

# 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.net](http://www.fcchighland.net)

Winter 2026

## Moderator Overview 2025

Happy New Year dear church family!!! Hope the new year brings you joy, love, peace and hope. As we begin a new year with new hopes and dreams, we need to look back at 2025 and all that has happened at our "Little Church With The Big Heart". In January of 2024, we were concerned about the future of our church and where we were headed. We saw that our income was down while the cost of everything was going up. We weren't growing in size but shrinking due to the loss of several of our dearest people. We wondered how long we could keep the doors open. We had big plans for things we wanted to do. It was scary to think of the future. The pandemic was so hard on everyone, but here we are still being the light and love of Jesus Christ to the world around us. And thanks to the generosity of two ladies, the Sass Sisters, who most of us never knew, we had options and a continued future. A little background about the Sass Sisters. They were members of the Hammond church and when they passed away they left the church their final tithe. That money was placed in a fund in Indianapolis that has grown over the years. We have been able to use some of that money to help keep us running. We will keep the doors open and put our faith and trust in God to see us through the tough times. The future is looking up for us as we have been blessed with new families and friends coming to our little church. Now to 2025 review: We had a few unexpected big expenses (Roof repair and AC/Furnace replacement) and we had lots of good things happen. We collected 226 cans of soup for the "Souper Bowl of Caring" which helped our Blessing Box Pantry. Kevin & Tania Messmer through Super Bowl Squares helped raise \$2275 for the pantry. Stitch In Time ministry blessed 21 blankets and 15 kids kits for cancer patients. We served 6 lunches at Hammond Homeless Shelter. Our garden provided fresh vegetables to Greater Hammond Community Service. Through the Foodbank we provided 51 seniors monthly food boxes. Your generosity help provide 12 children and 12 families with gifts and food at Christmas through the Angle Tree program. And finally we had awesome worship opportunities all year. Easter through Christmas we were blessed with wonderful messages of hope, love, joy and peace. We were blessed with beautiful music and the children's play. We will always be the "Little church with the big heart" and we must never lose our faith in God and each other. The year 2025 was a great year!! Great work all you faithful servants.

In Christ,

Debbie Benson

FCC Board Chair

## Upcoming Church Events

- February calendar (p. 2)
- Prayer concerns (p. 4)
- Serving Schedule (p. 5)
- Mission & Ministry opportunities (pp. 6-7)
- Remarks from Rebecca (pg. 8)
- March calendar (p. 9)

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Sundays @ FCC

Disciples Café  
9:30 A.M.

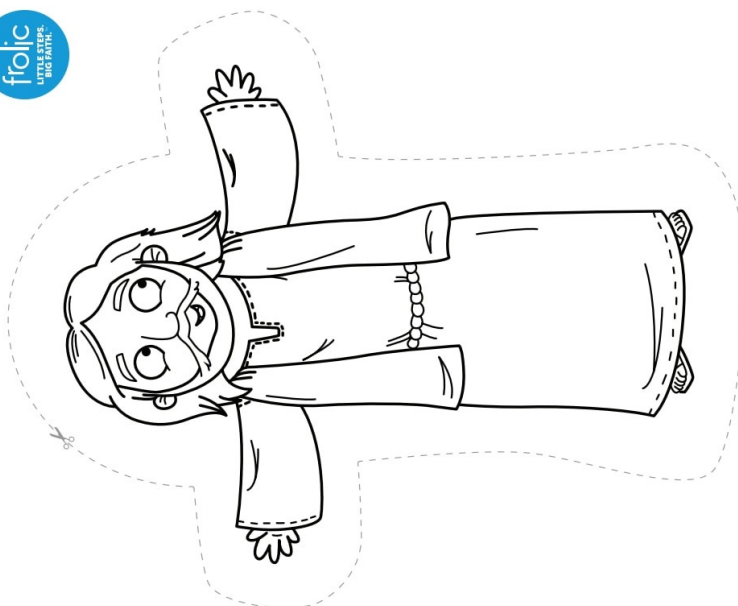
Worship

10:30 AM



# February 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b> Disciples Café 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M.	<b>2</b> Good Grief Group Therapy 10:00 A.M. — 11:30 A.M.	<b>3</b> B: Jay Korman	<b>4</b> Game Group 10-12	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b> Disciples Café 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M.	<b>9</b> Good Grief Group Therapy 10:00 A.M. — 11:30 A.M.	<b>10</b> Stitch of Time 10-12	<b>11</b> Senior Food Box Distribution 10-12	<b>12</b> Lunch with the Pastor @ Les Café 12:00 P.M.  B: Herbie Peck	<b>13</b> Wedding 5:00 P.M.	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> Disciples Café 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M.  Boomwhackers Rehearsal 11:45-12:15	<b>16</b> President's Day Office Closed	<b>17</b> Stitch of Time 10-12	<b>18</b> Ash Wednesday  Game Group 10-12  Pancake Dinner 6:00 P.M. Worship 7:00 P.M.	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> B: Lori Brown	<b>21</b> Fellowship Hall Rental 1-4 P.M.
<b>22</b> Disciples Café 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M.	<b>23</b> Good Grief Group Therapy 10:00 A.M. — 11:30 A.M.	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> Soup & Study 12:00 P.M.	<b>26</b> B: Debbie Benson	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> Fellowship Hall Rental



Please cut these out and color them as you wish.

The mandala can be a helpful meditation practice. You can also use it for prayer by writing your prayers in the spaces. These are just a couple of suggestions! Regardless use them how you need.

**Flat Jesus** is also a fun practice for any age to color him and share with us where you have had a holy moment with Jesus! After you color him, Rev. Becky can laminate him for you! We share pics on FB!



## Praying for our Friends & Family

### Members of the Congregation:

Dolores Cave, Don Dean, Judy Olen, Ashley Moss, Pastor Michael Sinclair, Family of Jean Morgan;

### Friends of the Congregation: (Please let me know if there are updates to this ongoing list)

The Yuris Family, The Murphy Family, Jerry Zolmer, Liz Griffin, Cherie Coolidge, Ron Straker, Barbara Blaze, Taft/Weber Family, Paul Graegin, Marian Huizenga, Bill Murphy, Matt Murphy, Spencer Gordon, Michael Cole, Chris Cole, Tim Gasaway, Anne Fairfield, Kaden & Mara Luthringer, Jim Moss, Dave Horvat, Scott Bridges, David Cole, David Harding, Pam Wynne, Tony, Steve and Bethany Chemeil, Dominick Certa, Lisa, Michael John, Elizabeth and Chris, Madge, Charles Fliter, Marie, Carol, Jasper, John, Pea Pod, Wyatt Raymond, Glen Marker, Lee Howard, Kevin (Natalie's caregiver), Pastor Michael Sinclair, Jack, Chirs, Ashley Cushing, Family of Jean Garriss, Family of Elaine Scott;

**The Wider Community:** War in Ukraine and War in Middle East; global natural disasters; violence and division throughout the nation (unrest in the US); growing global unrest; people struggling with food insecurity;

**Joys: 5 People considering baptism!**

### Fifth Street Figures

Description	Offering
Worship (12/7/25)	\$3540.83
Loose	\$7.00
Christmas	\$125.00
Sober School	\$600.00
Memorial for Furnace	\$1670.00
Church Mutual for Roof	\$270.69
Donation for Roof	\$2500.00
TOTAL	\$8713.52
Worship (12/14/25)	\$1012.72
Worship (12/21/25)	\$656.00
Christmas Offering	\$70.00
TOTAL	\$726.00
Worship (12/28/25)	\$1662.00
Christmas Offering	\$25.00
TOTAL	\$1687.00
Worship (1/4/26)	\$1735.83
Initial	\$55.00
Christmas	\$25.00
TOTAL	\$1815.83

## Fifth Street Figures Continued...

Worship (1/11/26)	\$1551.72
Initial	\$20.00
TOPS	\$100.00
TOTAL	\$1671.72

Worship (1/18/26)	\$1426.83
TOPS	\$50.00
TOTAL	\$1476.83

Worship (1/25/26)	\$725.00
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### November 2025 Figures

#### General:

Income: \$13,501.37

Expenditures: \$10,423.20

#### Outreach

Income: \$972.00

Expenditures: -

### December 2025 Figures

#### General:

Income: \$11,924.69

Expenditures: \$23,081.32

#### Outreach

Income: \$220.00

Expenditures: —

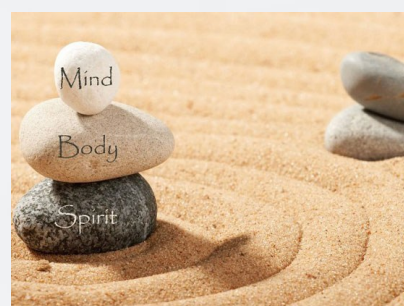
Thank you for your faithful giving to the ministries of our beloved church!

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 though  
feeding the Body and the Soul.”

This amendment was made in 2023 to identify  
our passion for food justice as well as spiritual  
growth in God in all we do.



**Our Mission Statement is to  
celebrate and share Christ's love  
through feeding the Body and the Soul.**



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(Disciples of Christ)  
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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, Wednesday, Thursday  
by appointment  
Pastor Rebecca Sundquist  
Cell phone: (217)341-4105  
Email: becky.sundquist@gmail.com  
YouTube: First Christian Church Highland IN  
Facebook: First Christian Church Highland IN

### News from the Christian Church in Indiana!

**The CC(DOC) in Indiana Mission**

**Indiana Identity Statement**

The Christian Church in Indiana is a diverse community of congregations called by God to act together in love.

**We Value . . .**

**Christ's Table:** We extend Christ's welcome to all through worship and communion.

**Connection and Care:** We are called to accompany one another.

**Shared Wisdom:** We gain insight in community.

**Mutual Ministry:** We do our ministry and mission more effectively together.

**Spiritual Leadership:** We nurture each one's call as gifted by the Spirit.

**We Imagine . . .**

A region that engages in networks of diverse relationships which shape our shared mission and ministry. We envision collaborative efforts that assist individuals in expressing their spiritual gifts, equip congregations to serve in their context and give witness to God's hope for a new community. This compels us to allocate our energy and resources in fresh ways and to call forth leadership throughout the region to fulfill this vision.

*Written by the Manna Process,  
2010-2012*



**CHRISTIAN CHURCH**  
| DISCIPLES OF CHRIST | IN INDIANA

### Elder & Deacon Serving Schedule

February 1, 2026

Elder—Sharon Worrell-Schroader

Deacon—David Michalak

Acolyte—Dean Perez

February 8, 2026

Elder—Brenda Michalak

Deacon—Tania Messmer

Acolyte—Ally Messmer

February 15, 2026

Elder—Debbie Benson

Deacon—Marc Obregon

Acolyte—Daniel Perez

February 22, 2026

Elder—Delia Helpingstine

Deacon—Don Dean

Acolyte—Cameron Ferguson

March 1, 2026

Elder—Delia Helpingstine

Deacon—Ashley Moss

Acolyte—Wells Sundquist

March 8, 2026

Elder—Sharon Worrell-Schroader

Deacon—Brad Chandler

Acolyte—Dean Perez

March 15, 2026

Elder—Brenda Michalak

Deacon—Rhonda Ryba

Acolyte—Ally Messmer

March 22, 2026

Elder—Debbie Benson

Deacon—Linda Messmer

Acolyte—Daniel Perez

March 29, 2026

Elder—Mary Ellen Carpenter

Deacon—David Michalak

Acolyte—Cameron Ferguson







## Ways You Can Be A Part of the Action!

### Lunch Bunch News

2026 Serving Dates:

February 7

April 4

June 6

August 1    October 3

December 5.



If you are interested in being a part of this amazing team of servants, see Sharon W.S.!

### Blessing Box and Book Nook News

Many thanks to Kevin and Tania Messmer for sponsoring the 2026 Super Bowl Squares fundraiser! Many thanks to all who purchased squares! Proceeds go toward supplies for the Blessing Box.

Puzzles, coloring books, and board games are fun additions to the Book Nook!



### Senior Food Box Ministry

We have an awesome team who distributes the senior food boxes (Patrick, Marc, Linda and Debbie)! If you want to be a part of the action, see Debbie Benson!

### New Directory Coming Soon!

The 2026 Directory will be coming soon. Be on the lookout!

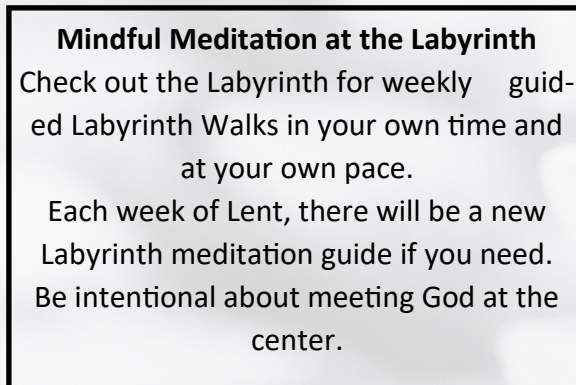
## Opportunities to Serve



**Souper Bowl of Caring**

Goal = 200 cans of soup

FCC Highland is collecting cans of soup throughout the month of February for the Blessing Box! All donations are greatly appreciated!



**Mindful Meditation at the Labyrinth**

Check out the Labyrinth for weekly guided Labyrinth Walks in your own time and at your own pace.

Each week of Lent, there will be a new Labyrinth meditation guide if you need. Be intentional about meeting God at the center.



2/10, 2/17, 3/10, & 3.17

**A STITCH OF TIME**

A Ministry of First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of Highland, IN

Creating handcrafted blankets for those undergoing chemotherapy.



**Boomwhacker Rehearsals**

Sundays after church for a half hour only! See calendars for dates!

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Highland, IN



AND WHEN THEY COULD NOT BRING HIM TO JESUS BECAUSE OF THE CROWD, THEY REMOVED THE ROOF ABOVE HIM; AND AFTER HAVING DUG THROUGH IT, THEY LET DOWN THE MAT ON WHICH THE PARALYTIC LAY. + MARK 2:4

**A NEW WAY**

**SPECIAL OFFERING 2026**

Week of **Compassion**



## Many Thanks

Thanks to Linda, Brenda, David, and Debbie for helping put away the Christmas decorations this year!

Many thanks to David Boban, Kevin Messmer, Delia Helpingstine, & Cheryl Sorrels for helping to make the Celebration of Life for Jean Morgan so special!

Dear Church,  
I would like to offer my thanks to all of you for your generous Christmas gift to me this year. I am humbled by your generosity. Thank you all so much!  
-Rev. Becky

*Thank You!*

Game Group  
1st & 3rd Wednesdays of each month!  
10-12.  
Join this fun group and be blessed!



For several years, there has been an Active Shooter distress signal under the pulpit. Church Mutual, the church's insurance carrier has informed us that this service will no longer be provided. We are, however, looking into alternative methods of safety for our congregation. We will keep you informed as we decide what system/equipment will work best for us.

## News From the Pews

FCC has 5 Candidates for Baptism!  
Baptism will be  
Pentecost Sunday (5/24/26)!

If you are interested in learning more about baptism and are considering this faithful transformation, please see Rev. Becky. A schedule for Pastor's Classes will be coming in the next few weeks. Pray for Ally, Cameron, Dean, Wells, and Sarah!



Palm Sunday 2026  
Sunday, March 29, 2026

Shout your Hosannas with  
FCC!



THE WORK OF  
IMAGINATION

Lent & Easter  
2026!

Lenten  
Soup & Study  
Wednesdays in Lent  
12:00 P.M.  
Studying  
"The Work of Imagination" series



PANCAKE  
DINNER  
&  
ASH  
WEDNESDAY  
SERVICE  
2/18



Pancake Dinner - 6:00 P.M.  
Worship Service - 7:00 P.M.

@ FCC (DOC) Highland

Please RSVP with Linda Messmer or at the church office. This helps us have enough food but not too much so as to not be wasteful.

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





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

The FCC Board has agreed to begin a capital campaign for new flooring in the main hallway in front of the sanctuary to Fellowship Hall! More to come soon!

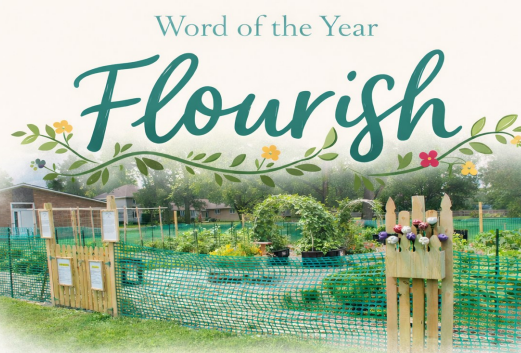
### Lunch with the Pastor

Thursday, February 12 &  
March 12

at Les Café in Highland!

11:00 A.M.

No agenda, just a time to connect!



Dear FCC Sisters and Brothers,

February and March invite us into a season that feels both tender and necessary. Lent arrives each year not as an escape from the world, but as a companion to it. We come carrying headlines that feel heavy, questions without easy answers, and a sense that so much around us is uncertain. Many of us are tired. Some of us are grieving. Others are quietly wondering what faith looks like in times like these. And still, Lent asks us to imagine. This year, our Lenten series is called **"The Work of Imagination."** Not imagination as fantasy or denial, but imagination as holy courage. The kind of imagination that allows us to see beyond what is broken toward what is possible. The kind that helped the prophets speak hope into exile, that allowed Jesus to envision a kingdom shaped by mercy rather than fear, and that continues to whisper to us that the story is not finished yet. Imagination is work because it requires intention. It asks us to slow down, to notice, to question what we have assumed must always be this way. It invites us to wonder what God might be creating even now, beneath the surface of a weary world. This Lent, we will practice that work together. Through worship, prayer, and reflection, we will explore how imagination shapes faith, justice, compassion, and resilience. We will ask what it means to imagine repair where there is fracture, belonging where there is isolation, and hope where despair has tried to settle in. And woven into this season is a profound sign of that hope.

This year, we will celebrate **five baptisms** in our community. Five moments when we pause to remember that God is still calling, still claiming, still beginning new things among us. Baptism does not erase uncertainty or guarantee an easy road ahead. What it does proclaim is deeper and truer: that love has the first word, and the last. That no matter how complex the world becomes, grace continues to flow. In a time when so much feels fragile, these baptisms remind us that faith is not only about endurance. It is about becoming. Becoming more open, more grounded, more willing to trust that God is at work even when we cannot yet see the full picture. My hope for this Lenten season is not that we will have all the answers, but that we will dare to imagine together. That we will make room for lament and for joy, for honesty and for wonder. That we will remember we are not alone, and that the Spirit continues to stir new life among us. May this season be gentle with you.

May it stretch your imagination.

And may it remind us all that even in uncertain times, God is still doing a new thing.

Grace and Peace,

Rev. Becky



# March 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b> Disciples Café 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M.  Boomwhackers Rehearsal	<b>2</b> Good Grief Group Therapy 10:00 A.M. — 11:30 A.M.	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> Game Group 10-12  Soup & Study 12:00 P.M.	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> B: David Michalak	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b> Daylight Savings Time Begins  Disciples Café 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M.	<b>9</b> Good Grief Group Therapy 10:00 A.M. — 11:30 A.M.	<b>10</b> Stitch of Time 10-12	<b>11</b> Senior Food Box Distribution 10-12  Soup & Study 12:00 P.M.	<b>12</b> Lunch with the Pastor @ Les Café 12:00 P.M.	<b>13</b> B: Dorothy Barrett, Suzanne Brown Raymond,	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> Disciples Café 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M.  Boomwhackers Rehearsal	<b>16</b> Good Grief Group Therapy 10:00 A.M. — 11:30 A.M.	<b>17</b> St. Patrick's Day  Stitch of Time 10-12  B: Alivia Neyhart	<b>18</b> Game Group 10-12  Soup & Study 12:00 P.M.	<b>19</b> B; Tom Cushing	<b>20</b> First Day of Spring	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> Disciples Café 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M.	<b>23</b> Good Grief Group Therapy 10:00 A.M. — 11:30 A.M.  B: Sheila Cushing	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> Soup & Study 12:00 P.M.  A: Sarah Williams-Perez & Jason Perez	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b> Palm Sunday Disciples Café 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M.	<b>30</b> Good Grief Group Therapy 10:00 A.M. — 11:30 A.M.  B: Ashley Moss	<b>31</b> A: Ray & Debbie Benson				



Lent & Easter  
2026

## THE WORK OF IMAGINATION

Lent begins in the ache, the questions, the tension between love and loss. It does not rush toward resolution, but invites us to slow down, to turn with honesty, and to journey with Jesus through wildness, confrontation, and cross. Along the way, we listen to voices from the margins, learn from stories of resistance and renewal, and remember that God meets us not in strength, but in surrender.

This is the work of imagination: to envision a world remade by mercy, to trust that healing is possible even in the shadow of empire, and to practice love that outlasts despair. Lent calls us into this holy labor—not as a solitary act, but as a communal path toward transformation. Imagine with us this Lent & Easter at FCC!

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PLEASE  
PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

