

First Christian Church Williamston, NC

Family Ties

A Newsletter for Church
Family & Friends

May 2024

Pastor's Message

Xin chao (which means “hello” in Vietnamese). When you read this newsletter I will be in Vietnam visiting my daughter, and actually in Cambodia on May 1st. I will be exploring old and new temples and pagodas – all dedicated to Buddhism or Hinduism (or even Confucianism and Taoism). One thing they have in common: shoulders and knees must be covered out of respect for the sacred nature of these places.

I have brushed up on the background of these 2 major religions and thought you might find it interesting as well.



Hinduism is considered the world's oldest religion, with roots dating back to 2300 – 1500 B.C.E. (For reference, Abraham and Sarah likely lived between 2100 – 1900 B.C.E.) It is the 3rd largest world religion, after Christianity and Islam. There is no specific founder, and it is really a compilation of many traditions and philosophies.

Hindus worship a number of different gods, although Brahman is the Ultimate Reality. I have always found it interesting that Brahman is known as a trinity of supreme divinity that includes Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (the preserver/protector) and Shiva (the destroyer).

Hindus believe in the doctrines of samsara (the continuous cycle of life, death and reincarnation) and karma (the universal law of cause and effect). One key thought is “atman,” or the belief in soul. This philosophy holds that all living creatures have a soul, and they're all part of the supreme soul. The goal is to achieve “moksha,” or salvation, which ends the cycle of rebirths to become part of the absolute soul.

How does one achieve this moksha/salvation? Good deeds, pious feelings and living your life according to the ideals of dharma (duty). Basically, if your good deeds outweigh your bad ones, then the soul is liberated from the eternal cycle of birth and rebirth.

Buddhism actually arose out of Hinduism, but was founded by Siddhartha Gautama (5th century B.C.E.), also known as “the Buddha.” The Buddha is not a god – in fact, there is no god to worship in Buddhism. Some therefore call Buddhism a philosophy, more than a religion.

Buddhism believes in reincarnation and karma. Buddhists believe that human life is a cycle of suffering and rebirth, but that if one achieves a state of enlightenment (*nirvana*), then it is possible to escape this cycle forever. This path to enlightenment is attained by living a moral life, meditation and wisdom. There are many philosophies and interpretations within Buddhism, making it a tolerant and evolving religion.



If the Buddha is not a god, why are people going to temples to worship him? They actually are not worshipping, but instead showing respect. To worship a god means to praise the god, make offerings and ask for favors, believing that the god will hear the praise, receive the offerings and answer the prayers. This is not what Buddhists do. Buddhists will meditate at temples, often offering lamps, burning incense, and bringing fresh flowers. They may even bow to the Buddha statue. But Buddhists will say these are gestures of respect and admiration (just as when you stand for a prominent figure who enters the room).

A statue of the Buddha with its hands rested gently in its lap and its compassionate smile reminds them to strive to develop peace and love within themselves. The perfume of incense is a reminder of the pervading influence of virtue, the lamp is a reminder of light of knowledge, and the flowers which soon fade and die, is a reminder of impermanence. A bow to the Buddha simply expresses gratitude to the Buddha for his teachings.

(Side note: in eastern Asia, large ears signify wisdom and compassion. This is one of the reasons the Buddha is depicted having long ears, because he is the enlightened one.)

Well, this should be an interesting trip. See you soon!
Pastor Karen

Congratulations Amy Ward

Amy Ward will graduate from NCSU on May 4th with her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree. We are so proud of you Amy!

Save the Date! VBS

We will hold VBS on June 17 – 19 this year. Mark your calendar, tell your neighbors, and volunteer to help!

5th Sunday Coin Collection

Thank you for your generosity. The collection for our food pantry in April was \$400.18. That's a lot of change!

CWF Installed New Officers

At the CWF General Meeting on May 6, Maria Holliday and Karen Hardison will be installed as co-presidents. Thank you to out-going presidents, Luanne Griffin and Sharon Griffin.



	ACOLYTE	10 AM: SUNDAY SCHOOL	11 AM: CHILDREN'S CHURCH
MAY 5	Grace Sessoms		✓
MAY 12	Will Saunders		
MAY 19	Finley Crisp		✓

Sunday school has started its summer break. Children's church will break after May 19. Acolytes will be utilized on a Sunday by Sunday basis this summer.

- May 04 Matt Oglesby
- May 06 Claudia Lilley
- May 12 Vinya Ward
- May 13 Ken Teeter
- May 15 Gary Sproat
- May 16 Serena Paschal
- May 19 Janice Gray
- May 19 William Peele, III
- May 20 Carla Lilley
- May 20 Sully Ross
- May 22 Ben Shelton
- May 22 Lauren S. Newman
- May 24 Minnie Harrison
- May 26 Levi Oglesby
- May 27 Bill Jones
- May 29 Wanda Johnson



SERVING IN May

MONTHLY DUTIES	
Elder/Greeter	Laurence Lilley
Home Communion	Rock H./Maria H.
Open/close church	Levi Oglesby/James Ward
Altar Guild	Claudia L./ Susan M.

WEEKLY DUTIES				
	DEACON	NURSERY	SOUND/PROJECTION	MONDAY MEALS
5 th	Wayne P.	Mary Katherine S.	Rock & Maria	
12 th	Tommy R.	Kathy Slade	Wayne & Austin	
19 th	Bonnie R.	Cassie Harris	Rock & Maria	
26 th	Mary Katherine S.	Sharon Griffin	Wayne & Austin	

Highlights of the April General Board Meeting

Property: One more large tree at manse to be removed.

Outreach: Week of Compassion offering total was \$4065. Totaling all the congregation's special giving (Blessings in Backpack, Blanket Sunday, etc) for the first 2 months of the year we have given over \$8,800. Awesome outreach response for our church!

CWF: General meeting to install officers is May 6. The budget includes 2 scholarships for Camp Rainbow. The Palm Sunday Bake Sale brought in \$2067. The T-shirt project cleared only \$200.

CMF: Made a donation to help with costs of tree removal; and scholarships for Camp Rainbow.



The Christian Church (DOC) In North Carolina
Bishop Valerie Melvin, Regional Minister

176TH REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

Saturday, June 22, 2024

“LET’S MEET AT THE TABLE”

Keynote Speaker



Rev. Dr. José Francisco
Morales Torres

Regional Minister



Bishop Valerie Melvin

HOSTED AT
First Christian Church
2035 Oleander Dr.
Wilmington, NC 28403

CORA-Co-Chair



Rev. Brad McDowell

CORA-Co-Chair



Rhondra Fleming

Register Today!



www.ncdisciples.org

May

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
28 Karen Vacation Youth Sunday 11am - Worship	29 11:30am - Lydia 7pm - CWF 7pm - Martha	30 7am - Elders Prayer mtg 7pm - Ruth Circle	1 10am - MM Prayer Grp 7pm - Choir	2 10am - MM Prayer Grp 7pm - Choir	3 11am - Food Drive	4 11am - Food Drive
5 Karen Vacation	6 Karen Vacation	7 Karen Vacation	8 Karen Vacation	9 Karen Vacation	10 Karen Vacation	11 Karen Vacation
12 11am - Worship	13 5:30pm - General Board	14 10am - MM Prayer Grp 7pm - Choir	15 10am - MM Prayer Grp 7pm - Choir	16 10am - MM Prayer Grp 7pm - Choir	17 10am - MM Prayer Grp 7pm - Choir	18 10am - MM Prayer Grp 7pm - Choir
19 11am - Worship	20 10am - MM Prayer Grp 7pm - Choir	21 10am - MM Prayer Grp 7pm - Choir	22 10am - MM Prayer Grp 7pm - Choir	23 10am - MM Prayer Grp 7pm - Choir	24 10am - MM Prayer Grp 7pm - Choir	25 10am - MM Prayer Grp 7pm - Choir
26 11am - Worship	27 Office Closed	28 Office Closed	29 Office Closed	30 Office Closed	31 Office Closed	1 Office Closed