

The CHRISTIAN





FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH
(Disciples of Christ)

Visitor



Leaning Into Lent at FCC

Ash Wednesday Service March 7 at 7:00 pm

We will enter into Lent with a service of penitence and ashes on Wednesday, **March 2 at 7:00 pm**. Our worship theme is *Come and Find the Quiet Center*, inviting us to slow down and consider what is truly meaningful in our lives. Lent invites us to slow down, consider how we want to live, and recognize our connections to God and one another. Join us for worship as we find our quiet center.

Small Group Opportunities for Adults

During the season of Lent we will offer two group opportunities both with a focus on spiritual disciplines that can be incorporated into daily life. Pastor Will invites you to Explore Sacred Rhythms from our breath, to our heartbeat, to the pulse of traffic. This book study group will examine seven key disciplines to weave into your daily life. Jennifer Fettchenhauer invites you to the table, to explore the spiritual discipline of Mindfulness as it relates to Food. We will focus on ALL of God's Creation, how we are all connected and the impact our choices about food have on All of God's Creation.

Lenten Devotional Material

Lenten Devotional Material will be available following worship this Sunday. We will be using the Psalms of Lament as we process all of the change, loss, and pain the last couple of years have brought. We will also be sending the devotional material out via daily email. Those emails will begin on Ash Wednesday. Please call the church office if you do not receive an email and would like to be added to that list.

Join us for this special Journey!

More details on each of our opportunities during Lent are inside this newsletter. Please consider participating in one or all of the opportunities, and invite family and friends to experience Lent at FCC too. We hope you will join us for this special time in the church as we journey to the cross.

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Will Writes
Leaning Into Lent

The season of Lent was not a significant observance when I was growing up. I think there was a sense among us “congregational protestants” that it was a bit too “Catholic”. We would gather for Maundy Thursday and our congregation would join with some other congregations for a Good Friday community service, but our eyes were on Easter. The choirs would begin early to perfect multiple Easter anthems or a cantata, the church would be decorated, and families would make sure everyone had new, or at least clean and pressed, clothes for the celebration.

As I grew older and moved into ministry as a career, I began to recognize the power of the Lenten season which, along with Advent, gives us opportunity to focus on life in the in-between times rather than simply moving from celebration to celebration. We “celebrate” Easter, but we “observe” Lent. It is something we do day by day.

The traditions around Lent focus on sacrifice. We are to “give up” something for the season. This ritual fast can be powerful if it is seen as a way of opening ourselves to something new. Simply giving up chocolate or caffeine may be good for our health, but if we are grumpy all the time and are counting the days until we can bite the ears off that giant chocolate Easter bunny, then we have missed the point. The idea of sacrificing is to open us to filling that space with something meaningful and even using the time or money we have freed up in our sacrifice to find new purpose.

So, you may give up Facebook for Lent and spend the time you normally spent staring at your phone in prayer or meditation. Maybe you will take a walk or visit a neighbor for some face-to-face interaction. Or you sacrifice something you value so that you can share with others. The tradition of giving up meat was to show solidarity with the poor, who could not afford meat. Over the years that morphed into no meat on Fridays (thus the creation of Friday fish fries as fund raisers). Our corporatized factory farming has made meat more accessible, so we are constantly challenged to find meaningful ways of observing a fast.

I invite you to “Lean into Lent” even as we are “Leaning into Lament” in our worship and mediations. See these next few weeks as a cleansing time for your spirit, just as many of us do spring cleaning in our homes. Join in Sunday worship with expectation. Take advantage of the Lenten studies and devotional guide to reshape your days. Give yourself the gift of time each day to rest, reflect, reconnect, and refresh. Then, when we do get to Easter, we will have a better sense of the power of resurrection in our own bodies and spirits and can cry out “He Is Risen” with joy!

Grace and Peace,


Will





Singing Psalms of Lament during Lent

During Lent, our weekly worship will be centered through a responsive psalm of personal lament.

The psalms of lament are songs and poems in which the psalmist cries out to God in times of deep distress and despair. In psalms of lament, the psalmist asks God for intervention to deliver him from suffering, sorrow, great loss, failures, and enemies. These petitions often give way to expressions of trust in God to act in the psalmist's favor, leading to hope and joy.¹

There are more psalms of lament than any other type of psalm. They fall into the broad categories of individual or communal (or sometimes both). Their basic structure includes:

1. Address to God
2. Description of complaint
3. Request for God's help
4. Expression of trust in God¹

Author Jessica Brodie writes: "Lament psalms teach us that it's never wrong to cry out to God. God hears us in our pain and welcomes us close... And at its core, lamentation is an act of faith, for God is the only One who can do something about our pain. When we lament, we acknowledge that God is everything. In our weakness, we call out to our God knowing He is there."²

Perhaps a part of our personal Lenten meditations could include one of the Psalms of Lament as preparation for an upcoming service. Psalms chosen for these Sundays will include Psalm 51 (Ash Wednesday), Psalm 4 (March 6), Psalm 137 (March 13), Psalm 32 (March 20), Psalm 22 (March 27), and Psalm 42 (April 3).

¹Ken Boa, "Psalms of Lament: Individual and Communal", accessed February 2022, <https://kenboa.org/biblical/psalms-lament/>

²Jessica Brodie, "Five Psalms of Lament to Remind Us We Are Not Alone," from Christianity.com, October 2020, <https://www.christianity.com/wiki/bible/psalms-of-lament-to-remind-us-we-are-not-alone.html>.

New members are welcome to join the Sanctuary Choir to participate in First Christian's music for Lent and Easter. Preparations are beginning this week! Rehearsals are Thursdays 6:15-7:30 in the Great Hall. All are welcome. Contact Jan Harrington (harringt@indiana.edu) or one of the current choir members for more information.



The next Third Friday Jazz Vespers will be Friday, March 18 at 6:30 pm. The theme will be "Lament" and will feature jazz musicians Rachel Caswell and Friends.

LENTEN PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE + LENTEN DEVOTIONAL

Thank you to everyone who sent in laments for our Lenten Devotional. That devotional will be available to pick up as a hard copy on Ash Wednesday and Sunday mornings. We will also send a daily electronic version to people on our email list.

Throughout Lent, please continue to send us your prayer concerns, laments, and signs of hope. You can do this through a response button in the daily devotional email, by emailing them to Sarah Lynne and Will Jewsbury, or by sending a letter to the church marked "*Prayers of the People*." We will be using your responses to help us shape the prayers of the people on Sunday mornings during Lent.

EXPLORING SACRED RHYTHMS

From our breathing to our heartbeats to the pulse of city traffic, rhythm fills our lives. Our spiritual lives also have their own rhythms as we experience joy and sadness, wonder and doubt, fear and expectation. As we journey through Lent, I invite you to join in an exploration of our spiritual rhythms. We will be using a resource called *Sacred Rhythms*, written by Ruth Haley Barton. She describes it this way: "*Spiritual disciplines are activities that open us to God's transforming love and the changes that only God can bring about in our lives. Picking up on the monastic tradition of creating a "rule of life" that allows for regular space for the practice of the spiritual disciplines, Sacred Rhythms helps us understand seven key disciplines along with practical ideas for weaving them into everyday life.*"

I will offer this on Sunday mornings starting March 6 from 8:30 to 9:30 am in the Fireside Study (or Great Hall if the group is larger). I will also be offering an identical Zoom gathering at 3 p.m. on Sunday afternoons. Participant books are \$10 (a couple could share). Email me at wjewsbury@gmail.com to indicate your interest in either the morning in-person gathering or the afternoon Zoom offering.

PRACTICING EVERY DAY MINDFULNESS WITH A FOCUS ON FOOD

The making and sharing of food is a very natural expression of our love for one another. On this Lenten journey, we will apply the spiritual practice of mindfulness in our food choices to gain a more complete understanding of where our food comes from and how our food choices impact not only our personal physical and mental health, but also the health of ALL of God's Creation. We can gain a better understanding of how we are all (people, animals, plants, and minerals) interconnected.

In Plum Village, the Zen practice center founded by Thich Nhat Hanh, before meals they say, "*In this food I see clearly the presence of the entire universe supporting my existence.*" Mindful eating means that we bring focus to choosing, preparing, tasting, and eating food.

This journey will "officially" begin on Ash Wednesday, March 2. Everyone's journey will be unique, so take time to reflect on why you are taking this journey. We will do this "together" by sharing information online. I will provide mindfulness activities to try as well as discussion posts that we can all respond to each week. We will have a Google folder to share resources, recipes and tips. If it is safe enough and the weather is good, I am hoping we can conclude this journey in late April with an outdoor Eastertide Feast. Please contact Jennifer Fettchenhauer (jennifer@fccbloomington.org) if you would like to join. I am hopeful that through mindfulness, we will have the opportunity to gain a greater appreciation for the journey of the food that nourishes us, and how our choices impact all of God's creation.

Family Ministry Update

Worship and Wonder begins March 6 - Welcome Haley Norris as a new storyteller!

We are excited to offer Worship and Wonder during Lent. As you all know, this is a special way for children to enter into the Lenten journey in worship that is suited for children's ways of connecting spiritually. Haley Norris has agreed to become a regular storyteller for Worship and Wonder. She has a lot of experience with young children and is excited to connect with your kids. Brett Gershon is also joining the Worship and Wonder team as a new volunteer. Many thanks to Linda Abe, Sarah Knepper, and Cindy Welch for continuing to volunteer as well. We hope to see FCC's young children on March 6! All volunteers *and children must be vaccinated for COVID-19. Masks are also required.*

Seeking Nursery Volunteers: *We currently have the nursery open for parents to take young children, but we do not have the nursery staffed. If you are interested in being a nursery volunteer please let Sarah Lynne know. Right now we do not have any nursery-aged children in worship, but if/when that changes we would like to be prepared to welcome these young children and families!*

WHEELER MISSION PEANUT BUTTER & JELLY TEAM

John Adams has reached out about getting PB&Js made for Wheeler Mission again. A lot of people have been seeking shelter there and they could use snacks. If you are interested in helping John make PB&Js for Wheeler Mission, send Sarah Lynne an email to get connected.

LENTEN MCUM DRIVE

Don't forget Lent begins Wednesday, March 2! The traditional Lenten practices are prayer, fasting, and charity. In Christian thought, charity is a discipline of self-giving love in imitation of God's love for us. This year you are encouraged to *intentionally engage in charity towards MCUM. Please consider how you will contribute to our MCUM resource drive this Lent.*

For example,

- Each week when you make a grocery list remove some treats and add items for MCUM.
- Consider what some of your favorite pantry items are and purchase these items each week for MCUM when you go grocery shopping.
- Google "food stamp benefit chart" and see if you can bring your grocery budget closer to what you would have if you needed food stamps (for example one person gets \$204/mo). Use the extra money to donate or buy supplies for MCUM.

MCUM would also appreciate supplies for their preschool. Consider how you can make space in your time and budget for gifts to MCUM children. Hold MCUM children in prayer as you purchase gifts for them. MCUM is asking for the following:

Books for 1–4-year old's (hard or soft cover)

Classroom supplies (art supplies, paint, paper, crayons)

Building blocks

Dress-up things

Bring your MCUM donations to worship each week. We will also do another drive through "Pack the Pickup" event in April. Stay tuned for that date.



In Our Prayers...

Please keep the Stafford family in your prayers as they grieve the loss of Peggy's mother, Druscilla Lind, who passed away on February 17. Services were held in Brooklyn, Indiana on February 21. Notes of encouragement and cards of condolence can be sent to the Stafford family at 1628 S. Bellemeade Dr., Bloomington, 47401.

FCC REPAIR PROJECTS UPDATE

There are several significant building projects that need to be addressed in the coming months and years. These include foundation and support beam repairs, exterior wall repairs, and supporting a staircase, among others. Terry Daugherty has compiled a short video to help us understand the scope of the work. You can see it at <https://youtu.be/xq36bqdojO8>. You are encouraged to look at it and send your questions or comments to Terry or Pastor Will.

BLOOMINGTON-WIDE READ: *THE SUM OF US*

Join us as we make the way for racial justice work in Bloomington!



Many of us feel discouraged about learning and reading about racism without feeling empowered for action and tangible work that will bring about positive change. Practical advocacy and action will be the focus of Bloomington Multi-faith Alliance's new subgroup: Faith for Racial Equity (F4RE). They are encouraging people of faith to read *Sum of Us*, join a discussion group of the book, and then attend a capstone event on **April 3 from 2-4 pm**. The Capstone will be available on Zoom and will feature local presenters and time for discussion. Stay tuned for more details.

FCC will be hosting a discussion group on Zoom on **Tuesday, March 15 from 7-8:15 pm on Zoom**. This will be co-led by Voices of Faith member Sue Fettchenhauer and Sarah Lynne Gershon.

The Zoom link will be shared the week before. You can also contact Sarah Lynne for the link.

Give to FCC While You Shop!

If you shop online on Amazon or if you shop for groceries at Kroger... you can give to FCC while you shop. Both companies have giving programs. At Kroger you give through your shopping card. Log in to your Kroger card and go to the Community Rewards page to choose First Christian Church. Amazon's program is through Amazon Smiles. Be sure to choose the Bloomington, Indiana First Christian Church. Thank you!



MARCH BIRTHDAYS



03/02	Andy	Stafford	1628 S. Bellemeade Dr.	Bloomington	IN	47401
03/03	Jim	Ray	2001 E. Hillside Dr., Stier Park #4	Bloomington	IN	47401
03/06	Bill	Knapp	3687 E. Tamarron Drive	Bloomington	IN	47408
03/07	Wayne	Johnson II	1900 S. Ramsey Drive	Bloomington	IN	47401
03/07	Bob	Orr	1105 E. Regency Dr.	Bloomington	IN	47401
03/09	Isabella	Coleman	2911 W. Julie's Way, Apt. K	Bloomington	IN	47403
03/09	Jihye	Choi	627 E. Alpine Trail	Bloomington	IN	47401
03/10	Mark	Knowles	1732 W. 7th St. Apt. 1	Red Wing	MN	55066
03/13	Glenn	Read, Jr.	120 N. Lexington Dr.	Bloomington	IN	47408
03/13	Tom	Trippel	1497 E Commander Ct	Bloomington	IN	47401
03/15	Eugenie	Sullivan	7019 Hoover Rd. #213	Indianapolis	IN	46260
03/15	Janet	Rowland	2455 N. Tamarack Trl. Apt. 134	Bloomington	IN	47408
03/20	Amy	Stafford	1309 N. Edison Place Unit B	Kennewick	WA	99336
03/20	Davis	Nam	3519 E. Morningside Dr.	Bloomington	IN	47408
03/21	Casey	Buckley	3821 S. Westmont Ave.	Bloomington	IN	47403
03/21	Charles	Watkins	1144 E. Benson Court	Bloomington	IN	47401
03/22	Carol	Isaacs	2959 Ramble Road West	Bloomington	IN	47408
03/23	Marlene	Vass	1009 S. Waltz Court	Bloomington	IN	47401
03/25	Emily	Werner	4950 White River Drive	Bloomington	IN	47404
03/25	Jason	Nam	3519 E. Morningside Dr.	Bloomington	IN	47408
03/26	Doug	Cull	3144 Eden Dr.	Bloomington	IN	47401
03/27	Nancy	Heimer	C/o Lucy Heimer, 6322 Inner Dr.	Madison	WI	53705
03/28	Charlie	Sinn	2559 S. Smith Road	Bloomington	IN	47401
03/28	Brian	Jackson	3693 S. Sowder Square	Bloomington	IN	47401
03/30	Marti	Black	3802 S. Sare Rd. Apt. 301	Bloomington	IN	47401
03/30	Ashante	Thomas	800 N Smith Rd., Apt. 1Y	Bloomington	IN	47408
03/31	Brandon	Lee	1028 S. Henderson St.	Bloomington	IN	47401

Please let us know if we have left anyone off of the birthday list!



Love is shelter. Love is a listening ear. Love is community. Love is a hopeful future. Love is a path forward. When all else seems lost, love remains.

On Memorial Day 2019, tornadoes swept through the Miami Valley of Ohio, destroying thousands of homes and apartments and leaving a trail of downed trees and power lines in their wake. Many of the tornado-affected families have had to relocate multiple times since the tornadoes due to substandard housing conditions and inflated rent.

Two years after the storm, the Stephens family was still unable to find adequate living quarters. The family of ten was forced to live apart. In addition to dealing with unscrupulous contractors, the family had to haggle with insurance companies as they tried to rebuild their home. The Stephenses, like so many other families, remained in temporary housing and separated, pending the completion of repairs. Yet, all was not lost. The Stephens family connected with the Miami Valley Long-Term Recovery Operations Group, and volunteer teams finished the repairs.

Alongside these traditional home repair projects, and with support from Week of Compassion, the MVLTRG helped launch the Tornado Survivors' Pathways to Homeownership Project to help alleviate the housing crunch in the Dayton area. Volunteers and local nonprofits work together to transition 'nuisance' properties and vacant lots into affordable, single-family housing options for tornado survivors who were displaced from rental housing, stabilizing both families and the community. First-time homeowners receive the support they need to build for their futures.

Sammy Deacon, Brethren Disaster Ministries Long-Term Project Leader, says, "When you reach out to help someone else, the blessing comes back to you as well. An important aspect of the recovery effort is listening to people's stories and knowing you have the opportunity to help them—physically and spiritually."

Your gifts to Week of Compassion bring hope out of despair, find blessings amid devastation, and help transform loss into new life. Your contributions bring tangible relief and change the course of lives.

With support for long-term recovery, including innovative programs like the Pathways to Homeownership project, Week of Compassion helps create opportunities for families to thrive after disasters. Because love remains!

Give to Week of Compassion this Sunday, February 27



First Christian Church of Bloomington, Indiana
is a Circle of Compassion Congregation

Please consider giving to Week of Compassion this Sunday.

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**Join us for
Ash Wednesday
on March 2
at 7:00 pm
(in person and online)**

**Scripture Readings
For Sunday Worship**

February 27
Transfiguration Sunday
Luke 9:28-36
2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2
The Next Degree of Glory

March 6
Luke 4:1-13
Psalm 4

March 13
Psalm 137