

CHURCH *Life*

A monthly publication of First Christian Church, Princeton WV



Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." And He said, "Take now your son..." Gen 22:1-2a According to some rabbinical interpretations, the text might be better read in this manner; God-"Take now your son", Abraham-"Which one?" God-"Your only son whom you love" Abraham-"I love them both" God-"Isaac" God then instructs Abraham to take Isaac to Mt. Moriah, which will one day become the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, and offer up Isaac as a sacrifice to God. The story starts out revealing that this exercise is a "test". This passage forces me to question the purpose for this "test". One might quickly rebut, "to test his faith". The book of Hebrews chapter eleven verse eight through twelve testify of Abraham's faith while following verse seventeen starts out; *By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac...* So hadn't he already proved his faith? Was not his life up to this point enough?

What aspect of Abraham's faith is God now testing? He left his home, came to Canaan under God's direction, fathered a son in his old age, lived a life of obedience, not that he didn't stumble a couple of times, and now he finds himself being tested in this manner. What was God looking for? Abraham's faith? Didn't God already know? Or, perhaps, God wanted Abraham to know? Know what?

I believe the deepest question in this story had to be answered by Abraham and asked in a manner that left Abraham absolutely assured in his heart of his answer. ***Abraham, do you love your son Isaac more than you love your God?***

Abraham immediately begins preparation early the following morning after speaking with God. We are told that he diligently travels three days and takes Isaac up on the mountain. Until the moment his son is bound, placed on the altar and the knife raised, Abraham had the opportunity to back out. We know God would not have permitted the sacrifice to occur. The writer of He-

brews gives us a clue to Abraham's thinking; *He considered that God is able to raise men even from the dead...* Heb 11:19a Abraham passed.

Did God need Isaac's blood? Does God need anyone's or anything's blood? NO! The blood of the sacrifices is for us. In the same manner as the test was not for God's sake, it was for Abraham's. We too are tested in a similar manner as Abraham, the father of our faith. As Abraham needed to prove to himself that God, the heavenly Father, was first in his life, we too must consistently affirm that He is first in our lives above everyone or anything else.

Every category of our lives can and should be challenged with a similar test that God gave to Abraham. We are given one hundred and sixty eight hours every week. Many struggle even giving God one of those hours on a Sunday morning. And every excuse is given to justify to ourselves we need not gather together as a church family. Weather, sniffles, tiredness and or other events all work to sedate a guilty conscience and justifying our absence. Interestingly, often these folks are found at the restaurant or store following church. One hour a week is .59% of our weekly allotment, slightly over one-half of one percent of our time, is God asking too much for an extra hour of Sunday school or Wednesday Bible study? Now were talking 1.78% of our weekly time allowance. This is less than one-fifth of a tithe. O preacher now you're talking math, no one's got time for this!

Another area of our Christian service to look at is in our giving. Do we love our money more than we love our God? God desires that we use a portion of the resources He has blessed us with, to support His work and church in this world. Does He need our money? *The earth is the LORD's, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it.* Psalm 24:1

Absolutely not! *For ever beast of the forest is Mine, the cattle on a thousand hills.* Psalm 50:10 Can

we in faith take the first fruits of the increase and bring it back to God as an offering? Or are we going to put our confidence in the money, "we have earned", to meet our wants and needs? Can we consistently say to ourselves, "God comes first in my life, and I know that He will take care of me and provide for me if I honor Him foremost."

Does God need our time? Does God need our money? How about our prayers, or service, or... you fill in the blanks, everything already belongs to God. So why does He require us to give? You tell me, why did He require Abraham to offer Isaac? It's not about Him, it is about us! Will First Christian Church survive without your attendance, giving, or serving? Good question! Why would God sustain a congregation that is not interested in sustaining itself? Hard words preacher! You are correct, but in this day and time in which we live, hard words are necessary.

As we begin the New Year, our bulletin board will be cleaned off and a fresh question stapled on, "What will we celebrate January 1, 2025?" God does not need us, our money, nor our service, but He chooses to use us. We are the expression of the Kingdom of God on the earth in this age. Will we, like Abraham, offer the best that we have? With such a sacrifice God is well pleased. Will we display for our children and grandchildren that God is first in our lives by our actions and not just our talk? Paul declared; *Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ...* Phil 1:27a

O God, work in and through us, for Your glory.

Pastor Steve



Prayer Concerns

Week Ending Dec. 23, 2023

*Jack Compton, Randy Martin,
Pastor Bill Pollack, Ronald Reeks,
Family of Mary Jane Rorrer,
Scooter Smith, Believers of
Ukraine, Sandra Wimmer*

Week Ending Dec. 16, 2023,

*Gary Reed, Loved ones in Israel
& Palestine, Wisdom for our gov-
ernment,*

Week Ending Dec. 9, 2023

*Sara Allen Fran Thaxton, Bud
Raines*

In the Military:

*Mike Kennedy, Devin Lusk, T. J.
Morris, Robert Worrell*

Our Friends Who are Homebound:

*Betty Craft, Betty Doyle, Mike
Elmore, Lola Fanning, Evelyn Jenkins*

Our Friends in Nursing/Retirement Facilities:

*The Havens: Peggy White
The Havens: Cleo Halsey
Stonerise Princeton: Gary Reed*

Mark Your Calendars!

Tuesday, January 2, 2024

Church Council—7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, January 9, 2024

*Elders Meeting — 6:00 p.m.
Ministry Teams —6:30 p.m.
Board Meeting —7:00 p.m.*

Social Media Broadcast

*Follow us on Facebook at First Christian
Princeton WV.*

Website: firstchristianprincetonwv.org

Youtube: First Christian Princeton WV

E-mail: fccprincetonoffice@gmail.com

Phone Live Stream: 1-833-336-0457



Memorial Gift Fund

Memorial gift has been given in loving memory of:

† **Violet Belcher** by Alan & Terra Rose Cook

JANUARY 2024

Elders: Sam Conner, Larry Wimmer
Deacons: Mark Murphy, Randy Winfrey
Deaconess: Memory Bhebhe, Drema Wall
Lay Reader: Tonni Bennett

Christian Women Fellowship

Christian Women will meet on **January 4th at 11:00 a.m.** We will meet in the upstairs lounge.

Christian Women are selling pecans and mixed nuts again this year. Pecan halves and pieces is \$10.50 for a 16 oz. bag, and a 16 oz. bag of mixed nuts is \$8.50. Please contact Margaret Conner on her cell (C) 304-920-5041, if you want to purchase pecans for the holiday.

Senior Breakfast

Senior Breakfast is on **Tuesday, January 9, at 9:00 a.m.** at the Cracker Barrel Restaurant. Come join in the fellowship and fun.

From the Archives



Our congregation's fourth Timothy was Bernard Oakes, who was born November 9, 1930; the second son, third child of Joseph M. and Mertie B. (Lilly) Oakes.

He was a 1948 graduate of Princeton High School and a 1952 graduate of Bethany College. While at Bethany, he met his future wife, Ann Wilson, who he married on June 14, 1954. He continued his education at Lexington Theological Seminary, earning a Doctor of Ministry degree.

He was ordained June 8, 1952, at the Old Bethany Church, then ordained again a week later in our church. He pastored churches in Akron, OH, Clarksburg, WV, Niles, OH, and Lordstown, OH.

His pastoral work extended beyond his congregation; holding several state and national offices in the denomination. He had a wide range of interests outside the church including being an adjunct professor in the Philosophy and Religious Studies Department at Youngstown State University and working with many community organizations. He was honored several times for his work with those community organizations.

Bernard died in Niles, OH, on April 10, 2022. His funeral was held at Niles First Christian Church then his remains were cremated and interred at Roselawn Memorial Gardens in Princeton.

Happy New Year church family!

This has been the seventh Christmas that we have celebrated with you. We are so very thankful for your love, acceptance, and generosity. First Christian Church has offered us a wonderful opportunity to serve, worship, and minister within this congregation. We are anxious to see what God is going to do in our midst and how He grows His church. There is so much to look forward to in 2024 and we want to be here every step of the way as I pray you do also. May God bless you with His peace, His hope, His joy, and His love.

Happy New Year!

Pastor Steve and Mrs. Teressa

Sunday School: 10 a.m.
Morning Worship: 11 a.m.

January 2024

First Christian Church



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																																								
	<i>1</i> Scott Barnes; Shirley White New Year's Day Church Office Closed	<i>2</i> 2:30 PM Straley Homework Session 7:00 PM Church Council	<i>3</i> 11:00 AM Adult Bible Study & 7:00PM 7:00 PM Children's Program	<i>4</i> 11:00 AM Christian Womens Fellowship 6:00 PM Handbell Choir 7:00 PM Music Rehearsal	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>																																																																																																								
<i>7</i> Samantha Broyles; Nicholas Stinson; Stephanie Stinson; Jason Wall 10:00 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Morning Worship Service	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i> 2:30 PM Straley Homework Session 6:00 PM Elders Meeting 6:30 PM Ministry Teams 7:00 PM Board Meeting	<i>10</i> 11:00 AM Adult Bible Study & 7:00PM 7:00 PM Children's Program	<i>11</i> Judith Crotty 6:00 PM Handbell Choir 7:00 PM Music Rehearsal	<i>12</i> Jason Anderson; Jeff Coburn	<i>13</i> Margaret Conner; Judah Vipperman																																																																																																								
<i>14</i> Pamela Bell; Alisha Bell 10:00 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Morning Worship Service	<i>15</i> W/o 15th thru 26th Newsletter Announcements & Articles Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Church Office Closed	<i>16</i> Rusty Coburn 2:30 PM Straley Homework Session	<i>17</i> Jessica Testa 11:00 AM Adult Bible Study & 7:00PM 7:00 PM Children's Program	<i>18</i> Donald Swim; Sammy Terry 6:00 PM Handbell Choir 7:00 PM Music Rehearsal	<i>19</i>	<i>20</i>																																																																																																								
<i>21</i> 10:00 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Morning Worship Service	<i>22</i>	<i>23</i> David Lee Baker; Laken Dye 2:30 PM Straley Homework Session	<i>24</i> Tyler Dye 11:00 AM Adult Bible Study & 7:00PM 7:00 PM Children's Program	<i>25</i> Eugene Brock 6:00 PM Handbell Choir 7:00 PM Music Rehearsal	<i>26</i>	<i>27</i> Levi Archer																																																																																																								
<i>28</i> Lynn Gallinger 10:00 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Morning Worship Service	<i>29</i>	<i>30</i> Chris Howard 2:30 PM Straley Homework Session	<i>31</i> Mary Feuchtenberger 11:00 AM Adult Bible Study & 7:00PM 7:00 PM Children's Program	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="7">Dec 2023</th> </tr> <tr> <th>S</th> <th>M</th> <th>T</th> <th>W</th> <th>T</th> <th>F</th> <th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> <td>6</td> <td>7</td> <td>8</td> <td>9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10</td> <td>11</td> <td>12</td> <td>13</td> <td>14</td> <td>15</td> <td>16</td> </tr> <tr> <td>17</td> <td>18</td> <td>19</td> <td>20</td> <td>21</td> <td>22</td> <td>23</td> </tr> <tr> <td>24</td> <td>25</td> <td>26</td> <td>27</td> <td>28</td> <td>29</td> <td>30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>31</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="7">Feb 2024</th> </tr> <tr> <th>S</th> <th>M</th> <th>T</th> <th>W</th> <th>T</th> <th>F</th> <th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> <td>6</td> <td>7</td> <td>8</td> <td>9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10</td> <td>11</td> <td>12</td> <td>13</td> <td>14</td> <td>15</td> <td>16</td> </tr> <tr> <td>17</td> <td>18</td> <td>19</td> <td>20</td> <td>21</td> <td>22</td> <td>23</td> </tr> <tr> <td>24</td> <td>25</td> <td>26</td> <td>27</td> <td>28</td> <td>29</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Dec 2023							S	M	T	W	T	F	S						1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31							Feb 2024							S	M	T	W	T	F	S						1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
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A Prayer for the New Year

Lord,
Whether I leave behind
a year of joy or of trials and difficulties

I pause to *give thanks*.
Thank you for being with me
every day of every year.

Thank you for making all things *new*
and for giving me the grace of
fresh starts and *new beginnings*.

Remind me of *your* presence in the days to come,
even when I feel pushed and rushed by busyness.

Be glorified in my life this year -Amen- (Heather C. King)

Membership

I want to thank Shirley White, Drema Wall, Cindy Brannon, and Kenneth Reeves for their help this past year for the special dates. Also, I want to thank all the Greeters. I appreciate you. Happy New Year!

Donna Reeves, Membership Ministry

Christian Women Fellowship

The Christian Women Fellowship prepared and served baked spaghetti, salad, bread, and pudding for 200 at Amy’s House of Hope on **Thursday, November 30th**. It is always a blessing to give to this ministry. Plans will be made to serve again during the next quarter.

On **December 7th**, we had lunch at the Havens with Peggy White and Cleo Halsey. Barbara Forrest gave a devotional and played the piano so we could sing some carols. Peggy and Cleo joined right in. We gave them candy and blankets we made and prayed over. A visit was made to Gary Reed and Ralph Re-pass to deliver their blanket and candy. We enjoyed the time spent with all of them.

Linda Kaluk CWF



Poem of Life

Life is but a stopping place,
A pause in what’s to be,
A resting place along the road,
To sweet eternity.

We all have different journeys,
Different paths along the way,
We all were meant to learn some things,
But never meant to stay...

Our destination is a place,
Far greater than we know.
For some the journey’s quicker,
For some the journey’s slow.

And when the journey finally ends,
We’ll claim a great reward,
And find an everlasting peace,
Together with the *Lord*.

Author unknown

Worship

We wish to thank the Advent Readers, *Kenneth & Donna Reeves, Cindy Brannon, & Linda Cheverton, Tonni Bennett & Sylvia Spooner, Ben & Andrea Haring and David & Tia Kaluk* for the month of **December**. We are looking forward to having *Tonni Bennett* as the Lay Reader for the month of **January 2024**.



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805 Straley Ave
Princeton, WV 24740
Rev. Stephen M. Janning, Minister
firstchristianprincetonwv.org



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