

The Christian Visitor May 2023



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

Our Life Together in May

Stewardship Campaign April 30th-May 21st

This year's stewardship emphasis is "Celebrate Stewardship" and it runs from April 30th-May 21st. Each Sunday, we will recognize a different area of stewardship worth celebrating.

Sunday, April 30th — Celebrate Planning
Sunday, May 7th — Celebrate Our Culture
Sunday, May 14th — Celebrate Giving
Sunday, May 21st — Celebrate Our Legacy

Pledge cards will be sent out soon and are asked to be returned by Sunday, May 21st.

Church Board

The Church Board will meet on Sunday, May 14th at 9:00am.

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

Offering Envelopes

Offering Envelopes for the new church year, beginning Sunday, July 2nd, are available for pickup in the narthex. Please sign your name next to the number that matches the box you take.

Celebration Sunday May 21st

To mark the end of the Stewardship Campaign, we will have Celebration Sunday on May 21st with a catered meal following worship.

Elders Breakfast

There will be an Elders Breakfast before church on Sunday, May 21st in the fellowship hall hosted by Barb Meyer.

Pentecost Special Offering to be Received



It's time, once again, to receive our Pentecost Special Offering. As you know, this is one of six Special Offerings received by our denomination the Disciples Mission Fund, to address the financial needs of the general ministries we, as *The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*, carry out together. Your Pentecost offering goes to ensure our movement continues to embody the Disciples of Christ vision: "To be and to share the Good News, witnessing, loving, and serving from our doorsteps to the ends of the earth." Half of your gift supports the local new church movement through our region's ministry. The other half supports New Church Ministry across the United States and Canada to equip, train, and empower new leaders. I hope our congregation will be a leader in generosity as we "throw in" with other congregations to further God's kin-dom in this way. We will receive this offering over **May 21** and **May 28**. Thanks in advance for your kind gift!

More in the Life and Witness of the First Christian Church

A PASTOR'S PONDERING

On the Day of Pentecost (that is, fifty days after Jesus' Resurrection), the disciples were all gathered, and suddenly there was a rush of a mighty wind. The Holy Spirit descended on them as tongues of fire, and they began to speak in different languages, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And the gathered crowd, representing several nations and languages, each understood what the disciples were saying *in their own languages*. It was the great mystery that gave birth to the Church.

Holy Spirit. It's a strange concept. It's Biblical, yet we don't really know much about it. Since about the year 800, the Church has even debated where it comes from. Does it come from the Father alone, or does it come from the Father *and* the Son? The Eastern Church declares that it comes from the Father. The Roman Church declares that it comes from the Father *and* the Son. Consequently, that's what we Protestants mainly believe too. What *is* the Holy Spirit? Why is it important for us? We don't worship it. We don't pray to it. Does it even have a particular *purpose*? The Father creates. The Son redeems. What does the Holy Spirit do for us?

I'd like to shift gears a bit and explore the Hebrew and Greek words we translate as "spirit." The Hebrew word is *ruach*. It means "spirit." It also means "breath." So when God blew into Adam's nostrils and Adam became a living being, God was not only blowing air, God was also blowing *spirit* into Adam. The Greek word we read in the New Testament is *pneuma*. Guess what? It also means both "breath" and "spirit" (or "soul").

If we were to re-translate those words as "breath," instead of "spirit," we would end up with "the Holy Breath," instead of "the Holy Spirit." Let's work with that understanding for a moment. If we understand the Holy Spirit as breath, it begins to make more sense to us. So, what is the Holy Breath? Why is it important for us? What is its purpose?

We often hear that the Holy Spirit sustains us. That's its purpose. The Holy Breath sustains us. Isn't that true? Our breath — that intake of oxygen and output of carbon dioxide does sustain us, doesn't it? If we don't breathe, we die. Our breath (theologically speaking) is the physical manifestation of our spirit, and, really, of God's Spirit moving in us. When we breathe, our lungs expand and contract, our diaphragm moves, our abdomen rises and falls. Our breathing makes us, as Genesis says, "living beings."

We also understand that the Holy Spirit comforts us. Jesus said that he would send "the Comforter" to be with us after he was gone. The Holy Breath comforts us. And isn't that true, as well? When we're startled, we experience a sharp intake of breath. When we're anxious, we sigh. Buddhist monks have a practice of meditative breathing. We've found that a deep intake of breath, followed by a very slow, measured exhale over several seconds, repeated five or so times, will calm us and help to alleviate anxiety. When we practice this "centered breathing," we become grounded in our bodies. If our breath (theologically speaking) is the physical manifestation of spirit — of God's Spirit, moving in us, then Holy Breath really is a comfort for us.

What if we stopped scratching our heads over the nature and definition of the Holy Spirit and began a practice of just embracing Holy Breath? What if we came to understand that God is as close to us — and within us — as our breathing? What if every breath we took was seen as embracing God? What if we understood that everyone breathes the same air as we do? What if we understood that everyone — no matter what religion they practice, no matter by what name they know God, no matter if they don't even *believe* in God at all — breathes the same Divine Spirit, and really is as close to the Divine as we are? Would it change how we see and treat others? Would it change how we perceived our relationship with God?

Every time we take a breath, we experience newness of life. Every time we take a breath, we experience Pentecost. Every time we take a breath and exhale, we put God out there in the world. God is Breath. God is shared. Life is reborn.

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

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

May 2023

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5	6
7 10:15 AM Worship	8	9 6:30 PM Bible Study	10	11	12	13	
14 9:00 AM Church Board 10:15 AM Worship	15	16 6:30 PM Bible Study	17 5:30 PM Pastoral Support Team	18	19	20	
21 8:30 AM Elder's Breakfast 10:15 AM Worship 11:30 AM Celebration Meal	22	23 6:30 PM Bible Study	24	25	26	27	
Pentecost Offering							
28 10:15 AM Worship	29 Memorial Day Office Closed	30 6:30 PM Bible Study	31				
Pentecost Offering							

**LOCAL
BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES
May 2023**

- 1 Bryan Medler
- 2 Heidi VanWinkle
- 3 Jean Donovan
- 4 Lori Eberly
- 5 Leah McClure
- 7 Joe Mouser, Jr.
Rodney Mott
- 9 Jeff Elder
- 14 Gary Reiners
Anna Lynn Warren
- 17 Andrew Iverson
- 19 Landon Elder
- 21 Harold Medler
Erin Tabor
- 25 Lori Rinehart
- 26 Mona Summers
- 30 Raymond Goin



Worship Leaders

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



Sister Congregations in Our Prayers

The Christian Church in Illinois - Wisconsin
Together Making Disciples of Christ

- May 7 Colfax CC, Arrowsmith CC,
New Covenant CC Normal; FCC, Muir, MI
- May 14 Barneys Prairie CC, FCC Mt Carmel,
FCC Henry, Lomax CC;
Cowden Lake CC, Coral, MI
- May 21 Union Ave. Litchfield, Flanagan CC,
FCC Creve Coeur; FCC, Lansing, MI;
- May 28 Mechanicsburg CC, FCC Keithsburg,
FCC Knoxville, FCC Muskegon, MI,

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

10:15 a.m. Worship Service
Church Phone 784-5460
Email address: gcfccdoc@yahoo.com
Website: fccdocg.com

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED