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Messenger

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

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Schedule for Big Kamp Kaleo Rummage Sale - 2025

August 2 to August 7 – preparation

August 7 to August 9 – SALE

August 9, 10 – pack up remainder

Saturday, Aug. 2 – 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. – unload donations at FCC-alley door – sort, organize

Sunday, Aug. 3 – Noon to 4 p.m. – unload donations at FCC-alley door – sort, organize

Monday, Aug. 4 – 9 am to 5 pm* – donations accepted at FCC-alley door – sort, organize, price

Tuesday, Aug. 5 – 9 am to 5 pm* – sort, organize, price

(* evening hours can be arranged as volunteers are available)

Wednesday, Aug. 6 – 9 am to 5 pm* – sort, organize, price

Thursday, Aug. 7 – 9 am – final touches; 5 pm to 8 pm – SALE

Friday, Aug. 8 – 9 am to 4 pm – SALE; 4 pm to 5 pm – glean for Junk Jaunt

Saturday, Aug. 9 – 9 am to 2 pm – SALE (half price); 2 pm to 5 pm – pack up remaining items

Sunday, Aug. 10 (if needed) – Noon to whenever – finish packing/sweep gym

Monday, Aug. 11 – Goodwill (or other) pickup from FCC

We'll need lots of volunteers for this Kamp Kaleo fundraiser; let D'Arcy B or Gwen B know if you are able to help! And share the sale dates with your friends, families and neighbors!!



Pastor's Corner

Dear Friends,

I mentioned on Sunday that I spent most of last week at the New Melleray Monastery in Eastern Iowa. I'm participating in a two-year Preaching Cohort for a program called *Bountiful Preaching*. Our ten-member group has study retreats where we gather from our homes in Ohio, Illinois, Iowa and Nebraska, and bring in scholars to teach and inspire us to preach more bountifully. Our cohort is one of many from all over the Midwest, and beyond.

Rev. Dr. Matt Skinner led us in a study of the gospel of Matthew. He started the class off by saying, *"To understand Matthew you have to have lived through a nasty church schism. You have to have lived through people actively sowing seeds of discontent; and not people far removed from you, but rather those closest to you. You wished they'd go away but they didn't."* Schism. The opposite of unity. This class was timely, because I'm also currently taking a Disciples' History and Polity class, and one of the main goals behind the Stone-Campbell Movement (which led to the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ tradition) was *Christian unity*. The Disciples seek to be *"a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world"* (disciples.org).

Unity is a challenge for people, in part, because our brains appear to be hard-wired to notice differences. In the Scientific American journal, author Leslie Henderson writes about research that suggests that the human brain functions in ways that influence our reluctance to trust others, especially those who are not like us (that is, different races, different religions, etc.) But just because the brain influences how we see those who are different from us, she writes, doesn't mean we can't work to change this. "Activity in our brains is malleable, [meaning we can] modify the more primitive fear and reward systems to produce different behavioral outcomes." Henderson quotes author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, who says that "the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story." And, going further, she draws upon social scientist Scott Page, who "provides mathematical evidence that although diverse individuals are less trusting of one other, when working together, they are more productive." The conclusion is that a diverse way of seeing things leads to better solutions than the most brilliant of like-minded experts.

So how do we build unity? I think we need to seek out opportunities to humbly learn from others, and the only way to do this is to build relationships with those who have different ways of living in and understanding this world, and the world yet to come. I was reflecting yesterday on what a blessing it has been for me to be part of diverse faith communities and cultures over the course of my life: from my Presbyterian heritage to my education at a Lutheran college; from my pastoring at a United Methodist, and now a Disciples of Christ, congregation; from my studying Hebrew at a Seventh Day Adventist university to working with Muslim Imams and Orthodox Rabbis. I am so so thankful I got to do all of this, and will continue to seek out ways to build bridges and learn how similar we really are, in the ways that matter.

I invite you to join me in this effort. Sharing God's love will mean finding ways to connect; and honoring God as a whole Creation will mean finding ways to unite. May you feel the love and joy of Christ every moment of this journey. Peace be with you!

Pastor Kara



LINCOLN SALTDogs

August 17th is Faith and Family Day

Anyone interested, please email slpallas@gmail.com so Susan can coordinate tickets. Come enjoy fellowship and fun with your fellow members!



10 th	Phyllis Thurber
12 th	Nick Calver
13 th	Donna Ruhl
16 th	Sara Lugn
25 th	Jim Christ
31 st	Keaton Effle



July Outreach Opportunity

This past fall, First Christian became an active member of *Justice in Action*, an interfaith, grassroots coalition of faith communities in Lancaster County. Some of the churches that support *Justice in Action* are United Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, UCC, Quaker, Jewish and more. First Christian is the only Disciples of Christ church to commit to supporting this important faith coalition thus far. The goal of *Justice in Action* is to address ongoing systemic issues that significantly impact the wellbeing of our local community. It chooses three issues of concern, based on the input from the faith community members. It then forms research committees for all three areas of focus, and, in collaboration with community experts (including those from non-profits, education, healthcare, law enforcement and governing bodies), and other cities around the country who have worked toward similar goals, works to find a solution to them.

Currently, the three areas of focus are:

- 1) establishing a Mental Health Navigation System (similar to how cancer patients are now cared for), where people needing help will go through one point of contact, which will coordinate care with all needed resources and stay with the patients through the course of their care. 65% of Lancaster residents surveyed said mental health was one of their top three concerns for this community;
- 2) putting into place a Pre-Eviction Mediation System which will work with both landlords and tenants, to help keep low-income individuals and families from becoming homeless. Affordable rental housing for the 31,000 residents who earn less than \$40,000/year is scarce; and
- 3) implementing a Pre-Trial Diversion System for individuals who have committed non-violent offences, in order to keep them out of the Lancaster County Jail, and, taking into consideration defendant accountability and public safety, restore them into the community. This not only saves tax dollars and helps to lower the overwhelming population numbers in our correctional facilities, but also addresses the underlying issues that led to the arrests. There is a disproportionate number of imprisoned individuals who are struggling with mental health and poverty, as well as significant racial disparity among the imprisoned.

In order to be a contributing member of *Justice in Action*, churches are asked to pay dues, based on the amount of each church's operating income. These dues go towards paying the wages for two employees, as well as other mission-oriented expenses. We are asking members to prayerfully consider contributing to our **July Outreach Opportunity**, which will be our *Justice in Action* membership dues for 2026, which are \$1,500. Dues will gradually increase over the next four years, until we reach the requested amount of 1% of our operating income.

Thank you for considering supporting this important work that will help make our community more healthy, just and Christ-like. If you are interested in becoming a part of our *Justice in Action* team, talk with Pastor Kara.

June Outreach Collection Barrel

This is what 43 backpacks full of school supplies looks like. On Sunday, July 13th, Pastor Kara blessed the backpacks.

Forty of the backpacks will be delivered to Head Start on July 15th as they have 40 beginning Kindergarten in August. The remaining will be delivered to McPhee Elementary School prior to the first day of school.

THANK YOU so much for embracing this Outreach Project.

YOU and FCC are making a difference in the lives of those less fortunate!



Devoted to Generosity – Ministry Moment



Jim Blosser shared the following message during worship on Sunday, July 13:

Ulysses S. Grant had been elected president but hadn't been inaugurated when a small group of pioneers gathered in the newly established village of Lincoln, Nebraska before it became an incorporated city. Along with Nebraska's first governor and perhaps the first chancellor of the university these committed Christians worshipped in the unfinished house of Pastor John Yearnshaw who arrived here in a covered wagon and established what we now know as First Christian Church. We've come a long way from a one room wooden church house to this beautiful facility here at 16th and K.

There's a reason this congregation has survived so many calamities and thrived for over 156 years. It's because faithful stewards gave their first fruits and we are recipients of these gifts. So now it's our turn to continue this vital and dynamic ministry here in the heart of our growing community.

Today we begin our stewardship drive for next year. It will culminate on Oct 26 when we dedicate our financial promises for 2026. The focus of this year's campaign "devoted to generosity" will make all of us more aware of how our financial contributions are used to love all, live spiritually, rejoice in hope and show hospitality. Over the next few months leaders of our worship, hospitality, outreach and communications teams will share how our gifts are used to make a difference in peoples' lives here in Lincoln and beyond.

But remember, stewardship isn't about money, it's how we live our lives and how we prioritize what God has given to each of us. Hopefully during this time we will all re-examine what we can do with our "first fruits" to make a difference. Make no mistake - everyone has some kind of gift to share. Some of us do have financial resources; some don't. So there are many other ways to use the gifts we've been given. Please pray about how you can contribute. We'll soon begin seeking out leaders for next year. The biggest requirement is a willingness to serve, so please consider a position when you're asked. There are many other ways to serve and I'm sure that we can find a place for all who are willing.

A personal note to conclude. Nearly 37 years ago a young family wandered into this very room. We were warmly welcomed and accepted into the life and ministry of this church very quickly. Our 2 daughters were baptized here. One was married here and our 2 granddaughters were brought here to be dedicated as infants. As I speak, my wife D'Arcy, both daughters and 3 of our grandchildren are at Kamp Kaleo. Without First Christian's undying support of that camp it would not be able to change lives as so many of us have personally witnessed.

First Christian has made a huge difference to our family and I can think of no better way to honor God and serve our Lord than giving our first fruits to this great congregation, knowing that every penny will be carefully and faithfully spent.

And finally, from my seat in the choir loft, every Sunday I'm fortunate to gaze at that great west window to see the symbols of all four gospel writers and of Peter and the Apostle Paul. And there in the center is Jesus, the good shepherd, reminding us to "Feed his Lambs". That window is a constant reminder of those great servants who gave their very lives to show God's love for all. We must continue that great tradition of spreading the Good News wherever we go.

The future here is bright, but only if we make it. So, whatever your gifts are, please be generous as God has been so generous to us.

Those Serving in July

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:

Elaine Parman

Elders:

July 20 - Connie Calver

July 27 - Jim Blosser

Deacons:

Brady & Kristie Christianson

Homebound Communion: July 13

Cecilia Burkhart, Carla Pinneo, Connie Calver, Jim Blosser

Hallway Hospitality:

July 20 - Rich Calver

July 27 - Elaine Parman

Ushers/Greeters:

July 20 - D'Arcy Blosser

July 27 - Elaine Parman

Acolytes:

July 20 - Trev Geder

July 27 - Kyson & Keaton Effle

Offering Counting:

July 20 - D'Arcy Blosser

July 27 - Elaine Parman

THANK YOU ALL for volunteering to serve.



"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

Thank you First Christian for your many prayers, calls, cards, visits, flowers and memorial gifts. Also, a very special thanks to Pastor Kara, Sara Lugin, and Mark Miller and all preparing the delicious gathering after the wonderful service for my sister Phyllis Knosp. What a blessing First Christian has been.

God's Blessing,

Glenna Robb and the Knosp Family

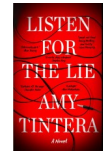
Book Club

July meeting will be on **Saturday, July 19, 2025 @ 9:30 am** at Cheryl Judds' Home.

Book for **July**: *Mad Honey*
by Jodi Picoult



Book for **August**: *Listen for the Lie*
by Amy Tintera



Book for **September**: *The Secret Life of Sunflowers*
by Marta Molnar



Book for **October**: *Boxes*
by Douglas Wellman and Mark Musick



Everyone is welcome to join us!

Devoted to Generosity

On Sunday, July 13, our focus was on Deuteronomy 26:1-11. This passage discusses God's command that the Israelites make a sacrifice to him with the first fruits of their labor, as a sign of their gratitude for God's faithfulness to them. From the abundance of their harvest, God was to come first. What are our priorities? Do we offer the first of our blessings to God, as the Israelites were commanded? Do we give God's portion first, or only if there's enough to give?

July 13 was the beginning of our "*Devoted to Generosity*" Stewardship Campaign. We intentionally have an extended campaign (4 months), because Stewardship isn't a once-a-year commitment – it's a way of life. Our goal, this stewardship season, is to see where we need to shift and reprioritize, so that, every time we walk out of this church building, our lives will have been changed, and we will live as an outpouring of gratitude for all God has done for us.

On **Sunday, August 10** our focus will be on Isaiah 11:1-9

Devoted to Generosity Stewardship Sunday Schedule:
September 14, October 12, October 19
October 26 (Commitment Sunday)

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



Prayers & Praises

First Christian Church Calendar

In Our Church Family:

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| • Donna Baker | • Ron Hile |
| • Rhonda Ball | • Polly Putney |
| • Cecilia Burkhart | • Marvin Thurber |
| • Mike Carlin | • Phyllis Thurber |
| • Jim Christ | • Jessica Vocasek |
| • Joan Dietrich | • Roger Vocasek |
| • Wayne Duncan | |

Sympathy to the Family of Phyllis Knosp. Phyllis passed away June 22nd. Her funeral was at FCC on June 28th. Cards maybe sent to: The Knosp Family at 1740 St. James Rd., Lincoln (06) c/o Glenna Robb.

Prayers for Roger & Jessica Vocasek. Roger is recovering from shoulder surgery and Jessica has back issues.

Friends:

- Ron Collamore, a regular visitor is seeking prayers for his health.
- Jeanne Schruck, mother of Meghan Schruck Cowger. Had lung surgery on June 9th. Jeanne is home recovering.
- Nikki, friend of Katelyn Long. She is recovering from recent gastric bypass surgery.
- Linda De Los Santos, sister of Vincent Ortega. Linda is home and continues rehab.

Our Timothy:

- Bruce Frogge at Cypress Creek CC in Spring, TX

In the Nebraska Region: North Platte First Christian Church-Jean Anderson

Our Global Ministries Missionaries in: Sri Lanka

"Dear God, who is responsible for all creation, we come in your presence and seek guidance at this time. God, we live in an environment where violence and suffering are all around. Our relationships and family circles are facing immense hardships and challenges. You call us to be persons of good character in such situations (Luke 10:38-42). Lord, we pray to you to use each of us as instruments to live with Christian qualities and to show the value of Jesus Christ amongst people who are weak and in vulnerable conditions and who question, "Who is there for us?" We pray to you that you will send your Holy Spirit, the Comforter, to accompany us when problems and challenges arise in carrying out work for those in our society."

For more information and stories about our Global Ministry partners visit www.globalministries.org



Sunday, July 20th

9 am	Adult Sunday School - Library
9:15 am	Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal
9:45 am	Torch Worship Rehearsal
10:30 am	Worship
6 pm	Board Meeting - Conference Room

Tuesday, July 22nd

10:30 am	Staff Meeting
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Sunday, July 27th

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

Thursday, July 31st

5 pm	Schenkel Wedding Rehearsal-Sanctuary
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Friday, August 1st

9 am	Rummage Sale Preparation - Gym
4 pm	Schenkel Wedding-Sanctuary

Saturday, August 2nd

8 am - 1 pm	Rummage Sale Preparation - Gym
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Sunday, August 3rd

9 am	Adult Sunday School - Library
9:15 am	Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal
10 am	SCRIP orders due
10:30 am	Worship
Noon - 4 pm	Rummage Sale Preparation - Gym

Monday, August 4th through Wednesday, August 6th

9 am - 5 pm	Rummage Sale Preparation - Gym
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Thursday, August 7th

5 pm - 8 pm	Rummage Sale Opens - Gym
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Friday, August 8th-Saturday, August 9th

9 am - 4 pm	Rummage Sale Open - Gym
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Sunday, August 10th

9 am	Stewardship Sunday
9:15 am	Adult Sunday School - Library
9:45 am	Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal
10:30 am	Torch Worship Rehearsal
	Worship

Monday, August 11th

Noon	August Messenger Deadline
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Tuesday, August 12th

10:30 am	Staff Meeting
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Sunday, August 17th

9 am	Adult Sunday School - Library
9:15 am	Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal
10:30 am	Worship
3 pm - 4 pm	Kamp Kaleo Listening Session-Parlor
6 pm	Cabinet Meeting - Conference Room

August SCRIP Orders are due on
August 3, 2025

Please contact the office or Donna Ruhl if you have questions or need to place a special order.