



FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Disciples of Christ

Welcoming All. Encountering Christ. Celebrating Community.

DECEMBER 2020

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STATEMENT OF MISSION

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is called to witness to all humankind with a spiritual vitality that embraces inclusiveness and Christ-like justice. Therefore, we seek to be a community that **reaches in** to one another, **reaches up** to God, and **reaches out** to the world with the love of Jesus Christ.



**May this eternal truth be always on our hearts:
That the God who breathed this world into being,
placed stars into the heavens
and designed a butterfly's wing,
is the God who entrusted his life
to the care of ordinary people,
became vulnerable that we might know
how strong is the power of Love.**

**A mystery so deep it is impossible to grasp.
A mystery so beautiful it is impossible to ignore.**

FROM BEN.....



The other day I saw a question on Twitter that asked, "What is your theology reduced to 10 words or less?" I wanted to come up with something clever at the time, but I knew it would distract from other, more important tasks at the time, so I let it go. A few days later I pulled out my Advent stole out of the closet and there it was! My theology in 10 words or less was right there in front of me, and it was only 3 words!

God with us.

This is the central longing of Advent that is finally realized in Christmas. This message is echoed through the rest of the Gospel story, over and over again. But we would be mistaken if we thought that God's presence with us began with Jesus' birth in the manger over 2,000 years ago. Hear these words from the Gospel of John, chapter 1, verses 9-10,

*The Word (Jesus) was coming into the world -
was in the world -
and though the world was made through the Word,
The world didn't recognize it.*

The Good News that God is with us, goes way back, way, way back to the beginning (whenever that was). There never was a time when God wasn't with us. The unfolding narrative of the Bible shows a gradual and increasing awareness that God is nothing like the god or gods that we've been trying to appease through sacrifice, blood lust, tribalism, and exclusion.

We shouldn't be too hard on our ancestors for "*not getting it*," because we still don't fully "*get it*" now. Jesus' birth wasn't about starting a new religion on the world scene, but it was about revealing the oldest, most fundamental truth in the universe. We are not alone!

As we proclaim this Good News, our job is not to forcibly make others subscribe to a narrow and joyless set of do's and don'ts! No, my friends, we are called to bear witness to what has been, what is, and what shall always be. Peace on earth, good will to all!

To show God's love aright.
(*Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming*)

Grace & Peace, Ben ><>



STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY TEAM

SUPPORT OF FCC'S ANNUAL STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Recall, First Christian Church's Mission Statement challenges us in three ways. It says that we are a community that **Reaches in to one another, Reaches up to God, and Reaches out to the world with the love of Jesus**. And certainly the concept of Stewardship is embedded in each of these challenges.

Several weeks ago you received a Stewardship letter and an Estimate of Giving card. Your response and support allows us to plan for the 2021 activities and missions of First Christian Church. For those who have returned the Estimate of Giving card, we extend a big Thank-you!!

If you have misplaced your card, let us know and we will send you another one. We look forward to receiving your 2021 pledge, at a worship service, by dropping it off at the church office, or by mail (3001 Grand Mere Parkway, Manhattan, KS 66503).

Please pray for our church as we seek to develop programs that support our Mission Statement as we reach out in Christian love to our Grand Mere neighbors and the surrounding Manhattan communities. Sending blessings to each of you.

Rich Gallagher, Chair, Stewardship Ministry Team

Team Members: Ruth Dyer, Elizabeth Jankord, Eric King, Dave Rogers, Ben Hitzfeld



CHURCH BUSINESS

COORDINATING COUNCIL REPORT

As we look at the year quickly coming to a close, I want to thank everyone who has stepped up to keep the work of the church moving forward in these incredibly difficult times of a pandemic. Way back in March we decided to go to streaming services for what we thought would be a few weeks. At the time it seemed unfathomable that not attending services could last for over 2 to 3 weeks, let alone not be able to meet for Palm Sunday and Easter. However, the reality began to sink in that the dangers and restrictions of the pandemic would last far longer than we ever could have imagined. In the meantime, the work of the church continued. The Elders organized to form Friendship Circles and have continued to keep in touch with folks in their circles. From Cradles to Crayons Childcare continued to provide wonderful care for children in the community while having to implement daily protocols to keep everyone as safe as possible. Many women stepped up and organized to come to the church to cook lunch for the children and staff of the FCC Childcare.

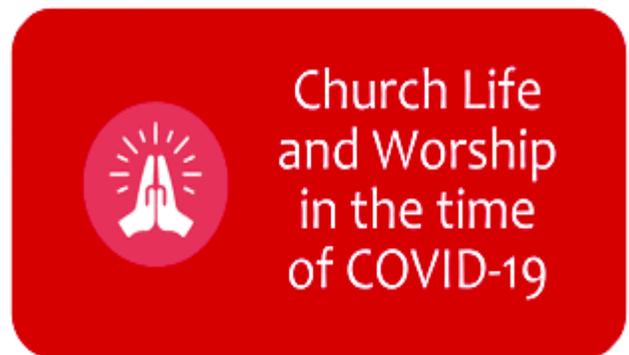
Committed individuals worked to insure that the facility continued to function in spite of occasional mechanical, electrical, or material failures that occurred. Mowing of grass and landscaping issues were faithfully taken care of by another group of individuals, so at any time the church grounds looked quite lovely and cared for.

Zoom allowed us to have virtual meetings for all sorts of groups such as the Elders, Faith Sisters, Coordinating Council, Book Study, TRUTH Youth, Ministry Teams, and Common Grounds. Ben and JT have provided the technological skills to record and distribute worship services accessible to everyone, and the Praise Team has worked to continue to deliver their wonderful music as a part of our services. Keeping in touch and moving the work of the church forward would have been far more difficult without the work of everyone involved.

One of the things that we normally do every December is to have a Congregational Meeting. We would meet following a Sunday morning service to hear information about the Servant Leadership candidates and the proposed budget for the next year. The reality in 2020 is that trying to have this meeting in person would be extremely difficult because a lot of people would be excluded as they shelter at home. We still need to have congregational approval for both of these things, so this year we will have to go about it differently. The details are yet to be worked out, but we plan to first have an informational Zoom meeting. The Zoom meeting will be recorded and a link provided for members to see it later. The actual congregational vote will be done by mail so everyone has a chance to participate in these important governance votes.

Again, thanks to all of you for all you do to keep the work of First Christian Church moving forward during this time while always meeting the spiritual needs of our flock.

*In His Name,
Alice Trussell, Chair Coordinating Council*



OUR CHURCH GOING FOWARD

GOD'S GIVEN TREASURES. HOW WILL YOU GIVE BACK TO GOD?

One of my favorite bible passages is Matthew 6:21 NRSV: *For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.* These words are on a magnet on my refrigerator, one that I made in Bible School many years ago. They're also on a kitchen trivet made by a friend. I'm constantly reminded of the treasures in my life and know that I am richly blessed.

This year of 2020 has forced us to pause and take inventory of our "treasures", many of which we take for granted when the going is easy. Are we healthy? Is there food on the table? Do we have a place in our home for kiddos to homeschool? Have we been blessed with continuous employment? Do we have reliable transportation to get us to and from it? As the weather changes, can we pay for heat and shelter and blankets and coats?

As you count your blessings, add this one to them: a warm and inviting church home that celebrates life's highs with you and offers support through dips in the road. It can't be contained in a structure, but is a living, breathing gathering of people who strive to get heaven into the world by sharing their treasures - be they time, talent, or tithes.

God has entrusted a great deal to us — a home in our community with a wonderful, new facility that serves as a base for our local and global missions outreach; a place where post-COVID, it will again be buzzing with activity; a childcare that offers many local families a place to shelter their young kiddos in safety while they work; and so many more opportunities and experiences. God also provides the means for us to maintain all that has been entrusted to us.

As is our custom, the congregation will be asked to approve the annual budget for CY 2021 in December. It includes items that are regular, recurring, and predictable, and is intended to be one tool to track our financial health. Budgeted expenses for the year are \$515,400.

We are one full year (*Can you believe it?*) into life at the new facility and the budget reflects the increases in utilities, property insurance, and the like. This is the first budget to ever include depreciation. The amount is significant; its inclusion allows us to be better stewards of the facility and puts us on a path of sustainability for our next 150 years. The Outreach budget is 8% of normal giving and is mathematically the same as usual despite the lower percentage. A nominal pay increase is included for our hardworking staff. The budget does not include the childcare program, which will have its own dedicated budget.

To make this budget work we need your participation. A Capital Campaign is on the horizon in the not-to-distant future too. The most important variable not reflected in the budget is *attendance*. The pandemic will come to an end. This budget makes us ready for when it does.

Please take inventory of all you're thankful for during this giving season and prayerfully consider how you will be a blessing by giving back.

In Christ's service,
Tresa Landis, Elder and Financial Oversight Committee Chair

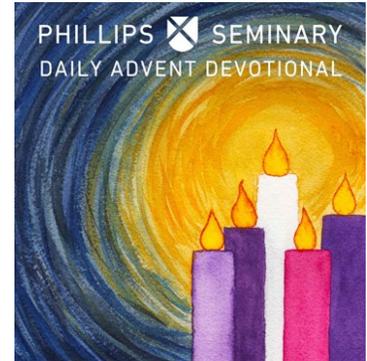


YOUTH & DISCIPLESHIP NEWS

WE ARE SO PROUD OF LUKUS EBERT!!!



Lukus Ebert, our Ministry Intern with Youth Focus, a Master of Divinity Student and Student Senate Member at Phillips Seminary, is one of the contributors to the Phillips Seminary 2020 Daily Advent Devotional. Lukus wrote the meditation for December 19, based on Judges 13:2-24, and entitled “Unbridled Joy”. That is exactly what Lukus imparts in this world, and his teaching in this Advent meditation can help us do the same.



We love him here at First Christian, and this week we learned USD 383 feels the same!. Lukus, who works at Woodrow Wilson Elementary, was recognized as the **“Teacher Aide/Paraprofessional 2020 Employee of the Year.”** Here’s what Lukus says about that award: *“It is an honor to be a part of an amazing and supportive team that has allowed me to succeed! I love coming to work everyday and working with students and staff that make a difference in my life!”*



Discipleship Ministry Team Advent Bags for all our church family, assembled by Ashley VanGilder, Christian Education Director, are available in the church office. Each bag has the Phillips Seminary Advent Devotional and a card activity. If you would like yours delivered to you, contact Ashley at ashley@fccmanhattan.org or call the church office, 776-8790.



LOCAL AND GLOBAL OUTREACH MINISTRY



TRUNK OR TREAT

First Christian made a whole lot of children and their families happy at our 2nd Annual Trunk or Treat on Halloween afternoon. Well over 120 participants came, and we had 9 trunks all decorated and filled with candy and favors. It was so much fun, a real gift to the children and families in our community. We look forward to doing it again next year!



2020  Christmas Offering

REJOICE

A special day offering of
Disciples Mission Fund

This Christmas Offering, a special day offering of the Disciples Mission Fund, supports Regional Ministries.

In recent years our region has played a critical role as we called a new minister, assisted with the preparation of a ministerial candidate for ordination, and sent youth and adults to camps and conferences. Our region has worked to nurture our pastor and provide us with learning opportunities.

Your generous gifts impact you and your faith friends.

The Christmas Offerings will be collected on Sundays, December 13 and 20. You may also drop off your offering at the church office or mail it to FCC, 3001 Grand Mere Parkway, Manhattan, 66503, noting Christmas Offering in the memo line.

*Cindy Garwick, Chair,
Local and Global Outreach Ministry Team*

LOCAL AND GLOBAL OUTREACH MINISTRY

SECOND HELPING

The Manhattan Mercury, Flint Hills section, on Sunday, November 15, 2020 addressed the increasing food insecurity in our community. First Christian Church has long supported the efforts of downtown churches serving free meals through Common Table and Second Helping with leadership from Sharon Purvis.

As part of the local mission of our church we are partnering with Second Helping at First Congregational United Church of Christ to provide 60 sack lunches for their weekly Sunday dinner-to-go guests to take for the next day. For current safety reasons we are unable to volunteer at their church, but we can coordinate the take away sack food and paper supplies at FCC.

You can help with this project in several ways: make a monetary donation to FCC for the Second Helping sack lunch mission by noting it in the memo line on your check, or as you shop in the weeks to come consider picking up a little extra to drop in the Second Helping box in the church office.

Food items: individual flavored oatmeal packets, breakfast/granola bars, individually wrapped cheese/peanut butter crackers, or cookies.

Paper items: paper sacks, napkins, sandwich baggies for cookies, or snack baggies for carrots.

If you would like to volunteer to help pack the sacks contact the church office. It takes two people about two hours to assemble the lunches.

Thank you for helping us address food insecurity in our community.

*Cindy Garwick, Chair,
Local and Global Outreach Ministry Team*



MATTHEW 25:35 NRSV

"FOR I WAS HUNGRY AND
YOU GAVE ME FOOD, I WAS
THIRSTY AND YOU GAVE ME
SOMETHING TO DRINK, I WAS
A STRANGER AND YOU
WELCOMED ME,"



FROM CRADLES TO CRAYONS CHILDCARE

From Cradles to Crayons celebrated Halloween with a parade through the church so that all of the classrooms could see everyone else's costumes. We also were able to send pictures and videos of the parade to families so that parents were able to see it, even if they weren't able to be here.

With the opening of the Explorers toddler classroom on November 23 all 5 rooms are now opened, but we are still hiring full and part time teachers to enable us to utilize the classrooms at full capacity.

If anyone is interested in volunteering to wash dishes from approximately 1pm-3pm we could really use the help. Please contact Cassie at 785-776-8790 or cassie@fccmanhattan.org if there is a day or more in December that you are able to help.

An online wish list has been set-up for equipment and supplies our lead teachers would appreciate having in their rooms. The list is updated frequently with new items. The link for the wish list is: <http://www.gifyou.com/wish-list/cassie-anderson/f0ebjkip> A number of the items are available through multiple sources.

The children and teachers would greatly appreciate a gift from the wish list and outdoor toddler toys and equipment. We want to thank the church for their continued support of the childcare center. We know that so many people spend time preparing lunches, donating items, taking care of our playground, doing payroll, spending time volunteering, and so much more. We cannot even begin to tell you how much we appreciate all of you.

Cassie Anderson, Director, From Cradles to Crayons Childcare



WALKING OUR HILLS!



PREPARING THE SANCTUARY



CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

Those wishing to order a poinsettia may do so at a cost of \$10.00 per plant. Anyone wishing to make a contribution instead of ordering a plant may do so.

Attach your payment to this form and place in the offering or turn into the church office by December 14. Or call the church office and Marian will take your order.

Thank you for your part in making the season memorable.

ORDER FORM

I would like to order: _____ poinsettia plant(s) at \$10.00 = _____

I wish to make a donation toward a poinsettia plant \$ _____

Name _____

Given in memory of _____

Given in thanksgiving for _____



ALL ABOUT US

THANK YOU

Thank you to our TRUTH Youth for their food pick up project to benefit the Flint Hills Breadbasket. On their November pick up the Youth turned in 183 pounds of food. Since they started collecting our food donations on the second Sunday of every month, they have brought in over 400 pounds of food. Thank you, Youth, and thank you donors!

Next Pick Up Sunday is December 13. If you want your food items picked up contact Lukus Ebert at lukuse@gmail.com or call the church office.

Dear Faith Friends.

Thank you for your acts of kindness extended to our family through prayers, cards, phone calls and food following the recent passing of Mom, Virginia (Ginger) Garwick.

Blessings, Ken and Cindy Garwick

LOVE AND SYMPATHY

Deepest sympathy to her loving family and all of her friends at the sudden death of Patty Duffy on November 11. Patty had a heart of service and she will never be forgotten.



We reach out with heartfelt sympathy to Ken and Cindy Garwick at the death of Ken's mother, Ginger. Sympathy and love also to John Garwick, Ken's dad at the loss of his beloved wife of 69 years.

Our sympathy to the family of Carlyle Clagett, who died on November 17. Carlyle was a former member of FCC and the brother of Verleta Myers.

BLESSED BIRTHDAY!

December 5	Kara Chapman
December 6	Ruby Brower
December 9	Dean Armstead
December 11	Evelyn Richardson
December 15	Verleta Myers
December 18	Bud Shawgo
December 21	Renate Woodmansee
December 23	Deb Marfield
December 27	Rick Allen

CONGRATULATIONS!

Dave and Debi Rogers are delighted to welcome a new granddaughter!

Cora Marie Eilert was born on November 20 to Jessica and Nate Eilert in Idaho.

We are so happy for all the family!



