

DECEMBER 2024

THIS MONTH @ FCC

A Note from the Pastor

Friends,

As we enter the season of Advent, I am aware that this time of year is celebrated as being all about joy, and yet many are carrying a variety of fears, burdens, and griefs. I am aware that in so many ways our world is broken. I am also aware that Jesus was born into a broken world full of difficulty, conflict, and division. According to the gospel writer, Matthew, the king at that time responded to Jesus' birth with fear and vengeance. Additionally, many people were struggling under the weight of difficult times.

I came across this reading the other day titled "Instructions on Living in a Broken World."

*lean into community
seek out love
applaud the good you see
keep paying attention
talk to your neighbors
dance to the music and embrace art
look for love and small joys
take breaks and relish in nourishing your body
donate what you can
linger at the dinner table with friends
check in with your people
let yourself grieve
love one another as deeply as you can
the storm is upon us and we must hold on
don't give up, we're here together.*

We are here together. We will create space for grief. We will create safe and brave space for honesty. We will lean into community. We will look for and share joy. We will love one another. We will not give up.

With care, *Jill*

This Issue

Advent & Christmas
[PAGE 02](#)

Announcements
[PAGE 03](#)

Sunday Worship
[PAGE 04](#)

Bible Study, Youth
[PAGE 05](#)

Keeping Connected
[PAGE 06](#)

In the Community
[PAGE 07](#)

Birthdays/Anniversaries
December Calendar Link
[PAGE 08](#)



connect with us



Advent & Christmas

There are many ways for you to engage and connect with the First Christian community in these seasons.



INTERGENERATIONAL FAITH FORMATION

SUNDAYS FOLLOWING WORSHIP

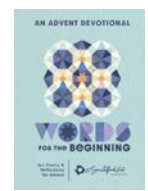
During the seasons of Advent and Christmas, we are excited to again be offering intergenerational faith formation. The themes for each week will connect with those we are exploring together in worship.

Children age 5 and up, along with youth and adults are invited to join us in Fellowship Hall after worship. Each week we will hear a story from the Bible that connects us to one another and to God. We then will respond to these stories with some discussion along with hands-on activities.

Plan to stay after worship on December 1, 8, 15, 22 and January 5 as we take in the seasons of Advent and Christmas together!

DEVOTIONAL & CALENDARS

AVAILABLE NOW



You're invited to pick up the *Words for the Beginning* Advent devotional containing writings, poems, art and more, for you to enjoy during this season.

Also available are an Advent-Photo-A-Day Challenge (see social media to take part in this!) and a coloring Advent Calendar for all ages.





COOKIES & CAROLS

WEDNESDAY,
DECEMBER 11,
7:00PM

You're invited to a Christmas carol sing-a-long! Enjoy cookies, fellowship and singing (or listening) to your favorite Christmas songs. Please come to Fellowship Hall for this event. All are welcome!

Sunday Worship

10:00AM ONSITE & ONLINE
Beginning December 1, we start exploring our Advent theme, *Words for the Beginning*. Worship onsite in the sanctuary and online.

Longest Night

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21
AT 7:00PM
Join us for a worship service on the longest night of the year as we acknowledge the grief that often accompanies us through this joy filled season.

WORSHIP

Children's Program

DECEMBER 22 ONSITE
DECEMBER 29 ONLINE
Enjoy the annual tradition of our children telling the story of Christmas in worship.

Christmas Eve

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24
AT 7:00PM
Join us for Christmas music, communion, and candlelight as we hear the story of and celebrate again the birth of Jesus.

Brunch & Worship

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29
Join us for a casual morning sharing brunch and worship as we gather in Fellowship Hall. Brunch begins at 9:30am and worship begins at 10:00am.



Announcements

Gifts of Gratitude to Staff

All year long, our staff reaches members and non-members of FCC to lead us and support us in meaningful and creative worship and in programming within the church and for the broader community. Our talented and devoted staff includes our pastors with Senior Pastor Jill Michel, Associate Pastor Kara Seaton and Minister of Music and Worship Laura Kittrell. Plus, we have our Office Manager Carol Mertens, Technology Assistant Cameron Michel, Custodian Michael Hull, Bookkeeper Lori Smith, and Nursery Caregivers McKenna Geake, Teegan Michel, and Ella Romero.

You are invited to express gratitude to them through our tradition of sharing monetary gifts at Christmastime. You can share gifts by:

- Sending a check to the church - note **STAFF GIFTS** on memo line
- Placing your gift in the offering box on Sundays - be sure to note **STAFF GIFTS** on the memo line of a check or on the envelope
- Giving your gift online - please choose fund: directed contribution and memo: staff gifts.

Please make sure your gift is received in the church office **by December 15** so that the collective contributions may be received by staff before Christmas.

Thank you!
FCC's Personnel Team
Beth Pelton
Thom Powell
Kathy Harrison

Truly Grateful for you.

Tree of Memories



You are invited to remember a loved one this Christmas with a butterfly ornament. Butterflies are symbols of resurrection, transformation, and hope—themes we often connect with the passing of loved ones.

Ornaments can be purchased for \$10 each. Pick up a paper form at church or fill out the online form **by December 8**. Ornaments will be placed on a tree at church on December 15. You are welcome to take your ornament that day or leave it until December 24.



Contributions will go toward the purchase of the ornaments with the remainder supporting Green Chalice, a ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) that supports congregations in living out their faith through creation care.

Stewardship - As the Year Ends

Thank you to everyone who participated in our “Imagine Together” campaign by making commitments of financial support for our ministry in 2025. If you intend to give financial offerings in the coming year, it is helpful to our Finance Team and other leaders if you fill out a pledge card indicating your intention **by December 8**. This makes planning so much easier. You can pick up a paper pledge card at church, request one be mailed to you, or you can also fill out your pledge card online.

We also appreciate you filling out the Ministry Interest form which indicates ways you would like to use your time and talents to serve. This form can be filled out either on paper or on our online form.

Finally, for any giving you intend to do yet this year, please have it to the church by December 29 for our final deposit of the year.

We are grateful for your ongoing generosity!



Worship

SUNDAYS AT 10:00AM

All are invited and welcome to worship each Sunday at 10:00AM. Worship is available onsite in the sanctuary and online at

youtube/@icdisciples



Sermon Series

During Advent and Christmas we will look at *Words for the Beginning*. Imagine what Mary & Joseph whispered in baby Jesus' ears. Imagine what we need to hear as we begin another year. You're invited to explore the following themes in worship and faith formation:

- December 1: You Are a Blessing
- December 8: We Can't Go Alone
- December 15: Do the Good That is Yours to Do
- December 22: Hope Is Worth the Risk
- Christmas Eve: Love Knows Your Name
- December 29: Don't Forget to Laugh
- January 5: The Road Isn't Straight

Special Worship Services

The seasons of Advent and Christmas bring several special opportunities to worship. See the sidebar on [page 2](#) for more details.

Nursery

Childcare is available on Sunday mornings during Worship & Faith Formation. Infants through kindergarten age children (and older children as needed) are invited to join our caregivers in the lower level east classroom for nurture and play.

Sunday Mornings



Called to Serve

SUNDAY MORNINGS

Sunday worship brings together many hands and many voices. People (like you!) are needed to fill several roles each week as we continue our ministry of welcome. There is a role for everyone, and everyone can serve! Call the church office or visit the link below for a description of the roles and to sign up where you feel called to serve.

ICDISCIPLES.ORG/VOLUNTEER



Above: Senior Pastor Jill Michel is welcomed back at the conclusion of sabbatical.



Bible Study



WEDNESDAYS AT 12 NOON

Contact the office for Zoom info

Upcoming Scriptures

December 4: [Luke 3:7-16](#)

December 11: [Matthew 1:18-25](#),
[Luke 1:46-55](#)

December 18: [Matthew 2:1-12](#)

December 25 & January 1:
No Bible Study

Faith Together

Above: JYF children gather for a sack lunch & nature hike.
Below: Chi Rho & CYF youth decorate for Advent.



Youth Group - High School

DECEMBER 8 & 15

CYF (high school) will meet December 8 and 15 from 4:30-6pm with Steve Clark & Chris Radcliff (855 Pheasant Ln, North Liberty). All high schoolers are welcome to come enjoy food, friendship and activities.

Youth Group - Middle School

DECEMBER 1 & 8

Chi Rho (grades 6-8) is meeting with Pastors Jill & Kara on December 1 and 8 from 3:30-5pm to explore baptism.

Youth Group - Grades 2, 3, 4, 5

DECEMBER 8 & 22

JYF (grades 2-5) will meet with Steve Strah & Pastor Kara December 8 & 22. On the 8th we will gather from 12-1:15pm in Fellowship Hall for lunch and Christmas-themed activities. On the 22nd we will share lunch and go offsite to sing carols.





Disciples Strings & Singers

WEDNESDAYS, 6:00-7:00PM

If you'd like information on participation in music at FCC, please contact [Pastor Laura](#).

Book Club

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5, 7:00PM

Contact the office for Zoom info

It's time to choose books for the new year! Suggestions were collected through November 24, and now it's time for our "Choosing Meeting" on December 5 either onsite or on Zoom at 7PM. All are invited to attend this meeting where we will vote on books for the group to read in 2025. You do not have to have suggested a book in order to take part. Questions? Contact [Nancy McKinstry](#).

FCC Connect

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12, 6:30PM

Contact the office for Zoom info

Enjoy visiting with others? Want to make some new friends? FCC Connect is an online opportunity to do just that. Sign on and join the conversation.

Hannah Circle

Hannah Circle does not meet in December, but we look forward to seeing you on January 20 @ 6:30pm on Zoom for a planning and business meeting.

Ladies Night Out

Ladies Night Out does not meet in December. However we hope you'll join us in January for Ladies *Lunch* Out. The January newsletter will have details.

Keeping Connected



FCC folks talk with community partners at the Alternative Gift Market.

Note From Your Pastors



Thank you for all the warm words, cards and goodies shared during Pastor Appreciation Month. Opening them at the conclusion of sabbatical was a delightful gift, and reading your kind words affirm again that ours is a supportive and uplifting faith community. We truly thank you!

Jill, Kara, Laura & Traci



Cards made by children for asylum seekers in Arizona, gifts from FCC people for Open Heartland families and blankets made for Habitat for Humanity families.

In the Community

FCC @ FREE LUNCH PROGRAM

DECEMBER 28, 2024

 **FLP SIGN UP HERE**



FCC serves at Iowa City Free Lunch on Saturday, December 28. Our menu includes Macaroni & Cheese with ham and peas, mixed vegetables, fruit salad, green salad, bread & butter, cupcakes/ cookies/bars, granola bars, juice or milk, and coffee. We expect to serve 145 meals. For the meal, you are invited to provide food items or to volunteer to serve, see the sign up link for both of these.

Serving shifts are divided into a longer shift (10:30am - 1:30pm) and a shorter shift (11:45am - 1:30pm). Non-perishable food items can be placed in the church's FLP tub in the narthex; perishable items should be purchased after December 15 and refrigerated/frozen as appropriate. Items may be delivered to church on Friday, December 27, 11:30am - 1:00pm.

***All grocery items must be at the church by 1 pm on December 27**

IOWA CITY
Free Lunch Program
*"An open door, a full plate,
no questions asked"*



Special Offering DECEMBER 15 & 22

The Christmas Offering supports the work of our regional church, the Christian Church in the Upper Midwest, including camps and retreats, clergy and congregational support, and more.

You can give to this offering through December 22 by mailing a check to the office, leaving your donation in the offering box on Sundays, or [giving online](#) (select fund: Special Offering - Regional, and memo: Christmas Offering).

Warm Winter Clothing



As the warm winter clothing distribution concluded, we are aware that the **need for adult-size coats, hats, mittens & scarves** much exceeded the items available. So as we head into the first frigid days of the season, we invite you to keep your eyes open through this season and throughout year. Whether that's noticing winter coats in your own closet you don't use, or taking advantage of those post-holiday sales, we invite you to pay attention. And if you have items to donate and are unable to store them until next fall, please contact the church.



December

WISHING HAPPY BIRTHDAY AND HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO THOSE CELEBRATING THIS MONTH



Our congregation is an Open & Affirming Church, and have committed to openly welcoming and affirming persons of all gender expressions and sexual orientations.

Who? IS MY ELDER

Last Name	Elder
A-CI	Lora Morgan Dunham
Co-F	Maggie Keyser
G-Kin	Martha Melton
Kit-Mic	David Klein
Mo-Sch	Marcus Seaton
Sea-Z	Nancy McKinstry



Click the realm logo to access FCC's online directory



900 Lincolnshire Place
Coralville, IA 52241
319-337-4181

icdisciples.org

There's Room at the Table for Everyone

Office Hours:
Monday - Thursday
9:00AM to 12:00PM

clergy staff available by appointment

First Christian Church Staff

Rev. Jill Cameron Michel
Senior Pastor
417-439-7391

Rev. Kara Seaton
Associate Pastor
319-530-3255

Rev. Laura Kittrell
Minister of Music & Worship
319-325-7673

Carol Mertens
Office Manager

Michael Hull
Custodian

Lori Smith
Bookkeeper

Teegan Michel
Ella Romero
McKenna Geake
Nursery Caregivers

Cameron Michel
Technology Assistant

connect with us

