

The Christian Visitor January 2023



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

Our Life Together in January

Taking Down Decorations Sunday, January 8th

We will be taking down the Christmas decorations following worship on Sunday, January 8th. Please consider staying after church for a few minutes to help with this task. Many hands make light work.

Thank You!

Lisa and I want to pass along our thanks for the cards and other tokens of love and friendship given to us at this holy season. They are appreciated and received with the same warmth with which they were given. You all have been, and continue to be, very kind in your expressions of love, welcome, and willingness to serve the Lord. Thanks again for the gifts — and for being who you are. We love you!
Pastor Dave

Sympathy

We express our sympathy to the family and friends of Harold Baize, who passed away on Friday, December 23rd.

Sympathy

We express our sympathy to the family and friends of Thelma Rhodes, who passed away on Monday, December 26th. A private family service was held in our sanctuary on Saturday, December 31st.

Elders Breakfast

There will be an Elders Breakfast before church on Sunday, January 15th in the fellowship hall hosted by Carol Hutchcraft.

Church Board

The Church Board will meet on Sunday, January 8th immediately following worship. If you have any items to add to the agenda, please notify the church office.

ATTENDANCE		SUNDAY WEEK					
		1	2	3	4	5	AVG
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
2022	DEC	30	45	49	34		40

Sympathy

We express our sympathy to the family and friends of Scott Bennett, who passed away on Friday, December 9th.

More in the Life and Witness of the First Christian Church

A PASTOR'S PONDERING

I like Jim Carrey. He's a talented actor, he's entertaining, and I think he's a good person. He starred in the movie *Yes Man* in 2008. It's a movie about a young man in a dead-end job he doesn't like, a girlfriend who's broken up with him, and friends whom he declines to see. His life is stagnant — going nowhere. One day, he runs into an old friend who persuades him to attend a self-help seminar in which he covenants with the guru to say "Yes!" to every question and every opportunity that comes his way — no matter how ridiculous or ill-advised. The upshot is that, amid a bunch of wrong turns and slapstick scenarios, he ends up building a new life with a beautiful girlfriend.

We're embarking on a new calendar year, traditionally a time of new beginnings. We make resolutions to "do better" this year. We hope for better times and better opportunities. In our church, we wonder what direction we'll take this year. We wonder how we'll encounter the holy in significant ways that help us to deepen our journey. Like Jim Carrey's character, Carl, we want to build a new life. How shall we do that?

I've been in ministry for 20 years. I've served several congregations in several contexts in that time. Before that, I was in church music for 20 years, serving many congregations in six different denominations. In all that time, I was never so impressed with a church, never encountered God in such engaging ways, as when the congregation intentionally said "Yes!" — even when it appeared ridiculous or ill-advised. Those were the times when the Holy Spirit was most prevalent, the congregation most engaged, and the church most in tune with God. Those were the times when the church experienced growth in sometimes very surprising ways!

It occurs to me that the deepest examples of spiritual encounter have happened when faithful people have said "Yes!" to the most ridiculous ideas. Noah said "Yes!" to building a huge ark on dry land. Abraham said "Yes!" to moving to an undisclosed address in a foreign land. Isaac said "Yes!" to being bound and placed on an altar of sacrifice. Jacob said "Yes!" to reconciling with his estranged brother. Joseph said "Yes!" to interpreting Pharaoh's dream. Moses said "Yes!" to a burning bush. Later, he said "Yes" to leading the nation out into the Sinai wilderness. Isaiah said "Yes!" to God's call. Zechariah said "Yes!" to God's prophecy. Mary said "Yes!" to a miraculous birth. Joseph said "Yes!" to an unwanted pregnancy. The shepherds said "Yes!" to the angels' call. The Magi said "Yes!" to a star. Jesus said "Yes!" to being crucified. The women at the tomb said "Yes!" to resurrection. All of these were ridiculous and ill-advised directives. And through them, God built a People.

Churches grow when they learn to say "Yes!" Silly as it might sound, I'd like for our congregation to set the intention this year of saying "Yes!" I'd like for us to make a covenant with God: we'll trust God to place opportunities in our way, and we'll promise to say "Yes!" to those opportunities — no matter how outlandish or ill-advised they might seem to be. Can we covenant to say "Yes!" to love rather than living out of fear? Can we covenant to say "yes!" to justice rather than sitting in security? Can we covenant to say "Yes!" to hospitality rather than craving the familiar? Can we say "Yes!" to wrestling with the difficult questions of faith, rather than seek only easy and comfortable answers?

This community of faith has already said "Yes!" in so many significant ways! But Dear Ones we're just beginning that journey of saying "Yes!" Here's what I know: I know that whenever we say "Yes!" to God, blessings abound, opportunities present themselves, light blossoms, energy radiates, and God will be in our midst in ways we can't even imagine! This year, let's say as one: "Yes, God! Yes!"

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

**LOCAL
BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES
*January 2023***

1	Alex Barnard	21	David Ricks
2	Ed Hopkey		Blake Warren
5	Stan Rinehart	22	Janet Glascock
6	Matt Barnard		Trey Van Winkle
	Jay Kristensen	23	Katie Ricks
8	Marilyn Hopkey	27	Steve Parsons
11	Billy DeWall	29	Gary & Ruth
14	Karen Rankin		Reiners '72
16	Mary Ellen McClure		
	Ava Rylan Rexroat		
19	Desiree Mouser		



Worship Leaders

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



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
 Website: fccdocg.com

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 RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED