



**FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH**  
— Disciples of Christ —

*Welcoming All. Encountering Christ. Celebrating Community.*

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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.

## JANUARY 2021



**May the New Year bring  
Christ's blessings of  
joy, peace, hope, and love  
to our members, friends, and visitors!**

## FROM BEN.....



I can't think of a better scripture for this last newsletter of 2020 than Paul's words in Philippians 3:13, "...one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead." We've spent a lot of energy lamenting over the events of this last year. I saw a post on Facebook yesterday that imagined in a couple of years from now, you will put on a jacket that you haven't worn in a while, reach into the pocket and feel something strange, and so familiar. When you discover an old mask that you have not seen or used in a few years, you will think back to this year with a different perspective. Hindsight is after all.....uh.....never mind! I'm not gonna finish that sentence!

My former congregation in Bastrop, TX experienced the tragedy of the largest and most destructive wildfire in state history. About 10 families in the congregation experienced total losses. Some bought houses in other parts of town, and some chose to rebuild on the site of their destroyed home. When we arrived in Bastrop, two years had passed since the fire, and life was beginning to heal. For all of these families, there were emotional scars from what had been lost, and yet, the grief was being replaced by the new life being reconstructed from rock bottom. I began to understand the power and healing of forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead.

Forgetting what is behind doesn't mean that we leave behind everything. It means that we sort through the rubble of life and take the good, and leave the other "stuff". I heard many times from people who lost everything, "It was just stuff." It's humbling to hear that from people who have experienced this kind of radical upheaval. What is the stuff that we ought to leave behind as we move forward into a new year? I can't answer that question for you. I encourage us all to take some time to answer that for ourselves.

As we strain forward towards what lies ahead, may we do so with eyes of faith, and a commitment to the work that God has for us as a faith family. As we begin to reassemble in 2021, we are not returning to a pile of ash. But I do pray that our hearts would be set on fire with the Holy Spirit, renewed and refreshed with purpose and a commitment to God's work through FCC.

*Grace & Peace, Ben ><>*

Is there something you  
can let go of this week?  
**An attitude, a bit of  
unnecessary busy  
work, a grudge?**

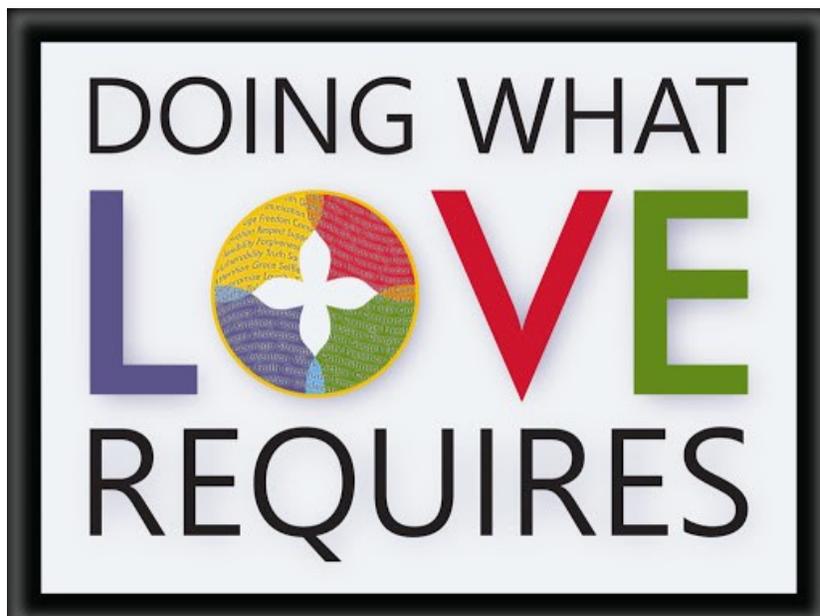
# STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY TEAM

## STEWARDSHIP GIFTS FOR 2021

As we enter January and put 2020 behind us we are reminded of the fact that the Covid-19 pandemic will still impact our lives for several months. But we also need to recognize that throughout this very strange time, vaccines are coming and we do have many things for which to be thankful such as technologies that give us the opportunity to worship virtually and participate in Zoom meetings. Even small masked-up, social distancing meetings will be with us for some time. However, the New Year gives us hope for finally being able to focus on new activities and missions of our church.

The Stewardship Ministry Team prays for your continued support. You can always increase your pledge to support the 2021 Budget. In addition, please consider an additional one-time cash contribution, an IRA Charitable Rollover such as a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD), a change of beneficiary on a personal insurance policy, establishing an FCC owned insurance policy, a stock gift, or other physical properties. Please contact the church (785-776-8790) and we can walk you through the steps and help you decide how to make these various contributions. The Stewardship Ministry Team extends “Thanks” for all of the Stewardship gifts (time, talent, and treasures) that are given to First Christian Church.

*Richard Gallagher, Stewardship Ministry Team Chair*



# CHURCH BUSINESS

## COORDINATING COUNCIL REPORT

December brought another vivid reminder that the church's routine activities had to be adapted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our church bylaws require us to have a congregational meeting in December to discuss and vote on the Servant Leadership

and the Annual Budget for the coming year. The Coordinating Council approved both documents in November, but a congregational meeting enables members to thoroughly review the documents and ask questions in person. Because we could not have in-person church services, we were not able to schedule a congregational meeting. The Coordinating Council decided upon a



**COVID-19  
RESPONSE**

three-step approach as an alternative:

- 1—Send letters to all members, including an explanation of the issues, the documents, a ballot, and a self-addressed, stamped envelope;
- 2—Hold a Zoom meeting on December 13 and make the recorded session available for viewing, and
- 3—Return the ballots to the church office by the end of December.

We were delighted that the Zoom meeting was well attended and several questions were answered. There was an excellent return rate for the ballots, and the votes will be counted shortly after the end of the year. Congregational response to the meeting and the written ballots is greatly appreciated.

With a vaccine becoming available, the promise of a return to normal services and fellowship hopefully isn't very far off. The pandemic has shown us that the First Christian Church members continue to serve to help the work of the church progress as we deal with these challenging circumstances. We look forward to the day when we can resume a full slate of worship, activities, and fellowship opportunities.

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



# YOUTH AND DISCIPLESHIP NEWS



## YOUTH FOOD PICK UP FLINT HILLS BREADBASKET

Once again, we surpassed our goal of collecting 150 pounds a month, when we brought in 166 pounds for December! Since we started collecting food these past four months, we have provided over 550lbs of food to those in our community through the Flint Hills Breadbasket!



## WHERE GOD IS LEADING ME

In all the uncertainty and quite frankly chaos that rocked the nation and world this year, there was one thing I was sure about, finishing my seminary degree. Well, on December 12th, I did just that as I submitted my last final paper. My certainty and accomplishment, which was hard-earned, do not shadow the events of 2020. Although honestly, so many things happened, it is hard to remember it all.

I had this grand idea of calculating my seminary journey logistically, such as books read, miles traveled, papers written, etc. Unfortunately, this has not happened because we all know life does not stop since one thing is finished. I can tell you, though with certainty, that I filled three shelves on a bookcase with the books my courses required. I fulfilled the on-campus requirement by taking 24 credit hours in-person, totaling a dozen trips to Tulsa. And I would say I have written a few dozen papers totaling more than 300 pages, a best guess.

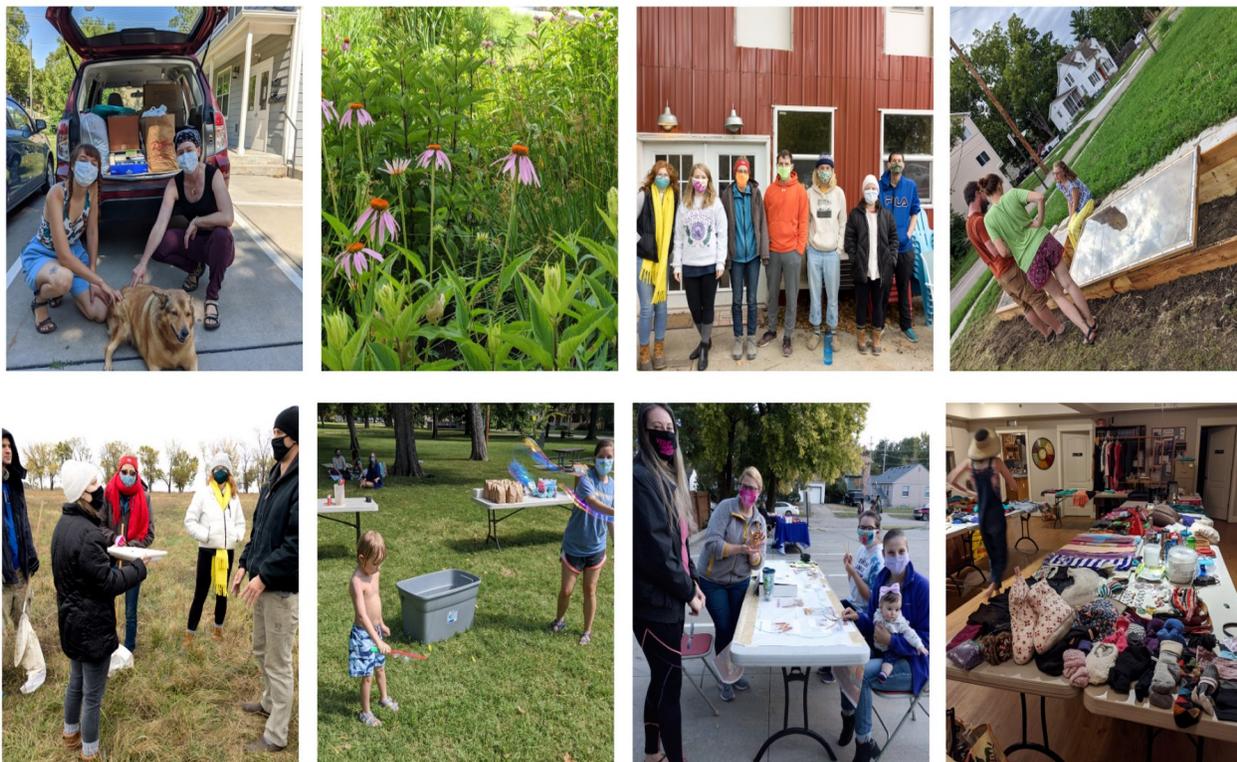
While I can quantify my seminary journey with numbers of classes taken, credit hours completed (82), grade point average, etc. Some things are greater than any number to signify this accomplishment. Something like gaining a new appreciation for the First (Old) Testament. In seeing that it is rich with stories of God and God's people trying to live in relationship with each other and with God. Or that as a non-heterosexual person, I do have say on things pertaining to Christianity. This say comes through the appropriate, disciplined practice of exegetical (critical explanation or interpretation of Scripture) work responsibly. As well as I try to preach in a way that dignifies God and Creation.

So, what is next? ! That is a real question. First, I continue to (im)patiently wait for my official grades. Then, ordination before seeking a residency for Clinical Pastoral Education at a hospital. In order to become a chaplain, which has always been my personal vocational goal throughout my journey at seminary.

All in all, I would say the journey wasn't bad.

*Lukus Ebert , Ministry Intern, Youth Focus*

# ECUMENICAL CAMPUS MINISTRY AT K-STATE



**ECM couldn't do it without you!  
Thank you for your support this year.**

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ECUMENICAL CAMPUS MINISTRY AT KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

On behalf of ECM, thank you, First Christian Church!

Onward and Upward!

*Pastor Christian Watkins, Director/Campus Pastor*

# LOCAL AND GLOBAL OUTREACH MINISTRY

It is now 2021 and food insecurity in Manhattan, Kansas is still with us. Help FCC reach out to our neighbors through our once a month mission commitment to provide 60 takeaway sack lunches for the weekly Sunday Second Helping dinner at First Congregation Church.

Next time you order groceries for pick-up or delivery OR you are in the grocery store shopping grab an extra box of:



- \* Oatmeal in individual flavored packets
- \* Granola Bars
- \* Peanut Butter/Cheese Crackers individually wrapped
- \* Cookies
- \* Paper Goods: paper lunch sacks, snack zip baggies, napkins

You can drop your donations in a box in the church office OR Lukus and the youth can pick up your bag labeled for Second Helping when they do their second Sunday food pick up for the Breadbasket.

You can also donate to this monthly FCC mission by noting Second Helping or 2H in the memo line of your check or on the envelope of your cash donation.

If you would like to volunteer to help pack the sacks contact the church office. It takes 2 people about 2 hours to put the lunches together.

Sharing  
God's Love  
Through  
Action

Your donations to this mission are greatly appreciated as we partner with our friends downtown addressing those in need.

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

# FROM CRADLES TO CRAYONS CHILDCARE

From Cradles to Crayons had a busy December. Despite the COVID shutdown of two classrooms early in the month, we enjoyed celebrating the Christmas season.

Several part time staff left at the end of the semester to pursue their student teaching or because they graduated. The church family was wonderful about volunteering in the infant classroom as an extra set of hands. In addition to the meals and so many other ways the church supports From Cradles to Crayons, seeing members in the classroom has been a real joy. Thank you to everyone for all of your time volunteering.

We also want to thank all those who brought in treats, cards and gift cards for the staff. We felt loved. A huge thank you also to all who contributed items from our wish list, and to the Patty Duffy family who designated her memorials go to From Cradles to Crayons.

*Cassie Anderson, Director, From Cradles to Crayons Childcare*



# ALL ABOUT US

Thank you so much for all of your support during this difficult time. We are so glad that our mom, Patty Duffy, had the church and all the people there in her life. She had such fun and rewarding experiences with the Faith Sisters. We're happy that so many donations were made in her name.

- Ange & Jennifer & families

Thank you so much to the church family for your prayers, cards, and caring while I recover from COVID with other members of my family. Special thanks to Debi Rogers for picking up our Dillons grocery order when we couldn't, and to everyone who pitched in at FCC to keep up the building until I can resume work.

Love, Lori Teel



**Our thanks to all who provided poinsettia for our Christmas season**

***Ruby Brower, in memory of Garry & Doug, and in honor of Justin, Kathy, Claire & Jenna***

***Rich & Linda Gallagher in thanksgiving for their Faith Family***

***Ken & Cindy Garwick in memory of Ken's mother, Ginger, and Cindy's Dad, Bill***

***Leonard Purvis, in memory of Sharon, and of Nola & Eugene Sylvester***

***Joan Thomson, in memory of Don***

***John & Linda Uthoff in memory of John's parents, John H. and Hazel Uthoff, his brothers Steven and Vincent Uthoff, and of Linda's brother, Leonard Koci***



## BLESSED BIRTHDAY!

January 3	Kathy Brower
January 7	Jenna Brower
January 8	Elaine Hwang
January 10	Lorene Stuteville
January 17	Mike Roediger
January 19	Jamison Koons
January 27	Elowyn Koons
January 28	Drew Trimmer
January 29	Justin Foster Roger Sink Kylee Teel

## OUR SYMPATHY

Our sympathy to Tim and Lisa Berggren at the death of Tim's grandfather, John Iseli, on December 27th.



**Our Youth Will Pick Up Food For Flint Hills Breadbasket  
Sunday Afternoon, January 10.**

**Contact Lukus Ebert!  
lukuse12@gmail.com**

**FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH**  
**3001 GRAND MERE PARKWAY, MANHATTAN, KS 66503**  
**(785) 776-8790    fccmanhattan.org**

Senior Minister: Ben Hitzfeld  
Christian Education Director: Ashley VanGilder  
Ministry Intern, Youth Focus: Lukus Ebert  
From Cradles to Crayons Director: Cassie Anderson  
Church Secretary: Marian Fuller  
Coordinating Council:  
  Chair: Alice Trussell  
  Vice-Chair: Debi Rogers  
  Secretary: Ruby Brower  
  Financial Secretary: Lukus Ebert  
  Treasurer:  
  Trustee Chair: John Uthoff  
  Elder Co-Chairs: Mickey Bogart  
                  Robert Russell  
  Deacon Chair: John Trussell  
Ministry Team Chairs:  
  Discipleship: Linda Gallagher  
  Fellowship: Renate Woodmansee  
  Local & Global Outreach: Cindy Garwick  
  Property, Co-Chairs: Fred Landis  
                          John Trussell  
  Stewardship: Richard Gallagher  
  Worship & Spiritual Life: Pam Russell  
TRUTH Youth Sponsors:  
  Dave Woodmansee  
  Bill McReynolds

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