



christ FELLOWSHIP

2016 Annual Report



A NOTE FROM MIKE

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Over and over in the Bible, we see the people of God reflecting back on His faithfulness to them. Monuments were raised. People gathered to worship, pray, and remember. It is in that spirit that we hope to provide a yearly report, every summer, to celebrate the Lord's work in our midst.

The past twelve months have been filled with stories of God's grace to us. I love the people of Christ Fellowship! I love their passion for reaching the lost. I love their genuine openness to whoever walks in the door. I love the diversity. I love that every Sunday half of our people are children who love to play together before and after worship. "One in Christ" has become so much more than a vision statement. We are truly a family and we are always adopting!

If you are reading this, then you are probably committed to Christ Fellowship in one of two ways: 1) you are a friend of the church, praying for us and supporting us from outside; or 2) you are a regular attender or member of Christ Fellowship.

If you are one of the people supporting us from a distance, we hope that you will worship with us one Sunday. We also hope that you find this report encouraging and helpful in directing your prayers for us. We value your continued support greatly!

If you are in community with us, I invite you to ask yourself several questions as you read over this report and think back on your own experiences as part of our church family:

- 1.) Is my love and commitment to the Lord Jesus growing?
- 2.) Do I look forward to weekly worship, the preaching of the Word, and the sacraments?
- 3.) Have I made an effort to build lasting relationships with other believers?
- 4.) Am I using the opportunities I have been given to share God's love in word and deed?
- 5.) Why does Horn Lake need a church like Christ Fellowship?

That last question will be the focus of our August sermon series. We will invite several people to share their answer to that question one Sunday. A good thing is worth sharing with as many people as possible. And there is nothing better than the love of God in Christ and the fellowship of a unified local church. We are better together and I look forward to the next year!

Mike Winebrenner, Pastor

A NOTE FROM MICHAEL

To my Christ Fellowship family and outside supporters:

What an amazing year it has been! God is always faithful to us. He is better to us than we deserve! I come from a pretty big family so whenever I need help, think of fun things to do, want to laugh, or need to cry, I always think about family first. Basically, I look to my family for a lot of things. I think that is how God made us: to need each other.

For a long time, I only thought of my biological family in this manner, but being here in Horn Lake at Christ Fellowship has done something to my thinking. My biological family isn't here, but God has done something miraculous! He has made Christ Fellowship my family. I don't mean this in the typical sense of a "church family". Christ Fellowship IS a family, and we also worship together on Sunday morning.

So what does this "family" look like? We pray for each other, cry with each other, rejoice with each other, and we can be open about our shortcomings with each other. This family shares meals with each other right in our own kitchens. We have Nerf wars, we fish, we grill, and we even just sit around and do nothing together. There is a love like only Christ can sustain within this family. It is amazing!

In 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, Paul expresses that he has become ALL things to ALL men so that he could reach SOME. In that same fashion, you have worn many different hats: greeter, setup crew, breakdown crew, cook/grill master, ticket taker, bounce house attendant, face painter, church member, friend, and family member. From the Block Parties to the candy for Easter to the love shown for expectant mothers, the love of God is apparent in His people. God is doing a great work through this church and we are grateful that we get to see it and share it with the world.

People don't always remember what you said but they usually remember how you made them feel, and numerous people have felt the "genuineness" at Christ Fellowship. Please know that the hugs, handshakes, smiles, high fives, and prayers have been making an impact in the lives of the people in our community. There are still plenty of people to be reached, but know that God does the work of changing hearts and uses us to help express His love for His people.

I am thankful that God is using this body in His kingdom work. I look forward to what else He has in store for us to do. I love you all and God Bless!!!

Michael Williamson, Director of Operations and Outreach

Looking Back

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all ONE IN CHRIST Jesus.” – Galatians 3:28

Christ Fellowship wants to be a church that is so committed to the unifying Gospel of Jesus that everyone in our community will know us by our love for one another – regardless of ethnicity, social status, age, or gender.

ONE in our love for the GOSPEL

Central to our activity as a church is the message of the Gospel. Much of our efforts as a church are focused on communicating that message to each other and to new people.

The primary way we do that is through the regular preaching of the Word on Sundays. Over the past year, we have offered eight different sermon series, but every passage and every theme was connected to the Gospel message.

We have also encouraged everyone in the church to begin praying for one person they know and care about who may not know Jesus. We are looking for opportunities to share our faith with them and/or invite them to hear the Gospel on Sunday morning.

I remain confident that people are hearing and responding to the Gospel message!

ONE in our love for WORSHIP

We continue to meet for weekly worship at the middle school. Over the last year, attendance has slowly grown from 40 last summer to an average of 65 over the past few weeks. Easter Sunday, we had 100 people in worship (exactly the number we prayed for)!

We have a lot of children every Sunday! We now have children’s ministry and nursery teams in place to help us love and serve them. In the past year, we increased children’s ministry to twice a month. We also moved to a weekly nursery during the sermon for ages 0-4.

Our worship team has helped us implement some special elements and music around Christmas and Easter. We also began using some basic liturgy in worship and occasionally offer time for testimonies of God’s grace.

One of the most exciting changes is the way we do the Lord’s Supper! Families come to the table row by row and partake together. We lock arms around the table and pray together before the next group comes up. It has been a powerful demonstration of our vision to be “One in Christ”!

ONE in our love for the CHURCH

The “church” to us is not just a weekly event we attend. Instead, “church” is a group of people we want to know, love, and serve. Over the past year, we have introduced more opportunities to grow closer to one another in Christian community in our homes and at special events.

Last fall, we organized two fellowship groups. They were well attended, but we decided to go back to gathering the whole church for fellowship because we all missed seeing each other! As the church grows, we will consider revisiting a group approach. For now, we enjoy monthly brown-bag fellowships and other special events throughout the year.

One of our goals for this year was to explain and encourage the idea of church membership. We have added six new member households and have several others moving towards membership. We are also encouraging more people to take on servant leadership roles within the church.

ONE in our love for the CITY

We love Horn Lake and we want to see our city and neighborhoods thrive. Most of all, we want to see more people worshipping Christ with us and experiencing the love of our church!

We carried over all of the programs and events from last year: City Project (home repairs for people in need); Halloween (candy and face painting at the Fire Station); MLK Block Party (hundreds of people attended again this year).

We also formed a few teams devoted to ministry outside the church. Our “local immigrant outreach team” recently hosted a summer block party in the park near the middle school. The team is working together to meet and build relationships with our sizable immigrant population!

We have several others working together as advocates for adoption and foster care. There is a huge need for this in Desoto County. The team is helping our church raise awareness and equip families in the community with a heart for children.

We continue to partner with Restoration Now, an organization committed to helping churches connect with people in our community who may have physical needs.

Finally, we are still partnering with the middle school. Over the past year, Mike and Michael met over a hundred students by attending a program every week in the school. We also worked with a group of Christian students and spoke several times at the school’s FCA.

Looking Ahead

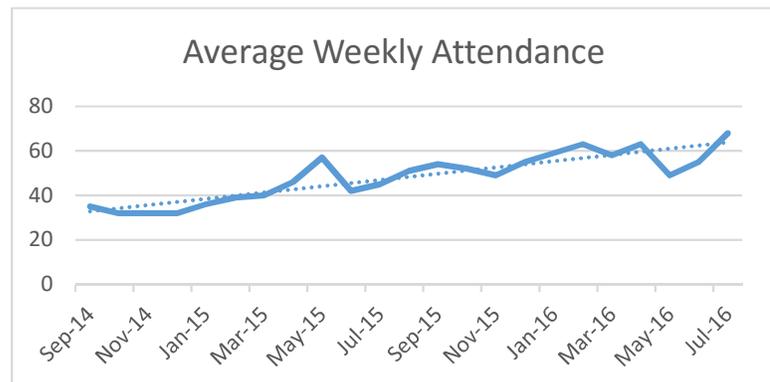
- In August, we will reconsider the vision of the church and present several goals for the future. This series will kick off on August 7 with a congregational meeting following worship.
- Jaime Loayza is currently raising support to join our staff as Director of Discipleship and Mission pending the approval of his visa! Lord willing, this transition will take place sometime in the next year.
- We plan to offer separate men’s and women’s Bible studies in the fall as well as a “Faith & Finances” discussion group led by Michael Williamson. We’ll eat, laugh, and struggle together as we learn to overcome obstacles, set savings goals, make spending plans, manage debt and loans, and more!
- Our children’s team is working hard to create a safe, fun, and Christ-centered environment for kids of all ages. Serving in this ministry is a great way to get to know other families and build healthy relationships.
- We plan to begin a weekly middle school outreach with help from some of the staff and teachers from HLMS.
- Our outreach teams will continue helping us serve and reach the community.

Statistics and Financial Information

Celebrating numbers and finances is not our primary goal, but they are indicators of spiritual growth and health – which is our primary goal. We try to keep up with numbers as merely one point of reference on how well we are accomplishing our mission.

People

People are the church. People are also the mission of the church! The numbers below represent the souls of people who need to be ministered to and people doing the ministering. We have seen a slow and steady growth over the first two years, for which we are very thankful! The fields are still ripe for harvest. Pray that God would carry on what He has started at Christ Fellowship.



Last year, our average attendance increased from 39 people to 55. The chart shows our average monthly attendance since we began worshipping in September 2014. Notice the solid growth trend over that period. We just finished July with a peak average of 68 (91 this past Sunday)! Like

every church, we have experienced some dips in historically low attendance months. We continue to be encouraged that the church is growing at a healthy pace. We are also encouraged by the consistent diversity in worship on a weekly basis across all demographics. Praise God for our people and pray for growth over the next year!

Finances

One of the main goals of any new church is to eventually become self-supporting. In the early stages, most of our financial support is being given by outside churches and individuals who are loving, supporting, and praying for us as a church plant. As we grow, we expect to be supported more and more by the tithes and offerings of our members and regular visitors. Financial statistics are just one of many ways to check the health of a church.

In the 2014-2015 fiscal year, only 17% of our budget was met by the tithes and offerings of members and visitors. This past year, giving grew to 26% of budget! This is positive growth, but we still have a long way to go before we become self-supporting.

General Fund Balance, June 30, 2015:

\$79,923.31

General Fund Balance, June 30, 2016:

\$82,685.87

Total Tithes and Offerings

(September '14 – June '15): **\$31,888.05**

Total Tithes and Offerings

(July '15 – June '16): **\$49,799.91**



Total Giving from Outside Sources (Supporting Churches and Individuals): **\$145,816.29**

Administration and Office Expenses: \$19,055.30

Emergency Relief and Community Development: \$11,573.38

Worship and Launch Expenses: \$22,614.02

Staff and Ministry Expenses: \$139,610.94

Total Expenses (July '15 – June '16): \$192,853.64

Net Surplus / (Deficit): \$2,762.56

Budget (July '16 – June '17)

Projected Tithes and Offerings: \$75,000

Giving from Outside Sources (Supporting Churches and Individuals): \$105,000

Administration and Office Expenses: \$15,200

Emergency Relief and Community Development (10% of giving): \$6,000

Worship Expenses: \$22,960

Staff and Ministry Expenses: \$149,630

Total Expenses: \$193,790

Net Surplus / (Deficit): (\$13,790)