



## Central Area Churches Praying for Churches Weeks of: July 26 — Chandler, First Christian Church — Christine Pomaville August 2 — Nicoma Park, Nicoma Park Christian Church — Chris Muse

Attendance		Giving	
Sunday Worship	68	Giving for operations	\$1,957.30
Emerging Worship	10	Giving for capital	0.00
Total	78	Giving for outreach	0.00
Sunday School	N/A	Giving total	\$1,957.30

*The world of the generous gets larger and larger; the world of the stingy gets smaller and smaller. The one who blesses others is abundantly blessed; those who help others are helped. Proverbs 11:24-25 (The Message Translation)*

### Keep Us Informed

Please contact your church if you or a loved one is ill, injured, in the hospital, needs special prayer, wants a visit, or has other needs.

Pastor Ray's: Cell Phone-**405-833-2272**  
Email-**raybelford@hotmail.com**  
Office: (405) **275-1525**

### Office Hours

Monday-Thursday 8:30 am - 5:00 pm  
Lunch times vary

Email: **office@fccshawnee.com**

Church Website: **www.fccshawnee.com**



Dear FCC Family and Friends,

Some of the most beautiful and moving church music for me is in the African-American spirituals that we occasionally sing.

First of all, I believe these spirituals remind us how the Good News can penetrate into the darkest and most foreboding places. Most of the slaves were literally kidnapped from their homes in western and central Africa and chained together in crowded and inhumane conditions on the ships of the slave-traders. If they reached America alive, they were then dumped into a foreign land and sold to the highest bidder. The majority of the slave owners were Christians who somehow believed the Bible condoned slavery. One has to wonder how a people enslaved in such terrible conditions could conceive of worshipping the same God of their captors. But the Good News got through.

Of course, slaves owned by Christians in colonial North America were forbidden to practice any religion but Christianity. The language of the owner was the only language permitted, whether in the fields or in church meetings. Attending church service was compulsory for many slaves; thus, the slaves were exposed to the stories in the Bible and began to see parallels to their own experiences; the captivity stories of the Children of Israel in bondage in Egypt; the stories of the exile of the Jews and their captivity in Babylon; and the story of David and Goliath showing that the weak could overcome the mighty. In the stories of Jesus they found a dream of salvation that gave them a vision of heaven and hope for the end to their sorrows in life.

According to McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia, it was in Christian worship services that slaves recognized echoes of their own religious music, which was forbidden. In the statements of the minister and the responses of the congregation, they heard the patterns of the call-and-response form that is repeated in much music of West Africa. Slaves also recognized the religious ecstasy that often accompanied the singing of hymns.

Many slaves began to hold their own secret worship services, known as "camp meetings" or "bush meetings" and in Praise Houses where their religious expression was less inhibited, and it was there that the verse-and-refrain form, as well as themes of the Bible-story lyrics of many hymns, seemed to fit well with the musical traditions of African-American slaves and were easily adapted to serve their worship and sometimes serve other purposes.

According to the histories of African-American spirituals, words or whole verses were added in America as a means to educate, communicate news or gossip, comfort mind and body, reprimand, tell a story, or give a coded signal.

Many songs came about to help slaves escape on the Underground Railroad, a somewhat-secret way to safety and freedom. Singers of spirituals sometimes included lyrics that messaged an impending escape. The "River Jordan" signaled the Ohio River. The land on the other side of the river was free of slavery and was signaled by the lyrics sung in "Sweet Canaan, the Promised Land."

The song "Wade in the Water" told escaping slaves how to elude scent-tracking dogs. "The Gospel Train" represented the Underground Railroad. "Follow the Drinking Gourd" told them to use the Big Dipper and the North Star to guide them when they travelled at night.

The song "Amazing Grace" apparently has its roots in African-American spirituals as it is believed that former slave ship captain, John Newton, who wrote the song, based its melody on one that he heard coming from the slave holds on his ship.

When singing spirituals, slaves sometimes lowered the third, fifth, or seventh notes of the scale, which resulted in the "blue" notes, to emphasize a sorrowful theme or verse, yet we can still hear the message of hope within their sorrows and the joy of a faith that sustained them through it all.

In today's world we continue to see and hear a living and vibrant spiritual body among the African-American churches in our country. The recent massacre in the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charlotte, South Carolina led to the world's seeing the church and victim's families' swift forgiveness of the shooter bring harmony into what could have been a very explosive situation. Their forgiveness is one of the most wonderful examples of grace we've witnessed in our lifetimes.

This coming Sunday, we want to honor the heritage the spirituals as all our music will be African-American spirituals. The quartet of Josh, Kyle, Steve, and Marcia will give our Call to Worship with "Swinging with the Saints". The quartet Spiritsong will provide special music with "His Eye Is On the Sparrow." Dr. Mary Chung and her husband, Dr. Carlos Feller, will be providing instrumental music for the prelude, offertory, and communion meditation. The rest of us will get to lift our voices in singing spirituals for our opening hymn, prayer hymn, communion hymn, and invitation hymn.

The message for Sunday is titled: "Time Out" and is based on Mark 6:30-34; 53-56.

Catch the spirit this week and be with your church family in worship, if you are able. Marcia has planned a great musical service. Bring a friend — or several.

Pastor Ray

*We Do forever*

*Cora Gray*

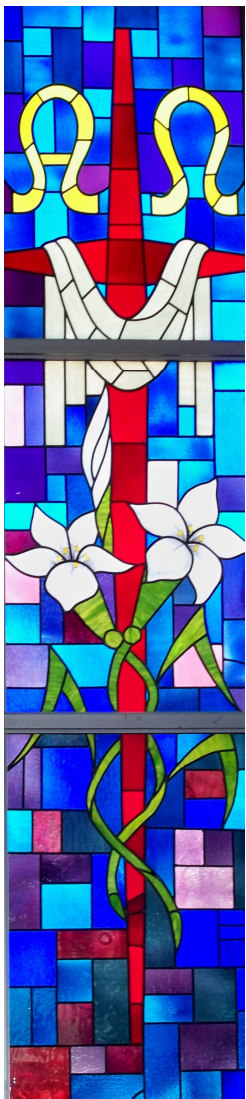
*David Tucker*

*will be married July 18, 2015  
in a private wedding ceremony.*

*Please celebrate with us at an adults only reception  
at 4:00 pm at the home of Rodney and Jennifer*

*Freed*

*1702 North Broadway Avenue  
Shawnee, Oklahoma 74804*



*Thanks!*

To our elders for preparing and serving the Sunday's fellowship breakfast!!  
It was yummy, and we enjoyed the fellowshipin'.

### Take a Cue from Me

That's what we would like to do. We're hoping some of you have pool cues that you no longer use and would like to donate to the youth room. We don't want you to run out and buy any before we have a chance to recycle ones that are unused but useable. THANKS!



Pumpkin Patch Meetings 3-28, 4-25, 5-30, 6-27

- Phillips Seminary’s Scholarship Fund has been added to receive a donation.
- Jack Scott is making crafts to sell; we will need someone to paint them.
- We plan to make rum cakes the week of Oct. 5th –9th for Sat., Oct. 10th bake-sale. Plan to take orders in August.
- To have the blood drive Oct. 10th, 9-12:00, we need 25 donors signed-up in advance. Forms are near the church doors.
- Salsa production has been plentiful. (Thanks, Gail Reeves!)
- Jack Scott has repaired the bridge. Deb Jackson will donate the paint.
- Rich MacMillan is going to prepare the sandwich-style board to display the list of donation recipients.
- Discussions have included: inviting Tecumseh schools for story-time; running the train during school visits; having wine-tasting on Oct. 17 when blue grass music is scheduled; selling hanging bottles with plants in them.



Report from July 12 Board Meeting

The Official Board met on Sunday, July 12, approved a reduction in the fee structure in the Church’s Wedding policy, and approved moving \$5,000 from the long term reserves to the church’s banking account.

The reasons given for reducing the fees which affects non-member usage of the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall for weddings was to make it more affordable for those wanting to have a church wedding to use our facility. Church members currently pay no fee to use either the Sanctuary or Fellowship Hall for a wedding.

The pastor reported that the church gets four or five requests a year from non-members who are looking for a church with a center aisle for a wedding. Thus far, each person has chosen to hold their wedding somewhere else. By lowering the fees, it is believed the church will actually bring in some additional revenue and also allow our church to be seen as an ecumenical and community-friendly church.

The fee for using the Sanctuary was reduced from \$500 for non-members to \$250. The fee for using the Fellowship Hall for the wedding reception was reduced from \$200 to \$150. The security deposit was reduced from \$350 to \$250, with \$200 returned following the wedding provided there is no damage to the church and \$50 applied to other fees. Required fees for a church wedding coordinator were also eliminated.

The transfer of \$5,000 from our long-term reserves was approved to maintain our bank balances in order to remain current on all our bills and debt service. Giving has declined during the second quarter. It was agreed that a stewardship letter from Board Chair Robin Talley would be going out encouraging increased giving to the church to support our ministries. A weekly report of giving verses needs will be included on each Sunday’s worship bulletin, and a monthly report will be sent out showing giving verses need on a monthly and year-to-date basis as was done several years ago.

A request to consider a wine tasting event with Pumpkin Patch was rejected by majority vote.

Dear First Christian friends,

A very belated thank-you to the church for allowing me to serve you as organist/choir accompanist for nearly three years. I treasure my time there and the people I met. Special thanks to the choir for hosting the lovely reception for me on my last Sunday and for the beautiful wind chimes I was given. Their beautiful, clear tones will always remind me of all of you!

God’s love, grace and peace to all of you,

Sandra Meyer



Spread THE WORD

Many of us have multiple copies of the Bible that are not being used. We are collecting extras for donation.

After you are certain they contain no treasures other than the beloved Good News, insert a note in the front “for donation,” and leave them on the stage table in Fellowship Hall or in the office.

- Wed., July 15—Boomer Bridge noon-5:00 p.m. Youth Group 6-8:00 p.m.  
Emerging Worship 6:15-6:45 p.m.
- Sat., July 18—(Adults only) Reception for Cora Gray & David Tucker following their private wedding.  
Please read the invitation on page four.
- Sun., July 19—Sunday school 9:00-9:30 a.m. Fellowship 9:30-9:50 a.m.  
UNITED SERVICE 10 a.m.  
Liturgical Worship and Christian Meditation 4-5:00 p.m.
- Wed., July 22—Boomer Bridge noon-5:00 p.m. Youth Group 6-8:00 p.m.  
Emerging Worship 6:15-6:45 p.m.

MILLENNIAL MINUTE

Many persons have asked for clarification regarding the recent SCOTUS ruling on same-sex marriage in the last few weeks. The article provided below from Relevant Magazine’s Aaron Cline is a brief, even-handed explanation of the ruling. I hope it helps to answer some of those questions!



What Same-Sex Marriage Means for Churches  
By Aaron Cline Hanbury, Relevant Magazine

June 26, 2015

After months of speculation, the Supreme Court of the United States has ruled that gay and lesbian couples have the right to marry in all 50 states. Reaction to the ruling among Christians appears divided to say the least, but the decision does raise several questions about how the ruling will affect churches and church-affiliated organizations.

**What the Court Said**  
In the majority opinion, written by Justice Anthony Kennedy, “four principles and traditions demonstrate that the reasons marriage is fundamental under the Constitution apply with equal force to same-sex couples.” Those are:

1. “The right to personal choice regarding marriage is inherent in the concept of individual autonomy.”
2. “The right to marry is fundamental because it supports a two-person union unlike any other in its importance to the committed individuals.”
3. “[The right to marry] safeguards children and families and thus draws meaning from related rights of childrearing, procreation, and education.”
4. “Marriage is a keystone of our social order.”

According to the five-to-four majority, the 14th amendment guarantees the right to marry to same-sex couples as “part of the liberty promised” by the amendment.

RELEVANT spoke with Douglas Kmiec, professor of Constitutional Law and Caruso Family Chair in Constitutional Law at Pepperdine University’s School of Law and a former Ambassador of the United States, about what the decision means on a practical level for religious institutions.

What the Court’s Decision Means for Churches and Church-Based Organizations

“No church will be required to perform a same sex ceremony if that is believed to be contrary to their Christian or other religious perspective,” Kmiec says.

Kmiec, who also served presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush during 1985-1989 as constitutional legal counsel, draws a parallel between that and the hiring practices of the Roman Catholic Church. Under most circumstances, organizations or companies may not legally consider gender among the qualifications of candidates.

The Catholic Church, however, believes that “Christ did not choose women for that priesthood and therefore excludes women from the priesthood,” he says. Because the Roman Catholic Church is a religious institution, the Court holds that civil rights laws contain a “ministerial exceptions.” In the same way, the government will not require churches that do not agree with same-sex marriage to uphold normal hiring standards.

“No church will be required to perform a same sex ceremony if that is believed to be contrary to their Christian or other religious perspective.”

But, Kmiec says, wedding ceremony officiating won’t be the “hard case.” Churches, of course, do other things. The most difficult cases, he predicts, will relate to outside and para-church ministries of churches.

For example, what happens when a faith-based school wants to hire employees who observe marriage like that school does, if that doesn’t include same sex couples? Can that school hire someone who is only married to a heterosexual person and exclude those in a same-sex marriage? “I think the likely answer to that is going to be, ‘No,’” Kmiec says.

Churches and religious institutions and organizations receive particular tax-exempt status in the United States. Kmiec says that “no doubt,” these exemptions will come under fire, with efforts to “withdraw public subsidies, either direct or indirect, from institutions that don’t observe the principle of non-discrimination with regard to same-sex marriage.”