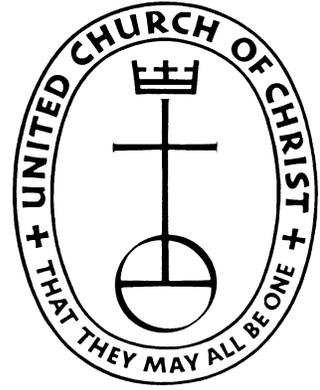




**First Christian
United Church of Christ
Newsletter
April 2019**



As we travel through the Season of Lent we will end our journey at Holy Week... starting with our Palm/Passion Sunday service on April 14th, followed by a Maundy Thursday Service on April 18th. Make plans to join us as we celebrate our Lord.

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PASTOR'S COLUMN

Going a little farther, Jesus fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will but as you will." Matthew 26:39

The season of Spring has arrived, and I have found myself thinking about what contributes to its coming. Spring happens because the earth wobbles in its orbit around the sun. The earth is not spinning smoothly, it has a wobble, and this wobble makes the northern part of the earth point closer to the sun at this time of the year and during the summer, while it is further away from the sun at other times, which we call fall and winter.

I found myself thinking, "I wonder why God did not create the earth to spin smoothly, but rather caused it to wobble?" It occurred to me that because the earth wobbles, there are different amounts of solar energy that hit various places on the earth at different times. This variance in solar energy makes a difference in the temperature of the oceans, land and air that lead to cloud currents carrying moisture over the land to provide rain. The earth's wobble affects the flow of the ocean's currents. The wobble leads plants and animals to have the chance to live in greater areas of the earth than if the earth did not wobble to bring heat closer to the earth's poles to warm them.

What seemed to me, at first, as a mistake in creation actually enables an abundance of forms of life to exist on earth.

There are times in life when I wonder if God has not made other mistakes. I wonder why God created some things that were created, such as mosquitoes. There are times when I wonder if God could not have answered some of our prayers differently and saved us much pain and sorrow. I wonder why God does not answer some of our prayers faster and in more powerful, direct ways.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed that he might not have to go the way that led to the cross. I do not understand why God would want Jesus to die such a

cruel death. Yet God allowed Jesus to die, and through his death God gave him life again. Jesus' resurrection can give us a stronger faith to believe Jesus' words that he has prepared a place for us in God's eternal realm.

Jesus' death led to his resurrection which gives us the assurance that as we confess our sins to God that they are forgiven, as Jesus says they are.

Jesus death led to his resurrection and so we are given reason to believe that the way Jesus said we should live toward one another is actually the best way of living, although there are times it may not be as pleasant for us or bring what we desire.

There are many things in life I do not understand, and I think, "If I were God, I would have done things differently." But then I would not have thought to create the world to wobble, and so life would probably not exist on earth as it does today, if it existed at all.

If I were God, I surely would not have given humans free will with all the pain and suffering humans bring on themselves and on others. But then I probably would not receive the satisfaction and joy God does when people decide they want to share in fellowship with God and live to please God in thankfulness for God's goodness.

If I were God, I would not have thought to have Jesus die, but then I may not have been able to give hope and comfort to people at the time of death, as becomes possible for people to know through the wonder of Easter, which we will celebrate in April. I make no pretense to be equal to God, or to fully understand God, which is good. May Easter be special for you!

Peace and hope for our futures,

Jamie Fonville, Supply Pastor

First Christian UCC – April 2019 Newsletter **FIGHT CANCER – BUY A CAKE APRIL 7TH!**

Our annual Hot Dog Lunch and Cake Auction is scheduled for Sunday, April 7th. Immediately following worship that day we will gather in the Bray Fellowship Hall for a good time of food and fellowship. But the real star of the day will be the cake auction afterwards. Last year we raised a record amount of \$5800 in support of the American Cancer Society's battle against cancer. Will we do even better with this year? Our auction is all in support of the Relay for Life's broader community fund raising efforts.

Mark your calendar and bring your checkbook that day. The day is always a lot of fun! And if you can bring a cake or other dessert to add to the effort, please do. The auction is not reserved for cakes alone. We always have a whole array of various treat. If you can bake or cook, pitch in and contribute your favorite. Let's support Relay for Life in the battle against cancer.



“MESSIAH,” BY G.F. HANDEL

“Messiah,” by G.F. Handel will be performed on Friday, April 26 at McCrary Theatre on Elon University Campus at 7 p.m.

The Elon choirs, Chorale and Camerata, combine with the Elon Festival Orchestra to present Handel's timeless masterwork.

In celebration of Dr. Futrell's 20th year at Elon, Elon choral alumni are invited to join the Elon choirs in performing. (Please contact Dr. Futrell at sfutrell@elon.edu if interested.) *Sponsored by the Department of Music*

MARGARET LIGHTBOURNE CIRCLE MEETING

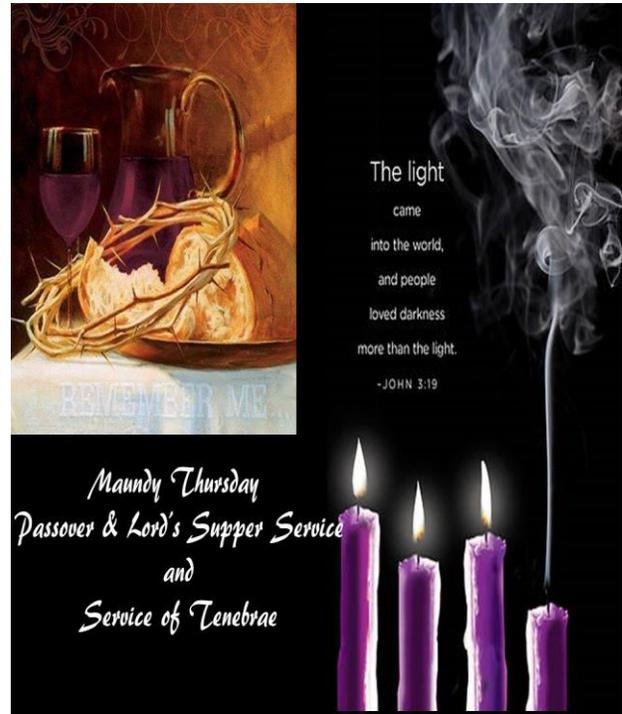
The next meeting of the Margaret Lightbourne Circle will take place on March 4th at 10:30 am in the church conference room. All are invited to attend.

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MAUNDY THURSDAY & TENEBRAE SERVICE PLANNED

FOR APRIL 18TH @ 5:30 PM

First Christian will observe a Maundy Thursday Service on Thursday, April 18 at 6:30 pm in Bray Fellowship Hall. We will begin with the Hebrew Passover Seder Service and where Jesus changed the meaning of the symbolic elements in the service to represent his body and blood, we will observe communion. This will be followed by a Service of Tenebrae, or Darkness, as we recall the hardships and suffering that came upon Jesus which led to his crucifixion on Friday. The service will be held around tables in Bray Fellowship Hall. We ask you to sign up for this event so that we may know how to prepare for this worshipful, thoughtful service. You may call the church office or fill out the slip in the Sunday bulletin, giving your name and the number that will be in your party. All are welcome!



SPECIAL LADY HONORED

Sunday, March 3rd we recognized a special lady, Mary Menefee. Recently we were told Mary would be moving to Charleston, S.C. to be closer to family. First Christians wanted to say our good-byes before she left us on the 15th of March.

Mary Terrell Menefee was born and raised in Caswell County. One of ten children, three boys and seven girls. The Terrell family church was Concord United Church of Christ. The family reunion is still celebrated every May.

As a young woman, Mary married Sam Watson. They had one son, Ted. The family moved to Burlington and became members of First Christian UCC. Mary was first a member of the Iris McEwen class and later moved into the Lila B. Sellars class. Mary has remained very active in Sunday School, Women's Circles, and church fellowship over the years. She has been an active member of First Christian UCC for 60 years.

We will miss Mary greatly. First Christian wished Mary the very best in her new home and many years of happy family life in Charleston, S.C.

It is Mary's desire to keep in touch with fellow First Christians. She may be contacted at Mary Menefee, Daniel Pointe Retirement Community, 514 Robert Daniel Drive, Daniel Island, S.C. 29492.

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SUPPER CLUB – APRIL 2TH

The Supper Club gathering will be held on April 1st. We (the Supper Club) will be meeting at Harbor Inn, 2408 S. Church Street (beside CVS Drug Store and across the street from Wendy's). There is plenty of parking and easy entry to their lot. We will gather at 6:00 pm, and as it now stays light until 7pm this gives us plenty of daylight for our travels. This is a "pay your own way" event. Come join in on the fun and fellowship always experienced at these gatherings. Please call Eleanor Lovgren (336-226-2671) by 8 pm on March 28th to make your reservation.

EASTER CELEBRATIONS

On Maundy Thursday, April 18th we will have a special service that will include Holy Communion.

On Sunday April 21st we will gather to celebrate our Risen Lord. As the sun breaks the horizon on Easter Sunday morning, we will gather on the lawn outside the church office to proclaim, "Christ is risen." "He is risen, indeed!" Our service will begin at 7:30 am In case of bad weather, please gather in the sanctuary. And we invite you to bring any fresh flowers from your garden to decorate the cross at the end of the service.

Following worship, we will move to the Bray Fellowship Hall for a breakfast hosted by the Board of Deacons as well as a time of fellowship together. Also, because of the hour of our breakfast, there will be no Sunday School on the 21st.

At 10:30, we will re-gather for our service celebrating the Resurrection. Special music is planned.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Selma Simpson, Frances Morgan, Jeanne Williams, Mary Jane Pettigrew, Harvey Sharpe, Donna Freeman, Anna Gerow, Nancy Thomas, Margaret Turner, Louise Walters, Kathy Russell, Elizabeth Woodlief—mother of Peggy Johnson. .

Friends: Mike Thaxton, Claire Spence, Mary Ellen Rice, Janette Hudson—mother of Connie Collins

FOOD DONATIONS – FIRST SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH

In many places in the Scripture we find the instructions to share with others... to care for our fellow man. Isaiah 58:1-10 speaks of the ways of fasting and giving to others. Matthew 25:34-40 tells us that as we are feeding others, we are feeding Christ. Luke 3:11 instructs us to share with others, and Proverbs 19:17 and 22:9a speak to the idea of 'blessed to be a blessing'.

We are collection non-perishable food donations on the first Sunday of each month. Items may be placed in the barrels located in the Bray Fellowship Hall at any time. The food items collected will be donated to the Salvation Army Food Ministry when the barrels reach capacity... and thank you for your donation!

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NEW DIRECTOR AT ALLIED CHURCHES

On February 26th Carol Fonville, Bobbye Mebane and Ken Little attended a gathering at Front Street United Methodist Church introducing Jai Baker as the new Director at Allied Churches recently appointed by the Board of Directors. Mr. Baker has held many positions in the business.

The Director stated that there are many changes that have been made at Allied Churches and he is working with community leaders to forge a new direction for the organization. There is a continued need for industrial donations, as well as church and community organizations.

Some of the things offered by Allied Churches include: The only homeless shelter in Alamance County, Emergency shelter for men, women and families, Financial and housing assistance, Job training and education, Mediation services for renter/landlord issues and Provide meals and emergency food

BRING YOUR CROSSES FOR ALL TO ENJOY

You are invited to bring special crosses for display in our connecting walkway during Lent. Seeing various styles and designs of crosses will help us better appreciate what Jesus endured for our salvation, as well as enabling us to appreciate the creativity of those who design crosses. We thank Ken Little for displaying some of his photographs!

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE REQUESTS

The Carrie McLean Taylor Scholarship Committee is receiving applications for scholarships for 2019. They are also seeking donations to help fund our scholarships to others. Applications and donations to this fund are requested to be sent or turned in to the church by April 30, 2019. Donations for scholarships should put "Scholarship Funds" on the memo line of your check. Completed applications should be given to Eleanor Lovgren.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Year to Date through 02-28-19

	Actual	Budget
Income:	\$20,541.74	\$34,483.00
<u>Expense</u>	<u>\$30,823.80</u>	<u>\$37,482.70</u>
Net Balance:	<\$10,282.03	\$0.30
Balance in Checking 02-28-19		\$13,152.88

As you can see, everyone's continued support is still greatly needed to carry on the ministry of the church. Please send in your giving today.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ken Little and Connie Collins
Treasurer and Accounting Manager