

Church of Christ

Florence

December 23, 2018

Elders

Robert Budy
home (859) 525-7396
Art Green
cell (859) 743-3290

If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact one of the elders.

Deacons

Jesse Black
Wyatt Robbins

Minister

Bruce House
cell (270)570-0830

Schedule of Services

Bible Class	9:30 am
Worship	10:30 am
Evening Worship	6:00 pm
Wednesday Class	7:00 pm

Contact Information

1141 Boone Aire Rd.
Florence, KY 41042

(859) 283-2355
www.florencecc.org
churchoffice@florencecc.org

FROM THE ELDERS

Due to safety concerns
The church doors will be locked
10 minutes after the beginning of service.

Someone will be stationed in the foyer
to allow admittance to latecomers.

Christians and Christmas

by Ethan R. Longhenry

It's that time of year again: the weather is getting cold, snow is beginning to fall, and we are constantly bombarded by retail stores and their marketing blitzes. Christmastime is upon us yet again, and every year it seems more commercialized, more cutthroat, and less about family and togetherness.

Many attempt to counteract this trend with banners proclaiming, "Put Christ back in Christmas!". Such persons feel that the loss of the religious aspect of Christmas is a disturbing trend. Is it appropriate, however, to have "Christ" in "Christmas"? Since this is the time of year that many engage in "Christmas discussions," it is appropriate for us to consider what we can learn from the Scriptures regarding Christians and Christmas.

When we open the Scriptures, we find in Matthew 1-2 and Luke 1-2 the description of the birth of Jesus the Christ according to the prophecies of the prophets of old. The shepherds and the manger are there, along with Joseph and Mary. There are "wise men" (Matthew 2:1), but surprisingly, their number is not mentioned. Most curious of all, however, is that no date or even time of year is mentioned; "December 25" or any ancient Roman or Hebrew equivalent is not present at all! The Scriptures report the fact that Jesus was born, demonstrate how His birth fulfilled prophecy, but remain absolutely silent about when the event took place.

In the end, no one knows precisely when Jesus was born. Sure, it was in Bethlehem in Judea, and likely between 6-4 BCE; best estimates based on certain details in the narrative would point to His birth being either in spring or fall.

December 25 was settled upon less because of Jesus and more because of the many pagan religious festivals that took place near the winter solstice: the rebirth of Mithras of Syria, the Saturnalia of the Romans, and observances of the Celts and other European peoples. Even the pagan flavor of the celebrations continued well into the medieval period for many of these peoples. Many Christmas

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The Church you read about in the Bible

traditions including the Christmas tree, are also derived from pagan observances. It is a well-known fact, therefore, that Christmas represents a "Christianized" holiday, allowing people to maintain their cultural traditions while providing a Christian rationale for the event.

Christmas, therefore, is not recognized as an observance found within the pages of the New Testament, representing a later tradition popularized and developed over time. Since this is the case, how should Christians approach Christmas? Should Christians observe it religiously? Should Christians take any note of the observance at all?

The Scriptures do not speak specifically regarding Christmas, but Paul provides some assistance in Romans 14:5-6:

One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let each man be fully assured in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord: and he that eateth, eateth unto the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, unto the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

Paul establishes that the matter of observing days is a liberty, and that everyone should be "fully assured" or "fully convinced" in his own mind. On what basis should we be "fully convinced"? In Romans 14:23, Paul establishes that "whatsoever is not of faith is sin," and we understand that faith, according to Hebrews 11:1, is the "assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen." We ought to be "fully convinced" on the basis of faith, and our faith ought to be based in what God has revealed to us. Since God has revealed nothing to us regarding observing Christmas as the birthday of Jesus, it is hard to understand how we can observe Christmas as Christ's birth.

Nevertheless, it is not wrong to observe Christmas in other ways. Christmastime represents a rare opportunity for many people to get away from work and spend time with extended family, and many enjoy giving gifts at this time of year to friends and family. Encouraging family relations is not a bad thing (Ephesians 6:1-4), and one can certainly take the opportunity that the holiday season affords to spend time with others.

In terms of Christmas, we must appeal to Romans 14 and its message of not causing our brethren to stumble in any way. If some Christians believe that Christmas should not be observed in any way, their views should be respected, and other Christians should not provoke them to violate their consciences (Romans 14:13-21). Those Christians who do not observe in any way, likewise, have no right to condemn those who observe the day as a way to associate with friends and family and to share gifts; they also are accepted by God (Romans 14:5-6).

In the end, there is even no condemnation if an individual decides to celebrate the fact that Jesus was born and came into the world and does so on December 25, fully realizing that such is most likely not the actual date of birth, per Romans 14. Such an observance may not be profitable; if it leads others to stumble, it should be avoided (I Corinthians 8). Let us seek God's counsel in the Scriptures and prayer, and make wise decisions in terms of our observances!

*Glory to God
in the highest,
and on earth peace to those
on whom His favor rests
Luke 2:14*

Collecting For Those In Need

The Emergency Shelter of NKY items needed: (Men's Shelter)

- SOCKS
- Men's Jeans
- Men's Sweatshirts
- Men's and Women's Sweatpants
- Underwear (New)

There is a sign-up sheet for those interested in helping at the shelter.

Benevolence Pantry items needed:

- Pasta
- Pasta Sauce
- Canned Tuna
- Canned Chicken
- Diapers
- Wipes

We would also like to collect diapers and wipes to give away at the clothing day next year.

We emptied the pantry at the clothing give away so we are starting over .

Benevolence

We are helping several families each month. Please check the list in the hall for items that still may be needed.

Please see Kenny Strasser, Teddi Budy, or Lela Wilburn for more information.

Thank you for everything you do!
Matthew 20:28

B+

Please share with everyone you know—Caleb Robbins is in need of a kidney and is now receiving dialysis three times a week. He has B+ blood type. For more information please contact Marty Hudson 513-636-6794

Please keep Caleb and his family in your prayers

Ladies Bible Class

All ladies are invited
Studying in the book of Exodus
Tuesday Evenings at 7:00

Lads Memory Verses

1 Timothy 4:2	Genesis 4:7
Matthew 28:19-20	Genesis 5:27
Mark 16:15-16	Genesis 39:9
1 Peter 3:21	Genesis 11:6
Acts 2:38	Exodus 14:14
Revelation 2:10	Joshua 24:15
1 Peter 1:15-16	Micah 6:8
Genesis 1:1	Proverbs 22:1

To ensure accuracy of announcements and prayer requests please fill out a gold or blue form and turn in to the office by Wednesday.

Prayer List

Wallace Murphy is recovering from neck surgery

Chrissy Brown, Teddi's niece, had a heart attack in November and is now in the hospital with congestive heart failure

Nina Luster, friend of the Greens and the Mayfields, recovering from a stroke

The Hubbard family, a friend of the Browns, lost her stepmother last week and her grandmother is in the hospital

June Pugh is having some health issues

Nancy Delauder eye surgery January 29

Gorman's grandsons, Jacob has strep and Joseph has croup

Ongoing prayer requests

Issac	Caleb Robbins	Doug and Ella
Joe Carr	James Palmore	Carmack
Shirley Zerkle	Rosemary Warmack	

Our Elders

Our Nation's Leaders

Our Military Personnel

Our Police, Emergency and Healthcare Personnel

The Churches of Christ around the world

All those traveling

The Emergency Shelter

The Creation Museum and Ark Encounter

Those Who Have Lost Loved Ones

Those with cancer and their families

Lula Creech	Debbie Hellman	Nancy Lambert
Randy Williams	Desirae Wilson	Janice Gallagher
Jeanette Misner	Dwight Lowerg	Kay Shinck
Kristen Shaw	Layla Adkins	Jim McCarthy
Donna Farrar	Ayden Egan	Donnice Palmer
Lorraine Starr	Peggy Davis	Brooks Dobson
Tammy Palmer	Gwen Miller	Kaily Jones
December Vosquez	Chad Fischer	Mrs. Zeph
Mike Lowe	James Blair	Galen Stanley
Zoe		

Our shut-ins and those caring for them

Joyce Tingle	Della LeMasters
Eveline Lanham	Dessie Hacker
Bob Hamon	Rosemary Warmack

“For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and His ears are attentive to their prayer” 1 Peter 3:12

Serving in AM Worship

Announcements	December 23	December 30
Opening Prayer	Bill Morgan	Bill Morgan
Song Leader	Robert Budy	Clint Green
	Randy Johnson	Jesse Black
Communion	Robert Budy	Randy Johnson
Serve	Wyatt Robbins	Wyatt Robbins
Serve	Tom Grindstaff	Tom Grindstaff
Serve	Justin Grindstaff	Justin Grindstaff
Serve	Dan Brown	Dan Brown
Serve	Elvis Byrd	Elvis Byrd
Serve	Larry Insko	Larry Insko
Scripture Reading	Clint Green	Kyle Strasser
<i>Matthew 1:18-25</i>		
Sermon	Bruce House	Bruce House
<i>No One Like Jesus</i>		
Closing Prayer	Clint Green	Wyatt Robbins

Serving in PM Worship

Announcements	Bill Morgan	Bill Morgan
Opening Prayer	Mark Walker	Robert Budy
Song Leader	Randy Johnson	Jesse Black
Communion	Robert Budy	Randy Johnson
Invitation	Bruce House	Bruce House
Closing Prayer	Art Green	Kyle Strasser

Wednesday

	December 26	January 2
Song Leader	Jesse Black	TBA
Invitation	Bruce House	Bruce House
Announcements	Art Green	Art Green
Closing Prayer	Art Green	TBA

Communion Prep

December The Brown's

Greeters

Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men. Ephesians 6:7

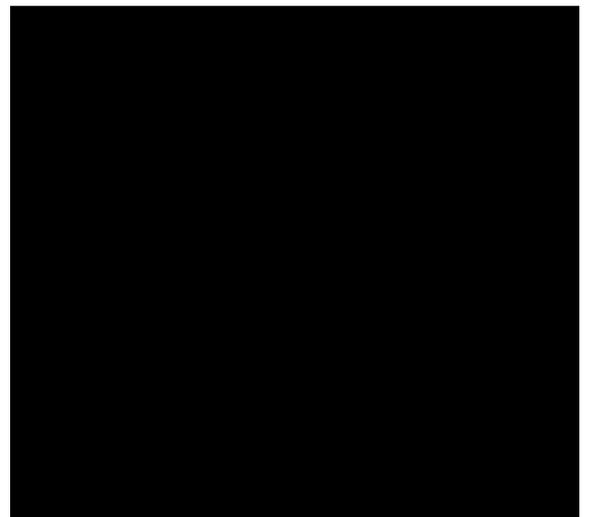


Mark Your Calendar

December 23 Singing Night

2019

January 6 Lads Meeting 1:00 pm-3:00pm
 January 12 Shelter Meal
 January 18 Mayfield and Emmons Wedding
 January 20 Lads Meeting 1:00 pm-3:00pm
 January 26 Singing Night



Deacons

Jesse Black *Children's Education/
Fellowships
Building Maintenance*

Wyatt Robbins *Youth and as needed*

Coordinators

Jerry Gorman *Prime Timers*

Dave Moster *Worship Service/
Duty Roster*

STAMP

Florence Church of Christ
 1141 Boone Aire Road
 Florence, KY 41042