

Fort Smith Disciple

First Christian Church, Fort Smith, Arkansas

December 7, 2011

First Christian Church
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Fort Smith, Arkansas 72903

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Church Staff

Rev. Randy Jay
 Senior Minister

Rev. Brad Kidder, Sr.
 Minister of Pastoral Care

Dianna Jackson
 Director of Music Ministry

Krista Mays
 Organist

Cathy Moser
 Financial Secretary

Randy Alexander
 Custodian

Barbara Brown
 Secretary

Connie Alexander
 Nursery Coordinator

Mission Statement

The mission of First Christian Church, Fort Smith, Arkansas is to lift up Jesus the Christ by:

- Enabling spiritual growth and deepened commitment, both individually and corporately;
- Developing a church family/community that is accepting and encouraging;
- Serving our community and the world through spiritual, physical, and emotional support; and,
- Reaching out in His name to the unchurched in our community.



2011 Good News of Great Joy!

The good news about the Christmas Offering is that it supports regional ministries in the nurture and establishment of congregations. One-hundred percent of the offering remains in the region.

Collectively we inspire the best in each other through our shared faith. May your Christmas offering strengthen our regional ministries so that we may sing Good News of Great Joy throughout the coming year. God Bless.



Help Prepare the Sanctuary this Saturday.

Our traditional Hanging of the Greens service is this Sunday, the third Sunday in Advent, and we need your help cutting and preparing the greenery this Saturday. Following the men's breakfast at 7:30, a group will leave around 8am to travel south of Paris to cut greenery (bring loppers!), and then a group will meet in the sanctuary at 1pm to prepare the

greenery. It's a big task and many are needed.

Also needed are folks to help Bruce prepare the poinsettias this Friday at 10am. Call Bruce if you can help.

Light Luncheon Following Worship

Bring your dish this Sunday for a lunch to follow our Hanging of the Greens service. Please bring sandwiches (last name A-I); soup (last name J-R); and desserts (last name S-Z).

Order Your Poinsettia!



It is a tradition at FCC to honor our loved ones with a Poinsettia Tree in our sanctuary. This year fifty-six plants will go into making our tree. Each plant can be reserved "in honor of" or "in memory of" someone special for \$8.00. When you send in your cash or check, please indicate the person being honored or remembered and who it is from. The tree will go up December 11, and on December 25, after worship, you may take your poinsettia(s) home. Call today!



Friendship Class Christmas Party

Saturday, December 10—6:30pm

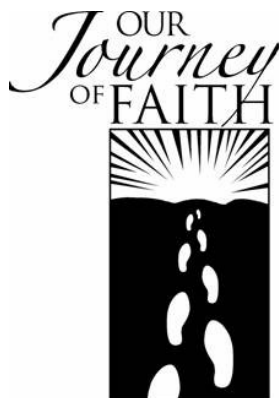
Home of Cliff & Ruth Carson

All past, present, and future members are invited.

Group 1 DWF will meet in the Parlor at 10am, December 13th for a cookie/candy exchange.

Group 2 DWF will meet at 1pm, December 13th in the home of Kaye Birkhead for a Christmas luncheon.

Group 3 DWF will meet Tuesday, December 13th in the parlor for their Christmas party. Bring your favorite, substantial finger food and a \$15.00 gift to be exchanged. A sitter will be provided, so everyone come and enjoy the fellowship! If you need the sitter, please contact the office so we will know how many children to expect.



From Your Pastor

David Steindle-Rast of “Spirituality and Health” magazine asks, “Does your view of God build you up? Does it give you courage to explore and be creative and make you open and welcoming to others, especially those who do not share your views? Or does what you have learned about God make you feel worthless, guilty, timid, or skeptical?” There are some forms of religious persuasion that promote the latter –guilt, fear, worthlessness.

Spiritual health actually depends on your God-view. In Greek the word “spirit” (New Testament) is a translation of “pneuma”, from the Latin it translates “life-breath”. Spirituality, then, may be defined as an aliveness, a vital unity of direction. Spiritual health and physical health are intricately connected. You cannot affect one without also affecting the other. Twentieth century theologian, Paul Tillich, called it the Ground of our Being.

However, as the author points out, the prevailing notion of God in our culture stresses not grounding but separation. God is seen as an all-powerful Super-Someone over and against us. “He” is somehow “over there”, while we are “over here”. God is understood as transcendent but not imminent. Yet there are some newer understandings of God (God constructs) that claim both transcendence and imminence, God both present from without and from within. This is a new, transforming image of God.

Jesus offers us a way of being healed by this transforming God construct. As a healer, a mystic who taught in parables, his God construct flowed from his mystical experience in a way that sought to transform that society which was based on oppressive conflict, competition, limited goods and on a purity system that alienated much of that population. Our spiritual and physical well-being is dependent upon our God-view, our God construct. Essentially, what we believe matters. But more importantly, how we behave and practice the faith based on what that faith informs us, is vital.

Advent Blessings, Randy

Spirit Talk

1 John 5:4 “For whatever is born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith.”

The cornerstone of Christian faith is the unmerited, immeasurable love of God released by Jesus through His death on the cross. His unconditional obedience to God released a truth we see in one of His last words, “It is finished.” Christ became the victor and ever-present, all-powerful conduit for God’s love that overcomes the problems of this world.

Jesus, through His sacrifice, gives access to peace and joy that overcomes things that appear as if they are going to overwhelm us. Isn’t it a profound experience to be uplifted by the peace and joy radiating from His followers as they face tribulation and distress?

We are more than conquerors through Him in all things and in the midst of them. The experiences of our lives, be they terrible or monotonous, are impotent before the love of God released by Christ Jesus our Lord. Faith is the means, the instrument, and the spiritual shield that consecrates hearts and releases the power to overcome when the world obtains sway and dominion.

It is through the indwelling Spirit that we experience the grace greater that overcomes “*he who dwells in the world.*” Faith looks beyond and presses us toward heaven. We must, through Christ and His example, overcome the world or it will overcome us. *John 16:33 “I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!”*

**Third Sunday
in Advent**



Advent Calendar

This beautiful, unfolding season of Advent continues this Sunday and continues for the following two weeks. Liturgically, Advent is important as a season of preparation, expectancy and anticipation of the coming of the Christ child.

Our worship will take on a somewhat different look and feel as we light the four candles of the Advent Wreath representing Love, Peace, Hope and Joy. On Christmas Eve we light the Christ candle, at the center of the Advent Wreath. We hope you will join us as often as you can for various Advent activities. We plan also to post in this newsletter ongoing scheduled events, worship services, giving opportunities.

- ◆ December 9—10am: Help prepare the poinsettias for worship.
- ◆ December 10—8am - Gathering of the Greens - need lots of help!
1pm—Preparing the Greens
- ◆ December 11—Third Sunday of Advent - Price family lights Hope candle; Hanging of the Greens service; light fellowship lunch of soup, sandwiches and Christmas desserts. Poinsettia tree will be arranged this Sunday, so please call to reserve your poinsettia soon.
- ◆ December 18—Fourth Sunday of Advent - Foster family lights Joy candle;
One worship service with Christmas Cantata at the 10:45 service.
- ◆ December 24—6pm - Christmas Eve Communion service; Struble/Hanson family lights Christ candle.
- ◆ December 25—10am - One worship service (No Sunday school classes)
- ◆ January 1—10am—One worship service (No Sunday school classes)

At The Table - December

Elders

Danny Lynch & Bruce Birkhead

Deacons

Randy Alexander (leader),
Darlene Brees, Linda Creekmore,
Jack Jackson II, Barbara Lynch,
Dan Marshall, Marilyn Maxey,
Regina Respass, LaBeth Riggs

Greeters

Dan Marshall, Marilyn Maxey, LaBeth Riggs

Volunteers for December 11

Worship Leader

Danny Lynch

Van Drivers

Harold & Audrey Stewart

Church Calendar

Sunday, December 11

Hanging of the Greens
3rd Sunday of Advent—Hope
Christmas Special Offering
9am: Youth Mission Café
Noon: Fellowship Lunch
4pm: Youth Ministry
4:30pm: Disciples Bells
6pm: Youth & Children's Music
6pm: Cabinet
6:45: Ministries

Monday, December 12

10am: Ladies' Bible Study
11:30 Staff Christmas Lunch

Tuesday, December 13

9am: Staff Meeting
Disciples Women's Groups
10am: Group 1 (Parlor)
1pm: Group 3(Home of Kaye Birkhead)
6pm: Group 3 (Parlor)

Wednesday, December 14

5:30pm: "Advent Spiritual Awakenings"
7pm: Chancel Choir

Dianna's Notes

Disciples Bells will meet in the sanctuary at 9am to rehearse.



Music in December

December 11—Disciples Bells
December 18—Children's Chimes &
Jubilation Bells
December 24—Disciples' Bells
December 25—Disciples' Bell Quintet

For The Record—December 4

Operating	\$	11,128.35
To Date	\$	11,128.35
Building	\$	2,604.00
To Date	\$	2,604.00

Lectionary Readings

For the week of December 11

Isaiah 61.1-4, 8-11

Psalm 126

I Thessalonians 5.16-24

John 1.6-8, 19-28

Mission Express O Café

The café opens at 9am each Sunday morning. All the proceeds support the Youth Mission trips. Setup **begins at 8:30am Sunday.** **Come join us for fellowship and a cup of coffee.**

This week's menu will feature:

Beignets, coffee, cappuccino, and fresh fruit.

Community Service Clearinghouse

requests donations of MACARONI AND CHEESE and/or BOXED POTATOES, such as Au Gratin or Scalloped for November and December. A box for donations is across from the church offices.

Prayer Concerns

- **Brooxine Kidder** went home from the hospital earlier in the week. Also continue to remember her and Brad's son-in-law, **Jeff Courtway**, in your thoughts and prayers.
- **Bill Sullivan and Dewaine Moncier** were admitted to Sparks earlier in the week.

Christmas Library News

The books I'm reading now are all recipe books. Christmas is coming, and the display case will have many Christmas books for devotions and just Christmas stories. We even have Dickens' *Christmas Carol*. With all the excitement and work getting ready for family time, I get caught with an "unexpected time of joy". I believe this is my gift from God. (It's also the title of a book by C. S. Lewis, which is not about Christmas but might be on your "to read" list).

Come check it out.

Gerre Walker



Thank you to everyone who rang the bell for the Salvation Army.

Linda Creekmore,
Community Outreach Director