



FIRST CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY

WELCOME to First Christian Assembly, an independent church whose mission is articulated by Jesus in Mark 16:15 when he said "...Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature". Following this great commission, First Christian Assembly preaches and teaches the gospel of Jesus Christ. In so doing, we trust that God, working through His Holy Spirit will draw souls to salvation in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Meaning of Christmas

The exact date of Jesus' birth is unknown, as the Bible does not give specifics as to the dates of either His birth or conception. But in the second century A.D., a Roman Christian historian named Sextus Julius Africanus calculated Jesus' birthdate to be December 25 (nine months after Africanus believed Jesus was conceived). In spite of the assumptions made in Africanus's line of thinking, the date was widely accepted.

At that time, Roman culture already celebrated a holiday on December 25: Saturnalia, the winter solstice. This tradition honored Saturn, the god of agriculture, and was celebrated with merriment, feasting, and gift giving. When Rome eventually instituted Christianity as the state religion in the fourth century, the Roman church converted Saturnalia to a Christian holiday in order to commemorate Jesus' birth. Christians have celebrated it as such ever since.

While the date may be in doubt, we can be certain however, that we know the true meaning of Christmas. Christmas is love. John 3:16-17 says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him." The true meaning of Christmas is the celebration of this incredible act of love.

The real Christmas story is the story of God's becoming a human being in the Person of Jesus Christ. Why did God do such a thing? Because He loves us! Why was Christmas necessary? Because we needed a Savior! Why does God love us so much? Because He is love itself (1 John 4:8). Why do we celebrate Christmas each year? Out of gratitude for what God did for us, we remember His birth by giving each other gifts, worshipping Him, and being especially conscious of the poor and less fortunate.

The true meaning of Christmas is love. God loved His own and provided a way—the only Way—for us to spend eternity with Him. He gave His only Son to take our punishment for our sins. He paid the price in full, and we are free from condemnation when we accept that free gift of love. "But God demonstrated His own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

Ministry Highlights

Announcements:

- New Year's Eve service will begin at 7:00 PM. Please let Gloria Felicione know if you plan on staying for coffee/fellowship following the service.
- There will be **NO** Bible Study nor service on Sunday, New Year's Day.

Missionaries

John Koehler, Afghanistan

Dear Friends, I hope this Christmas finds you pondering anew the wonders of His love! I have been meditating on Isa. 9 and been greatly encouraged by verse 2: "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned." That verse really describes A land and especially the men under the bridge but also the incredible Hope we have in His arrival to bring His light to all, no matter how great the darkness.

Last night I had 2 young men over, one a follower the other pondering... we watched the J film and it came so alive as A land resembles 1st century Israel! I felt like I was there! Afterwards we had a great talk on why J had to die. We also talked about what a decision to follow means, the literal possibility of death here in this country for such a decision. This young man's words were; "**I have already made a decision and realise the cost.**" A light has dawned on those living in deep darkness!

(FCA) First Christian Assembly, 1900 S. 11th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19148
 (PAC) Philadelphia Access Center, 1832 S. 11th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19148

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The Philadelphia Access Center is a ministry of First Christian Assembly. Our mission is *revealing Christ through compassionate service*. Services available at PAC include social services information and referrals, biblical counseling, support groups, volunteer training, and community outreach. All services are free of charge and available to anyone. To learn more, visit us in person (across the street from FCA) or online at www.philaccess.org or www.facebook.com/philaccess.

WEEKLY SERVICES /MEETINGS

	FCA	PAC
Sunday	9:45 AM <i>Bible Study</i> 11:00 AM <i>Worship Service & Children's Sunday School</i>	
Monday		7:00 PM <i>Stepping Stones</i>
Tuesday	6:30 PM <i>Prayer (Sanctuary)</i> 7:00 PM <i>Worship (Sanctuary)</i>	
Wednesday	6:30 PM <i>Men's Fraternity (on a hiatus)</i>	1:00 PM <i>Women at the Well</i> 1:00 PM <i>Coram Deo</i>
Thursday		6:00 PM <i>Prayer Service</i> 7:00 PM <i>Bible Study</i>
Friday		7:00 PM <i>Right Path (on a hiatus)</i>

- *Coram Deo*: A men's Bible study and Christian fellowship.
- *Right Path*: A Christ centered support and recovery group for people whose lives have been affected by drug and alcohol addiction. In a warm and friendly atmosphere, we provide loving support and fellowship; in genuine confidential sharing, coupled with a Biblical twelve step model of recovery.
- *Stepping Stones*: A Christ centered support group for men and women impacted by a loved one's addiction. In a warm and friendly atmosphere, we provide loving support, fellowship, confidential sharing, and intercessory prayer.
- *Women at the Well*: This group is Biblically based and promotes hope, healing, and fellowship for women impacted and struggling with brokenness.



PRAYER REQUESTS

- Ministries (present and future) at First Christian Assembly and the Philadelphia Access Center
- Christians around the world being persecuted for their faith
- Our supported missionaries
- For our Pastor and his family
- Our country and God's will for it

Link to Video: <https://youtu.be/sYx5zFW0nmQ>

This is a video of a group from the U.S. going to Indonesia to help with a construction project that **John Cutts**, one of First Christian Assembly's supported missionaries, had going. [Good video.](#) At one point, you'll see one of the tribe members confronting a cult instigator who had come by after church services. Note the MAF plane. One of FCA's other supported missionaries trains pilots and mechanics for MAF and also builds planes currently in New Guinea.