

 **The Visitor**
First Christian Church
(DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) • GREENSBORO, NC

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The Visitor


A publication of

First Christian Church
(DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) • GREENSBORO, NC

1917-2017  February 22, 2017

Coming Up

February 26

Christian Men's
Fellowship meeting
following worship

March 1

Ash Wednesday
worship service 7 p.m.

March 5

First on First potluck
dinner 5:00 p.m.

*Eat dinner with First
Christian on the first
Sunday of each month
at 5 p.m. Plan to gather
with us and our friends
from Mount Pleasant
Christian Church and
Shalom Community
Christian Church, with
guest speaker Rob Mor-
ris, the new executive
director of Christmount.*

To know and love God, to nurture each other, and to reach out and welcome all people in the name of Jesus Christ.

FIRST
THINGS FIRST

love. serve. hope.

FIRST
CHRISTIAN CHURCH
(DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

Rev. Lee Hull Moses, Senior Minister

Pastor's email address: pastor@fccgreensboro.org

Phone: 336-273-4725 Fax #: 336-273-7030

Website: www.fccgreensboro.org

Send newsletter submissions to info@fccgreensboro.org



We will spend the Lenten season thinking about how we enter into the divine presence of God.

This will help us think about worship in general, and we'll be intentional about including a variety of forms of worship and music throughout the season. How can our worship better reflect who we are as a congregation beyond Sunday morning? How can worship in this Lenten season help us draw closer to God and to our neighbors?

Lent begins Wednesday, March 1, with Ash Wednesday service at 7:00 p.m.

Our God is a rock in a weary land, a weary land, a weary land.
Our God is a rock in a weary land, a shelter in the time of storm.
Let us make a joyful noise to God with songs of praise!



A Note from Our Ministry Intern



Dear Friends,

Many of you probably don't know this, but almost five years ago I spent 11 months traveling to 11 different countries to share the Christian gospel with people all over the world. This experience aligned perfectly with my childhood faith, since I was raised in an Evangelical church that prioritized evangelism and conversion. Even as a middle and high schooler, when I learned that someone in my class or neighborhood practiced a different religion, I was quick to try and convert them to Christianity. So, when I began my 11-month journey overseas, I thought I had a pretty good idea of what the next year would hold. However, this adventure completely disrupted my faith and worldview in the best way possible.

You see, I was under the impression that my team and I were bringing God's presence to each of the countries we visited. Therefore, I was completely thrown off when I realized that God's presence was already there. While many of the people we met did not know who Jesus was, or may have used different names for God, they constantly practiced compassion, hospitality, and grace. They cared for their land and only took what they needed, ensuring there was more than enough for others. They valued community over individuality, and in so many ways, they embodied the commandments to love God with all your heart, mind, and spirit, and to love your neighbor as yourself.

For me, this experience of encountering God's presence in a variety of cultures and religions completely reframed the way I interact with people of other faiths. Whereas I used to live with a sense of religious superiority, trying to convince others of my own beliefs, I am now committed to listening more than I speak, and learning about different faith practices. Therefore, I was very excited when the opportunity arose for our congregation to attend NCCJ's Interfaith Tour in Greensboro!

On February 19, the CYF group and several members of our congregation toured three different places of worship: Beth David Synagogue, the Baha'i Temple, and the Islamic Center of Greensboro. At the Synagogue, we learned about 11 different Jewish rituals and observances, illustrated by the beautiful stained-glass windows in their worship space. At the Baha'i temple, we learned that this faith was founded in Iran in the 19th century. We also discovered that Baha'is place significance on the lives and teachings of Abraham and Jesus, along with several others. Finally, at the Islamic Center, the group learned about the Muslim faith, sampled some traditional foods, and even witnessed a woman convert to Islam!

As our FCC group traveled from place to place with hundreds of other Greensboro residents, I could sense God's Spirit of love, peace, and unity dwelling among us. I am abundantly thankful to be rooted in a community that values listening and learning with one another. In an age when it's far too common to fear or demean others who are different from us, learning about other faith traditions is a beautiful way that we as the church can practice love together.

Peace, Amanda



News, Events, and Church Notes

Details on the April 8 Prayer Service and Prayer Walk

As part of our Centennial celebrations, the Health and Wholeness team invites all to participate in a Prayer Walk. First, a brief prayer service begins at 1:30 p.m., April 8, at the site of our original location, now First Presbyterian Church, 617 N. Elm St. A two-mile walk (approximately!) from our 1917 site to our 2017 location follows. Walkers/runners will meet at FCC around 1 p.m. to ride together in the church bus to the prayer service. If you decide to participate in the walk and need a ride back to your vehicle, we've got you covered. **Walk with us from our founding toward our future!**

Health and Wholeness?

As we seek to live out our congregational mission "to know and love God, to nurture each other, and to reach out and welcome all people in the name of Jesus Christ," we must consider how our physical health connects to our faith. We, as people of faith, can follow in the footsteps of Jesus by concerning ourselves with the wellness of the whole person—this includes our mind, body, spirit, and relationships. Health is a practice of faith, and we are called to live into the fullness of abundant life, and to contribute to this goal for others.

First Christian Church partners with the North Carolina Council of Churches in its efforts to improve the lives of people of faith and all North Carolinians.



Words of Welcome

New members Bill and Robin Lund joined First Christian Sunday, February 19. Welcome, Bill and Robin! We look forward to introducing the Lunds.

Words of Congratulations

Judith Guy, former ministry intern, had her final interview with the Commission on Ministry and is approved for ordination this summer.

JUST WONDERING...QUESTIONS & ANSWERS BY RETIRED DISCIPLES MINISTER REV. JT MOORE

How 'big' was the event of the Passover celebrated by the Jews (Luke 22:1-6)?

It was at the Passover time that Jesus came to Jerusalem where he was to be arrested and crucified. The Feast of Unleavened Bread was about a week in duration, and within that week was the Passover, an occasion when the Jewish people remembered their quick departure from Egypt, so quickly they didn't have time to bake bread from leaven and they ate unleavened cakes. The Feast (and the Passover) was made with great preparations, somewhat like a city prepares for a big event today. Roads were repaired, bridges made safe, wayside tombs were whitewashed (so no one would step on one and become unclean), inns made ready, etc. Two days before the Passover everyone searched their home to make sure there was no leaven. Every male Jew of a certain age who lived within a certain distance of Jerusalem was bound by law to attend. Everybody, away from Jerusalem at some time in their life, wanted to be in Jerusalem to celebrate. Thus, huge numbers came to the Holy City.



Elders and Deacons Retreat at Christmount March 3-4 (you can still register!)

Elders and deacons are invited to this retreat; our Director of Congregational Life, Melissa Guthrie Loy, will lead some of the workshops. Keynote speaker is Dr. Charisse Gillett. All details are available in the church office or at christmount.org.

Listening Session for the Music Search Committee

Tell us what you think about the role of music in our worship life and your dreams for the music ministry at First Christian. This listening session follows worship Sunday, March 5, at 11:15. If you can't attend the listening session, send an email with your thoughts to info@fccgreensboro.org.



Important conversations

We welcome guest speakers March 19 and April 2 as part of our speaker series on Sunday mornings at 9 a.m., in the Friendship classroom. Coffee and gathering at 8:45.



March 19, Jennie Belle, Director of Immigration and Farmworkers with North Carolina's Council of Churches, "**What does the Bible say about immigrants and refugees?**"

April 2, Dr. Mary F. Foskett, professor, "**What does the Bible say about resurrection?**"

Save the Date

Join First Christian for its Centennial Celebrations



Come

Saturday, April 8, 2017, 1:30 p.m.
A simple prayer service at the site of our original location, now First Presbyterian Church, 617 N. Elm St. Followed by a prayer walk to our current location, 1900 W. Market St.

Saturday, June 3, 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.
Family fun day featuring music, food, inflatables, and games.

Sunday, June 4, 10:00 a.m.
Centennial Celebration Worship with guest preacher Vy Nguyen, Director of Week of Compassion. Luncheon to follow.



First Christian Church is a place where thoughtful people **think**. It is also a place where thoughtful people **do**. We take seriously Jesus' commandment to love our neighbors. It is our mission to know and love God, to nurture each other, and to reach out and welcome all people in the name of Jesus Christ.



RECENT ATTENDANCE

February 12: 100

February 19: 105

PRAYER CONCERNS

Please contact the church office if you would like a name added to or removed from the prayer list.

PRAY

Angie Wethington
Letha Gant
Joe & Ann Fry
Leroy Bymaster
Marie Reaves Grant

Gary Yeager
Lib Tilley
Burt Bennett
Bobbie Poston
Chuck Jones

JoAnn Alley
Kenny Honeycutt
Bonnie Stanley
Jim Saveriano
Roger Stanley

Bill Rayle
David Hodgkin
Billie Pierce
Anne Early
H'Nguep Siu

Prayer Chain Updates

Prayer concerns are often shared through our prayer chain phone tree. If you would like to be added to—or taken off—the list to receive and pass on phone calls, please let the church office know.

love. serve. hope.
connect

Do we have your current contact information, including your email? Do we have your birthdate, anniversary, or membership date? We are constantly updating our database. When you have a moment, email info@fccgreensboro.org with the following: Your name(s), Mailing address, Email, Home and Cell Phone(s), Birthdate, Anniversary, and Membership date. Don't know your membership date or not a member? Not a problem—send us relevant info and we'll confirm our records are correct. Thanks for helping us stay connected.

Now, are you connected with us online? Our website and Facebook pages are updated on a daily basis! fccgreensboro.org and facebook.com/fccgreensboro

SUNDAYS AT FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

10 a.m. Worship
11 a.m. Fellowship and Coffee Hour
5 p.m. Sunday Night Youth

There are ways to *connect* every single day. We are serving, learning, and growing in a variety of ways:

Small Group

Are you an early riser? Every second and fourth Sunday morning at 8:45 (that's not actually that early!) a small group gathers in the Friendship classroom to read something brief and discuss. Currently, participants are enjoying *We Make the Road by Walking* by Brian McLaren. Readings stand alone so you can join in any time. Next small group meeting dates: February 26, March 12 and 26.

Sunday Night Youth

On Sunday evenings, youth groups for pre-school through high school give kids an opportunity to learn. PYF (age 3 through 2nd grade) study a Bible lesson through story, games, and crafts. JYF and Chi Rho (grades 3-8) learn Bible stories, play games, and do service projects. CYF (grades 9-12) discuss hot topics, play games, and support one another. A meal is served at 5 p.m. before groups begin.

Vintage Bunch and Vintage Kings & Queens

The Vintage Bunch is a monthly gathering for older adults that includes lunch and a program every second Wednesday. Every fourth Monday, folks gather at the church to play cards (coming up: Monday, Feb. 27, at 9:30). In March, those who registered for the annual beach trip should meet at FCC Tuesday, Mar. 7, at 9:30 a.m., to board the bus. The group returns from the beach March 9. Cards will be played March 27.

Table Topics

On Tuesday evenings, a group of us gathers at Green Joe's coffee shop at 7 p.m. to check in with each other and talk about... well, everything. Before the gathering each week, we'll share a short resource—it might be a blog post, a podcast, a video—and then we'll use that as a conversation starter. We might talk about current events, or theology, or whatever's on our minds. The resources for each week will be posted on our website and on our Facebook page. Please join us—your coffee's on us the first time you come!

Table Talk

On Thursday evenings at 7 p.m., a group gathers at a local restaurant or at someone's home for casual, informal conversation. There is not a planned topic for Thursdays. We show up: some of us eat dinner, some of us have a drink, some of us eat at home and stop by for conversation (or hugs), some of us bring our dog. (To date, no one has brought a cat. We say all are welcome. If your cat does well on the patio at Sticks & Stones, bring Garfield!) Coming up: March 2, Pastabilities, 1726 Battleground Ave.; March 9, Taste of Thai, 1500 Mill St.; March 16, home of Cliff & Louise Greaves, 1104 W. Cornwallis; March 23, Iron Hen, 908 Cridland; March 30, Jams Deli, 2920 Martinsville Rd.

Keeping Joy Alive *contributed by Ellen Smith*

The Agape Women's small group talked about JOY in our February meeting. We used the book *Fight Back with Joy* by Margaret Feinberg as a starting point. We learned three tools to use to keep joy alive, even in hard times.

Find strength through "weakness" by accepting what is making life hard, adapting to that change and depending on the strength that comes from God. The author learned to give herself permission slips to be "weak." The format of the slip is "in the face of _____, I give myself permission to _____."

Replace negative self-talk with positive self-talk. When the joy robbers of anxiety, fear, worry, etc., come in, negative self-talk often follows. This can be destructive. Replace it with positive thoughts like scripture, uplifting songs/hymns, poems, an uplifting mantra, an affirmation.

Activate joy by celebrating with joy even in crisis (even though this is counter-intuitive). It works since joy begets joy. This changes our focus from the crisis to the bigger picture, to God's perspective. We celebrate not because of the problem, but *in spite of* the problem. It takes great faith. And living in that faith, even in hard times/crises, is a great tool to use to fight back with joy.

We need to be disciplined in our celebrations. Plan them. This gives us something to look forward to and keeps joy alive. A tool she suggested is having an ongoing dream list.



Agape invites any woman interested in Christian fellowship to join its discussion on JOY! The next gathering is Monday, March 13, at 7 p.m., at the home of Patricia Klaers, 808 Jarmon Drive in Jamestown. Ellen Smith leads the group's discussions which have their starting point in the book *Fight Back with Joy* by Margaret Feinberg. In March, we will look at *The Velveteen Rabbit* finding adult lessons on joy, even in a child's book.