

WELCOME TO OUR NEWSLETTER!

Volume 10, Issue 2 February, 2024



# DO YOU LOVE ME? CHECK YES OR NO

This was a good country song and also part of notes that I would send to girls in class during high school. Whenever I was interested in a girl, I was too shy to find out if she liked me so I did what most teenagers did, write a note and put 2 boxes in it. Do you like me? Check "Yes" or "No" and worry about the response if I got one. Sometimes, the note would end up in the trash or even worse, the teacher would take it from me

and have me read it in front of the class. I was always curious about how girls felt about me but I was never able to ask face to face.

Sometimes, we act like shy teenagers when trying to find out how God feels about us. Instead of going directly to the Bible to read for ourselves, we try to send a note through a friend to see which box God will check. Does He like us? I sure hope He checks "Yes!"

> l love our church! Earl Winfrey Earl@fccgwd.org

Check us out online:

www.fccgwd.org

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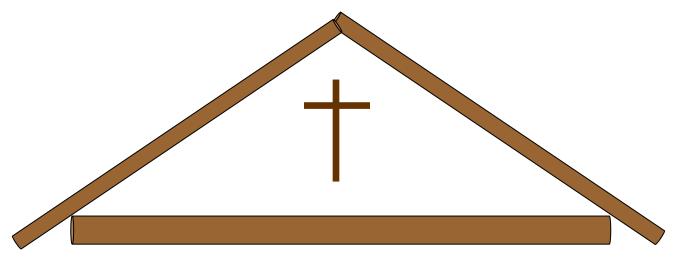
JESUS

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Please keep us informed of any address changes so we can keep our records up to date.

#### What Kind of Church is First Christian Church?

First Christian Church is a non-denominational Elders-led Church located in Greenwood, SC. We are part of the movement to restore the simplicity of New Testament Christianity. We believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God, that He lived a sinless life, offered His life for ours on the Cross, and rose on the third day to live forever. We believe that salvation comes through simple obedience to the plan of salvation that is laid out in the pages of the New Testament.



## Core Beliefs

A common misconception is that all churches believe and preach the same thing. Unfortunately that isn't the case. In a world that is greatly divided spiritually it is very important to know just exactly what a church believes and practices. We welcome the opportunity to sit with you and discuss these core beliefs in depth.

#### We believe...

- 1. That Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God who died for our sins and arose from the dead. 1 Corinthians 15:1-8
- 2. That the Bible is the inspired Word of God "a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path".

#### 2 Timothy 3:16; Psalm 119:105

- 3. That every person has worth as a creation of God but "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" **Romans 3:23**
- 4. That forgiveness of sins and the promise of eternal life are available to those who trust and obey Christ as Savior and Lord. John 3:16
- 5. That we are saved by grace through faith in Christ. Ephesians 2:8-9
- 6. That the Church is the body of Christ on earth and exists to save the lost and edify the saved. **Ephesians 4:1-16**
- 7. That Jesus Christ will one day return as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. 1 Thes 4:13-18
- 8. That those accepting Christ must repent of sin, confess their faith and be baptized into Him. Romans 10:9, Acts 2:38

For more information about baptism, see our Baptism FAQ located on our website



#### PAGE 2



**FP#5 (2/5)** - The Super Bowl is the biggest sports event of the year for the NFL and possibly for all professional sports. The game is played by the two teams who reached their goals that were set at the beginning of the year. What goals do you have for 2024? Are you looking to lose weight, find a new hobby, do something you always wanted to do, or find a new career path? Whatever your goal is, make sure you develop a plan to reach that goal. The teams set a goal to reach the Super Bowl, but they had to begin by making it to the playoffs. Remember that you cannot reach your goal without taking the first step. Let's get out there and take the first step!

**FP#6 (2/12)** - Love is in the air! Valentine's Day is just around the corner, and for those who have a significant other, this can be a great holiday. However, there are others who are lonely, and this day can drive home the fact that are missing somebody in their lives. Whether they loved and lost or never loved before, the loneliness can hurt and cause other emotional issues to show up. If you are one of those who are lonely, please remember that God loves you, and our church would be happy to pray with you and for you as this is a painful season for sure. If you are one who has a significant other, think about helping somebody who is lonely. How can you be there for that person?

**FP#7 (2/19)** - The Daytona 500 is considered the Super Bowl of NASCAR. Just like any other race on an oval track, the cars begin and end in the same place. Sometimes, life can feel that way. No matter what you do, there just seems to be no way of breaking out of the rut. This is where a friend can help. Sometimes, we can be too close to the situation and that causes us to be blind to the way out of the rut. A good friend can help you see the changes you can make in your life to get yourself off the NASCAR track and back on the road trip of life. What part of your life do you need help with?

**FP#8 (2/26) -** Spring training for Major League Baseball is a time when the teams can work on their players and try out new players to see how they fit. This is how they can fix problem areas and check the progress of injuries that were being treated during the off-season. The church tends to have periods of time when they are in a Spring training type of situation. The numbers may not be what they used to be and the activity just seems to be slower than usual. During those times, the people should use the opportunity to fix problem areas and see what can be done to improve. What part of our church can we work on while waiting for the growth to happen? What can you do to help us?

### **BE PRPARED**

(Taken from "The Management Methods of Jesus")

In a cosmic sense, Jesus' preparation was without a beginning. It was forever. Even in an earthly sense, Jesus prepared for thirty years before beginning to execute His plan.

As finite beings, we don't have thirty years to formulate our plan, but Jesus' example is, as always, a good one. To insure maximum effectiveness, the fullest realization of our plans, we must commit to necessary preparation.

In my forty years in business, I have rarely felt overprepared. I have often felt severely underprepared, and the results have borne out that feeling. Inadequate preparation produces inadequate results.

# Who will be our Next Man Up?



# Mentoring today for a better tomorrow

Jesus based much of His approach to accomplishing His plan on His understanding of the Old Testament. He had a foundation of knowledge upon which to base His actions, and He executed brilliantly. To succeed, we must do the same thing.

Many young people come to our company who want to be in the television business. In television, writing is the foundation for everything. An axiom in our business says, "If you can't first put it down on paper, you can never put it up on the screen." Yet so many of the young people who come to us have not mastered even the fundamentals of grammar, the basics of the English language. They haven't prepared. They won't succeed.

Jesus powerfully taught us about preparation, both by His own perfect example and by His teaching. Many of the parables He used to explain His principles admonish us to be well prepared. For example, the parable of the foolish virgins, who were caught without oil in their lamps when the bridegroom came and thus missed the wedding, teaches us about adequate preparation. So also does the parable of the servants, who did not perform their assigned tasks and were not ready to meet their master upon his return. They thought the master would be away for a long time, so they wasted their time and received the master's wrath when he returned unexpectedly.

Whether you're laying the foundation for a career, launching a product, or making a presentation, there is no substitute for preparation. Give it the necessary time and attention. Jesus did. His amazing success is a testimony to its importance.

Wisdom of Larry the Cable Guy:

A day without sunshine is like night.

#### "So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom." (Psalm 90:12)

Another translation of the above verse goes like this: "Teach us to count our days so we can make our days count." As we began a new year, we had a sermon series called "Live The Life." During this series, we talked about living the life that glorifies God and this was a time to take an honest look at how our lives are lived for the Lord. Let's face it, we all fall short in living the way we should, so this was a series that we could all benefit from.

To help us get the most out of this sermon series, I decided to create a supplement and present it in this article. I'm sure most of you have heard of a bucket list before. This is a list of things you want to do before you "Kick the Bucket" and it usually contains a list of goals and dreams that you have always wanted to accomplish.

I want each of us to work on a "Spiritual Bucket List" so we can focus on what we want to do for the Lord. This is a list that will be personal, but I want us to find somebody to share the list with so we can pray for each other and check up on the list. When working on the items for the list, the first item on your list should be to get baptized if you have not been baptized yet. This is the single most important decision you will ever make in your life because you will become a child of God.

The rest of the items on your "Spiritual Bucket List" should contain tasks that will push you to become a deeper, more committed follower of Christ. There are some typical items that will most likely end up on most lists: Read the entire Bible, start a prayer journal, show random acts of kindness, memorize whole chapters of a Bible book, talk to your neighbor about Jesus, etc. All of those items should be on your list, but here are some items you may not think about:

1. <u>Forgive somebody who has hurt you deeply</u> - We have all been hurt by somebody, and the scars are deep. Ask God to help you forgive that person so you can move on with your life.

2. <u>Research a theological topic</u> - This item may sound scary to most people, but it can really help you strengthen your Biblical foundation if you take the time to work through a tough doctrine of the church. My office has plenty of books to help, and of course, I'm available too.

3. <u>Clean up the temple of the Lord</u> - The Apostle Paul says that your body is the temple of the Lord, so make some goals to clean it up. This is an area of weakness for me, so this is on my list.

4. <u>Invest in the community</u>: Visit a nursing home or volunteer in a school or a local ministry. If possible, attend a city council meeting so you can get to know the council members.

5. <u>Visit the Holy Land</u>: This item might take a few years to accomplish. There is something about walking where Jesus walked that is special, and one of my former professors provides trips on a regular basis when he teaches while guiding the group.

The main point for a spiritual bucket list is to organize your thoughts so you can focus on being the best Christian you can be. Now that the sermon series has ended, it's time to get to work!

## Youth Sunday, Fellowship Meal, and Easter in March

Our recent tradition of making 5th Sundays our Youth Sunday with Fellowship Meal needs to be changed for the month of March. Since Easter is on a 5th Sunday, we will be having our Youth Sunday on the first Sunday, March 3 instead. Fellowship Meal will also be March 3. Looking forward to hearing another great sermon from Wil next month!

#### IF YOU WANT TO WALK ON WATER... (Earl Winfrey)

Our 2018 theme "Get Out Of The Boat" was inspired by a book I studied several years earlier. In that book, I took a closer look at the story of Jesus walking on water, and for the first time, I saw Peter in a new light. We are quick to criticize Peter for his lack of faith, but at least he had enough faith to get out of the boat! That is my desire for our church. We may not have all the answers, but we can at least have enough faith to step out of the boat and let God lead us.

Below is a portion of my 2nd sermon in 2017:

Peter Got Out of the Boat (Read Matthew 14:22-33)

A. Jesus stayed behind to pray on the mountain - After the crowds left, Jesus needed some time alone in order to work through His grief. Remember that He was still needing to grieve over the loss of His cousin, John the Baptist. At this point, it is important to remember that even though Jesus was completely God, He chose to live life as a human and that meant that He needed to process His emotions the same way humans do. He was hurting from the loss of his cousin, and He needed to grieve in order to heal. I guess the lesson we can learn from this is that even though we may have to modify our plans in order to minister to people, we still need to make time for ourselves so we can be refreshed and become stronger.

**B.** After Jesus was finished, it was evening and the wind was against them - The Sea of Galilee is known for sudden storms that pop up after the sun goes down, and in this situation, the boat was too far from land to escape it. They had to ride out the storm on the sea, so I am sure that they were already anxious about the possibility of capsizing. To make matters worse, they thought they saw a ghost on the water. Of course, we know that it was Jesus walking towards them.

**C.** After finding out that Jesus was walking to them, Peter cried out to Jesus and got out of the boat to walk to Jesus (v.28-33) - I'm sure that we could criticize the fact that Peter took his eyes off Jesus and started to sink, but at least he had the courage to get out of the boat. The other Disciples were comfortable where they were but Peter wanted to get close to Jesus instead. Sometimes, you have to get out of the boat if you want to be like Jesus. As a church, we cannot allow ourselves to get so comfortable that we never challenge ourselves to become better. We need some "Get out of the boat" moments so we can continue to grow in our faith. If we never step out and take some risks, how will we ever know what God is capable of doing?

Our "Get out of the boat" moment as a church was in 2017, when we created a Fall Festival, and the parking lot was full! We challenged ourselves to put on the Fall Festival even though we did not have the resources of a bigger church. We gained exposure and got to talk to some of the people we would have never been able to meet if we did not step out of the boat. That was a great moment of faith for us, and I think it is time for us to look for more opportunities like that this year! Just like Peter, we need to have the faith to step out of the boat so we can be more like Jesus.

FOOTPRINTS

# BACK PORCH CONVERSATIONS

## "There's no such thing as Strangers, they are all just friends whose names I don't know yet."

The memorial service for my dad went great last month! It was good to stand in the church where he grew up and even sing songs that were led by the same choir leader who was working there 42 years ago when I was there as a young boy. We got to see some friends we haven't seen in a long time and meet some old friends of my dad from high school. One guy was telling me about being in ROTC with him and spending afternoons on the front porch shining boots. My dad had a reputation for being the best shoe shiner in the school. That makes sense because while I was growing up, my dad was shining his boots several times each week. I enjoyed being able to lead the service and having the grandkids participate by reading scripture and sharing thoughts about Paw-Paw. Michaela

played a special on the piano and my nephew Eric did a good job playing my father's violin. We also had a time for friends and family to say something about dad, and a couple of friends talked about how friendly he was. That was a good way to describe him.

My dad has never met a stranger. It didn't matter what was going on, he would be talking and having a good time with people he just met. I remember being in line for roller coasters at Six Flags and seeing him talk to those around us about anything and everything to make the time go by faster. He would share stories about when the park opened and his favorite story about putting me on the Scream Machine when I was 2 years old! My mom was a nervous wreck but he said that I loved it. I do not remember my first ride but I do know that the Scream Machine has always been my favorite so I have no doubt that it was my first big coaster.

Going out to eat with my dad was always an adventure. When we would go to the Golden Corral, he would talk to the waitress and forget that he was supposed to be eating his food. We would often remind him that there were other customers who needed the waitress and he should let her get back to work before she got in trouble. We were always there longer than usual because he would spend more time talking than eating. Of course, he would always leave a big tip so I am sure that the waitress was not that upset. Most of them enjoyed the conversations.

The world could use more people like my dad who are not afraid to talk to others and get to know them. Although I am an introvert, there are times when I enjoy a conversation or two as well so there could be some of my dad in me. He would often say that "There's no such thing as Strangers, they are all just friends whose names I don't know yet."

#### Invite your neighbor over for a meal.

Whether you model your cooking style after Martha Stewart or Betty Crocker, making a meal for your neighbor will be meaningful and hospitable. It doesn't have to be an extravagant feast; the simple act of inviting someone into your home is what matters most. Plus, some of the best conversations occur at the



dining table, so it will be a good opportunity to get to know your neighbor on a deeper level.



This month's Church myth: "The thief on the cross is an example of a conversion for us"

The last words of Jesus is often the subject of interest among many Christians. One sentence is of particular importance for those who wish to argue against the need for baptism as part of salvation. Here is the passage:

Luke 23:39-43 (ESV), "(39) One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, 'Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!' (40) But the other rebuked him, saying, 'Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? (41) And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.' (42) And he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' (43) And he said to him, 'Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.'"

The old "Thief on the cross" argument falls short of proving anything about salvation for several reasons, but I will try to keep this short and focus on a couple here. If you would like, I can give a full study on this passage if you want to sit down with me and discuss it.

Many people use the "Jesus" card and yes, that can be the end of the conversation for most since Jesus can do anything He wants so if He wanted to save the thief, that is up to Him. However, I believe that we have not successfully proven that this scene is about salvation in the sense that the thief was being converted on the cross. Can we prove that he was not already a follower of Jesus? The way he defends Jesus lets me know that he had some kind of belief and knowledge about who He is before being nailed to the cross. There is so much we do not know about this thief so how can we conclude that this was not a follower being brought back in after he had strayed?

Just for fun, let's assume that this scene is about salvation in the sense that Jesus converted the thief. How can we duplicate this for today's use? Where is the sinner's prayer in this scene that so many people try to insert when talking about salvation? Do we have any other scripture that points to this scene for the purpose of offering the plan of salvation? The Bible is silent when trying to find a conversion that involved something similar to this scene so I cannot use the thief on the cross for an example of somebody being saved without baptism. From the death of Jesus forward, the only conversions shared involved water baptism by immersion.

This myth is busted because even if this was a true conversion, we have no evidence of the early church using it as an example of how to be saved.



We want to cover our church in prayer on a weekly basis. Along with the many prayers that go up on our behalf, I am declaring every Tuesday to be a day for us to offer up special prayers specifically for our church. Please join us by praying at some point every Tuesday!

# One Liners to Make You Laugh

When a woman suffers in silence it means her phone is out of order.

Bible Trivia Question (Send answers to Earl)

Answer to last month's question:

Samson offered clothing as a reward if the Philistines could solve his riddle (Jdg 14:12)

Winners: Wil Winfrey/Michaela Winfrey/Bruce Brower



Be one of the first 3 people to answer correctly and you will be a winner!

Be one of #4-10 to answer and you will receive an honorable mention!

Honorable Mention: Michael Winfrey

This month's question:

Which bird does Job say is "lacking in wisdom" due to the fact she leaves her eggs on the ground?

# ichael's usic oment

# The Meaning Behind the Song: Love in Any Language by Sandi Patty

The song "Love in Any Language" by Sandi Patty is a powerful and emotive piece that captures the essence of love and its ability to transcend barriers of language, culture, and nationality. Released in 1984, the song became an instant hit and has since resonated with audiences around the world. At its core, the song is a celebration of love's universal nature and its ability to connect people from diverse backgrounds.

"Love in Any Language" speaks to the notion that love is a language in itself, one that transcends words and fosters understanding and compassion. Regardless of whether love is expressed in English, Spanish, French, or any other language, its essence remains unchanged. The song carries a profound message of unity, encouraging individuals to view each other through the lens of love, rather than be divided by differences.

Sandi Patty's powerful vocals and heartfelt delivery add depth and emotion to the song's lyrics. The listener is drawn into a world where love knows no boundaries, where understanding and empathy prevail. Through her rendition, Patty conveys the idea that love is not confined to a single culture or language but is a force that unifies and uplifts.

Sandi Patty was captivated by the message and powerful melody of "Love in Any Language." Its universal theme resonated deeply with her, and she felt compelled to share it with the world.

"Love in Any Language" continues to be a beloved song cherished by individuals around the world. Its enduring legacy lies in its ability to remind people of the power of love and its capacity to create a more compassionate and connected world.

https://oldtimemusic.com/the-meaning-behind-the-song-love-in-any-language-by-sandi-patty/

Je t'aime, Te amo, Ya ti-bya lyu blyu Ani o hev ot cha, I love you

The sounds are all as different As the lands from which they came And though the words are all unique Our hearts are still the same

Love in any language Straight from the heart Pulls us all together Never apart And once we learn to speak it All the world will hear Love in any language Fluently spoken here We teach the young our differences Yet look how we're the same We love to laugh, to dream our dreams We know the sting of pain

From Leningrad to Lexington The farmer loves his land And daddies all get misty-eyed To give their daughter's hand

Oh maybe when we realize How much there is to share We'll find too much in common To pretend it isn't there

# Step Out in Faith

*"For the grace given to me, I tell everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he should think. Instead, think sensibly, as God has distributed a measure of faith to each one."* - Romans 12:3

Do we really do our best when we claim to do so? Should we assume everyone else is doing his or her best? We can easily overestimate our effort. We talk ourselves into believing we are more sacrificial than we are, as patient and forgiving as we can possibly be, that we are giving all we have and we simply cannot give one more ounce, second, or piece of ourselves.

Dumbing down our best is one way we think more highly of ourselves than we should. Other times, it's due to comparison. We claim "at least, I'm doing more than so-and-so." We place ourselves in the 10 percent-who-are-doing-90-percent-of-the-work category, but we don't have a good attitude about it. If we're willing to serve sacrificially and abundantly, shouldn't we do so with a posture of humility?

Thinking too highly of ourselves is a sign of pride, which can manifest as arrogance or self-loathing. Pride puts our own estimation of ourselves, good or bad, above the truth. We might believe we're doing our best, or stop short because we think we're less capable or poorly equipped. Pride is never our best.

God distributes a measure of faith to each of us. With that measure comes responsibility and capability. Only God knows exactly what our best is, and you can trust Him to equip, challenge, grow, and humble you when you step out in faith to serve Him.

https://justbetweenus.org/everyday-faith/daily-devotions/step-out-in-faith/



# **RECIPE OF THE MONTH:** Frozen Delight

Ingredients:

1/2 pint whipping cream
1/2 pint sour cream
1 can tidbit pineapples (Drain thoroughly)
1/4 cup chopped cherries
1/4 cup chopped pecans
2 sliced bananas

Whip the whipping cream until stiff, add and mix together the rest of the ingredients, pour into a pan and freeze. Once frozen, cut into squares and enjoy! CALENDAR OF EVENTS - FEBRUARY 2024



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Prayer - 9:30am Coffee - 9:45am S.S 10am Worship - 11am	Daily Scriptures are given for us in anticipation of the sermon	Pray for FCC reminder to pray for our church every Tuesday	Mid-Week Bible Study 10am and 6pm (All ages)	Mission of the Month: Greenwood Soup Kitchen	Weekly bulletin will have the most current information	All events subject to change if needed
		Leadership meets as needed		1 Prov 16:1-17	2 Prov 16:18-33	3 Luke 6:43-45
4	5	6 <u>Pray for FCC</u>	7	8	9	10
	Psalm 24	James 3	Heb 12:1-17	1 Peter 1:13-25	1 John 3:1-10	Matthew 5:8
11	12	13 <u>Pray for FCC</u>	14	15	16 (Prov 15:1-14) <b>3rd hr.</b> (9am)	17
	Prov 3:1-12	Prov 12:1-14	Prov 12:15-28	Phil 2:1-11	prayer time in the Sanctuary	Prov 15:15-33
18	19	20 <u>Pray for FCC</u>	21	22 (Isaiah 6) Newsletter	23	24 (Psalm 86) Meet and Eat
	Josh 24:14-28	Psalm 19	Psalm 66	Submissions Due	Revelation 4	for Lunch (TBD)
25	26 James 2:1-13	27 <u>Pray for FCC</u> 1 John 3:11-24	28 Acts 10:1-23	29 Acts 10:24-48	Communion Meditation: 2/04 - Frank Jackson 2/11 - Bruce Brower 2/18 - Michael Winfrey	
					2/25 - Frank Jackson	





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Did you know that God loves you? I do. God loves us very much. But, God is like a parent. Even if you make them mad, they still love you very much. That's what God does. Even if we sin, God loves us so much. In fact, he loved us so much to send his own son down to earth to die for us, so we can spend eternity in heaven with him.

Michaela Winfrey

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only son, that whosoever believes in him would not perish, but have eternal life."

John 3:16

