



# Newcastle CHRISTIAN CHURCH

## Newsletter - MAY 2024



**Our Vision Statement:** NEWCASTLE CHRISTIAN CHURCH STRIVES TO BE A COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS EAGER TO TELL PEOPLE ABOUT JESUS.

### WOMEN'S MINISTRY



### May 12, 9:30 am

Come at 9:30 to enjoy a hot breakfast prepared and served by our wonderful gentlemen. You are invited if you are a mother, a

grandmother, a future mother, an adopted mother, a fur-baby mother, a mother figure, or you had a mother (and you're female). Bring your daughters and moms and neighbors and friends. Free meal, Free gift, Mother's Day games, and door prizes, and best of all, the sister-shiping together!

### ODD 3 FRIDAY



ODD month + 3rd Friday = Game Night at NCC!!!

May 17th!

At 6:00pm we'll have tacos and play BINGO, with prizes! Come on over and bring your friends, family, and a dessert to share! Also, bring a couple Dollar Store specials for prizes.



MAY 18, 2024 | 9AM TO NOON

We're making Fleece Blankets for Hospice, or you may work on your own project.

### GRADUATION SUNDAY



**Sunday, May 19**

On Sunday, May 19th, we will honor and celebrate our graduates from high school and college. If you know of anyone not listed here, please let the office know.

Hayden Archey—Newcastle High School

### POUND



...continues through May to help Camp Sooner prepare for their Summer Camp season starting in June. This year, they have asked us to collect napkins and 12-oz cans of Coke (only regular Coca Cola please, other churches have been asked to provide other flavors and diet versions). There is a box in the foyer for your donations. We will collect these items through the month of May. Thank you!! for helping the Camp in this way!



### CAMP SCHEDULE

#### 2024 SUMMER CAMP SCHEDULE

CAMP	DATES	CAMPER	SPONSOR
Elementary Camp (1st-3rd Gr)	June 13-14	\$ 100*	\$ 50
PreTeen (4th-5th Grade)	June 9-12	\$ 200*	\$ 100
Junior High (6th-8th Grade)	June 16-21	\$ 250*	\$ 125
High School Camp (9th-12th Gr)	June 2-7	\$ 250*	\$ 125

\* Discount for registering by May 1st, late fee added after May 15th, and no guarantee of a camp t-shirt. Church pays 1/3 of discounted or regular camp tuition for members (not including any late fees). Talk to David or Courtney for more info. Find out what you will owe upon registering online at [www.campsooner.com](http://www.campsooner.com).



# 5 Christian Distinctions

Tim Keller, one of my favorite authors/preachers wrote an article in 2020 called, “*5 Features That Made the Early Church Unique*”. This is a large excerpt of it.

In the first three centuries, Christians were persecuted more than any other religious group. Because they refused to honor other gods or worship the emperor, they were seen as too exclusive, too narrow, and a threat to the social order.

So why, if Christians were seen as offensive and were excluded from circles of influence and business and often put to death, did anyone become a Christian? Larry Hurtado explores this question in two books, *Why on Earth Did Anyone Become a Christian in the First Three Centuries?* and *Destroyer of the gods: Early Christian Distinctiveness in the Roman World*.

One main reason, Hurtado explains, was that the Christian church was a unique “social project.” They were a contrast community, a counterculture that was both offensive and yet also attractive to many.

But what made the Christian community so different?

## **New Identity**

Hurtado points out that the basis for this unusual social project was the unique religious identity of Christians. Before Christianity, there was no distinct “religious identity,” since your religion was simply an aspect of your ethnic or national identity. If you were from this city, or from this tribe, or from this nation, you worshiped the gods of that city, tribe, or people. Your religion was basically *assigned* to you.

Christianity brought into human thought for the first time the concept that you *chose* your religion, regardless of your race and class. Christianity also radically asserted that your faith in Christ became your new, deepest identity, while at the same time not effacing or wiping out your race, class, and gender. Instead, your relationship to Christ demoted them to second place. This meant, to the shock of Roman society, that all Christians—whether slave, free, or highborn, or whatever their race and nationality—were now equal in Christ (Gal. 3:26–29). This was a radical challenge to the entrenched social structure and divisions of Roman society, and from it flowed at least five unique features.

### **1. The early church was *multi-racial* and experienced a unity across ethnic boundaries that was startling.**

See the description of the leadership of the Antioch church as just one example (Acts 13). Throughout the book of Acts we see a remarkable unity between people of different races. Ephesians 2 is testimony to the importance of racial reconciliation as a fruit of the gospel among Christians.

### **2. The early church was a community of *forgiveness and reconciliation*.**

As we have said, Christians were often excluded and criticized, but they were also actively persecuted, imprisoned, attacked, and killed. Nevertheless, Christians taught forgiveness and withheld retaliation against opponents. In a shame-and-honor culture in which vengeance was expected, this was unheard of. Christians didn’t ridicule or taunt their opponents, let alone repay them with violence.

### **3. The early church was famous for its *hospitality to the poor and the suffering*.**

While it was expected to care for the poor of one's family or tribe, Christians' "promiscuous" help given to *all* poor—even of other races and religions, as taught in Jesus's parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37)—was unprecedented. (See Gary Ferngren's essay "The Incarnation and Early Christian Philanthropy.") During the urban plagues, Christians characteristically didn't flee the cities but stayed and cared for the sick and dying of all groups, often at the cost of their own lives.

### **4. It was a community committed to the *sanctity of life*.**

It wasn't simply that Christians opposed abortion. Abortion was dangerous and relatively rare. A more common practice was called "infant exposure." Unwanted infants were literally thrown onto garbage heaps, to either die or be taken by traders into slavery and prostitution. Christians saved the infants and took them in.

### **5. It was a *sexual counterculture*.**

Roman culture insisted that married women of social status abstain from sex outside of marriage, but it was expected that men (even married men) would have sex with people lower on the status ladder—slaves, prostitutes, and children. This wasn't only allowed; it was regarded as unavoidable. This was in part because sex in that culture was always considered an expression of one's social status. Sex was mainly seen as a mere physical appetite that was irresistible.

Christians' sexual norms were different, of course. The church forbade any sex outside of heterosexual marriage. But the older, seemingly more "liberated" pagan sexual practices eventually gave way to stricter Christian norms, since the "deeper logic" of Christian sexuality was so different. It saw sex not just as an appetite but as a way to give oneself wholly to another and, in so doing, imitate and connect to the God who gave himself in Christ. It also was more egalitarian, treating all people as equal and rejecting the double standards of gender and social status. Finally, Christianity saw sexual self-control as an exercise of human freedom, a testimony that we aren't mere pawns of our desires or fate (see *From Shame to Sin: The Christian Transformation of Sexual Morality in Late Antiquity*).

### **Loving Challenge**

It was because the early church didn't fit in with its surrounding culture, but rather challenged it in love, that Christianity eventually had such an effect on it.

Could essentially the same social project have a similar effect if it were carried out today?

From My Heart,

*Billy*



# May 2024

## Camp Sooner 2024

### High School Camp:

June 2nd-7th

### Jr. High Camp:

June 16th-21st

Cost: \$250

Registration Open!!



Register Here



SET YOUR MINDS ON THINGS ABOVE, NOT ON EARTHLY THINGS.  
COLOSSIANS 3:2

### Graduation Dates

Blanchard Graduation

May 13

Bridgecreek Graduation

May 17th

Newcastle Graduation

May 23rd

Graduation Sunday

May 19th

### What are we Studying?

Sunday School: James

Wednesday Night: Revelation

Barabbas... That name alone rings a bell. The man who we hear about every Easter, the murderer who was set free because the Jews preferred a guilty man be set free rather than their own Savior. He's the one who deserved the beatings, the torture, and the death that our Lord was given. He's the one that every year, when the preacher reads Matthew chapter twenty seven, we shake our heads and think to ourselves about how unfair it was. We get angry at the Jews in the crowd because they set free the man who took lives, but yelled, "Crucify!" to the man who saved, loved, and redeemed lives. Barabbas walks free. And as he leaves the stage, he hears Jesus being taken to get flogged. He keeps walking without a care. Why should he care? Rather than death, he got life. He's free. We don't like when life isn't fair, so, every time we read this passage, our hearts get angry, right? What we don't realize, however, is that we are Barabbas. We deserve death. We deserve to be spit on and mocked, to have a crown of thorns digging into our flesh, and to feel the sweat drip into our wounds. We deserve to be struck on the head with a staff over and over again, having our mind spin and our vision blur. We deserve every single one of the thirty-nine lashes. The flesh being torn off of our bare bodies, but being chained to the ground so we had no choice but to take every single strike. We deserve the bones, glass, and metal that were woven into the whip to be dug into our body, only to be ripped right back out. We deserve to carry a cross, to have splinters make their way into our fresh wounds. We deserve to have rusty nails pierced through our wrists and feet, and to be hung on the splintering cross. We deserve to have to look our mother and brothers in the eye as they stare at our bleeding, naked and shame-filled body, as we push up to fill our lungs with air, which only opens all the wounds and expands the holes from the nails. We deserve to take our final breath. We deserve death.

As the realization of this reality sets in, and our hearts grow weary and our shoulders get weighed down by the weight of our sins, suddenly there's a man in front of you. A man who the crowd wants to crucify, a man who is willing to take your place. Jesus. And not only does He take your sin, He rises from the dead, defeating death itself forever. This is good news? Or is it? Because when we have good news, we share that news. I hear good news all the time: someone's had a baby, someone's getting married, someone scored a goal, someone is going to college- there's so much good news that spreads like a wildfire. But the gospel seems to stay within the walls of the church.

I mean, yeah, we're kind to people, we stay patient in lines at Wal-Mart, we post scripture online, we get a Christian tattoo, we do all sorts of things. But that's not enough. Just imagine how many lost people there are, sitting in their own despair. Drowning because the weight of their sins is just holding them down, and they may not even know it. But we're so caught up in our own selves that half the time, we're not even being true believers ourselves! Paul was not ashamed of the gospel, so we can not feel shame either, because Jesus took all of that shame with Him on the cross. We can not fear, because the Lord tells us over and over again, "Do not fear." Because what is there to fear when the Creator is within you? What can mere mortals do to you? We can not stay silent about our love for Jesus, because when we stop doing our job of worshiping, the rocks will cry out. Because creation knows the worthiness and holiness and goodness of God, and is worshiping constantly. And, we can't even tell our closest friends what the Lord has done for us? But I bet that everyone knew how Barabbas was saved from the cross.

So this Easter, we remember. Not just remember for a few seconds during communion time in service. No. That's not enough. We remember the grace that saved us. And we don't just remember, because if we were to just remember that would be selfish. We remember, and we share.



# May 2024 Newsletter

Courtney Loveless, Children's Ministry/Preschool Director

Our mission is to help children come to KNOW Jesus Christ, GROW to be like Him, and GO serve Him.

“Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.” Deuteronomy 6:5

## Children's Church

4yo ~ 5th grade meets in Room 101, Door will open at 10:20 am for check in. Church will start at 10:30 am.

Our time together in Children's Church - we Worship with songs, we have a time of prayer, communion time, we take up an offering to help support a mission (our focus has been praying for those that need to hear the Good News) and we have a lesson experience which may include a game and a craft. Take - n- Talk's will be sent home each week with our Scripture reading from our lesson, it will have a verse to memorize and a 'family time' suggestion.

## Sunday School

→ 9:30 am, Room 105, 4yo ~ 5th grade. Teacher: Courtney

Sunday School is an opportunity for children to learn more about Jesus through memory verses and lesson activities.

## Wednesday Nights

Fellowship Meal, 5:30pm  
Bible Study, 6:30pm Teacher: Courtney  
Room 101, 4yo ~ 5th grade

Wednesday's is an opportunity for children to dig deeper into God's Word. Learning how important it is for us to have a relationship with Jesus.

## Nursery



Our nursery is more than a room. We aim to teach your littles to love Jesus through songs, bible stories and play.

**Castle KIDS Volunteer Schedule for Children's Church**

1st Sunday > Cheri/Emily  
2nd Sunday > Malinda  
3rd Sunday > Courtney  
4th Sunday > Courtney

**Castle LITTLES Volunteer Schedule for Nursery - 10:15am**

1st Sunday > Michelle C./Axie  
2nd Sunday > Ginger/Taylor  
3rd Sunday > OPEN  
4th Sunday > Emily L.

Wednesday Nights with Mrs. Linda - 6:25pm



## CHILDREN'S CHURCH Lesson Title

- 5/5 - Lesson 1 > God's Rules are the Best, Ten Commandments
- 5/12 - Lesson 2 > God's Rules are the Best, Ten Commandments
- 5/19 - Lesson 3 > I can follow Jesus, Paul & Barnabus
- 5/26 - Lesson 4 > I can follow Jesus, Paul & Barnabus

## FAMILY RESOURCE:

Family Conversation Starters - <https://d6family.com/splink/>

Download the D6 app., parenting at your fingertips.



**YOU MISSED THE EARLY BIRD DISCOUNT.**  
Price increased to full price. Pay before the 15th to avoid a late fee.

**Mark your Calendars!**

**SUMMER CAMP 2024**

PreTeen Camp (4th & 5th grade)  
Cost \$200  
June 9 - 12 (Sunday - Wednesday)

Elementary Camp (1st - 3rd grade)  
Cost \$100  
June 13 - 14 (Thursday - Friday)

MUST REGISTER ONLINE!  
[campssooner.com/summer-camp](http://campssooner.com/summer-camp)

Are YOU looking for an opportunity to serve?  
I am looking for someone to serve the 3rd Sunday of every month in our Nursery. Serving in children's ministry, your time is most valuable in building a spiritual foundation for our littles and their family. You are not just a babysitter. You will shape the way children view Jesus, the Bible and the church.



# Newcastle CHRISTIAN CHURCH

2200 North Main Street Newcastle, OK 73065

### Church Office:

Phone: 405-387-4100  
Fax: 405-387-2399  
Website: nccok.com  
Email: ncc@nccok.com

### Office Hours

Monday-Friday 9:00 am-4:00 pm

### Staff

Billy Collier, Minister  
[billy@nccok.com](mailto:billy@nccok.com)

David Martinez, Youth Minister  
[dmar4x@gmail.com](mailto:dmar4x@gmail.com)

Courtney Loveless-Children's Director/Preschool Director  
[nccastlekids@outlook.com](mailto:nccastlekids@outlook.com)

Cheryl Millican, Ellen Storey,  
Secretaries  
[ncc@nccok.com](mailto:ncc@nccok.com)

### Elders

Rick DeWeese  
Garland Hawkins

### Deacons

Alan Allison  
Travis Cotten

Sunday  
Sunday School 9:30-10:15am  
Worship Service 10:30 am  
Youth Group 5:30 pm

Wednesday  
Dinner @ 5:30  
Bible Studies 6:30 pm

## **PRAYER REQUESTS**

**Call or email the church office, 405-387-4100, [ncc@nccok.com](mailto:ncc@nccok.com).**

Submit prayer requests to the church office anytime. They will be added to the weekly list, emailed out each week, or emailed immediately if its urgent.

### Important Dates in MAY

- 1—Wed. dinner & Bible Study 5:30 pm
- 7—Last Ladies Bible Study for spring session 10 am
- 8—Wed. dinner & Bible Study 5:30 pm
- 10—Food Pantry 9-10:30
- 12—Mother's Day brunch 9:30
- 15—Wed. dinner & Bible Study 5:30 pm
- 17—Odd-3 Game Night 6:00
- 18—Ladies Craft time 9-noon
- 19—Grad Sunday
- 22—"Last Supper" & Bible Study 5:30 pm
- 27—Memorial Day

## **FOOD PANTRY**

MAY Donation  
Item:



**CANNED GREEN BEANS**

The more food we donate, the less has to be purchased by the ministry. **THANK YOU!!**

## **MAY 2024 - Communion Thought**

5/5	5/12	5/19	5/26	N/A
Rick DeWeese	Neil Newcomb	Gary Pitzer	David Martinez	

**Memorial Day  
May 27th -  
Church office  
closed**



## **TITHES AND OFFERINGS**

Offering plates are passed each Sunday, or you may use the giving box in the foyer for your checks or cash (in an envelope please). Giving is also available through the church website at [www.nccok.com](http://www.nccok.com) on any of your devices. If you need help, just call the church office.



**Last Sunday of the month—watch for info**

*Tithes and*  
**OFFERING**  
INVESTING IN THE KINGDOM