

# The Christian Visitor April 2024



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

## Our Life Together in April

### Welcome Table Wednesday April 17th

This month's Welcome Table Wednesday will be on April 17th with a meal beginning at 6:00pm in the fellowship hall, followed by a short lesson. All are welcome!



### Youth Sunday Opportunity

Calling all youth and parents! We hope to build a youth program here (a decidedly challenging task!). Toward that end, we had planned a youth Sunday, but we missed the mark with those able to participate. Our youth coordinator, Sharon, and Pastor David have decided to do a "reset." We'll find a suitable time, do some planning, and create an opportunity for our youth to lead us in a worship experience of their own making. Parents, please prioritize this for your kids. We'll set a date far enough in advance that you can plan for your young people to be present and immersed in the planning and implementation. We'd like to see all youth present for this opportunity, because our kids are important to us! Further details coming soon!

### Garden Tilling

We are offering garden tilling for any size garden this spring. All funds raised will go towards the youth group to support future mission projects. Dates will be determined based on weather. Contact Ryan Iverson (217-781-2376) if you are interested in utilizing this service.



### Elders Breakfast

There will be an Elders Breakfast on Sunday, April 21st at 8:30am in the fellowship hall.

### Church Board

The Church Board will meet on Sunday, April 14th following worship.

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

### Bible Study

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



### Worship Leaders

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

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

### A PASTOR'S PONDERING

This past Lent, we were involved in a worship series entitled, *Listen: Hearing that Still, Small Voice and Finding Your Own*. We encountered blocks of silence that were, at the same time, both welcome and unsettling. We learned that prayer isn't all about giving God a laundry list of wants, needs, and wishes. We discovered that prayer is holy *conversation* — that it's about listening as much as it is about telling. We saw that prayer is about fostering *relationship* — both with God and with ourselves. What we found, in the end, is that *prayer is important to a fulfilling life*.

We are now in what's called "the Easter season." It's a time for resurrection. It's a time for new beginnings. It's a time for us to affirm the abundance of life we're created to have. As we work our way through Easter and approach Pentecost — that time when we celebrate the coming of Holy Spirit — I'd like for us to build on that theme of prayer. We've touched on *listening* in prayer (and, believe me, there's a whole lot more we could do in the arena of listening in prayer!) But there are other components of prayer we should familiarize ourselves with. There are components of speaking, and acting, and living into. There are especially components of being that we need to explore and discover.

A church is more than just a building — more than just a place where we encounter the holy. A church is more than just the promulgation of the Gospel. A church is more than just good works. Above everything else, a church is a *community*. It's where people gather together to become, *together*, more than they are alone. It's where people develop and live into right relationship with each other. And at the peak of that relational aspect is something that sets the church apart from every other effort, from every other group, from every other club, from every other doer of good works, and from every other kind of relationship. You see, other groups and clubs and organizations can foster relationship and build community. Other organizations can help people in need. But the church is the only organism that becomes and identifies as "the body of Christ." We are the only organism that lives and works as God's corporeal representatives in the world. And, as the body of Christ, the church needs and thrives upon prayer. We *feed* on prayer. Prayer nourishes us.

I believe the church needs to be centered in prayer, and we, both individually and as a community, should live out our lives — and our common life — in prayer. This next year, I'd like for us to learn as much about prayer and the spiritual life as we can. I'd like for us to learn to engage in all different kinds of prayer. I'd like for us, not only to become *adept* at prayer, but hungry for prayer. I'd like for us, as a community, to emphasize prayer in our life together this year.

Toward that end, I offer several ideas I'd like to see happen. First, I'd like for us to establish a "prayer wall." Much as our Jewish sisters and brothers go to "The Wailing Wall" and stick little bits of paper in the cracks between the stones that have prayers written on them, I'd like for us to have a similar opportunity to write out our petitions and place them. It ties a spiritual motivation to a physical action.

Second, I'd like for us to continue the practice we began during Lent of lighting candles for our prayer intentions. It brings light to our intentions.

Third, I'd like for us to organize a group who will commit to pray daily for the needs we place on our prayer wall. It will become the "heartbeat" of our faith community.

Fourth, I'd like for us to organize a contemplative prayer circle that will meet monthly, for those who are interested to learn the practice of meditation and contemplative prayer.

Fifth, I'd like to form a class for adults — perhaps a Sunday morning "adult forum" whose purpose is learn more about how to make prayer a daily, integrative practice for any follower of Jesus. We'd do a book study for that forum.

Sixth, I'd like for our chapel space to truly become a specially set-apart prayer space. Let's move our meetings and classes to another space.

I believe a praying church is a *growing* church. As we pray, we grow closer to God. As we grow closer to God, we become more Christlike. As we become more Christlike, our ministries will flourish. As our ministries flourish, we become more healthy and we live more deeply. I hope you'll join me as we discover a richer prayer life together.

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

# April 2024

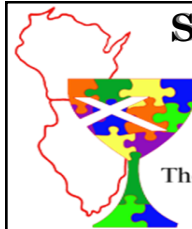
	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			<b>2</b> 6:30 PM Bible Study	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1</b>							
<b>7</b> 10:15 AM Worship	<b>8</b>		<b>9</b> 6:30 PM Bible Study	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>14</b> 10:15 AM Worship 11:30 AM Church Board	<b>15</b>		<b>16</b> 6:30 PM Bible Study	<b>17</b> 6:00 PM Welcome Table Wednesday	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>21</b> 8:30 AM Elders Breakfast 10:15 AM Worship	<b>22</b>		<b>23</b> 6:30 PM Bible Study	<b>24</b> Secretary Vacation	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b> 10:15 AM Worship	<b>29</b>		<b>30</b> 6:30 PM Bible Study				

LOCAL  
BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES  
*April 2024*

9 Josh Johnson  
Jennifer Jamison  
12 Joan Ricks  
13 Brecke Barnard  
14 Sue Ann Rickey  
Amy Rinehart  
Rick and Lori Rinehart '84  
17 David DeWall  
21 George and Barb Meyer '01  
22 Rodney and Brenda Mott '83  
Cullen Neal  
25 Nick Elder  
28 Valerie Mouser



**Sister Congregations  
in Our Prayers**



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

April 7 FCC Rock Falls, IL; Central CC,  
Bourbonnais, IL/ The Grow Center;  
FCC Peoria, IL; Fremont CC, Fremont, MI  
April 14 Disciples Women's Ministry;  
Disciples Men's Ministry  
April 21 Glen Oak CC, Peoria, IL; Mosaic Christian  
Church, Peoria, IL; FCC Petersburg, IL;  
FCC Rushville, IL; Woodgrove Bretheren  
Christian Parish, Hastings, MI  
April 28 Church of Christ Uniting, Lexington, IL;  
FCC Macomb, IL; Carlock CC, IL;  
FCC Galesburg, IL; FCC Ionia, 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

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