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THE CRUSADER (USPS139220) published bi-weekly except the week after/of Christmas by First Christian Church,
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Thursday, Dec. 7th

9:00 Staff meeting
2:00 Worship at Knox County Nursing Home
6:30 Worship Committee (via Zoom)

Saturday, Dec. 9th

10am-noon Book Club Movie Event

Sunday, Dec. 10th

8:40 Coffee House Theology Sunday
School in conference room
9:30 Coffee Fellowship
10:00 Worship
11:30 Disciples Sunday School
3:00 Blue Christmas

Monday, Dec. 11th

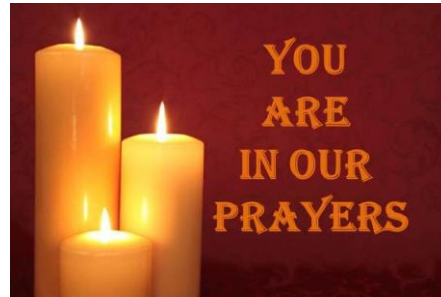
6:00 Council followed by Elders at 7:00

Wednesday, Dec. 13th

9:30 and 5:30 Bible Study
5:30 Youth Group
7:30 Choir practice

Saturday, Dec. 14th

9:00 Staff meeting
10:30 Disciples Women's Council
5:30 Men's Night Out at Pizza Ranch
and Ladies Night Out at Jimmy's



... for **Carole Batterton**, grieving the death of her fiancé and long-time member of the church, **Don Billups**. Don passed away Nov. 28. There will be no funeral or memorial service.
... for those going through cancer treatments: **Mary Gehring, Mary Davis, Al Bower, Jimmy Ellis**
... for peace and health and strength for **Raye Ann Beasley**.
... for **Don Tucker**, for encouragement and health after his heart attack. He is still in Texas and hopes to return to Galesburg in April. He is experiencing some depression over the holidays and missing home – would like to receive cards from folks. Cards can be sent to Rambling Oaks Courtyard, 112 Barnet Blvd, Room 201, Highland Village, TX 75077.

... for those who are experiencing depression and struggling, especially during the holidays.



Crusader

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

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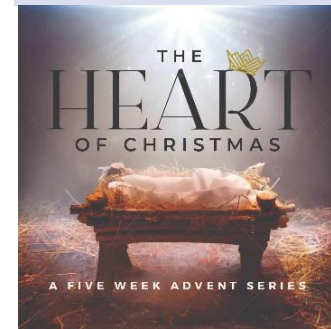
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Director of Music – Steve Jackson sjackson@sandburg.edu

Co-Pastors: Gregory S. and Martha-Jean Fitch

pastorgreg02@gmail.com & pastormj02@gmail.com

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Dec 10, 2023

Second Sunday of Advent

Message by Pastor Martha-Jean Fitch

“Peace In the Heart of Christmas”

Scripture: Luke 2:8-14; Colossians 1:19-22

Dec 17, 2023

Third Sunday of Advent

Message by Pastor Greg Fitch

“The Heart of Christmas Brings Joy”

Scripture: John 1:14; Ephesians 1

Worship will be in-person and on Facebook Live at 10am

CHRISTMAS POTLUCK BRUNCH & CONGREGATIONAL MEETING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17 at 9am

Join us for an All Church Christmas Potluck Brunch on **Dec. 17 at 9am**. Please bring a brunch item or two to share. Drinks and table service provided.

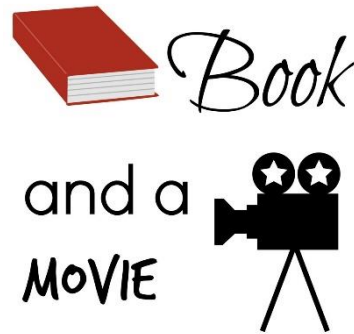
There will be a brief Congregational Meeting to vote on the slate of nominees for 2024.



BOOK CLUB MOVIE EVENT DECEMBER 9

Our next book club will feature a made-for-tv movie based on a short novel: *“London Snow: A Christmas Story,”* by Paul Theroux. This little book is appropriate for all ages and is about 50 pages in length, if you wish to read it before viewing the hour movie. Reading the book is NOT a requirement, however, and we hope you will come to enjoy this delightful, little story. (This book may take a special library request.)

The Book Club invites anyone in the church to come view the movie with us (I hear there will be coffee cake). The date is **December 9 at 10am**. We will view the movie and have one of our very informal discussions afterwards. We hope to see you at this special Book Club event.



BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE Sunday, December 10th at 3pm

Our Blue Christmas Service is particularly meaningful to those who are feeling weary and blue throughout this season of the year – due to grief or stress or burdens. Or perhaps you just need a time to get away from the rush of the season, and just quiet your heart and focus on the wonderful way God reaches out to us with the gifts of hope and love, peace and joy. . . It’s an

opportunity to be in community, to also remember that — in spite of everything that happens in our lives — God is with us, and the promise of the light of Christ is just around the corner.

For these reasons, our church will have a “Blue Christmas” service on Sunday, **December 10 at 3pm**. We will have a time of prayer, music and candle lighting. Come and worship and/or invite someone you know could use some extra support & join them at the service.



everybody else’s combined! Also, invite others to bake too --- the more assortment of friends and cookies we have, the BETTER!

We’re looking forward to seeing you on **Saturday, December 16th**.

Thanking you in advance – *Disciple Women’s Council*

COOKIE CUTTER CHRISTMAS – PART 2!

It’s your last reminder of our “Cookie Cutter Christmas – Part 2” cookie exchange for **Saturday, December 16th from 2 to 4pm** in large fellowship hall – otherwise known as “Cookie Cravings Center.” Don’t forget to bring 3 dozen – either in 1 dozen assortment or all 1 kind – of your favorite **HOMEMADE** Christmas cookie(s) and take home 3 dozen of

TRUSTEES will meet at 6:30pm on Monday, Dec. 18th



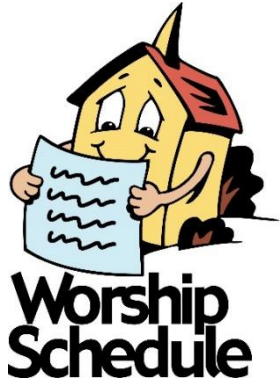
GIVING TREE DURING ADVENT SEASON

We will be collecting items on the Giving Tree in the Sanctuary throughout the season of Advent to benefit our own Blessing Box this year. Suggested items to purchase: personal hygiene (deodorant, toothpaste and brush, feminine hygiene products, soap, razors, shampoo); food items (individual crackers,



individual tuna, chicken salad, etc., juice boxes (not in can), Ramen type noodles, breakfast biscuits); clothing (socks, gloves, underwear, winter hats, hand warmers); toilet paper. Please note we cannot distribute canned goods during the winter months. You can also give cash donations to the office and we will purchase items for you.

Won’t you consider reaching out and giving an outpouring of love this holiday season?



WORSHIP SERVING SCHEDULE

Dec 10 – Diaconate Serving: Chris Wood and Marla Wood
Lead in Communion: Neill Unger

Offering Message: Pastor

Prayers: Cindy Andrews

Greeters: Chris and Marla Wood at North St.; David Wilt at Broad St.; Leslie Wilt at canopy door

Dec 17 – Diaconate Serving: Kaleb and Raeleen Brown

Lead in Communion: Pastor

Offering Message: Carolyn Spratt

Prayers: Donna Flicek

Greeters: Kaleb and Raeleen Brown at North St.; Chris Wood at Broad St.;
Marla Wood at canopy door

Elders Serving Out: Neill Unger and Chris Mowrer

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDELIGHT/COMMUNION SERVICE

“The Heart of Christmas is Jesus”

Sunday, December 24th at 7:30pm

Invite your family and friends to join us as we celebrate our dear Savior! The offering taken at this service will be donated to our own Good Samaritan Fund.

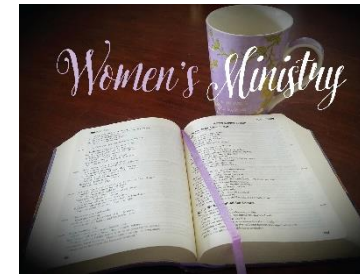


LADIES NIGHT OUT DEC. 14

Ladies Night Out will be at **5:30pm Thursday, Dec. 14** at Jimmy's Pizza. All ladies from the church are invited to attend. Come join the fun!

MEN'S NIGHT OUT DEC. 14

Men's Night Out will be at **5:30pm Thursday, Dec. 14** 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.

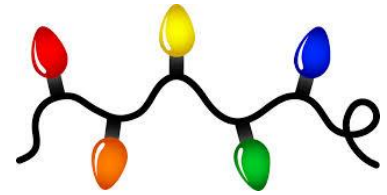


NAOMI CIRCLE BIBLE STUDY DEC. 19

All women are invited to participate in the Naomi Circle Bible Study which is held every month on the **3rd Tuesday at 10:30am** in the Conference Room. The next one is **Tuesday, Dec. 19**. We are studying “*Loved by God*” by Liz Curtis Higgs.

CHRISTMAS OFFICE SCHEDULE

The church office will be closed from **Dec. 25th – Dec. 27th** and on **Jan. 1st**. Lorraine will be in the office on the mornings of Dec. 28th and Dec. 29th. There is **no Crusader the week of Dec. 25th or Jan. 1st**.



PASTORS ON VACATION

Pastors Greg and MJ will be on vacation the week of **December 25th through January 1st** and back in the office on **January 2nd**. While they are gone, if there is a pastoral need, please contact the elder of your shepherding group.

On **December 31**, we will be blessed to have **Tracy Jackson** filling the pulpit. You won't want to miss hearing her message.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY

Thank you for your generosity towards FCC in 2022! Finish the year strong with a year-end donation. Please turn in your offerings **no later than noon on Dec. 28th** in order to be recorded for 2023 giving.



Please note that Coffee House Theology Sunday School will meet in the Conference Room at 8:40 to 9:25am on Sundays beginning December 10th.