

# The CHRISTIAN

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

## FCC Members Honored for Service to Community *FCC Members Recognized for Commitment to Service*

Hundreds turned out at the Buskirk Chumley Theater on March 27 to celebrate the great tradition of community service here in Bloomington and to honor some of our local heroes who spend countless hours giving back to this community. This year, three FCC members were honored with nominations for a prestigious *Be More Award*, recognizing their commitment to volunteering.

**Dorie Brineman** served at the information desk at *IU Health Bloomington Hospital* for more than 35 years, a remarkable feat for any volunteer. The person in this position is often the first one with whom visitors interact. Dorie always greeted people with kindness, dignity and a friendly face. Her service extends to other areas of the community as well, including her work with the Meals on Wheels program and here at FCC.

**Sue Cull** received the *Be More Knowledgeable Award* for her work with the *Teachers Warehouse*, where local teachers are able to get supplies for their classrooms for free. Sue led several supply drives that kept the shelves filled with supplies for teachers. Sue also currently serves as the President of the organization and is credited for growing not only the amount of supplies available but also the number of teachers using supplies from Teachers Warehouse.

**Judith Olmstead** was honored for her work with students at *The Nest at New Hope*. This program provides high quality early learning experiences for children from birth to five years old who are experiencing poverty and homelessness. Judith engages students in hands on, meaningful learning projects each week. Known as “Grandma Judy” the children learn from her, love her and trust her.

The *Be More Awards* give the city of Bloomington an opportunity to lift up a handful of volunteers who nurture this caring community here in Bloomington through their time, love and commitment to service. **Thank you!**

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## PASTOR'S PEN

*Good News, A Rare Opportunity and An Invitation! Please Send Your Feedback.*

**Good News:** On Sunday, April 29, noon - 4 pm *right in front of our church*, the City of Bloomington will be holding a street fair celebrating our city's bicentennial. The fair will include food, music, and community building activities.

**Opportunity:** This will be a great time for FCC to remind people of our church's life and presence on Kirkwood Avenue. Even though this is very short notice, it's an opportunity to reach out that could be very rewarding for FCC.

**Invitation:** What do you think? How might we showcase our presence April 29? How might we let people know that our purpose is to share Christ's inclusive love? How might we extend hospitality? What shall we offer?

- Simple art activities for people of all ages?
- Sidewalk chalk and bubbles? Open sanctuary for quiet time?
- Lawn chairs and blankets for people who want to people-watch or visit?
- Space for our "own" FCC artists to demonstrate and/or showcase their work?
- What else?

**Your Help:** We need a few good folks (ASAP) who will step-up with ideas and organizational abilities to help make our corner "pop" with life! We also need lots of good folks present during shifts that day to help make good things happen.

If you are excited about this opportunity and want to help with your ideas, organizational abilities, and/or presence, please email me ASAP! My plan is to get going on this yesterday! I look forward to hearing from you.

Blessings,



Pastor Helen

PS. If you have any interest in our FCC Pilgrimage to Cuba, please plan to attend the informational meeting. Details are in this newsletter.

For the latest newsletter, upcoming church events, to make gifts online, and more, visit our website: [www.fccbloomington.org](http://www.fccbloomington.org).

## Cuba (Again)?

Mark Knowles, Director of Service and Youth Ministries

### Cuba Informational Meetings

**Sunday, April 22 at 12:15 pm**

**Tuesday, April 24 at 6:00 pm**

Join us for one of two informational meetings where we will discuss the focus of our trips to Cuba and how you can get involved.

Later this month, on Sunday April 22 at 12:15 pm and Tuesday April 24 at 6:00 pm, we will hold meetings that get into the *who, what, where, when, and how* of our Thanksgiving trip to Cuba (though I suppose those final words do, roughly, answer the *where and when* bit). But for now I want to touch on the *why*. Why back to Cuba when we went there two years ago? Aren't there other places that also would be worth visiting, or have needs, or are full of wonderful people?

As to that latter question: yes, of course! The world is full of interesting places, and wonderful people, and genuine need. No single trip anywhere will change those facts. That's why we as a church continually support our larger Disciples organizations like *Week of Compassion* in responding to crises or *Global Ministries* in working for peace and reconciliation, just as it is why we as humans love to go new places and meet new people.

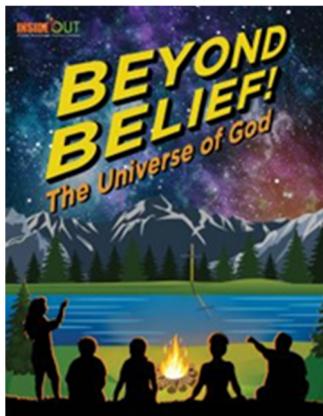
But we also love building upon what we've done and forming deeper connection, and that is why we are going back to Cuba a second time. (And when I say "we" I mean us as a church, not the same individuals; I'm sure some who went in 2016 won't be going this time, and hopefully many new people will—as there's space for many more.) Those of us who went on the last trip loved some of the initial connections we made that we weren't fully expecting: with an active, energetic group of older adults, and with a thoughtful, wise group of youth; with a graceful man talking to us about Cuban art, and with a gracious church providing us a Cuban meal; at an idyllic sustainable farm in the countryside, and at a joyous Pentecostal worship service in the heart of Havana. These were good, initial connections, and now we want to build upon them.

And, perhaps most importantly, we want to build those connections across boundaries. Cuba is one of our closest, yet most distant neighbors. Going there is not a political statement—at least, not political in the sense most people think, of anything having to do with government or ideology. Rather it is about Jesus' admonition that loving God means loving neighbor, and that loving neighbor means loving those most separated from us by human division. We were all struck by the love and beauty and, yes, faith of the Cuban people, churches, and organizations we encountered, and we believe that that kind of sharing across boundaries is the essence of the kingdom of God. And, now, we want more people to have that chance!



## It's Time to Sign-Up for Camp!

Church camp registration forms are now available on the reception desk, or you may register online at the Indiana Region's webpage (<http://indianadisciples.org/commissions/commission-on-faith-formation/>). We know the cost of camp is high—especially for families with multiple children—but we believe in our camp program so much, the line item for scholarships is the largest in our entire faith formation budget.



Pastor Helen would be happy to make confidential financial arrangements for your family.

***Camp makes a difference that is truly “beyond belief”!***



## Building a Neighborhood Together Coming to FCC May 29-31

Anyone interested in exploring and building a peaceful neighborhood—literally—is welcome to join us for an *Intergenerational, Interfaith Event* on Tuesday-Thursday, May 29-31, from 5:30-8:00 p.m. Called “Building a Neighborhood Together,” the experience is like VBS... but it's for all ages and all faiths. For three nights, we'll enjoy sack-lunch dinners, talk about what neighborhoods need, and then build our own cardboard city in the Great Hall. Connie Myers is the FCC contact for this special event.

**Join us!**

## FCC Youth Group News

FCC's Youth Group has been busy welcoming out of town guests from Hiram College with a meal, making Lenten Pretzels, and filling and hiding Easter eggs. We hope everyone had fun at the Annual Egg Hunt! Next the youth will continue the fun with a church lock-in this Friday following Jazz Vespers. Lock-ins provide a great opportunity for the group to get to know each other, have fun and (most importantly) eat lots of pizza! Later this month we will have the opportunity to connect with others from across the region for an important conversation about race organized by the Christian Church of Indiana. The event is part of a series of events for the project “Youth Conversations on Race.” The opening event in this series will take place on April 14th.

### **Thank You for Contributing to our Lenten Food and Supply Drive for Monroe County United Ministries!**

FC has long supported the important work of Monroe County United Ministries (MCUM). FCC members participate on MCUM's Board of Directors, and we give to their food and supply pantry throughout the year with an overall goal of donating 2,000 pounds in 2018. This year, we focused on supporting the MCUM food and supply pantry during the Lenten Season. Each Sunday we watched the pile of donations grow as the children brought them into our sanctuary. Overall, we collected 411 pounds for MCUM's food and supply pantry and an additional 100 pounds for Opportunity House.

These donations support families in Monroe County who are experiencing poverty. MCUM Development Associate Steve Thomas expressed thanks and shared the importance of donations like these, "There were so many much-needed items in your collection, from canned fruit to macaroni and cheese, laundry detergent to bar soap, and so much more. Looking beyond weight, it's easy to know your impact on local families experiencing hardship. For each product you donated, reward yourself now with a moment of reflection: Picture a family in need making use of your gift - a baby wearing a clean diaper that you provided; a child pouring themselves a bowl of your cereal for breakfast this Saturday; a parent who not only prepares the dinner you gave them, but who can also clean their dishes because of your dish soap."

**Thank You!**

### **Get Your Tickets for MCUM's Spring Luncheon *Spring Into Action* Sunday, May 6 from 12:00 - 2:00 pm Bloomington-Monroe County Convention Center**

Contact Natalie Garshaw to purchase your ticket for this year's *Spring Into Action* luncheon, silent auction and program benefiting MCUM. Tickets are \$28.00 for adults and \$15.00 for children under 12. A table of 8 can be purchased for \$200. Dr. Matthew Bagetta will keynote this year's program. Dr. Bagetta received his Ph.D. in Sociology from Harvard University and now teaches at IU's School of Public and Environmental Affairs (SPEA). His research centers on civic engagement and the power of social movements. Wonderful baskets will also be up for auction. If you are interested in attending or would like to donate a basket for auction (at least \$25.00 value) contact Natalie Garshaw.

**See you at the Luncheon!**

### **Opportunities for Helping Families In Need In Our Community**

Have you ever wondered how people break the cycle of poverty? Have you ever wanted to be part of a diverse group working together to help families wanting to make a change in their lives? Here are two ways you can be part of **Thriving Connections** - an initiative that is part of the South Central Community Action Program - formed to provide this type of assistance in our community.

1. **PROVIDING SUPPER FOR FAMILIES.** TC families meet every Thursday at St. Mark's United Methodist Church. Various groups provide dinner for the families prior to their programs and meetings. FCC members have been providing dinner at 6:00 pm once every quarter of the year for several years. Our next dinner will be on Thursday, April 19. We plan the menu, sign-up to prepare and bring food, set up and serve the meal. This is an excellent opportunity to meet the families and help them as they move through this initiative. If you are interested/willing to help, contact Jo Weddle at 812-345-6217 or [jweddle2@comcast.net](mailto:jweddle2@comcast.net). Your help would be most welcome.

2. **SERVING AS AN ALLY.** Moving out of the cycle of poverty takes a great deal of determination and support - support that comes from Thriving Connection allies. Are you interested in partnering with a family as they are working their way through this initiative? If so, then you are invited to learn more about what it means to be an Ally with Thriving connections. An Open House and Volunteer Appreciation Night will be held on Thursday, April 12, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. at St. Mark's United Methodist Church. Contact Katie for more information at [kthompson@insccap.org](mailto:kthompson@insccap.org) or by phone at 812-339-3447, ext. 521 (or contact Jo Weddle at the numbers above.)



If you are a **caregiver**, personal or professional, who would like a bit of **respite** time to take a **creative adventure**, this is for you! No experience necessary, this **FREE** opportunity is sponsored by FCC. Each class is led by a professional artist or experienced crafter, many of whom are also caregivers. All materials and light refreshments are supplied. Here's what's on happening in **April**:

**April 10**, "Dream Catchers: Learn the Legend, Make Your Own" led by Jeanne Dutton. The Ojibwe (sometimes called Chippewa) people are credited with making the first dream catchers. It was a great thought and the idea became a legend among other Native American nations. In this class, you will make your own to take home and hang above your bed so all your dreams are sweet ones.

**April 24**, "Paint Your Mission Statement" led by Leslie Asher. Choose a Mission Statement – a scripture, an old adage, a proverb, something that speaks to you. Then, choose your colors, paint your canvas, write your words, and add your illustration. Sample and suggestions will be available for inspiration.

**Reservations are required** and registration is limited to 10 people. Please email Jeanne Dutton at [CaregiversCreate@gmail.com](mailto:CaregiversCreate@gmail.com) with questions and to register.



The Millers would like to thank everyone for the all of the notes, visits and well-wishes from the FCC church family. Your thoughts and prayers have meant so much to both Gerry and John.

### FCC's Annual Flower Sale Begins!

It may not feel like Spring this week... but it is in fact **SPRING!** And that means it's time for FCC's Annual Flower Sale fundraiser.

We all love flowers and they also make nice gifts. Mother's Day will be the following week after delivery! So, just keep that in mind too.

The order forms are available at the reception desk at FCC or you can call Diane Thrasher for a copy. **The deadline to order is April 15th!** Pick up will be on Saturday, May 5th from noon-2:00 pm at the Solution Tree parking lot located at 555 Morton Ave.



If you have questions or would like to help with this fundraiser, contact Diane Thrasher or the FCC office.

### To all of you...

- who brought bags of candy
- who stuffed and hid 400 Easter eggs
- who packed up the children's quiet time activity bags
- who helped with the children's Pray Ground in the front of the sanctuary
- who expressed joy at seeing happy, active children in worship

...*thank you* for making Easter special for families and children!



### Sacred Music in our Community

#### Feast on Bach! Feast III

*Cantatas for Reformation and Pentecost*

Bloomington Chamber Singers and Orchestra

When: Sunday, April 15 - 3:00 p.m.

Pre-concert lecture on the Cantatas at 2:00 p.m.

Where: St. Marks United Methodist Church, 100 St. Road 46

Ticket information at their website:

<http://www.chambersingers.info/>

**Thank you** for all who contributed to the success of the Interfaith Winter Shelter. So many helped with the transition of the shelter to Wheeler Mission, helped with meals, and continued to staff late, overnight and early morning shifts throughout the season. Your commitment to this important ministry provides a safe a warm place to rest for many.

## New Developments from the Congo

Global Ministries News

Missionary Stories

By Paul Turner, project consultant for Global Ministries in the Congo

March 28, 2018



Political and economic challenges in the Democratic Republic of the Congo persist, but that doesn't stop the people from waking up each morning to thank God for another day, and continue the struggle for positive change in their country. Despite poverty, conflicts and everything you read and hear in the news, there is an abiding sense of purpose and pride among the people. And there's new hope in the full cooperation of the faithful, both Catholic and Protestant, in calling for democracy and free elections.

In 2017, I assisted CDCC in creating a Development Office to directly oversee, plan, and report on the myriad of development activities the church was undertaking. The CDCC Development Office made a tremendous impact in the capacity of the church's sustainable development efforts. For example, several years ago the CDCC Agricultural Training Center in the village of Ikengo (e-kan-go) lost all of its animals to disease. Today, with new vaccinated animals, the center is once again producing eggs and meat products. Food security is atop the list of priorities in the Equator Province, and the center plays a vital role in promoting this priority.

This past year the CDCC also focused on the need for climate adaptation in the Equator Province. The region has been hit hard by climate change, which is causing longer dry seasons in some areas, and unexpected floods in other areas. The unpredictability has upset the cycle of cultivation and movement of goods along the many rivers and waterways in the province. In response, we were able to locate the in-country offices of the Global Climate Fund to begin a conversation about supporting climate adaptation strategies in the Equator Province.

The partnership that formed between the US Embassy Self Help Program and CDCC has also been renewed with more commitments into 2018. The Equator Province is often passed over for international partnerships because there are no open conflicts in here. Instead, the partnerships and the money go east where the fighting is located, and therefore most Non-governmental organizations (NGOs). However, together we are making the case that fighting poverty is the best long term solution that impacts all of DR Congo, and can lead to greater political stability as well.

In 2018, the CDCC Development Office looks to:

- o expand the availability of clean, fresh drinking water to more interior forest communities,
- o launch a new social enterprise addressing widespread vision impairment,
- o make use of abundant plantain and bananas to produce flour,
- o assist CDCC posts with climate adaptation and training, and
- o support the Youth Department with its "Days for Girl" program to distribute sustainable feminine hygiene supplies.

This is just a partial list of the development activities CDCC is undertaking to improve the lives of people in the Equator Province. In DR Congo, the church remains a trusted and vital institution that is taking responsibility for holistic development, bringing the whole Gospel to the whole person.



## 2018 MCUM Challenge

**2018 Goal:** 2,000 pounds

**Most recent trip:** 411 pounds

**Year-to-date:** 773 pounds

### April Pantry Needs!

MCUM is in need of cereal, peanut butter, pasta sauce, canned pasta, canned tomatoes, canned fruit, dish soap, laundry soap, and all-purpose cleaners. MCUM is also collecting **Boxtops for Education** to support their Early Learning Center. Please, consider donating what you are able!

*Thank you for showing how much you care.*



**Cardinal Theater** will again be using FCC's Great Hall as rehearsal space. They will begin rehearsals for their production of *Robin Hood* this weekend, April 7 through April 27. We look forward to supporting Cardinal through this continued partnership. Welcome Cardinal!

### Safe and Welcoming

We continue to look at ways to remain both a welcoming and a safe church. If you are a leader of a group that takes place on weeknights or weekends (after regular office hours) and you don't already have a door code for your group, please contact the church office. If you attend multiple activities at FCC outside of regular office hours and would like a personal code, please contact the church office at [fcc@fccbloom.org](mailto:fcc@fccbloom.org) or 812-332-4459. Thank you!

### UPCOMING EVENTS...

#### Friday, April 6

12:00 pm Executive committee

5:30 pm Listening to God

6:30 pm First Friday Jazz Vespers

Youth Lock-in

#### Sunday, April 8

9:00 am Learning Session I

10:00 am Worship

11:15 am Learning Session II

#### Monday, April 9

6:30 pm Monday Night Book Study

#### Tuesday, April 10

1:30 pm Caregivers Create!

#### Thursday, April 12

5:30 pm Handbell choir rehearsal

6:15 pm Sanctuary choir rehearsal

#### Friday, April 13

5:30 pm Listening to God meditation

#### Sunday, April 15

9:00 am Learning Session I

10:00 am Worship with Children

Worship & Wonder

11:00 am Joyful Noise rehearsal

11:15 am Learning Session II

#### Monday, April 16

6:30 pm Monday Night Book Study

7:00 pm Women's Arts & Crafts

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**Coffee Fellowship Treat Schedule**

**April 8:**  
Emmaus Interpreters Class

**April 15:**  
Grades K-12 & Sharing Table

**April 22:**  
Sanctuary Choir & Handbell Choir

**Scripture Readings  
For Sunday Worship**

**April 8**  
Acts 1:1-14  
Mark Knowles preaching

**April 15**  
Acts 3:1-10

**April 22**  
Acts 17:1-9, Thessalonians 1:1-10