

The Christian Visitor November 2023



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

Our Life Together in November

Youth Gathering

The youth will meet on Sunday, November 12th from 5:00-7:00pm at the church fire pit. Come join us for food, fun, and fellowship. Bring a friend! Please call the office or text Sharon (217-418-9294) by noon Friday, November 10th if you plan to attend.

Poinsettias



Poinsettias are available to order through the church for display in the sanctuary during Advent. Order forms are located on the table in the narthex. Cost is \$10 per plant. Order deadline is November 12th. You are also welcome to bring in your own poinsettia purchased elsewhere.

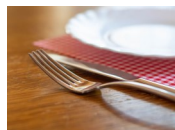
Church Board

The Church Board will meet on Sunday, November 12th following worship.

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



Welcome Table Wednesday November 15th

This month's Welcome Table Wednesday will take place on November 15th, with a meal at 6:00pm in the fellowship hall, followed by a short lesson.



Procession of Giving Sunday, November 19th

We will be collecting items for Shepherd's Closet for our annual Procession of Giving on November 19th. They are currently in need of::

- Children's Winter Hats 
- Children's Socks
- Boy's Underwear (preferably boxers)
- Adult Gloves 
- Adult Hats
- Adult Socks
- Women's Underwear (sizes 5, 6, 7, 3x)
- Men's Underwear (preferably boxers sizes small-3x)




Hanging of the Greens Sunday, November 26th

We will gather for Hanging of the Greens following worship on Sunday, November 26th. A light meal will be served in the fellowship hall once we are finished. Come help us prepare our church for the Advent season.

Looking Ahead

Advent

We will begin our Advent Worship Series for this year, "The Gift of Being Present," on December 3rd and continue each Sunday through the Advent season. 



Christmas Eve

Our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service will take place on Sunday, December 24th, beginning at 7:00pm

More in the Life and Witness of the First Christian Church

A PASTOR'S PONDERING

It's November. For the past couple weeks, Lisa and I have begun to see Christmas commercials on TV. When we went to Hobby Lobby last weekend to pick up some fall decorations for the house, we found that Christmas had almost taken over the store! The other day, I heard someone refer to Thanksgiving as "a bump on the holiday highway." While many of us are beginning to think of Christmas — purchasing gifts and planning ahead for travel, celebrations, and vacations, and while many of us are excited for the season, I think it's sad that Thanksgiving has been relegated to being a "bump in the road" and one more opportunity to watch football.

Thanksgiving is a *national* holiday. But it's also a *spiritual* observance. President Washington was the first president to issue a proclamation in 1789, designating Thursday, November 26 as a day "for the People of the United States as a day of public thanksgiving." Then, during the Civil War, President Lincoln proclaimed a national Thanksgiving Day, to also be celebrated on November 26. Finally, President Franklin Roosevelt signed a congressional bill making the fourth Thursday of November officially Thanksgiving Day in the United States.

It seems that, in times of crisis, beginning with the supply shortage in 1621, through a devastating Civil War, and through an equally devastating Depression, our civic leaders have always stressed the importance of *giving gratitude*. Our spiritual leaders also know the importance of standing in gratitude. Paul teaches us to "give thanks in all circumstances." That's why Holy Communion is known in the Greek of the Bible as *eucharist*, or "meal of thanksgiving." The importance of giving gratitude cannot be stressed enough.

Thanksgiving is a time specially set aside for us to foster and practice gratitude. It's a designated time for us to remember and give thanks for our blessings. But it's also more than just a day, and it's more than just sitting back in our comfort and making a laundry list — sometimes a fairly smug laundry list. Gratitude isn't separate from our daily living. It's not a holiday from the ordinary; it's a "holy day" that marks the importance of the gratitude in our daily life that makes every day extraordinary. Thanksgiving isn't something we "observe." It's about a *choice*. Thanksgiving is a choice we make to have a particular attitude toward the world and a particular outlook on life.

What that means is that Thanksgiving is most definitely not "a bump on the holiday highway." I'd say it's, at the least, an indispensable precursor to Advent and Christmas. But it's not just "all about Christmas." Thanksgiving stands on its own as a time for us to make ceremony out of gratitude. "Making ceremony" is how we state an intention. It's how we make something communally important. Our civic leaders knew that. Our spiritual leaders knew it. And we know it too. One thing we know in our national life is *abundance*. And we don't want to take that abundance for granted, especially because there are still many large pockets of poverty here. So we "make ceremony" out of a sense of *righteousness* — that is, we solemnize the paying forward of our blessings to those who are in need. That's part of what it means to "live in gratitude." And living in gratitude is strong medicine for us — emotionally, spiritually, and physically, too! Gracious people are generally happy people. And gracious people are grace-filled people. And grace-filled people are people who live all life abundantly, as Jesus intends for us to do.

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

Thanksgiving Special Offering to Be Received

As most of you know, the Disciples Mission Fund provides six opportunities for us, as a congregation, to participate in what are called “**Special Offerings.**” These offerings always fall at particular times during the year. This month, we will receive our **Thanksgiving Special Offering**, which always helps fund Disciples’ higher education efforts. Here’s what DMF has to say:



“The Thanksgiving Offering benefits the Colleges, Universities, Seminaries, and Divinity Houses affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Higher education has been an important focus for Disciples since the very beginning of the movement. Throughout our history, Disciples have founded institutions of higher learning to educate students and form leaders to make a difference in the world. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is still committed to higher education. Your gift to the Thanksgiving Offering helps support the education of thousands of students at our fifteen colleges and universities as well as our seven seminaries and divinity houses.

The Colleges and Universities of the Christian Church provide quality education through classes offered by some of the nation’s top undergraduate and graduate faculty. Many of the campuses are comprised of state-of-the-art facilities, offer diverse degree programs, include dynamic student life activities, offer exciting athletics programs, and much more. The Thanksgiving offering supports everything from scholarships, to religious life offices, to faculty growth and development. By giving to the Thanksgiving Offering you are helping our institutions invest in students as they prepare themselves to become leaders.

The Thanksgiving Offering also provides scholarship and support for our theological education institutions. Each of our seminaries and divinity houses is committed to educating and forming Christian leaders for church and society. Generations of pastors, community leaders, and agents of social transformation have been educated at our theological institutions. They have flourished and made a difference in the world, thanks to gifts from Disciples congregations and individuals throughout the ages. These institutions continue to prepare leaders for the present age and the age to come.

We are thrilled to announce that 2023 has been a banner year for many of our institutions. Enrollment is up, programs are expanding, scholarships are increasing— excellent news all around! Growth, however, tends to mean added expense. For this reason, we ask for your generous financial support during this year’s **Thanksgiving Offering** so that we can both continue supporting the needs of higher education and learning, and grow to meet the broader needs of our Disciples students.

Support for Disciples Mission Fund and gifts to the Thanksgiving Offering are a critical part of the ongoing collaborative work of church and higher education that is such a foundational part of the heritage of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Please give generously to this offering. Your gift makes a difference in the lives of our students and it makes a difference in the world.”



We will receive this Special Offering **Sunday, November 12, and Sunday, November 19.**

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

November 2023

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3	4
5 All Saints 10:15 AM Worship	6		7 6:30 PM Bible Study	8	9	10	11
12 10:15 AM Worship 11:30 AM Church Board 5:00 PM Youth Event Thanksgiving Offering	13		14 6:30 PM Bible Study	15 6:00 PM Welcome Table Wednesday	16	17	18
19 10:15 AM Worship Thanksgiving Offering	20		21 6:30 PM Bible Study	22	23 Thanksgiving Office Closed	24	25
26 10:15 AM Worship 11:30 AM Hanging of the Greens	27		28 6:30 PM Bible Study	29	30 Jennifer Out of Office		

**LOCAL
BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES
*November 2023***

9 Kate Kristensen
14 Katy Neal
17 Ryan Iverson
18 Sharon Higgins
19 Matt and Pat Provin '94
Lane Elder
Tinley McClure
23 Emily Elder
30 Joe and Tara Mouser '85
Keegan Wayne DeWall



Community Christmas Program

Vocal music opportunity – calling all singers! Gibson Area Music Foundation is beginning vocal practices for its annual Christmas program. The format will be similar to the one used last year – Christmas carols + selections from Messiah. Rehearsals will take place on Monday evenings throughout November from 7:00-8:30pm at the Presbyterian Church. Final performance will be Sunday, December 3rd at 3:00pm at the Bible Church.

Worship Leaders

Please consider serving as worship leader in November. 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

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

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED