



First Christian Church

Church Life



January/February 2021

Volume 73—Issue 1

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CHRISTMAS EVE "ZOOM" SERVICE
of Communion and Candlelighting
Thursday, December 24, 2020
8 p.m. central time



We will gather in our homes using our computers, tablets, iPads, or phones as people share the story of the birth of Jesus through scripture and song. Please have communion elements ready and a candle that you can hold up as we welcome the Christ Child singing:

*"Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright
 Round yon virgin mother and Child,
 Holy infant so tender and mild,
 Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace."*

NOTE: The Zoom link will be emailed out beforehand!

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Main:

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Pastor's Article

Dear Church Family and Friends,

This edition of Church Life looks back over the months of November and December of 2020 and looks forward to January and February of 2021. If we were to compare this edition with any other year, we would immediately note so many differences. Instead of photos of worship gatherings in our beautiful sanctuary, or Wednesday Night Live programs and meals in the fellowship hall, or children's or youth gatherings, we instead see photos that have an uncanny resemblance to the opening scene of *The Brady Bunch*. Remember seeing this?



The Brady Bunch Family

Nine people in squares all looking out from their own little cubicles of existence as, while the Brady Bunch theme song is playing, it alternates between what we now call “speaker view” and “group view.” That’s what our Zoom gatherings at First Christian Church now resemble as we meet for ‘coffee hour,’ worship, Board and Elders meetings, Wednesday Night ‘Virtual’ Live, special presentations, youth group, and the Sunday children’s gathering. This is what one of the screens from last Sunday’s worship on December 14, 2020, looked like (you had to scroll over to see the other group of people since those assembled could not fit on one screen):



The First Christian Church Family

While there might be some surface similarities between the Brady Bunch picture and the First Christian Church picture because we are gathered together on a screen, the big difference is that the Brady Bunch served to entertain. Our Zoom gatherings have provided an important sacred space—even though it is virtual—for us to connect through fellowship, worship, prayer, Christian education, and so much more. Allison Willis, our Children Worship and Wonder leader, has even told the Advent stories via Zoom using little wooden pieces. Here she is on the third Sunday of Advent telling the story of the shepherds showing the way to Bethlehem to her son Sam and other children gathered in their own homes:



The Christian Women’s Fellowship annual Noel Market has previously been an event with lots of people milling about in many rooms of our church with the parlor filled with baked goods, a coffee shop, Ann’s Attic, the hallway exhibiting the quilt and afghan, and a Soup n’ Cornbread luncheon in the fellowship hall. This year’s Noel Market, which featured so many beautiful items and raised considerable funds, was held instead in the church’s parking lot:



I know we all fervently desire to be able to meet again in our beautiful buildings, but I am proud of our congregation for not succumbing to social pressure. We have continued to stand firm in our conviction that keeping our buildings closed to in-person gatherings is consistent with Jesus' Golden Rule of loving neighbor as self by not putting people at risk. While technology can be a fickle partner, I am so grateful that it has advanced to the point that our young can attend school virtually, many people can work out of their homes, some medical appointments can take place via telehealth, and we can gather "alone together" as a congregation via Zoom. While this is not everyone's preferred mode of meeting, we should remember that our Christian teaching has always been that while our bodies are important (they are our temples allowing us to navigate this earth), our spirits are primary. So while during our Zoom meetings we are not gathered together in our bodies, we still are gathered together as a community of spirits or souls.

Two species continue to wage a war for survival on planet earth: human beings and a coronavirus. Since last March the virus has had the upper hand. This makes concrete planning difficult as we look forward to the months of January and February. This also makes this edition of Church Life different from previous years when we could give more concrete information about upcoming events. For the time being, until we are at least in a yellow zone or the weather is warmer, we will continue to meet via Zoom on Sundays (fellowship at 9:45 AM, worship at 10 AM, the children's gathering at 4 PM) and on Wednesdays (at 6 PM for our Wednesday Night 'Virtual' Live gathering for a time of fellowship and reflection on scripture and sacred poetry). The Church Board, Elders, youth group, and various other groups also will meet virtually.

There are a few additional zoom events we hope to host beginning in January and February. We look forward to Rev. Dennis Gray's Zoom presentation as part of our "Sharing Stories About Race in America" series, which we had to postpone when the presidential debates interfered with our initial schedule. We also look forward to continuing Zoom presentations as part of our important "Mental Health Awareness" series. Finally, I plan to do a six-part Zoom series on "Celtic Christian Spirituality." I had originally planned to do this as a day-long Spring Spiritual Retreat on March 28, 2020 up at Camp Kum-Ba-Ya. The pandemic had just begun, so this event was cancelled. Since I cannot see into the future to know what this spring will bring, I hope that you will join me on Zoom so that I can share with you my deep love of the Celtic Christian tradition. Should we be in a safer place in the spring, I will facilitate a Spring Spiritual Retreat at Camp Kum-Ba-Ya on a different topic.

As we move into the final days of 2020, we reflect on the many challenges we have faced in what seems to us to be an unprecedented year. Yet people have faced challenges before. Just as one historical example, as we move toward Christmas and the beginning of a new year, I think back to Christmas of 1939 when the British people were in their third month of having entered World War II. Air sirens were the constant background noise of their lives as people rushed to take shelter. The country was anxious and afraid. Princess Elizabeth was thirteen years old at that time. She brought a poem written by Minnie Louise Haskins to her father's attention, called "God Knows / The Gate of the Year." Her father, King George, read the beginning of this poem to the British people in his BBC Christmas radio address that year to help encourage them as they entered a new year filled with uncertainty. I leave it with you too to read as we celebrate Christmas and enter into 2021, not knowing the challenges we will face but knowing that God will help us face those challenges:

"God Knows / The Gate of the Year"
By Minnie Louise Haskins (1875-1957)

And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:
"Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown."

And he replied:

*"Go out into the darkness and
put your hand into the Hand of God.
That shall be to you better than light
and safer than a known way."*

So I went forth, and finding the Hand of God, trod gladly into the night.
And He led me towards the hills and the breaking of day in the lone East.

In Christian Love and Service,

Pastor Ruth

From the Church Buildings Reopening Committee

(Previously printed in the November/December 2020 edition of *Church Life*.)

Dear Church Family,

The Church Buildings Reopening Committee is dedicated to providing information to keep our faith community informed and healthy.

As you know from the news, our country, state and county are under assault from Covid-19. At one time, not too long ago, we may not have personally known anyone who has this dangerous virus. That can no longer be said.

Our church buildings have been closed since March even when other churches have chosen otherwise. We chose to have outdoor and/or online services. Our Zoom services have worked well. We believe anyone who has been involved with these offerings has been blessed.

Our congregation grounds itself in Jesus' commandment to love neighbor as self by diligently attempting to keep others safe from harm. The committee will carefully review the incidence rate map daily (found on the <http://kycovid19.ky.gov> website) to determine what zone our county falls into. Our church will abide by guidelines for our county.

The Church Buildings Reopening Committee recommends the following for our church related activities (We will notify you of cancelled activities [other than Sunday worship] 2 days in advance. For example: CWF group meetings that occur on Tuesday will be notified on Sunday):

RED ZONE (Critical ~ >25+ per 100K):

- Extreme limiting of in-person activities.
- Outdoor worship at 10 AM in the parking lot when the temperature is higher than 45 degrees Fahrenheit and it is not raining. When weather does not permit our gathering outdoors, we will worship together on Zoom at 10 AM. **The decision will be made by 8 AM that day.**
- No activities at all inside the Church Buildings (no Faith and Food, CWF, Scrapbooking, Youth Group, etc.)
- Children, youth and adults to meet virtually for gatherings via Zoom.
- Worship materials, prayer concerns, and announcements to be brought to homebound, those in assisted living facilities, and those not on the internet.

From the Church Buildings

Reopening Committee

ORANGE ZONE (Accelerated ~ >10-25 per 100K):

- Outdoor worship at 10 AM in the parking lot when the temperature is higher than 45 degrees Fahrenheit and it is not raining. When weather does not permit this we will worship together on Zoom at 10 AM. The decision will be made by 8 AM that day.
- Sanctuary to be open an hour or two a week for people to enjoy a time of prayer and reflection in the beauty of this sacred space.
- Groups of 10 or less may meet (socially distanced and with masks) in Church Buildings. Youth Group may meet. Children to continue to meet via Zoom. Wednesday Night 'Virtual' Live and other offerings will continue via Zoom.
- Worship materials, prayer concerns, and announcements to be brought to homebound, those in assisted living facilities, and those not on the internet.

YELLOW ZONE (Community Spread ~ >1-10 per 100K):

- Resumption of indoor worship (30-minute Simplicity Sunday worship with announcements, joys, concerns, prayer, special music, and communion) with safe practices in place including spacing out in the pews, prefab communion cups, and the wearing of masks. Worship service will be videoed on Facebook Live or put on YouTube. Sermons to be provided via manuscript and on Facebook Live.
- Continuation of Zoom gatherings for Children, Wednesday Night 'Virtual' Live, and other special studies
- Groups larger than 10 may begin meeting (as long as there can be proper social distancing and masks are worn). Youth may meet.
- Worship materials, prayer concerns, and announcements to be brought to homebound, those in assisted living facilities, and those not on the internet.

GREEN ZONE (On Track ~ < 1 per 100K):

- The Resumption of full or almost normal activities.
- Pre-pandemic worship service to resume with choir, message, etc. Worship service to be videoed on Facebook Live or put on YouTube.
- Resumption of Sunday School, Worship and Wonder, and other gatherings
- Worship materials, prayer concerns, and announcements to be brought to homebound and those in assisted living facilities.

From the Church Buildings Reopening Committee

Protection of Self and Others:

We all must remain extremely vigilant to protect ourselves and others, wearing masks, remaining socially distant, and recognizing if we have Covid or influenza symptoms we should be tested for Covid and quarantine for 14 days. We should also ask those who have been in close proximity to us for longer than 15 minutes to wait to be tested for Covid 2 – 5 days after the exposure and to quarantine until such time the Covid test comes back negative.

Symptoms may go on quietly during the 14 days after exposure or may never emerge.

This is why it is so important to quarantine. If the person that someone is exposed to or does have Covid, it is important to remain in quarantine for the 14 days even if your test is negative. It seems logical to repeat the test near the end of the 14 day quarantine, but this can be discussed with a health care provider.

We strongly encourage anyone who is feeling ill or who has been potentially exposed not to attend any Church activities.

We pray that you all stay safe and healthy. Keep in your prayers all those who are battling the virus.

Yours in Christ,

The Church Buildings Reopening Committee

**REPORT FROM THE ANNUAL BOARD
and CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
Sunday, December 6, 2020, 11:15 AM
(Immediately following worship service on Zoom)**



The meeting was opened by Rob Clause, Board Chair. There were forty-one (41) congregational/board members present (as well as 4 youth with parents on zoom). Prior to the presentation of the Annual Budget and the 2021 Slate of Officers, Bruce Dobyns noted that he had combined the Budget and Slate of Officers, and he recommended that the vote include both with one motion. Don Bennett, on behalf of Don Chamberlain, Chair of the Stewardship Finance Committee, reviewed the proposed budget, which had been emailed out to all members of the congregation. He noted that the 2020 budget was \$181,243 compared to 2021 at \$181,527. There were no increases or decreases in salaries. The minister's health insurance had been estimated at a 5% increase for the year; however, the increase was at 12%. Pastor Ruth requested that the \$643 increase be reduced from her professional development allowance. Chair Rob Clause reported that he and the CPA are hoping to have the PPD loan forgiven. This should help our present fiscal year finances. The Slate of Officers for 2020 will remain the same for 2021 with exception of the Board Chair, Rob Clause, who has served four years and chosen not to continue; Amy Roos has agreed to accept the nomination for Board Chair for 2021. A motion was made by Celeste McAllister and seconded by Charlotte Van Dyke to approve the Proposed Slate of Officers for 2021, as well to approve the Proposed Budget for 2021. The members voted via "zoom" and the poll indicated a 100% approval of the motion. The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED, Rebecca Landolt, Secretary

Winter Retreat 2021

“Celtic Christian Spirituality”



**To be held over 6 sessions via Zoom
(Date and time to be announced)
Retreat Leader: Rev. Ruth Ragovin, Ph.D.**

Many are drawn to the creation-affirming wisdom, spiritual teachings, and practices of the Celtic way. Nurtured in parts of Wales, Britain, Ireland, and Scotland, this rich tradition combines elements from the mythology and folklore of the pre-Christian Celts with a form of Christianity that took root in the early centuries through the efforts of people such as St. Ninian and St. Patrick, which expressed itself through poetry, legends, and the lives of the saints. Contemporary teachers such as John Philip Newell, John O’Donohue, Carl McColman, and Paul John Martin have helped revitalize Celtic Christianity with people going on pilgrimage to Iona and Lindisfarne and affiliating with groups such as the “Community of Aidan and Hilda.” Since, however, there is no one unifying authoritative text, teacher, or tradition, the umbrella of Celtic Christian Spirituality is large and cannot easily be defined. Yet there are common threads: a spirituality that is more poetic than doctrinal, an understanding of God in Trinity who offers divine presence and protection, communities that stress hospitality and following a way of life, the experience of soul friends, pilgrimage, a reverence for the goodness of creation, along with an understanding of thin places, sacred spaces, sacred symbols, numbers, and animals. Our sessions will be partly structured around the legacy of a number of Celtic saints: Patrick of Armagh, Brigid of Kildare, Brendan of Clonfert, Non of Wales, David of Wales, Ita of Killeedy, Aiden of Lindisfarne, and Hilda of Whitby. We will enjoy listening to Celtic music and hymns, as we incorporate Celtic blessings, prayers and liturgies, and learn about unique forms of Celtic religious art such as the Celtic knot and high standing crosses. Come and allow your souls to be nourished by the wisdom we can gain by learning about Celtic Christian Spirituality!

To register, please email fccmurray@gmail.com or call 270-753-3824. We will send you the Zoom link to participate.

Epiphany / Women's Christmas

January 6, 2021



There is an Irish custom called Women's Christmas (*Nollaig na mBan*) to be celebrated on Epiphany, when women are encouraged to take a day off after all the hectic and work of the Christmas season to kick back and enjoy a day for contemplation before rushing into the new year. The United Methodist minister, Jan Richardson, who has become an acclaimed artist and writer, for a number of years has created a beautifully illustrated "Women's Christmas Retreat," that she makes available for use free of charge. We encourage you (men and women!) to take time for reflection on your own spiritual journey by using her generous gift to all of us. It may be downloaded at <https://sanctuaryofwomen.com/WomensChristmasRetreat2020.pdf>. While designed to be used on Epiphany (January 6) it can really be used any time!

Thank you

Dear FCC Church Family,

Thank you for your many kindnesses to our mom and dad and our family for the last many years, and for your assistance in this time of loss. We are very grateful for the wonderful food provided for us as we gathered on Friday night and again on Saturday night at mom and dad's home to celebrate mom's birthday. With love, the Roos Girls: Melanie Dawson, Amy R. Roos, and Debbie Cunningham

Many thanks to **Matthew Sandiford**, who served as a youth director alongside Elena Roberts for a few months. His wife Avery has accepted a teaching position as the new agricultural teacher at Tuscola Community High School in Tuscola, Illinois. They moved there a few weeks ago. Congratulations to both along with our thanks for your outstanding work with our youth!

Babies!



Big sister 3-year-old Jovi Lee Rogers holds 1-month old Linnix Grace Rogers.

Congratulations to John and Patsy King on the birth of their new little great granddaughter, **Linnix Grace**, who was born on Tuesday, November 10, 2020, weighing 6 lbs and 19 inches. She is beautiful!

The Kids Have Been Zooming!



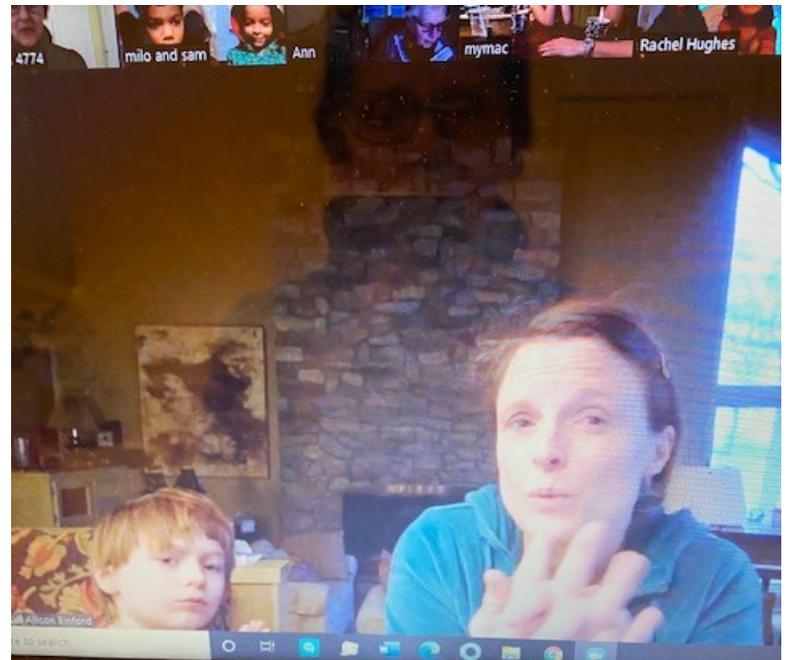
November 8, 2020



November 22, 2020



November 29, 2020



December 6, 2020

Condolences

Our love and prayers are with John Hughes and family in the death of his grandmother, **Mrs. Dortha Hughes**, who went to be with the Lord at the age of 95 on October 30, 2020, at Spring Creek Nursing Home in Murray.

Our love and prayers are with the family, church family, and friends of our beloved organist **Donnie Hendrix**, who, at the age of 60, went to his eternal home with God on Sunday, November 15, 2020, at the Murray Calloway County Hospital after a difficult and courageous battle with Covid-19. A Celebration of Life will be held in the sanctuary of First Christian Church at a later date.

We received the following beautiful letter from June and Doug VanderMolen, which serves as such a source of encouragement to all of us during our time of loss:

Dear Pastor Ruth, I wanted you and the congregation to know you are all in our prayers at this difficult time. Losing Donnie to Covid-19 is devastating to so many in Murray, and beyond. I know God's love can sustain us even while we question, cry, and grieve this loss of our dear Donnie. However, days ahead will be difficult. So we will need to turn to God, to each other, and to all of our wonderful memories. These things will allow us to pierce the darkness of our grief and continue to move forward. While we grieve our loss, may we choose an attribute of Donnie's—his smile, his sense of humor, his musical talent (okay, most of us can't do this), his open and accepting nature, his compassion, his hugs (okay, not right now), ... and add or increase that attitude in our own lives to help fill some of the void left with Donnie's passing. May God hold you close as you minister to those around you while dealing with your own loss. Our prayers go out to all of you. Love and prayers, Doug & June.

Our love and prayers are with Beth Roark and family in the death of her father, **Douglas Williams**, on Thursday, November 19, 2020, at the age of 89. Beth was blessed by actually being on the phone with him when he took his last breath on earth. Her beautiful voice would have accompanied him as he crossed over the threshold into eternity. A private ceremony was held on November 21, in Hopkinsville.

Our love and prayers are with Fred Wells and family in the death of his beloved wife, **Sharon Wells**, Saturday, November 21, 2020, at the age of 80, at the Oakview Nursing Home in Calvert City, KY. A private burial was held. A memorial service may be held at a later date.

Condolences

Our love and prayers are with Nancy Dycus in the recent death of her cousin **Darryl Smoot**.

Our love and prayers are with Don and Martha Chamberlain (and brother Mark) in the death of their daughter, **Lindsay Chamberlain**, on Friday, November 27, at the age of 40, in Huntington Beach, California, following a severe brain injury as the result of a fall. A celebration of life will be held at a later date.

"To Our First Christian Church Family and Friends,

Your prayers, cards, and expressions of sympathy have meant everything to us as we mourn the loss of our daughter Lindsay. She was a special person who was quick with a smile and laughter, making her a "best friend" to many.

We have felt your presence and love, and want you to know that it is this empathy that is helping us move forward. Lindsay is now in God's arms and, as two wonderful FCC friends told us, "Lindsay is in a place of light and beauty."

The beautiful flowers and the wonderful food were also deeply appreciated!

God Bless!

Don, Martha and Mark"

Our love and prayers are with Dee Roberts and family in the death of her beloved mother, **Marietta Gear Norwood**, on Sunday afternoon, December 13, in Paducah after an extended illness. We so enjoyed Marietta adding her musical skills to our choir and for her presence among us. Her legacy will live on through all whose lives she touched.

Be in prayer for...



Ron Gray's Aunt Ardyth
Maryam Azimi
Billie Burton
Joyce and Nate Clause
Sandra Daughrity
Teresa Dowdy
Phyllis Duckworth
Nancy and Mark Dycus
Judy and Dave Eldredge
Terry Farmer
John and Wilma Faulkner
Fiona Fennell
Leon Fowler
Laura Godfrey
Glenn and Patricia Hughes
Tab Jakonen
Mark Kennedy
Patsy King
Ruth King

Sandra Lay
Sharon Lueck
Paula Marvin
Bob and Celeste McAllister
Anna and Josh McCurdy
Ann McKeel
John Pasco
Aaron Perkins
Carolyn Reagan

Ron Ratliff
Jean Carol Ridley
Deane Renshaw
Bill Roberts
Cecil Roberts
Betty Shea
Tom Seipel
Andrew Schultz
Scott Tamaren
Patsy Tracy
Jackie Underwood
Tony and Charlotte Van Dyke
Linda Wade
Gary White
Bernice Willis
Dwight Willis
Linda Wilson

FINANCIAL GIVING

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR October		
	2020	2019
Income	\$ 7,801.00	\$ 11,363.00
Expense	\$ 12,214.00	\$ 14,705.00
Balance	\$ (4,413.00)	\$ (3,342.00)

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR Jan-October		
	2020	2019
Income	\$128,415.00	\$148,303.00
Expense	\$133,099.00	\$148,396.00
Balance	\$ (4,684.00)	\$ (93.00)

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR November		
	2020	2019
Income	\$ 16,875.00	\$ 15,286.00
Expense	\$ 12,327.00	\$ 12,940.00
Balance	\$ 4,548.00	\$ 2,346.00

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR Jan-Nov		
	2020	2019
Income	\$ 145,290.00	\$ 163,589.00
Expense	\$ 145,426.00	\$ 161,335.00
Balance	\$ (136.00)	\$ 2,254.00

TITHES AND OFFERINGS

Thank you to everyone who has sent in their tithes and offerings to the church! We encourage you to continue to be faithful in your giving by mailing them to the church at: *First Christian Church, 111 North Fifth St., Murray, KY 42071.*

NOTE: A mail slot has been installed that goes in through the door leading into the freezer room so that you may put your checks in there, knowing that they will be secure.

ONLINE GIVING

Missing worship service? No problem. Make your tithes and offerings with Givelify from wherever you are, using your computer or your Smart phone app.

To make a computer donation, go to <https://www.givelify.com/givers> to start giving. To make a mobile donation, we recommend you download the Givelify app for Android or iPhone. It's free to download and use. It's totally safe and secure, and for tax time you have one-tap access to your complete donation records.

Community Rewards Programs



1. To enroll in Kroger Community Awards and give back to FCC, visit **<https://www.kroger.com/account/enrollCommunityRewardsNow>** and log into your Kroger account.
2. 2. Once there, you will see “Give More Back to the Community.” Hit the “Enroll Now” button.
3. 3. To enroll in awards to benefit FCC, type in “First Christian Church— Murray” or “ID458”
4. 4. Click on the organization button (it’s round and to the left of the name). Then click on “enroll.” This money benefits the Building Fund.

From August 1 to October 31, 2020 FCC earned \$61.69 from 22 households participating in the Kroger Community Awards program.



Remember, always start at **smile.amazon.com** and Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to our church. To support First Christian Church when shopping on Amazon, simply click on the following link: **<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/61-0482959>** and shop! It’s that easy!

From July 1 to September 30, 2020, FCC earned \$13.74 from AmazonSmile.

SUNDAYS AT FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

SERMON: Pastor Ruth's weekly sermon will be included as a PDF file that will be emailed out no later than Saturday evening, along with other worship materials, joys, concerns, and announcements. Her sermon also is included as a link on our church's website at www.fccmurray.com. Her message can also be listened to on Facebook Live (technology and internet service permitting). You may access this by going to the Facebook icon on our church's website or through your own Facebook page.

Note: Pastor Ruth will be taking a few Sundays off following Christmas. The following people will be bringing the message in her place (to be posted on the church Facebook page and emailed out):

Sunday, December 27, 2020: Rev. Beth Dobyms

Sunday, January 3, 2021: Rev. Bruce Dobyms

Sunday, January 10, 2021: Rev. Russ Ragovin

SUNDAY AT 9:45 AM ~ Sunday Fellowship via Zoom

SUNDAY AT 10 AM ~ "Simplicity Sunday" Worship Celebration via Zoom: Responsive readings, scripture, children's message, music, announcements, sharing of joys and concerns, prayer, and communion. ***NOTE: The Zoom link will be sent out in the Tuesday email and again later on in the week. We will be meeting via Zoom until either we are again in a 'yellow' zone or the weather is warm enough for us to meet in the church parking lot.***

COMMUNION: If you are using your at-home worship kits, we encourage you to take communion at 10 AM, as you join with others to share the bread and cup. If you are on Facebook, Pastor Ruth will be officiating at the communion table before the videoed message. Our elders officiate at the communion table during our Sunday morning zoom service at 10 AM.

CHILDREN'S ZOOM FELLOWSHIP, SUNDAYS at 4 PM ~ Our Worship and Wonder director Allison Willis will be sharing stories with the children. Activities are provided by Rebecca Landolt with the help of Ann Thornton and Nancy Dycus. The Zoom link to attend is sent out by Saturday of each week. If you know children who might like to attend, please let Pastor Ruth know by emailing her at ruthragovin@gmail.com

ONGOING WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

YOUTH GROUP (grades 6 to 12): Our youth director Elena Roberts will communicate with the youth to let them know when they will be meeting.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT 'VIRTUAL' LIVE Zoom Meeting, Wednesdays from 6-7:30 PM. During this time of fellowship, we reflect upon a poem and the lectionary Psalm of the week. The Zoom link and materials are emailed out beforehand.

NOTE: Please check your Tuesday emails for information about whether other groups are meeting.



January



- 1 Jordan Benton
- 2 Elizabeth Dawson Howard
Bradley Marvin
- 3 David Daughaday
Tory Daughrity
Lily Kinsley
- 4 Sam Dillard
- 5 Bryan Warner
- 10 Leah Hart
- 13 Eliana Benton-Ragovin
Haley Hart
- 15 Leah Ann Enzendorfer
- 16 Brandon Daughaday
Lyn Ryan
- 17 Henry Kwan
- 19 Jennifer Donnelly
- 26 Albert Zimmerman
Bruce Dobyns
- 27 Fulton Hart

Happy
Anniversary

- 10 Joe & Teri Gould



Happy Birthday

- 4 Sam Allen
Leah Hughes
- 5 Joyce Clause
- 7 Terri Benton
- 9 Eli McKeel
- 10 Rebecca Landolt
- 11 Lisa Allen
Gary Darnell
- 14 Katie Allen
- 15 Alison Epperson
- 18 Dwight Willis
- 22 Angela Gierhart
- 28 Roger Dawson
Carolyn Reagan

Happy
Anniversary

- 14 Greg & Lillian Gierhart
- 23 John & Jan Fuqua
- 24 Sonny & Julie Warner
- 25 Albert & Emily Zimmerman



Outreach

NEED LINE

The Need Line pantry is low on the following items: peanut butter, soup, hot dogs, bread, spinach, lima beans, Spam, crackers, mixed vegetables, instant potatoes, spaghetti sauce, carrots, blackeyed peas, canned pasta, eggs, milk, pork, and chicken. Fresh vegetables and fruits from the garden are also welcome. Cleaning and personal hygiene items that are needed include: toilet paper, dish liquid, bar soap, shampoo, and deodorant. Need Line is located at 509 N. 8th St and is open from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday. For more information, call 270-753-6333. If you drive up, they will meet you at your car and take your donations.

BLESSING BOX

We have an increasing number of residents of Calloway County who are now food insecure and often see people stopping to take food out of the Blessing Box at the back of our parking lot. We encourage you to place food either in the Blessing Box beside our church or another one in the community.

Outreach



LYSOL/CLOROX WIPES/GLOVES/MASKS

Many thanks to all the many people who have been providing Lysol and Clorox wipes, gloves, masks, and cleaning materials to our church! We still need more and are asking, if you are able, to donate what you can to the church. They will be essential once we return to in-person worship!

LAUNDRY LOVE

Please continue to collect quarters for Laundry Love. Even though we have not been able to participate in this important ministry by helping people as they do laundry, we are helping by giving the resource centers at Murray Independent and Calloway County schools gift cards so families can do laundry at iWash. Each time we participate in Laundry Love it costs us a few hundred dollars. We encourage you to put aside some quarters to bring to the church when it resumes again.

MAIN STREET YOUTH CENTER

Main Street Youth Center is in need of individually wrapped snacks. Donations may be dropped off at the youth center from 2:30 to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Wednesday, at 513 South Fourth St. For more information, call the center at 270-753-8336.

Outreach 2020

Submitted by Melanie Dawson

Pastor Ruth asked me to write an Outreach report. With this year being so different, I really wasn't sure how to organize it. Well, here goes.

LAUNDRY LOVE

We partner with St. John's Episcopal Church and First Presbyterian Church in doing laundry on the last Monday of every month. So we usually man the laundry mat four times a year. January 27, 2020 was our first and last time to physically get to help about 35 families wash laundry.

Total spent \$349.50.

By April, our church's scheduled month, was cancelled due to COVID. By July, our next scheduled month, Laundry Love had started up again with a new plan. Iwash cards would be given to the families through the school's resource centers. So 20 cards were loaded with \$12.50 each and distributed (10 each) to the Murray and Calloway schools.

Total \$250

BACK PACK PROGRAM

On February 2, 2020, collected Souper Bowl of Caring offering on Super Bowl Sunday. This money helps fund the Back Pack program. On February 16, 2020 we assembled approximately **500 paper sacks** to be delivered the week of February 23, 2020. These paper sacks for a two week period go to children in the Murray Preschool, Murray Elementary, Calloway Preschool, and Calloway Elementary schools.

WEEK OF COMPASSION

Officially this offering was taken on February 23, 2020 (before COVID). But many individuals donated funds following that as our nation and world have faced unprecedented challenges. A check was sent to Week of Compassion in the amount of **\$2,045**.

OUTREACH FUNDS DISBURSED

Outreach funds were disbursed to: West Area **\$750**, Camp Kum Ba Ya **\$750**, NAACP at Mayfield **\$150**, and United Way – Community Fund **\$350**. Since we weren't meeting, big collections at the church didn't happen as a large group but individuals made donations directly to these agencies. If donations came to the church they were sent to the appropriate agency. These are the ones that I know about, there may be others. Life House- Baby Bottle Campaign, Green Needleline Bags, School Supplies, snacks for Main Street Youth Center, and shampoo and toiletries for Needleline. The McAllisters and others fill and hand out "Little Acts of Kindness" bags.

BLESSING BOXES

It started as just filling the one in our back parking lot. Before COVID, the children's Sunday school classes would check on it every Sunday morning. But now, our Youth Group once a month goes and checks on many of the Blessing Boxes in the area (about 14 – additional boxes are popping up to help food insecure individuals and families during this difficult time due to the pandemic). Many individuals in our church also help keep the Blessing Boxes stocked, with a special emphasis on the one behind our church and the one beside the jail.

CLUTCH BAGS

In October (less COVID restrictions) our Youth Group had their first gathering since March. They packed **125 clutch bags** containing feminine hygiene products to be distributed to local middle and high schools.

CWF NOEL MARKET

On November 7th, 2020, the CWF Noel Market Bazaar happened outside behind the Education Building. As far as I can remember this was a first, having it outside and the weather was wonderful.

THANKSGIVING BASKETS

Thanksgiving Baskets with turkey and all the trimmings were provided for 16 families this year. Due to COVID, we collected some of the food items, provided monetary donations but the actual assembling and delivery of the baskets was done at Need Line this year. This project couldn't continue to happen without **Rebecca Landolt, David Robinson**, and the wonderful people at **Food Giant**.



Bradley Dawson representing First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) moved food from the organized staff at FOOD GIANT to NEEDLINE for **16 families** to be blessed with Thanksgiving dinner. Thanks to the church family members who provided funds and food bags to the project and to **David Robinson** who organizes this major project each year.

OTHER OUTREACH

December is always a busy month and even with COVID many organizations still wanted to provide a special Christmas for others. The logistics may have changed but the purpose to help others didn't.

- COVID Christmas 2020 (couldn't buy gifts for students had to donate money)
Laker Christmas **\$150**
Tiger Christmas **\$150**
individuals also helped on their own
- Needline Christmas Baskets for 1000 families--- we donated **300 cake mixes (\$300)**
- Individuals gifts/help totaling **\$450**
- HOPE Calloway (MCC Homeless Coalition) --- Youth helped sell candles (approximately **\$325**)
- **30 "gifts"** to residents at Spring Creek (toiletries, puzzles, coloring books, etc.)
- Alternative Gift Catalog. People may give alternative gifts any time of year, which help support the following organizations: Murray's Kids Care for Hunger in Calloway County, MCC Homeless Coalition, Church World Service, Test Fees for Calloway County Adult and Family Education, Main Street Youth Center, Anna Mae Owen Residential Hospice House, Starfish International, Soup for the Soul, CASA by the Lakes, Week of Compassion, West Kentucky Mentoring Program, and Habitat for Humanity, Murray/Calloway County.

I know by no means have I covered all of the extraordinary things that you all do for others.

- checking on your neighbors and fellow members with phone calls and cards
- providing meals for people on the "Meal Train"
- driving people to medical appointments

Even though 2020 has been the most unusual and hard year for many, we at First Christian Church, on our little corner on North 5th street, have tried to fulfill our mission of caring for and loving others in our own church, community, and world. Thank you for your continuous commitment and service. Let's all look forward to a new year.

Melanie Dawson
Outreach Chairman

Outreach: Back Pack Program

Submitted by Teresa Nixon

It is with joy that First Christian Church can move into 2021 with participation in the Need Line Backpack program. However, it will look different this year.

Schools are needing all sacks for the entire month by the first of that month, i.e., we are signed up to deliver sacks the third and fourth weeks of February, but now those sacks are needed by February 1st. This is due to the way schools are arranging for parents to pick up meals/ Backpack sacks, etc.

Need Line said they would work with us any way possible to get the sacks out. Since our church will likely not be reopened by mid-January, I am arranging to purchase all supplies needed and deliver to Need Line. Volunteers there will assemble the sacks and make arrangements for delivery. This is an extra burden for them, so hopefully we will be back to our normal process after this year.

Thank you for reaching out to our children through this community program.

Teresa Nixon



Need Line delivery

November 17, 2020

David Robinson delivered his truck load of food items given by our members to add to The Need Line Thanksgiving Basket project. The turkeys and perishables were picked up at Food Giant (being paid for by gifts from our members) by **Bradley Dawson** and **Rebecca Landolt** and delivered to Need Line for families to pick up at the Need Line office. We committed to provide the Thanksgiving family meal for 16 families.



Candle Project

This important community outreach project began as a dream that **Rebecca Landolt** had to make the community aware of the many homeless in our county and to raise funds for housing. She purchased candles to be placed in windows both to shed light on the homeless in our community and as a fundraiser. This project was then taken on by our youth in coordination with the Homeless Coalition. Thanks to **Elena Roberts, Matthew Sandiford** and the **youth group** for promoting the candle project for homeless awareness in cooperation with HOPE CALLOWAY as they served 4 hours at a table in front of Kroger. Thanks to the Kroger management for supporting our group and mission. A check payable to HOPE CALLOWAY for \$324.42 was delivered by Rebecca Landolt. This is an ongoing project.



CWF Noel Market

November 7, 2020

Report from Leah Hart

The Noel Market Bazaar, held November 7 outdoors behind the Education Building, was a success with a profit of \$2,184.00! This was primarily due to two years of planning and the creation of beautiful crafts by Betty McCord and Vicky Holton (see photo on page 31). In addition, several other talented CWF women donated their lovely homemade items, and others arrived early and stayed late Saturday morning to assist with the sales. Rebecca Landolt surprised us a month ago purchasing and donating 600 notecards and envelopes showcasing one of our stained glass windows, which we were able to sell before and during the bazaar. Debbie Batteiger was instrumental informing the community of the bazaar and the many items to be sold. We were blessed with a beautiful warm fall day, and the help of Bradley Dawson, Terry Hart, Steve Horwood, David Robinson, and Bryan Warner (who also donated a very nice piece of his artwork) setting up tables and carrying out items at 6 a.m., and then returning at noon to carry things back inside! Terri Benton was the lucky winner of our raffled 1940's antique quilt, donated by Rebecca Landolt. The CWF sincerely thanks everyone involved for their time and generous support enabling us to have another successful Noel Market Bazaar!



CWF Noel Market

November 7, 2020



Steven Horwood picks a quilt ticket. The winner was Terri Benton!



Vicky Holton and Betty McCord finally relax after months of hard work.



CWF Noel Market

November 7, 2020



Outreach

*"Dear First Christian Church,
Thank you for being such a blessing to HOPE Calloway. Your gifts help to make Murray and Calloway County a better place to live for its community members.
Thanks,
The HOPE Calloway Staff"*

Ruth Daughaday reports that Joanna Thomas, activity director at Spring Creek, "thanked us for our donations of gifts to bring joy to the residents at Christmas."

"Thank you so much for your generous donation of personal care items for our female students at CCHS. We appreciate you and your ability to continue the Clutch program. It is a great program and because of your donation we are able to meet student needs. Thank you, Jessica and Lisa at the Harbour Youth Service Center, Calloway County High School"

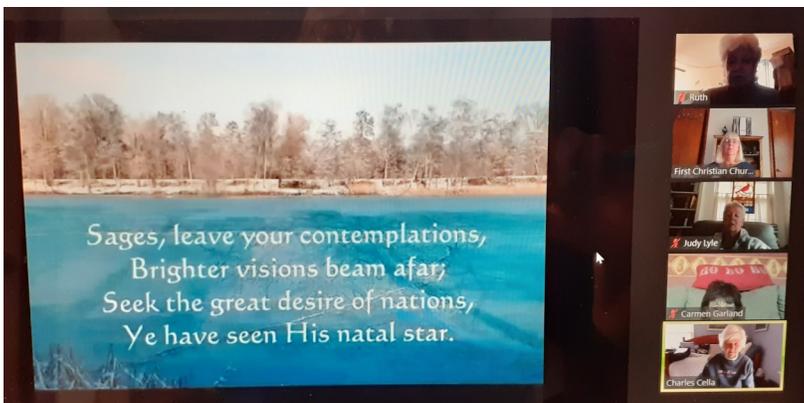
"We would like to thank you for your continued support of the Family Resource and Youth Service Center of the Murray Independent School District as evidenced by your recent donation. Because of your generosity, we are able to further our mission in bettering the lives of children and families in our community. Sincerely, Morgan Carman, Murray FRYSC Coordinator"

Simplicity Sunday Worship



November 8, 2020

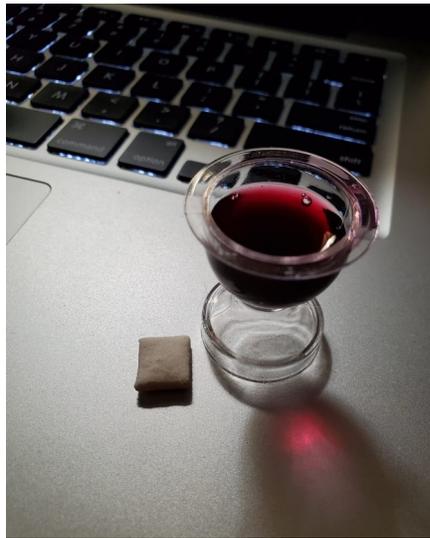
Zooming through Advent



Zooming through Advent



The McAllister's worship center



Beth Dobyms posted this on Facebook with caption "We remain connected ..."



Rebecca Landolt's worship center



Decorating the Sanctuary

Many thanks to **Jean and Don Bennett** for decorating the sanctuary for Christmas! Even though Covid-19 will prevent us from opening our sanctuary at present for services and sadly we will not be able to host a Christmas Eve service this year, **John and Rachel Hughes** will be preparing a video clip of our beautifully decorated sanctuary with **Donnie Hendrix's** Christmas music playing in the background. A Christmas Eve service will be held on Zoom.

