



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
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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.

Christmas Came in Straw

John Scott once wrote: "We are not to picture Jesus as a modern baby lying with nothing on but a diaper...but as a baby in 'swaddling cloths', the long narrow strips of bandage wrapped round his limbs and body making free movement impossible...Is it not almost unbelievable that the Creator, on whose freedom and power we all depend, should allow himself to be bound, and to lie in helpless weakness in the straw?"

The true message of Christmas is that God was born into our world naked, defenseless, and vulnerable. How ironic then is our consumeristic perversion of it!

The Messiah, bound in a feeding troth—while December shopping malls exhibit a celebration of our capitalistic freedom to make and spend as much money as we desire.

The Savior of the World, born in a barn to peasants—while our homes and tables exhibit an extravagant excessiveness associated with royalty.

God, humbled, emptied and poured out—while Christians use Christmas to exert their power, control and authority, especially over others who have different faiths.

Christmas challenges us to acknowledge that God's ways are not our ways. While we perceive Christmas as an opportunity to get our own way, through the true message of Christmas I believe God is trying to show us another way.

This is why I believe it is so important to attend and invite others to our worship services and activities during Advent and Christmas. For amid the clamor of consumerism and selfishness, in our worship we will hear a call to sacrifice and selflessness. Amid the noise of narcissism and pride, through our acts of servitude, we will sing carols of humility and sharing.

And may the world look at us and see not a Crusader born with a silver spoon in his mouth and a sword in his hand, but a baby whose limbs were bound and whose bed was straw.

Stewardship and Budget

As was mentioned during the Call to Offering a couple of weeks ago, I noticed in the newspaper that some non-profits were having a difficult time making ends meet at this time of the year. Money was tight and the volunteers were not showing up like they had in the past. The same could be said about us here at First Christian Church. Money is indeed tight. We have the volunteers, but there is not the numbers needed to fully staff all the worthy causes we want to do. The cabinet has met a couple of times to see if we can find some answers. Those meetings have been full of questions and worthy suggestions to see if we can save money and still fully meet our outreach commitments. We have cut back on our outreach giving and have committed to

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continue giving to it on a limited basis, although we were able to make last month's pledge. That's a good sign. The cabinet also decided that we needed to have some meetings with the entire congregation invited to look at things as they are and discuss some possible solutions. Those three meetings will take place in January during the Sunday school hour. We will look at the budget and our expenditures and let everyone have a realistic look at where we stand. Everyone's input will be welcome. Do not interpret this article as doom and gloom. The church has some funds available that could be used. But those funds are either dedicated for a specific use or will be needed for a major project in the future, such as resurfacing the parking lot. Using those funds for general operating expense is not their purpose. That would be like breaking a hundred dollar bill. Once you break it, you wonder where it all went. A wise person once told me that. What has happened is that we went from a medium to large church with a corresponding budget to a small to medium church but with the same budget. Let's put our heads together in January and put this worry behind us.

Danny Lynch, Stewardship Ministry Chairman

Worship and Education Opportunities

December 9

Elders

Kristi Williamson and Jim Creekmore

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

Kristi Williamson

“Four Hands at Christmas” Concert

Everyone is invited to hear "Four Hands at Christmas", a piano and keyboard concert performance by Evan Mino and Teri Sparks. The concert will be held **Thursday, December 6, at 6:00 pm**, First Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, 3501 Rogers Avenue. A reception will follow in the fellowship hall. Transportation will be provided for anyone who would like to attend. If you need a ride, please call the church office or Linda Creekmore, 709-9980.

Cookies will be needed for the reception. Please let Linda or the office know if you can bring a dozen or more.

If you cannot make this concert, there is one on **Sunday, December 2, at 6:00 pm** at First Church of the Nazarene.

Dianna's Notes

Disciples Bells meet at 9:00 am in the Sanctuary to rehearse.

Worship Music

- December 9** Disciples Bells
- December 16** Children's Chimes and Jubilation Bells
- December 23** Bell Ensemble
- December 24** Disciples Bells; Disciples Bells Quintet; Robbie Wilson, Solo
- December 30** Bruce Birkhead, Solo

Advent Worship

- | | | |
|--------------------|----------|---|
| December 6 | 6:00 pm | “Four Hands at Christmas” Concert (Evan and Teri) |
| December 9 | 10:45 am | Chrismon Service
Hanging of the Greens |
| December 15 | 1:00 pm | Youth (cookies and caroling) |
| December 24 | 6:00 pm | Christmas Eve
Candlelight Communion |

Fellowship and Service Opportunities

Youth Fellowship Activities

The youth fellowship wishes to invite all to join them on **December 8 at 8:00 am** at Disciples Hall to travel to Birkhead Mountain for gathering of the greens.

This will be a fun trip for all and an excellent way to get to know and work with the youth of the church. Please plan to attend.

It's time again to break out your amazing cookie recipes and join the youth on **December 15 at 1:00 pm** to bake from scratch those yummy cookies, and we will have a small dinner of Harold and Audrey Stewart's pizza. After dinner, we will travel to area nursing homes, sing Christmas carols and hand out cookies.

We will need at least five people to come with their recipes and ingredients to bake the cookies. Please call John or the church office if you wish to help. This is a fun event for all and a time to help in a great cause.

Holiday in the Park

Community Outreach is sponsoring **Holiday in the Park** the night of **December 5** from 5:30 pm-8:30 pm.

Gathering the Greenery

Please join us **Saturday, December 8**, to gather and prepare greens to adorn our sanctuary for the Advent season. If you are a gatherer, meet at **8:00 am** in the lower parking lot to travel to Birkhead Mountain to gather pine and cedar to build the sanctuary wreaths and window decorations. Dan & Zena will have breakfast ready at the mountain when the crew arrives! If you are a preparer (or not an early riser on Saturday!), join us in the Narthex at **1:00 pm** to build. Bring work gloves and hand-held clippers. If you are "in" for both activities that day, thank you! We will have a great morning and afternoon together.

Angel Tree

We have an Angel Tree located in Disciples Hall. Please choose an angel by removing the ornament. Place gifts in bag with angel information securely attached. Do not wrap gifts (may add wrapping paper to bag). Thank you for making Christmas joy for these angels. The last day is **December 16**.

Friendship Class Party

The Friendship Class Christmas party will be on **Friday, December 14, at 6:00 pm** in the home of Randy and Julie Jay. Their address is 3405 South 29th Circle. Please bring finger foods to share and a gift for "dirty Santa".

Christmas Dinner

Menu for **December 17, 6:30 pm**: Slow roasted Prime Rib, garlic roasted mashed potatoes, green beans, roll, dessert, Coffee, Tea

Men and women are invited to our December Disciples Men's Fellowship. **Reservations requested.** Please let Barbara in the office know if you plan to attend and how many. Howard Marshall will have the short devotion.

Announcements

Concerns and Celebrations of the Community

- **Janice Rickman**, Greta Pryor’s mother
Please contact the church office with the name of any member of our congregation who has been sick or is hospitalized.

Welcome New Members

- Maebry, Marc, and Catie have been adopted into our church family.
- **Maebry Halmes**, 1403 6th Terrace, Barling, AR 72923, 479-209-7676, maebryhalmes@gmail.com
 - **Marc & Catie Kendall** (contact information to follow)
Please pray for them as they unite with us to serve our city, region and world.

For the Record – December 2

Operating Receipts.....	\$ 10,468.60
Endowment	465.00
Monthly Budgeted Needs	31,413.55

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.

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Church Calendar

Sunday, December 9

- 8:30 am Second Sunday of Advent
- 8:30 am Worship (Chapel)
- 9:00 am Mission Café
- 9:30 am Sunday School
- 10:45 am Worship (Sanctuary)
Chrismons/Hanging of the Greens
- 2:00 pm Jackson Piano Recital
- 3:30 pm Disciples Bells
- 5:00 pm Jubilation Bells
- 5:45 pm Youth Snack Supper/Meeting
- 6:00 pm Cabinet
- 6:45 pm Ministry Teams

Tuesday, December 11

- 9:00 am Staff Meeting
- 10:00 am DWF Group 1 (Parlor)
- 12:00 pm DWF Group 2 (Parlor)
- 6:00 pm DWF Group 3 (Parlor)

Wednesday, December 12

- 10:00 am Prime Time Bells
- 11:30 am Lunch Bunch (TBA)
- 3:30 pm Butterfield Worship
- 4:15 pm Children’s Music
- 7:00 pm Chancel Choir

Friday, December 14

- 6:00 pm Friendship Class Party at the home of Randy & Julie Jay

Saturday, December 15

- 1:00 pm Youth cookies and caroling

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

In Memory of:

- **Naomi Hatley**, by Nina Abernathy, Carolyn Haley
- **Imogene Price**, by Nina Abernathy, John & Margot Mundy
- **Mary Ann Collins**, by John & Margot Mundy
- **Gracelyn Kate Smith**, by John & Margot Mundy