



## Lifting Praise

Issue 49 | Vol: 08

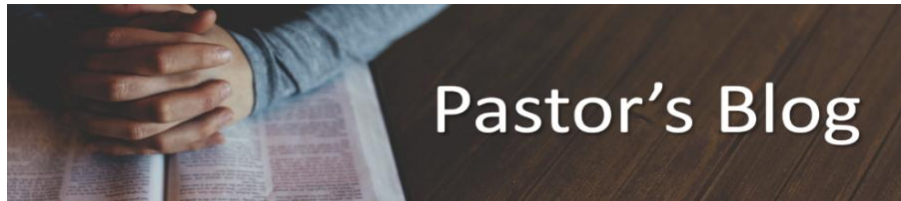
December 3, 2025



**Lifting Praise is the weekly newsletter designed to help you stay connected and informed about everything happening with the First Christian Church family.**

### **Song of the Week**

Phil Wickham - Psalm 8 (Hallé)



## TRAPPED IN THE TRAPPINGS

Upward Look by Jon Forrest

Senator John McCain of Arizona was a prisoner of war during the Vietnam conflict. He was shot down and held as a prisoner of war in Hanoi for 5 ½ years, 1967-1973, spending much of it in solitary confinement. John McCain said this, "When I was being mistreated by the North Vietnamese, many times I found myself asking to live just one more minute rather than one more hour or one more day. And I know I was able to hang on longer as a prisoner of war because of the spiritual help that I received through prayer." "At Christmas, I was the room chaplain, not because of my excessive virtue, but because I knew all the prayers that went with a church service, since I had been in a boarding school and was an Episcopalian. We asked for a Bible, and the Vietnamese said they didn't have any. Later we learned that thousands of Bibles had been sent to us." "Four days before Christmas, I was told that I could copy prayers and stories from the only Bible the Vietnamese had available...Our service consisted of a biblical passage read by me, followed by an appropriate song by the choir. I talked about the birth of Christ and the choir sang, 'Silent Night.' " "I looked around the room and there were tears in those men's eyes. They weren't tears of anger or fright or sorrow or bitterness or even longing for home. They were tears of joy that, for the first time in seven years for some of them there was a celebration of Christmas together as Americans."



This powerful story of a Christmas Celebration in the "Hanoi Hilton" (aka, Vietcong prison camp) reminds us more of what it means to "HAVE YOURSELF A REAL CHRISTMAS." Most of us today think that, in order to have a REAL Christmas we must have lights, decorations, magnificent trees, and beautiful music in the background, overwhelming meals, cookies, candy and other treats. We must have wonderful Christmas clothes and more gifts under the tree than we can count!

However, as illustrated in our story, REAL Christmas is much more than exorbitant trappings! It is really about a personal connection with God through Christ. On the first Christmas there was controversy, rejection, poverty, exhaustion, dictatorship, scandal, dirt, and uninvited guests. Nothing could be further from the perfect modern Christmas, yet there was amazing worship and joy!

The trappings of Christmas tend to deflect the true focus of the season away from the realization that God sent his perfect Son into a dirty, corrupt world to live an exemplary life for all and to die a miserable, painful death in order to bring undeserved forgiveness for our cold blooded sins. Sometimes we find ourselves "Trapped in the Trappings" of Christmas. As we enjoy the trappings of Christmas, let's make sure we take the time to focus on the REAL side of the season; the side that really matters.

This Sunday, Josh McVey will deliver the sermon for our second Sunday of Advent, titled **Firm Ground in a Dark World** and based on Isaiah 9:2. I look forward to hearing it and I know you will too.

Getting Real,  
Jon



### Wednesday Night Adult Bible Study – 12/3

As we continue our series of lessons titled, "When God Raises Up a Leader," A Study of the Judges of Israel, we move into the section that contains the most information about the colorful and exciting Judge named Samson. Tonight, we will look at the incredible circumstances surrounding his miraculous birth and the spiritual guidelines given to his mother and eventually to him. Tonight we will look at Judges 13. We will examine the Nazirite Vow that became a centerpiece of his life and ministry. Numbers 6:1-21 tells us what the vow entails. Hope you can

come tonight and share the adventure.

## WNS

5:30 - 6:05 - meal

6:15 - 7:15 – Bible study

Nursery - pre k

Elementary age children (K-5) Bible Bunch

"The Immortals" Middle & High school ages

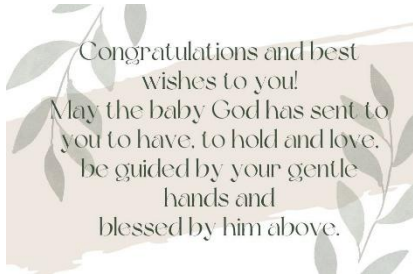
Adults Bible Study Lead by Pastor, Jon Forrest.

We have 4 outstanding cooking teams that will bring us simple, yet delicious meals that will be available from 5:30 to 6:05PM. We still encourage \$2 per person donations to offset the cost, but there is never a charge.

### Menu:

12/3 - Nacho Wednesday

12/10 - Chili & Cornbread



Welcome to Our World Congratulations to Julian and Isabella Varela who welcomed their brand new baby boy, Zach, into the world on Monday, November 24. Zach was in church on the very next Sunday. We look forward to presenting him to the church family soon.



### Welcome to the Family

It was a joy and privilege last Sunday to welcome Coleen Gutierrez and Dan Peck as they responded to the Lord's invitation to come as immersed believers and followers of Jesus Christ to officially unite with this church family as members of First Christian Church. We will do everything we can to encourage their walk with Jesus and love them as He does. Dan also rededicated his life to Christ as well. God bless you, Coleen and Dan as you serve with this body of believers.



The nominating ministry is currently putting together board and officer nominees for 2025 election.

Members of the congregation may submit person(s) for elected office(s) in writing and signed by the nominating member of the congregation; Now until January 4th; before all nominees are officially posted.

Members may contact J.D. Hileman and/or Andrew Forrest



### ADVENT began November 30<sup>th</sup>

This ADVENT Season the congregation will be given a daily devotional book titled **DARKNESS THEN LIGHT – Stories of Illumination for the Season of Advent**. Each Sunday we will light the appropriate Advent Candle(s) and have a reading. Jon and Josh will have some inspiring sermons that will run with the weekly themes in our devotional guides. The climax will be on Christmas Eve with our Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service. Plan to make this a great season of growth in your relationship with Jesus the Christ.



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## WOULD YOU LIKE TO VOLUNTEER?

### Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service December 24th at 600PM

If you would like to do a reading, special music or anything special in the service talk with Jon Forrest or Cindy KK Shaugnessy.

Invite your family, friends, neighbors or anyone you know who could be blessed by this amazing evening of Worship.



### New Mexico Christian Children's Home Christmas Party

Sunday December 7th Afternoon (Time TBD)

The NMCCH has 18 children residing there!

We'll have food, games, and gifts for all the children. Party will be at NMCCH in Portales, NM



### All Church Christmas Dinner

Wednesday December 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:00PM

Church will provide The Turkey, Ham and mashed potatoes & gravy.

Everyone else please bring sides and/or desserts. Thank you



### Communion at Home

If you find yourself homebound and in need of being served the Lord's Supper on Sundays, please contact the church with a request that someone come and serve you. If you just need communion supplies so you can participate during communion service online, please let us know and we can provide disposable communion cups like the ones we use at church.





## Firm Ground in a Dark World

Isaiah 9:2

Josh McVey

December 7, 2025

**Welcome**

**Advent Candle & Reading** – Andy & Rickey Fenstermaker

**Video – Jesus' Light**

**Call to Worship**

*Go Tell it on the Mountain*

**Scripture Reading:** Colossians 1:9-14 – Faith Elswick

**Opening Prayer** – Keith Risdon

**Worship Medley**

*O Come All Ye Faithful*

*Silent Night*

**Intercessory Prayer**

**Communion Song**

*As The Deer*

**Communion Time**

**Special Music**

**Morning Message** – Josh McVey

**Firm Ground in a Dark World**

*Isaiah 9:2*

**Decision Time**

*He is Able*

**Closing Prayer**

**Parting Chorus**

*O Come Let Us Adore Him*




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### MEMORY VERSE:

*Revelation 22:5 – There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.*

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## Prayer Requests

**ATTENTION: Please let us know if there are any changes, removals or updates before Friday every week.**

**Amber Anderson** – Reoccurrence of cancer & other health issues. (Kendra Beevers)

**Judy Armijo** – Health concerns. (Margaret McCormick)

**Kendra Beevers** – Health concerns.

**Jerry Bailey** – Heart attack. (Dan Peck)

**Ann Ruth Black** – In hospice care. (friends of the Wallace's)

**Melanie Black** – Taking care of mother. (friend of Wallace's)

**James Bruffett** – Recovering at home. (Kristine Bruffett)

**Carmen Cerny** - Carmen's cancer is responding to treatment. Almost in remission PTL! (Bonetta Hutson)

**Gina Dorazio** – Heart problems. (Rick & Melody Lewis)

**Beverly Duncan** – Hospitalized in Hobbs.

**Weldon Embry** – Vehicle accident in Lubbock Hospital ICU. (John Butts)

**Alyssa Everett** – She goes to see a new dr on 11/26 to see if she is a candidate for a new procedure. We pray that she is and that it works. She continues to have faith and is still fighting. If no procedure she may have only months left. Continue to pray please. (Cousin of Jeff Wright)

**Rick Fountain** – Recovering from heart valve replacement & bypass surgery in Dallas, TX (Lori Turner)

**Joe Friendo** – PTL! Cancer free. Husband of Victoria. Ron Eggleton's son-in-law. (Jim Hileman)

**Coleen Gutierrez & Dan Peck** – Personal concerns.

**Casey Henry** – Recovering at home. (Jon Forrest)

**Barbara Hill** – Having serious heart problems. (Doug McGregor)

**Mark Hill** – Recovering from heart transplant surgery. (Grandson of founding preacher Clovis Bolton.) (Douglas McGregor)

**Josh Hutson** - Health concerns.

**Kori Koren** – MS, multiple falls & injuries. (Judy Baskett)

**Shavon Kuykendall** – Her cousin passed away this week. (Jeremy Fluery's caregiver)

**David Lawson Sr.** – Serious health concerns. (Gena Wilkerson)

**Yvonne Light** – Health Concerns.

**Vida Linton** – Personal concerns. (Dear friend of Jessie Strauch)

**Jon McCormick** – Small vein disease in brain cavity. (Brenda Knoll)

**Lori McGregor** – Lupus. (Doug McGregor's daughter-in-law)

**Tim Meeks** – Has given up all treatments. (Bobby Light)

**Annabelle Mendez** – Cancer. (Bobby Light)

**Weston Miller** – Having seizures. (Lori Turner)

**Ignacio & Blanca Muñoz** – Health concerns. (Brother of Joe Muñoz)

**Melissa Muñoz** – Struggling with cancer (Joe & Ida Munoz's daughter-in-law)

**Debbie Murray** – Throat cancer. Lost voice box and larynx & now having gall bladder removed. (Bill & Pam Wallace)

**Frank Muse** – Home bound. (Lori Turner)

**Linda Muse** – Fell down & needs healing. (Lori Turner)

**Marsha Neill** – Leaking fluid from brain through nasal cavity. (Colleen Gutierrez)

**Chris Pacheco** – Serious cancer. Getting bad. (Margaret McCormick's Nephew)

**Hope Peña** – Recovering from knee replacement surgery Nov.10. Doing PT.

**Allan Potter** – Prostate cancer. (Doug McGregor)

**Lee Potter** – Hospitalized & not doing well. (Colleen Gutierrez)

**David Renteria & wife** – He suffered a massive stroke and is paralyzed on one side. Now at home in Ruidoso. (Doug McGregor)

**Heath & Samantha Rohr** – Heath is deployed.

**Tim Romero** – Prayers for medical and mental condition. He is having a severe problem with memory issues & clinical depression. (Son of Ida & Joe Muñoz)

**Wilma Sartain** – Health concerns

**Sharon Spiller** – Concerns for her and her family. (Yvonne Lights sister)

**Jody Stanbury** – Lupus. (Joy Melton's daughter)

**Nancy Steele** – Health concerns.

**Jessie Strauch** – Health concerns. (Jon Forrest)

**Cindy Sutherland** - New spots on lower right lung and liver found. (Dianna Thompson)

**Tim Underwood** – Cancer.

**Gena Wilkerson** – Eye surgery on Dec. 23.

**Michael Williams** – On wait list for new lungs.

**Janet Winter** - Physical issues. (Jon Forrest)

**Dee Wood** – Passed away. Pray for family & friends (Judy Baskett)

**Ruthie Yarbrough** – 5 wk. series of daily radiation treatments. (Bonetta Hutson)

**Alan Zucchelli** – Heart problems. Waiting for the test results. (Wilma Sartain's Son)

**Unspoken request**

**Persecuted Christians around the world.**

**Pray for Israel.**

## **Please pray for our Home Bound**

**Billie Aucutt** – Now home. (Jon Forrest)

**Bill Gaedke** –At daughter's home in Rio Rancho.

**Treva Kline** – Living at Wheatfields. (Jessie Strauch & Bernice Baker Sister)

**Linda Newell** – Resident at the Retirement Ranch. (Pat Newell's widow)

**Maria Sandoval** – Health Concerns room 210 at St. Anthony's

**Fred Strauch** – Numerous health issues. Now home. In hospice care. (Jessie Strauch)

**Don Sweet** – At Retirement Ranch. (uncle to Beverly Duncan)

**Everett Steel** –. Home. (brother of Jessie Strauch and Bernice Baker)

**Pat Weekley** – At home.



## Military Personnel & Families, First Responders & Our Nation

Please let us know if there are any changes, removals or updates before Friday every week.

You can select the **"CONNECT WITH US"** tab in your APP & go to "EMAIL/QUESTIONS/PRAYER CHANGES" or call the church at 575-763-7113 or email at [fcc@plateautel.net](mailto:fcc@plateautel.net)



### Sunday Night ALIVE!

Sunday Nights at First Christian Church are now ALIVE! They are ALIVE with music; ALIVE with fellowship; ALIVE with the Word of God and ALIVE with the presence and leading of the Holy Spirit!

Come join in the ALIVE movement at 6:30 this and every Sunday Night! You'll be glad you did! Generally, the service lasts about 45 minutes!

### Live and in Person!!

Sunday Morning Services

9:30 - Sunday School: all ages (on-site only)

(Staffed Nursery available for infants through Age 3)

10:30 - Teknon (on site only)

10:30AM - Morning Services

(Staffed Nursery available for infants through Age 3)



### Additional Blessings of Streaming FCC Services

If you miss our morning Worship Services or want to see them again, they are all stored on the FCC YouTube Channel and on our website, [www.fccclovis.com](http://www.fccclovis.com) under the tab named Media and on your phone with the FCC app.

Our Wednesday Night Bible Studies are in person or on Facebook Live and can be viewed later on the FCC Facebook page once you have joined the church's Facebook page by liking it so you can see it live or go back and review it at a later date.

You can also download the app on your Roku tv,  
Google Tv, Fire Tv and Apple tv!!  
Just search for FCCCLOVIS

**Invite your family, friends, and neighbors,  
to worship with us at one of these venues!**



Tithes and offerings to FCC can be given by clicking "Give" link on our website [www.fccclovis.com](http://www.fccclovis.com) and on the FCC app on your phone. There is also an offering box in the foyer for checks and cash (i.e. offering envelopes). Another way to give is to come by the church building and drop off tithes Monday - Thursday 9AM-2PM. We can also pick it up if you can't leave your home. Just give us a call at 575-763-7113.

**Thank you for your generous heart! ♥**

As  
A



fall arrives, so does head colds, flu, pneumonia & Covid.  
kind reminder:

**Communion cups & Kleenex tissue are single use.**

**Help prevent cross infection, please discard cups & tissue in nearby trash receptacles.**

### A Reminder to Church Members

All current board reports are available.  
in the hot file in the church lobby.

Newly posted are the 2024 990 IRS reports  
& the updated church bylaws.



## December

2 - Hadassah Jenkins  
2 - Pat Weekley  
6 - Cindy Vaughn  
7 - Carolee Elswick  
9 - Aaron Elswick  
10 - Troy Johnson  
10 - Angelina Baca  
10 - Frances Simon  
16 - Alex Diaz  
21 - Palani Romary  
24 - Andrew Hawkins  
24 - Jade Lopez  
31 - Manuel White

Please let us know if there are any birthdays or anniversaries we need to add or have missed. Thank you.  
You can call the church at 575-763-7113 or email at [fcc@plateautel.net](mailto:fcc@plateautel.net)



## December

9 - Allan & Ruthie Yarbrough  
10 - Jon & Cheryl Forrest  
15 - Stephen & Crystal Fenstermaker  
19 - Jared & Shannon Reeves  
19 - Fred & Jessie Strauch

## December 2025

Adjusted Servant Ministry

This Week:

Scripture Reading: Faith Elswick

Opening Prayer: Keith Risdon

**Welcome Ministry:** Bill Wallace

Communion Prep: Debbie Hudson

## Upcoming Events

## December

Date: 12/7/25

Time: Afternoon (Time TBD)

Location: New Mexico Christian Children's Home Portales

Description: NMCCH Children's Christmas Party

Date: 12/15/25

Time: 6:00PM

Location: First Christian Church

Description: Board Meeting

Date: 12/17/25

Time: 6:00PM

Location: First Christian Church

Description: All Church Christmas Dinner

Date: 12/24/25

Time: 6:00PM

Location: First Christian Church

Description: Christmas Eve Candlelight & Communion



### December Prayer

God, thank You for carrying  
me through every high and  
low of this year.

As the year ends...  
help me release what hurt,  
cherish what stayed,  
and trust what's coming.





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**Lead Pastor**

Jon Forrest

**Elders**

J.D. Hileman

Keith Risdon

Jeff Tackitt

**Trustees**

J.D. Hileman

Gary Bake

Joe Muñoz

**Church Secretary**

Hope Peña

**Nursery Attendant**

Sharon Douglas

Kimberly Wright

**Associate Pastor**

Joshua McVey

**Deacons**

Gua Acosta

Gary Baker

Jerry Elliott

Clark Elswick

Andrew Forrest

Doug McGregor

**Treasure**

Keith Risdon

**Assistant Treasurer**

Tiffany Forrest



**First Christian Church**

1700 N. Main, Clovis, NM 88101

Office hours are Monday-Thursday.

Monday-Thursday 9:00AM - 2:00PM

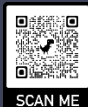
Friday – 9:00AM – 12:00PM

575-763-7113

fcc@plateautel.net

like us on Facebook & YouTube

Download the app!



**SundayMorning**

9:30AM - Sunday School for all ages

10:30Am - Teknon

Morning Worship: 10:30am

(Staffed Nursery available for  
infants through Age 3)

On Site and online @ Facebook Live,  
You Tube, FCCCLOVIS app

**Sunday Evening**

Sunday Night ALIVE

6:30PM - All ages

**Wednesday**

Wednesday Night Special

5:30 - 6:05 - meal

6:15 - 7:15 –Classes (All ages)

Nursery - pre k

Elementary age children (K-5) Bible Bunch

“The Immortals Middle & High school ages

Adults Bible Study Lead by Pastor, Jon Forrest

