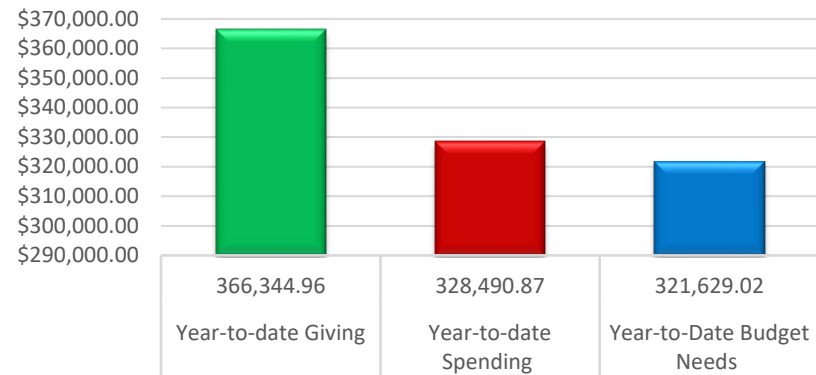


FCC Financial Update



Loose Change offering will be collected this Sunday to benefit our **Pastor's Discretionary Fund**. This fund is used throughout the year to benefit those in our community who need a little extra assistance. Our Christmas Eve offering will also go to this fund.

12/17 Worship Attendance: 183
Average Attendance for December: 196

#FCCallin

End of Year Gifts
As a reminder – all year-end gifts must be received or postmarked by December 31, 2023 to be credited on your 2023 giving statement. Giving statements will be mailed by January 31, 2024 for all total donations over \$25.



First Christian Church
402 East Noble Avenue
Guthrie, Oklahoma 73044
www.fccguthrie.org
(405) 282-4080
RONNIE FIELDS, Sr. Pastor
KAREN ALLEN, Associate Minister



The Tie That Binds

First Christian Church, Guthrie

405-282-4080 www.fccguthrie.org

First Christian Church of Guthrie

Sharing Christ
Growing in Faith

December 19, 2023

Volume 59, No. 12



From your FCC
Office Staff

- Natalie Hardin - Children's Minister
- Michelle Gill - Mother's Day Out Director
- Ronnie Fields - Senior Pastor
- Staci Carey - Youth Minister
- Karen Allen - Associate Minister
- Shana Bench - Church Administrator

The church office will be closed Dec. 22 – Jan. 1. The staff will be in and out of the office as needed during this time.

"Peace on earth will come to stay when we live Christmas every day."

New Year's Eve Breakfast & Worship
Join us Sun., Dec. 31 for a Potluck Breakfast at 9:30 a.m. followed by Worship at 10:30 a.m. Worship will include Christmas Carols and a short message by Karen Allen. Come casual and enjoy a morning of fellowship as we prepare to kick off a new year!

A Note from Pastor Ronnie

Happy New Year! As we turn the page to a new year, it's the perfect time to begin a journey of self-discovery and spiritual reflection. I'm so excited about our upcoming sermon series, "Who Are You?". (Cue the song by The Who) Each week, we'll dive into understanding how our identity is shaped by the perceptions of others, our own self-view, and most importantly, what God says. Join us as we unravel these questions, starting with our first week's focus, "Who Are You?: Label Legacy." Let's embrace this new year with open hearts and minds, ready to discover not just who we are, but who we are meant to be!

Kid Min Minute

Keeping Up With Karen



The countdown is on to Christmas! Less than a week away and I'm certain it is filled with a myriad of emotions for everyone. For some, it's the anticipation of family gatherings – maybe that's an exciting thing, for others maybe it's more stress-filled. For some, it's excitement about gifts that have been bought or given, those still needing wrapped or trying to figure out what someone wants. For others, it's a time to settle in and truly soak in the Christmas season as the hustle of events narrows down. There's also those who enter this week with hesitation and mixed emotions of the difficulty of missing loved ones, coupled with a time of year that sees everyone running here and there but some schedules are more lonely, less busy.

Wherever you are on the Christmas spectrum, I hope you know God is meeting you right where you are. There is no recipe for the perfect Christmas! I have talked to many this season that are struggling with loneliness, missing someone special either due to death or separation, and others who are celebrating a little different this year. Through it all, I am reminded that Christmas isn't about how much you get done or how many parties you attend but rather being reminded that God's perfect love was expressed through the gift of his Son and our Savior.

Maybe you're like me and struggle between filling the calendar with Christmas activities and making sure all the preparations are made for whatever is "next" on the calendar. The past couple weeks, I have had to work hard to keep my attention toward the reason why we celebrate and why we have the activities that we do on the calendar. Throughout this season, my goal has been for our church to provide opportunities to draw closer to Christ, strengthen relationships with each other and share the light of Christ by serving. I hope that you have joined in some of the events!

As we move into 2024, our church is at a very exciting point! We are growing each week and our ministry team leaders have done an incredible job serving this past year as we've created new events, added dinner groups, enhanced our worship experiences, built stronger community relationships, strengthened our financial outlook and expanded our outreach goals. I hope you are feeling the momentum of all that is happening at FCC. I know I do! On Sunday mornings, it's refreshing to feel the joy and buzz of excitement as people come to worship. Throughout the week, it's exciting to connect with people outside of worship.

As we look to the coming year, I wonder what God has in store for us? I am excited to embrace the coming year with new families, new ministry opportunities and a vision for how God will use FCC in this community.

I hope you are having those same thoughts. Some questions I would pose as we prepare for 2024...

- How has God used me in 2023? What is one gift I discovered about myself and would be excited to develop it more?
- This year, who is someone I have met or a family I've met and would like to get to know better? How will I foster this relationship and make intentional effort to spend time getting better acquainted.
- If I could pick one ministry to be involved in, what would it be? Who should I talk to about getting involved in it?
- What is one way that I can spend more time with God...add a devotional time, prayer time, or accountability partner?

Whether 2023 has been the best year ever or the hardest one yet (or somewhere in between), I pray that you feel God's presence drawing near to you as we approach Christmas. I pray that as you look ahead to 2024 you will be prayerful about what God has in store for you.

Merry Christmas, *Karen*

Letter of Resignation

Please accept this as my resignation letter as the Director of Mother's Day Out. I will be finishing out this school year. May 23rd is the last day of the 2023-2024 MDO school year and will also be my last day as Director. I have been the Director since 2015, and before that I worked as a Mother's Day Out teacher from 2002 through 2012, so I have been around and loved working for the church for a very long time. All of my children have been through the program, and some have even worked for me as teachers at MDO. This has been a wonderful job to have and it will be difficult to say goodbye to the teachers, children, and parents that make MDO such a great program. I have loved watching the program grow over the years and I will continue to be a part of the church and get to watch the program grow in the hands of a new Director.

Michelle Gill, MDO Director

*** Tuesday, 12/19 Pool Party! 6 pm - 9 pm \$5 ***
 Sunday, 12/24 Worship - Elf 10:30 am
 Christmas Eve Service - A Christmas Carol 5pm

GATHER

GROW

The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. John 1:9

When you think of Christmas, what are the first things that come into your mind? During Youth Extra we shared a few... It is true that those are all wonderful things that remind us of this season. And sometimes, all of the stuff overshadows what's most important... the only reason we have Christmas at all! Together we read the Christmas story, a story many have heard but did you know:

• **Let's start from the beginning, with Luke 2:1-5, shall we?**

• In today's time, a census is a much quicker process that is useful to make sure all people are being represented in the government and that there are enough resources available. But a census back then was mostly just for the ruling emperor's bragging rights. They just wanted to know how big their empire was, so they made people travel from all over the place for miles and miles, back to their hometowns. Even mothers like Mary, who were just about to have a baby, had to listen to this rule.

◦ **Read what happened next in Luke 2:6-7.**

• And it was there, in Joseph's hometown of Bethlehem, that baby Jesus was born. The town was so packed that they could only manage to find shelter in the same place most people kept animals. Jesus, the savior of the world, used a manger — a feeding trough — as his crib.

◦ **Let's find out what else was going on in Luke 2:8-14.**

• These shepherds have nothing to do with Jesus' story. They weren't family. They weren't even neighbors. As far as we know, these shepherds had no connections to Jesus... yet. God made a point of sending angels to tell them of this historic moment. The angels told them that Jesus' birth would cause great joy for all people, starting with the shepherds!

◦ **What do you think the shepherds did? Let's read on in Luke 2:15-20.**

• What do we do when we see or hear about something exciting? We can't wait to tell someone else about it. The shepherds were no different! They had to tell everyone! This was the beginning of the celebration to come for the world — all because Jesus was born!

Reroute (Weekly challenge): Every vacation has moments of stuff... take a moment to reroute and get back to the fun. Ask do I have in my life that feels more dark and less light? Ask you bring light to the dark for you.

PRAYER: God, thank you for sending Jesus as the savior needed and still need today. Help us to step out of the closer to your light. Help this Christmas season to be can show others how much you love this world. Amen.

Sunday, 12/24 Reading Scripture = Makenna;

serving = Gabby & Bailey

Sunday, 12/31 Reading Scripture = Zach;

serving = Max & Luke

GIVE

Merry Christmas!

Celebrate!

January Birthdays!

- | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1 – Daelon Rice | 12 – Abigail Simpson | 22 – Sheryl Reeve |
| Herb Reeve | 13 – Jaycee Zellers | Hadley Timmons |
| 3 – Paul Ketch | Deanna Case | 23 – Riley Dods |
| 4 – Rick Martin | 14 – Andi Mays | Karen Ochs |
| Dakota Hubbard | Pam Smith | 24 – Logan Hand |
| Victoria Barkley | 15 – Tara Yancey | 25 – Kenny Walter |
| 5 – Aspen Mitchell | Megan Reece | Jake Doles |
| 7 – Brad Hand | Robin Kemper | 26 – Carl Biggs |
| 8 – Samantha Gerhards | 17 – Jaci Wiss | 27 – Ryan Biggs |
| 10 – Janice Hand | 21 – Bo Hayes | 28 – Morgan Hanna |
| Terryl Wiczorek | Courtney Anderson | Gregg Gumerson |
| Dorothy Smith | | 29 – Treva Seals |
| 11 – Virgil Rodgers | | 30 – Waylon Ball |
| Greg Ireton | | 31 – Brandon Tontz |

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

17 – Bill & Paula Bowles

24 – Paul & Barbara Ketch

Prayer Requests

Hospitalized at this time: Bill Cunningham

Preparing for surgery: Jamie Johnston

We pray for our church family: Mike Carey, Rodney Stewart, Debi Shore, Bill Bowles, Gerald Whitfield, Jennifer Bounds, Gene Owen, Denise Shoun, Marie Lynch, Dennis Lynch, Steve Ochs, Carl Biggs

Our church family currently in the nursing home: Joan Dreessen, Keith Young, Glennette Meredith, Elmina Lynch, Bonnie Reynolds, Cynthia Baker, Mickey Eckley, Dorothy Smith

We pray for our friends and family members: Family of Johnnie LeGrande, Teresa Russell, Camden Zehall, Family of Barrett & Megan Ellis, Max Brownlee, Cooper Lawson, Cathy Carter, Rosalee Martin, Barb & Kara Sawyer, Renee Leathers, Crystal Grilley, Don Channel, Mike Brown, John Timmons, Linda Beedle, Charlotte Cascio, Teal Esmeyer, Hendrix Beutler, Tonya Stansbury, Dennis and Norma Kelley, Mike London, Sam Porter, James Stowe, Mike Bell, Jodie Flurry, JD Inda, Woody Green, Gary Kragh, Blake Alaniz, Tonya Dawn McCulloch, David Brown, Susie Ellison, Mary Wheeler, Penelope Ivey, Teresa May, Elsie Steinbeck

And our military all over the world: Sonny Crick, Court Machtolff, Bonnie Epperson, Jonah Friese, T.J. Wilson, Matt Byce, Braxton Canning, Nate Ames

FCCYOUTH
 wish you a...



Merry Christmas
 and Happy New Year

The true light that gives light to
 everyone was coming into the world.
 John 1:9

Join us Thurs., Dec. 21 at 6 p.m. for our **"Blue Christmas"** worship, a service tailored for those who find the holidays challenging. Whether you're coping with loss, loneliness, or simply seeking peace, this service offers a comforting blend of hymns, prayers, and messages of hope. It's a time to find solace and companionship in the warmth of our church family.



FCC Cookies & Caroling

Just wanted to thank the carolers that came by Sunday. It brightened Rodney and my day. The cookies were delicious. We're so blessed to have such a loving church family. Thanks again!

The Stewart family



Connections Team Update

As we enter into a new year, we pray that you find peace in being more intentional through giving, volunteering, or whatever makes your heart happy. If you are not part of a committee at First Christian Church, I encourage you to see what various committees we have available for you to serve. What better way to start a new year than to offer your time to something new and rewarding!

Coming up soon will be our annual FCC chili cookoff on Jan. 7! Be watching for signups soon! You won't want to miss it! Our next Connections Team meeting will be at 5:30 on Feb. 6 at 5:30. Join us in the choir room!

Jana Frey, Connections Team Leader

YOUTH NEWS Continued...

1/7 Sun 10:30 = Worship + Youth Extra (Emmalyn; Taylor M & Kenzie)
11:30 = Chili cook-off & Birthday bites!

1/10 Wed = 6-7:30 Youth Nights

1/14 Sun 10:30 = Worship (Hadley; Daelon & Colten) 11:30-1 = Youth

1/21 Sun (Donuts) 10:30 = Worship + Youth Extra (Aiden; Abigail & Hadley)
11:30-1 = Youth

1/24 Wed = 6-7:30 Youth Nights

1/28 Sun 10:30 = Worship (loose change offering) (Taylor M; Emmalyn & Anna)
11:30-1 Youth



January

Scripture series: **WHAT CAN I DO?** based on Jesus' Life & Ministry.

15th Annual FCC CHILI COOKOFF

January 7, 2024

Get ready to join the chili cooking competition



Unique Prizes and Great Fellowship for all!



LifeLine Screenings will be held at FCC on Fri., Jan. 26.

Screenings include Carotid Artery Screening, Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening, Peripheral Arterial Disease Screening, Or Atrial Fibrillation Screening.

If you are interested in signing up, call 800-636-0186

If you need financial assistance with your screenings, please contact Shana in the Church Office at 405-282-4080 as we have a couple of gift certificates available.

Our Online Bible Study will take a break for the holidays and resume on Jan. 15, 2024!