

# The CHRISTIAN



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FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH  
*(Disciples of Christ)* *Visitor*



## *Christmas Eve at FCC*



We hope that you have found the advent devotional material meaningful, including poetry of Maya Angelou, art and writing of Joe Lee, and the intersection of Isaiah's powerful prophecies with the stories of Mark and Luke. As we round the corner and approach the final destination along this Advent journey to the manger, we hope you will join us (in person or online) for Christmas Eve at FCC.

We will sing carols and light the Christ Candle in preparation for the birth of Jesus during two very special Christmas Eve services and a Christmas Concert this Friday, Dec. 24.

We will travel to Bethlehem during our **Family Service at 5:30 pm**, following the way of the prophets, holy family, shepherds and magi. Joe Lee will be creating a piece of art on the chancel during worship as *children help tell the story of Jesus' birth* during this family-oriented service that culminates in a candlelit, no-rehearsal, everybody-gets-a-part children's Nativity pageant. This service starts at 5:30 pm.

**At 7:30 pm** FCC's Sanctuary Choir and Choral Scholars will present *A Christmas Concert of Early American Music*. FCC's *Traditional Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols* will follow the concert **at 8:00 pm** as we gather to prepare for the birth of Our Lord and Savior with lessons, carols, special music and communion.



## **Sunday Worship on December 26** *Service of Carols, Communion and Cookies*

Take a break from the holiday busy-ness and join us the day after Christmas (Sunday, Dec. 26) at 10:00 am for a special worship service of *Carols, Communion and Cookies*. Sarah Lynne Gershon has prepared this informal and fun service that will be just as it promises... filled with singing your favorite carols, celebrating Christ's birth with holy communion and sharing cookies! Bring your favorite cookies to exchange and a container to take home a variety! We will see you on Sunday!

### **Christmas Eve at FCC**



**5:30 pm Family Service**

**7:30 pm Christmas Concert**

**8:00 pm Candlelight Service of  
Lessons and Carols**

## Will Writes

We are in the season of Christmas movies and telling stories. I wonder what stories, if any, we will tell our children and grandchildren about the 2020 and 2021 Christmas seasons in the years to come. Will the lockdowns and online worship events of this pandemic season become part of the stories that we share, or will we consider this simply a momentary diversion and return to our nostalgic stories of caroling and sleigh rides in the snow?

Like you, I wish we could have everything back to normal and simply enjoy Christmas and this holiday season as we have in the past, but we are not yet back to “normal”.

As case counts increase and hospitals become burdened once again, we are learning several new truths about how our community is being affected by Coronavirus. Despite the politicized conversation we hear each day, it is evident that masks and vaccinations are effective and that our individual choices matter.

I have been in conversation this week with our COVID task force and want to share the following thoughts with you:

- We are planning to remain in person for worship while still providing live-streaming of each service. While we have not required proof, it appears that the majority of those who are gathering in the sanctuary each week are vaccinated.
- We recommend all participants in worship and in-person small groups be vaccinated and boosted.
- We encourage social distancing as much as possible.
- We will follow the county guidelines on wearing masks. (Currently required)
- We will not be restarting coffee hour or all-church meal functions.

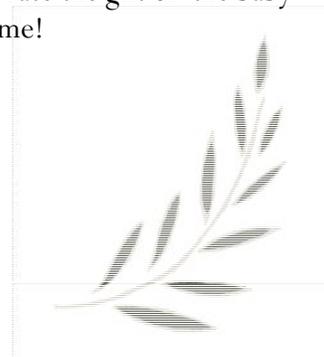
At Allen White’s funeral last Monday, I spoke of the way we enter into the Christmas season recognizing both darkness and light. While we want to focus on light and joy; we can see, in our peripheral vision, the cross and the table of remembrance. As we arrive this week in Bethlehem, may we remember the words of Mary as that frightened and overwhelmed young girl found the courage to lift her voice, “*My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior!*”

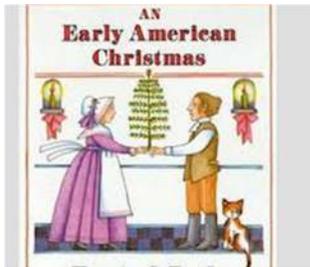
May our spirits be filled with joy and our hearts with hope as we celebrate the gift of the baby who has long been with us... and is yet to come! Come, Lord Jesus, Come!

Merry Christmas,



Will



**MUSIC NOTES:*****Christmas Eve Concert of Early American Music (1776-1850)***

No malls filled with the constant sound of recorded carols or easily accessible YouTube recordings of the latest Christmas releases; no accompaniments or large organs or splendid choirs with brass orchestra or music mainly performed by others: Early Americans began to create its own repertoire of music as varied and diverse as the landscape and the population itself; in many cases, music was made mainly by singing a varied repertoire growing from the heritage and situation of the local population or the various religious practices that emerging in from New England through the frontier. Our concert will include Christmas music of America's emerging tradition: music **William Billings** of colonial New England, who is regarded as the first American-born composer; **Shaker Hymns** from the communities of The United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing – known as Shakers - who first founded communities in the United states in 1780; **Appalachian Folk Carols** reflecting the style of many folk traditions and melodies emerging from the cultures of the new inhabitants; **African-American Spirituals** bringing soulful music from the enslaved people of the southern plantations , and music from the **Moravian Community** established in the United States around 1735 in Philadelphia and especially around Winston Salem, North Carolina with a population of classically-trained musicians in the European tradition. This promises to be a joyful musical experience as we celebrate the birth of Jesus with unusual music from our heritage. Join us at 7:30 pm before the Candlelight Communion service.

**DID YOU MISS LAST WEEK'S JAZZ VESPERS? WATCH IT ON-LINE!**

If the pouring rain or a myriad of Christmas obligations kept you from last Friday' Jazz Vespers, we urge you to take a break and watch and listen to it on-line. It will be posted on the FCC website for the month. Don't miss guest vocalist Rachel Caswell and the Garrett Spoelhof Trio and the readings and meditations from Linda Abe, and the Jessens as they explore the topic of Love and Commitment in this special Advent service. An additional treat is the fantastic pre- and post-service jazz renditions of secular Christmas standards that made the evening especially joyful. Please make it a point to tune in for this wonderful evening bringing family and friends together for this contemplative service and its extra Christmas celebratory moments.

A TREAT HERALDING THE NEW YEAR - TUESDAY DECEMBER 28 – 7:00 AT FCC

A JAZZ CONCERT WITH PIANIST EVAN MAIN AND CLARINETIST FRANK GLOVER

Local pianist Evan Main will be home from New York for the holidays and giving a concert of Jazz Standards and Free Improvisations with Clarinetist Frank Glover at First Christian Church at 7:00 on Tuesday December 28. A fun postlude to Christmas and prelude to celebrate the New Year. Admission is free with an optional good will offering for the musicians.

### Christmas Eve Offering to benefit Week of Compassion Disaster Relief

In an effort to support the relief effort following the devastating tornadoes recently, our Christmas Eve Offering will be directed to Week of Compassion ministries to support their relief work in multiple states, with the greatest impact in Western Kentucky. Several congregations there have been directly affected. Week of Compassion is coordinating with the Region, congregations, and ecumenical partners to provide relief. You can give through the Christmas Eve Offering during one of our services on Friday or by mailing a check to FCC with the note "Week of Compassion" on the memo line.



### COMMUNION NOTE

The chalice shaped individual serving communion cups that we used during the fall are currently back-ordered. So, we have returned to the foil topped cups. We are hoping that we will have a supply of the easier to use cups in January. Thank you for bearing with us!

### Thank you to everyone who supported our MCUM Family Xmas Shopping!



We were able to purchase gifts for two families. It was encouraging to know we were making Christmas a little brighter for others, but honestly it also made my Advent season a little brighter! I can't think of a better way to prepare for Jesus and I was encouraged by connecting with many of you through our service.

Whether it be running into our Sunday school leaders when they dropped off donations, eating pizza with all our shoppers, crossing paths with the Houchins while we were both searching for little Dino toys, or wrapping presents with the Fletchers, Ashlyn and Jo Weddle, it was good to share Christ's love together.

- Sarah Lynne Gershon

### Christmas Gift Contributions for our FCC Staff

If you would like to make a special monetary Christmas gift to our dedicated FCC staff, please mail it to the church (205 E Kirkwood, 47408). 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!



**Adult Faith Formation: Make connecting regularly for  
spiritual growth and learning  
Your New Year's resolution; *Join a small group!***

It's almost the new year, a time to reflect on the highs and lows of your life and what you would like to commit to doing in 2022. If you aren't in one already, we encourage you to commit to joining a small group. If you want to commit to connecting more deeply with other members of FCC on a regular basis, please contact Sarah Lynne Gershon. Let her know what days and times work well for you and what topics would interest you. You could join a new group or one of our ongoing small groups:

**The Campbellite Group:** This group is for people who want to think about how to live their faith in a time of world-wide change. We read a current article about a religious or moral issue, and then discuss how it bears on our faith. We don't always agree with each other—or with the chosen article—but the search for how to live faithfully keeps us trying. We invite you to join us Sundays at 11:15 a.m. via Zoom. Leaders: Jane Watkins, Joe Lee

**The Sharing Table:** Join this lively, unstructured dialogue as participants review the morning sermon and discuss various meditational writings through the lens of a personal relationship with the sacred. Conversation begins on **Sundays at 11:15 a.m.** in the sanctuary on the main level.  
Leader: Thomas Thompson

**Faith, Friends, and Film:** When this group gathers, film sets the tone for diving deep into our shared faith journey. The dialogue begins with brief and engaging videos featuring modern theologians. Some weeks the group learns about or engages in a spiritual discipline and practices it together. Join us in sharing the discoveries and challenges that arise as we more deeply connect with God, self, and others. We meet Sundays at 11:15 a.m. via Zoom.  
Leaders: Lisa Autry, Amy Hoover, and Sharon Robinson

**Meditation Group:** This group practices silent meditation to cultivate peace and joy. Each session includes discussion of readings from teachers such as Thich Nhat Hahn, Richard Rohr, and others. No previous experience in meditation practice is required.  
Meets at 8:15 a.m. on Sundays in the Campbellite Room.  
Leader: Tom Walsh

**Understanding Progressive Christianity:** What does Christianity have to offer an increasingly secular world? How has "religion" distorted Jesus' message? This is a 24-week class (fall and spring) in which participants can learn about and grow in a progressive, Christian faith that is free from dogma and rooted in hope for a full and abundant life in this world. We will engage readings and videos from scholars such as Bart Ehrman, Diana Butler Bass, and Marcus Borg.  
Join us on Mondays at 6:30-8:00 p.m via Zoom.  
Leader: David Garshaw

*(Continued on page 6)*

The **Racial Trauma Healing small group** (UPDATE) This small group had their last meeting in November. They followed the book *My Grandmother's Hands* by Resmaa Menakem as a foundation for personal reflection, discussion, and guided meditation/yoga body practices. At our last meeting one participant said this was the first anti-racism group and book she's read that she felt like she **could immediately apply and feel empowered to address racism in her life**. Our time together was so meaningful that we would love to host this group again in the future. If you are interested please let Sarah Lynne Gershon know.

### Afghan Refugee Support (Update)

We've gotten word that *Exodus Indy Refugee* will be asking people to submit volunteer applications in January for the Welcome Teams. Sarah Lynne Gershon is planning to host a Zoom meeting on Sunday, January 2 at 3:00 pm to talk about this outreach opportunity and answer questions. If Exodus is ready to receive volunteer applications for Bloomington, then Sarah Lynne will share the links for the application and background check.

The Zoom link for the January 2 informational meeting is below and will also be shared in our weekly email or you can email Sarah Lynne Gershon for that information.

Here is the zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82020971687?pwd=c1hkcmN3YitSMzYydnlRlVwNEc1QT09>

Don't know what this is referring to? Exodus Refugee Indy is putting together "welcome teams" to provide friendship and help to refugees who are resettling in Bloomington. We would love to have a group of people at First Christian Church who are interested in pitching in and offering help as they are able. The needs are wide-ranging, but expressing your interest in helping does not commit you to any particular task. Perhaps one week you could take someone to a doctor's appointment? Or help them learn to use a stove or navigate the public library? Would you like to hear about these needs and learn more about being on a welcome team? Email [sarahlynn@fccbloomington.org](mailto:sarahlynn@fccbloomington.org) and let her know!



### Bloomington Watercolor Society Christmas Tree

For several years, the Bloomington Watercolor Society has held monthly meetings in our church. On Dec. 13 this group held their annual holiday party in Great Hall. Members were invited to create and construct an ornament to be placed on a Christmas tree in the Chapel Gathering Place. You can now view and enjoy the tree which will remain there until we take down our Christmas decorations in the church. The next BWS meeting will be at FCC on January 10. At that time the members will take their decorations home with them for their personal use next year. BWS members at FCC are Bess Lee, Bob Florini, Bob Thrasher, Jeanne Dutton and Joanne Weddle.





## JANUARY BIRTHDAYS



01/01	Victor Gasana	4199 Innisbrooke Dr.	Bloomington IN	47408
01/06	Theo Johnson	3359 John Hinkle Place	Bloomington 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	Olivia Werner	4950 White River Drive	Bloomington IN	47404
01/11	Chip Welch	930 W. Second Street	Bloomington IN	47403
01/13	Taylor Fox	6385 E. Cox Dr.	Bloomington IN	47408
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	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!*

### *Thank You...*

Jennifer and Scott Fettchenhauer would like to thank everyone for their prayers, cards, emails, and texts over the past year and a half, especially this past week!

Most of you know already that Scott and I rushed up to Muncie on Monday morning (Dec. 13), after getting a call that Max was headed to the ER with symptoms of appendicitis. As it turned out, he did in fact have acute appendicitis and was immediately rushed into surgery where it was discovered that his appendix had ruptured. Following a successful appendectomy and a week in the hospital with IV antibiotics, Max is now at home recovering.

This year has been a challenging one for our family with the loss of both of my parents (Mike and Linda Waco) and now Max's hospitalization. We even had to say goodbye to a beloved pet (Freckles). Our 2021 story sounds a lot like a pitiful old Country music song! That said, with the support of our FCC friends and family, we are doing well and looking forward to a Christmas filled with love and loads of appreciation for those who are still with us and also appreciating the impact of those who are no longer with us. We send you ALL wishes for peace, love, joy and especially HOPE this holiday season. We all need hope in our lives. It sustains us during the good and the difficult times.

With Love and Appreciation,

*Jennifer, Scott and Max Fettchenhauer*

First Christian Church  
(Disciples of Christ)  
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CAROLS, COMMUNION, & COOKIES  
DEC. 26 | 10AM

*As we celebrate the birth of Jesus, join us the day after Christmas, Sunday December 26, for an informal service complete with favorite carols, communion and a cookie exchange to follow! Worship will begin at 10:00 am both in person and online at [www.fccbloomington.org](http://www.fccbloomington.org).*

**Scripture Readings  
For Sunday Worship**

**December 26**  
Colossians 1:15-20  
*Carols, Communion and Cookies*  
Sarah Lynne Gershon

**January 2**  
Isaiah 60:1-6 & Matthew 2:1-12  
*Still Seeking After All These Years*  
Sermon: Will Jewsbury

**January 9**  
Luke 3:15-17 & Isaiah 43:1-7  
*Resolute Expectation or Expectant Resolve*  
Sermon: Will Jewsbury