

The CHRISTIAN





FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH
(Disciples of Christ)

Visitor

Join Us for The Season of Advent at FCC

“Be Ready” to Engage the Spirit as We Wait, Prepare, and Get Ready

Each week during Advent, we prepare for Hope, Peace, Joy and Love by engaging these traditional themes of Advent alongside the sacred texts of the season. Join us on this Advent journey.

Third Sunday of Advent - Dec. 11

Be Ready for Joy!

Isaiah 35:1-10

Luke 1:46b-55

Third Sunday of Advent - Dec. 18

Be Ready for Love!

Isaiah 7:10-16

Matthew 1:18-25



Christmas Eve at FCC

*Join us on Christmas Eve as we welcome the Infant
Jesus, our Lord and Savior!*

At 5:30 pm, our Family Service will offer an interactive worship experience that will invite participation from worshippers of all ages. No preparation is required - all can take part in the telling of the story of the coming of Jesus!

At 7:30 pm, join us in the sanctuary for *a concert of Early American Christmas music* presented by our Sanctuary Choir.

At 8:00 pm, our Traditional Service will share the story of Christ's coming through scripture readings, carols, and beautiful music from our Sanctuary Choir and featured soloists.

Both services will include candlelight and communion as well as an invitation to bring gifts to the manger in honor of Baby Jesus. These gifts will be for the benefit of babies at Middle Way House, a Bloomington shelter for women who have survived domestic abuse. While all new baby items are welcome, Middle Way House especially needs diapers in sizes 3, 4, and 5, baby wipes, and diaper rash cream. There is no need to wrap your contributions. As we lay our gifts at the manger, we will do so knowing that when we clothe the least of these, we clothe Christ.

Volume 64, number 19 December 7, 2022

The Minister's Missive
All Good Things Must Come To An End

Dear Church,

We've heard it said that all good things must come to an end, and we know this is true – at least as it pertains to earthly things. We experience endings to our favorite season, our favorite holiday, and that perfect week of vacation. On a deeper level, our most cherished friendships, our deepest family connections, and marriages that have lasted half a century or more eventually end, if not for other reasons, then because of the ending of our earthly lives. We understand that good things often end not because they have failed, but because the season has changed.

Something good at FCC is coming to an end. On Friday, December 16, we will hold our final Jazz Vespers service. Jazz Vespers is a worship experience of great depth and beauty that has invited worshipers into a reflective space for encountering the Spirit's renewing presence. Beautiful, soothing music meets with timeless words of scripture, stirring poetry, candlelight, and Communion to renew weary and searching souls.

There is no doubt that Jazz Vespers has been a source of blessing in our church. I have heard many speak of their pride in FCC offering such a creative worship opportunity. It is also true, though, that this pride has not been manifesting itself in attendance. Jazz Vespers participation has been low, with few from our congregation regularly attending, and fewer still bringing friends, neighbors, and guests. Though the worship experience is lovely, our community is not showing up to enjoy it. We must be good stewards of our church's resources – resources of time, energy, and money. Jazz Vespers is an expensive venture, and the reality is that, in this season, it is not a source of growth for our church. And so, this good thing must gently and graciously come to an end.

Some will be disappointed to see Jazz Vespers end, and for some there will be grief in letting go. I want to offer deep gratitude to those who labored to make these fine services possible. I will miss some if I try to name all the people involved in the creation of Jazz Vespers, but I am grateful to those who pursued a bold vision to try something new and outside-of-the-box. My heart swells with gratitude for the two individuals who have so lovingly created, prepared, and led these services: Jan Harrington and Linda Abe. They have been a model of teamwork at its finest and have shared their abundant creative gifts generously. Jazz Vespers has been for them a labor of love. I hope you will take some time to let them know how much you have appreciated their work.

Where there are endings, there are also beginnings. We look forward to experimenting with occasionally incorporating jazz into our Sunday morning worship services. I also look forward to continuing to explore possible alternative worship experiences our church might offer that will serve as an entry point for those in our surrounding community who have not yet found their way to FCC. I hope you will plan to be present on Friday, December 16 at 6:30 p.m. so that we can give Jazz Vespers the good ending it deserves.

Shalom,

Pastor Kyrmen

317-408-9782

pastorkyrmen@gmail.com



MUSIC NOTES

Third Friday Jazz Vespers on December 16th at 6:30 – Anticipate

The concluding Third Friday Jazz Vespers service on December 16 - whose theme is Anticipate - will be a Christmas celebration of our 6 years of in-person Friday services and our 52 weekly 12- minute Jazz Vesper Moments that we produced during the height of the pandemic. As part of that retrospective, we will be posting 4 of those Jazz Vespers moments during Advent on our Midweek information email blasts and on Facebook; they feature reader Linda Abe and singer Elena Escudero with visuals and editing by Jan Harrington and Jono Palmer. The episodes are:

- Anticipating Change* posted on Dec 7th,
- Anticipating Reflection* posted on Dec. 14th,
- Anticipating Wonder* posted on Dec. 21st,
- Anticipating Joy* posted on Dec. 23rd.



On Friday, December 16th don't miss guest vocalist Rachel Caswell and The Keller-Tuberg Trio and the readings and meditations from Linda Abe, and the Jessens as they explore the topic of **Anticipate** in this special Advent service. An additional treat is the fantastic pre- and post-service jazz renditions of secular Christmas standards that will make the evening especially joyful. Please make it a point attend this wonderful evening bringing family and friends together for this contemplative service and its extra Christmas celebratory moments.

The service begins at 6:30 Friday, December 16th with pre-service music at 6:20.

Thank you!

Linda and I wish to thank those many musicians who have provided such great jazz in our Jazz Vespers services, and the FCC members and staff who have supported us through helping with set up, ushering, suggesting readings, and loyally participating as readers since the beginning of the project.

I'd like to express my deepest gratitude to the congregation, the choir members, the FCC staff for your support and forbearance during my long recovery from surgery, and especially to Shayla who has so brilliantly and selflessly guided the music and much of the administration during these months. I am hoping that in the coming weeks I will be able to actually be back in person again, especially by Christmas Eve.



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 Early Americans began to create its own repertoire of music as varied and diverse 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.



Sacred Symbols

If you have been with us for worship the past two Sundays, you have seen the beautiful new covering on the Communion Table. This lovely blue cloth features glittering white *Chrismons*, ancient symbols for Christ. The covering was designed by Linda Abe, who led the participants of the fall retreat at Camp Bedford in its construction.

You may have also noticed the three purple candles on our Advent wreath have been replaced by lovely new blue candles. “Why is the sanctuary decorated in blue and not purple as it has been in Advents past?” you may ask. Historically, purple has been the dominant liturgical color for Advent. However, purple is also the color for the season of Lent and is associated with penitence and solemnity. Some Protestant churches have desired to make a distinction between this penitential mood and the excited anticipation of Advent. The color blue, which symbolizes hope, had some historical use in the early church in particular geographic regions during the Advent season. Drawing upon that ancient tradition, a growing number of churches today are decking their sanctuaries in blue to emphasize the hopeful anticipation of Advent.



Oh, and if you're wondering about that pink candle, there is indeed a reason for it too! The third Sunday of advent, Gaudete Sunday, reminds us of the joy Christ brings into the world; joy is symbolized by the color pink. This Sunday, we will light the rose-colored candle as we prepare to receive Christ's joy.





MCUM Shopping on Dec. 11

Every year our FCC families are connected with a low-income family that is served by MCUM to help make their Christmas a little more joyful. We get a list of favorite things and gift wishes from MCUM and then we purchase and wrap 3-5 gifts for each family member. FCC families will gather after church this Sunday to wrap gifts.

Caroling and Pizza on Dec. 18

EVERYONE is welcome to come sing (we do not care how off key you are)! We will bring Christmas cheer to FCC members who are not physically able to come regularly to worship and fellowship events. Afterwards, we'll gather at Café Pizzaria for dinner. Please RSVP to Sarah Lynne so she can make plans for the group.

As Buddy the Elf says "The best way to spread Christmas cheer singing loud for all to hear!" Let's max out the Christmas Spirit meter on Sunday Dec 18th 4:00-6:00pm (6:00pm at Café Pizzaria).



FCC Staff Christmas Gift

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!

Thank you.





In Our Prayers...

Please offer prayers for Joe Parrot, a long-time member who has recently received an untreatable cancer diagnosis. Cards and notes may be mailed to the home of his daughter, Bev Prior at 3940 Albert Lane, Bargersville, Indiana, 46106.

Calling All Seekers!

Do you have a youth in your family who is in the sixth grade or older and who may be curious what it means to be baptized and become a member of the church? Pastor Kyrmen will be offering a Seekers class for all youth who are ready to contemplate the meaning of the baptism commitment. Classes will begin in February with baptism in the spring for those who decide they are ready to make their confession of faith. Please contact Pastor Kyrmen and let her know of your youth's interest. All interested families will be invited to offer input about developing a schedule for class meetings.

Attendance Cards

Those little yellow cards you find in your bulletin each week can yield a whole lot of information for FCC's staff and volunteers - but only if you fill them out! Your attendance card helps us to keep an accurate count of how many are showing up for worship, which helps us print the right number of bulletins, prep communion appropriately, and turn in accurate numbers to the Region. Knowing when a regular attender goes missing helps us to know if you need someone to check in to offer some support. And don't forget that the attendance cards also give you an opportunity to share prayer concerns you would like the pastor or the prayer team to know about. That little yellow card does a lot! Please fill one out EVERY Sunday that you are present and drop it in the offering plate as it passes by!

Calling All Worship Leaders!

You may have noticed an extra person on the chancel the past couple of weeks. A new role, worship leader, has been added to our weekly service. The worship leader's responsibilities are to lead the call to worship and read the first scripture lesson. The worship leader can be anyone of any age! You don't need to be a member of the church; you can be someone who has only worshiped with us a few times or someone who has been here for decades! If you would like to serve in this role, know that you are welcome! You can try it out just once and see how it goes or sign up to serve in rotation with others. If you would like to serve as a worship leader, please contact worship commission chair, Linda Abe at abels@iu.edu or call the church office.

Outreach Commission

Our Outreach Commission met again this week to create a two month plan for how to respond to unhoused people who have been coming before church for shelter and food. The commission decide to move forward with providing a continental breakfast in the Great Hall from 8-9:30am. Cereal, hardboiled eggs, milk, tangerines, instant oatmeal and toast w/ butter, PB & jelly will be provided by the church. At 9:30 the breakfast will close and visitors will be encouraged to attend worship if they would like. We also encourage congregants to join us and get to know our visitors.

Exodus Refugee



It has almost been three months since we first welcomed our family at the airport. Our team met last week to talk about all that we can celebrate together, all of the challenges, and how we want to continue to connect with our family in the future.

Three months is the end of our formal volunteer commitment with Exodus Refugee, but it isn't the end of our relationship with this family. In fact, members of the family have attended our church and expressed a desire to continue to come to worship! Since they are interested in being congregants, those of you who have not signed up as an Exodus volunteer will have more opportunities to connect with the family personally. Public transportation isn't available on Sundays, so one ongoing need will be in providing rides for them to come to worship. If you live on the south side of Bloomington and think you might be able to give rides for our family, please email Sarah Lynne. There are five adults in the family, but even if you could drive 2 or 3 adults, please let us know.

There are two more areas where you might be able to help. They need information on any jobs for people with limited English. If you have noticed places that are hiring, please let Sarah Lynne know. Even better if you can send her the link to an application!

The other area we would like help with is giving our family a very Merry Christmas in their new home! Would you be willing to bring them some meals during the holidays? We would love to introduce the family to some new foods and this would be a very meaningful gift for them. You can sign up for the meal train with this link: <https://www.mealtrain.com/trains/ynmw61> Please contact Judith Olmsted if you need more information. Or would you like to help the family celebrate with a beautiful tree? We are collecting ornaments for their Christmas tree. Please purchase a special ornament and drop it off at church. We are not looking for big packs of ornaments, we can purchase that if we need more. We would love to collect nicer ornaments specially selected by members of our congregation. We will be collecting them until Dec 18th.

And now, we'd like to lift up some of our team's celebrations! We could not have done this without the entire congregation's support, so these are *your celebrations too!*

Celebrations from the past 3 months:

- ★ **Chaz Sinn** saved the day after the family's apartment application was denied! We worked together to get them into their rental very quickly. It is a beautiful little condo.
- ★ They learned to ride the bus *and we learned to use the bus! (We just wish it ran on Sundays too)*
- ★ You can not imagine what a circus getting them set up with bank accounts was, but **Cindy, Betsy, and Eve** did it! This event included a French speaking child who just *happened to be at the bank at the same time and helped communicate with one of the family members.*
- ★ **Judith** connected the family with new member **Beudelaine** who used her skills to gather info for resumes!
- ★ **Jan** magically connected us with a Kinyarwanda speaker who has been an amazing, ongoing help as a translator!

There are so many beautiful little miracles. Thank you for being a part of this and we hope to witness more little miracles as we continue to connect with this family in the future.

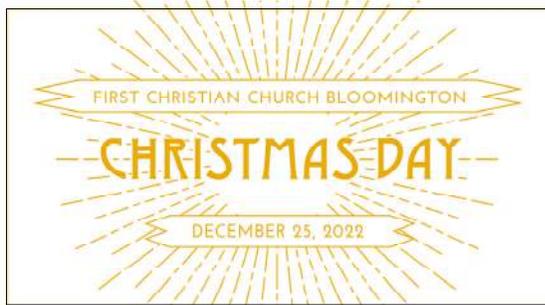
Christmas Special Day Offering - December 11 and 18

Our 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
- Counsel and pray with those who are troubled of spirit
- Lead the Church to address racism
- Inspire leaders to experiment and create
- Witness to the power of God to make things new



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



**Join us for Worship
Christmas Day at 10:00 am**

Join us for worship on Christmas morning at 10:00am as we gather for a service of storytelling, caroling and communion. Celebrate the birth of baby Jesus with your FCC family with an informal, cozy service.

**Join Us for Coffee Fellowship Time
and Sign-Up to Help Provide Hospitality**

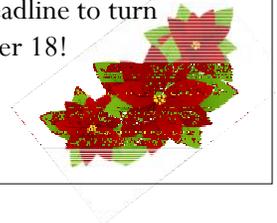
Whether you're a member or a guest, join us in the Chapel Gathering Space after worship for coffee and fellowship. We are grateful to Jean Thompson, Ashante Thomas, and members of the Emmaus Interpreters class for generously hosting various fellowship hours in December.

Hospitality volunteers are needed in 2023! Will you volunteer to bring food and welcome everyone who gathers in the Chapel Gathering Space before and after each week's worship? Sign up online at <https://signup.com/go/NgdEMmu> or reach out to Kate Kroll, marymclainkroll@gmail.com.



**Time to Order Your
Poinsettias!**

Please find inside this newsletter the order form for Poinsettia plants and to make a donation to the Permanent Fund in memory or honor of a loved one. Send your check with your order form. The deadline to turn in your order is December 18!





JANUARY BIRTHDAYS



01/03	Jim	Berkey	1600 N. Willis Drive, #25	Bloomington IN	47404
01/07	Eric	Griffin	3830 Woodhaven Drive	Bloomington IN	47403
01/08	Audrey	Fletcher	6200 W. Maple Grove Rd.	Ellettsville IN	47429
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
01/16	Max	Dorelien	3441 N. Stoney Crest Rd.	Bloomington IN	47404
01/22	Kyrmen	Rea	1212 W. Acacia Ct.	Bloomington IN	47404
01/24	Holly	Biddle	9456 N. Ingram Rd.	Solsberry IN	47459
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!

Stages Bloomington and The Jewish Theater of Bloomington Present “13”

During the past few months, FCC has enjoyed the sounds of singing, dancing, and youthful energy in our building three evenings per week plus Saturdays. Stages Bloomington, a local youth community theater, and youth from the Jewish Theater of Bloomington have been rehearsing for their upcoming musical production “13”, which opens this Thursday night!

If you'd like to support these hard-working kids and see a great show, head over to the Waldron Arts Center this weekend. Showtimes are Thursday (12/8) at 7 pm, Saturday (12/10) at 2:00 pm and 7:00 pm, and Sunday at 2:00 pm. A brief synopsis of the show and access to tickets may be found here: <https://www.stagesbloomington.org/>



FCC Holiday Office Hours



The FCC Administrative Offices will be “closed” between Christmas Eve and the New Year’s Day holiday, December 23-January 2. Staff will come in to the office, as needed, to complete necessary business, like creating and printing the worship bulletins and checking mail. If you need to have access to the church building during this time, please contact the office prior to Dec. 22 to make arrangements. If you have a pastoral care emergency, please contact Pastor Kyrmen directly at 317-408-9782 or pastorkyrmen@gmail.com.

Wishing you a Very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

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The Christian Visitor

Vol. 64, no. 19

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH BLOOMINGTON
CHRISTMAS EVE
DECEMBER 24, 2022

5:30 pm
Family Service

7:30 pm
Concert of Early American Christmas Music

8:00 pm
Traditional Service

**Scripture Readings
For Sunday Worship**

December 11

Third Sunday of Advent

Be Ready for Joy!

Isaiah 35:1-10

Luke 1:46b-55

December 18

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Be Ready for Love!

Isaiah 7:10-16

Matthew 1:18-25

December 25 -Christmas Day

Service of carols, Storytelling and Communion

John 1:1-14