

Ponca City Christian

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
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Seeking, Serving, Sharing
June 4, 2023



Devotional Christian

Matthew 7:15-28

Fruit is one of God's favorite metaphors for describing what our lives organically produce based on what our hearts believe and love.

We recognize who's true and who's false "by their fruits," what they do and don't do, what they say and don't say. A thornbush can insist it's a vine, but if it bears no grapes, well. . . .

A diseased tree might insist it's healthy, but if the fruit is diseased, well. . . .

We can lie with our lips about what we love, but fruit trees never lie.

This is meant to be unnerving. Faith, not fruit, is the instrument by which we are saved. But faith is revealed by fruit. No fruit, no faith. Bad fruit, bad tree. God sees faith in the heart. But we can see only the fruit of faith. That's why Jesus said, "You will recognize them by their fruits."

He means we will recognize true and false brothers and sisters when they reach a certain level of maturity, and their fruit can be seen.

What makes this whole process even trickier is that good trees sometimes act sinfully and bear bad fruit.

Those don't look like good fruits. So, were they bad trees?

No and not necessarily. Why? Because when confronted, they "[bore] fruit in keeping with repentance." And the bad fruit proved to be an anomaly in a longer-term context of bearing good fruits.

And fruit — consistent fruit over time — is what confirms the species of a tree.

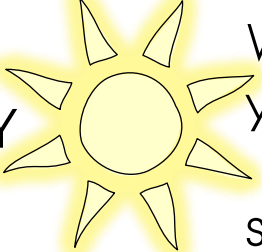


We are fast approaching the halfway point of 2023. As such, I was asked by the Stewardship and Financial Resources Team (SFRT) to provide a brief financial update to those who

maintain a vested interest in First Christian Church—Ponca City.

Expenses through the end of April were as expected with nothing unusual or unexpected. Our income fluctuates based on our personal giving timelines. Bearing that in mind, however, we are currently experiencing a decline in giving to the operating (general) budget which I am monitoring closely. Giving to the operating budget allows us the cash flow to pay monthly bills, make payroll, and provides funds for maintenance and repairs. The "business" of the church is not very glamorous, but it does allow us to continue the ministries and services FCC champions. It is with a grateful heart that I express my appreciation for the continuing support of the missions of the Church and the faithfulness of our Congregation. If you have questions about the Church financial position, please feel free to speak with any SFRT member: Bob Corbin, facilitator; Ted Impson, FCC Treasurer; Marlena Freeman; Ron Kreger; and Mike Morriss.

Blessed to serve with you,
Arlene Stauffer, Financial Assistant

It's **VACAY** time!  What are you up to this summer!?

We would like you to share "Virtual Vacations" with our church family. Send your vacation pics to Karen@fccponcacity.com. She will create a montage of fun in the sun to share in worship! This oughta be good!

Prayer

Lord, please bear your fruit in me. I pray that you protect your flock from the wolves. Give me wisdom and insight not to follow or be led astray by a false shepherd. Amen.

Giving in Review

As of April 30, 2023

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|-----------------------|--------------|
| Income Received YTD | \$111,198.76 |
| Budgeted Expenses YTD | \$109,500.00 |
| Actual Expenses YTD | \$106,542.74 |