



# 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.*

## Nativity

Tradition says that Francis of Assisi created the very first Christmas nativity scene in AD 1223 after a trip to the Holy Land and Christ's birthplace. So began a new tradition that took root in many Western countries. Today, we can see nativity scenes in front of churches and homes, on street corners, and in pageants every Christmas season.

The word *nativity* is taken from the Latin *nativus*, which means "arisen by birth." A nativity scene is a representation of the night of Jesus' birth as depicted in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Nativities can be pictures, models, live demonstrations, or carvings, but they usually contain the same elements: the Christ Child in a manger; His mother, Mary; His earthly father, Joseph; shepherds; angels; various barn animals; a star; and, sometimes, three [wise men](#) bringing gifts. A nativity scene is most often set inside a stable or cave.

Displaying a Christmas nativity scene is a long-standing tradition, but it can also present a bit of a skewed view of the actual events of Jesus' birth. While each person depicted in a traditional nativity scene is a part of the Christmas story, not all the characters were present in one place on the night Jesus was born. Mary, Joseph, and Jesus were in a stable that night due to the overcrowding in Bethlehem's inn ([Luke 2:7](#)), but the Bible never mentions whether or not animals were present—in fact, it never even mentions a stable. The shepherds, once told of Jesus' arrival, left their flocks to worship the newborn King ([Luke 2:16](#)). However, the angels, which are often part of nativity scenes, bore the good news to the shepherds *in the fields* ([Luke 2:8–14](#)). As far as we know, there were no angels flying visibly over the place where Jesus was when the shepherds arrived. In addition, the wise men (the Bible never says how many there were) were also probably not present that first night. The magi visited Jesus some time later, when He was in a house ([Matt 2:1–11](#)).

Despite these small details, a Christmas nativity scene is a wonderful reminder of what happened the night Jesus was born. Ever since Adam and Eve's sin, our relationship with God has been marred and broken ([Gen 3](#); [Rom 5:12](#)). Out of love, God sent His Son in human form "to seek and to save the lost" ([Luke 19:10](#)). To that end, Jesus Christ was born in the town of Bethlehem. Modern Christmas nativity scenes help to proclaim Christ's birth and the true "reason for the season."

## Missionary Update PNG

Wait Meri Reporting.

I think I mentioned before that especially kids here call out "wait meri!" when they see me. (It means white woman.) Well, two weeks ago, as the kids were waiting at our gate to come in for the Friday group, I heard a kid yelling "wait meri" over and over again. So when the kids came in, I told them I did not like this. My name is Lois. A grandmother who comes with her grandson, told me that Timothy, the 3 year old, was the culprit. So after my lecture, I asked him, what is my name? He said "wait meri." So I told him my name is Lois. The next week, I wanted to check if he remembered my name. I said, what is my name? He thought a minute and said "wait meri." One has to laff.

The other thing about being a "wait meri" is that all us wait meri missionaries look alike to the nationals here. One lady told me she had seen me walking with a man for exercise. Well, it was not me, but hey, I get credit for exercise I do not even do! How good is that.

The 6 year old child that I had written about who was the victim of torture during sanguma has been safely taken to Port Moresby, the capitol. Praying that she will recover in every way and be placed in a safe situation. While in Port Moresby, Anton, the Lutheran missionary who had rescued her, has had a chance to address leaders from different parts of the country about the problem of sanguma (witchcraft) here. He has been a leader in bringing this out in the media. His name is Anton Lutz if you would like to read online about him.

During the last 2 prison visits, various persons have indicated the desire to accept the forgiveness and salvation offered to them by Jesus. Praying they will grow in their walk with the LORD. Pausing at one cell this last visit, sang with the men praise songs. What beautiful voices they had. They could be a choir.

I gave some Burmese language tracts to a Burmese business man while making a soap purchase for the prison outreach. He said a missionary in his country had given him tracts as well. However, he said he is Buddhist. I challenged him by saying Buddha is dead and Jesus is alive. (Examine the evidence.) I believe "the hounds of heaven" are on his case.  
Lois

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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](http://www.philaccess.org) or [www.facebook.com/philaccess](http://www.facebook.com/philaccess).

**WEEKLY SERVICES /MEETINGS**

	Meets at FCA	Meets at PAC
Sunday	9:45 AM <i>Bible Study – Phila -location</i> 10:00 AM <i>South Jersey Worship Service</i> 11:00 AM <i>Phila Location Worship Service &amp; 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 (Fellowship area)</i>	
Wednesday		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 at First Christian (Phila.& NJ) and the Philadelphia Access Center
- Christians around the world being persecuted for their faith
- Our supported missionaries
- For our Pastor and his family
- Paula Grazulis
- Operation Christmas Child Shoebox gifts shipped to Kenya and Ukraine

*[Isa 9:6–7] 6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of [his] government and peace [there shall be] no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.*