

# The CHRISTIAN



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FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH  
*(Disciples of Christ)*

## Visitor

### Summer Forum Series on Disciples Identity Continues *Exciting Line-Up of Speakers and Topics*

We've lined up some widely-known and *extremely* well-regarded Disciples leaders for FCC's Summer Forum Series on Disciples Identity in July via Zoom. Pastor Helen sends out a reminder and a Zoom link every Saturday morning in her Pastor's Postcard email. We also publish the link via our Facebook pages. If you need help in accessing Zoom, please call Andi Fletcher (812-320-1567), Christine Griffin (812-327-3609) or Miche Andre (239-234-8287).

**July 12: Rev. Dr. Robert Welsh**

**Topic:** How Disciples understand Baptism and Communion



Robert Welsh retired in 2017 after 18 years as President of the Council on Christian Unity, where he served as Disciples Chief Ecumenical Officer, representing our church in a broad range of international, national and local efforts in giving expression to the unity of the church and our oneness in Christ.

An ordained Disciples minister, Dr. Welsh served as a congregational pastor outside Bardstown, Kentucky; as the Dean of Students at Transylvania University, and where he taught in the area of religion and psychology. He also served on the staff of the World Council of Churches on its Faith and Order Commission and he offered leadership in various general ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

**July 19: Rev. Dr. Ronald Allen**

**Topic:** How Disciples Understand the Bible



Ronald Allen, ordained in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), is Professor of Preaching, and Gospels and Letters, Emeritus at Christian Theological Seminary, where he served from 1982 -2019. In retirement, he works with lectionary preaching groups, supports commissioned ministers, leads Bible studies, retreats, and other events in congregations, regions, and the general church.

A prolific writer, Allen's most recent publication is the fruit of 40 years of research and teaching: *I Will Tell You the Mystery: A Commentary on Preaching from the Book of Revelation* (Cascade, 2019). He recently helped edit *Preaching Prophetic Care: Building Bridges to Justice* (Pickwick, 2018), a reframing of the notion of "prophetic preaching" as an expression of "prophetic care."

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## Pastor's Pen

### *Strengthening the Ties that Bind*

“How are you?” “Checking in.” “I’m missing you.” “How can I support and encourage you?” “I’m holding you in prayer.” “What’s going on in your life?” “The peace of Christ be with you.”

These connective phrases and questions serve to hold us together in community. Unfortunately, during these stay-at-home days, opportunities to offer these phrases to one another don’t happen as frequently or as naturally as they might otherwise. However, it is now more important than ever that we remain intentional and diligent about tending to the ties that bind us together as one in Christ. Indeed, it is when we nurture our connections with our church community that we are: 1) reminded that we are not alone, 2) better able to engage the world as followers of Jesus, 3) strengthening the church through ministries of care and compassion.

Here are some practical ideas that will help you do your part in strengthening the ties that bind us together as the body of Christ.

- Make it a daily practice to send at least one card or email to someone at church, whether or not you know them! If you do nothing beyond this, it will make a huge difference!
- Remain in the habit (or get back into the habit!) of weekly worship from the comfortable “pew” of your own home, and be strengthened when you invite familiar FCC faces to join you in spirit!
- Participate in the weekly Adult Forum (via zoom), where you will get to see some of your church friends as well as reflect on what it means to be part of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
- Read, like, comment, and share our FCC Facebook posts. (If you would like to be part of an “in-house” non-public FCC Facebook group, please let me know.)
- Pray daily for your church staff and leadership as we continue to navigate these times.
- Participate in one of the various small groups that meet via zoom. If you are shy about joining, please reach out to me and I’ll help make it easier for you!
- Initiate a one-time virtual gathering, perhaps with one or two folks you might otherwise greet on Sunday mornings.
- Continue to give financial support. It makes a difference!

Now for a change of subject: By the time you read this article, I presume that there will be more news regarding the events that have placed Bloomington in the national news and confirmed once more the reality of systemic racism in this nation. As you are aware, one of our Disciples priorities is to become an anti-racist/pro-reconciling church. Our immediate responsibility is to engage in challenging reading, awkward dialogue, uncomfortable listening, and acts of solidarity that reflect a faith in a God of justice and healing. The road to racial reconciliation is long, but it is a road that we must travel together.

See you Sunday!

  
Pastor Helen

### Book Bunch Sponsors All-Church Movie “Watch Night!”

In July, FCC’s Book Bunch will be reading *Just Mercy*, by Bryan Stevenson, a #1 New York Times bestselling book. As an attorney devoted to serving the poor and the wrongfully condemned, Mr. Stevenson tells the true story of “the redeeming potential of mercy” as he attempts to seek justice for death row inmates. Stevenson’s story was also made into a film (by the same name) that was released in 2019 (PG13), starring Jamie Foxx and Michael B. Jordan.

In an effort to help educate ourselves about systemic racism and racial injustice, Book Bunch invites you to read the book and/or to watch the film with us. Though we still can’t gather together physically, we *can* watch simultaneously! So, gather your family on **Friday, July 10 at 8 p.m.** when Sarah Lynne Gershon will host a screening of the movie via Zoom. You are also invited to join the Book Bunch for our Zoom discussion on Thursday, July 16 at 4:00 p.m. **Please RSVP to Sarah Lynne Gershon at [sarahlynnne@fccbloomington.org](mailto:sarahlynnne@fccbloomington.org) if you want to participate in either or both of these activities so that you will receive the necessary Zoom invitations in July.**

P.S. If you know you won’t be available on July 10<sup>th</sup> to watch the film, please note that in light of the death of George Floyd, “Just Mercy” is being shown for free during the month of June only on several platforms including YouTube, Google Play, and Amazon.

### How Do We

### **STAND UP, SPEAK UP, ACT IN SOLIDARITY?**

FCC *Voices of Faith*, a network of Disciples women, will address that question Saturday morning, July 18, at 9:30 am in a special Zoom Dialog with Allison Ruari, Associate Minister at Vine Street Christian Church in Nashville, Tennessee. Many at FCC already know Rev. Ruari. Allison grew up here at FCC and is the daughter of Pastor Helen. Rev. Ruari will lead the group in addressing what it means to be people of faith who are committed to be anti-racist and pro-reconciliation.

Voices of Faith has chosen to read *White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*, by Robin DiAngelo, over the summer and will begin discussion of the book at the July meeting. All members of First Christian Church are invited to join the July 18 Dialog. Please send your name via email to Pastor Helen Hempfling to receive an invitation to the Zoom meeting.

### **SCAM ALERT from Pastor Helen!**

Scammers are targeting church people by posing as their pastor (or church friend) and asking for money, gift cards, etc. to help out someone in need (with the “promise” of reimbursement). This has happened to me, virtually all of my clergy colleagues, and some of you. Unfortunately, some well-meaning folks have been scammed out of a lot of money, and it breaks my heart. Some of the scammers are excellent impersonators of your pastor, so please hear this: I will **NEVER** send you a personal email that asks you for money, gift cards, personal info, etc. Nor will your church friend!

If you have a question about the validity of email or text that you received, please call me (or your church friend) **directly**, and do not reply to the message you received! If you need a phone number, please call the church office. These scammers are very good and getting better, so please beware!

### Faith Formation and Family Ministries Update

By Sarah Lynne Gershon, director

I hope you all continue to enjoy your summer. Our Summer Missions program with Interfaith Friends' COVID Caring Calendar is over. It was really good to talk (or text!) with those of you who participated and to hear about the conversations it started in your family. Thank you to all of you who connected with and showed God's love to our community through this program.

As of now, it looks like we will be continuing to practice Family Faith Formation at a distance, so I am developing a plan for the first semester of the school year. This will include some website re-design that makes our digital resources more readily available than worship box deliveries. While I am in the planning phase, I would LOVE to hear from you. Let's find new ways to be the church and grow in our faith together through-out our weeks and in our homes!

#### Adult Faith Formation

I am so grateful for the leadership the **Book Bunch** and **Voices of Faith** has shown in responding to our commitment to being an Anti-Racist and Pro-Reconciling church. It is truly inspiring. **Voices of Faith** is reading *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo and **Book Bunch** is hosting a discussion on *Just Mercy* Thursday July 16<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 pm. Everyone at First Christian Church is invited to the **Book Bunch** discussion and if you aren't able to read the book you can watch the movie instead. I'll be doing the latter and hope to see you there!

I am also excited to announce that we will be hosting additional guest presenters for our Summer Forum series! This Sunday, Rev. Dr. Robert Welsh, former President of the Council of Christian Unity, will lead us in an exploration of Baptism and Communion from a Disciples' perspective. On the 19<sup>th</sup>, former CTS professor, Rev. Dr. Ron Allen will present on reading the Bible, and on the 26<sup>th</sup>, Rev. Dr. Michael Kinnamon, co-author of *Disciples: Who We Are and What Holds Us Together* (a book I just read and found enlightening), will present on the tension Disciples' hold between Unity and Liberty. He will then highlight the implications of this tension for justice work. I look forward to seeing Sundays at 11:00 am! Thank you to everyone who has participated thus far.

#### Summer Camp Goes Virtual!

After much thought and planning, summer camp is going virtual this year. This does not replace the experience of in-person camp, but it does give our youth a chance to connect with their larger faith community. Registration is \$10 (and scholarships are available!). Please let Ashlyn Reynolds or the church office know if you are interested and/or would like a scholarship.

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|--------------------|----------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| July 23 at 6:00 pm | You & Me (ages 5+)               | July 23 at 7:30 pm                          | Middle School (6-8 Bedford) |
| July 21 at 6:00 pm | New Beginnings (1-3 gr, Bedford) | July 21 at 7:30 pm                          | Middle School (6-8 Geneva)  |
| July 20 at 6:00 pm | New Beginnings (1-3 dr. Geneva)  | July 20 at 7:30 pm                          | High School (9-12 Bedford)  |
| July 20 at 6:00 pm | Explorer (4-5 gr. Bedford)       | July 21 at 7:30 pm                          | High School (9-12 Geneva)   |
| July 22 at 6:00 pm | Explorer (4-5 gr. Geneva)        |   |                             |
|                    | July 20 at 7:30 pm               | MAD (Music, Art, Drama for 6-12 gr. Geneva) |                             |
|                    | July 23 at 7:30 pm               | CROSS (Rec. & Sports for 6-12 gr. Geneva)   |                             |

## MUSIC IN OUR UPCOMING SERVICES

Here you can find a guide to music that will be a part of our worship services upcoming! I hope this will enhance your worship experience as you prepare for each Sunday's YouTube worship and give insight into the music you will hear and a heads up and background on the hymns.

**July 12 - Theme: An Earthly Grace – Acts 4:32-37** – “...With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them....”

The communion anthem *Ubi Caritas* by the French composer Maurice Duruflé (1902-1986) is a meditative treatment of a beautiful chant from the 9<sup>th</sup> century traditionally sung on Maundy Thursday when we hear about Jesus washing the disciples' feet and the call for us to show love to one another in humble service, Duruflé's setting is one of four motets based on Gregorian themes; the melody is always present, surrounded with wonderful harmonies that make this motet one of the most transcendent pieces in the repertoire. The translation of the Latin text below could be a basis for meditation in preparation for Sunday's worship.

*Ubi caritas et amor,  
Deus ibi est.  
Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor.  
Exultemus et in ipso jucundemur.  
Timeamus et amemus Deum vivum.  
Et ex corde diligamus nos sincero.  
Amen.*

Where true love and charity are found,  
God himself is there.  
Since Christ's love has gathered us together as one  
let us rejoice and be glad in Him, now and forever.  
We will fear and love the living God.  
And we will love one another with a sincere heart.  
Amen.

Here is a YouTube link to the motet if you would like to hear it as part of your meditation, perhaps following the translation above: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9PzS7rVTgKE>

The hymn for this day – *Called as Partners in Christ's Service* - will also uplift the theme of service and caring. Jane Parker Huber (b. 1926) wrote this text in 1981 for the women's breakfast held when two Presbyterian denominations convened joint General Assemblies in Houston, Texas. The hymn tune associated with this hymn – BEECHER - is by John Zundel (1815-1882); He composed it in 1855, and it was published in *Christian Heart Songs* (1870). The tune's name is for Henry Ward Beecher, pastor of Plymouth Church in Brooklyn, New York, where Zundel served as organist for thirty years. Listen here to learn the hymn before Sunday so you can sing along! The video includes the words! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KnT-UpyiVB8>

**July 19: Theme: The Power of Grace - Romans 8:26-39** - *For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

The Communion Solo will be “If God be for us” from Handel's *Messiah*, sung by our choral scholar Maria Izzo-Walker: “If God be for us, who can be against us? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is at the right hand of God, who makes intercession for us. (Romans8: 31, 33-34). Listen here - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N7UcilVV98Q>

And the hymn closing out our series on Grace is *Amazing Grace*! Please sing along with us on Sunday.

**Special “Virtual” Congregational Meeting on July 12**  
*Important Meeting to Approve Leadership Positions for 2020-2021*

At the June 21 meeting (after unanimously voting to accept the names presented by the nominating committee to fill the roles of board member, trustee, elder and deacon), the FCC board voted to approve a one-time suspension of the by-laws to give the congregation the opportunity to vote virtually for next year’s church leaders. Normally, this vote would take place just after the worship service, two weeks following the board meeting. However, because the pandemic is preventing us from meeting in person, the following process, developed by the executive committee, will be followed: On Sunday morning, July 12, active and participating members will receive an email message from the church that lists the names of the candidates. Then, between the hours of 9:00 am and 9:00 pm, members may vote by responding to the email with a “yes” or “no” (via email or phone message). Members who do not use email may call the church, state your name, and say “yes” or “no”.

Upon approval of the congregation, their terms of service will begin immediately. Special thanks goes to nominating committee members Scott Cripe and Terry Daugherty.

**Below is the slate of candidates:**

**Board:**

John Walsh (representing elders)  
 Christine Griffin (representing outreach and service)  
 Lauren Johann (representing youth)  
 Chuck Jones (at large)  
 Braden Mishler (representing deacons)  
 Amy Wardlow (at large)

**Trustee:** Chip Welch

**Elder:** Debbie White

**Deacon:** Mackenzie Colston



**NBA’s XPLOR Program Announces Hiatus for 2020-21 Program Year**

After considerable discernment, the National Benevolent Association (NBA) has made the difficult decision to place our young adult residential program, NBA XPLOR, on hiatus for the 2020-21 program year.

In light of the impact of COVID-19 and the realities of addressing this infectious disease, the NBA had to address the real question of “can we safely bring people together?” As an organization, NBA devoted several weeks of staff time and many more hours of internal and external conversations to reach this decision.

Through analysis, consultation, and prayer, NBA understands that there are many unpredictable variables in hosting a residential program in these uncertain times. Considering NBA’s vision of creating communities of compassion and care, we believe that our Residents, Host Teams, and the NBA staff are best served by placing the program on hiatus for the 2020-21 program year. While we lament this decision, we hope this time provides us the freedom and flexibility to adapt to the changing situations of living in a pandemic and dismantling systems of injustice. For more information go to [www.nbacares.org](http://www.nbacares.org) and click on “Stories & News” in the drop down menu.

**FCC Summer Forum Series Continues...** *(continued from page 1)*

**July 12:**  
**Rev. Dr. Robert Welsh**  
*How Disciples Understand  
 Baptism and Communion*



**July 19:**  
**Rev. Dr. Ronald Allen**  
*How Disciples Understand  
 The Bible*



**July 26: Rev. Dr. Michael Kinnamon**  
**Topic:** *How Disciples Understand Liberty and Unity  
 (and the Tension between Justice and Unity)*

**Michael Kinnamon**, one of the most prominent and influential ecumenical leaders and educators of our time, was the ninth General Secretary of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA. Prior to his election in 2007, he was chair of the Council's Justice and Advocacy Commission. He also served as General Secretary of the Consultation on Church Union (now Churches Uniting in Christ) and as an Executive Secretary of the World Council of Churches' Faith and Order Commission.

An ordained minister in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Dr. Kinnamon, now retired, was a seminary and university professor for 30 years, also serving as Dean of Lexington Theological Seminary from 1988-98. A highly published author and sought after preacher and speaker who has preached and lectured all over the world. Dr. Kinnamon will help us reflect on some of the themes he lifts up in his book *Disciples: Who We Are and What Holds Us Together*.

**Thank you from Pastor Helen and Pastor Bruce**

Your prayers, cards, notes of encouragement, and offers of assistance in the days surrounding Bruce's surgery and recovery have strengthened and humbled us. There are no words that can adequately express our gratitude to you, our church family. We give thanks to God for you. We also give thanks that all reports thus far indicate that Bruce is cancer free!

**In our prayers**

Our elders and our prayer ministry team continue to pray with and for you. Please email or call the church office with your specific prayer requests.

**Are you having trouble accessing our online worship services?**

Help is on the way! Please call the church office, and we will send you (via email or through the post office) a copy of the weekly bulletin (containing scripture and words to the hymns and anthems), prayer, and sermon.



*July Series: Commitment*

**July 17** – Commitment to Prayer

**July 24** – Commitment to Love

**July 31** - Commitment to Hope

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**“Virtual” Congregational Meeting  
July 12 via email or phone**

**Please review information on page 6 of this  
newsletter prior to July 12. Then vote by  
email at [fcc@fccbloomington.org](mailto:fcc@fccbloomington.org) or by  
phone at 812-332-4459.**



**Scripture Readings  
For Sunday Worship**

**July 12**

Acts 4:32-37

**July 19**

Romans 8:26-39