

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH



Hey Church Family,

What is “the Devil”? Where did he come from? Can demons possess Christians? I get asked these questions often. In my experience, people are usually squarely located on either the side of “I don’t believe in Satan/I don’t ever think about it” to the other side of “I pray against Satan and his demons all the time.” It reminds me of what C.S. Lewis said in *The Screwtape Letters*: “There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them.” Not only do most people in my experience either ignore or obsess about Satan, they also tend to picture Satan like a character in a Bugs Bunny episode. Yet, the Bible never describes Satan’s physical appearance (there are metaphors, like in 2 Cor. 11:14, but no actual descriptions), probably because this Being is a Spirit and has no physical properties.



How does the Bible present this Being? Interestingly, we don’t have evidence that ancient Hebrews believed in a chief, Evil Being. Here’s the deal: in nearly every case in the Old Testament, *satan* isn’t a name. Thus, the noun *satan*, Hebrew for “adversary” or “accuser,” occurs nine times in the Hebrew Bible: five times to describe a human opponent and four times referencing a divine being. In the very few times this divine Being is mentioned, *it behaves according to YHWH’s instructions*. He is not evil. He is not opposed to God. He’s following God’s orders (see, e.g., Job 1:6-12). In the Old Testament, it’s a Being who acts like a prosecuting attorney, whose job it is to point out the sin or lack of faith in people.

Yet, by the time of the Jesus, this Being is considered to be a profoundly powerful, evil Being active in human affairs. This chief Being is called several names in the New Testament: e.g., “ruler of the demons...Beelzebul” (= proper noun for a Philistine deity meaning “lord of flies”) (Matthew 12:24), “god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4), “devil” (= slanderer or accuser) (Matthew 4:1), “prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2), “roaring lion” (1 Peter 5:8), “dragon” (Revelation 12:9; 20:2), “Belial” (= worthlessness) (2 Cor. 6:15), or the “wicked one” (Matthew 13:19). This Being is the contradictory force to God (Luke 11:15–19; Matthew 12:24–27; Mark 3:22–23:26). This Being is not alone; He has minions (Matt. 25:41). Demons, and even Satan, have the power to enter and possess people, like Judas (Luke 22:3; John 13:27; Mark 5:12–13; Luke 8:30–32). In fact, Jesus’s ministry was largely focused on conquering Satan’s reign (Luke 10:18).

Moreover, it seems to have been a common belief that when a Gentile “converted” to Christianity, it meant moving away from Satan to God (e.g., Acts 26:18). That is, recent converts weren’t considered “basically good” or “neutral” and then finally decided to follow Jesus. Instead, *they were people heavily influenced by Evil who were rescued from Evil’s dominance*. This belief remained for centuries. In one detailed document which speaks of how new Christians should be baptized (*The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus of Rome*, perhaps early 3rd cent.), notice what it says about Satan and the need for converts to be “exorcised” (= to cast demons out of a person forcefully).

20:7...On the Sabbath, those who are to receive baptism shall all gather together in one place chosen according to the will of the bishop. They shall be commanded to pray and kneeled. 8 Then, laying his hand on them, he will exorcise every foreign spirit, so that they flee from them and never return to them. When he has finished exorcising them, he shall breathe on their faces and seal their foreheads, ears and noses. Then he shall raise them up...21:9 When the elder takes hold of each of them who are to receive baptism, he shall tell each of them to renounce, saying, “I renounce you Satan, all your service, and all your works.” 10 After he has said this, he shall anoint each with the Oil of Exorcism, saying, “Let every evil spirit depart from you.”

So, can Christians be tormented by a demonic spirit, or have a demonic spirit indwelling within them? I think it’s possible. There is simply no reference in the New Testament that states or implies that “Christians can’t be possessed/tormented/indwelt” by an evil spirit. Moreover, there are passages that demonstrate the opposite. Here are three quick examples: (1) Jesus believed that Satan can “snatch the word” that Christians received when preached to them (e.g., Mark 4:15).

If the Spirit “blocks” out all evil, then how can this happen? (2) Paul deliberately gives advice to Christians on how to resist “the Devil” in Ephesians 6:11-17. If Christians can’t be influenced by evil spirits, then why tell them how to fight against it? Paul doesn’t mention the precise terms, “torment/possession” specifically, but he does say that evil is “struggling” against us (v. 12). (3) In 1 John 5:18-19 John the Elder says that if God is our Father, then the “evil one” cannot “touch” that person. This is probably an allusion to the book of Job, where God never granted The Accuser permission to “touch” Job himself (= kill him), just everything around him (see Job 1:11-12; 2:3-6). Even so, this is a difficult text to interpret. Does it mean that John the Elder believes that God never allows Satan permission to kill God’s people? I think so. This text certainly doesn’t mean that demonic spirits can’t influence or torment Christians. It says nothing about the subject.

I think the main reason why people hold to the belief that demons can’t possess/influence a person is based on an assumption of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps they think “filled with the Holy Spirit” means something like, having a glass completely full of a liquid, for which there is no more room. I’m not sure; but, if so, there’s no reason to think that. The phrase “filled with the Holy Spirit” (almost chiefly in Luke-Acts), means something like “enabled by God to do something.” I think the spatial language comes from the very long tradition within Judaism that God’s Spirit “filled the Temple” (esp. in 2 Chronicles and Ezekiel). Jews did seem to believe that our insides were like an empty living space, where the Spirit and/or evil spirits might dwell (e.g., Matt 12:43-45). What’s difficult to determine is whether or not they believed that, while you have access to God’s Spirit, one could not also be influenced by a demonic spirit. That is, I don’t know of any Scriptural evidence of an “either-or” proposition: either the Spirit is inside you or an evil spirit is (or can be) inside you.



So what should we do?

First, realize that an evil, opposing force to God’s rule is active right now in the world. Really. Second, realize that as Christians, we know that evil does not have power over us anymore. Christ’s life, death, and resurrection defeated Evil’s reign in our lives! We have no reason to be afraid. We have no reason to obsess about evil. Third, realize that evil can still influence people, *even the faithful*. It’s so poignant to me that the first place a demon is mentioned in the ministry of Jesus is



in a synagogue (Mark 1:21-27)! Surely no one thought the man in the synagogue had an “unclean spirit” within him. I can hear the congregants now: “That’s Bob! What in the world is Jesus talking about?! I’ve known him for years. Our kids went to preschool together. This is nuts. There’s no way that evil has corrupted his heart.” *Nevertheless, they would have been wrong.* This man, right in the middle of a synagogue service, demonstrates how evil had already taken hold. I’ve met numerous people who have given me the distinct impression that they were being used by evil. I’ve been in their presence and felt a dark, icky feeling. Of course they’d deny it; of course I could be wrong. Nevertheless, based on the witness of the New Testament, I know it’s possible.

I certainly don’t want to be used by Evil. So, let’s “clothe [ourselves] with the full armor of God (Eph. 6:11) and “resist the devil” because he “will flee” from us (James 4:7). And let us always check our hearts and minds to see if, perhaps, we’re being influenced in the wrong direction..

For the Kingdom,

David

David W. Pendergrass, Ph.D.

Senior Pastor



Grandparent's Day is Sunday, September 9. In 2 Timothy, Paul writes to Timothy and says, "I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well," (1 Timothy 1:5, ESV). Many make read quickly through this passage, but Paul notes that Timothy's faith began with the Christian example and teaching that he received through maternal figures in his life.

Families play a vital role in the spiritual formation of children. A child's home is the first place that he/she may hear about Jesus. The family can influence a child to follow Jesus or to reject him.

How do you influence your children's (or grandchildren's) faith? Do you take them to church? Do you pray at home? Do you discuss Bible stories or emphasize Bible concepts? With Grandparent's Day approaching, it is a great time to reflect on the impact that we, as grown-ups, have on the little ones (and older children) in our families.

FCC Kids plans to celebrate grandparents with a *Bring Your Grandparent to Church Breakfast* on Sunday, **September 9**. Preschool and Elementary children can have a grandparent (or several) join them for breakfast @ 10 am upstairs, in the FCC Kids area. RSVP to Elaine Pendergrass, Pastor to Children (elaine@fcclawrence.org).

Elaine W. Pendergrass (Pastor to Children)

elaine@fcclawrence.org



FCCLawrenceKids

Care and Connections Ministries



The Care and Connections Ministries have been functioning in their own capacities. Here is just a reminder as to what some of the ministries do:

Bread – weekly, on Wednesdays, bread from Panera is received and bagged by a team of volunteers and placed in Fellowship Hall free for the taking.

Card – this ministry strives to remember those in the church whose birthdays or anniversaries are known and those who need cheering or get-well wishes.

Funeral Lunch/Reception teams work with families who have a loss and plan to have a lunch or reception prior to or following a funeral held at our church.

Hospital & Rehabilitation Visitation and Surgery Waiting team makes visits by invitation of patients or family members to those hospitalized or are in a rehabilitation facility, and offer to sit

with families who have a family member enduring surgery.

Kitchen Coordination – a ministry that oversees the kitchen and use of it for special events whereby kitchen use is required or requested through a use permit. Shirley Valentine-Wynes is the Kitchen Coordinator at FCC.

Shut-In Card/Phone Contact – this ministry makes great effort to stay in touch with those who are in the military or are shut-in and wish to have contact from the church through cards, phone calls and visits.

Transportation – this ministry is under re-construction in order to better serve those who need rides to and from church and all 4 Sundays, are now covered for first service.

Grief Share – had its first 13-week successful session in early spring and a new session is just now forming, meeting on Sunday's at 3:00 p.m. with leadership by Brock Caffee who has compassion, willingness to listen and a calming manner, and a program for those in grief from the loss of a spouse, mother, father, other family member or close friend consisting of viewing a chapter by chapter video followed by discussion and sharing; there are other ministries who provide care and comfort through special or specific prayer, prayer shawls, prayer warriors and prayer chains, and new baby families.

If you have interest in participation or further inquiry, please contact Marita Elliott, Pastor of Care and Connections through the church at marita@fcclawrence.org or 785-817-3005.

Marita Elliott (Business Administrator)

marita@fcclawrence.org

EVANGELISM AND OUTREACH MINISTRIES



The Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field, which a man found, and covered up. Then in his joy, he goes and sells all he has and buys that field. (Matt 13:44)

The Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls. And when he found one of great value, he went and sold all he had and bought that pearl. (Matt 13:45-46)

I have no doubt we have each heard or even read the above descriptions of the Kingdom of Heaven (or Kingdom of God) various times. If you are like me, it is very easy to read something and keep right on going without letting the significance of what I just read actually hit me. How about yourself, have you stopped and reflected on these descriptions of the Kingdom? Have you considered how valuable the Kingdom may be to those who have not yet heard?

Jesus tells us that the Kingdom is of great value! So much so that it is worth selling all that we have in order to obtain the Kingdom. As I reflect on the Kingdom being that desirable, I realize it is worth enough to change my ways of life to have. Not just selling goods to obtain the Kingdom. But letting go of any ways of life that would hinder my obtaining the Kingdom. For me personally, this has meant letting go of some of my sleep time or time I would enjoy spending on various projects. Instead, I have chosen to get up earlier, so that I can dedicate more time in the morning (before distractions of the day), to read and meditate on God's word, to pray, and to read other books that foster a greater love for God's greatness. It is through having a greater love of Jesus and His Kingdom that I then will speak of my King to others. Let's meditate on His great value together so we can share the goodness of Jesus with others.

The Kingdom of God is also like leaven, which a woman hid in three measures of flour until the whole batch was leavened. (Matt 13:33) Not only is the Kingdom of God able to permeate through a whole society, but Kingdom living ought to permeate through all aspects of our own lives, until we exhibit Kingdom ways of living through every area of our lives. And we then will enlighten the world around us with the Kingdom that we exhibit.

What are you doing to delight in Jesus and His Kingdom? What are you "selling" or changing in your own life in order to have the Kingdom permeate and define all areas of your life? What is the value of the Kingdom to you personally? How are you sharing the goodness of the Kingdom with others?

If you want to read some of the parables Jesus teaches regarding the Kingdom, here are several I've been memorizing: Matthew 13, 18:21-35, 20:1-16, 21:28-32, 21:33-44, 22:1-14, 25:1-30

Desiring more of the Kingdom,

David Nanne 480-524-6785 | dm.nanne@gmail.com

THE GIVING TREE PRESCHOOL



We are so excited that our school year at the Giving Tree has started! Beginning mid-August our hallways and classrooms were filled with activity. We have children who are returning for another year of preschool as well as many new families. The children are always eager to make new friends, participate in music and movement, enjoy making art projects, learning letters and numbers, exploring centers and hearing daily Bible stories.

A special part of our day begins with singing the song, "My God is So Big". This Giving Tree 40+ year tradition continues to bring smiles to the faces of children and parents. I enjoy seeing how God continues to work through the lives of several generations within our families. Our Christian preschool continues to thrive within our community.

We hope you and your family can join us for our 3rd Annual Ice-Cream Social on Sunday, September 9th from 5:30 pm-7:00 pm in the church parking lot. This event is co-hosted by The Giving Tree Preschool and FCC Children's Ministry. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet and fellowship with many of our preschool families as well as our amazing preschool staff and volunteers. We look forward to seeing you!

The Giving Tree has a few openings available for the 2018-2019 school year. Please contact us for more information!

Julie Hafenstine (The Giving Tree Preschool Director)

www.lawrencepreschool.com



TheGivingTreePreschool



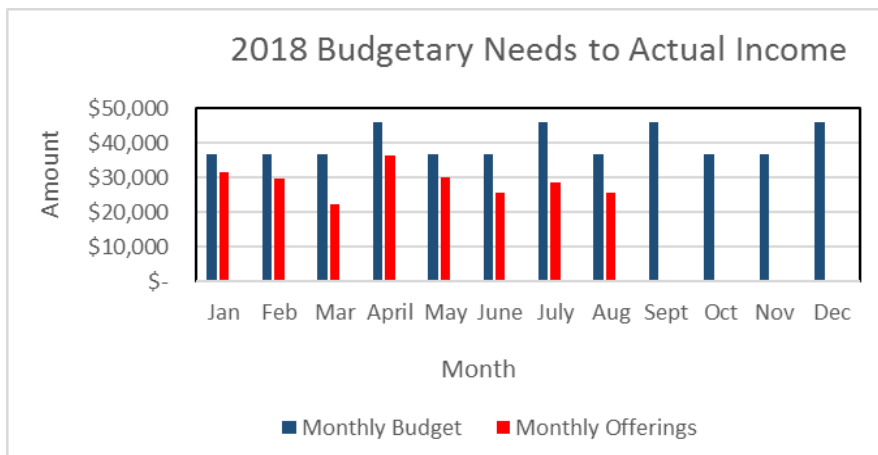
STEWARDSHIP

Because you give, FCC is 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 continue to watch the finances of the church. Because we are not seeing the needed increase in giving, we find it necessary to make adjustments to our current budget. Beginning August 1st, both the Pastor to Children and the Pastor to Youth and College positions are going to half time. It is our hope, that our finances will improve and we will be able to move back to full time positions. Moving forward, we will continue to monitor the finances and make recommendations as necessary.

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 will 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.
- The August numbers are preliminary, any change should be minimal. The Trustees will meet later this month to approve the July statements.



July Budget (5)	\$ 46,022
July Actual	\$ 28,685
July Deficit	\$ 17,337
Aug Budget (4)	\$ 36,817
Aug Actual	\$ 25,811
Aug Deficit	\$ 11,006

We were about 38% behind where we needed to be for July and 30% behind for August. At this rate, on average, we will be behind roughly \$126,500 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 Marita 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

YOUTH MINISTRY



Oh wow! The summer has gone by so fast! As summer break is approaching an end and the next school year is about to begin, I am very excited to see what the Lord has in store for FCC YTH and its students! FCC YTH is excited to implement the strategy of Gather, Grow, Go within its ministry. FCC YTH gathers 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.

During the first few weeks of August, on Wednesday nights, FCC YTH will be going through and finishing a series called: "The Christian Gauntlet." We will be using the Scripture of 2 Peter 1:5-8 as our framework to discuss the concept of "adding to our faith." God has challenged me to add on to my faith, and I want to give our students the same challenge. On Sunday mornings, FCC YTH will continue the RightNow Media series called "Doctrine." The Sunday morning study for the summer will focus upon basic essentials of the Christian faith led by Francis Chan, who led the previous Sunday morning series.

FCC YTH will still have normal gatherings on Wednesday nights. Doors open at 5:00 PM and gathering activities last from 6:00-7:30 PM.

Upcoming Dates:

Friday, August 24 – FCC YTH will have a Late Night or Lock-In. More details to come.

Transit College Ministry is the University/College Ministry of FCC Lawrence. The University of Kansas will start the 2018 Fall Semester on August 20. Students should be returning back to campus starting August 16. We care and have been praying for our college students all summer. We are excited to welcome back our KU college students! Please contact our Pastor to Youth and College, Paul Porter, for more info: paul@fcclawrence.org.

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



@fcc_yth



[fbl.me/fccyth](https://www.facebook.com/fbl.me/fccyth)

COLLEGE MINISTRY

Transit College Ministry is the University/College Ministry of FCC Lawrence. We congratulate our college students who have finally survived finals and are now enjoying the summer. We do not have an organized gathering during the summer, but if you are a college student or a college-aged student who is still here in Lawrence, I would love to meet you and treat you to meal to get to know you better! Please contact our Pastor to Youth and College, Paul Porter, for more information: paul@fcclawrence.org.

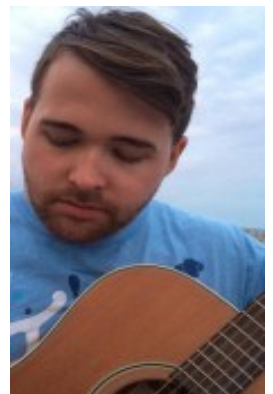
Paul Porter (Pastor to Youth and College)

WORSHIP MINISTRY



September brings our Chancel Choir back together! We are looking forward to reuniting and we welcome all new singers with open arms. Our first rehearsal will be Thursday, September 6 at 7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. Come join us and lend your voice to the praises we will offer our Awesome God! Contact Greg with any questions at greg@fcclawrence.com.

Greg Boyle (Traditional Worship Director)
greg@fcclawrence.org



Matthew Mulnix (Modern Worship Leader)
matthew@fcclawrence.org

COMMUNITY AT FCC

Birthdays

9/01 Max Mountain
9/06 George Stewart
9/07 Zach Thomas
9/15 Christie Ogunnowo
9/27 Fred Shirk
9/28 Neva Garber

Anniversaries

9/01 Denny & Judy Chawick
9/02 John & Janie Harris
9/02 Bill & Becky Myers
9/06 Aaron & Jeanene Lathrom

Prayer Requests

Stude Family
Penny Family
John Weeks
Theo Dixon
Tyler Lathrom
Russell Platt
Smith Family
Gaines Family
LaVerne Calef

June Woodward
Susan Dickson
Ciara Stancer
Russell Platt
Allison
Kimley
Caroline Cawrey
Lauren
Malaiikui Johnson

Caden Adams
Peyton Family
Carter Family
Edward Family
Davis Family
Gravino Family
Johannsen Family
Dean Stelter
Gail Copple

Soendker Family
Tyler Lathrom
Patty
Fred Shirk
Stude Family
Hiersche Family
Hoag Family
Jim, & Betty Chapin
Royce & Cathy Parsons

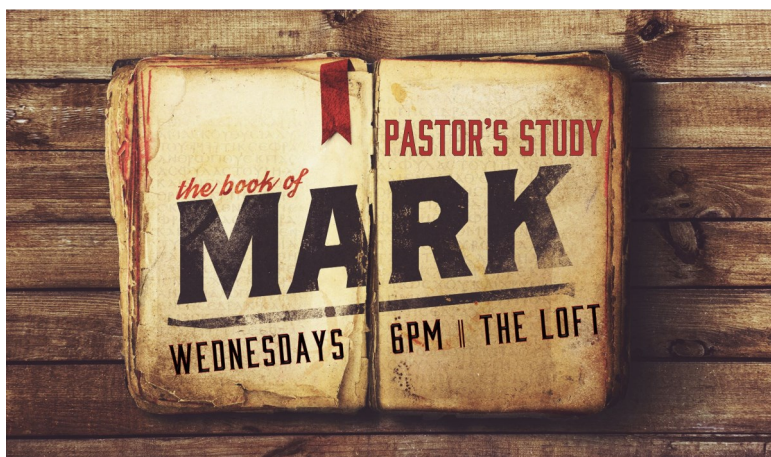


TRADITIONAL SERVICE 8:45

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MODERN SERVICE 11:00

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Paul Porter, Pastor to Youth and College	paul@fcclawrence.org
Elder Board	elders@fcclawrence.org
Trustee Board	trustees@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 8:45am • Modern Worship 11am