

The CHRISTIAN



FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH
(Disciples of Christ) *Visitor*

New Timeline Tells a Wonderful Story!

The next time you are at church, please take the time to go into the Chapel Gathering Space to take a look at the impressive timeline on the wall! It offers a beautiful visual reminder of the many ways we have been “living out” the FCC Story since its inception in 2015.

Created by Sharon Robinson with the help of members of the FCC Story Communications team, the timeline is meant to be a work in progress that will expand over the next several years as we continue to grow into the vibrant church that is described in our FCC Story: a church that takes seriously its call to share the inclusive love of Christ through learning, serving, welcoming, and offering spiritual connection.

Copies of the “original” FCC Story (originally called the Future Story) are available by calling the church office. When you take a fresh look at it, you will be amazed by how much of the Story has already become reality, including our XPLORE program, our Jazz Vespers, our small group ministries (including arts outreach), and a stronger and visible downtown presence. You will also see that there still much to come over the next couple of years.

Thanks to our intensive congregation-wide work with Hope Partnership of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), along with the hard work of many, many people over the past five years and counting, the FCC Story will continue to serve as a Spirit-driven and faith-infused roadmap that will help us navigate the future God has in store for us.

As we enter a new decade, we can celebrate the steps we have taken in the previous decade to become a church that witnesses to the love of Christ in life-giving ways. By the grace of God, 2020 will be another exciting and fruitful year!

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Pastor's Pen

Acts of Hope

This week's headlines have left me feeling raw and unsettled: earthquakes in Puerto Rico, fires in Australia, more violence in the Middle East, deep political divisions on the home front. I pray for the world. I invite you to the same. Each day.

Prayer, you see, is an act of hope, and acts of hope do not deny the brokenness of this world. Instead, they declare that the world's brokenness neither defines us nor defeats us.

The church, at its best, provides space, inspiration, and permission for acts of hope to reshape the ways we see and receive each other and the world. And when we engage the world with acts of hope, we see that it is filled with potential and possibility. As people of faith, one of our high callings is to live and act in hope. It is a hope that can sing the song of Mary: "Nothing will be impossible with God" (Luke 1:37). It is a hope that can proclaim with the Apostle Paul: "I can do all things through him who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). It is a hope that gives us the power to shine that light into the darkness, following the One who said: "You are the light of the world... Let your light shine!" (Matthew 5:14-15).

Speaking of light, I share with you two non-scriptural quotes about light that have inspired hope in me over the years. I hope they do the same for you!

*Do not be dismayed by the brokenness of the world.
All things break. And all things can be mended.
Not with time, as they say, but with intention.
So go. Love intentionally, extravagantly unconditionally.
The broken world waits in darkness for the light that is you. -- L. R. Knost*

*Ring the bells that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack, a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in
That's how the light gets in
That's how the light gets in --Leonard Cohen*

Yes, as we live and act in hope, we become those through whom the light of Christ shines into the world. We become witnesses to a perfect Love that receives each one as a beautiful, beloved, child of God. I can't think of a better way to be in this world. Can you?

See you Sunday!

Helen Hemphing
Pastor Helen

Faith Formation and Family Ministries at FCC

Gratitude for Those Who Create Opportunities for Spiritual Growth and Nourishment

The programs of FCC's Faith Formation and Family Ministry have been cultivated over many years with many hands. Those who have lead this important ministry over the years have each created new traditions that will be treasured for many years to come. We are so fortunate to have had such caring and talented people fill this role at FCC.

This Sunday (January 12) we will lift up a treasure in our church family. Connie Myers has nurtured the faith formation and family ministry at FCC since long before she became the director six years ago. Connie has built our *Childrens Worship and Wonder* program, planned meaningful retreats with opportunities for fellowship as well as spiritual growth, and she's supported members of the FCC family as they have developed programs for FCC. There are too many contributions to list, and we are grateful for each. Join us for worship this Sunday, January 12, as we celebrate and thank Connie.

During worship on January 19 we will "officially" welcome Sarah Gershon as Director of Faith Formation and Family Ministries. Sarah is a Master of Divinity student at Christian Theological Seminary with a church background that spans evangelical as well as mainline protestant traditions. This winter and spring, Sarah will be "learning the ropes" as she steps in to her new position. Then, starting in the summer, she will begin her CTS field work with us for the 2020-2021 academic year.

Welcome New Members!

We are pleased to welcome Carie and Jeff Johann, who became "official" members of FCC on December 22. The entire Johann family has been very active at FCC for a number of years, particularly with our ministries that serve those who are experiencing homelessness or poverty. Both Carie and Jeff work at Crane. Their daughters Lauren and Claire active with our youth group. Carie's daughter Amy is often in worship with her family. Welcome!

We also welcome Crystal Blankenship, who joined the FCC family on January 5 when she came forward to reaffirm her faith in Jesus as the Christ and commit herself to serving Christ through the ministries of this congregation. Crystal, who is from Bloomington, discovered FCC's warm welcome when she attended worship at the invitation of a friend. She says, "I love God and I love First Christian Church!" And we say, "Welcome, Crystal!"



Please Pray For...

The family of Brian Jackson as they grieve the loss of Brian's mother, Diane, who passed away peacefully on December 19 due to unresolved internal injuries related to a car accident. As you may know, Brian's brother-in-law (Ken) also passed away due injuries sustained in the same accident. Cards and notes of care and support may be sent to the Jackson family (Brian, Melissa, David, Maya, Ben) at 3693 S. Sowder Square, Bloomington, 47401.

Also pray for Jerry Spore as he recovers from the placement of a pacemaker. Cards may be sent to him at 901 S. Hastings Dr., Bloomington, 47401.

Jean Thompson would like to thank her FCC family for all of the prayers, well wishes, notes, visits, and meals during her recovery from spinal stenosis surgery. Jean is home and recovering well. She is returning to some of her "normal" activities including volunteering at FCC.

**“Christian Civic Engagement: A Dialogue of Hope”
A Special Sunday Morning Forum**

With

Guest Speaker Rev. Bruce Ervin

Sponsored by Voices of Faith, a Disciples Women’s Group

Sunday, January 26, 9:00 am and 11:15 am (two identical sessions)

By many measures, this is an alarming time in America. Deep political divisions threaten to tear us apart. Conflicting perspectives about civic issues endanger the kind of conversation and exchange that are so critical to democracy.

The Church—especially in times like these—has a significant responsibility to help its people and its country move toward reconciliation.

Historians tell us that division and partisanship are not new in America. Indeed, the father of the U.S. Constitution, President James Madison, reminds us that division occurs when partisans of a few narrow and conflicting political ideologies are able to maintain power because too many citizens are silent. Madison, also a student of theology, believed that unity is more likely when large number of voters from across the political spectrum vote. According to Madison, broad participation encourages broad compromise, and the nation moves forward united.

Voices of Faith is a network of Disciples Women that strives to empower women to engage in dialogue and advocacy. Motivated by a call to help move toward reconciliation and unity, the First Christian Church Voices of Faith (VoF) has committed its energy to the ideal of broad participation. Voter registration is our focus during the coming election year of 2020. We will be trained to assist in voter registration, and we will work to offer citizens within our community the opportunity to register to vote.

Why should Christians be engaged in this particular form of civic activity? The Rev. Bruce Ervin, an ordained minister in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and pastor of Bedford First Christian Church, will help answer that question. He will lead a conversation about the Biblical call to civic engagement and the historical rationale that demands response from citizens—especially when times are divided and threatening.

Depending on your schedule, you may choose to attend the either 9’00 am session or the 11:15 am session. The sessions will be identical.

**For the latest newsletter, upcoming church events, or to give a financial gift online,
visit our website: www.fccbloomington.org
or find us on facebook at facebook.com/fccbloomington**

Deeper Bible Study: A Five Week Study of Passages from John's Gospel

Back by popular demand, this five week Bible Study course will to help you “go deep” as you engage scripture with your mind, your heart, and each other. Deeper Bible Study, which was offered as a pilot course last fall, proved to be such a positive experience for participants that we will be offering it again on five consecutive Wednesday evenings, 6:15-7:15 pm on Jan 22, 29, Feb 5, 12, 19.

Facilitated by Pastor Helen and Debbie White, participants will reflect on the upcoming narrative lectionary passage taken from John’s Gospel. Designed for beginning through advanced students of the Bible, all you will need is a good Study Bible, a journal or notebook, your open mind, your ability to listen well, and your willingness to share your own thoughts in a very supportive learning environment.

There are 10 spots available on first come first serve basis. You may register by emailing Pastor Helen, by calling the church office, or by signing up at the reception desk.

2019 MCUM Food and Supply Drive Results

Each year we set a goal as a congregation of donating 2,000 pounds to the Food Pantry and Cleaning Closet at Monroe County United Ministries (MCUM). Last year, MCUM provided nearly 32,500 meals to those experiencing a financial crisis and over \$19,500 to low-income residents on the verge of homelessness.

FCC collects donated items throughout the year with special drives during Lent and Advent. Our recent Advent drive brought in 324 pounds of donated items for 2019 and overall in 2019 we surpassed our goal by donating 2,116 pounds of donated items to MCUM. Let’s challenge ourselves in 2020 to do even better. Consider putting an extra canned good or cleaning product into your grocery cart each week and bring those extra items with you to worship at FCC on Sunday. See you in church!

What’s Up with FCC’s Youth Group?

Ashlyn Reynolds, Youth Director

FCC’s Youth Group is looking forward to an overnight lock-in later this month. While this will be a fun event, the youth group will also be engaging in conversations about justice work.

FCC College Ministry Intern Haley Norris and our XPLOR resident Kristen Valentine will join Youth Director Ashlyn Reynolds in leading the group through conversations around the civil rights movement, current issues, and anti-oppression terms and issues.

If you are a student in grades 6-12 and are interested in attending this event or just want more information, please contact Ashlyn Reynolds.

Summer Camp Registration Begins!

It’s strange to think about registering for summer camp when it’s cold outside, but it is time to sign up! Camp registration begins **January 6th**. The early bird deadline is **May 15th**. Camp dates are posted in the following link:

<http://indianadisciples.org/commissions/commission-on-faith-formation/#camp>

Church camp is an incredible experience for children and youth where they can grow in their faith and sense of community. There are scholarships available! Please contact Pastor Helen for more information on camp scholarships.



Caregivers Create! January 2020

An Art and Craft Class for Health Caregivers No Experience Necessary

1:30-4:00 p.m. on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month

JANUARY 14, TUESDAY – Brusho!

Carol Rhodes brings us the fun of creating with Brusho watercolor crystals! You'll be amazed as the crystals burst into bloom in water. Learn how to use them to create backgrounds or just add pizzazz to your paintings.

Carol is a creative, versatile artist who teaches watercolor classes at the John Waldron Arts Center and is a founding member of the Bloomington Watercolor Society.

JANUARY 28, TUESDAY – Paper Irises

It's only January, but we'll be thinking SPRING when we use crepe paper to create beautiful irises!



Caregivers Create is a **FREE** visual arts program for health caregivers, both personal and professional. It is designed to provide a bit of respite from the day-to-day tasks of caregiving, and to provide inspiration and relaxation for the health caregiver through an artistic adventure!

Each session focuses on an art project led by an experienced artist or crafter, many of whom are professionals. Projects include art journaling, watercolor painting, pressed flower bookmarks, origami, greeting cards, and other creative exercises. All supplies are provided, light refreshments served, and there's time for informal socializing with other caregivers.

Reserve your place now!

It's free, but reservations are required. Currently, reservations are limited to 10 people.

To reserve your spot, or for more information, email Jeanne Dutton at CaregiversCreate@gmail.com, or call First Christian Church, 812-332-4459.

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!



**Pastor Helen Hosts a
Euchre Table at Friday
Game Night at FCC!**

Join us for another fun-filled
Game Night at FCC this **Friday
January 10th at 7:00 pm.**

We'll have plenty of games and snacks. You are welcome to bring your own as well. Among the game choices this month, Adrian will host a role playing game and Pastor Helen will be hosting a Euchre Table! The fun is open to all, including young'uns, friends and neighbors!

Hope to see you there!

Thank You... to everyone who helped prepare FCC for Advent during the Hanging of the Greens in November. The decorations throughout the church helped to make this year's Advent Season bright. Thank you also to those who helped take down the decorations following Christmas on January 5. Many hands make light work, and your help is greatly appreciated.



From all the staff at First Christian Church, *thank you* for your generous contributions to the staff Christmas gifts. Your love and support is overwhelming and much appreciated. Thank you for supporting us and giving us this wonderful opportunity to serve you!

UPCOMING EVENTS...

Friday, January 10

7:00 pm FCC Game Night

Sunday, January 12

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

Tuesday, January 14

11:45 am Voices of Faith

1:30 pm Caregivers Create!

5:30 Listening to God meditation

Wednesday, January 15

7:00 pm Roger L. Heimer Book Group

Thursday, January 16

6:15 pm Sanctuary Choir rehearsal

January 17-19

XPLOR Gathering

Sunday, January 19

8:30 am Mediation Group

9:00 am Learning Session I

10:00 am Worship

11:15 am Learning Session II

12:00 pm FCC Board meeting

4:00 pm Youth Bible Study

5:00 pm Bloomington Bible Study

Monday, January 20

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

FCC office closed

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Coffee Fellowship Treat Schedule

January 12:
Campbellite Class

January 19:
Book Bunch and Roger Heimer
Book Group

January 26:
Emmaus Interpreters Class

**Scripture Readings
For Sunday Worship**

January 12
John 1:35-51; Psalm 66:1-5

January 19
John 2:1-1; Psalm 104:14-16

January 26
John 2:13-25; Psalm 127:1-2