



**First Christian Church**  
Disciples of Christ

430 S. 16<sup>th</sup> St. Lincoln, NE 68508 402.475.4289

## Messenger

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

**The Rev. Kara Hillhouse**, Interim Pastor  
**Mark W. Miller**, Director of Music Ministries  
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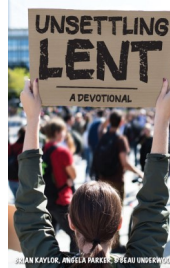
# LENT 2024 AT FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

## LENT 2024 - 40 DAYS LOOKING TO JESUS

Coming soon to your mailbox or email!

Lent is an especially appropriate time to focus on Jesus. Lent is all about Jesus' life and death, culminating in His joyful Easter resurrection. Our very lives are defined by Jesus' life, death and resurrection. Because Jesus lived, we live; because Jesus died and rose from the grave, we die to sin and are raised into a new and renewed way of living. Lent, the 40-day season leading up to Easter, is a time to reflect on all God has done for us through His son Jesus. This Lent we invite you to think about who Jesus is and all that He did during His earthly ministry. We also invite you to reflect upon all that Jesus does for you each and every day. Over the next forty days of Lent (Sundays are excluded), consider the 40 "titles" of Jesus. Look up the Scripture for each title and ponder in your heart the gracious and generous work of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

PASTOR KARA HILLHOUSE



The Worship Team selected the **"UNSETTLING LENT"** devotional as another Lenten resource. *"A daily devotional for the season leading to Easter, Unsettling Lent invites Christians to reexamine Biblical stories through social-justice lenses."*

These devotionals will be delivered to those who are not able to get to church and available for pick up on Ash Wednesday or in the Narthex on Sunday, February 11th.



## COME JOIN US FOR AN ASH WEDNESDAY SOUP SUPPER & WORSHIP SERVICE

Soup Supper: begins at 5:30 pm  
Worship Service: begins at 7 pm

Sign up sheets will be available in the Chapel entrance on Sunday, January 28th to indicate you are coming and what delicious food items you want to provide.

Hope to see you there!

## Pastor's Corner

Dear Friends,

The past two weeks during our sermons we've been looking at "call" stories, first with the young boy Samuel and then with the four fishermen, called by Jesus to follow him. We've seen examples of people faithfully heeding God's call to join Him on His mission to heal and love the world. And we've talked about how hard following this call can be. There are days when we have exuberant energy... and days when we feel weary and heavy-laden. Lent, which begins on Wednesday, February 14th, with Ash Wednesday, can also be a time that feels heavy-laden: it is solemn, it can feel a little dark. A few years ago I came across the following poem and it resonated with me. I'd like to share it with you, and maybe it will speak to you, too.

*i have come undone,  
no longer content  
with what was enough  
to get by,  
to carry me  
through another day.  
do you feel it too,  
mercy tugging in the darkness?  
oh I'm coming,  
dragging my bones  
to that path of completeness,  
for that ageless saturation of  
love.*

~Janet Johnson Anderson

I love the phrase "mercy tugging in the darkness." The image, of a great benevolent force that we cannot see or describe pulling us in a direction that will benefit us, is a powerful thing to me. Is that how God works in our lives? Gently nudging us in the direction He'd have us go for our own good; and, when necessary, pushing or pulling us a little harder, when we get stubborn and refuse to listen to His voice. *Mercy tugging in the darkness.* You see, God invites us into the fullness of His grace and mercy, but never demands it. He invites us into fellowship with Him. It's a choice.

If we choose to follow, grace and mercy are what we will find. When we have "come undone" and have reached our wits' end, we will find a "saturation of love" waiting for us. Doesn't that sound wonderful? Isn't that exactly what we need? Not just now, but every single day of our lives? I know I do. I hope you'll choose to follow God's nudges in your own life. It will make all the difference - not that we won't still have moments of coming undone, because we will. But we will have mercy and love as our companions along the way.

Peace be with you as you go about your day.

*Pastor Kara*



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### Don't Forget SCRIP

See Donna Ruhl after worship or send an email to the church office, if you are interested in SCRIP. The next special order will be **Sunday, February 4th**. We have several cards on hand. Remember, SCRIP is a win-win for local businesses and First Christian Church.

## Auto Pay Your Church Giving

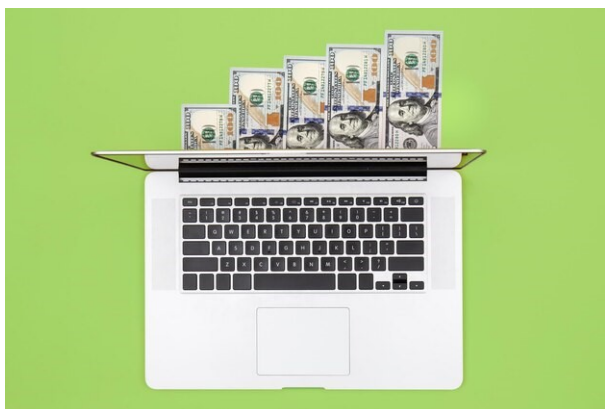
Tired of writing checks? There is an easy, convenient, and secure way to electronically transfer funds from your checking account to donate to the church. Enrolling is easy – a debit authorization form and voided check is all that we need. Forms are available in the FCC office or can be emailed to you upon request. In addition, auto payment can be canceled with a written 30 day notice.

### Auto Pay benefits for YOU:

- ⇒ 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.
- ⇒ NO fees, so your whole donation benefits FCC.



The Staff of First Christian Church want to extend a big THANK YOU to everyone in the congregation for their generous Christmas gifts. Thank you for recognizing us at this special time of year.

*Pastor Kara Hillhouse, Mark Miller and Elaine Parman*

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FCC Friends,

Thank you for hosting Nia and Rudy's wedding on December 31st!

Your Friends,  
The O'Bryant Family

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Dear First Christian Church,

We would like to thank you for your generous gifts to our family as we have searched for Tyler. The gift cards helped all of us, and we appreciate your kindness.

We ask for your continued prayers as we continue through this journey. There is still no lead as to Tyler's whereabouts, and that has been very frustrating.

Our family will continue to praise God for so many good people, such as yourselves, who have supported us these past 2 months.

*The Family of Tyler Goodrich*  
(Lonnie, Pam, Jordan, Aislinn, Jennie, Will, Weston, Rhett, Felicia, Travis, Cody, Angie, Bill Glen, Kade, Brylee, Rylee, Paisley, Joe, Lucas, Andrew, Alex)

Have you wondered how many people watch our YouTube videos or where they are from? Our YouTube video ministry has increased significantly since July 23rd of last year. This is when we started posting individual selections from our Sunday services. On December 31, 2022 we had 9 subscribers of our YouTube channel and we had 5,876 views of our videos in 2022. All the viewers were from the United States. Compare this to 2023 where we had 19,151 views of our videos and 139 subscribers of our YouTube channel. Only 1,334 views last year came from our subscribers whereas 17,817 views came from non-subscribers. Today we have viewers from around the world. We have viewers in the United Kingdom, Sweden, Canada, South Africa, Australia, India, Germany, Malaysia, Mexico, Ireland, Norway, Suriname, Poland, Nigeria, Netherlands, and of course the United States. Our viewership is predominately men and women over the age of 45. As of 01-16-2024, we have 145 subscribers, 18 of those being in the last 28 days. We have six videos with over 600 views. Our top video is Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken posted in September with 852 views. We also have Playlists for the Weekly Hymns, The Sanctuary Choir, Handbells, The Recorder Consort, The Torch Worship Team, Mark's service music, the 2023 Lessons and Carols and 2023 Christmas Eve Service.

We also have seen growth in the reach of our Facebook and Instagram accounts since the beginning of 2023. We now have 292 followers of our Facebook page and 107 followers of our Instagram page. We have followers from the United States, Czech Republic, Kenya, Bangladesh, Brazil, Congo, Luxembourg, Malaysia and Nigeria.

I hope you will take the time to check out our YouTube videos if you don't already. I would encourage you to Subscribe to our channel and click the Like button on our videos. Also, if there is a video you really enjoy, share it with your friends. The number of subscribers and likes play a role in the algorithm that suggests our videos to viewers.

If you have a Facebook or Instagram page, I would encourage you to Follow First Christian Church and to like our posts. If you don't have a Facebook or Instagram page, it is free to sign up. You don't have to follow your friends or other pages, just follow First Christian Church so you don't miss out. The posts with pictures showing the life and activities of our church consistently have the best reach of our posts. If you are involved in a church activity, take some pictures and send them to me, so I can post them. If there is a post you really like, again share it with your Facebook or Instagram friends and introduce them to what we have to share about First Christian Church.

I am amazed at how far the ministry of First Christian Church has spread around the world these past few months. We can grow it even bigger with your help!

Thank you!

*Sara Luga*, Communications Team

## \$\$ Finance Notes \$\$

Thank You for your generous support in 2023!

The Finance Team cannot say THANK YOU enough to everyone who participated in 2023 Faith Giving, which topped out at just over \$25,000! Almost one third of this total (just over \$8,000) was raised in December. What a show of loyalty and faithfulness to the church!

In addition, over 99% of all 2023 pledges were received! Because of this, 2023 is the fifth year in a row First Christian Church has ended the year in the black with enough income to cover expenses. The FCC Board Officers and Finance Team invites everyone to join them for cake during coffee fellowship following Worship on Sunday, February 18th.

Again in 2024, the finance team is designating the LAST Sunday of each month as "Faith Giving" Sunday.

Faith Giving is just one way to support the mission and ministry of FCC. Stewardship is much more than money. Stewardship is everything that we do in response to God's gracious, unconditional, unending love. In the coming weeks, there will be plenty of opportunities for you to commit your time and talent to the work of God through your Stewardship.

After the fantastic year we had in 2023, we are hoping to make 2024 even better. To keep that momentum going everyone needs to pitch in and become an integral part of the mission and ministry of FCC.

May the Spirit of God be with you,

*The Finance Team*

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**Deborah Group Meeting**  
Monday, February 5th at 7 pm  
Sally Mason's home, 4511 Gertie Ave.

All women are welcome to join us! Contact D'Arcy Blosser for more information....  
402-429-6902.



## Those Serving in February

If for any reason you will be unable to fulfill your responsibility, **please find a substitute**. All of these positions need to be filled each morning.

### **Worship Leader:**

Kristi Bowker

### **Elders:**

February 4 - Wayne Duncan

February 11 - Cecilia Burkhart

February 18 - Jim Christ

February 25 - Sara Lugn

### **Deacons:**

Riley Bowker, Brad Bowker

**Homebound Communion:** February 11

### **Homebound Communion:**

Wayne Duncan, Cecilia Burkhart, Jim Christ, Sara Lugn

### **Hallway Hospitality:**

February 4 - Geoff Putney

February 11 - Vince Ortega

February 18 - Rich Calver

February 25 - Doug Effle

### **Ushers/Greeters:**

February 4 - Monte Dietrick

February 11 - D'Arcy Blosser

February 18 - Elaine Parman

February 25 - Wayne Duncan & Susan Pallas-Duncan

### **Acolytes:**

February 4 - Edryk Christianson

February 11 - Trev Greder

February 18 - Kyson & Keaton Effle

February 25 - Gianna Greder

### **Offering Counting:**

February 4 - Monte Dietrick

February 11 - D'Arcy Blosser

February 18 - Elaine Parman

February 25 - Rich Calver

**Thank you for volunteering for these positions!**

# February Birthdays

20<sup>th</sup>

Monte Dietrick

25<sup>th</sup>

Hanna Pinneo Boring

27<sup>th</sup>

Rae - Hope Putney

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## FCC Kitchen/Parlor Tips



Our winter residents have moved back into the kitchen and parlor. Let's stop feeding them by cleaning up! They like coffee with or without cream and sugar.

### **Please clean up completely:**

- ⇒ Rinse ALL dishes, place in a dishwasher tray by dishwasher.
- ⇒ Empty and clean ALL coffee pots.
- ⇒ Empty coffee grounds and wipe up around coffee pot. Unplug coffeepot.
- ⇒ Sweep floor, if lots of spills use wet mop from janitor closet.
- ⇒ Wipe ALL tables down in the parlor and clean the floor if necessary.
- ⇒ Take dirty towels and dishcloths home to launder and return.

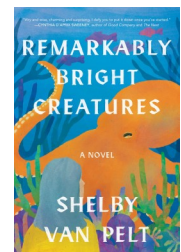
Thank you for serving, preparing and cleaning up.

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## **Book Club News**

Book Club will be meeting on Saturday, February 17th @ 9:30 am at Dottie Harrell's home.

Our book for discussion is: *Remarkably Bright Creatures* by Shelby Van Pelt



Bring ideas to this book club, as this is as far out as we have planned.

# Prayers & Praises

## In Our Church Family:

- Donna Baker
- Rhonda Ball
- Bobbi Carlin
- Mike Carlin
- Jim Christ
- William Deterding
- Joan Dietrich
- Sharon Hile
- Polly Putney
- Rae-Hope Putney
- Marvin Thurber
- Phyllis Thurber
- Jessica Vocasek

## Friends:

- Jennie & Will Ernest and family. *Tyler Goodrich, the young man missing since November 3rd is Jennie's brother.*
- Tammy Foral, *healing, patience and strength as facing many health issues. Co-worker of Sara Lugn*
- Cedric Gibb, *healing prayers, friend of Cec Burkhart*

## Our Timothys:

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

**In the Nebraska Region:** Center on Church Leadership - Regional Church

## Our Global Ministries Missionaries:

- Mission Partners in Hungary

*"We uplift those who have known the hardships of displacement, the wanderers, and seekers of refuge before you in prayer. Grant solace and hope to those displaced, especially the children who bear this weight of uncertainty. May our efforts reflect your divine justice and mercy."*

For more information and stories about our Global Ministry partners visit [www.globalministries.org](http://www.globalministries.org)



# Lincoln First Christian Church Calendar of Events

## Sunday, January 28

- 9:00 am Adult Sunday School - Library
- 9:15 am Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal - Sanctuary
- 10:00 am Torch Worship Team Rehearsal
- 10:30 am Worship
- 11:30 am Elders Meeting - Library

## Wednesday, January 31

- 6:30 pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal
- 7:30 pm Handbell Quartet Rehearsal
- 8:30 pm Recorder Consort Rehearsal

## Sunday, February 4

- 9:00 am Adult Sunday School - Library
- 9:15 am Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal - Sanctuary
- 10:00 am Torch Worship Team Rehearsal
- 10:00 am SCRIP orders due
- 10:30 am Worship

## Monday, February 5

- 7:00 pm Deborah Group Meeting - Sally Mason's home

## Wednesday, February 7

- 6:30 pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal
- 7:30 pm Handbell Quartet Rehearsal
- 8:30 pm Recorder Consort Rehearsal

## Friday, February 9

- 4:00 pm Cowger/Shruck Wedding Rehearsal - Chapel

## Saturday, February 10

- 3:00 pm Cowger/Shruck Wedding - Chapel

## Sunday, February 11

- 9:00 am Adult Sunday School - Library
- 9:15 am Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal - Sanctuary
- 10:00 am Torch Worship Team Rehearsal
- 10:30 am Worship

## Wednesday, February 14

- 5:30 pm Ash Wednesday Soup Supper
- 7:00 pm Ash Wednesday Worship Service

## Saturday, February 17

- 9:30 am Book Club - Dottie Harrell's home

## Sunday, February 18

- 9:00 am Adult Sunday School - Library
- 9:15 am Sanctuary Choir - Sanctuary
- 10:00 am Torch Worship Team Rehearsal
- 10:30 am Worship
- 6:00 pm Minister's Cabinet Meeting - Parlor

## Wednesday, February 21

- 6:30 pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal
- 7:30 pm Handbell Quartet Rehearsal
- 8:30 pm Recorder Consort Rehearsal

## Sunday, February 25

- 9:00 am Adult Sunday School - Library
- 9:15 am Sanctuary Choir - Sanctuary
- 10:00 am Torch Worship Team Rehearsal
- 10:30 am Worship
- 11:30 am Elders Meeting - Library

## Monday, February 26 - Messenger Deadline