

The CHRISTIAN

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

Preparations for the Future at FCC: Updates from the FCC Board

Finances and Permanent Endowment Fund

At the FCC Board's April 19 meeting (via Zoom video conferencing), the finance committee reported that from an operating budget perspective, we did not see an obvious impact from COVID-19 in the first quarter of the year (January – March). This is due in part to the fact that some of our members paid all of their yearly pledged offering in the first quarter. While we won't know until the second quarter how much of an impact COVID-19 will have on our pledged giving and other income, April receipts appear to be coming in lower than normal.

The finance committee also oversaw FCC's successful application to the Payroll Protection Program which resulted in FCC being approved to receive a forgivable loan designed help cover payroll and other qualified expenses (e.g. utilities) during this time of pandemic. Finance committee members are Brian Jackson, Tim Sullivan, Jim Watson, and Shari Sprinkle (all CPA's).

Our Permanent Endowment Fund Committee has recommended that --due to the market drop-- we will not be drawing from the permanent fund at this time. Committee members, who receive weekly reports/updates/guidance from Gary Kidwell, (President of the Christian Church Foundation), communicate with each other on a regular basis. Permanent Fund Committee members are John and Carole Ambler, Mike and Vonora Bishop, and Jim and Betsy Watson.

Guidance from Our FCC Medical Professionals

FCC is fortunate to have wise, faithful, and discerning medical professionals among its members. As information about the coronavirus began to trickle into the mainstream media in March, Pastor Helen and board officers sought out their guidance and followed their recommendations regarding suspension of worship services and other face-to-face gatherings "pending further notice."

Our board continues to seek out their wisdom and guidance as we move into the summer and begin to prepare for some sort of transition in our communal life in Christ, which will include gearing up to live-stream our worship services.

While our medical professionals agree that it's too early to set dates and a timeline regarding our transition, they are wise to begin to think about developing protocols that will guide the practices and procedures we will adopt and follow in the coming weeks, months, and (perhaps) years.

Our medical doctors include Mike Bishop, Scot Moore, Kip Myers, Jim Ray, Andy Stafford, and Rhonda Trippel. Our nurses include Jenn Richards and Peggy Stafford. We are thankful for their leadership in these unprecedented times.

Pastor's Pen

The Times They Are A Changin'

Those words are perhaps truer now than they were in 1963 when Bob Dylan penned them.

Yes, the times are a-changin' before our eyes, and they won't be a-changin' back to the way they used to be. That's a fact. A hard to swallow one, but nevertheless a fact. And I'm quite sure that the reality of the changin' times hasn't totally sunk in for anyone. Perhaps the best we can do is acknowledge that we are, indeed, living in unprecedented times. And unprecedented times call for the church to be the church in unprecedented ways.

Here at FCC, we're starting to figure out how to do a few things in these changin' times, like offering a digital worship service, holding meetings, small groups, and Bible studies via Zoom, and being more intentional about connecting with one another through cyber space and snail mail. However, we have barely scratched the surface of figuring out how to "do" church and "be" the church in these times."

We have more questions than answers, and that's OK! After all, part of our Disciples identity has to do with being comfortable asking the next right question and (according to Disciples statesman Jim Powell), "seeking the *next right answer*." Part of the *next right answer* will be for us to accept the reality that online church is here to stay. Indeed, everything I've read says that online church is **not** a fad that will fade away as the COVID-19 crisis subsides.

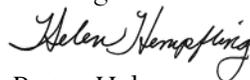
In light of this emerging reality, let's begin

to ask this question: *how can we be an online church with a bricks and mortar presence?* **NOT** this question: *how can we be a bricks and mortar church with an online presence?* Part of the answer to this question includes live-streaming our worship services, and we're in the process of figuring out how to create and offer a quality live-stream service. However, because we know that there is so much more to church than the Sunday morning worship hour, we will also need to figure out how we can be *FCC online* throughout the week, both during and after the pandemic. We'll need to figure out how to best **engage** each other and the world as we share the inclusive love of Christ online: welcoming online, learning online, serving online, offering spiritual connection online, but **NOT** excluding those for whom online is not a viable option.

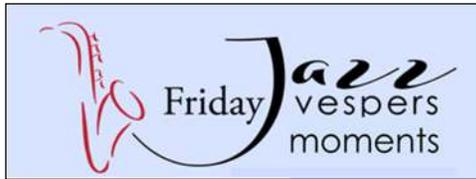
Sometimes I start to feel overwhelmed when I ponder this reality that none of us (at least those in my generation) can get our heads wrapped around. When I start to feel overwhelmed, I remind myself to pause: to take a breath, look outside, take a walk, call a friend, read the Bible, and remind myself that God's love for the church and the world is the ONE thing that does not change!

And then I remember that even online church comes with a "pause" button! I think I'll go take a walk!

Blessings!



Pastor Helen



Weekly Online Jazz Vespers Begins This Friday, May 1st!

During this time of social distancing, our Jazz Vespers Series is moving from the first Friday of the month in the sanctuary to a virtual weekly Jazz Vespers Moment. A mini-vespers moment of music, poetry and reflection featuring jazz singer **Elena Escudero** and curated by Linda Abe will be available on the homepage of FCC's website <https://www.fccbloomington.org/> each Friday evening at 6:30. This video will remain on our homepage until the online Sunday Worship Service posts on Sunday morning. Join us and please also share the link with your family, friends and neighbors.

In May, each Vespers Moment will explore aspects of the theme of *Abundance*:

May 1: Abundance of Creation

May 8: Abundance of Hope

May 15: Abundance of Grace

May 22: Abundance of Courage

May 29: Abundance of Love

We are thrilled that Elena is able to again share her talent with us while sheltering from her home in Chicago and hope that everyone will take a moment each Friday evening to step back with us and quietly reflect on the ways that our lives are filled with Abundance even in this fearful and uncertain time.

Youth Sunday is This Sunday, May 3!

Join us online for worship this Sunday, May 3 at 10:00 am as the youth groups from First Christian Church of Bedford and Bloomington host a combined Youth Sunday Worship!

We promise this will be a unique and meaningful service filled with all of the energy and enthusiasm that our youth possess. You will find this service on our website www.fccbloomington.org. You can also find the service on YouTube by subscribing to our channel:

"First Christian Church Bloomington, IN".

The video will be available beginning at 10:00 am on Sunday.

"See" you online this Sunday!



Join Pastor Helen's Coffee Fellowship Pilot Project!

Pastor Helen is seeking up to 30 people to help her test out a virtual coffee fellowship hour on Zoom. Here is her idea: she will send out a Zoom invitation to the first 30 people who express a desire to chat with others during two digital Sunday morning coffee hours. The first coffee hour will be from 9 – 9:45 am. The second hour will be from 10:45 – 11:30 am. You are invited to participate in either or both of these virtual coffee hours. You will need to have either a smart phone, an ipad, or laptop computer with a microphone and a camera. (If you don't have any of these, see the article below!)

Here's how: send Pastor Helen (or the church) an email that lets her know which coffee hour you would like to "attend." Watch your email for a Zoom invitation from her. It will arrive at some point on Saturday and contain the link that will give you access to the coffee fellowship hour. Once you have "arrived" at coffee fellowship, you will see and greet each other in the larger group before Pastor Helen creates smaller "chat rooms," designed to encourage real conversation similar to what you might experience during one of our regular coffee fellowship hours.

Please remember: this is an experiment because Pastor Helen has never hosted a Zoom meeting for large groups! If you have had prior experience with hosting break-out chat rooms on Zoom, please feel free to contact her. She is happy to receive coaching!

"I'm not computer savvy, but I want to stay connected with FCC!"

If this sounds like something you have said or thought, please know that we want to stay connected with you, too! Here are some ideas you might consider. All of them will help us stay connected!

- Call the church office and ask us to mail you a paper bulletin and transcript of the previous week's worship service in its entirety, including words to the anthem and hymns.
- Volunteer to make "check in" phone calls to members who might appreciate hearing from a fellow member of FCC. To do this, call Sue Cull or the church office. We'll give you some names of members whom you can call. The church office can mail an updated directory too!
- Join our prayer ministry team. If you are willing to pray for others on a daily basis, this might be a ministry for you. Each week we will send you an updated list of prayer requests.
- Become a friend or mentor to one of our young people who is considering baptism or confirmation. This means that you would covenant to pray for them, send them notes or cards of encouragement and wisdom, and perhaps even make an occasional phone call to them.

An Invitation to Pass the Peace

A much beloved part of our on-line worship is the Passing of the Peace. We invite YOU to record a "Passing of the Peace" video from your home and then send it to us for incorporation into our worship service. All you need to do is record yourself (and/or family members) saying "The Peace of Christ be with you." Email it to Ashlyn Reynolds ashlreyn23@gmail.com and all you have to do is join us for worship! We don't know when it will be your turn to pass the peace, but we guarantee that you'll see yourself on an upcoming Sunday morning.

Faith Formation and Family Ministries Update

By Sarah Lynne Gershon

Happy Easter! The FCC elementary children continue to celebrate Eastertide with the weekly devotionals I send out to families. A couple weeks ago, children were delighted to find an FCC egg hunt brought to their yard, organized by Ashlyn Reynolds (thanks to our Easter bunnies Alexander Trippel and Max Fettchenhauer). Our families are now encouraged to bless other FCC members with cards and surprises (more on that in the next newsletter)!

Last week's devotional focused on the Luke 4 passage and highlighted Jesus' announcement that he was inaugurating "the year of the Lord's favor" or Jubilee, by bringing good news to the poor, sight to the blind, freeing captives, and liberating the oppressed. We noticed that there are "Jubilee" people now—people who bring good news to the poor, heal the sick, free captives and liberate the oppressed. After school lets out, I will be working with Interfaith Friends to offer families opportunities each week to partner with or encourage "Jubilee people" in our wider Bloomington community.

Finally, families, do not forget that 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. We also have scholarship money for registration fees. **Please contact me if you are even considering signing up for camp.** We need to know who is going to camp from FCC.

Concerning Adult Faith Formation: Some FCC small groups are finding ways to connect at a distance. The meditation group is meeting through Zoom every Sunday morning at 9 am. Please contact Thomas Walsh at tpwalsh@indiana.edu for the link to join.

We are also hoping to get some Deeper Bible Study groups going. These groups will focus on the passage that is being preached on the upcoming Sunday. Chuck Jones will lead a group on Wednesdays at 6:30 pm through Zoom. Please contact him at Mr.Chuck.Jones@gmail.com to join. Please contact me if you would like to participate in a Deeper Bible Study on a different day.



Honoring our 2020 Graduates!

Spring always brings warmer weather, beautiful flowers... and **graduations!** Even though we can't celebrate in person, we will still lift up our graduates, celebrate their accomplishments and look forward to their bright futures.

If you or family will be celebrating a graduate this year, please let us know. We are developing our list of high school and college graduates now and will celebrate them soon! So far we have the following on our list of high school grads: Isabella Coleman, Ryan Eller, and Alexander Trippel. We also have Melanie Breeden and Henry Street on our list of college grads.

Please **email Sarah Lynne Gershon at sarahlynn@fcbloomington.org or call the church office** to let us know if you are graduating or have a child graduating that needs to be added to our list! We can't wait to celebrate our grads! Way to go class of 2020!!

FCC Story update, including progress on our building

The FCC Story is continuing to unfold! As you might recall, the FCC Story (earlier known as the Future Story) was presented to the congregation in 2017 following an intensive and extensive congregation-wide visioning process that helped us identify and name the “why” of our existence: *FCC exists to share the inclusive love of Christ through learning, serving, welcoming, and offering spiritual connection*. Various ministries have emerged from this vision, including Jazz Vespers, XPLOR, lawn outreach, and small groups. As a result, the corner of Kirkwood and Washington is now quite well known as the location of a vibrant and inclusive community—named First Christian Church—that practices Christ’s welcome and grace in a variety of ways.

An important part of the FCC story addresses our building—with its prime location—as an asset and conduit for our ministries. The Cornerstone Team has been working on ways to help us leverage this asset. At the April 19 board meeting, Mike Rampley reported that the Cornerstone Team: 1) has received a comprehensive report (from Ar-See Engineers) that addresses the structural health of our 100 year old building; 2) will soon receive the final report (from Sims-Durkin Engineers) that addresses the health of our mechanical, electric, and plumbing systems; and 3) continues to meet with architect David Allen, who has provided a design for handicap accessible restrooms and enhanced spaces for worship and fellowship.

Once the team receives and digests all the building-related assessment and design work (prioritized and with cost estimates), they will recommend to the board a priority-driven multi-year capital building plan. Pastor Helen says, “This team is to be commended! Not only are they developing a comprehensive approach that will strengthen the building’s capacity to be used as a tool for service, but—in this unprecedented time—they are also open to the ways that God’s spirit is reminding us that the church is not simply a building, but a people held together by the love of Christ and called to serve the world in his name.” Stay tuned!

FCC’s *Voices of Faith (Disciples Women)* Reminds Us to Register to Vote! Deadline to Register is May 4 - Indiana Primary on June 2

It’s not too late to register to vote in Indiana’s Primary election! You have until May 4th to register to vote. You may register in person at the Monroe County Government Election Central located at 401 W. 7th Street or you may register online by going to <https://indianavoters.in.gov/>. You can also use this web address to find information about your ballot status, determine who’s on your ballot for the election, and find your polling location.

If you plan to vote by absentee ballot, you must submit your application by May 21 and that ballot is due by June 2 at noon. **All registered voters can vote by mail in the primary using an absentee ballot. Voter registration forms and the application to vote by mail can also be found at <http://monroecountyvoters.us>**. The Primary election is on Tuesday, June 2. If you plan to vote in person, be sure to bring your photo ID to the polling place.



Preparing to Bid a Fond Farewell to our XPLOR Residents *Cards, notes, and videos invited and encouraged*

Our XPLOR Residents Miche, Adrian, and Kristen have had quite the year here in Bloomington. They have contributed to our Bloomington community and to our FCC family through their work, kindness, caring and many talents. It's hard to believe, but the time is coming for us to say good-bye to them---unfortunately from a distance.

Here's how you can help us say good-bye: Please take the time to mail (to the church) a personal card or note to them as individuals or as a group (or both). You might include a word of thanksgiving or encouragement, and you might also decide to share a particular memory you have shared with them.

Alternatively, if you have a memory to share via social media, we invite you to please make a brief (one minute) video recording and email to Ashlyn Reynolds at ashlreyn23@gmail.com. **May 12 is the deadline** for receiving all of these various farewell expressions. Our "public" good-byes will be shared during the May 17 on-line service of worship.



Send Cards, Notes and Video Farewells to Ashlyn or the FCC Office by May 12th!

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. 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 text response 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.



Week of Compassion Continues Relief Work *Tornado Season Begins as Storms Hit Nashville*

In early March, the Nashville Metro Area was devastated by severe tornadoes. Twenty-six people were killed, more than 300 were injured, and thousands experienced property damage or loss. New Covenant Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) responded immediately with support from Week of Compassion--in spite of damage to their own church facility. With so many of their neighbors in need, the church became a hub of neighborhood relief activity. Church members and members of the wider community stepped in to volunteer, collecting and distributing needed supplies, assessing damage in the area, and serving hot meals from a tent on the church lawn.

(continued on page 9)

(Week of Compassion News continued from page 8)

But shortly after the storm, COVID-19 concerns meant new social distancing guidelines. The church could no longer gather large crowds to distribute necessities while also keeping everyone safe. Like many communities recovering from disaster, the people of Nashville and the congregation of NCCC had to adapt quickly in order to continue serving their neighbors. They limited access to the distribution center, controlling the flow of people to just a few at a time so volunteers and recipients could maintain distance. Soon, even these measures were insufficient.

While the COVID-19 pandemic stands as its own disaster, other natural disasters continue to occur. Right now especially, at the onset of tornado and flood season, communities are making preparations to weather the next storm, even as some continue recovery from previous events, all while facing new obstacles created by social distancing. In every stage of disaster response--from early relief, through long-term recovery--the COVID-19 pandemic creates new complications that will require creative solutions. In partnership with local congregations and communities, Week of Compassion continues to respond to current needs, while making plans to enable continued response through the duration of this pandemic.

Just as NCCC had to adjust their response to the March tornadoes, Week of Compassion, Disciples Volunteering, and many of our partners through National VOAD are working to reframe the process of rebuilding. Rather than bringing in volunteers from out of town, workers are encouraged to volunteer in their own local communities, where they will not have to travel long distances or require lodging. Since volunteer groups can no longer participate in large numbers, necessary projects are assigned to small groups who can implement practices that will protect them and the people they serve.

New Covenant Christian Church has now gone mobile with the services they were at first providing from their property. Volunteers are delivering meals and hygiene items to their unhoused neighbors who live in a nearby tent community under the Jefferson Street Bridge (a camp that has seen many new residents in recent weeks). They also continue the important work of building neighborhood coalitions to facilitate long-term recovery; protect residents from predatory investors and landowners; and advocate for the just distribution of resources across the city and county.

In these difficult days, our Disciple churches and leaders are also experiencing the Living Christ in unexpected places: remaining flexible and open to the Spirit, and adapting existing ministries in order to serve those in need. Congregations, community partners and colleagues are all finding new ways to continue this critical work together. There is great hope in the collective commitment of our churches and partners to the ongoing work of responding to disasters with compassion.

Thank you for your gifts to Week of Compassion.
To donate go to www.weekofcompassion.org/donate



In Our Prayers...

Please hold the family of Scott Cripe (Scott, Barbara, Everett, Dellon) in your prayers as they mourn the death as well as celebrate the life of Scott's mother, Mariam Cripe (92), who passed away on Sunday, April 26. A private graveside internment service will be held on Wednesday, April 29, at the Carmel Cemetery. A memorial service will be held at a future date. Cards may be sent to the family at 3930 W. Tapp Road, 47403.

May Birthdays

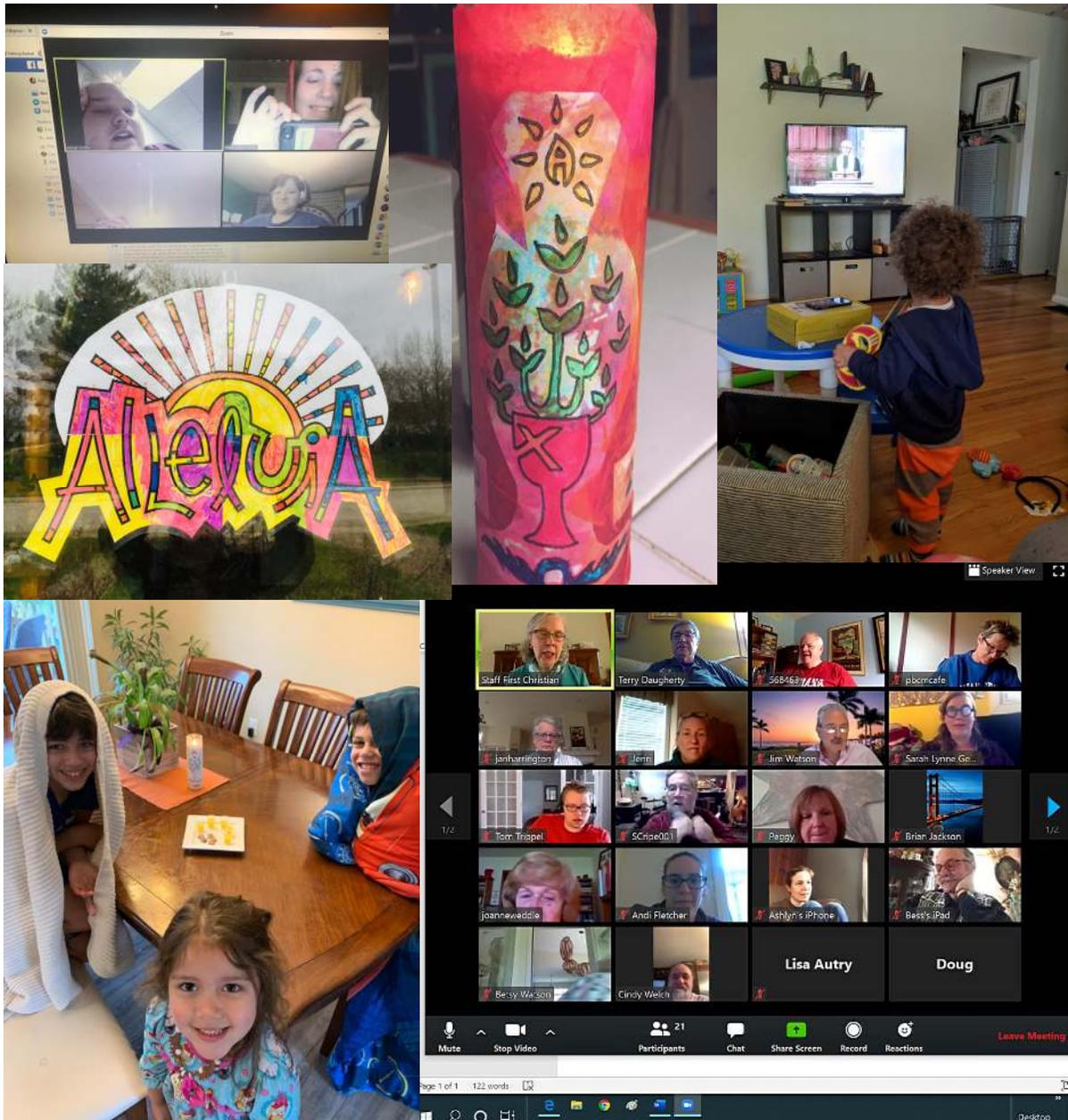


05/01	Tate	Knepper	3616 S. Kingsbury Ave.	Bloomington	IN	47401
05/02	Donna	Cartwright	2927 N. Bankers Drive	Bloomington	IN	47408
05/02	Zoe	Hill	8956 W. Rice Rd.	Bloomington	IN	47403
05/03	Pam	Matthews	7263 S. Burch Rd	Bloomington	IN	47403
05/03	Brett	Hamilton	1326 Dutch Ridge Rd.	Heltonville	IN	47436
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!

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.



First Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
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FCC BEDFORD & BLOOMINGTON
YOUTH SUNDAY
MAY 3, 2020

Online at 10:00 am this Sunday!
www.fccbloomington.org

**Scripture Readings
For Sunday Worship**

May 3

Youth Sunday!
Acts 16: 16-36

May 10

Luke 13:18-30

May 17

Luke 14:15-24