



First Christian Church

Church Life



March/April 2021

Volume 73—Issue 2

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Pastor's Article

Dear Church Family and Friends,

It's hard to believe that the season of Lent is right around the corner! This Wednesday, February 17, at 7 PM we will begin our forty-day journey with Jesus to the cross as we join together for an **Ash Wednesday service**. On a number of occasions in previous years we were forced to cancel our Ash Wednesday service because of ice and snow on our church parking lot. This year, while we may again experience inclement winter weather, we won't have to worry about that because we will be meeting in the sacred virtual space of Zoom. An added benefit is that our service will be open to people from outside our community and even outside our time zone, making our circle wider. We look forward to having some of our children and youth lead us in this deeply meaningful service in which we participate in self-examination in ways we might be more like Jesus, make Lenten vows, take communion, and place ashes or earth on our faces or hands to signify that we are followers of Jesus.

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What items will you need to do to participate?

- **Ashes or earth.** We will apply ashes in the shape of a cross either on our foreheads or hands to signify that we are followers of Jesus. They symbolize our recognition of our mortality, that we are part of the earth and one day will depart “earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.” I had originally planned to have ashes available, made from the burning of last year’s Lenten vows and palms, to be placed in snack-sized Ziploc bags and placed in a bag hanging from the fellowship hall door. Since we are in the midst of a winter storm, this will not be possible. However, some of you may have ashes you could use from your fireplace or grill or you could simply get a little dirt either outdoors (although our yards may be covered with snow and ice) or from an indoor plant that you could mix with water to make a kind of mud to apply. Or you could simply apply a little oil in the shape of a cross on your forehead or hand. Anything will work! It is the internal soul gesture that is important.
- Have available a **rock** (or shell or other natural object) that calls out to your soul. You will use this as part of one of our Lenten spiritual practices.
- Draw a ***valentine shape on a piece of paper*** that you will use to write your Lenten vow on.
- Have a ***candle*** ready to light.
- Have something to symbolize ***the bread and the cup*** to use during communion. (If you don’t have prefab communion cups, simply use a cracker or piece of bread and if you don’t have grape juice or wine you may use any beverage.)
- A ***copy of the bulletin*** will be emailed out along with the Zoom link on Ash Wednesday for you to use (although you do not need to have one).
- A ***simple bowl of soup and bread*** to eat before the service begins during a time of Lenten fellowship from 6:30 to 7 PM.

Additionally, during Lent, I will be providing a **special sermon series** entitled ***“Lessons from the Garden,”*** in which we will visit a number of gardens from the Bible beginning with the Garden of Eden in the first book of Genesis through to the Garden of the Holy City in the last book of Revelation. I include the Lenten Sermon Series details on p. 6.

I also look forward to using our Wednesday evenings during Lent from 6:30 to 7:50 PM to do a special presentation on ***“Celtic Christian Spirituality,”*** a topic that is near and dear to my own heart. I did the groundwork for this last year during a week-long working retreat with the intention of leading a day-long Spring Spiritual Retreat at Camp Kum-Ba-Ya on March 28, 2020, just twelve days after the pandemic forced us to close our building and cancel the retreat. We never could have imagined that a year later it still would be risky for me to offer a retreat up at the camp. Instead, I will be breaking down into five-sessions what was originally designed to be a day-long retreat. The participant’s guide will be emailed out as a PDF beforehand. I include details about this special Lenten series on p. 4.

Finally, during Holy Week we will also have a **Maundy Thursday service** on April 1 as we get ready for the big celebration of **Easter on April 4**. Who knows but maybe we might even be back in our sanctuary by then! Let’s pray for the Covid-19 cases to lessen and that we soon will be in a yellow zone, which will allow us to gather for in-person worship. What a day of rejoicing that will be!

In Christian Love and Service,

Pastor Ruth

“Celtic Christian Spirituality”



Wednesdays during Lent 2021
6:30-7:50 PM central time on Zoom
To be led by 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 uniting authoritative text, teacher, or tradition, the umbrella of Celtic Christian Spirituality is large and cannot easily be defined. Yet there are common themes and 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 retreat will be partly structured around the legacy of a number of Celtic saints: Ninian of Whithorn, Patrick of Armagh, Brigid of Kildare, Brendan of Clonfert, Columba of Iona, and Aidan of Lindisfarne. 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.

For the zoom link, please email fccmurray@gmail.com and the link will be emailed to you, along with the materials for each session.

CELTIC CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

Wednesdays during Lent 2021

6:30-7:50 PM Central Time

Wednesday, February 24 ~ Session One

Who Were the Celts?

Pelagius, the Bad Boy of Theology

St. Ninian of Whithorn: Pioneer in the Faith

Wednesday, March 3 ~ Session Two

St. Patrick of Armagh: The Encompassing Presence and Protection of Christ

"Carmina Gadelica"

Celtic Trinitarian Thought

Wednesday, March 10 ~ Session Three

The Ritual of the "Caim"

St. Brigid, Mary of the Gaels

Anam Cara

Wednesday March 17 ~ Session Four

St. Brendan the Navigator: Holy Journeying

Wednesday March 24 ~ Session Five

St. Columba / Columcille: Dove of the Church

Iona

The Book of Kells

St. Aidan of Lindisfarne: Generosity

LENTEN SERMON SERIES 2021

“Lessons from the Garden”



Sunday, February 21

Part One ~ “The Garden of Original Blessing” (Genesis 2:4-9,15-25)

The Spiritual Practices of Wearing Skin, Going Barefoot, and Feeling Awe

Sunday, February 28

Part Two ~ “The Garden of the Holy City” (Revelation 22)

The Spiritual Practice of Maintaining Hope

Sunday, March 7

Part Three ~ “The Well-Watered Garden” (Isaiah 58:5-11)

The Spiritual Practice of True Fasting

Sunday, March 14

Part Four ~ “The Garden of Intimacy” (Song of Songs 4:12-5:1)

The Spiritual Practice of Seeing the Divine in Others

Sunday, March 21

Part Five ~ “Tending God’s Garden” (scripture TBA)

The Spiritual Practice of Sowing Seeds

Sunday, March 28 (Palm / Passion Sunday)

Part Six ~ “The Garden of Sorrow” (Mark 14:32-41)

The Spiritual Practice of Welcoming Pain

Easter Sunday, April 4

Part Four ~ “The Garden of Joy” (John 19:38-20:18)

The Spiritual Practice of Gratitude

SUNDAYS AT FCC **(Pandemic Schedule)**

A copy of our at-home worship service is included as a link on our church website at www.fccmurray.com. A copy of Pastor Ruth's sermon will be emailed out as a PDF file and also will be posted on our website. Her message can 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.

9:45 AM ~ Zoom Coffee Gathering for a time of fellowship.

10 AM ~ 'Simplicity Sunday' Worship Celebration via Zoom. We will share in a time of fellowship, music, prayer, and communion together. We presently are enjoying hearing one congregant each Sunday share about their faith journey. To prepare for worship, please have a candle ready to light as we are welcomed into our sacred space as Mark Dycus plays "Holy Ground" for us and something to symbolize the bread and cup as we partake of communion together. The Zoom link is emailed out both in the Tuesday email and again on Saturday.

COMMUNION: If you are using your at-home worship kits, we encourage you to take communion at 10 AM, as you join with others at this time to share in the bread and cup. This Sunday we will be offering communion during our Zoom gathering at 10 AM. Pastor Ruth will also be presiding at the communion table on Facebook Live.

OFFERING: You may mail your check to the church at First Christian Church, 111 North Fifth Street, Murray, KY 42071 or drop it off in the secure mail slot in the door beside the one leading into the fellowship hall. You may also give online through our Givelify app.



WEEKLY OFFERINGS

CHILDREN'S GROUP: The children meet with our Worship and Wonder Leader, Allison Willis, and their Sunday School teacher, Rebecca Landolt, on Sundays at 4 PM on Zoom.

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

MEN'S GATHERING: Mondays at 7 PM via Zoom.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT 'VIRTUAL' LIVE, Wednesdays from 6-7:30 PM on Zoom. A time of fellowship during which we reflect upon a poem with a spiritual theme, a lectionary passage, and music. The Zoom link and materials are emailed out beforehand.

CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP: as they determine.

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

MARCH



- 1 Mark Dycus
- 2 Gwen Falwell
- 3 Rose Donnelly
- 7 Stacy Fulton Humes
- 8 Krista Crass
- 9 Nancy Dycus
- 15 Lillian Gierhart
Terry Hart
Elizabeth Roberts
Ava Rodenberg
- 20 Mallory Cathey Looney
Mike Cathey
- 21 Haval Latif
- 22 Aidan Nichols
John Roark
Amy Roos
- 23 Patsy King
- 25 Henry Hart
- 28 Madison Grace Garland
- 30 Julie Warner
- 31 Jackie Underwood

Happy Anniversary

- 17 Eric & Dee Roberts
- 23 Marty & Karen Dunham
- 24 Scott & Julie McKeel



- 2 Rhonda Roso
- 3 DeeAnna Natividad Vaughn
- 4 Amy Chase
- 5 April McKeel
- 8 Marty Dunham
- 9 Ron Gray
- 12 John Fuqua
Hastings Hume
Nina Natividad
- 15 Vicky Holton
Sharon Rue
- 20 Lily Sanchez
- 21 Joseph Gould
- 24 Kim White
- 26 Russ Ragovin
- 29 Easton Looney
Grayson Looney



- 7 Mike & Vicky Holton

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

Testimonies



Don Wilson

This is in honor of my mom, Linda Wilson, and in memory of my father, Jimmy Wilson.

If I were to choose a title for my testimony it would be: “This is My Story, This is My Song, Praising My Savior All the Day Long.” My brother and I were raised in Coldwater, Kentucky, just west of Murray, My mom and dad took us to church there where my dad was the piano player for over 60 years. Mom and dad sang special music there and we had a small choir.

I was the song leader there from my late teens till I moved to Murray in my early 30s. I have always found comfort and peace in both my Bible and Christian music. I think I have this in me because this was how I was raised. I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior when I was about 14 years old. I can’t say that I didn’t drift away from Jesus, because I did but I always had Him in my heart and soul. I could always look to Him for guidance, if I only would. He has always been there for me in all of life’s ups and downs.

As I got older, I seek to walk closer to Him and seek to do His will more and have faith in what God can do with my life if I will believe in Him and let Him guide my way. I thank God for sending His son, Jesus Christ as my personal Lord and Savior. By His life, death, resurrection and ascending into Heaven, praise God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. I pray that we all give God thanks for everyday of our lives and use them for the Glory of God.

Thanks for the opportunity to speak about my faith. I hope to always continue my daily prayer to God, to listen to what He says to me and to not try to do as much talking, but more listening.

Testimonies

Celeste McAllister

First Holy Communion

The First Holy Communion is a Catholic ceremony, which marks a child or adult's first reception of the Sacrament of the Eucharist. It is an extremely important event in a Catholic family's life and is marked with celebrations, family gatherings and festive parties as well as gift-giving and special white clothes (white dress, white gloves, veil and white patten leather shoes).

I made my First Communion on May 10, 1959.

Confirmation

Confirmation is the sacrament by which Catholics receive a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Through Confirmation, the Holy Spirit gives them the increased ability to practice their Catholic faith in every aspect of their lives and to witness Christ in every situation. A closer bond with the Catholic Church.



I am in the second row left (second one in). My Confirmation was made on July 2, 1969.

Testimonies

Krista Crass

My Journey in Faith

I committed my faith to God when I was 12 years old at First Baptist Church here in Murray. As a child, I spent my summers with my grandparents attending Sugar Creek Baptist Church. We attended every Sunday morning, Sunday night and Wednesday night. My grandparents didn't drive so my ride was in the back of a pickup truck belonging to Troy and Elaine Vance, who so graciously picked up my grandparents. I can still see the inside of the church.

As a family, we attended The First Baptist Church here in Murray, I have memories of attending church and Sunday school there, but my fond memories are at Sugar Creek.

My teenage driving years were spent at Eastwood Baptist Church with my friends. I can't say there was a lot of participation on my part with church activities but we were there.

My son and I joined First Christian Church in 1985; this was my husband's church where he grew up in with his parents and grandparents and Catherine joined us in 1990. This church to us is HOME!

I'd like to think my journey over the years has been like an arrow always pointing straight up – but in reality it's probably more like the stock market graph with peaks and valleys. While you're at the top of the peak, all is right with your world. In the valley, it's dark days, it doesn't mean I'd lost my faith in God or I stopped believing – to me it was that I didn't understand and I was lost. I've never stopped praying, in my valley I stopped trusting. One thing I can certainly say, is when I came out of the valley I could see God's hand clearly on the situation and hear him saying “my child, my child it's all in my time.”

Times now are uncertain, there's fear, ugliness and distrust, and just plain sadness. For now, we've lost life as we knew it. Loved ones, friends and family are gone to something that's faceless! There is no one to blame, no one to yell at and no one to hold accountable. When I flew last March to Austin for the birth of Rylee Jo it was the beginning of Covid-19. I'd been watching the news and was I a little nervous about flying, but not afraid. Being at the hospital for three days waiting for this baby girl to arrive and then an emergency C-section my body, brain and nerves were gone. Only then to find out if I left the hospital I wasn't allowed back in, Covid-19 was their response.

My mind was telling me to stay but my mother-in-charge brain was telling me that I needed to clean the already clean house and get food. To my surprise, there was no food at the grocery store. For the second time in my life, I felt helpless to take care of my family, I was scared, I felt uncertain and being in a city that I didn't know how to maneuver in made it that much worse.

The first time when I felt completely helpless I was also angry at God! Our son was diagnosed with Juvenile Diabetes. I fell completely apart, I didn't understand the big words and terms they were throwing at me and most of all, I didn't understand what Diabetes meant. I'm his mother – it's my job to take care of my family, It was my husband that held me and reminded me "we'll find a way, with God's help we'll do what we have to do." I had been part of a spiritual weight loss/nutrition class for over two years and the book I'd come to live by was the book that would help me help our son. Little did I know in my valley God had been preparing me two years before for this very day. I could hear God saying, "I will never leave you."

I flew home from Austin early as the city was about to shut down and the rumor was the airlines would shut down as well. Through Catherine's and Mike's church family and friends we secured enough food that I felt comfortable they would be ok, but in all honesty, that didn't keep me from being on Amazon Fresh Market every night at midnight looking for what got restocked. Once again I could hear God reminding me: "Look at the birds of the air."



This is my view every morning – a rock in my front yard. It's been there for years, I never noticed the shape until I was quarantined at home last March. I was working with the front door open and I just sat there in awe of what was right in front of me. At the perfect angle I see Mary kneeling over Baby Jesus. This visual for me is faith, its hope and its trust.

I know I'll have more peaks and valleys, and accepting Christ and walking in faith, although it's an outward symbol and journey it's also a private journey. We're all different, we each have different issues and for me I have to remember that God is still writing my story. Quit trying to steal the pen and trust the author.

Testimonies

Jean Bennett

My Faith Journey

My faith journey began in grade school when I went to a Baptist Church with a friend and her family. My family didn't go to church at that time, so that was my first church experience. The minister made me so terrified I was going to hell that I went forward at the invitation. My mother was furious with me and wouldn't let me go back there – or anywhere else. She said I needed to wait until I was older.

We moved from Lexington to Whitesburg, Kentucky, when I was in upper middle school and my parents and I went to a Presbyterian church there. I asked lots of theological-type questions during those years and was always told: “we don't ask questions like that, Jean.” So, all those years I was told to just accept what the Bible (King James, of course) said.

In college, I had an advanced literature class. One assignment was to read a particular passage from the Bible. I don't remember now what it was, but at the time this “good young Christian” knew the passage by heart. I confidently went to class the next day and the professor said to the class: do you all really believe that stuff? And he didn't get struck by lightning! As that class continued, I realized he wasn't an atheist or agnostic – he did that to make us think. Although I don't remember his name, I will be forever grateful to him for freeing me to ask questions and grow as a believer.

Although I continued to think and question the meaning of life and religious beliefs, I didn't go back to church until Keisa began asking questions – in middle school, of course! We went to the Methodist church here in Murray until Brentley's best friend, Fulton Hart, talked him into coming to the First Christian youth group. Alan Bearman was wonderful with the youth, so Don and I decided to attend the church that supported our son.

Neither of us knew anything about Disciples of Christ churches and their doctrines, but from the first time we attended, the members made us feel like we were part of their family. Bill Horner taught our Sunday School class and I could actually ask questions! Over the years at First Christian, I have found other members who ask questions and a Sunday School class that considers ideas from other established theological questioners. What a joy it's been to find a church and denomination that welcomes all, wherever they are on their faith journey.

Have I answered all my questions? Not even close! But I've come to realize that questioners and non-questioners are both loved by God. We're each on the kind of journey we need to be on. On my journey, even though I still have many questions, my faith is stronger for asking them.

I'm so happy for being in this church. I feel its members are a part of my extended family and – of course – choir is a part of my immediate family. I feel so blessed to be a part of FCC, Murray.



Joys and Thanksgivings

Many thanks to **Rob Clause** for his four-year service as Board Chair, during which time he did a beautiful job in keeping our congregation energized and united.

Many thanks to **Amy Roos** for beginning as our new board chair.

Many thanks for **John Roark** for serving as Elder Chair last year, during this pandemic, and to **Dan McKeel** for agreeing to serve as Elder Chair this upcoming year.



Many thanks to **Dan McKeel** for starting us out on our new venture of having one person each Sunday share about their faith journey. Dan talked on January 17. about his life-long participation in our congregation and how his participation in the Walk to Emmaus (encouraged in our congregation by Rev. Dr. David Roos and O.B. Boone) transformed his faith.

Joys and Thanksgivings

Congratulations to **Erica Gray** and her academic team at the Calloway County High School, who won the Governor's Cup for the 11th year in a row!

Many thanks to **Rev. Beth Dobyns**, **Rev. Bruce Dobyns**, and **Rev. Russ Ragovin** for bringing the messages on December 27, 2020, January 3, 2021, and January 10, 2021. Pastor Ruth greatly appreciated a little time off!



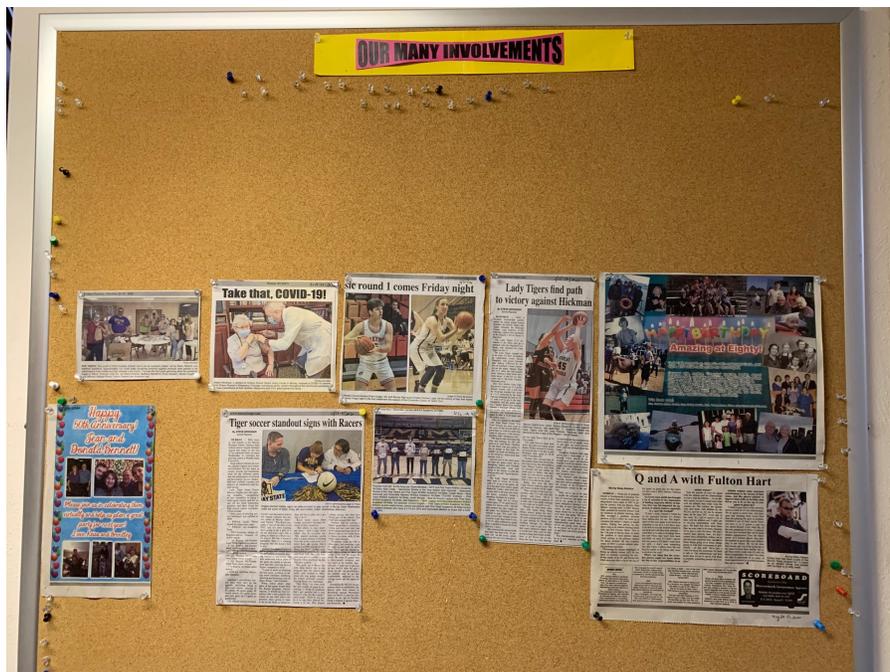
Many thanks to **Celeste McAllister** for sharing something about her faith journey during our Sunday morning zoom gathering on January 24. It was fascinating to hear about her early years growing up Roman Catholic in Canada where she attended a bilingual French-English school before the family moved to the United States. She described the Catholic understanding of infant baptism, the importance of Godparents (who were her older siblings), her first communion, and the important role a number of the saints (St Jude, St Anthony, St Michael and St. Joseph) have had in her life.

Many thanks to Don Wilson for sharing about his faith journey on Sunday, January 31. We enjoyed hearing about his participation in church with his family growing up, how his father was the pianist, and Don was the song leader. Don has a strong faith and we appreciate his service as a Deacon in our church!

Joys and Thanksgivings



Many thanks to **Teresa Nixon** for making trips to purchase all the many items needed to fill the sacks for the Need Line Back Program and bringing everything to the fellowship hall bit by bit. **David Robinson** also has purchased items to include over the past months. Backpack supplies (see above) were taken to Need Line in January. Thanks to Teresa Nixon, **Doris Cella**, **Judy Lyle**, **Bobbie Raby** and David Robinson for making this project happen!



Even though we have not been meeting for in-person gatherings in our church building, Pastor Ruth has continued to keep our Church bulletin board updated in preparation for the time (hopefully in the near future) when we can begin to congregate again.

Joys and Thanksgivings

The Murray High Speech Team won the title of Murray Regional Champion for a sixth consecutive year Saturday. **Alyssa Daugherty** is the regional champion in Declamation and the runner-up in poetry. Congratulations Alyssa!

Congratulations to **Amanda and Payton Pennington** in the birth of their daughter **Melody Lael Pennington** on Friday, February 5, at 12:18 AM. Mother and daughter are doing well!



Many thanks to **Krista Crass** for sharing portions of her faith journey during our Sunday morning worship celebration on February 7. It was interesting and inspirational! She showed us a photo of a rock in her front yard (see above), which she realized beautifully depicted Mary and Jesus in a nativity scene.



A long overdue thank you to **John Hughes** for setting up the church's YouTube page! Check it out and subscribe to it at:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCKYIaSY44v7uPTXsofRI9oA>



"Dear Choir members,

Thank you so much for thinking of me after my dad passed on. The crystal bowl is beautiful, especially when the light catches it. I opened it and immediately took it to the dining room table where I see it every time I walk through the house. When I use it I will think of both my dad and the caring friends that surround me. Thank you for keeping me in your thoughts and prayers.

Beth Roark"

"Dear Christian Church Family,

Thank you all so much for your kindness during this difficult time. The planter basket was lovely and brought such beauty to the room. The food was delicious and was enjoyed by many. I am very grateful to have you in my life. Love, Emily Kennedy."

Be in prayer for...



Ron Gray's Aunt Ardyth
Billie Burton
Noah Cavitt
Joe Chaney
Hannalore Clause
Krista Crass
David Daughaday
Sandra Daughrity
Teresa Dowdy
Susan Drake
Phyllis Duckworth
Judy and Dave Eldredge
Fiona Fennell
Leon Fowler
Laura Godfrey
Joe and Terri Gould
Kim Hall
Tab Jakonen
Loretta Jobs

Patsy King
Ruth King
Sandra Lay
Sharon Lueck
Paula Marvin
Bob and Celeste McAllister
Anna McCurdy
Ann McKeel
Eli McKeel
Ray Neamon
John Pasco
Penn Pennington

Aaron Perkins
McKenna Phelps
Ron Ratliff
Jean Carol Ridley
Deane Renshaw
Bill Roberts
Cecil Roberts
Elena Roberts
Tom Seipel
Andrew Schultz
Scott Tamaren
Ann Thornton
Patsy Tracy
Jackie Underwood
Gary White
Dwight Willis
Linda Wilson

Condolences

Our love and prayers are with Emily Kennedy and family in the death of her beloved husband, **Mark Edward Kennedy**, on Saturday, December 19, 2020 at the age of 66 at Alive Hospice Residence in Nashville surrounded by his family. A family funeral service was held at JH Churchill.

Our love and prayers are with Martin Tracy, who shared the following on December 15: "It's with a heavy heart to share the sad news that my wonderful brother-in-law, **George Karnavas** passed away (December 14, 2020)." Terry Lee and family will have a memorial for George's life sometime next year where relatives and friends will have an opportunity to celebrate his life.

Our love and prayers are with the family of **Mrs. Dixie M. Hopkins**, who died on Sunday, December 20, 2020, at the age of 87 at Spring Creek Health Care in Murray. At one time she was a member of First Christian Church.

Our love and prayers are with Dwight Willis and family in the death of his mother, **Bernice Willis**, who passed away on December 31, 2020, in Campbellsville, KY. Graveside services were held on January 2, 2021.

Our love and prayers are with Bobbie Raby and family in the death of her nephew, **Jimmy Kepley**, who lost his battle with cancer on January 1, 2021. He was 67 years old.

Our love and prayers are with Wyatt Heady in the death of his 7-month-old son **Chevy Scott Heady** on Friday, January 8, 2021. Wyatt attended our youth group for a number of years.

Condolences

Our love and prayers are with Roger Dawson and family in the death of his beloved mother, **Mrs. Elfreida Henderson Dawson**, age 80, who took her last breath at the Lakeway Nursing Home, Benton, KY, on early Sunday morning, January 24, 2021.

Our love and prayers are with Carmen Garland in the death of her cousin, **Debbie Wright**, who died at the age of 62. She suffered from cerebral palsy and had many more decades of life than normally would have been expected because her family dedicated their lives to taking care of her.

Our love and prayers are with Krista Crass and Lesa Sims in the death of their beloved aunt **Letitia Johnson** on December 28, 2020.

Our love and prayers continue to be with the family and friends of **Carolyn Reagan**, who passed away peacefully at the age of 92 from Covid-19, surrounded by family, at the Anna Mae Owen Residential Hospice House in Murray on January 27, 2021. A private family graveside service was held on Sunday, January 31, at the Murray Cemetery, with Pastor Ruth officiating. There will be a public memorial service at a later date. Carolyn Reagan was a life-long member of First Christian Church. She and her family contributed the stained glass window with the lamb on it. We will miss her joy-filled spirit, warmth, and smile.

Our love and prayers are with the family and friends of **Josh McCurdy**, who was found dead at his home on Tuesday, February 2, 2021. He was the husband of Kathy Perkins' daughter Anna, who has Alzheimers and lives with Kathy's sister Susan.

Our love and prayers are with the family and all the many friends in the death of our former Children's and Youth Director, **Tom Seipel, Jr.**, on February 13, 2021, surrounded by loved ones in Georgia.

FINANCIAL GIVING

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR December		
	2020	2019
Income	\$ 13,473.09	\$ 29,328.30
Expense	\$ 12,225.26	\$ 17,772.63
Balance	\$ 1,247.83	\$ 11,555.67

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR Jan-Dec		
	2020	2019
Income	\$158,762.72	\$192,916.85
Expense	\$157,650.68	\$179,107.99
Balance	\$ 1,112.04	\$ 13,808.86

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. Once there, you will see “Give More Back to the Community.” Hit the “Enroll Now” button.
3. To enroll in awards to benefit FCC, type in “First Christian Church— Murray” or “ID458”
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 November 1, 2020 to January 31, 2021 FCC earned \$61.62 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!

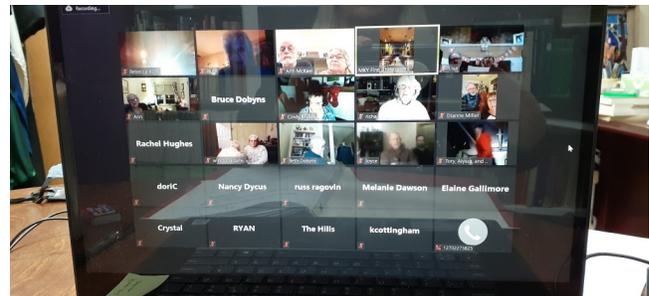
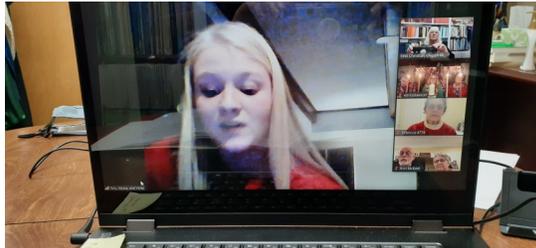
Christmas Eve

December 24, 2020

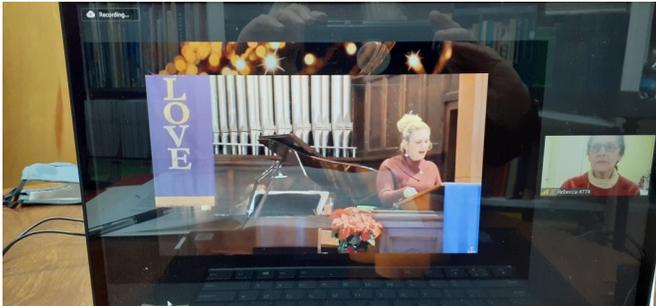
Many thanks to everyone who participated in our Zoom Christmas Eve service. It was made extra special by the inclusion at the beginning of the service of a video created by **Rachel and John Hughes** taken in the beauty of our sanctuary with **Donnie Hendrix's** Christmas music playing in the background. You may view the video here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xvkb1ZRD67w>

Additionally, **Tory Daughrity** blessed us through her beautiful singing of "O Holy Night", accompanied on the piano by **Angie Thome**. The video of Tory singing also was prepared by Rachel and John Hughes. You may view the video here:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_OwWrhesZNE&feature=youtu.be

Many thanks to **Judy Hill** for playing the piano, **Mark Dycus** for playing the guitar, all the many speakers (**the Dawsons, the Grays, Rebecca Landolt, Dan McKeel, Alyssa Daughrity, John Roark, Rachel Hughes, Gary White**), **Elena Roberts** for overseeing the Zoom in the sanctuary, **Jean Bennett** for helping with organizing, **Don and Lisa Wilson** for their special music, and all you who attended.



Christmas Eve December 24, 2020



The Kids Have Been Zooming!



Youth filling Blessing Boxes



Simplicity Sunday Worship





Outreach

NEED LINE

The Need Line pantry is low on the following items: toaster pastries, shelf stable milk, juice boxes, cheese snacks or cheese crackers (no peanut butter), soups, Jiffy mix, peanut butter. Personal hygiene items that are needed include: toothpaste, toothbrushes, and small bottles of mouthwash. 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

Please don't forget our blessing box, located in the back of the church. If you are able, please think about donating non-perishable food items and dropping them off directly to the blessing box (please do not bring to the church). There is a need in the community and bringing a few items, as you are able, is much appreciated. When collecting items, please do keep in mind that some of those needing food are homeless and do not have a way to cook.



From left, Janie Eckstein and Celeste McAllister made and delivered Christmas gifts in December 2020.

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.