



1010 N Florence Ave
May 1, 2022

(918) 341-1199
fccclaremore.org

Hello, Beloveds!

I'm excited to share some of what is sprouting and blooming this month at First Christian Church of Claremore.

First, Welcomers are welcoming on Sunday mornings - they certainly are brightening the entrance to our sanctuary! Bev, Don, Krisalynn, Tava, Amanda, Larry Y, Jerry, Twyla, Kendall, and Janet are among our intentional Welcomers. They committed to participating in training experiences and are devoting at least one Sunday a month to being at the doors from 10:30-10:50 AM. They will also check in with guests after service. I am grateful for the attention, care, and energy each Welcomer has already given. If you are curious to learn more about our hospitality efforts and would like to help, please let me know. I am grateful to Michael as well for his work and support in these efforts within his role as Church Growth chair.

Second, if you are interested in acquiring and developing approaches to engaging in important conversations, I invite you to be part of three Zoom training sessions from Rev. Dr. Leah Schade from Lexington Theological Seminary. You can learn more within this newsletter in the section entitled "Dialogue in the Purple Zone."

Third, a weekly Bible Study will begin the second week of May. One group will meet on Mondays from 10:30-11:30 AM at the church; the other will meet on Tuesday evenings via Zoom from 6:30 PM- 7: 30 PM. If you would like to be part of the Zoom session, please contact me for the link. I am also happy to help those who need some Zoom assistance prior to our first session. For May, we will explore the scripture for the upcoming Sunday sermon. If you cannot attend either session, please check out our Facebook group page where there will be ways to learn and reflect online. We will utilize intriguing and important material from Alliance Q as we continue to live into our commitment

to be Open and Affirming during the month of June.

Fourth, we will begin monthly "Beliefs and Story Sessions" on Saturday, June 4 from 10-11:45 at the church. These sessions will meet the first Saturday of every month and will focus on a different theme. June's theme will be Community. July's theme will be Love.

Finally, our sermon series "Another Way" continues through May 15. Then, we will host Rev. Dr. Lisa Barnett, who will be our guest preacher, and Rev. Michael Davison, for my Installation on May 22. I'm looking forward to that special day. We will begin a new series: "Imagine a World with More" on May 29.

Plans and ideas for June are already in the works as we continue to imagine how we can represent God's Limitless Love within our community while tending to our spiritual development as Disciples. This has been a particularly full month, and I appreciate the loving and collaborative spirits within this congregation. Thank you.

With You on the Journey,

Pastor Alexis

Beginning May 9,
you are invited to
join our:

*Question & Wonder
Bible Study*

10:30-11:30 on Mondays
1010 N. Florence Avenue

6:30-7:30 PM on Tuesdays via Zoom
(contact Alexis@fccclaremore.org for the link)

Seekers welcome.



NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION

If you wish to have an article or announcement placed in the next newsletter, please email it to the church office at fccaa@sbcglobal.net no later than the 25th each month. If you would like to receive the newsletter by email, please notify the church office.



When the need for an urgent prayer arises, the prayer chain is called to action. The chain operates mostly by email, though requests can be called in as well. By calling in or emailing a request, it can be sent out within a matter of minutes. You may send requests by calling 918-341-1199 or fccaa@sbcglobal.net.

Health Concerns

Beth Young
CJ Masters
Linda Womack
A.G. Murray
Linda Young

Sympathies for the family of: Cheryl Newman

Praise

Trudy Hedgpath welcomed her second granddaughter.



9 Beverly Wofford	30 Beverly McAnally
13 Zoe White	30 Larry Melton
16 Dee Dee Clark	

Elder Ministry

May 1	Barry Clark
May 8	Trudy Hedgpath
May 15	Sara Masters
May 22	Katy Galusha-White
May 29	Larry Melton



Chairman's Corner

As one of my dear friends posted on Facebook, "I'm about to wear out the climate control switch on my pickup, changing back and forth from heater to air conditioner." The weather swings this spring are interesting.

First Christian Church, Claremore, is getting into in the swing of things, too. We have a Church Life/Growth Ministry team that is phenomenal. We have rock painting May 18. We are going to paint rocks with a verse and our name and place them throughout town for others to find. June follows with a float trip on the Illinois River (6/11), Food Truck Thursday (6/23), a trip to Tulsa to watch the Pride Parade (6/25), and worship and all-church family picnic at Claremore Lake (6/26).

Rev. Alexis' has bible studies planned, Zoom trainings along with beliefs and story sessions. See her article in this month's newsletter. I hope you can be personally involved in one of these series.

There will be a congregational meeting Sunday, May 15. Finance and Trust Committee recommended to the board to commit \$200,000 from the sale of our former building to the Christian Church Foundation. The board approved the motion. It must now be voted on by the congregation.

Rev. Alexis' Installation is Sunday, May 22. Rev. Michael Davison, our Reginal Minister, will install our newly ordained reverend. The guest speaker will be one of Alexis' professors from Phillips. She is Dr. Lisa Barnett, and she is an Assistant Professor of American Religious History. Disciples Women's have graciously agreed to host a reception following the installation.

Random Acts of Kindness continue through J.O.G. Lynne gave a heartwarming explanation of J.O.G. and her experience with a homeless man at her second home, Hobby Lobby, on Sunday. The pickle was passed after worship and Zack received \$91.

Changes in the church include a door that will open and close for the kitchen pantry. Thank Greg for his expertise. The POD has finally left us. Barry helped us with numerous phone calls and negotiations to arrange for pick up. Now we are hoping for better weather and a new partially asphalted parking lot. We are looking at new flooring in the sanctuary and an improved handicap ramp.

See you at Church,
Trudy Hedgpath

“Dialogue in the Purple Zone” Training

You are invited to be part of a special training series facilitated by Rev. Dr. Leah Schade from Lexington Theological Seminary called “Dialogue in the Purple Zone.” The training series teaches participants how to facilitate and be part of Deliberative Dialogues within church settings. Deliberative Dialogues are intentional conversations during which a diverse group of individuals determine their shared values which they utilize in creating a group’s mission and areas of focus. It is an excellent way to explore what we care about as a community of faith and how we will express and live into our values together. Different committees and groups will find the tools within this training to be helpful as they determine how to focus their time, talent, and energy. I am excited by this opportunity and would love for you to be part of it.

The training will occur via Zoom and takes place @ 2:30 pm on May 7, 14 and 21.

Here are some questions you might have and their answers:

Why should I participate? Participants will acquire tools that will be helpful in: 1) How to have conversations about important issues in a way that is honest while being respectful of other people’s experiences and perspectives. 2) Learning how to be better decision makers within a group setting. 3) Becoming productive and engaged members of society.

How can I participate in this training? Please let me know your interest and your plans to attend by Monday, May 2: (alexis@fccclaremore.org - or - 217-779-9292). We will join the training via Zoom at the church. You do not need to register online - I’ve taken care of that.

What if I cannot join the group at the church but can join from another location? Let me know, and I will share the Zoom link with you. You can join from another computer. During break out discussion times, you will be with other people you might not know. Those attending from the church will discuss the prompts provided together in person.

Who can attend? Anyone who is interested can attend. This opportunity will be shared with the congregation in a variety of ways. I strongly encourage current and future leaders to participate because the skills that will be covered will be very helpful for your roles; however, everyone is welcome because everyone can benefit from learning the techniques that will be shared.

What happens after the training? That is up to the board and cabinet - we might decide to have a Deliberative Dialogue regarding the church’s mission. Committee chairs might use it in their meetings to determine objectives and actions for the year. Leadership will meet after the training to consider how they will put what we learned to use. There are many options, and I am very excited and curious to know what is inspired within you!

How can I learn more? You can read about the training here: <https://lextheo.edu/academics/continuing-education/lay-school-of-theology/> You’re also welcome to either email, text, or call me if you have questions.

What if I want to participate but cannot attend those dates and times? Please let me know. I would be happy to make arrangements for you to receive some of the information from and a summary of the training.

I have read material by and attended other workshops facilitated by Rev. Dr. Leah Schade; she is consistently thoughtful, patient, smart, kind, practical, and prepared. She was kind enough to talk with me by phone to answer some of the questions I had regarding this training last week, and she is looking forward to meeting those who attend. Please let me know if you have any other questions or information that would be helpful for me to know: alexis@fccclaremore.org.



After over two years, it's finally time! I don't know about you, but I have missed getting together with part of my church family every Wednesday night to visit, laugh, and sing together while preparing ourselves to help lead the rest of our church family to take notice of the presence of God through music. I would like to personally invite ANYONE who would like to participate in choir to join us on Wednesdays @ 7 pm starting May 18. You don't need any prior experience to participate. I would also like to thank Carolynn Saunders for stepping up and volunteering to accompany us on the piano. I hope to see you there as we start a new chapter in the music ministry of First Christian Church in Claremore. In Christ's Joy!



Disciples Women

Disciples Women met on Thursday, April 21. We enjoyed a salad lunch. Mary Fry gave our study/devotion on Faith. NEODW reached out to us about the need for filling some positions for the Executive Committee. There is no interest from our group for doing this. I contacted Angie Graves from Salvation Army to see if our group could help with packing bags for Food 4 Kids in May. She said they are covered for the remainder of this school year but will welcome our help when school begins again in August. We are donating money to Mercy Chefs for Ukraine help and Caminante Ministry in the Dominican Republic. We will be serving snacks after Pastor Alexis' installation and worship on Sunday, May 22. Our next meeting will be on Thursday, May 19.



Church Growth

The quote “Nothing that is worth doing is ever easy” has been attributed to many people over the years. It’s become a cliché, but whoever said it isn’t wrong. FCC Claremore made the hard decision to move from a building that had so much precious history within our congregation to a smaller location that would allow us to continue to be a light into the community. It wasn’t easy, but financially we are in a better place for it.

A few years ago we made another decision after years of study, prayer, and movement from the holy spirit; we said “YES” to becoming an Open & Affirming congregation. Every single person in our congregation voted for this new identity which for me was the closet I’ve ever come to a spiritual nirvana. I do not identify with the LGBTQ+ community, but I have friends who do and I have been heartbroken learning how communities of faith have ostracized and condemned my friends for expressing their love for another human being. That hate did not coincide with the God I grew up studying.

I’ll get back to the quote soon enough, but I want to add a new word into this conversation. The word is “holistically”. The root word, “holistic” as defined by Merriam Webster is “relating to or concerned with wholes or with complete systems rather than with the analysis of, treatment of, or dissection into parts.”

In this conversation, we are talking about the holistic implications of being Open & Affirming. The first step of “being” in this instance is to state that we are Open & Affirming. We can give that one a big check mark and I can’t stress how big a step this was. It was monumental, not just for us, not just for Claremore, but for Rogers County has a whole. The next step in “being” is to act on that statement. Now let’s go back to that first quote “nothing that is worth doing is ever easy”. For a lot of us, we still don’t have firm grasp on the LGBTQ+ community and what it means. Some of us don’t understand the reason we need to do more than simply be a welcoming church when people visit us. A few of us might be worried about being labeled “the gay church” or “gay lovers”. I know for people that are still struggling with these very understandable issues, it might be difficult to go beyond our initial O&A identity statement.

While traveling for work through Texas I stumbled upon an AM Christian radio station discussing transgender children. I could only stomach a few minutes of the conversation, but the gist was that if we didn’t acknowledge transgender as an option, it simply wouldn’t exist. Now take a moment to put yourself in the proverbial shoes of someone who might identify as transgender and imagine how hurt you would feel.

Take a moment to imagine the taste in your mouth that you’d get about Christianity. Now let’s rewind to the prominence of Westboro Baptist Church in the mid 2010’s and the signs that they held and the words that they said. Imagine if you were an LGBTQ+ person and heard that from people who were supposed to represent God. It wouldn’t just be hurtful; it would be damaging. My siblings in Faith, the antidote to that rhetoric isn’t just a mission statement on our wall, it has to be action. It has to be standing with the oppressed, the ostracized and saying that “you are loved” and working in our communities of Faith and the World to let people know that our God’s love is limitless.

“Nothing that is worth doing is ever easy”

In the coming months we will have opportunities to learn from each other and express God’s love to those who desperately need it in our community. I hope you will participate with an open heart and open mind to “holistically” live out this identity.

Michael Robinson, Church Growth Chair



Please join us at the church for rock painting on May 18 at 5:30 PM. We will be putting phrases on them and our church name to scatter around the community. This is meant as a fun event and a unique way to get our word out. Sandwiches, chips, and beverages will be provided. Please let Renee, Tava, or the church office know if you are interested in participating.



Join us on June 11th as we sail down the Illinois in kayaks and rafts. The cost is around \$30 per person. We will have more information and a sign-up sheet later in the month. You’re encouraged to bring a friend to join us!



Hello Mary

	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
1		3	4	5	6	7 12p Purple Dialogue Training (contact Pastor Alexis to learn more)
8	9 <i>HAPPY</i> <i>Mother's Day</i> 10:30a Bible Study	10 6:30p Zoom Bible Study (contact Pastor Alexis for the Zoom link) 7p Boy Scouts Meeting	11	12	13	14 12p Purple Dialogue Training
15	16 10:30a Bible Study	17 6:30p Zoom Bible Study	18 5:30p Rock Painting 7p Choir Practice	19 12p Disciples Women	20	21 12p Purple Dialogue Training
22	23 10:30a Bible Study	24 6:30p Zoom Bible Study	25 7p Choir Practice	26 7p Girl Scouts Service Team Meeting	27	28
29	30 <i>Memorial Day</i>  OFFICE CLOSED 10:30a Bible Study	31 6:30p Zoom Bible Study				

8:30a Praise Team Practice
9:30a Adult Sunday School
10:15a Donuts & Coffee
10:45a Worship Service
12p Elders Meeting

8:30a Praise Team Practice
9:30a Adult Sunday School
10:15a Donuts & Coffee
10:45a Worship Service

8:30a Praise Team Practice
9:30a Adult Sunday School
10:15a Donuts & Coffee
10:45a Worship Service
12p Congregational Meeting
12:15p Cabinet

8:30a Praise Team Practice
9:30a Adult Sunday School
10:15a Donuts & Coffee
10:45a Pastor Alexis' Installation during Worship Service
12p Reception
1p Outreach Ministry Team Meeting

Pentecost Offering
8:30a Praise Team Practice
9:30a Adult Sunday School
10:15a Donuts & Coffee
10:45a Worship Service



First Christian Church of Claremore
 (Disciples of Christ)
 1010 N Florence Ave
 Claremore, OK 74017

PLACE
 STAMP
 HERE

STAFF

Alexis Engelbrecht, Pastor
 Susan Kotoff, Administrative Assistant
 Sean Robinson, Music Director
 Carolyn Saunders, Accompanist

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

FAITHFUL FINANCES*	April	2022 YTD
Total Offerings and Other Income for Daily Ministries Expenses	11,651.51	39,955.21
Total Daily Ministries Expenses	9,939.03	41,355.39
Net Income (Loss)	1,712.48	(1,400.18)
Needed for Budget	10,970.23	46,623.52
Budget Excess (Shortfall)	681.28	(6,668.31)

*Totals could change after bank statements have been reconciled.

<p>FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH 1010 N Florence Ave Claremore, OK 74017 Ph: 918-341-1199 Fax: 918-341-1207</p> <p>OFFICE HOURS Mon - Fri 1-5 pm</p> <p>SOCIAL MEDIA  www.fcclaremore.org  www.facebook.com/fccclaremore</p>	<p>SERVICE TIMES</p> <p>Sundays 9:30 am Adult Sunday School 10:45 am Worship Service (In-person & Facebook Live)</p> <p>Check calendar for fellowship and education opportunities.</p>	<p>GIVING</p> <p>We appreciate your giving. Did you know that you can also give online? Go to our website and click on the "Give" tab on the homepage or use the Givelify app.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>You can also stop by and drop off your offering at the office, mail it, or put in the offering plate.</p>
---	--	---