

The CHRISTIAN

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

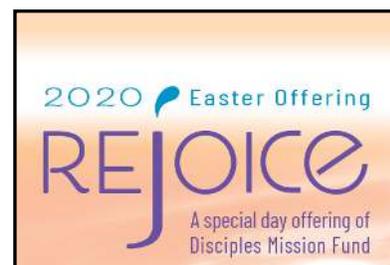
Ways to Stay Connected as a Church Family at FCC *Worship with Us Online and Gather with Zoom and Google Hangout*

As of today, nearly 500 households have participated in our March 22 online worship service and over 300 households have tuned in to our March 29 online service. **That's amazing!** Both Bedford and Bloomington FCC folk are included in that number, as well as others who have found their way to our online worship services. It's also been wonderful to receive your text messages, emails, and Facebook comments during the virtual coffee hour after worship. We are, indeed, the body of Christ and we will continue to be so.

We are learning new ways to connect as we “shelter in place” and that means using a variety of communications tools too! You should be receiving weekly emails with the links and information about how to join our online worship services. If you are not receiving these emails, please call or email the church office at fcc@fccbloomington.org. We are also posting information to our Facebook and Instagram pages. So, “like” us on Facebook and “follow” us on Instagram! Please, share information about our services with your family, friends and neighbors! We have had people from as far away as New Zealand join us for worship.

We have started to gather on **Zoom** for small groups and meetings. *Zoom* is an online video conferencing service. All you need to participate is a computer or smart phone and an internet connection. It works on all devices (mobile and desktop). Don't let the technology scare you! As more of our groups move online, our “tech coaches” will show you how to connect. Remember, we are ALL in this together... and as Disciples say, “All means All!” We want to connect with as many members of our FCC family as possible. That means we are busy calling, texting, snail mail, email, newsletters, Facebook, Instagram, and Zoom. Please stay in touch. Let us know how you are doing, and if you are in need.

As we prepare for Holy Week at home, please set aside time to join us in worship. We will gather for worship online on Sundays at 10:00 am, on Maundy Thursday (7:00 pm) and on Good Friday (noon). You will find our services on our website at www.fccbloomington.org.



Pastor's Pen

Sometimes, poems say all that need to be said in times like these. I share with you a poem written on March 13 by Brother Richard Hendrick, a Capuchin Franciscan friar who lives in Ireland.

Lockdown

*Yes there is fear.
 Yes there is isolation.
 Yes there is panic buying.
 Yes there is sickness.
 Yes there is even death.
 But,
 They say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise
 You can hear the birds again.
 They say that after just a few weeks of quiet
 The sky is no longer thick with fumes
 But blue and grey and clear.
 They say that in the streets of Assisi
 People are singing to each other
 across the empty squares,
 keeping their windows open
 so that those who are alone
 may hear the sounds of family around them.
 They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland
 Is offering free meals and delivery to the housebound.
 Today a young woman I know
 is busy spreading fliers with her number
 through the neighbourhood
 So that the elders may have someone to call on.
 Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and Temples
 are preparing to welcome
 and shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary
 All over the world people are slowing down and reflecting
 All over the world people are looking at their neighbours
 in a new way
 All over the world people are waking up to a new reality
 To how big we really are.
 To how little control we really have.
 To what really matters.*

*To Love.
 So we pray and we remember that
 Yes there is fear.
 But there does not have to be hate.
 Yes there is isolation.
 But there does not have to be loneliness.
 Yes there is panic buying.
 But there does not have to be meanness.
 Yes there is sickness.
 But there does not have to be disease of the soul
 Yes there is even death.
 But there can always be a rebirth of love.
 Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now.
 Today, breathe.
 Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic
 The birds are singing again
 The sky is clearing,
 Spring is coming,
 And we are always encompassed by Love.
 Open the windows of your soul
 And though you may not be able
 to touch across the empty square,
 Sing.*

Blessings on you, dear friends in Christ, as you listen, look, sing, pray, and love.

Helen Hemphing
 Pastor Helen

PS. Our own Bob Orr has also written a thoughtful poem that helps us reflect on these times. You can read it (on page 7 and on our FCC Facebook page). If you have written a relevant poem or prayer that you would like to share, please send it to me.



This Friday, April 3, is First Friday Jazz Vespers time! Since we are unable to celebrate First Friday in person this month and don't want to miss a month, we are posting an archived unedited video of a live Jazz Vespers that took place on June 7, 2019. The link will appear on the website on Friday and be available until Sunday morning. We will also include a bulletin on our website (for download) so that you can follow along and join in the singing or find the poems. If you have never attended Jazz Vespers service, take the leap and see what you have been missing – a meaningful evening of meditation, readings and music – this time in the comfort of your own home!

Online Holy Week Services

All of our Worship Services will be offered online and easily accessed through our website's homepage <https://www.fcbloomington.org/>. If you need help finding us online, please call the church office and we will connect you to an FCC "tech coach."

Palm Sunday, April 5, 10:00 am (online)

This Sunday, which is Palm/Passion Sunday, we will wave our branches and shout Hosannas to our King. We will also begin the journey into Holy Week, where we will find ourselves standing in the dark shadow of the cross. To prepare for this online service of worship, plan to bring a branch of any kind, communion elements, a Christ Candle, and an offering envelope.

Maundy Thursday, April 9, 7:00 pm. (online)

This brief and meaningful interactive worship service will help us remember and re-enact the events that occurred on a Thursday evening in an upper room 2,000 years ago. There will be music, scripture, communion, prayer, and images. We invite you to prepare by gathering up the elements that will allow you to worship at home: 1) a candle to remind us of Christ's presence in our midst, 2) bread and juice of any kind for communion elements, 3) something that will help you remember and perhaps reenact Jesus washing his Disciples' feet (e.g. a bowl and cloth, or perhaps disposable towels such as wipes or paper towels and a hand sanitizer.)

Good Friday, April 10, noon (online)

This traditional Good Friday Service will lead us to the foot of the cross. There, we will be invited to "lean into" the painful events of that day, and to reflect on wondrous love of Christ Jesus for us and for this world. This brief and reflective service will contain scripture from John's Gospel, prayers, music, and images.

Easter Sunday Online!

Guest Preacher: The Rev. Teresa “Terri” Hord Owens General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Disciples from across the United States and Canada will shout out our Alleluias with one voice on Easter as our General Minister and President proclaims the Good News of Resurrection to all of us! The Rev. Teresa “Terri” Hord Owens, a powerful preacher who has a great love for the church, will strengthen, encourage, and empower us to be the church of Jesus Christ.

FCC Bedford and FCC Bloomington will welcome Terri by (hopefully) “parachuting” her into our online joint Easter Sunday service. Pastor Helen and Pastor Bruce will lead the service of worship from our sanctuary, and our FCC musicians (from both congregations) will offer special music and lead us in our hymn singing! Of course, we will partake of communion together in spirit and have our online coffee fellowship following our time of worship! Plans are still being finalized (and there are surprises yet to be revealed!), so please watch your inbox for updates from Pastor Helen via her Pastor’s Post Card.

About our General Minister and President



Rev. Hord Owens was elected as the General Minister and President on July 9, 2017. A Disciple since young adulthood, she served as dean of students at the University of Chicago Divinity School and pastor of First Christian Church of Downers Grove, IL prior to her election.

Terri’s resume includes more than 20 years in corporate America leading diverse teams in data management before she entered seminary. For 15 years, she served as the dean of students at the University of Chicago Divinity School, shepherding a varied student body in both background and theology.

Rev. Hord Owens is widely sought after as a preacher, speaker and workshop facilitator. Her ministry and intellectual interests include a theology of reconciliation, cultural intelligence, developing inclusive and multi-cultural congregations, and the mentoring of youth and young adults. She is married to Walter Owens, Jr., with whom she celebrated 30 years of marriage prior to her election. They are the proud parents of an adult son, W. Mitchell Owens, III.

Easter Special Offering April 12 and 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



Music for Encouragement and Meditation for Holy Week

In this time of Social Distancing, music can help us stay calm, centered, inspired, or energized. As we enter Holy Week, here are some suggestions and resources (in addition to our online worship services) for adding music to your days.

YouTube Virtual Worship Services

Our YouTube worship services are being beautifully recorded and edited (in careful isolation and separation) carefully by Jono Palmer and Ashlyn Reynolds and some of our choral scholars, and Jihye, spread out from each other in the choir loft!

Quarantine Karaoke

Check out our tenor Choral Scholar Renson Madarang's Facebook page! He offers a WONDERFUL "Quarantine Karaoke" – different song to bring joy each day!

Daily Musical Devotionals

Dr. Daniel Cole, an IU grad who is now minister of music at First Presbyterian – Columbia, SC – is posting DAILY MUSIC DEVOTIONALS that are incredible. He has given me the link below to open each day and a new one will be there (as well as the old ones for the last week.) They are moving, educational, and inspiring. www.firstprescolumbia.org/music-devotions.

Archived Anthems for Holy Week and Easter

Here are links to some Lenten and Easter choral anthems from our archives past, which I hope you will find helpful in your worship and devotions. You will find a short abbreviated synopsis of the text under each title. Here is how to access the music directly through the FCC website: 1) Go to www.fccbloomington.org, 2) click on The Arts tab and then on The Music tab. 3) At the bottom of the now visible YouTubes, click on the page number of the piece you are looking for, 5) then find the name of the piece you would like to hear and listen to your heart's content.

For Palm Sunday:

1. Gounod: Blessed is he that cometh: Page 97
Blessed is He that Cometh in the Name of the Lord
2. arr Roland Martin: Vexilla Regis (The Royal Banners forward Go) - Page 16
The royal banners forward go; the Cross shows forth redemption's flow.
3. Fedak Christus Paradox - Page 48
You Lord are both Lamb and Shepherd...you the everlasting instant...our death and life.

For Holy Week :

- 1, Ramirez - Agnus Dei from Missas Criolla - Page 76
Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us and grant us thy peace.
2. William Byrd Agnus Dei - William Byrd - Page 87

3. Isaac O Food to Pilgrims Given - Page 1
O food to pilgrims given...o manna from on high...
4. Faure - In Paradisum (from Requiem) - Page 17
May the angels lead you to paradise...
5. Mozart: Ave Verum - Page 41
Hail true body, born of the Virgin Mary.. who suffered for us on the cross...Be with us at our time of death.

Easter:

1. Randall Thompson Alleluia – Page 80
2. Vaughan Williams: Easter from Five Mystical Songs – Page 48
Rise heart, thy Lord is Risen. . .
3. Chesnekov Salvation is Created – Page 22
Salvation is created, in midst of the earth, O God, O our God. Alleluia.

Your Offering and Pledges

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. So, please keep your offerings coming via the mail, through your bank, or through the “give” button on our website.

Jennifer and Eve are there during our regular office hours, 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.

Special Gifts

Because several of our members will be needing financial assistance to help them through this crisis, Pastor Helen is inviting special gifts for this purpose. Please designate “Emergency Assistance Fund” in your memo line.

Opportunity to serve

If you feel called to offer an essential service to someone who is unable to leave their home (i.e. run an errand, pick up a prescription or groceries, deliver a meal, etc.) please know that you are needed! One of our members, Amy Wardlow, is coordinating service delivery through the Area 10 Agency on Aging. Your help is certainly needed during this time. Please contact Amy at awardlow@area10agency.org.

Updated FCC Directories Available

Sending cards and notes of encouragement can be very meaningful during times of stress. We could all use a little support from time to time. 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 a student who is home, unsure when they will be able to see their friends or go back to school and their normal busy life. 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 or phone to get your copy.

A Pastoral Thought

Pastor Helen shares these thoughts, written by Pastor Bruce: We are going to get through this. It may take a few weeks or a few months, but we will get through this. The Church and the nation have been at their best in times of crisis. As Christians, we know that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. As Americans, we know that in times of crisis, divisions have been set aside and all have pulled together in the same direction for the common good. So hang in there, dear friends. Breathe deeply of the Spirit. Don't be shy about asking for or offering help. And don't hesitate to do what you know to do: **call, text, write notes, email, Facebook message each other, and check-up on your neighbors.** Help whomever you can as you are able to do so.

A prayer for today

written by one of our Elders, Bob Orr

So here we are 6 feet apart.
And hope the virus will not start
To seep through our so fragile pore
And make us sick or something more.

And so, we stand and wait and wait.
And pace the floor in measured gait.
Now its time to wash our hands.
The unseen foe will rise again.

I stand with arms outstretched in rage.
Why, Oh God, do you engage
In sickness, pain, and pestilence?
To me my God it makes no sense.

And so it been since psalmists time
That we have screamed, and yelled, and whined.
And then I see a human face
With outstretched arms to embrace.

There is love within those arms
And people work to stay the harms
The first responders, teachers, clerks
Doctors, nurses, stem the hurts.

Ministers, and neighbors, volunteers
All come together; dry our tears
In spite of all, my God is there
Next to me to sooth my fear.

I may never, ever, understand
Just what my God has done or planned
But by God's grace we do survive
When all is done, we feel alive.

And this is clear as clear can be.
We must live our destiny.



In Our Prayers...

Please pray for the family of Mike Engber who passed away last week (March 26) at Hospice House, surrounded by his immediate family. Cheryl is honoring his wish to be cremated, with a celebration of life to take place “whenever we can all hug again!” Cards, “virtual hugs” and notes may be sent to Cheryl at 2731 S. Silver Creek Dr., 47401.

Please also pray for healing and relief from pain for Don Wendling as he recovers from a compression fracture after a fall. Cards and notes may be sent to him at 3722 Fairington Dr., 47403.

Also pray for Pamela Walters as she struggles with declining health at Meadowood Health Pavillion. Her new address is 2455 N. Tamarack Trl. #17, 47408.

Bill Knapp would like to thank his FCC family for all of the prayers, cards, and kind thoughts following the passing of his beloved wife, Liz.

Please send your prayer requests via email messages to fcc@fccbloomington.org and phone calls to the church (812-332-4459). Our prayer team continues to pray daily for you.



XPLOR Update

Our XPLOR residents (Adrian, Miche, and Kristen) are making some pretty major adjustments to their lives as they stay-at-home in their FCC apartment. The National Benevolent Association (NBA) has shortened the residency program, so it will end on May 18 as opposed to June 28. In addition the NBA is working closely with our FCC host team (chaired by Chuck Jones) to offer the support and guidance needed to help our residents remain safe and healthy at home while they engage creatively with the church and the community. Our residents, who are following strict NBA COVID-19 protocols, are in the process of creating new and detailed life and work plans that will help them complete their residencies.

Our residents have already served us in several ways, including: 1) hanging the Lenten Banners that are featured on our Facebook pages and online worship services; 2) serving as scripture readers in our online worship services; 3) doing some deep cleaning, and 4) continuing to do security checks in our building. By the time you read this article, they will have each completed an addendum to their covenant that will outline ways that they plan to serve and engage each day while remaining at home (eg doing check-in's with church members, serving remotely with their internship agencies, using FCC's social media platforms to help us remain connected, coaching "newbies" with Facebook, deepening their own spiritual practices, etc.) In addition, by the time you read this, Kristen will be a "remote" resident, connecting with the XPLOR Community from her home in Virginia via the magic of social media.

Please hold them in your prayers and feel free to send them individual notes of encouragement, using the church's address. Their names are Miche Andre, Adrian Griffin, and Kristen Valentine.



Holy Week and Easter Activities for FCC Families

By Sarah Lynne Gershon, director of Faith Formation and Family Ministries

Easter has long been my favorite holiday. Even when I was young I remember being enlivened by Easter worship. I still eagerly anticipate the triumphant songs of celebration, loud proclamations that “HE IS RISEN,” fancy Easter dresses, and deviled eggs each year. Although we will be unable to prepare for and celebrate Easter together in physical proximity as a church, I hope families find ways to celebrate the hope of resurrection in their home, deepening their connection to one another and First Christian Church through our shared faith that Jesus is Lord.

My goal for Holy Week is to provide some resources for families to prepare for Easter and grow in their faith together at home. Families will continue to receive their Lenten Prayer devotional through Easter, but for Holy Week I will also be emailing instructions for a daily devotional activity—creating an “Easter Tree.” My family has enjoyed creating a tree like this in the past. It provided such cheery decorations that we didn’t want to take it down after Easter day. Luckily (as your kids in Worship and Wonder know) the Easter season is 50 days long! We left the tree up for the whole season, changing the decorations to Pentecost flames and doves on the last day of Eastertide.

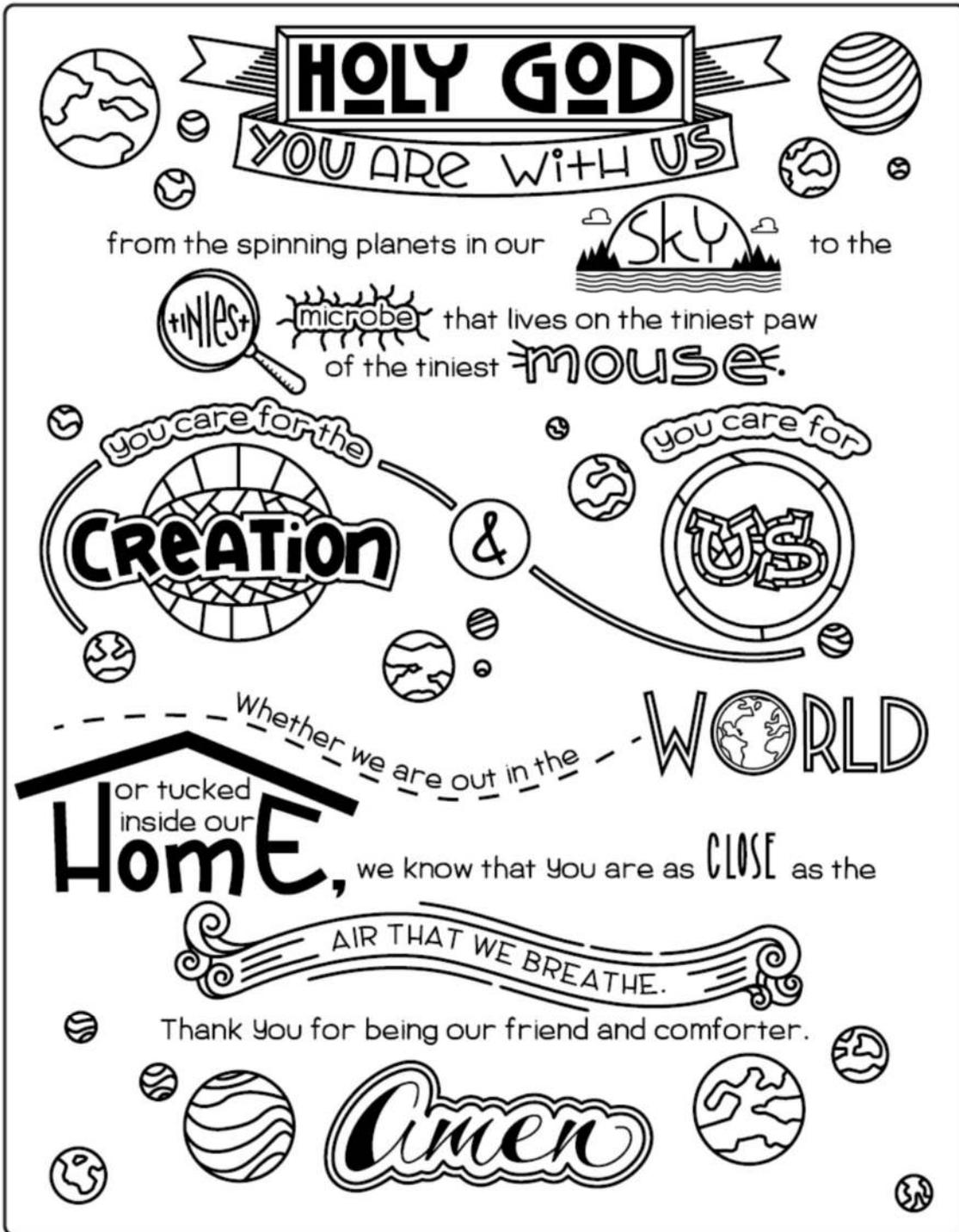
As we continue to live in this trying time, where our vulnerability to illness and death is right at the surface, I encourage you to spend more than one day celebrating life and resurrection. Keep baking Easter treats and surprising your children with hidden eggs after April 12th! I will continue to send devotional resources as well as fun home-based activities to aid in Easter celebration (*you’ll find a coloring sheet on page 10 of this newsletter*). Finally, our whole church community is blessed by remembering our kinship in Christ during this time, so please continue to share thoughts from your family devotionals and photos with your FCC community.

FCC’s Youth Group Connects Online!

By Ashlyn Reynolds, director of Youth Ministries

The youth have been taking on the challenges of quarantining with patience and creativity. While the Spring Youth Assembly had to be cancelled and our regular Sunday meetings disrupted, the youth have been having weekly devotionals with each other through Google Hangouts. So far we have had two virtual meetings. The hangouts take place on Sunday afternoons at 4:00 pm! We miss seeing each other face to face, however the quarantine has given us the opportunity to reflect on our faith and explore ways to reconnect to one another.

Some of our youth and young adults have been volunteering with Sarah Lynne and our Children and Families ministry by delivering communion and resources for at-home worship! The youth have continued to be dedicated to their church family.





First Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
205 E. Kirkwood Avenue
Bloomington, IN 47408

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fcc@fccbloomington.org
www.fccbloomington.org
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**Scripture Readings
For Sunday Worship**

April 5

John 19:16b-22; Psalm 24

April 12

John 20:1-18; Psalm 118:21-29

April 19

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