



First Christian Church

Disciples of Christ

love all . live spiritually . rejoice in hope . show hospitality

Messenger

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COVID-19 Precautions

Thank you so much to those of you who have been worshiping with us since we opened on June 7th. Some time has passed since then, and we felt it was a good time to remind everyone of First Christian's polices regarding COVID-19 precautions.

- Everyone must wear a mask inside the building. The proper way to wear a mask is to cover both your nose and mouth to prevent spreading airborne particles.
- Please keep a 6 foot distance from anyone not in your immediate family group.
- There are new hand sanitizer dispenser at each entrance. Please use these before coming into the Sanctuary.

These simple precautions will help to keep everyone healthy and safe during the pandemic. Thank you in advance for your cooperation!

Don't Forget SCRIP

See Donna after worship or send an email if you are interested in SCRIP. The next special order will be next Sunday, February 7, but we have several cards on hand. Remember, SCRIP is a win-win for local businesses and First Christian Church.



Here's What We Know: Finance Notes

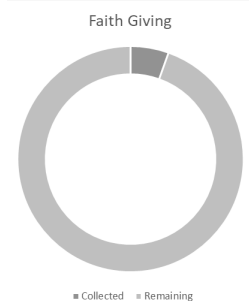
While it's hard to imagine what God has in mind for FCC this year, we need to trust God and do the work of making sure 2021 is a successful year. This is going to take everyone pitching in and feeling like they are an integral part of the mission and ministry of FCC. It's going to take **FAITH!**

Last December, the congregation approved the 2021 operating budget. At this time, projected expenses exceed anticipated income by \$4,000 per month.

In previous years, the finance team has designated the 5th Sunday as "Faith Giving" Sunday, but faith shouldn't be limited to four times per year. Faith should be constant and continuous. Every Sunday should be considered "Faith Giving" Sunday in order to meet our needs for the year. Our monthly faith giving goal for 2021 is \$4,000. As of January 31, we have received \$2,630 in faith giving. A great start!

The Finance Team

Dark Grey - Collected
Light Grey - Remaining



Pastor's Corner

“If you have ever felt yourself aging and losing both the health and tautness of a young body and the opportunities that come with that and been powerless to turn back the clock. If you have ever felt the world slipping away from you as you grow older and ever more marginalized. Then you have felt how God feels in this world“

Ronald Rolheiser

As I draw to the end of Ronald Rolheiser's book *The Holy Longing* I was struck by his reflections entitled "A Spirituality of Justice and Peace-Making." In this section he explored the ways in which God's power is experienced in our world. So often we think God's power is revealed in the physically strong, the beautiful and fit, the articulate and well-spoken. Rolheiser points out that "...muscle, swiftness, beauty, brilliance and grace reflect God's glory, but, they are not the primary ways in which God shows power in this world."

As we move closer to Lent, we are also reminded that God's power was also uniquely experienced by Jesus on Good Friday. "God never overpowers. God's power in this world is never the power of a muscle, a speed, a physical attractiveness, a brilliance or a grace which, as the contemporary expression has it, 'it blows you away and makes you shout yes, yes there is a God.'" He went on to say "God's power though is more muted, more helpless, more shamed and more marginalized. But, it lies at a deeper level, at the ultimate base of things and will, in the end, gently have the final say."

While his comments were part of his reflections about the God that undergirds real social justice, his words struck me in a different way.

As I read the quote at the top of this page, my thoughts went to a different situation in my life. I suppose, in a way, it is an issue of justice and peace-making, one that hits close to home. As many of you know, I have been helping a friend and colleague as he ages and struggles with dementia. He has no family and so I have come to be that for him. Since my return to the US in 2016 I have watched his health continue to decline. He has also had to deal with dementia which has worsened during the isolation of COVID-19. I have watched him age more rapidly than his years would normally dictate. Recently I had to move him from his assisted living apartment to a care center. While it was necessary, I found the process very painful. Yes, it was a lot of work and it had to be done quickly. But, it was also emotionally pain-

ful for him and for me. A lot of memories from the last months of my mother's life flooded back on me. My heart ached for him and where life had taken him. Once a man of significant intellect and an articulate preacher, his world had become one room in a care center. While I know that he will now get the care he needs, the whole thing has weighed heavy on my mind and heart.

As I read the above words from Rolheiser, I began to sense that God was now with him, and me, in a new and different way. I suspect this change may leave us feeling "God forsaken." I had a sense that God was with him especially now. As I read these words a prayer came into my heart, I prayed that the God of the aged and forsaken would be experienced by my friend. I had a sense that God was with me too, in a new and different way. Not in youth, or health, or intellect, but in the aging body and mind of a friend. I prayed that's God's love would surround him and comfort him in this painful time of change.

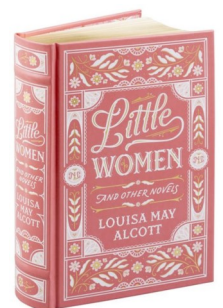
As we close in on a year dealing with COVID-19 and all the cries for justice that surround us still, may we also experience the power of God that is often experienced on the Good Fridays of our own lives. May the deeper presence of God remind us that, in the end, God does have the final word. God is with us, even and especially, in the midst of our Good Fridays and ultimately leads us to the power of the resurrection.

In peace and love,
Pastor Karen

Book Club News

Book Club will meet again Saturday February 13 at 9:30 via Zoom. Link information will be sent out soon.

Our book for discussion is:
Little Women
by Louisa May Alcott



Some of the upcoming titles to be discussed include:

All the Gallant Men by Donald Stratton and Ken Gire
Abide with Me by Elizabeth Strout

Anyone is welcome to join in our discussions at any time. We usually meet on Saturday mornings, but check the FCC Calendar of Events for specific dates, and times, or change of location.



Those Serving in February

If for any reason you will be unable to fulfill your requirement, please find a substitute and alert the FCC Office. We can also help find substitutes if necessary.

Worship Leader

Karl Ahrendsen

Elders

February 7	Jim Blosser
February 14	Connie Calver
February 21	Tom Mason
February 28	Wayne Duncan

Hallway Hospitality

February 7	Jim Christ
February 14	Rich Calver
February 21	Vince Ortega
February 28	Mike Carlin

Ushers/Greeters

February 7	Jessica Effle
February 14	Wayne & Susan Pallas-Duncan
February 21	Elaine Parman
February 28	John & Lindsay Swanson

THANK YOU for volunteering. Your efforts at First Christian Church is what keeps Sunday worship alive and thriving!

FCC Social Media!



Each week FCC is posting new pictures, videos, and links to great worship music. Look for First Christian Church on Instagram, Facebook, and You Tube for new content every week. Get connected!

If you have experienced any difficulties or problems with any of the Church offerings (videos, Worship, etc.) please contact the church office at (402) 475-4289.

A thank you note....

Thank you for your heart felt kindness shown to me following my stroke December 11, 2020. The prayers, love, expressions and thoughts have strengthened my faith and convictions and I know God answers prayers.

What a blessing you have been Pastor Karen, staff, elders, Stephen Ministers, and friends. Thank you!!

First Christian truly is a caring congregation and you all make it so.

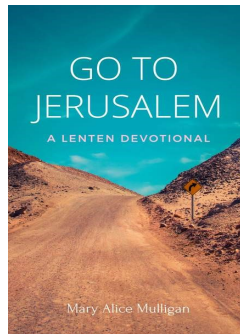
Blessings,
Mildred Brockemeyer



STEPHEN MINISTRY

“May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy.”

1 Thessalonians 3:13a



New Lenten Devotionals
Coming Soon!

This Lent, imagine placing your hand in the hand of Jesus and journeying with him to Jerusalem.

In these daily devotions for the 40 days of Lent and Holy Week, pastor and scholar Mary Alice Mulligan leads us on a self-reflective journey to discover what it really means to follow Jesus. As you journey to Jerusalem, you'll reflect on the scriptures in which Jesus calls on his Disciples to leave everything and follow him, is baptized and announces his ministry, predicts his own death, clears the temple and pledges to rebuild it in three days, and proclaims God's love for all.

Lent begins February 17. Booklets will be mailed to all active members of the church, free of charge.

A Message from the Board

The Board met via Zoom January 17th at 6:00 pm. We heard reports from staff and committees. As you probably saw in the last Messenger, we ended the year in a good financial position, so I would like to thank all of you for your financial dedication to the church. Because of this, the board approved sending an additional \$1000 to the Disciples Mission Fund from the 2020 budget. We also heard that our budget deficit for next year looks a little better because we had some more pledges renewed or added after our congregational meeting in December.

We reviewed the installation of the streaming video system in the Sanctuary and we have been continually improving the system. Please let us know if you are having any trouble streaming the service and we may be able to help you. An easy way to find the YouTube stream is <https://fclincoln.org/youtube>.

We also reviewed the new doorbell and remote unlock system for Kelly to be able to see who is ringing at the doors. We are still working with the vendor on some issues, but the new system is up and running. Thank you to those who supported this project by donating designated funds.

We look forward to having a virtual leadership retreat in the future to renew our goals from 2020 and continue planning how FCC can best serve in the community and beyond.

Geoff Putney
Board Chair

News from the National Disciples of Christ

[Disciples of Christ Historical Society](#) is pleased to announce the launch of the [Journal of Discipiana](#), an online-only, open access, peer-reviewed journal for original scholarship that explores issues related to all aspects of thought and religious life and practice within the historical or contemporary Stone-Campbell Movement.

The General Editor, Dr. Mark G. Toulouse, works in consultation with an editorial board of scholars representing a diversity of gender, “racial-ethnic,” and national identity from the three primary streams of the Stone-Campbell Movement: the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the Christian Churches/Churches of Christ, and the Churches of Christ (*cappella*). Jim McMillan provides staff support as Managing Editor. Dr. Rick Lowery, President of the Historical Society, is Publisher.



Auto Pay Your Church Giving

Tired of writing checks? There is an easy, convenient and secure way

to electronically transfer funds from your checking account to donate to the church. Enrolling is easy – a debit authorization form and voided check is all that we need. Forms are available in the FCC office or can be emailed to you upon request. In addition, auto payment can be canceled at any time.

Auto Pay makes life easier for you by:

- Knowing you are faithfully supporting so many important vital ministries
- Realizing the joy in being the faithful steward God calls you to be
- Eliminating the need to write a check regularly helping your personal budgeting process

Auto Pay benefits to FCC:

- Provides a more predictable income flow for better church financial management
- Reduces time and effort in processing collections by FCC staff/volunteers
- Increases faithful offerings to the church due to regular automatic donations



Save the Dates for upcoming Lenten services. We will also be worshipping every Sunday morning at 10:30 am in the Sanctuary - and - live-streaming at www.fclincoln.org/youtube. We will also be offering a Wednesday Night Zoom study with Pastor Karen. More information coming soon. All are welcome - tell your friends!

Ash Wednesday February 17th
Worship 7 pm

Maundy Thursday April 1st
Worship 7 pm

Good Friday April 2nd
Worship 12 noon

24 Hour Virtual Prayer Vigil
1 pm Friday through 1 pm Saturday

Easter Sunday April 4th
Worship 10:30 am

Prayers & Praises February 4, 2021

Our Timothy's:

- Bruce Frogge at *Cypress Creek CC in Spring, TX*
- Glenda Dietrich Moore, *Creative Arts Ministry in Lincoln, NE*

In the Nebraska Region:

- Bellevue Christian Church and Rev. Michael Lincoln
- Bethany Christian Church and Rev. Daryl Lauber

Our Global Ministries Missionaries:

- Maria Abigail Hernandez serving in Japan

Find more information and stories about our Global Ministry partners at

www.globalministries.org



Who can you ask for real-time data? ALEX!

Alex is a database that will be shared by the whole Church. General Minister and President Terri Hord Owens set this as an objective early in her tenure, knowing from her earlier experience in corporate settings **that business intelligence (data) is key to making informed decisions.** Alex will position Disciples to finally have a real-time directory and picture of church-wide trends that has been impossible with the current year-book system.

But there's more! The goal is that as we build out the system **there will be an opportunity to have more church intelligence.** Together congregations, regions, and general ministries will be able to analyze trends in geographical areas, see changes in staffing models, look for ways to combine strengths, and more. We will eventually have all our historical data in the system to get a firm grasp on the past as we chart our future together. (To quote management guru Peter Drucker: "If you can't measure it, you can't improve it.")

This work is only possible if we have good data. The Alex database will draw in select data from our current yearbook legacy system, and from the financial database maintained by Treasury Services. Congregations and regions can spot trends in real time. Congregations will be able to update their contact and staff information in real time for submission to the regions for verification before pushing it out to the existing databases housed in general ministries.

Lincoln First Christian Church Calendar of Events

Thursday, February 4 - Messengers Mailed

Sunday, February 7 -SCRIP Orders Due

10:30 am Worship - Sanctuary

12:00 pm Virtual Coffee Fellowship - ZOOM

Sunday, February 14

10:30 am Worship - Sanctuary

12:00 pm Virtual Coffee Fellowship - ZOOM

Monday, February 15

12:00 pm Messenger Deadline

Tuesday, February 16

9:00 am Staff Meeting - Conference Room

Thursday, February 18 - Messengers Mailed



Working for Justice
Ecumenical Legislative
Briefing Day

Saturday, February 13, 2021

9:30 am - 12:00 pm

This is a virtual conference

Topics to be discussed include education, immigration, gerrymandering, racial justice, and more. For more information go to www.nelegisbrief.org.



Sanctuary Flowers \$45

Call the FCC Office at
402-475-4289 or email
to info@fclincoln.org

A letter from Rev. Teresa “Terri” Hord Owens, General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

(an excerpt)

January 14, 2021

Dear Disciples,

Here at the beginning of a new year, there is no doubt that our church- as much of the rest of the world - is in a wilderness season. We find ourselves wandering, longing for the comfort of what we once knew and wondering what the future holds.

I believe that this moment, like all wilderness moments, holds great opportunity for us, if we are brave enough to imagine what might be. I want to invite you to imagine with me.

Several intertwining crises present themselves in this moment, each with a particular opportunity: The pandemic, which has caused the cancellation of our General Assembly and forced so many churches out of their buildings, provides an opportunity to re-envision what church looks like in all expressions and to explore what it means to be a church sent out. The racial justice reckoning happening across the United States gives us an opportunity to revisit our commitment to be a pro-reconciling /anti-racist church; that is, to be the church we say we are.

The economic crisis, in which the wealth gap is widening and leaving many without access to resources, gives us an opportunity to discern how we will love and serve our neighbors, even as we work toward a more just economy for all. The political unrest of American democracy gives us an opportunity to explore what it means to be witnesses of Jesus in a time of such division and change. And the ever-present crisis of climate change provides an opportunity to reaffirm our call to care for God’s good creation, even as we confess and repent our participation in its destruction.

I’d like to share with you some ways we can live into this calling this year by focusing on four key areas: covenant, story, tools, and practice.

- **Covenant:** I hope you will pray for those who are discerning a way forward, and for your congregation as it lives in covenant with the whole church.
- **Story:** Please make sure you’re signed up for my *Dear Disciples* newsletter and follow Disciples social media so you won’t miss these opportunities to imagine with me.
- **Tools:** I hope you have heard about ALEX, a new Disciples database that will eventually replace the year book. It will provide a real-time directory and help us track church wide data trends. You can learn more about ALEX at www.disciples.org, where you can also sign up for newsletters and connect with ministries across the church.
- **Practice:** I hope, as we move into this new year, that you will stay connected to your local congregation, and that you will embrace the practices of our faith that give you life.

Church, we are called to imagine a new world. We are called to imagine God’s reign fully come, and to discern how we can participate in making it so. We call ourselves Disciples of Christ, a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world. **It is time for us to be the church we say we are: to seize the opportunity of this wilderness moment and to move forward with courage, permission to change, and freedom from fear, to imagine a church that bears witness to God’s limitless love.**

I’m glad to be in ministry with you,

Teresa Hord Owens