# FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH



The author of Hebrews was faced with a demanding, serious situation: fellow Christians were abandoning their faith due to suffering caused by persecution. When thinking of how to encourage them not to leave Jesus, he was a bit frustrated that he had to explain some basic points of Christianity, like, for example, that Jesus stayed faithful to God's will even though he suffered. What he says still haunts me: "About this we have much to say that is hard to explain, since you have become dull in understanding. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic elements of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food; for everyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is unskilled in the word of righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, for those whose faculties have been trained by practice to distinguish good from evil." (Heb. 5:11-14 NRS)

It always makes me think: Am I an "infant" in the faith? Am I "dull in understanding"? Moreover, would it be possible to characterize Christians according to their maturity? Could one reasonably describe a "Teenager Christian" or "Adult Christian"? There are no Bible verses that explain it this way. Yet, I think it's possible to imagine how they might be described. These designations have nothing to do whatsoever with the person's actual age. Moreover, I'm just giving my way of categorizing patterns I've seen; you might describe them differently based on your biblical interpretation and experience. I'll move from what I think is the smallest segment of the Church and move to the largest.

The non-believer. There are the obvious non-Christians, i.e., they admit that fact. They are rare, but are certainly part of many churches (like here). Moreover, every congregation has a population of people who think they are Christians, but are not. They've never "picked up their crosses" to follow Jesus (Mk 8:34). They have no awareness of the presence of the Spirit (e.g., Rom. 8:9). Deep down, even if they wouldn't articulate it this way, they believe that being a Christian means "acting like my Ideal Self around other people who also act like their Ideal Selves and we all learn to do Church." This is what old Christians call, "good churchmen." They are institutionalized Christians: they know how to behave while at Church, but have never experienced a true, real, confession and repentance to God. It would be (nearly) impossible for them to relate to being "born from above" (Jn 3:3). Instead, they've learned the routines of the local church and confused that with



salvation and maturity. Moreover, this group almost always confuses biblical knowledge with being a disciple of Jesus (cf. 1 Cor. 8:1). Or for some, they substitute Jesus for something else more primary that fits their liking (As one person told me a few months ago: "I go to church just for community. That's the only reason why anyone goes to church, anyway. Community.") These people act like pagans (cf. 1 Cor. 6:9-11). They can be judgmental, gossipy, cause dissentions, are competitive, demonstrate works "of the flesh" (e.g., Gal. 5:19-21), and can treat Church like it's any other institution. In addition, it's typically all masked by being "nice" (since so many people think "being nice" is the true mark of a Christian).

Adults. There is a small section of the church of Adult Christians. These are Real, confessing, growing, mercy-drenched, forgiving, serving, loving, devotional people. They have completely denied themselves and committed every aspect of their lives to Jesus. They are a living embodiment of Romans 12. They love anyone who walks in the door, regardless of how they're dressed, showing honor to all. They immediately give up their seat in the sanctuary for anyone. They are probably leading a small group. They are active in missions and prayer meetings. They regularly pray, regularly attend Church gatherings, and regularly study their Bible. They're almost always reading some theological book. They're more interested in the Whole than the parts. They want the Church to succeed more than their own particular ministry to succeed. They are never fighting for personal agendas. They are not desperate for adulation or recognition. They want to serve Jesus in their giftedness and build up the Body (e.g., 1 Thess. 5:11). They are actively making disciples. They're more interested in how they can serve you than how they can be served. They are unassuming and humble. They exude Jesus. They are the backbone of lay leadership. One could say more.

**Teenagers.** There's also a section of Teenager Christians. These are those who have passed beyond the infancy of Christianity. They no longer have to be begged to read their Bibles or pray. They've recently gotten involved in a small group. They listen to sermons and read theological books just because they want to learn more. They're hungry for more, and they're doing something about that hunger. They're taking responsibility for their growth so they look for Adult Christians for wisdom. They've gone on a couple mission trips and are beginning to take various forms of leadership in Church. Their beliefs and habits are beginning to manifest the teaching of Jesus. They are beginning to mentor others and make disciples. One could say more.

**Infants**. Then, we have the largest group of Christians in any church: the Infant. This is where we get hoodwinked, because Infant Christians can be any age. I have known, and still know, many older people who are Infant Christians. Of course I know that disciples can still struggle with sin (and praise God for His grace!). Nevertheless, I think a short description of the Infant Christian might be:

### February

- They typically only know and believe the absolute basic, simple truths of Christianity (e.g., 1 Cor 3:1-3). Moreover, they really appreciate rehearing those simple basics as many times as they can: in sermons, books, and songs. Like little children, they love reading those simple books over and over again through the years because it's safe and they already know it.
- They might get angry when people use "big words" about God. They'll tell you as quickly as possible that God is simple. Jesus is simple. The Church is simple. And anyone who says anything otherwise is trying to confuse you and get you to lose your faith. They get frustrated when anyone tells them that the Christian tradition is overwhelmingly rich and full, and that there have been tens of thousands of brilliant preacher scholars.



- They might have little-to-no devotional habits, i.e., they are not committed to studying Scripture, prayer,
- worship, service, etc. (e.g., Acts 2:42). Most of the time, they need to be begged and begged to read their Bibles, pray, come to church regularly, join a small group, or go on mission. The most they see their Bibles is during a sermon. They feel good about having their unused Bible near them, like on their nightstand. This same group tends to read very tiny devotional books much more than their Bible.
- They are just "so busy." Church participation is usually at the bottom of their list. Anything whatsoever can be placed above church attendance on their Things-To-Do-On-Sundays List. Runny nose? Stay home. Tired? Stay home. Kids have homework? Stay home. Don't feel like it? Stay home. Having friends over for lunch? Stay home. Big game on at noon? Stay home. Need to clean the house? Stay home. What excuses have you given or heard?
- They might routinely cuss/curse, or express impure humor, both of which are prohibited by Paul (e.g., Eph. 4:29; 5:4). You would be shocked at what I've heard from so-called leaders in various churches! If you don't talk that way in front of someone you respect, then why talk that way at all? Would you cuss/curse with Jesus?
- They might regularly watch awful shows/movies. Infants make every excuse to watch shows and movies that they know they wouldn't watch with someone they respect: "It's just funny." "It's just entertaining." "I don't watch it that often." Infants stay in denial that the kinds of values represented in nearly every show on TV is absolutely counter to the teachings of Jesus. How in the world can we celebrate shows that advocate marital affairs, gossip, betrayals, bad language, and on and on? If you wouldn't watch that show with Jesus in the room, then why watch it now? News flash He's in the room already. :)
- They might regularly listen to music with impure lyrics. Everything I just said applies here too. Would you share your Playlist with Jesus? If not, they why in the world deliberately put that poison in your mind?
- They almost always feel entitled. Infants deep down really think they've done God a favor by dressing up and going to a church building. Infants think that other people should serve them. They think that the preacher should be perfectly entertaining and relevant and penetrating and handsome/pretty and articulate, but still "just like me" so that I can relate. They think that the music minister should only choose songs that they like or make them feel better. They believe that everyone else should realize that "these are my seats and should be reserved, no matter what they occasion or time I appear." They still think the Christian life is about being entertained or only hearing what they wanted to hear (e.g., 2 Tim. 4:3). (I've had people tell me they couldn't stand my sermon because they didn't want me to preach from the New Testament, another didn't want me to preach from the Old Testament, another didn't want to be told they're a sinner, another because they only wanted to be encouraged, another because I didn't mention grace more, etc.) The bottom line: Deep down, they really do believe that other people are an extension of themselves, which means other people are responsible for making them feel happy, welcomed, and entertained. They're entitled.
- Infants might love gossip. They love to talk about what they don't like: the carpet, the speaker, the music, the smells, the air temperature, the lighting, and on and on. They tend to judge others, talk behind people's backs, and willingly or unwillingly do what they can to cause dissention (e.g., Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 3:3; 1 Tim. 6:3-5).

One might list other features in all of these categories. Yet, don't forget where we started. In addition to the author of Hebrews, Peter encouraged his congregation in the first century to long or yearn for "pure, spiritual milk" so that they would grow up in their faith (1 Peter 2:1-3). The emphasis is upon their yearning for spiritual maturity. Paul also shares in the same frustration with the Christians at Corinth. Listen to what he says: "So, brothers and sisters, I could not speak to you as spiritual people, but instead as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. I fed you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready. In fact, you are still not ready, for you are still influenced by the flesh. For since there is still jealousy and dissension among you, are you not influenced by the flesh and behaving like unregenerate people?" (1 Cor 3:1-3 NET) In the Greek, "infant" is pejorative. Paul is ticked off and disappointed. I can see him shaking his head as he spoke this to the scribe.

Assuming these descriptions are even basically accurate, where are you? If you're like me, you might feel that it's time to grow up. If so, what are you doing to mature? There's still time...and plenty of grace.

For the Kingdom,

Waviel David Pendergrass, Ph.D.

# Adult Discipleship



January 2018 has come and gone far too quickly. My prayer remains, that as members of First Christian Church, we continue to keep our mission an important part of all we do during the year. Our DGroups continue to Gather, to Grow and to Go.

I am wondering as I write this how many of you have not yet committed to becoming a part of one of these groups. Women Together, Seekers and the Pastor's DGroup continue to gather together each Sunday morning. With childcare, coffee and goodies always available, this is the perfect time to get to know some of the wonderful people at FCC who are seeking to grow in their faith and in their love of Jesus. Our hope is that each one of us might be better able to go share the best news this world has to offer and to make disciples of others. In addition to the

Sunday morning groups, Morna and Laverne Calef have opened their home on Thursday evenings and Janet Matthews continues to lead a Thursday morning women's group in this mission as well.

Plans for several new groups are underway. Keep an eye on the bulletin, social media and the various sign-up sheets in Fellowship Hall for more information. One such group will be studying *The Search for Significance* beginning in March. If you would like to see "your true worth through God's eyes" and come to understand that you are significant and fully loved and accepted by God, this is the DGroup for you. Join us as we work together to do life better and more truthfully. If you have questions or would like to know more, please feel free to contact me. My email address is tammiedcaffee@gmail.com.

Remember there is always a place for you at FCC!

Tammie Caffee (Pastor of Adult Discipleship) tammiedcaffee@gmail.com.

# COUNSELING SERVICES

GriefShare: **ORIENTATION FEBRUARY 1**- is a 13-week support group for people who have lost a loved one. Whether your loss is recent or happened some time ago, GriefShare groups can be an appropriate place for you. Our GriefShare group will be held on Thursdays and is open to congregation members and the community. Please share this information with anyone you think could benefit from an opportunity to work with others through their grief experience! Please contact Brock Caffee to be put on a list for an upcoming group or just to ask questions about the GriefShare ministry. We'd love to have you! Call Brock at (785)551-2304 or email at brockdcaffee@gmail.com.

Brock Caffee, LDMFT brockcaffe@gmail.com

# Outreach



If you're like me, you regularly make a schedule in your mind, with full intent to follow it to accomplish your felt needs or wants. Then, if your schedule gets interrupted, if you're like me, you can become frustrated, or even angry. What about though, if you make your day's schedule, and then your best friend comes along and says they have a special event that day, and would really enjoy taking you as their chosen friend to join them? Well, again, if you're like me, you may be happy to adjust your schedule, to sacrifice or surrender your own plans to join them in this adventure that has spontaneously come up. You feel it's worth the change in plans, and that your schedule can slide.

What if that friend were God? Are you eager (or even willing) to surrender your planned schedule to God for Him to interrupt your intents, and invite you to join Him on a special opportunity to speak hope/life/ encouragement/ Truth/ etc. into someone's life? It can be hard to surrender your own plans. Or rather, it can be hard for me to surrender *my* own plans. But, it is a blessing to do so. Sure, it can bless those we minister to, but also it greatly blesses our own soul as we join the Father in His exceptional Kingdom expansion! So, I pray that God would give me an interruptible spirit.

I have found sometimes that if I am feeling dryer spiritually, it may simply be because I am not speaking of Christ with others. We are not meant to keep this blessing to ourselves! In seasons when I am more active in speaking of the wonders of Jesus with those around me, I have greater excitement for Jesus myself, and greater satisfaction in being part of God's global work.

Brothers and Sisters, pray to God that He may give you and me an interruptible spirit. That we would not be so focused on needing to do your own thing. Oh, it is a privilege to be invited by Father to join Him in such important work as the expanse of His Kingdom and being trusted to correctly handle His word of Truth. *In your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. (1 Peter 3:15)* It is worth surrendering our earthly plans to be spontaneously swept into Kingdom plans. And may we encourage one another in doing so. May you be blessed richly with an increased excitement for King Jesus as you surrender your schedule to Him!

David Nanne | Outreach 480-524-6875

# Worship



FCC Family, with the Advent and Christmas season in the rear view mirror, we approach the Lent and Easter season with open ears and hearts. Let us be aware of God's calling on us to gather together through worship, grow through teaching and study, and go make disciples of Lawrence and the nations. Worship is the perfect opportunity to gather together and equip ourselves to grow and go. The prayer of the Worship Ministry at FCC is that you come with a humble heart to experience the joy found in a personal relationship with Jesus.



Ash Wednesday: Please join us for a short, yet powerful worship service on Wednesday, February 14<sup>th</sup>, at 6pm in the FCC

Sanctuary. Elements of this special service include ash implementation, unison prayers, readings, and worship through songs. Start off the Lent and Easter season with a special opportunity to gather and experience the power of our Savior.

**Singer or Instrumentalist?** Everyone has a voice, two hands, and two feet that can be used for praising our Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. If you have a desire to join in worship through singing or playing an instrument, there's a place for you at FCC Lawrence! Want to join the Chancel Choir? Contact Greg Boyle at greg@fcclawrence.org. Interested in praising God through instruments? Contact myself at matthew@fcclawrence.org. Whether it is the Traditional or Modern service, we'd love for you to worship alongside us each Sunday. Grow in your faith by helping others to gather in worship.

Matthew Mulnix - Modern Worship Leader| Greg Boyle - Traditional Worship Leadermatthew@fcclawrence.orggreg@fcclawrence.org

"Oh sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth! Sing to the Lord, bless His name; tell of His salvation from day to day." Psalm 96:1-2

# Stewardship

As it has been said many times, we are so thankful for the faithful support, the generous contributions and the love that each one of you have for FCC. Without the gift of your time, talents and resources the ministry of FCC could not continue.

Below we have provided the YTD totals for the Unified Budget at the end of December. We are showing YTD net income of \$14,224. At the end of December, we should be at 100.00 % of the budget, income is at 99.43% and expenses at 97.00%. The Unified Budget includes contribution income, operating expenses and church support for Missions and Outreach.

YTD Income	\$ 486,156.00
YTD Expense	\$ 471,932.00
YTD Net Income/(Loss)	\$ 14,224.00

### Unified Budget thru December 2018

If you haven't yet turned in a pledge card it is not too late! We are lacking in what we need to support our proposed budget for 2018. Based on pledges, loose offering, and non-pledged funds we are at about 70% of what is needed. If you have not pledged, please consider doing so. While we do have reserves, the Trustees would prefer not to have to use them. If you could consider an additional gift for 2018, it would be very much appreciated. The staff and leadership of FCC are so very excited about the New Year and feel that we have everything in place to bring new families to the church. There is such a need in our community to make disciples, we ask that you continue to support us in that mission!

	2017	2018
OUTREACH/MISSIONS MINISTRY	\$ 14,400	\$ 14,400
Global Ministries	\$ 5,750	\$ 5,750
Denominational Ministry	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000
Community Outreach	\$ 4,650	\$ 4,650
WORSHIP MINISTRY	\$ 5,100	\$ 6,100
CARE MINISTRY	\$ 60	\$ 50
DISCIPLESHIP & ADULT EDUCATION	\$ 600	\$ 800
WELCOMING & CONNECTING	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
CHILDREN'S MINISTRY	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
YOUTH MINISTRY	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,500
COLLEGE MINISTRY	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
SR. PASTOR'S OFFICE	\$ 6,600	\$ 5,200
TRUSTEE'S	\$ 447,518	\$ 438,575
Office Ministry	\$ 18,800	\$ 18,300
Computer Ministry	\$ 9,000	\$ 8,100
Facility/Maintenance	\$ 84,000	\$ 98,806
Compensation/Fringes	\$ 335,718	\$ 313,369
TOTAL FCC BUDGET	\$ 487,278	\$ 478,625
TOTAL GT BUDGET	\$ 106,611	\$ 109,992
GRAND TOTAL FCC & GT	\$ 593,889	\$ 588,617

### 2018 Budget Summary

# Children's Ministry



February is a month of love. Red and pink hearts fill the store aisles, and commercials advertise diamonds and chocolate. Love is a lot more than the mushy-gushy feeling that comes with physical and emotional attraction, though. Jesus told people to love like this: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you... (Matthew 6:44, ESV). As disciples of Jesus, we are to love everyone, whether we like them or not.



Unfortunately, as a teacher and school administrator, I heard this a

few times from students who retaliated against other students: My Dad (or other grown-up) told me that if someone hits me, I should hit them back. While this sentiment is common, it is does not follow the teaching of Jesus.



So, how do we teach our children to Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you... (Matthew 6:44, ESV) when it seems to go against the status quo? The answer is simple: Model it. When you are angry with someone, pray for him/her. When someone is unkind, do not speak unkindly in return. When your child experiences bullying at school, remind him/her to act like Jesus. In this way, Jesus's teaching about love will continue to this generation and beyond.

Elaine W. Pendergrass (Pastor to Children) elaine@fcclawrence.org

# The Giving Tree Preschool



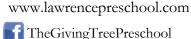
The Giving Tree students are enjoying a great second semester of preschool. We are having fun learning about winter, snow & arctic animals. With the cold weather upon us, we are thankful to have the fellowship hall included in our license for indoor recess. After learning about the letter "Q", quiet-time and quilts, we ended the week with Pajama Day. We enjoyed popcorn and watched a movie on the big screen T.V. The fellowship hall made a great "movie theater"! Thank you to the church family for sharing this space with our preschool children.



When we think about February, we often think about love! We are fortunate to work, play and learn in an environment where love is abundant! At The Giving Tree we use Valentine's Day as an opportunity to learn about God's love for us and how much we love God in return. We will also explore the love we share with family and friends, and what special gifts those relationships can be.

With February upon us, The Giving Tree will begin enrollment for the 2018-2019 school year. If you have friends or family with children age 3-kindergarten, please let them know about our wonderful preschool. Enrollment for returning and alumni families will begin on February 1st and will be open to the community on February 19th. The Giving Tree is truly an excellent program with amazing teachers. Our teachers strive to teach God's love through all of our activities while preparing children with kindergarten readiness skills.

Julie Hafenstine (The Giving Tree Preschool Director)





# 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 col-



lectively. 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 February, on Wednesday nights, FCC YTH will be going through the series called "The Thinking Series." Teenagers have numerous questions about life, the Bible, and the Christian faith. Starting in February, we will be talking about truth, evidences for God, and navigating through tough questions that perplex our minds and sometimes our hearts. On Sunday mornings, FCC YTH will be going through a series called "Identity." One of the big questions teenagers ask themselves is "Who am I?" They are in search of their identity and sometimes to the point that they will go to extremes to answer this question. In this four week series during February, we will look into the

concepts of image, choices, relationships, and accomplishments and how these concepts relate to our identity. After this series, hopefully, students will be guided on a track towards discovering their true identity in Jesus Christ.

Please Note: February 11th will be FCC YTH's annual Valentine's Dinner to fundraise for the camp and mission trip scholarships for participating students. April 6-8th will be Young Christian's Weekend (YCW) in Branson, MO. Other events and dates are in the works and will be announced as soon as possible.

Paul Porter (Pastor to Youth and College) paul@fcclawrence.org



# College Ministry



FCC Transit is the University/College Ministry at 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. During February 21-23, KU is hosting its first Veritas Forum and FCC Lawrence will be a church site for further discussion after the event. Keep your eyes on the bulletin for more details. 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.

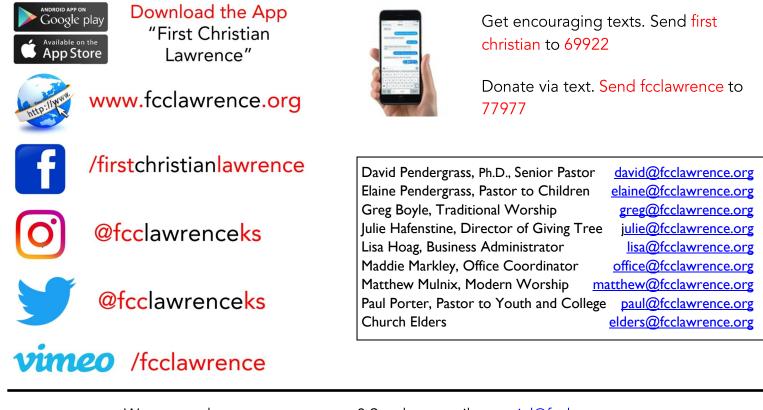
### Paul Porter (Pastor to Youth and College)

paul@fcclawrence.org



1000 Kentucky Street • Lawrence KS 66044

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED** 



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 I Iam

# Community at FCC







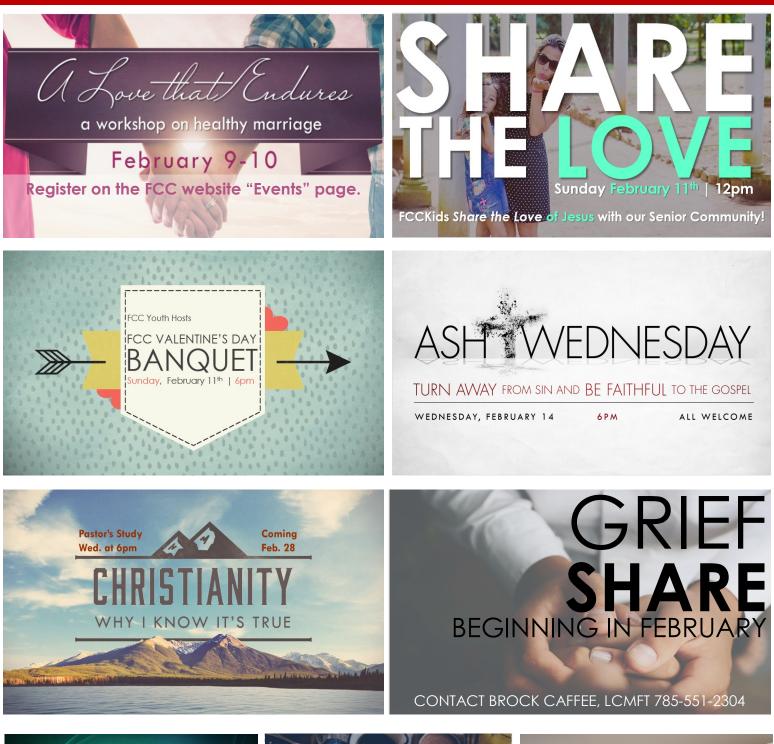








# For Your Refrigerator





Sunday, February 4<sup>th</sup> 10:15am | Fellowship Hall. Come to learn more about FCC.



Saturday, February 3<sup>rd</sup> 9am | The Big Biscuit 4821 W 6th St, Lawrence, KS Lawrence Interdenominational Nutrition Kitchen

\_.I.N.K



FCC Serves L.I.N.K. Sunday, February 11<sup>th</sup> | 12:30pm Sign up at the Welcome Desk.