

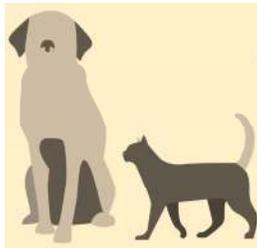
The CHRISTIAN



FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH
(Disciples of Christ) Visitor

Blessing of the Animals on September 27

Service via Zoom at 4:00 pm and Socially Distanced Blessing at 5:30 pm



On Sunday, September 27, we will celebrate something that St. Francis of Assisi started almost 800 years ago! Known as the Patron Saint of Animals, St. Francis preached to birds, and blessed fish that had been caught before releasing them back into the water. It is even said that he communicated with wolves, stopping a wolf from attacking an Italian town by making the sign of the cross and commanding it not to hurt anyone. St. Francis considered all God's creatures his brothers and sisters. So, it isn't surprising that many churches remember St. Francis on or near his Feast Day with a special service celebrating and blessing all of God's creatures.

We look forward to this special service each year. This year, we have planned for two services to fit the needs of those who are at high risk for COVID-19 and for those who are beginning to participate in socially distanced activities that follow safety guidelines. All pets are welcome to participate in either service.

Our online service **will be at 4:00 pm via Zoom**. It will include special music, liturgy and prayer. All pets will be blessed individually and by name. The link to the Zoom service can be found here:

Zoom Link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83193340788?pwd=Tms5NWw5WXk5N0x3V2xodVZRYmZpOT09>

An in-person service titled ***"Pets and Picnics in the Park"*** will be held outdoors at the **3rd Street / Waldron Hill Buskirk Park by the playground at 5:30 pm**. Bring your pet, your mask, and a picnic dinner. There are not a lot of picnic tables, so you may also want to bring blankets or camping chairs for the picnic. Sarah Lynne will bring cold drinks and Pastor Helen will be present to bless the animals. Families with young children can pick up a worship bag for October at this event. Please let Sarah Lynne know via email at (sarahlynn@fccbloomington.org) if you would like to pick up your worship bag at the park.

Don't forget to register your attendance to our Online Sunday Worship Service by filling out the form found on our homepage.

www.fccbloomington.org

Thank you!

Pastor's Pen

Pastor Helen to Retire

Dear Members and Friends of First Christian Church,

On Tuesday, September 15, I submitted the following letter to Terry Daugherty, Board Moderator:

Dear Terry and Members of the Board,

It is with very mixed emotions that I share with you that I will be retiring on May 30, 2021. This was not an easy decision to make, but it was the right one. Our trip to Idaho last month made it clear that we need to be there to help my sister care for my parents.

While there will be ample time over the coming months for us to continue to serve God together as partners in ministry, please know that I have always considered it a joy and an honor to serve as your pastor for these past 24+ years. We've done some good ministry together. My family and I have been richly blessed by God through all of you, and I pray God's blessing upon you, both now and always.

Blessings and Peace,

Pastor Helen

I'll share more in the coming months. Right now, however, I'm feeling a bit too tender to offer anything more than what I've written above. Thank you for being the amazing congregation that you are! I love the people of First Christian Church, Bloomington, and I always will!

Blessings, dear friends in Christ,



Pastor Helen

PS. Change of subject! Last week, during our extended family Zoom call to wish my mother a happy 90th birthday, we were joined by four dogs and seven cats--all part of the extended Hempfling clan! It was a lot of fun for us to see (as well as "ohh-and-ahh" over) these four-legged furry family members, all with distinct personalities!

I'm looking forward to seeing many of you and your pets at our Blessing of the Animals service, which will take place via Zoom at 4 pm on September 27. We'll have some special music and share in a short liturgy. The highlight will come when each pet will be lifted up, named, and blessed. Please see the front page article for more information and how to get connected via Zoom. Also, at 5:30ish, I will be present in at the Waldron Hill Buskirk Park (on Third Street behind the Police Headquarters) for anyone who wants their pets to be blessed face-to-face. Our FCC families will be there with their pets and picnics to enjoy a socially distanced time of fellowship. All are welcome!

Voices of Faith to offer Voter Registration Information
September 22 from 10:00 am - 2:00 pm on FCC's Lawn

FCC's Voices of Faith (Disciples Women) will be helping folks register to vote, or receive information on how to vote, by offering a *Voter Registration Information Table on September 22*. The event will take place on FCC's front lawn **from 10:00 am - 2:00 pm**.

If you are interested in helping with this event, or interested in receiving information on voter registration, please contact the church office or Susan Fettchenhauer. Yard signs are available for those interested in encouraging people to register and vote.

The Voices of Faith voter registration table event is a collaborative effort with the Bloomington League of Women Voters and is designed to be a non-partisan resource for voting information. All COVID-19 precautions for wearing masks and social distancing will be followed during the day.

Being the Church We Say We Are
Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciliation Resources

Love is an Action Word is the name of a 7-part series designed to help educate and engage Disciples as we embrace our mission priority to be an anti-racist/pro-reconciling church. The September 24 (7:00 pm) webinar session will feature Disciples leaders discussing the Black Lives Matter movement and work of the National Convocation. Panelists will be Rev. Dr. Timothy James, Administrative Secretary of the National Convocation, and Associate General Minister and President of the Christian Church and Rev. Dr. Irie Session, President of the Board of the National Convocation and Co-Founder of "The Gathering" church in Dallas TX.

To register, please go to the Disciples homepage, www.disciples.org. The webinar is one of the items that is scrolled across the top. *Love is an Action Word* is produced by and for Disciples to help us "be the church we say we are." It is brought to us by the Office of the General Minister and President and by Reconciliation Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Zoom Discussion on Anti-Racism on September 24 at 7:00 pm

Discussion of Emmanuel Acho's Series "Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man"

Members from FCC and North Christian Church in Columbus are invited to gather on Zoom for an anti-racism discussion of the YouTube Series "Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man."

This series is free and available for anyone to watch. It features former NFL player turned ESPN analyst Emmanuel Acho. In the series, Acho addresses basic, fundamental questions about race in a straight-forward, honest way. The episode that will be discussed in our **Zoom session on Sept. 24 at 7:00 pm** will be Episode 7, which includes a conversation between Acho and Carl Lentz, lead pastor of Hillsong Church East Coast. If you would like to join the next discussion, you can watch this episode at this link: <https://uncomfortableconvos.com/episode/episode-7>

Please contact Jean Thompson at lajean_2000@comcast.net for a link to the Zoom discussion.



Building Update

John Seest, our Structural Engineer, reported some good news to the Cornerstone meeting at its latest meeting: The load-bearing walls/pilasters and trusses of our sanctuary are strong and secure! The bowing that had concerned him was due to water getting behind the limestone veneer and pushing it out. He recommends that we tuckpoint the limestone in order to keep out water and maintain the structural integrity of the building. In addition, he recommends that our window wells be shored up by removing the limestone veneer and replacing it with concrete to protect the foundational brick wall behind it. He also recommends that we continue to monitor our walls regularly and note any outward movement.

John also expressed concerns over the structural integrity of our balcony, which was extended when the organ was moved there decades ago. He will be doing more investigation. Finally, he recommends that we replace the large support beam that runs under our sanctuary (directly beneath the dividing wall between the narthex and the sanctuary). It was compromised by termite damage (remediated many year ago).

In the meantime, David Allen, our architect, has submitted final plans for handicap accessible restrooms, a renovated Chapel Gathering Space with kitchenette, an enhanced chancel, and an upgraded narthex that includes direct access to an all-gender restroom!

Once the Cornerstone team receives John's final report and recommendations (including final cost estimates related to repair and maintenance), they will be very close to presenting their recommendations to the board and congregations (including priority projects and estimated costs). Stay tuned!

MCUM Drive-In Food & Supply Drive!



This past Saturday (September 12) FCC filled the truck for our very first Drive-In, Contact-Free Food and Supply Drive! By the end of the day we had completing our goal of filling the truck with 670 pounds of donated goods for MCUM's Food and Supply Pantry! Thank you to all who came out to help with the success of this drive!

Especially, we'd like to thank Fay McIntyre and Frieda Hoffman for organizing and for our volunteers Eve Schultes-Ridge, Toni Pittman, and Pastor Helen, who helped gather the items from cars as they drove through the alley to drop off their donations. **Thank you!**

Youth News
by Ashlyn Reynolds

Our first youth event this year will be a **Crafter-noon** on **Sunday, September 20 from 4:00-6:00 pm**. This will take place at the church on the front lawn. We will be getting creative and enjoying each other's company (from 6+ feet away and wearing masks). Various art-making materials will be provided!

It's Time to Join a Small Group or Class at FCC!

Contact the group leaders or sarahlyne@fccbloomington.org for Zoom links

Weekly Opportunities on Sundays

Sunday Meditation Group (spiritual practice)

This group practices silent meditation to cultivate peace and joy. Each session includes discussion of readings from teachers such as Thich Nhat Hahn, Richard Rohr, and others. No previous experience in mediation practice is required. **Meets at 9:00 a.m. on Sundays via Zoom.**

Leader: Tom Walsh

Faith, Friends & Films (discussion, spiritual practice)

When this group gathers, film sets the tone for diving deep into our shared faith journey. The dialogue begins with brief and engaging videos featuring modern theologians. In order to dig deeper into the question, "What does it mean to be a Christian?" this group is starting a 7-week film series on Sept. 20 called "Allegiance to Empire." We meet **Sundays at 11:15 a.m. via Zoom.**

Leaders: Lisa Autry, Amy Hoover, and Sharon Robinson

Campbellite Class (study, discussion)

As thinking persons who love God and each other, we think together about how we should live as part of God's family. This term our focus will be on "Living the Christian Life in a Time of Pandemic." This class likes lively discussion as part of our lifelong learning. Join us **Sundays at 11:15 a.m. via Zoom.**

Leaders: Jane Watkins, Joe Lee, and Nancy Heimer

Contact Andi Fletcher for Zoom link

Bloomington Bible Study (study, discussion)

This group consists of young adults who are college-aged, but you do not need to be in college to attend. Everyone 18-30 is welcome! Pre-Pandemic FCC's college ministry focused on studying with the Bible (this means that students were encouraged to bring homework to do while we discussed our weekly theme and how it relates to our faith journeys), but now everything has changed and we are figuring out the how's and what's of this group. Stayed tuned for the details coming soon and let us know if you want to get connected to whatever transpires. **Time, Day and Forum TBD**

Leader: Haley Norris

(More groups and classes on page 6)

Groups Meeting Weekly

Contact the group leaders or sarahlynn@fccbloomington.org for Zoom links

Deeper Bible Study

This group engages FCC's sermon series scriptures using the Deeper Bible Study method. The Deeper method keeps us on our toes, searching each text for relevance, guidance and inspiration, *and* allowing us to be honest when we don't find what we expect. We welcome folks new to this Bible study method, as well as those who've tried it before, and are always interested in feedback from participants. The sermon series we are following this fall are: *A Season of Creation* (Sept), *A Season of Courage* (Oct), and *A Season of Gratitude* (Nov). Commit to one month or all three! We would love to dig into the Bible with you anytime!

Leaders: Debbie White, Elma Jessen and Connie Myers

Making Sense of the Cross

A 6 week book/DVD/discussion study via Zoom of different understandings of the Cross. Lutheran biblical scholar David Lose will be the teacher on DVD, with Bruce Ervin providing leadership. The class will be held on Wednesday evenings, beginning September 9. Books can be ordered through Amazon or by calling Mitzi in the Bedford-FCC office: 812-275-4497.

Groups Meeting Monthly

Contact the group leaders or sarahlynn@fccbloomington.org for Zoom links

Book Bunch (for women)

This fun group of readers gathers every five weeks to discuss books from a variety of genres. We typically meet **on a Thursday at 4:00 pm via Zoom. A booklist with meeting dates and locations is available in the church office and online.**

Leader: Betsy Watson

Voices of Faith

A network of Disciples Women, Voices of Faith strives to dialogue, educate, and advocate as we do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God. The group is now reading *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo and is supporting voter registration initiatives. Via its mailing list, VoF shares calls to action that support legislation, cooperation with civic groups, and responses to community issues and concerns. We meet **monthly on third Saturdays, 9:30-11:00 am via Zoom.**

Leaders: Sandy Bate, Susan Fettchenhauer, Judith Olmsted

Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS)

This group of moms gathers on the **first Wednesday of each month** to embrace the journey of motherhood. Whether you are a soon-to-be mom, an adoptive mom, young mom, seasoned mom, foster mom, stepmom or any other type of mom, you are welcome to join us! Learn more on our Facebook page: [@fccbloomingtonmops](https://www.facebook.com/fccbloomingtonmops).

Led by Andrea Dalton



Former Members In Our Prayers

Please hold Georgia and Rick Sheriff in your prayers as they mourn the loss of their son, Christopher (38) who died on September 10. The Sheriff family was active in our congregation when their children were young. Cards and notes of condolence can be sent to Georgia and Rick at 9404 Aurora Ave., Urbandale, IA 50322.

Also, hold Rev. Steve Fisher, another former member, in your prayers as he grieves the death of his son Jonathan (42), who was killed in a motorcycle accident. Cards and notes may be sent to Steve at Willow Lake Place, 2725 Lake Circle Dr. #101, Indianapolis, IN 46268.

Regional Assembly is October 2-3 Mark your Calendars!

2020 Regional Assembly is online this year – with some of the great features you love about Assembly – dynamic speakers, group discussions, a women’s event, and a vibrant worship service with a virtual choir (including many of FCC’s Sanctuary choir members). You won’t want to miss this first ever virtual assembly – and an opportunity to invite someone who has never attended.

Registration closes on September 23. That’s next Wednesday! You can register by going online to <http://indianadisciples.org/regional-assembly-2020/> Scroll down the page until you see “REGISTER HERE” in red. Click and fill out the online form. You can also register by calling the regional office at (317) 926-6051. This event is FREE, but you must register.

October 2 at 6:30 pm: Women’s Evening “And Who Is My Sister?”

Because we are having a virtual dinner, we thought it would be fun to post virtual recipes of what you might have brought to a potluck dinner. Please post your recipes to our Facebook Page:

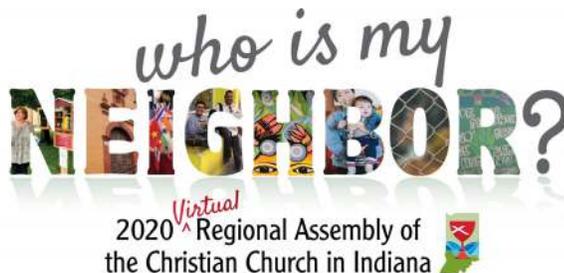
<https://www.facebook.com/Indiana-Disciples-Women-470878366309822>

October 3: Regional Assembly

9:00 am - Welcome, Music, and Business

10:00 am - Keynote Speaker Rev. Lisania Martinez, and Small Groups Conversations

11:00 am - Worship with Rev. Terri Hord Owens and Virtual Choir





Week of Compassion Update: Disciples Respond to Oregon Wild Fires

As wildfires continue to spread across much of the west, Week of Compassion is learning more about the widespread impacts and needs. In Oregon, an historic number of fires have burned more than 1 million acres of land, and parts of the state currently have the worst air quality in the world. Hundreds of thousands of people are under evacuation orders-- including more than 100 Disciples households.

In the midst of this ongoing emergency, churches are working to serve their neighbors. Local partnerships are critical, and existing ministries provide opportunities for response in a crisis situation. Congregations in Oregon are working with other leaders and relief organizations to identify specific needs in their area. In partnership with the Region, Week of Compassion is supporting congregations as they serve their wider communities. This response through local churches allows our impact to reach even farther, as Disciples work to meet the critical needs of their neighbors.

Medford First Christian Church has served a community meal each Thursday night for many years. They also have a food pantry and community garden. Through these ministries, the church was already connected with many of their most vulnerable neighbors. Now that their part of southern Oregon is the site of two major fires, those community connections position the congregation to have a significant impact for those in need. FCC continues to serve food once a week, now in the form of sack dinners to go. In collaboration with their community partners, FCC is also helping to distribute items collected by other Disciples churches in the region.

To the north, First Christian Church Corvallis has a long-standing ministry with unhoused members of their community, including a soup kitchen that provided daily meals prior to the pandemic. They've modified this ministry throughout the pandemic in order to stay connected with this vulnerable population. Because of their existing relationships within the area, the church was approached by a county official about serving as a temporary shelter for a small number of houseless neighbors who need respite from the poor air quality. When asked how the collaboration came about, Rev. Matt Gordon replied, "I know a guy." The congregation has now been approved as an overflow shelter to house up to 20 people for two weeks.

These are just a few of the ways in which Oregon Disciples are caring for their members and neighbors during a critical time. When congregations have a foundation of connection and relationship within the community, they find ways to expand and build upon that ministry when disasters create immediate needs.

Please continue to be in prayer for those who have suffered losses in these and other fires across the west, and those who remain at risk. Together, our wider Church is making a difference for those most in need from this disaster. To support these fire relief efforts, please designate your gift as "U.S. Storms and Fires;" or, for hurricane response, designate "Hurricane/Cyclone/Typhoon."





OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS



10/01	Dan	Goins	60 Bailliere Dr.	Martinsville	IN	46151
10/02	Liz	Culpepper	15351 English River Loop	Leander	TX	78641
10/03	Ann	Moore	2526 E. Summer Creek Dr.	Bloomington	IN	47401
10/08	Tim	Jessen	3632 W. Indian Creek Dr.	Bloomington	IN	47403
10/09	Story	Bolton	8841 S. Morning Glory Ct.	Bloomington	IN	47401
10/10	Olivia	Walsh	3006 S. Olcott Blvd.	Bloomington	IN	47401
10/11	Regina	Niyonsaba Gasana	4199 Innisbrooke Dr.	Bloomington	IN	47408
10/11	Lindsay	Stafford	837 NW 33rd St.	Oklahoma City	OK	73118
10/12	Cheri	Engber	2731 S. Silver Creek Dr.	Bloomington	IN	47401
10/14	Sparrow	Houchins	3821 S. Westmont Ave.	Bloomington	IN	47403
10/14	Maya	Jackson	3693 S. Sowder Square	Bloomington	IN	47401
10/15	Ethan	Fletcher	6320 E. Bender Rd.	Bloomington	IN	47401
10/16	David	Austin	3040 N. Ramble Road West	Bloomington	IN	47408
10/16	Nancy	Brinegar	2726 S. McCartney Lane	Bloomington	IN	47401
10/17	Mike	Rampley	2228 Autumn Drive	Bloomington	IN	47401
10/20	Matthew	Moore	2526 E. Summer Creek Dr.	Bloomington	IN	47401
10/21	Jane	Zebendon	2309 S. Sussex Drive	Bloomington	IN	47401
10/24	Susan	Jenkin	3476 S. Knight Ridge Rd.	Bloomington	IN	47401
10/25	Scott	Cripe	3930 W. Tapp Rd.	Bloomington	IN	47403
10/25	Rachel	Rosolina	2004 Grovesnor Pl.	Bloomington	IN	47401
10/26	Cindy	Kvale	1212 Skylark Ct.	Bloomington	IN	47401
10/29	Jo	Weddle	5390 W. Shadybrook Dr.	Bloomington	IN	47403
10/29	Mia	Walsh	3006 S. Olcott Blvd.	Bloomington	IN	47401
10/30	Stephanie	Richards	1651 W. Dove Drive	Bloomington	IN	47403

If you have a birthday that is not listed, please let us know so we can update our records.

First Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
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The Christian Visitor

Vol. 62, no. 18

**Sermon Series continues
Through September 27**

A SEASON OF
CREATION
BEDFORD & BLOOMINGTON
FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

**Scripture Readings
For Sunday Worship**

September 20
And Then We Blew It!
from Genesis 3:1-19

September 27
When the World Started Over:
Flood and Covenant
from Genesis 6, 7, 8, 9