



FIRST LIGHT CHURCH

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

There are many ways to look back over a year. As a church focused on life change through Jesus Christ happening across generations, we have much to thank God for this year! Through God's grace we saw over 50 people join First Light Church through membership and 26 follow Jesus through baptism. We also celebrate as 10 new children were dedicated to the Lord through Parent-Child Dedication and nearly 50 new students began engaging with Student Ministry. Additionally, 35 new families began participating in financially contributing to First Light Church.

In the pages that follow we hope you gain further insight from the last year at First Light Church. While these numbers certainly aren't the total sum of the year or the only way to measure the year, they do provide a snapshot of the exciting growth we see happening. We look forward to how God will continue to move within the lives of our faith family in 2024. Thank you for your obedience and continued engagement in loving God and loving people well.

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CHURCH LIFE

There are many facets to Church Life at First Light with the primary focus being to serve First Light Church and our community. In this past year, we carried this out in a variety of ways. In our Upward Sports ministry, we have 200 children participating, with the majority coming from our community. Another area is Vandalia Butler Teacher Breakfast. We host the staff and faculty of Vandalia City Schools on their first day back to school each August. Once the football season begins, we serve the Vandalia Butler Football team a meal before

every game on Friday afternoons. This past year, we averaged serving 80 football players and coaches, over a 12-week period. When one of our church members has a member of their family pass away, to extend our love to that family, we also provide a meal following the funeral. We accomplish this by your willingness to serve and your generous giving. Thank You.

-Shirley Lassiter







FACILITIES

Our facilities play a major role in the daily operations of First Light Church. As you can imagine, with the amount of space that we have, there are many projects and tasks that happen every week to ensure we are caring for them well. While our staff take care of many of these duties, some wouldn't be possible without your service. Due to your extravagant generosity with service opportunities, we were able to enlist volunteers to assist in various areas such as the following:

- Cleaning for the Upward Basketball program in winter.
- Cleaning during vacation of Facility Team members.
- Set up and tear down for Vandalia Butler Teacher Breakfast and other events.
- Several volunteers also assisted with lawn care and flower bed care during the spring, summer, and fall months.

We also partnered with the Vandalia Butler High School Special Needs class for the last two school years. They volunteer and assist with our cleaning needs during the week, and it allows the teachers to teach daily skills to their students.

Due to your generous, giving we were able to move forward on our heating and cooling repair needs during the cold weather and warm weather seasons. We have also been able to address some of our lighting needs and convert others to LED to improve visibility and decrease expenses. We appreciate your willingness to serve and give financially to help us maintain our facilities and grounds.

- Robin Pennington





In Vacation Bible School's "Keepers of the Kingdom", we explored the Armor of God from Ephesians 6 and sought to be bold in standing up for our faith and sharing it with others. Over 25 children trusted Jesus as their Savior during Vacation Bible School '23! Thank you, First Light Church, for your generosity in meeting the needs of children!





PRESCHOOL MINISTRY

“We now serve 40% more children on an average Sunday than we did at this time last year.”

Preschool ministry is growing by leaps and bounds! We now serve 40% more children on an average Sunday than we did at this time last year. Praise God! We are so very appreciative of the volunteers who pour their time and care into these little ones, training them up in the instruction of the Lord. It takes dedicated individuals, as well as dedicated resources, to reach the next generation with the Gospel. So we also thank you, Faith Family, for your continued time and financial contributions aimed toward their spiritual growth.

Thanks to your partnership, we were able to share God’s love with over 90 preschoolers for Vacation Bible School this past summer. Alongside Children’s Ministry, we launched new family programming this fall.

These “Family High Lights” have provided new opportunities for children, parents, and grandparents to learn about and worship God side-by-side while making memories together. Additionally, seven families pledged during our Parent Child Dedications to raise their children up in the Lord with their community here at First Light. We are thankful for where God brought us in 2023, and enthusiastic to see where He leads us in 2024! Thank you for being a part of our journey.

- Amber Day and Amy MacGillivray



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

"I Love to Tell the Story" is an old hymn written in the early 1800's that focuses on the story of God and the stories of those who followed Him as recorded in the Bible. You might say it's our theme song in Children's Ministry because our faithful team of children's teachers love to tell that old story to a new generation of listeners. From Sunday mornings to Vacation Bible School to Kids' Camp to Upward Sports and in every opportunity in between, our goal is to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with children in Kindergarten through 6th Grade. We are currently using curriculum

from "Wonder Ink" which takes children on a journey in God's Word to discover that they are known by God, loved by Jesus, and led by the Holy Spirit. Upward Sports gave us the opportunity to share the Gospel with well over 200 boys and girls in the Hangar early this past year. Kids' Camp 2023 guided our 3rd-6th grade campers to discover the story of Joshua and the foundations of faith Joshua's story teaches. Thank you, First Light Church, for your generosity in meeting the needs of children!

-Kathie Parish



SERVING OUR COMMUNITY



140 bags

sent home every week through Care4Kids



40 kids

received dinner and Christmas Gifts through Care4Kids



200

played in Upward sports, most coming from outside First Light



80

football players and coaches were served in the Hagar weekly during the football season

STUDENT MINISTRY



Hello, everyone!

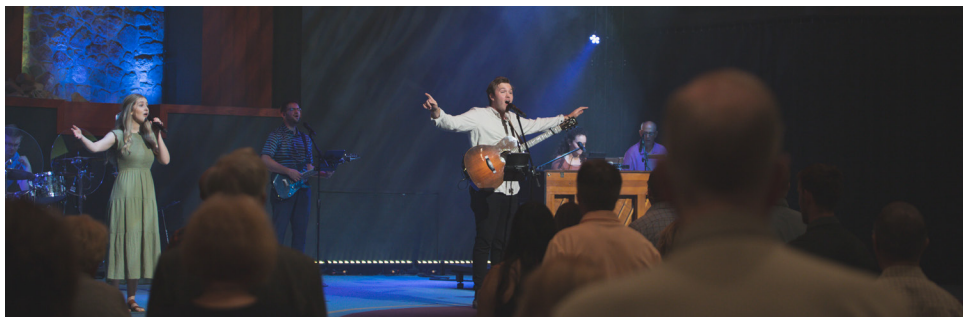
My wife, Ashley, and I have been here for about two years now, but we both grew up in this church. We knew that this church was special, and God was going to do something amazing when I joined the staff in August of 2021. Recently, we have seen 22 student baptisms take place in the ministry, and countless students come to Jesus Christ, and take their faith more seriously.

God is doing something special here in our students' lives! I am so grateful and thankful for the resources that our church family has supported us with for us to do amazing things, advance the Gospel, and grow our faith to be more like Jesus. We can't wait to see what's ahead this year.

- Ben Graham



SUNDAY WORSHIP



I've had the privilege to join the First Light faith family this year. It has been a tremendous blessing to watch the Lord use the music ministry to declare His truth through musical worship! We have grown in number, experience, and have upgraded our infrastructure to prepare us for where the Lord

is calling us! I'm looking forward to another year of allowing the Word of God to dwell in us richly through singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with one another.

- Cooper Patrick



LIVESTREAM

In 2023, our livestream has continued to grow consistently, reaching over 40 states and 13 countries, including the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, Argentina, Australia and more. With almost 11,000 views over the course of 2023, we average just under 200 viewers each week. This is the equivalent of having another weekly Sunday morning service attended entirely online!

- Elijah Markins

TECH MINISTRY



This has been a bright year for tech ministry at First Light! Thanks to your faithful generosity, we've been able to accomplish long-needed lighting overhauls in both the Worship Center and the Student space in the Hangar! This makes both rooms much more flexible and easier to use for the range of events that take place throughout the year, from normal services to retreats, weddings, the Good Friday Experience, and more. This year the tech team has been blessed with volunteers modeling generosity with their time to help keep services running smoothly. We were also able to send a dozen from our team to the Worship 4:24 conference at Cedarville University for a great time of equipping and encouragement.

- Timothy Kolker



Thank you First Light Church for your extravagant generosity in your time and resources in 2023! Because of you we are reaching more of our community for Christ.

