



Central Area Churches Praying for Churches Weeks of

Dec. 20-Oklahoma City; Crown Heights Christian Church
Dec.27-Oklahoma City; East Sixth Street Christian Church

Attendance		Giving	
Sunday Worship	78	Giving for operations	\$4,832.63
Emerging Worship	9	Giving for Capital	00.00
Total	87	Giving for Outreach	400.00
Sunday School	28	Giving total	\$5,232.63

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you will lead Joseph like a flock! You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh. Stir up your might, and come to save us! Restore us, O God: let your face shine, that we might be saved.
Psalms 80:1-3 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

What a Generous Congregation!

The appeal to help a family in need with their Christmas this year brought \$825 through last week. Thanks to Gail Reeves, most of the items that were on the boys' wish lists have been purchased. A couple of items have been ordered, to be delivered this week. Terry Muller has volunteered to wrap the gifts. Even though the parents asked for nothing for themselves, we intend to use the balance of the donations to send them a check for help with food and bills.

Again, thanks to everyone who helped contribute to this outreach ministry.

Christmas Eve Service

Candlelight Service starts at 6 p.m., Thursday, December 24th. We will sing; hear the Christmas story, music, and message; receive Communion; and encircle the sanctuary with candles to sing "Silent Night." Bring friends. Little ones are welcome in their pj's.

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.

The annual event is being held between 11 a.m. and noon this year so people will not have to get out after dark.

Santa was booked up, so he will **not** appear. However, there will be candy sacks for the children.



Yes, We Are Still Collecting Clothes

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



Pumpkin Patch

The first Pumpkin Patch meeting for 2016 will be held on Saturday, January 9, 2016, at 10 a.m. in fellowship hall. Plans for events for the 2016 patch will be discussed.

Dear FCC Family and Friends,

I doubt if any of you are really concerned, but the World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) is in trouble. In an article I read this week the author ponders whether the church can learn anything from the WWE.

No, he's not talking about faking church, but perhaps there are times church might seem a little unreal—too predictable.

I learned a long time ago that "professional" wrestling is not real. Some of you might remember a former football player from our state who became a professional wrestler by a couple of names—Big Bill Watts or Cowboy Bill Watts. Watts dropped in on our Shawnee High School weight room one day out of the blue and wanted to lift weights. Believe me, no one thought about saying, "No." However, we asked Watts if professional wrestling was fake. I remember he said, "Let's just say it's an exhibition." He also admitted in some parts of the country he was the "good guy," and in other parts of the country he was the "bad guy."

I believe I have seen some worship services that seemed to be more an exhibition than real, but that's not the point the individual writing the article wanted to make. Nor do I.

My information comes from the author; I'll admit I'm not a fan of WWE. He says the reason the WWE is in trouble is they have invested too heavily in their old celebrities. Most of their stars are over-the-hill and are having some difficulty staying in shape. You may not recognize the names, but the Undertaker is 50 years old and Kane is 48. Sting is now 56. The WWE still tries to build their pay-per-view programs by trotting out other old timers like the Rock, Stone Cold Steve Austin, Ric Flair, and others.

They have gotten to the point there is no real talent, ratings-drawing, or bankable name to rely on because the WWE didn't develop their young talent.

The author of the article says, "It reminded me of many of our churches." He goes on to say, "Okay, it reminded me of my church."

I am reminded of an extremely bright, committed young man who grew up in our church. I remember one thing he told me about why he was leaving. He said, "People never let me grow up. They still treat me as if I'm just a kid and too young to do anything."

Like many churches we are a little like the WWE: still relying on our aging folks to get things done. One of the things that I like about our recent changes in our Constitution and By-Laws is that we dropped the term Junior Deacon. Another change that I like is what Josh started doing when he was preaching, that we now continue to do each Sunday: involving the youth in our worship service.

I was also pleased to see that we added one younger person as a new elder for 2016.

One of the real blessings that Josh has brought to our youth is educating them on the church and the reason we do some of the things that we do. This is in addition to teaching them about Jesus Christ and the scriptures. I dare say that our youth know more about the lectionary, the reason for the changes in the seasonal colors during the lectionary year, communion, and the history of the Disciples of Christ, than many of the rest of our congregation.

Steve Scott has pointed out on several occasions how we need to be training younger people in the church to take the place of our more "mature" members to make sure we have the leadership we need for the future.

We have been fortunate to have some real stars—solid Christians—who have served on many committees and will do anything for the sake of the church. Too often we have taken them for granted, thinking they will always be around to serve. But things happen. People get sick. People die. People move. People get tired and need a break every once in a while.

The author of the article said that he has not come up with a list of "Five Things to Get Your People Involved", because he's still trying to figure out things for his church. He says, "But what we do need to do is start intentionally and actively recruiting, educating, training, and equipping our people to serve and lead."

If you look around at those in our worship service these days you will see more younger faces than we've had in several years. We all need to get to know them. We need to learn their names. We need to let them know that they have a place here, including places of leadership.

We are about to begin our 125th year of providing ministry in Shawnee and the surrounding community. We have a responsibility to reach and train those who will lead the church into the future.

This coming Sunday the Chancel Choir will present the cantata, *The Nativity*, and Pastor Josh will be providing the meditation. We will have our annual tasting party following worship.

If you are able, be in worship and fellowship with your church family.

Pastor Ray



Special Christmas Offering

We will be collecting the yearly Christmas offering again on 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.



Pumpkin Patch Checks Distribution

Gail Reeves (in light blue,) 2015 Pumpkin Patch chairperson, presented checks of \$830 each from the profits of the pumpkins sold at this year's Pumpkin Patch to the following representatives:

Left to right are Nikki Waters, of the Volunteer Health Center (Pott. County free clinic); Glenn Blankenship, of Shawnee Rescue Mission; Debbie Watson of Jim Thorpe Academy; and Jennifer Freed, representing Project Safe. Pastor Ray announced while Gail bestowed the checks.

Wed., Dec. 16—Boomer Bridge noon-5:00 p.m.

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. Bring munchies.

Youth 4-6 p.m. Vespers 5:00 p.m.

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 US A 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.**

NO choir rehearsal. No Youth.

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.**

Sun., Jan. 3—**Sunday school 9:00-9:30 a.m.**

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

NO choir rehearsal. Youth 4-6:00 p.m.



Pastor Ray, Linda and Staff of FCC

ASSOCIATE MINISTRY MATTERS

Millennial Minute

Our Youth Group continues to gather on Sunday Evenings from 4:00-6:00 (not Wednesday evenings) through Advent. Sunday the 20th will be our last gathering of the calendar year. Youth and their families are encouraged to attend the Christmas Eve service, however. It is a Youth Group tradition to wear your pajamas to this service! We will take a break on the 27th and return on January the 3rd. Finally, the New Year's Lock-In is coming up! See Kyle for more information.

Advent Vespers

Our Young Adults will be leading Advent Vespers on Sunday evenings at 5:00. Attendance has been good, so we are prayerfully considering continuing Sunday evening worship in the New Year! If you are looking for a more meditative, prayerful, candle-light communion service to help you prepare for the Advent (coming) of Christ in Christmas, come worship with us! All are encouraged to join us for the final Advent Vesper's service on Sunday!

Music Notes

The Chancel Choir is putting some final touches on Mark Hayes' *Nativity!* This mini-cantata, featuring our Chancel Choir, Soloists Kyle Miller-Shawnee and Larry Peery, the Chancel Quartet and narration by Nelda Ward will be prayerfully performed this Sunday! You do not want to miss this! This musical celebration of Christmas will be followed by the Annual Tasting Party! As a reminder, 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!



Advent Blessings in Abundance,

josh

Let's Keep in Prayer

- **Brent Biddy** has had his final chemo and has undergone a bone marrow biopsy.
- **Dr. Frank Howard** is having new health issues.
- **Jenetta Sumner**, wife of Don, fell and broke her hip. She, also, has other health concerns.
- **Jim Comfort** will be traveling to Florida this week to spend Christmas with his family.
- Remember the **family in Tulsa** whose 1 1/2 year old daughter died from abuse. The alleged abuser is in jail. The mother apparently is not involved, and she is on suicide watch.
- Remember the family of **Georgia Belle Austin**, former Pottawatomie County Clerk. Her graveside services were Tuesday at Resthaven.

Celebrations

- **Glen Pence**, Pastor of FCC in Seminole had a good check-up with his doctor.
- **Landon Peery** was selected for all-district football and Bethel's defensive player of the year.
- **Sabrina West** has completed her round of treatments, and her last scan shows no cancer.