

Ponca City Christian

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
210 North Fifth Street
Ponca City, OK 74601
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Seeking, Serving, Sharing
December 25, 2022



Why I love this church...

It is a wonderful church if we'll communicate with each other and work together.

This church has helped me raise my family; I couldn't have done it without them. They were baptized here, and so were some of my grandchildren.

It's a part of me and my family.

-Pat Morahan



Kay County, OK COVID Risk Level



Giving in Review

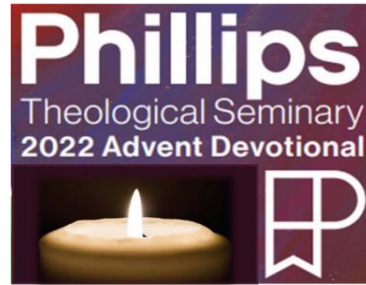
As of November 30, 2022
Budgeted \$299,860
Received \$269,337

We are happy to announce that our Music Director position has been filled! For many of you, there is no need for introductions because you already know the person who is filling the role, Amy Boatman. Amy has been playing the organ and piano during worship for a few months now and she has been working with our ensemble group. Amy will begin working with our Chancel Choir and Bell Choir in January. We look forward to hearing more wonderful music from the many talented people in the congregation and the community under Amy's leadership.



Please join me in offering Amy a warm welcome into this new role.

I would like to extend a special thank you to Christy Thompson, Beverly Poet, Bob Corbin, and Joyce Ketcher. They all participated in bringing Amy into this new role of Music Director. -Pastor Stephen



Week Four
December 25, 2022
Tis the Season to...
Titus 3:4-7

When kindness and benevolence appeared through God, our savior, appeared, it was not a result of those deeds....

Titus 3:4-6 (A. Carter Paraphrase)

It's commonplace to describe our society as results driven. Metrics, measurables, and product, with good reason, have become outcome-oriented benchmarks that establish and legitimate organizational value, worthiness, and rationale. Such perspectives are important correctives that challenge rigid power structures and inequities. Carrying associations with positive outcomes, metrics often function as indicators and, thus, metaphors for success.

We can, however, become over invested in mutated forms of these metric metaphors. With Christmas at times seeming the busiest time of the year, we are occasionally lured into metric-based approaches to Christmas: our love measured in gifts, travel, and tree height; our faith by the relaxation, consumption, service attendance, or donations.

This Christmas is an opportunity to remind ourselves anew of the essence of God's love. In today's passage, many translations render the Greek terms *chrystotes* (kindness/good) and *philanthropia* (philanthropy, love for humanity) as good and kindness. Such renderings, while accurate, obscure the author's nuance. For the author of Titus, kindness and benevolence are transformative, they characterize God's orientation to and love for humanity. Neither society's metrics nor the Church's measurements can warrant God's liberating love, not even our pursuits for justice. If salvation was metric-based could today's church in any way justify such sacrifice given by Christ?

Titus thematically centers on divine grace and its impact on human social-being. Recognition of such grace inspires us to reflect Christ's love. The author of Titus measured such love partially by the absence of social discord. Unfortunately, interpreters often seek in Titus, not an articulation of divine grace and love, but decontextualized metrics for faith by legislating of power in church and society through mutated metaphors.

This Christmas, might we humbly hear this letter's testimony on love: a reminder that the source of human salvation has but one immeasurable source, the awe-inspiring kindness and benevolence of God.

Arthur F. Carter, Jr. PhD

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