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THE CRUSADER (USPS139220) published weekly except the week after/of Christmas by First Christian Church,
301 N. Broad St., Galesburg, IL 61401-3696. POSTMASTER: Send Address Corrections to The Crusader at above address.
Periodical Postage paid at Galesburg, IL 61401.



December 15 –

5:30pm – Youth group
7:15pm – Choir practice

December 16 – 5:30pm

Men's Night Out at Pizza Ranch

December 19 –

8:30am – Christmas Continental
Breakfast
Worship at 9:30am in sanctuary &
Facebook Live
11am Adult Sunday School
4pm – Children's Christmas
Program

December 20 – 7pm

Trustees

December 21 – 7pm

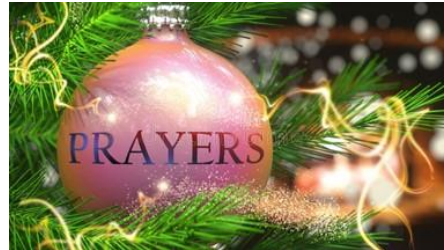
The Weekend Cluster meeting

December 22 –

5:30pm – Children's "Happy
Birthday Jesus" party
7pm – Historical Society
7:15pm – Choir practice

December 24 – 5pm

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service



... for **Shannon Edwards and her son, Daniel**, for strength and hope as they are apart from one another. Also pray for Shannon as she continues her studies. ... **Bill Arnold** passed away this past weekend. Our prayers and sympathy goes to Bill's three sisters and 2 children. Bill will be cremated and buried in Peru at a later date. ...for all those affected by the recent tornados across 6 states of our country. Particularly hard hit was the state of Kentucky. *First Christian Church of Mayfield, KY* suffered significant damage and other Disciples have a lot of damage to their homes. **Pray** for all whose lives have been affected by this disaster; and pray for the first responders and those trying to restore power, and care for survivors. You may **Give** - Week of Compassion will work with local partners and church leaders to meet immediate needs and also support long-term recovery. Give [online](#); text WoC to 41444; or mail a check to:
Week of Compassion
P.O. Box 1986 ~ Indianapolis, IN 46206



Crusader

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Vol. 75, No. 25 ~ Dec 14, 2021

December 19, 2021
Message by Pastor Greg Fitch
Fourth Sunday of Advent

“Rediscover Christmas: Find Love in our Differences”
Scripture: 1 John 4:7-16



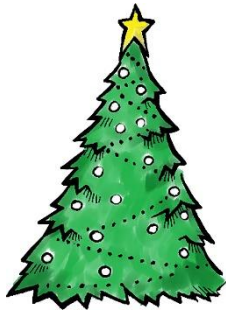
December 26, 2021
Message by Pastor MJ Fitch
“Rediscover Christmas: Find Christ in our World”

Scripture: John 3:16-17

Worship will be in-person at 9:30am and on Facebook Live at 9:30am and later on Sunday morning on our webpage and YouTube

CHRISTMAS EVE
CANDELIGHT SERVICE
Friday, December 24th at 5pm
Invite your family and friends to join us as we
celebrate our dear Savior!





LOOK FOR THE GIVING TREE THIS ADVENT SEASON

*The real joy of Christmas,
Lies in giving - not taking from others,
It is the only joy that
Increases by leaps and bounds -
When you give as much as you can to others.*

One of the best ways you can reflect on the love of Jesus is by giving back to those in need. You are invited to give to our Blessing Box throughout this Advent Season. Look for the “Giving Tree” in the Sanctuary, close to the choir loft. Place items in the boxes provided that are helpful during winter or to provide for a household as they struggle to meet day to day needs. It will increase your joy by leaps and bounds.

Items include winter wear, blankets, any cleaning supplies, personal hygiene items, gifts for babies or small children, cocoa mix, tea, devotionals, candy, note pads, pens. A complete list of items are on a print-out in the sanctuary. This makes it easy to grab one and take with you while you shop.

Christmas is one of the best times of year to be a witness of the love of Jesus. Our neighbors seem to be seeking more, hurting more, and needing more this time of year. The act may seem small to you, but it can make a huge difference in the life of those who are in need the most. When you seek to love others, you are living the true meaning of Christmas.

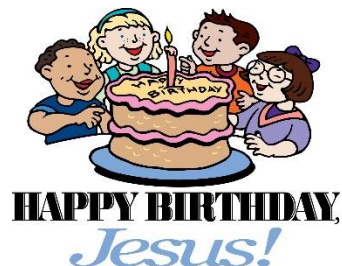
MEN’S NIGHT OUT ON DEC. 16

Men’s Night Out will be at **5:30pm Thursday, December 16** at Pizza Ranch. All men of the church are welcome to join us for food, fellowship, and a brief devotional. Everybody pays their own way.



“HAPPY BIRTHDAY JESUS” CHRISTMAS PARTY DECEMBER 22 AT 5:30pm

The youth group will have a “Happy Birthday Jesus” Party on **December 22 at 5:30pm**. All youth are invited to attend a party to celebrate the Real Reason for the Season!



YOUTH CHRISTMAS PROGRAM DECEMBER 19 AT 4pm

Please join us **Sunday, December 19 at 4pm** in the sanctuary for the Youth Christmas program, “*A Socially Distanced Christmas Pageant*.” It follows a children’s pastor as she strives to create a virtual Christmas program using smartphones and Zoom. It’s a great way to have some fun and share the story of the Christmas season.

Some of our youth will also be blessing us with a bell performance. We look forward to sharing the Christmas story in a unique way.

ALL CHURCH CHRISTMAS CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19 AT 8:30am

Join us for a catered All Church Christmas Continental Breakfast on **December 19 at 8:30am**. We will be serving muffins, rolls and fruit. You do not need to bring anything – this is our gift to you.

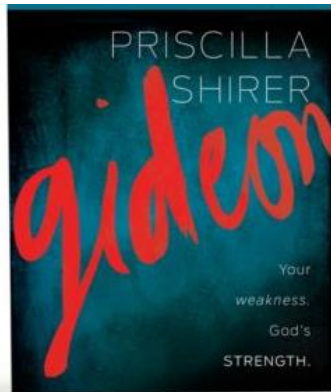
Following the breakfast, there will be a congregational meeting to vote on the nominating committee’s slate of nominees for upcoming year.



*Thank you for the beautiful bag, thoughts and prayers.
Contents are wonderful too. In Jesus name, - Susanne Roberts*

SERVING SCHEDULE

	DIACONATE	COMMUNION	OFFERING
DEC 19	David Wilt Leslie Wilt	Mary Runge	Steve Spicher (recorded)
DEC 26	Jake Runge Earlene Crouse	Neill Unger	Carolyn Spratt



NEW BIBLE STUDY BEGINS JAN. 12

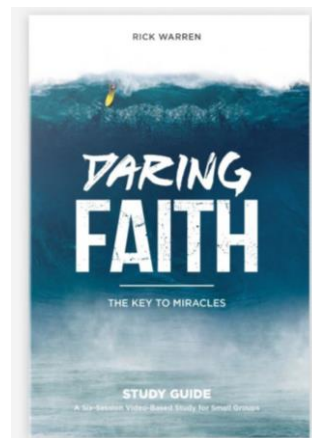
A new Bible Study on Priscilla Shirer's book, *"Gideon: Your weakness. God's strength,"* will begin **Jan. 12 and meet each week through Feb. 23** with two session options: 1) in-person or on Zoom at **9:30am** in the Conference Room; or 2) in-person or on Zoom at **5:30pm**. The cost of the book is \$13. If you would like a book ordered for you, please contact the church office as soon as possible. Scholarships are available. All are welcome to join.

Like everything else in the Bible, the story of Gideon is about God and His people. His love for them, as well as His strength operating in spite of their weakness – even through their weakness. And because God's people includes you and me, Gideon's story is also about us – our lives, our doubts, our struggles, and our possibilities as believers. This study will encourage you to recognize your weaknesses as the key that the Lord gives you to unlock the full experience of His strength in your life. Instead of ignoring, neglecting, or trying to escape your weaknesses, see them as gifts that they are, given specifically and strategically by God to unlock the door of God's strength.

NEW SERIES FOR ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL BEGINS JAN. 9

The Adult Sunday School class will begin a new study, *"Daring Faith,"* by Pastor Rick Warren on **January 9 through February 13**. The class meets on Sundays at **11am** in-person in the Conference Room or via Zoom. The cost of the book is \$8. If you would like a book ordered for you, please contact the church office as soon as possible. Scholarships are available. All are welcome to join.

Now is the time to choose faith over fear and live with more freedom, joy and impact. As Ephesians 3:12 says, *"Because of Christ and our faith in him, we can now come boldly and confidently into God's presence"* (NLT). Discover how you can have daring faith in these uncertain times and make a difference for Christ through Pastor Rick Warren's *"Daring Faith"* study.



This week I share a story about making Christmas special.

In the months leading up to the Christmas season, Dan lost his job. Well, in the city he lived in, most of the workers had to relocate with the company or face unemployment. Dan was one of the unlucky ones who had not been with the company long enough to be asked to transfer. With the closing of the plant the town began to dry up as well. The service industry was pretty much wiped out; no one could afford to hire anything done anymore. The retail stores were not hiring; they were just trying to survive with hopes that another company would move into the vacant facility. Things looked bleak for Dan and his young family.

Dan was able to get odd jobs to eke by a living, however Christmas was coming and, in spite of the circumstances, Dan wanted it to be a good one. Since they could not afford to buy Christmas, they would have to improvise.

The family started on the day after Thanksgiving, children and all. They began to make their own Christmas decorations that they would place on their real Christmas tree that they would personally go and find in the woods. They would hand-craft gifts for each other and, since they could not afford store bought wrapping paper, they would save the junk mail flyers and newspapers they would find to wrap their treasures.

With these preparations made, Christmas day came. The tree, the homemade presents, the family preparation - this would be a Christmas every one of Dan's 3 children would remember for the rest of their lives.

Things got better. Dan got a job. His wife and children fell back into a "normal" routine, but no one ever forgot that Christmas. It did not last for a few minutes and then was over. That Christmas took a lot of creativity and hard work. However, the end result was one to remember.

God did the very same thing as He made preparations for that first Christmas. He went through much preparation to make it special. A special Christmas that wouldn't last for a few minutes and be over, but would last many lifetimes and forever!!!

What special memories can you and I create this Christmas, beginning with keeping Christ in Christmas ... and creating depth in our most loved relationships....

See you Sunday, and Christmas Eve, as we celebrate God's most precious Christmas gift!

Shalom, *Pastor Greg*