



Central Area Churches Praying for Churches Week of Dec. 6—Norman, First Christian Church

Attendance		Giving	
Sunday Worship	48	Giving for operations	\$1,940.48
Vespers Service	4	Giving for Capital	00.00
Total	52	Giving for Outreach	00.00
Sunday School	22	Giving total	\$1,940.48

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed he is coming says the Lord of hosts. Malachi 3:1 NRSV

Office Hours

Monday-Thursday 8:30 am - 4:30 pm
Lunch times vary

Email: office@fccshawnee.com

Church Website: www.fccshawnee.com

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

Clothes

Yes, We Are Still Collecting

Just bring your gently-used garments to the stage area.



Board Report

During the called board meeting this past Sunday, Jason Moery and Deb Jackson were appointed as elders for 2016. The recently approved amendments to the church's constitution and by-laws require a minimum of six elders. The appointments were necessary to be in compliance with the approved changes.

There was also a discussion about the current financial situation of the church. Giving was down again in November. A discussion was held on steps that have been taken and plans to increase income and reduce expenses. The recent lease to One Safe Place-Family Justice Center will be providing \$1,040 per month income to the church. The lease went into effect at the first of November and payments for November and December will be forthcoming. The vouchers have been submitted to the County Commissioners for approval at their next meeting.

The refinancing of the loan on the elevator expansion will reduce our monthly debt service by about \$800 per month.

Since Josh has taken a fulltime job at Phillips Theological Seminary and can only be here on Sundays, he volunteered for a reduction in his pay from the church. He has assured us of his wishes to remain active in the ministries of our church.

John Broomfield has volunteered to provide custodial services to the church at no cost as a means to giving. We will begin making arrangements for the change by the end of the year as we will give our current custodial service notice so they can seek a replacement customer for their services. If you're here when they are, please thank them for their work.

Also, a freeze on all unnecessary spending has been put in place.

After a lengthy discussion a motion was made, seconded, and approved to take \$5,000 from the church's savings to make sure we can meet our obligations as these changes take place.

It is extremely important that everyone continue to be faithful in their giving to the church, and if possible increase the amount of their financial support. The objectives will continue to be to remain current with all our financial obligations and to begin rebuilding our reserves. Please continue in prayer concerning this.

Thank you

Gary Heilman has taken on the responsibility for readying the sanctuary pews for worship.

Thanks, Gary!

Tasting Party

Our annual tasting party will follow the Chancel Choir's cantata, Sunday, December 20. Please, bring bite-sized savory and sweet items to share.



Dear FCC Family and Friends,

Advent is the beginning of the new year in the life of the church. And with the new year in our lectionary cycle, we leave the Gospel of Mark behind and find the Gospel of Luke as the focus for the coming year.

Perhaps, it is because my background includes, in addition to other jobs being: a newspaper reporter and editor, a student and college professor, and a corporate officer who has had to prepare numerous reports; I can identify with the author of Luke.

Read how Luke begins his Gospel. **Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, I too have decided, after investigating everything carefully from the first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed.** Luke 1:1-4 NRSV

What this has always said to me is, "I have done my research, I have verified the facts, and now I am ready to make my report." This is what newspaper reporters should do before they write their stories. This is what students should do before they author their research papers. This is what corporate officers should do before they make reports to the board.

At least three times, the author of Luke gives historical facts to set the time and place of everything by mentioning historical names and titles. He does it in the first chapter, he does it again in the second chapter, and again in the third chapter which we will be examining this coming Sunday. The third chapter begins in this way: **In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness.** Luke 3:1-2 NRSV These are facts which use historical figures to set the time of the events. It is also an interesting fact that the seven VIPs mentioned in these verses are mainly remembered today because of their mention in this Gospel.

To our logical minds there are two things that might stand out in this text. First, we are told the word of God came to John. When we think about people today who claim that the word of God came to them, they are usually on television wearing Armani suits and living in luxurious homes. John certainly doesn't fit that image. The second thing is where this happened—in the wilderness. It wasn't in Jerusalem. It wasn't in the Temple. It wasn't in a place where people could be packed into 20,000 seats. It was in the wilderness.

Throughout scripture we are reminded again and again that God chooses unlikely people. Some people have said, "How odd of God to choose the Jews!" It was odd that God chose David, a young lad whose father did not even include him among the sons whom he presented to Samuel for consideration. How odd of God to choose Mary, a young unmarried girl. How odd of God to choose John. I believe those of us in ministry think it is odd that God called us.

The wilderness also seems an unlikely place to proclaim the word of God. Usually, we would believe that someone on a mission for God would go where the people are. Yet, where God chose to use John required people to go out and find him.

He didn't draw them out there with utopian promises, but called them out to confess their sins and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins. The Greek word for repentance is "metanoias" which involves changing one's mind—turning around—proceeding in a new direction.

What does this mean for today? People still need forgiveness, and God still forgives.

The sermon title for Sunday is "God Is Calling" and is based on Luke 3:1-6.

Advent is a time of preparation. It is a time for seeking forgiveness of sins. It is a time of drawing close to God. If you are able, be in church Sunday. We are not in the wilderness, but right where we've been for more than sixty years, on the corner of Broadway Avenue and Elizabeth Street. Let's make Advent a time for coming home—coming to your church home.



Pastor Ray

Special Christmas Offering

We will be collecting the yearly Christmas offering on Sunday, December 13, and Sunday, December 20. This is another of our denominational special offerings, but this one is different in that all the funds raised go to the Oklahoma Region. The funds are used to support our Regional Pastor and her staff in providing various ministries here in Oklahoma.

Funds are used to provide support to local churches, supporting and equipping pastors for their ministries, revitalizing existing congregations, and helping plan for new congregations. The funds also assist with camps, conferences, and retreats for our children and youth.

As a result of the Chancel Choir's faithful practicing, we were deeply inspired by a traditional service of Advent Lessons and Carols for our morning worship. The worship experience featured a series of readings and hymns that thoughtfully led us into this sacred season.

Thank you, Assoc. Pastor and Music Director, Josh; each member of the Chancel Choir; Pastor Janet; Pastor Ray; Nelda Ward; and Keith Whitmore, Accompanist.

Wed., Dec. 2—Boomer Bridge noon-5:00 p.m.

Sun., Dec. 6—**Second Sunday of Advent.** Sunday school 9-9:30 a.m.

Fellowship 9:30-9:50 a.m. **United Service 10 a.m.**

Chancel Choir 11:15-12:30. Youth 4-6:00/Vespers 5:00.

Sun., Dec. 13—**Third Sunday of Advent.** Sunday school 9:00-9:30 a.m.

Fellowship 9:30-9:50 a.m. **United Service 10 a.m.**

Chancel Choir 11:15-12:30. Youth 4-6:00/Vespers 5:00.

Sun., Dec. 20—**Fourth Sunday of Advent.** Sunday school 9:00-9:30 a.m.

Fellowship 9:30-9:50 a.m.

United Service 10 a.m. with the Christmas cantata, "Nativity."

Annual Tasting Party following the Chancel Choir's cantata.

Youth 4-6:00/Vespers 5:00.

Church offices closed the week of Christmas; no newsletter.

Thurs., Dec. 24—**Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service, 6 p.m.**

Fri., Dec. 25—**CHRISTMAS DAY! UNTO USA SAVIOR IS BORN!!**

Sun., Dec. 27—**Sunday school 9-9:30 a.m.**

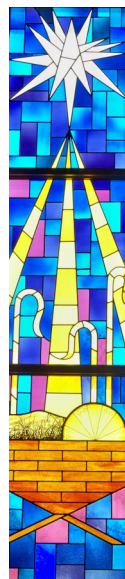
Fellowship 9:30-9:50 a.m. **United Service 10 a.m.**

Chancel Choir 11:15-12:30. Youth 4-8:00.

Thurs., Dec. 31—**New Year's Eve. End our year in prayer.**

Church offices closed.

Fri., Jan. 1—**New Year's Day. Start our year with prayer.**



ASSOCIATE MINISTRY MATTERS

Millennial Minute

Don't forget! Through Advent, our Youth Group will gather on Sunday evenings from 4:00-6:00 (not Wednesday evenings). This time will begin with "game time" and Young Disciples Choir. The Youth will also participate in Advent Vespers before dinner. The annual Christmas Party and Youth New Year's "Lock In" is also in the works. Stay tuned for more information!

Advent Vespers

Our Young Adults will be leading Advent Vespers on Sunday evenings at 5:00. This prayerful, candle-light communion service is a perfect chance to reflect on the meaning of the holiday season in preparation of the Advent (coming) of Christ in Christmas! All are encouraged to join us for this worship service, and a light soup supper will follow. See you at Vespers!

Music Notes

The Chancel Choir is hard at work preparing music for the holiday season! We will continue our Advent journey with a beautiful arrangement of the traditional Advent Hymn *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence* this Sunday. Mark Hayes' mini-cantata *Nativity* will be prayerfully performed on the 20th of this month followed by the Annual Tasting Party! After the 20th, the choir will be on "Winter Break" until January. Rehearsals will resume on January 10th and we will return to the chancel on the 17th. Consider joining your Chancel Choir in the New Year!

Blessed Advent,

josh



Keep in Our Prayers These Families:

- Services for Kentrina Wissman, former director of our Child Development Center, will be 10 a.m. Wednesday, December 2, at Temple Baptist Church.
- Services for Linda Roberts, Joel and Clarrissia Catlett's daughter, were last Friday.
- Trevor Storie needs to be back on our prayer list. Trevor's latest scan shows that prostate cancer has returned. His cancer was first discovered when he was 9 years old. He is now 11 and will be undergoing a long regimen of treatments and hospital stays.

Praise God for This Celebration:

- Rayna and Kevin Barker have announced the birth of their second child. Luke Henry Barker was born on September 7, weighing in at 7 lbs. 13 oz. Rayna is a former youth minister, here. Luke has an older brother, Corbin. The church has the Barker's mailing address.