



CHRISTIAN CHURCH

focus

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF 1ST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, JANUARY 2026 – VOLUME 80

LIVING A LIFE FILLED WITH THANKFULNESS

"Pray Like This"

new sermon series kicks off 2026

Starting January 4, our new sermon series, **Pray Like This: 21 Days to a Transformed 2026**, will unpack Jesus' model prayer from Matthew 6 (the Lord's Prayer). Over three inspiring weeks, we'll discover how intimacy with our Father, daily dependence, and full surrender unleash breakthrough in our lives, families, and city.

We're pairing this series with our *21 Days of Prayer*

and Fasting, using the guide we've prepared just for you—filled with daily Scriptures, prompts, and fasting ideas to draw you closer to God. Be sure to check your email from 1st Christian for the guide.

Culminating in a powerful **Night of Prayer** on January 22, free dinner at 5:30 PM, prayer time starts at 6 PM. This is our chance to reset and invite God's kingdom to come. Don't miss it—let's start the year transformed and expectant!



LET'S TAKE 21 DAYS (OF PRAYER & FASTING) *JUST TO FOCUS ON JESUS*

Beginning January 1, our church family will embark on a journey toward the heart of Jesus with—**21 Days of Prayer and Fasting**—that culminates with a Night of Prayer at the church on January 22. It's not complex; we've written a simple guide that will lead you day by day through this journey. It also explains each part of fasting, prayer and meditation.

This guide includes daily Scripture, devotional thoughts, and guided prayers using the SOAP method (Scripture, Observation, Application, & Prayer) and ACTS model (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, & Supplication)—simple tools that make prayer accessible and meaningful. Each day's devotional takes just a few minutes but creates lasting impact in your heart.

Why should you participate? Because these 21 days will genuinely change you. When you intentionally create space to hear God's voice and seek His heart, beautiful things happen. You'll experience reduced anxiety and a deeper peace that touches every corner of your life. Your relationships—with your spouse, your children, your coworkers—will be infused with patience and grace you didn't know you had. Your work performance improves when your mind is clear and your spirit is settled. You'll notice a lightness in your step and a clarity in your thinking that comes only from time spent in His presence.

What if you didn't start 'on time'? If you're reading this and thinking, "Oh man, I already missed the first few days," don't worry about it! You aren't "late" to the party. Jump in today, or whenever you can. And if you start, but then life gets in the way and you miss a day? Don't beat yourself up. Just pick it back up the next morning and keep moving forward. This is all about grace, not perfection.

Come just as you are. Start whenever you can. Keep going faithfully when you stumble. Let's lean into what God has for us this year. I can't wait to see how He uses us for His glory!

Blessings,

Randy



**SUNDAYS
AT 4 PM**

**CONTACT JIM BLUMENFELD
FOR MORE INFO @
470-654-3469**

WHY SERVE? BECAUSE IT'S GOOD FOR YOU!

Let's be honest—when someone asks you to volunteer at church, your first thought might be, "But I'm already so busy!" And... fair enough. Between work, family, and just trying to keep your life together, adding one more thing feels overwhelming.

Here's the secret you may be missing: **serving at church is ministry to yourself. It isn't just good for others—it's amazing for YOU.**

Think about it. When you serve, you're living out your identity as a follower of Jesus. He didn't come to be served but to serve (Mark 10:45), and we're called to follow His example. **Saved people serve people.** It's who we are! Every other approach to life is against the grain.

But practically speaking? Serving builds authentic friendships—you can't serve alongside someone without bonding. It grows your faith as you watch God work through you (yes, through YOU!). It gives you purpose and meaning beyond your 9-to-5. Studies even show volunteers are happier and healthier. Who knew scrubbing nursery toys could boost your serotonin?

Jesus designed us to thrive when we're using our gifts to love others. So, this January, skip the juice cleanse and try something that'll actually change your life.

Ready to jump in? There are a lot of places you can help, but here are just a few.

greeter __
building cleaning __
hosting a LIFE group __
parking __
coffee & snacks __
grounds crew __

Prayer team __
office work __
sound/lights __
musician/singer __
kids/students __

Scan the QR code below to explore more serving opportunities!



Or call us at: 770-832-3974 OR Contact: Paul@1stChristianChurch.com.

Let's make 2026 the year you discover the joy of serving!



We will return for our first night of youth group in 2026 on January 7th! When we return, we will dive into a new four-week series on the life of Joseph in Genesis.



Youth Meals

We need your help in providing meals for youth group on Wednesday nights! Since the youth group consists of 35 or so regulars, when adult helpers are considered, food prep needs to be for 50. We have openings widely available this semester. One of the great things about youth group is that dinner is provided for students upon arrival. This eliminates the need for them to figure out their own dinner needs amidst the craziness of school and practice schedules. This is an excellent opportunity for life groups (some have served every month in the past) or people/groups that only want to serve on certain occasions or a single time. The congregation is grateful for Josh and Katie Madaris, Jacob Joiner, Kelsey Traylor, Daniel Taylor, Casey and Selina Sapp and Chris and Lindsey Carr for their diligent work with Jake McPike in this ministry.

You can sign up by contacting Jake by email at jake@1stchristianchurch.com.

JUST FOR YOUth

YOUR NEXT STEP COULD SHAPE YOUR STORY

What if your next step could change everything? Every choice—big or small—sets you in a direction. Sometimes life feels like a maze of options: which friends to choose, what goals to chase, who you're becoming. But here's the truth—every step you take builds a path. And when you walk with Christ, He leads you toward the life you were created to live.

Think about the Bible stories you know. David's step onto the battlefield with Goliath changed his future. Ruth's choice to follow Naomi led her to become part of Jesus' lineage. Peter stepped out of a boat and walked on water—because he kept his eyes on Jesus. Every one of them had a moment when one step of faith reshaped their destiny.

So how do you take the right steps? Start by slowing down. Pray before you decide. Ask, "Does this choice draw me closer to Jesus or pull me away?" Surround yourself with people who follow Christ—you tend to walk where your friends are going. Stay rooted in Scripture; it's your GPS for right paths (Psalm 119:105). And when you mess up, don't stop walking—Jesus is ready to guide you back.

The path ahead isn't about perfection—it's about direction. With Christ lighting your way, even small steps of obedience have tremendous impact. So today, choose your next step wisely. Walk with purpose. Walk with courage. Walk with Christ—and you'll find He's already gone ahead of you, preparing the road for a life that matters.

Most of the time you'll find the question is not, "What's the right thing to do?" Generally speaking, we know what we are *supposed* to do. More often, we're looking for the strength to do it. That's when you should call one of our counselors or pastors here at 1st Christian. There's no need —ever— to walk alone.

OMEGA UPDATE

Approximately 15 ladies of the church meet once a month for a fellowship meal and to keep in touch with their service projects which are all designed to serve women and children. By tradition, Marjorie Aldredge hosts a lovely Christmas dinner at her house and Lily Ward, president, reads a Christmas book designed for children. This evening wraps up the year beautifully. Should you want to join this group for the coming year, speak to Lily Ward, Marjorie Aldredge or Wendy Barnhart. The regular meetings with dinner provided are held in the bride's room at the church auditorium.



PARENT POWER

BUILDING BETTER HABITS IN YOUR KIDS

Want your kids (or grandkids) to develop helpful habits? Start leading them.

Children don't need more lectures about prayer, Bible reading, or kindness. They need parents who model these practices consistently and unapologetically. Kids are expert observers, poor listeners. They'll do what you do, not what you say.

Here's the formula: Pick one habit. Make it visible. Make it routine. Make it non-negotiable.

Want kids who pray? Then pray before meals—out loud, every time. No shortcuts. Want kids who serve others? Then serve others—and bring them along. Want kids who read Scripture? Then read Scripture—where they can see you doing it.

The mistake most parents make is overthinking it. They create elaborate family devotional plans that collapse within a week. They bribe kids with rewards for memory verses. They turn spiritual disciplines into battles.

Instead, integrate spiritual practices into daily life just like you do things like brushing teeth. No fanfare. No guilt trips. Just consistency. Bedtime prayers aren't optional in your home, just like breakfast isn't optional. Church attendance is what families do, period.

Here's what won't work: inconsistency, exceptions, and explanations. Kids smell hypocrisy a mile away. If you skip church for soccer tournaments, they'll come to learn that soccer matters more than God. Hard to hear, but true.

The goal isn't raising perfect children—it's raising children who see faith as normal, practical, and central to life.

Be the thermostat, not the thermometer. Set the temperature. Your kids will adjust.

That's how habits form.



*Brittany Vibhakar &
Beth Morgan
Children's Directors*



Children's Christmas Musical

Thank you to everyone who came out to support our kids the night of the Christmas musical! They did such a great job and were so excited to see so many familiar faces in the crowd!

A huge thank you to all the individuals who participated in making the cookie reception a reality! Not only did it look lovely in the FLC, but everything tasted wonderful! The kids and their families really enjoyed the time they spent visiting & tasting all the sweet delights!

The musical would not have happened if it weren't for the willingness of a number of individuals who helped out on Wednesday evenings and the weekend of the performance. We are so very blessed and fortunate to have individuals willing to invest their time, knowledge & talents into our children!

Angel Tree Gifts

Thank you to all the individuals who purchased gifts 37 children of 14 families. Their parents have been so very grateful for your generous gifts. It means so very much to them – it also means a lot to us to see so many people stepping up to help these families who live right here in our community! We had one mom tell us that once she looked up our address she realized we were the church where she'd brought her children on Halloween for "Joseph & the Pharaoh" experience. We had another family come whose spouse had been part of the crew that helped redo our parking lot. How amazing to see God at work making these connections!

Senior



**January 15th
at Suttons
11:30 AM
(Dutch Treat)**

STEADY PRESENCE IN UNSTEADY TIMES

There are seasons in family life when the ground feels unsteady—when finances tighten, illness lingers, grief enters the home, a child’s behavior changes, or depression casts a long shadow. These moments are disorienting not only for parents, but especially for children who lack the language to name what they feel yet feel it deeply all the same.

Scripture never pretends that families are immune to hardship. The Bible is honest about famine, loss, fear, and uncertainty. Yet it is equally clear about this promise: *“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit”* (Psalm 34:18). God does not wait for the storm to pass before drawing near.

For parents walking through crisis, the goal is not to appear strong, but to be **faithful**. Children do not need perfect explanations; they need steady presence. Simple routines—meals together, bedtime prayers, worship attendance when possible—provide stability when life feels chaotic. Predictability becomes a form of grace.

Give your children permission to feel what they feel. Sadness, anger, confusion, even silence are not signs of failure; they are signs of being human. Listen more than you speak. Pray with them, even when your prayers feel short and unfinished. God honors honest words.

Practically, accept help. Scripture reminds us that the body of Christ exists so that *“if one part suffers, every part suffers with it”* (1 Corinthians 12:26). Let others carry what you cannot right now.

Above all, remember this: crisis does not cancel God’s work in your family. Often, it becomes the very place where faith is deepened, compassion is learned, and hope—quiet but resilient—takes root. God is still writing your family’s story, even during unsteady times.



CONGRATULATIONS PAIGE

On December 12 Paige Veal, the daughter of Brian and Carrie, graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Science in Earth and Environmental Science with a concentration in Professional Geology. She has found work in the field and with four years of experience will eventually become a PG (professional geologist). At this time, she sees herself working in a laboratory someday. Way to go Paige.



- 1st Kids & Youth program for 2026
- Students starting back to school
- Night of Prayer on Jan. 22
- Thanks for nearly enough money for 2 wells in India. One well costs \$5,000.
- Engelie Blomerus
- Randy and Lindy as they prepare for their new series of lessons for Wednesday night Bible studies.

NEW WEDNESDAY NIGHT ADULT BIBLE STUDY STARTS JANUARY 7TH

*ANCHORED: THIRTEEN ESSENTIAL TRUTHS
THAT HOLD US STEADY (WHEN LIFE IS FALLING APART)*

In a world that feels like it's shifting under our feet, many believers quietly wonder, "What do I really believe—and will it hold when life hits hard?" **Anchored: Thirteen Essential Truths That Hold Us Steady** is a 13-week journey designed to answer that question with confidence, clarity, and hope.

Across these weeks, we will explore the big truths that have carried Christians through every storm: who God is, why the Bible can be trusted, what it really means that Jesus is both fully God and fully man, how the cross and resurrection change everything, how the Holy Spirit works in us, what salvation truly is, what the Church is for, and where history is headed in God's hands. Each week connects doctrine to real life—suffering, anxiety, identity, relationships, and everyday decisions.

Anchored is not a seminary course and it's not a debate club. It's a guided, conversational journey through the essential doctrines of Christianity. Each week builds on the last, helping faith move from assumptions to understanding, to living faithfully.

You need this class because vague beliefs cannot sustain you in specific crises. When the diagnosis comes, the job is lost, the child wanders, or the culture mocks your faith, you need more than clichés—you need bedrock truth that will not move. This course will help you think clearly, pray deeply, and stand firmly.

It will also equip you to be a lifeline for others. Friends, children, grandchildren, and coworkers are full of questions. As you become anchored in core doctrine, you become a steady, loving voice in their chaos—able to explain what Christians believe and why it matters with both conviction and kindness.

If you are hungry for a faith that is more than feelings—faith with roots, reasons, and resilience—then **Anchored: Thirteen Essential Truths That Hold Us Steady** is for you. Come strengthen your soul, bless your friends, and discover again that God's truth really does hold.

LUKE IN THE LAND
LADIES WEDNESDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY -
STARTING JAN. 7 AT 6 PM
TAUGHT BY LINDY GREGORY



Join us for *Luke in the Land*, and walk with Jesus in His first-century world. Kristi McLelland will take us through the Gospel of Luke while exploring the real places where Scripture unfolded.

For 8 sessions, we will gain fresh insight into Jesus' life and ministry.

Let's see how He brought the Kingdom of God to earth for everyone. Come deepen your understanding of Scripture and experience the Gospel of Luke in a powerful new way.



Church Events

- 1/4 -Celebrate Recovery 4 PM
- 1/7 - Wonderful Wednesday 5:30 PM
- 1/11 - Celebrate Recovery 4 PM
- 1/12 - Omega 6 PM
- 1/13- Food Pantry 9-10 AM
- 1/14 - Alpha 10 AM, Wonderful Wednesday 5:30 PM
- 1/15- Senior Fellowship at Suttons 11:30 AM
- 1/18 - Celebrate Recovery 4 PM
- 1/21 - Wonderful Wednesday 5:30 PM
- 1/22 - Night of Prayer dinner at 5:30 PM, prayer time starts at 6 PM.
- 1/25- Celebrate Recovery 4 PM
- 1/28 - Wonderful Wednesday 5:30 PM

WAYS TO GIVE



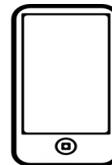
Sunday (Giving boxes)



1stChristianChurch.com



306 College Street
Carrollton, GA 30117
Carrollton, GA 30117



Text 1stcc to 73256

December Numbers	<u>Weekly Offering Needed</u> \$17,211.54			
	<u>12-7</u>	<u>12-14</u>	<u>12-21</u>	<u>12-28</u>
Attendance	253	271	286	273
Offering	\$36,356.86	\$42,083.53	\$6,723.50	\$18,716.71
YTD Received	\$882,520.23	\$924,603.76	\$931,854.26	\$950,570.97
YTD Needed	\$843,365.46	\$860,577.00	\$877,788.54	\$895,000.08

Christmas Eve attendance 311

*283 Average Attendance per Sunday for 2025