

# The Christian Visitor December 2019



*We are called to share our Christian Faith and Christ's Love with all people.*

## Our Life Together in December



### Baptism Sunday December 1st

We will have a special service on Sunday, December 1st where the youth who have been participating in the Faith Foundations Class will be baptized during the morning worship. Following the service, there will be a fellowship hour honoring those who were baptized.

### Youth Sunday December 8th

The youth will have a large role in our worship service on Sunday, December 8th. Come and support our youth and their faith formation!

### Poinsettias

Poinsettias may be ordered for the sanctuary in honor or memory of someone. To order please fill out a form and leave in the church office. The cost is \$9.00 per plant and the deadline is December 9th.



### Christmas Eve Worship Tuesday, December 24th

We will have our annual Christmas Eve Candlelight Service on Tuesday, December 24th at 7:00pm.

### Christmas Offering Sunday, December 15th and 22nd

Supporting our Regional Ministries in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Illinois / Wisconsin



One hundred percent of this special offering goes to The Christian Church in Illinois and Wisconsin to help provide services to local congregations, such as supporting the congregations in times of crisis, providing camps for our children and youth, helping congregations call their next pastor, and partnering to do global ministry together.

### Christmas Card Tree

*Merry Christmas*



The Christmas Card Tree has been placed in the narthex to receive your Christmas greetings to church members and friends.

We invite you to donate any postage savings to the Christmas Offering.

### Outreach



The Outreach committee is seeking your help in collecting the following items for Shepherd's Closet to assist individuals in need:

*Winter Hats and Gloves or Mittens  
Please NO SCARVES  
Children's Underwear (up to size 10)  
Children's socks  
Winter Boots*



## **Pastor Mat's Musings**

If you are anything like me, then you are already bracing yourselves for a hectic month of choosing the perfect gift, eating way too much food, and not being able to get that song out of your head. Christmas is a magical time. These elements of Christmas make the holiday different than others. No other holiday is wrapped in anticipation like Christmas. We are all participants in Christmas, whether we would like to be or not.

The hoopla of Christmas provides us Christians with something we do not have much of during the year. The Christmas season provides Christians with a constant reminder of their faith. No other time of year will you see little baby Jesus' laying in your neighbor's yard. No other time of year will the entire nation sing songs like "Joy to the World" or "Silent Night."

In preparation for this year of Advent, I have focused a lot on Mary. Can you imagine what her term of carrying Christ must have been like? Mary, in today's standards, was just a child. Some scholars place her age to be around fourteen or fifteen. While her pregnant friends would be wrapped in excited anticipation for their children, Mary's term of carrying Jesus was full of heartbreak. She was made pregnant out of wedlock, a fact that was sure to bring condemnation. She couldn't tell people what happened. They would have thought she was crazy. It took a visit from an Angel to convince her fiancé that Mary was not lying. Mary must have felt isolated. She must have been scared. Yet, her response to God's call is simple: "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Mary could have responded kicking and screaming. No one would have blamed her for that. Rather, she responded with willingness.

So this month as you enjoy your time with your family; each week as we light a new candle of Advent, remember the Marys in your life. Remember the pastors, the family friends, the authors, and the influencers who answered God with the same willingness of Mary. Remember that our privileges did not come without a cost. Martin Luther faced certain death when he published his "95 Theses." The puritans faced harsh conditions when they fled England in hopes of finding religious freedom. And surely someone in your life sacrificed so that you would know God. Be thankful this month not just in Christ's birth. Be thankful for those in your life who answered God with willingness.

Pastor Mat

## **Adult Bible Study**

Our Adult Bible Study will continue to meet every other Wednesday at 6:30pm going through the book of Judges. Meetings for this month will be December 4th and 18th. Childcare will be provided for children through 5th grade. Middle-schoolers are welcome to attend middle-school youth group!

## **"Rise" Middle School Youth**

Our middle-school youth group called "Rise" will meet December 4th and 11th with a light meal at 6:00 and youth group at 6:30. Following that, we will take a short break for the holidays before starting back up in mid-January. All middle-school students are welcome!

## **Young Women's Bible Study**

The Young Women's Bible Study will continue to meet every other Tuesday at 7:00pm. This month's meetings will be on December 3rd and 17th. We are currently going through a video series on the book of James. Expect a casual atmosphere for spending time hanging out, watching a quick video lesson, and discussing the teaching from the video.

## **Thank You**

Thank you to everyone who stayed after worship on November 24th to help decorate the church for the Advent season and a special thank you to those who provided lunch following the decorating.

# More in the Life and Witness of the First Christian Church

## December Serving Schedule

**Communion Bread Baker—Cathy Hagan**

### Sunday, December 1st

**Greeter:**

**Elders:** *Arlen DeWall, Don Eberly, Carol Hutchcraft*

**Deacons:** *Sue McClard, Beth Tabor, Leah McClure  
Jay Kristensen, Gary Reiners, Ruth Reiners*

**Worship Leader:** *Baptism Sunday*

**Communion Preparation:** *Jay Kristensen*

**Home Communion:** *Don Eberly and Jay Kristensen*

### Sunday, December 8th

**Greeters:** *Youth*

**Elders:** *Melanie Warfield, Cheryl Elder, Sharon Higgins*

**Deacons:** *Katy Neal, David DeWall, Kristine Medler  
Jeff Elder, Ruth Neal, Emily Elder*

**Worship Leader:** *Youth*

**Communion Preparation:** *Ruth Neal*

**Home Communion:** *Sharon Higgins and Ruth Neal*

### Sunday, December 15th

**Greeter:**

**Elders:** *Sue Walker, Marilyn Tjardes, Angie Barnard*

**Deacons:** *Ryan Iverson, Janet Iverson, Mary Alice McRae  
Ed Hopkey, Mike Finis, Adam Kincaid*

**Worship Leader:**

**Communion Preparation:** *Ed Hopkey*

**Home Communion:** *Marilyn Tjardes and Ed Hopkey*

### Sunday, December 22nd

**Greeter:**

**Elders:** *Arlen DeWall, Don Eberly, Carol Hutchcraft*

**Deacons:** *Sue McClard, Beth Tabor, Leah McClure  
Jay Kristensen, Gary Reiners, Ruth Reiners*

**Worship Leader:**

**Communion Preparation:** *Gary Reiners*

**Home Communion:** *Carol Hutchcraft and Gary Reiners*

### Sunday, December 29th

**Greeter:**

**Elders:** *Melanie Warfield, Cheryl Elder, Sharon Higgins*

**Deacons:** *Katy Neal, David DeWall, Kristine Medler  
Jeff Elder, Ruth Neal, Emily Elder*

**Worship Leader:** *Angie Barnard*

**Communion Preparation:** *Jeff Elder*

**Home Communion:** *Cheryl Elder and Jeff Elder*

## Elders Breakfast

December 8th  
Host: Arlen DeWall

## Men's Group

December 1st  
Host: Clyde McRae

## Disciples Women's Ministry

Tuesday, December 17th 6:30pm

Hostess: Carol Hutchcraft

Location: Carol's Home

Devotion: Sharon Higgins

Project: Visiting Christian Friends

## Greeters / Worship Leaders

Please consider serving as a greeter or  
worship leader in the coming months.  
Sign-up sheets can be found in the narthex.

## Memorial Gifts

Memorial Gifts to First Christian Church  
have been received in memory of

***Sue DeWall***

These gifts are added to our Memorial Fund  
for current and future projects, furthering our  
shared ministry and mission.

## Outreach

**Food Pantry:** 151 items were received in  
November for the Shepherd's Closet Food  
Pantry.

2019 year to date: 277 items received

Next Pantry Sunday: December 1st

**Office Hours:**  
 Mon—Fri: 9:00 am—1:00 pm  
 Church Phone: 217-784-5460  
 gcfcdoc@yahoo.com  
 fccdocgc.com

# December 2019

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b>	<b>Baptism Sunday</b> 8:00 AM Men's Breakfast 9:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM Worship 11:30 AM Fellowship 1:30 PM Nursing Home Services	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> 9:30 AM Prayer 7:00 PM Young Women's Bible Study	<b>4</b> 6:00 PM "Rise" Middle School Youth 6:30 PM Adult Bible Study 7:30 PM Choir	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 8:00 AM City Recycling FCC
<b>8</b>	<b>Youth Sunday</b> 8:00 AM Elders Breakfast 9:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM Worship	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> 9:00 AM Prayer 6:30 PM Church Board	<b>11</b> 6:00 PM "Rise" Middle School Youth 7:30 PM Choir	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> 9:00 AM Food Pantry
<b>15</b>	<b>3rd Sunday Advent</b> 9:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM Worship	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 9:00 AM Prayer 6:30 PM DWM 7:00 PM Young Women's Bible Study	<b>18</b> 7:00 PM Adult Bible Study 7:30 PM Choir	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> 8:00 AM City Recycling FCC
<b>22</b>	<b>4th Sunday Advent</b> 9:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM Worship	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> <b>Christmas Eve</b> 7:00 PM Candlelight Service	<b>25</b> <b>Christmas</b> <b>Office Closed</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> 9:00 AM Food Pantry
<b>29</b>	9:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM Worship	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>				

## A Plastic Bag A Poem by Penny Lorenzen

*Have you ever seen a plastic bag  
A-sailing in the sky?  
I've seen quite a few of them  
Like a kite a way up high.*

*Some get off course away up there,  
And get tangled in the trees,  
They just blindly follow  
The path of a fickle breeze.*

*I've seen them caught in fences  
Quietly flapping there,  
Or snuggled in an open field  
Without a single care.*

*They "hatch" them in the grocery store  
They hang there by the score  
Until a busy customer  
Drags them out the door.*

*What happens next we'll never know  
But somehow they escape  
Trusting in the friendly wind  
To find a ditch or bush to drape.*

*-Penny Lorenzen*

ATTENDANCE		SUNDAY WEEK					
		1	2	3	4	5	AVG
2019	JAN	69	34	26	37		42
2019	FEB	57	36	42	34		42
2019	MAR	42	43	40	54	53	46
2019	APR	83	67	86	67		76
2019	MAY	67	73	63	63		67
2019	JUNE	47	44	54	57	40	48
2019	JULY	57	48	46	62		53
2019	AUG	53	60	70	42		56
2019	SEPT	41	78	42	57	62	56
2019	OCT	60	61	64	67		63
2019	NOV	61	59	58	50		57
	AVG	57.9	54.8	53.7	53.6	51.7	

## Thank You

The ladies of DWM would like to say THANK YOU! to everyone who supported our "Silent Giving." Your generosity will make it possible for us to strive to fulfill the mission statement of our congregation "to share our Christian faith and Christ's love with all people" and to fulfill the purpose of Disciples Women's Ministries "to provide opportunities for spiritual growth, enrichment, education and creative ministries to enable women to develop a sense of personal responsibility for the whole mission of the Church of Jesus Christ." Thank you for your continued support and prayers.

## Recycling December 7th and 21st



First Christian Church is in charge of recycling for the month of December. Slots from 8:00-10:00am and 10:00-11:30am are available December 7th and 21st. Sign up in the narthex if you would like to volunteer to help.

## Church Board

The Church Board will meet on Tuesday, December 10th at 6:30 pm. If you have any items to add to the agenda, please send them to the church office.

Copies of the Board Minutes and Treasurer's Report are available on the table outside of the Church office. Please take and read.

## In Our Prayers

The Prayer Group gathers in confidence at 9:30 am each Tuesday to honor prayer requests and remember those with on-going needs.

Harold Stimmel  
Harriet Farney  
Patty Benz  
Evelyn Fawver  
Irene Schaefer  
Mike Lorenzen  
Chet Goodrich



**LOCAL  
BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES  
*December 2019***

5 Jennifer Hagan  
7 Tyler Ricks  
11 Harry & Mary Ellen McClure '57  
14 Angela Back  
Ron Hoffman  
16 Joe Higgins  
Harold Stimmel  
Nick Tabor  
17 Kristine Medler  
Barb Meyer  
21 Harold (Vic) & Eleanor Baize  
22 Harry McClure  
25 **HAPPY BIRTHDAY, JESUS!!**  
30 Arlen & Sue DeWall '75  
Tanya Farney  
31 Brenda Mott



## Handel's Messiah

Sunday, December 8th  
3:00 pm

Gibson City Bible Church

## Messiah Cookies

First Christian Church has been asked to provide cookies for the reception that follows the annual community performance of the Messiah on December 8th. Sign up in the narthex if you would like to provide a dozen cookies. Cookies will need to be dropped off at the Bible Church the morning of December 7th.

## Sunday School

Sunday school classes for grades K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and adults begin at 9:00am every Sunday morning.

**Pastor** - Mat Bowen  
**Administrative Assistant** - Jennifer Hagan  
**Choir Director** - Tim Ricks  
**Church Pianist** - Joan Ricks  
**Custodians** - Jeff and Cheryl Elder

9:00 a.m. Sunday School  
10:15 a.m. Worship Service  
Church Phone 784-5460  
Email address: [gfcdoc@yahoo.com](mailto:gfcdoc@yahoo.com)  
Website: [fcdocg.com](http://fcdocg.com)

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH  
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED