FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH



Hey Church Family! I've been so excited lately! God has been changing lives! We've had more people join our church community, more people give their lives to Jesus, and more baptisms. God is so good! Discipleship Groups are booming! Because of some great conversations with non-believers lately, it's made me think more of an important topic in Christianity.

When you read the Gospels carefully, you discover some great insights concerning the audience to whom Jesus speaks. There are four types of audiences addressed in Jesus's ministry: (a) His opponents, (b) the crowds, (c) the disciples, (d) the Apostles. I want to briefly explore the final three audiences and reflect on why this matters.

"The Apostles"

Jesus's very first disciples were "taken" from John the Baptizer's group of disciples; Andrew (and probably John), then Andrew recruited his brother, Simon Peter. Soon after, Jesus called someone else from the same hometown as Andrew: Philip, who then brought his brother, Nathaniel (John 1:35-48). We see in these, and with others, Jesus used a network of relationships that already existed (e.g., brothers: Andrew and Simon Peter, John and James), business partners (Peter and Andrew fished together with James and John, Lk 5:10), while the others almost certainly would have known each other because they lived in the same towns (Capernaum and Bethsaida).



This group is given different lists (i.e., the names don't line up perfectly), but that's another story. These men, to varying degrees, quit their jobs and greatly diminished their family responsibilities in order to be with Jesus "full-time." They ate with him, slept near him, listened intently and memorized His teachings, saw Him perform miracles, and learned how to be a person who had completely submitted to the Kingdom of God. A disciple is a student, learner, or even better translated, "adherent or apprentice." They went "all in." While these men were certainly Jesus's disciples, Jesus gave them a special name and job description: "Apostles" (Mark 3:14). This term is Greek, meaning, "emissary; one who is sent out with full authority." That is, this group was the earliest group that Jesus trained and "sent out" to preach the arrival of God's reign, and to enact the signs that the Kingdom of God had come through healings and exorcisms (e.g., Matt. 10; 28:19-20; Luke 10). Further, they would function as the main leaders of the next group of people, the "disciples" that followed Jesus. We shouldn't picture the Apostles as Jesus's best friends (they might have been, but the text doesn't say that). Instead, we should see them as Jesus's very first apprentices who were to lead the other disciples to be Jesus's apprentices, and on and on the generations would go. Moreover, their special job description didn't bring a pay raise, increased social status, or special decoder ring. They were to lead all of Jesus's disciples as servants (e.g., Mark 10:45; Luke 22:24-30; John 13:1-17), knowing that their leadership was the way of the cross, a life of utter denial.

Thus, we have the main leaders, the main apprentices of Jesus, the Apostles. He deliberately called twelve men because it was symbolic: just as God, the Father, had constituted the "twelve tribes of Israel" centuries earlier, Jesus was creating a "new Israel" under His instruction and authority. This is why this group is often referred to as "the twelve" (throughout the Gospels; Acts 6:2). The "Twelve" led this group of disciples during Jesus's earthly ministry and after His resurrection (e.g., Acts 6:2). In the early church, the highest form of authority besides a prophet/ess, was an Apostle (e.g., Eph. 2:20; 4:11).

"The Disciples"

Jesus and His Apostles traveled throughout the regions of Palestine, taught of God's rule, and performed various "signs" of God's rule. Because of this, many people believed that Jesus was, indeed, the expected Messiah and "Son of Man" figure spoken of Daniel 7:13-14. They would become a disciple. The disciples were those who obeyed Jesus's call to follow; they rejected their former life-styles and committed themselves to Jesus's teachings of God's rule; they made Jesus their Master (e.g., Mark 1:16-20; 3:13-15; 4:10; 8:34-38; Matt 8:19, 21; Luke 5:1-11). They could travel with Jesus wherever He went, though some disciples would have only literally followed Him around when He came to their hometown, like those in Bethany or Jerusalem (e.g., Luke 6:17; 10:1; Jn. 6:60). This group



of disciples included both women and men, which was unheard of in Judaism of the time: Jewish women were never allowed to study under a rabbi. In fact, it was women who supported Jesus' ministry financially (Luke 8:1-3; 23:49, 55; 24:13, 18, 33)! Jesus's disciples also included common folk (e.g., Luke 6:13), tax collectors (e.g., Luke 19:1-10), scribes (i.e., people who were paid to read and write legal documents, Matt. 8:18-21), and even religious leaders (Matt. 27:57; John 19:38-42). We should picture this group of disciples to be around 20-50, depending on the time and region where Jesus was.

Now, some of these disciples were very excited about Jesus's "miracles" (though they're not called that in the Gospels, but "power acts" or "signs") and what Jesus taught (e.g., John 2:23-25). Yet, His message was highly offensive to some of these disciples. Jesus offended people when Jesus demanded that all people must "eat His flesh and drink His blood" (e.g., John 6:52-66); when Jesus told certain parables (e.g., Matt 13, which climaxes in 13:57; Mark 6:3); when Jesus implied that even though He's the Messiah, Jesus doesn't/won't always rescue people, even His cousin, John the Baptizer (Matt 11:2-6); when Jesus said that those who claim to "be free" just because of their Jewish heritage are mistaken (John 8:31-40). And there are multiple times what Jesus said would have been terribly offensive to people (for various reasons), like when Jesus demanded that a rich person give up his wealth (Mark 10:17-22; a sign that God had "blessed" a person in Judaism). One might cite other examples. And because of His message, several of those who first considered themselves disciples ended up abandoning Jesus. This is why Jesus explained to His Apostles why such a thing occurs (read Mark 4:3-20).

"The Crowds or Multitudes"

Think of the crowds as the "sea" where Jesus and His disciples "fished" (Mark 1:17). Jesus's main target of His teachings was "the crowds." He was trying to "convert" them into His movement. They are the common folk who would have been working nearby when Jesus was teaching, or might even have a meal with Jesus. They might have heard of His teachings or "power acts" from relatives or friends (e.g., Mark 3:7-9). They were neutral, but curious. Jesus felt great sympathy for them, and often took care of their physical and spiritual needs (e.g., Matt. 9:35-36; Mark 6; 8). However, we should never think that because Jesus had sympathy for them that He didn't think the crowds were "basically OK." No. Jesus thought that, in general, people in His time were wicked, sinful people (e.g., Mark 2:17; 8:38;



9:19; Matt. 12:45). This is precisely why He travelled around Palestine preaching His message of God's rule being accomplished and experienced by complete devotion to Him. Modern conceptions of Jesus tend to make Jesus a mild-mannered "hippie" who taught about love and peace and "good morals," and he wanted people to reach their full potential. Nonsense.

Of course, a crowd that is elated that Jesus has arrived (e.g., Mark 11:1-11) can turn into a mob (Mark 15:8-15). Why? Because those in "the crowd" have no allegiance to Jesus. They might be a fan of Jesus, but have not heeded His call to "follow Him" at all costs. Crowds can be swayed. Give them what they want, and they like you. The crowds like the fireworks: seeing "power acts" and seeing demons come out of a person is sensational. They like Jesus's fish and bread. But, they don't go "all in." They refuse to "deny their wills" to follow Jesus (Mark 8:34).

So what?

I've been working in ministry for nearly twenty-three years. No matter the church or denomination, I find it amazingly similar in this regard: each church has people who fit into these categories. Most disturbingly, there is always a significant portion of people that would fit into the first-century "crowd." They're a "fan" of Jesus, they're intrigued in "religion." They say things like, "I believe in God," and they try "to be a good person." They might even "go to church" often. It's just that Jesus never once asked people to be His fan, or believe in God, or "go to church," or to be a "good person." He demanded everything. He wants all of us. There is no middle ground. Reflect carefully: where are you? Which group best describes your life, heart, and mind?

"Well, who in the world does Jesus think He is? Who thinks that He can demand my whole self?" That's exactly what His first audience thought too (e.g., Mark 1:27; 4:41; Luke 7:49). And this is still the question worth pondering. I'm convinced that when you grasp who Jesus really is, the only logical response is to bow down and surrender everything. And, until that happens, you're not His disciple, which means you're not "saved" (e.g., John 10:9; Acts 2:40-41, 47). You're still stuck in the sinful crowd. That's sad. It's why Jesus wept over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41-44). Jesus doesn't want anyone to face judgement without hope. He wants you to be "ransomed" from your sinful self (Mark 10:45).

Praise God there's still time! I encourage you: read the Gospels and come to grips with who He is. It'll be worth it.

For the Kingdom,

Pastor David Pendergrass

Outreach

Oh how the Lord has been good, and continues to be good! In the *Perspectives of the World Christian Movement* course, we are now in Week 7, with about forty participants. Week 5 closed out our Biblical section of the course, and participants were asked to write a brief summary of how God has been speaking to them thus far, or questions they had, etc. As an example of how men and women are coming to fall more in love with Jesus and His glorious Kingdom, here is the response from one gentleman:

This course has been incredible since Week 1. I came into this expecting God to move and transform me but I did not know at what extent it would happen. It has literally been something of a rewiring of my views. I came into this seeing God as a disciplinarian God. I see him now as one who is madly in love with me and wants me to like and love him back in a way I didn't know was ok. I came into this waiting for the King's return and not seeing it as God moving. I came in seeing the Church as being dead but that is not true. It may be partially true in America but the Kingdom of God is now and then. He is at work all over the world and is ready to do things right here. I came into this wanting to do ministry but not knowing where and what. I had an idea of church planting with my wife and in Week 5 I can say we will be starting a new ministry in our church in June or the very near future, hopefully, knowing that God is at work and has called us to go to the kids of Lawrence ages 5-18. I have been stretched, made uncomfortable, and incredibly convicted. I have also seen passion without emotions and passion with emotion. Surrendering my crown to Jesus has been an incredible decision. One that is hard but one that has rewards. I see the church as a building and a castle meant to protect the people and keep them comfortable while in fact we need church mobilization and desperately need for the walls to come down. If any change is to come we must become less and He must become more. He must be glorified. We cannot continue to want a uniform robottish look for all Christians. We must let God and His spirit do His spirit do His thing. So many thoughts. These are just some of them.

Yes, may we each become less, and God become more! May He be glorified by all. As I consider God becoming more, I encourage you each to seek ways to delight yourself in God, to enjoy Him! For some, that may sound daunting, the idea of enjoying God. It may be a foreign concept to many.

Here's one practical way that I find helpful.

- Open your Bible to the Psalms (or other areas of praise being expressed to God).
- Stand up! (it's harder to express great excitement when sitting)
- Read aloud the Scripture, read it with emotion as you consider the very words you are speaking.
- Be prepared to move with the words, ie: raise hands when it says, or kneel down when it says.

Some Psalms that I enjoyed doing this with recently are: Psalm 47:1, 5-7; 48:1; 63: 1-8; 64:10; 66:1-12; 67:1-7; 68:3-4, 32-35; 71:14-24 (pay attention to the context in 1-13); 72:8-11, 17-19.

If you have other ways that you find helpful to delight in God, please let me know, I would be happy to learn from you. We talk about that which we love, and we love that which we talk about.

Enjoying Christ,

David Nanne 480-524-6875

Elder's Update



On Saturday Feb. 10th, Marita Elliot, Jim Self, and David Nanne attended the Gender Matters conference in Overland Park. Hyacinth Self joined the sessions in the afternoon. All four of them readily agreed that the time spent in worship and learning was well worth the time. Presented by the Desert Stream/Living Waters organization based in Grandview, Mo., the conference included guest speakers, a panel of field experts in local ministries, a question and answer session, and beautiful music and prayer time. The

overwhelming theme of God's love for the men and women He created was underscored with the message that He wants what is best for us despite the broken emotions some deal with. Personal testimonies spoke truth to the misconception that there is no help or hope for those who struggle with same sex attraction or other forms of relational brokenness. Attendees were encouraged and empowered in ways to to speak truth to the prevailing cultural belief that Christians who reach out in love to help the lost are doing so out of hate or judgement, but rather in genuine concern for their fellow human beings.

Desert Stream/Living Waters offers training in a wide variety of resources. Part of their mission of is to build up local communities of healing. They are bringing their message of hope to Lawrence on **March 9th at 10am** at the St. Lawrence Center on Crescent Rd. The cost, which includes lunch, is \$20. For more information call: (816) 767-1730 or email: dgreer@desertstream.org.

Hyacinth Self (Elder Chair) elders@fcclawrence.org

Adult Discipleship



Speaking from personal experience, this introvert knows taking that first step into one of the D Groups at FCC can be a scary proposition, but one does not have to attend very long to see that D Groups are the place where connections are made and friendships are born. So, today as I write this I am praying for those of you who have not yet made a commitment to attend one of these groups or one of the new groups starting soon. Take this opportunity "to Gather, to Grow and to Go" at FCC! We are delighted to help you in this endeavor.

The first of these new groups begins March 25 at 10:00 a.m. Utilizing the author's workbook, this Women's D Group will be studying The Search for Significance by Robert S.

McGee. This study offers individuals the opportunity to replace false beliefs with God's truths and apply those truths to daily living. Along the way, you will see "how deeply loved, completely forgiven, and fully pleasing you are." Totally accepted by God and absolutely complete in Christ, your journey of self-discovery and truth can begin on March 25. Join us for the first session if you have questions or are not quite certain if this is the D Group for you. A sign-up sheet can be found in the Fellowship Hall.

In addition, if you are interested in becoming a D Group leader at FCC, we will be having our second training session for leaders on March 18. This is a required training for all current and interested D Group leaders. Lunch will be served. The training will begin immediately following the 11:00 service.

As always, I am available should you have questions or concerns.

Tammie Caffee (Pastor of Adult Discipleship)

tammiedcaffee@gmail.com.

WORSHIP



FCC Lawrence Family, as February closes and March begins, we move closer to the acknowledgement of the sacrifice of Jesus, and the celebration of His resurrection. During our coming worship services, please take time to reflect on the life of our savior, Jesus Christ. Through the Lenten season, we have opportunities to grow in our humble acceptance of the gift that Christ gave us years ago.

The gift of salvation is always on the table. Whether you have yet to accept it, or you did so years ago, a relationship



with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is free. The cost has already been paid. The economic concept of "no such thing as a free lunch" does not apply to our omniscient, om-

nipotent, and omnipresent God. He knows our struggles, has power to heal them, and walks alongside us every step of the way. So when you worship, come to the altar with an open heart, ready to receive the gift of new life in our savior, Jesus Christ.

Lenten and Easter Season Services

Join us on Sunday, March 25th for Palm Sunday. Be there to cheer on the kids in our Children's Ministry as they learn about Jesus. Good Friday Service is March 31st at 6pm. Gather to acknowledge the sacrifice on the cross. Sunday, April 1st is Resurrection Sunday! Start out the morning at the Clinton Lake Pavilion for Sunrise Service at 6am, followed by Traditional and Modern Services at 9 and 11am, respectively.

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

There are so many wonderful things happening here at First Christian. The building has been busy and full of life over the last few weeks as we hosted a marriage workshop, a wedding, the Cub Scout Blue and Gold banquet, and the question and answer session with Dr. Mary Poplin. We are also currently hosting Family Promise. We are thankful to have such a great building to share with the community and to continue our work of making disciples. Hopefully, as we are able to host such events, those who attend will see first, our love for Christ and secondly, our love for the community. We are so thankful for all who give to the ministries of First Christian.

Because you give, we are 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 new Christians to be baptized, for Bible studies, for recovery groups to meet, for couples to get married, for families to welcome 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 the 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. They do not include gifts for the building, capital improvements or other designated gifts.
- February numbers are preliminary, but shouldn't change much, if at all. The Trustees will meet later this month to approve the February Statements.



Jan Budget	\$ 38,817
Jan Actual	\$ 31,484
Jan Deficit	\$ 5,333
Feb Budget	\$ 38,817
Feb Actual	\$ 29,691
Feb Deficit	\$ 7,126

We were about 15% behind where we needed to be for January and 19% behind for February. At this rate, on average, we will be behind roughly \$75,000 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.

Ways to Give

Online - fcclawrence.org - Click the "Give" Button **Phone** - Text fcclawrence to 77977 **Offering Plate** – Each Sunday **Mail** – First Christian Church, 1000 Kentucky Street, Lawrence, Ks 66044

Children's Ministry



The global church is in the season of Lent through the month of March. Lent reminds us of Jesus's sacrifice on the cross to pay for our sins. While it's a somber season, it's also a great reminder of what it truly means to be a Christian. While Jesus displayed love and did many miracles on Earth, he taught about the Kingdom of God and how to be part of it, which involves self-sacrifice. While we may not be called to give our lives for our faith, Jesus said, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must say no to themselves. They must pick up their cross and follow me," (Mark 8:34, NIrV).





elaine@fcclawrence.org

In a world that says that people can (and should) do as they please, and that everyone should support the decisions of others, Jesus's example and instruction do not mesh. As parents, we must do our best to teach what Jesus taught, not what the world teaches.

Try this: When you must say no to your child, remind him/her of the reason. Remind your child that he/she must say no to their own desires, at times, too. We don't always know what's best, so we must listen to the wisdom of others. When we decide to follow Jesus, we choose to listen to him and to follow him, even when it means saying no to something else.



f FCCLawrenceKids

THE GIVING TREE PRESCHOOL



Throughout the month of February, we explored the theme of Valentine's Day and love. The children especially enjoyed the flower shop in our dramatic play center. They had fun making flower arrangements and gifts for their friends. We also learned about the Greek word, Agape and all the love that Jesus has for each of us. There are so many wonderful stories throughout the Bible that allow us to share about His love with our preschool children and incorporate them into our weekly curriculum.





Elaine W. Pendergrass (Pastor to Children)

Oh how we wish spring would arrive soon! I hope that March will bring warmer temperatures, so we can play outside on our wonderful playground. Throughout the month, we plan to explore rhyming, spring weather and prepare for the upcoming Easter celebration. The Easter story ties in beautifully with all the new life that takes place in nature as spring approaches. Jesus is New Life! Have a blessed Easter!



Each semester we learn and memorize a Bible verse and connect it with our daily learning, Our verse for the spring semester is, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path" (Psalm 119:105). Enrollment for the 2018-2019 school year is underway. If you have family or friends with children 3 years old through kindergarten, interested in attending preschool, please have them contact me for more information.

Julie Hafenstine (The Giving Tree Preschool Director)

www.lawrencepreschool.com





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; hoth individually and collectively. As students mature in



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



In March, on Wednesday nights, FCC YTH will be going 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 continuing the RightNow Media series called "The Thinking Series." The Sunday morning studies will focus on a single question about life, God, faith, and will overlap our discussions from Wednesday nights. It is great time to come be a part of FCC YTH, especially for young students with lots of questions.

Please Note: There will not be FCC YTH on Wednesday, March 21 due to Spring Break.

FCC YTH will be going to Young Christian's Weekend in Branson, Missouri, on April 6-8, 2018. It will be here before we know it.

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 5:30-7pm** 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 essential and important



seeker who wants to learn about what Christians believe, then this study is perfect for you.

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



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















TAMMIE CAFFEE | tammied caffee@gmail.com

