

WARNER ROBINS DISCIPLE



Rev. Darrell Vandervort, Pastor

Shirley Thompson, Pianist

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH
(Disciples of Christ)
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Warner Robins, GA 31093
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Sunday School: 10:00am
Worship: 11:00am
December 2016 Number 12



Here we are at the end of 2016. It has been a full year at First Christian Church. There were ups and downs just like any other living organization. While I am not someone who usually makes resolutions at the end of the year in preparation for the coming New Year, I may deviate from my norm a bit this year. In looking back at all that has taken place, maybe forward with resolution might be the way to go forward.

At the beginning of this year, a leadership team from First Christian was trained in the process for the Hope Partnership for Missional Transformation. If you thought it was long reading it, try saying it aloud fast. This program is from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and helps churches make hard decisions about the future of their congregations. In May and June we held house groups to go over the material provided, look at information about our community, and make recommendations to the congregation. Ultimately, we decided to begin the process of re-visioning, redefining the Mission of First Christian Church.

Re-visioning is not about saying we will spread the Gospel message. It requires we create a dynamic statement that is action oriented. Ultimately, it reflects the Great Commission of going out and making disciples, but is directed toward the unique time and place in which we live.

As part of the process, we suspended our constitution and by-laws in order to be flexible during this process. We also created a Transition Team to guide the

effort and communicate with the congregation. Since that time, we have taken some new steps and done different things that we have not attempted as a congregation in a long time.

On October 1st, we hosted a Fall Festival for the Pre-K through 3rd grade children and their families at Miller Elementary School. There were inflatable events and games, hotdogs and chips, and prizes. Children were given a card with numbers for each of the stations. As they went to the Bouncy House, or the Face Painting room, or one of the games, their card was stamped. They even got a stamp when they went to eat. The last stop was in the prize room where there were colorful pencils, stickers, pencil bags, coloring books and reading books. Many parents were surprised that this was all free, especially the food and books. We had a good turnout of volunteers and children, and it was a fun afternoon.

We have also joined with All Saints Episcopal Church and Faith Lutheran Church to provide an after school tutoring program created by the Episcopal Church in GA called Path To Shine. This program targets early elementary children who are on the edge between success and failure. According to studies, if these children don't improve, the chances that they will leave school before graduation are very high. This program began on Nov. 8th. The response of the children the day after the program started was tremendous. People from all of the congregations volunteer to tutor, lead recreation, bring special

programs like art, or music, and provide food for the children.

We also partnered with Faith Lutheran Church to hold an Ecumenical Election Eve Prayer Service. On the Monday before the election, we gathered in the sanctuary to pray and to remember that we are called to pray for those selected to serve the government at all levels. We also recalled our baptisms in order to remember that no matter who won or lost, we as Christians must stand together and not give in to divisiveness.

The newest opportunity to gather for fellowship and conversation is the Wine and Wisdom gatherings on Wednesday evening every 2 weeks. This program provides our church family as well as anyone else who would like to come to the Fellowship Hall and share in focused conversations on various topics, of which not all of the topics will be serious. We will also share in wine and other refreshments as people choose. As I am writing this column on the day before the first Wine and Wisdom party, I cannot tell you how it went. I am hopeful that it will go well.

Our focus as a congregation is moving from counting numbers on Sunday morning and moving toward counting the impact First Christian has in our neighborhood and community. Counting the amount in the offering plate and the number of people in worship has been the norm for generations. We need to look back to what counted in the Gospel, who was touched, who was fed, who was healed. We made an impact with children and their families with the Fall Festival; we are touching the future through Path to Shine; we are reaching in new ways to our community and seeking greater depth of disciple within the congregation.

Now, as we approach our next step in Re-visioning, we will begin to write our Future Story, a narrative vision of our next 5 years of serving God in Warner Robins. We look

at 5 years, because the world changes rapidly and we need to develop a habit of reassessing what is needed and what we can do more frequently than we have in our history. We are called to serve in a living community where needs and challenges can change and we as First Christian Church, need to be able to respond more quickly than ever before. Please pray and participate in the process and the ministries come from this effort.

This December, Christmas Day is the last Sunday of the month. Because of this, we will do some different things in worship. There will still be singing and have scripture and responsive readings, but the focus for the sermons will be odd.

On Dec. 4th, the sermon will be on The Littlest Angel; Dec. 11th will be on The Little Drummer Boy, Dec. 18th will be The Best Christmas Pageant Ever, and on Christmas Day we will sing as many carols as we want.

On Christmas Day we will have a light breakfast available at 10:00. There will be no Sunday School, so come enjoy fellowship and then come to worship. Also, if you received a new clothing item for Christmas, wear it. Well, maybe not PJs. We will sing carols and read the Christmas story and celebrate at the Lord's Table.

Shalom, *Darrell*

DECEMBER ELDERS & DEACONS

Listed below are those serving in Dec:

Elders: Charlie Hebenstreit
Brenda McReynolds

Deacons: Haley Crofutt
Rita Youngblood
Nicole Crofutt
Angela Hebenstreit

Tradition: Sit with husband in a room lit only by tree lights and remember that our blessings outnumber the lights. Happy Christmas to all. Betsy Canas Garmon

DECEMBER SERMONS & SCRIPTURE



DW GRACE GROUP

The Grace Group met this Thursday. We planned our annual Christmas gathering. It will be on the 15th at 7:00 p.m. Heather Johnson will host this year. Everyone is asked to bring a snack/finger food to share and a new pair of fuzzy socks with a small gift of no more than \$5.00 inside the socks for our game.

We will be doing our annual stockings for the children at the Salvation Army Safe House. Sharon-Kay will have more details to follow.

In addition, we began planning our next year's events and are looking forward to some new fun events. We would like to extend a big thanks to all who helped, donated & visited our annual Bazaar, Bake Sale and Yard sale. We are looking forward to using the money to fund several local missions. Happy Holidays & Merry Christmas to all.

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

There is one more good thing about Winter. He brings Christmas. Through the bleak December the thought of the coming festival is pleasant—like the reflection of a fire on our faces.... Christmas-day is the pleasantest day in the whole year. On that day we think tenderly of distant friends; we strive to forgive injuries—to close accounts with ourselves and the world—to begin the new year with a white leaf, and a trust that the chapter of life about to be written will contain more notable entries, a fairer sprinkling of good actions, fewer erasures made in blushes, and fewer ugly blots than some of the earlier ones. And to make Christmas perfect, the ground should be covered and the trees draped with snow. The bleak world outside should make us enjoy all the more keenly the comforts we possess, and above all, it should make us remember the poor and the needy; for a charitable deed is the best close of any chapter of our lives, and the best promise too, for the record about to be begun.

Alexander Smith, "Winter," 1863

KITCHEN SUPPLIES

Foam coffee cups	Paper Towels
39 gal garbage bags	13 gal trash bags
Small dessert plates	Kleenex
16 oz. plastic glasses	Dish Soap
Spray kitchen cleaner	Napkins
Divided oblong foam plates	

BATHROOMS SUPPLIES

Kleenex tissue	Bathroom Tissue
Liquid Hand Soap	Toilet cleaners

December 2016

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday



"May you have the gladness of Christmas which is hope; the spirit of Christmas which is peace, the heart of Christmas which is love."

Ada V. Hendricks

					1	2	3 Pam Palmer
4	5	6 8:00 a.m. Breakfast at Cracker Barrel	7 Gavin Edmondson	8 Radio Club Meeting 7:00	9	10	
11 Jennifer Lamm	12	13 8:00 a.m. Breakfast at Cracker Barrel	14 William Griffith	15 DW GRACE XMAS PARTY 7:00 at Heather Johnson	16	17	
18 Fellowship Dinner 6:00 p.m.	19 Bariatric Group Mtg. 7:00	20 8:00 a.m. Breakfast at Cracker Barrel	21	22	23	24	
25 	26	27 8:00 a.m. Breakfast at Cracker Barrel	28 Prayer Shawl Group 7:00	29	30	31	

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**THINK ABOUT THIS. IT'S 100% TRUE:
From Christian Clippings**

1. At least 2 people in this world love you so much they would die for you.
2. At least 15 people in this world love you in some way.
3. A smile from you can bring happiness to anyone, even if they don't like you.
4. Every night, **SOMEONE** thinks about you before they go to sleep.
5. You mean the world to someone.
6. If not for you, someone may not be living.
7. You are special and unique.
8. When you think you have no chance of getting what you want, you probably won't get it, but if you trust God to do what's best, and wait on His time, probably, sooner or later, you will get it or something better.
9. When you make the biggest mistake ever, something good can still come from it.
10. When you think the world has turned its back on you, take a look: you most likely turned your back on the world.
11. Someone that you don't even know exists loves you.
12. Always remember the compliments you received. Forget about the rude remarks.
13. Always tell someone how you feel about them; you will feel much better when they know and you'll both be happy.
14. If you have a great friend, take the time to let them know that they are great.

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