



CHRISTIAN CHURCH

focus

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
1ST CHRISTIAN CHURCH
MAY 2026 – VOLUME 84

Mother's Day

MAY | 9 & 11 AM
10 | FREE BRUNCH AT
10 AM

Join us this Mother's Day for a heartfelt celebration at 1st Christian! Between our 9 and 11 AM worship services, enjoy a special brunch designed for fellowship and appreciation of all the wonderful ladies in attendance.

This event is perfect for families and newcomers alike, offering a wonderful opportunity to connect and celebrate together. As is tradition, all ladies will receive a free t-shirt. Don't forget to invite a friend!



PARENT POWER

Helping Kids Grow Through Play: *The Summer Opportunity*

Summer has a way of slowing life down—at least a little. No school. Tons of daylight. Alarms are set later, calendar's pressure eases. Goodbye homework; see ya in a couple of months! But for parents, summer offers something more than an ease in routine. Summer offers opportunity.

One of the greatest gifts we can give our young ones during summer is permission—and encouragement—to play.

I'm not talking organized sports or screen-based games. I mean "*real play.*" *The kind that used to happen when mama said, "There's the door, be back before dark."*

Research consistently shows us that *unstructured play* helps kids develop confidence, resilience, communication skills, and emotional intelligence. Play is how our kids learn to solve problems, build friendships, develop creativity, and grow emotionally. When they build forts, ride bikes, invent games, dig in the dirt, climb trees, or simply laugh with friends, they are doing important work.

And perhaps most importantly: play teaches kids how to be present.

In a world filled with devices, notifications, and endless "entertainment," (we might use the word "entrapment") many kids have forgotten how to be bored—and boredom is often the doorway to imagination. A child without a screen eventually creates something. They explore. They invent. They engage with people rather than pixels.

Parents, I suggest you resist the incessant pull of devices this summer.

1. Consider creating "tech-free windows" during the day.
2. Encourage neighborhood games, water balloons, puzzles, crafts, etc.
3. Go on "exploration" walks with the kids.
4. Children don't always need more entertainment; they often need more freedom.

There is also something deeply spiritual about play and rest.

Continued on next page

PARENT POWER

*Randy Barnhart
Senior Minister*

God Himself built rhythms of work and rest into creation. In the Bible, the concept of Sabbath reminds us that life is not meant to be constant productivity. Children need moments to breathe, laugh, wonder, and enjoy being alive. Play can become a form of gratitude—a way of receiving life as a gift rather than treating every moment as a task.

But summer should not become a season of “no responsibility.” Healthy families learn that work and play belong together.

Children thrive when they contribute. Simple chores, helping in the garden, preparing meals, caring for pets, or serving others teach responsibility and dignity. The goal is not to make summer feel like school—quite the opposite. It’s to help kids discover that work can be meaningful, shared, and even fun. Turn chores into races. Put music on while cleaning. Make projects collaborative instead of punitive.

A child without a screen eventually creates something. They explore. They invent. They engage with people rather than pixels.

Summer becomes powerful when families embrace both rest and purpose.

This season also offers meaningful opportunities for spiritual growth. Programs like Vacation Bible School (**June 15th – 18th**) can give children friendships, biblical foundations, and memories that often last for years. And a week at camp—such as Woodland Christian Camp—can become a defining spiritual milestone. Lots of us adults trace our faith back to a campfire devotion, or a counselor who showed us that “God *really is love*.”

Summer is not just time to survive until school starts again. It’s an opportunity.

Reconnect with the kids. Laugh more. Rest more. Work together. Unplug. And just as important, play.

Healing in Motion now meets at 1st Christian Church on Wednesdays from 1 PM to 2 PM.

HEALING IN MOTION, a mental health peer support team, focuses on supporting individuals with various mental health challenges. Regardless of specific issues, you are welcome to join the group. Each member has unique experiences, and we work together to support one another.

Our group is like one big family, and we are always happy to welcome new members. We believe in the importance of connecting with others who understand mental health struggles. Obviously, what is shared in the group remains confidential. For more information, please contact Sarah Beth Dickey at 859-979-1970 or Joshua Wolfheart at 404-561-9375.

Welcome New Members

Thinking About Becoming a Member?

You don't have to be a member to worship with us, but if you've been visiting and feel God leading you to make this your church home, we'd love to walk alongside you in that journey.

Church membership is more than just a title—it's a commitment to grow in faith, serve alongside others, and be part of a spiritual family that prays for and supports one another. As a member, you'll have opportunities to deepen your relationship with God, connect with others in meaningful ways, and use your gifts to make a difference.

If you're interested in learning more, we invite you to attend our upcoming **Membership Class** where we'll share our mission, beliefs, and how you can get involved. There's no pressure—just a chance to explore what God might be calling you to.

Contact Paul at the church office 770-832-3974 or speak to Pastor Randy after service to sign up. We can't wait to welcome you into the family!



Deondrae James 4/5/26



Chaze Wiles 4/5/26

Arthur, Dana, Chloe, Landon and Birdie Hoover 4/5/26



Bonnie Gurley 4/26/26



CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP ENERGIZES AND INSPIRES



Gregorys' Mission Trip

Scott, Lindy, and Kendall, an FCC family, had the pleasure of accompanying Canton First Baptist Church on a mission trip to the Zona Zegura Bible Church in Cusco, Peru.

The 20-person group arrived in Cusco early on April 4th, and were warmly met by students at Zona Zegura, who are in training for hospitality services. The program called Life and Works offers teens a six-month training program with the goal of placing each student in a job at one of the five-star resorts in Cusco, Peru. It was delightful to be served by these teens who eagerly desire to learn and work.



Easter was a celebration at the Zona Zegura Bible Church. Local home churches associated with the mission traveled for many hours to come worship. What a blessing to witness three baptisms, three students are currently enrolled in the Life and Works program. We also had the distinct pleasure of partaking in the Lord's Supper with the church that day. What joy!

Easter afternoon found the Canton group divided into small groups where the Americans shared their testimonies and solicited prayer requests from the Peruvian house churches. That evening, the Americans served the Peruvian's pizza cooked in the ministry's own pizza oven.



The following day, the group toured the Zona Zegura compound where there is a place for unwed moms with infants and a site that will be an orphanage for local children. This site's orphanage will be led by an adult who was raised at the ministry's "Village of the Children" orphanage. After the

Continued on next page

tour, the Canton group packed up and traveled hours to “Village of the Children. Again, the group received a warm welcome from the orphaned children. Here we played games, sang songs, and led a devotional. Later the next day, the team went to the surrounding villages to share the Gospel and ask for prayer requests. The following evening, we were able to serve the locals pizza (again) using this site’s outdoor pizza oven!



On Wednesday, April 8th, we traveled back to Cusco. On the way we were able to visit the ALMA orphanage, a new orphanage that was recently acquired and opened. The property was attained after an Australian lady was diagnosed with cancer and had to return to her home. This is a beautiful site, evidence of God’s great grace.

When the group returned to Cusco, they stayed at a local hotel and prepared for an early departure for Machu Picchu. The Canton team explored the ancient Incan ruins for the remainder of the trip.

This trip was a lot of travel. The team was able to see all components of the Zona Zugura Bible Church’s missions (the Life and Works Training Center, the three orphanages, as well worship with the house churches coming together on Easter). What delight it was to see God’s hand working in the lives of the Peruvian people. Please pray for their Pastor, Cesar, as he creatively leads this vital ministry in Peru.

Senior

5/21 - 11:30 AM at SUTTONS



1ST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

FOOD PANTRY 9 - 10 AM



Third Wednesday of the month

JUST FOR YOUth

Randy Barnhart
Senior Minister

Growing up typically involves wanting more freedom. That's normal. As a teenager, part of life is learning who you are, making some of your own decisions, and figuring out what you believe. Sometimes that process makes you feel like you should pull away from your parents. The truth is, even as you grow up and mature, you will still need your parents a lot more than you realize.

You may feel like your parents don't understand you, ask too many questions, or worry too much. You might want space, privacy, or independence. That doesn't mean something is wrong with you. It means you're growing.

But here's something important to remember: pushing people away doesn't always mean you want them gone.

Christian family expert James Dobson has often pointed out that it's normal for someone your age to seek independence while still needing boundaries and support. Researcher Chap Clark says many students appear distant while secretly wanting trusted adults to stay close and involved. It's a little bit complicated, but...the truth is, your parents are usually not trying to control you—they're trying to protect, guide, and understand you. Even when conversations feel awkward, they matter.

Here's a challenge: instead of shutting down completely, let your parents in a little.

Tell them when you're stressed. Talk honestly when you're struggling. Give them a chance to know what's going on inside your world.

You don't have to handle everything alone, and it's a good thing, too. Because no human being can. Becoming an adult doesn't mean needing people less. Sometimes it simply means learning how to let people love you in a new way.

Grace Upon Grace

God doesn't run out of patience with us. He meets our stubbornness with kindness, our foolishness with wisdom, our wandering with open arms. *Shouldn't we do the same for each other?*

When an older saint seems resistant to change, remember — they've weathered storms you haven't seen yet. Honor that. When a younger person makes a choice that makes you wince, remember — grace found you mid-mistake too. Extend that.

We don't have to abandon truth to be gentle. We don't have to choose between honesty and kindness. Scripture calls us to speak truth *in love* — not instead of it, not despite it, but wrapped inside it.

Inside the walls of 1st Christian, and beyond, let every person who crosses your path feel so genuinely seen, so warmly welcomed, so honestly loved — that they won't want to be anywhere else. When your sisters and brothers here meet Christ in you, they all know this is the safest place they've ever experienced.

That's not weakness. That's the fragrance of Christ.

Ephesians 4:15, Colossians 4:6

Men Matter, and Father's Day should reflect that

*Randy Barnhart
Senior Minister*



FEARING BRAVELY

This Father's Day, we're launching something special for the men of our church—and for anyone who has ever wondered what courage looks like in everyday life.

Beginning on Father's Day, June 21, we'll begin a brand-new 3-week series called **Fearing Bravely**.

Our world has no shortage of noise, opinions, and pressure. But what does it look like to live with quiet courage? What does it mean to stand firm in conviction, show up where God has placed you, and speak truth with grace? This series explores the lives of biblical men and women who moved from the sidelines to the front lines—not because they were fearless, but because they trusted God's presence more than their circumstances.

Week one, **Stood Up**, follows Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego as they refuse to bow to cultural pressure. Their courage reminds us that faithfulness often means standing when everyone else is kneeling.

Week two, **Showed Up**, centers on Esther and the challenge to step into difficult spaces “for such a time as this.” God often places us in specific relationships, workplaces, and moments for a reason.

Week three, **Spoke Up**, looks at Peter and John in Acts 4—ordinary people transformed by the Holy Spirit into bold voices of hope and truth.

This Father's Day, we especially want every man to be present. Fathers, grandfathers, sons, mentors, husbands, and young men—this series is for you. Invite someone to come with you. Courage is contagious, and sometimes a single Sunday can become the beginning of a new chapter.

Something meaningful is coming. Mark your calendar now for June 21.

Prayer
REQUESTS

- Graduates
- Missions
- VBS
- FCC staff
- Chad Taylor & Whitney Vaughn – FCC security team
- OMNI Christian Services
- Youth and 1st Kids

A New Way to Give!

When giving your tithes and offerings online, you now have the option to use Google Pay. After entering the amount you would like to give and clicking “continue,” the option to use Google Pay will show up on the next screen. If you have any questions, please contact Brittany at 770.832.3974 or email her at Brittany@1stchristianchurch.com.

WAYS TO GIVE



Sunday (Giving boxes)



1stChristianChurch.com



306 College Street
Carrollton, GA 30117



Text 1stcc to 73256



Vacation Bible School
June 15 - 18, 2026

Congratulations 2026 FCC Graduates



Haley Sapp is graduating from UGA with her Master's degree in biomedical science. She has also been accepted to veterinary school at Arkansas State University to start in August of 2026.



Mark and Mandy Anderson's son, Riley is graduating from UGA



David and Tina Fletcher's Grandson, Jackson Lovvorn is graduating from Carrollton High school.



Arthur and Dana Hoover's daughter, Chloe is graduating from South Paulding High school and plans to attend West Georgia Technical College.



Bethany Hutcheson's daughter & Greg and Joanne Shackelford's granddaughter, Hailey Denney is graduating from UGA.



Jerry and Barbara Tipton's granddaughter, Kailynn Tipton, received her High school degree from Liberty University, while living in Liberia West Africa.



Chris and Lindsay Carr's daughter, Cadence is graduating from Carrollton High school and will attend Kenesaw State University.



Jason and Lindsey Faircloth's son Grayson, is graduating from Carrollton High school and will attend UGA.



*Brittany Vibhakar &
Beth Morgan
Children's Directors*



Thank you!

Thank you to everyone who volunteered or brought friends & family to our Family Easter Egg Hunt! It was a wonderful time with over 50 children gathering eggs, doing crafts, and most importantly, hearing about the resurrection of our Lord & Savior!

Wednesday Nights:

Our last Wednesday night for the school year will be May 13th for church wide bingo! Come join us for an evening of fun – there will not be supervised children's classes that evening. A BIG THANK YOU to Brenda Holland & Deborah Jackson for leading & teaching our Wednesday evening classes and to all the other fantastic volunteers that helped make the classes possible!

Summer Fun!

Summer is just around the corner and we have some fun things planned that you won't want to miss!

Save the date for Vacation Bible School! On **June 15th – 18th**, we'll be traveling to Rome to visit the home of Paul & the Underground Church. Each evening the kids will visit with Paul and members of the underground church to learn truths about God's love! Be on the lookout for emails & posters coming soon regarding registration!

There are many opportunities to serve prior, during and after VBS. If you'd like to help us make this a successful program, please email Beth or Brittany at beth@1stchristianchurch.com or Brittany@1stchristianchurch.com.

A day trip to the Biblical History Center in Lagrange is in the works! This trip will be geared towards those who will have just completed 2nd – 5th grade; however, younger and/or older siblings are welcome to attend, with an attending parent or guardian. The plan is for this trip to take place in the middle of July. We will have more details regarding times & pricing in the near future. If you're not familiar with the Biblical History Center be sure to check it out at biblicalhistorycenter.com.

To see all of our summer happenings, make sure to pick up a summer schedule (available mid-May) in the children's check-in area!

Sunday Morning Reminders:

Please continue to help your child work on the books of the Bible & memory verse at home. They earn prizes when they memorize the verse and once they have learned all 66 books of the Bible, they will be able to pick out their own special Bible.

Preschool: "How wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ." (Ephesians 3:18 NIV)

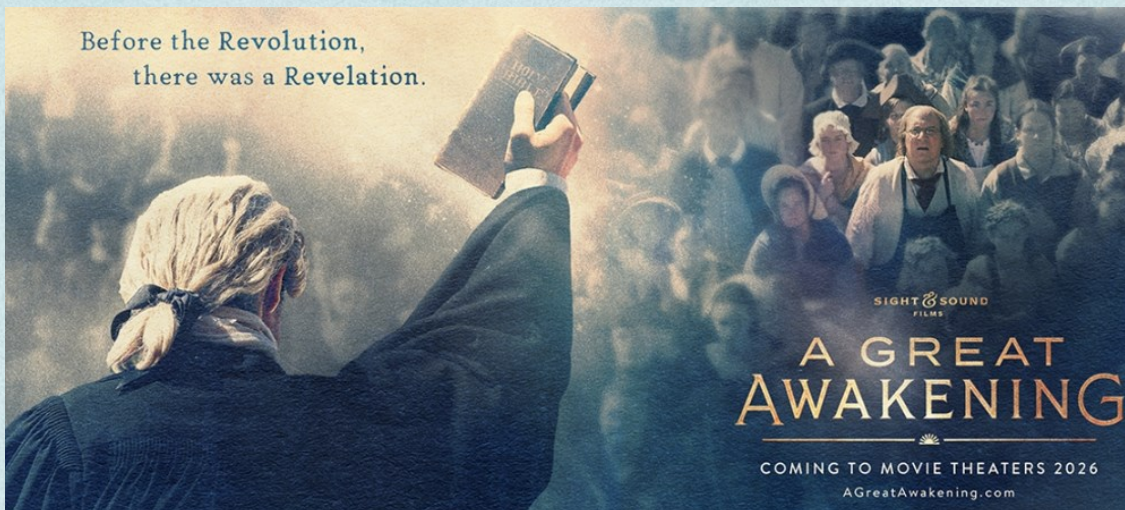
Elementary: "Let us not become tired of doing good. At the right time we will gather a crop if we don't give up." Galatians 6:9 NIV

OMNI CHRISTIAN SERVICES

One of the joys of being a part of our church comes when we observe our fellow members step forward to lead in a ministry of some variety. We have Billy and Cyndi Ressler with R&R, Jim and Laura Blumfeld leading Celebrate Recovery, Dick and Susan Ingle with their work in Southeast India, etc. For several years now Allen and Rhonda Howard have been providing pastoral care for people through a hands-on ministry they call Omni Christian Services.

These two faithful servants stand by to provide rides to appointments and other destinations for people who are stranded without transportation. This ministry also has a team that specializes in building wheelchair ramps and providing walkers and other medical equipment. Sometimes the way they can help most comes with paying a utility bill or providing basic household items. If Allen hears of a “forgotten” person, he will be on their doorstep. While this ministry provides material help, the main thrust is to simply show the love of God in a tangible way. Obviously, there may be many

ways the rest of us can help. If you want to chat with Allen about this work, call at 678-618-4258. If you would like to point out someone in need or offer assistance to his work, he can be reached at omnichristianservices@gmail.com



Movie Review: A GREAT AWAKENING

No chase scenes. No love triangles. No hidden bodies or espionage. This movie will appeal to the die-hard history buff as it tells the true story of the unlikely/lengthy friendship between Benjamin Franklin, Deist and Philadelphian rebel, and George Whitefield, a radical priest of the Church of England, who found a mission field in the colonies (as did his friends John and Charles Wesley).

As Franklin’s fame and intellect take him into the politics of the American revolution, Whitefield’s passion for preaching that true liberty will be found only in Jesus leads him into preaching to huge crowds as he tried to cover all of the colonies. A friendship develops as Franklin’s print shop becomes quite profitable printing Whitefield’s sermons and publicity materials. These two gifted, influential men exert tremendous pressure on a society trying to find its way in a struggling new nation.

Currently, this film is being shown in select theaters in our area. Watch for its release on streaming services. Catching up with this little-known history lesson would be a great way to begin your USA 250 celebration.

PIPELINE

STUDENT MINISTRY

If you are parenting a middle schooler or high schooler right now, you know how overwhelming these years can be. Students are facing pressure from every direction—friends, social media, school, entertainment, anxiety, identity confusion, and a culture that often pulls them away from Christ. Many parents wonder how to raise teenagers who love Jesus and stand firm when the world around them feels unstable. Let me encourage you: God entrusted your student to you for this season.

One of the greatest influences in your student's life is still you. Middle schoolers and high schoolers may not always act like they are listening, but they are watching. They notice how you handle stress, how you treat others, how you respond to failure, and whether your faith is real at home or only visible at church. They do not need perfect parents—they need faithful, authentic ones.

When the world feels shaky, your home can become a place of strength and stability. Students do not need panicked parents; they need steady parents rooted in God's Word. They need moms and dads who speak hope instead of fear, who love truth, and who model grace. When culture shifts, let your home remain grounded in Christ.

Practically, make church and youth group a priority for your family. Faithfulness teaches middle schoolers and high schoolers that God is central,



*Jake McPike
Youth Minister*

not optional. Pray with your student regularly, even in simple moments before school, before a big game, after a hard day, or in the car. Open the Bible together, even briefly, and create natural conversations about faith throughout the week.

It is also important to know what is shaping your student. Pay attention to what they are watching, hearing, and consuming online. Keep communication open and ongoing. Ask questions, listen well, and guide them with wisdom and love. Encourage them often, correct them when needed, and remind them who they are in Christ.

If you feel like you have fallen short, take heart. Your student does not need a flawless parent—they need a faithful one. God is bigger than your mistakes, and it is never too late to begin leading intentionally. Start today, stay consistent, and trust the Lord with the results.

As a youth ministry, we believe parents are the primary disciplers of their middle schoolers and high schoolers, and we are honored to partner with you. Keep going. The prayers you pray, the example you set, and the seeds you plant today matter more than you know. God is still building strong families in the middle of a shaky world.



sharing Christ. Alleviating suffering.

FIELD VISIT TO UKRAINE



In March, my friend and our board member, Georges Carillet, and I went to Ukraine for our annual field visit. Thank you for praying for our safety and wisdom in making important decisions for our ministry!

It was a challenging trip. It took us two days to travel from the US to our destination point in Ukraine. We flew into Poland and took a train to a border town. There we were met by a pastor who drove us into Ukraine.

We traveled through three different regions: Volyn, Zhytomyr and Kyiv. In each town we passed, we saw a main square covered by flags and pictures of the fallen heroes who defended their land (pictured above). It was a sobering reminder of the price of freedom for Ukrainians.

So many lives lost!...

During our two-day visit in Zhytomyr, Russia launched 1,000 drones over Ukraine in one day. Two nights in a row, I couldn't sleep as I heard the sirens and alarms telling me to go to a bomb shelter. I cannot imagine living in this nightmare for over four years, surviving the air raids and continuing to live life.

Regardless of the loss, terror and uncertainty, Ukrainian Christians are sharing HOPE with thousands of people every month! There are so many open doors for evangelism and impact! Every day of ministry can lead someone to Christ.

Please consider sharing this report with your friends and family and join our team to alleviate suffering and to share Christ with Ukrainians!

Natasha Reimer
Executive Director



<https://mulberryinternational.org>

UPCOMING EVENTS

5/2 - Daughters of the King Banquet 5 PM FCC -
Family Life Center

5/3 - Celebrate Recovery 4 PM

5/6 - Wonderful Wednesday 5:30 PM

5/10 - Mother's Day Services at 9 & 11 AM, Brunch
10 AM, Celebrate Recovery 4 PM

5/11 - Omega 6 PM in the bride's room

5/13 - Wonderful Wednesday 5:30 PM. A Bingo Night
to conclude the programming until August

5/17 - Graduation Sunday 9 & 11 AM,
Celebrate Recovery 4 PM

5/20 - Food Pantry 9-10 AM

5/21- Senior Fellowship 11:30 AM at
Suttons

5/24- Celebrate Recovery 4 PM

5/31 - Celebrate Recovery 4 PM

VBS - June 15-18



6/21 - Father's Day Services at 9 & 11
AM, brunch at 10 AM

APRIL NUMBERS

Weekly Offering Needed

17,692.31

4/5
Easter

4/12

4/19

4/26

| | <u>4/5</u> | <u>4/12</u> | <u>4/19</u> | <u>4/26</u> |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Attendance | 472 | 242 | 290 | 272 |
| Offering | \$27,032.70 | \$24,693.82 | \$8,471.60 | \$12,871.41 |
| YTD Received | \$324,655.49 | \$349,349.31 | \$358,090.91 | \$370,962.32 |
| YTD Needed | \$247,692.34 | \$265,384.65 | \$283,076.96 | \$300,769.27 |