

**First  
Christian  
Church  
(Disciples of Christ)**

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*Merry Christmas  
and a blessed New Year  
from your church staff*

**Genny, Mary Claire, Chris,  
Barbara, Chialing, Darrin,  
Kaitlyn, and Pastor Merry.**

### **Advent Devotionals**

Our Advent Devotional Booklets this year are coming from the Society of St. Andrew, an ecumenical organization which partners with our Week of Compassion ministries to address hunger in America. The theme of this year's devotionals is "My Soul Magnifies the Lord." The Advent Devotionals will be available this year in two formats. We will have the usual option of picking up a regular paperback Advent Booklet at church as well as signing up to receive daily e-devotionals throughout Advent by signing up on their website:

[www.endhunger.org/  
advent.](http://www.endhunger.org/advent)

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# The Echo

Volume 15 Issue 12

December 2015

## **ADVENT AT FIRST**

Sunday, November 29—Advent I

Lighting of Candle of Hope

5th Sunday Offering

1pm—Rehearsal with choir and narrators for the Cantata.

Wednesday, December 2—Poinsettia

Slips and money due in office. Cost: \$10.

Saturday, December 5—Hometown

Holidays—5pm Hand Bell Choir at US Bank

Sunday, December 6—Advent II

Cantata and Lighting the Candle of Peace

Wrapped gifts and toys due at church.

Wednesday, December 9—5:30pm

MSU women's basketball team wraps clothing or outreach baskets.

Sunday, December 13—Advent III

Youth Sunday and Lighting of Candle of Love.

The youth will lead worship service.

Christmas baskets will be delivered.

Wednesday, December 16—5pm—Youth

Seasons of Light, at The Star Theater

Sunday, December 20—Advent IV

Lighting of Candle of Joy

Tuesday, December 22—Youth Caroling

Thursday, December 24—Christmas Eve

Candlelight Service

9:30 Pre-service Special Music; 10pm Candlelight Service

Friday, December 25—Merry Christmas

Blessings to all as we celebrate the Birth of Jesus

## MERRYMENTS

Without question, First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Morehead is one of the most compassionate churches I have ever served. I had already seen glimpses of your congregational care and your outreach generosity in my two short months with you, but never dreamed I would wind up being on the receiving end of such thoughtful and loving acts of kindness. You were immediately helpful and concerned after my initial ankle injury (torn tendon), for which I was both a bit embarrassed yet deeply appreciative to receive. Two weeks later, when complications set in and I became side-lined to the point of needing to take an unexpected leave of absence, your compassion and support reached out to surround me with the kindest of thoughts and encouraging prayers. You have showered me with beautiful cards and expressions of concern which have lifted my spirits and helped me "behave" and follow the doctors' orders. There aren't enough words, time, or space to fully express my gratitude for your patience during this time, so please know that my "Thank You" is sincerely packed, especially in this season of Thanksgiving & Advent anticipation, with the deepest measure of "thanksgiving" imaginable.

Speaking of, your amazing compassion is now kicking into full gear as Thanksgiving Baskets are being gathered and delivered, and signups for the Christmas Outreach Project for the community are in progress. Blessings abound for the families in need and for each of us who share in this opportunity to support our local neighbors who are struggling to make ends meet. As we remember them in this season, may we also remember our "neighbors" around the world who are struggling with wars, hunger, homelessness, and diseases, all of which present life-threatening challenges to those who are suffering from their impact.

As Christians, and followers of Christ, we have the responsibility to care about and for all of our neighbors, not just "even" when, but "especially" when they are different from ourselves, or strangers in or from a foreign land. The Good Samaritan story Jesus taught his followers is only "good" because it exemplifies the commandment of loving our neighbor by announcing the enemy Samaritan traveler is the compassionate caregiver for the Jewish man who had been the victim of a robbery. Recent and ongoing tragic developments in Paris, Beirut, Congo, Syria, and other cities around the world, including in our own country, are once again reminding us that people of all nations, races, and religions, are being exploited and victimized. It is crucial, as Christians who are preparing to welcome a most holy homeless family with child, that we see way beyond the secular and partisan debates that stir fears and uncertainty about what is safest, in order to recall we are asked to do what it most loving. Darkness, it appears, comes not just with the setting of the sun, but when we forget the words of God's Son.



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### A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT PAUL SEMISCH

Dear Members of the FCC Family,

As 2015 draws to a close, I look back on our journey together this past year. We said goodbye to our pastor in May, welcomed supply preachers and an interim minister and have started the process of searching for a new minister. It's been quite a journey! Throughout this process, we have come together to ensure that our church continues to move forward.

One of the messages we hear frequently at FCC is that we need to slow down and listen. That message is particularly relevant during the season of Advent and as we continue our journey in searching for a new pastor. We have a lot of work to do in the upcoming year as we move through this time of transition, and the best way to prepare for that work is to make sure that we are solidly grounded in prayer and in community. I am grateful for each and every one of you and for the time, energy, gifts and talents you bring to this family of faith at FCC. Let's continue to stay connected in prayer and in community as we journey through this holy season and into 2016. Peace. Paul

## YOUTH GROUP

Greetings FCC Family,

The youth had a wonderful time at the November meeting shopping for the Thanksgiving baskets for families in our county and rehearsing for our Youth Sunday program. Many thanks to all who volunteered to provide transportation on the shopping trip and to Natalie and Mitch for the delicious meal they provided to the youth.

Youth Sunday will take place on Sunday, December 13<sup>th</sup>. A special thanks to Mark Etherton who developed a script for our youth program based on Tomie de Paola's *The Clown of God*. We hope that everyone will join us for this special service that is sure to be a blessing to all in attendance.

In addition to our Youth Sunday service, the youth will be participating in a couple of other activities during the month of December. On Wednesday, December 16 at 5:00pm, the youth will visit the MSU Star Theater to view the *Seasons of Light* laser light show. We would like to extend thanks to Leon and Pastor Molly who donated the tickets for the Star Theater prior to Pastor Molly's resignation. The youth will also go caroling again this year on Tuesday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>. Thanks to Etta Jane McCarty who has offered to prepare a meal for the youth on this day. We will also need drivers for our trip to the Star Theater and for caroling. If you are willing to provide transportation on either day, please let one of the youth directors know.

Wishing you peace and blessings always,

Chris Prichard & Mary Claire Williams  
FCC Youth Directors

## CHOIR NOTES

As we enter into the holiday season, the music department is in full swing! There are many things going on for your enjoyment. I hope you'll be able to join in for many of these wonderful times together.



On December 3rd and 4th, the MSU Music Department will be presenting their annual Madrigal Feast. I mention this because our wonderful choir interns all will be singing in the groups at this event. I know it will be a fantastic musical time! There are details on the MSU website.

On December 5th, the bell choir will be playing at US Bank as part of Hometown Holidays. We've been working very hard on an extended repertoire of holiday favorites. So, if you're attending Hometown Holidays, please stop by and say hello!

On December 6th, the choir will present our Christmas Cantata: What Child Is This? by Joel Raney. The choir has been diligently preparing for this celebration and we look forward to sharing a special time of music with you during the worship service on December 6th. Also, as we finish up the Advent season, we'll look ahead to our Christmas Eve celebration. We will be planning a time of carols and music at 9:30 and then our candlelight service at 10:00. This is a lovely way to steal a few moments of peace and quiet praise before the bustle of Christmas morning. I'd like to wish you all a wonderful start to the holiday season.

*Genny Jenkins, Choir Director*

### Thank You From FCC

Thank you to Alta Blair and Etta Jane McCarty for supporting the People's Clinic with a lunch for the volunteers on November 17.

Thank you to Natalie Mineer and Mitch Wilson who provided food for the youth luncheon on November 22.

Thank you to Mark Etherton for the script for Youth Sunday.

Thank you to Pastor Molly and Leon for providing MSU Star Theater tickets for the youth on December 16.

Thank you to Etta Jane McCarty for providing lunch on December 22 before the youth go caroling.

### Thank You From Charlene

I want to thank the congregation for all of the prayers, concerns, and help with groceries. You have all been so kind in our times of turmoil. I know you will continue to be with us both during Frank's 4 Way Bypass and after as he heals and I continue to help him. Your thoughts, prayers, emails, and cards have meant so much to Frank and I both. God bless you all.

Charlene Bradford

### Thank you From Merry

Dear friends: Thank you all so very much for your love and support through my recovery. Your thoughts and prayers have not only encouraged me but sustained me through these days of healing after the complications with the blood clot set in with my ankle injury. Your cards, emails, and texts have brightened my days beyond measure. Your patience throughout this process is most appreciated! While it is disappointing to realize this will take longer to resolve than I had hoped, it is a blessing to know that I will be able to return in January, and we can continue our search together for the meaning and mission of who and what God is calling the church to be and do in the love of Christ.

Thank you all. Merry

### Thank You from the Bizzels

Dear Church Family, Thanks is such a small word, but I am sending it in many forms. You as a church have been so kind and thoughtful to us during Jack's illness and passing. Thanks to the many who sent food, prayers and visits. We love you for this.

### December Elders

December 6: Ginny & Mark Etherton

December 13: Mark & Ginny Etherton

December 20: Yvonne Baldwin & Larry Fannin

December 27: Larry Fannin & Jami Hornbuckle

### December Deacons

Matt Nutter, Chris Prichard, Carmen Swim,  
Phillip Swim, Mary Claire Williams,  
And Ned Breschel.

### Christmas Outreach

It is time to think about families in our community for Christmas. There are so many ways to be a part of this outreach. You may purchase toys, provide food donations, or donate money so our church can purchase shoes, coats and an outfit for each of the children.



Please mark checks for Outreach if you choose to provide a donation that way. You may give donations to Mike or Dayna Seelig, to Joe Barrett or drop them in the collection plate.

We have seen the blessings that come from this event since we have been part of outreach at First Christian Church, both for the families and for our church. Please consider participating in some way as you are able. Mike and Dayna Seelig, Co-Chairs

### Treasurer's Report

Income for the first three Sundays in  
November is **\$10,022.38.**

*The average income needed to pay the church  
expenses is*  
**\$10,287.31.**



**Lectionary Schedule** (The Disciples of Christ lectionary schedule is being used.)

- December 6—Luke 3: 1-6
- December 13—Luke 3: 7-18
- December 20—Luke 1: 39-45  
(46-55)
- December 27—Luke 2: 41-52



**Mack Fund**

*In memory of Jack Bizzel*  
Jim & Emma Lou Gross

Support us when you shop this holiday

*In the previous quarter, \$9.38 was donated to FCC by Amazon.*

Amazon donates when you shop at [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com).



Here's our link:

<http://smile.amazon.com/ch/61-0865444>

**Living Memorial Fund**

In memory of

**Dr. Jack English Bizzel**

Joyce Hart

Fran Helphinstine and Rob Sloss

Dan and Marge Thomas

Kenny and Betty Hall

Ron and Natalie Caudill

Joe Barrett

Etta Jane McCarty

William and Rhonda Collier

Larry and Loretta Fannin

David and Darlene Perkins

James A. Morton

Ival and Linda Bryant

Robert and Sherry McEwan

Don and Alta Blair

**December Birthdays**

- |                     |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1- Alta Blair       | 7- Jami Hornbuckle |
| 1- Stephen Brashear | 10- Michael Young  |
| 1- Eric Carter      | 22- Jeremy Skaggs  |
| 2- Karen Ross       | 28- Kathryn Rogers |
| 6- Larry Fannin     | 28- Kristi Skaggs  |

**COMING UP IN 2016**

January 3, 2016—First Sunday Lunch—Breakfast. Please bring your favorite breakfast items. Thank you to Chris Prichard and Connie Kibbey for being our chefs in charge.



**Time to Order Poinsettias!**

We are ordering poinsettias from the MSU Horticulture department! If you would like to make a donation or purchase a poinsettia in memory of or in honor of an individual. Please email Barbara or call the office ((606) 784-4836) with your order by **Wednesday, December 2**. You may use this form or order slips are available in the office and in the sanctuary. Cost: \$10.



\_\_\_A donation or \_\_\_A poinsettia

\_\_\_In honor of or \_\_\_In memory of

Given by \_\_\_\_\_

Continued from page 2

## MERRYMENTS

This Advent Season, as we anticipate the light of "new life" which comes to break the darkness of "evil" in this world, we are also urged to struggle spiritually in and with the darkness that continues to cast shadows over our lives. This year, may the Advent Words ring especially true in our hearts and bring us renewal of faith, as we watch and await: in **HOPE** of expectation for righteousness, justice, and mercy; in **PEACE** which comforts and passes all understanding, borders, and beliefs; in **LOVE** which is unconditionally given unto us all as children of God; and in **JOY** that rejoices in the saving grace and eternal redemption we experience with the coming of the Christ child. I will close with the first stanza of a hymn written in 1744 by Charles Wesley: "Come, O long expected Jesus, born to set your people free. From our fears and sins release us; Christ, in whom our rest shall be. You, our strength and consolation, come salvation to impart; dear desire of many a nation, joy of many a longing heart."

Advent Blessings to All!

**Rev. Merry Jones**

## Black Gospel Ensemble October 25



## Birthday Dinner November 1



If you have not signed up to support our church, enter this number 11559, (FCC, Morehead). A portion of your purchases will be donated to FCC for outreach programs.

Thank you! Go to [www.kroger.com/communityrewards.com](http://www.kroger.com/communityrewards.com) to sign up.



**Electronic giving doesn't take vacations.** This winter, if you can't make it to church due to travel or other commitments, we encourage you to automate your regular donations. The church relies on the consistent financial support of the congregation and electronic giving offers an easy way to give on a recurring basis. Please visit the church website <http://www.fccmorehead.org/> and locate the giving page. We thank you for your continued support!

**First Christian Church - December 2015 Calendar**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>Office Hours</b> Monday-Thursday	<b>8:30-1:00 pm</b>					
		1	2 Poinsettia slips due in office. 5:30 Bells 7:00 Choir	3	4 Office closed	5 5pm Hometown Holidays— Bells at US Bank
<b>6 ADVENT II— Peace.</b> No Sunday School. 10:45 Worship: Cantata Wrapped gifts/toys due	7	8	9 5:30pm MSU Girls Basketball team will wrap Christmas gifts 5:30 Bells 7:00 Choir	10	11 Office closed	12
<b>13 ADVENT III- Joy</b> 9:45 Sunday School 10:45 Worship Service Led by our Youth Christmas gifts delivered	14	15	16 5:00 Youth to Star Theater 5:30 Bells 7:00 Choir	17	18 Office closed	19
<b>20 ADVENT IV— Love</b> 9:45 Sunday School 10:45 Worship Service	21	22 Youth Caroling	23 5:30 Bells 7:00 Choir 	24 9:30pm Music 10:00pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service	25 Office closed <b>Merry Christmas</b>	26 
<b>27</b> 9:45 Sunday School 10:45 Worship Service 	<b>28</b> <b>NO BOARD MTGS.</b> The ECHO newsletter article deadline	29	<b>30</b> 5:30 Bells 7:00 Choir	<b>31</b> New Year's Eve		

First Christian Church  
(Disciples of Christ)

Merry Jones, Interim Minister  
Genny Jenkins, Choir  
Mary Claire Williams and  
Chris Prichard, Youth  
Barbara Marsh, Secretary  
Chialing Hsieh, Organist  
Sarah Chaney, Bell Choir  
Kaitlyn Rhoden, Nursery  
Darrin Roe, Custodian

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(user name:  
fccmorehead)



<http://www.facebook.com/fccmorehead>



## Search Committee

The search committee has analyzed the 52 responses to the survey regarding the essential, desirable, and negotiable qualities and skills for pastoral candidates. The data and the ranked priorities, along with a list of all written comments, will be shared at the next board meeting. Copies will also be available in the office. The committee has also finalized the demographic survey required for the Congregational Profile. It was available in print form Sunday, November 22, and online through a link in the eBlast. We asked that one survey per household be completed and returned by November 25. The committee plans to finalize the Profile and submit it to the Regional Minister by November 30. We appreciate the congregation's thoughtful participation in this important part of the process.

Yvonne Baldwin, Chair