

The CHRISTIAN

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

The FCC Story Continues to Unfold *XPLOR Leadership Team Commissioned*

In early 2016 a group from FCC gathered in collaboration with the Hope Partnership to begin a process of building a roadmap for our future. This process involved assessments of our building, two retreats, community-wide interviews, and congregational listening sessions. More than 100 people participated. After more than a year, FCC's *Future Story* was presented in 2017. It painted a bold 5-year vision for ministry at FCC.

Out of that *Future Story* came our Jazz Vespers service that provides an informal, contemplative time to reflect where ALL are welcome. We have hired an architect to help us consider how we might better use our building to support the on-going and new ministries at FCC. Those recommendations will be shared with the congregation soon. New small groups are getting attention here at FCC and beyond our doors. Caregivers Create was recently featured in the Herald Times. This group gives caregivers the opportunity to have a creative break through projects lead by local artists.

We have joined with the NBA XPLOR program to host young adults interested in pursuing a career in community service. Through XPLOR, young adults are partnered with Disciples congregations, regional and general ministries, and wider communities—positively engaging neighborhoods, the congregations, and the young adults. FCC's XPLOR Leadership Team was commissioned on January 6 and will prepare to welcome this group in 2019-2020.

Our *Future Story* has become our *FCC Story*. It is an exciting time as all of our thoughtful planning is now coming to life through new ministries and programs here at FCC. If you are not familiar with the *FCC Story* and would like more information on what that means for the life of FCC and its members, you can find a copy of the original "FCC Future Story" at our reception desk. Soon, we will post it online as well.

In This Issue...

- Page 3** Jazz Vespers continues with The Elena Escudero Quartet
- Page 4** FCC welcomes new members and celebrates with child dedications
- Page 6** Caregivers Create featured in the Herald Times, January class info

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Pastor's Pen

Engaged in the FCC Story

In doing some preliminary “number crunching” in preparation for a report that will be submitted to the 2018 Yearbook and Directory of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), I’m noticing some hopeful signs here at FCC.

- First, we received 22 new members in 2018. This compares to 7 in 2017 and 7 in 2016.
- Second, our average worship attendance was 142, compared to 131 in 2017 and 130 in 2016.
- Third, at least 60% of the 45-60 people who attend First Friday Jazz Vespers are not members of FCC.
- Fourth, small group participation is significantly higher in 2018 over the previous years. (Numbers are not yet finalized.)

While pastors are often told to not read too much into numbers, I can’t help but see a connection between these numbers and the beautiful ways that our FCC Story (formerly known as the Future Story) has been unfolding over the past several years. Indeed, the FCC Story is doing what it was intended to do: keep us focused on our mission to witness to the inclusive love of Christ through serving, welcoming, learning, and offering avenues for spiritual connection. And we are beginning to bear fruit!

While we don’t yet have enough data to tell us whether or not these numbers will continue to go up, we can take heart. Indeed, in a day when both mainline and evangelical churches are seeing an overall decline in weekly worship attendance, FCC bucked this trend in 2018.

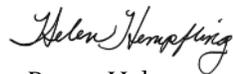
Perhaps one of the reasons we bucked this trend is that more of us are becoming more deeply *engaged* in the life of the church. Carey Nieuwhof, one of my favorite bloggers on church life says,

this: “In the future, church attendance won’t drive engagement; engagement will drive attendance. If you want your church to grow, stop trying to attract people. Start trying to engage people. In the future church, only the engaged will attend because only the engaged will remain.”

I wonder, what is it that keeps you engaged at FCC? I really want to know because it might make a difference in how we “do church” in the coming years! Please email me your responses!

In the meantime, let’s support and challenge one another to make 2019 one of the most engaging years ever for this congregation! Trust me, there will be many opportunities to engage with one another AND with God in conversation and prayer and fellowship and learning and serving. The more we engage with each other and with God, the more we will open ourselves up to experiencing life as it was meant to be lived!

See you Sunday!



Pastor Helen

PS. If you want to read (or re-read) the original Future Story (now known as the FCC Story), we will have hard copies available at the church. Very soon, we will be posting it to our website too.



A New Look for the First Friday Jazz Vespers

Last First Friday Vespers we said farewell to our bassist and JV Director Stefan Lenthe who has been with us for 17 Jazz Vespers services (consistently for every one from the beginning of them!). As you probably know, Stefan is moving to New Orleans to further his professional career in the heart of the jazz capital of the South!

We will likely see him visit from time to time, since his parents live in Bloomington where his father is a trombone professor on the IU Jacobs School of Music faculty.

We will be in good hands going forward, since our wonderful vocalist Elena Escudero has agreed to become the First Friday Jazz Vespers Director – so she will continue to be our singer along with returning pianist June Lee and drummer Sam Bryson. The name of our new bassist will be released soon – and the ensemble will now be known as The Elena Escudero Quartet. Please mark your calendars for the “debut” of this quartet at our next Jazz Vespers service on **February 1 at 6:30 pm**. The theme for February’s service will be “Compassion”.

Join A Small Group at FCC, There’s Something For Everyone!

Are you looking for an new way to learn, share, and grow in your faith? FCC’s small groups offer a variety of opportunities for growth. Groups meet weekly and monthly, on Sundays as well as during the week. We have traditional Bible study groups before and after worship on Sundays for adults while FCC’s children participate in *Worship and Wonder* during worship and in *FaithSteps* at 11:15 am. Teens (grade 6-12) meet following worship for to discuss scripture as well as other topics of importance to this generation.

Mediation groups (no experience necessary) meet on Tuesday evenings at 5:30 pm and on Sunday morning at 8:30 am. Our Women’s Arts & Crafts group meets monthly and provides a place for fun and fellowship while creating new crafts as a group and as individuals, and our Disciples Women Group *Voices of Faith* meets monthly to discuss topics of social justice and collaborate on solutions to complex issues. Maybe you’d rather discuss a good book? Consider joining our Men’s Book Group or the Women’s Book Bunch. Both meet monthly. We will include more information on our groups in upcoming newsletters. Meanwhile, give one a try or contact Connie Myers for more details on small groups here at FCC.

FCC Welcomes New Members and a Returning Member and Celebrates Families with the Dedication of Children

On December 16, FCC welcomed new members Sarah Lawson, Edwin Manuel and Jessica Leming. **Edwin** and **Jessica** will be married in the FCC Sanctuary in less than a month! Edwin was raised in Columbus, Indiana where he enjoyed playing sports, particularly soccer. He comes from a large and loving family whose roots are in Mexico and was raised in the Catholic Church. Edwin works here in Bloomington as a leasing agent for a real estate management company. Jessica hails from Bedford Indiana, where she enjoyed playing violin and singing with her family. She was raised in a Pentecostal tradition. Jessica is a registered nurse who works in Progressive Care at IU Health Bloomington Hospital. They recently bought a house and are happy to call Bloomington their home! They love our church because we are a good “fit” for them as a couple.

Sarah Lawson is a transplant from Western New York who arrived in Bloomington in the summer of 2016. She's currently in the third year of work toward a dual Ph.D. in Comparative Literature and Folklore, focusing on European fairy tales in French, German, and Russian and their modern adaptations. When not studying or teaching, she writes fantasy novels, snuggles with her cats, and sings in our church choir. She loves our church because of our inclusiveness and because she gets to sing from a real hymnal!

This past Sunday, January 6th was an exciting day as we welcomed new members, a returning member and also dedicated children and their families during worship.

We welcomed **Casey Houchins** and her children **Sparrow and Sawyer**. Casey grew up in southern Indiana in the Baptist church. She earned her bachelor's degree at Oakland City University and is currently a special education aide at Highland Park Elementary. We are thrilled that she will be sharing her love of teaching with us soon as a Sunday School teacher for our children here at FCC.

We welcomed **Kristina Temple Hill** back to FCC. Kristina was active in our youth group some years ago before moving away and starting a family. We are thrilled to have Kristina back in Bloomington and back at FCC.

We also celebrated families with a service of dedication during worship on January 6. It is a very special occasion to commit to support and care for the spiritual wellbeing of a child. Gabby Johnson, member and FCC nursery coordinator, brought her son **Theo Johnson** to be dedicated, and Kristina Temple Hill, who re-joined FCC, brought her children **Zoe and Gavin Hill** to be dedicated.

Please welcome these members to FCC and also extend your congratulations to these families who have brought their children to be dedicated.

Support FCC Youth and the Good Neighbor Community ♥ MLK Day Service Project

Your donations of the following supplies will enable families from our Good Neighbor congregations to pack blessing bags for neighbors they meet on the street. No need to buy everything on the list; all donations are welcome. Collection boxes will be available in the Chapel Gathering Space and the Narthex. Join your FCC friends (including our Youth) on MLK Day at Beth Shalom from 9:00 am - 11:00 am for this Good Neighbor Community project. Unused supplies will be given to Shalom Center.

Donation List (travel sizes are perfect)

***Deodorant (most needed)**

***Foot powder (most needed)**

***Razors (most needed)**

Toothbrushes

Toothpaste

Shaving cream

Heavy socks

Granola bars

♥ The Good Neighbor Community is a network of five Bloomington congregations (Beth Shalom, FCC, First Presbyterian, Trinity Episcopal, & Unitarian Universalist Church) who first came together for the “Building a Neighborhood Together” event held at FCC in the summer of 2018. We so enjoyed our work together, we carried on our “Good Neighbor” moniker and remained in communication, looking for ways to continue our ministry together.

FCC Youth Update

By Ashlyn Reynolds

The youth have been very busy this past month through out the life of the church. From decorating to wrapping gifts to lighting the advent candles and so much more. We had a fun craft night making ornaments and Christmas cards. As we enter this season of Epiphany, we will take time to reflect on how we have grown over the last year and set goals to grow into the new year. There will be a lock-in on January 20th and then activities with the Good Neighbor Community on Martin Luther King Jr. Day on the 21st.



Caregivers Create!

An Art Adventure for Health Caregivers

No Experience Necessary

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

Are you a caregiver? Do you need a little “Me” time? *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 at CaregiversCreate@gmail.com, or call First Christian Church, 812-332-4459.

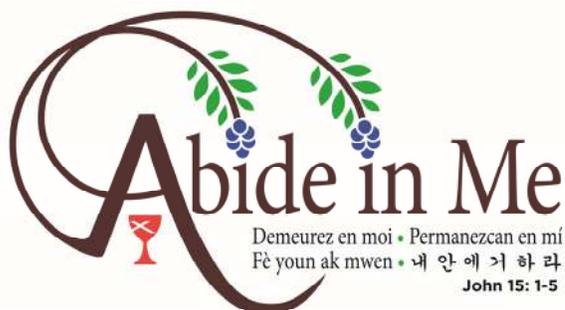
January Project

In response to a special request, January will be devoted to creating journals, of various sizes, with a focus on a Valentine’s Day theme! These small books can be made into memory books with photos and embellishments, greeting cards, special gifts, or as a prayer, poetry, or inspirational diary...a unique way to say, “I love you!” We will meet on January 8 and 22.

Space is limited. Make your reservation right away!

Thank you Jean!

Thank you Jeanne Dutton, for creating a place for caregivers to come for a creative break from the incredible task of caregiving. Caregivers Create is a gift to the community. The wonderful article in January 6th Herald Times is much deserved recognition of the care and love that you pour into this program.



**2019 General Assembly
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
July 20-24
Des Moines, IA**

Although summer seems far away now, it will be here before you know it. When making summer plans, we hope you'll consider joining FCC friends at General Assembly in Des Moines the week of July 20-24. This year's assembly promises to provide inspiring opportunities for education and worship. General Assembly always presents wonderful and engaging opportunities for education, sharing ideas with others, and participating in meaningful and resource-building discussion. You will hear powerful preaching, uplifting music, and sharing the Lord's Supper - all in one room as thousands of Disciples worship God together! We look forward to exploring our theme "Abide in Me" from the Gospel of John.

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing." – John 15:1-5

You can find more information on the programs, worship, and education opportunities at this year's General Assembly at www.disciples.org. Just click on the "General Assembly" tab. Registration is already open, and some of our members are already planning to go. Will you join us?

For the latest newsletter, upcoming church events, or to give a financial gift online, visit our website: www.fccbloomington.org



Downtown Parking Update

FCC's Chip Welch and Scott Cripe continue to work on long-term parking solutions for FCC. Below is an update from the City of Bloomington on new parking regulations for the downtown area.

New parking regulations for downtown Bloomington starting January 1, 2019

On-street metered parking will be enforced from 8 am until 9 pm. Previously, on-street parking was enforced beginning at 9 am.

Hours of Enforcement and Rates Hourly on-street metered parking rates were not increased: The cost to park in a metered space will remain \$1 per hour. **On-street metered parking will be free on Sundays and City Holidays.**

Free Parking Beginning January 1, 2019:

No free parking will be provided to users of municipal lots. However, approximately 250 free, mostly non-time-limited spaces are still available in downtown Bloomington at the following locations:

- Rogers Street from 5th Street to 11th Street (limit of two hours)
- Madison Street from 2nd Street to 3rd Street
- Washington Street from 2nd Street to 3rd Street
- Lincoln Street from 3rd Street to East Smith
- Grant Street from 2nd Street to East Smith
- The city employee parking lot at City Hall (after 5pm)

Credit Card and ParkMobile Fees

When using a Visa or Mastercard to pay for parking, the city assesses a \$0.30 credit card convenience fee. ParkMobile may be used to pay for parking at fees ranging from \$0.50 per transaction down to \$0.30 with a \$0.99 monthly subscription fee.

Municipal Garages

The City maintains three municipal garages for monthly permit-parking and transient parking located at Fourth Street, Seventh Street and Morton Street. **The garage parking rates were not increased: The cost to park in a garage space will remain \$.50 per hour. Garage parking will be free on Sundays and City Holidays.**

Free parking time in garages will be reduced from three hours to one hour. Free parking time in garages will sunset on January 1, 2021.

New hours of enforcement for municipal garages:

All three garages: Monday 8 am continuously until Sunday 4 am.



2018 MCUM Challenge

2018 Goal: 2,000 pounds
Advent Drive: 591 pounds
Total for 2018: 2,420 pounds

FCC Surpassed the 2018 Goal!

Each year FCC sets a goal to collect a certain amount of food and supplies for Monroe County United Ministries (MCUM) Food and Supply Pantry and Child Development Center.

Each Sunday members bring donations to church, and over the year the number of pounds collected rises. Our goal for 2018 was 2,000 pounds, and we surpassed that goal. We collected 2,420 pounds!

We've already started to collect for 2019. Frieda Hoffman took our first trunk full of food and supplies earlier this week. Thank you to all who give so generously in our community.

Thank you for showing how much you care.

FCC Office Hours

Monday - Thursday: 9:00 am - 5:00 pm
Friday: 9:00 am - Noon

The FCC Office will be closed on Monday, January 21 in observance of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday.

UPCOMING EVENTS...

Sunday, January 13

8:30 am Meditation group
9:00 am Learning Session I
10:00 am Worship and Children's
Worship and Wonder
11:15 Learning Session II

Tuesday, January 15

5:30 pm Listening to God meditation

Wednesday, January 16

7:00 pm Men's Book Group

Thursday, January 17

6:15 pm Sanctuary Choir rehearsal

Sunday, January 20

8:30 am Meditation group
9:00 am Learning Session I
10:00 am Worship and Children's
Worship and Wonder
11:15 am Learning Session II
12:15 pm FCC Board Meeting

Monday, January 21

FCC Office Closed for MLK Holiday
9:00 am Youth MLK Project at Beth
Shalom

Tuesday, January 22

1:30 pm Caregivers Create
5:30 pm Listening to God meditation

Thursday, January 24

4:00 pm Women's Book Bunch
6:15 pm Sanctuary Choir rehearsal

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Coffee Fellowship Treat Schedule

January 13:
Emmaus Interpreters Class

January 20:
Grades K-12 and Sharing Table

January 27:
Choir and Handbell Choir

**Scripture Readings
For Sunday Worship**

January 13
Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

January 20
Luke 4:14-30

January 27
Luke 5:1-11