



On St. Patrick’s Day I was blessed to represent you and the church of Jesus Christ at a lovely wedding in downtown Decatur. Not only was the wedding service downtown, it was out in the open, in the town square, in full view of 100 invited, seated guests plus several hundred folks where were Irish for the day, wearing green and feeling the good, good vibrations of having imbibed for several hours the fruit of the vine or the hops of barley. Drummers were drumming, bagpipes were wailing, and there was much laughter in the air, but when the groomsmen came out and the bridesmaids processed the community grew quiet, and walked across the town square holding the arm of her father, everyone respectfully stood and watched.

It got better. During the ceremony, while the city and our neighbors paused out of respect, after the declaration of intent (the part where they say “I do”) and the exchange of vows, I explain the meaning of wedding rings. The wedding liturgy goes: *The ring is a symbol. In marriage, it is the symbol of the uniting of two lives in a holy venture which will last throughout life. The ring symbolizes love because, like the circular nature of love, it does not end. It is, therefore, fitting that you bind your sacred vows by the giving and receiving of a ring, a beautiful and meaningful symbol.*

I asked the couple, “What do you offer in pledge of your vows?” Of course, the answer is “rings.” Except what the groom said was, “My love.” I said, “That is a great answer. You will do well.”

What do you offer in pledge of your vows? Wedding rings remind us of the vows we make, the love we cherish, and the commitment to honor and hold each other that was made before God and one another. The ring is a reminder, but it is not a marriage, a relationship. It is a symbol that points to the hard work and the deep joy we experience. There are other symbols that serve to remind us of vows we have made and the depth of meaning they hold for us. The Chalice. The Bread. The church steeple. The hand extended to help. The hands clasped in prayer.

The Cross. Our denominational symbol of the red Chalice with St. Andrew’s Cross was once explained to me this way: imagine you are holding the Cup of our Lord at the Last Supper, and the cross is right behind you because you are standing in its shadow, so the shadow falls across the Chalice, and suddenly, each time you see the symbol, you remember how much God loves you.

What do you offer in pledge of your vows? The symbol of the cross, to the Romans a symbol of punishment, to the world a sign of folly, of foolishness, says Paul, but to those who see and believe the cross is lifted up high to serve as a symbol of life and love. Of course, unlike the fiery serpent in the wilderness then or the one that emblazoned on the doors of ambulances today, God did not send Jesus as a form of punishment. Instead, God sent Jesus “to save the world.” If you like, you could say that God sent Jesus as a pledge of God’s vow to love you.

What do you offer in pledge of your vows? Symbols can serve to remind us of sacred vows. But symbols work best with some skin on them. We love like God first loved us when we package food for the hungry and pay for the shipping costs, when we fight and persevere for justice and mercy, when we look across the great divide and see before us a brother, a sister, a child of God, one who lives and loves and breathes the same air. God loves you. Who needs you to love them like God loves you?

Oh yeah, I have to tell you how the wedding ended. When I said, “*You may now kiss the bride!*” all of Decatur cheered and roared and clapped. Then I said, “*You are warmly invited by the family to a lovely reception immediately following this worship service.*” And the bride quickly added, “*Only those who are invited!*” Aren’t you glad we’re all invited to love?

As always, First Christian Church of Decatur, I am delighted to be your pastor.
Shalom, **James Brewer-Calvert**

Christian Education Calendar Update



- Sunday, April 15th** – Youth Group going to Mellow Mushroom after church
- Saturday, April 21st** – Spring Carnival
- Sunday, April 22nd** – Disciples Youth in Metro Atlanta gather at First Atlanta Chinese Christian Church at 4:30 p.m.
- Friday – Sunday, April 27, 28 & 29th** – FCCD hosting at least 18 people from metro Atlanta churches for Children Worship & Wonder training
- Sunday, April 29th** – Our Children Worship & Wonder trainer, Rev. Kaye Edwards will be bringing the word from Mark 9:33-37
- Saturday, May 12th** – Leukemia & Lymphoma Society Children’s Fun Run in the Park
- Saturday, May 19th** – Anita Renahan-White’s Ordination Service at 2:00 p.m.
- Sunday, May 20th** – Graduation Sunday
- Sunday, May 20th** – Disciples Youth in Metro Atlanta gathering at 4:30 p.m.
- Saturday, May 27th & Sunday, May 28th** – Youth Group Lock-In at FCCD
- Monday, June 4th through Friday, June 8th** – Vacation Bible School (Leaders are needed, please let me know if you are able to help)

Thank you for all of the blessings you bestow upon me, **Brandy Alsobrook**

News and notes for God’s folks

Did you meet and greet...? Recent Visitors

We are delighted to welcome friends and neighbors who recently visited to worship God here, Rev. Jose’ Lingongo, Rhonda Buyers, Gwen Jackson, Aileen Michalak, Julianna, Devdan, Alex, Russell Broomfield, Khwanza LeBlanc, Marian Griffith, Kaula Harriet, Marcus Hopkins Turner and daughter, Allie Houchin, David Cromer, Augustine Young, Diane D. Jett, Olin & Carolyn Hatch, Dan George & Nancy Suttles, Tommy & Cathy Archibald, Sunny Alsobrook, Kayla Harriet, Isaiah Bell, Marcus Hill, Marcus Hill’s mom and grandmother, Lisa and family, Pastor Paul Turner and Billy Pabst, Sally, Lee, including a wonderful assortment of faithful folks who participate regularly. Hope to see you again soon!

Decatur Cooperative Ministry In Kind Needs for April

15 new bed pillows, boxes of disposable serving gloves for dinner volunteers, 1” binders for PTC curriculum, Umbrellas, Ponchos, Sinus medication, Pine Sol cleaner, Lysol disinfectant spray. From Hagar’s House: A mother lists her sizes as 16 petite, blouse - size large, bra 42 B, Panties 8-9. Her son wears-briefs extra large, pants 38/32, shirt-Large.

Please bring items to the church to be delivered!



Graduation Sunday for Class of 2012

Please plan to be in worship on Sunday, May 20th. We will be recognizing and honoring our 2012 graduates! If you have a family member graduating and you would like him or her recognized during the 10:50 worship service, please email the person’s name, school, and degree completed to Brandy.
Blessings & Peace,
Brandy Alsobrook

Spring Sermon Series

“Follow the Leader: Re-Imagining Christianity After the Resurrection”

Sunday mornings at 8:30 a.m. and 10:50 a.m.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Theme</i>
<i>April 15</i>	<i>John 20:19-31</i>	<i>We relearn forgiveness</i>
<i>April 22</i>	<i>Luke 24:36-48</i>	<i>We revisit hospitality</i>
<i>April 29</i>	<i>1 John 3:16-24</i>	<i>We resolve to love</i>
<i>May 6</i>	<i>John 15:1-8</i>	<i>We reconnect spiritually</i>
<i>May 13</i>	<i>Acts 10:44-48</i>	<i>We re-imagine inclusivity</i>
<i>May 20</i>	<i>Luke 24:44-53</i>	<i>Graduation Sunday</i>
<i>May 27</i>	<i>Acts 2</i>	<i>The Day of Pentecost</i>

Watching our figures

Palm Sunday, April 1, 2012

9 a.m. Decatur Square Service	56
10:50 a.m. Sanctuary Service	90
Total	146
Offering	\$5,230.00
Offset (Video D Studios Inc.)	175.00
Offset (Emory Chase Condo Assn.)	225.00
DeKalb County Election	50.00
Easter Offering	192.00
Total	\$5,872.00

Maundy Thursday, April 5, 2012

7 p.m.	50
Easter Sunday, April 8, 2012	
8:30 a.m. Awakenings Service	12
10:50 a.m. Sanctuary Service	110
Children in Easter Egg Hunt	10
Total	132

Olive Branch Christian Church baptismal service in the sanctuary	25
Offering	\$3,277.00
Offset (GIPL)	400.00
Offset (Gentle Spirit)	400.00
Offset (AA’s)	60.00
Sunday School Book	8.40
Easter Offering	1,197.00
Total	\$ 5,342.40

Total Easter Offering \$1,389.00

Total Annual Giving March 2012

‘12 YTD Total Income	\$80,516.48
‘12 YTD Total Expenses	\$79,445.67
‘12 YTD Surplus (Deficit)	\$ 1,070.81

“Big Bertha” Capital Fund Campaign Update: \$55,932.00 has been received to date towards our Sanctuary HVAC system. Thank you, one and all, for your support. Our goal is \$130,000 to cover anticipated costs for the necessary replacement HVAC.

April Birthdays

- Apr. 9 - Millie Simmons
- Apr. 13 - Charlotte Ivey
- Apr. 15 - Julie Bryant
- Apr. 15 - Kaitlyn Asher
- Apr. 16 - Nga Nguyen
- Apr. 19 - Ian Parvin-Asher
- Apr. 20 - Steve Maxey
- Apr. 23 - Millie Suttles
- Apr. 27 - Jean Crowe
- Apr. 29 - Beth Schiavo
- Apr. 30 - Lyman Delk

April Anniversaries

- Apr. 16 - Stephen & Meredith Westbrook
- Apr. 24 - Jay White & Anita Renahan-White



First Christian Church of Decatur

(Disciples of Christ)

601 West Ponce de Leon Avenue
Decatur, Georgia 30030

Church Office — 404-378-3621

Fax — 404-378-1875

Email: 1stcc@bellsouth.net

Website: www.decaturdisciples.org

Ministers: All the People

Your Church Staff:

The Rev. Dr. James L. Brewer-Calvert, *Senior Pastor*

William E. Garner, *Director of Music*

Brandy Alsobrook, *Director of Christian Education*

Kathy Westbrook, *Church Organist*

Elizabeth Hamm, *Bookkeeper*

Sherry Davis, *Church Administrator*

Azeb Gidey, *Custodian*

Mark Ranney, *Facilities Manager*

Your Volunteer Ministry Coordinators:

Diana Blake, *Wedding Coordinator*

Rev. Daphne Reiley, *Caregiver Spiritual Support*

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The Newsletter of First Christian Church of Decatur

Decatur Disciples



Welcome new member!

On Easter Sunday, April 8, Mr. Russell Broomfield joined First Christian Church by renewal of the vows he made at his baptism. Russell has been an active participant in worship and community life of the congregation since Christmas. He is a computer programmer by trade and a computer gamer by hobby. Welcome, Russell, into our growing church family!

April 21st from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Decatur Toy Park Spring Carnival

Come, celebrate 10 years of fun and hospitality in the First Christian Church Park and Playground!



Come and celebrate at First Christian Church's 2012 Spring Carnival! Bring the whole family to this fun-filled day of games, food, and great prizes! Attractions include a giant slide, obstacle course, games, face painting, crafts, and much more! Plus, enter to win great prizes from participating Decatur establishments including many of your favorite restaurants. This will be a very special carnival because we are celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the park. We hope to see many of our "Graduates" at the park. Proceeds from the carnival will go to the church outreach funds, part of which maintain and expand our Church and Community park. Every day children from all walks of life bring their parents to our park. We estimate that around 200 families enjoy the playground each week. We are delighted to play host and practice hospitality for the benefit of all. Please, come to our annual carnival, have a fun family afternoon, and support our park and outreach mission. Hot dogs and carnival treats will be available for purchase. Entrance to the carnival is \$5 per person with a \$20 family max. Visit our website at www.decaturoytopark.com or call 404.378.3621 with questions and to volunteer. *All hands on deck!*



I am so happy to report that First Christian Decatur will be hosting **Children Worship & Wonder** training April 27, 28 and 29; with Kaye Edwards as our trainer. Kaye will also be worshipping with us and bringing the good news on Sunday, April 29th. Kaye is the Director of Family & Children's Ministry's in the Disciples Home Missions office.

Children Worship & Wonder Training

Friday, April 27th 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Saturday, April 28th 9:00 am – 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, April 29th 2:00 – 5:00 p.m.



April 11, 2012

Volume 49, Issue 7

*We are Disciples of Christ,
a movement for wholeness
in a fragmented world.*

*As part of the one body
of Christ, we welcome all
to the Lord's Table
as God has welcomed us.*



--Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
Statement of Identity

Sunday, April 22, 5:00 p.m. (Church Van departs 4 p.m.)

Metro Atlanta Disciples Youth

2012 "Tour of Life" Continues

April Program Theme: Meal Time (Around the World)

Disciples are used to sharing potlucks, church dinners, and camp meals together (it's called "table fellowship" in the Bible). Did you know our table fellowship reaches around the world? At this event we will hear about the churches and faith stories of Disciples pastors from China, Korea, and Puerto Rico, share communion, sing, and end with an ethnic feast!

Who: Youth in Grades 6-12 and their friends

When: Sunday, April 22, 2012, 5:00 p.m.

Where: Peachtree Corners Christian Church/First Atlanta Chinese Christian Church, 6060 Spalding Dr., Norcross, GA 30092

What to Bring: Each adult advisor is invited to bring one favorite ethnic dish to share (enough for 8-10 servings).



Please let me know if you have any questions.

Blessings and Peace,

Brandy M. Alsobrook

Director of Christian Education

First Christian Church of Decatur
 601 West Ponce de Leon Avenue
 Decatur, Georgia 30030
 44-378-3621 office
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April 2012

Sunday Worship Schedule
 8:30 a.m. Awakenings Service (chapel)
 9:15 a.m. Sharing in Fellowship Hall
 9:30 a.m. Sunday school for all ages
 10:50 a.m. Sanctuary Service

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9 a.m. Community Palm Sunday Service on Decatur Square 12:15 p.m. Called Board Meeting 12:45 p.m. Disciples Exec. Board in Fellowship Hall 12:45 p.m. CYF Lunch 1:30 p.m. Contemplative Prayer 8 p.m. NA	2 10 a.m. Staff Meeting 11 a.m. Prayer Group 6:30-8:30 p.m. Suzuki Violin 6-7:30 p.m. Lisa Cottrell In Carmack	3 3:30 p.m. Music Theory Grp. 3:30 p.m. Cello Lessons 8 p.m. AA/ALANON	4 8 a.m. Lenten Prayer Retreat 3:30 p.m. Music Theory Grp. 7 p.m. Emory Chase 7:30 p.m. Chancel Choir	5 6 p.m. Bell Choir Rehearsal 7 p.m. Maundy Thursday Service	6 "Keeping Watch" 12-3 p.m. Chapel Open for Good Friday	7 1-2 p.m. Spiritual Growth with Rev. Grenpastures
8 9:30 a.m. Egg Hunt in the Park 1:30 p.m. Contemplative Prayer Group 2 p.m. Olive Branch CC Baptism 4-5 p.m. Northlake Vespers 8 p.m. NA	9 10 a.m. Staff Meeting 11 a.m. Prayer Group 6-7:30 p.m. Lisa Cottrell In Carmack 7:30 p.m. Stewardship Meeting	10 1:30 p.m. Ruth Circle 3-5 p.m. SIS 3:30 p.m. Cello Lessons 7-9 p.m. Caregiver Support Grp. 8 p.m. AA/ALANON	11 9:30 a.m. SIS 3-5 p.m. SIS 3:30 p.m. Violin Lessons 6:30 p.m. Bell Choir 7 p.m. Outreach Meeting 7:30 p.m. Chancel Choir	12 9:30 a.m. SIS 3:30 p.m. Cello Lessons 7:30 p.m. Lydia Circle	13 7-9:30 p.m. Atlanta Stereographic Assoc.	14 2 p.m. Eunice Kalb Memorial Service with Reception to follow
15 12:15 p.m. CYF after church 1:30 p.m. Contemplative Prayer Group 8 p.m. NA	16 10 a.m. Staff Meeting 11 a.m. Prayer Group 6-7:30 p.m. Lisa Cottrell in Carmack	17 3-5 p.m. SIS 3:30 p.m. Cello Lessons 8 p.m. AA/ALANON	18 9:30 a.m. SIS 3-5 p.m. SIS 3:30 p.m. Violin Lessons 6:30 p.m. Bell Choir 7 p.m. Outreach Meeting 7:30 p.m. Chancel Choir	19 9:30 a.m. SIS 2 p.m. Retired Teachers 3:30 p.m. Cello Lessons	20	21 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Spring Carnival in Park 1-2 p.m. Spiritual Growth with Rev. Grenpastures
22 12:30 p.m. Personnel Meeting 1:30 p.m. Contemplative Prayer Group 4:30 p.m. ATL CYF At First Chinese Christian Church 8 p.m. NA	23 10 a.m. Staff Meeting 11 a.m. Prayer Group 6-7:30 p.m. Lisa Cottrell in Carmack 6:30 p.m. Evaluation And Planning	24 3-5 p.m. SIS 3:30 p.m. Cello Lessons 8 p.m. AA/ALANON	25 9:30 a.m. SIS 3-5 p.m. SIS 3:30 p.m. Violin Lessons 6:30 p.m. Bell Choir 7:30 p.m. Chancel Choir	26 9:30 a.m. SIS 3:30 p.m. Cello Lessons	27 6 p.m. Wedding 6-9 p.m. Children Worship & Wonder Training	28 Work Day at Camp Christian 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Children Worship & Wonder Training 1-2 p.m. Spiritual Growth with Rev. Grenpastures
29 1:30 p.m. Contemplative Prayer Group 2-5 p.m. Children Worship & Wonder Training 8 p.m. NA	30 10 a.m. Staff Meeting 11 a.m. Prayer Group 6-7:30 p.m. Lisa Cottrell in Carmack 7 p.m. Anita Renahan-White Ordination Council					