

# First Family News

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

October 2018

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## Keep Calm and Follow On

Assumptions sometimes get in the way of what we are doing. Your leadership asked me to come and serve God alongside you during this transition time for the next 18 – 24 months. The Search Committee named my specific task to be a “transformation” interim, but in the first Following Jesus Discernment presentation that I gave on 9/16, I pointed out that it is God who will transform you and me. As your pastor now, I can only be a facilitative spiritual leader. I have a clear goal. This is what I am asking you as a congregation to have: a clear purpose in your service as LFCC going forward. Strong, small congregations and all sized churches operate better with a mission focus. This is our first priority and one of the main tasks of an intentional interim period.

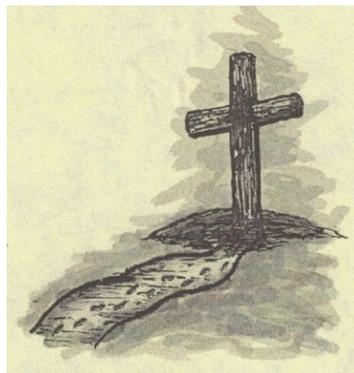
God is always in the business of transforming us, if we will be open to God! I mentioned that we are still in the wilderness – a rich Biblical metaphor for the continuing walk of faith. If we ever think we’ve “arrived,” then we are indeed lost. The important processing work FCC has already done has brought you to this place now. I hope you will read the Powerpoint presentation that is linked with our website and look at the two pages, Holy Experiment One and the Organizational Chart, which follow. Church is a “we” endeavor. I hope you will come to our follow-up session on 10/21... for discussion. Maybe someone has a better worded ministry focus. Having a clear goal to guide us in our work as Christ’s disciples will benefit the church and can help visitors or seekers know if we are a good fit. Please note that we will need to have some more such discussions in the months ahead.

Another focus during intentional interim times is to keep the main thing, the main thing: our relationship with Christ must be nurtured! The organizational chart shows us concretely our tasks.

I exhorted you to remain calm and follow on... “Following Jesus Farther on the Way.” Let’s reclaim our joy in Christian living and grab hold of the faith that God will not fail us. I hope you know in your hearts that God is ever present with us, that uncertainty can be valuable – keeps God as our ultimate leader, and that creativity and (vertical) growth are part of the path any GROWING Christian. It’s okay if we wear out our walking shoes for the Lord!

I am cherishing this chapter of life and am thankful to be on the Way with you.

Melinda



## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

### MISSION

#### Things that Jesus has called us to do

Feed the Hungry

Care for the Poor

- Lawrenceville Co-op
  - Family Promise
  - Mending the Gap
- School drives for Supplies
- School drives for snacks
- Christmas gifts for schools

#### Social Justice

#### Going further with Study, Advocacy, and Action for the Things Jesus has called us to do (Looking at the larger world)

Poverty

Immigration

Environment

Racism

(Upcoming, study of Poverty and advocacy through Bread for the World)

### COMMUNITY

#### Caring for each other

Filling the needs of our congregation in ways we can:

- Caregivers
- Hospital Ministry
  - Illness
  - Fellowship
- Getting to know each other

#### Caring for our Neighbors

#### Building partnerships with our immediate community

- Schools – card ministry and volunteer reading buddies
- The Y Preschool – pop by to visit and be reading buddies
- Surrounding neighborhoods
  - Live Nativity
- Prayer Vigil for Christian Unity in January?

- Special First Friday Celtic service from 5-7 pm – lay led? Maybe twice a year?
- Thank our local first responders with homemade treats and cards – February or March?
- Trunk or Treat/Fall Festival for next year?
- Community Garden? (partner with existing enterprise already in operation)

### SPIRITUAL FORMATION

#### Study, Worship, and Individual and Corporate Spiritual Growth to deepen our faith

Melinda's leadership

- Worship services
  - Studies
  - Lenten Study
- Listening Heart Series
- Host Labyrinth Field Trips
- Host walk by Ash Wednesday at Gwinnett Tech or GGC
  - Other

## Holy Experiment One for Lawrenceville First Christian Church

Trying on a Proposed Contemporary Statement of Mission:

*First Christian Church is faithfully following Jesus farther on The Way by...*

*Loving like Christ*

*Thinking like Christ*

*Acting like Christ*

Our Mission Focus:

*LFCC has a heart for children and families locally and is a strong supporter of Camp Christian in GA.*

The core values I (Melinda) have observed...love, faith, compassion, and community. (On the Following Jesus Discernment Session One PPT, I omitted one word to make an LFCC memory device.)

Your task is to consider IF this is something we can use - on a consensus basic - no major objections. Every one of us has an opinion, but our church can benefit from having a working focus. This is like the rudder of a boat. We need to have one to put on the website and claim as our identity and use in our talk about LFCC.

Having a clear mission statement that is true to our personality as a congregation lets others know if LFCC is a good fit for them. Thank you for your continued work as stewards of First Christian Church! Melinda welcomes dialogue concerning this important project.

Dear Church,

Planning continues for our upcoming Capital Campaign that will run from Oct 28<sup>th</sup> thru Nov 18<sup>th</sup>. Our theme is "Following Jesus Farther Along the Way."

Our scriptural base is Micah 6:8 -

"What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"

We have assembled the following team to lead us.

Co-Chairs: Rod Baker & Tadd Huff  
Spiritual/Prayer: Lynn Lane  
Communication/Events: Beth Thompson  
Key Donors: Elizabeth McElhanon  
Pastor: Melinda McDonald  
Board Chair: Lee Thompson

During and leading up to the campaign anyone on the team can help with answering your questions or to provide additional information.

As a result of the recent feasibility study, funds raised will be prioritized to pay our mortgage obligations, general building refurbishing and to create a reserve for future maintenance.

Monies designated to the Capital Campaign are kept in a separate account. Tithes and offerings are placed in the operational account that pays for the budgeted daily operations of the church.

More information and details will be coming in the near future and we ask the church to be in prayer for our campaign team leaders and for a successful campaign.

Campaign Co-Chairs,  
Rod Baker & Tadd Huff

## Capital Campaign

- **TOWN HALL MEETINGS FOR THE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN**
- *Two Town Hall/Informational meetings for the LFCC Capital Campaign will be held on the kick-off Sunday, October 28.*
- *One meeting will take place during the Sunday School hour and the other immediately following the 10:50 Worship Service. Please plan to attend one of the meetings for important information about the goals, projects, and vision for the Capital Campaign. Question and answer time will be included.*  
*Light refreshments will be available for both meetings.*

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## Disciple Angels

A quick reminder that the Harvest Lunch will be at the end of October. Elizabeth McElhanon is chair, so please offer her your support.

Also, three former presidents, Beth Thompson, Eva Krahwinkel, and Connie Worrel have agreed to be the nominating committee for your new president and officers. It has been my honor and pleasure to serve as president for the last two years. Thank you so much for helping us get food and gathering funds on time. Not to mention, what fun we had! This was a successful because everyone stepped up and helped! There were always willing hands and hearts. This position is not a burden, because every woman in this church is an angel.

Thank you, Dorrie Toth  
Disciples Women

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## Family Promise



### Family Promise Update

Family Promise is making some changes to cope with a significant reduction in funding. The Day Center, which serves families with children in the Homeless Recovery program, will be returning to the facility on the back of LFCC property. It had most recently been housed in rental space in town so that Family Promise's SaltLight and Aftercare operations could use the LFCC property. Since the funding cuts, these two operations have had to be suspended, so the Day Center will be returning soon to the LFCC property.

### Did You Know...

LFCC has played an important role in helping Family Promise to carry out its mission in Gwinnett County. In 2008, we started leasing the house on the back of our property to Family Promise for \$1 per year. Over the years, many in our congregation have volunteered time to staff the front desk there, especially on Sunday mornings, and a number have served on the Board of Trustees. Others were trained to serve as the overnight hospitality volunteers at the churches which feed and house the families overnight during the week. Still others have supported Family Promise with prayer and donations of money and goods. LFCC and these many congregations in our community provide a wonderful example of the creative ways that congregations can be The Church in the world. Go church! Go Church!

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## Annual Apple Trip, October 25



Join us to enjoy a BBQ lunch and then back to shop for apples, fried pies, other fruit, vegetables and homemade ice cream at Jaemor Farms. We will meet at the church at 10:00am and then travel for BBQ and back to Jaemor.

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## CMF Annual Harvest Dinner, Nov. 4

Join us on Sunday, Nov. 4, following the 10:50 service for our annual harvest meal. This event is our main fundraiser to help us support Florida Christian Home, Camp Christian, Cane Ridge and other entities we support every year. We will serve turkey, ham, dressing, gravy, green beans, sweet potatoes and other traditional Thanksgiving food items. Thank you for your support.





## Gardening Opportunity

We are looking at the possibility of planting Blueberry bushes on our church property and we need a team of volunteers that will take on the responsibility of the maintaining the area. The Blueberry garden would consist of six bushes with two each of a variety that would allow for harvesting blueberries in the spring, summer and late summer. We are being advised by Hilary Wilson a Master Gardener.

The planting of the bushes would be next spring when the bushes are sold by the GA Ext office. It will be a couple of years before we would be able to harvest very many blueberries, but the thought is we would make them available to Mending the Gap, the Lawrenceville Food Co-op and of course any LFCC members that would like some.

If you would like to be a member of the team or need additional information please contact Rod Baker or Beth Thompson.

## GOD IS SMILING

Some familiar faces from LFCC attended the Atlanta United 2 Soccer game on Sept. 21.

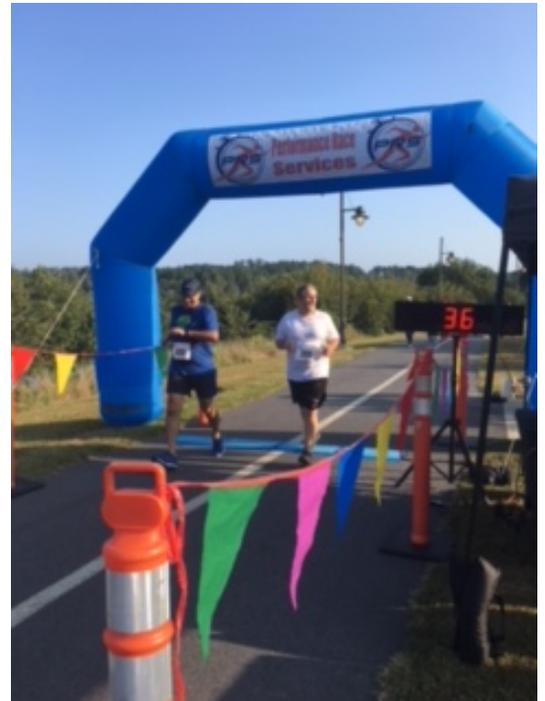


# Run Against Senior Hunger 5K

It was a very nice event. There were about 175 participants.



Race participants Connie Thompson, Beth Thompson, Candace Richardson, Lee Thompson, and Josue' Machado before the race. Not pictured, Rod Baker.



Josue' and Rod cross the finish line in the 5K.



Beth and Candace cross the finish line in the One Mile Fun Run.

## October Birthdays

- 1 Bill Nielson
- 7 Larry Roberts
- 8 Maggie Joy Westbrook
- 12 Jim McCollough
- 23 Rod Baker
- 24 Clayton Moss
- 25 Eva Krahwinkel
- 30 Meredith McElhanon Bell



## Important October Dates

- **Tuesday, Oct 2**  
TONTO 11:30am
- **Sunday, Oct 7**  
World Communion Sunday  
Reconciliation Offering  
First Sunday Food for Co-op  
No Choir Practice  
Leadership Council 6pm
- **Tuesday, Oct 9**  
Labyrinth Walk Outing Retirees @ Sweet Baby Jane's 11:30am
- **Wednesday, Oct 10**  
CWF Ewing Group 1:15pm
- **Saturday, Oct 13**  
Disciples Men's Rally in Griffin 10am
- **Tuesday, Oct 16**  
FRF @ Culver's 7pm
- **Wednesday, Oct 17**  
Listening Hearts 6-7:30pm
- **Sunday, Oct 21**  
Following Jesus Discernment Session Two 12-2pm

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## October Worship Helpers

- Oct 7: Responsive Reader – Elizabeth Anders  
Scripture Reader – Bruce Johnson  
Communion Meditation – Congregational Litany  
Greeter – Open
- Oct 14: Responsive Reader – Elizabeth Anders  
Scripture Reader – Kim Peeples  
Communion Meditation – Beth Thompson  
Greeter – Open
- Oct 21: Responsive Reader – Elizabeth Anders  
Scripture Reader – Mabel Simmons  
Communion Meditation – Melinda McDonald  
Greeter – Open
- Oct 28: Responsive Reader – Elizabeth Anders  
Scripture Reader – OPEN  
Communion Meditation – Rod Baker  
Greeter – Open

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## Serving at the Table in October

Elders – Beth Thompson, Trish Taylor (7, 14, 21, 28)  
Deacons: Open  
Communion Preparation: Candace Richardson



### **First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**

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Music Director: Kim Peeples