



First Christian Church

Disciples of Christ

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

Weekly Worship

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

The Rev. Kara Hillhouse, Pastor
Mark W. Miller, Director of Worship, Music & Sacred Arts
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Week of **December 28, 2025**
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Merry Christmas from the Staff of First Christian Church



Community Prayer

Praise is our cry, O Holy One of Israel, for you have come among us and borne our burdens. Give us open hearts, that we might embrace our suffering sisters and brothers, and welcome Jesus in the hospitality we show to exiles. Amen.

“Reprinted and Revised Common Lectionary Prayers,
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Call to Worship

One: All God's people – boys and girls, men and women:

Many: come and worship!

One: Shepherds, wise ones, saints, and angels:

Many: come and worship! Come and worship!

One: All who need the Savior, all who long for comfort:

Many: come and worship! Come and worship Christ, the newborn King!

Christmas Eve Reflection

From The Rev. Kara Hillhouse

Dear Friends,

If we're honest with ourselves, we're all searching for something *more*. Something that we can't define or even imagine, but we have the sneaking suspicion that we need it to make us whole. It's not that we don't have some joy and purpose in our lives right now, but we still feel that space within that is empty, so our joy and purpose is not quite complete. Some of us try to fill this space with new and shiny material things, and more, with the hope that they will satisfy. But none of those things will fill that space within, because that space belongs to God alone. It's where he will happily take up permanent residency, if we invite him in. When we try to put anything else in that space it will always disappoint. I think this empty space is the reason there are so many people who only come to church at Christmas and Easter. They haven't completely bought into this whole "God thing," so they don't come every week, but they're not yet willing to give up on it completely. They're drawn by the desperate hope of finally finding what they are searching for.

In the manger, God shows us that he is approachable. He isn't a recluse, doesn't hide behind a curtain like the Wizard of Oz, and isn't surrounded by bodyguards. This is the God who invites us to come to him when we are weary and heavy-laden, to touch the very hem of his garment, and to throw ourselves upon his mercy and grace so we can find the Life he promises. While we celebrate the Incarnation at Christmas—the day Jesus became fully human (yet remained fully divine)—we also seek God *every* day of the year, because we know he's here, and it's his presence alone that will make us complete.

I hope to see you Christmas Eve! Let's seek Christ together.

Pastor Kara



Scripture Readings for December 24th

Isaiah 9:2-7

“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders, and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.”

*For
unto
us a
CHILD
is born
unto us a Son
is given, and the
Government shall be
Upon His shoulders,
and His Name shall be called,
Wonderful, Counselor,
Mighty God, Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace!*
Isaiah 9:6

Luke 2:1-20

“In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no place in the guest room. Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.’ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!’ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.’ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them, and Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told them.”

Scripture Readings for December 28th

Isaiah 63:7-9

“I will recount the gracious deeds of the LORD, the praiseworthy acts of the LORD, because of all that the LORD has done for us, and the great favor to the house of Israel that he has shown them according to his mercy, according to the abundance of his steadfast love. For he said, ‘Surely they are my people, children who will not deal falsely’; and he became their savior in all their distress. It was no messenger or angel but his presence that saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.”



Matthew 2:13-23

“Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, ‘Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.’ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, ‘Out of Egypt I have called my son.’ When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: ‘A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.’ When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, ‘Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child’s life are dead.’ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, ‘He will be called a Nazorean.’”

Prayers & Praises

December 28, 2025

In Our Church Family:

- Donna Baker
- Marvin Thurber
- Jim Christ
- Phyllis Thurber
- Joan Dietrich
- Jessica Vocasek
- Ron Hile
- Roger Vocasek
- Polly Putney

Prayers for Gwen Belden, whose brother, Al Watsek, recently passed away.

Prayers for Monte Dietrick, whose brother, Roy Dietrick, unexpectedly passed away on December 7th.

Prayers for Jim Christ as he continues to gain strength with cardiac rehabilitation.

Prayers for Roger & Jessica Vocasek. They both have health issues.

Prayers for Katelyn Long. Katelyn is continuing to work with a specialist.

Friends:

- Lucy Reuter-Masek, *mom of Kristie Christianson, prayers for recovery after the removal of a facial tumor.*
- Jody Schrage, *friend of Katelyn Long, prayers for healing are appreciated.*
- Nikki, *friend of Katelyn Long. She is recovering from recent gastric bypass surgery.*
- Darlene Shaw, *friend of Katelyn Long. She is having an ablation on her heart; pray for her to be at peace regarding the procedure and for it to go well.*
- Ron Collamore, *prayers for his health.*

Our Timothy:

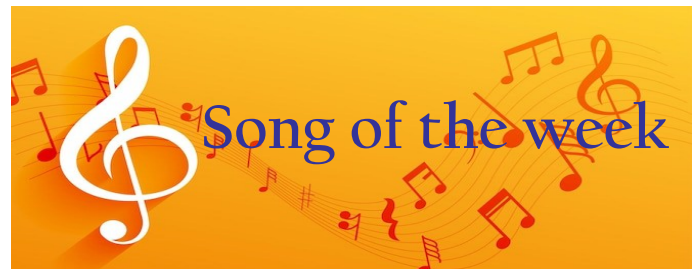
- Rev. Bruce Frogge, *Cypress Creek CC in Spring, TX*

In the Nebraska Region: Other Nebraska

Clergy: Paul Williams - Ass. Prof. of Religious Studies @UNO; James Harman - First Central UCC - Omaha; Gene Merrill - Brethren Church - Falls City; Shelby Moock - First Congregational United Church of Christ - Hastings; Dustin Bower - Domestic Violence Counselor

Our Global Ministries Missionaries in:

Botswana



Joy to the World

Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her king; let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground; he comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found, far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove the glories of his righteousness and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love, and wonders, wonders of his love.



"Our mighty God, we ask for your mercy over the rising incidents of passion killings and suicide among high-profile leaders and civil servants. Bring healing, hope, and restoration to all who battle silent struggles. May forgiveness, compassion, and unity take root in our nation. Above all, may your Holy Spirit never depart from this land or its people.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

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

