



# December Newsletter

First Christian Church . 2501 N. Park Lane . Altus, Oklahoma  
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## Church Staff:

*Ben Partin, Pastor*  
*Keli Jonas, Secretary*  
*Doug Trittle, Custodian*



## Elders:

*Phil Carson*  
*Randall Coffman*  
*Doug Dalton*  
*Jerry Gibson*  
*Jim Jones*



## Diaconate:

*Vacant*  
*Bob Clark*  
*Jackie Morey*  
*Mike Morrow*  
*Brenda Risner*



## Official Board Members:

*Randall Coffman (Interim)*  
(Chairman)  
*Vacant*  
(Vice-Chairman)  
*Keli Jonas*  
(Secretary)  
*Wanda Jones*  
(Treasurer)



## Committee Chairperson:

*Megan Everett*  
(Worship)  
*Jane Clark*  
(Service & Action)  
*Jackie Morey*  
(Education)  
*Don Skiles*  
(Administration)

## A Word from Ben...

### Why December 25<sup>th</sup>?

It's that time of year again. Time to get out the Christmas tree, hang up the lights, the stockings, the ornaments, and spend entirely too much money to buy things we don't need. But every now and then you'll hear the objections that Christmas isn't a Christian holiday. At least that it wasn't originally. Romans had long celebrated the holiday of Saturnalia to honor their god Saturn. That celebration went from December 17<sup>th</sup> to the 23<sup>rd</sup>. The other festival that people suggest Christians borrowed from to create Christmas was a feast to celebrate the "Birth of the Unconquered Sun" which was celebrated on December 25<sup>th</sup>. Finally, since Christmas isn't mentioned as an official Christian holiday honoring Jesus' birth until A.D. 336 Christians were obviously trying to "Christianize" these pagan traditions, so their people wouldn't be tempted to participate. Much like churches today try to do with Halloween by having "Harvest Festivals." These objections always bring up the question, is Christmas something that we as Christians should celebrate?

First of all, Saturnalia was celebrated for a week starting on the 17<sup>th</sup>, so it had been completed for two days before Christmas. It doesn't make much sense to create a holiday to replace a pagan practice but place that holiday after the event you're trying to distract people from. The second festival, The Birth of the Unconquered Sun, was instituted in A.D. 274, a good 60 years before Christmas...or was it? Emperor Aurelian actually instituted that feast to try to give new life to a dying Roman Empire. It is now thought that he probably did this to try to curb the rise of Christianity which was celebrating Christ's birth on December 25<sup>th</sup>. In fact, there is evidence that Christians believed Christ to be born on December 25<sup>th</sup> as early as A.D. 175. One hundred years before the festival to the Birth of the Unconquered Sun!

So why did they choose December 25<sup>th</sup> to celebrate Christ's birth? In Luke chapter one Zechariah is told that his wife Elizabeth will conceive a son and they are to name him John (he is later called, "the Baptizer"). Luke then tells us that in the sixth month of that pregnancy is when the angel appears to Mary. This tells us that roughly 15 months after Zechariah served in the temple Jesus was born. There is an early Christian document that records the tradition that says Zechariah was serving on the Day of Atonement in late September. Doing the math, we can easily see that would put the birth of Jesus in late December. Other church fathers connected Jesus conception with prophecies in Daniel and placed it on March 25<sup>th</sup>, placing his birth on Dec. 25<sup>th</sup>. Still others cite a tradition that says prophets die on the same day as their birth and since Jesus died in the spring (say, March 25?) maybe that was the day he was conceived. Again, bringing us to December 25<sup>th</sup>.

I don't agree with their reasoning, but the fact of the matter is that Christians, from as early as we can tell, have celebrated Jesus' birth on December 25<sup>th</sup>. The celebration may have grown over the years, but it has never been a celebration of the winter solstice, the Roman god Saturn, the Egyptian god Horus, or any other pagan tradition. We give gifts because the wise men brought Jesus gifts, we put a star or angel on the top of the tree to remind us of the star that brought the wise men, or the angel that told the shepherds of His birth. There might be some traditions that are tied to pagan practices, but the nuts and bolts of the holiday are purely Christian. So, my advice for you this year would be to put on the ugliest Christmas sweater you can find, pour yourself a cup of eggnog, and unashamedly wish everyone you see a very Merry Christmas!

Merry Christmas,  
Pastor Ben



# December 2018



Sun      Mon      Tue      Wed      Thu      Fri      Sat

<p><i>Just a Note: The Church Office will close at Noon on Christmas Eve and on New Year's Eve, and will reopen at 9:00am on the following Wednesday. Merry Christmas &amp; Happy New Year</i></p>						1
2 1st day of Advent (Hope)	3	4 Worship Committee- 5:30PM	5 CWF-9:30AM S/A-10:30AM Education- 1:00PM	6	7	8
9 2nd day of Advent (Love)	10	11 Angel Tree gifts	12 LIFT Potluck Christmas Party- 6:00PM	13 Elders-6:00PM Diaconate- 6:30PM Board-7:00PM	14	15
16 3rd day of Advent (Joy)	17	18	19	20	21	22
23 4th day of Advent (Peace)	24 Christmas Eve	25 Merry Christmas	26	27	28	29
30	31 New Year's Eve	<p>Come enjoy the Children's Christmas Program, "The IT" during our Worship Service.</p> <p>Children's Christmas Program</p>				

**CWF-LADIES BIBLE STUDY GROUP  
WEDNESDAY LIFT-WEDNESDAY MEAL & BIBLE STUDY  
MBG-MEN'S BREAKFAST GROUP**

# Serving in December

## Communion Preparation - Jerry & Brenda Gibson

### Dec. 2

Communion Meditation:	Rick Weinkauff
Diaconate:	*Wanda Jones, Carol Carson, Bob McGuire & Keith Jonas
SS Nursery:	Kristen Partin & Wanda Jones
WS Nursery:	Kristen Partin & Keli Jonas
Children's Church:	Rick & Roma Weinkauff
Greeters:	Bob Clark & John Signorelli
AV Booth:	Randall Coffman & Dan White

### Dec. 9

Communion Mediation:	Jim Jones
Diaconate:	*Keith Jonas, Jackie Morey, Doug Tritle & Mike Morrow
SS Nursery:	Elisabeth White & Keli Jonas
WS Nursery:	Nicole Stanfill & Carol Carson
Children's Church:	Don & Sarah Skiles
Greeters:	Bob Clark & John Signorelli
AV Booth:	Randall Coffman & Dan White

### Dec. 16 (Christmas Program)

Communion Meditation:	Randall Coffman
Diaconate:	*Wanda Jones, Jane Clark, Bob McGuire & Brenda Gibson
SS Nursery:	Marilynn Wright & Wanda Jones
WS Nursery:	Jackie & Mark Morey
Children's Church:	Lee Barnes & Carol Carson
Greeters:	Bob Clark & John Signorelli
AV Booth:	Randall Coffman & Dan White

### Dec. 23

Communion Meditation:	Don Skiles
Diaconate:	*Keith Jonas, Jackie Morey, Keli Jonas & Mike Morrow
SS Nursery:	Jackie Morey & Wendi Noon
WS Nursery:	Brian & Colleen Buss
Children's Church:	Nova & Wendi Noon
Greeters:	Bob Clark & John Signorelli
AV Booth:	Randall Coffman & Dan White

### Dec. 30

Communion Meditation:	Dan White
Diaconate:	*Iris Felix, Brenda Risner, Carol Carson & Doug Tritle
SS Nursery:	Elisabeth White & Keli Jonas
WS Nursery:	Jane Clark & Brenda Gibson
Children's Church:	(5th Sunday)
Greeters:	Bob Clark & John Signorelli
AV Booth:	Randall Coffman & Dan White

***Thank you for your service to the Church!***

**PLEASE NOTE:** This list is subject to change.

\*Indicates leads Offering Prayer

## IN OUR PRAYERS


*If you have a prayer need or know of any changes, please contact the church office.*

Sally Smith - Continued healing	Barker family - Healing for Jonas	Martin family - Comfort/healing/strength
Mike Chase - Health issues/comfort	Mary Hershey - Peace/comfort	Jimmy & Carole - Health issues/comfort
Brenda R. - Peace/comfort	Jerry Gibson - Health issues	Bart Graves - Health issues
John S. - Comfort/peace	George Signorelli - Health issues	Nick Williams (Altus teacher) - ALS
Kathy James (AHS Counselor) - Healing/peace	J. White family - Deployment/safety/comfort	
Wendy P. (Tara's cousin) - Healing/peace	Our Pastor & family - God's protection	
Loran Mayes - Surgery/healing/comfort		

## PRAISES


Our visitors      Outreach programs      Wednesday LIFT      Nehemiah Initiative

Periodically the Prayer List will be updated. If we remove someone in err, please let us know.



**Mackenzie Buss**  
 4th - Mary (Charlie) Buss  
 9th - Geneva Skiles  
 15th - Jane Clark  
 18th - Mr. & Mrs. Jim Jones  
 21st - Mr. & Mrs. Mark Morey  
 23rd - Brenda Risner, Tara Coffman & Rick Weinkauf  
 25th - Jerry Gibson  
 27th - Keith Jonas  
 28th - Mr. & Mrs. Keith Jonas  
 29th - Mr. & Mrs. Randall Coffman  
 30th - Brian Buss

Ms. Iris and Ms. Brenda (Risner) have been working with the littles on a very special Christmas program. Please plan to attend the performance on Sunday, the 16th, during morning worship service following a brief "sermonette" from Pastor Ben.


**Santa's Prayer**

My dear precious Jesus, I did not mean to take your place, I only bring toys and things and you bring love and grace. People give me lists of wishes and hope that they came true; But you hear prayers of the heart and promise your will to do. Children try to be good and not to cry when I am coming to town; But you love them unconditionally and that love will abound. I leave only a bag of toys and temporary joy for a season; But you leave a heart of love, full of purpose and reasons. I have a lot of believers and what one might call fame; But I never healed the blind or tried to help the lame. I have rosy cheeks and a voice full of laughter; But no nail—scarred hands or a promise of the hereafter. You may find several of me in town or at a mall; But there is only one omnipotent you, to answer a sinner's call. And so, my dear precious Jesus, I kneel here to pray; To worship and adore you on this, your holy birthday.

Please join us for our Annual  
**Christmas Eve Candlelight Service**  
 December 24, 2018  
 6:30pm



**Wednesday LIFT** will have a special Christmas Potluck Party on December 12th. Everyone is invited to bring your favorite holiday dish to share...  
*Also*  
 The kids will have a dress rehearsal, so bring them too!

**ANGEL TREE** This year the CWF group and the Service/Action committee accepted 20 Angel Tree requests, making our total donation 25. "Thank You" to everyone that participated in this year's event!  
 Please remember: Gifts are due on December 11th.