



# FIRST LIGHT CHURCH

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

# OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

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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 over 30 follow Jesus through baptism.

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 look at the exciting growth we see happening. We look forward to how God will continue to move within the lives of our faith family in 2025. Thank you for your obedience and continued engagement in loving God and loving people well.

Live Life with your Head Up,

- David Starry  
*Lead Pastor*

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# CHURCH LIFE

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There are many aspects of Church Life at First Light with the primary purpose to serve First Light Church and our community. In this past year, we carried this out in a variety of ways. For regular attenders and visitors, we held three Discover Membership Meetings. This meeting is an in-depth look at the history and purpose of First Light Church. In our Upward Sports Ministry, we have 247 children participating in the games of volleyball and basketball. The majority of these participants come from our community. Another area is Vandalia Butler Teacher Breakfast. We have hosted the staff and faculty on their

first day back to school since the late 1980's. 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 70 football players and coaches weekly, over a 12-week period. When one of our church members passes away, to extend our love to that family, we offer a meal following the funeral. We accomplish this by your willingness to serve and your generous giving. Thank You.

- Shirley Lassiter  
*Church Life*







# GROUP LIFE

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I am excited about what God is doing and has done here with our Small Groups at First Light Church in this past year. We have several small groups that are currently bursting at the seams and will be branching off to form new groups! Additionally, another off-site small group is forming soon in the Englewood area. One new group formed this past fall, that is now being led by Matt Neely. This is a group geared for parents with teens, and this is a direct answer to prayer as we had a great need for this! Our small group leaders are continuously faithful and excited to serve and lead. We had a great meeting/luncheon this past November in order to get everyone

excited, encouraged, and informed about the vision for the future. We had multiple small groups step up to help with Upward Sports this year, which is a huge help to that ministry. A big thanks to all who served!

I am excited to be the new Group Life Pastor and look forward to some new opportunities to serve and lead this coming year. I am so thankful for our small groups and their leaders and value all that they bring to our church through faithful teaching, fellowship and service.

- Jeff Grubbs  
*Group Life Pastor*



# VBS 2024

In 2024's Vacation Bible School "The Great Jungle Journey," we had over 300 children participating! 23 kids gave their lives to Christ and many more made a commitment to Follow Him for faithfully.







# PRESCHOOL MINISTRY

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Preschool Ministry continues to grow, grow, grow! Several new, young families visited our church and became regular attenders this year. Also, eight families in our congregation welcomed newborns in 2024, with more on the way in 2025. VBS saw nearly

100 children served in the preschool ministry, as many volunteers came together, sharing their time and efforts to spread the Gospel to our youngest disciples.

– Amy MacGillivray  
*Preschool*



# CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

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Kids Camp '24 we focused on Hebrews 6:19 and learning to place our hope in Jesus who is our strong and secure anchor! It was our highest-attended camp at Wilderness Ridge to date, and there were 50 of us from First Light! Several kids made decisions for Christ, and seeds were planted that God will continue to grow until His purpose is completed.

Sunday mornings we are welcoming new kids often and our attendance is up by about 30% with more and more children participating and hearing God's Word.

We've had great success with our family events: everything from creating Resurrection Gardens at Easter to our Fall Family Day at Young's Dairy and the Christmas Pizza and PJ's party. These were opportunities for families to connect here at First Light and invite new friends to join us!

Our adult volunteers who serve our children are a tremendous group who know the value of teaching God's Word to this generation and are committed to serving the Lord! I am grateful for each one of them!

- Kathie Parish  
*Children's Ministry*



# SERVING OUR COMMUNITY



In Care4kids, we hosted monthly open clothing closets that served approximately 50 families. We provided Christmas for about 40 children and school supplies/shoes for about 40 children. This school year, we are supplying over 150 bags of food every week to

Vandalia Butler students. These have all been opportunities to connect with underserved families in our community and share the love of Christ through meeting physical needs.

- Amber Day  
*Preschool & Care*

# STUDENT MINISTRY

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Recently, we have seen many student baptisms take place in the ministry, and countless students come to Jesus Christ, and take their faith more seriously.

This year we made the shift from Sunday evenings to Sunday morning student gatherings. With that change, we continue to see more and more students walk through the doors, eager to see what God has in store for their lives.

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  
*Student Pastor*



# SUNDAY WORSHIP

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This past year, our team has continued to grow, and I am constantly amazed by their dedication and passion for providing excellent, Christ-honoring music for our church. Our mission is for the Word of Christ to dwell richly within His people, and we pursue that by singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs that point to Christ and are rooted in Scripture. Above all, our desire is never to draw attention to ourselves but to direct all glory and worship to Him.

Your generous and faithful giving allows us to continue growing alongside the modern needs of technology. These tools not only simplify what we do, enabling us to focus more fully on proclaiming Christ, but they also help our team develop musically, ensuring that we continue offering our very best. Thank you for your continued support in making this possible!

- Cooper Patrick  
*Worship Pastor*



# PRODUCTION

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This year has been an exciting one in our production ministry! In 2024, we focused on not only improving our technical equipment like our new projectors, but our entire Sunday Gatherings. Our leaders went to FILO, a conference designed specifically for church technical artists with the purpose of equipping, encouraging, and inspiring those that serve in production to lead their churches well. We also had Digital Great Commission Ministries evaluate our church to help us get a fresh, outside perspective on ways to love our people well.

- Timothy Kolker  
*Technical Production*



# LIVESTREAM

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2024 was an exciting year for our livestream experience! With a full video system overhaul made possible by your generosity, we installed new cameras and streaming equipment to give online viewers an experience as close to being in the room as possible. This investment has paid off! Since our system upgrade, average online viewers have almost doubled, with more people finding our livestream and connecting with us. Our average watch

time has continued to grow, with over 1,521 unique viewers totaling in just under 8,000 views just since June. That's almost a 10% increase in viewership made possible by your generosity and investment into the future of First Light Church. Because you gave, we are able to reach even more people with the Gospel. Thank you for your generosity!

- Elijah Markins  
*Graphics & Communications*

# BUDGET

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This year's First Light Church operating budget is a conservative financial target based on previous years' budget-giving trends and this year's budgetary requests from church ministry leaders. It is an increase of \$244.78 per week compared to the 2024 weekly budget receipts. The weekly budget target for 2025 - 2026 is \$32,499.37. The Church Elder Council recommends it for a vote by the membership in its February 26, 2025, Church Conference.

Throughout 2024, First Light experienced numeric growth in many ministry areas, including preschool ministry, student ministry, and livestream viewership. The church saw nearly 50 people attend Discover First Light and over 30 people baptized. First Light also saw 35 new giving units added to its budget giving and a 5.2% increase in giving compared to the previous year. This budget helps support that growth and momentum that God is blessing our church with.

For 2025, a trend of rising operating costs continued. The cost of employee health insurance increased again by 11%. Operating expenses such as building insurance, utilities, and consumable goods continued to rise and experience the effect of inflation. The Elder Council also extended a cost-of-living increase to the church's staff and a funding increase to its local mission partners. These factors, paired with the growth in ministry participation, drive a need for more significant funding across nearly all of the church's budget line items compared to past years.

The following details provide an overview of First Light Church's 2025 - 2026 Operating Budget. This budget is made possible by the gifts of the people of First Light Church and the Lord's provision to meet our church's ministry needs. We trust the Lord will continue to provide.



## Budget Giving Trends Weekly Averages

2024 Weekly Budget Target	\$29,866.11
Previous 12 months	\$32,254.39* <i>(Through December 31, 2024)</i>
Previous 24 months	\$31,062.92
Previous 36 months	\$30,464.83
2025 Annual Operating Budget	\$1,689,967.24
2025 Weekly Budget Target	\$32,499.37

## 2025 Budget Categories

Missions	\$3,790.00 \$197,080.00	Weekly Annually
Ministries & Ops	\$8,166.53 \$424,659.56	Weekly Annually
Salary/Wages	\$15,336.69 \$799,067.88	Weekly Annually
Benefits/Taxes	\$5,206.15 \$270,719.80	Weekly Annually

<b>CHURCH MISSIONS</b>	2025-2026 Weekly Amount	2024-2025 Weekly Amount	Difference
SBC Cooperative Program	2,200.00	2,200.00	0.00
Greater Dayton Assoc. Of Baptists	25.00	25.00	0.00
Care4Kids	515.00	400.00	115.00
Care Ministry	250.00	200.00	50.00
Community Missions	300.00	300.00	0.00
Finish Line Ministries	500.00	500.00	0.00
<i>Together We Go Missions</i>	<i>2,000.00</i>	<i>2,000.00</i>	<i>0.00</i>
Category Totals	3,790.00	3,625.00	165.00

<b>CHURCH MINISTRIES</b>	2025-2026 Weekly Amount	2024-2025 Weekly Amount	Difference
Preschool	110.00	90.00	20.00
Children	210.00	175.00	35.00
Students	312.00	225.00	87.00
Adult Group Life	151.00	75.00	76.00
Classics	10.00	10.00	0.00
Worship	152.00	125.00	27.00
Production	132.00	100.00	32.00
Hospitality	25.00	20.00	5.00
Connections	97.00	55.00	42.00
Membership Care	63.00	50.00	13.00
Visual Communications	65.00	65.00	0.00
Staff Development	236.53	0.00	236.53
Churchwide Events	300.00	0.00	300.00
Category Totals	1,863.53	990.00	873.53

<b>CHURCH STAFFING</b>	2025-2026 Weekly Amount	2024-2025 Weekly Amount	Difference
Wages	15,336.69	13,992.32	1,344.37
Benefits/Taxes	5,206.15	5,677.79	-471.64
Category Total	20,542.84	19,670.11	872.73

<b>CHURCH ADMIN &amp; OPS</b>	2025-2026 Weekly Amount	2024-2025 Weekly Amount	Difference
IT	120.00	75.00	45.00
Building Insurance	967.00	600.00	367.00
Telephone & Internet	87.00	83.00	4.00
Professional services	50.00	50.00	0.00
Office Supplies	60.00	55.00	5.00
Postage	30.00	40.00	-10.00
Online Giving Fees	370.00	370.00	0.00
Printing	260.00	300.00	-40.00
Property Tax Assessment	15.00	13.00	2.00
Annual Fees	175.00	175.00	0.00
Building & Grounds	245.00	225.00	20.00
Gas & Electricity	1,940.00	1,900.00	40.00
Water & Waste Disposal	289.00	275.00	14.00
Facility & Equipment Maintenance	1,250.00	1,000.00	250.00
Janitorial Supplies	75.00	60.00	15.00
Campus Security	370.00	370.00	0.00
Category Total	6,303.00	5,591.00	712.00

