

The Messenger

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Our Mission is to Celebrate and Share Christ's Love through feeding the Body & the Soul.



9540 Fifth St. Highland, IN 46322

219/924-5400

www.fcchighland@att.net

November/December 2022

Around the world, the evergreen tree is commonly recognized as a "Christmas tree." From small town square tree lightings to elegant window displays in the most posh cities; from kindergarten crafts to fields of cut-your-own, Christmas tree traditions are part of the way we lean towards Christmas. The Christmas tree has secular roots (yep, pun intended). Long before the advent of Christianity (so punny), people found significance in growing things that stayed green all year. In ancient times, people used evergreen in their homes, both decoratively and as a way to ward off illness and evil spirits.

Early Romans draped evergreen boughs in their homes to celebrate the Winter Solstice. Scandinavian Vikings believed in the Sun God, Balder, whose favorite plant was said to be the evergreen. The Druids used evergreen in their temples to symbolize everlasting life. For Christians, the Christmas tree as we know first made its appearance as a decorated tree inside homes thanks to 16th century Germans. Martin Luther is credited as the person who first added lights to a Christmas tree. He did this with candles, carefully wrapping tapers in wire to the boughs of the tree.

Christmas trees were originally a hard sell to American Christians when they first were seen in the United States in the 1740s. For about 100 years, American Christians still considered the Christmas tree a pagan symbol, and so it was offensive to those who wished to keep Christmas sacred. By the end of the 19th century, however, Christmas trees had grown in popularity, showing up in drawings, decorations and displays. Trees were trimmed in strings of popcorn, berries and other homemade hangings. By the time electric Christmas tree lights came along, the tree tradition was widely embraced in America. Statistics show that an average of 87% of American households put up a tree, even if it's just a small one.

The Christmas tree is a symbol we know. It's familiar in a time when the world has been through a whole lot of change and uncertainty. As people of faith, we believe in an Everlasting God-- One who does not falter, One who does not grow weary, One who does not give up on us or let go of us. Our God is no fair-weather friend, but sticks with us in the storms and in the bleakest seasons. God is constant, God is steadfast, God is true. Maybe this Christmas, we could all use a reminder that while we might be worn out, God has been faithful, and like the evergreen, provides shelter and respite. This Advent, let the lovely branches of hope, peace, love and joy unfurl around you and find God anew through this beautiful symbol from God's world.



Upcoming Church Events

- Advent & Christmas info (p. 3)
- December calendar (p. 2)
- January calendar (p. 7)
- Mission opportunities (p. 8)
- Remarks from Rebecca (p. 10)

Sundays @ FCC

Disciples Café—
9:30 A.M.

Worship—10:30 AM



December 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 A: David & Maribel Boban	2	3 Homeless Lunch B: Ray Benson
4 2nd Sunday of Advent Congregational Meeting	5	6	7 Game Group 10-12 Boomwhackers 6 P.M. B: Kathy Drury	8	9	10 B: Dolores Cave, Jamie Neyhart
11 3rd Sunday of Advent Boomwhackers 11:45 A.M.	12	13 Blue Christmas Service 7 P.M.	14 Senior Food Box Distribution 10-12	15	16 B: Max Schroader	17
18 4th Sunday of Advent Christmas Program	19	20 Prayer Circle 7 P.M. on Zoom (this month on this night only)	21 Game Group 10-12	22 B: Andrew Bridges	23 Christmas Eve Live 7 P.M.	24 Christmas Eve streaming 4 P.M. The Simple Service 11 P.M.
25 Christmas Pajama Sunday Christmas Worship	26	27	28 B: Linnea Sundquist	29 B: Tania Messmer	30	31 New Year's Eve
Office Closed						

Lovely Branches Advent & Christmas at First Christian Church

A timeless symbol of an enduring faith.

November 27th—1st Sunday of Advent—Hope

December 4th—2nd Sunday of Advent—Peace

December 11th—3rd Sunday of Advent—Love

*December 13th—Blue Christmas—7 P.M.
“The Thrill of Hope & Starlight”*

*December 18th—4th Sunday of Advent—Joy
“Do Not Be Afraid” Christmas Program*

Christmas Eve Services

*December 23rd—Live Candlelight Service @ 7 P.M.
December 24th—Streaming Candlelight Service @ 4 P.M.
(online only)*

December 24th—Simple Service- 11 P.M. (in-person only)

*December 25th—Christmas Sunday
Pajama Sunday with Cocoa, Coffee and Coffeecake*

Praying for our Friends & Family

Members of the Congregation:

Celia Newcomb, Phyllis Frost, Clarence McCoy, Tim Drury, Roger Mierzwa, Dolores Cave, Nancy Cave, Justin Meyers, Sharon Morgan, Don Dean, Kathy Jage

Friends of the Congregation: (Please let me know if there are updates to this ongoing list) The Yuris Family, The Murphy Family, Madge Lipka, Gene Beres and Family, Dennis Chambers, Gary Barber, Cindy Williams, Jerry Zolmer, Liz Griffin, Mary Jones, Chris Dury, Al Eckert, Cherie Coolidge, Melissa Belar, Cathhart Family, Ron Spore, Jim Pasour, Ron Straker, Louise Wolak, Nikki Sweeny, Barbara Blaze, Taft/Weber Family, Patricia Eaton, Michael Tusai, Susan Worrell, Jeff Meyers, Terry Mavity, Sandi Lamb, Louis Spannik, Jeri Sears, David Coolidge, Tim Gasaway, Joshua Russell (deployed to Afghanistan), Jack, Lee, Chris, Faith, Jon Carpenter, Marty Chidalek, Jeff Mayer, Kenny, Austin & Rachel Scherer, Laurel Higgenbotham, Margie Cole, Sophia Morgan, Jill Armstrong

The Wider Community: War in Ukraine ; divisions in our nation; worsening Climate Crisis; Hurricane Ian Recovery, Protests for Women's Rights in Iran; several mass shootings across the country

Joys: The upcoming holiday season, the Boomwhackers debut performance!

Fifth Street Figures

Description	Offering
Worship 10/2/22	\$780.44
Reconciliation	\$180.00
TOTAL	\$960.44
Worship 10/9/22	\$2074.23
Reconciliation	\$20.00
TOPS	\$50.00
TOTAL	\$2144.23
Worship 10/16/22	\$2459.23
Worship 10/23/22	\$1130.23
Reconciliation	\$25.00
TOTAL	\$1155.23
Worship 10/30/22	\$539.23
UNICEF	\$90.29
TOTAL	\$629.52
Worship 11/6/22	\$1214.23

Fifth Street Figures Continued...

Worship 11/13/22	\$2350.00
Christmas	\$20.00
TOTAL	\$2370.00

Worship 11/20/22	\$913.79
Thanksgiving	\$40.00
TOTAL	\$953.79

September Figures

General

Income: \$4,793.00
Transfer from Capital Fund \$6,000.00
Expenditures: \$11,420.57

Outreach

Income: —
Expenditures: \$200.00

October Figures

General

Income: \$9,326.83
Transfer from Capital Fund: \$1,000.00

Outreach

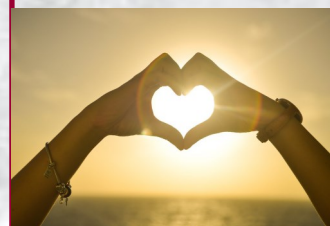
Income: \$315.29
Expenditures: \$90.29

Thank you for your faithful giving to the ministries of our beloved church!

If you are interested in receiving the financial statements for First Christian Church, please contact Delia Helpingstine and she will be happy to share that information with you.

The mission of First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Highland, IN: "to celebrate and share Christ's love" to "Our Mission is to celebrate and share Christ's love though feeding the Body and the Soul."

This amendment was made to identify our passion for food justice as well as spiritual growth in God in all we do.



FCC Offers Multiple Platforms to Join the Community of Faith

FCC offers multiple ways to participate in the community of faith. Not only do we offer in-person worship, but you can join together with our community online through YouTube (First Christian Church Highland IN) and Facebook Live (First Christian Church Highland, IN).

Recorded services can also be found on Facebook, YouTube, and our website.

Many opportunities to get involved in service and faith formation are posted with the FCC Facebook group and website. Check out www.fcchighland.net for weekly and daily updates on both platforms.
FCC is now on Instagram!!
Follow fcchighland today!

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email: fcchighland9540@gmail.com
Check us out on Facebook!

Disciples Café 9:30 A.M.
Worship: 10:30 A.M.



Pastor Office Hours:
Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday
(10:00 A.M.—1:00 P.M.) or by appointment
Pastor Rebecca Sundquist
Cell phone: (217)341-4105
Email: becky.sundquist@gmail.com

Elder & Deacon Serving Schedule

11/27/22
Elder—Delia Helpingstine
Deacon—Olivia Sundquist

12/4/22
Elder—Sharon Worrell-Schroader
Deacon—Brad Chandler

12/11/22
Elder—Steve Sundquist
Deacon—Linda Messmer

12/18/22
Elder—Brenda Michalak
Lector—Janis Bermingham
Deacon—Janis Bermingham

12/25/22
Elder—Debbie Benson
Deacon—Linnea Sundquist

Staff Love Gift

It's hard to believe Christmas is coming soon! It's been a crazy year for all of us. Even through the craziness of the world and the continuing pandemic, our staff has been on top of it all. They have provided faithful worship, listening ears, caring hearts, great music, and both online and in-person worship—every week without fail.

To show our appreciation, we are collecting the Staff Love Gift. Our staff includes Rev. Becky Sundquist (Our Fearless Leader), David Boban (The Music Man), Kevin Messmer (The Great Tech Guy), and Melinda Hawley (Mrs. Clean Jeans, the

Custodian). Debbie Benson will be collecting for the staff gift. You can give it to her in person or mail it to her home (2585 Tulip Ln. Hobart, IN 46342) Please have it to her by 12/22.



If you are interested in serving as a lector/worship leader on Sunday mornings, please see Brenda Michalak or the church office for open Sundays. Your voice is important in worship leadership!

Looking for Indoor Fun this Winter?

Do you like to play Card games - Yahtzee - Dominoes - Bunco? The Game group has a ball every time they gather. If you are looking for some fellowship with some all star people and a relaxed atmosphere with classic games, then check out the Game Group! We will meet on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month from 10:00 to 12:00. Bring your favorite game - bring a friend - and come join us for fun and fellowship. See Debbie Benson for details.



Boomwhackers Rehearsal Schedule

Great job on your debut performance! The Boomwhackers Chorus meets every 1st & 3rd Wednesday of each month. As we meet in the snowy months of winter, we will cancel rehearsal in the case of inclement weather. For the next couple of months, rehearsal will be at the following dates & times:

December 7th—6 P.M.

December 11th (after church briefly)

Next Performance—December 18th

January 4th—6 P.M.

January 18th—6 P.M.



REPEAT
the sounding

JOY

2022 Christmas
OFFERING

A SPECIAL DAY OFFERING OF
DISCIPLES MISSION FUND SUPPORTING
THE MINISTRIES OF OUR REGION

January 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 New Year's Day	2 Office Closed	3	4 Game Group 10-12 Boomwhackers Rehearsal 6 P.M. B: Mary Schons	5	6 Feast of the Epiphany B: Carol Coolidge	7
8 Epiphany Sunday	9 B: Roger Mierzwa, Carol Chandler	10 B: Tim Brown	11 Senior Food Box Distribution 10-12	12	13	14
15 Elders Meeting 11:45 A.M.	16 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Office Closed	17 Board Meeting 7 P.M.	18 Game Group 10-12 Boomwhackers Rehearsal 6 P.M.	19	20	21
22	23	24 B: Grace Kristoff	25 Prayer Circle on Zoom 7 P.M.	26	27	28
29	30	31				



Did you know?

Feminine hygiene products are of the most sought-after but least likely to be purchased items for low income women. They cannot be purchased by food stamps or through WIC. CBS recently did a feature on this issue and it was reported that many women use bread as a replacement. Let's support the sisters of our community with feminine hygiene products for our Blessing Box. Dignity for all.

We also are happy to take any old books off your hands for the Book Nook.

All donations are greatly appreciated!

Opportunities to Serve

2022 Angel Tree

The holidays are fast approaching and for some children, they won't be so joyful and jolly. Again this year, we are working with Highland school counselors and other Highland churches in providing Christmas gifts for the needy children of our community. These are children from low income families who receive free breakfasts and lunches through school. It's hard to believe that there are more than 350 children in our community that will be in need of some holiday happiness.

The "Angel Tree" is in the narthex decorated with ornaments of children in need. Each tag has a child's name, age, grade and a list of wishes.

The goal is to provide something needed and something fun. They ask that you spend \$40 per child so all of the children receive equally, especially if in the same household. The gifts can be wrapped or bagged and the ornaments need to be attached to the gift. Please have the presents here at the church by **December 9th**.

Our hope is to provide gifts for 20 children. If you want to be a part of the Angel Tree but are unable to shop, we have several people happy to shop for you. If you have any questions, see or call Debbie Benson.



The Holiday Plate and the Blessing Box

Through December, the Blessing Box theme will be "The holiday plate". We are collecting items you would find at people's meals of celebration. Stuffing, mac and cheese, cranberries, etc. The hope is that people will find items they need to celebrate the spirit of the season in special ways at their family meals.

As always, cleaning and hygiene products are in high demand. These items tend to go the quickest as they cannot be purchased with food stamps or through WIC.

Thank you for making a difficult time for so many be a little less heavy through our no-questions-asked mini pantry.

Church Briefs:

Thanks!

Thank you to all who added a special touch to our first ever Newcomer Sunday! The day was a big success and every bit of teamwork made it so. Thank you to all!

Thank You!

Prayer Circle

December 20th & January 25th
7:00 P.M. on Zoom.

Together, let us share our concerns and joys and offer them to our God who is with us in all things.

2 New Facebook Groups for You!

There are two new FB groups to keep you updated as well as to help spread the word. Check out **The Labyrinth at First Christian Church** as well as **Seeds of Hope Farm & Garden**. Help us get the word out about these important ministries by inviting your friends to join!

Senior Food Box Ministry

More and more people are signing up for the monthly distribution of the senior food box through NWI Food Bank. If you know of anyone age 60 or older who is struggling with food security or having to decide between food or medication, let us take a little bit of the burden off the monthly bills with this 30-40 pound box of pantry staples.

News From the Pews

The Thrill of Hope & Starlight

A Blue Christmas Service

for hope and healing in a season of darkness, grief or uncertainty.

December 13, 2022 at 7:00 P.M.

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

9540 Fifth St.

Highland, IN 46322

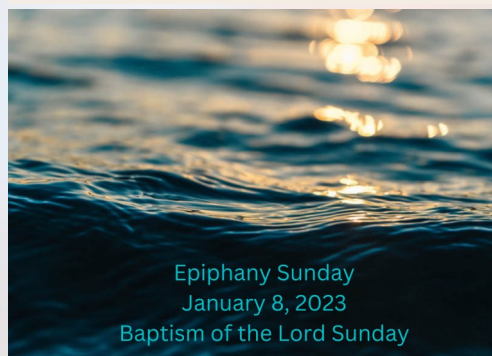
www.fcchighland.net

Christmas Eve at First Christian Church

Christmas Eve Live / 7:00 P.M. / December 23rd

Christmas Eve Streaming (Online Only) / 4:00 P.M. / December 24th

Christmas Eve Simple Service / 11:00 P.M. / December 24th



Epiphany Sunday
January 8, 2023
Baptism of the Lord Sunday

The Simple Service on Christmas Eve at 11 P.M. is exactly as the title proclaims. This service will only be in-person. The singing will be a cappella. There will be candle-light, scripture, a brief message and communion. Simply Jesus.

But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit." ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:20

Remarks from Rebecca

Dear FCC Brothers and Sisters,

The dawn of 2023 is upon us and I am mindful of the uncertainties that face the Church just as Joseph faced uncertainties with Mary and this child she was carrying. We know all the statistics and the up hill journey we face as we seek to bring God's light and love into the world so that others will know God's love. There are many things to consider and cause doubt. Sounds like Joseph's situation, right? And then an angel appeared to him and told him what was happening and told him how to respond—to Mary, to Jesus.

Each of us have been called too. Each of us have been called to carry the mission of the Church into the future. Most recently, we have been asked to pledge toward the success of our church. Many of you have faithfully pledged to support what we are doing because what our church is doing matters. Thank you all so very much for taking that pledge so seriously. Thank you for being like Joseph and heeding God's call to live in faith of what the Spirit is doing through us.

Do not be afraid. Good things have been happening among us. Good things are yet to come. Jesus Christ will lift up the work of the Church and carry it into the future. Thank you for acting in faith.

Grace and Peace,

Rev. Becky

Congregational Meeting—12/4

There is a congregational meeting immediately after worship. This meeting is to approve the budget for 2023.



Splinters from the November Board Meeting

At the last Board Meeting, the following were key issues discussed:

- The 2023 budget was approved;
- Looking into the financial future;

The next Board meeting will be held on January 17th at 7 P.M. All Elders and Deacons are included on the Board along with Executive Chairs and Department Chairs. Everyone's participation is important! Please save the date on your calendar.

The Mission of First Christian Church is to celebrate and share Christ's love through feeding the Body and the Soul.

- amended August 7, 2022

Isaiah 11: 1-6 A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might,

the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord—and he will delight in the fear of the Lord. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth.

He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.

⁵ Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist. The wolf will live with the lamb the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them.

Farm News

We had another phenomenal year on the farm. In total, we donated over 1400 pounds of fresh produce to our local food pantries. David & I would like to say a big thank you to all that helped on the farm this year. From the weeding, rototilling, and spreading mulch to the planting and harvesting, it really does take many hands, and we couldn't be more grateful for those who volunteered to help. This year our volunteers included 4 hard workers from outside our congregation, which was wonderful. It can be hot, dirty work, but I think we can all feel proud of what we are doing to further our mission to celebrate and share Christ's love through feeding the body and soul. Until we meet again, Spring 2023!

Farm Managers, David & Brenda Michalak

P.S. There is still honey available from last year's honey harvest at the apiaries on the Farm (on our church property). This is superb honey crafted through the Earthling Bee Company in Griffith. Let us know if you want more!



If you would like weekly e-news from the Christian Church in Indiana please send an email to **info@indianadisciplesorg!** Keep up the latest ministries and opportunities the CCIN has for us!



CHRISTIAN CHURCH
| (DISCIPLES of CHRIST) | in INDIANA

Keep your Flat Jesus Pics coming!

Rev. Becky has an ongoing file she adds your Flat Jesus pics to. At the end of the year, there will be a video about all the adventures of Flat Jesus in 2022. Where do you experience the presence of Jesus Christ in your life? Take a pic with your and send it to Rev. Becky. Need a Flat Jesus? Let Rev. Becky know!

Christmas Morning Worship at First Christian Church of Highland.

10:30 A.M.

Wear pajamas!

Coffee, cocoa, and coffeecake.

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).





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PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE

