



FOCUS

Still Saying Yes to God! A Century of Faith, Love and Service 1915-2015

March 24, 2017

1200 East Boulevard • Charlotte, NC 28203 • Tel: 704 334-3771
9:45 a.m. Sunday School • 11:00 a.m. Worship Service



Holy Week

Palm Sunday

April 9th at 11:00 am

Maundy Thursday

April 13th at 7:00 pm
 First Christian Church

Good Friday

April 14 at 7:00 pm
 SouthPark Christian Church
 6650 Park South Drive, Charlotte, NC 28210

Easter Sunrise

April 16th at 8:00 am
 at First Christian Church

Easter Sunday

April 16th
 Worship at 11:00 am

CMF BBQ

April 21st and 22nd
 11:00 am ~ 7:00 pm or until sold out.

Easter Hydrangea

Once again this year we will be filling our sanctuary during the Easter season with the beauty of Hydrangeas. Help us create a stunning sight while also honoring and remembering individuals who are important to you.

To purchase a Hydrangeas in honor or memory of someone, please fill out the following information and place it, along with \$16 per Hydrangeas (cash or check) in the box in the entryway to the sanctuary. Contact Chip Givens with any questions.

Deadline April 2nd



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W e l c o m e Marie Graham our New Minister of Music!

Marie comes to us highly
recommended . . .



New Minister of Music
of First Christian Church

48 Credits toward DMA in Music
Education at Boston University

M.A. Education/Curriculum &
Instruction Lesley University,
Cambridge, MA

Bachelor of Arts Music Education,
choral emphasis
Hartt School of Music, University of
Hartford, West Hartford, CT

Certifications & Memberships
NC - K-12 Music, previously CT, MA,
VT, & SC

Active Member of NAfME & OAKE

Certificate in Music Education.
K-12th grade

Currently Choral Music Teacher,
CMS, Albemarle Road Middle School
2016 to present

Music Director/Conductor/Worship
Leader, 2006 - 2014
at Mill Grove United Methodist Church

What Is a Future Story?

On March 19th, a team that has been hard at work presented a vision for the future of the church, a Future Story. Before March 19th, many of you have been involved in the efforts of the church to look to revitalization through our denominational HOPE Partnership's New Beginnings program. We met with an Assessor, Peter Wells, who wrote a report. A Trainer came to visit us and work with a group of leaders of small home groups that would meet over the course of three or four months. Those leaders then came together to decide how to proceed. The decision was, rather than try to flesh out one of the three future stories given to us in the report, to instead craft our own Future Story. A team was put together, the Board voted for the team to act, and the team was brought forward for a blessing in worship one Sunday last spring. This team consisted of Julie Bogguss, Alan Holmes, Steve Clifton, Zoë Macomber, Karen Artz, and Rev. Jolin McElroy. The process included: prayer, some bible study, interviews with area leaders (for example, city planners, a leader from our school system, local police, a social work executive, and Dilworth neighborhood leadership), digging into the research provided by our Assessor, digging into the feedback provided by those small home groups, and dreaming of what could be--all the while asking for God's direction.

The main questions before us were: 1) What would make our church more sustainable into the future? 2) What would make our church more faithful--to its unique identity and to Jesus' call? And 3) How would we bring a message of God's love to people who are not yet part of this church--or who might never step across the threshold of most churches? Our Future Story is not a stone tablet delivered by God, but still we believe it has been sparked by and shaped by the Holy Spirit at work in our prayers, conversations, study, and dreaming. Some parts of it will be embraced quickly, and other parts will take some time and discussion, and still other parts might never come to fruition as we envisioned it--a lot depends on what happens as we try it on.

After the Future Story was presented last week, some people were really excited. Others were quiet, but mulling it over. And still others were uncomfortable with it all. These reactions are healthy and expected. Change always sparks controversy. The question is . . . What will we do next?

An aspect of the Future Story that I would hope is not at all controversial is the reinvigoration of the Weekly Prayer Group. The last time our congregation did something bold and faithful that was clearly led by God was when we were praying together weekly. If you read the Story and you love it, if you read the Story and you're frustrated by it, please consider being part of this prayer group. We believe clarity and strength will come to this church with a group praying for the future here. We are providing that Future Story here in this issue of the Focus so everyone can have some time to think and to process it. There will be plenty of conversations about this (both formal and informal!)--including this Sunday, March 26th during worship and afterward during the Board Meeting. Please approach it with an open mind and heart. . .

Future Story

March 2017

In your corner, on God's corner . . .

It's New Year's Day 2021 and First Christian Church, Charlotte has truly grown into its mission to love as Christ loves. A small group has gathered to get things ready for the baptism in a few days. A young man who has become a significant part of the church has, as he says, "Decided to take the plunge!" He found First Christian Church because people involved with the church kept showing up on his doorstep. He was one of the young people who came through Behailu Academy, the group home next door on East Blvd. First, the pastor came by offering to draw portraits of the residents there. And then, it was the Sunday School Class surprising them with Duck Donuts one Sunday morning. Sometimes, people from the church had come over to help with life skills--like how to interview for a job. Other times, people from the church came over just to ask how they were doing. The church just wouldn't give up. For James, who had seen too many people give up on him, this was a sign from God. So here he was, helping the church members pick up scattered leaves from leftover poinsettias from last week's Christmas services and clean out the baptistery in preparation for becoming part of a family like none he had ever known. He was working on his GED and had a plan to become a mechanic. James had a knack for fixing mechanical things, but hadn't quite known how to make his life work. That is, until recently. First Christian Church was a big part of that. He didn't fit into the traditional church service, but he was being baptized in that Sunday morning gathering. He had come to learn that this church was consistent in its desire to "love as Jesus loved," whichever group they interacted with. And he realized he really liked the way Jesus loved.

When the prayer group took on its weekly gatherings again, James wasn't on the minds of the members. For years, the prayer group met on Saturdays once a month. But eventually, realizing that the last time the church found renewed vigor and growth, the prayer group had been mostly a weekly gathering, leaders in the church decided to make the prayer group a weekly occurrence. It was a search for focus, for finding and serving the desires of the heart of God. During that prayer group, baptisms came up, those who really needed God in their lives, and a lot of other things--like an Open Table Service, a service that expanded beyond the altar and the formal presentation of the Lord's supper. Little did those praying realize the power in the prayers they were praying. Little did those praying expect God to be partnering with them and their visions for the future in such a palpable way.

The church began its unusual gathering, this one around the Sunday dinner hour, called "The Open Table." The community met in the sanctuary and ate at long tables joined together. The food was simple fare: soup and homemade bread. It started out once a quarter, then graduated to once per month. Now, in 2021, it was meeting weekly. The sanctuary is a meeting place, an open table, as it were, for friends to gather, share, learn, love and support each other. The services are thematic, rather than predictable--with the exception of the primacy of Communion. One common thread between the Open Table Services and the traditional services is they all end with Communion. Some of the less traditional aspects started at the Sunday night services and were so well liked they expanded to the Sunday morning services. Sunday morning, while remaining traditional in many ways, became less formal and more flexible.

Back to our story . . . Nowadays, their love for neighbors is evident in the many ways the small church on the corner connects with the community that surrounds it. There is a culture at this church that focuses outside its walls through partnerships with a variety of neighbors close by and further away. Dao Blung Hlao, the Jrai-Speaking First Christian Church, and the other Montagnard refugees who had become part of the church starting in the year 2008, continued to remind the congregation of what it is to be a neighbor, even to families struggling against religious persecution in Vietnam. A willingness to listen to the deep and holy experiences of those who have very different lives became an even bigger part of the life of this church. The Future Story Support Team guided church members in sharing their expertise, gifts and talents. In addition to old sayings like, "The little church on the corner where God's light shines," and the mission statement of "To Love as Jesus loved and to serve God in all we do," this community has added, "In your corner, on God's corner," because

the people of this church believe they've seen God at work on the corner of East Boulevard and Dilworth Road, East. The community of faith has been present enough and visionary enough to reach out to groups and individuals who didn't think their lives fit with the life of a church. Even The Tom Sykes Center (housed next to Dilworth Elementary School) has programs based at First Christian Church. The children from The Relatives down

Future Story (continued from p. 3)

the street and Behailu Academy next door are mentored by church members and know First Christian Church as a safe place to gather. Members of the church and surrounding community are volunteering at Crisis Assistance and the Urban Ministry Center putting faith into action. The IB students at Myers Park high school often join in and have learned a lot from the connections with other teenagers through these organizations serving youth. The students started coming because they needed community service hours but the relationships between the students, church members, and members of the community, have grown and blossomed. Classes open to the public are offered on a variety of topics like Art for Beginners, Budgeting, Social Media and Internet for All Ages, Unplugging through Meditation, Prayer for Beginners, Vocal Music, and Creative Writing. The Fellowship Hall is a hub of activity. Some of these classes were led in conjunction with the Charlotte Rescue Mission. More than one person gives credit to the signs in the restrooms throughout the church for saving their life as they sought freedom from domestic violence.

Christ's charge that "if you do this to the least of these you do it to me" is expressed in First Christian Church. Our interaction with the guests from the Dilworth Soup Kitchen (DSK) has grown. Every year 10 children from DSK families are sponsored and sent to Christmount for camp. The annual Thanksgiving breakfast/service was first opened to the entire community including the DSK visitors and volunteers. We now have well over one hundred attendees every Thanksgiving.

First Christian Church started as a warming station the winter of 2017/2018. It was hard to ignore the need. The congregation decided to start a capital improvement campaign to renovate the education building and improve access to all three floors for everyone. The campaign was done in cooperation with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Church Extension. The renovations included updating the kitchen and fellowship hall to help both the DSK and allow us to host The Room at the Inn.

The little library outdoors continues to thrive, providing books for those who pass by First Church as well as clients of the DSK. Those who can provide a book, do so. First Christian Church partnered with Dilworth United Methodist Church to provide weekend backpack meals to families in need as well as summer backpacks when children are out of school. The summer backpacks include books and food to nourish body and mind.

First Christian Church is effective in showing the love of Christ, literally. What started as a small art show, with the theme of illustrating the parables, has expanded to 4 art shows a year, with a group of visual artists who have come to participate in the events related to art. First Christian Church members discovered a need in artists who are not usually called to think about incorporating their faith into their work. All the art shows usually illustrate an aspect of Jesus' call to "love thy neighbor." The art shows allow members and those who are unchurched or who have been hurt in the past by the dogma of religion to enter First Christian Church, view the art and have dialogue with neighbors and members of the faith community in a safe and loving environment. The sanctuary has been outfitted with better lighting to accommodate the shows and there is a regular schedule to paint the interior of the sanctuary every other year. These shows are changing us--revealing ideas and people we hadn't really encountered before. The art shows may originate within First Christian Church, but travel to other churches to continue to spread the Love of Christ and encourage dialogue and healing. Because of the exposure to the breadth of God's creation and the people God loves through art, the congregation has a stronger connection to those situations and communities that are often ignored or scorned in our society.

This empathy has caused the church to open its eyes to those around us, and has fueled a greater desire to be involved in missions.

First Christian Church supports a thriving arts community within the fellowship building. A dance studio on the third floor offers classes for young people who never thought they'd be able to afford an elite dance studio in Dilworth. It was part anti-obesity initiative in the school system, part after-school mentoring program, and part arts education effort--at least, that's what the grants were for that helped to fund it. What the new dance studio really did was give young people dreams of what they could be, of places beyond their own neighborhoods and prior experience. The

First Christian Church

Future Story (continue from p 4)

dance studio manages its students and recruits its own leadership. The dance students present two shows a year in the newly renovated sanctuary.

Visual art wasn't the only offering in the sanctuary. First Christian Church continues to praise God with a vibrant music ministry. 2016 was a stressful year, our organist retired and moved away. When our minister of music of over 20 years retired as well, we were concerned our music ministry would disappear. Through much prayer and a miraculous search, the right replacement was found. New members came in and supported the music ministry which began to grow and evolve. The choir is now asked to sing during some of the art shows. Outside groups use the sanctuary to perform. First Christian Church has become the place for small ensembles to showcase their music. An eclectic offering of concerts intrigued the neighbors who made it the place to go on a date or outing. The groups could rent the space for a nominal fee, the tickets purchased thru an online vendor with some of the proceeds going to the artists as they were trying to support themselves and some income to First Christian Church. When Peachtree Christian Church brings their plays to Charlotte, they now play to a full house.

The role of technology within the church continues to grow. The nuts and bolts didn't always feel spiritual and it took input from people outside of the church service to help us understand how much this connection meant to them. Live streaming to members who are homebound or unable to attend a service help them to feel more connected to their church family.

In addition to our Maundy Thursday service we added a Good Friday vigil from 3-6 pm. When the church was open for prayer and meditation, again, art was put out by our resident artists depicting the Passion of Christ. People from the neighborhood came to plan their Good Friday around coming and seeing how the artists had depicted the Passion.

The early church experienced conflict between members, and First Christian Church is no exception. New members brought new ideas and new viewpoints that weren't always understood or appreciated. Some of the older members were heard to say, "I don't even recognize my own church anymore." The Open Table Service brought some controversy, allowing food in historically food-free space. Not understanding the purpose for gathering this worshipping community in the sanctuary, people not involved with the service asked, "Can't they just do this in the Fellowship Hall?" Following trends in church governance the board rewrote the constitution and bylaws which improved the way First Christian Church governs. The congregation approved the new documents. The new board has twelve members and is now smaller and able to make decisions quickly. Not all the decisions were supported by all the church members. When the church made its decision to make its acceptance of the LGBT community official, some in our community decided to leave. One of the biggest conflicts was removing the pews in the sanctuary. Resistance and finances kept the pews in place for a while but as the art and music programs grew over time, the pews became a hindrance. Poor flow as people viewed the art, but more importantly conversations and interactions interrupted and cut short, which is the true purpose of the shows. The dancers were limited in their performances and considered moving out. Many of the young budding musicians craved better interaction with the audience. The Open Table services also wanted a more flexible space, looking for face to face dialogue and community over a shared meal. With the pews removed, beautiful new floors installed, and comfortable, flexible seating purchased, the members wondered why they were so resistant to this change.

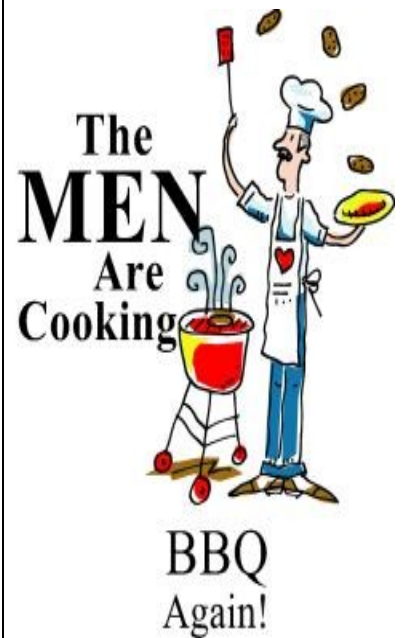
Jesus performed his first miracle at a wedding so it was a natural extension to find a way to share the sanctuary for weddings. Thus, the Wedding Chapel of Dilworth came into existence. The Wedding Chapel idea was created to separate it from First Christian Church. Couples following the First Christian Church guidelines can have the officiant of their choice and their dream wedding. The added income from The Wedding Chapel provided additional income to support the Church's missions (an additional \$800-\$1200 for every Wedding Chapel wed

Future Story (continued from p. 5)

ding). Couples who had no church for their wedding came to the Wedding Chapel of Dilworth. Some new to the area, some unchurched, some denied the opportunity to marry in their own faith tradition but all looking for a sacred space to share vows of enduring love.

Christ would retreat to the garden for rest and a quiet place to speak with God. Once our back yard had dilapidated play equipment and then was an empty eyesore. Now in its place is a labyrinth open to the community. A place for all to rest, rejuvenate and commune with God. A small fire pit at the center provides a ceremonial area to light a scrap of paper and release a problem to the Lord. We had less resistance to taking down the Magnolia tree, at least from anyone who ever had to clean up the magnolia leaves. A Knight City Grant covered the removal of the tree and the fence. New plantings, benches, fountain and, of course, free Wi-Fi for anyone extends to the garden. The added welcome to the courtyard for neighbors and visitors was only a small sign of the growth of heart of this church. When James, the young man we met earlier in this story, has a little bit of time to himself, you can find him sitting in that courtyard as if it were an extension of his living room. He's not the only one who has found it to be a peaceful home away from home. The Open Table Service, weather permitting, has a profound moment for everyone when the community quite literally travels outside the walls of the church building out to that prayer garden and people walk the labyrinth to receive communion one at a time, from one another. For many people, this is the highlight of their week.

These programs needed additional support. Jolin was at her maximum capacity ministering to our congregants. We tried many things to find additional support. Among other efforts, we worked with local seminaries to include seminary students to explore new and different ways to engage the community. Included in these new leaders was an aptitude for social media and stretching the social media presence. Each student had strengths in different areas and helped the programs grow. The congregation decided to call a half time Associate Minister who had a social work background to help with our commitment to care for those we touch through our various outreach ministries. In addition to working with members of the congregation, members of Dao Blung Hlao and others who are new to this country who are part of this church, this Associate Minister provides guidance and support for the guests of the Dilworth Soup Kitchen on Mondays as well as others we are now encountering. The position started out as a part time position, but has now become a full time ministry in our church. We added a Building Superintendent as well. Partnering with The Shepherd's Center we could find a retiree interested in staying active in the building superintendent position and at a salary we could afford. With that additional staff, we truly could become a church "in your corner, on God's corner." As James helped to clean up the sanctuary for his baptism, he thought about how much his life had changed already, because of First Christian Church. He didn't really grasp how much life had changed for the members of the church, too. They were light years beyond where they had started. The changes in the community there weren't for everyone, but no one could deny that God had done a new thing with First Christian Church . . . And this was just the beginning.



See you there!

**Bring a Friend!
Friday, April 21st &
Saturday,
April 22nd
11:00 am to 8:00
pm
or until all gone!**

**What a great time
for fellowship and
assisting the Youth
with Summer Camp
scholarships.
Plus BBQ...**



YOUR GENERAL BOARD: MARCH UPDATE

The General Board met on Sunday, February 26.

Finances: The Board received an update on church finances from Paul West, Treasurer. Total revenue received in the month of January was \$ 17, 301; total expenses were \$ 12,393, for a positive difference of \$ 4,908.

However, this positive picture on paper is dimmed by two points: funds available will be drawn down quickly as cyclical bills come in - and - overall giving for January and February is down by over \$5,200.

The Board continues to watch finances carefully and encourages everyone to maintain their financial support as faithfully as possible. Online giving makes it secure and convenient to do so - www.fcc-charlotte.org or thru the FCC PushPay App available for your smart phone or tablet through the Apple App store or Google Play.

Thank you, David Kingsbery, for volunteering to track cumulative giving week by week, enabling the Board to have a clearer, up-to-date financial picture.

Trustees/ Property - The Board is extremely grateful to the Trustees for their support in taking care of several property matters in the last month, including \$19,570 for air conditioning and duct work and \$4,700 for mold remediation in the offices and choir room behind the Sanctuary; and \$900 for a kitchen grease trap (80% reimbursed by the Dilworth Soup Kitchen).

Future Story - Sunday, March 12 and Sunday, March 19 will be important milestones as the New Beginnings/ Future Story Team leads Worship and sets the stage for the reveal of the Future Story. Plan to be with us!

New Minister of Music - Upon the recommendation of Pastor McElroy and representatives of the Choir, the Board approved unanimously the hiring of Marie Graham as Minister of Music at a salary of \$ 12,000 annually, effective Wednesday, March 1 (Ash Wednesday), pending background checks. Please see the article elsewhere in this newsletter about Marie and her qualifications. We are excited to have Marie join our staff in this important role.

Wanted: Delegates to the Regional Assembly - The Regional Office has asked Congregations to name four Voting Delegates and four Alternate Delegates to serve at the Regional Assembly, scheduled for Saturday, April 29, in Wilson. If you plan to attend the assembly, please let Jolin or Julie know.

Next Meeting: Sunday, March 26, 12:15 p.m., Fellowship Hall. Board meetings are open to all. If you have any questions or wish to address the Board, please contact Julie Burch Board, Moderator, at jburch6152@gmail.com. Minutes of Board meetings are always available to anyone who requests them (with a huge thanks to Pam McKnight, Secretary).

"Serving the Lord with Gladness. . ."

On behalf of a grateful Congregation, the General Board wishes to recognize the following individuals this month for their dedication and service:

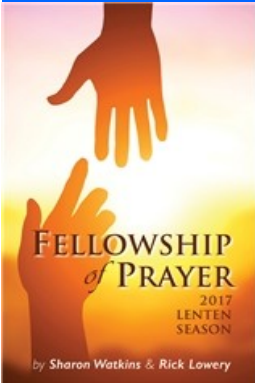
The FCC Choir - providing leadership and inspiring music the past few months during a time of transition for our Music Ministry.

Pastor Jolin, Tom McElroy, Tami Toler, Larry Toler and David Craven - "the heavy lifting" - relocating church offices temporarily during mold remediation work.

*****Many thanks to members and friends who responded so generously to a special Stewardship email this past week. The General Fund offering for March 12 was \$ 6,810. Your continued faithfulness in giving time, talent and financial resources is what allows the church to sustain its ministries.**

Church Happenings

SPIRITUAL RESOURCES FOR YOUR LENTEN JOURNEY



Looking for inspiration for your journey through Lent? Check out www.chalicepress.com for a variety of resources for Lent and Easter. Chalice Press is the publishing arm of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Its mission is to publish resources inviting all people into deeper relationship with God, equipping them as disciples of Jesus Christ and sending them into ministries as the Holy Spirit calls them.

Here are just two possibilities of resources which may interest you:



Coloring Lent:

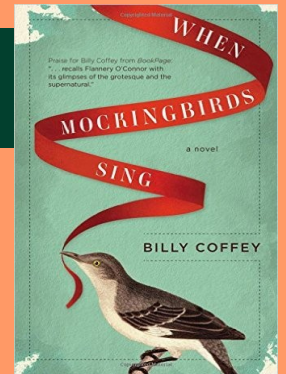
An Adult Coloring book

For the Journey to Resurrection by Jesse Turri, Natalie Turri and Christopher D. Rodkey.

Book Club

May 7th , 5:30 pm

When Mockingbirds Sing by Billy Coffey



FOOD DRIVE



LOAVES & FISHES
Groceries for Neighbors in Need

The Loaves & Fishes pantry of the Episcopal Church of the Holy Comforter. Thank you for your kind and generous contribution. You have surely helped our neighbors in need.

Thank you for your support!

35.6 lbs 2/2/2017
7.6 lbs 1/10/2017

FOOD DRIVE FOR APRIL

Cooking Oil, Dishwashing Liquid, and Toothpaste

Dilworth Soup Kitchen

Monday
First Christian Church
11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
1200 East Blvd,
Charlotte, NC
704 334-3771

Tuesday
Ascension Lutheran Church
11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
1225 E Morehead St,
Charlotte, NC
704 372-7317

Wednesday
St. Mark's United Methodist Church
11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
917 Clanton Road,
Charlotte, NC
704 523-7483

Thursday
Saint Mark's Lutheran Church
11:30 a.m. to 12:30 pm
1001 Queens Rd,
Charlotte, NC 28207
(704) 375-9185

Saturday
Sacrifice of Praise Ministries
12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.
2806 L.D. Parker Drive, Charlotte, NC
704 333-3367



no requirements.
no charge.
just come and eat.

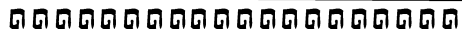
Everyone is welcome to enjoy our Soup Kitchen, located in the Fellowship Hall on the Dilworth Road, East side of the building from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. every Monday.

We are grateful for help from so many of our neighbors in Dilworth for support and help of this effort. Because of the generosity of the citizens in Dilworth, this soup kitchen truly has come from the heart of an entire community. If you would like to join us for a free Monday lunch, please come. If you would like to be a part of this as a volunteer or donor, you're welcome to eat with us on Monday and envision how you might be able to help.

Sign up on-line at www.dilworthsoupkitchen.wikispaces.com.



APRIL SERVERS



Elder of the Month:

Lead	Chip Givens
Co Lead	4/2, 4/16 Leslie Therrien
	4/9, 4/23 Nancy Carol Stahl
	4/30 Alan Holmes
Deacons	TBA

APRIL SERMON SCRIPTURE

APRIL	2:	Ezekiel 37: 1-14
APRIL	9:	Matthew 21: 1-11
APRIL	16:	Matthew 28: 1-10
APRIL	23:	John 20: 19-31 Rev. Sarah Kingsbery Guest Preacher
APRIL	30:	Luke 24: 13-35

Liturgist

(reading scripture and announcements)

APRIL 2: Julie Burch Board

APRIL 9: Julie Burch Board

APRIL 16: Julie Burch Board

APRIL 23: Julie Burch Board

APRIL 30: Julie Burch Board



Tommy McElroy

Children's Moment

APRIL 2: Jolin McElroy

APRIL 9: Jolin McElroy

APRIL 16: Jolin McElroy

APRIL 23: Jolin McElroy

APRIL 30: Jolin McElroy



Paul & Laura West, Treasurer

2017 Weekly Need to meet Budget \$ 3,686.73

Offering for March 19, 2017 \$ 3,124.00**Offering for March 12, 2017 \$ 6,810.00**

Offering for March 5, 2017 \$ 3,168.00

Offering for February 26, 2017 \$ 2,704.00

Offering for February 19, 2017	\$ 3,713.00
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Offering for February 12, 2017	\$ 2,151.40
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Note from Elders: Please let an Elder know if you have a special prayer concern



First Christian Church

1200 East Blvd. * Charlotte, NC 28203

Tel: 704 334-3771 * Fax: 704 334-3774

Email: office@fcc-charlotte.org

Website: www.fcc-charlotte.org

APRIL**2017**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 9:45 am Sunday School 10:00 am Jrai Church 11:00 am Worship	3 9:00 am YOGA 11:30 am to 12:30 pm Dilworth Soup Kitchen 5:30 pm Quilter's Bee 6:30 pm Hope Home mtg 7:00 pm Missions meeting	4	5 10:30 am YOGA 6:30 pm Choir Rehearsal 8:00 pm Mindful Meditation AA	6	7	8
9 9:45 am Sunday School 10:00 am Jrai Church 11:00 am Worship Palm Sunday	10 9:00 am YOGA 11:30 am ~ 12:30 pm Dilworth Soup Kitchen 6:30 pm Hope Home mtg 6:30 pm CMF meeting and a meal	11	12 10:30 am YOGA 6:30 pm Choir Rehearsal 8:00 pm Mindful Meditation AA	13 7:00 pm Maundy Thursday	14 7pm Good Friday at SouthPark Christian Church	15 1:30 pm Prayer and fellowship Building an inclu- sive Church (Elder's meet- ing) FOCUS Deadline
16 8am Sunrise 9:45 am Sunday School 10:00 am Jrai Church 11:00 am Worship 	17 9:00 am YOGA 11:30 am ~ 12:30 pm Dilworth Soup Kitchen 5:30 pm Quilters Bee 6:30 pm Hope Home mtg	18	19 10:30 am YOGA 6:30 pm Choir Rehearsal 8:00 pm Mindful Meditation AA	20 6:30 pm Elder's mtg	21 FOCUS Mailed BBQ 11 to 8pm	22 BBQ 11 to gone
23 9:45 am Sunday School 10:00 am Jrai Church 11:00 am Worship 12:15 pm General Board Meeting Rev. Sarah Kingsbery - Guest Preacher	24 9:00 am YOGA 11:30 am ~ 12:30 pm Dilworth Soup Kitchen 6:30 pm Hope Home mtg	25	26 10:30 am YOGA 6:30 pm Choir Rehearsal 8:00 pm Mindful Meditation AA	27	28	29 Regional Assembly (Wilson, NC)
30 9:45 am Sunday School 10:00 am Jrai Church 11:00 am Worship	Special Acknowledgement in Newsletter Newsletter "On the front page of last year's Easter issue, First Christian Focus used two pieces of Newsletter Newsletter clip-art to frame the church's Holy Week worship schedule. Holy_9038c and holyweek_3802c show the key events from Jesus' final week. Another noteworthy feature of this front page is the boxed horizontal table of contents along the bottom. It directs readers where to find important information during a busy church season. First Christian Focus is a publication of First Christian Church, Charlotte, North Carolina." Newsletter Newsletter magazine, April 2017.					

CONCERNS

†Bob Ward
 †Family & Friends of Clint Franklin
 †Sarah Hendrick (daughter-in-law of Marie Graham)
 †Kerry Weesner (son-in-law of Diane Vogt)
 †Family & Friends of Philip Burkhalter
 †Family and Friends of Barbara Diehl (sister of Betty Fraley-Touhy)
 †Family & Friends of Jane Pixley (grandmother of Sarah Beth Smith)
 †Alison Day
 †Emily Henderson and family
 †Diana O'Keefe & Leigh Evans, Marie Digiovanni (friends/cousin of Paul West)
 †Connie Marchbank
 †Joseph Park Nunn (father of Susan Scholle)
 †Shirley Harpe
 †Eddie Hughes and Laura Hughes
 †Brenda Ross & Brandy Haynes (friends of Tom & Jolin McElroy)
 †Chondera Bertha (friend of Laura Hughes)
 †Beth Vroman, Renee Estep and Geri Gregor (friends of Tammy Pereboom)
 †J.C. Parke
 †Family & Friends of Robby Robertson
 †Evie Wahl (sister of Mary Clifton)
 †Family & Friends of Gene Tanner (father of David Tanner)
 †Family & Friends of Jackie Tindell (mother of Forrest Tindell)
 †Family & Friends of Jane Parke
 †Forrest & Marjorie King, Tracey Taylor (friends of Janet Baugus)
 †Garrett Pope and family (friend of Carol Tarcza)

IN OUR Thoughts and Prayers

†Bob & Hazel Freeman (uncle & aunt of Leslie Therrien & Laura Hughes)
 †Dale Rudsill (aunt of Jessi Hughes)
 †Gilbert Edwards & Beth Bentolila (family of Steve Clifton)
 †Montagnard families & Religious freedom in Vietnam for all
 †Mary Helen Hughes (sister of Eddie Hughes)
 †Jon Raby (step brother of Andrea Raby)
 †Gary Canfield
 †Bunong Christians in Cambodia

Ongoing Concerns:

†Paul Webb (grandfather of Tiffany Miller)
 †Kathy Mellen (daughter of Nancy Carol Stahl)
 †Howard Johnson
 †Military Overseas
 †Elsie McLendon
 †Phil Bauer & Family
 †Connie Mead (mother of Julie Bogguss)
 †Jessie Black (mother of Cliff Black)



02/Set Dieu	19/Madeleine
03/Min Dieu	Long
04/Juliana Ksor	20/Levonzie Hol-
05/Pin Dieu	combe
08/Forrest Tindell	20/Robert Siu
08/Thuy Adrong	20/Susan Siup
09/Laura West	21/Juan Carlos
09/Alexander Sonda	Hernandez
10/Michelle Wise-	21/Matthew Erick-
man Kelley	sen
10/Avery Craig	23/David Wagoner
11/Steve Clifton	23/Zoë Macomber
14/Cliff Black	23/Neal Harpe
16/Jrao Ksor	23/Aven Riddick
16/Pha Ksor	25/Sarah Kings-
17/Adele Spil	bery
19/Brandon Herdt	26/Jupy Puckett
19/Randy Lipshay	



05/Jim & Ann Wright

If your name is missing from the list of birthdays or anniversaries, please give the Church Office a call. Thank you!

When we can't find Easter

Easter is the most joyous Christian holy day ... except when it's not. What do we do when our mood isn't what we think it "should" be? The kids are sugared up, we're juggling family gatherings (and maybe conflicts), our everyday challenges remain, and festive hymns — however rousing — fail to lift our spirits. We wonder, "What's *wrong* with me, that I can't seem to find Easter?"

Been there, done that. And it's okay. *You're* okay.

Jesus' resurrection doesn't scoop us out of our troubles, but the death-defying Christ walks through them beside us, on our own Emmaus road (Luke 24). We aren't alone. When we can't find Easter, Easter somehow finds us — if not on this designated Sunday, perhaps two days from now, or next week or mid-May. Watch for it; keep your heart open. Christ is risen indeed — and you shall be too.

—Heidi Mann

If you know someone who is sick, in the hospital, or has a prayer concern, please call the Church Office at 704-334-3771.

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

First Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
1200 East Boulevard
Charlotte, North Carolina 28203



"In opinions, liberty;
in essentials, unity;
and in all things, love"



Jolin Wilks McElroy, Pastor
Marie F. Graham, Minister of Music
Grant Lombard, Media Technicians
Andy Smith, Interim Pianist
Tami Toler, Office Manager
Meredith Salyer, Nursery Attendant

Office Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Telephone: (704) 334-3771

Fax: (704) 334-3774

Email: office@fcc-charlotte.org ✉ Website: www.fcc-charlotte.org

