

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

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GREENSBORO, NC 27403-1715

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The Visitor



A publication of

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

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**Welcome,  
compassion,  
love,  
service,  
family,  
and grace...**

**Those are the values that ground our work together, that guide and inspire us as we lean into the ministry God has called us to do in this place.**

Our leaders named those values at the January 29 leadership retreat. Our youth embodied those values through the February 5 Souper Bowl of Caring (pictured above). We extend our thanks to the youth and leaders who prepared for the event and to all who participated in the effort to help feed those who are hungry.

**Here  
I STAND**



**What are some values that you and your family hold dear? What one statement do you know to be true? On what do you stand?** We're exploring those questions in our current worship series, inspired by Martin Luther's statement as he defended his faith: "Here I stand, I can do no other." Each week we ask: What is the faith claim each scripture leads us to, and how do we live if we proclaim that to be true?

Follow the sermon series online, too: [fccgreensboro.org/sermons](http://fccgreensboro.org/sermons).

**Welcome, Chris Dorsey**

On February 12, we are pleased to welcome Chris Dorsey, president of the Higher Education and Leadership Ministries (HELM) of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). HELM encourages leadership development throughout the church, nurturing Christian leaders as well as connecting with our church-related colleges and seminaries. Our congregation supports HELM through our gifts to the Disciples Mission Fund, part of our operating budget each year. This visit gives us a good opportunity to connect with our church beyond our own congregation. Learn more about HELM at [helmdisciples.org](http://helmdisciples.org).



*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)

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## A Note from Our Pastor



Dear friends,

To say that we are living in politically complicated times would be a bit of an understatement, don't you think?

First Christian is, to use an increasingly popular term, a purple church. That is, some of us voted blue, some of us voted red. (Of course, some of us voted some other color entirely, or didn't vote at all, but you get the idea.) In some ways, being a purple church is really hard. We aren't quite sure how to talk to each other these days; we're nervous about offending someone we care about, wondering how we can possibly see things so differently.

In other ways, though, it's really good news. In a time when our country feels completely divided between us and them, purple churches like ours have something deeper that holds us together. We've always valued the diversity of opinions within our community. One of the things we hold dear is that we can disagree and still come to the table together. That hasn't changed. Still, it's not easy, so here are a few thoughts on being a purple church in such a time as this:

Have a conversation. Find somebody you respect and with whom you disagree (I promise you can do both) and invite them to talk. In person, not on Facebook, over a cup of coffee or a meal. Don't assume that you know everything about what the other person thinks. Do assume that they have the best of intentions. You might not change each other's minds, but you'll learn something and you just might understand each other better. Need a conversation partner? I'm available.

Respond, don't react. The rapid-fire pace of the news, and social media in particular, make it easy to read a headline and react with outrage or fear. Read the whole story. Make sure it's from a reputable source of journalism and not just online click-bait. Then figure out how to respond: maybe you respond by learning more about the issue, or you pray about it, or you write to your legislators. Knee-jerk reactions exacerbate tensions; thoughtful responses from faith-led people can change the world.

Remember who we are. At a time when words like justice, compassion, and welcome have become politically-loaded terms, it's easy to forget that these are the very ideals that make us who we are. We value these things not because we voted for one candidate or another, but because we are created by a God who calls us to welcome the stranger and look out for the needs of the most vulnerable among us. We are followers of the Christ who came to free the oppressed, feed the hungry, care for the sick, and include the excluded. We are guided by the Spirit who leads us back to the table each week where we share the feast of God's abundant grace.

If we hold onto those truths and let them guide us in all that we do, I believe that our beautiful purple church can be a gift to the world.

Glad to be walking together with you,  
Lee



## News, Events, and Church Notes

### Save these dates

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?**"

### Words of Thanks

*From Carol Burnett, Interim Music Director and Organist*

Thank you all for your kind welcome. I am enjoying being in your presence, working with the choir and staff and getting to know you. The choir members are gracious and eager to work each week in rehearsal. They are a delight. We would love to have any of you join us as we lead our worship through music. We could really use the help of another bass or two but each section is open. Thank you for your encouragement and support.

*From Maria Hanlin, Chief Executive Officer, & Daintry O'Brien, Development Director, Habitat for Humanity of Greater Greensboro:*

Thank you for the gift from First Christian Church Men's Fellowship Group, designated toward a Future Build Project. We are honored that you have chosen to share your resources with us. We support partner families in their journey to become strong, stable and self-reliant homeowners. Within the last two years, 24 Habitat Greensboro homeowners have paid off their mortgages. We celebrate this amazing achievement! Through your gifts, you make it possible for families in our community to realize their dream of homeownership. Thank you for helping families have their first home! Thank you for your continued support of Habitat's vision: "A world where everyone has a decent place to live."

### JUST WONDERING...

*QUESTIONS & ANSWERS BY RETIRED DISCIPLES MINISTER REV. JT MOORE*

**Jesus remarked about an oversight of some of the customs of the day relative to welcoming a guest (Luke 7:36-50). What were they?**

This occurred when Jesus was welcomed into a Pharisee's home and where he was ministered to by a woman. The homes of people with moderate income were often built around an open courtyard. It was there that meals were eaten and one often found a garden and a fountain. When a teacher (rabbi) was present, people were welcomed to "drop in." A guest was usually extended certain courtesies. First, the host placed his hand on the guest's shoulder and gave him the kiss of peace. Second, since the "roads" of the day were only dust tracks, one's feet would be dusty (think of shoes as soles held in place by straps), so cool water was poured over the feet to clean and comfort, and then dried. Third, a drop of attar of roses was placed on the guest's head, or a pinch of sweet incense was burned. In that day, guests did not sit at a table, but reclined on low couches, resting on the left elbow, leaving the right arm free, with the feet stretched out behind. During the meal, the sandals were taken off.



## Table Topics

On Tuesday evenings, a group of us gathers at Green Joe's coffee shop (2915 Battleground Ave) 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 is on us the first time you come!

## Table Talk

It's true: we like to eat. We eat together often. We also work in the garden to grow food to help feed others. One way we connect is around the table on Thursday evenings. Sometimes at a local restaurant; sometimes at one of our homes. No pressure to eat or drink; stopping by for 20 minutes or an hour is great too. Here's the Table Talk schedule for the next two weeks:

7 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 16: Book Signing @FCC w/ Rev. Dr. Mike Simpson (see below)

7 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 23: Sticks & Stones, 2200 Walker Ave.

## Book launch for Rev. Dr. Mike Simpson

Dr. Mike Simpson will launch his new book, *Fix Your Family*, on Thursday, Feb. 16, from 7-8:30 in the Gathering Space of First Christian Church. Mike served as Pastor of First Christian from August 1992, through November 2000. He launched his first book, *The Lazarus Project*, at FCC in December 1999.

*Fix Your Family* is based upon the same psychological model—Family Systems—that Mike used as a minister and as a nationally known congregational renewal consultant. Much of the insight and several of the vignettes described in the book come directly from Mike's work while at First Christian. In particular, there is a detailed section on the Advent event from 1997 entitled "The Christmas of the Special Child."

Mike is a retired ordained minister of the Christian Church (Disciples). He is a published novelist, a marathoner, portrait artist and blues harmonica player. For more information about Mike or *Fix Your Family*, you can go to [fixyourfamily.org](http://fixyourfamily.org).

## Elders and Deacons Retreat at Christmount March 3-4

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



## March 5 First on First Dinner

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 Morris, the new executive director of Christmount.



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

January 29: 107

February 5: 130

## PRAYER CONCERNS

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

*PRAY*

Angie Wethington

Gary Yeager

JoAnn Alley

Bill Rayle

Letha Gant

Lib Tilley

Kenny Honeycutt

David Hodgins

Joe & Ann Fry

Burt Bennett

Bonnie Stanley

Billie Pierce

Leroy Bymaster

Bobbie Poston

Jim Saveriano

Anne Early

Marie Reaves Grant

Chuck Jones

Roger Stanley

## 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.

## An update about our music transition:

As you know, we're in a period of transition with regard to our music staff, following the departure of Jody Henley and Genie Jones. I'm grateful that Carol Burnett is serving as our interim music director and organist, and I am looking forward to working with her for the next several months. With input from the Personnel Committee and the Worship Ministry Team, I've put together a search committee consisting of Eleanor Bray, Patti McDonald, April Murray, and Troy Desselles.

We met recently and spent some time thinking about the role of music in our worship life, and our dreams for the music ministry at First Christian Church. Over the next several weeks, we would like to hear from you: Members of the search committee will be attending a variety of small groups (Table Talk, Agape, choir rehearsal, Table Topics, Vintage Bunch, youth groups, etc.) to gather input, and if you miss one of those, there will be an listening session on Sunday, March 5, following worship.

-- Lee

**SUNDAYS AT FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH**

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

*connect***Connect at a Welcome Gathering**

(Are you new around here? Not new but want to get more connected?)

This is a perfect opportunity for new members or anyone who just wants to learn a little more about First Christian Church and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Hor d'oeuvres will be followed by a presentation and conversation with our pastor and other church leaders. Sunday, Feb. 12, at 5 p.m., at Lee's home, 221 N. Elam Ave. Please RSVP to [admin@fccgreensboro.org](mailto:admin@fccgreensboro.org) or 336-273-4725. Childcare provided if requested in advance.

**Connection Cards**

We are introducing a Connection Card that offers a way for all worshipers to participate and engage more deeply in worship. The Connection Card is a part of the bulletin and is perforated for easy (we hope!) tearing. "Offering" ourselves to God includes giving monetary gifts and gifts of our time and talents. This Connection Card allows worshipers to note ways they'll participate in the life of the church. There is space for prayer requests as well. We hope the offering plates will be full of monetary gifts and these cards that note our gifts of time, participation, and prayer. Please fill them out each Sunday; our gifts make a difference!

*participate*

**Agape Women's Small Group** meets Monday, Feb. 13, at 7 p.m., at Laura Tebow's home: 5109 Cheviot Road. We continue our talk about finding and keeping JOY in our lives. Ellen Smith can be contacted for more information: 336-430-0607.

**Crochet & Chat**

We're working with plarn (plastic bags recycled into yarn) to create mats for the homeless. Join us—no matter your skill level!—Monday, Feb. 13, at 11 a.m., at the church. Bring your own lunch. Coffee and cookies will be provided.

**The Outreach Ministry Team** will meet Sunday, Feb. 19, after church. All are invited to participate in the conversation about Outreach projects. Questions? Want to know more? Contact Team Leaders Anna Young or George Manley or the church office.

**First Christian Church is attending the Interfaith Youth Tour! Adults and families invited!**

Join CYF Sunday, Feb. 19, from 2:00-5:30 p.m., as we visit the Greensboro Bahá'í Center, Beth David Synagogue, and the Islamic Center of Greensboro. If you would like more information or would like to RSVP, please reach out to Amanda Kerr by email at [amanda@fccgreensboro.org](mailto:amanda@fccgreensboro.org)

**Caring for One Another**

For many years, a group of church members called Caring Friends faithfully stayed connected with our homebound members through calls, cards, and visits. In the past couple of years, we have begun to realize that there is much more to caring for one another than simply visiting those who can't get to church, as important as such visits are. To that end, Caring Friends is being transformed into a new congregation-wide Care Team with the bold mission of helping us care for one another through all stages of life, through celebrations and sorrows.

We imagine a Care Team made up of lots of people who stand ready to meet needs in a variety of ways. Meetings will be few and far between, but action will be plentiful. When we know of a need—say, a family who's had an illness and could use a visit (we'll be careful about confidentiality, of course), or parents with a new baby who could use a healthy meal, or someone who hasn't been to church in a while and could use a phone call to see what's up—the Care Team leaders will reach out to see who can help. We hope to provide care for each other not just in times of crisis, but when good things happen too (you got a new job, made the honor roll, passed a tough course, or ran your first 5K), or even just in the middle of ordinary life (who wouldn't appreciate a surprise, home-cooked meal in the middle of a regular busy week, or a parents night out?)

Faith Manley, with the support of the rest of the elders and some former members of the Caring Friends, is helping to get this Care Team off the ground this spring. Here's where you come in: we need to know how you'd like to put your caring into action. Not comfortable with hospital visits but you could make a pot of soup? Sounds good. Don't love phone calls but you could send a card or two? Perfect.

Here are some of the ways we've thought of, but maybe you have another idea:

- Visits to homebound church members
- Visits to the hospital
- Meals
- Celebrations
- Offers to babysit
- Phone calls
- Cards
- Prayers
- What else?

If you're interested in helping out, please contact Faith Manley, or email [info@fccgreensboro.org](mailto:info@fccgreensboro.org), or fill out the connection card this Sunday at church, or join us for a brief information **session on Sunday, Feb. 19, following worship** for anyone who is interested in learning more about the Care Team.

**Help us stay in touch with former members**

Do you know someone who was connected to First Christian and should be invited to our Centennial celebrations? Give us their contact information or pass along our newsletters.