

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH



Hey Church Family!

It's Resurrection Seasons! Jesus's death and resurrection are the absolute center of the Christian faith. There is nothing more central. There is nothing more necessary. There is nothing more urgent to share. Why celebrate Jesus's death and resurrection? What's the big deal?

Jesus's death did something. He wasn't just a good example for us to follow; His death wasn't just a symbol. Not only did Jesus's death demonstrate an unfathomable love for us (Rom. 5:8; Eph. 5:2; 1 John 3:16), His death also condemned sin (Rom. 8:3), defeated death itself (2 Tim. 1:10), allowed us to be declared righteous (Rom. 5:9), allowed us to be reconciled with the Father (Rom. 5:10), gave us the ability to be raised to new life (1 Thess. 5:10), and ransomed us, redeemed us, set us free, from the power of evil and sin (Mark 10:45; Gal. 3:13-14; 1 Tim. 2:6; 1 Pet. 1:18-19). When Jesus died, it affected all of history and humanity. And all of us who have repented of our sins and reoriented our lives in Him are part of His new family, set free to live the lives He intended.

Jesus's resurrection did something. Not only did Jesus's resurrection demonstrate that the Father vindicated Jesus (e.g., Acts 2:24; 3:15), but His resurrection also defeated death (Rom. 6:9), allows us to live a "new life" (Rom. 6:4; 8:11)—as if we're reigning right now in the heavenly realms (Eph. 2:6; Col. 2:12; 3:1), makes us righteous/justified before the Father (Rom. 4:25), and guarantees that we, too, will be raised in a resurrection body (1 Cor. 6:14; 2 Cor. 4:14).

Non-Christians are right to ask, "Why do you believe Jesus was raised from the dead?" When I answer that question, I focus on key facts that hold one thing in common: a profound, unheard-of change in theology and praxis for multiple Jews (even His enemies!), within years of the event. For example:

1. Saul/Paul was an adamant opponent of Jewish Messianists and had the job of arresting them (Acts 8:3; Gal. 1:23). He almost certainly never met Jesus, and was certainly no friend to His followers! Then he absolutely changed sides (on the issue of Jesus, of course, not on the issue of being an ethnic Jew) and went around, in the face of profound persecution on all sides, telling everyone that Jesus was resurrected and the living Lord. I think the resurrection best explains his "conversion experience," theology, mission, message, and hope.

2. It's crucial to remember the ancient context. There were numerous purported messiah-figures and prophets near Jesus's life (Messiah figures: = Judas of Sepphoris (4 BC), Simon of Perea (4 BC), Athronges (4-2 BC), Menahem (AD 66), John of Gischala (AD 67-70), Simon bar Giora of Gerasa (AD 68-70), Lukuas of Cyrene (AD 115), Simon ben Kosiba/Bar Kochba (AD 132-135); "Prophets": John the Baptizer (AD 20s), The "Samaritan" (AD 26-36), Theudas (AD 45), The "Egyptian" Jew (AD 56), An anonymous "imposter" (AD 61), Jesus son of Ananias (AD 62-69), Jonathan the Weaver, refugee of Cyrene (AD 71).) After one of these leaders would die, their followers might do either of two things: (a) disband, because their leader was a failure; or (b) declare that God's Spirit had now rested on another person in the movement, especially a relative (like the eldest brother). What they most certainly did *not* do was to claim that the dead leader had been vindicated by God, giving him a new, transformed, Spirit-infused body after he died. *Jews didn't do things like that. Ever.* Yet, that's *precisely* what the earliest Jesus movement claimed. They didn't disband. They didn't claim that James, Jesus's brother, was the new Messiah. No. From within decades (at the latest) the earliest Jewish Jesus followers were writing songs to Jesus as living Lord, praying to Him, healing people in His "name," baptizing in His "name," celebrating His death at atoning/saving, and preaching boldly in His "name." I think the resurrection best explains why the earliest Jewish Christians talked, acted, and thought as if Jesus were alive and well, present with them, and governing the events of history as Ruler with God the Father.

3. Related to #2 is the fact that doing all those things in the "name" of Jesus implied profound theological facts about Jesus. Whether hymns written to Jesus as God/Lord (spread throughout NT) or rewriting the Shema (1 Cor 8:6), these Jews deliberately included Jesus into the divine identity--and this kind of thing had never been done before in the history of Judaism. I think the resurrection best explains why they would include Jesus in the divine identity.

4. Every text which speaks of Jesus appearing to His disciples demonstrates that not one single disciple believed, without evidence, that Jesus (a) *would be* raised and/or that He (b) *was* actually raised. It's amazing to me that not one disciple was looking for it. So, in addition to Paul/Saul (though I think this category is different because they knew Jesus), they, too, must be convinced. I think the resurrection best explains why they all changed their minds.

5. It's shocking to me that such widespread belief in the resurrection occurred so early and was so widespread (i.e., it occurs in multiple different documents and strands of traditions). If this were a later legend, shouldn't it take, at minimum, a couple decades? 1 Cor 15:3ff, written within twenty years of Jesus's life, speaks of the "tradition handed down" that Jesus was killed and raised on the third day, in language that was technical within Jewish circles. Remember, the Gospels and Paul's letters were all composed within the life-times of the original eye-witnesses, who could easily refute false information. I think the resurrection best explains why the changes happen so fast and are so widespread.



6. New Testament scholar, N.T. Wright, is correct: When Jews spoke of resurrection, it was (a) a *peripheral* topic, not central to any Jewish belief, praxis, or literature; (b) would occur to a *group* of people (all Jews or faithful Jews or whatever); and (c) would occur at the shift of the ages, at *Judgment Day*. (A fourth commonality might include the typical belief that resurrection would include the FORMER body of the person.) However, the earliest Jewish Christians differed on all these points: they (a) made resurrection central to their belief and praxis; (b) constantly and consistently said it happened only to one person (at this point in history) and; (c) happened in this era, not (only) at the shift of the ages/Day of YHWH. (And of course, the NT presents Jesus as having a new body of the new age). I think the resurrection best explains these changes in belief.

7. Other anecdotal things like the fact that priests and Pharisees are even converted (in Acts 15 it mentions them in passing). I think the resurrection best explains why the very people who helped get Jesus arrested and killed are now part of the community of people praying to Jesus, singing to Jesus, preaching about a resurrected Jesus, etc.

If we celebrated Jesus's death and resurrection on a fixed day, when would it be? Scholars are divided, but for various historical reasons, Jesus's death probably occurred around 3pm on Friday, April 3, 33. This would put His resurrection around Sunday, April 5, 33.

I really hope that you'll commit to being a part of this special season of the church! In the love of the One "who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from this present evil age according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory forever and ever! Amen." (Gal. 1:4-5 NET)

David

For the Kingdom,
David W. Pendergrass, Ph.D. *Senior Pastor*

WORSHIP MINISTRY



Church Family,

March has been a great month in the Worship Ministry at FCC. Through the Lenten season, we've celebrated the hope we find in Jesus. Through songs that speak of His sacrifice, to the Triumphal Entry, words that glorify our Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have been sound at First Christian. With our children's ministry waving of palms during our processional song, to long time members reading scripture, the power of Jesus has been proclaimed by all ages.



As you read this, you'll have already celebrated, or will be celebrating, the resurrection of Jesus Christ. What an amazing thing that we get to celebrate yearly through song, scripture, prayer, and teaching? Our prayer in the worship ministry is that your relationship with God has been strengthened through special services such as Good Friday, Sunrise, and Resurrection Sunday. In songs like "Unstoppable God", we have the chance to worship Christ by proclaiming that when the third day dawned, sin was defeated, and Jesus had overcome. He paid it all, suffered, and rose from the grave. He did this to wash away our crimson stains white as snow. What an amazing gift that is free for us? Follow Jesus, confess your sins, and He'll accept you in to the most amazing relationship you'll ever experience.

Matthew Mulnix - Modern Worship Leader | Greg Boyle - Traditional Worship Leader
matthew@fcclawrence.org greg@fcclawrence.org

OUTREACH MINISTRIES

Greetings in Christ Jesus!

Have you ever wanted to share your faith with others, but then not know where to start or what to say? I certainly have! And as I talk to others, it seems to be a trend among some of us who profess Christ. Actually, I just read of an interesting study today. On the website for the Billy Graham Center of Wheaton College, they share: *"Research tells us that nearly 80% of unchurched people said they would engage in a faith conversation if their Christian friends asked. Unfortunately, only 39% of Christians have actually shared how to become a Christian with someone in the past six months."*

That was striking to me! I do not mean any guilt by that, nor do you have to be fearful of having to clearly explain how someone enters the Kingdom of God and lead them to Christ in each conversation. But we can all practice engaging with people on various levels regarding matters of faith, and how Jesus changes our lives. May the Spirit grant us courage and boldness to invite people to the Kingdom. As we take steps towards conversations of Jesus, and enter into them, let's rejoice and cheer one another on for making an effort!

I would love to encourage you to reflect on your conversations with people regarding faith. Here are a few ideas I have found helpful to take a step to conversations about Jesus with others:

- Be a learner of people, ask them questions, and from their answers ask more non-intrusive questions. As they share, there may be felt needs arise through which you can share an aspect about the God of the universe that can meet those needs.
- As one man working in India put it, always have fresh rotti! (Rotti is Indian flat bread) Who wants stale bread? It's harder to share stale bread with people. People want fresh bread, and we are more eager to share something we are currently enjoying. Jesus is the bread of life. Enter the Bible daily. Consider what you are reading. Rather than just glossing over text, consider things that strike you... do you paint a picture in your mind, are you convicted of how to live life, are you excited about a new insight? And then you can honestly share "I had an interesting (or challenging/convicting/encouraging/etc) time reading this morning." They may ask more, and you can share just a bit. If they are interested, a dialogue may arise.
- Practice talking about Jesus to yourself or with other believers. Consider, what difference does Jesus make in your life?
- Practice saying Jesus's name out loud! Declaring Jesus is good.
- Encourage one another in talking about Jesus with others, and ask how others are doing.
- Pray, asking God to give opportunity for conversations to come up in which you can talk about Jesus.

Please, share with me what you have found helpful in talking about Jesus as well. We can all grow together in delighting in, and sharing our Treasure, King Jesus, with others!

Peace,

David Nanne 480-524-6875 dm.nanne@gmail.com

ADULT DISCIPLESHIP



Hello Church Family!

We, as a church, have just revisited the most profound event in the history of the world—the week between Palm Sunday and Resurrection Sunday. Those experiences and others capture my heart and my head in ways not easily described. The Holy Spirit is at work at FCC. One has only to have witnessed the recent baptisms, see the many new faces present and watch the ministries growing within this body of Christ. Our doors are open, and everyone is welcome here.

For me, the Discipleship Groups are a pleasant reminder of all of this. When people gather in small groups, personal connections are formed. D Groups members tell me digging deeper into God's Word is helping their faith grow. The loving, the caring, the sharing are making a difference in their lives. Members find they are mutual accountability partners in everyone's endeavor to be more like Jesus.

This month I say "thank you, thank you, thank you" to all of you who are helping to make the heart of FCC beat more loudly. To those of you who have accepted the challenge to be a part of our D Groups know that you are appreciated. If you have not yet joined a group, let me help you find your place. You are welcome here!

Tammie Caffee (Pastor of Adult Discipleship)

tammiedcaffee@gmail.com.

STEWARDSHIP

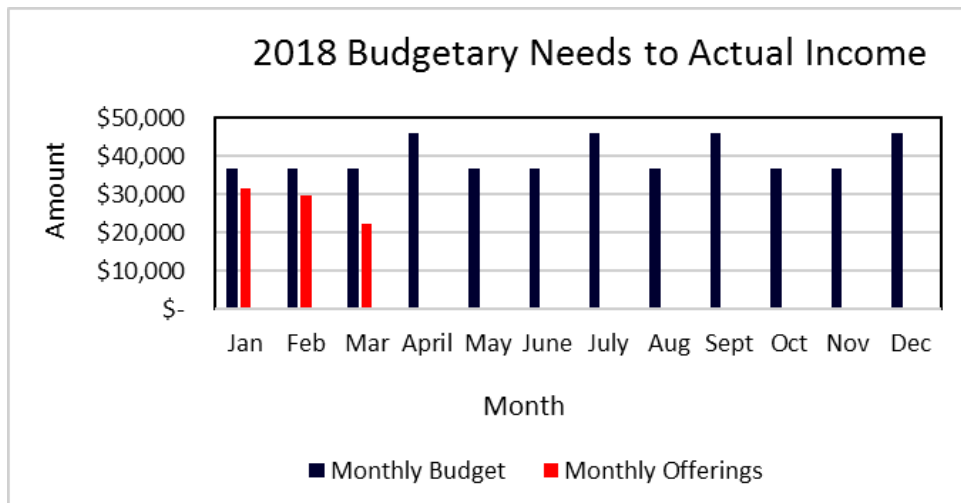
There are so many wonderful things happening here at First Christian. As we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, it reminds us of new beginnings. As the spring season slowly comes about, we see new growth in the vegetation around us. The trees and flowers are beginning to bloom. God has given us such beauty in our world. We are also seeing new growth here at FCC. We have had 3 recent baptisms, new Christians starting their new life in Christ. The love and knowledge of the life that God has is in store is just starting to bloom. There is so much beauty in seeing a new Christian experience God's love for them. We are thankful for ministries that allow new Christians to learn and to grow. We are thankful for a ministry staff that is well education and ready to teach and to counsel. We are thankful to all who give to make these ministries possible.

Because you give, we are also able to provide a place for people to come who are hurting and lost, a place to learn more about God and his incredible love for us, a place where God can use people to change lives! With your gifts and time we are able to provide food through LINK and household items through the Helping Hands closet. Because you give, we can maintain a wonderful facility for children to attend preschool, for those new Christians to be baptized, for bible studies, for recovery groups to meet, for couples to get married, for families to dedicate new babies and for families to say goodbye to their loved ones who have been called home. We are so thankful, because of so many, we can continue to minister and to be a place and a people that God can use to change lives!

The Trustees are excited about 2018. The church is growing and sometimes it takes a little time for the finances to catch up. As we have mentioned in previous monthly newsletters, we are lacking in what we need to support our budget for 2018. Based on pledges, loose offering, and non-pledged funds we are at about 70% of what is needed. To keep the congregation informed, we will be including the chart below each month to show our average income needed compared to our monthly offerings.

Please note the following:

- On average we need \$9,204 per Sunday to cover our budgetary needs.
- Some months have 5 Sundays, the graph will indicate those months with an increase in the budget number.
- Larger one-time gifts or early annual payments of pledges we be spread over the remaining months.
- These numbers represent what is given to the Unified Budget for our operating, missions and outreach budget. It does not include gifts for the building, capital improvements or other designated gifts.
- March numbers are preliminary, any change should be minimal. The Trustees will meet later this month to approve the March statements.



Feb Budget	\$ 36,817
Feb Actual	\$ 29,741
Feb Deficit	\$ 7,076
Mar Budget	\$ 36,817
Mar Actual	\$ 22,377
Mar Deficit	\$ 14,440

We were about 20% behind where we needed to be for February and 40% behind for March. At this rate, on average, we will be behind roughly \$116,000 at year end. If you haven't pledged, please consider doing so. If you could consider an additional gift for 2018, it would be very much appreciated. The Trustees are keeping a close eye on the finances and will keep you further updated through the newsletter and bulletins. If you have questions, please contact the Trustees via e-mail, trustees@fcclawrence.org.

Monthly giving will fluctuate from month to month, some of the fluctuation is related to the timing of gifts. If someone is on vacation or misses a Sunday, their gift may fall into the next month. To avoid this, might we suggest setting up recurring payments through our online giving option. Just go to our website and click the "Give" button. We recommend the ACH option as the fees are much less, than using a credit card. If you have questions or need help, please contact Lisa in the Finance Office.

Ways to Give

Online - fcclawrence.org - Click the "Give" Button **Phone** - Text [fcclawrence](tel:77977) to 77977

Offering Plate – Each Sunday **Mail** – First Christian Church, 1000 Kentucky Street, Lawrence, Ks 66044

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY



Hi FCC Families!

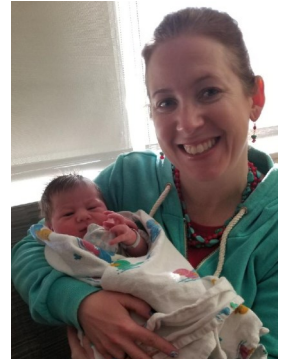
April is an exciting month in the life of the church. This year, April 1 is Resurrection Sunday (Easter), the day on which we get to celebrate that Jesus was raised to new life! To commemorate this experience, and to make it come to life for children, families are invited to bring flowers to place on an empty cross. This picture of bringing something lifeless (a dead tree, in fact) to life (by covering it in flowers) is a great reminder of why we celebrate Resurrection Sunday (Easter). Jesus is alive!



Stop by the FCC Kids area on any Sunday, and you may hear children chanting Jesus is alive! We do many things to actively learn about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and to teach children what that means. Jesus's resurrection gives us hope that this life is not the end. It helps us to grieve with hope when our friends and family members' bodies die (1 Thessalonians 4:13-14), knowing that if they were disciples of Jesus, we will see them again. Jesus's resurrection shows us that Jesus keeps his promises and that he did not leave those he loved. Jesus's resurrection shows us that we can follow the One who has power over death!

Elaine W. Pendergrass (Pastor to Children)

elaine@fcclawrence.org  FCCLawrenceKids



THE GIVING TREE PRESCHOOL



The month of March brought forth many blessings to The Giving Tree. We held our annual St. Patrick's Day Parking Lot Fundraiser. Parking spaces for the parade were available for a \$10 donation and we raised \$1000. All proceeds went toward The Giving Tree Scholarship Fund. Thank you to everyone who volunteered your time to raise funds to help families in need of tuition assistance. If you would like to make a donation, please note The Giving Tree Scholarship Fund on your offering envelope or on the memo line of your check. This is truly a blessing to several of our families.




We are glad that spring has arrived and are thankful for the beauty that God has created for us here on Earth. Spring is a true reminder of how magnificent our dear Lord is as we begin to see the trees bud, flowers bloom, green grass starting to grow, and new life of many animals. Here at The Giving Tree, we will be exploring signs of spring taking place all around us. Teaching about spring provides ample learning

opportunities, and it is truly a blessing to share that God created it for us. The most exciting part is sharing that His son, Jesus, sacrificed so much for us and we continue to be blessed with abundant love.

We are currently accepting enrollment for the 2018-2019 school year. Please contact me for more information if you have children 3 years old through kindergarten and are interested in having them attend preschool.

Julie Hafenstine (The Giving Tree Preschool Director)

www.lawrencepreschool.com  TheGivingTreePreschool



YOUTH MINISTRY



I am looking forward to what God has in store for our youth students in 2018. FCC YTH is excited to implement the strategy of Gather, Grow, Go within its ministry. During the spring semester we will continue to gather on Wednesday nights, Sunday mornings, and other various occasions. We desire to pour into the students, so that they grow to become more like Jesus. We work to accomplish this part of the strategy through biblical education, prayer, and discipleship with students; both individually and collectively. As students

mature in Christ, FCC YTH desires to go out into the world to serve practical needs and spiritual needs of others primarily by sharing ourselves and the gospel of Jesus Christ.



In April, on Wednesday nights, FCC YTH will be continuing through the series called “Piecing Together a Worldview.” Teenagers have numerous questions about life, the Bible, and the Christian faith. I will be “piecing” together everything and explaining as to why I am convinced that the Christian worldview is the best explanation (truth) of reality. On Sunday mornings, FCC YTH will be starting the RightNow Media series called “Amazing Grace.” The Sunday morning study for April will focus upon God, His grace, and how we fit and participate in God’s gospel of grace.

Please Note: FCC YTH will be attending Young Christian’s Weekend in Branson, Missouri, on April 6-8, 2018. We still have some open spots if

there is a student (grades 6th-12th) who wants to come. There are fees and forms that need to be filled out and turned in before we leave. Contact Paul Porter for more information at: paul@fcclawrence.org.

Paul Porter (Pastor to Youth and College)

paul@fcclawrence.org



@fcc_yth



fbl.me/fccyth

COLLEGE MINISTRY



Transit College Ministry is the University/College Ministry of FCC Lawrence. During the week, we meet at the church on Thursdays from 5:30-7:00 PM for food, fellowship, and Bible Study. During the majority of the 2018 spring semester, we will be going through a Bible study called “The Apostles’ Creed.” The objective of the study is to use the Apostles’ Creed as the framework to discuss the essentials and important teachings that make the Christian faith

what it is.

Whether you are a seasoned Christian or a seeker that wants to learn about what Christians believe, then this study is perfect for you. Also, join together with fellow college students who attend our corporate worship services at 9 AM and 11 AM each Sunday morning. Finally, our Pastor to Youth & College, Paul Porter, would love to sit and chat with you over some coffee or a meal, so take him up on this offer.



Paul Porter (Pastor to Youth and College)

paul@fcclawrence.org

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

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Church Elders	elders@fcclawrence.org

Want to make an announcement? Send an email to social@fcclawrence.org

Office Hours: Monday — Friday, 9am to 4pm (closed 12-1pm) 785-843-0679

Come to First Christian this week! Traditional Worship 9am • Modern Worship 11am

COMMUNITY AT FCC



REFRIGERATOR PAGE

**MONDAYS IN APRIL & MAY
FCC SOFTBALL LEAGUE**
PAUL PORTER: PAUL@FCCLAWRENCE.ORG

Coming in April

THE WORTHY LIFE

A STUDY OF 1 AND 2 THESSALONIANS

PASTOR'S STUDY

WEDNESDAYS AT 6PM

PANCAKES
WITH THE PASTOR
SATURDAY, APRIL 7TH, THE BIG BISCUIT

11 AM, THURS, APRIL 12TH, THE BIG BISCUIT

JOY

JUST OLDER YOUTH

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT JOINING FCC?

**COFFEE &
QUESTIONS**

SUNDAY APRIL 8TH, 10:15AM, FELLOWSHIP HALL

SUNDAY, APRIL 8TH, 12:30PM

LINK

SIGN UP IN FELLOWSHIP HALL

DGROUP
LEADERSHIP TRAINING

SUNDAY, APRIL 15TH FELLOWSHIP HALL

Sermon series in April

LIFE AFTER DEATH

What will the new world be like? When will it happen?
How will we exist? What is hell?