

WHO AND WHAT IS FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF BRYAN/COLLEGE STATION

A church is more than a building. A church is its members reaching out and spreading the message of Jesus to "the least of these." Over the years First Christian Church has responded to Jesus' admonition in Matthew 25:40 in several ways.

Blessing Box

In December of 2017 First Christian partnered with a Girl Scout Troop to provide a blessing box containing food and other items to those who might be homeless or otherwise in need in the area surrounding the church. This has been an ongoing project and church members readily keep it supplied with easy to eat canned food, some fresh fruit, eating utensils, water, bibles, and many other items. It is used extensively each week by those in need.

Habitat for Humanity and Race for the House

One of the projects in recent years to be undertaken by the church was the Chandler Run for the House benefiting Habitat for Humanity. There was a twofold purpose to this run – to honor our former minister, Rob Chandler's service and memory and to benefit Habitat. The first race was held in Fall of 2010 and raised slightly over \$4,000.

The race has continued through the Interfaith Committee of Habitat to build houses supported by First Christian and other churches in the community. Since its inception this project raised more than \$40,000. Smith Dairy Queen, headed by Karen Smith of our church, has also conducted fund raisers for Habitat and built a house dedicated to the late Terry Smith. The church is an enthusiastic supporter of Habitat for Humanity in this community.

Support for Stephen F. Austin Middle School

For the past 10 years, First Christian has supported our neighbor, Stephen F. Austin Middle School. We have done this by providing emotional and morale support for the teachers and providing school supplies for students in need. The church has provided scholarships for the students for summer camp. The principal of the school considers the program a vital part of the school and a much appreciated resource.

Young Life

Another successful community outreach has been First Christian's support for Young Life. Some Young Life leaders who came to our minister in 2009 were looking for a place to meet to conduct programs for middle school young people in Bryan. The church voted to allow Young Life to use our building twice a week for this purpose. The Monday evening group serves students from Stephen F. Austin Middle School (our across the street neighbor) and the Thursday night group has served Jane Long Middle School. Each group consists of about 10 leaders and 40 or so young people. This collaboration has been a blessing for Young Life as well as for the church. The Young Life leaders also help the church with our annual Halloween Trunk or Treat and served as set up crew and ushers for our dedication of Dishman Park in October of 2016. Young Life has had to temporarily suspend this activity during this pandemic.

Hospice Brazos Valley

First Christian members were among the founders of the only non-profit hospice in the area back in the 1980's. The church continues to support their mission through donations and volunteer hours.

Timothys

Over the years First Christian has a wonderful record of encouraging persons to enter full-time ministry Over the last 50-60 years seventeen Timothies have emerged from this congregation.

Other mentoring of young people...

In 2001 the church had the wonderful opportunity to both spiritually and monetarily support a young man from Uganda who came to the attention of our minister at that time, Rob Chandler. Mark Musumba came to the states to seek higher education, but he came with few resources. The church adopted him and mentored and encouraged him through to his PhD from Texas A&M. Various members provided tuition expenses, clothing, a car, senior boots etc. Mark became a wonderful member of this church and today is leading a research study at New Mexico State University.

Dishman Park

Dishman Park was conceived and brought to fruition to provide a neighborhood park to be used as a safe and pleasant green space for the area around the church. A very generous donor came to us in 2014 wanting to honor his parents with a lasting memorial. The park was dedicated October 1, 2016 with about 120 people present. This park is located at the corner of Homestead and Winters directly behind the church. This wonderful project was made possible through the very generous donation of Mr. Charles Dishman, a Bryan native who now lives in Houston. Dishman Park honors the memory of the late Harry and Hazel Dishman, long-time residents of Bryan. Features in the park include a pavilion, a wedding venue, a prayer path, picnic tables and benches, Fruits of the Spirit panels as mentioned in Galatians 5:22., gardening boxes, a volleyball court, and a lovely bridge over a creek which intersects the church property. There are several goals for this park including reaching out to the neighborhood around the church, providing new venues for church activities, and reaching out to the larger community. As part of the park, a Neighborhood Association was formed which includes many of the individuals living directly near and around the church.

OUR BEGINNING

First Christian was founded in 1866 by some leading members of the community at the time – indeed even leaders across the state. Below is a summary of our location changes over the years.

Year

Event

1866

First Christian Church was organized in Bryan. Two prominent organizers of the congregation were Colonel J. S. Proctor and Judge Spencer Ford. Judge Ford also served as a member of the local committee which in May 1871 who convinced the Texas Legislature to locate the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas south of Bryan.

1868

First building for First Christian Church was erected of red brick and was located at the corner of 27th and Dallas streets (later College Avenue).



1876	<i>The Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas opened.</i>
1907	First church building razed for a new church to be built in the same location. During the interim, the congregation worshiped in the Old Opera House.
February 1908	New church building dedicated.
December 1925	Church building destroyed by fire with small insurance coverage and the loss of all church records.
1926-1928	Services were held on the ground floor of the Masonic Lodge Building until the basement of the third church building was completed where services were then held until the sanctuary was completed in 1928.
January 1929	Third church building dedicated. The architect for this building was Mr. Ernest Langford of the A&M College of Texas.
1950's	By the mid 1950's it became obvious that the First Church Christian Church on the corner of 27 th and College would be compelled to move its location because of the encroachment of apartments and commercial buildings and no room to expand.
October 1952	Lots 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 purchased in the Winter's subdivision (Ennis and Homestead).
March 1961	Building at the corner of Ennis and Homestead dedicated. Worship was conducted in the Fellowship Hall.
September 1974	Present sanctuary dedicated.
May 2009	New Gathering Space dedicated. This new area connected the educational and fellowship wing with the sanctuary.

