



First Christian Church
Disciples of Christ

430 S. 16th St. Lincoln, NE 68508 402.475.4289

Messenger

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

The Rev. Kara Hillhouse, Interim Pastor
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Christmas 2023 Peace Amid Chaos

Join our services for a bit of **Peace Amid Chaos** this Christmas Season.

Lessons and Carols
December 17th @ 10:30 am

Worship
December 24th @ 10:30 am

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
December 24 @ 6:00 pm

Annual Congregational Meeting

December 3rd following Worship



Go to: https://katebowler.com/seasonal_devotional/blessthisadvent to download your free copy and begin your Advent journey on December 3rd.

If you are not able to download and print, let the church office know.





This coming Sunday we'll enter the sanctuary and instantly feel that something has happened at church: the Christmas tree will be up and the sanctuary will be decorated. But it will be more than that. There will be an anticipation of something. Something that we might not be able to put into words, as words so often fall short for us. There will be a sense that something important is coming. And there is—the season of waiting: Advent.

“Advent is a time when we prepare ourselves spiritually to celebrate the birth of the Savior. Advent is the church’s response to [the] amnesia [of the world around us]. Advent is a four-week period when Christians pause and say, ‘Let’s remember what this is all about. Let’s remember who the child is, born in Bethlehem two thousand years ago. Let’s remember the hope and the promise that come from him. Let’s remember who he called us to be and what he called us to do. Let’s remember the mission he gave us as we seek to live as Christ-followers.’” ¹

Advent prepares our hearts for the manger. And the manger points us to the Cross. The two are inextricably linked, for the sole purpose of Jesus’ birth was so that he could die for our sins and show us the way to the abundant and eternal life. We cannot celebrate Christmas without being led to Easter; and we cannot celebrate Easter without remembering and reflecting on Christmas. It’s a full circle.

This year, let’s not rush through Advent. Let’s not forget to “wait.” We’re so good at thinking ahead, planning ahead, forging ahead - *what gifts will I buy for the family, when will we put up the decorations, when will we send out the cards* - but when we do that, we lose the promise of “now.” And “now” is what Advent is all about. It’s about the waiting and it’s about the preparing of our hearts for Christmas. It’s about being *intentional*: anticipating what is about to happen and understanding how that will change our lives. I invite you to not dash to Christmas this year. Instead, let’s wait together and prepare for what is about to happen. I believe, if we can do this, we will experience Christmas in a more meaningful, more joyful way.

Peace be with you all,

Kara

¹ Hamilton, Adam. *Not a Silent Night: Mary Looks Back to Bethlehem*, 2014.

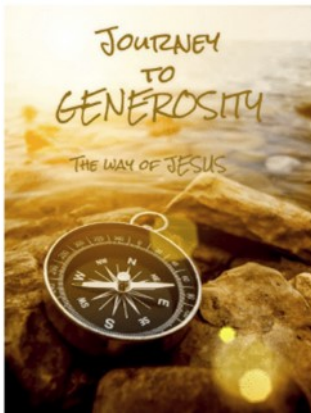
LETTER TO THE EDITOR

When does the Sunday worship service begin at First Christian Church? According to the service bulletin, it’s when the Carillon Bells start ringing at 10:30 a.m. This should be notice to worshippers to end their conversations and find their seats. After the Carillon ringing ends, there is Preparation for Worship music often from Mark at the organ or piano and sometimes from an ensemble such as the handbell choir or recorder consort. This sets the mood for a meaningful service.

Listen to the first five minutes of the November 19th service on YouTube Worship November 19th, 2023 - YouTube. There is loud conversation during the whole time the Handbell choir is playing the Preparation for Worship music. They practice one hour every Wednesday evening, preparing music to enrich our worship service and hardly anyone listened.

We have YouTube viewers from around the world watching our services so I would encourage everyone to help make a better impression.

Gwen Belden



Book Club News

Book Club will be meeting on **Saturday, December 9 @ 9:30 am** at Susan Pallas - Duncan's house - 5121 Claire Ave.

Our book for discussion is:

The Last Castle by Denise Kiernan



Please be thinking about books for upcoming months and email them out to everyone!

Anyone is welcome to join in our discussions at any time. Check the FCC Calendar of Events for specific dates and times, or change of location.

More than 50 people celebrated the culmination of our JOURNEY to GENEROSITY 2024 Stewardship Campaign on Commitment Sunday, October 29th by attending Worship and enjoying lunch in our gym. After the celebration lunch, the Finance and Outreach teams hosted a Trunk or Treat event.

A special THANKS is extended to Donald and Jill Everett for donating Runza chili and Miller & Paine cinnamon rolls for the luncheon and ice cream coupons for Trunk or Treat.

THANK YOU to all of FCC's dedicated volunteers who assisted with the 2024 stewardship campaign, celebration lunch and Trunk or Treat.

As of November 19, 2023, we have received 27 pledges.

May the Spirit of God be with you,
The Finance Team



November 13, 2023

For the past two years First Christian has hosted the Disciple Region's Behavioral Health Initiative Team meetings as we have utilized your excellent Zoom technology (I especially like the mic!) for our meetings. Now that Pastor Karen has retired we have decided to go totally Zoom so will meet from our homes or offices. Thank you so much for the use of your space, equipment, and occasional technical assistance. We appreciate you!

Ruth Few

NEW BENCHES

On October 23, an 850 pound box was delivered to the church's south portico. On Saturday, November 11, six mighty church members helped with the "Reveal Party". Two new benches for the south portico were unpacked from a dumpster-full of excelsior and installed. They are a nice addition to our south entrance. We hope to add a third one for the east end next summer. A huge thank you goes to Jim Blosser, Rich Calver, Mark Miller, Vince Ortega, and Carla and Kevin Pinneo for their help.

Gwen Belden



Deborah Group will meet on **Monday, December 4th @ 7 pm** -- D'Arcy Blosser's home - 4648 Happy Hollow Ct.

Our study this year is based on Lamentations and is titled *Into The Light: Finding Hope Through Prayers of Lament*.

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



Go and Do the Same



Go and Do the Same
Luke 10:37

Marcia Foster shared the following on Sunday, November 19, 2023.

Stocking Stuffer Gift Cards!

SCRIP cards make a great holiday gift, and now for Christmas, smaller denominations are available for certain retailers.

\$10 Cards From

Amazon - Applebee's - Bath & Body Works - Cheddars - Cracker Barrel - CVS - Disney - Home Depot - IHOP - Olive Garden - Target - Walmart

\$5 Cards From

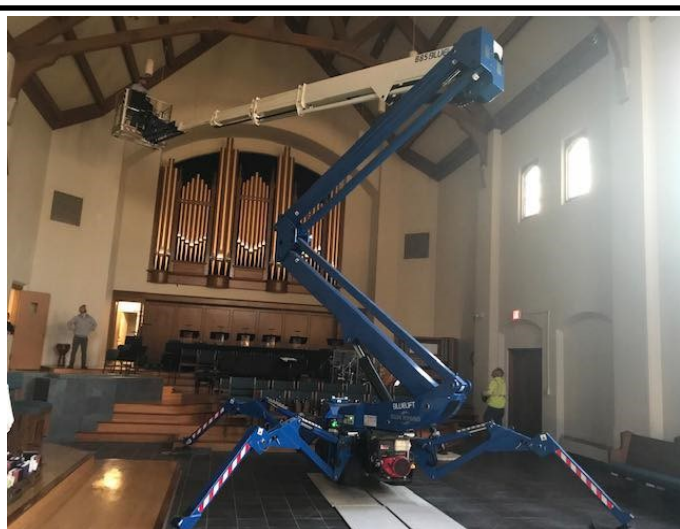
Barnes & Noble - Cold Stone Creamery - Panera - Starbucks - Taco Bell

Larger denominations are available, too! Scrip orders go out on the first Sunday of each month. **December 3rd** is the last Sunday to order before the holidays!

The Outreach Team is collecting \$10 or \$25 Walmart gift cards for McPhee School during December.

Purchase of SCRIP supports local businesses and gives a portion of the proceeds back to the church. It's a Win-Win for everyone!

If you have special orders for SCRIP, please get in touch with Donna Ruhl or the FCC Office. Thank you again for participating in our SCRIP Program.



How many people does it take to change a light bulb in our sanctuary? Four plus an enormous lift. All 22 pendant light bulbs were replaced November 17th!

"It's that time of the year again. Have you heard the jingles on the radio and seen the TV commercials? We can take advantage of Black Friday prices now! There are great deals out there for all of those special gifts, including that scrumptious chocolate, cozy slippers, beautiful jewelry or popular electronics.

It feels good to give someone a gift. To find that special something that we know that person will love and get to watch as they open the present.

I'm thinking, can't we still get that feeling by giving here? We may not be giving something we searched for on Amazon or went into 5 stores to find, but aren't we still giving something special, and aren't we still giving hope?

Soon we will be entering the season of Advent. A time of hope and a time of anticipation and waiting, as we prepare to celebrate Christ's birth. Each week as we light the Advent candles and listen to the scripture, we come a little closer. As we wait, this gives us time to reflect on the many blessings that come during this season and how we can give.

On Sunday mornings we gather as a faith community to worship and ponder the lyrics from the hymns and worship songs we sing. We enjoy the festive decorations and paraments that help us draw closer to God with their beauty during the Advent season.

As you contemplate the gifts you are giving this year, I ask you to consider how your gifts can help enhance worship at First Christian and bring hope. Perhaps your gifts can be used to purchase new music for the handbells, recorders, choir or Torch Team. Your funds may help provide communion supplies for our congregation and our homebound members. Or your gifts may help us prepare this space so we can share the hope of Christ with those watching online.

There are many ways that you can give during this time, and in all seasons. Please consider how your gifts may be used to bring hope as we wait and anticipate the glory of Christ's birth."

Giving is an act of love. It's choosing to help someone else above ourselves. It's about making a sacrifice that echoes the self-giving love of God and it's about returning that love. We need YOU to reciprocate God's wondrous love by generously supporting the mission and ministry of First Christian Church in downtown Lincoln, Nebraska!

May the Spirit of God be with you,
The Finance Team

Those Serving in December

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

Worship Leader:

Cecilia Burkhart

Elders:

December 3 - Jim Blosser
December 10 - Wayne Duncan
December 17 - Elaine Parman
December 24 - Debby Ortega
December 31 - Sara Lugn

Deacons:

Kristi Bowker, Susan Pallas-Duncan

Homebound Communion: December 10

Homebound Communion:

Elaine Parman, Wayne Duncan, Cecilia Burkhart, Debby Ortega

Hallway Hospitality:

December 3 - Doug Effle
December 10 - Mike Carlin
December 17 - Geoff Putney
December 24 - Vince Ortega
December 31 - Rich Calver

Ushers/Greeters:

December 3 - Monte Dietrick
December 10 - D'Arcy Blosser
December 17 - Jessica Effle
December 24 - Elaine Parman
December 31 - Wayne Duncan and Susan Pallas-Duncan

Acolytes:

December 3 - Trev Greder
December 10 - Edryk Christianson
December 17 - Gianna Greder
December 24 - Kyson & Keaton Effle
December 31 - Trev Greder



DECEMBER

2nd Brady Christianson
3rd Ashley Lugn
7th Kyson Effle
22nd Hunter Christianson

Mark your calendars and register for Kamp!! Registration opens on December 1. Note that all campers who register by March 1st will receive a \$100 discount on their camp fees!! In addition, FCC pays 1/2 of fees for each camper. When you register, you will not need to pay up front; you will pay your camper portion to the church and FCC will write a check to Kamp Kaleo for all participants.

Two Little Kamper weekends will be offered-one in June and one in July. This is an introductory camp for K-3rd graders (going into K-3rd grade in the fall of 2024); campers come with a parent, grandparent or guardian. It is a great weekend to introduce your child to summer camp and the out of doors.

Kamp registrations also make great Christmas gifts! Do you have a child in your family who would love camp? Give them a give certificate for summer camp!

If you have any questions, contact D'Arcy Blosser about summer camping at Kaleo.

LINKED BY Love 2024 CAMPING SEASON

KALEO
BURWELL, NE
REGISTRATION OPENS DEC. 1ST

REGISTER BEFORE MARCH 1ST FOR \$100 OFF
REGISTER BETWEEN MARCH 2ND AND APRIL 1ST RECEIVE 75% OFF

MAY 28-31 - AIC KAMP
JUNE 2-6 - JUNIOR KAMP
JUNE 7-9 - LITTLE KAMPERS #1
JUNE 16-21 - JR/SR HIGH KAMP
JULY 5-7 - LITTLE KAMPERS #2
JULY 7-12 - FAFA/FANS KAMP
JULY 14-17 - ROBOTICS KAMP
AUGUST 1-5 - ADULT KAMP

EVERYONE IS WELCOME HERE
FOR MORE INFO OR TO REGISTER VISIT: WWW.KAMPKALEO.COM

THESE CAMPS ARE SPONSORED BY THE YOUTH AND OUTDOOR MINISTRIES COMMITTEE
A JOINT UCC AND DDC ENDEAVOR

THANK YOU for volunteering!

Prayers & Praises November 30, 2023

In Our Church Family:

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

Vic Burgess as he is now in Hospice Care at the Eastern NE Veterans Home in Bellevue, NE.

Mike Carlin as he begins chemo treatments on December 4th.

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 Burkhardt

Our Timothys:

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

In the Nebraska Region:

Other Nebraska Clergy: Rev. Gary George; Rev. Dr. Paul Williams; Rev. James Harmon; Rev. Hollie Schmidt; Rev. Dr. Russ Seger; Rev. Kate West; Sandy Denton; Gene Merrill.

Our Global Ministries Missionaries:

- Mission Partners in Morocco

"In this sacred moment, we lift up our country, praying for unity, compassion, and justice to prevail. May your guiding light lead our leaders toward decisions that honor the dignity of every person and foster a spirit of inclusivity."

Find more information and stories about our Global Ministry partners at www.globalministries.org



Lincoln First Christian Church Calendar of Events

Saturday, December 2

10:00 am Setup/Decorate for Advent

Sunday, December 3

9:00 am Adult Sunday School - Library
9:15 am Sanctuary Choir - Sanctuary
10:00 am Torch Worship Team Rehearsal
10:00 am SCRIP orders due
10:30 am Worship - First Sunday of Advent
11:30 am Annual Congregational Meeting - Sanctuary

Monday, December 4

7:00 pm Deborah Group Meeting - D'Arcy Blosser's home

Wednesday, December 6

5:30 pm Supper
6:30 pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal
7:30 pm Handbell Quartet Rehearsal
8:30 pm Recorder Consort Rehearsal

Friday, December 8

7:00 pm Blosser Open House

Saturday, December 9

9:30 am Book Club - Susan Pallas-Duncan's home

Sunday, December 10

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

Wednesday, December 13

5:30 pm Supper
6:30 pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal
7:30 pm Handbell Quartet Rehearsal
8:30 pm Recorder Consort Rehearsal

Sunday, December 17

9:00 am Adult Sunday School - Library
9:15 am Sanctuary Choir - Sanctuary
10:00 am Torch Worship Team Rehearsal
10:30 am Worship - Lessons and Carols -
Third Sunday of Advent

Wednesday, December 20

5:30 pm Supper
6:30 pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal
7:30 pm Handbell Quartet Rehearsal
8:30 pm Recorder Consort Rehearsal

Sunday, December 24

9:00 am Adult Sunday School - Library
9:15 am Sanctuary Choir - Sanctuary
10:00 am Torch Worship Team Rehearsal
10:30 am Worship - Fourth Sunday of Advent
6:00 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Monday, December 25 - *Merry Christmas!*

Tuesday, December 26

Noon Messenger deadline

Tuesday, December 26

Noon End of 2023 Messenger mailed and emailed