

SPRING/SUMMER 2024

TF

THE FIRST CHURCH  
EST. 1898  
MAGAZINE

**FEATURED TOPIC:  
TRANSFORMATION**

The Transformative Power of  
Worshipping God

Students Transformed at Accelerant

Christians as Transformers

**ISSUE NO.02**

[www.thefirstchurch.com](http://www.thefirstchurch.com)

WHEN LIFE  
**HURTS**

THE STORY OF JOB

BEGINNING APRIL 7

# **HOW DO YOU TRUST GOD EVEN WHEN LIFE ISN'T FAIR AND YOU SUFFER FOR NO GOOD REASON?**

We find honest answers and real help with the story of a real man named Job, whose story invites us to consider what it means to say, "God runs the world by wisdom," and how this truth can bring peace in dark times.

**SUNDAYS  
9:00 + 10:45 AM**

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**KNOW GOD**

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**FIND FREEDOM**

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**DISCOVER PURPOSE**

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**MAKE AN IMPACT**

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# FROM THE EDITORS

Welcome to the Spring/Summer issue of TFC Magazine.

Every spring and summer, the Church worldwide celebrates 'the big three': Jesus' Resurrection, Ascension, and Pentecost. These events remind us of the salvation and transformation Christ offers humanity and how the Church was formed to continue sharing this gospel message as we await his triumphant return.

Transforming the world for God's glory isn't a one-person show; it's a team effort. This is why Jesus put his Spirit into the Church to carry on the mission he began.

Easter, the Ascension, and Pentecost remind us that we are part of a community of believers who, for two millennia, have partnered with God to cover our respective corners of the earth with the healing balm of heaven through the Pentecostal power of the Holy Spirit. So, what are some ways The First Church is preparing people to transform the communities around it?

In this issue, we've assembled articles to inform and inspire you to take the gospel ministry of transformation seriously. First, Nick Tucker examines how worshipping God in song and prayer with fellow believers first transforms us so that we are prepared to transform others with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Next, Dylan Maynor shares how TFC's weekly on-campus ministries and off-campus events like 'Accelerant' are stirring students to learn about Jesus and be the hands and feet of Jesus. Finally, Allen Mayo compares and contrasts sacred and secular approaches to transforming the world: why the approach of Jesus to mending a fractured world works, and what you and I do to help transform the world one day at a time.

Throughout this edition of TFC Magazine, you'll also find advertisements for kids, students, and adults to register for dynamic transformational events like 'Summer to the Max' and the 'Global Leadership Summit,' which will be held at The First Church this summer.

Enjoy the Spring/Summer edition of TFC Magazine!

— The Editors

**A CONGREGATION  
FOR EVERY  
GENERATION.**

# NEW TO THE FIRST CHURCH? START HERE!

Whether you want to know God better, serve on a team, learn about church membership, or be water-baptized, our Growth Track course with the pastoral staff offers all this and more. Four one-hour sessions give you a solid foundation of who Christ is, what The First Church is all about, and how you can make an impact. If you wish, you can even join the church at the end of the four sessions.

Sign up today to attend Growth Track.

## GROWTH TRACK

### Step One

#### Discover Christ & Church Membership

Discover more about Christ and The First Church. Learn details about beliefs, leadership and how we intentionally organize our local church.

First Sunday of every month.

### Step Two

#### Discover Your Design

Dive into the details of your personality, discover your gifts, and begin the journey of discovering your purpose in life and how you can make a difference in the lives of others.

Second Sunday of every month.

### Step Three

#### Discover A Team

Find out what it means to make a difference on a 'Serve Team' at TFC by using your God-given gifts to serve others.

Third Sunday of every month.

### Step Four

#### Discover Water Baptism

We believe that water baptism is a public declaration of three important things: you are a follower of Jesus Christ, you are beginning a changed life in Christ, and you are part of a new family: Christ's Church.

Fourth Sunday of every month.



## SUNDAYS | 6-7 PM

# COMING TO THE FIRST CHURCH TICKETS ON SALE NOW



## GLS24 Speakers

 <p><b>CRAIG GROESCHEL</b> Founder and Senior Pastor, Life Church; Bestselling Author</p>	 <p><b>JONI EARECKSON TADA</b> Founder and CEO, Joni and Friends; Disability Advocate; Bestselling Author</p>	 <p><b>MARCUS BUCKINGHAM</b> Global Researcher; Entrepreneur; Founder of the Strengths Revolution</p>	 <p><b>KINDRA HALL</b> Storytelling Expert; Bestselling Author</p>	 <p><b>MIKE KRZYZEWSKI "COACH K"</b> Head Men's Basketball Coach, Duke University (1980 - 2022)</p>	 <p><b>ERWIN RAPHAEL MCHANUS</b> Founder, The Arena Mastermind for Optimal Performance, MGSAC; Bestselling Author</p>
 <p><b>AMY C. EDMONDSON</b> Novartis Professor of Leadership and Management, Harvard Business School; Bestselling Author</p>	 <p><b>MICHAEL JR.</b> Comedic Thought Leader; Actor; Author</p>	 <p><b>MOLLY FLETCHER</b> Former Top Sports Agent; Podcast Host; Bestselling Author</p>	 <p><b>DAN OWOLABI</b> Executive Director of Branches Worldwide; Author; Pastor</p>	 <p><b>WILL GUIDARA</b> Hospitality Evangelist; Restaurateur; Bestselling Author</p>	 <p><b>ARTHUR C. BROOKS</b> Harvard Professor; Bestselling Author</p>

*The community gets better when its leaders get better.*

### What is The Global Leadership Summit?

The Global Leadership Summit is the premier leadership event of the year. It is broadcast in person at hundreds of partner host sites worldwide, including The First Church in Goldsboro, NC. This two-day experience is among the most valuable and accessible leadership development opportunities available today.

### Who is the Global Leadership Summit for?

The Global Leadership Summit brings together curious, growth-minded leaders and aspiring leaders—including those who don't yet realize the value of their influence. It also networks for-profit, non-profit, civic, and church organizations to build strategic partnerships that better the community.

### What kind of speakers does the Global Leadership Summit have?

The Global Leadership Summit will feature a faculty of over twelve world-class speakers. They are leading experts spanning various fields, including ministry, business, nonprofit, entertainment, sports, and education. They will deliver fresh, actionable, and inspiring leadership insights and encouragement.





# THE GLOBAL LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

August 8-9, 2024


at  THE FIRST CHURCH  
EST. 1859



	<u>RATE</u>	<u>PRIORITY CODE</u>
<b>First Church Pricing</b> For regular attendees of The First Church (TFC)	\$139 thru 5/8 \$159 thru 7/17 \$179 thru 8/9	HOSTGLS24
<b>Emerging Leaders Pricing</b> All Students ages 12-17	\$99 thru 8/9	Mark 'Student/Faculty'
<b>Student/Faculty Pricing</b> Individuals with an accredited college/university or high school. Must mark 'Student/Faculty'	\$99 thru 8/9	Mark 'Student/Faculty'
<b>First Responders, Nurses, and Military</b> Active firefighters, police officers, EMTs, paramedics, and hospital workers as well as active and retired military.	\$99 thru 5/8 \$129 thru 8/9	SMT24FIRSTRSPNDR NURSE24 or Mark 'Military'
<b>Summit Partner Pricing</b> Your organization or church can become an exclusive First Church Summit Partner and receive special pricing and bonus benefits. To discuss partnership opportunities, please email <a href="mailto:allen@thefirstchurch.com">allen@thefirstchurch.com</a> .	\$139 thru 5/8 \$159 thru 7/17 \$179 thru 8/9	
<b>Public Pricing</b>	\$179 thru 5/8 \$209 thru 7/17 \$249 thru 8/9	

## National Partnerships

<b>Catholic Parishes</b> For church staff and members	\$139 thru 5/8 \$159 thru 7/17 \$179 thru 8/9	SMT24CATHOLIC
<b>C12</b> C12 is a Christian organization that helps CEOs and executives grow their businesses through networking. Visit its webpage for more information.	\$139 thru 5/8 \$159 thru 7/17 \$179 thru 8/9	SMT24C12
<b>Thrivent Financial</b> For Thrivent employees and Thrivent clients	\$139 thru 5/8 \$159 thru 7/17 \$179 thru 8/9	SMT24THRIVENT
<b>YMCA</b> For YMCA employees and YMCA clients	\$139 thru 5/8 \$159 thru 7/17 \$179 thru 8/9	SMT24YMCA
<b>SHRM</b> SHRM is the Society for Human Resource Management. Visit its webpage for more information.	\$159 thru 5/8 \$179 thru 7/17 \$209 thru 8/9	SHRM



THE TRANSFORMATIVE  
POWER OF *W*ORSHIPPING  
*God:* BECOMING MORE  
LIKE JESUS

BY PASTOR NICK TUCKER

Worshipping God is not merely a religious ritual; it's a profound practice that has the potential to shape our character, mindset, and actions.

For Christians, worshipping God is not just about singing songs or reciting prayers; it's about deepening their relationship with the divine and aligning themselves with the teachings and example of Jesus Christ. In essence, worshipping God is a transformative journey that helps individuals become more like Jesus.

At the core of Christian belief is the concept of imitating Jesus Christ. Christians strive to emulate his compassion, forgiveness, humility, and selflessness in their daily lives. Worshipping God plays a pivotal role in this process by fostering spiritual growth and molding believers into the likeness of Jesus.

### **Worship Cultivates a Sense of Reverence**

First and foremost, worshipping God cultivates a sense of reverence and awe. It reminds believers of God's majesty, holiness, and sovereignty. In the presence of God, individuals are humbled and reminded of their own limitations and imperfections. This humility is foundational to becoming more like Jesus, who exemplified profound humility throughout his life.

At the same time, we are also able to step into putting on Christ in our worship, and boldly praise and proclaim by who we are in Christ Jesus. Praise and worship is a spiritual weapon in difficult seasons of life. In this way, we fight our battles in confidence by speaking and singing biblical principles, promises and literal scripture while we trust God that He is working on our behalf.

### **Worship Develops a Posture of Surrender**

Moreover, worshipping God involves surrendering oneself completely to His will. It requires letting go of personal desires, ambitions, and egos, and submitting to God's plan. Jesus epitomized this selfless surrender in his prayer at Gethsemane, where he said, "Not my will, but yours, be done." Through worshipping God, individuals learn to relinquish control and trust in God's guidance, mirroring the trust and obedience demonstrated by Jesus.



## **Worship Fosters a Deep Sense of Gratitude**

Furthermore, worshipping God fosters a deep sense of gratitude and thanksgiving. As believers reflect on God's blessings and faithfulness, they are reminded of the sacrificial love demonstrated by Jesus on the cross. This gratitude compels individuals to live lives marked by generosity, kindness, and service, echoing Jesus' own acts of compassion and love towards others.

## **Worship Nurtures a Spirit of Unity**

Additionally, worshipping God nurtures a spirit of unity and community among believers. As they gather together to worship, they are reminded of their shared identity as children of God and members of the body of Christ. This sense of belonging encourages mutual support, encouragement, and accountability, creating an environment conducive to spiritual growth and transformation.



## **Worship Gives Us Greater Appreciation for the Study of God's Word**

Moreover, worshipping God involves the study and reflection on His word, as found in the Bible. Through scripture, believers gain insight into the life, teachings, and character of Jesus Christ. They learn valuable lessons about love, forgiveness, humility, and servant leadership, which serve as guiding principles in their journey of becoming more like Jesus.

In conclusion, worshipping God is not just a religious obligation; it's a transformative practice that shapes individuals into the likeness of Jesus Christ. Through reverence, surrender, gratitude, community, and study of scripture, believers are molded into vessels of God's love, grace, and compassion. As they continually engage in worshipping God, they are empowered to embody the virtues and values exemplified by Jesus, thereby fulfilling the ultimate purpose of their faith.



## **For Worship Leaders**

As a worship leader, there is nothing more gratifying outside of leading people into God's presence and seeing souls saved, than to see someone grow in their personal worship. To witness someone who has seen worship as something to spectate, then shift to understand that worship is something we all engage and participate in is so rewarding.

Even more so, it is rewarding to hear of a person that hits a hard season, and something inside of them clicks. They harness their personal praise and worship as a weapon in spiritual battle when no one else is there to see, playing a major role of carrying them through a hard place and simultaneously drawing them closer to the Lord.

To know that you and your team played a role in developing that growth in someone's personal worship through how you lead them in corporate worship is invaluable and gratifying that you are making and seeing a Kingdom difference!

## **For Those Sensing a Call to Get Plugged into The First Church Worship Ministry**

As worship leaders in worship ministry, we certainly are called to some qualifications just like for different areas of ministry, scripture has qualifications for leaders. We strive to lead with excellence in skill, a pure heart and life striving to be followers of Jesus and to set an example, as well as commitment to work as a team to be unified, being discerners and facilitators of what the Holy Spirit wants to do.

Certainly, if you are being called to this level of ministry, we would love for you to contact us and have a conversation about getting plugged into our team to lead our congregation in worship!

**Our worship matters, and our worship makes a difference. Praise and worship make us more like Jesus!**



# GRADUATION SUNDAY

KINDERGARTEN  
GRADUATES



HIGH SCHOOL &  
COLLEGE GRADUATES

# JUNE 9, 2024

# STUDENTS TRANSFORMED AT ACCELERANT

BY PASTOR DYLAN MAYNOR

“Where’s Jacob?” I thought as the evening service came to a close and I looked around the auditorium to see where the students in my room were. We had just finished a quick team meeting but were still missing a few students in the midst of the 3,000 plus Accelerant attendees. “Where’s Jacob!?” I shouted a little louder as I began to get concerned. It was at this moment when another student informed me that he was at the altar praying for students who were not a part of our group.

As I made my way down to the altar, I saw a large group of students standing together praying for someone in the middle. The closer I got to the group I began to realize what was happening. The young boy in the middle was possessed by a demon and the group of students surrounding him were praying for his deliverance. My first instinct as a youth pastor was, “I’ve got to get these kids away from this!” “Someone needs to do something!” “Are these kids mature enough for this type of spiritual warfare?”

In that moment, I was quickly convicted by the Holy Spirit. What came to mind was this statement – “Don’t let your students be bolder than you are.” I had a decision to make, I could snatch Jacob’s hand off this young man and explain to him why I was rushing him out the door, or I could join him in interceding for the possessed young man. I placed my hand on Jacob’s back and joined my faith with his, believing for a miracle. It was only a matter of moments before the young man we were praying for was delivered from this demonic oppression.

**“WHAT CAME TO MIND WAS THIS STATEMENT – ‘DON’T LET YOUR STUDENTS BE BOLDER THAN YOU ARE.’”**



**“WHEN STUDENTS BEGIN TO REALIZE THAT THERE IS A GREATER PURPOSE TO THEIR LIFE AND GO FROM JUST LEARNING ABOUT JESUS TO BEING THE HANDS AND FEET OF JESUS, TRANSFORMATION HAPPENS; NOT JUST FOR THEM, BUT FOR THEIR FAMILIES, SCHOOLS, AND COMMUNITY!”**

Later that night, as we returned to the hotel room, I asked Jacob about his experience. He explained to me how he had seen that young man at the altar and just felt like the Holy Spirit was leading him to pray for him. He described the experience as only a middle schooler could, stating that he had crawled through the legs of “like twenty people” and “used Jesus to cast out that demon.” He was no doubt proud of what he had been a part of, but everyone in our room—including Jacob—recognized that Jesus was the true hero of that story! That night, Jacob had seen the power of God firsthand. He was forever changed!

Towards the end of the trip Jacob told me that he has felt for some time now that he is called to be a pastor and feels as if what he experienced around the altar that night was the first of many moments where he would see God’s power manifested in his life. I believe him! In fact, I too have felt for some time that Jacob was a young man with a special calling. As I talked to his family upon returning from Accelerant, I shared with them how excited I was that the calling we had all known that Jacob had was starting to be revealed to him too!

Youth ministry is hard. There are plenty of ups and downs that take place in the life of a teenager, but students like Jacob and moments like the one we shared at Accelerant are why I do it! When students begin to realize that there is a greater purpose to their life and go from just learning about Jesus to being the hands and feet of Jesus, transformation happens; not just for them, but for their families, schools, and community!





Jacob's story is one of many I could share that took place over the course of our weekend at Accelerant. Stories like this would not be possible if it were not for your generosity that allows us to attend events like Accelerant and facilitate our weekly youth services in the manner that we do! If as you read this article, you felt something tugging at your heart, maybe you would even consider volunteering in Flow Students!

Here at the First Church, we have three core values—to reach the lost, love the least, and raise up next generation leaders. I believe that these three values reflect the very heart of the Father, and I am thankful that I get to on a weekly basis partner with both Him and you to raise up next generation leaders like Jacob; leaders who have been transformed by the Spirit of God, formed by the Word of God, and are now dedicating their lives to telling the world about the Son of God. I hope you have been encouraged by this article and all that God is doing in Flow Students!

**NOTE: ACCELERANT IS AN ANNUAL STUDENT DISCIPLESHIP GATHERING IN GATLINBURG, TENNESSEE, THAT DRAWS THOUSANDS FROM ACROSS THE UNITED STATES. ACCELERANT HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS AN EVENT THAT ATTACHES "BOOSTER ROCKETS" TO THE SOULS OF STUDENTS THAT PROPEL THEM A LITTLE FURTHER IN THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST, AND A LITTLE DEEPER IN THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF HIM AND HIS PURPOSE FOR THEIR LIVES. ACCELERANT IS SPONSORED BY THE DISCIPLESHIP DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL PENTECOSTAL HOLINESS CHURCH (IPHC).**



MOTHER'S  
DAY *Brunch*

MAY 12  
8:30-10:30 AM

JUNE 16

# FATHER'S DAY

BRUNCH

8:30-10:30 AM



# CHRISTIANS AS TRANSFORMERS

## HOW GOD WORKS WITH THE FAITHFUL TO MEND A FRACTURED WORLD

BY PASTOR ALLEN MAYO

*The year was 1984.*

I was fifteen. A brand new cartoon had taken television by storm—"Transformers." If you're old enough, you might even be able to sing some of the lyrics to the original theme song: 'Transformers, more than meets the eye. Transformers, robots in disguise.' Forty years later, that kids' cartoon has morphed into a movie franchise that has grossed over five billion at the box office.

Transformer cartoons and movies depict a cosmic showdown between Autobots and Decepticons, two robot factions from outer space. The Autobots, the good guys, are all about protecting Earth, while the Decepticons are power-hungry troublemakers. The battle is huge and epic, with a message about choosing the right side and standing up against tyranny. Plus, robots turn into cars and jets, which is pretty cool.

In a way, we are all like Transformers. If we're honest, sometimes, we act like Autobots, and sometimes, we act like Decepticons. Know this, though: all of us are attempting to transform the world in some fashion or another.

### **SACRED AND SECULAR APPROACHES TO TRANSFORMING THE WORLD EXIST**

This essay attempts to illuminate two key approaches to transforming the world. First, it will show how God reunites us with Himself through saving faith in Christ so that our hearts are ready to join Jesus in mending a fractured world for God's glory. Second, it will compare and contrast how Christianity's sacred approach to mending the world differs from secular approaches and why understanding this distinction is important.

Think of it this way—what if we had accountants, bankers, and aircraft mechanics who were not just great at their jobs but also deeply committed to their Christian faith? Picture this in every field: fantastic writers, entertainers, educators, electricians, medical personnel, and media personalities blending their professional excellence with the values of Christ's Church.

And don't forget about attorneys, law enforcement officers, business owners, military personnel, politicians, painters, and parents. Basically, for any job you can think of, the world benefits from people





who are both skilled in their field and passionate about their faith.

However, please don't mistake this for imposing the Christian religion on anyone. The Church doesn't impose ideas; it proposes ideas. We let our light shine before people so they may see our good works and glorify our heavenly Father of their own volition.

This is how Christians transform the world.

This is also why we each look different and have different skill sets. We're kind of like all those different Autobot characters. Some might operate like Optimus Prime, who morphs into the powerful iconic red and blue semi-truck. Others of us may look like Bumblebee, the sleek black and yellow Chevrolet Camaro. As Christians, we understand that God has designed each person differently to scatter us as His agents of salt and light across every sector of society to mend a fractured world (Matthew 5:13-16).

“

THE WORLD BENEFITS FROM PEOPLE WHO ARE BOTH SKILLED IN THEIR FIELD AND PASSIONATE ABOUT THEIR FAITH.



From the Christian perspective, transforming the world dates back to the biblical account of Adam and Eve at the beginning of human history. The disastrous 'Fall' in the Garden of Eden fractured both the human soul and the world.

**JESUS AND CHRISTIANITY: A SACRED APPROACH TO MENDING A FRACTURED WORLD**

The 'good news' of Christianity is that creation's Creator takes the divine initiative to both reunite us with Himself and mend the world. God chose Abraham as the patriarch of a people who would serve as His particular instrument. Then, from Jacob, Abraham's grandson, comes the nation of Israel. Finally, for Christianity, this narrative goes to a whole other level when, in the fullness of time, Israel brings forth the world's Savior and Transformer.

Think of it this way: the birth of Christ the Messiah was a stealth invasion by the kingdom of heaven. Heaven invaded earth through the babe of Bethlehem, the sinless Son of God. The ancient world was familiar with invasions

by kingdoms, especially forceful ones. Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Empire, Alexander the Great and the Greek Empire, and Ceasar Augustus, who transformed Rome from a Republic to an Empire. However, unlike those kingdoms, which used command-and-control tactics, Jesus' invasion is marked with healing and love.

This is why Jesus' approach to mending a fractured world is unlike any other. He teaches his followers to expand God's kingdom on earth by praying the 'Lord's Prayer,' the 'Our Father,' which includes a powerful line: "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

This is prayer in action, where humans partner with God in the present until Jesus returns to ultimately set the world right.

Reread the Lord's Prayer with this fresh set of eyes. View it as your call to partner with God in filling the culture with the features that matter to heaven—like food on every table (daily bread), forgiveness in every heart (forgive us our trespasses), godly leaders in every sphere (lead us not into temptation), and deliverance from every evil (Matthew 6:9-13).

When we view the Lord's Prayer in this way, Jesus' words: "I have come that you might have life and have it more abundantly," also take on new meaning (John 10:10).

This is what led St. Irenaeus, the great second-century theologian, to express the essence of Christianity with this pithy proverb: "The glory of God is a human being fully alive!" Imagine every human being "fully alive"—spiritually and materially—by the Holy Spirit. God has envisioned and set into motion this comprehensive transformation project that mends humans and society. This is the sacred approach of the Christian faith and practice (Romans 14:17).

As a result, by the second century, the gospel of Christ's kingdom was already exploding, and its growth worldwide continues to this day.

## **MARX AND NIETZSCHE: TWO SECULAR APPROACHES TO MENDING A FRACTURED WORLD**

However, in modern times, particularly in Western culture, there's been this tug-of-war between sacred and secular approaches to mending a fractured society. Take, for example, two prominent European thinkers from the 1800s, Karl Marx and Friedrich Nietzsche. Both felt like Christianity had taken its shot at mending a fractured world, but it was time for new approaches that didn't include God. Ironically, both of these men were raised in Christian homes.

### **KARL MARX**

Karl Marx came from a long line of Jewish rabbis on both sides of his family. However, his father converted to Lutheranism shortly before Karl's birth. Marx wasn't a fan of Christianity's influence. He infamously called religion "the opium of the people" and believed that to set the world right, we need to tackle economic and class issues first. He thought that spiritual and moral concerns were secondary at best.

We know that economic and social mistreatment of the masses matters to God. The epic deliverance of two million Hebrews from bondage in the book of Exodus reveals His heart on the matter. We also see God's deep concern for material matters in the ministry of Jesus. For



example, he miraculously fed the five thousand (Luke 9:10-17). However, in the Church's mind, our spiritual well-being is the lynchpin that transforms the material realm. This is the principle behind Matthew 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these other things will be added unto you."

Marx inverted this order. He thought the spiritual took a back seat to the material. History has shown that this line of thinking has backfired, leading to oppressive communist systems worldwide that, to this day, still limit religious and personal freedoms. Among just one of the many atrocities of the twentieth century, humanity saw Joseph Stalin use Marxist ideology as a justification for brutal policies, resulting in the deaths of millions through famines, purges, and labor camps. Marx might have spared the world much pain if he had better appreciated his Jewish roots, Lutheran baptism, and upbringing.

### **FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE**

On the other hand, Friedrich Nietzsche has also shaken the world in ways that still impact us today. Like his contemporary Marx, Nietzsche came from a Christian family. His father was a Lutheran pastor. However, again, like Marx, he challenged the core of Christian spirituality and morals.



Nietzsche implied that traditional Christian values were losing their grip. He made the shocking assessment, "God is dead! And we have killed him!" This was his way of inferring a major cultural shift away from traditional Christianity and moral absolutes.

Nietzsche figured that with God out of the picture, humans are responsible for shaping our fate and developing values free from religious teachings. However, as with Marx, this philosophy, too, turns on itself.

Without moral absolutes, society would be on a collision course, with each person doing what is right in their own eyes. This secular approach leads to a world filled with more fracture, chaos, and anarchy, not less.

Nietzsche would have done well to remember Israel's painful history, especially in the book of Judges, that any approach to mending a fractured society apart from God is smoke and mirrors; it's an illusion at best and deceptively destructive at worst (see Judges 21:25).

As the Christian axiom has rightfully said, "The heart of the human problem is the problem of the human heart." In other words, the transformation of our societies starts with the salvation of our souls. This is why the Father has sent his Son, "to be the Savior of the world" (1 John 4:14; Romans 10:9-10; 12:1-2).

These misguided and failing secular attempts of Marx and Nietzsche at mending a fractured world, and many other philosophies like them, bring us back full circle to the sacred approach of Christianity.

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**THESE MISGUIDED AND FAILING SECULAR ATTEMPTS OF  
MARX AND NIETZSCHE AT MENDING A FRACTURED WORLD  
BRING US BACK FULL CIRCLE TO THE SACRED APPROACH OF  
CHRISTIANITY.**



## **CONCLUSION: MENDING THE WORLD REQUIRES PARTNERING WITH THE WORLD'S CREATOR AND SAVIOR**

The Bible has this beautiful vision in Habakkuk 2:14 of how, one day, the earth 'shall' be covered with the knowledge of God's glory as the waters cover the sea. Jesus calls you and me to join him in covering the earth with God's glory by going into 'all' the world (or every sector of society) and making disciples—disciples who lovingly transform the world as we live out his divine teachings.

### ***Christians are transformers! You are a transformer!***

So, think again about your job. Are you an accountant, a lawyer, an electrician, or an educator?, Maybe you're a railroad conductor? What do you feel a calling to do? Your unique skills and passions are where you're meant to influence society and continue the mending of a fractured world in the name of Jesus Christ—the ultimate Transformer.

In what practical ways can you join Jesus in transforming culture in your field of endeavor tomorrow? Could you begin praying the Lord's Prayer more regularly? Could you begin sharing how you came to a saving faith in Jesus with colleagues? How might you incorporate heaven's values into your industry?

As you pray for boldness, remember Paul's exhortation to the Christians in Rome facing social discrimination and sporadic hostility: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16). The gospel is God's power to transform.

## **ACTIONABLE STEP: ATTEND THIS SUMMER'S 'GLOBAL LEADERSHIP SUMMIT' AT THE FIRST CHURCH**

One of the ways The First Church is taking this matter of mending a fractured world seriously is by serving as a host site for the two-day 'Global Leadership Summit' on Thursday and Friday, August 8 and 9, 2024.

The 'Global Leadership Summit' is the most extensive leadership experience in the world. It partners with local churches, ministries, and organizations. Now in its 30th year, the Summit brings together world-class ministry and marketplace speakers with respected track records in their respective fields to equip and inspire you to lead transformation in your community.

First Church attendees can purchase significantly discounted tickets. Other ticket options, including early bird rates and discounts, are also available. Check out the Summit ad in this issue of TFC Magazine.





# LIFE GROUPS

# LIFE

LIVE LIFE LIFE CONNECTED

## SPRING/SUMMER SEMESTER CATALOG

Live Life Connected. This is what Life Groups at The First Church are all about—connecting you with others to experience authentic community, find freedom, and grow in your relationship with Jesus Christ.

The Spring/Summer Semester is perfect for enjoying a Life Group. This magazine section lists April - July groups; you can sign up for them digitally.

With nearly 25 groups to choose from this semester, there is something for every season of life, and new types of groups are forming regularly.

Check out the Spring/Summer Semester offerings on the following pages, then scan the accompanying QR Code to sign up. You can also click on the QR Code to sign up if you are reading this article digitally.

Why ask for advance sign-ups? Advance sign-ups help us ensure we have the right size room for each group.

Live Life Connected. A group is waiting to welcome you!



scan or click  
to register

## ADULT LIFE GROUPS

Apr | May | Jun | Jul

### SUNDAYS

#### **Art of Marriage** with Daryl & Shelly Anderson

**Who:** Married and Engaged Couples of All Ages

**When:** Weekly | Mar 3 - April 14 (except Mar 31) | 6 - 7:00 PM (Note Start & Stop Date)

**Where:** The First Church Campus (Ministry Training Center - TBD)

**What:** The ALL-NEW Art of Marriage is a transformative small group designed to help you explore new levels of intimacy, communication, and connection with your spouse.

**Handicap Accessible:** Yes

**Childcare:** Yes

#### **Blessed are the Chosen Part 2** with Pastor Bill Rose

**Who:** Adults of All Ages

**When:** Weekly | 6 - 7:00 PM

**Where:** The First Church Campus (The Main Sanctuary)

**What:** What Does It Mean To Be Chosen? Blessed Are the Chosen is an interactive Bible study based on the groundbreaking television drama *The Chosen*, which is based on the life of Jesus Christ. *The Chosen* portrays Jesus through the eyes of those who met him. This study brings both the Old and New Testaments to life in an approachable and conversational way. We will watch episodes together, discuss the background, and apply the truths from Jesus' teachings to our lives. We will look deeper at God's character, power, and promises. Once we belong to Him, we're given a new identity and ushered into a new reality that is sure, powerful, and life-changing.

**Handicap Accessible:** Yes

**Childcare:** Yes

#### **FLOW Parent Bible Class** with Pastor Jim & Laura Dotson

**Who:** Parents of Middle School and High School Students

**When:** Weekly | 6 - 7:00 PM

**Where:** The First Church Campus (Generations Center - Middle School Room)

**What:** The FLOW Parent Bible Class is designed to allow parents to engage in the same Bible lessons their students learn on Sunday nights from Pastors Tyler Weeks and Dylan Maynor in FLOW Student Ministries.

**Handicap Accessible:** Yes

**Childcare:** Yes



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## ADULT LIFE GROUPS

Apr | May | Jun | Jul

### SUNDAYS

#### **Growth Track** with the Pastoral Staff | **NEW Day and Time!**

**Who:** Adults of All Ages

**When:** Weekly (except 5th Sundays) | 6 - 7:00 PM

**Where:** The First Church Campus (Next Steps Room)

**What:** New to The First Church? This is the place to start! Four one-hour sessions that, when completed, equip you to 1) connect to Christ and TFC, 2) discover the strengths of your purposeful design, 3) develop your God-given gifts to make a difference in the lives of others, and 4) discover the purpose and power of water baptism. We recommend that everyone attending TFC go through this foundational course. If you like, there's even the opportunity to become a member.

**Handicap Accessible:** Yes

**Childcare:** Yes

#### **Intercessory Prayer** with Sue Davis

**Who:** Adults of All Ages

**When:** Weekly | 6 - 7:00 PM

**Where:** The First Church Campus (Education Wing - TBD)

**What:** A group hour of prayer for our nation, church, community, and families.

**Handicap Accessible:** Yes

**Childcare:** Yes

#### **JOY** with Greg Clark and Dawn Jones

**Who:** Adults of All Ages

**When:** Weekly | 6 - 7:00 PM

**Where:** The First Church Campus (Ministry Training Center - Room 1)

**What:** A one-hour group that focuses on the impact and importance of the Word of God in today's changing society.

**Handicap Accessible:** Yes

**Childcare:** Yes

#### **Bible Study** with Murray Crawford

**Who:** Adults of All Ages

**When:** Weekly | 6 - 7:00 PM

**Where:** The First Church Campus (Ministry Training Center - Room 2)

**What:** A thought-provoking hour of expounding on God's Word in community with others.

**Handicap Accessible:** Yes

**Childcare:** Yes



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## ADULT LIFE GROUPS

Apr | May | Jun | July

### SUNDAYS

#### **Singles 50+ at The First Church** with Katherine Ray

**Who:** We are a community of Single Believers ages 50 and above who encourage, challenge, and equip one another to grow in our relationships with Christ while building meaningful friendships. We focus on individual wholeness through godly and healthy relationships while doing life together.

**When:** Twice Monthly | 2nd and 4th Sundays | 3:30 - 5:00 PM

**Where:** The First Church Campus (Ministry Training Center - Room 3)

**Handicap Accessible:** Yes

**Childcare:** No

#### **Songs of Faith for All Generations** with Dr. Ray Taylor and Mr. Jeff Quinn

**Who:** Adults of All Ages

**When:** Weekly | Jun 2 - Jul 28 | 6 - 7:00 PM

**Where:** The First Church Campus (Education Wing - Fellowship Hall)

**What:** Praise and worship hymns and spiritual songs are God's best tools for getting the Word of Christ into the hearts and minds of all generations. Colossians 3:16 tells us, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and ... singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God". Through listening to the hymns and spiritual songs, class

members will explore the rich background of many hymns and songs as well as develop a greater sense of faith, encouragement, and Biblical teaching when singing and praising God. Hymns and spiritual songs remind all generations of God's greatness, Christ's redemptive work in atonement, our need for a Savior, and our dependence upon God's steadfast love and grace.

**Handicap Accessible:** Yes

**Childcare:** Yes

#### **The Great Disappearance: 31 Ways to be Rapture Ready** with Dr. Ray Taylor and Mr. Jeff Quinn

**Who:** Adults of All Ages

**When:** Weekly | Apr 7 - May 26 | 6 - 7:00 PM

**Where:** The First Church Campus (Education Wing - Fellowship Hall)

**What:** In Dr. David Jeremiah's latest prophecy book, *The Great Disappearance: 31 Ways to be Rapture Ready*, he examines the next event on God's prophetic timetable, the Rapture. Through his video series and class discussions, this Life Group will explore topics that inspire hope and joy as we see the promise of God's plan unfold all around us and grasp the power of the prophetic text surrounding the Rapture. One book per household in attendance will be provided.

**Handicap Accessible:** Yes

**Childcare:** Yes



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## ADULT LIFE GROUPS

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### MONDAYS

#### **Sermon on the Mount** with Tish Jones

**Who:** Women of All Ages

**When:** Twice Monthly | Apr 1 - Jul 15 | 6:30 - 8:00 PM

**Where:** The First Church Campus (Education Wing - Fellowship Hall)

**What:** We are a diverse group of women who meet twice monthly to study topics relevant to women from a biblical worldview.

**Handicap Accessible:** Yes

**Childcare:** No

#### **Women's Ministries**

**Who:** Women of All Ages

**When:** Monthly | 2nd Monday | 6:30 - 8:00 PM

**Where:** The First Church Campus (Education Wing - Fellowship Hall)

**What:** Real Women Doing Real Life Together. Devotions, refreshments, community outreach, and friendship!

**Handicap Accessible:** Yes

**Childcare:** No

### TUESDAYS

#### **Sermon on the Mount** with Tish Jones (Virtual)

**Who:** Women of All Ages

**When:** Twice Monthly | Apr 2 - Jul 16 | 7 - 8:00 PM

**Where:** The First Church Campus (Education Wing - Fellowship Hall)

**What:** We are a diverse group of women who meet twice monthly to study topics relevant to women from a biblical worldview.

**Handicap Accessible:** Yes

**Childcare:** No

#### **Victory Link** with Dorothy Brock

**Who:** Adults of All Ages

**When:** Monthly | 3rd Tuesday | Apr - Jul | 6 - 8:00 PM

**Where:** The First Church Campus (Education Wing - Fellowship Hall)

**What:** We are a diverse group of individuals who meet monthly to discover and discuss Scriptural ways to break through difficult situations and maintain a victorious life in Christ.

**Handicap Accessible:** Yes

**Childcare:** No

#### **Women's Intercessory Prayer** with Phyllis Parrish

**Who:** Women of All Ages

**When:** Weekly | Apr - Jul | 10 - 11:30 AM

**Where:** The First Church Campus (Education Wing - Fellowship Hall)

**What:** A one-hour women's group that focuses on the impact and importance of the Word of God in today's changing society.

**Handicap Accessible:** Yes

**Childcare:** No



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## ADULT LIFE GROUPS

Apr | May | Jun | July

### WEDNESDAYS

#### **Art of Marriage** with the Burtons, Cox's, and Heads

**Who:** Married and Engaged Couples of All Ages

**When:** Weekly | Mar 6 - Apr 17 (except Apr 3) | 7 - 8:00 PM (**Note Start & Stop Date**)

**Where:** The First Church Campus (Ministry Training Center - Room 3)

**What:** The ALL-NEW Art of Marriage is a transformative small group designed to help you explore new levels of intimacy, communication, and connection with your spouse.

**Handicap Accessible:** Yes

**Childcare:** Yes

#### **Celebrate Recovery** with the CR Team

**Who:** Adults of All Ages

**When:** Weekly | 7 - 8:00 PM

**Where:** The First Church Campus (Ministry Training Center - Room TBD)

**What:** Celebrate Recovery is a year-round international program in 13-week segments designed to provide biblically balanced sustainable recovery from hurts, habits, and hang-ups. It guides us toward new healthy truths and life-giving habits as we repair our broken relationships. Join more than 7 million hurting people across the globe who now walk in freedom through the power of Jesus Christ as we walk through the eight principles of Celebrate Recovery based on the Beatitudes in Matthew 5.

**Handicap Accessible:** Yes

**Childcare:** Yes

#### **Divorce Care** with Pastor Jim and Laura Dotson

**Who:** Adults Who Have Experienced Divorce

**When:** Weekly | May 1 - July 31 | 7 - 8:00 PM

**Where:** The First Church Campus (Ministry Training Center - Room TBD)

**What:** A 13-week support group and international program designed to help heal you from the hurt. It is a warm, caring environment led by people who understand. Learn practical information and gain hope for the future.

**Handicap Accessible:** Yes

**Childcare:** Yes

#### **Precept Community-Wide Bible Study**

**Who:** Adults of All Ages

**When:** Weekly | 8:30 - 11:30 AM

**Where:** The First Church Campus (Education Wing - Fellowship Hall)

**What:** No matter where you are in faith, you shouldn't be alone. Join a Precept discussion group to study God's Word with others as you grow closer to Him and each other.

**Handicap Accessible:** Yes

**Childcare:** No



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## ADULT LIFE GROUPS

Apr | May | Jun | Jul

### WEDNESDAYS

#### **Victory in Spiritual Warfare** with Burton’s, Cox’s, and Heads

**Who:** Adults of All Ages

**When:** Weekly | Apr 17 - Jun 5 | 7 - 8:00 PM

**Where:** The First Church Campus (Education Wing - Fellowship Hall)

**What:** In this timely, unique exploration of spiritual warfare, Dr. Evans unveils a simple yet radical truth: every struggle and conflict faced in the physical realm has its roots in the spiritual realm.

With passion and clarity, Dr. Evans demystifies spiritual warfare so that readers can tackle challenges and obstacles with spiritual power—God’s authority

**Handicap Accessible:** Yes

**Childcare:** Yes

#### **The Gospel According to John** with Pastor Bill Rose

**Who:** Adults of All Ages

**When:** Weekly | 7 - 8:00 PM

**Where:** The First Church Campus (Education Wing - Fellowship Hall)

**What:** John had been with Jesus when He went among the people and loved them. And John could still hear the words: “I am the light of the world...I am the door...I am the way, the truth, the life.” John wrote his account of Jesus’ life so that others may believe and have life in Jesus’ name. Join us beginning Wednesday, January 3, as we open John’s Gospel to see this saving Son of Man through John’s eyes. While Jesus was on earth, he communicated with many kinds of people about his mission. Jesus performed many miracles to show the nature of his love and power. Jesus prepared his followers for the future by promising them the presence of the Holy Spirit. The Life Lessons in John are filled with intriguing questions, inspirational stories, and touching reflections to challenge us from God’s Word.

**Handicap Accessible:** Yes

**Childcare:** Yes

### THURSDAYS

#### **Business Leaders’ Breakfast** with Danny Daniels and J.L. Gurley

**Who:** Men of All Ages

**When:** Twice Monthly | First & Third Thursday | Apr - May | 7:00 - 8:00 AM

**Where:** The First Church Campus (Education Wing - Fellowship Hall)

**What:** We are a diverse group of men discovering best practices for applying biblical principles on the job.

**Handicap Accessible:** Yes

**Childcare:** No





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## ADULT LIFE GROUPS

Apr | May | Jun | Jul

### THURSDAYS

#### **Dear to the Heart Women's Bible Study** with Beverly Anderson and Angie Smith

**Who:** Women 40 and above

**When:** Weekly | Apr - May | 10 - 11:30 AM

**Where:** The First Church Campus (Education Wing: The Green Room)

**What:** An exciting morning of Bible study, fellowship, and fun designed to grow your faith in Christ.

**Handicap Accessible:** Yes

**Childcare:** No

#### **Empty Nesters** with the Jordans and the Ingles

**Who:** Empty Nesters

**When:** Monthly | Second Thursday | Apr - May | 6:30 - 8:00 PM

**Where:** The Dallas and Penny Jordan Home

**What:** We are a group of 50 and early 60-year-old empty nesters who meet monthly in a home for fellowship, Bible discussion, and prayer to grow closer to God. In this fun, intimate, and comfortable environment, we aim to cultivate growth from personal experiences and learn to walk through life in the truths of God's Word.

**Handicap Accessible:** No

**Childcare:** No

#### **Jolly Seniors** with Sherry Bryson and Jeane Anderson

**Who:** Adults 60 and above

**When:** Monthly | Second Thursday | Times Vary

**Where:** On and Off Campus Events

**What:** Devotions, luncheons, outings, and friendship for Season Citizens!

**Handicap Accessible:** Yes

**Childcare:** No

#### **The Book of Revelation: Uncovering** with Jane Woodard

**Who:** Adults of All Ages

**When:** Monthly | Last Thursday | Apr - Jul | 2 - 4:00 PM

**Where:** The First Church Campus | Education Wing: The Next Steps Room

**What:** We are a diverse group of adults who meet monthly to study God's Word and strengthen each other's faith in Christ.

**Handicap Accessible:** Yes

**Childcare:** No

### FRIDAYS

#### **Heart of Motherhood** with Courtney Horton

**Who:** Women with school-age children and students

**When:** Monthly | Last Friday | Apr - May | 6 - 8:00 PM

**Where:** The First Church Campus (Education Wing - The Green Room)

**What:** We are a diverse group of moms with children from birth to high school who meet monthly to have fun while strengthening our 'mommy' skills in practical and biblically-spiritual ways.

**Handicap Accessible:** Yes

**Childcare:** Upon Request





**SCAN FOR MORE INFORMATION!**

**Welcome to Summer to the Max at First Church! Get ready for 9 weeks of non-stop fun and spiritual growth for your preschool and elementary-aged children. Every Sunday morning, join us for an over-the-top experience designed to bring families closer to God, closer to the church, and closer to each other.**

**While parents enjoy the adult services, children will have a blast experiencing fun activities in the Generations Center. From interactive lessons to exciting games, each week promises something new and unforgettable. Join us as we make this summer one to remember!**

## **SUNDAY MORNING SCHEDULE:**

- JUNE 2 - SUMMER KICK-OFF**
- JUNE 9 - SUNDAE SUNDAY**
- JUNE 16 - YOU GOT GAME**
- JUNE 23 - MONKEY SEE MONKEY DO**
- JUNE 30 - PIÑATAS AND PIZZA**
- JULY 7 - CHRISTMAS IN JULY**
- JULY 14 - TIS SO SWEET**
- JULY 21 - UNBELIEVABLE SUNDAY**
- JULY 28 - SUMMER SEND-OFF**



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