

First Christian Church
800 Beech Street
Elizabeth City, NC 27909

Newsletter
FEBRUARY 2024

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FEBRUARY 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



HELP US FIGHT HUNGER!
Bring your
non-perishable
food donations or a
special offering
February 4-11

For inquiries, call/text
the church office at
252-338-6506 or
contact Joy Rhodes.

Happy February, FCC Family!

What's the first thing you think about when February rolls around? I think about the Super Bowl, but I can tell you that corporate America wants you to be thinking about flowers, candy, expensive dinners and teddy bears. But what's the real story of Valentine's Day? Father Frank O'Gara of Whitefriars Street Church in Dublin, Ireland, can enlighten us.

"Saint Valentine was a Roman priest during the reign of Emperor Claudias who persecuted the church between 268-270 AD," Father O'Gara explains. "He had a law that prohibited the marriage of young people. Claudias believed that unmarried soldiers fought better than married soldiers because married soldiers might be afraid of what might happen to them, their wives or families if they died."

"We also must consider the society in which Valentine lived," says Father O'Gara. "Polygamy was much more popular than monogamy. Yet, in those days, the Christian faith was attractive to the younger generations. Obviously, the church championed monogamy but it presented the problem to the Christian church of what to do about this." It seemed that St. Valentine had to choose between honoring the Emperor or God.

The choice was simple. St. Valentine began secretly marrying young couples in spite of the law prohibiting him to do so." Valentine was eventually caught, imprisoned and tortured for performing these ceremonies. St. Valentine's time in prison is where the story gets a little fuzzy. "One of the judges who was charged to deem St. Valentine's fate was a man named Asterius, whose daughter was blind. Legend has it that St. Valentine prayed with and healed the young girl with such astonishing effect that Asterius himself became a Christian."

In 269 AD, Valentine was sentenced to a three part execution of a beating, stoning, and decapitation all because of his stand for Christian marriage. The story goes that the last words he wrote were in a note to Asterius' daughter. He inspired today's romantic love letters by signing it, "from your Valentine."

Valentine's martyrdom did not go unnoticed by the public. He became known as the "patron saint of lovers." However, I believe he, like Daniel, like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego should be better known for their bravery to do what is right in the face of sure death.

O'Gara concludes, "if Valentine were here today, he would say to married couples that there comes a time when you're going to have to suffer. It's not going to be easy to maintain your commitment and your vows in marriage. Don't be surprised if the 'gushing' love that you have for someone changes to something less "gushing" but maybe much more mature."

I love that story. So, if you're in need of something to do with your significant other, there's actually two events that we are hosting on Valentine's week. We're having our annual Super Bowl party on Sunday, February 11, at 6:00 pm. We'll have heavy hors d'oeuvres and awesome door prizes that only first-time visitors can win.

Secondly, to kick off the Easter season, we'll have an Ash Wednesday service (on Valentine's Day, the 14th), which is one of my favorite services of the year. It's a short mid-day service (at noon) where we'll offer a to-go lunch for anyone that needs to head back to work afterwards.

In conclusion, I pray that each of you have a blessed February, that you feel the love that was offered for you on the cross of Calvary. Join us for a party and in celebrating the Easter Season and, of course, your loved ones are always invited.

Your Pastor & Friend,

Rev. T.J. Long, Jr.

Rev. T.J. Long, Jr.
First Christian Church
of Elizabeth City



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

JANUARY 2024 BOARD REPORT

The official board of First Christian Church met in the Fellowship Classroom on Jan. 8, 2024, at 7:00 PM. Tom Sawyer, newly elected moderator, called the meeting to order and opened with prayer. Our pastor and 14 board members were present. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Portia Copeland provided the December check register and account balances as of Dec. 31, 2023. A chart was provided to compare the 2023 budget with the expenditures. It showed that the offerings of our congregation met our 2023 financial needs. Our chairman thanked Portia for the uplifting report, and Sandra Riggs thanked Portia for her hard work in gathering all the data.

WORSHIP REPORT: The Worship Committee met on Jan. 7 to organize for the new year. The 2024 committee members are: Bill & Linda Ross; Tammy & Keith Sawyer; J.P. Rich; Paula Crawford; Roberta Williamson; Melodi Robbins; Nina Gregory; Teresa Moore; Tom Sawyer; Pastor T.J. Long; and Betty Sawyer. During this meeting the group organized Laity Week. The first official meeting of the committee will take place on Jan. 21 with lunch provided by Tammy & Keith Sawyer. *Betty Sawyer, Worship Chairperson*

EDUCATION REPORT: Sandra reported that a meeting of the committee with the pastor is scheduled in the next few weeks. *Sandra Riggs, Education Chairperson*

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE: The church Christmas Dinner was held on Dec 9, 2023. There were an estimated 50 people in attendance. Everyone brought gifts for the shut-ins at Brookdale Assisted Living and Waterbrooke in lieu of exchanging gifts. The gifts were delivered to the facilities.

A breakfast sale is scheduled for Jan. 27. Signup sheets for orders are on the lobby table. Anyone who wants to help is welcome and appreciated.

Portia Copeland, Membership Chairperson

OUTREACH COMMITTEE: We are in the process of getting committee members in place for the 2024 year. On Jan. 4, the Food Bank delivered food for the backpack program. Outreach is scheduled to meet Jan. 9 to bag the food for the backpacks to be delivered to the school on Jan. 11.

Joy Rhodes, Outreach Chairperson

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE: No report

PROPERTY COMMITTEE: Justin was thanked for already beginning his new chairmanship by changing light bulbs.

Justin James, Property Chairman

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE: Gail Hobbs sent her report stating that four memorials were given in the month of December.

ELDERS: June Gibbs reports that the elders met in December.

DEACONS: No report

DEACONESSES: It was reported that new pumps have been ordered for use in preparing communion.

CMF: Thirteen men attended the December meeting. The next one will be on Jan. 18. On Jan. 23 the Albemarle District Meeting will be at 7:00 PM at First Christian Church in Williamston. *J.P Rich, CMF President*

CWF/ DWM: CWF had a Christmas party on Dec. 15, at the home of Roberta Williamson. There were 10 ladies present.

CWF had a regular meeting on Jan. 4 with nine ladies present. We opened with the CWF prayer. June Gibbs, treasurer, gave her report. Members approved a motion to purchase new baby kits for Church World Services in honor of each newborn in our church. It was also discussed that other types of CWS kits for the coming year might be built. A final decision will be made at the next meeting.

"Souper Bowl" food and/or cash donations will be collected on Feb. 4 & 11. Week of Compassion soup lunch will take place on Feb. 25. CWF will work with Outreach to plan this luncheon.

Saturday, Jan. 27, is the next breakfast sale. Helpers are encouraged to come on Saturday morning at 6:30 A.M. We will start serving at 8:00 A.M.

Nancy Tatum led the "Just Women" study on "Play, Pray, Rest and Work: A Recipe for Self-Care" with scripture from Mark 6: 30-32. We closed the meeting with the CWF benediction. *Portia Copeland, CWF President*

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: Our pastor again suggested donating our unused Bibles to Christ Episcopal Church for use in their chapel. Several other donation possibilities were explored but none seemed feasible. Gene Scott moved to donate them to Christ Church and the motion was seconded by Teresa Moore. The motion passed with a show of hands.

NEW BUSINESS: A suggestion was made regarding new candlelighters with bell snuffers. The acolytes have had a difficult time lighting the candles as the wax is building up in the ones we have had for approximately 4-6 years. Teresa

February Birthdays

2	Ann Turner	15	Tabitha Simpson
	Pastor Donald Waltz		Dustin Riggs
3	Frank Albert	17	Caleb Gibbs
	Clay Etheridge	19	Phil Martel
4	Jeremy Lassiter	21	Samantha Warden
5	Gabrielle Anne Wall	22	Susan Beals
6	Carlton Berry		Erin Riggs
7	Jodi Cobb		Jerad Carter
	Malachi Cartwright	23	Morgan Stevens
9	June Melvin	25	Darian Meads
10	Tommy Copeland		Michelle Wall
	Adley Weatherly	26	Kolton Stevens
12	Debbie Pipkin Foster		Beverly Blocker
	Ken Pipkin	28	Frank Wall
14	Justin James	29	Kelly G. Mitchell

February Anniversaries

13	Bill & Dollie Summerour
15	Kevin & Christie Bray
16	Jeff & Teresa Lassiter

Serving in February

Elder: Vance Meads, Norma James

Deacons: Portia Copeland, J.P. Rich,
Tommy James, Gene Scott,
Teresa Moore

Deaconesses: Kathy Gray, Mary Ann Scott

Greeters:

Feb 4 Roberta Williamson,
Gene & Mary Ann Scott
Feb 11 Justin & Ashley James
Feb 18 Jeff & Teresa Moore
Feb 25 Arlene & Larry Bruce

Acolytes:

Feb 4 Ryland & Lilly
Feb 11 Ava & Asher
Feb 18 Jessie & James
Feb 25 Allie & Morgan

Altar Flowers

Feb 4 — The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in memory of Mr. & Mrs. W.E. "Mutt" Scott, and Mr. & Mrs. James E. White, Sr. by the Nina Gregory family and the Mr. & Mrs. Eugene Scott family.

Feb 11 — The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in memory of H. Alvin Arnold on the occasion of his February 3rd birthday by his wife, Bonnie Arnold.

The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Shelton E. "Poss" Bunch by his daughters Bonnie and Carolyn.

The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of our Aunt Juanita Flood Del Vecchio on her birthday by Judy McKenzie and Nancy Tatum.

Feb 18 — The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of the birthday of Mrs. Selma Scott and in memory of Diane Flowers, by the Jimmy Flowers family.

Feb 25 — The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of the birthday of "Mutti" Wilma Williams Flood by her children, grandchildren and great-children.

The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Hilda and Henry Schanding, by Janet Oller and Michelle Hopkins.

Open Gym Group Attends Game

Our Open Gym group was given an opportunity to catch a Washington Wizards NBA game in Washington, DC, on Monday, January 15th. They had a great time traveling out of town, seeing the game and enjoying a little bit of snow as well.



First Christian Church presents **THE BIG GAME**

PARTY

SUNDAY, FEB 11

6:30 PM

**BRING AN APPETIZER
TO SHARE!**



Open Gym Basketball Mondays 6:00 pm — 7:30 pm

Open Gym is an opportunity to spend time with youth from our community 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@fcec.org for information.



Moore moved to purchase three new ones. Betty Sawyer seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Another point of discussion was about members who have recently transferred or joined our church and whether or not we present baptismal and/or membership certificates. We do record baptisms and transfers in our files. There was some discussion, however, about the ways we record such important events in the life of the church. One member emphasized that we should always have it written in our membership books as well as the digital records.

MINISTER'S REPORT: This report covers accomplishments in December and plans for January. Pastor T.J. made 11 pastoral visits in December.

The gym was closed in December but will reopen on Jan. 22. Pastor Daniel Spence and Pastor T.J. will be taking 13 Open Gym students to an NBA game in Washington, DC, free of charge! The tickets were purchased by Terry Long. The Pastors will cover the cost of the meals.

The new basketball backboards have been delivered and Dunavant's Steel will be installing them sometime soon. The installation will not interfere with NEAAT's use of the gym.

Our Bible Discussion is reading through the books of 2 Kings, Psalms and Isaiah with about six in attendance.

On Dec. 20, we had 25 come out for our annual Christmas caroling hayride. The trailer, decorations and towing were provided by Jeremy & Brittany Lassiter. Bill & Linda Ross volunteered to prepare cookies and hot chocolate.

The gift from Guy C. Long of our new NIV Large Print pew Bibles were used for the first time on Sunday, Dec. 31!

We added three new members to the church: Arlene Bruce, Larry Bruce and Cecil Speight. Pastor T.J. anticipates a few new members to join within the next month or two, as well.

We have confirmed that Green Saves Green will be here to provide all the cleanup supplies we'll need for our Community Cleanup on Jan. 13.

Pastor T.J. plans to meet with the chairs of the Membership and Education committees regarding 2024. He has already met with Outreach and will meet with Worship on Jan. 21.

Pastor T.J. is in the process of revisiting our Vision and Mission statements as well as reinstating cabinet meetings for 2024 to ensure that each committee has what it needs to meet regularly and function accordingly.

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

There being no further business, a motion was made by Portia Copeland to adjourn followed by a second by Gene Scott. Pastor Long dismissed us in prayer.

Minutes submitted by Nancy Tatum, Board Secretary

NT/erw

2023 Financial Report

Budget	Income Received		
4001 Tithes	\$163,272.17		
4001 Credit Card	\$4,803.50		
4002 Loose Money	\$7,463.52		
4003 Sunday School	\$0.00		
4006 Facility Use	\$4,970.21		
Total Budget Income	\$180,509.40		
Designated Income	Received	Paid Out	Fund Balance
1052 Building Fund	\$2,328.00	\$1,750.00	\$1,070.37
1055 Water Well Project	\$12,058.05	\$12,058.85	\$0.00
1055 Local Outreach Fund	\$7,577.76	\$7,059.36	\$4,157.16
1055 Angel Tree	\$723.00	\$688.99	\$34.01
1056 Memorial Fund	\$555.40	\$404.07	\$6,201.54
1056-01 Memorial Garden Fund	\$0.00	\$274.48	-\$718.94
1057 Organ Fund	\$165.00	\$980.00	\$4,607.31
1058 Choir Fund	\$25.00	\$50.00	\$2,951.29
1059 Permanent Endowment	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$450.00
1061 Youth Fund	\$2,525.00	\$659.52	\$5,822.85
4020 Altar Flowers	\$1,517.00	\$1,460.00	\$57.00
4025 Week of Compassion	\$17,191.66	\$16,991.66	\$200.00
4026 Pentecost Offering	\$325.00	\$325.00	\$0.00
4027 Easter Fund	\$370.00	\$370.00	\$0.00
4028 Mother's Day	\$580.00	\$580.00	\$0.00
4029 Father's Day	\$537.00	\$537.00	\$0.00
4030 Thanksgiving Fund	\$397.00	\$0.00	\$397.00
4031 Christmas Fund	\$105.00	\$190.00	\$100.00
4035 Reconciliation Fund	\$235.00	\$235.00	\$0.00
Total Designated Funds	\$47,214.87	\$44,613.93	\$25,329.59
TOTAL Income	\$227,724.27		

Wednesday Night Bible Discussion

5:45-6:45 pm Church Library

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, February 1 – Isaiah 53
 Friday, February 2 – Isaiah 54
 Saturday, February 3 – Isaiah 55
 Sunday, February 4 – Day off
 Monday, February 5 – Isaiah 56
 Tuesday, February 6 – Isaiah 57
 Wednesday, February 7 – Isaiah 58



The season of Lent is one of two important seasons of the Church year. Whereas Advent leads up to the birth of Christ, Lent marks the final days of Jesus' life and ministry. The season lasts for forty days, from Ash Wednesday until Holy Saturday (the day before Easter).

Lent is known for expressions of penitence, humility, and sorrow. This is because of the association made between the crucifixion of Christ and human sinfulness. One example of such expression is the placing of ashes on the foreheads of believers on Ash Wednesday. Throughout the time of Lent, sacrificial choices are emphasized. Such choices may include dietary changes, giving to the poor, or relinquishing personal luxuries. With the coming of Easter, there is a shift from remorse to joy. Jesus, who died for our sins, is triumphant over sin. God's people are granted a reprieve and a new covenant.

1 Copied from Disciples Home Missions Ministries Resources



Join us as we celebrate Ash Wednesday on February 14, at 12 noon, with the placing of ashes. There will be a sandwich lunch that can be eaten in or taken away as your day dictates. Let's take time to set our hearts on the season of sacrifice to prepare for the season of redemption and salvation. Bring a friend or co-worker with you!



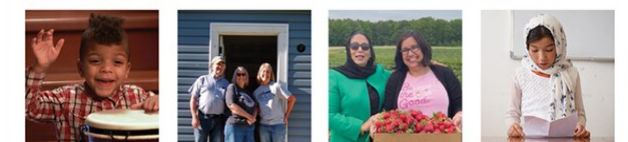
Week of Compassion Special Offering 2024

GIFTS TO LIVE ON

[Jesus] looked up and saw rich people putting their gifts into the treasury; he also saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. He said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them, for all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on." Luke 21:1-4, NRSVue

February 18 & 25, 2024

Lunch will be served after our worship service on Sunday, February 25th.



Map of the geographic locations that were blessed by the donations given during the Week of Compassion in 2023.

February 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
NEAAAT Gymnasium Schedule: Mondays –3:30pm–5:00 pm Tuesday-Friday 4:00 pm-7:00 pm Facility Use Agreement ends Tuesday, Feb 16, 2024				1 12:00 pm CWF Camp Caroline Registration Begins	2	3
4 ● Souper Bowl of Caring Worship Comm Lunch Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany	5 7:00 pm Board Meeting	6	7 5:45 pm Bible Discussion 7:00 pm Choir	8 5:30 pm –9:00 pm Social Hall Reserved	9	10
11 ● 6:00 pm Super Bowl Party Souper Bowl of Caring Transfiguration Sunday	12 6:00-7:30 pm Open Gym	13 12:00 pm Card Ministry	14 12:00 pm Ash Wednesday Service 5:45 pm Bible Discussion 7:00 pm Choir <i>Ash Wednesday Valentine's Day</i>	15 6:30pm CMF	16	17
18 ● Week of Compassion Special Offering First Sunday in Lent	19 6:00-7:30 pm Open Gym <i>President's Day</i>	20	21 5:45 pm Bible Discussion 7:00 pm Choir	22 Social Hall: Food Bank	23 Social Hall: Food Bank	24 Social Hall: Food Bank
25 ● Week of Compassion Special Offering Soup after Service Second Sunday in Lent	26 6:00-7:30 pm Open Gym	27 12:00 pm Card Ministry	28 5:45 pm Bible Discussion 7:00 pm Choir	29 Leap Day	Next Month: Pancake & Sausage Breakfast Saturday, March 9	