

# The CHRISTIAN



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FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH  
*(Disciples of Christ)*

## Visitor

### New Sermon Series to Begin April 26 “The Kingdom of God”

What does God’s reign look like through the eyes of that early Christian who wrote a two part volume that contains the Gospel According to Luke and the Acts of the Apostles? This 5 week sermon series will help us answer this question. While we continue to “shelter in place,” please join us for worship online on Sundays at 10:00 am by going to our website [www.fccbloomington.org](http://www.fccbloomington.org) and scrolling to the video. You can also download a bulletin as you prepare for worship at home.

#### **April 26**

Theme: The Kingdom Defined

Text: Luke 4:14-21

Luke’s Jesus still hasn’t uttered the term “Kingdom of God,” but with this passage – Jesus’ so-called inaugural address – it becomes clear what the Kingdom is about.

#### **May 3 (Youth Sunday)**

Theme: The Power of a Name

Scripture: Acts 16: 16-36

When Paul and Silas call on Jesus’ name, Kingdom-values become clear.

#### **May 10**

Theme: Parables of the Kingdom

Text: Luke 13:18-30

God’s Kingdom doesn’t come in conventional ways, nor does it have the “look” of Kingdoms in this world.

#### **May 17**

Theme: Hospitality in the Kingdom

Text: Luke 14:15-24

Another Kingdom parable tells the story of what happens at a banquet turned on its head. Ultimately, in God’s Kingdom, there is room at the Table for everybody.

#### **May 24 (Sarah Lynne Gershon preaching)**

Theme: Paul’s conversion shows how God’s kingdom can disrupt our lives, challenging us to see the world in a new way.

Text: Acts 9:1-19a

#### **FCC Board Meeting on April 19**

The FCC Board will meet via Zoom video conferencing on April 19 at noon. If you would like to “sit in” on the meeting please let Pastor Helen know so she can send you the link. The meeting is open to all.

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## Pastor's Pen

In these very strange times, I deeply appreciate how some of you have been letting me know that you are thinking about me and Bruce. And I trust that you have been reaching out to others. If you are wishing that someone would reach out to you, let me encourage YOU to be the one who takes the initiative to reach out to them. When you do, you will be heartened by their response! Trust me, you will make their day!

Because a number of you have asked how I am doing, let me give you a brief update. First, Bruce and I are still figuring out how to do our jobs! His office is a spare bedroom and my office is the dining room table! We've had to negotiate our Zoom meetings because we only have one computer that is new enough to be able to handle Zoom software. (Trust me, we'll be spending part of our stimulus checks at Best Buy!) The good news is that we have remained healthy and we still really like being married to each other!

Second, because we record the service on Wednesday, our weekly work rhythms have changed significantly. This is the first time in my 35+ years of ministry that I've EVER completed a sermon and worship liturgy by Wednesday morning, which makes the first half of our week quite full! On the flip side, this is first time in our professional careers that we've been able to relax a bit on Saturday and to sleep in on Sunday morning and still make it to (online) church! (My daughter Allison tells me that this is how "normal people" manage their time!)

Third, last week, my 89 year old parents moved from Lynchburg, VA to Boise, Idaho. Long story short: my older sister Martha (who

lives in Boise but has been in Lynchburg since mid-February to help care for them) invited them to move in with her and her husband. They accepted her offer, knowing that living alone would only become more difficult. Here's the kicker: they traveled across the country in a huge handicap-accessible Winnebago RV that my sister found and purchased in Lynchburg and will sell in Boise!! Their adventures are too many for this article, but they are now safely settled into their own space in Martha's home, which will eventually include a handicapped restroom. I am so thankful for Martha's ingenuity and generosity and for my parents' fearless approach to life!

Finally, I've missed my children and my grandson! Allison calls me daily on Facebook "video chat" so I can see Silas. He is changing so quickly, and I ache to hold him. Her church (where she serves as associate pastor) does livestream worship from their sanctuary, which means that she has to hold Silas on her hip while she leads worship! If you want to see her being "super-mama pastor," I'll send you the link! Sam and Jonathan, along with their significant others are (thankfully) all still employed and working remotely from their homes. We had a nice family chat over Zoom on Easter afternoon. But I cried because I missed them.

And I miss you, too; more than words can express. I pray for you daily. And I give thanks for you and look forward to the day with we can all gather together under one roof as we sing our praises to God!

Blessings!

*Helen Hemphing*  
Pastor Helen



### *In Our Prayers...*

Please hold Andy Stafford in your prayers as he recovers at home from surgery to remove a kidney stone. Cards may be sent to him at 1628 Bellemeade Dr., 47401.

Also hold Donna Richards in your prayers as she grieves the death of her mother, Maxine Thacker (94), who passed away Friday, April 10, in Bloomington. Donna, who has been unable to worship with us in recent years due to her husband's health, deeply appreciates prayers and notes of encouragement. Her address is 1020 E. Heather Dr. 47401.

## **Faith Formation and Family Ministries Update**

*By Sarah Lynne Gershon*

Happy Easter! First Christian Church families will be celebrating Eastertide until Pentecost on May 31. The first week of Easter I sent out the story of Mary Magdalene and the Red Egg, some reflection questions, and egg-themed crafts for Easter decorating. I would appreciate any of our families' pictures of activities, Easter decorations, or reflections on the devotional. I would love to share them for the benefit of all our families.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of Easter we will focus on Jesus as the "Light of the World" and what it means to see the world in the light of Jesus' resurrection! Families were also given candles to make an Easter candle for weekly worship. The families were blessed to receive these candles when FCC youth hid Easter eggs in their front yards. Many thanks to Ashlyn and all the volunteers who made a socially distant FCC Easter egg hunt possible!

I will continue to send out worship resources and a mid-week devotional to FCC families with elementary age children every week. I welcome feedback from families about how they prefer to receive these resources (email or snail mail). Despite worshiping at a distance we are managing to have fun and grow together in our faith! Thanks be to God!

Finally, summer camp has not been cancelled! As of now, they are extending all early bird registration deadlines and promising to refund any registration fees if it does need to be cancelled. **Note that New Beginnings Camp date has changed to July 20-22.** All the other camp dates are the same. Please contact Pastor Helen if you need your registration fee covered by our scholarships. We are committed to making sure that financial difficulties do not prevent any children or youth from attending camp! Get your registrations in today and then email me to let me know you registered.

In Love and Light,  
*Sarah Lynne Gershon*



### **FCC Flower Sale Cancelled**

It is with much regret that we will have to cancel the Spring Flower Sales for this year. This has always been something to look forward to. Our customers have been eager to place their orders, but with the Coronavirus Impact, we have to cancel. Our local greenhouses will have plants. Support them if you are able. Be safe and we look forward to seeing you soon in church. - Bob and Diane Thrasher

### Ways to Give to FCC

The work of the church continues, and thus we need your financial gifts. Although the office is closed to the public, the Governor has deemed church work and facilities as essential. Jennifer and Eve are at the church during the week, although our office is closed to the public. John has been doing some deeper cleaning for us. And, with the exception of our recording sessions, Ashlyn, Sarah Lynne, Jan, and Pastor Helen are hard at work from our homes. We would like to offer the following simple ways to stay on top of your giving to FCC while we continue to move our worship and ministries online.

#### Automatic Payment through Your Bank

Consider setting up an automatic/online payment with your bank. Many already do this because it's automatic, easy and there are no fees. Simply contact your bank to set up an automatic payment that will be sent to FCC weekly or monthly on the date that you choose.

#### Mail your check

We are continuing to receive mail service. You can send your check via "snail mail" to First Christian Church at 205 E. Kirkwood Ave, Bloomington, IN 47408.

#### Give Online

You can give online through our website [www.fccbloomington.org](http://www.fccbloomington.org). Note that a small fee will be extracted from your donation by the company that processes these online payments. We are grateful for your continued support of the important ministries of First Christian Church.

#### Text to Give

We now have NEW way to receive your tithes and offerings. You can text your contribution via smart phone by texting 812-359-1790. You simply type the amount of your contribution in the message line of your smart phone. If you are new to this form of giving, you will receive a response (text) with a link to complete your contribution as a guest or you can start an account (free) There is also a link on our home page.

#### Easter Special Offering received through April 19

As we gather "virtually" this Easter season, the Easter Offering is especially important as we are reminded that church can happen in many ways and in many places, not only in our physical buildings. General Ministries that receive support from this offering include, but are not limited to:

- |                             |                                 |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Center for Faith and Giving | Higher Education and Leadership |
| Disciples Home Missions     | National Benevolent Association |
| Disciples Women             | New Church Ministry             |
| Global Ministries           | Council on Christian Unity      |



*This information (shared at the recommendation of the Finance Committee and the Permanent Fund Committee) has been provided by India Bobadilla, who serves as Vice President (Great Lakes Zone) of the Christian Church Foundation. India is available to consult with anyone in our congregation who desires assistance in understanding options for charitable giving and estate planning. If you would like to make an appointment with her, please contact Pastor Helen.*

## **CARES Act Provisions for Charitable Giving**

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act was signed into law on March 27, 2020. Among many other provisions, the Act provides incentives for people to continue giving to churches and nonprofits so they can continue to serve the community.

### **I. CARES Act Provisions for Taxpayers who take the Standard Deduction**

- a. Since the 2017 Tax Act significantly increased the taxpayer's standard deduction, most taxpayers no longer itemize. The standard deduction is the benchmark for whether it makes sense to itemize things like property tax and charitable gifts. As a result of that increased benchmark, there are less perceived tax benefits related to charitable giving.
- b. To promote charitable giving in 2020, the CARES Act creates an above-the-line deduction for cash contributions to nonprofits of up to \$300 for taxpayers who take the standard deduction.

### **II. CARES Act Provisions for Itemizing Taxpayers**

Itemizing taxpayers can make tax-deductible charitable contributions of cash of up to 100% of their 2020 adjusted gross income. Previously the tax-deductible contribution limit was 60%.

### **III. Other Options for Individuals Over Age 70½: RMDs and QCDs**

#### **a. Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs)**

Although the CARES Act suspends required minimum distributions from tax-deferred retirement accounts for the 2020 tax year, qualified charitable distributions (QCDs) are still possible for individuals who are over 70½ and who have assets in a Traditional IRA.

RMDs from your IRA are taxable income. That additional income can move you into a higher tax bracket, reduce your eligibility for certain tax credits and deductions, and you may have to pay a Medicare surcharge if your taxable income is too high.

The 2020 "pause" in RMDs would be a great time to work with your Foundation representative and your tax advisor to develop a strategy to help you use your assets to accomplish the goals that are important to you.

#### **b. Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs)**

Making a qualified charitable distribution means requesting that a distribution from your IRA be paid directly to a qualified charity, which reduces the future tax liability on the withdrawal of those assets. The SECURE Act (December 2019) pushed the RMD age back to 72 for many seniors; however, it did not change the eligibility age for making QCDs. The QCD age is still 70½

### May Birthdays



05/01	Tate	Knepper	3616 S. Kingsbury Ave.	Bloomington	IN	47401
05/02	Donna	Cartwright	2927 N. Bankers Drive	Bloomington	IN	47408
05/02	Zoe	Hill	8956 W. Rice Rd.	Bloomington	IN	47403
05/03	Pam	Matthews	7263 S. Burch Rd	Bloomington	IN	47403
05/03	Brett	Hamilton	1326 Dutch Ridge Rd.	Heltonville	IN	47436
05/06	Carmie	Hamilton	1326 Dutch Ridge Rd.	Heltonville	IN	47436
05/06	Heidi	Watson	913 S. Mitchell St.	Bloomington	IN	47401
05/07	Julie	Donham	5900 N. Maple Grove Rd.	Bloomington	IN	47404
05/08	Eve	Schultes-Ridge	5460 S. Victor Pike	Bloomington	IN	47403
05/11	Scot	Moore	1639 S. Ira Street	Bloomington	IN	47401
05/11	Alasdair	Gershon	909 N. Blair Ave.	Bloomington	IN	47404
05/12	Dale	Webb	532 Green Road	Bloomington	IN	47403
05/14	Sharon	Goins	60 Bailliere Dr.	Martinsville	IN	46151
05/15	Whitney	Gates	3493 E. Saddlebrook Ct.	Bloomington	IN	47401
05/15	Kathy	Curry	1107 Azalea Lane	Bloomington	IN	47401
05/17	Bob	Martin	4243 W. Lynwest Drive	Bloomington	IN	47404
05/18	Jim	Barker	115 Lexington Drive	Bloomington	IN	47408
05/21	Erv	Fettchenhauer	2604 E. Windermere Woods Dr.	Bloomington	IN	47401
05/24	Mary	Swarthout	3521 W. Fairington Drive	Bloomington	IN	47403
05/24	Kate	Kroll	2704 N. Browncliff Lane	Bloomington	IN	47408

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

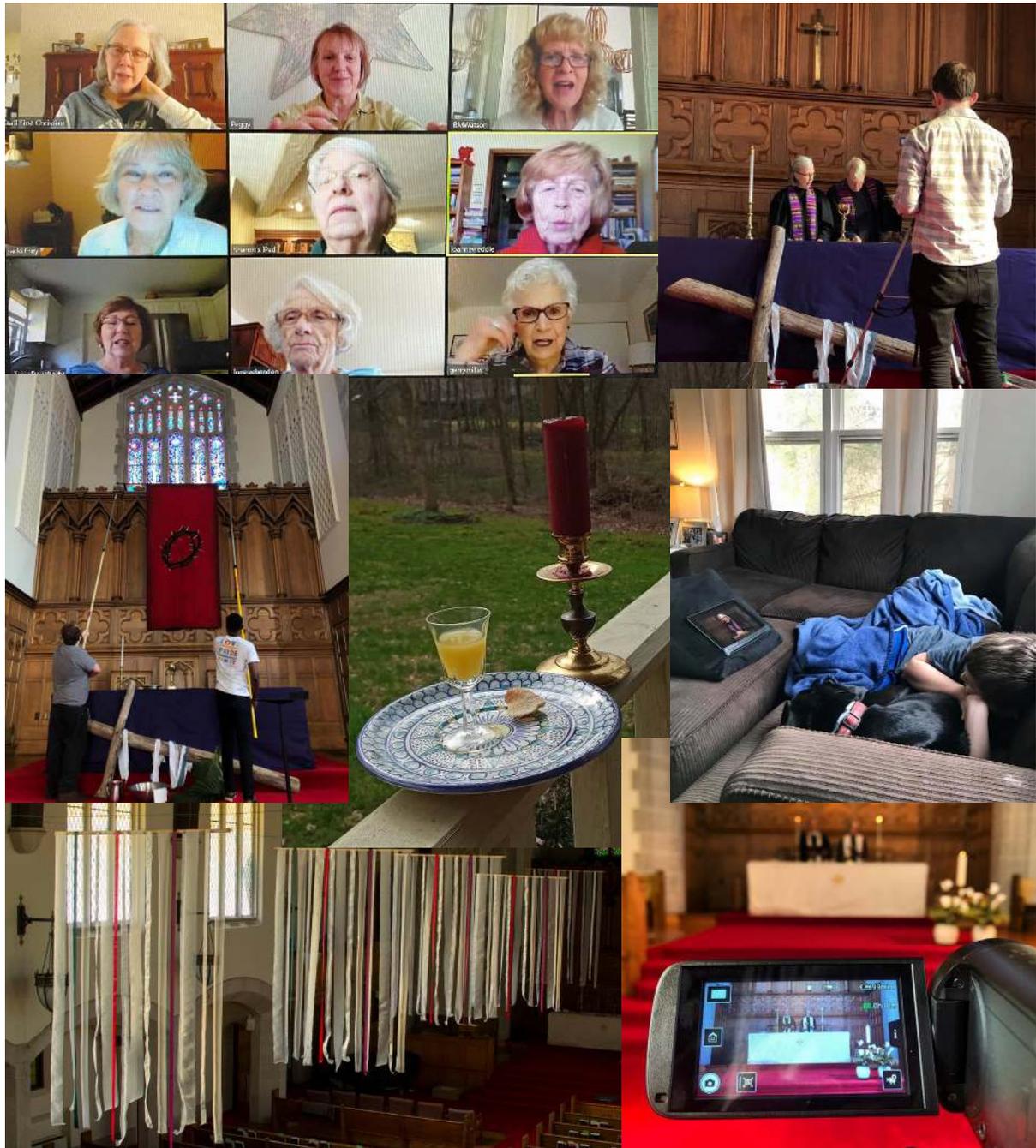
### Updated FCC Directories Available

Sending cards and notes of encouragement can be very meaningful during times of stress. Consider writing to someone who is living in a retirement community and cannot receive guests right now. Or perhaps you would like to send a cheery note to someone on the May birthday list! If you would like an updated copy of our church directory, please let us know. We can email a PDF copy or snail mail a hard copy. Contact the church office through email ([fcc@fccbloomington.org](mailto:fcc@fccbloomington.org)) or phone (812-332-4459) to get your copy.

*Join us on Facebook and Instagram! And join us on Sunday morning for online worship at [www.fccbloomington.org](http://www.fccbloomington.org) or on our YouTube channel "First Christian Church Bloomington, IN".*

### Send Your Pictures!

While we are apart, please send your pictures so that we can see you, and share them with our FCC church family. Send them via our Facebook Picture group or email to [jennifer@fccbloomington.org](mailto:jennifer@fccbloomington.org).



First Christian Church  
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**Scripture Readings  
For Sunday Worship**

**April 19**  
John 20:19-31; Psalm 145:13-21

**April 26**  
Luke 4:14-21

**May 3**  
Acts 16: 16-36