



The Chalice

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
4 N. Main Street
Watkinsville, GA 30677

706-769-5966

<http://fccwatkinsville.org>

December 7, 1941 : 1972 : 388

Dear Church,

We have begun the season of Advent, the time of the year that we anticipate Christ coming again to make earth and heaven new, restored to the hopes and intentions God has for Creation, a vision depicted in the Garden of the first chapters of Genesis. It is, of course, also a time in which we celebrate the birth of Jesus, over 2000 years ago, by preparing to welcome to welcome this baby into our community. This season is the beginning of the church year, even though it overlaps most of December, the last month of our calendar year. In the church, we begin the year 4 Sundays before Christmas, getting ready for the birth of Jesus once again, celebrating his presence in our community, while also anticipating his arriving once again, bringing the full restoration of Creation, including the people(s) who populate it, to God's original hopes and intentions.

December 7, 1941

As I was staring at the date, trying to imagine what to write, I couldn't help but notice that December 7th is upon us. It is a date that is etched into our memory. It is the date, in 1941, that Pearl Harbor was attacked; another human tragedy in an infinite trail of tragedies from before recorded history, continuing on even today. Over 2400 were killed in the attack, with over 1000 more wounded. This Pacific War had been raging since 1937, and would claim 10's of millions of lives, 5 to 1 civilian, before it was over. Both of my grandfathers served in the Pacific during this war.

December 7, 1972

This same date of 1972 is much less known. It is the date that the Apollo 17 astronauts took the famous "Blue Marble" photograph of Earth from their capsule, on their way to the moon on this final lunar mission. It was one of the first clear images of the whole Earth. Because the sun was directly behind the camera, the entire face of the planet was lit up in brilliant blue, white, brown, and green. The astronauts were 28,000 miles away when they took the shot; it was the last time human beings were that far away from the Earth.



December 7, 1941 represents for many of us, the tragedy we humans, made in the image of God, are willing and capable of bringing upon one another and ourselves. December 7, 1972 evokes the unity and wholeness with one another, and all that has come forth from God's imagination that we humans, sinful and broken as we are, can imagine and aspire to.

Much more than a millennia before either of those dates (sometime in the 380's?), the church began to observe the season of Advent, in the time of year that December 7th always fall, to 1) celebrate the birth of Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us, and 2) look forward to Christ's return, when the all that is hurting and broken in the world will finally be healed and made whole once more; not just the whole human race, but also "rocks and trees and skies and seas." My faith teaches me this healing and wholeness will extend even to all of God's creation beyond these earthly boundaries, and beyond the boundaries of our solar system, into the totality of God's holy universe. It is more than I can imagine, much more than enough to give me a headache to try to comprehend. And yet such is wideness and depth of God's healing that we are called to believe in and called to work to bring about as God's holy church. Such is the birth and rebirth we look forward to in Advent.



Wow. Let all of the children, together say, Amen.

Rev. Alan Cloar

Interim Minister, First Christian Church (DOC) Watkinsville



December Calendar 2023

Sunday, December 3, 2023

Hanging of the Green
Sunday School – 10:00 am
Worship – 11:00 am
Elder: Ann Smith

Monday, December 4, 2023

10:30 am – Coffee Chat

Wednesday, December 6, 2023

5:30 pm – Meal Ministry
7:00 pm – Choir

Sunday, December 10, 2023

10:00 am – Sunday School
11:00 am – Worship
Elder: Rosa Hall

Monday, December 11, 2023

6:00 pm – Board Meeting

Tuesday, December 12

1:00 pm – ICGPA Lunch – Pastor Alan

Wednesday, December 13, 2023

5:30 pm – Meal Ministry
7:00 pm – Choir

Sunday, December 17, 2023

10:00 am – Sunday School
11:00 am – Worship
Elder: Bill Hunt
4:00 pm – DW Christmas Party
Barbara Powell's Home

Monday, December 18, 2023

10:30 am – Coffee Chat

Wednesday, December 20, 2023

6:00 pm – Blue Christmas Worship
7:00 pm – Choir

Sunday, December 24, 2023

10:00 am – Sunday School
11:00 am – Cantata
Elder: Mary Lillie Watson
11:00 pm – Christmas Eve
Candlelight Service

Monday, December 25, 2023

Christmas Day
Office Closed

Tuesday, December 26, 2023

Office Closed

Blue Christmas services are observed and have been in observance in many churches around the country since 1990. It is observed on the longest night of the year in Advent. Blue Christmas reminds us that all of our Christmases, even the darkest ones, can be filled with honesty and hope if we are first willing to sit in silence and bring our deepest fears to God.

Grieving comes with an immense amount of pain! Observing a Blue Christmas can help in relieving the pains that people feel during this festive period.



Financial Report October 2023

By Kathy Reising for Gina Hansford, Treasurer

OCTOBER CONTRIBUTIONS	2023 YTD CONTRIBUTIONS	2023 BUDGETED CONTRIBUTIONS
\$20,790	\$115,264	\$165,299

OCTOBER EXPENSES	2023 YTD EXPENSES	2023 BUDGETED EXPENSES
\$13,604	\$146,945	\$162,412

2023 YTD CONTRIBUTIONS MINUS EXPENSES \$ -31,681

2023 CONTRIBUTIONS VS BUDGET \$ -50,035 (UNDER)

2023 EXPENSES VS BUDGET \$ -15,467 (UNDER)



YEAR TO DATE (44 SUNDAYS)

WEEKLY CONTRIBUTIONS BUDGET \$3,757

AVERAGE WEEKLY CONTRIBUTIONS ACTUAL \$2,620

AVERAGE WEEKLY SHORTAGE PER BUDGET \$(1,137)

	OCT 31, 2023	DEC 31, 2022	CHANGE IN ACCOUNT
GENERAL FUNDS	\$46,559	\$30,680	\$ 15,879 (52%)
DESIGNATED FUNDS	\$34,375	\$47,179	\$ - 12,804(-27%)

STATEMENTS, AS OF	SEPTEMBER 30, 2023	DEC 31, 2022	
SAVINGS GENERAL FUNDS	\$181,718	\$204,534	\$ -22,816 11%
ENDOWMENT FUNDS	\$188,547	\$174,431	\$ 14,116 8%

ACTS Report

ACTS/Area Churches Together Serving continues to serve many families in Oconee County who are in need! Photos show items you may not expect but are used and welcomed by clients. Cookware of any kind is needed, towels, blankets and bedspreads, warm clothing, jackets and coats! Check your closets and bring items to the Fellowship Hall for ACTS! The Oconee Schools Canathon was several weeks ago and although smaller than past years was a boost for the storage room!

I am very proud of our church for all the weekly volunteer hours we give.

ACTS purchased 150 turkeys for clients and Antioch fixed 150 fixing bags! Over 200 families were served in November with approximately help for over 800 family members.

Pam Crawford, ACTS Board Member

HOW YOU CAN HELP ACTS


Contribute – contribute funds, food, household items, linens, and/or good clothing. Checks should be made out to ACTS and sent to:

Attention: ACTS Treasurer
P.O. Box 638
Watkinsville, Georgia 30677

Organize Food or Clothing Drives – organize individually or through your church, work, neighborhood or civic group.

Volunteer Your Time – Participating Churches must provide volunteers to serve at the ACTS distribution center, and a Church Coordinator for ACTS.

Pray – Prayerful support of ACTS volunteers and of those in need of its services makes the ministry possible.

 **ACTS**
Area Churches Together Serving

P.O. Box 638
Watkinsville, GA 30677

Distribution Center located at:
130 East Thompson St., Bogart GA.



Outreach

The Outreach Committee provided a meal on December 4 for Family Promise and took it to Milledge Ave. Baptist Church.

As our years comes to a close, I am proud to say Outreach has a new chair, Barbara Powell. I'd like to say a big word of thanks also to our Outreach Committee members: Mary Lillie Watson, Melba Baker, Gina Hansford, Marsha Lee, Rosa Hall and Ann Smith.



Family Promise has 4 main Programs that they offer their clients.

Prevention and Diversion Services

These services are devoted to preventing families from experiencing homelessness in the first place. We offer rental arrears assistance, utility payments, and other services to keep families in their homes or quickly move families to housing with assisting with upfront moving assistance.

Emergency Shelter Services

We run a static site shelter for three families at a time using volunteer support for monitoring. Families can live in our shelter program for 3 months.

Transitional Housing Services

In partnership with the Athens Area Habitat for Humanity, we operate 2 transitional housing units for families. With a year-long lease at a subsidized rate, families receive case management support and stabilization services to help families work towards their next housing options.

Family Support Services

Families in each of our programs are offered additional referrals and assistance including help with household supplies, diapers, hygiene products, and much more.

Testing Relief goody bags were delivered to the UGA Presbyterian Student Center for our Disciples of Christ students. It was a great time of fellowship for the baggers and deliverers.





REGISTRATION ENDING DECEMBER 31!

REGIONAL YOUTH ASSEMBLY
Friday January 19, 2024 - Sunday January 21, 2024

The 2024 Regional Youth Assembly (RYA) at Epworth by the Sea in St. Simons Island, GA will be a time of fellowship, worship, and fun for the Disciples of Christ (DOC) youth of Georgia, and we hope that your middle and high school youth and adult sponsors will be able to join us this year! We can't wait to see you!

Please click the button below for registration and more information on the 2024 RYA.

REGISTRATION + INFORMATION



Disciple Women

The group met on November 11th with nine members present! Missing our President Joan and caregiver Cathy! Marsha was also caregiving! The group enjoyed pizza and sweets and talked around the table about prayer concerns which were many!

The three military boxes were received by our adopted soldier, Michael Ashley, and he was excited and shared with friends!

Thank y'all so very much to everyone who helped out...it is greatly appreciated and will be quickly consumed!



November and December project continues with needs for the Day Center of Family Promise. Cleaning



supplies and hygiene items can be dropped off in the container marked Family Promise through the end of December! Daniel and Mary Lillie delivered the first installment of supplies.

Another project for December is to help our CMF men with the Chicken Mull!

Another Christmas Project is to adopt two SOS/Support Our Seniors. This is now done through Oconee Area Recourse Council, and we took two names to purchase gifts they asked for!

#1 senior asked for velour top and pants, tennis shoes and socks.

#2 senior asked for King Sheet Set, heated throw,

and gift card to Bell's.

Their requests were filled by the group. Rosa and Pam shopped, wrapped, and delivered them in time for their Christmas Party!

Our group also decided to support our Oconee Pilot members seated around the table by sponsoring their upcoming 5K with a \$250 donation! Pilot members Rosa, Cathy, Elaine, and Pam have more than 80 years combined supporting this service organization!

A program on the history and facts about Family Promise Athens were given by Pam Crawford.

Our Annual Christmas Party will be hosted by Barbara Powell at her home on December 17th, at 4:00! All are welcome and bring a plate of goodies to share and a gift (\$10-15) for the gift exchange!

Pam Crawford
For President Joan Taylor

CMF

The mull was a huge success this year because of all the help that arrived early and worked hard. The mull sold out completely by 1:05 pm and we raised almost \$9,000, which will be distributed soon. Thank you to everyone that came out and supported us.





When I was a little girl, we would search and search in the woods for the perfect Christmas tree. Now we weren't looking for a Frasier fir or a spruce. There was only one kind of Christmas tree—and that was a cedar tree. Now I remember having some friends that had artificial trees, but that just seemed wrong. We would stomp around in the woods, passing up all the little simply ones that looked way too small, and then we'd settle on one that was much too big, and you'd just cut the top out of it, because the top was shaped just right. And then, we'd still come home with a tree that was too large for the living room. But that didn't matter...the bigger the better.

For as long as I can remember, I've somehow been involved with the traditional Hanging of the Green service here at Watkinsville First Christian Church. I can remember Mr. Albert Smith cutting a huge cedar tree from his property and it would be placed right here in the middle of our sanctuary. It was always bigger than any artificial tree you could ever imagine. That was before we ever dreamed of actually spending money to go cut a tree from a tree farm. But times change, and those tree farms became the thing to do. I don't know how Ann Smith and I became the Christmas tree getters...I think we were self-appointed...but it seemed like every year on the day of the chicken mull, we could head down to Jack's creek to find a tree for the sanctuary. Because, by now, it WAS the thing to do...to buy a tree. Of course, it had to be the perfect tree, and one year Ann and I walked about a hundred miles in Jack's Creek to find a tree big enough for this sanctuary.

And then, one year, an artificial tree didn't seem so bad after all. I guess we were getting too old to keep trampling around the Christmas tree farm. So, we broke down and bought the tree. We haven't regretted it since, although we've gone through a few artificial trees since then. Because not only did an artificial tree not seem so bad after all, but those pre-lit kind became very appealing, also.

And also, for as long as I can remember, Ann was always in charge of putting together the Hanging of the Green service. Maybe that's why she felt responsible for the tree. For the last few years, I've volunteered to be responsible for this service. And I always think, what can we do differently? We do the same service, year after year, same old stories, just different readers. Same old hymns, just maybe a few different folks singing them. And then one Sunday afternoon when I was thinking about this service, I realized that it was OK to have the same old service, with the same old stories, and the same old hymns. The legend of the poinsettia, and the story of the wreaths, and the meaning of the Chrismons, well, you only hear those stories once a year. And we tell them every year to reinforce their meaning. It's our tradition to decorate with poinsettias, hang wreaths, and read the Christmas story. I mean, baby Jesus is the same old baby Jesus as last year, also. But we continue to read the story of his birth, because we believe it, and we want others to believe it, too, so that they can experience the joy of the true meaning of Christmas.

Teresa Guthrie



Annual Watkinsville Christmas Parade

Jenny and Amber did an excellent job on the church's float. John Tyre made the larger-than-life Bible. Thank you to everyone that helped.

