

First Christian Church
800 Beech Street
Elizabeth City, NC 27909

Newsletter
APRIL 2024

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Guest Minister to Speak Sunday, April 7th



Reverend Mary H. Williams is currently a supply minister and Regional Elder with Christian Church Disciples of Christ. She also serves as an associate minister with Red Hill Missionary Baptist Church and a team member with Community Clergy for ECU Health. Reverend Williams has ministered in the Christian Church for more than 35 years in various capacities, including pastor. Her faith foundation is built on Jesus Christ as Lord. She retired in 2009 after a successful 35+ year career in education. Reverend Mary is an active community volunteer and provides administrative support to several non-profit organizations that help senior citizens and youth. She loves AAU youth basketball and serves on her son's team as a chaperone and mentor. Reverend Williams resides in Tarboro, North Carolina, with her husband Jonah. The couple has three adult children, one daughter-in-law, two sons-in-law, and six grandchildren.

Don't miss her special visit with us, **Sunday, April 7th**.

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APRIL 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

Dear FCC Family!

You may read this after April 1 but I still thought it would be fun to share with you one of the proposed origins of the April Fools Day holiday.

Although not universally heralded, one popular theory suggests that April Fools' Day dates back to 1582 when France switched from the Julian calendar (which celebrated the new year immediately after Easter) to the Gregorian calendar which is what we currently use. The news of the change traveled slowly through Europe. For some, in the rural areas, the news took a couple of years to spread.

People who were slow to get the news or failed to recognize that the start of the new year had moved to January 1 became the butt of jokes and were called "April fools." These pranks included having paper fish placed on their backs and being referred to as "poisson d'avril" (April fish), said to symbolize a young, easily caught fish (gullible person).

April Fools' Day spread throughout Britain during the 1700s. The tradition became a two-day event, starting with "hunting the gowk," in which people were sent on phony errands (gowk is a word for cuckoo bird, a symbol for fool) and followed by Tailie Day, involving pranks played on people's derrieres, such as pinning fake tails or "kick me" signs on them.

Today productivity goes down all throughout the workforce as many people get in on the fun on April 1. Many a fake posts and promotions will go viral on that day, fooling many to think that a celebrity died or a "left-handed sandwich" is on sale (which was an actual Burger King prank promotion in 1998).

The word fool occurs in the Bible 182 times. However, the description of a fool had nothing to do with ignorance of the date or calendar. A common descriptor of a fool in the Old Testament is someone that doesn't do like they ought; whether they lie, break the rules, act carelessly, recklessly, etc. Those people can also deceive others, making the victim feel like a "fool."

Probably the most common descriptor of a fool is one that rejects God and wisdom. Psalm 14:1 says, "The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.'" Proverbs 12:15 states, "The way of fools seems right to them, but the wise listen to advice."

So it seems that the biblical definition is less about benign ignorance but intentional indignation. While blurring out insults or foolish talk can happen to anyone, it is far more common to those who have an issue with pride, authority and accountability. Why would someone say, "there is no God"? It could be out of ignorance but, more likely, it's out of an unwillingness to seek the truth. It's a lot easier to make your own rules than to bend to the law of Christ (to love God and others as yourself).

Ignorance isn't bliss but a platform for foolishness. Indignation is worse; guaranteeing foolishness and contempt towards God, humanity and nature. However, within the church, we don't pick on the ignorant or indignant. We don't belittle them or adhere metaphorical "kick me" signs on their backs. Why?

We were once foolish in God's eyes. We once thought we didn't need Christ. We once thought our way was the best.

As a church, we shouldn't be out to make fools of anyone (no matter how differently they act or believe). We're not about making fools but followers of Christ. The only way we can do that is to mirror the love, acceptance, mercy AND humility of Jesus. So, instead of fooling people on April Fools Day, let us consider how we can coax people to become followers every day! It is my job to continually inspire you to do so and give you opportunities to connect with the community to do so, as well.

Your Pastor & friend,

- T.J. Long, Jr., Minister
First Christian Church of
Elizabeth City
minister@fccec.org



FEBRUARY 2024 BOARD REPORT

The official board of First Christian Church met in the Fellowship Classroom on March 4, 2024, at 7:00 P.M. Tom Sawyer, moderator, called the meeting to order and led us in the Lord's Prayer. Our pastor and 12 board members were present. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Portia Copeland, treasurer, provided the February check register as well as account balances as of February 29, 2024.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE: I can report to you that we met and went over our yearly agenda. We talked about Palm Sunday and the cantata; Maundy Thursday, a service that Pastor Long has said is one of his favorites; and Easter Sunday. We checked with Ashley James to see if she wanted palms for the children. We decided on recognitions for Mother's Day and Father's Day. We did all of this, but we did not address the letters from Pastor Long concerning congregational engagement because he did not attend the meeting.

Betty Sawyer, Committee Chairperson

EDUCATION COMMITTEE: The board welcomed Ashley James as the new chairperson of the Education Committee. She has already been serving as the coordinator of Children's Church. Ashley has been working hard to prepare lessons for our youth that are often based on the same scripture as the pastor's sermon or that emphasize special events in the life of our community or denomination, such as Week of Compassion.

Ashley James, Committee Chairperson

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE: A Super Bowl party was held on Sunday, February 11th, with 10 people attending. Finger foods were brought by various attendees.

On February 25th, the committee set up for the Week of Compassion Soup Lunch. Four pots of soup were provided: vegetable beef by Martha Bundy, Tom Sawyer, and Teresa Lassiter; chicken noodle by Portia Copeland. Sandwiches were provided by Joy Rhodes (pimento cheese); Melodi Robbins (egg salad); and Jean Etheridge (peanut butter & jelly). Crackers were provided by Bill & Linda Ross. Tea, coffee and water were provided by membership.

Portia Copeland, Membership Chairperson

OUTREACH COMMITTEE: The Outreach Committee met on February 27th to sort and bag food for 116 backpacks. We also met afterwards to discuss the upcoming Parents' Night Out on March 23rd from 6:00-8:00 P.M. We confirmed our menu for feeding S.O.U.L.S. on March 31st. We are

planning on meeting with the director of the Boys & Girls Club to find out more about their need for volunteers. Also discussed were options for doing a "Morale Booster" for the staff of our sponsored school, Pasquotank Elementary, before Spring Break.

Thank you to the Outreach Committee and volunteers for your dedication and commitment. Those present this month were Arlene Bruce, Larry Bruce, Jean Etheridge, Teresa Moore, Melodi Robbins, & Helga Spruill. We hope to see Martha Best back soon in good health. Many thanks to our congregation for so generously contributing 170 pounds of food and \$375 in cash for this year's Souper Bowl of Caring.

Joy Rhodes, Outreach Chairperson

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE: No report

PROPERTY COMMITTEE: It was found that the hot water heater issue in the Fellowship Hall kitchen was a bad breaker in the outside panel box. It was repaired on February 9th by Gary Eure Plumbing. Also, Bert's Refrigeration provided a commercial refrigerator recharge with gas in the men's kitchen on February 29th.

Justin James, Property Chairman

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE: No report

ELDERS: No report

DEACONS: Thanks to all of the deacons who so willingly substitute when the assigned deacons are out of town.

Nancy Tatum, Head Deacon

DEACONESSES: No report

CMF: Eleven men attended the February meeting. The Sausage/Pancake Breakfast will be held on March 9th. The next CMF meeting is on March 21st.

J. P. Rich, CMF President

CWF: The CWF will meet on Thursday, March 7th at noon.

Portia Copeland, CWF President

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: A question was asked of the CMF president, J.P. Rich, about their offer of providing the five-gallon buckets for First Christian's Church World Service project of cleaning buckets for U.S and world disasters. He reported that 10 buckets have already been purchased by CMF funds and now we are ready to fill them.

NEW BUSINESS: The pastor announced that the service for Kenneth Shaw, Roberta Shaw Williamson's brother, will be held on March 9th at 1:00 at the Museum of the Albemarle. Pastor Long also shared that the children have raised

April Birthdays

4	Natalie Scott	18	Rhonda Kaden
7	Cameron Meads	18	Brittany Lassiter
9	Jeff Moore	18	Ray Raby
9	Kristina Mullen	21	John C. Lee
10	Jimmy Flowers	23	Kathy Gray
10	Holly Watts	23	Kelly Raper
11	Paul Miller	24	Jessica Flowers
12	Patricia Twiddy	24	F. C. Twiford
12	Hope Van Dalsum	25	Caleb Bray
16	Mary Ann Scott	29	Vance Meads
16	Gene Scott	30	Michelle Twiford

April Wedding Anniversaries

6	Tommy & Melissa Copeland
10	Keith & Tammy Sawyer
11	Jeff & Teresa Moore
20	Randy & Gwen Williams
23	Phil & Michelle Wall

Serving in April

Elder: Vance Meads, Norma James

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

Deaconesses: Kathy Gray, Mary Ann Scott

Greeters: April 7 Roberta Williamson,
Gene & Mary Ann Scott
April 14 Justin & Ashley James
April 21 Jeff & Teresa Moore
April 28 Arlene & Larry Broce

Acolytes: April 7 Lilly & Emily
April 14 Ryland & Zoey
April 21 Jessie & James
April 28 Allie & Morgan

Altar Flowers

April 7th—

The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in loving honor of Tommy and Melissa Copeland on their 23rd wedding anniversary.

The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Geneva Lewis by her daughter, Melodi Robins.

April 14th—

The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in loving honor of Keith and Tammy Sawyer on their 14th wedding anniversary.

The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in loving honor of Tommy's mother on the occasion of her birthday, by the Tommy and Melissa Copeland family.

April 21st—

The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Mr. & Mrs. W. P. Beals, Joey Oller and Henry & Hilda Schanding, by Stella Gallop.

The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Mr. & Mrs. William M. Norris, by Sandra and Darrell Riggs.

April 28th—

The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in loving honor of Jessica Flowers on the occasion of her birthday by her Granddaddy, Jimmy Flowers.

Gifts Given in Memoriam

In Memory of Ken Shaw by Jean Etheridge

In Memory of Kenneth Shaw by
Julian & Portia Copeland

In Memory of Margaret Scott by
Nina Gregory



**Week of
Compassion
Soup Luncheon**

March 25, 2024

Offerings Given in Lieu of Easter Lilies

In Memory of Kenneth & Ann Beals	Memorial Fund	By Steve & Chrissy Forbes
In Memory of Flora Bunch	Memorial Fund	By Steve & Chrissy Forbes
In Memory of Grover & Gentry Copeland	General Fund	By Julian & Portia Copeland
In Honor of Paula Crawford	Memorial Fund	By Tommy & Norma James
In Memory of Donald Etheridge	Memorial Fund	By Phil & Sophia Martel
In Honor of Jean Etheridge	Memorial Fund	By Phil & Sophia Martel
In Memory of Ludford & Mary Etheridge	Memorial Fund	By Donna J. Etheridge
In Memory of John L., Ora, & Calvin Forbes	Memorial Fund	By Steve & Chrissy Forbes
In Honor of Laura Glatz	Memorial Fund	By Cecil Speight
In Memory of Ray Hopkins	Memorial Fund	By Stella Gallop
In Honor of Kathryn James	Memorial Fund	By Tommy & Norma James
In Honor of Vance & Deloris Meads	Memorial Fund	By Tommy & Norma James
In Memory of Joe & Irene Morse	Memorial Fund	By Doris Daems & Mary Pritchard
In Memory of Albert Rhodes	Outreach Fund	By Joy Rhodes
In Memory of Albert Rhodes	Memorial Fund	By Steve & Chrissy Forbes
In Honor of Tammy Sawyer	Memorial Fund	By Caleb & Faith Bray; Keith Bray
In Memory of Doris Warden	Memorial Fund	By Tim & Brenda Warden
In Memory of Rudolph "Sonny" Warden	Memorial Fund	By Tim & Brenda Warden
In Memory of Rufus & Virginia White	General Fund	By Julian & Portia Copleand
In Memory of Eugene Williams	Memorial Fund	By Murlene Williams
Undisclosed	Undisclosed	By Franziska Spruill

a considerable amount of money this year for the Week of Compassion by filling their banks.

Tom Sawyer stated that NEAAAT's volleyball coach has asked to use the gym 4:00-7:00 on Wednesday nights.

Nina Gregory asked where the \$200 from Christ Episcopal Church (in appreciation for our gift of pew Bibles to their congregation) was placed. It was decided to put it in the Outreach account.

MINISTER'S REPORT: This report covers things accomplished in the month of February. I made 12 pastoral visits this past month.

Our Bible Discussion group is currently reading through the books of 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, Zephaniah and Jeremiah with an average of six in attendance each Wednesday.

On February 11, we had our annual Superbowl Party where we had plenty of food, door prizes and trivia with three visitors in attendance.

On February 14, Nina and I led an Ash Wednesday service with 22 in attendance. We were blessed with a meal prepared by the Membership Committee afterwards.

The new plexiglass basketball goals were installed by Duvanant's Steel of Camden on February 27th and 28th at a cost of \$1,650. We came under budget by \$265.22. The new goals will first be used for Open Gym next Monday, March 11th. We hope to reinvigorate attendance. Since having seven weeks off in December and the first three weeks of January, plus many were in the midst of their basketball seasons, we've only averaged three in attendance the past month. NEAAAT's coaches have told me that they plan to send their basketball players to Open Gym during the off season.

The Outreach Committee will be offering a Parent's Night Out; an opportunity for parents to receive two free hours of childcare for a date night, while the kids have a movie night with snacks here in the fellowship hall - all for free! This will happen on Saturday, March 23rd from 6-8pm. Teresa Moore, Arlene Bruce and I will volunteer.

I partnered with the Education Committee in helping the children of the church with a goal to raise \$200 for Week of Compassion. The final total submitted was \$228.07! Ashley James and I thanked the kids for their efforts by giving them all a selection of ice cream treats during Sunday's children church.

I will be preaching this coming Wednesday at noon for the Lenten series at Christ Episcopal Church. I've also been

invited by ECSU's choir to bring the word for one of their Holy Convocation services on Tuesday, March 26 at 7:30 pm.

In other news, we're excited that Ashley James joined First Christian Church on March 3rd. We're also pleased to announce that she will be serving as the Education Committee Chair with Sandra Riggs' blessing.

Just an FYI, I will taking a short vacation April 4-8 (although, I will be back in time for Open Gym Monday, the 8th) to visit my best friend, who is also a pastor from Elizabeth City, in Dallas, Texas.

For April there are a couple of opportunities for the congregation to serve. On Saturday, April 13th there's a Camp Caroline cleanup scheduled. Also, the Food Bank of the Albemarle's annual Sort-o-Rama will be on Saturday, April 20. Lastly, the date for the next Albemarle District/CMF meeting, which will be at our church, is still under consideration and will be announced as soon as it is decided.

Thank you very much for your support!

Your Pastor & Friend, 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.

Minutes submitted by Nancy Tatum, Board Secretary

NT/erw

Finance Report February 2024

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

Monthly Budget	\$ 15,312
Budget Income	\$ 11,579
Budget Shortage	\$ 3,733
Expenses:	\$ 7,606
Designated Income	\$ 4,536
Designated Bills:	\$ 1,230
Attendance:	
Jan (4 Sundays)	44 avg
Children	5 avg
Nursery	0 avg
Bible Discussion:	7 avg

April 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 7:00 pm Board Mtg	2	3 5:45 pm Bible Discussion 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	4 12:00 pm CWF Pastor TJ Vacation →	5	6
7 ○ Guest Minister: <i>Mary Williams, Regional Elder</i> Pastor TJ-Vacation Second Sunday of Easter	8 6:00-7:30 pm Open Gym Pastor TJ-Vacation	9 12:00 pm Card Ministry	10 5:45 pm Bible Discussion 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	11 5:30-9:00 pm Social Hall Reserved	12	13 Camp Caroline Clean-Up Day
14 ○ Third Sunday of Easter	15 6:00-7:30 pm Open Gym	16	17 5:45 pm Bible Discussion 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	18 12:00 pm CMF	19	20 Outreach: Food Bank Sort-a-Rama
21 ○ Fourth Sunday of Easter	22 6:00-7:30 pm Open Gym	23 12:00 pm Card Ministry 7:00 pm Roast Pork Dinner & District Meeting	24 5:45 pm Bible Discussion 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	25 Social Hall: Food Bank	26 Social Hall: Food Bank	27 Social Hall: Food Bank
28 ○ 12:00 pm Worship Committee Mtg Fifth Sunday of Easter	29 6:00-7:30 pm Open Gym	30				

SPRING FLING 2024



Albemarle District Meeting & CMF District Assembly Hosted by First Christian Church of Elizabeth City

First Christian Church in Elizabeth City is hosting the quarterly meeting of the Albemarle District and CMF District Assembly on **Tuesday, April 23**. Registration begins at 6:30 pm with a Roast Pork Dinner being served at 7 pm. The District meeting and CMF assembly will begin immediately following the dinner. Any of the congregation that would like to come are welcome.

Please join us! A sign-up sheet will be available in the lobby for those planning to attend.

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, April 4 – Jeremiah 27

Friday, April 5 – Jeremiah 28

Saturday, April 6 – Jeremiah 29

Sunday, April 7 – Day off

Monday, April 8 – Jeremiah 30

Tuesday, April 9 – Jeremiah 31

Wednesday, April 10 – Jeremiah 32

Special Leadership Meeting

There will be an Elders/Worship Committee meeting,

**Thursday, April 4th
at 6 p.m. in the sanctuary.**

The First Christian Board is invited to attend. An open discussion regarding the role of the Elders will be included. Inquiries regarding this meeting may be directed to Norma James.

Open Gym Basketball

Mondays 6:00 pm — 7:30 pm

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 for information.

Food Bank Sort-A-Rama

Saturday, April 20th

Contact Joy Rhodes, Outreach Chair, to join the fun. Last year we sorted bags of apples! We really did have great fellowship (and got a little exercise!). Join us!