

# The Connection

December 2025

A Monthly Newsletter of Turner Christian Church

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## Dear Church... from Pastor Matt

This last month marked my 7th anniversary with Turner Christian Church, and during that month I had one of the most profound experiences I've had as part of this congregation. It wasn't flashy or exciting—it was “just” a small prayer meeting of nine people on a Sunday night. What made it profound was the way we heard from God in that conversation. See, I'm really good at talking to God, but not so good at hearing him respond—mainly because I don't spend time listening. Listening just hasn't been part of my prayer practice.

In this gathering we started by looking for God. We thought about where we have seen God moving in our congregation in the past, then we shared those glimpses of God with the group. People shared about healings they had experienced, friendships they had discovered with others; they talked about the generations God is bringing together in the congregation, the new faces they've been seeing, the diverse group of people that gather here on Sunday mornings; we talked about the work God has been doing through the preschool, food bank, Operation Christmas Child, and our relationships with community groups like the community garden. We were inspired to see a white board covered in good things that God is doing here.

Then we turned to the topic of the prayer gathering: who has God made us to be today? Based on what we see him doing, what kind of church has God made us to be? We talked about how God has made us intergenerational, worshipful, generous and helpful. He has been teaching us to treat people of each generation and every background with compassion and respect. He has given us a passion for serving our local community through our preschool, food bank, and sharing our grounds and facilities. It was exciting to watch a picture develop of how God has been shaping this congregation to have a particular character and mission.

We closed by asking, “What do we need to ask of God, because of everything we've seen today?” We prayed for our junior worship volunteers, who are working so hard to make sure we have ministry for every age. We prayed for new staff members like Jerry Sygney and Frank Musgrave who are helping us cover all the work of the staff since Pastor Rachel left. We asked God to show us how we can minister well to our youth. We prayed for the new officers who will lead us in 2026.

I came away from this prayer meeting with a profound feeling that God had really shown up and spoken to us. There was no earth-shaking revelation—in fact, I don't think anyone said anything we didn't already know—but we got to see this picture develop through the experiences and impressions God had put on many different hearts. We were able to discern *together* a shared vision of what God is doing. It was beautiful.

The reason I'm telling you all of this is because you are all invited to participate! The reason we heard from God is not because those nine people showed up, but because God showed up. These meetings are open to the entire congregation, and we would love for anyone and everyone to join in. You don't need any qualifications or abilities. You just need to show up, and listen with us for God to speak.

The prayer meetings gather on first and third Sundays from 6 to 7:30pm. This month, that's December 7th and 21st.

God bless, and Merry Christmas!





Little Lamb Christian Preschool  
**A Note from Our Director,**  
Bethany Robinson

One of the things I love most about this time of year is how naturally conversations about God flow into our everyday lives. As we discuss Thanksgiving and what it means to be thankful, questions arise about whom we thank for our blessings. When we start singing Christmas songs, it prompts even more inquiries about the meaning behind those songs and why we sing “Jesus is the king, born for you and me.”

In this age of curiosity, our students often ask profound questions like, “Is God invisible?” We dive into abstract concepts that may be new to them, and it’s a beautiful experience to witness their understanding unfold. Just last week, we explored the idea of God’s presence in our lives. We talked about how, while we can’t see Him, we can feel Him and recognize His touch in the world around us. To illustrate this, I compared God to the wind. We can’t see the wind, but we can feel it on our skin and see things like our hair blowing in it. The lightbulbs of understanding flickered on in their little faces around the room, and those moments remind me how eternally grateful I am to be part of these early conversations.

As I think of my own childhood, I can close my eyes and hear my mom’s voice saying “God is big enough for all your questions.” She would say this often and I would laugh and say “of course he is”, but now as I hear these questions spill out of these students this little saying doesn’t feel little at all. This is an invitation and assurance that I want them to carry with them. God will never be too small for all their questions; at four, at ten, at twenty six, and seventy five. God will *always* be big enough for **our** questions.

As we head into the Christmas season, I find these conversations are helping me realign my own heart to a place of curiosity, a place to search for him, and to ask the questions. Sometimes I feel so certain about who God is that I forget the mystery of him and just how vast and deep His love is for me. My students are a constant reminder to embrace a childlike faith; a faith questioning, and eager to learn. In a time when life gets busy and the world bombards us with distractions, I want to focus my energy on curiosity. This desire to seek understanding not only deepens my connection with God but also enriches our shared journey so we can explore the beauty of God together.

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**Blue Christmas Service**  
**Sunday, December 21st at 3:00 pm**

This service is designed for those who face feelings of grief and loss during the Christmas Season—for those who need space to remember their loss and their lost loved ones in this season of hope. All are invited to join in singing carols, reading scripture, remembering, and hoping in the coming of Christ.

**Christmas Eve Candlelight Services**  
**Tuesday, December 24th at 3:00 pm**

Join us for a service of readings, carols, and candlelight as we celebrate the birth of Christ!

**Turner Food Bank**

(A Ministry of Turner Christian Church)

Located at: 5455 Chicago St SE

Open: Mondays, 9:00—11:30 am

**Thank you for once again,** as a congregation, for rising to meet the needs of our community. Between collaboration with Turner Christian Church, Turner Elementary School and others in the local community, we had over 3,500 pounds of food donated during the last month.

Thank you all for your part in helping out!



The church has started a new curriculum for discipleship classes AND the Sunday service. Starting November 30th both the sermons and classes will be using the "Standard Lesson" curriculum to study the core beliefs of the church.

Find out more about the curriculum in the church app or at [www.turnerchristianchurch.com/discipleship](http://www.turnerchristianchurch.com/discipleship).

#### ADULT CLASSES

Classes will be available on Sundays at 9:00 and if you are interested in participating in a class but need a different time, please register and mark "other" for class time. Depending on interest, we may be able to create groups at other times.

#### KIDS CLASSES

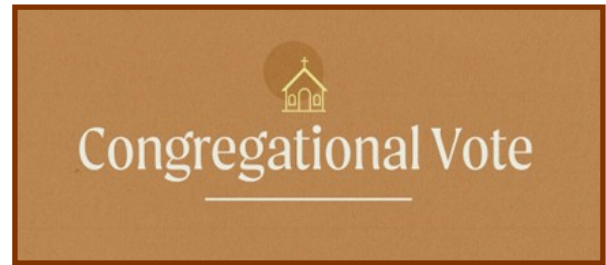
Our goal is to provide kids classes to make it possible for everyone to attend a class. Fillin out this form helps us know what to plan for, and whether we need to consider offering kids classes at a different time in the week.

#### REQUESTING BOOKS

This curriculum offers a **student book** for following along with the weekly lessons. It also offers a **daily devotional book** that adds to the weekly studies. Please indicate whether you would like a copy of wither of these books when you register.

#### PAYING FOR BOOKS

We do not want the cost of books to be an obstacle to anyone, so we are not asking for payment with registration. If you would like to contribute to paying for the books, you can do so through the offering box (write "SS Books" on the memo line or donation envelope) or online through the Website or app. Both books are \$9.00 per copy.



All the Candidates and the Proposed Budget for 2026 were approved by the congregation by ballot on November 30, 2025.

#### Elder (2026-28)

John Stroup  
JD Remy

#### Chair of the Congregation (2026)

Lloyd Love

#### Board Secretary (2026)

Casey Holmes

#### Financial Secretary (2026)

Kris Jakubowski

#### Assistant Financial Secretary (2026)

Kayla Klinger

#### Trustee (2026-2028)

Jon Remy Jr

#### Finance Deacon (2026)

Laurie Boyle

#### Hospitality Deacon (2026)

Casey Holmes

#### Missions Deacon (2026)

Gary Tiffin

#### Seniors Deacon (2026)

Sharon Teixeira

#### Officers Continuing Their Service:

##### Elders

Dave Stoker ('25-27)  
Frank Loyd ('25-27)  
Gary Tiffin ('24-26)  
Alan Grunstad ('24-26)

##### Trustees

Ray Telfer ('25-'27)  
Mel Metcalf ('24-'26)



Have you ever considered the phrase Eternally Grateful? I think sometimes we say it as just another way to say thank you. When I was thinking about how to thank you all for your participation in Operation Christmas Child, it really hit me how that phrase should have a bigger impact and leave a bigger impression on our hearts. If not for your participation in filling and shipping these shoeboxes, and if not for the thousands of other people around the world who participate to make sure these little gifts get to the children that God has selected for

them, there may not be an "Eternally Grateful" because their Eternity might not be something to be grateful for. Because of these shoebox Gospel Opportunities, their lives can be changed for eternity and place them in an eternity where they can be grateful. And throughout eternity, these children will be telling their stories of how they came to know Jesus. They will be talking about how they got that soccer ball in their shoebox and how they not only enjoyed sharing soccer games with their friends, but also how they were able to share the good news of Jesus through their interaction with those friends because of that soccer ball. They will be able to tell us how they were able to attend school and make something better of their lives through an education that they would not have had without those school supplies. They will be able to tell the story of how that little note or that little picture in the shoebox touched them in a way that they could finally understand that not only does God love them, and Jesus loves them, but somebody in the world that they didn't even know loved them enough to take the time to send them a gift, something they'd never received before in their entire lives. Their friends and their families can talk for eternity about how these children changed their lives by what they learned through receiving a shoebox and then shared with them. In light of Eternity, we can be extremely grateful for the opportunity that we have here in Turner to let God use us as tools for kids and adults throughout the world to have the chance to be Eternally Grateful.

Through the efforts of this congregation and other local congregations and individuals, we, just here in Turner, are going to be sending 2,640 gospel opportunities around the world this year. That's 2,640 children who will be receiving a gift, and not just the shoebox, but the life-changing truth of how Jesus came to save us all. With the ripple effect that we know happens through these shoeboxes, we can multiply that number by 8 to 10 and that's the impact that God will be supplying through your generosity. So when I say thank you for what you've done for this mission and ministry, please consider that I'm not just saying thank you, but I am saying that I, and these children and their families and their friends, are Eternally Grateful for your participation.

—Ann Stoker

#### **Update:**

***The total number of shoeboxes that came through the Work Shoppe in Turner this year is 2,704!***



#### **Seniors Bowling—Friday, December 12th**

We are heading to the bowling alley again! Our scores are improving- come join us either by bowling or being cheerleaders! The cost is \$5 to bowl, and cheerleaders are free! Transportation will be leaving the church at 1:00 pm.

#### **Seniors Christmas Party—Monday, December 15th**

Join us at 11:00 am for an afternoon of eating delicious pizza and watching the 1970's movie "Scrooge," starring Alec Guinness and Albert Finney.

#### **Seniors Trip to Powerland Heritage Park—Friday, December 19th**

We will enjoy a drive through Powerland Heritage Park where the museums come alive with festive decorations, snacks and Santa. Please meet at the church. Transportation will leave the church at 4:30.

***Please register for these events on the church app or in the church foyer on Sundays.***