



First Christian Church
3501 Rogers Avenue
Fort Smith, Arkansas 72903

Office: (479) 783-1139

Office Hours:
8:30am –4:30pm
Monday-Thursday

Church Staff

Rev. Dr. Jarrett Banks
Senior Minister
252-414-9229
jarrett@fccdoc.org

Rev. Soniyah “Sonna” B. Key
Associate Minister Intern
Dianna Jackson
Director of Music Ministry
Evan Mino
Organist

Barbara Brown
Secretary

Pam Shelby
Financial Secretary

Randy Alexander
Custodian

Patience Hudlow
Nursery Coordinator
Lesley Fleming
Nursery Attendant

Mission Statement

The mission of First Christian Church, Fort Smith, Arkansas is to lift up Jesus the Christ by:

- Enabling spiritual growth and deepened commitment, both individually and corporately;
- Developing a church family/ community that is accepting and encouraging;
- Serving our community and the world through spiritual, physical, and emotional support; and,
- Reaching out in His name to the unchurched in our community.

Because of Christmas Day

Harry Belafonte sings the words of one of my favorite Christmas carols: “Long time ago in Bethlehem, so the Holy Bible say, Mary’s boy child Jesus Christ was born on Christmas Day. Hark, now hear the angels sing, a king born today. And man will live forevermore, because of Christmas Day.”

The good, glorious news of this Christmas is that we know who our God is, how our God acts and what our God desires because of Christmas Day. For on Christmas Day, the God who was thought to be distant and aloof became as close as God could possibly become—becoming one of us—becoming flesh to dwell among us, giving us the best gift that God had to give, the gift of God’s self.

God proved to the world how far God is willing to go to bring us close to God by becoming close to us. God loves us so much that God emptied God’s self, poured God’s self out to us and for us through the vulnerable little baby born in a stable who grew into a man. And although we rejected him, spit upon him, tortured him and killed him by nailing him to a tree, God brought him back to life for the very ones who crucified him—revealing in a real and powerful way that God will never give up on us. God will never forsake us. God will always be there for us, forgiving us, loving us, transforming our despair into hope and our deaths into life.

Why do we share hope with others that God is always for us and never against us, always by our side working all things together for the good? How can we say with confidence to all people that God is never the cause of any of our misery and suffering? How can we proclaim that God is never using the pain of this world to punish us for our sins, but God is always here with us loving us and forgiving us? Because of Christmas Day!

Why are we compelled to love others and share with others freely and unconditionally? With others—others who do not deserve our love and cannot earn our love—others who may reject our love and even abuse our love. Why do we keep on sharing and keep on loving those who may never share with us and love us? Because of Christmas Day! Because God was born to an underserving woman named Mary, worshipped first by undeserving shepherds, called undeserving fishermen to be his disciples and lived and died for undeserving people like me and you!

Jarrett

Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service, 6:00 pm

Worship and Education Opportunities

December 23

“Unto Us a Child Is Born”

Rev. Dr. Jarrett Banks

Luke 1:39-45

Elders

Zena Marshall and Danny Lynch

Deacons

Connie Alexander (Foreman), Darlene Brees, Janet LaForce, Tim Randolph, LaBeth Riggs, Steve Riggs, Elizabeth Vaughn, David Williamson

Prepare Communion

LaBeth Riggs

Greeters

Tim Randolph and David Williamson

Worship Leader

Zena Marshall

December 30

“In the Trenches”

Rev. Kaycee Young

Colossians 3:12-17

Elders

Dan Marshall and Kristi Williamson

Deacons

Connie Alexander (Foreman), Darlene Brees, Janet LaForce, Tim Randolph, LaBeth Riggs, Steve Riggs, Elizabeth Vaughn, David Williamson

Prepare Communion

LaBeth Riggs

Greeters

Tim Randolph and David Williamson

Worship Leader

Dan Marshall

Thank You

Sometimes mommas get sick and the recovery process will involve making adjustments. My mom recently had hip surgery. She is doing fine and will start therapy this week. It was hard watching her struggle to walk, but it was even harder knowing that pain was going to be a part of the process. I had to adjust my thinking. I had to adjust my words. I had to adjust my tears.

When people talk about recovery, they rarely talk about the life adjustments needed to make recovery possible. What if we saw recovery more in terms of making small adjustments on our way to reach a specific goal, instead of viewing it as just a long, uphill journey?

I lost my faith about six months before I joined FCC. The Church universal broke my heart. The racism, the sexism, the jokes about millennials and Gen Xer's. It broke my heart. I walked away. The Church universal no longer represented the faith and the worldview that was cultivated in me by way of the communion table.

The church needed to be welcoming to all. The church needed to become a safe and brave space for my friends to gather, spiritually grow, and give back to the community to which they belonged. The Church universal needed to adjust. I lost faith that the Church universal would be able to make that adjustment.

Much like the children of Israel, weary with waiting, despondent and a bit confused. What, with all the prophecies, the foretelling of the coming Messiah, and still nothing.

We all have lost hope. We all have experienced the slipping of the light right between our fingers. No way the Church universal could ever be open to a gospel of social justice. Where would I find a church willing to make adjustments at the table for folks who might look different, think different and act differently? I lost my faith. I updated my passport. I started sampling other faiths. I was moving from the “Nones” to the “Dones”.

Right before I completed the move, I visited FCC. A month later I joined. *There was a star in Bethlehem.* In a few weeks, I will be ordained at FCC, the first African-American woman to be ordained at this church. Our faith journey will be forever intertwined. Your support, your willingness, your acceptance, your covenantal love compelled me to make an adjustment. I have no words to express my profound appreciation and gratitude. I love you and always will....

**Adjusted and Intertwined,
Rev. Soniyah "Sonna" B. Key**

**Please give generously to this year's
Christmas Offering received on December 23.**

Our finest gifts support the work of regional ministries this Christmas. Your regional ministry works to:

- Connect congregations to each other
 - Foster faith development
 - Gather Disciples in camps, conferences, and assemblies
 - Nurture the development of a new generation of pastors
 - Assist churches in calling new ministers
 - Interpret the global mission of the Church
 - Represent the Church in ecumenical gatherings
 - Counsel and pray with those who are troubled of spirit
 - Lead the Church to address racism
 - Inspire leaders to experiment and create
 - Witness to the power of God to make things new
- The Christmas Special Day offering supports all of these and many other ministries of our regions.**

Dianna's Notes

Bell Ensemble meets at 9:00 am in the Sanctuary to rehearse.

Worship Music

- December 23** Bell Ensemble
December 24 Disciples Bells; Disciples Bells Quintet; Robbie Wilson, Solo
December 30 Bruce Birkhead, Solo

December 19: Prime Time will meet for rehearsal and lunch at Golden Corral following rehearsal.

Disciples Bells meet at **5:00 pm on Christmas Eve** to rehearse. Wear your Christmas best.

No rehearsals on December 23, December 26, December 30, January 2.

Disciples Bells and Jubilations Bells rehearsals resume **January 6.**

Children's Choir and Chancel Choir rehearsals resume **January 9.**

Fellowship and Service Opportunities

Youth News

- ◆ **Thursday, December 18**, youth fellowship and friends will go and view Christmas lights either in NWA or possibly Tulsa. Please meet at the church between 4:00-4:30 pm, also bring money for a McDonald's style meal.
- ◆ Come join the Youth Fellowship at **7:30 pm on New Year's Eve** for a lock-in. We will go to Bowling World and bowl two games then return to the church to bring in the new year. Bring sleeping bag, pillow, blankets just in case you give up and want to sleep. We need help with snacks, and if possible volunteers to do breakfast on **January 1**. Please contact Marilyn Maxey, Michelle Moran or John Mundy if you wish to help.
- ◆ Snoasis is **February 22-24, 2019**. This camp is located at Camp Couchdale in Hot Springs for grades 6 through 12. If you wish to attend, please let John Mundy know. This year's theme: Identity Crisis; Who are you? We will have registration forms at the church office.

Church Growth Seminar

How will we add new members to our church in 2019? As you have already figured out, it is much different than the way we added members in 1999. On **Sunday morning, January 13**, Dr. Banks will use the Sunday School hour to introduce a Church Growth Seminar that he will be leading on Wednesday nights beginning January 16. The seminar will follow supper, which will be served at 5:30 pm in Disciples Hall.

Announcements

Welcome Nadine Burton

Rev. Dr. Nadine Burton, the Regional Minister of the Great River Region, will worship with us this Sunday, December 23.

There will not be a newsletter for week of December 23.

Concerns and Celebrations of the Community

- **Joey Douglas**, Ashton Place, 318 Strozier Lane, Room 520, Barling, AR 72923
- **Maxie Walker**, 202 Georgetown Circle, 72908

Please contact the church office with the name of any member of our congregation who has been sick or is hospitalized.

MEMORIAL: We gratefully acknowledge the following gift, given as a thoughtful expression of sympathy and of care...

In Memory of:

Janice Rickman by Diane Fagan

Mission Express O Café

The café opens at **9am each Sunday** morning. All the proceeds support the Mission trips. Setup **begins at 8:30am Sunday**. Come join us for fellowship, a cup of coffee and doughnuts.

Fort Smith Disciple (USPS 206-080) published weekly by First Christian Church
3501 Rogers Ave., Fort Smith AR 72903-2961.

Periodical postage paid at Fort Smith, AR.
POSTMASTER: Please submit address changes to FORT SMITH DISCIPLE, 3501 Rogers Avenue, Fort Smith, AR 72903-2961

Church Calendar

Sunday, December 23

Fourth Sunday of Advent
Christmas Offering
8:30 am Worship (Chapel)
9:00 am Mission Café
9:30 am Sunday School
10:45 am Worship (Sanctuary)

Monday, December 24

Office Closed
9:00 am—12:45 pm
Hope Campus
6:00 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion

Tuesday, December 25

Christmas Day
Office Closed

Wednesday, December 26

Office open until 12:00 pm

Thursday, December 27

Office open all day

Sunday, December 30

7:30 am Elders' Meeting
8:30 am Worship (Chapel)
9:00 am Mission Café
9:30 am Sunday School
10:45 am Worship (Sanctuary)
Take down decorations after late worship

Monday, December 31

7:30 pm Youth Lock-in

Tuesday, January 1

Office Closed

Thursday, January 3

10:00 am DWF Board (Parlor)

For the Record – December 16

Operating Receipts.....	\$ 5,343.40
To Date	18,866.46
Endowment.....	100.00
To Date	910.00
Christmas Offering	752.75
Monthly Budgeted	
Needs.....	31,413.55