

First Christian Church
Iowa City - Coralville
THERE'S ROOM AT THE TABLE FOR EVERYONE

DECEMBER 2026

THIS MONTH @ FCC

A Note from Pastor Jill

Dear Friends,

The introduction to this year's Advent devotional from A Sanctified Art says this, "Every Advent, we light candles and speak of hope. We wait for the good news that God is born. We prepare with pageants and presents. Yet, in the midst of our busy waiting, we know all too well that the world is not as it should be. Wars rage on, violence persists, new tragedies unfold. God's promises are real, *and* God's promised day has not yet come. This tension keeps us yearning - for a new day, a new way, a world made new."

During Advent we will gather exploring the theme, "Until the Dawn - Actions for the Work of Advent" and asking questions about what we can do to make a difference for ourselves and for our world. I hope you'll be intentional about choosing to participate in life at First Christian throughout this Advent and Christmas. After all, we are better together. And as you will see in this newsletter there are options for meaningful worship, for getting to know one another better, for fun times together, and for serving the neighbors in our community.

On a different note, it is the time of year when we start to anticipate winter weather. And while I am looking forward to the newsletter where that picture of the church at the top of this page shows snow, I know that winter weather can present challenges. So, we want you to always remember that our first priority is your safety. Even if events at church go on as usual, please always make the safest decision for yourself. On the occasion where winter weather requires a cancellation, we will communicate that in several ways: an email, a Facebook post, and on KCRG. If you have any questions, please reach out to myself or another staff member before you get out in questionable weather.

With Care,

Jill

This Issue

Announcements
PAGE 02

Advent & Christmas at First Christian
PAGE 03

Sunday Mornings
PAGE 04

Faith Together
PAGE 05

Keeping Connected
PAGE 06

In the Community
PAGE 07

December Calendar Link
Your Elder
PAGE 08

connect with us



Announcements

Staff Christmas Gifts



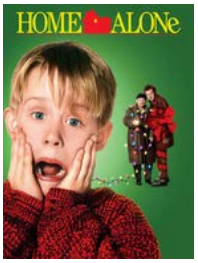
RECEIVED THROUGH DECEMBER 13

To show appreciation to our three pastors and nine support staff, we invite you to send checks to the church, noting STAFF GIFTS or give electronically (use the fund "Directed Contributions" and the memo "Staff Gifts").

We ask that you do so before Monday, December 13 so that the collective contributions may be received by staff before Christmas. Thank you for your generosity and appreciation for the team that makes FCC so special!

From FCC's Personnel Team:
Laurie, Thom, and Kathy

Movie & Merriment



DECEMBER 4, 6:30PM

Share Christmas joy at Movie & Merriment on Friday, December 4 at 6:30pm. Join us for the movie "Home Alone," as well as pizza and ice cream sundaes (all from the movie!). We'll also have a short discussion around the song, "O Holy Night." So food can be planned for, please RSVP here!

Tree of Memories



For several years, our church has shared a Tree of Memories to honor and remember loved ones who have passed away.

This year, rather than purchasing new ornaments, we invite you to participate in one of two ways:

- Bring an ornament from home that belonged to or reminds you of your loved one. Tags will be available to add their name.
- Choose an ornament provided at church, add a tag with your loved one's name, and hang it on the tree.

All ornaments may be taken home anytime between Christmas Eve and January 3.

Ministry Teams



DECEMBER 3, 6PM

FCC's four Ministry Teams help guide and carry out the work of our church. Teams meet monthly, with upcoming gatherings on December 3, January 7, and February 4 at 6pm. Not all teams will meet in December, so check with the team leader before attending.

Stewardship - As the Year Ends

Thank you to everyone who has participated in FCC's stewardship campaign with commitments for 2027. If you plan to give next year, please complete a pledge card by December 1. Paper copies are at church, can be mailed on request, or you can fill out your pledge online.

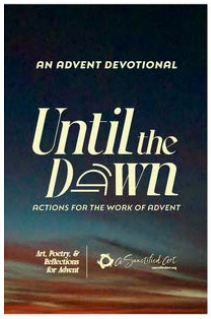
Please also consider completing the Ministry Interest Form (paper or online) to help us connect your gifts with opportunities to serve.

If you have remaining giving for 2026, please make sure it's received in the office by December 27 for inclusion in the final deposit of the year. Thank you for your generosity and support!



Advent Devotional

AVAILABLE NOW



We're again sharing Advent devotional booklets to accompany this year's worship theme, *Until the Dawn*, from A Sanctified Art. Pick up a printed copy at church or request one by mail. An e-reader version of this year's Advent devotional is also available. Contact the church office for information on access.



Sunday Worship

10:00AM ONSITE & ONLINE

Join us beginning November 29 as we enter Advent with our theme, Until the Dawn. Together, we'll explore how God's renewing love gives us courage to resist despair, put our prayers into action, and choose joy. Come worship with us as we move toward the hope, peace, and promise of God's love.

Linger Longer

SUNDAYS AFTER WORSHIP

After worship this Advent, don't rush off—Linger Longer! Grab a treat, pull up a chair, make room for conversation and connection.

- Explore one of the activity tables.
- Invite someone to join you at a high-top table and dive into a few conversation questions.
- Or simply stay awhile and catch up with a friend or meet someone new.

There's room for everyone! Kids are welcome to join in, and the nursery will be open.

Special Services

Children's Program

Enjoy the annual tradition of our children telling the story of Christmas in worship. Onsite Dec. 20, online Dec. 27.

Longest Night

MONDAY, DECEMBER 21, 7:00PM

Join us for a worship service on the longest night of the year as we hold space for the grief and joy that comingle during this season for many.

Christmas Eve

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24, 7:00PM

You're invited for Christmas music, communion, and candlelight as we hear the story of and celebrate again the birth of Jesus.

Brunch & Worship

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27

A casual morning sharing brunch and worship in Fellowship Hall. A light brunch begins at 9:30am and worship begins at 10:00am.

Worship

SUNDAYS AT 10:00AM

All are invited and welcome to worship week. Worship is available onsite in the sanctuary and online at youtube/@icdisciples

Upcoming Sermons

December 6 - 2nd Sunday of Advent
Mark 1:1-8, Until the Dawn...Start Somewhere
December 13 - 3rd Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 61:1-4, Until the Dawn...Speak Up
December 20 - 4th Sunday of Advent
Luke 1:26-38, *Until the Dawn...Take Courage*
December 24 - Christmas Eve
Luke 2:1-20, *Until the Dawn...Angels Sing*
December 27 - 1st Sunday after Christmas Day
Luke 2:22-40, *Until the Dawn...Build Up*

Sundays for Children

- Children are always welcome in the sanctuary
- Bags & a table of worship materials are available
- A rug in the sanctuary provides a comfy place to sit
- Childcare is offered for infants up to kindergartners and older children as needed on Sundays from 9:30am through the end of Faith Formation. The nursery is located in the lower-level east classroom.

Christmas Offering

The Christmas Offering is our final denominational offering of the year and supports our region, the Christian Church in the Upper Midwest. The region connects Disciples across Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota through camps, retreats, special events, and support for congregations and pastors. Gifts can be made by mailing a check, placing your donation in the offering box (be sure to indicate "Christmas offering" on the memo), or giving online (select Special Offering - Regional, Christmas Offering).

Sunday Mornings



There's a role for everyone on Sunday mornings! To learn how you can serve, call the church office or visit the link below.

ICDISCIPLES.ORG/VOLUNTEERS



Remembering dear friends on All Saints Sunday



Kids learn about local organizations in Children's Moment



Disciples Ringers preparing a piece for Advent



SoundReach Choir performs their fall concert at FCC

Bible Study

WEDNESDAYS AT 12 NOON

CONTACT OFFICE FOR ZOOM

Upcoming Scriptures:

December 2: Isaiah 61:1-4

December 9: Luke 1:26-38

December 16: Luke 2:22-40

December 23 & 30: No Bible Study

Faith Together

EXPLORING FAITH

Exploring Faith is an opportunity for middle and high school students to ask about the Bible, Christian history and traditions, world religions, and what it means to live out our faith. We are on a break for the holiday but will return on Sundays at 4:30pm beginning January 17.

Youth @ FCC!

JYF CHI RHO CYF

All youth (grades 3-12) will combine to go caroling on Dec. 20 from 3:30-5:30 PM.

WINTER RETREATS FOR YOUTH

Give your kids a break from the busy school year with a fun, faith-filled regional winter retreat at the **Christian Conference Center in Newton**! Enjoy worship, music, activities, and campfires. Adult chaperones from FCC will attend and provide transportation, and the church covers 50% of each youth's registration fee (more if needed)! Mark your calendars! Registration details and sign-up are available now!

RETREAT DATES

January 8-10:
Chi Rho (grades 6-8)
CYF (grades 9-12)

February 19-21:
Junior (grades 3-5)

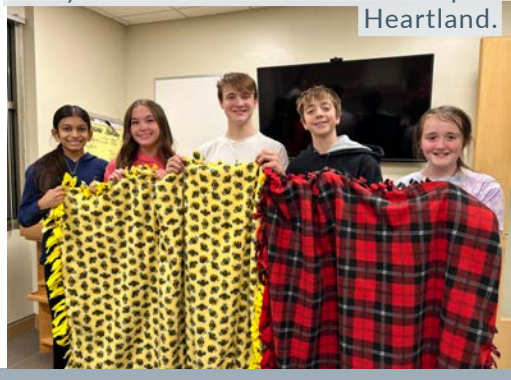


Neighborhood Scavenger Hunt





Our youth made tie blankets for Open Heartland.



Book Club

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3, 7PM

CONTACT OFFICE FOR ZOOM



Are you loving the book club discussions, but they haven't picked your favorite book yet? Here's your chance to make suggestions for 2027! This meeting between Thanskgiving and Christmas will be for choosing next year's books.

Coffee with Friends

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 9:00AM

You are invited to stop by for coffee and conversation at the Crosspark Hy-Vee in Coralville (3285 Crosspark Rd). Everyone is invited to this event on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, sponsored by Disciples Women.

FCC Connect

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10, 6:30PM

CONTACT OFFICE FOR ZOOM

Catch up with many of your FCC friends! FCC Connect is an online opportunity to do just that. Sign on and join the conversation!

Disciples Women

NO DECEMBER MEETING

Disciples Women will not meet in December, but all women of the church are invited to join them for a planning meeting on January 18. Bring ideas about programs and events you would like to help plan.

Ladies Lunch Out

THURSDAY, JANUARY 21, 11:30AM

There is no Ladies Lunch Out in December due to the holidays. And remember, "night out" is "lunch out" during the winter months, and will be at 11:30am. In January, we will eat at Tavern Blue (805 2nd St, Coralville). If you plan to attend in January, **please RSVP to Nancy R.** You are always welcome, but it is important to make a reservation!



JYF Youth visit kittens

Keeping Connected



Holiday Card Making Workshop sponsored by Disciples Women and led by Heather





Whitney hanging a wreath in the sanctuary

In the Community

CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR OPEN HEARTHLAND

BRING GIFTS BY DECEMBER 6

All Christmas Gifts for our Open Heartland familes have been claimed. Please remember to include gift receipts, to wrap the item and label it with the first name and family # of the recipient (this information is on the Sign Up Genius). Gifts are due at First Christian by the morning of December 6.

FCC @ FREE LUNCH

DECEMBER 26

We serve at Free Lunch on Saturday, December 26. Our menu will be Mac & Cheese with Ham and Peas Casserole, mixed vegetables, fruit salad, green salad, bread & butter, dessert, granola bars, juice or milk, and coffee. We expect to serve 130 meals.

The casserole signup sheet and casserole pans with recipe will be available at church by Sunday, December 6. To donate other food items or work on free lunch day, use Signup Genius. At any time, non-perishable items may be placed in the Free Lunch Box in the vestibule; casseroles and desserts may be placed in the FCC kitchen freezer. **All items need to be at church before Christmas Day**.

ALTERNATIVE GIFT MARKET

DONATIONS BY DECEMBER 13

What a lovely time we had with our friends from 13 local organizations! We invite you to continue supporting their important work through First Christian's Alternative Gift Market.

To donate, complete a giving form (available at church or online) and make **one payment to First Christian Church for the total amount.** Your giving form indicates how want your donation is divided among the participating organizations.

Donations are due by December 13, when checks will be sent to the organizations. Giving in honor of someone? Gift cards are available at church!









Clockwise: FCC members supporting immigrant neighbors, at Loteria fundraiser for Open Heartland, and interacting with AGM guests.



December

CLICK HERE FOR FCC'S DECEMBER CALENDAR

realm

First Christian's online directory

WHO IS MY ELDER?

Last Name	Your Elder
A-Cl	Julie F.
Co-F	Nancy M.
G-Kin	Maggie K.
Kit-Mic	Steve S.
Mo-Sch	Marcus S.
Sea-Z	Jane D.

First Christian Church
Disciples of Christ

900 Lincolnshire Place
Coralville, IA 52241
319-337-4181
icdisciples.org

There's Room at the Table for Everyone

Office Hours:
Monday & Wednesday:
9:00AM - 1:00PM
Tuesday & Thursday:
1:00 - 5:00PM

clergy staff available by appointment

First Christian Church Staff

Rev. Jill Cameron Michel
Senior Pastor

Rev. Kara Seaton
Associate Pastor

Rev. Laura Kittrell
Minister of Music & Worship

Malinda Thomas
Office Administrator

Michael Hull
Jenna Janssen
Custodians

Lori Smith
Bookkeeper

Cameron Michel
Technology Assistant

Sophia Romero
Ella Romero
Jacob Hall
Teegan Michel
Nursery Caregivers

connect with us