



CHRISTIAN CHURCH

focus

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF 1ST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, FEBRUARY 2026 – VOLUME 81

BE REAL: A Journey Through 1 John Starting February 8



How do you know if your faith is real? The Apostle John wrote his first letter to help us answer that question with confidence. Through February, we'll discover what authentic Christianity looks like—not religion based on performance, but a real relationship with God that transforms how we live.

John gives us practical tests: Are we walking in the light? Do we love with actions, not just words? Are we living as God's children? This isn't about earning salvation—it's about examining the evidence that we truly know Him.

Join us as we explore what it means to Be Real in our faith, our love, and our daily walk with Christ. John wrote "*so that you may know you have eternal life.*" Let's discover that assurance together.

PARENT POWER

When Should You Seek Counseling for Your Child?

Sarah noticed her normally cheerful third-grader, Emma, had stopped asking friends over to play. At bedtime, Emma clung to her mother, crying about stomachaches that mysteriously disappeared by morning. Her teacher reported she'd become withdrawn, often staring blankly instead of participating. When Emma whispered one night, "I just don't think anyone likes me anymore," Sarah knew something deeper was happening—but was it serious enough for counseling?

Many parents face this uncertainty.

As a parent, deciding whether your child needs professional help can feel overwhelming. Here are clear signs it's time to consider counseling:

Seek help when you notice:

- Persistent changes in behavior, mood, or sleep patterns
- Acts of violence and continued anger
- Declining school performance or sudden reluctance to attend
- Withdrawal from friends and activities they once enjoyed
- Expressions of worthlessness, hopelessness, or self-harm
- Extreme anxiety that interferes with daily activities
- Difficulty coping with major life changes (divorce, death, relocation)

Trust your instincts. If something feels wrong, it probably deserves your attention. Counseling isn't a sign of failure—it's a proactive step toward the health of your child. Early intervention often prevents bigger struggles later. A trained counselor provides your child with tools to process emotions and navigate challenges in age-appropriate ways.

Here's where your church can help. Call the church office at 770-832-3974 or email Paul@1stChristianChurch.com to get in touch with one of the two counselors at our church: Lily Ward or Rachel Veal.

Remember: Seeking help demonstrates strength and love. You wouldn't hesitate to treat a broken arm—emotional health deserves the same priority.

Two Words

By Kenneth MacHarg

There are two words that I never want to hear used together.

They are “quick” and “prayer.” As in: “Let’s have a quick prayer and we’ll dismiss.” Or, “We’ll have a quick prayer and get started.”

I would suggest that “quick prayers” are basically a formality with which to open or close a meeting, a worship service or some other event. They are perfunctory, shallow and generally accompany the putting away of papers and books and the shuffling to find the car keys.

Prayer, properly done, is anything but quick. Not that prayer needs to be long, drawn out, boring or rambling. Those aren’t necessarily much better.

But prayer, genuine prayer, genuinely conversing with God, is sharing our deepest thoughts, emotions and desires. Prayer is exploring who we are and who God is. Prayer is expressing our adoration of almighty God, our praise for all that the Lord has done for us, our thanksgiving for His faithfulness and love, our appreciation for his forgiveness and his life and death for our salvation, our requests that he will continue to make Himself known to us, our confession of our shortcomings and failures, our petitions for our own faithfulness and devotion, and our requests for purity and service.

You can’t do all or any of that quickly. It just doesn’t happen. It won’t.

When Polly and I talk--when we really talk and share--it takes time. It happens over the meal table, or on a long drive, or in the evening as we are winding down the day. We talk, we appreciate, we question, we explore, we confess, we commit.

Of course, we have those occasional bursts of short communication. “Don’t forget to pick up some milk.” “Could you please bring me another cup of coffee?” “See you later.”

Those brief messages communicate. Sometimes we use code that has developed between us over more than 50 years. But, those bursts of rapid communication work only because we have spent half a century communicating frequently and in depth.

There are those times when we and God can communicate with a so-called “quick” prayer. But those short bursts of prayer will only truly communicate between us and God if we have spent substantial time in deep, heart-felt prayer in the privacy of our homes and in the middle of our worship.

Just the term “quick prayer” communicates shallowness and a lack of sincere communication with God. It indicates a rush to do something else, perhaps seemingly more important, than to spend time in prayer with the Lord. It demonstrates a stronger interest in getting home to the TV or on to the next event than in spending time expressing ourselves to Him.

If we are not communicating in depth, then the “quick” prayers that we use to open and close meetings are nothing more than procedural functions. Certainly, they do not facilitate any kind of quality communication with our Lord.

So, when we pray, whether in the quiet of devotions or at the beginning or end of a meeting, let’s really pray, communicate, appreciate, trust and believe in Him who knows the desires of our hearts and in His compassion and love hears and answers all of our prayers.



Sunday February 15th @ 5:30pm

**Bean Supper Provided
Bring a dessert to share**

Just for YOUth

When I've Made a Bad Mistake

So, you really messed up. Now what?

First, take a breath. You're not the first person to make a terrible choice, and you won't be the last. The Bible is full of people who crashed and burned—Peter denied Jesus three times, David committed adultery and murder, Paul hunted down Christians. Yet God didn't give up on any of them.

Here's what to do when you've blown it:

- 1. Own it.** Don't minimize or make excuses. This is hard to do. We all want to look good, and that's impossible when you're admitting fault. When David finally admitted his sin, he prayed, "Against You, You only, have I sinned." (Psalm 51:4). Be honest with God—He already knows anyway.
- 2. Confess it.** Tell God what you did. First John 1:9 promises, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us." That's not just nice words—it's a guarantee. Ask God to break your heart over your failure – NOT over having been caught in the failure.
- 3. Accept forgiveness.** This is the hardest part. You might feel like you don't deserve it, but guess what—you don't—none of us do. But there's good news in all this: God's love for you isn't based on your performance. Romans 8:1 says, "There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."
- 4. Make it right where you can.** If you need to apologize to someone or fix something, do it. Repentance means turning around. Repentance never stands still.
- 5. Move forward.** Satan wants you stuck in shame. God wants you restored. Don't let one mistake define your whole story. When you have owned it, confessed your sin to God, accepted His forgiveness, and made it right where you can, then (and only then) listen to no voice that condemns you.

Finally, remember this: *Your worst moment isn't your final moment. God specializes in second chances. Come back. He's waiting.*

Mission Moment

Change is a fact of life whether in Carroll Country or on the mission field. **Northwest Haiti Christian Mission** had been established 30 years before members of FCC visited the work on the northern coast of Haiti in 2009. By that time, many far-reaching programs and facilities had been developed to support the evangelistic, educational, health and medical work based in Sain-Louis-d-Nord, Haiti.

For the past several years now, our international news has been reporting the political and economic chaos of the island nation. Due to the gang violence of the last five years, **NWHCM** programs and services have been forced to modify. Foreign doctors and volunteers can no longer enter the country for mission trips. In fact, the Port-au-Prince airport no longer functions. On the bright side, if there can be said to be one in Haiti, generous donations from abroad have enabled **NWHCM** to carry on by allowing in-country doctors to set up practices coordinated with the mission. These doctors can charge lower prices. A medical doctor, a dentist and an orthopedist serve the Haitian community using the mission buildings. Gran Moun Program for elderly and the Miriam Center for special needs children still reside at the **NWHCM** compound.

The mission orphanage had to be abandoned, being in a remote area and having limited access to a water supply. The “orphans” from the orphanage have been either relocated to three towns, aged out, or placed with family or foster care. By 2032 all will be aged out of care. The Haitian government requires those 18 or over to be separated from younger children and prefers foster care for the younger ones. Three former residents of **NWHCM** are attending college.

For the last 7 years, Sam Guilliams has served as Executive Director of the mission. Mark your calendar now for February 15, 10 a.m. to hear him speak during the Sunday School hour in the auditorium.

New Members



Terry Hudson, Mallory, Nora and Charley Evans joined Sunday, January 18th after the 9 AM worship service.



Food Pantry Update

Beginning in February First Christian Church Food Pantry will have a new distribution date. The new date will be the third Wednesday of each month. The change will take place on February 18, 2026. The time will remain the same 9:00-10:00AM.

The Food Pantry will continue to operate as it has in the past the only change is the date, which will be the third Wednesday of the month. All new participants will be required to have photo identification, be a Carroll County resident, and have a personal interview.

It is our hope to better serve the Community with this change and make it more accessible for those we are now serving.

The dates the Food Pantry will be open are February 18, March 18, April 15, May 20, June 17, July 15, August 19, September 16, October 21, November 18, and December 16.

The Food Pantry staff of First Christian Church looks forward to serving you and the Community on the third Wednesday of each month. If you have any questions please contact the church office 770-832-3974.

In His Service,

Marjorie Aldridge-Food Pantry Chairman



Congratulations to our Dr. Chris Carr on being chosen District Seven Music Teacher for 2026 by his peers. Chris' family serves God's Kingdom at FCC where they regularly attend the 11 a.m. service and help with the youth and other programs of our congregation. PRAISE GOD FOR PUBLIC SERVANTS LIKE DR. CARR.



Prayer Requests

- Elders and staff
- Youth and 1st kids
- Chad Taylor and Whitney Vaugh (Police officers who serve on our security team)

Splish! Splash! May 25-29 or June 1-5



Every summer Johnson University situated in the Smokie Mountains offers a unique camping opportunity for senior citizens. This wonderfully affordable vacation offers mornings of worship and Bible studies, afternoons of on or off campus activities, with evenings of cultural presentations. Cam Huxford, preacher emeritus at Compassion Christian in Savannah, Georgia, will be guest speaker and Dr. Tommy Smith, former President of Johnson University, will lead the daily group Bible study.

Campers live in student dorms, two to a room with bath. A private room is an option. Or the campus provides an area for RVs. Food service at Johnson amazes the campers with its wide range of foods and the thought given to special dietary needs. Every evening ice cream and popcorn are available as Christian folks from across the nation mingle for conversation.

With the theme of SPLISH! SPLASH! one can expect the auditorium to be cleverly decorated and much of the silliness of the week to take on a nautical slant. For example, John Thomas Oakes (professional entertainer) and his father Tommy will appear one evening as Shem and Japeth, THE FLOOD BROTHERS, telling the story of the father's mission with a nod to the The Blues Brothers.

For very active seniors, the camp provides a special track with activities including biking, golf, kayaking, or hiking. Look for posters in both areas of the church or go on line, JohnsonU.edu/Renew for more information on cost, specific details, and registration info. Both weeks traditionally fill to capacity rather quickly. If you think this might be for you, plan to register by March 15. If you need to talk to FCC folks who enjoy this week, look up Mary Alice Hobson, Ken and Polly McHarg, or Sandy Vierling.



*Brittany Vibhakar & Beth Morgan
Children's Directors*



There are a lot of great things going on at First Kids this month!

Wednesday Nights

Brenda Holland continues to teach our elementary aged children about different Heros of the Bible...in January they learned about the persistence of Noah, the obedience of Abraham, the submissiveness of Moses & the fearlessness of Joshua! These lessons are hands on and immersive – if you're child isn't already attending Wednesday nights, it's not too late to have them join. Our preschool & kindergarten aged children are being taught by Deborah Jackson, who is doing lessons that reinforce the various topics being taught on Sunday mornings. Repetition is very important at that age and she presents the Bible lessons in several different ways to help the kids retain what they are learning.

Sunday Mornings

Our continued goal is for every child to learn the order of all 66 books of the Bible in addition to learning new memory verses each month! We are thrilled that we have many children that learn the memory verse each month and we have several that have learned all the books of the New Testament and are working on finishing learning all the books of the Old Testament. They earn prizes when they memorize the monthly verse and/or the books of the Bible. Last month, we had a lesson on the Lord's Prayer. If your child is able to recite it, they can also earn a prize for doing that.

Please help your child work on the books of the Bible & memory verse at home:

Preschool: "Jesus said, "Let the children come to me."" - Matthew 19:14 NLT

Elementary: "I give you a new command. Love one another. You must love one another, just as I have loved you."
John 13:34, NIrV

Offering & Service Project

This year all offerings given at 1st Kids will go towards purchasing food for the little food pantry on the corner of East Ward & Rome Street. Kids will have the opportunity to replenish the food on various Sunday mornings. In addition to using any offering collected, families are also welcome to bring & donate non-perishable foods.

Looking Ahead

Save the date for VBS! It may only be February, but summer will be here before we know it. Mark your calendars for June 15th – 18th and Sunday, June 21st and plan to join us at Vacation Bible School! Stay tuned for more details and a theme reveal coming soon!



**CELEBRATE
RECOVERY**
A CHRIST-CENTERED RECOVERY PROGRAM



SUNDAYS AT 4 PM

CONTACT JIM BLUMENFELD
FOR MORE INFO
470-654-3469

Senior



**February 18th at
Suttons**

**11:30 AM
(Dutch Treat)**



*Jake McPike
Youth Minister*

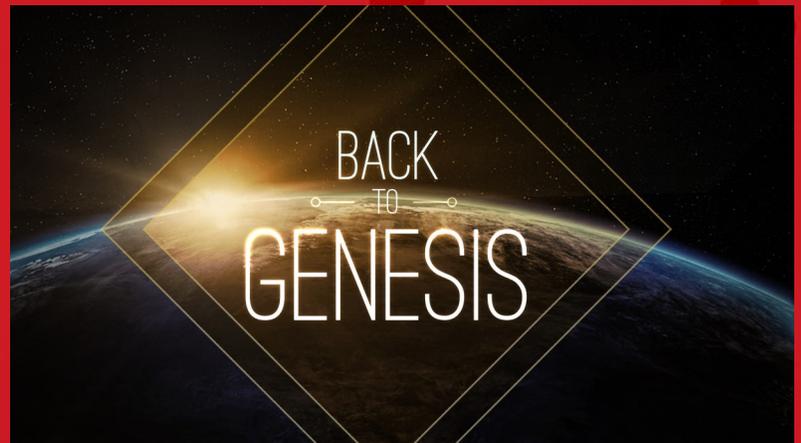
Pipeline Student Ministry will spend the month of February continuing a series on the book of Genesis. This series highlights God as creator, the significance of being made in His image, and navigating a worldview battle.

The series breakdown is as follows:

Week 1: Creation and fall of man

Week 2: The flood

Week 3: Abraham and the promise



Church Events

- 2/1 - Celebrate Recovery 4 PM
- 2/4 - Wonderful Wednesday 5:30 PM
- 2/8 - Celebrate Recovery 4 PM
- 2/9 – Omega 6 PM
- 2/11 - Alpha 10 AM, Wonderful Wednesday 5:30 PM
- 2/15 - Beans and Bingo 5:30 PM, Celebrate Recovery 4 PM
- 2/18 - Food Pantry 9-10 AM, Senior Fellowship at Suttons 11:30 AM, No Wonderful Wednesday (Winter Break)
- 2/22- Celebrate Recovery 4 PM
- 2/25- Wonderful Wednesday 5:30 PM

WAYS TO GIVE



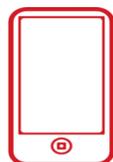
Sunday (Giving boxes)



1stChristianChurch.com



306 College Street
Carrollton, GA 30117



Text 1stcc to 73256

January Numbers

| | <u>Weekly Offering Needed</u> | | | |
|--------------|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | <u>1-4</u> | <u>1-11</u> | <u>1-18</u> | <u>1-25</u> |
| Attendance | 257 | 302 | 293 | No Services |
| Offering | \$26,429.50 | \$22,902.93 | \$39,446.10 | \$3,554.66 |
| YTD Received | \$26,429.50 | \$49,332.43 | \$88,778.53 | \$92,333.19 |
| YTD Needed | \$17,692.31 | \$35,384.62 | \$53,076.93 | \$70,769.24 |