

The Christian Visitor December 2024



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

Our Life Together in December

Advent Worship Schedule

**Advent Worship Series
Calm & Bright**

**First Sunday in Advent
Sunday, December 1st**
Jeremiah 33:14-16 Luke 21:25-36
Sleep in Heavenly Peace

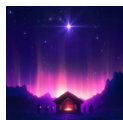


**Second Sunday in Advent
Sunday, December 8th**
Luke 1:68-79 Luke 3:1-6
Glories Stream

**Third Sunday in Advent
Sunday, December 15th**
Philippians 4:4-7 Luke 3:7-18
Redeeming Grace

**Fourth Sunday in Advent
Sunday, December 22nd**
Micah 5:2-5a Luke 1:39-55
Let Us Sing

**Christmas Eve
Tuesday, December 24th**
Candlelight Service 7:00pm



Advent Collection



We are collecting hats, scarves, gloves, and mittens for all ages throughout the Advent season to donate to Shepherd's Closet. Items may be brought in on Sunday mornings or dropped off during office hours and will be displayed on the tree outside the church office, along with any cards received during the Christmas season.



Recycling Volunteers December 7th & 21st

First Christian Church is in charge of recycling for the month of December. Volunteers will be needed on December 7th & 21st from 8:00-11:00am. Sign up in the narthex if you are able to help.

Office Closed

The church office will be closed December 26th-January 2nd. During this time, contact Pastor David (417-496-2978) or any elder for church needs.

Chili Dinner Update



Thank you to everyone who was involved in our chili dinner fundraiser. We raised over \$2,300 for hurricane relief!

Poinsettias

The church has ordered a limited number of poinsettias for display during worship. Forms for reserving a plant are available in the narthex until they run out.



More in the Life and Witness of the First Christian Church

A PASTOR'S PONDERING

We are in the holy season of Advent — those four weeks preparing for Christmas. We're anticipating the coming of the Christ Child and everything that means for us. Many of us have our Christmas decorations up; they are up at the church, and many of us have begun listening to Christmas music. That's ok. We're all trying to accomplish something very important to us. We're trying to "get the Christmas Spirit" — that ineffable, indefinable, elusive feeling that seemed to come to us so easily in childhood. It's a feeling that seems to be evoked through music, through scent, through visual cues like colored lights and images of the Nativity.

I can still remember vividly the music I heard as a little boy, and a couple of Mom's special decorations. When I experienced those things, it evoked a feeling of anticipation and excitement within me. I (like most kids) was excited about Christmas for three reasons: 1) getting presents I'd spent weeks drooling over in the Sears catalog, 2) getting to see my cousins, aunts, uncles, and grandparents who lived some distance away, and 3) I could sense something different and exciting about my parents at that time of year.

I think all kids are excited by getting presents, by seeing extended family, and by seeing their parents happy. I think that, as we grow older, those things don't change for us, and, in a sense, that's the crux of what we're anticipating as we progress through December. We all like the prospect of *receiving* something. As kids, it was receiving special toys. As adult Christians, it's receiving light, peace, hope, joy, and love. We all like to connect with people who are special to us. For kids, it's normally extended family. For the adult Christian, it's about connecting with a broader scope of people and deepening existing relationships. We all like to see people happy — whether kids or adults, because we thrive on happiness. We thrive on those positive energies we sense in other people.

When it comes down to it, I think those three things really constitute what we've come to call "the Christmas Spirit." We "get the Christmas Spirit" when we experience the gift — giving/receiving — the *exchange* of energies of love, energies of hope, energies of peace, energies of joy. We experience the gift of eternal life in the Christ Child. We experience infinite life as we draw ever closer to God. When God becomes "like us," then we are able to become "like God" — knowing life, knowing love.

We "get the Christmas Spirit" when we connect in meaningful and deep ways with others, because we're meant to be together. It feels good when we discover common traits that affirm love, cooperation, mutuality, and shared support.

We "get the Christmas Spirit" when we sense the greening of the human spirit that becomes evident in generosity, openness, self-expression, and self-giving.

These are the things God came to earth to birth in us. These are the things that give us hope — hope that we can experience peace and togetherness, belonging and welcome.

Yes, Christmas is a special time. And the time we spend in anticipation — Advent — is also a special time, for it is then that we learn to make room in our hearts for the things that really matter, by divesting ourselves of things that simply do not serve us or our best interests.

The magic of Christmas is found in the blossoming once again of the human spirit that gains its life and vitality from the Holy Spirit imparted to us through the Christ.

Come quickly, Lord Jesus! Love, the Guest, is on the way! Let us make him room.

More in the Life and Witness of the First Christian Church

Church Board

The Church Board will meet on Sunday, December 8th following worship.

Elder's Breakfast

There will be an Elders Breakfast on Sunday, December 15th at 8:00am.

Community Christmas Program December 15th

The Gibson Area Music Foundation is holding its annual Christmas concert "Celebrate the Season" on December 15 at 3:00PM at the Bible Church. It will include selections from "Messiah" along with carols and readings about Christ's birth and will feature soloists and a string ensemble.



Christmas Dinner

American Lutheran Church, 905 E. First St (Rt. 9 East), Gibson City will host their 49th Annual Christmas Day Dinner on Wednesday, December 25. They will be serving Turkey, Ham, Dressing, Vegetables, Potatoes, Desserts and beverages from Noon to 1pm in their Parish Hall. No Tickets necessary but please call 217-784-4841 for reservations - leave your name, number in your party and your phone number. A Freewill Offering will be received.

Choral Union Concert

The Choral Union will present their Christmas concert, "Impossible Dreams" on Monday, December 9th at 7:00pm at First UMC Champaign (210 W Church St). Tim & Joan Ricks and Lisa Massey-Brown are singing at this concert.

Christmas Special Offering to be Received December 15th & 22nd



It's time for our Christmas Special Offering. As you know, we receive six Special Offerings each year on behalf of Disciples Mission Fund. Our Christmas Special Offering always goes to support our Regional ministries here in Illinois, Wisconsin, and now Michigan.

This year's theme is "**God's Love is Made Visible.**" God's love is made visible, by faith, through *you*. It's made visible in providing camp experiences, retreats, and other gatherings at facilities like Camp Walter Scott. It's made visible in working toward justice, confronting historic wrongs, and consciously embracing the possibilities of Emergence as a witness to the power of being "a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world." It's made visible in serving together in mission "from our doorsteps to the end of the earth," through ministries like SLAM and Disciples Women. It's made visible in equipping pastors and lay leaders for faithful service, through opportunities for learning, development, and training. It's made visible through supporting and strengthening congregations with staff called to vital ministries, providing tools for spiritual formation, discipleship, and revitalization. It's made visible through overseeing the ordination and Search and Call processes for ministry.

We will receive this Special Offering over **December 15 & 22**. Please be generous with your gifts!

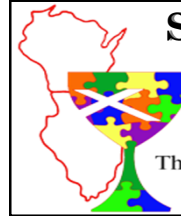
Office Hours:
 Tue—Fri: 9:00 am—1:00 pm
 Church Phone: 217-784-5460
 gcfcdoc@yahoo.com
 fecdocgc.com

December 2024

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 1st Sunday of Advent 10:15 AM Worship 11:30 AM Chili Dinner	2		3 6:30 PM Bible Study	4	5	6	7 8:00 AM Recycling
8 2nd Sunday of Advent 10:15 AM Worship 11:30 AM Church Board	9		10 6:30 PM Bible Study	11	12	13	14
15 3rd Sunday of Advent 8:00 AM Elders Breakfast 10:15 AM Worship	16		17 6:30 PM Bible Study	18	19	20	21 8:00 AM Recycling
Christmas Offering							
22 4th Sunday of Advent 10:15 AM Worship	23		24 Christmas Eve 7:00 PM Candlelight Service	25 Christmas Day Office Closed	26	27	28
Christmas Offering							
29 10:15 AM Worship	30		31				

LOCAL
BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES
December 2024

- 5 Jennifer Hagan
7 Tyler Ricks
14 Angela Back
15 Ron Hoffman
16 Joe Higgins
Nick Tabor
17 Kristine Medler
Barb Meyer
25 HAPPY BIRTHDAY, JESUS!!
30 Tanya Farney
31 Brenda Mott



**Sister Congregations
in Our Prayers**

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

- December 1: FCC Downers Grove, IL;
FCC Robinson, IL;
University CC, Chicago, IL
December 8 : FCC Centralia, IL;
UniPlace Champaign, IL;
Chandlerville CC, IL;
Burt Lake CC, MI
December 15: Regional Ministry
December 22: Merry Christmas
December 29: Happy New Year!
Transformation Ministries

Pastor - David Massey-Brown
Administrative Assistant - Jennifer Hagan
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