

First Christian Church
800 Beech Street
Elizabeth City, NC 27909

Newsletter
MARCH 2024

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MARCH 2024



Email: office@fccec.org Facebook.com/FCCDOC Phone: (252) 338-6506

Rev. T.J. Long, Jr, Pastor
Tom Sawyer, Moderator
Teresa Moore Vice Moderator

Rana White, Admin. Assistant
Nina Gregory, Choir Director
& Organist

Hello FCC Family!

Spring is so close, however, Lent is here! Since I gave you a short history of St. Valentine last month, it would only be appropriate for me to tell you another history of a pertinent saint who is identified with the month of March. You may have heard of him. His birth name was Maewyn Succat but you know him better as St. Patrick.

Much of what is known about his life comes from the *Confessio*, a book Patrick wrote during his last years. Born in Great Britain, probably in Scotland (wait, he's not Irish?!), to a well-to-do Christian family of Roman citizenship, Patrick was captured and enslaved at age 16 by Irish raiders. For the next six years, he worked as a herder in Ireland, developing a deepening religious faith. At 22, he escaped back to Britain and was reunited with his family.

While back in Britain, Patrick had a dream in which he heard voices of Irishmen pleading him to return to their country. After being ordained as a bishop, Patrick returned to Ireland in 433 at the age of 37 and began preaching the Gospel, converting many thousands of Irish and building churches around the country. After 40 years of living in poverty, teaching, traveling and working tirelessly, Patrick died on March 17, 461 in Saul, where he had built his first church.

He was made the patron saint of Ireland and baptized thousands of Irishmen into the Christian faith. He used a three-leaf clover (shamrock) to describe the Holy Trinity. These days, March 17 is a day of international celebration, as millions of people around the globe put on their best green clothing (even though Patrick commonly wore blue) to drink libations, watch parades and toast the luck of the Irish.

Many of the holidays that we celebrate in America have ties to the Christian faith but many of the details have gotten lost over the decades and centuries. The purpose of St. Patrick's Day is to commemorate a man who returned to country where he was imprisoned as a child to give people liberty from their sin by introducing the gospel and Jesus Christ. In contrast, the purpose seems to wear green, "be merry" and not get pinched.

This loss of purpose doesn't just happen with holidays but within every one of our lives. It's easy to forget what our purpose is in this life. It's not to make money, raise kids or even to pursue happiness. Our purpose, the whole reason we were created, is to worship God and serve humanity. Perhaps you can think of it like a campsite; to "leave the world a better place than you found it." The only way to do that is to be selfless, others-focused like St. Patrick was. He could've held a grudge or let bygones be bygones but he obediently followed God's leading to his life's purpose. He devoted his life to God and served the people of Ireland with everything he had.

Let us be thankful and inspired of the REAL St. Patrick (who routinely wore blue and was not Irish) by considering our real purpose and finding ways to serve others and leave this world a better place than we found it. I'd love to partner with you in doing just that.

Your Pastor & friend,
Rev. TJ Long, Jr., Minister
First Christian Church
of Elizabeth City
minister@fccec.org



CAMP 
Caroline

**Summer 2024
Registration
is Now Open**

CYF Camp | Grades 9-12 | June 16-21

Created to Be Me Camp | Grade 8 | June 23-29

Chi Rho Camp | Grades 6-7 | July 14-19

JYF Camp | Grades 2-5 | July 7-12

UNO Camp | Grades K-2 with Parent/Guardian | June 14-16

New! Family Camp | All Ages! | July 25-28

To unsubscribe, please email office@fccec.org or call 252-338-6506 and request that your name be removed.

FEBRUARY 2024 BOARD REPORT

The official board of First Christian Church met in the Fellowship Classroom on February 5, 2024, at 7:00 P.M. Tom Sawyer, moderator, called the meeting to order and led us in the Lord's Prayer. Our pastor and 15 board members were present. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Portia Copeland, treasurer, provided the January check register as well as account balances as of January 31, 2024.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE: Worship met on January 21st to discuss Ash Wednesday, Week of Compassion, and letters from the pastor. As in the past, the pastor will provide the Ash Wednesday service and Membership will provide a snack lunch. The main topic of the meeting was to address a letter from the pastor in which he has expressed several of his concerns. The last letter as well as the previous letter will be filed for the record of the committee's work. We will keep the board informed as to the work we do on his concerns. After lengthy discussion, we decided to task ourselves with finding suggestions to address his concerns and bring them back to the committee on February 11th. Some of the topics were congregational singing, sleeping during the sermon, and lack of engagement by the congregation. We adjourned with a hard job ahead. Lunch of chili and baked potatoes was provided by Tammy and Keith Sawyer

Betty Sawyer, Chairperson

EDUCATION COMMITTEE: Sandra told the board that the education chairmanship may change in the coming months. The board will be informed, probably at the next meeting.

Sandra Riggs, Chairperson

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE: The sausage biscuits, cheese biscuits, and applejack breakfast sale was held on January 27th. There were 55 cheese biscuits sold @ \$1.50 each; 46 sausage biscuits sold @ \$2.50 each; 165 applejacks sold @ \$3.50 each for a total of \$830 received. Expenses were \$220, resulting in \$610 cleared. All monies will go to the current budget. On February 25th we will work with the Outreach Committee and CWF to prepare soup and sandwiches for the Week of Compassion lunch.

Portia Copeland, Committee Chairperson

OUTREACH COMMITTEE: The Outreach Committee met on January 30th to sort and bag food for 140 backpacks. Those that helped were Martha Best, Teresa Moore and Melodi Robbins. Thank you all for your help! We also held our first meeting afterward with Pastor Long to discuss pos-

sible future activities. Also, the poster and baskets for "Souper Bowl of Caring" were put in place for February 4th and 11th.

Joy Rhodes, Outreach Chairperson

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE: No report

PROPERTY COMMITTEE: During recent high winds, the church lost a shingle, and Justin repaired it. J.P. checked the water heater in the Fellowship Hall kitchen followed by a call from Justin to a plumber to come and examine it. The plumber thought that it might be an electrical problem. Tom Sawyer made a suggestion that if it has to be replaced that we consider a different type of water heater, such as a tankless one.

Justin James, Property Chairman

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE: No report

ELDERS: No report

DEACONS: No report

DEACONESSES: All is running smoothly.

CMF: Twelve men attended the January meeting. There was discussion about the scheduled March 9th sausage/pancake breakfast. The next meeting is on February 15th.

J.P. Rich, CMF President

CWF: The CWF had a regular meeting on Thursday, February 1st, at noon with five ladies present. We decided to build "Cleaning Kits" for Church World Service for the coming year. Members are asked to donate a five-gallon bucket with a lid (not a screw top) and bring to the next meeting. Week of Compassion soup lunch will be on Sunday, February 25th. The following have volunteered to provide vegetable beef soup: Tom Sawyer, Martha Best and Corky Bundy. Chicken noodle soup: Portia Copeland. Sandwiches will be provided by Jean Etheridge (PB&J); Joy Rhodes (pimento cheese); and Melodi Robbins (egg salad). Joy Rhodes stated that baskets and a soup pot (for monetary donations) have been placed in the church for the "Souper Bowl of Caring" donations for the Food Bank of the Albemarle. Everyone is asked to bring non-perishable food items or donate money. Nancy Tatum led the "Just Women" study on "Self-Esteem and Taking up the Cross" with scripture from Matthew 10:19-31. We closed with the CWF benediction. After Portia explained in the board meeting about the cleaning buckets and the listed contents for them, JP stated that he would share the information with the CMF members. He suggested that they might provide buckets for the project.

Portia Copeland, CWF President

March Birthdays

4	Donna Crain	12	Elizabeth Brown
	Sonya Longest	14	Norma James
5	Billy Gallop	17	Lisa Pipkin
6	Leslie Watts		Landon W. Bray
	Gwen Williams		Carol Rich
7	Christie Bray	21	Pat Wice
	Makayla Martel	24	Tighe Simons
9	Mark Williams		Brayden V. Meads
	Anna Keaton	26	Finn T. Gregory
	Ava Long		Allie Stevens
10	Blake Simons	27	Corbin Thompson
	Kristin Lassiter		Kacey Weatherly
11	Jon Van Dalsum		Richard Woble

March Anniversaries

1	Paul & Carolyn Dunwell
10	Ray & Betty Jo Raby Stacey & Debbie Foster
16	Jon & Melba Van Dalsum J.P. & Carol Rich
17	Rudy & Sharon Warden
20	Jimmy & Terry Cahoon
26	Jerry & Donna Crain

Serving in March

Elder: Paula Crawford, Joe Lassiter

Deacons: Nancy Tatum, Travis James,
Jessica James, Sophia Martel, Jeff Bush

Deaconesses: Martha Best, Melodi Robbins,
Betty Duncan

Greeters:

March 3 Roberta Williamson,
Gene & Mary Ann Scott

March 10 Justin & Ashley James

March 17 Jeff & Teresa Moore

March 24 Jean Etheridge & June Gibbs

March 31 Arlene & Larry Bruce

Acolytes:

March 3 Ryland & Lilly

March 10 Zoey & Emily

March 17 Ava & Asher

March 24 Jessie & James

March 31 Allie & Morgan

Altar Flowers

March 3— The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in honor of our children and grandchildren by Tommy and Melissa Copeland.

March 10— The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in memory of Donald Etheridge by his family.

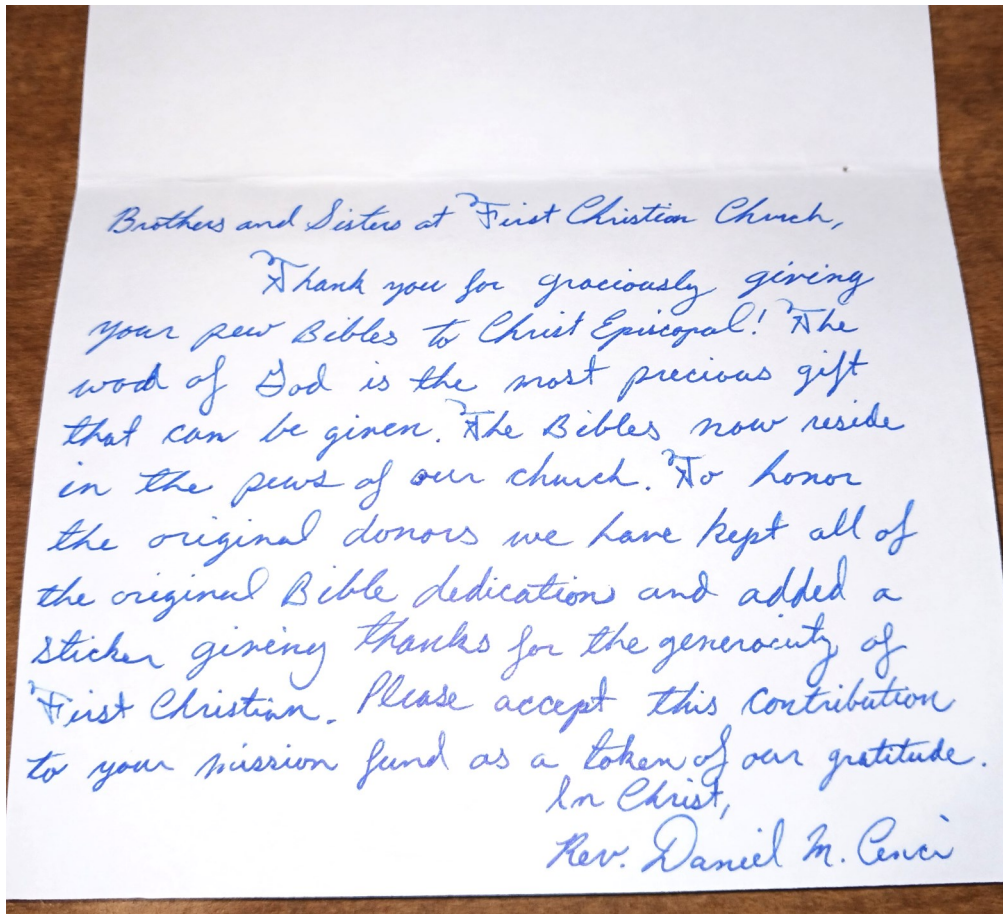
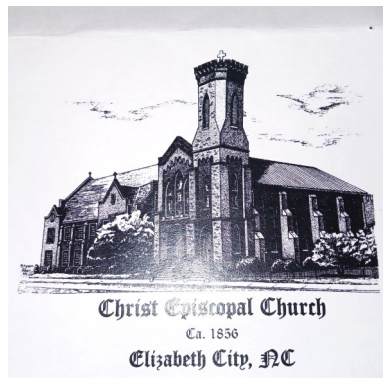
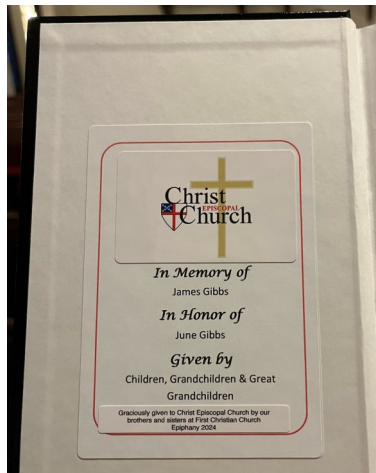
The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in memory of Mrs. Gracie White by Millie Sweetenham and Tom and Martha White.

March 17— The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in memory of Mr. and Mrs. W. E. "Mutt" Scott and Mr. and Mrs. James E. White, Sr. by the Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Scott family and the Nina Gregory family.

March 24— The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in memory of Thomas A. Sawyer, Jr. and Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Ferrell, by Betty and Tom Sawyer, Jennifer and Lisa.

March 31— The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in memory of my grandparents, Mack and Mattie Jennings and Ethel Jennings, and in honor of my children, grandchildren, and great-grand-children, by June Gibbs.

Heartfelt Appreciation



We received this heartfelt card from Christ Episcopal Church thanking us for giving them our old pew Bibles. In gratitude, they augmented the bookplate to continue to dedicate the Bibles as we had done. They have also added at the bottom of the bookplate, "Graciously given to Christ Episcopal Church by our brothers and sisters at First Christian Church. Epiphany 2024." Included with the note was also a \$200 donation.



We donated 170 Pounds of Food!

Thank you from the Outreach Committee for those that participated in the Souper Bowl of Caring project. We donated 170 pounds of food goods and \$375 to the Food Bank. We almost doubled last years donation! Thank you again.

Joy Rhodes
Outreach Chairperson

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS: Paula Crawford brought up a concern about how much cold air comes into the building when those using the door between the Fellowship Classroom and the Youth Room fail to close it completely. There followed a discussion about problems with other doors needing work.

Paula also shared a concern about the women's bathroom in the Fellowship Hall needing to be more handicapped accessible. Some suggestions were made as to additions that could be helpful for safety in the bathrooms.

The moderator offered a suggestion that to be inclusive, any church committee communications through e-mails should include all committee members.

Tom Sawyer stated that Northeast Academy for Aerospace and Advanced Technologies would like to rent the gym in the spring. He requested, and was given, approval to speak with Ms. Chappell, Dean of students, about possible dates.

MINISTER'S REPORT: This report covers things accomplished in the month of January. I made 12 pastoral visits this past month.

The new plexiglass backboards will be installed by Dunavant's Steel of Camden by Friday, February 23rd. NEAAAT's coaches are excited about the upgrade. The backboards will be ready for Open Gym on the 26th.

Our Bible Discussion group is currently reading through the books of 2 Kings, Psalms and Isaiah with an average of six in attendance each Wednesday.

I met with Joy & Melodi on the fourth to help facilitate a smooth transition from one Outreach chair to another. The Outreach Committee met on the 30th and will be offering a Parent's Night Out (which gives parents an opportunity to drop off their kids at the church for two hours on a Friday for a date night, while the kids have a movie night with snacks here in the fellowship hall all for free), which will happen on Friday, March 23rd from 6-8pm. Outreach also has other plans for this year that will be presented next month.

I assisted a handful of volunteers in undecorating and cleaning the sanctuary and hallway on the 12th and continued that cleaning trend by having eight volunteers gather the next day for a Community Cleanup. We were able to clean over 400 pounds of trash from seven streets surrounding the church. Green Saves Green, a local non-profit, provided us with all the grabbers, gloves, safety vests, buckets and bags we needed at no cost!

That following Monday, on the 15th, Daniel Spence (the pastor of Victory Praise & Worship Center) and I took 13 underprivileged middle and high school students to their first ever professional basketball game in Washington, DC. All the kids were well behaved and were super appreciative for the opportunity.

I attended a Worship Committee meeting on the 21st and our first district meeting of the year in Williamston on the 23rd. We will be hosting the next district meeting in April.

Lastly, I was asked by the chancellor of ECSU to be one of three pastors to speak at this year's ECSU Clergy luncheon, which happened on the 31st.

I've also been asked to preach on one of the Wednesdays of the Lenten series at Christ Episcopal Church. I will preach on March 6 at 12pm.

The next two months with the Super Bowl party, Ash Wednesday, Week of Compassion, Lent and Easter services coming up will prove to be a busy yet impactful time for us all.

Thank you for your support and I'm looking forward to February and celebrating Lent with you all.

Your Pastor & Friend, T.J. Long, Jr.

There being no further business, Paula Crawford made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Portia Copeland. Our pastor dismissed us in prayer.

Minutes submitted by Nancy Tatum, Board Secretary

NT/erw

Finance Report January 2024

If you have questions, please call
Treasurer, Portia Copeland, 252-335-4447

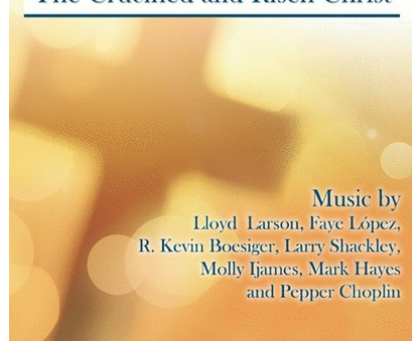
Monthly Budget	\$ 15,312
Budget Income	\$
Budget Shortage	\$
Expenses:	\$
Designated Income	\$
Designated Bills:	\$
Attendance:	
Jan (4 Sundays)	52 avg
Children	6 avg
Nursery	0 avg
Bible Discussion:	6 avg

Lorenz SATB

HALLELUJAH!

What a Savior!

The Crucified and Risen Christ



Music by
Lloyd Larson, Faye López,
R. Kevin Boesiger, Larry Shackley,
Molly James, Mark Hayes
and Pepper Choplin

Hallelujah! *What a Savior!*

On Sunday, March 24, the Chancel Choir of First Christian Church will present the story of our Savior's crucifixion and resurrection in the performance of "Hallelujah! What a Savior!" This musical work, along with vivid and eloquent narration, reveals the events that occurred within seven days - from Jesus' glorious entry into Jerusalem to His triumphant resurrection from death.

Come and celebrate Palm Sunday, the beginning of Holy Week, with music, communion, and fellowship with your companions in Christ.

Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and riches, and wisdom and strength, and honor and glory, and praise forever and ever! AMEN!



Parent's Night Out

Saturday, March 23
6:00—8:00 pm

Children under 18 years old
RSVP by Wednesday, 3/20/24.

A sign-up sheet is available in the lobby or
text/call 252-338-6506.



All-You-Can-Eat Pancake & Sausage Breakfast



Saturday, March 9, 2024
7:00 am—10:00 am

\$8.00/person

Purchase advance tickets from any member of the Christian Men's Fellowship. Proceeds go to the Men's Fellowship project fund.

March 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3 ● Worship Committee Meeting after the Worship Service Third Sunday in Lent	4 7:00 pm Board Meeting World Day of Prayer	5	6 5:45 pm Bible Discussion 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	7 12:00 pm CWF	8	9 7:00am-10:00am Pancake Breakfast
10 ● Fourth Sunday in Lent	11 6:00-7:30 pm Open Gym	12 12:00 pm Card Ministry	13 5:45 pm Bible Discussion 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	14 5:30 pm –9:00 pm Social Hall Reserved	15	16
17 ● Fifth Sunday in Lent	18 6:00-7:30 pm Open Gym	19	20 5:45 pm Bible Discussion 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	21 6:30 pm CMF Newsletter Submission Deadline	22	23 6:00-8:00 pm Parent's Night Out
24 ● Easter Special Offering CHORAL CANTATA: Hallelujah! What a Savior! Palm Sunday Liturgy of the Psalms	25 6:00-7:30 pm Open Gym	26 12:00 pm Card Ministry	27 5:45 pm Bible Discussion 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	28 Social Hall: Food Bank Delivery	29 Social Hall: Food Bank Delivery	30 Social Hall: Food Bank Delivery
31 ○ Easter Special Offering Easter Resurrection of the Lord		Social Hall: Outreach/ Backpack Ministry	Next Month: April 5—Food Bank Sort-a-Rama			

Wednesday Night Bible Discussion

5:45-6:45 pm
Church Library

We are reading through the whole Bible by reading six chapters a week. We discuss and question various aspects of each chapter. No lectures, no curriculum! We laugh some and learn from each other! Come and join us! A list of scriptures for each week can be found in the lobby or on our website at fccec.org.

Sample of One Week's Schedule

- Thursday, Feb 29 – 2 Chronicles 35
- Friday, March 1 – Zephaniah 1
- Saturday, March 2 – Zephaniah 2
- Sunday, March 3 – Day off
- Monday, March 4 – Zephaniah 3
- Tuesday, March 5 – Jeremiah 1
- Wednesday, March 6 – Jeremiah 2

Open Gym Basketball

Mondays 6:00 pm — 7:30 pm

Open Gym is an opportunity to spend time with our youth and have fun. The average attendance is 12 people plus area pastors are now joining us! A small devotion has been added. No registration is required. Come any Monday except the first Monday of the month. Contact Pastor TJ at minister@fccec.org for information.



Food Bank Sort-A-Rama

Friday, April 5th

Contact Joy Rhodes, Outreach Chair, to join the fun. Last year we sorted bags of apples! We really did have great fellowship (and got a little exercise!). Join us!