

# FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

## FAMILY NEWS

Hello Church Family!

How much do you really know about the history of the celebration of Jesus's birth? The term, "Christmas," is an Old English expression for "Mass of Christ" (*Cristes Maesse*). The Western and Eastern Churches disagree over the exact time of Christmas. In the Western Church, Christmas time (or "Christmastide") *begins* on December 25 and *ends* on January 6 (the Day of Epiphany). Hence, this is the origin of the "Twelve Days of Christmas."



No one knows the precise **date** of Jesus's birth because for the first few centuries of the Church, no one seemed to care when it happened. The first reference to the birth of Jesus on Dec 25<sup>th</sup> might come from Theophilus of Antioch (171-183). Some ancient authors agreed; others disagreed. Here's how ancient authors thought about it:

It was not uncommon for ancient authors to date Jesus's birth in association with the vernal equinox (or some other association with the Sun). The vernal equinox in modern times is dated to March 20/21, though the ancient people dated it to March 25. It marks the change from the longest night to the gradual elongation of daylight hours. In the same way, the conception or birth of the Son of God brings "light" to a dark world. For example, a Latin author argues in *De Pascha computus* (written ca. 243) that the first day of creation was March 25. The author assumes that Jesus must have been born on the same day as the creation of the sun, which is on the fourth day, which would mean March 28.



Other authors believed that since the first day of the *universe's* creation was March 25, it must be the case that Jesus, "God's new creation," must have also been conceived on March 25. This would date Jesus's birth nine months later, on December 25. Other authors agreed with their Jewish counterparts that great prophets were conceived on the same day as their death. And since many Christians believed that Jesus died on March 25, then he must have been born on March 25. Other authors dated Jesus's birth to various days in spring, such as April 2, 19, or May 20. To read more on this issue, see Joseph F. Kelly, *The Origins of Christmas* or Susan K. Roll, *Toward the Origins of Christmas*.

In the Western church, the precise date of Dec. 25, 1 AD was not standardized until 525, when Pope John I commissioned the monk, Dionysius Exiguus, to make a standard calendar for the Western Church. Unfortunately, his calculation of years was off by nearly five years (Jesus was born between 6-4 BC), and there is no way to know what precise day Jesus was born.

The roots of having a *festival* celebrating the birth of Jesus begins in controversy. A sect of Gnostic Christians existed in the early second century in Alexandria, Egypt, led by Basilides. This group believed that Jesus was not *born* divine. Instead, the divine Word united with a human Jesus at His baptism. They believed Jesus's baptism was the first time the divine Word *appeared* on Earth. This festival was called "Epiphany," since this is a Greek word for "appearance." They celebrated this festival on Jan. 6.

Orthodox churches argued that the divine Word first appeared on Earth at Jesus's *birth*, not his baptism. So, many churches celebrated Jesus's birth and baptism on Jan. 6. In fact, to this day, the Orthodox church celebrates Jesus's birth and baptism on Jan. 6. The Western church would separate these events: Dec. 25 for His birth; Jan 6 for the visit of the Magi or His baptism (depending on the Church).

Ever wonder why some people use the term, "Xmas"? "X" is the Greek letter, "chi," which is the first letter of "Christ" in Greek. At least as early as the 15<sup>th</sup> cent., Christians have used "Xmas" for "Christmas." Perhaps you've seen the *labarum* (seen on right), which uses the first two letters of "Christ" in Greek, the "X" and "P."



Your short history lesson is over! This year, I encourage you: before one present is opened, open to Matthew 1 and Luke 2. Read the accounts of Jesus's birth. Let it sink in. Pray. Praise God for sending His Son to take away the sins of those who trust in Him. Give Him all the glory. *His birth is still worth celebrating. He is still changing lives!*

For the Kingdom,

*David*

Senior Pastor

# YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS

Hello Church!

As December is coming up, YTH is seeking the presence of God even more intentionally. To prepare ourselves for the Advent season, we are digging into the Scriptures to truly discover the compelling stories of Jesus' incarnation. We are going to take a look at each of the characters involved in the Nativity stories, seeking to find the areas in our life that God is calling us to grow in. We will take a look at the devotion and faithfulness of Joseph, the obedience and the courage of Mary, and the compassion and the humility of God. We are hoping to grow in all of these areas as we dive into the beautiful story of God's first advent.



YTH seek to be a community of love and unity. We believe that growth happens when we seek the Lord together by being in communion together. Therefore, YTH will celebrate the incarnation of God by eating, laughing, building Christmas Trees, and laughing together. This celebration will happen on December 14th and it will be an absolute blast as we learn more about the nature of the incarnation! With this said, the last YTH night will be December 14th. After this Wednesday, YTH will take a break for the winter. But we are coming back in January with a bang! After taking two weeks off, we will start meeting again on January 11th. When we come back, we will talk about the foundation that we need to be able to accomplish the resolutions that we choose to make.

## CHILDREN'S MINISTRY NEWS

Hello Church!

There are days that are bad, but it is the beauty of God that He creates great things out of the bad days that consume us. Currently, FCC Kids are diving into stories in the Scriptures where different characters had to face a bit of struggles. So far we have talked about the bad days of Noah, Moses, Joseph, and Jonah. But we are learning that God shows his sovereignty and beauty in those seemingly terrible situations. Most recently, we talked about how God calls us to obedience as we saw the mistakes that Jonah made in his disobedience. But most importantly, we saw that God forgives Jonah who was disobedient. God forgives His children who repent of their disobedience. The love of God is infinite and beautiful church!

We are close to getting the new Children's Director! Please be praying for smooth transitions as we continue to search for the new person. Because of this transitional time, Children's Ministry will not be hosting any big events, but I am sure that the new director will be amazing and bring this ministry back up to speed with amazing events.

Kiyun Lee  
Pastor of Youth & Children

# THE GIVING TREE PRESCHOOL NEWS



What a wonderful time of year to give thanks for all that our Lord has provided! The Giving Tree classrooms are full of excitement as we approach the holiday season. Thanksgiving provides many opportunities to learn what it means to be thankful. Students were asked to bring something to school that makes them thankful. This not only allowed for children to practice speaking in front of the group, it also provided the opportunity for students to think about what is truly special in their lives.

Prior to the Thanksgiving break we had our own "Friendsgiving" celebration. Families were asked to send a food item to school that would be added to our Harvest Mix. We all gathered and shared this special snack that everyone helped to make. We enjoyed this special time of Thanksgiving full of singing and laughter. We even made turkey hats to wear as we celebrated friendship.

On behalf of The Giving Tree staff and students, I want extend a big thank you to everyone who contributed to the chair drive. We love our new chairs! Your generosity allowed for 36 new chairs to be purchased for the three classrooms. Thank you for your support and continued prayers.

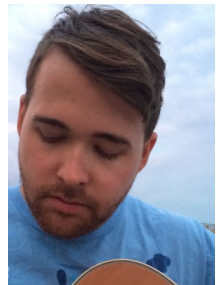


Julie Hafenstine  
The Giving Tree Preschool Director  
[www.lawrencepreschool.com](http://www.lawrencepreschool.com)



## WORSHIP MINISTRY NEWS

"This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." (Psalm 118:24 ESV) I hope that this is First Christian's cry every Sunday, and every day of your Christian walk. My goal is to have the Worship we experience on Sundays be an outpouring of thankfulness for our week, and preparation for the trials that might find us in the coming days. Though corporate worship can be a joyous time that fills our souls, don't let it be your only source of "spiritual jet fuel". My goal for 2017 and beyond is to find those "alternative fuel sources", and share them with you. Let our Worship of God be a "renewable resource" that we can share with everyone in Lawrence and beyond.



During the month of November, we were blessed with several awesome offertories. My thanks goes out to Taylor Webb, Abbie Treff, Susan Dickson, and Judy Chadwick for sharing their musical gifts with FCC. To listen to November offertories and more, go to the First Christian Church website, and check out our Sound Cloud feed under the "Worship" tab. We also enjoyed the first Sunday of Advent.

In December, we will be blessed by wonderful offertories, hymns, contemporary Christmas carols, and advent traditions. I personally love this season of singing about the birth of the savior, Jesus Christ. While there is a plethora of great secular Holiday songs, I am proud to be a Worship Leader at a church that allows me to sing about the true reason for the season. I hope you will join us on Sunday mornings, along with our Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services to do just that.

Matthew Mulnix  
Modern Worship Leader  
[matthew@fclawrence.org](mailto:matthew@fclawrence.org)



# PUT ME ON THE REFRIGERATOR!



Serve at L.I.N.K. Dec. 11 at 12:30pm in basement.



FCC Family album, Dec. 14-17. Sign up via our website or in the Fellowship Hall.



Dec. 24 at 6:00pm, Program  
Dec. 25 at 10am, Combined Service



Learn more about FCC. First Sunday of every month at 10:15am in the Fellowship Hall.



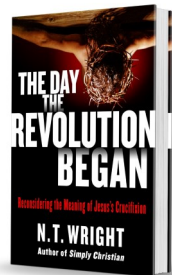
In-depth study of Revelation. Jan. 11 at 6pm in the Fellowship Hall. Free childcare.



Marriage Workshop. Feb. 10 from 6-9pm and Feb. 11 from 9am-5pm. Free childcare. Register online today.



**JOY** (Just Older Youth)  
2nd Thursday of each month  
11:00 am at Perkins Restaurant



**YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS THIS STUDY!**

New kick-off beginning **February 26<sup>th</sup>**

A complete Growth Group list is in the Fellowship Hall.

**FCC GROWTH GROUPS**



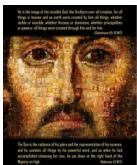
*We have this hope, as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure... Hebrews 6:19*

**RUTH:** 1st Wednesday of each month in Fellowship Hall. **9 - 11am**

**LYDIA LADIES:** First Tuesday of each month. Wyndham Place Senior Residence **7-9pm**



The Transportation Ministry needs people who can drive for Modern Service just 1 Sunday per month. Contact the church office if you can volunteer ([office@fclawrence.org](mailto:office@fclawrence.org) or 785- 843-0679).



The Welcome Desk has free study journals. One of the most beneficial habits a disciple of Jesus can make is to write what God is telling you. Take notes when you study Scripture. Take notes during the sermon. Take notes on your prayer life.



We would love to increase the amount of boxes that FCC donates for next year's Operation Christmas Child Shoebox collection. Empty boxes can be found in fellowship hall. Please take one or more home to fill. We can store the donated boxes at the church until next November.



FCC has Scholarships available of \$500 per academic year. These are available for graduating seniors and undergraduate students in recognized programs who are currently, or have recently, been actively involved and attending FCC and its youth programs. Applications can be picked up in the church office. The due date for completed applications is Monday, January 9th, 2017. If you have any questions please contact Lisa Hoag at 785-843-0679 or by e-mail, [lisa@fclawrence.org](mailto:lisa@fclawrence.org).

# STEWARDSHIP

During our stewardship campaign we have talked about where we find our contentment. Is it found in our money, education, status or other temporary things that we accumulate here on earth? Or, is it found in “the one who strengthens us?” There are so many in our community and the world who do not know where to find this kind of contentment. Our mission as a church is to make disciples. *The gift of your time, talent, and resources make this possible in so many ways.* We make disciples as we provide opportunities to grow in our knowledge of the Bible, to show our love to Christ through worship, to care for and minister to one another within the church, and to serve those who are less fortunate. All of these things happen in a building that your gifts help maintain, through staff that your gifts help pay, and through gifts given directly to the causes that FCC supports. *In the continued effort to make disciples of all nations, please do not underestimate the importance of your financial gifts, no matter the size.* Each person that comes to Christ through these efforts, and of course, with the direction and guidance of the Holy Spirit, will then begin their own journey in accumulating for themselves “treasures in heaven” and in finding contentment in “the one who strengthens us.”

Below are the YTD income and expense totals for the Unified Budget through October 31, 2016. We ended the month with a net loss of \$888 leaving a net loss for the year of \$10,422. We should be at 83.33% of the budget at the end of October. Income was at 80.68% with expenses at 83.21%.

Thank you to those who participated in our 2017 stewardship campaign. It is no too late to submit a pledge if you wish to do so. Please e-mail Lisa in the finance office at [lisa@fcclawrence.org](mailto:lisa@fcclawrence.org). The Trustees continue to work on the 2017 budget which will be submitted to the Elders for approval at their December meeting.

## Unified Budget YTD thru October 31, 2016

YTD Income	\$332,410
YTD Expenses	\$342,832
YTD Net Income/(Loss)	(\$10,422)

Lisa Hoag  
Business Administrator

# THANKSGIVING DINNER

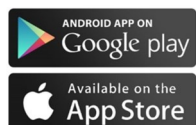
Thank you to everyone who was able to attend and help serve the FCC Thanksgiving Dinner!  
For more pictures, go to [www.facebook.com/firstchristianlawrence](http://www.facebook.com/firstchristianlawrence)



# FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

1000 Kentucky Street • Lawrence KS 66044  
Traditional Worship 9 AM • Modern Worship 11 AM

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**



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Donate via text. Send **fcclawrence** to **77977**

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Kiyun Lee, Youth & Children's Ministry  
Church Elders  
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