



Central Area Churches Praying for Churches Week of Dec. 13—Oklahoma City—Britton Christian

Attendance		Giving	
Sunday Worship	70	Giving for operations	\$3,281.95
Emerging Worship	10	Giving for Capital	00.00
Total	80	Giving for Outreach	665.00
Sunday School	34	Giving total	\$3,946.95

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.
Philippians 4:4-6 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



Dear FCC Family and Friends,

The events of the last few weeks from Paris to San Bernardino and around the world have caused great anxiety and fear. It is a time we really need good news, but at this time during Advent John the Baptist turns up like a bad penny.

During Advent, do we really need a double dose of his message of gloom and doom? Perhaps it is a wake-up call for us in our day as it was in John's day. Certainly, his message causes us to long for the good news of the coming of a Savior. At every moment we certainly need a Savior.

When we see the events that are occurring in our world we take stock of our lives. I'm guessing that most of you reading this have accepted Christ as your Savior and have been baptized. Because of grace we are children of God.

If we go back 2,000 years to the time of John, the crowd that was coming to him was a Jewish crowd. They believed they were God's chosen people as children of Abraham. They could make claims that, based on their lineage, they could get by as the Lord's favored people.

Yet, John's message made their claims sound increasingly hollow and empty of content. His blunt message caused them to want and need something more, and so they accepted the need for repentance and baptism at the hands of this wild-eyed prophet. And John himself was there to insist that their plunge into the river was not the end of their striving, but only the start.

The Rev. Charles Hoffacker writes, "You'd think he would be happy, this John, at thousands climbing out of the river, drying themselves off, signing themselves up as new and improved People of God."

He goes on to write, "But he won't let it rest! He doesn't care if they have a family tree that goes back to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He doesn't care if they've participated with gusto in this guerrilla theater, this performance art, that he's conducting down by the riverside. What John wants is to see lives that have been transformed, lives tuned into a different frequency than they were before."

Hoffacker goes on: "He's not interested in people's roots, their membership cards, their family connections, their past. He's interested in their fruits: what they are doing now with mercy on their minds, what they are doing now for God's own pleasure and purpose."

He tells them that their lives must change to really show their repentance. He tells them, and us, to be honest, to not use our power wrongly, and to share our abundance with those who have little or nothing.

John is getting right in our faces in this time and in this place asking if our lives have truly been changed to reflect that we have become followers of Jesus after our baptism, or if we are still the same people doing many of the same things we were before accepting Christ and being baptized.

John said that Jesus would baptize us with fire. Where is the fire in our faith? If we look at our congregation do we see the fire? When we look at the church in the world, do we see the fire? As followers of Jesus Christ, we should have a spirit of fire that is a burning love for all people, a fire of compassion, hospitality, and peace. This is how Christ intends for us to change the world.

Don't let the fire never be lit, go out, or die down to only embers. Let us pray for the Holy Spirit to reignite the fire of Christ in our lives and throughout the world to **overcome the hate, death, and destruction with Love, Life, and Salvation.**

We see the fire in all those who repeatedly donate themselves and their wherewithal to making our church and community better. All those every day saints that were mentioned in last Sunday's sermon (and others!) as budget-less workers for God.

The sermon title for Sunday is "Fixer Upper" and is based on Luke 3:7-18.

If you are able, be in worship with your church family this Third Sunday of Advent. Come expecting to have Christ light your fire.

Pastor Ray

Clothes

Yes, We Are Still Collecting

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



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.



*F.C.C.
 Thank you all for the support to the FJC and for our new Keurig coffee brewer. We could not do this without community support. Thank you for giving us a chance. One Safe Place
 A Family Justice Center*

Note: Coffee brewer was purchased by an individual.

Pumpkin Patch

We have invited representatives of The Shawnee Rescue Mission, Volunteer Health Center (Free clinic), Project Safe, and Jim Thorpe Academy to receive checks for \$830 each from this year's profits from the sale of pumpkins.

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.

Thank you

Thank you John Broomfield for volunteering to provide custodial services to the church. John has volunteered to assume the custodial duties at no cost to the church as a means of giving.

The change was planned for January 1, but our current custodians have already found another job.

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.



A Chapel Again

The library space has been returned to its former use as a chapel. The space was a chapel many years ago before becoming the church library.

It will now serve both purposes as the library remains.

The chapel will be used by our youth, the Gathering Few Emerging Worship, as a quiet prayer space for individuals to pray and meditate, and will be used for our annual Easter Prayer Vigil among other purposes.

ASSOCIATE MINISTRY MATTERS

Note: This is a repeat of last week's article as Josh is in finals week at Phillips Theological Seminary. Information remains relevant.

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 "Christmas Lamb" 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

Wed., Dec. 9—Boomer Bridge noon-5:00 p.m.

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.

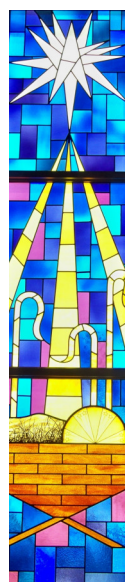
Fellowship 9:30-9:50 a.m. **United Service 10 a.m.**

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.**



Let's Keep in Prayer

- Carol Conway was by the office last week. She's weak, but was out and about following her recent surgery.
- Burn victim Dusten Hayes is reported to be improving following serious burns. He has already had skin grafts.
- Dr. Frank Howard is having more medical issues.
- Jim Comfort will be travelling to Palm Beach, Florida, for his annual Christmas visit with his family. Pray for safe travels and for help with his newly restricted diet.
- Lois Bottoms is reported to still be having some issues following her heart surgery. She says she still has some A-fib problems and trouble breathing.
- Lorene Friend had another iron infusion last week.
- Marti Verlander, Sherrie Randall's sister, is being tested for Alzheimer's.
- Remember the family of Austin (A.D.) Blackard who passed away at the age of 23 following heart surgery. He leaves behind 1-year-old twins. He is the son of Kelley Garcia, who is a nurses aide at Heartland Hospice.
- Remember the family of Bill Taylor who passed away Friday, December 4. Bill had been on our prayer list for several months.