

# The Christian Visitor February 2024



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

## Our Life Together in February

### Lenten Worship Series

A worship series is planned for Lent, entitled, *Listen: Hearing That Still, Small Voice, and Finding Your Own*. In this series, we will quiet things down and heighten our attention to the “still, small voice” of God and our own, true self. Listening through prayer as well as meditation on holy texts is an ancient Lenten practice. Beginning Ash Wednesday, Feb. 14, and continuing through the Sundays of Lent, you won't want to miss out on this unique Lenten spiritual journey, as we work to prepare our hearts for the transformation of Easter. Come and rest, come and listen.



### Ash Wednesday February 14th

We will recognize Ash Wednesday on February 14th with a short service at 11:45am. A light soup lunch will be served in the fellowship hall following worship.

### Pastors Class to Convene During Lent

Pastor's Class will convene during Lent, looking toward a service of Baptism on Easter Sunday, March 31. Several families have expressed an interest in having children/grandchildren baptized this year. If you are interested in Pastor's Class, please let Pastor Dave know, so we can work out a meeting time that works for everyone. We'd like to have four sessions, 45 minutes or so. Thus far, we're looking at possibly 5 candidates for baptism, with some distance attendance via Zoom. There is always room for more!

### Lenten Schedule



**Wednesday, February 14th** Ash Wednesday

Service at 11:45am

Soup lunch to follow

**Sunday, March 24th** Palm Sunday

Worship at 10:15am

**Thursday, March 28th** Maundy Thursday

Service at 7:00pm

**Friday, March 29th** Good Friday

Service at 7:00pm

**Saturday, March 30th**

Chain of Prayer 6:00am-6:00pm

**Sunday, March 31st** Easter Sunday

Breakfast & Egg Hunt at 9:00am,

Easter worship at 10:15am



### Noel Hutchcraft Memorial Open Gym

Our series of Open Gyms in memory of Noel Hutchcraft will conclude in February. We will gather at the GCMS Middle School Sundays February 4th & 11th from 4:00-6:00pm. Come join us for these fun evenings together!



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

### A PASTOR'S PONDERING

Our Christian walk, including personal prayer time, worship, Bible study and Christian education, as well as walking our path in the world, is all about our transformation. We move from being asleep to coming awake. In fact, that word, *resurrection* (which we reserve as a sacred term for a sacred act) is, in the Greek of the New Testament, a very common word, used daily by ordinary people. It means simply “to stand up out of bed,” or “to come awake.” Our resurrection can be a metaphor for our continuing enlightenment as we learn and grow in Christ. The journey we take during the holy season of Lent is a way for us to embody the introspection, the reflection, and the self-examination necessary for clearing ourselves, so that we’re ready for the transformation of new life at Easter.

Lent is traditionally about “prayer and fasting,” that is, committing to spiritual disciplines designed to help us grow, and becoming more intentional in our faith walk. Traditionally, the faithful would participate in acts of self-denial (like fasting, and abstaining from meat on Fridays during Lent). In more modern times, people have “given up” habits that they know hinder their spiritual growth, or things they know aren’t good for them. People “give up” soda pop, chocolate, smoking, drinking, and other things, hoping to break bad habits. Those acts of abstinence are great for those who’ve got bad habits to break. Others of us concentrate our discipline on *building* habits that are good for us, such as committing to daily schedules of meditation, or looking for ways to be of particular service to others, particularly the less fortunate. Some increase monetary giving. Some commit to being in worship every Sunday.

Lent is a great time to do these things, because the growth that can happen through these intentions and disciplines mirrors the growth that happens in nature in the season of Spring. Building up our spiritual lives means, not only being more intentional about taking on spiritual disciplines, but also about releasing those things that no longer serve us. Lent is what we call a penitential season. That is, a time in which we examine our hearts and consciences, asking forgiveness for things we have done — or even failed to do, and especially forgiving *ourselves* (because we’re our own worst critics, after all!).

During worship, you’ll be given some time and space to enter the silence of your own hearts in acts of prayer. You’ll notice that we engage in a special litany of pardon. You’ll notice less talk and more action. You’ll notice that Lent takes on a more somber atmosphere, as we focus on what we need to change in order for transformation to happen. This season isn’t all about Christ’s passion and death — it’s not a sad time when we focus on our guilt. Rather, it’s an intentional time when we focus on God’s forgiveness, and how we can give the gift of forgiveness to ourselves and to each other.

I hope each of you will commit to some greater spiritual involvement this season. You’ll find that, as we grow together, we’ll become a transformed community once Easter arrives. And that transformation can carry us through new and developing ministries together, as we work to awaken our community to all the ways in which God is at work in our lives.

Come and rest! Come and listen!

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

### Welcome Table Wednesday February 21st

This month's Welcome Table Wednesday will take place on February 21st with a meal at 6:00pm in the fellowship hall, followed by a short lesson.



### Church Board

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

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

### Hustlers

The Hustlers will have their "Souper" Bowl Party on Sunday, February 11th at 5:00pm at the home of Ron & Melanie Warfield.



### Elders Breakfast

There will be an Elders Breakfast on Sunday, February 11th at 8:30am in the fellowship hall.

### Bible Study



A weekly bible study meets every Tuesday evening at 6:30pm.

### Guitar Lessons



We are collecting interest in group guitar lessons through the church. Anyone interested in learning to play guitar is encouraged to sign up in the narthex and indicate best times to meet. Once we've gathered interest, we will work on the best times to schedule meetings.

### Worship Leaders

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



### Week of Compassion Special Offering February 18th & 25th

As the relief, refugee, and development mission fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Week of Compassion works with partners to alleviate suffering throughout the world, with a vision of a world where God's people transform suffering into hope.

This year's Week of Compassion Special Offering will be received February 18th & 25th. Because of your generosity, Week of Compassion meets people and communities in the midst of grief and lament, in the deepest moments of 'How could this happen?', as the very real presence of God's unfailing compassion.

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

# February 2024

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2	3
<b>4</b> 10:15 AM Worship 4:00 PM Open Gym	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> 6:30 PM Bible Study	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	
<b>11</b> 8:30 AM Elders Breakfast 10:15 AM Worship 11:30 AM Church Board 4:00 PM Open Gym 5:00 PM Hustlers	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> 6:30 PM Bible Study	<b>14 Ash Wednesday</b> 11:45 AM Ash Wednesday Service	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	
<b>18</b> 10:15 AM Worship	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> 6:30 PM Bible Study	<b>21</b> 6:00 PM Welcome Table Wednesday	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	
<b>Week of Compassion Offering</b>							
<b>25</b> 10:15 AM Worship	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> 6:30 PM Bible Study	<b>28</b> March Newsletter Articles Due	<b>29</b>			
<b>Week of Compassion Offering</b>							

**LOCAL  
BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES  
*February 2024***

- 1 Ashley Nicole Spears
- 2 Lindsey Graham
- 10 Ruth Reiners
- 14 Dayne White
- 21 Hailey Johnson  
Jessica Moore
- 22 Dennis Higgins
- 25 Janet Iverson
- 29 Sue McClard



**Sister Congregations  
in Our Prayers**

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

- February 4 Parkway CC, Springfield, IL;  
Ursa CC, IL;  
FCC Gibson City, IL
- February 11 FCC Mt. Sterling, IL;  
New Bedford CC, IL;  
FCC Walnut, IL
- February 18 Week of Compassion
- February 25 Davis Memorial CC, Taylorville, IL;  
Central CC, Havana, IL;  
Grace CC, Frankfort, 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: [gfcfccdoc@yahoo.com](mailto:gfcfccdoc@yahoo.com)  
Website: [fccdocgc.com](http://fccdocgc.com)

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH  
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED