



# First Christian Church

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The Church Bell

April 1, 2020

## A Different Kind of "Church Bell"

As with most things in our lives right now, things are different. Publishing the Church Bell is no exception. If we followed the normal format, we would have a publication full of cancellations. Rather than focusing on what we are not doing, we will be focusing this issue on what we *ARE* doing.

While the meeting spaces here at the church are gathering dust, phones and computers of our members are not. The Elders are taking the lead in checking on our members. Jeanette Etheridge and Gilda Cauley are organizing the calling lists and making sure it's happening. But others are stepping in as well. The church office has been getting calls and either taking care of the needs or getting the information to the correct person. Zoom meetings enable us to check-in on our folks, to hold a Sunday School class or to have a virtual meeting. Birthday parties are being replaced with Birthday Parades. We even have virtual baby showers via a drop-off box in the church office.

Different than what we are used to, yes. Will all of this go away when we are able to gather again? I hope not. I think maybe this event has forced at least some of us outside our comfort level with technology and that can be a good thing going forward. But most of all, I hope that taking care of our church family will remain utmost in our lives.

Blessings to you,  
Charles Cauley

## On-line Services to Continue

As of now, we are hoping to be back together May 3, if the Stay-At-Home Order is not extended. But until we are able to gather again, we will continue to be able to share services through video.

## Elder of the Month Bob Kendall

### Note from the Elders:

The congregation has been reorganized into twelve Elder Care Groups. Each member of the congregation will begin receiving weekly calls just to check in and make arrangements if a grocery or pharmacy run is needed. If you have a concern or need before your weekly call, please contact the church office (252-237-4125), Leigh Finnegan-Hosey (202-407-2767), Gilda Cauley (252-236-1549) or Jeanette Etheridge (252-230-7087).

Love and Peace,  
Jeanette

## Zoom Calendar

Church Check Wednesdays @ 5:30 PM EST

Please join us for a community check in! This is a chance for our FCC members and friends to share their life updates, prayer requests, and reflect on the blessings still available to us in the midst of this ongoing crisis.

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/6189994330> Meeting ID: 618 999 4330

Sunday School:

FCC Small Group (open up to ANYONE) will meet this Sunday morning at 11AM. This will give everyone a chance to login for it to start at 11:15AM. Go to [zoom.com](https://zoom.com) and click "Join a Meeting". The meeting ID is: 691-739-896 The password is: unafraid Join us!!

Elders Meeting:

Elders will hold their meeting via Zoom on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays at 6:30. The meeting ID will be forwarded to Elders prior to the meeting.

## Minister's Musings . . .

Dear Church,

My goodness, a lot has happened since my last Bell article! Back then I said that during this Lenten season we would focus on stories from the wilderness. Little did I know we would be entering an uncharted wilderness of our own...

It seems like the Coronavirus has changed almost everything about our daily patterns of living. In fact, I didn't realize just how much of my time was spent out and about until we were ordered to stay home. In addition to these minor inconveniences, I know there are members of our community who have had to cancel or postpone major life events – e.g. weddings, graduations, even medical procedures - due to this crisis. Please know that my heart breaks for the pain these cancelations have inflicted on you.

My original plan for this article was to share some thoughts on our virtual worship services. Instead, I'd like to first address the ancient Biblical tradition of lament. I have noticed that when asked how you are doing, many folks in our congregation are hesitant to express their hurts or frustrations, especially when they think others may be suffering more acutely. To this I want to say that while it is always wise to keep our grievances in perspective, being honest about the vicissitudes of life is a both healthy and faithful practice.

In the Judeo-Christian tradition, faith and lament have always existed side by side. Nearly *half* of all the psalms are expressions of lament, meaning they acknowledge (often in excruciating detail) themes of conflict, sorrow, sin, loneliness, betrayal and hopelessness. A person who laments may sound like a "complainer," but lament goes much deeper than a complaint. Lament involves the energy to search; it seeks to comprehend the heart of God, rather than simply react from previously reached conclusions.

One of the most famous lament prayers is Psalm 22, which Jesus himself quotes in the Garden of Gethsemane:

*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?  
Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?*

- Psalm 22:1

Like his ancestors before him, Jesus cries out in painful confusion to a God who promised him goodness and mercy. This snapshot from Jesus' final days is often overlooked in our celebrations of Holy Week, but the authors of the Bible included it in their portraits of Jesus for a *reason*. I'll let you decide why...

As the fallout of this pandemic continues, I encourage you to bring your full selves – the good, bad, and ugly - before both God and neighbor. This kind of vulnerability takes practice, but it just so happens that right now many of us have extra time on our hands. Friends, I am convinced that whenever we go deeper with God - even if it is to protest, questions, or lament - our faith becomes stronger.

Thank you all for graciously supporting myself and the rest of the First Christian leadership during this unprecedented crisis. Our lay leaders have gone above and beyond in their care for the congregation. I could not have made it through the past few weeks without them! Please keep sharing our online services with anyone you think could use some encouragement. And until next time, be safe First Christian Church!

Grace and Peace,  
Leigh Finnegan-Hosey  
Interim Minister, FCC of Wilson



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## "Blessing in the Chaos"

To all that is chaotic  
in you,  
let there come silence.

Let there be  
a calming  
of the clamoring,  
a stilling  
of the voices that  
have laid their claim  
on you,  
that have made their  
home in you,

that go with you  
even to the  
holy places  
but will not  
let you rest,  
will not let you  
hear your life  
with wholeness  
or feel the grace  
that fashioned you.

Let what distracts you  
cease.  
Let what divides you  
cease.  
Let there come an end  
to what diminishes  
and demeans,  
and let depart  
all that keeps you  
in its cage.



Image: *Shimmers Within the Storm* © Jan Richardson

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Let there be  
an opening  
into the quiet  
that lies beneath  
the chaos,  
where you find  
the peace  
you did not think  
possible  
and see what shimmers  
within the storm.

- Jan Richardson, *The Cure for Sorrow*



## A Green Chalice Team Report

"If we can think about how to prepare for climate change like a pandemic, maybe there will be a positive outcome to all of this," said Christopher Jones, lead developer of the Cool Climate Network. "We can help prevent crises in the future if we are prepared. I think there are some big-picture lessons here that could be very useful."

- **NBC Interview, "[Corona virus shutdowns have unintended climate benefits](#)"**

One the unintended consequences of COVID 19 is that as countries diminish their use of fossil fuels the earth is getting cleaner! Air and water pollution are way down across both China and Italy. Unfortunately, these benefits won't last forever. When production and air travel ramp back all that pollution will come back, perhaps even more strongly than before. Therefore, as stewards of God's creation, we must adopt an earth-friendly pattern of living as we continue to raise the alarm about global climate change.

Not sure where to begin? Have no fear! Our FCC Green Chalice group is full of helpful resources and ideas about how to accomplish these goals. Join us on [Facebook](#) to hear more about sustainable living and to share your own tips, tricks, and insights!

## FCC Financial Report

Treasurer's Report – YTD February 29th, 2020  
Tim Sharp / March 31st, 2020

For the month ending February 29th, 2020, FCC had YTD total income of \$70,723 and YTD total expenses of \$54,272 resulting in a YTD surplus of \$16,451\*.

### 02/01/2020 – 02/29/2020 – YTD Operating Budget

	Actual	Budget	Variance
Income	\$70,723	\$63,854	\$ 6,869
Expenses	\$54,272	\$63,854	(\$9,582)

Actual YTD Surplus/(Deficit) \*\$ 16,451

### Month of February—Operating Budget

	Actual	Budget	Variance
Income	\$44,046	\$31,927	\$ 12,119
Expenses	\$26,261	\$31,927	(\$5,666)

Month of February Surplus/(Deficit) \$ 17,785

\*YTD income includes \$3,312.10 from our Operating Reserve account (\$1,656.05 per month) that was included to balance the 2020 operating budget.



### Who will be graduating with the Class of 2020?

FCC is always proud of our graduates and would like to celebrate you. Please let us know if you are graduating from high school or college this coming May or June. Contact the church office at 237-4125.

### Baptism

We have a group of students who are interested in being baptized this Spring! If there is anyone else - student or adult - who would like to join this class please email [assistantminister@fccwilson.org](mailto:assistantminister@fccwilson.org) with your interest.

## **From the Technology Team**

Last year our technology team started preparing for new ways to manage our church administrative processes. The older ACS church management software was replaced with Realm, which we believe is a more modern software. The solution allows members to maintain their contact information, and for those interested, allows donations or giving via credit card, debit cards, or bank ACH (I.e. bank drafts) transactions. Charles Cauley stated “you could run the State of NC with this new software”.

Please be on the look out in the coming weeks for communications related to 2 features we’re rolling out;

### Member Contact –

Based on your primary email address provided to the church, you may receive an invitation to setup a login to our system. You will be prompted with information to validate your identity based on information in your church profile. We'll also be posting to our website, a link that will allow members access to the system.

### Members can;

validate and update their contact information including mailing address, phone numbers, email addresses, etc. Your primary email address will also be used when online donations are accepted

Giving Statements - you'll be able to view your current giving information throughout the year, not having to wait for the mailings quarterly.

### Online e-Giving

We'll post another link to the website for the online giving form. This form will accept credit cards, debit cards, and allow setup of bank drafts.

Transactions can be one-time donations, or set as recurring transactions

Transactions will be processed by Vanco Payment Solution, which is a level 1 certified PCI service provider, which mandates security requirements to accept credit card transactions.

Text giving via your smart phone will be an option as well

There are fees associated with online giving. During the giving process the member will be allowed to indicate they will add the fees to their giving amount to help offset the cost to the church, or the fee will be charged to the church.

So for now, be aware new things are coming and we hope you will be comfortable and excited to use these features.

But, until we are able to accept donations online or via text, we hope you will mail in your pledges and donations. Our church is still operating during this “virus disruption” with Leigh, Casey, Charles, Connie and others working many hours to bring video services to all of you.

We want to keep all facets of First Christian operating smoothly and appreciate your support. God bless and please stay safe.

# Our Church Family

Please notify the church office at (252) 237-4125 if someone's birthday needs to be added and/or if you have some news to share.



## Birthdays of the Month

### April 1

Jeff Bost  
Mary Louise Gray  
Ashley Quick

### April 2

Turner Boyce-Inscoe  
Melissa Denton

### April 5

Theresa Mathis  
Ryan Wetherington  
Michael Wetherington  
Caroline Whitley

### April 7

Leah Wetherington

### April 8

Peggy Almond  
Sherry Brenner

### April 10

Kathleen Ujlaki

### April 11

Joyce Gay  
John Glover, Jr.

### April 13

Kathy Sandifer

### April 14

David Elliott  
Norma Faye Etheridge

### April 17

Leslie Kendall  
Barbara Lewis

### April 18

Boots Philyaw

### April 19

Bud Ruffin  
Sion Smith  
Luke Webb

### April 20

Anna Brinson

### April 23

Pat Campbell

### April 29

Alice Thomas  
Brandon Near

### April 30

Matthew Quick  
Laurie W. Tyson

## Prayer Concerns

Faye Boykin, Wanda Brown's father and brother, Keith Daughety, Judi Glover, Bob Kendall, Joshua Near, Jean Pittman, Billy Raper (Libby Daniell's brother-in-law), Bill Smith, Don Steffa, Linda Walling, Gilbert Ferrell, Jackie Nissen (Dawn Gunn's mother), Ray Manning (friend of Barbara Lewis), Betty Kearney (Charles Cauley's sister)

Church family,

This spring has certainly taken on a different form than I think any of us ever expected. Worshiping apart, yet together. Supporting each other, though be it more than 8 feet away. Figuring out if family will be able to meet a newborn instantly or months away.

It's a time of uncertainty, but I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart for the love you have already shown an innocent child coming into this world - a world that is baffling his parents already.

Thank you for the time you have taken to drop off gifts, cards and sweet words of encouragement.

This First Christian "family" is one of the best attributes of this congregation and we can't thank you each of you enough for the showering.....err, SPRINKLING of support we have already received. Thank you to Linda, Celia, Gilda, JonTyler and the countless musicians from our Music Ministry ready to serve during our time away.

We promise to keep you posted and ask that you continue to hold us in your deepest prayers. God's peace and our deepest gratitude,

Casey, Andrew & Jackson



Congratulations to Emily Ruth Leary who was engaged to Jackson Etheridge on March 9! They are set to be married in April 2021 here at First Christian Church!

Congratulations to Peggy Anderson on the birth of her first great-granddaughter, Kensington M. Anderson. She is the daughter of Michael and Rachel Anderson and the granddaughter of Todd Anderson.