



# THIS MONTH AT FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH



DECEMBER 2023 *(next newsletter will come out December 20)*

## A NOTE FROM YOUR PASTOR

Dear Friends,

On Sunday we shared in a service where we walked through the Christian year together. Beginning with Advent and going through the Sundays after Pentecost (also known as Ordinary Time), we set the table with colors and symbols of each season, remembered their meaning and stories, and sang songs from each season. Yes, we sang a Christmas song, an Easter song, a Pentecost song, and one to represent each other season. We did this because this is one of those unusual years when Advent did not begin on the Sunday of Thanksgiving weekend. So, it seemed a fitting time to take advantage of that “extra” Sunday and remind ourselves how the Church tells time.



Why does that matter? First, Advent is the beginning of the church year - so, since the year is about to start, it seemed good to remember its rhythm. Second, while we might notice the changes of the colors in the sanctuary, we often don't spend a lot of time remembering the significance of these seasons. So, we did that on Sunday. Finally, as we heard in the service, “The Christian year is not simply something for use by our church leaders. Rather the structure of the Christian year is an invitation to each of us. It is an invitation for us to not simply learn the stories of faith, but to allow them to become part of who we are and how we are.”

Yes, pastors and other “church nerds” may love things like liturgical seasons and colors, but their purpose is much larger. They are an invitation to each of us to engage in the stories of our faith and to be transformed by them.

As we anticipate Advent on Sunday, let me share a word about our journey through Advent this year. Our theme is “How Does a Weary World Rejoice?” The reality is that there are so many things in our lives and in this world that can make us weary. But weariness doesn't have the only word. There is that line in “O Holy Night” that says, “A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices...” It reminds us that often weariness and joy (or other seemingly conflicting feelings and experiences) can live together. So, we explore this idea through this theme and propose some tools that will help us rejoice even amidst our weariness. How does a weary world rejoice? This Advent we'll suggest these ways: we acknowledge our weariness, we find joy in connection, we allow ourselves to be amazed, we sing stories of hope, we make room, we root ourselves in ritual, we trust our belovedness.

In addition to worship, I hope you picked up or requested your Advent devotional packet. In it is a devotional booklet as well as other materials you can work with throughout Advent. You are also invited to join us for Advent conversations on Wednesday evenings **starting tonight** on Zoom at 7pm. In preparation for those conversations, you might go ahead and read that week's devotional booklet pages. But don't worry if you haven't had a chance - you can join us without any preparation at all.

There is more information on page 3 of this newsletter about what's going on at First Christian this season. I hope you'll choose to participate in things that feel meaningful to you. And I hope you'll let this first season of a new church year be a time of delight and connection for you.

With care, *Jill*

P.S. Thank you to everyone who helped with decorating the sanctuary - it looks great. Let Advent begin!

Remember, Alternative Gift Market donations are being collected through **December 15**. Please turn in your donation along with the donation form so that your dollars are directed to your chosen organizations.

# MARK YOUR CALENDARS



## BIBLE STUDY

Join us using Zoom. We meet at **12noon each Wednesday.**

Upcoming scriptures:

**November 29:** Luke 1:24-45

**December 6:** Luke 1:57-66

**December 13:** Luke 1: 46-55

**December 20:** Luke 2:21-38

**December 27:** No Bible Study

**FAITH FORMATION** happens for all ages each Sunday after worship (11:15am—12noon)

- *Children Worship & Wonder* for ages 5-5th grade (center classroom in the basement)
- Youth and Adults are invited to gather in the Fellowship Hall each Sunday during Advent to do a hands on activity together.

## YOUTH GROUPS ARE MEETING

CYF (9th - 12th grades) meets **December 3, 10, and 17** at 4:30pm. We will meet at Pastor Jill's home on December 3 and 17. Look for more information to be coming about activity and location for December 10.

A Star Wars study for continues on **Thursdays through December 21** at 8pm on Zoom.

Chi Rho (6th - 8th grades) and JYF (3rd - 5th grades) meet at church at 12noon on **December 17.**



## STRINGS AND SINGERS

You are invited to be part of Disciples Strings & Singers and help lead worship music. Join us for rehearsal on **December 13** at 6pm.

## FCC CONNECT - December 14 @ 6:30pm

Join us for a time of visiting with friends from FCC. We gather on Zoom for this once a month time of conversation. There is no agenda other than conversation with new and old friends.

## HOLIDAY BREAKS

Hannah Circle, Ladies' Lunch Out, and the FCC Book Club all take a break for the holidays. Join them again in January.



## FCC @ FREE LUNCH DECEMBER 23

Our last 2023 Free Lunch meal is Saturday, **December 23**. Our menu will be Homemade Macaroni & Cheese with Ham and Peas Casserole, mixed vegetables, fruit salad, green salad, bread, dessert, granola bars, juice or milk, and coffee. We expect to serve 120 meals.

You can help by: making a casserole (pans & recipes are available at the church), providing other food, or volunteering that day. To sign up to volunteer or provide other food items, please use [this link](#).

If you are interested in volunteering on other days with other people, visit [FLP's sign up here](#).

## HOLIDAY COLLECTION

**December 3 - 17** we will collect new adult sized socks, underwear, and sweatpants. These donations will be shared with our neighbors who eat at the Free Lunch Program. As you purchase items, especially socks, please remember that many of these folks spend a lot of time outdoors where winter weather makes it difficult to stay warm. All adult sizes are welcome and helpful.





## How does a weary world rejoice?

### *Advent & Christmas – A Time of Reflection*

Join the **Wednesday night Zoom** which takes place November 29 – January 3 at 7pm. This is an opportunity to connect with others and discuss the themes we are exploring during Advent & Christmas. Read that week's section of the devotional booklet in preparation for this time.

### *Advent & Christmas – A Time to Worship*

*exploring the question “How Does a Weary World Rejoice?”*

On the **First Sunday of Advent** (December 3) we will *acknowledge our weariness* and find hope.

On the **Second Sunday of Advent** (December 10) we will *find joy and healing in connection* and find peace. We will put our peace doves on the tree today.

On the **Third Sunday of Advent** (December 17) we will *allow ourselves to be amazed* and find joy. Our ornaments will appear on the Tree of Memories today.

Join us for the **Longest Night service** at 7pm on Thursday, December 21. This night we acknowledge that this time of year is difficult for many. We will both honor this and move toward hope and healing. This service will be recorded and then posted later on our [YouTube channel](#).

On the **Fourth Sunday of Advent** (December 24) we will *sing stories of hope* and find love as the children share their Christmas program in morning worship.

**On Christmas Eve night we will gather at 7pm** and *make room for the gift of God-with-us*. This service will culminate in communion and singing “Silent Night” as we circle around the sanctuary with candles.

We will gather for **Brunch & Worship in Fellowship Hall** on December 31 and *root ourselves in ritual*. We will **start the new year** by *trusting our belovedness* as we worship together on January 7.

### *Advent & Christmas – A Time to Connect*

**Faith Formation** happens each Sunday after worship. During December we will do hands on activities creating things for ourselves and others. Elementary children will continue with Worship & Wonder.

**Cookies & Carols** is an intergenerational time of fellowship, singing, and holiday treats on Tuesday, December 12 at 7pm in Fellowship Hall.

### *Advent & Christmas – A Time to Remember*

**Tree of Memories ornaments** will be available again this year. This year's ornaments have cardinals on them. It has been said that when a cardinal appears, it is a gentle reminder of a loved one who has passed. Although no longer with us, they remain cherished forever and the memories and love never leave. Fill out a form and purchase an ornament to remember your loved one(s).

### *Advent & Christmas – A Time to Care*

**Bring donations of adult sized socks, underwear, and sweatpants** through December 17.

**Volunteer to work or provide food for the Free Lunch Program** on Saturday, December 23.

Don't forget to **turn in your Alternative Gift Market form and donation** by December 15.

## PRAYERS & PRAISE

This section is covered for privacy

*Please always let your pastors know about surgeries, hospitalizations, or other pastoral care needs.*

## THANK YOU!

We may no longer list names individually, but we want each of you to know how grateful we are for the things that you do. Whether you sign up to serve in one of various roles on Sunday mornings, help with Faith Formation or youth group, coordinate or participate in a group or a ministry in the community, or just offer a helping hand...whatever you do, it does not go unnoticed. We are who we are because of each of you!



## CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Contractors have begun installing the new card reader lock and security system for exterior doors.

## YOU MAKE WORSHIP HAPPEN

**Sundays rely on volunteers to go smoothly!** If you are willing to help, use the links below to sign up:

- Serving as a Greeter: [FCC Greeters: Greeters \(signupgenius.com\)](https://signupgenius.com)
- Serving as an Usher: [FCC Ushers: Ushers \(signupgenius.com\)](https://signupgenius.com)
- Serving as an Acolyte (K - 6th grades): [FCC Acolytes: Acolytes \(signupgenius.com\)](https://signupgenius.com)
- Serving as a Scripture Reader: [FCC Readers: Scripture Reader \(signupgenius.com\)](https://signupgenius.com)
- Preparing Fellowship Time treats to share: [FCC Fellowship Hosts: Fellowship Time Host \(signupgenius.com\)](https://signupgenius.com)
- Preparing Coffee for Fellowship Time: [FCC \(Blank Group\): Sunday Morning Coffee \(signupgenius.com\)](https://signupgenius.com)
- Preparing and Cleaning Up Communion on Sundays: [FCC communion prep & clean-up: Communion Prep and Clean Up \(signupgenius.com\)](https://signupgenius.com)
- Serving in our Valet Parking ministry on Sundays before and after worship: [First Christian Church, Coralville/IC: Valet Parking, 2023 \(signupgenius.com\)](https://signupgenius.com)

If you are interested in doing Children's Moments, speak with Pastor Kara (icdisciple.kids@gmail.com).

If you would like to be trained to run sound or PowerPoint, speak with Laurie Dahms.

If you have questions about any of these roles, please reach out to Carol by email (icdisciple.sec@gmail.com) or during office hours. She can share a document with a detailed description of each role.





# DECEMBER

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
BIRTHDAYS	BIRTHDAYS		ANNIVERSARIES		1	2 Rockets Pie Making Fellowship Hall 10 AM-7 PM
3 Worship 10 AM Faith Form 11:15 AM Nom Comm 11:15 AM Bells 12 noon CYF 4:30 PM @ Michel home Scouts 5:30/7:00 PM	4 Nominating Committee 6:45 PM	5 Clergy Staff Mtg 9:00 AM	6 Bible Study @ Zoom 12 noon Advent Zoom 7 PM	7 Women Clergy @ Zoom 10 AM Finance Team 6 PM Star Wars Study for Youth @ Zoom 8 PM	8	9
10 Worship 10 AM Faith Form 11:15 AM CYF 4:30 PM @ Michel Home Scouts 5:30/7:00 PM	11	12 Clergy Staff Mtg 9:00 AM Board Meeting 6PM Cookies & Carols 7 PM	13 Bible Study @ Zoom 12 noon Disciples Strings & Singers 6 PM Advent Zoom 7 PM	14 FCC Connect@ Zoom 6:30 PM Arrow Chapter 7 PM Star Wars Study for Youth @ Zoom 8 PM	15	16
17 Worship 10 AM Faith Form 11:15 AM JYF/ChiRho 12 noon CYF 4:30 PM @ Michel Home Scouts 5:30/7:00 PM	18	19 Clergy Staff Mtg 9:00 AM Staff Meeting 10:00 AM	20 Bible Study @ Zoom 12 noon Advent Zoom 7 PM	21 Longest Night Worship 7 PM Star Wars Study for Youth @ Zoom 8 PM	22 Free Lunch food drop off 11 AM- 1 PM	23 FCC @ Free Lunch Program 10:30 AM-1:30 PM
24/31 Worship w/ Xmas program 10 AM Faith Form 11:15 AM Xmas Eve Worship 7PM <hr/> Brunch 9:30 AM Worship 10AM	25 CHRISTMAS DAY OFFICE CLOSED  	26 CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY OFFICE CLOSED	27 No Bible Study Advent Zoom 7 PM  <div style="background-color: yellow; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">Carol on Vacation</div>	28	29	30  <div style="background-color: lightgreen; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">Kara and Laura on Vacation</div>



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Carol Mertens, Office Manager

Michael Hull, Custodian

Lori Smith, Bookkeeper

Damian Dorta, Technology & Communications

Kalea Seaton, Nursery Caregiver

Caitie Klein-Lester, Nursery Caregiver

CYF Youth  
volunteering  
at the North  
Liberty  
Community  
Pantry



JYF and Chi Rho kids doing a  
Scavenger Hunt around the  
church building and yard