

THE LAWTON CHRISTIAN

The official newsletter of the First Christian Church of Lawton



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From the Pastor's Pen

by Rev. Paul Appleby

As the first full year of our ministry together comes to a close, let me be the first to say how proud I am of the way that our congregation has modeled good, safe, Christian behavior in the midst of a global pandemic. We have adapted quickly to rapidly changing circumstances. Our Agape and Clothing Closet ministries quickly shifted their methods and continued to feed the hungry and clothe the naked while keeping our workers and volunteers safe. We also added our exterior community food pantry (which will get a facelift and expansion in the coming weeks thanks to the tireless work of Konrad Delger) to

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help provide contact free gifts of basic staples and ready to eat foods to the hungry in our community. Our worship and Bible Study ministries adapted to online, modified in person, and once again solely online service with a speed and a quality that are virtually unmatched by congregations of our size. As an added benefit, we now have the ability to better serve long-time members who have been unable to join us in person! Our office staff did a wonderful job updating our pictorial directory in a year when coming to the church to “have your picture made” by a professional photographer was a non-starter, and Patty and Piper did a wonderful job in assisting with our 2020 capital campaign. David has worked to improve the production values in our music ministry in ways that will continue to pay dividends for years to come. Our Elders and Deacons adapted quickly to providing ministry via Monday Morning Minutes and a continued ministry of telephone check-ins and prayer. Our property committee, volunteers, and facilities manager have done amazing work renovating our church space. Finally, our church board has taken swift action to capitalize on available PPP funds and to ensure that we stay in solidarity with state leadership of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to keep our church safe. Amidst all of these challenges we have seen some new folks join our church family (even during our physical plant closure) and our entire congregation has worked to maintain “the unity of the Spirit and the bonds of peace.”

In the coming year we will face new challenges and opportunities in ministry. As we prepare for re-opening, I will be working with many of you to assemble a long-term strategic planning taskforce to help us develop a long-term philosophy of ministry and plan to move ahead. Upon re-opening, we will begin to look for new opportunities for evangelism and service to our community. We still face the challenge of putting together robust and Christ-centered outreach and ministries for the youth of our community, but I know we will be fit to the task at hand, because I know that the God who has called us is faithful and able to do more than we can ask or think. As 2020 fades into the distance behind us, I look forward to seeing where the Lord will lead us as we strive to be all that God has made us to be in 2021.

Rev. Paul Appleby

Peace in Christ,
Rev. Paul Appleby
Pastor, The First Christian Church of Lawton



Worship Corner - January 2021

by Rev. Paul Appleby

As the new year begins, we in the church move into a new season in our worship calendar. This season is called Epiphany, and Epiphany is all about seeing things in a new light.

The words of the Psalmist, "In your light, we see light" give voice to how we are to understand God, our world, and our place in it through the life of Christ. It is in the light of Christ that everything is illuminated. It's like C.S. Lewis said, "I believe in Christ like I believe in the sun not because I can see it, but by it I can see everything else."

In this season of Epiphany, we will shine the light of Christ on all that surrounds us, the bright and the shadowy to learn that in Jesus everything is illuminated. We will celebrate the season with a new worship series called Illumination. Here's what we will be shedding light on in the month ahead.

Epiphany (January 3, 2021)- "Right Way, Right Here, Right Now"

Scriptures: Isaiah 60:1-6, Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12

Songs: Epiphany Anthem (Special Music), "Jesus, Light of the World"

Message: In Isaiah the prophet predicts the dawning of a new day, when God's plans would be revealed, and all people would turn toward the light. In Matthew we have the familiar story of the wise men visiting from the east. They are guided by the light of a star to the place where Jesus lay. They also commit a crime against the state by not returning to the king as they had promised, because they understood that all human relationships (even those with governance) must be viewed in light of our relationship with God. In Ephesians, Paul tells the church that this day has come saying, "Earlier generations didn't know this hidden plan that God has now revealed to his holy apostles and prophets through the Spirit. This plan is that the Gentiles would be coheirs and parts of the same body, and that they would share with the Jews in the promises of God in Christ Jesus through the gospel."

In this service we will look at history, prophecy, ethics, and community in light of what God has done for the world in the birth of Christ Jesus.

First Sunday After Epiphany (January 10, 2021)- "All Wet"

Scriptures: Genesis 1:1-5; Psalm 29; Acts 19:1-7; Mark 1:4-11

Songs: "What Was Your Vow and Vision" (CH 177), "Spirit Song" (CH 352)

Message: Jesus changes the way we view everything. Take something as simple as water. Water quenches our thirst, keeps us clean, and is essential for all life as we know it. In the beginning of creation God's Spirit moved over it. But did you know that in the Psalms we are told that God lives above it? It's true. The ancient Israelites believed that above the expanse of the dome of the sky was a giant body of water, larger than the earth's oceans,

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and on top of that was the realm of God. In light of this, is it any wonder that Christ led by example in symbolically traveling through water, that satisfying, cleansing, life giving element so that following his example in our baptism when we come back up above the waters, we enter into God's presence in the church and experience his Spirit directly?

Second Sunday After Epiphany (January 17, 2021)- "Speak, Lord, For Your Servant is Listening"

Scriptures: 1 Samuel 3:1-10; Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18; John 1:43-51

Songs: "Be Thou My Vision" (CH 595), "Speak" by The Waiting

Message: Even in times when it seems "the word of the Lord is rare and visions are not widespread", God our maker still knows how to speak to us in a way we will hear and understand. In the work of Jesus, God called out to each and every person on earth to follow him. God is still calling us all to follow. May we have ears to hear.

Third Sunday After Epiphany (January 24, 2021)- "A Little Fishy"

Scriptures: Jonah 3:1-5, 10; Mark 1:14-20

Songs: "Blessed be the God of Israel" (CH135), "I Sing a Song of the Saints of God"

Message: The whale isn't the only thing in the story of Jonah that's a little fishy. Somehow an entire nation comes to repentance because of a single sentence spoken in the most half-hearted way possible by one of God's prophets. And while we are on the topic of fish, Jesus calls his earliest disciples from their work on the Sea of Galilee to stop what they are doing, abandon their family and their livelihood, and to follow him - a stranger- so they can go and "fish for people"... Yep, when God is at work things tend to get a little fishy.

Fourth Sunday After Epiphany (January 31, 2021)- "With Great Power Comes Great Responsibility"

Scriptures: Psalm 111; 1 Corinthians 8:1-13; Mark 1:21-28

Songs: "Silence, Frenzied, Unclean Spirit" (CH 186), "God Made from One Blood" (CH 500)

Message: Psalm 111 declares the amazing, unlimited power of God. But in the center of the Psalm we see that God uses his power, not for his own benefit, but to help his people. In Mark we hear about the strange power of Jesus to silence and drive out devils. Once again, this power is used to benefit others. In 1 Corinthians Paul talks about the power of freedom given to Christians in light of what Jesus has done for us. You'll never guess how he suggests we use it.





January 2021



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Happy 2021!	2
3 10 am Virtual Worship on FCC YouTube Channel 11 am After- Words on Zoom	4 Monday Morn- ing Minute on FCC YouTube Channel	5	6 Epiphany 5:30 pm To-go Sack Meal	7 5:30 pm Elders' Meeting	8	9
10 10 am Virtual Worship on FCC YouTube Channel 11 am After- Words on Zoom	11 Monday Morn- ing Minute on FCC YouTube Channel	12 1 pm Ruth Group (location TBA)	13 5:30 pm To-go Sack Meal	14	15	16
17 10 am Virtual Worship on FCC YouTube Channel 11 am After- Words on Zoom	18 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Monday Morn- ing Minute on FCC YouTube Channel	19	20 5:30 pm To-go Sack Meal	21 6:30 pm FCC Board Meeting	22	23
24 10 am Virtual Worship on FCC YouTube Channel 11 am After- Words on Zoom	25 Monday Morn- ing Minute on FCC YouTube Channel	26	27 5:30 pm To-go Sack Meal	28	29	30 10:30 am Heart Sisters meet at Pam Shepherd's Home
31 10 am Virtual Worship on FCC YouTube Channel 11 am After- Words on Zoom						



Agape Ministry

Each Wednesday evening from 5:30 to 6:30 pm we serve to-go meals outside the south side of the building. Our plan is to continue doing this until such time as folks are allowed to return to a semi-normal life again. At these meals, Hilde Bilvais has been busy passing out the following to those who need it: **150 lbs of dog and catfood, 100 cans dog treats, 30 hats (plus gloves and mittens), 50 cans chicken noodle soup. She will distribute hand/body warmers next month. If you have dog or cat food you do not need, please contact Hilde.**

Upcoming meals for January are as follows:

January 6 - Chicken Fritters

January 13 - Beef

January 20 - Burgers

January 27 - Chicken

We continue to ask for contributions to the Outdoor Pantry Box (on the west side of our building). You may just set your contributions on the shelves of the box. The food goes very quickly, often the same day it is stocked. The Pantry Box is incredibly successful at reaching those in need. Items needed include **ready-to-eat foods such as fruits, fresh vegetables, bread, cheese and crackers, peanut butter, cereal, canned meats with easy-open tops, and bottled water.**



Happy Birthday!

1/1 Tom Springli
1/7 Dick Tannery
1/10 Vickie Johnson Flores
1/15 Amanda Todd
1/16 Adahjean Oates
1/22 David Aubrey
1/24 Jay Cooper
1/25 Marjorie Lutz
1/26 Melinda Lund
1/31 Brian Herring
1/31 Darlene Ramsey



Happy Anniversary!

1/27 Coy and Peggy Citron



Joys

- Jimi Denning has been given a clean bill of health by the USMC!
- Jay and Kathy Cooper's daughter is much better!
- Mary Denning is being treated with medicine instead of invasive procedure!
- Brian Herring and Kimberly Butler are engaged!
- Ricky Hargett (John Adair's friend) is healing nicely after severe COVID!
- Lois Smith (JoJo Aubrey's mother) is healing and has been moved to a good care facility along with JoJo's father!
- Gene Maudlin (Becky Tannery's friend) is much better and home!
- Jane Springli's son has reached his first year sober!
- Ande and her mother (Hilde Bilvais friends) are healing from COVID!
- Amber Delger's aunt and uncle are on the mend from COVID!
- Nellie McKenzie got a report of "No cancer", and her family is over COVID!
- John Saville and his four co-workers have all been able to return to work after having COVID!

Prayer Concerns (COVID)

- Sam Bowman
- Denise Smith's father and stepmother
- Wendy Nelson, Wendy's Mother Cynthia, Sandi Pounds, Scott Johnson, and Bryan German (Amber Delger's good friends)
- Ricky Hargett (John Adair's friend)
- Patty DiLeo (Patty is a friend of the daughter of the secretary at Westside Christian Church in Duncan)
- Those who are quarantining with sick family members
- All hospital staff
- Teachers, students, and educational staff

Prayer Concerns (Cancer)

- Holli Hill Scholtz (former FCC musician)
- Susie Garrett (Mother of Becky Tannery's daughter's friend)
- Joe Bailey
- Richard Terry (Becky Tannery's friend)
- Susan (Phyllis and Sam Bowman's daughter-in-law)
- Carol Labutti (Wendi Lindley's cousin)
- Kathy (Melissa Pratt's sister)
- Jerry Foster (Joe Bailey's cousin)
- Kathie (Ro Bielinski's friend) and Kathie's sister Anne

Other Health Concerns

- Mary Denning (adjusting to a new heart medication)
- Marge and Melissa Lutz (health issues)
- Clayton Fields (Denise Smith's father going through therapy following hospital stay)
- Ursula Asuncion's husband (health issues)
- Mary Butler (therapy/healing for broken ankle)
- Vickie Johnson Flores (knee replacement)
- Konrad Delger's father (mobility issues)
- Mark Fanti (broken hip)
- Coy and Peggy Citron (health reasons)
- Don and Phyllis Henke (health)
- Barbee and Bill Barker (continued strength)

Other Prayer Concerns

- Catrina Black and family following the death of her mother-in-law
- Family of Ro Beilinski's friend Kathie (following the death of Kathie's husband)
- Family of Breck Starr following his death (Breck was a friend of Joe Bailey's daughter)
- Family and friends of Sandra Oathout who died (Don Henke's niece)
- William (the Bowmans' son) and wife who had a miscarriage)
- David Pratt (Loss of job)
- Hilde Bilvais middle son
- Central Middle school students and faculty following the deaths of teachers
- Our city, our country, our leaders, our troops, and the world during this difficult time

Church Leaders for 2021

Board Officers:

Chair – Brian Birdwell

Vice Chair – Deanna Deville

Secretary – Rick Van Horn

Treasurer – Darlene Ramsey

Committee and Auxiliary Group Chairs:

Education – Nancy Davis and Joan Van Horn

Membership – Alisa Engler

Outreach – Amber and Konrad Delger

Personnel – Becky Tannery

Property – Sheila Fountain

Stewardship – Church Office

Worship – Rick Van Horn

Elders:

John Adair (term ends 12/31/2022)

Sage Appleby (term ends 12/31/2022)

David Aubrey (term ends 12/31/2022)

JoJo Aubrey (term ends 12/31/2022)

Joe Bailey (term ends 12/31/2021)

Becky Tannery (term ends 12/31/2022)

Deacons:

Teresa Adair (Term Ends 12/31/2022)

Patsy Bassel (Term Ends 12/31/2022)

Brian Birdwell (Term Ends 12/31/2022)

Marilyn Bohlender (Term ends 12/31/2021)

Phyllis Bowman (Term Ends 12/31/2022)

Amber Delger (Term ends 12/31/2021)

Deanna Deville (Term Ends 12/31/2022)

Vicky E. Flores (Term ends 12/31/2021)

Vickie Johnson Flores (Term ends 12/31/2021)

Janice Logan (Term ends 12/31/2021)

Jane Springli (Term ends 12/31/2021)

Tom Springli (Term ends 12/31/2021)

Rick Van Horn (Term ends 12/31/2021)

Memorial Trust:

Teresa Adair (term ends 12/31/2022)

David Aubrey (term ends 12/31/2022)

JoJo Aubrey (term ends 12/31/2022)

Nancy Davis (term ends 12/31/2022)

Beverly Honeycutt (term ends 12/31/2021)

Sheila Fountain (term ends 12/31/2021)

Tom Springli (term ends 12/31/2021)



Thank You, From Your Church Staff

We, your church staff, deeply appreciate your generous donations for our Christmas Bonuses! We are so blessed to be able to work with this community of faith!

In Christ's Love,

David C. Anderson, Elizabeth Calhoun-Dean, Konrad Delger, Brian Herring, Patty Neuwirth, Piper Saville, and Beverly Watson.

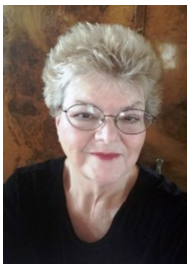
Thank You, From Lawton Food Bank

Thank you so much for your generous support this year!

From the Lawton Food Bank

CWF News

As we approach this time of the holidays I want to wish each of you a Happy New Year in 2021. This year 2021 is full of promise and hope. Let us continue to support one another through cards and calls, texts and emails until we can meet and embrace each other in person. I think of you daily and you are all in my prayers. Piper and I were talking about the CFW-ODW yearbook, and several months ago we voted to add an insert to the book, as we have not really gotten to utilize the book (mine still looks pristine)! However, we cannot fill out the dates, times, and meeting places in our current climate of quarantine and isolation. Rather than having to cancel set dates, we think it prudent to hold off on the insert and dates until such time as we are able to meet safely after the vaccine is widely distributed. I trust each of you is well and safe. If you need anything in the coming months you have my number, and I am at your service. Kathy



Health Tip from Kathy Cooper, RN



Exciting news about the vaccines efficacy and effectiveness has us filled with hope that this pandemic may have an end in sight, but each of us must continue to do our part by 1) wearing masks, 2) washing hands often and well, 3) practicing social distancing and 4) getting the vaccine as soon as it is available to us. I have been researching the vaccine pre-order number, and the United States has over 300 million doses order from Pfizer, Moderna, and Astra Zeneca. They also have invested in at least 11 other pharmaceutical companies heavily; Johnson and Johnson, and others for additional doses. By the end of 2021 all Americans should have received a Covid vaccine. There are over 100 companies in the process of production and research of this vaccine. We will have enough doses.

More research is being done to determine if we will need additional vaccinations after the initial doses (which consists of two injections approximately 2 weeks apart). Here is a breakdown of the prioritized vaccination schedule: Phase Ia: health workers, nursing home residents and staff = 24 million
1b: essential workers 87 million, Adults with high-risk medical conditions and those over 65 = 150 million (yet to be determined which high risk medical conditions qualify), and the rest of the U.S. population 69 million. This classification is from the WHO (World Health Organization). Each state determines their plan for distribution, and in looking at Oklahoma's plan it is still very fluid. I believe that is a good plan, because it allows for adjustments as needed in this uncertain time. I hope this information is helpful and eases your mind about us not have enough vaccine as our government has invested heavily in the research and development of these vaccines. Please take your vaccine, whichever one is available to you as soon as it is available. Jay and I plan to take it as soon as possible. Kathy

Healthy Congregation News

Recertification application was submitted to the Oklahoma Healthy Congregation Association. We should hear in April if we were successful.

Church Staff and Contact Information

Pastor- Rev. Paul Appleby/pastor@fcclawton.org

Administrative Assistant - Piper Saville/office@fcclawton.org

Director of Music - David C. Anderson/davidtunespianos@gmail.com

Facilities Manager - Konrad Delger

Financial Secretary - Patty Neuwirth

Sound Technician - Brian Herring

Media Technicians - Evan Aubrey and John Bowman

Nursery - Beverly Watson and Elizabeth Calhoun-Dean

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