



firstChristian
NORFOLK NEBRASKA
1408 E. BENJAMIN AVENUE
NORFOLK, NE 68701
402-371-5734



2016 Annual Report

**Gather Big ■ Group Small
Serve Somewhere ■ Give Something**

2016 Church Leaders

Elders:

Steve Ball
 Larry Glandt
 Jon Hausmann, Vice Chairman
 Don Holloway, Chairman
 Jim Hopkins, Secretary
 Kevin Mueller
 Steve Smith

Treasurer:

Bridgitte Ball

Financial Secretary:

Steve Ball

Trustees:

Steve Smith
 Don Holloway

Staff:

Lead Minister	Tim DeFor	Office Manager	Molly Daniell
Associate Minister	Randall Coffin	Finances	Bridgitte Ball
Worship Minister	Greg Springer	Preschool Director	Stacy Hardy
Technology Assistant	Zach Fuoss	Preschool Assistant	Tara Jordan
Connections Minister	Taylor Hiatt	Custodian	Paul Dittmer
Student Minister	Marshal Hardy	Custodian	Maria Mendez
Student Assistant	Molly Bradley		
Children's Minister	Kristi Carmichael		
Children's Assistant	Liz Spray		

Ministry Teams / Leaders

Team	Leader	Team	Leader
Management	Don Holloway	Building/Grounds	Tim Lillard
Adult Discipleship	Randall Coffin	Communion Prep	Evelyn Muegge
Children's	Kristi Carmichael	Guest Services	Taylor Hiatt
College	Karen Spray	Production	Greg Springer
Fellowship	Carolyn Crippen	Worship Technology	Greg Springer
Finance	Steve Smith	Transportation	Rusty Parker
Morning Star	Stacy Hardy	TNT (Seniors)	Jean Hopkins
Men's Ministry	Steve Wagner	Servers/Ushers	Taylor Hiatt
Missions	Scott Dodson	Love Fund	Teena Fenwick
Youth	Marshal Hardy	Nursing Home	V.Hall/T. Comeford
Women's Ministry	Chris McKibbon	Website	Greg Springer
Baptism Prep	Miriam Circle	Worship	Greg Springer

Lead Minister: Tim DeFor 2016 - The Best Year Ever... (Until Next Year)

The title above didn't change except for the year, and it proved to be true. 2015 was great, but 2016 was even better. (And all signs point to 2017 to outpace 2016.)

To any who peered into the window of **firstChristian** in 2016, it is obvious that something special is happening. For some, it may have been the year they finally submitted their life to Christ in baptism. For others, it was a year of tragedy that God and the church family saw them through. Others took risks, worshiped freely, connected with new friends in small groups, served willingly, and/or gave generously. These are the stories that make me smile the most. I wish I had room to share all of these stories. These are the true measure of how well a church is "being the Church."

Still, I can share significant events in the life of the church that are a result of life changing growth. Though they are not the heart, they reveal the pulse of the church. I can also share significant numbers. Numbers are not the goal, but they help us see if we are winning for Christ. Each number represents something greater, God's work in people's lives. Each attendance and participation number represents a soul, a life. Each dollar represents the stuff of earth being used for the purposes of heaven. If the numbers truly reflect what God is up to, then as of December 31, 2016 was the best year ever.

The true life of a church is not found in the events hosted or the programs provided, but in the changed lives of people. At many Elders' meetings, I share stories from the lives of you, our church family. I wish I could somehow share all these glimpses of God's work with everyone, but instead I must be satisfied with a recounting of some of the significant events and milestones in the life of FCC as a whole. There may be events and programs that are not listed that you feel should have made the list. If so, I apologize. It was my oversight. Below are just 4 of the significant ministries and milestones of 2016 in the life of FCC.

Children's Ministry Transition – Kristi Carmichael and her Children's Ministry Team have been leading **firstChristian** toward being more Orange. Orange is when the heart of the home (red) intersects with the light of the church (yellow) to make orange: two combined influences with one goal in mind. This has led to several changes. Baby dedications during services has been replaced with Family D, where parents learn what it means to provide a Christ centered home and with friends and extended family commit to raising their children to know and love the Lord. The Orange concept also led us to transition Wednesday nights from a weekly church centric focus to a monthly family focus, called Family JAM. These changes encourage us to be increasingly Orange.

Sermon Based Small Groups – Over 300 people participated in weekly sermon based small groups in the Fall of 2016. We are transitioning from a church with small groups to a church of small groups. As we grow bigger, we must also grow smaller. It is impossible for anyone to know everyone, but everyone must be known by someone. At the conclusion of a 10-week study over 150 gathered to celebrate what God has done and is doing through small groups. This fall we transitioned to sermon based small groups. The weekly discussions help us to apply and reinforce what God was telling each of us on Sundays, and keep the conversation going.

Big 4 – For ten weeks in the fall of 2016 we focused on how we can Forge a Faith that Matters. This was the introduction to the Big 4: Gather Big, Group Small, Serve Somewhere, Give Something. These are the four main ways that FCC partners with and provides for our church family to grow in their faith. These are becoming the backbone of our programing, our expectations, and our identity.

Building Expansion Groundbreaking – On April 3, 2016 we celebrated the much anticipated ground breaking for our Thrive Vision expansion and remodel. Though progress has come more slowly than expected, the design was finalized, the building site was prepared, a drainage system created, the parking lot expanded, footings and foundation poured, electrical trunks extended, and steel delivered. I am encouraged by the participation in giving. To date over 260 households are contributing to make the Thrive Vision a reality. We look forward to celebrating in our new space late Spring and using expanded children's and activity space in the Fall of 2017.

We are truly blessed. I grew up in the church, have volunteered in churches, and have served several churches and parachurch organizations. I have never seen a staff that works as well together as the one with which we are blessed. I have a growing confidence in our team and their devotion to God and **firstChristian**. Here are some things that I see that I hope you have seen too.

Molly Daniel – Molly served as our Office Manager. She did more than a job; she served in an ever changing and growing ministry. She has assisted our staff of varied personalities and ministry styles in their ever active and growing ministries. I am grateful that God provided Molly to FCC during a time of change and growth. She brought many improvements and innovations.

Randall Coffin – I am thankful for his partnership in preaching. He continues to deliver solid biblical truth. I am confident that when I am not speaking that we are in good hands. In administration, he is diligent in the details of many projects. He has a big heart for community and care of the church family. He is especially instrumental in building our small groups ministry. This year, he has stepped up in his leadership and expanding his ministry.

Greg Springer – He regularly goes the extra mile, is multitalented, and helps everyone's ministries succeed. He is more than a worship arts minister. He is a servant to all. He regularly challenges us towards creativity and excellence in all areas of ministry. Much of the positive things that stand out about FCC, he has a hand in creating. This year he has helped his volunteer leaders mature as well as put many hours preparing for our future expansion. I have seen him maturing as a strong minister for Jesus.

Marshal Hardy – He has a strong grasp of the needs the youth and families of teenagers. He is a team player and is growing as he takes on additional responsibilities. His ministry continues to expand beyond the youth, into the congregation, the community, and regionally. He has faced new and growing challenges with grace and truth. He is looking to improve the way we do what we do and pushing us to action.

Kristi Carmichael – She is a strong team member. Her hard work makes the difficult task of leading the children's program seem manageable. Her efforts continue to introduce Jesus to children and deepen their faith in him. Her role is possibly the hardest position on the team, and she carries the load well. She is a hard worker, diligent, creative, and visionary. She is growing the program so well that we will run out of space well before we reach our potential. This year she has been a true change agent for the better. Her high personal standards raise the bar for all of us.

Taylor Hiatt – Taylor was added to our team as Connections Minister in February of 2016. This a new position was created to help the people of FCC, new and old, to connect as part of the family. She oversees Guest Services as well as volunteer on-ramping. Her fresh ideas and new insights have also helped us to transform our communications, from Bulletin and Newsletter to online and social media presence. Taylor has proven to be a huge asset as we grow and mature our ministries.

There are many more who make it possible for the church to Thrive. **Stacy Hardy** directed our preschool and teaches little ones with the help of **Tara Jordan**. **Paul Dittmer** and **Maria Mendez** help make our building welcoming and ready for ministry through their custodial work. **Zach Fuoss** helps Greg with many facets of technology. **Liz Spray** supports and compliments Kristi with Children's Ministry. **Molly Bradley** Helps Marshal run an active youth program. But our real heroes are the many volunteers who gift their time, energy, and very selves to shine Christ's light into a dark world.

Thanks team. You are a big reason that God is doing amazing things in and through FCC.

FCC's year cannot be summarized in a couple of pages, but I trust these words have helped give you a picture of God's work. With the people God has blessed us, the guidance he continues to give, and His ongoing blessing, I am excited for what God has for our future. 2016 was a great year, a year of Onward and Upward progress which has poised us for greater things to come. With God's continued blessing 2017 will be the best year ever!

In Him,

Tim

PS Below you will find some statistics that shed additional light on the life of the firstChristian family.

The three statistics that are most easily measured are baptisms/new members, attendance, and giving. In 2016 we added **61** new members and had **54** baptisms. Below is a list of those who were baptized and who became members. Our 2016 average worship attendance was 580, up from 2015 by 52, or about 10%. This is our fifth straight year of growth. Both our worship attendance growth and our overall growth reveal an influx of young families with children. Any growth is significant with only 1 in 20 churches in America growing.

We miss several of our friends who have moved to other towns, found other church homes, or have gone home to heaven. Even with their loss, there is great encouragement from the continual number of new people who visit and make FCC their home. The final measurement I will share is giving. For over a decade, each year our weekly average giving has increased. In 2014 our average weekly general fund giving was again at a record high.

I have shared a few statistics. If you are interested in more, you will find them in a few other places in this report or you can give me a call. Here are a few that may interest you.

Baptisms: (54) in calendar order

Kami Riley	Jimmy Johnston
Rich Riley	Kristin Johnston
Michele Contreras	Blake Johnston
Cameron Liewer	Grant Johnston
Karissa Dasher	Brett Johnston
Rhonda Jones	Colin Wood
Devin Jones	Cierra Ahlers
Marci Hjorth	Abby Robinson
Jasmine Hjorth	William Hines
Jake Hjorth	Tammy Rohde
Chuck Hughes	Lindsey Brandenburger
Jaime Hughes	Shayla Trausch
Zachary Eberhardt	Amy Swalley
Brynn Carmichael	Jesse Dunbar
Ariel Zach	Amanda Ramberg
Ricci Benson	Colson Stateler
Mary Maddox	Cason Stateler
Cranston Thornburg	Alison Bryde
Sarah Thornburg	Chris Titus
Tori Moser	Autumn Titus
Travis Weinrich	Ashley Titus
Brigett Weinrich	Priscilla Durate
Noah Kalvelage	
Adam Kester	
Kyla Tucker	
Karen Reynolds	
Jesse Ferguson	
Morgan Zeck	
Stephanie Riley	
Jennifer Madison	
John Dunbar	
Olivia Bryant	

New Members: 61 (in calendar order)

Kami Riley	Jaime Hughes	Jimmy Johnston
Rich Riley	Doug "Evan" Evans	Kristin Johnston
Michele Contreras	Annette Evans	Blake Johnston
Cameron Liewer	Zachary Eberhardt	Grant Johnston
Karissa Dasher	Brynn Carmichael	Brett Johnston
Gary Folchert	Ariel Zach	Colin Wood
Josh Arthur	Holly Carpenter	Tammy Rohde
Megan Arthur	Kent Carpenter	Amy Swalley
Tami Chasteen	Ricci Benson	Jesse Dunbar
Jim Chasteen	Mary Maddox	Amanda Ramberg
Rhonda Jones	Troy McCormick	Brian Cordell
Devin Jones	Bobbi McCormick	Beth Cordell
Colten Hiatt	Tori Moser	Colson Stateler
Taylor Hiatt	Travis Weinrich	Cason Stateler
Ron Kerr	Brigett Weinrich	Alison Bryde
Robin Kerr	Noah Kalvelage	
Joshua Feenstra	Adam Kester	
Janelle Feenstra	Kyla Tucker	
Diane Holland	Karen Reynolds	
Marci Hjorth	Jesse Ferguson	
Jasmine Hjorth	Morgan Zeck	
Jake Hjorth	Stephanie Riley	
Chuck Hughes	Jennifer Madison	

<u>Year</u>	<u>Average Worship Attendance</u>	<u>Average Total Attendance</u>	<u>Weekly General Fund Giving</u>
2004	409		\$6,535
2005	400		\$6,999
2006	372		\$7,119
2007	375		\$7,508
2008	391		\$8,237
2009	381		\$8,664
2010	394	495	\$9,239
2011	413 (*420)	521 (*524)	\$10,363
2012	422	514	\$11,661
2013	465	588	\$12,317
2014	489	583	\$13,347
2015	528	630	\$12,757
2016	571 (*580)	705 (*715)	\$14,669

*(#) with Christmas weekend services included

Management Ministry Team

Ministry Team Leader: Don Holloway

2016 Projects and Highlights:

This was a pivotal year in terms of seeing the end of our debt on the original building and observing the first full year of giving to the Thrive Campaign. The total giving to the Thrive Campaign at the end of this year was \$852,125. This was also the year when we were able to see the beginning of construction for the new addition.

This has been an exciting year for other reasons too. The church attendance grew more than 11% for the year and giving exceeded the General Fund Budget by almost \$70,000. We know we serve a faithful God, and his blessings have shown in the generosity of the people of FCC. We are well aware that our current facilities are crowded, especially for the Youth and Children Ministries, but as the growth has continued (for which we are so grateful to God) we are now becoming aware of the dire need for more volunteers in almost all areas of the Church. We are thankful that Taylor Hiatt has joined our staff as the Connections Minister, and she is doing a wonderful job of enlisting more people to serve, but it seems we will need a concerted effort from many people to serve in all areas. Two of our Elders have moved on in 2016. Steve Ball moved to Omaha, and Larry Glandt's term was up, and he chose to not serve another term. Both of these gentlemen will be missed from the Management Team. They both were great servants to the Kingdom, and we appreciated their many talents. Larry will still be an active member of our congregation. We thank both men for their years of service, and welcome Tim Pearson as a new Elder whose term will begin January 1, 2017.

We are thankful for the opportunity to serve, and look forward to another exciting year in 2017.

Adult Discipleship Ministry Team

Ministry Team Leader: Randall Coffin

2016 Reports:

- The Big 4 (Gather Big-Group Small-Serve Somewhere-Give Something) were key areas of discipleship that First Christian offers every person who comes through the doors. The Big 4 were introduced to the congregation through a Fall sermon series. The Fall programming presented a real shift from a church with Small Groups to a church of Small Groups. The Fall Small Group session was launched with 30 Small Groups and 337 participants.
- Men's Ministry offered the third and final session of the Men's Fraternity material. Journey Men continues to be the weekly offering for the discipleship of men. Journey Men groups met Tuesday evening, Friday morning, and Saturday morning. At the end of 2017, Steve Wagner stepped down as the Men's Ministry leader.
- Women's Ministry continued to offer the steady opportunity for Bible Study through the year.

Concerns:

- Volunteers will transition from "Renters" to "Owners" in Small Group Ministry.
- New leaders for Small Groups will be identified, developed, and provided an opportunity to launch a group.
- Men's Ministry will need new leadership and direction.

2017 Goals:

- FCC embrace College Ministry at Northeast Community College.
- Small Group can grow by 10 more groups ending the year with 40 total groups.
- Adult Ministry develop a better plan for Basic Bible Doctrine classes as well as a more cohesive ministry direction between Small Groups, Men's Ministry, and Women's Ministry.

Finance Ministry

Ministry Team Leader: Steve Smith

Ministry Team: Bridgitte Ball, Steve Ball, Randall Coffin, Tim DeFor, and Don Holloway

Ministry Assistants: Teena Fenwick

2016 Financial Summary

GENERAL FUND (58.69% of total giving)	\$ 762,219.36
MISSIONS (10.11% of total giving)	\$ 131,296.49
-EXPENSES DEDICATED TO MISSIONS (IN ADDITION TO GIVING DEDICATED TO Missions)	
-Columbus Church Plant	\$ 12,141.12
-Missions Promotions Expenses	\$ 2,094.12
-Total of Missions Giving and Expenses:	\$ 145,531.73
SPECIAL FUNDS (31.20% of total giving)	\$ 405,231.84
-Building Fund	\$ 400,965.96
-Special Funds	\$ 1,442.21
-Scheffler Scholarship	\$ 2,823.67
TOTAL GIVING (94.92% of total income)	\$ 1,298,747.69
OTHER INCOME (Non-Giving - 94.92% of total income)	\$ 69,463.78
-Interest	\$ 575.06
-Refund/Registrations	\$ <u>68,888.72</u>
TOTAL INCOME: (contributions, interest, reimbursements)	\$ 1,368,211.47
TOTAL EXPENSES:	\$ 1,403,472.24
-General Fund Expenses	\$ 671,843.98
-Missions Expenses	\$ 131,296.49
-Special Expenses	
-Construction Expenditures	\$ 589,451.89
-Special Fund	\$ 1,442.21
Other Expenses	
-Hail Damage Repair	\$ 9,437.67
NET DECREASE:	\$ 35,260.77

Ministry Team: Worship/Technology/Production

Ministry Team Leader: Greg Springer

Worship:

- This year I put some intense focus on developing of Worship Leaders both to lead in my absence and also female leaders who can better engage our female congregants (due to vocal key range, and song content).
- We introduced 6 new worship songs to the congregation which are now in regular use.
- Began regularly utilizing 2 electric guitars on Sunday morning, as well as running the amplifiers off stage which allows us to better control our stage volume and thus increase clarity in the front-of-house sound mix.
- On multiple occasions I consulted Joshua Muehlbauer the worship pastor at our church plant in Columbus, advising him on technology, leadership, and working through some team dynamic issues they were experiencing.
- We changed the way we mic'd the grand piano which dramatically increased the clarity and ability for the grand piano to be heard.
- Led congregation in over 250 songs during the year.

Volunteers:

- We added 10 volunteers onto our worship arts ministry teams including musical, technical, and artistic.
- We implemented a new service planning and volunteer management software called Planning Center Online, which has streamlined our scheduling and equipping of volunteers. This will be used across many different ministries.
- Worship teams put in over 1500 man hours of time in preparing and leading worship this year. Technical teams put in another +300 man hours.

Technology:

- Began talks with AVLA (Audio Video Lighting and Acoustics) consultant HouseRight about the integration of the new worship space as well as remodeling and repurposing of current equipment.
- We continued improving the website, adding integration with Constant contact, adding a blog page, and adding an electronic copy of the newsletter to the website.
- We installed a larger computer server, which improved storage space, speed, stability, security, and also added remote management capabilities.

Production:

- Began recording and producing weekly welcome and video announcements for the services.
- Started a graphic design team made up of volunteers who help to create sermon series graphics and other high use logos for the church.
- For our Forge series, as a creative element, we had Merle Mead a blacksmith, forge steel outside the entrance to inspire people as they entered and exited.
- For our Easter/post Easter series, we shared video testimonies of 3 different individuals as well as a custom performance for Easter integrating video from the 3 stories into the live performance of the song You Never Change by our worship team.

Student Ministry/Club 56

Ministry Team Leader: Marshal Hardy

Throughout the course of 2016 the FUEL Student Ministry was actively growing both in size as well as in purpose. During the year, an average of 150 students and adults met weekly, on Sunday evenings for teaching, worship, small group discussion, and it was a great opportunity to be together. We not only learned, but attempted to apply scripture to our daily lives.

It was also encouraging to see students learn to take what is written in scripture, learn about what it means for them, digest it, and then obey. Over this past year we had 23 of our FUEL students baptized. We also had a quite a few students serve on a couple different mission trips. Over all, the truths that they applied to their lives, had an eternal impact on their lives as well as the lives of those they came into contact with.

Another program that is exciting and growing at FCC is the Club 56 program. Every Wednesday during the 2014-2015 school year, from 2:00-4:00, we have 80 5th and 6th grade students as well as 20 assistants/staffers in the Church building. It has been amazing to see how the students, who come from a variety of faith backgrounds have been able to learn biblical truths, in a fun, engaging, and meaningful way.

One of our major tasks for the 2016-2017 year is volunteer development. We are incredibly blessed to have so many adult volunteers. High level individuals who are actively involved in the community, at their places of employment, coaches, teachers, students, and FUEL/Club 56 volunteers. These same individuals are also leading worship, running sound, leading small groups, and traveling with the programs. We are so blessed to have such incredible volunteers. We don't ever want to take advantage of them, but we do want to help them adopt the vision for the programs and be a part of implementation. High level individuals need to feel challenged, desired, appreciated, and informed.

It has been an amazing year and I look forward to continuing to work hard to provide opportunities to point the lives of students and adults to the Cross!

Weekly Volunteers/Sponsors:

Darryl Bradley, Molly Bradley, Joshua Bleich, Kevin Mueller, Julie Mueller, Julie Muehlbauer, Lee Hahn, Jessica Hahn, Joy Parkinson, Jessica Zelfel, Cameron Liewer, Austin Nathan, Mark Mckibbon, Pai Mitch Danahy, Amanda Danahy, Caitlin Ingram, Brian Lamb, Caitlyn Bleich, Paige Noble, Jeremy Wieman, Darrin Zuhlke, Rachael Zuhlke, Michael Ortmeir, Jennifer Ortmeir, Eric Rogat, Jessica Rogat, Becky Dunlap, Patrick Noble, Carson Hausman, Mara Casey, Ethan Carlson, Clayton Spray, Katie Rusk, Mathew Lillard, Brianna Lamb, Tommy Wisnieski, Camryn Uhlir, Ellie Kumm, Aaron Chleborad, Grant DeFor, Dawson Meir, Madelyn Meier, Jeremiah Finley, Adisson Cassity, and Lisa Linville

Connections Ministry

Ministry Team Leader: Taylor Hiatt

2016 Statistics:

- Current student and adult connections volunteers: 90 unique and active (rotating at least once a month).
- 7 unique volunteer positions as a result from division and addition of past volunteer positons.
- Current positions would allow for 32 connections volunteer each Sunday (128 volunteers for a 4-week month – not including holidays/special events).

Projects:

- Establishing the New Here and Connection Center (developing these areas to better serve regular attenders and guests).
- Adding volunteer positions and centralizing the Connections/Guest Services Ministry.
- Incorporating Planning Center Online for volunteer scheduling and management.
- Restructuring the volunteer onboarding process.

Challenges:

- Reorganizing the Connections/Guest Services Ministry and working to create a thriving volunteer culture.

Goals for 2017:

- Add additional volunteer positions and/or openings in each positon once the new building is completed (make room for new volunteers).
- Work with other staff to develop churchwide volunteer communication, training, appreciation, and recruitment (weekly, monthly, quarterly).
- Visual improvement of Connection Areas (New Here and Connection Center) and improvement of offered connection resources at these locations.
- Find and nurture Connections Team Leaders.
- Continue to be flexible and make adjustments based on the needs of the facility and those that attend.

Children's Ministry

Ministry Team Leader: Kristi Carmichael

Team Members: Romona Noble, Julia Mortimer, Liz Spray

Our Projects & Highlights were:

- We finished the first remodel of north rooms to accommodate additional classrooms/children.
- Our attendance remained consistent across all Children's programming
- We changed Wednesday programming from a weekly kid program to a monthly family program with an emphasis on parent equipping, family service, family worship experience and guided date nights.
- We also implemented a new family dedication celebration for families wishing to commit to raising their children) in a Christ-centered home.
- Also incorporated Planning Center Online for volunteer scheduling and management.

Our biggest challenges were:

- Volunteer recruitment and development
- Transition to the new monthly Wednesday family program (Family JAM)

Helpful statistics:

	Average Attendance	Unique Attenders	Attendance Rate
Sunday Birth – 4 th	126	646	30%
Sunday 5 th & 6 th	19	126	15%
Wednesday Night JAM	87	138	63%
Vacation Bible School	151	180	84%
Family JAM	142	230	62%

	Total Attendance
Winter JAM	32
Summer Camps	54
Trunk-or-Treat	450 (kids)

Student and Adult Volunteers: 219 unique volunteers across all Children's programs

2017 Goals:

- Maximize space and volunteers to accommodate growth
- Develop written volunteer handbooks and training manuals
- Work with new Connections Minister to increase volunteer participation