



DECEMBER 2022

CONNECTING POINT

FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST

Where Have All the Wise Men Gone?



When I was a teenager, my family and I were privileged to attend a special Christmas musical presentation in the outdoor amphitheater at Silver Dollar City in Branson, Missouri. To this day it is still, without question, the single most impressive Christmas musical presentation I have ever seen.

I remember well, sitting in freezing weather with my family as we watched the greatest story ever told, portrayed with a fabulous musical score and fascinating sets, amazing animals and first-class actors. Besides the obvious, one of the more moving portions of the presentation was the entrance of the wise men. To characterize it as spectacular would be an understatement. They were royal in their regalia, stately in their stride, and magnificent in the giving of their gifts to the King.

There were three wise men in the presentation at Silver Dollar City. But in Scripture, no specific number is given. Biblical scholars tell us there were probably more than three. (The number three most likely comes from the fact they brought three gifts.) The Biblical wise men were not kings, either. Rather, they were Magi, magicians, or astrologers with a knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures. They also came to see Jesus, long after He had been born in a manger, in a stable, in Bethlehem. By the time they arrived, Jesus, Mary and Joseph were in a house. (See [Matthew 2:11](#).)

You remember the story. The wise men came to Jerusalem asking for the "King of the Jews." Herod found out about it and had the wise men brought to him under the guise he wanted to worship this new King. The truth of the matter was, Herod was so jealous, he was going to have the new King killed. History records, when the wise men failed to return, Herod sent an order that every male child, two years of age and younger, living in Bethlehem and the surrounding area, be killed. By the time Herod's evil edict was enacted, Joseph and his young family were long gone to Egypt where they stayed until Herod was dead.

Back to the wise men.

I don't want us to miss the point here. These men, regardless of how many there were, left a lasting legacy for all of us. These were men who were prepared to worship the King. (Something we would all do well to emulate as we enter the Christmas season.)

They came prepared to do three things:

(1) To get a glimpse of the King. They wanted to see Him. Matthew said, "When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy" ([Matthew 2:10](#)). They couldn't wait to see the King.

(2) To give their lives to the King. They wanted to submit to Him. Matthew tells us when they saw Him, they "fell down and worshiped Him" ([Matthew 2:11b](#)).

(3) To give their gifts to the King. They wanted to serve Him. Matthew says, "When they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense and myrrh" ([Matthew 2:11c](#)).

As we enter this Christmas season, unfortunately, many modern-day Herods can be seen all around us, still trying to silence the King. The perennial push to eliminate God from the Pledge of Allegiance, opposition to football coaches praying with their teams or having a public prayer at football games, resistance to saying the name **JESUS** at any public event or the ongoing efforts of the ACLU to remove nativity scenes and any Christmas carols that mention the name of **JESUS** from public schools and courthouses, just to name a few.

We know where the Herods are. They're hiding in plain sight. My question is, where are all the wise men and women? Where are the people who, like the Magi of old, can't wait to get a glimpse of the King, give their lives to the King, and give their gifts to the King?

This Christmas season, the wisest thing we can do is show how much **JESUS** means to us. The whole world will be watching ... even the Herods among us. And who knows? Maybe what they see in us will cause them to become wise men, too! ([1 Peter 2:12](#)).

Seeking Him ,

Pastor David

DEVOTION

Light Has Come

Read

John 3:14-19 (ESV)

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.”

Reflect

According to this passage, why did God send His Son into the world?

Approximately 700 years before it came to pass, the prophet Isaiah declared: “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them a light has shone” (Isaiah 9:2) The people walking in darkness are sinners, people who stumble around in the dark, living for themselves, doing as they please, and loving the darkness because it hides their sin. These are the people the light shines on. And if we are honest, that is you and me before we knew Jesus. Darkness loving people. Sinners.

Today’s passage from the Gospel of John gives us more insight into why the light came into the world. He says that God loved the world, so He sent His Son to give eternal life to all who would believe in Him. He didn’t come to condemn the world but to save it. Jesus came into the world to be the light of the world that overcomes the darkness and gives us life (John 1:4-5).

John starts off today’s passage with a reference to Moses lifting up a serpent in the wilderness. In order to understand what John is getting at, we need to revisit Numbers 21. Moses and the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness at this point because of their sin and unbelief. They were grumbling once again about the food and water situation. Never mind the fact that it was their own sin that had gotten them into this mess in the first place. Never mind the fact that God repeatedly and miraculously provided for them. They complained anyway.

So the LORD punished them with poisonous snakes. Many Israelites died and finally, the people recognized

their sins. They told Moses, “We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you. Pray to the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us (Numbers 21:7). So Moses prayed and God told him to raise a bronze serpent up on a pole. Anyone who had been bitten by a snake could look at the serpent and be healed. The serpent wasn’t an idol. It had no power to heal on its own. The power was in the faith of the people who would look to it believing that God would heal them.

It seems like a somewhat bizarre story at first glance but in reality it is full of foreshadowing and object lessons. This cycle of belief, praise, obedience and blessings followed by unbelief, complaining, rebellion and punishment demonstrated to God’s people just how much they need Him. They couldn’t save themselves. They needed a Savior. Once they were willing to humble themselves, confess their sin, and ask God to help them, He was faithful to deliver them.

The bronze serpent is symbolic of Jesus. In today’s passage, He said that He would need to be lifted up just as the snake was so that anyone who would look to Him for salvation would be saved. The snake was just a one-time lifesaving event. But looking up to Jesus on the cross and trusting Him as our Savior and our Messiah, is an eternal salvation!

Friends, Jesus is the light of the world. If we put our faith in Him, we are not condemned. If we look to Him, we will be healed from the poison of sin and saved from certain death. Unfortunately, there are people who will not look to Jesus and be saved. These people are already condemned. John said these are people who love the darkness more than the light because they love their wickedness.

This Christmas season, I invite you to spend some time looking up to Jesus, our Savior. The Light has come. Glory to God in the highest.

Pray

God, thank You for sending Your Son to be the light of the world. Jesus, thank You for laying down Your life by being lifted up on the cross so that we can look to You and live forever. Amen.



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PULL TABS ARE
THE WAY
FOR A SPECIAL
PLACE
TO STAY!



Thank You

FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF THE
ANNUAL COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING MEAL!

It means a great deal to our community
and to us and especially to the
Kingdom of God that you took time
prepare, serve, and attend the meal.

FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST
Christmas
Eve SERVICE
DECEMBER 24 - 5:00PM

THE LIGHT

Bible Reading Plan

1. John 1:1-9
2. Psalm 36:1-9
3. Job 33:23-28
4. John 12:30-36
5. John 12:44-50
6. Psalm 119:105-112
7. Psalm 56:1-13
8. Psalm 97:1-12
9. Job 12:13-25
10. Psalm 19:1-10
11. Proverbs 4:13-19
12. Isaiah 5:16-21
13. Isaiah 58:1-8
14. Isaiah 58:9-14
15. Proverbs 20:22-27
16. Luke 11:33-36
17. Isaiah 42:1-9
18. Isaiah 42:10-17
19. John 3:16-21
20. Isaiah 9:1-7
21. Isaiah 60:1-11
22. Isaiah 60:12-22
23. Matthew 4:10-17
24. Jeremiah 31:33-37
25. Daniel 2:19-23
26. Matthew 5:11-16
27. Matthew 6:19-24
28. Luke 8:11-18
29. Psalm 43:1-5
30. 1 John 2:7-11
31. Psalm 18:28-33

Ministry and Fellowship Events

Men's Breakfast

Saturday - December 3 @ 8:00 a.m.
Fellowship Hall

Accura Care Christmas Party

Sunday - December 4 @ 2:00 a.m.
Accura Care - 921 Riverview Drive

Christian Homemakers Meeting

December 8 @ 9:30 a.m.

Bible Buddies Family Christmas Party

Wednesday - December 14 @ 6:30 p.m.
Fellowship Hall

Bible Buddies Christmas Worship

Sunday - December 18 @ 9:30 a.m.
Sanctuary

Esther Circle

December 21 @ 1:30 p.m.
Christmas Luncheon

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Saturday - December 24 @ 5:00 p.m.
Sanctuary



December Celebrations

December 1
Tretton Huff (BB)

December 5
Rhonda Wiese

December 7
Ozzton Inman (BB)

December 8
Eh S. (MCS Student)

December 10
Claudia Schulke
Dianne S. (MCS Staff)

December 11
Ulises Placido

December 13
Delores Wheeler
Guy Fishman

December 17
Makenna Gray (BB)

December 20
Ruth Dean

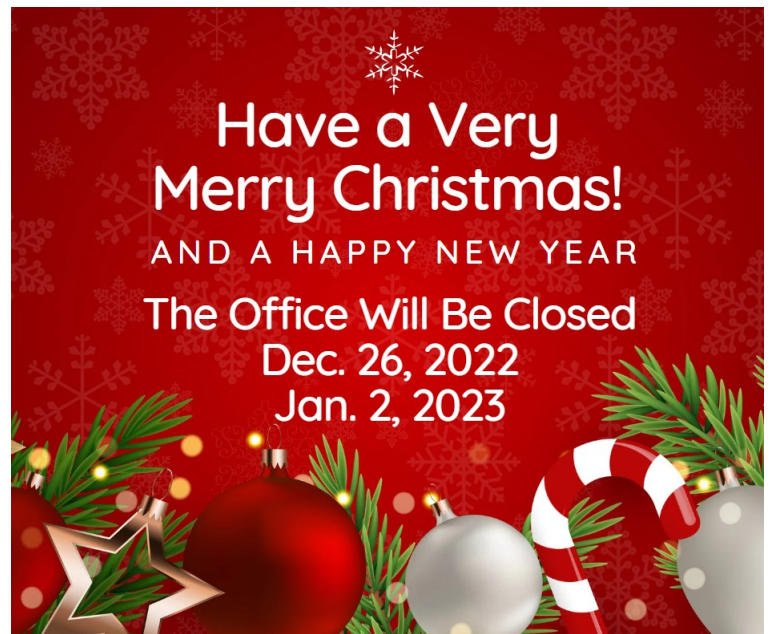
December 21
Donna Hahn

December 23
Tanya W.

December 24
Larry & Jean Heschke

December 27
Gloria Anderson

December 29
Lucas H. (MCS Student)



Ways To Give

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1-888-364-GIVE (4483)



First Church of Christ
772 N. 2nd Street
Cherokee, IA 51012

Accura of Cherokee (Countryside Estates) Christmas Party

It is that time of year again to start thinking about Christmas and preparing to make the residents of Accura smile during the annual Christmas Party! The date will be Sunday, December 4th at 2:00 p.m. Accura of Cherokee currently has 38 residents.

Staff suggests personal gifts such as shampoo, body lotion, hand lotion, blankets, 2023 calendars, etc. (something they can use) in the \$10 range.

We will sing Christmas carols with them for entertainment. We can bring in baked cookies and bars. There will be no sign-up sheet for baked goods. Please bring them with you when you attend the party. Last year we supplied individual ice cream cups. It is a big treat for the residents. Monetary donations for ice cream will be accepted. Please give those donations to Pam Cronin. Once the need is met, no more will be taken.

All church members are invited to attend the party! The best thing is: masks are no longer required to be worn in the facility. However, if you do not feel well, please do not attend.

Instructions:

- Please take a tag from the tree, write your name on the sheet of paper (located on the small table by the tree) that you have taken a tag from the tree. This way we will know a gift is being bought for that tag. The tag will either have lady or man written on it.
- When you bring the wrapped gift back to the church, please mark the paper again, before placing the gift under the tree.
- If you would rather contribute money for a gift instead of shopping, give your donation to Pam Cronin or leave it at the church office with Nancy. Pam will do the shopping for you. If you choose to donate money for this event, please have it to Pam or the church office no later than Friday, December 2nd at noon.

The residents enjoy this program very much and it is a wonderful way to express Jesus is the reason for the season! Merry Christmas!

Thank you so much,

Pam Cronin



November Worship Team Schedule

December 4	December 11	December 18	December 25
Children's Church	Children's Church	Children's Church	Children's Church
Sholeen Sparks	Polly Fishman	Dixie Draper	Angela Hall
Children's Sunday School	Children's Sunday School	Children's Sunday School	Children's Sunday School
Sholeen Sparks	Polly Fishman	Dixie Draper	Angela Hall
Communion Message	Communion Message	Communion Message	Communion Message
Mike Sparks	Guy Fishman	David Hall	Dennis Smith
Worship Leader	Worship Leader	Worship Leader	Worship Leader
David Hall	Sharon Henkel	Angela Hall	David Hall
Singers	Singers	Singers	Singers
David Hall	Sharon Henkel	David Hall	Angela Hall
Angela Hall	Larry Heschke	Marcia Casey	David Hall
	Nancy Nelson	Mark Casey	Sharon Henkel
PowerPoint	PowerPoint	PowerPoint	PowerPoint
Braella Inman	Ozzton Inman	Nancy Nelson	Nancy Nelson
Sound	Sound	Sound	Sound
Larry Heschke	Mike Sparks	Larry Heschke	Mike Sparks
Janitors	Janitors	Janitors	Janitors
TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

NOTE:

We would like to let you know that the worship team schedule may vary from week to week. We are going to be flexible in light of our beloved, volunteer worship director's health. Please keep Wren and Dennis Smith in your prayers.

Do you play piano, keyboard, guitar, or drums? Can you help us amateurs pull it together? Can you clean, dust, and vacuum? We need you! If the thought just ran through your mind that you can and should help with worship . . . consider that the Holy Spirit calling . . . and answer. Thanks!

Christmas

MARY'S SONG

Luke 1:46-55

For He who is mighty has done great things for me,
And holy is His name.
And His mercy is on those who fear Him
From generation to generation.

Luke 1:49-50

MAGNIFICAT*	NAME	FILLED
SOUL	MERCY	HUNGRY
GLORIFIES	STRENGTH	RICH
REGARDED	SCATTERED	EMPTY
LOWLY	PROUD	HELPED
STATE	PUT DOWN	SERVANT
MIGHTY ONE <small>NIV</small>	MIGHTY	ABRAHAM
GREAT THINGS	EXALTED	SEED
HOLY	HUMBLE <small>NIV</small>	FOREVER

**The term "Magnificat" does not appear in the Bible text, but this passage, also known as "Mary's Song," is commonly referred to by that name.*

G X V B J N B P B I V D W L E P F Y J K Y T P M E N R N
S P D X D E L G I B N D L D B H V G F O R E V E R C N I
L T B H G K I O J C H G E J K K D K F P W L O B M C Q B
A N O W C D I Y M B X O Q T N U O M A G N I F I C A T C
E L A Q E M I G H T Y Y S X L W P Q E C S K G X W I N H
Y A L Y E X J W I E V I B C V A M W L H E C H G P A W L
L E W T Q R P Y F N O Q E U V T X B J S A H P L B F O F
M T P R F Y J T L N S T M D D R M E G J V O H O V R D P
L J A X L W N A E V C Q N E D W Y G Y N F E Q R C P T C
H X Q U Y A T X S A M X J D U Y E I E B M K I I W R U Q
Q O O I V P G C V B B C Q R S A M E R C Y N J F Q O P C
G S Q R G G C D R R D I S A E T X T L R S I F I K U L I
S C E P M D E U W A K V R G E T Y R G N U H P E U D F C
G S U R S E N C T H B C K E D G V M S E B P J S W R I X
N P S E B R O T K A F L E R V L N T D Y R R Q K O E F K
I J I W R E Y U D M T O A Q U U R M T C N A M E T C V P
H I P Q I T T K E Q O W V G Y E S S M L I Y L A I L H W
T R H U C T H J P H T L T J N J I Q K V C C T J A U C D
T O V N H A G C L X C Y A G M E M V A L F S Q J M H I M
A G M Q W C I F E M W H T H V J J Y X I J E V B D B Z W
E G N G O S M W H M I H F T L U T V L S P K L R P A E P
R T D C Z M W Q G T J G D P Y F J L H I Y E O C N K O P
G C E S Q E K A A G M C D T J P E R X Y C S P G T J D J
H B P N G S N E J R W Q O X G D D H M E F M X J W D N I



Poinsettias Decorating Our Church Were Purchased

In Memory of:

Sherm Nelson & Greg Nelson

(by Joanne Nelson)

Loved Ones Gone Before Us

(by David & Angela Hall)

Helen & Ted Clark

Kenny Brandt

(by Della Rupp)

Dean Nelson

(by Darlene Nelson)

Lyndsey Bruce Reicks

(by Bonnie Lambert)

Harold & Judy Ferrin

(by Lynette Smith)

Royce & Joyce Cougill

(by the family of Royce & Joyce)

Steve Buck

(by Rita Pearson)

Wayne Buck

(by Rita Pearson)

Steve Buck

(by Hulda Schmitt)

Wayne Buck

(by Hulda Schmitt)

Vera Gano

(by Laverne Gano)

George, Fern, & Connie Cockburn

(by Curt & Rhonda Wiese)

Paul & Maxine Jenness

(by Paula Burch)

Rodney Hazen,

Kermit & Kathryn Hazen

(by Joyce Salter)

Neal Johnston

(by Bob & Eleanor Johnston)



Board of Elders and Deacons Election Set December 6, 2022

The election of board members will take place on December 6, 2022. Election ballots will be available on that day in the lobby and in the bulletins. We ask that you attend worship that day to turn in your ballots.

Those that have accepted your nominations are as follows:

Elders

Larry Heschke

Deacons

Mark Patten

Tom Mortenson

Kevin Schmillen

Barry Nelson

Trustees

No accepted nominations

The Annual Congregational Meeting will then take place following worship services on Sunday January 8, 2023. We highly encourage you to attend the Annual Congregational Meeting. If you have something you want to address at that meeting please contact the office to be placed on the agenda.

Those of you who lead small groups or ministries please begin thinking about and submitting your annual report for publication in the First Church of Christ 2022 Annual Report. Please have your reports typed in a Word document and attach it to an email to be sent the office at office@cherokeefcc.com.



We can tell it's really Christmas time when the music in the mall gets a little more festive and radio stations devote all their time to classic carols. Christmas Music is one of the things about Christmas that really announces it's time to celebrate the birth of Jesus. It was no different in the Bible. In the four-part series, we will see that music truly was at the heart of the Christmas story.



Christmas Sermon Series 2022

12/4 - Mary's Song: A Song of Praise

12/11 - Zechariah's Song: A Song of Thanksgiving

12/18 - Simeon's Song: A Song of Joy

12/25 - The Angel's Song: A Song of Salvation

Board of Elders and Deacons Meeting Highlights

- The board had an offer from the Sutherland Church of Christ to purchase our 15-passenger van for \$4,800.00. Larry Heschke motioned to accept the offer and add the proceeds to the 2022 Harvest Offering to purchase a newer minivan. Tom Mortenson seconded the motion and the motion carried.
- Dixie Draper proposed that extra funds taken in from the freewill offering at the Community Thanksgiving Meal be given to the church's Harvest Offering. David made a motion to accept the proposal and Barry Nelson seconded the motion. The motion carried and the excess funds from the Community Thanksgiving Meal will be added to the Harvest Offering.
- A proposal to terminate the bulk mailing permit for the Connecting Point Newsletter was brought to the board. (see attached document). Barry Nelson motioned to accept the proposal and Tom Mortenson seconded the motion. The motion carried.
- The nominee Board of Elders and Deacons nomination forms were collected and tabulated. The following people were nominated:

Elders

- Larry Heschke
- Kevin Schmillen
- Dan Salter
- Tom Mortenson
- Guy Fishman

Deacons

- Mark Patten
- Tom Mortenson
- Kevin Schmillen
- Barry Nelson
- Guy Fishman
- Curt Wiese
- Joe Draper

Trustees

- Guy Fishman
- Curt Wiese
- Joe Draper

Total Attendance and Offerings

Date	Attendance	Offerings
10/30	79	\$1453.00
11/06	113	\$2659.25
11/13	62	\$3320.58
11/20	100	\$8055.65

Board members chose those they will contact to see if they accept their nominations. They are to let the office know by Wednesday this week so the ballots can be published in accordance with the by-laws.

- Nancy Nelson submitted her resignation to accept a full-time work at home position with full benefits. The new job will begin on November 28, 2022. With her resignation Nancy has offered to contract for a flat fee for up to six months with no set office hours. She will continue to do what duties need to be done on her own time. (See attached document). David Hall motioned to accept Nancy's resignation and accept the transitional contract with gratitude for the work she has done for this congregation. Larry Heschke seconded the motion and the motion carried. The contract is set to begin on December 1, 2022.



Final Bulk Mailing of Newsletter

This month will mark the final time we will mail the Connecting Point newsletter by bulk mail. A proposal was brought forth at the November board meeting to end this process to save both money on postage and waste of paper. The proposal outlined the following and the board motioned to approve the proposal and the motion carried.

This proposal is for the termination of the bulk mailing of the church's monthly newsletter to save on the cost of postage so those funds can be put towards other ministry projects.

Current Situation:

The bulk mailing permit currently costs \$250.00 annually. The current permit expires in March of 2023.

To mail the newsletter using the bulk permit there must be a minimum of 200 pieces mailed out with each mailing. It currently costs approximately an additional \$40.00 per month in postage for the mailing of each newsletter. This is \$480.00 annually.

The cost of printing each newsletter is approximately \$165.00 for each printing. *(This includes printing and paper costs)* This is \$1980.00 annually.

The total current annual cost of bulk mailing the newsletter is **\$2,710.00**.

Proposal:

Continue creating the monthly newsletter and send it out as an attachment via email to those who wish to continue to receive it.

Have printed copies available to pick up in the lobby. (50 copies would be about \$39.00 per month or \$468.00 annually)

For those that are homebound in assisted living or nursing homes mail the newsletter with first class postage stamps or send them with those who visit or contact those individuals on a regular basis. This would be approximately \$11.00 per month or \$132.00 annually.

Continue putting the newsletter on the website and the church app then also upload to Facebook page.

This proposal would cost approximately **\$600.00** annually.

Method of Transition

Make announcements in the remainder of the 2022 newsletters that printed copies will no longer be mailed and will be available by email, website, app, or printed copies in the lobby. The December 2022 newsletter will be final bulk mailing.

Beginning with the January 2023 newsletter those who would like to get it will have access to it through the website, app, Facebook page, and hard copies in the lobby.

Staff Resignation

November 11, 2022

Dear First Church of Christ Board of Elders and Deacons,

It is with both excitement and sadness that I am giving you my resignation as secretary for First Church of Christ. I have been offered a full-time work from home opportunity with a full benefits package. I begin that position on Monday, November 28, 2022.

I understand this puts you and the congregation in some what of a bind. With that in mind I have an of option for you.

Option:

I will contract with you a flat monthly rate and I will come into the office to complete what needs to get done on my own time. No set hours will be arranged under this situation. This would be a three- or six-month contract that would terminate as soon as you hire a replacement secretary. The rate under this contract would be \$1,200.00 per month which would help cover the time to train a new secretary. This contract would begin December 1, 2022.

It is with great sincerity and gratitude that I thank you all for your support and encouragement over the last several years.

In Christ with You,

Nancy M. Nelson

BIBLE CLASSES

10:40 a.m.

Christian Standard Curriculum
Chapel

Ladies Class
Room 7 - Downstairs

Men's Class
Room 8 - Downstairs

Children's Class
Downstairs

MISSIONS WE SUPPORT

Nebowa Christian Camp
Midwest Christian Services
Deaf Missions
International Disaster Emergency Services
Rapha International
Voice of the Martyrs

CHURCH INFO

Worship
Sunday Mornings
9:30 a.m.

Office Hours
Monday - Friday
9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Leadership
Pastor David Hall (641) 638-4762
Mike Sparks, Elder (712) 261-4730
Kirk Nelson, Elder (712) 540-9591
Larry Heschke, Elder (712) 221-7592
Mark Patten, Deacon
Barry Nelson, Deacon
Tom Mortenson, Deacon

Website
www.cherokeefcc.com
FB: @firstchurchcherokee

Phone: (712) 225-2667
Email: office@cherokeefcc.com



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