

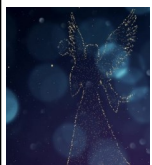
# The Christian Visitor December 2022



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

## Our Life Together in December

### Advent Worship Schedule



**Advent Worship Series**  
**Angels Among Us:**  
**Do Not be Afraid!**

**First Sunday in Advent**  
**Sunday, November 27th**  
**Jeremiah 33:14-16      Luke 1:5-25, 57-80**  
Make Ready A People: More Hope

**Second Sunday in Advent**  
**Sunday, December 4th**  
**Malachi 3:1-4      Luke 1:26-56**  
Nothing is Impossible: More Peace

**Third Sunday in Advent**  
**Sunday, December 11th**  
**Zephaniah 3:14-20      Matthew 1:18-25**  
Do Not Be Afraid: More Joy

**Fourth Sunday in Advent**  
**Sunday, December 18th**  
**Micah 5:2-5a      Luke 2:1-20**  
This Will Be A Sign: More Love

**Christmas Eve**  
**Saturday, December 24th**  
**Candlelight Service 7:00pm**



**Christmas Morning**  
**Sunday, December 25th**  
**Sunday Worship 10:15am**  
Festival of Lessons and Carols

### Cookie Decorating & Card Making December 11th



Everyone is invited to gather in the fellowship hall for a light lunch, cookie decorating and card making on Sunday, December 11. This will happen following the church board meeting. We will participate in an intergenerational activity of decorating cookies and creating cards for our Christian friends as well as sharing holiday stories. Please join us for this special time!

**Cut out Cookies & Frosting Needed:**  
Please sign up in the narthex if you are willing to donate 2 dozen cookies or make white frosting.



### Recycling Volunteers December 3rd & 17th

First Christian Church is in charge of recycling for the month of December. Volunteers will be needed on December 3rd & 17th from 8:00-10:00am and 10:00-11:30am. Sign up in the narthex if you are able to help.

### Christmas Card Tree

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.

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

### **A PASTOR'S PONDERING**

It doesn't seem possible that we're talking about Christmas already! But it's going to be here in less than a month. Many of you have been involved with our Advent worship series entitled, "Angels Among Us: Do Not be Afraid!" Each week we explore a different angelic visitation story. Last week we discovered how an angel appeared to Zechariah and said, "Make ready a people: more hope." This week we'll enter the story of Gabriel's appearance to Mary who said, "Nothing is impossible: more peace." In coming weeks, we'll encounter the angelic message of "Do not be afraid: more joy," and then, "This will be a sign: more love." Through it all will run the thread of the angelic message, "Do not be afraid!"

Fear is so often a stumbling block for us on our spiritual journey. Fear will sap us of hope, of peace, of joy, and of love. That's why the angels' messages always begin with "Do not be afraid!" Fear is a "little death," because it robs us of living fully. In this holy season of Advent, we're making preparation to receive the Christ Child by getting rid of this fear that doesn't serve us. That's our spiritual work over the next few weeks. We anticipate the time when we won't be imprisoned by fear anymore.

When Christmas comes, everything will be different! When Jesus was born, Matthew tells us, "The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned." Matthew doesn't say, "will see," or that light "will dawn." When Christ is born, it's already happened! Christmas is all about having more hope, more peace, more joy, more love — and more life. Christmas is all about living fully in the light. No more waiting! Each year we have the privilege of bringing Jesus bodily into the world and into our midst. We don't just remember Christ's birth; we live that event in our here-and-now. At Christmas God is with us. Not just in our memory — not just in a spiritual sense — but physically here. That's a miracle.

This week, we'll explore the question: What are we bringing into the world? It's a question that gets to the heart of our discipleship because, as followers of Jesus, we're called to bring the Good News into the world. Advent is the time for us to prepare to bring something of him into the world. Christmas is so much more than just pretty angels and pretty concepts of "peace on earth" and "good will." It's so much more than just homecoming and family. Christmas is when we embody those angelic concepts. Christmas is when we bring Christ into the world. That, of itself, is a beautiful thing, but it's also a bit scary. It's a time of becoming for us. At Christmas, we become the body of Christ as we live into the embodiment of Jesus. We not only celebrate him, we especially bear him. We bring him. We present him from our own lives. That's a hefty responsibility for us! As Christians it can be our greatest privilege and our finest hour.

When Christmas comes, will we be ready to bring Christ into the world? Will we be ready to bring hope, and peace, and joy, and love? When Christmas comes, will we bring our whole selves into the world — selves free from the shackles of fear? I pray we will!

**May it be so! May it be so for us!**

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

## Church Board

The Church Board will meet on Sunday, December 11th immediately following worship.

If you have any items to add to the agenda, please notify the church office.

## Worship Leaders

Please consider serving as worship leader in December. A sign up sheet is on the table in the narthex.

## Elders Breakfast

There will be an Elders Breakfast before church on Sunday, December 18th in the fellowship hall hosted by Arlen DeWall.

## Office Closed

The church office will be closed the week of December 26th-30th. During this time, contact an elder for any church needs. In an emergency, Pastor David will be reachable by cell phone (417-496-2978).

## Community Christmas Program Sunday, December 4th

Gibson Area Music Foundation will present to the public "Celebrate the Season" at 3 p.m. on Sunday, December 4 at the Gibson City Bible Church. The free program will contain Christmas carols, readings, and Messiah selections to tell the story of Christ's birth.



ATTEND- ANCE		SUNDAY WEEK					AVG
		1	2	3	4	5	
2022	JULY	28	38	38	40	42	35
2022	AUG	41	52	46	50		47
2022	SEPT	36	40	32	44		38
2022	OCT	36	31	35	41		36
2022	NOV	45	43	31	30		37



## Christmas Special Offering to be Received December 11th & 18th

It's nearly time for us to receive our Christmas Special Offering. The Christmas Offering is received on behalf of Disciples Mission Fund. Proceeds always come back to the region from which they're given. Think of it as a Christmas present to ourselves! Your contribution helps to fund the work of the Region on our behalf. We benefit from regional workshops for church leaders, the process of ministerial Search and Call, training for elders, the work of pro-reconciliation and other justice and missions projects, and so much more! Being a Disciple means that we abide and work in covenant with each other. That covenantal work is carried out primarily through regional efforts. In a very real sense, regional programs and ministries are how we are Disciples in the world! We will receive this Special Offering beginning December 11, and continuing through December 18. Please make your check payable to Disciples Mission Fund, and be sure to write "Christmas Special Offering" on the memo line. We hope you'll be very generous with your gift. Let's make this a banner year for our congregational giving!

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

# December 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3 8:00 AM Recycling
<b>4 2nd Sunday Advent</b> 10:15 AM Worship	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>11 3rd Sunday Advent</b> <b>Christmas Offering</b> 10:15 AM Worship 11:30 AM Church Board 11:30 AM Cookie Decorating	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 8:00 AM Recycling
<b>18 4th Sunday Advent</b> <b>Christmas Offering</b> 8:30 AM Elders Breakfast 10:15 AM Worship	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> <b>Christmas Eve</b> 7:00 PM Candlelight Service
<b>25 Christmas Day</b> 10:15 AM Worship	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> <b>Office Closed</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>

**LOCAL  
BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES  
*December 2022***

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



## **Community Christmas Dinner**

The American Lutheran Church will be hosting their 47th annual Christmas Day Dinner at noon on December 25, 2022! The free meal includes turkey, ham, dressing, mashed potatoes with gravy, vegetables, desserts and beverages. A free-will offering will be received. No tickets are necessary, however, we ask that reservations be made by Wednesday, December 14th, to ensure there is enough food. To make reservations, please call the church office at 217-784-4841 and leave your name, the number in your party, and your phone number. People can also call the church office to arrange for home delivery if they are homebound and have no transportation. If you desire home delivery please leave your address, and your meal will be delivered between noon and 2 p.m. December 25.

**Pastor** - David Massey-Brown  
**Administrative Assistant** - Jennifer Hagan  
**Choir Director** - Tim Ricks  
**Church Pianist** - Joan Ricks  
**Custodians** - Jeff and Cheryl Elder

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

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH  
P.O. Box 10  
Gibson City, IL 60936-0010  
217-784-5460  
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED