

The CHRISTIAN

 FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH *Visitor*
(Disciples of Christ)

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of Indiana Recognizes FCC
Gives Thanks for Stewardship in Giving to Disciples Mission Fund and Special Day Offerings



FCC has a long history of supporting the ministries of the greater Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) through stewardship, volunteering and supporting members as they serve in the church at positions around the globe. Recently, the Indiana region of the church honored and thanked us for our stewardship and generosity in giving to the Disciples Mission Fund (DMF) that funds life-giving and life-saving work we have been called to do. DMF-funded regional and general ministries offer opportunities for

Disciples to serve as missionaries, attend college or seminary, advocate for the least of these, and so much more.

We are part of a covenantal relationship with the wider ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The Indiana region recognized FCC's giving in 2018 for the following honors:

- Top Five in Disciples Mission Fund Giving
- Top Five in DMF Increase over 2017 Giving
- Top Five in Special Day Offering Giving

Wow! What an amazing statement this is about FCC's tradition of supporting these important ministries that have impact locally, regionally and globally. Thank you for your generosity and continued support of the ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

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Staffing Updates in the New Year

I rejoice that the board has approved my recommendation to call Sarah Gershon as our new Director of Faith Formation and Family ministries, starting early January 2020. Sarah is a Master of Divinity Student at Christian Theological Seminary (CTS) with a church background that spans evangelical as well as mainline protestant traditions. Through her studies as CTS, she discovered that she resonates deeply with Disciples theology, culture, history, polity and practice. This winter and spring, Sarah will be “learning the ropes” at FCC as she steps in to her new position. Then, starting in the summer, Sarah will begin her CTS field work with us for the 2020-2021 academic year.

Sarah, her husband Brett, and their children Alasdair and Oliver live in Bloomington and have been worshipping with us for a number of months. They especially appreciate our Children Worship and Wonder ministry that is offered each Sunday morning after the children lead the passing of the peace.

Sadly, the board also reluctantly accepted the resignation of Chuck Jones as our Director of Outreach and Service Ministries. I am grateful for his leadership and thankful that he will remain active with this congregation in a volunteer capacity. I have included his letter below my signature.

Finally, as we move further toward Christmas, I ask that you keep this congregation in your prayers as we seek to be a place of hope, refuge, and welcome for all God's children.

Thank you for the ways that you care.

Blessings,



Pastor Helen

PS: Here is Chuck Jones letter to the board.

Dear Members of the Board,

With reluctance I ask you to accept my resignation as Director of Service Ministries at First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), effective January 31, 2020. I felt honored to be offered this role last December, and I have thoroughly enjoyed leading the formation of our XPLOR ministry through 2019.

Unfortunately, the health issues that led to my early retirement have proven also to interfere with my ability to fulfill effectively the day to day responsibilities of this important role. I intend to continue to lead the XPLOR host team as a volunteer, as well as continuing to occasionally preach. This has been a difficult decision to make.

Being a part of the FCC staff under Helen's leadership has been a delight; our staff is very talented, and are fun, positive, good people. As I've mentioned many times, FCC is so much more than I could have hoped for in a church home when I moved to Bloomington. I'm continually blessed by being a part of this congregation, and I look forward to our continued fellowship, worship and work together.

God bless you,

Chuck Jones



WORDS FROM THE CHOIR LOFT CAROLS: THE SACRED MUSIC OF CHRISTMAS

The Advent and Christmas season is perhaps the time when most of us participate in the activity of the transmission of the *story* of our people through song. It is a time for carols, which are popular and traditional songs usually having the events of Christmas as their theme.

The term “carol” comes from the old French word “*carole*,” (meaning a “round dance”), which indicates the far distant origins of such traditional songs sung and danced during pagan celebrations of the Winter Solstice. In 1223 St. Francis of Assisi introduced special Christmas songs or canticles in the language of the people into his newly instituted Christmas Nativity plays. From these celebrations, the tradition of singing songs in the language of the people at Christmas spread throughout Europe.

During the Puritan time in England, when celebration of Christmas was suppressed, carol singing declined, but became popular again in England during Victorian times with the collection and publishing of medieval and folk carols. The tradition of “caroling” is traced back to as early as the 5th century and into the early 19th century – when laborers known as “waissailers” or “waits” would travel through the streets from door to door, singing for food, drink, or monetary contributions. It was only in England in 1872 that the tradition of singing carols in church was instituted in the Cathedral at Truro and has become a part of the tradition of Christian worship at Christmas throughout the world.

In fact, every culture has a type of popular song that might be categorized as *carol*. “The First Noel” is an English carol (interestingly, the word “*noel*” in French is interchangeable with the English word “*carol*” as it is understood today). “Infant Holy, Infant Lowly” is a Polish carol; “Angels We Have Heard on High” is a French carol.

A few of our most famous Christmas songs are not actually “*carols*” at all, but narrative hymns. “It came upon a midnight clear” from New England is one; as is “Hark, the Herald Angels Sing” which was written by Charles Wesley and set to music originally by Mendelssohn. “From heaven on high” and “Wake, awake the watchmen calls us”, and “Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming” are examples of German Chorales from the Reformation. “O Come, O Come Emanuel” is an example of a Gregorian Hymn – a chant with a rhymed verse. “What Child is This?” is an example of a 19th century text set to the tune of a Renaissance secular song “Greensleeves.” Isaac Watts, the “father of English hymnody”, composed “Joy to the World”, set to music vaguely reminiscent of a chorus in Handel’s *Messiah*. “Silent Night” comes from Austria; it was first performed in the Nikolaus-Kirche (Church of St. Nicholas) in Oberndorf, Austria on 24 December 1818, composed by their pastor and choirmaster, Joseph Mohr and Franz Gruber. The first English translation of this most famous of all carols was in 1871 where it was published in a Methodist hymnal.

As we proceed through this Advent and Christmas season, we hope you will continue to join in the corporate singing and transmission of the story of the beginning of our faith through song. Actively participate in the Lessons and Carols at the Christmas Eve Service Communion (December 24 - 8:00), or join with the children and youth in the Family Service and Christmas Pageant (December 24, 5:30); and, as an audience, enjoy the settings of carols by the early 17th Century German composer Michael Praetorius (whose most famous carols include “Lo How a Rose E’er Blooming” and “Ding, Dong Merrily on High”). Finally, on the Sunday after Christmas (December 28), our morning worship will include the chance to sing as a congregation your favorite carols; you can register your choices of favorite carols with Connie Myers who is actively surveying members for their choices.

**Christmas Eve at FCC
Tuesday, December 24**

Join us on Christmas Eve as we prepare for the birth of Christ through worship, music, and reflection.

5:30 pm Family Service with Candlelight

7:30 pm Choral Cantata
Tapestry of the Holy Birth
after the Music of Praetorius

8:00 pm Candlelight Communion with Lessons and Carols



7:30 PM CHRISTMAS EVE CONCERT BEFORE CANDLELIGHT COMMUNION

Tapestry of the Holy Birth

A Cantata for Christmas for Chorus, Soloists, and Chamber Orchestra
arranged by Stephen Mager
after the music of Michael Praetorius (1571-1621)

On Christmas Eve at 7:30, the choirs and musicians of First Christian Church will perform a cantata by St. Louis composer Stephen Mager based on carols and renaissance dances of the prolific early 17th century German Composer Michael Praetorius. The handbell choir will begin the concert with a selection of favorite carols. Come early, prior to the 8:00 Candlelight Communion service, to hear this joyful music celebrating the heritage of music honoring the Birth of Jesus .



First Friday Jazz
Vespers
Wonder

**The
Ellie Pruneau
Trio**

Featuring guest vocalist
Jared Griffin

Join us on January 3 at 6:30 pm for First Friday Jazz Vespers at FCC.

If you haven't attended FCC's Jazz Vespers service before, come try something new in the new year.

"Wonder" will be the theme of this service featuring the Ellie Pruneau Trio and vocalist Jared Griffin.



Please Pray for:

The family of Brian Jackson as Brian's mother (Diane) enters comfort care after it was determined that further treatment is no longer an option (car accident). The Jackson's address is 3693 S. Sowder Square, 47401.

Sandy Rampley, whose father, Jack Phillips, passed away on December 10 (brain hemorrhage). Services were held in Corydon on December 14. Mike and Sandy's address is 2228 Autumn Drive, 47401.

Margaret Hathaway, who is undergoing radiation treatment following surgery (skin cancer). Her address is 2455 N. Tamarack Trail, Apt. 208, Bloomington, Indiana 47408.

David Presley, who is recovering from surgery (pancreas) and is undergoing rehab in Martinsville. David and Linda's address is 459 S. Park Place, Martinsville, 46151.

Connie Gross, who is undergoing rehab at Bell Trace, following a stay in the hospital (sepsis and congestive heart failure). Her address is 3485 S. Knightridge Rd., Bloomington, Indiana 47401.

Mary Droste's son John who is recovering from surgery (broken hip) after a fall. Mary's address is 800 N. Bell Trace Circle, Apt. 103, 47408.

All those for whom this time of year is particularly painful. Your prayers make a difference.

Help Us Update Church Directory

We are in the process of updating our database for a new FCC Directory. This will include names and contact information for all who consider FCC their church home. Draft copies of the directory are available in the Chapel Gathering Space throughout January. Please check to make sure your information is correct and that we have listed all of your family members who would like to be included. Once we have updated the information, new directories will be available. Thank you in advance for helping us update this information!

Wrapping up 2019 and preparing for 2020

As 2019 comes to a close, it's a good time to check to see if you are up to date on your pledged giving for the year. Contact our financial secretaries with any questions you may have.

We are also still receiving planned giving cards for 2020. If you haven't already, please consider this financial commitment to FCC for 2020.

Rehearsal Schedule for Choirs for the remainder of December

Thursday, December 19

5:30-6:15 pm - Bell Choir

6:15-8:30 pm - Sanctuary Festival Choir

Monday, December 23

5:30 pm - Soloists and Instruments

6:15-8:30 pm - Sanctuary Festival Choir and Orchestra

Tuesday, December 24 - Christmas Eve

6:30 pm - Bells and Sanctuary Choir Warm-up

7:30 pm Concert: *The Tapestry of the Holy Birth:*

Carols and Dances of from the 17th Century

8:00 pm Candlelight Communion

After Christmas there will be no Thursday Choir Rehearsals until January 9th. The Sanctuary Choir will sing in the 10:00 service on January 12th.

January Birthdays

01/06	Theo	Johnson	2677 N. Warren Rd.	Bloomfield	IN	47404
01/07	Eric	Griffin	3830 Woodhaven Drive	Bloomington	IN	47403
01/09	Kathy	Deckard	1813 E. Arden Drive	Bloomington	IN	47401
01/09	Judy	Schmid	Redbud Hills, 3211 E. Moores Pike, Rm. 314	Bloomington	IN	47401
01/09	Olivia	Werner	4950 White River Drive	Bloomington	IN	47404
01/11	Chip	Welch	930 W. Second Street	Bloomington	IN	47403
01/14	Loretta	Orr	1105 E. Regency Dr.	Bloomington	IN	47401
01/17	Maia	Duffy-Paiement	260 S. Lori Lane	Bloomington	IN	47401
01/17	Cormac	Duffy-Paiement	260 S. Lori Lane	Bloomington	IN	47401
01/24	Holly	Biddle	9456 N. Ingram Rd.	Solsberry	IN	47459
01/24	Joe	Parrott, Jr.	2390 E. Winding Brook Dr.	Bloomington	IN	47401
01/28	Jetta	Norris	3194 N. Dahlia Lane	Bloomington	IN	47404

Please let us know if we have left anyone off of the birthday list.

Third Mexico Initiative Trip Scheduled *Applications Currently Being Accepted*

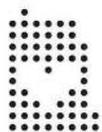


A delegation of Indiana Disciples will travel to the US-Mexico border **April 22-27, 2020** as a continuation of our efforts to better understand the challenge of refugees and immigrants on our southern border. This trip will be to Southwest Good Samaritan Ministries, a Disciples of Christ ministry, located in **Los Fresnos, Texas (www.swgsm.org)**. Founded in 1985, this ministry has assisted over 20,000 refugees and asylum seekers primarily from Central America.

Participants in this trip will have the opportunity to participate in the services being provided to asylum seekers and have a deep engagement with, and opportunity to better understand, the root causes of those who are seeking to come to the United States, and the complex legal, social, and humanitarian call to accompaniment and solidarity for our nation and our church.

There is space for ten participants and the deadline for application is **January 31st**. For more information on this opportunity, go to:

<http://indianadisciples.org/mexico-initiative/>



MCUM **Food & Supply Drive 2019**

Help us meet our 2019 goal of donating 2,000 pounds of items to MCUM's Food Pantry and Cleaning Closet. Bring donated items to FCC on Sundays during Advent. FCC's children will place the items on the chancel during worship. Thank you!



FCC Holiday Office Hours

Christmas Hours

Tuesday, December 24: 9:00 am-Noon

December 25: Closed

December 26 & 27 Limited hours, please call

New Year's Hours

Tuesday, December 31: 9:00 - Noon

Wednesday, January 1: Closed

Thursday - Friday: Normal hours resume

Christmas Gift Contributions for our FCC Staff

If you would like to make a special monetary Christmas gift to our dedicated FCC staff, you may place a donation in the offering or mail it to the church. Be sure to mark your donation "staff gift."

This is your opportunity to thank our wonderful staff who keep the ministries, mission, and day-to-day operations of FCC alive and well every day of the year!

UPCOMING EVENTS...

Sunday, December 22

Sacred Knowing

8:30 am Mediation Group

9:00 am Learning Session I

10:00 am Worship

11:15 am Learning Session II

4:00 pm Youth Bible Study

5:00 pm Bloomington Bible Study

Monday, December 23

6:15 pm Sanctuary Choir rehearsal

Tuesday, December 24

Christmas Eve

5:30 Family Service with Candlelight

7:30 pm Choral Cantata

8:00 pm Candlelight Service with

Communion and Lessons and Carols

Wednesday, December 25

Christmas Day

Sunday, December 29

8:30 am Mediation Group

9:00 am Learning Session I

10:00 am Worship

11:15 am Learning Session II

4:00 pm Youth Bible Study

5:00 pm Bloomington Bible Study

Wednesday, January 1

Happy New Years!

Friday, January 3

6:30 pm First Friday Jazz Vespers

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Christmas Eve at FCC
Join us as we prepare for the birth of Christ through worship, reflection, music and celebration.

5:30 pm Family Service with Candlelight

7:30 pm Choral Cantata
Tapestry of the Holy Birth
after the Music of Praetorius

8:00 pm Candlelight Communion
with Lessons and Carols

**Scripture Readings
For Sunday Worship**

December 22
Sacred Knowing
Isaiah 52:7-10; Luke 2:1-15

December 29
Intergenerational Worship with
Carol Sing
Linda Abe preaching

January 5
A Voice in the Wilderness
John 1:19-34; Psalm 32:1-2