

The CHRISTIAN

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

FCC's Blessing of the Animals on October 6

Join Us as We Celebrate and Bless our Animal Friends

On Sunday October 6 we will celebrate something that St. Francis of Assisi started almost 800 years ago! We will celebrate and honor our animal friends!

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 (October 4) with a special service celebrating and blessing all of God's creatures.

FCC's Blessing of the Animals Service will be on **Sunday October 6 at 4:00 pm on our beautiful lawn**. Please bring your pet and join us for this special service as we celebrate these wonderful creatures who show unconditional love and bring joy to our lives. We will also be collecting donations of pet food for the Monroe County Humane Association's pet food bank. So bring your donations with you to the service.

The Blessing of the Animals service has become a beloved tradition that FCC shares with our community through the FCC Lawn Ministry. Tell your friends and neighbors! All are welcome! We only ask that dogs be kept on a leash, and other animals kept in a manner that will ensure their safety and the safety of others (kennel, habitat, cage... as needed). If your pet is shy, doesn't travel well or is not comfortable around others, you might consider bringing a picture of your pet to the service.

Join us on October 4th at 4:00 pm on our front lawn for this special service! We are so fortunate to have this green space in the middle of downtown. What a great opportunity to share the inclusive love of Christ with our Bloomington community!

Inside This Issue...

Page 4 Learn about MOPS

Page 5 Reconciliation Ministry
Special Offering

Page 6 October Birthdays!

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Pastor's Pen

After our whirlwind summer that included welcoming our XPLORES residents, dealing with the aftermath of a lightning strike, making headway with decisions about future building upgrades and renovations, and prepping for the launch of our fall programming, life around First Christian Church has begun to feel a little more routine. And I, for one, am glad! I've tweaked my own routine, adding the following:

Deeper Bible Study: This "pilot" class, which meets weekly for seven weeks, is off to an excellent start! We're learning a Bible Study method that I hope will become routine for many of you.

Meeting with our XPLORES Residents and Host Team: Our Residents are remarkable young adults with SO many gifts to be developed and shared. Part of their covenant is to offer 6 hours a week to help build up the church! I am in the process of helping them find/develop/support ways they can serve. Stay tuned! Our FCC Host Team continues to dedicate themselves to making sure that our residents are well supported. Sadly, we had to say good-bye to Fabiana last week following an NBA decision to release her from her covenant. During her short time with us, we came to appreciate her personality, her potential for ministry, and her passion for justice. We hold her in prayer as she discerns next steps.

While I'm on the topic of XPLORES, here is what we need: 1) dinner invitations on Friday or Saturday. Our three delightful Residents would love to get to know you better! 2) Tickets to a ball game or the theater. Even though one of our residents is a die-hard Tar Heels fan, we can at least attempt to get her to wear red! 3) An offer to drive them to Aldi to

shop for groceries on their tight budget. 4) Your daily prayers. Please contact Chuck Jones or Rhonda Trippel regarding the best way to make your offers.

Meeting with New Clergy Colleagues:

First Methodist, Trinity Episcopal, and First United Church now have women serving as their lead pastors. This is the first time that any of these congregations have had women serving in a senior leadership role. Of course, for us this is "old hat," and my hope is that we can offer encouragement and support to these congregations during their transition in leadership. In the meantime, I must say that I am enjoying being part of a clergy group where I am not the only woman!

I've also "let go" of part of my routine:

First Friday Jazz Vespers Service: Linda Abe will be the new Jazz Vespers Coordinator. She will be working with Jan, our musicians, and our core group of volunteers to make sure that this special service continues to be one of the best ministries that our church has to offer to the wider community. I will continue to help lead the service; however, Linda will take the lead in creating the content and form that makes the liturgy of this service so special and unique. I am so thankful for her gifts!

As you continue to "tweak" your routines, my prayer is that you will listen for ways that God is calling you to offer your time and energy and gifts in ways that will help bring wholeness to you and to this world that God so loves!

Blessings,

Helen Hempfing

Pastor Helen



PREACHING FROM THE CHOIR: The Hymnal: More than a Book of Songs

We all expect that our Sunday worship service will contain some congregational hymn singing, and in this forum I often return to admonitions to the congregation to actively and energetically take part in those significant (and essential) moments of worship. Sometimes, from my perch in the choir loft at the back of the church, I can look down and notice lots of folks singing, others sharing the hymnal with their children or family and helping by pointing the way through the hymn for the young ones, and yet some others barely even opening the book...perhaps listening or maybe feeling left out or maybe checking out for a time! The thing about the hymnal is that it is more than a bunch of songs – some of them well-known and beloved, others unfamiliar or with new texts. It is an important collection of spiritual poetry. At First Christian, we still hold our hymnals for a very good reason instead of projecting words a line at a time on a distant screen – aside from the music, the content of the *entire* hymn text is in itself something to contemplate even after or before the singing takes place. Each week, Pastor Helen carefully evaluates and chooses hymns that enhance and reveal the themes for the Sunday service to lead us into closer communion during worship, to open our hearts to prayer or action or praise. This week I'd like to share again with you an article from the notes of a recent CD that reveals something very special about the spiritual act of hymn singing. Hopefully this provocative article can help find an extra something meaningful in the ACT of hymn singing even if one feels they cannot participate fully –something which is an amplification of the content of the hymns themselves.

WHAT HYMNS ARE TO US AS A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

by Ian Frazier

Excerpted from the CD liner notes to *Shall We Gather:
American Hymns and Spirituals* - Albany Records, TROY476

Hymns begin in uncertainty. The throat-clearings, the fumbling in the hymnals for the right page, the mismatched voices struggling for the proper key and hunting through the first verse for the tune – in most places of worship, hymn-singing begins with these. Western movies sometimes show small congregations singing a hymn outdoors, where the vastness of the sky and scenery gives a heightened sense of frailty to the song. But the very act of composing hymns, the determination to sing a song of praise to God, exists against a large background of doubt and un-belief and darkness. At their essence, all hymns have a quality of whistling in the dark.

Many, if not most, of the American hymns we sing were written in the 19th century or before, when Americans in general thought more about God than they do today. In small towns all across the country, this was how you spent your Sundays: you went to church in the morning, you came home and read the Bible or prayed, and you went to church again in the afternoon. A Midwestern country history I read describes the county's founders as people "mighty in prayer and exhortation."

(continued on page 4)

(Preaching from the Choir continued from page 3)

Small Group Ministry Highlight: MOPS (Mothers Of PreSchoolers)

Who we are: Mothers of young children (birth through elementary school) and mentors who have already mothered their children through the early years.

Why we offer this ministry: Through MOPS, we gather and support moms during the most potentially isolating phase of motherhood, before our babies enter school. Several of our MOPS moms are not from FCC, and we hope to reach out to even more moms this year and beyond. FCC's financial support gives us access to the wealth of resources available from the MOPS organization, which is an international ministry, and allows us to offer childcare for our monthly meetings.

When and where we meet: The first Wednesday of each month, September – May, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. in the Fireside Study. Childcare is provided. And there's almost always chocolate.

What we do when we meet: We start with practical advice from videos featuring top-notch speakers. And snacks! Then we get to have honest conversations with other moms who understand the joys and frustrations of motherhood. Finally, we try to fit in some games and activities to get our creative juices flowing. Check out our FaceBook page to find out more about our upcoming meetings and projects. @fccbloomingtonmops.

When I stand in church to sing a hymn I'm always encouraged to see at the bottom of the page the name of Isaac Watts or Charles Wesley or John Newton, or someone else from that serious and devotional era of faith. When I sing "Shall we gather at the river/Where bright angel feet have trod," I think of the spiritual concentration – not just of the writer, but of a whole culture—that it took to envision those bright feet.

Our minds nowadays are occupied with other subjects. And yet, surprisingly, our greater familiarity with doubt may help us to hear these hymns more clearly than people in former times could have done. To us a hymn may stand out more vividly against the immensity of the surrounding doubt-filled silence. Faith is not something you have; it's something you do; the same can be said of art. As an act of faith or a work of art, a hymn exists in that uncertain moment between giving up and going on. A hymn is an inspired decision to go on. It fulfills the decision note by note and word by word. Its conviction builds. Suddenly it is greater than the darkness, and it rises up all the stronger for the doubt that went before. If the voices begin hesitatingly, by the final verse they are almost always full and confident and in unison; acting on faith, the hymn has somehow caused faith to be. Our hymns and spirituals are among the great discoveries faith has made about itself, through words and music that now belong to us all.

A Pause for Many Thank-Yous

By Chuck Jones, Director of Service Ministries

August was a pivotal month for FCC as we went from preparations to becoming an XPLOR Host Congregation. As we move into our new day to day life with our residents, I'd like to pause to say thank you to those who have led and served us as we prepared for this milestone.

First, a huge thank you to James Harris and Cindy Welch for their hands-on leadership in the physical remodeling of the new XPLOR apartment space. James created the remodeling plan and donated his time as a professional contractor during the first phase of construction. Cindy led the completion of the project. She donated countless volunteer hours of work. Ashante Thomas recruited FCC volunteers for several painting Saturdays. Thank you to EVERYONE who participated in these work days.

Ashlyn Reynolds, Ashante Thomas, Rhonda Trippel and Cindy Welch led the effort to furnish the apartment, including linens, housewares, and stocking the pantry and refrigerator. Thanks also to the worship leaders who planned a moving and meaningful commissioning service on September 8. And thanks to Diane Thrasher for her usual wonderful work creating our excellent Brunch Reception.

We are also thankful for our FCC XPLOR Host Team. They have spent months learning and preparing to walk alongside our residents during the ten months they are with us. Thank you to Helen Hempfling, Linda Abe, Bruce Ervin, Judith Olmsted, Ashlyn Reynolds, Ashante Thomas, Rhonda Trippel, and Cindy Welch, whom I have the honor of supporting and working with as FCC's XPLOR Team coordinator.

When we think about the monetary and time donations, the food, furniture, linens, household items, and bicycles that you have donated—we need to thank you. Without your support and prayers we could not have successfully prepared for this exciting journey. Thank you, and may God richly bless us all as we learn to XPLOR.



Reconciliation Special Offering Sept. 29 & Oct. 6

Support the Church's Mission of Anti-Racism, Pro-Reconciliation Work

Throughout the year we receive special offerings that support important initiatives of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) at a regional and national and international level. **During Sunday worship on September 29 and October 6** we will receive offerings of support for the Reconciliation Ministry of the church. A special envelope (found in this newsletter) can be returned to FCC during worship or mailed to the office. The Special Offering is used to fund our Church's mission imperative to become a pro-reconciling and anti-racist church utilizing experiential education, inclusive worship and intentional dialogue. Through this offering we are able to provide programs for leadership development, curriculum for dialogue and learning, and partnerships within the Church and our communities.



October Birthdays



10/01	Dan	Goins	60 Bailliere Dr.	Martinsville	IN	46151
10/02	Liz	Culpepper	720 S College Mall Rd.	Bloomington	IN	47401
10/03	Ann	Moore	3308 S. Snoddy Road	Bloomington	IN	47401
10/03	Andrew	Donham	5900 N. Maple Grove Rd.	Bloomington	IN	47404
10/04	Rebecca	Klein	723 Olde Mill Circle	Bloomington	IN	47401
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	4199 Innisbrooke Dr.	Bloomington	IN	47408
10/11	Lindsay	Stafford	837 NW 33rd St.	Oklahoma	OK	73118
10/12	Cheryl	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
10/21	Jane	Zebendon	2309 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
10/26	Jerry	Spore	901 S. Hastings Drive	Bloomington	IN	47401
10/27	Maurice	Biggs	1213 S. Brooks Drive	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

Please let us know if we have left anyone off of the birthday list.

Join Bedford Christian Church on a Day Trip to Cane Ridge

We've been invited to join a group from Bedford Christian Church on a day trip to Cane Ridge on Thursday, October 10th. The group will depart from Bedford at 8:00 am. The cost for transportation is under \$20.00 per person. There are 5 spots available! If you are interested in joining this group, please contact Wanda Jones at MnWLocks@yahoo.com or 812-275-3808.



First Friday Jazz Vespers
Earth

**The
Ellie Pruneau
Trio**

Featuring vocalist
April Varner

Join us on Friday, October 4 at
6:30 pm for Jazz Vespers!

Missing Something? Check our Lost & Found Box!

Our Lost & Found box is overflowing! Perhaps there's something in there that you left behind? Check and see! We've placed the Lost & Found box in the reception area on the pew.

UPCOMING EVENTS...

Sunday, September 22

8:30 Mediation Group
9:00 am Learning Session I
10:00 am Worship
11:15 am Learning Session II
3:00 pm Meadowood Service
5:00 pm Bloomington Bible Study

Monday, September 23

6:30 pm Creative Faith (book study) at St. Mark's UMC

Tuesday, September 24

1:30 pm Caregivers Create!
5:30 pm Listening to God meditation
6:15 pm Deeper Bible Study

Thursday, September 26

5:30 pm Handbell Choir rehearsal
6:15 pm Sanctuary Choir rehearsal

Sunday, September 29

8:30 Mediation Group
9:00 am Learning Session I
10:00 am Worship
11:15 am Learning Session II
5:00 pm Bloomington Bible Study

Monday, September 30

6:30 pm Creative Faith (book study) at St. Mark's UMC

Tuesday, October 1

5:30 pm Listening to God meditation
6:15 pm Deeper Bible Study

Wednesday, October 2

6:30 pm MOPS

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Coffee Fellowship Treat Schedule



September 22:
Sanctuary Choir & Handbell
Choir

September 29:
Campbellite Class

October 6:
Book Bunch & Roger L. Heimer
Book Group

**Scripture Readings
For Sunday Worship**

September 22
Genesis 28:10-17

September 29
Exodus 3:1-15

October 6
Exodus 16:2-15