



CHRISTIAN CHURCH

focus

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF 1ST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

SEPT 2026 – VOLUME 88



Finding Wholeness: Reflections on Our Night of Prayer

Our recent Night of Prayer was a powerful hour dedicated entirely to seeking God's healing touch. Together, we brought our deepest needs before the Lord, praying for physical healing from disease and cognitive struggles, as well as freedom from addictions, anger, and anxiety. Just as earnestly, we lifted up the quiet wounds of the soul—asking God to bring comfort and renewal to the brokenhearted, reconciliation to broken families, and hope to broken dreams.

If you are carrying pain today, remember that God invites you to bring every burden to Him. Healing is a journey, and you do not have to walk it alone. In the spirit of James 5:14–16, never hesitate to **reach out to our church leadership to be prayed over and anointed with oil**. Our elders and pastors consider it an honor to stand with you in faith.

For ongoing encouragement toward healing, everyone is warmly welcome to attend **Celebrate Recovery** on **Sunday afternoons** at 1st Christian. It is a safe, Christ-centered community ready to walk alongside you through every hurt, habit, and hangup. Come as you are, and experience the healing power of fellowship and grace.

Randy Barnhart
Senior Minister



Besides Labor Day and the first day of fall, September brings a variety of national observances, from National Pizza Day to Chocolate Milkshake Day. Perhaps more significant, however, is that the entire month of September is recognized as **National Recovery Month**.

At 1st Christian Church, we believe that change and healing are possible for everyone through God's grace and a personal commitment to Christ. One of the ministries we offer to support that healing journey is **Celebrate Recovery (CR)**.

Celebrate Recovery is a Christ-centered program that helps people experience God's healing from life's hurts, habits, and hang-ups (not just addictions). Founded in 1991, it uses biblical principles and supportive community to encourage lasting life change. Over the past 35 years, Celebrate Recovery has grown into an international ministry, helping countless people find freedom from struggles such as addiction, anger, pride, codependency, depression, gambling, and many other life-controlling issues. While no two CR groups look exactly alike, all Celebrate Recovery ministries follow a common structure and set of principles that unite members across the world. Whether traveling for work, vacation, or family visits, participants can use the Celebrate Recovery app to find a local meeting and immediately connect with a familiar community of support.

Over the years, God has faithfully provided leadership for this ministry at First Christian Church. Recognizing the need for CR in our community, Billy and Cyndi Ressler launched Celebrate Recovery 14 years ago. After leading both Celebrate Recovery and their R&R ministry for many years, the Resslers transitioned CR leadership to Jim and Laura Blumenfeld. Under their guidance, the ministry continued to grow, and meeting times were moved from Friday evenings to Sunday afternoons at 4:00 p.m.

Recently, recognizing both the opportunities for growth and the increasing time demands of leadership, Jim and Laura passed the ministry to Steven and Nicole Miller. Having experienced firsthand the redemptive power of Celebrate Recovery, Steven and Nicole stepped into leadership with enthusiasm and a heart for serving others. They have continued training new leaders and expanding opportunities for ministry.

God is using this leadership team to impact neighboring communities as well. Through the efforts of several participant leaders, a new Celebrate Recovery ministry is scheduled to launch at Bowdon Baptist Church in January 2027, with meetings planned for Friday nights. Praise the Lord!

How can you support this important outreach to the broken and hurting?

First and foremost, pray. Pray for those who attend, for those seeking healing, and for the leaders who faithfully serve each week. You can also invite a friend, family member, neighbor, or coworker who may be struggling with something that is keeping them from becoming the person God created them to be. A personal invitation, and even accompanying someone on their first visit, can make all the difference.

As our ministry continues to grow, new opportunities for service are emerging. Nursery care is currently provided for children who attend with their parents, and there is an immediate need to launch a **Celebrate Recovery Student Ministry** for school-aged children. To support this effort, we are seeking four or five couples who can model healthy Christian family life and commit to serving one month of Sundays at a time. These volunteers will help teach age-appropriate lessons that reinforce the same biblical principles their parents are learning in Celebrate Recovery. Could God be calling you to serve in this way?

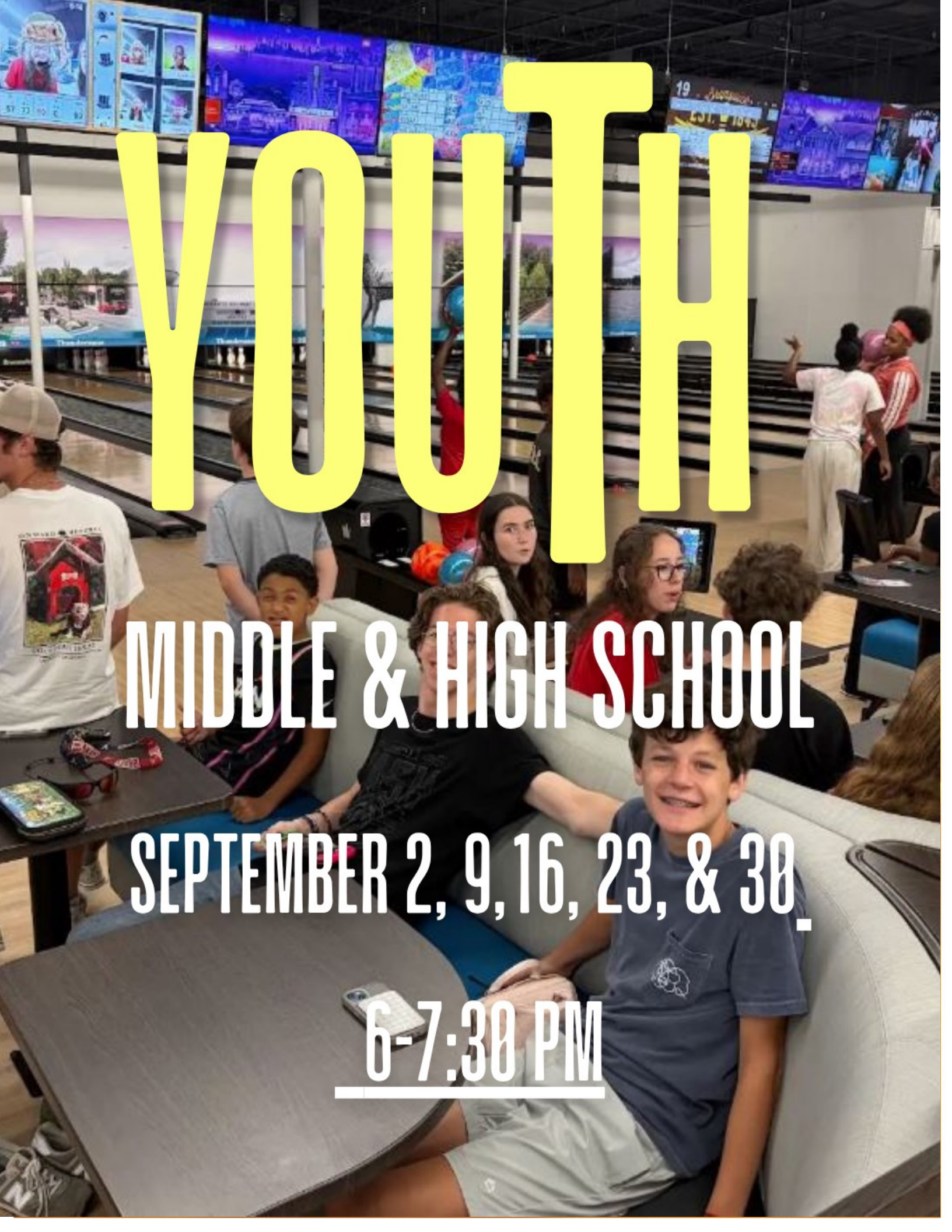
For more information, to volunteer, or to learn more about Celebrate Recovery, contact:

Steven and Nicole Miller

CelebrateRecovery@1stChristianChurch.com

706-452-3953

We all have struggles, hurts, habits, and hang-ups. Celebrate Recovery is a place where people can experience God's grace, find healing, and walk alongside others on the journey toward freedom.

A group of youth are sitting on a light-colored sectional sofa in a modern lounge area. In the background, there are several large digital screens displaying various colorful images, including a cityscape and a map. The word "YOUTH" is overlaid in large, bold, yellow capital letters. Below it, the text "MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL" is in white, and "SEPTEMBER 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30." is also in white. At the bottom, "6-7:30 PM" is written in white and underlined.

YOUTH

MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL

SEPTEMBER 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30.

6-7:30 PM



SEPTEMBER SERMON SERIES

Life can test us in ways we never expected. How do we keep trusting God when the path is uncertain, the wait is long, and the future feels unclear? This September, join us for **Resilient Faith**, an encouraging journey through Hebrews 11. Together, we'll learn from people who trusted God's promises, followed when they could not see the outcome, endured to the end, and also managed to mess up a few times, too! Their stories will help you build a faith that stands strong.

*Randy Barnhart
Senior Minister*

The generous **Food Pantry Ministry** of First Christian has been operational for over 23 years. Over two decades ago, Julee Gray and Elaine Hobson saw a need in the community and organized a food ministry for people whose resources couldn't be stretched to the end of the month or the next paycheck. Members of the congregation responded warmly. Today, under the direction of Marjorie Aldridge, the ministry has 12 reliable volunteers. These amazing servants show up the 3rd Wednesday of each month from 8:30-10:00AM, to pack boxes, welcome guests, interview, do a devotional, check guests in, and load boxes for recipients--- rain, shine, snow, or sleet.

The ministry welcomes new volunteers who are willing to observe, learn, and help support the program financially. For several years, it has been blessed to receive an EMC Foundation Grant. The foundation supports the ministry because its purpose and careful management meet their requirements. We are deeply grateful for this generous contribution. Kroger also partners with the food pantry, allowing it to purchase food in bulk at excellent prices.

If you are interested in contributing to this worthwhile ministry with your time or money, see Marjorie Aldridge for more details.

Each month, we serve between 2 and 30 guests, depending on the need.

Each guest is given a box of food based on family size and income.

Each box is identical and contains enough food for 2-3 weeks.



BAPTISMS

Felix Mensah (pictured on the left) was baptized by Randy Barnhart right after the 11 AM service on Sunday, August 9th. Felix attends the University of West Georgia.

Ben Burch (pictured 2nd from left) was baptized by Randy Barnhart right after the 11 AM service on Sunday, August 23rd.



Healing IN MOTION

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT GROUP



YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

Support. Understanding. Growth.



A SAFE PLACE TO HEAL.

Share, connect, and find hope.



STRONGER TOGETHER.

Healing happens in community.



EVERY WEDNESDAY | 1PM TO 2PM



FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH



**306 COLLEGE STREET
CARROLLTON, GA 30117**

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:



SARAH BETH

(589) 979-1970



JOSHUA

(404) 561-9375

Take the next step. You deserve it.

Senior



Join us for Senior Fellowship!

Date: September 17

Time: 11:30 AM

Location: Sutton's Restaurant

Dutch Treat – everyone pays for their own meal.

Come enjoy the fun and fellowship with friends!

Open to all seniors 55 and up.

SENIOR MINISTRY RELAUNCH IN THE MAKING

Decades ago Eddie and Sarah Duffey, a young couple of FCC, saw a need for fellowship among the older members of the church and began such a program. Years later Marggo and Ron Shepherd revived the waning fellowship. When Gerald Howard, minister/entrepreneur/caterer, moved to Carrollton, he saw where he was needed and the KEENAGERS blossomed and grew under his (and wife

Kay's) leadership. Since Gerald's death we have been offering basically just a Dutch-treat meal at Suttons.

Recently a committee consisting of David and Diane McFarland, Jeffrey and Danielle Davis, Jim and Marie Ratcliff, Jerry Stanford, and Mary Alice Hobson has been formed to organize and begin a ministry for the retired population of the congregation. With a kick off date in January 2027, we look forward to this effort. If you have any opinions or suggestions, see one of these people named and they will put it forward for consideration. The more ideas, the better.

SOMETHING GREAT IS COMING

THIS JANUARY

FOR SENIOR SAINTS



*Brittany Vibhakar &
Beth Morgan
Children's Directors*



Wonderful Wednesdays

Wonderful Wednesdays are in full swing! That said, it's not too late to get your child plugged in! Our 1st -5th graders have been learning about the fruit of the spirit and how to practice them in their own lives. Our pre-school, PreK & Kindergarteners have been learning about being made by God.

Candy Collection

Please help us collect candy for our David & Goliath Halloween outreach event! Beginning Wednesday, September 9th, bins will be located in the 9 AM & 11 AM foyers. We are expecting hundreds of children to pass through our doors and would love to be able to provide them with both the Word of God and a sweet treat they can eat!

Save the Date: Christmas Performance

Save the date to see the preschool & elementary age children perform in this year's Christmas performance, on Sunday, December 6th! There will be an early morning rehearsal on Saturday, December 5th. More information coming soon!

Save the date and join us October 31st on a brand new journey as we take our community back in time to ancient Israel. Once there, they will encounter a young shepherd boy named David and a huge giant named Goliath. Similar to Exodus, this will be an interactive experience.

This is such a great opportunity to introduce people to the Word of God, show them around the church in the form of the journey, and make a connection with some that may otherwise never set foot inside a church. Please be praying about this outreach and how you might take part in it.

If you have questions or would like to volunteer, please contact Beth or Brittany at Beth@1stchristianchurch.com or Brittany@1stchristianchurch.com.



Hearing From Your Elders

Many qualities of an elder in the church are listed by the apostle Paul (self-controlled, upright, holy, disciplined, etc.) as are many duties (leading, teaching, rebuking, etc.), and as an elder it is important for me to continually evaluate my thoughts and behaviors in order to be an appropriate and growing leader. Church leadership covers a wide range of duties, and our group of elders are deeply involved in the various ministries of the church giving oversight to and advice to ministry leaders as well as participating in the many programs FCC offers. Our role as overseers involves coordinated efforts with the ministry staff to plan for future needs, meeting as a group with the senior minister to make long range ministry plans, and overseeing the fiscal functions of the church as budgets are developed and spending planned. Titus 1:9 states, " He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it." For me, this means that I must be constantly studying and learning and praying for guidance so that my understanding of God's plan for His church and my leadership are as in sync as possible.

Scott Hobson



Titus 1 and 1 Timothy 3 spell out the official requirements for an elder as an overseer of the church. Some think of an elder as one who oversees the business aspects of the church including budgets, buildings, personnel, etc. Personally, I immediately think of teaching. Studying, learning, and sharing the lessons found in scripture are a big part of serving the church as an elder. Shepherding the flock is another key part of being an elder. From birth to the grave and everywhere in between you will find countless ways our elders shepherd. The list is long: prayer, phone calls, listening to the needs and challenges people are facing, visits, text messages, more prayer, etc. Any and all ways of seeing, caring about, and encouraging others in their walk through this life are all part of the ministry for elders. Whenever possible, I want to be a peacemaker. When hundreds of people are involved in anything, there will be differences of opinions. As a leader, I seek to identify shared goals and possible solutions. When decisions are made, communication is very important for unity. What do elders need? They need the prayers and support of believers committed to the ministry. Prayers for wisdom and being led by the Holy Spirit in every decision to be made and every challenge we face. In the end, elders are simply servants overseeing and loving the local congregation.

Greg Shackelford



Continued on next page

Hearing From Your Elders continued

1 Timothy 3 has clear guidelines as to the attributes of an overseer/elder. This list gives character & behavioral traits that an elder should portray. These include, but are not limited to being:

- Temperate
- Self-controlled
- Hospitable
- Able to Teach
- Not Violent but Gentle
- Not Quarrelsome or a Lover of Money

I am in a situation different from the other elders as I work on staff for the church as the Facilities Manager. In that position, I have the opportunity to interact with different people during the course of a week due to the number of folks that have reason to come to the church. From church members to community members passing by, to tradesmen doing repairs & maintenance, I have an opportunity to present a quality of character that will reflect the qualities that Christ asks that we exhibit and discuss how Jesus is working in our everyday lives.

Tony Ward



As an elder at First Christian Church, I am responsible for the offering meditation schedule. Besides that, I am heavily involved with the Children Ministry and Youth Program. Sunday mornings at 9 a.m. you will find me singing with the Praise Team. Happily, I volunteer for projects that come up with which I can help. In my leadership position, I feel like my willingness to serve is a top priority. If there is every a question you would like to discuss about the doctrine or programming of the church, please reach out to me.

Stanley Reid



Jason Faircloth is the youngest of the five elders. He and his wife Lindsay are raising four young sons, the oldest a freshman in college. Jason exhibits a love of teaching Jesus. He and Lindsay have a Sunday School class at 10m and he often preaches when Randy needs a replacement. Jason also represents FCC on the board of Open Hands.

Jason Faircloth





*Randy Barnhart
Senior Minister*

How to Have Your Very Best Semester Yet

A standout semester doesn't happen by accident—it's built on daily, intentional habits. Whether you're walking the halls of high school or stepping onto a college campus, here is how to make this term your strongest one yet:

- **Anchor Your Schedule Early:** Don't rely on memory. Plug assignment deadlines, exams, and work shifts into a digital calendar or planner during week one. Set up digital reminders. Proactive planning eliminates late-night panic.
- **Protect the Basics:** Late nights catch up fast. Aim for consistent sleep, stay hydrated, and give your mind actual margin to recharge. Sharp focus in class starts the night before.
- **Find Your Core Community:** Surround yourself with friends who sharpen you, encourage your faith, and hold you accountable. Attend worship every Sunday. Get plugged into a campus ministry or small group right away.
- **Own Your Growth:** Don't wait until midterms to ask for help. Visit office hours, join study groups, and remember that asking questions is a mark of strength, not weakness.

Approach each day with purpose, give your best effort, and trust God with the results!

Congratulations Shannon

Shannon Crowder started accumulating certificates a couple years ago to prepare herself for a career in medicine. Recently she aced the program in healthcare management/medical assistant. Meeting this goal has given her the courage to go on for more education. Instead of looking for a job, Shannon has enrolled in a new program being offered to train in conducting sonograms. Don't you know the Crowder family is proud of her!!! Shannon, your church family is equally proud.



1ST CHRISTIAN CHURCH **Family Night** **in the Park**

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12
Lake Carroll Pavillion 5 - 8 PM

Join us for an evening of fellowship and food. FCC will provide hot dogs and drinks. Bring your favorite side dish and invite your friends to join us in the fun. Enjoy boat rides, exciting games for the kids, and the pavilion's proximity to an amazing playground. Stay cool under the pavilion's giant ceiling fans and enjoy the beautiful lake.



PARENT POWER

Five Things That Won't Fit in Their Backpacks

The backpacks are packed, the lunches are made, and the school-year routine is underway. But children need more than pencils, folders, and a dependable ride to school. Here are five things grade-school children need their Christian parents—and grandparents—to remember.

1. Their hearts matter more than their grades.

Celebrate effort, improvement, kindness, and faithfulness—not just report cards. Ask, “What was the best part of your day?” and “Was there anyone who needed a friend?” Scripture reminds us that while people often focus on outward achievement, “the Lord looks at the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).

2. Home should be their safest place to struggle.

Children will forget assignments, make poor choices, and sometimes disappoint us. They need correction, but they also need to know that failure will not cost them our love. Let home be where they can tell the truth, ask embarrassing questions, and try again. “Be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry” (James 1:19).

3. Faith is learned in ordinary moments.

Children need more than an occasional spiritual lecture. They need to see us pray when we are worried, forgive when we are hurt, thank God for everyday blessings, and make worship a priority. Deuteronomy 6 tells parents to talk about God’s truth throughout the normal rhythms of life. A two-minute bedtime prayer may shape a child more deeply than we realize.

4. Our words become part of their inner voice.

Children often carry our words long after they leave home. Tell them, “I love being your parent.” “God made you for a purpose.” “One mistake does not define you.” “I’m proud of the way you treated that person.” Proverbs 16:24 says gracious words bring sweetness and healing. Speak the kind of words you hope they will someday say to themselves.

5. They are watching how we treat people.

Our children notice how we speak about teachers, coaches, other parents, and children who are different from them. We cannot teach them to honor others while they hear us constantly criticizing them. Jesus said, “Do to others as you would have them do to you” (Luke 6:31). Let them see respect, patience, generosity, and grace lived out at home.

Parents, you will not handle every school-day moment perfectly. Grandparents, your encouragement, prayers, and steady presence matter enormously. Our children do not need flawless adults. They need faithful ones—people who keep pointing them toward Jesus, loving them through every season, and reminding them that their deepest identity is not found in a classroom, on a team, or on a report card.

It is found in Christ.

*Randy Barnhart
Senior Minister*

PICKLEBALL *and* PIZZA

GAME ON!

ALL PICKLEBALL PLAYERS ARE INVITED TO JOIN STUDENTS FROM UWG
CHRISTIAN CAMPUS FELLOWSHIP ON SEPT. 8, OCT. 13 & NOV. 10, 6 - 8 PM
IN THE FAMILY LIFE CENTER



THE CHANGING OF THE GUARD

At multiple famous tourist areas, people gather around to watch the changing of the guard. Here at First Christian the guard changed so quietly that it was nearly overlooked. After 7 years of service, Chad Taylor has been replaced by Whitney Vaughn a resource officer for the Carrollton City Police Department.

Chad made many friends during his years at security for the services and will be missed. However, we are happy for him that he was given a chance, through the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, to work with 10–12-year-old baseball players in a discipleship ministry. Chad's youngest child fits into this program, so it is a win-win. If you see Chad around in his regular job for the police department or at the ballfield, tell him how much he was appreciated for 7 years.

Now, get to know Whitney. Introduce yourself. Chat with her. We want her to know we do not take her presence lightly.



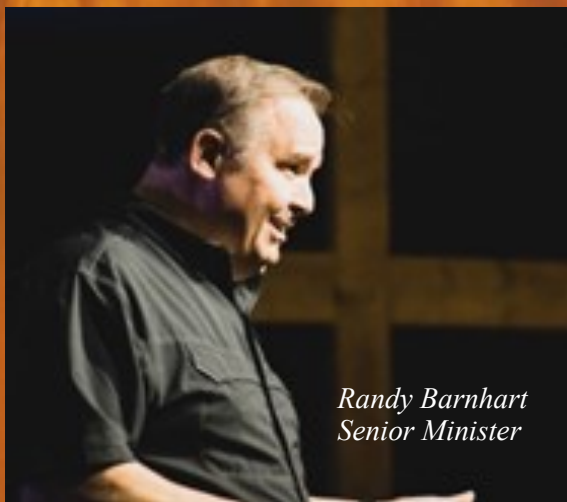
Mary Alice Hobson and Whitney get acquainted.

What Would You Like to Hear a Lesson On?

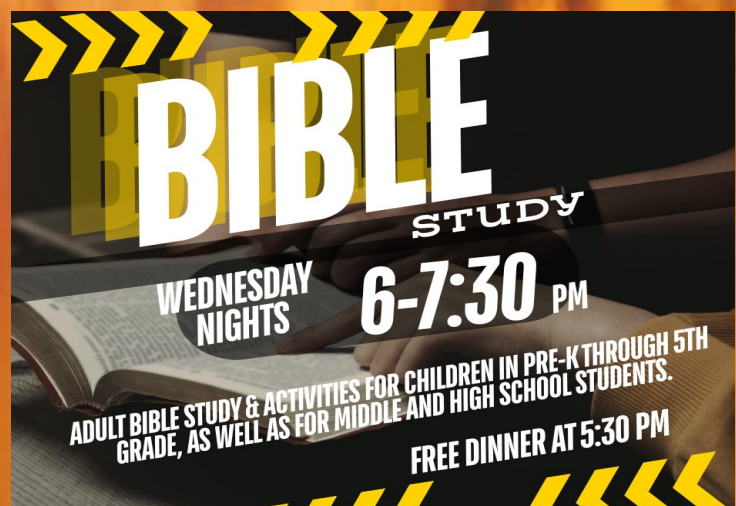
On Wednesday nights our adults are covering a series of topics that members of the church requested to study. We'd like to know what subjects, personal challenges, Bible passages and theological curiosities you'd like to hear covered.

YOU
ASKED
FOR IT

Submit your questions to
Randy@1stChristianChurch.com Keep on Asking



*Randy Barnhart
Senior Minister*



UPCOMING EVENTS

9/2 - Wonderful Wednesday 5:30 dinner, Bible study at 6 PM

9/6 - Celebrate Recovery 4 PM

9/9 - Alpha 10 AM, Wonderful Wednesday 5:30 dinner, Bible study at 6 PM

9/12 - Family Day at the Lake Carroll Park 5—8 PM

9/13 - Celebrate Recovery 4 PM

9/14 - Omega 6 PM in the bride’s room

9/16 - Food Pantry 9-10 AM, Wonderful Wednesday 5:30 dinner, Bible study at 6 PM

9/17 - Senior Fellowship 11:30 AM at Suttons

9/20- Celebrate Recovery 4 PM

9/27 - Celebrate Recovery 4 PM

9/30- Wonderful Wednesday 5:30 dinner, Bible study at 6 PM

WAYS TO GIVE



Sunday (Giving boxes)



1stChristianChurch.com



306 College Street
Carrollton, GA 30117



Text 1stcc to 73256

Weekly Offering Needed

17,692.31

AUGUST

8/2

8/9

8/16

8/23

8/30

Attendance	282	299	298	257	263
Offering	\$23,986.20	\$15,741.30	\$10,419.74	\$17,926.70	\$10,775.75
YTD Received	\$617,194.28	\$632,935.58	\$643,355.32	\$661,282.02	\$672,057.77
YTD Needed	\$548,461.61	\$566,153.92	\$583,846.23	\$601,538.54	\$619,230.85