



**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**, Pastor  
**Mark W. Miller**, Director of Worship, Music & Sacred Arts  
**Amy Johnson**, Administrative Assistant

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[www.fcclincn.org](http://www.fcclincn.org)

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### Lincoln Disciples Pancake Feast Hosted by: DOC Youth

- Money raised goes towards Kamp Kaleo Scholarships
- Contact Pastor Kara to volunteer



Shrove Tuesday: February 17<sup>th</sup>

5:30pm-7:30pm

Southview Christian Church

2040 S. 22<sup>nd</sup> St / Lincoln, NE 68502



### Lincoln Disciples of Christ Joint Ash Wednesday Events

Wednesday, February 18<sup>th</sup>

5:30 pm Soup Supper

Sign-up to bring food and to help clean/serve  
 in the Narthex or call the office



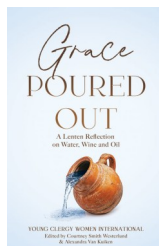
7 pm Ash Wednesday Service



Leadership Retreat  
 Saturday, January 31<sup>st</sup>  
 9am-1pm  
 Scottish Rite

Our Lenten devotional is *Grace Poured Out*, edited by Courtney Smith Westerlund and Alexandra Van Kuiken. This guide from Ash Wednesday through Easter Sunday provides a reflection with a prayer or call to action to help you deepen your understanding of how God is working in your life.

Copies available in the Narthex beginning Sunday, February 15. If you are unable to pick up your copy, please contact the office.



Your First Christian staff wishes to thank you for your kind and generous Christmas Love Offering for us. It is a privilege to serve this congregation, and to help you with your mission to glorify God and serve your neighbors. It is a blessing to us to receive your gift, support and affirmation.

--Mark, Amy, Even, Tiffany, Keaton, Riley and Kara

## Pastor's Corner

Dear Friends,

This is a difficult time for our nation. It's not the first time it has struggled, and it won't be the last, but I'm not sure either of those truths are helpful *now*. If you are on the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Nebraska email list, you received a letter this week from Rev. Robin Blakemore, our Transitional Regional Minister. Robin wears many hats in her position, and, personally, the one I'm particularly thankful for today is her role as the pastors' pastor. We all, including pastors, need someone to remind us, when times get tough, of the bigger picture and greater power that is Christ alone. As my heart aches, and I search for words to speak to you all, I found her words to be a comfort. Below is a portion of her letter:

*"Beloved Disciples, Grace and peace to you from the One who binds up the brokenhearted and calls us to walk courageously in the way of peace. These past weeks have weighed heavily upon our national soul. In Minneapolis, a series of confrontations between federal agents and community members—including multiple deaths—have shaken hearts and stirred deep questions about justice, safety, and our common humanity. The images and stories echo with grief. They remind us that every human life bears the imprint of God, and that no tragedy is ever 'just another headline.' As followers of Jesus, we are not called to rush past grief or explain it away. We are called to tell the truth about suffering and to stand with those whose lives are most vulnerable to the actions of powerful systems. Every life lost diminishes us. Every grieving family matters. Every community living in fear deserves to be seen and protected.... This is not about party alignment or political slogans. It is about the Gospel we proclaim and the Christ we follow—the one who stood with those on the margins, refused violence as a solution, and called his followers to be peacemakers, even when the cost is real. .... [W]e commit ourselves anew to being a people who accompany the vulnerable, speak truth in love, and work for justice that leads toward healing rather than harm."*

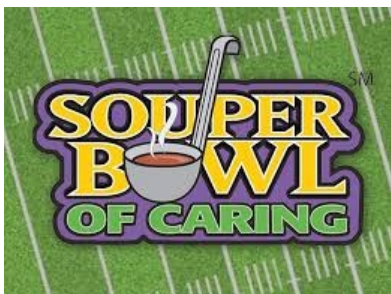
Hear her words again: "As followers of Jesus, we are not called to rush past grief or explain it away. We are called to tell the truth about suffering and to stand with those whose lives are most vulnerable to the actions of powerful systems." Please join me in feeling the grief, and then praying that *all people* (including ourselves) will have our hearts turned, and follow the only One who holds all power and authority; the One who came as the Prince of Peace for "the least of these." And who, though all worldly power was offered him in the Wilderness, willingly took on the Cross, for our sake, that all might know God's love. May this bring us all to our knees, worshiping God alone. Though we are hopelessly lost, God is merciful. He will never stop working to love and redeem his blessed Creation. And he needs us to be a part of that work. Let's find the courage to follow his ways. Peace be with you all.

"In this world you will have trouble; but take heart, I have overcome the world." John 16:33

"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." Lamentations 3:22-23

Pastor Kara





## February Outreach Collection Barrel

Matt Talbot Kitchen and Outreach (MTKO) is the recipient of this month's collection barrel.

February is the "Souper Bowl of Caring" focus for MTKO. On Sunday, February 8, people all over the United States will be gathering to watch the big game. Whoever you're cheering on, we hope you'll join MTKO in being champions for those in our community who need help tackling hunger by donating the following items:

### Food Items -

Canned protein - chicken, tuna  
Hearty canned soups - with meats and veggies  
Spaghetti O's  
Peanut Butter  
Cereal  
Powdered milk  
Mac and Cheese

### Winter Items -

New or gently used blankets  
Sleeping bags  
Men's winter coats - XL or larger  
Men's winter gloves - XL or larger  
Tents  
Handwarmers

Thank you for supporting this Outreach Opportunity!

## February SCRIP Orders are due on February 1, 2026

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

## Volunteer Opportunities in 2026

First Christian Church is signed up to serve the evening meal at The Gathering Place - 1448 E Street on the following dates in 2026:

March 22nd  
May 24th  
July 26th  
September 27th  
November 22nd



The time commitment is 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm. Four to five volunteers are needed for each date. Let Elaine Parman know if you are interested in serving on a date.

Pictured below are (L to R): Wayne Duncan, Elaine Parman, Susan Pallas-Duncan and Gwen Belden serving at The Gathering Place on January 25th.



Wow! Thanks to your generosity FCC donated 9 tricycles; 300+ diapers and a variety of interactive, educational toys to the infant/toddler section of Head Start at 18th and K Streets.

Pictured below are the items and Pastor Kara and Elaine delivering them.



## New Elders Ordained on Sunday, January 25, 2026.

Pictured below are our new elders being ordained by Pastor Kara (L to R) : Brady Christianson, Marcia Foster, Pastor Kara, and Dan Cowger. The second picture is the laying on of hands by their fellow Elders.



### First Christian Church Foundation

The FCC Foundation meets quarterly; our next meeting will be on Wednesday, February 4 at noon on Zoom. Any FCC member or friend is allowed to listen in and participate in discussion. Contact D'Arcy Blosser if you would like to attend.



### Deborah Group, Disciples Women

Deborah Group will meet on February 2nd at 7 p.m. at the home of Bobbi Carlin, 2426 Emily Lane. D'Arcy will lead the discussion of Chapter 6 of *Learning to Walk in the Dark* by Barbara Brown Taylor. If you'd like to participate in Deborah Group, contact D'Arcy Blosser, and she will add you to the email list and/or answer any questions you may have.

### Pie Orders are Complete!!

If you have not picked up your frozen pie(s) yet, please do so. Thanks so much to everyone who placed orders; all proceeds will go to non-profit organizations and will be allocated at the Deborah Group's February meeting.



### Finance Notes



Thank You for your generous support in 2025!

The Finance Team cannot say **THANK YOU** enough to everyone who participated in 2025 Faith Giving, which topped out at \$16,625! Over 60% of this total (\$10,010) was raised in December. What a show of loyalty and faithfulness to the church!

In addition, 100% of all 2025 pledges were received! Because of this, 2025 is the seventh year in a row First Christian Church has ended the year in the black with enough income to cover expenses. The Finance Team would like to invite everyone for cake at coffee fellowship following worship on Sunday, February 8th, to celebrate.

After the fantastic year we had in 2025, we are hoping to make 2026 even better. To keep that momentum going everyone needs to pitch in and become an integral part of the mission and ministry of FCC.

Again in 2026, 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 time and talent to the work of God through your Stewardship.

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



## 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:**

Marcia Foster

### **Elders:**

February 1 -- Dan Cowger

February 8 -- Marcia Foster

February 15 - Brady Christianson

February 22 -- Jim Blosser

### **Deacons:**

Monte Dietrick and Evan Foster

### **Hallway Hospitality:**

February 1 -- Rich Calver

February 8 -- Elaine Parman

February 15 -- Geoff Putney

February 18 (Ash Wednesday)-Elaine Parman

February 22 -- Vince Ortega

### **Ushers/Greeters:**

February 1 -- Monte Dietrick

February 8 -- D'Arcy Blosser

February 15 -- Elaine Parman

February 18 (Ash Wednesday) -- Elaine Parman

February 22—Wayne Duncan & Susan Pallas-Duncan

### **Acolytes:**

February 1 -- Edryk Christianson

February 8 -- Gianna Greder

February 15 -- Trev Greder

February 22 -- Kyson & Keaton Effle

### **Offering Counting:**

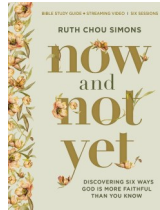
February 1 -- Gwen Belden

February 8 -- D'Arcy Blosser

February 15 -- Elaine Parman

February 22 -- Rich Calver

**THANK YOU ALL** for volunteering to serve.



## **SPIRITED READERS**

COMMUNITY BOOK STUDY  
A CHAPTER BY CHAPTER  
DISCUSSION OF THE BOOK  
*now and not yet*  
By Ruth Chou Simons

- DISCUSS A CHAPTER EACH MONTH
- PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN BOOK
- **4TH TUESDAY** EACH MONTH— 6:30-8:00 pm
- \* Next Meeting is February 24th

### LOCATION:

THE MILL @ TELEGRAPH, 330 S. 21st St  
No RSVP needed, call with questions: 402-475-4289  
Website: fcclincoln.org



## February Birthdays!

20<sup>th</sup>

Monte Dietrick

22<sup>nd</sup>

Hazel Waller

25<sup>th</sup>

Hanna Pinneo Boring

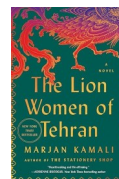
## Book Club

**Next Meeting** - Saturday, February 28  
9:30 am

**Susan Pallas Duncan's Home: 5121 Claire Ave.**

**There is a long wait list at the library for February's book, so it is advised to put it on hold quickly or buy it.**

Book for **February**: *The Lion Women of Tehran* by Marjan Kamali



Book for **April**: *The Violin Conspiracy* by Brendan Slocumb



Book for **March**: *The One Hundred Years of Lenni and Margot* by Marianne Cronin



Book for **May**: *My Friends* by Fredrik Backman



Everyone is welcome to join us!

# Prayers & Praises



## BEACONS FROM THE BOARD

### In Our Church Family:

- Donna Baker
- Cec Burkhart
- Jim Christ
- Joan Dietrich
- Ron Hile
- Debby Ortega
- Polly Putney
- Bob Throop
- Marvin Thurber
- Phyllis Thurber
- Jessica Vocasek
- Roger Vocasek

*Prayers for Cec Burkhart*, who continues to recover at home from a broken hip after several falls.

*Prayers for Ron Hile*. He has returned home after a stay in the hospital and Eastmont after several falls.

*Prayers for Debby Ortega*. She is home after surgery on her arm following an accident in a parking lot where she was hit by a vehicle.

*Prayers for Bob Throop*. He is home after a stay at the Heart Hospital and is doing Cardiac Rehab. He will have a procedure to place a second lead into his pacemaker to help his heart function better on Feb. 25th.

*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:

- Laurie Aufdemberge, Kristi Bowker's sister, *prayers as she faces breast cancer again*.
- Ron Collamore, *prayers for his health*.

### Our Timothy:

- Bruce Frogge at Cypress Creek CC in Spring, TX

**In the Nebraska Region:** Seminarians and those Training for Ministry

**Our Global Ministries Missionaries in:**  
Bangladesh

"Gracious and loving God, we pray for peace and stability in Bangladesh. We pray for the patience and perseverance of all sections of society as they go through this transition in political leadership and the administration of this country, and for everyone to resist the urge to seek revenge and retribution. At this time, we pray for a peaceful, fair, transparent, and participatory national elections that are scheduled to be held on February 12, 2026. We pray that the government leaders will have wisdom, courage, and compassion as they navigate these challenging times. Give them divine guidance to help them make decisions leading to reconciliation and healing. Amen."

The FCC Board met on January 18th with all Board members present. FCC ended 2025 with a budget surplus of \$12,562 - how awesome! There is one 2025 outstanding bill of approximately \$8,000 to be paid. Still, that means FCC ended the year with a \$4,000 surplus, Thank You everyone that gave above and beyond their pledge.

2026 is shaping up to be a great year at FCC with three new Elders, new Board members and new team leaders. If you are interested in serving on a Ministry Team let the office know and Pastor Kara or myself will visit with you about the various teams and opportunities.

Together, let's keep our light at 16th and K shining brightly.

Elaine Parman, Board Chair



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



## First Christian Church Calendar

### Sunday, February 1st

9 am Adult Sunday School - Library  
 9:15 am Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal  
 9:50 am Torch Worship Rehearsal  
 10 am SCRIP orders due  
 10:30 am Worship  
 11:30 am Communications Team Meeting - Library

3 pm - 7 pm Outside Group - Parl/Kit/Gym

### Monday, February 2nd

7 pm Deborah Group - Bobbi Carlin's home  
 7:30 pm - 8:30 pm Outside Group - Gym

### Tuesday, February 3rd

7:30 pm - 8:30 pm Outside Group - Gym

### Wednesday, February 4th

Noon FCC Foundation Mtg - Zoom  
 6:30 pm Handbell Choir - Sanctuary  
 7:30 pm Solos/Ensembles - Sanctuary  
 8 pm Recorder Consort - Sanctuary

### Sunday, February 8th Homebound Communion

9 am Adult Sunday School  
 9:15 am Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal  
 9:50 am Torch Worship Rehearsal  
 10:30 am Worship  
 1:30 pm - 7 pm Outside Group - Parl/Kit/Gym

### Monday, February 9th

7:30 pm - 8:30 pm Outside Group - Gym

### Tuesday, February 10th

10:30 am Staff Meeting  
 7:30 pm - 8:30 pm Outside Group - Gym

### Wednesday, February 11th

6:30 pm Handbell Choir - Sanctuary  
 7:30 pm Solos/Ensembles - Sanctuary  
 8 pm Recorder Consort - Sanctuary

### Thursday, February 12th

7:30 pm - 8:30 pm Outside Group - Gym

### Saturday, February 14th

10 am Disciples Choir Rehearsal

### Sunday, February 15th

9 am Adult Sunday School - Library  
 9:15 am Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal  
 9:50 am Torch Worship Rehearsal  
 10:30 am Worship  
 1:30 pm - 7 pm Outside Group - Parl/Kit/Gym  
 6 pm Cabinet Meeting - Conf. Rm

### Monday, February 16th

7:30 pm - 8:30 pm Outside Group - Gym

### Tuesday, February 17th

5:30 pm - 7:30 pm Pancake Feast - Southview Christian Church  
 7:30 pm - 8:30 pm Outside Group - Gym

### Wednesday, February 18th Ash Wednesday

5:30 pm Soup Supper - Gym  
 6:30 pm Choir Rehearsal - Sanctuary  
 7 pm Service - Sanctuary

### Thursday, February 19th

7:30 pm - 8:30 pm Outside Group - Gym

### Sunday, February 22nd

9 am Adult Sunday School - Library  
 9:15 am Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal  
 9:50 am Torch Worship Rehearsal  
 10:30 am Worship  
 11:30 am Elder Meeting - Library  
 1:30 pm - 7 pm Outside Group - Parl/Kit/Gym

### Monday, February 23rd

Noon Messenger Deadline  
 7:30 pm - 8:30 pm Outside Group - Gym

### Tuesday, February 24th

10:30 am Staff Meeting  
 6:30 pm - 8 pm Spirited Readers - The Mill@ Telegraph  
 7:30 pm - 8:30 pm Outside Group - Gym

### Wednesday, February 25th


6:30 pm Handbell Choir - Sanctuary  
 7:30 pm Solos/Ensembles - Sanctuary  
 8 pm Recorder Consort - Sanctuary



The 2026 Church Directory is now available. A pdf version will be emailed this week. If you would like a physical directory, please contact the church office.

## HVAC

### (Boiler Replacement and Office) Update



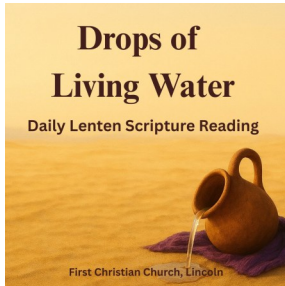
All of the furnaces and electric heaters have been installed.

The following A/C equipment will be installed (on the roof), Spring 2026:

- Gym – 2 units
- 2nd floor classroom and Toddler room
- 3rd floor – west
- Kitchen and east end of parlor
- Office

Donna Ruhl, for the FCC Property Team

# Drops of Living Water



During Lent, we meditate on what the Cross means for us. The Cross was a shocking and unexpected demonstration of God's love for us, through Jesus Christ. The Cross was God doing what God does best: turning things upside down. God took a human means of punishment and death, and turned it into a sign of his redeeming Grace. If we are to worship and follow our Savior, who willingly took on this Cross, we have to obey him. And what did Jesus command? To "love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.... [And] love your neighbour as yourself" (Matthew 22:37, 39). How can we possibly obey this commandment? Where can we turn for help? The Bible. It provides us with everything we need to know in order to follow Jesus; it is the Living Water we need to flourish. Following the Bible's guidance isn't easy, and we'll fumble daily in trying to do so; but the direction we need is all in there, waiting for us to read it and learn from it and take heart in it. I invite you to join me in making scripture a daily part of Lent, by reading these "Drops of Living Water." Use them as a way to grow deeper in our understanding of Lent and our need for Easter; so that when we arrive at the foot of the Cross on Good Friday, and the Empty Tomb on Easter Sunday, we'll have a deeper understanding of the price God paid for us, because he loves us.

Pastor Kara

Feb. 18	<i>"For dust you are and to dust you shall return."</i>	Gen 3:19
Feb. 19	<i>"Even now,' declares the Lord, 'return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.'"</i>	Joel 2:12
Feb. 20	<i>"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."</i>	Psalms 51:10
Feb. 21	<i>"But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed."</i>	Isaiah 53:5
Feb. 23	<i>"Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."</i>	Matthew 26:41
Feb. 24	<i>"Come near to God and he will come near to you."</i>	James 4:8
Feb. 25	<i>"Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the LORD.' And you forgave the guilt of my sin."</i>	Psalms 32:5
Feb. 26	<i>"For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."</i>	Matthew 6:14
Feb. 27	<i>"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,' declares the Lord."</i>	Isaiah 55:8
Feb. 28	<i>"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!"</i>	Philippians 4:4