

## Joys and Concerns of the Church and Community

- **Thirteen years together!** Wednesday, February 9<sup>th</sup> marked the 13<sup>th</sup> anniversary at First Christian Church of Decatur of Senior Pastor **Brewer-Calvert's** servant leadership alongside our members and friends, with the help and grace of God.
- **Keith Williams'** mother passed away on February 9<sup>th</sup> in Richmond, VA. He was blessed to be with her in her final hours on earth.
- Amazing news! Please continue to pray for **Thomas Sowell** and for his family, **Jim, Virginia,** and **Daniel,** former members of First Christian whom many in our church know and love. **Thomas,** a sophomore at Lakeside High School, was critically injured in a snowboarding accident in late January, has made amazing progress. His parents reported this week that that his breathing tube was removed. He immediately knew his name, the year and that he was in Atlanta. Later he asked his father to bring his books to the hospital because he had a book report due. To follow his progress, you can read the blog: <http://prayforthomas.blogspot.com/>. The family appreciates your continued prayers.
- **Hank Ferry** as he recovers from bronchitis and pneumonia.
- **James Eunice,** student at Valdosta HS, had been missing for over several weeks. **Eunice** apparently fell out of his boat and drowned. His body was recovered last Monday, and his funeral was held this past Saturday. His friends are members at First Christian Church in Valdosta GA. Pray for his family and friends.
- **Leigh Britt,** daughter of **Bob** and **Barbara Powell,** has surgery scheduled for Feb. 14.
- **Wiley** and **Danl** ask for prayers for **Andrea Berlin** (Crohn's disease).
- **Mary Ellen Fountain** asks for prayers to "keep on keeping on."
- **Millie Linville** "Continued prayers that I focus on true healing and spiritual growth."
- **Christy Tempo** is on bed rest for the remaining 2 months of her pregnancy.
- **Daphne Reiley** offers thanksgiving for the fruits of the spirit.
- **The Rev. Adei Grenpastures** requests prayers for neighbor **Jackie Hudson** and her daughter **Alexis.** Healing and strength for **Judy** and **George Barrett.** Prayers of thanksgiving for **Alicia Maxwell's** positive response to treatments. Prayers for Alicia's friend **Andy Farmer.** Continued prayers for **Laura Thigpen** who is in hospice. Family of **Abby Smith** say she is doing much better, is out of PICU, and request the following:
  - 1) Prayers for continued improvement with her vision;
  - 2) Prayers for continued stability for her kidneys and blood chemistries;
  - 3) Prayers for overall healing, especially her brain;
  - 4) Prayers for much needed sleep for Abby and the rest of us;
  - 5) Prayers for **Drew** and **Anna** as they continue to deal with this long, stressful hospital stay; and
  - 6) Prayers for **Paul** who is under the weather due to a stressful, sleepless 1 1/2 weeks.
- **Kathy Westbrook** requests prayers for her former student, age 23, whose mother just passed away.
- **Rev. Jessica Torres** lifts up her friend **Judy** in Colorado (cancer); **Art** and **Derrick** (health); the **Rev. Jose Morales'** ordination (thanksgiving).
- **Mary Ellen Fountain.**
- The **Tate family,** including **Jacqueline's** parents **Judith Turner, John Neumann** and **Linda Neumann.**
- **William Garner** and **Kohl Sudnikovich** and the **Garner** family.
- **Sarah McClelland's** friends **Thomas** and **Suzanne Chafin** and their newborn child **Rhys,** who was born at 29 weeks, who is doing much better!
- **Nathan Brown** requests prayer for spiritual healing and discernment for himself and for **Mr. George Williams,** who is in need of healing and spiritual awakening
- Our neighbors in the Middle East, and in particular, those in Tunisia and Egypt.
- **Michael Dodd's** friends the **Capshaws.**
- **The Revs. Wendy Miles** (healing) and **Ray Miles** (strength).

- "Please include **Susan Reimer** in our prayers. She has been released from the hospital! There is a site that has updates posted, etc.: [caringbridge.org/visit/susanreimer](http://caringbridge.org/visit/susanreimer). Thank you. **Linda Chesnut**"
- **Clara Holley** is recovering at home and feels so much better!
- **Marvin Lee** is recovering from hip replacement surgery and is in rehab in Gainesville.
- **Caroline Leslie** requests prayers for **Jim Patrick,** who is recovering from surgery.
- **Julie Fleming** and **J.D. Fleming** request prayers for **Vicky Likens,** who is in treatment for leukemia.
- Friend and colleague of **Michael Dodd, Yvonne Capshaw,** whose **mother** and **husband Rodney** have both been diagnosed with cancer.
- Continued prayers for recuperation and rest for **Glen** and **Elaine Alsobrook.**
- Comfort and solace for **Ruby Rathel,** Elaine's mother.
- Prayers for the **Magdaleno** and **Bunting** families, friends of the **Reileys.**

## Church Calendar

Sunday, February 13:	8:30 a.m.	Awakenings Service in the Chapel
	9:30 a.m.	Sunday School
	10:50 a.m.	Sanctuary Service
	12:15 p.m.	Disciples Women Soup and Salad
	12:30 -2 p.m.	Christian Youth Fellowship
	8 p.m.	NA
Monday, February 14:		<b>Rev. Dr. Brewer-Calvert will be in Athens</b>
	10 a.m.	Staff Meeting
	11 a.m.	Prayer Group
Tuesday, February 15:	3-5 p.m.	Spring Into Spanish
	4-6:30 p.m.	Music Teacher
	8:00 p.m.	AA/ALANON
Wednesday, February 16:	9:30-10:30 a.m.	Spring Into Spanish
	3-5 p.m.	Spring Into Spanish
	6:30 p.m.	Bell Choir Rehearsal
	7:30 p.m.	Chancel Choir Rehearsal
Thursday, February 17:	10:30-11:30 a.m.	Spring Into Spanish
	2 p.m.	Retired Teachers
	4-6:30 p.m.	Music Teacher
Saturday, February 19:	1-2 p.m.	Spiritual Growth with Rev. Grenpastures
Sunday, February 20:	8:30 a.m.	Awakenings Service in the Chapel
	9:30 a.m.	Sunday School
	10:50 a.m.	Sanctuary Service
	12:30 p.m.	Board Meeting
	3 p.m.	Atlanta Concert Ringers
	8 p.m.	NA

**Assisted Living:** **Gus Head** Northlake Gardens 1300 Montreal Road, Room 228 Tucker, GA 320084-8141; **Matelyn Heyward** Ivy Hall 5690 State Bridge, Room 130 Alpharetta, GA. 30022-8188; **Velma McKinney** Wesley Wood Towers 208 Towers Circle NE Atlanta, GA. 30329-4095; **Gwen Sapp** Traditions Health & Rehabilitation 2816 Evans Mill Road-Room D10 Lithonia, GA. 30058-7440; **Ellen Young** and **Eunice Kalb** 3675 Kensington Road Decatur, GA. 30032-1735. **At Home:** **Julie Bryant** 2100 Clairmont Lake Montclair

Room 213 Decatur, GA. 30033-4052; **Jean Crowe** 165 Marion Place, NE, Apt. 705 Atlanta, GA 30307-2791; **Hank Ferry** 1209 Highland Drive, NE Marietta, GA 30062-2206; **Maurice** and **Edith Jones** 4640 Stonemeade Court Atlanta, GA 30331-7988; **Jane Liles** 127 King's Bridge, NE Atlanta, GA 30329-2548; **Thetis Merritt** 631 Kirk Road Decatur, GA 30033-2133; **Don** and **Carolyn Middour** 1476 Oakridge Circle Decatur, GA 30033-2133; **Robbie Re** 1701 The Oaks Clarkston, GA. 30021-1276; **Sara Ripy** Arbor Terrace 425 Winn Way Rm. 224 Decatur, GA 30030-1733; **Millie Simmons** 221 Mimosa Drive Decatur, GA 30030-3733; **Virginia Smith** 336 Madisons Way Waleska, GA 30183-3182.

## **Grace Notes: A playground built with love**

By Lorraine V. Murray for the AJC

Church ministries usually bring to mind soup kitchens and homeless shelters. But I recently experienced an unusual twist on the idea of serving others when my niece, sister and I took my great nephew Eli to a neighborhood playground. Talk about a toddler's version of heaven! The little fellow was surrounded by clusters of colorful push toys, including a miniature police car and a large blue, plastic dog. While my niece captured each moment in photos, the boy dashed from swing to sliding pond and back.

The playground is situated on a generous swath of land that belongs to the First Christian Church of Decatur. I would venture a guess that this prime piece of real estate, on the edge of the posh downtown area, would net a tidy sum if sold to developers. But it seems this congregation decided to use the land for something far more valuable, which is giving children a place to run and jump and make new friends. About 12 years ago, the church joined forces with neighborhood folks to raise money to create the playground and park.

Eli and his mom and dad spent a week touring Atlanta, going to various museums and attractions. And, of course, they shelled out plenty of money for admission, parking and don't forget trinkets to take home. But this vast playground decorated with towering oaks comes with no strings attached. It is absolutely free.

We were there for nearly two hours and by the time we left little Eli was completely worn out but still beaming a big smile. The families that gather there, eating lunch at picnic tables while children play hide-and-seek nearby, needn't be members of the church. They don't have to be Christians or even believe in God, for that matter.

After all, Christ loved people unconditionally. It didn't matter what someone's race was or how much money he had or what he'd done in the past. And on this sunny, crisp day as I watched the children giggling with glee, I realized this playground wasn't just built with concrete and fences and swing sets. It was built with the kind of love Christ modeled when he told the disciples, "Love one another as I have loved you."

And if you spend an afternoon there watching the children scurrying around, you'll get a glorious glimpse of what lies at the heart of truly ministering to others. Whether it's a soup kitchen, a shelter or a playground, love is given freely and in great abundance. It's the same love God bestows on each of us.

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## **First Christian Church of Decatur**

(Disciples of Christ)

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**The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)** was born in the early 1800s as a dynamic movement for God that spread across the American frontier. Seeking to move beyond denominational division and toward being a New Testament Church, our founders envisioned a united community of faith grounded in the love and grace of Jesus Christ. Today we are over 3,700 congregations strong across the United States, Canada, and around the world. The red Chalice with St. Andrew's Cross symbolizes our focus on the weekly celebration of Holy Communion and the openness of the Lord's Table, where all are made welcome and invited to partake.

**First Christian Church of Decatur** was founded on Christmas Day 1921, and has served faithfully ever since with a significant urban ministry, an inclusive theology, and a Kingdom-building vision. We are open and accepting of all of God's people, and encourage women, men, and young people to follow their call from God to serve, just as Christ first served us.

### **How to Join:**

You may join First Christian Church by transfer of membership, confession of faith, or by renewal of the vows of your baptism.

Please fill out a Friends and Visitors Card (found in your worship program) and bring it forward with you during the Hymn of Invitation, where our Pastor will be delighted to welcome you.

Disciples of Christ congregations are delighted to recognize all baptisms. We baptize by immersion at an age of understanding. If you have not been baptized we will schedule one with you at a later date. Pastor-led classes on "Baptism and Belonging" are offered on a regular basis.