2023. The family declined a meal.

Christmas dinner will be on Dec. 9 at 6:00 P.M. The menu will include meatloaf, chicken in cream sauce, rice, gravy, green beans, glazed carrots, rolls, cake, coffee, tea, and water. Individuals are asked to bring gifts for the residents at Brookdale Assisted Living and Waterbrooke of EC in lieu of exchanging gifts. A suggested list was provided in the church bulletins.

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

*Portia Copeland, Chairperson*

**OUTREACH COMMITTEE:** Melodi stated that all of the committee's activities were in the current newsletter. She will find out sizes for the children who are to be helped by the Angel Tree contributions.

*Melodi Robbins, Chairperson*

**STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE:** No report

**PROPERTY COMMITTEE:** A commercial grade can opener has been ordered for the men's kitchen. A replacement refrigerator has been purchased to replace the one in the choir room. Portia and Julian Copeland have a connection who got a better price on door hardware for the gym and Fellowship Hall. Gene Scott is willing to install that hardware.

*Tom Sawyer, Chairman*

**MEMORIAL COMMITTEE:** One memorial in November.

**ELDERS:** June Gibbs reported that all is going well.

**DEACONS:** Sandra Riggs reported that things are good.

**DEACONESSES:** Two boxes of communion bread were purchased. Our church secretary will order more cups.

**CMF:** On Nov. 16th, sixteen men were in attendance at the meeting. The next meeting is on Dec. 21. The men have contributed to the following ministries recently:

## *January Birthdays*

4	Ann Merriman	23	Kris Meads
	Jeff Lassiter	24	Bobbie Boynton
6	Pam Cobb		Deanne Boyce
	Micah Cartwright	26	Travis James
10	Stormi Leann Balance	29	Darrell Riggs
	K.J. Pipkin	31	Virgil Parrish
11	Wanda McMullen		
13	Sophia Martel		
	Kenneth Hall		
14	Hayley Hopkins		
15	Ashley Lee Guajardo		
	Brandy Lee Vines		
22	Tommy Lee		

## *January Anniversaries*

1	J.W. & Hope Van Dalsum
20	Don & Pam Keaton
30	Ryan & Beverly Blocker

## Serving in January

**Elder:** Paula Crawford, Joe Lassiter

**Deacons:** Nancy Tatum, Travis James, Jessica James, Sophia Martel, Jeff Bush

**Deaconesses:** Martha Best, Melodi Robbins, (Betty Duncan)

**Greeters:**

Jan 7	Roberta Williamson, Gene & Mary Ann Scott
Jan 14	Justin & Ashley James
Jan 21	Jeff & Teresa Moore
Jan 28	Arlen & Larry Bruce

**Acolytes:**

Jan 7	Ryland & Zoey
Jan 14	Ava & Asher
Jan 21	Lilly & Emily
Jan 28	Allie & Morgan

## *Altar Flowers*

*Jan 7*—The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in honor of our Children, Grandchildren, and Great-Grandchildren by Mr. and Mrs. Julian Copeland.

The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Eugene Williams by his wife, Murlene Williams.

*Jan 14*—The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of the January 13th birthday of Brenda Harris Clark. Who went home to be with the Lord on January 17, 2006, by her forever friend, Bonnie Bunch Arnold.

*Jan 21*—The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in loving honor of Ella's brother and sisters W.L. Buddy Onley, Diane Onley, and Sheila Norfleet by the Ella & Ken Pipkin family.

*Jan 28*—The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Dallas Gallop on the occasion of our wedding anniversary, by Stella Gallop.

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.

## *In Loving Memory...*

**One memorial was given in the month of December**

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

# Outreach Update

The Outreach Committee wants to thank Arlene Bruce for the beautiful scarves she made that were given to nursing home shut-ins.

Outreach will be serving SOULS on the 30<sup>th</sup> of December, which will bring my four years as Committee Chairperson to an end.

I want to thank all of the church members that have given of their time and work to help make the Outreach program successful. Joy Rhodes will be the new Outreach Chairperson.

~ Melodi Robbins



Arlene Bruce



- \$300 to the Food Bank of the Albemarle
  - \$300 to the school Backpack Ministry
  - Postage for Operation Christmas Child boxes
  - A donation will be made to our annual Angel Tree.
- J.P. Rich, CMF President*

**CWF:** The CWF did not meet on the regularly scheduled date of the first Thursday. Instead the group met on Friday, Dec. 15th (6:00 P.M.) at the home of Roberta Williamson for their annual Christmas gathering.

*Portia Copeland, CWF President*

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** No decision has been made yet about donation of the 60+ Bibles.

**NEW BUSINESS:** None

**MINISTER'S REPORT:** This report covers things accomplished in the month of November. I made 11 pastoral visits this past month with a goal of 15 for December.

Open Gym had an average of 13 teens in attendance each Monday night. The gym will be closed for the month of December and will reopen on Monday, Jan. 22. The same group that watched The Chosen got together on the 14<sup>th</sup> to watch "The Sound of Freedom" with 11 in attendance. Our Bible Discussion group is reading through the books of 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, Isaiah and Hosea with an average of six in attendance.

I cooked pancakes alongside Joe Lassiter for the Pancake/Sausage breakfast and attended the monthly CMF meeting. I officiated two funerals this month; one for my uncle and the other for Cynda Bunch.

On Wednesday, the 28<sup>th</sup> our church secured two sizable donations for two different purposes. Rev. Daniel Spence (Pastor at Victory Praise & Worship Center) and I will be taking 13 of our Open Gym teenagers to an NBA game in Washington, DC on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day on January 15<sup>th</sup>. We will be using the church's van for this one day trip. We had an anonymous donor outside the church give \$900 to cover the cost of all the tickets while the church will cover the cost of gas and parking from a previous donation made to Open Gym. Rev. Daniel Spence will personally be covering the cost of lunch for the teens while I will cover the cost of their dinner, making this trip completely free for any that sign up and turn in the liability form.

Our church secured a sizeable donation from Guy C. Long, Inc. from Chester, PA of 120 NIV Large Print Pew Bibles as well as \$2000 to go to upgrading our basketball goals in the gym.

We received two anonymous donations within the church in order to pay for the software called PowerChurch, which Rana will use to gather, store and update member information. She has downloaded the software and will soon begin the long, detailed process of putting all of our church's info into this program.

The Outreach Committee and I plan to go Christmas Caroling on the week before Christmas. Details will be announced. We'll have another community cleanup day here at the church in partnership with Green Saves Green on Saturday, Jan. 13<sup>th</sup> at 2pm. I hope that many will participate in either of these outreaches.

In December I will be mapping out next year's calendar of events, fundraisers and outreaches as well as making a gameplan on revisiting our Vision & Mission Statements along with reinstating cabinet meetings for 2024 in order to assure that each committee has what it needs to meet regularly and function accordingly.

God has surely blessed us in 2023 and I'm looking forward to a year of growth in 2024 with a couple new leaders on committees!

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

Before adjournment, Tom Sawyer expressed appreciation for Teresa Moore's leadership of the board this year. All agreed with a round of applause. There being no further business, Portia Copeland made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Melodi Robbins. Reverend Long dismissed with prayer.

*NT/erw*

## Martin Luther King Day Community Clean-Up

Saturday, January 13, 2:00 pm



Join us for another community clean-up day. Our last one was a great success. We welcome you to bring a friend. We'll walk the neighboring streets around the church and pick up debris and anything else we find. Most importantly, we'll hopefully get to meet our neighbors and share the love of Jesus.

### Finance Report November 2023

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

<b>Monthly Budget</b>	\$ 15,312
Budget Income	\$ 14,869
<b>Budget Shortage</b>	<b>\$ 443</b>
Expenses:	\$ 13,996
Designated Income	\$ 646
Designated Bills:	\$ 605
<b>Attendance:</b>	
Nov (4 Sundays)	51 avg
Children	6 avg
Nursery	1 avg
Open Gym:	14 avg
Bible Discussion:	7 avg

**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](http://fccec.org).

**Sample of One Week's Schedule**

- Thursday, December 28 – Isaiah 29
- Friday, December 29 – Isaiah 30
- Saturday, December 30 – Isaiah 31
- Sunday, December 31 – Day off
- Monday, January 1 – Isaiah 32
- Tuesday, January 2 – Isaiah 33
- Wednesday, January 3 – Isaiah 34

**Open Gym Basketball**  
Mondays 6:00 pm —7:30 pm  
**RETURNING Jan. 22nd**

Open Gym is an opportunity to spend time with our youth and have fun. The average attendance is 12 people plus area pastors are now joining us! A small devotion has been added. No registration is required.



Come any Monday except the first Monday of the month. Contact Pastor TJ at [minister@fccec.org](mailto:minister@fccec.org) for information.

**2024 FCC Leadership Service Schedule**

- Moderator** Tom Sawyer
- Vice Moderator** Teresa Moore
- Board Secretary** Nancy Tatum
- Treasurer** Portia Copeland
- Asst. Treasurer** Sandra Riggs
- Financial Secretary** Jean Etheridge
- Trustee** June Gibbs (2)  
Keith Sawyer (3)  
Vance Meads (1)

**Board Members**

- Martha Best
- Jeff Bush
- Portia Copeland
- Paula Crawford
- Betty Duncan
- Jean Etheridge
- June Gibbs
- Kathy Gray
- Gail Hobbs
- Jessica James
- Justin James
- Norma James
- Tommy James
- Travis James
- Joe Lassiter
- Sophia Martel
- Vance Meads
- Teresa Moore
- Joy Rhodes
- J.P. Rich
- Sandra Riggs
- Melodi Robbins
- Betty Sawyer
- Keith Sawyer
- Tom Sawyer
- Gene Scott
- Mary Ann Scott
- Nancy Tatum

**January, March, May, July, September, November**

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>Elders</b>                          | <b>Deacons</b>  | <b>Deaconess</b>  |
| Paula Crawford (2)<br>Joe Lassiter (2) | Nancy Tatum (3)*<br>Travis James (3)<br>Jessica James (3)<br>Sophia Martel (3)<br>Jeff Bush (2) | Martha Best (3)<br>Melodi Robbins (2)<br>(Betty Duncan) (1) |

**Committee Chairs**

- Education** Sandra Riggs
- Historian** Nancy Tatum
- Membership** Portia Copeland
- Memorial** Gail Hobbs
- Outreach** Joy Rhodes
- Property** Justin James
- Stewardship** Gene Scott
- Worship** Betty Sawyer

**February, April, June, August, October, December**

- |                                    |  |                                      |
|------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Elders</b>                      | <b>Deacons</b>   | <b>Deaconess</b>                     |
| Norma James (3)<br>Vance Meads (3) | Portia Copeland (2) **<br>J.P. Rich (2)<br>Tommy James (2)<br>Gene Scott (2)<br>Teresa Moore (3) | Kathy Gray (3)<br>Mary Ann Scott (2) |

**( ) Years of Service    \*Serves Choir**

**January 2024**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 <i>New Year's Day</i> <i>Office Closed</i>	2	3 5:45 pm Bible Discussion 7:00 pm Choir	4 12:00 pm CWF	5	6
7 ● 9:30am Worship Committee Mtg <i>Baptism of the Lord</i>	8 7:00 pm Board Meeting	9 12:00 pm Card Ministry	10 5:45 pm Bible Discussion 7:00 pm Choir	11 5:30-9:00 pm Social Hall Reserved	12	13 2:00 pm <i>Community Cleanup Day</i>
14 ● <i>Second Sunday after the Epiphany</i>	15 <i>Church Van Reserved</i>  <i>Martin Luther King Day</i> <i>(Office Closed)</i>	16	17 5:45 pm Bible Discussion 7:00 pm Choir	18 6:30pm CMF	19	20
21 ● <i>Third Sunday after the Epiphany</i>	22 6:00-7:30 pm Open Gym  <i>Newsletter Submission Deadline</i>	23 12:00 pm Card Ministry 7:00 pm Albemarle District Meeting (Williamston)	24 5:45 pm Bible Discussion 7:00 pm Choir	25	26	27 8:00-10:00am <i>Applejack &amp; Biscuit Sale</i>
28 ● <i>Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany</i>	29 6:00-7:30 pm Open Gym	30	31 5:45 pm Bible Discussion 7:00 pm Choir	<i>SAVE THE DATE:</i> <i>Sunday, Feb 11, Super Bowl Party</i>  <b>NEAAAT Gymnasium Schedule:</b> Mondays -3:30pm-5:00 pm Tuesday-Friday 4:00 pm-7:00 pm		

**Albemarle District Meeting and Coat Drive**

**Tuesday, January 23, 2024 | Dinner at 7:00 pm (\$10)**  
**First Christian Williamston**

Let's spread the warmth of God's love by collecting new or gently used coats for the Salvation Army. Bring them to our district worship and business meeting on Tuesday, January 23rd, at First Christian Williamston, 101 E Liberty Street, Williamston, NC 27892 (252-792-3625). A sign-up sheet will be available in the foyer to sign-up to ride. Inquiries? Contact Portia Copeland.