

The CHRISTIAN

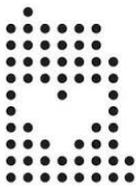




FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH
(Disciples of Christ)

Visitor

Supporting our Neighbors through Monroe County United Ministries
FCC Continues Tradition of Advent Food and Supply Drive and Shop and Share



FCC has long been a supporting organization for Monroe County United Ministries (MCUM). We were there in the beginning as one of the community churches that founded MCUM in 1939 to help address the issue of poverty and its impact on children in our community. We've continued this relationship over the years through food and supply drives, board membership and volunteering.

Throughout the Advent Season, FCC will receive donations of non-perishable food items and supplies for MCUM's Pantry and Supply Closet. Each year we set a goal of donating a certain number of pounds of items for their Pantry and Supply Closet. We hope to donate 2,000 pound (or more) by the end of this final drive of 2019. Consider adding a few extra items to your grocery cart for MCUM, and bring those items to FCC on Sunday morning when our children will place them carefully on the chancel. You can find a list of needed items on page 7 of this newsletter.

Another FCC Advent Tradition is participating in the MCUM Shop and Share ministry. Each year, a portion of our Sunday School offerings are set aside to purchase Christmas gifts for families in need who are recommended by our partners at MCUM. This Sunday, December 8, FCC's children and youth will gather following worship at 11:15 am for this very special Christmas shopping event! Following a pizza lunch, family members and adult children's ministry volunteers will take FCC's children and youth on a shopping mission. Working off of wish lists that include things like pajamas, toys and books, children will select just the right things to make someone's Christmas more joyful. After shopping we will head back to FCC to wrap the gifts and enjoy some fellowship.

We hope you will consider joining us as we support the important ministries of Monroe County United Ministries this Advent Season.

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Volume 61, number 21 December 4, 2019

Pastor's Pen

Pastor Helen's Annual (and Updated!) Guide to the Seasons

The Christmas Season is not yet here. However, we ARE in the middle of two other seasons: Advent and "The Holidays." During the contemplative and sacred Season of Advent, we prepare for Christmas by: 1) naming the reality of darkness and pain and brokenness in this world and in our lives, and 2) watching for signs of Christ's light to penetrate this darkness and bring healing and wholeness. Advent allows us to admit that our lives are not "Norman Rockwell Perfect" and that our world is not all "Holly Jolly." And it offers us the space... and the time... and the words... and the symbols... that help us to wait for the coming light of Christ and to trust that the current darkness will not overcome us.

In contrast, the secular Holiday Season is time filled with shopping, cooking, spending, decorating, parties, and entertaining. In its call for non-stop activity, it equates busy-ness with fullness, cheer with consumption, joy with jingle bells, lite with Light, and frenzy with faithfulness. Unfortunately, we know that when "The Holidays" are not well managed, we can end up feeling empty and exhausted.

As Christians, we can find it challenging to simultaneously navigate the clashing cultures and competing expectations of Advent and "The Holidays." So, I'm offering my updated annual guide to help you celebrate both seasons.

- Pay attention to the profound words of yearning and hope in the Advent Carols that we sing in worship. They will ground you in the deep, deep joy that comes from waiting expectantly for the coming of Christ. But also, have fun singing Jingle Bells and Rudolph!

- When you find yourself waiting in a line or in traffic, practice peace: breathe deeply and offer a quiet prayer for those in front of you and behind you.
- When you feel yourself becoming impatient or angry with someone, practice gratitude as you refocus your thoughts and attention on what brings you joy.
- When you experience a wave of grief or loneliness or despair, channel the wisdom of the Rev. Fred Rogers, who said, "What is mentionable is manageable." In other words, name out loud your pain and trust that God's light is powerful enough to penetrate the cracks of a broken life and bring wholeness.
- Carve out 3 minutes during the day (and set a reminder alarm) for prayer during a time that you might otherwise be engaged. When your alarm goes off, practice p.p.p (pray for peace and people) for three minutes.
- Before you retire for the evening, light a candle or the lights on your Christmas tree, let go of tomorrow's to-do list, and sit in the stillness of the moment as you allow the light to illumine the space and calm your spirit.
- Remember and rejoice that the love of God and the light of Christ surrounds you as you are. There is no need to pretend to be someone else!

Advent Blessings AND "Happy Holidays!"

Helen Hemphing

Pastor Helen

A Concert of Music for Christmas Eve – 7:30 PM - December 24

Tapestry of the Holy Birth

Cantata for Christmas

Composed and arranged by Stephen Mager
after Michael Praetorius and contemporaries



At 7:30 on Christmas Eve, the Sanctuary and Bell Choirs will offer their annual concert of music for Christmas prior to the Christmas Candlelight Communion. The Handbell Choir will begin the concert with a medley of carols, followed by a cantata sung by the Sanctuary Choir – *Tapestry of the Holy Birth* by Stephen Mager for mixed chorus and chamber ensemble.

The *Tapestry* is a collection of arrangements and carol settings based largely on hymns, motets, and dance music of Michael Praetorius (1571-1621). The first significant composer of Protestant church music, Praetorius composed many hundreds of choral settings of great diversity and various degrees of complexity. His best-known work is surely his setting of the beloved carol, *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming*. He left two major compendia of music, *The Muses of Sion* (1605-10) for vocal music; and *Terpsichore* (published 1612) for instrumental dance music. Both collections provide source material for this cantata. In addition, some of the *Tapestry* is drawn on other late sixteenth century sources and dance collections.

The carols of the cycle are linked by newly composed narrative recitatives from the Gospel of Luke by St. Louis composer Stephen Mager in a charmingly compatible quasi-Baroque style somewhat in the manner of a cantata by Bach or Handel. The Masterworks Chorale of Belleville, Illinois under the direction of Dr. Mager first performed the work as a choral cantata in December, 2016. Taken together, this *Tapestry* represents a blend of sacred and secular, and is a joyful celebration of the ancient and the new.

Join the Sanctuary Choir for Christmas Eve

The Sanctuary Choir invites additional members to sing with us on Christmas Eve. Rehearsals for the Christmas Eve Concert and Candlelight Communion will be on Thursday, December 19 and Monday, Dec. 23 from 6:15pm -8:15pm. The choir will meet to warm up on Christmas Eve at 6:30 prior to the 7:30 Concert. Please see or contact Jan Harrington (harringt@indiana.edu) if you are interested in joining us for this special Christmas Festival Choir.

**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



First Friday Jazz Vespers
Dec 6 at 6:30

Hope

heralds the Advent Season

This month's First Friday Jazz Vespers welcomes the season of Advent with Meditations, Readings, Scripture, and Jazz based on the theme of "Hope".

Ellie Pruneau's Trio will be joined with guest vocalist – Jared Griffin. Formerly a student at the IU Jacobs School, Jared is currently based in Indianapolis. He is a singer-songwriter performer whose music incorporates aspects of his Rhythm and Blues roots as well as Jazz to create his own unique style.



**Christmas Day
Special Offering
Dec. 15 & 22**

Our finest gifts support the work of regional ministries this Christmas. Your regional ministry works to:

- Connect congregations to each other
- Foster faith development
- Gather Disciples in camps, conferences, and assemblies
- Nurture the development of a new generation of pastors
- Assist churches in calling new ministers
- Interpret the global mission of the Church
- Represent the Church in ecumenical gatherings
- Lead the Church to address racism

The Christmas Special Day Offering supports all of these and many other ministries of our regions.



In Our Prayers...

Please pray for Margaret Hathaway as she undergoes extensive radiation treatment following three surgeries (cancer). Notes may be sent to her at 2455 N. Tamarack Trail, Apt. 208, Bloomington, Indiana 47408. Pray also for Connie Gross as she receives treatment (sepsis and congestive heart failure) in the Progressive Care Unit at Bloomington Hospital. She welcomes cards and prayers from her FCC family. Her address is 3485 S. Knightridge Rd., Bloomington, Indiana 47401.

Also, pray for the family of Brian Jackson. His parents, sister and brother-in-law were in a terrible car accident on November 26. His mother and brother-in-law remain hospitalized. Cards and notes may be sent to the Jackson family at 3693 S. Sowder Square, Bloomington, Indiana 47401.



Order your Christmas Poinsettias!

Purchase a poinsettia in memory or honor of a loved one to be placed in the chancel during Advent and Christmas. Poinsettias are \$12.00 each and may be taken home following the 8:00 pm Christmas Eve service. You may also make a donation to the Permanent Fund in lieu of or in addition to flowers. The order deadline is THIS Sunday, December 8.



Sunday, Dec. 15 at 4:00 p.m. Christmas Caroling (all ages)

Ill health and winter weather keep several in our church family homebound for much of the winter. Caroling is a fun way to meet people where they are while spreading some Christmas cheer. And there's really nothing like singing those sacred carols with children of all ages to put a person in the holiday spirit! Meeting up afterwards for dinner at a local restaurant is a great way to finish the evening.

Youth Advent Project Shared on Social Media

Through the month of November, the youth have been focusing on gratitude. They had a Friendsgiving at the home of Alexander Trippel where they made gratitude jars. Each wrote a note to their peers and placed it in their jar.

In December the youth are turning their attention toward Advent. You may have seen a few participating in our Sunday morning services! During our learning hour and evening Bible Study we are spending time discussing each week's word: Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. The youth are writing their thoughts or a prayer on a note card. You can keep up with this project on social media! Pictures of the note cards are being shared on the youth's Instagram and the FCC's Facebook page!

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!



Friday Game Night at FCC!

What's your favorite game? Do you like trivia games? Or would you rather gather with friends around a card table for a game of Euchre? Or maybe you prefer a game that gets you up on your feet and moving like Twister?

FCC's Game Nights are LEGENDARY!
(*Seriously, they are!*)

FCC XPLOR Resident Adrian Griffin has brought this great tradition back to FCC on the second Friday of each month. The next Game Night is coming up soon on **Friday, December 13 at 7:00 pm.**

We'll have plenty of games and snacks. You are welcome to bring your own as well. The fun is open to all, including young'uns, friends and neighbors! If you have any questions you can message the host, Adrian, at 479-445-9346 or at angriffinva@gmail.com.

Hope to see you there!

FCC Class & Small Group Holiday Parties



The **Emmaus Interpreters Class** will gather for their annual Christmas party at the home of Andy and Peggy Stafford on December 20 at 6:30 pm.

Kate Kroll will host the **Campbellite Class** Holiday gathering at her home on December 15 at 6:00 pm. *Please note that the date has been corrected from a previous newsletter. December 15th is the correct date.*

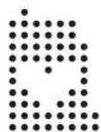
FCC's **Book Bunch** group will meet at 5:30 pm on December 17 at Feast Market & Cellar for their annual Dinner & Trinket



Exchange. The Book Bunch book selection for December is *Mystery in White: A Christmas-Crime Story*.

New Updated Church Directory in Progress

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. 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. Let us know if we have missed anyone. Once we have updated the information, new directories will be available by hard copy or electronic (PDF) version. Thank you in advance for helping us update this information!



MCUM **Food & Supply Drive**

Current Needs:

Reusable or cloth bags
 Peanut Butter
 Condensed Soups
 Ready to Eat Soups/Chili/Pasta
 Dried pasta (1 lb. pkgs.)
 Cereal
 Crackers
 All-Purpose Cleaners
 Dish soap
 Laundry Soap
 Shampoo and Conditioner
 Lotion
 Body wash

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

UPCOMING EVENTS...

Sunday, December 8

Sacred People
 8:30 am Mediation Group
 9:00 am Learning Session I
 10:00 am Worship
 11:15 am Learning Session II
 11:15 am MCUM Shopping
 12:00 pm FCC Board Meeting
 4:00 pm Youth Bible Study
 5:00 pm Bloomington Bible Study

Monday, December 9

7:00 pm Conversational English group

Tuesday, December 10

12:00 pm Voices of Faith!
 1:30 pm Caregivers Create!
 5:30 pm Listening to God meditation

Thursday, December 12

5:30 pm Handbell Choir rehearsal
 6:15 pm Sanctuary Choir rehearsal

Friday, December 13

7:00 pm FCC Game Night!

Sunday, December 15

8:30 am Mediation Group
 9:00 am Learning Session I
 10:00 am Worship - Baroque Cantata
 11:15 am Learning Session II
 4:00 pm Caroling
 4:00 pm Youth Bible Study
 5:00 pm Bloomington Bible Study
 6:00 pm Campbellite Class Christmas Party

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The Christian Visitor

Vol. 61, no. 21

 **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 8
Sacred People
Isaiah 2:1-5; Luke 1:26-38;
Matthew 1:18-25

December 15
Sacred Space
Isaiah 25:1-10; Luke 1:38-56

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