

The Herald

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)



December 2009

Pastor: Katherine Bryant Graves

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Alternative Gift Fair

ALTERNATIVE GIFT FAIR Sunday, Dec 6, 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM at the Carbondale Unitarian Fellowship. This holiday charity event provides shoppers an opportunity to choose holiday gifts that help make the world a better place. Fairly traded items will be sold to benefit people in developing countries, along with options to give donations in the name of a loved one to over a dozen local, national and international charities and organizations. Live music and children's craft activities add to the festive atmosphere. For more information call 618-549-7193.

15th Annual Cookie Walk

The fifteenth annual Cookie Walk at First Christian Church will be Saturday, **December 12**, from 9 to 12, in the Fellowship Hall. PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE OF DATE. All church ladies (and gentlemen, too!) are asked to bake one or more batches of your best holiday goodies and bring them to the church on Friday, December 11. Anyone who has no time to bake but would like to support the event is encouraged to make a cash donation. Just indicate that your donation is for the Cookie Walk. Proceeds from this event will benefit Good Samaritan Ministries.



A few helpers are needed to set up late afternoon on Friday, December 11, and for the event on Saturday, December 12 (to set up starting at 8:00, during the Walk from 9 to 12, or cleaning up from 12 to 1). Sign-up sheets will be available in the narthex, or you may contact Martha Ellert.

Anyone wishing to order gingerbreads should fill out an order form or contact Vera Felts, as soon as possible. Order forms for gingerbreads will be available at the church on Sundays preceding the Cookie Walk and all orders should be placed no later than December 7. Gingerbread cookies will be \$4.50 each, \$5.00 if personalized. - Martha Ellert

Dickens Christmas at FCC

December 20th, 2009 5 p.m.
\$7 per person – children under 6 eat free!

- Chef – Martha Beck
- Entertainment provided by the FCC Chancel Choir

Come and join the festivities!

Menu: Roast Turkey and Ham
Oven Roasted Potatoes
Herb stuffing
Green Beans
Cranberry Salad
Green Salad
Scrumptious Holiday Desserts



This will be the Graves family's tenth Advent and Holiday season with First Christian Church, Carbondale! A decade later, I am still held breathless by our ritually gorgeous Hanging of the Green, our beautiful Christmas Eve candlelight family service and the wealth of opportunities to participate in the Christmas spirit. It is indeed - the most wonderful time of the year!

We begin with our **Hanging of the Green work party** on Saturday, November 28th at 9 a.m. where we come together to take out, dust off and refurbish our decorations for the sanctuary in preparation of our Hanging of the Green service on Sunday. This is great fun with coffee, bagels, music, laughter and collaborative efforts in putting up the trees, preparing the poinsettias, garlands and organizing who brings in what where. I hope you can join us! Then on Sunday, November 29th we begin to ritually prepare our sanctuary in preparation for receiving the Christ Child as one of the most symbolically rich worship services of the year. If you want to get in the spirit - don't miss the Hanging of the Green!

We will again host the **open house for the Lights Fantastic Parade** with displays of Nativities

and Vera Felts' Nativity stamp collection on December 5th. We see more than 150 people who wander in from the cold to receive our hospitality after the parade. Our float reminds the community of our presence and involvement in community life thanks to the expertise and leadership offered by the Dions.

December 6th we will again dedicate our **Spirit of Christmas gifts** by leaving them under the Chrismon tree in the sanctuary. The generous parade of gifts brought forward always brings tears to my eyes as we see what is made possible by the overflowing compassion of Christ embodied in this congregation.

Martha Ellert will again sponsor the **Morning Etude Concert** and **salad luncheon** on Thursday December 10th beginning at 10:30 a.m. which features soloists, instrumentalists and the Lorelei Singers performing in our festively decorated sanctuary for the benefit of the entire community.

Our **Cookie Walk** on Saturday December 12th will bring in another large group of folk who will discover once again that our members are creative and talented bakers and joyful hosts!

Sunday December 13th Derek Hamblin and friends will bring us **Christmas carols** in worship with a small orchestra lifting us with inspirational music and bringing us wonder at the art.

Sunday December 20th Marleen and the children will illustrate the reason for the season in worship with their **Christmas pageant** and in the special coffee hour following we anticipate a much beloved visitor.

That evening the choir is putting on a **"Dickens Christmas" program** with a delicious meal prepared by Chef Martha Beck continuing the message of "peace on earth good will to all." Invite your neighbors because this event too is open to the public!

And finally we meet in the serenity of candle light at 7:00 p.m. on **Christmas Eve to worship** and adore the babe in the manger and end singing Silent Night with family and friends while holding our candles aloft.

Christmas is a busy time for FCC, full of colorful, delicious and inspirational memories! - Pastor Katherine





*Wishing you the light from the
Star to warm your journey in
the New Year. Best Wishes!*

*Pastor Katherine, Marleen Shepherd, Derek
Hamblin, Marge Schulhof, Mary
Burnham, Tom Kilpatrick, Mona
Miller, Paula Melton,
Amy Dion*



Christmas Offering

Its exciting when God is revealed to us in new ways that take our breath away and the work we do for God suddenly has new hope and new vision.

Across the Regions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) there are exciting stories of new congregations being established, existing congregations being renewed and transformed, and leaders equipped for ministry. Great things are taking place as we join God in God's mission for the sake of the world.

In this holy season let us reach out to those broken lives that feel no joy. Let us be a beacon of light that will lead them to God's gift of new life.

With your Christmas Offering, you support your Region's ministry to enlist Disciples as members of a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world. This offering will be received in worship Sundays December 13 & 20.

Morning Etude Club's Concert

First Christian will host the Morning Etude Club's Holiday Concert on Thursday, December 10th, at 10:30 AM. The program will present a variety of holiday and other festive music, performed by vocal and instrumental soloists and ensembles, including the Lorelei Singers, an organ prelude by Mona Miller, a harp ensemble, and much more. The public is invited to this free concert and to the luncheon that will follow. For more information please call the church at 457-6817.

Health Ministry

SAFETY is an important factor in our overall health and wellness.

For those of us who live alone, especially those who do not have family in the immediate area or friends who call or check on them as a matter of routine, safety should be a top priority.

Falls in the home, as well as other medical emergencies, frighteningly contribute permanent disability and/or death of older adults in the US in alarming numbers.

We are so fortunate that today, in our electronic age, we have the means to protect ourselves. One of these protection comes in the form of LIFELINE, a company which has served communities in the United States for over 30 years and now has over 700,000 people who rely on them for service.

What are the advantages of Lifeline?

- Instant response when you have an emergency and “push” the button to summon response by a “live person” by way of a loudspeaker in your home.
- If you have trouble getting up to answer the phone, your button allows you answer your phone from your chair using the same loudspeaker you use to summon help.
- You can start your service without leaving your home by a simple toll free phone call.
- No contracts to sign, it is paid on a month to month basis.
- You pay a small shipping fee for your unit. It can easily be installed by a family member, friend, or though a helpful person at the church. It is really a “plug and play” unit.



BEST OF ALL, your Health Ministry is signed up with Lifeline as an agent, which means that you may obtain a brochure in the church office which has FCC special code on it and entitles you to \$90.00 off when you sign up.

Please consider the advantages and safety issues for you and check out Lifeline!

Ready to Retire



As some of you know, this is the last Health article from me as your Parish Nurse. It has been a joy and pleasure to serve as your Parish Nurse since 1999, but Bob and I made an agreement that we would both retire when our license to practice expired at the end of this year...that time is now. It is my hope that our church will be able, with the help of volunteers from the congregation, continue with a Health Ministry. Jo Sanders, Director of Health Ministry at Southern Illinois Health Care is prepared to come in the spring to discuss this with us. Knitting Ministry will continue just as it has been and prayer shawls and baby blankets are available when they are needed.

May God Bless you all during this Christmas Season and the coming New Year.

Marge Schulhof, RN, BS, FCN

Outreach

Of all the holidays, I do believe that Christmas is my favorite. Against the harsh backdrop of winter's drear, a light appears, a new hope for an old, weary world, the celebration of a baby that changed the course of history and all of mankind.

As we adorn our homes with the trappings of the celebration, and as we travel between the festive gatherings that are the hallmark of this season, let us not forget why we do so much in such a short amount of time. Reflect on the life of Jesus, and how he accomplished much in what by today's standards, was a very short lifetime. Should we not do the same in the month set aside to celebrate his birth? Of all the months, is not this month the best time to let the light of Christ shine through us? Sadly though, for many people, this is the month where we see the worst of human nature. Stress, fatigue, and mental exhaustion plague

even the best of us, and we become grouchy as we consider what it takes to have the "perfect" Christmas.

I think however, that the "perfect" Christmas is within everyone's reach. For me, that perfection is achieved when I take time to step back and tune out all the noise that has no relevance to Christ. So, Macy's is having a HUGE sale and door-buster deals for the first 100 customers through the door at 5 a.m. I can see the people lined up, vying for their position to get the best possible price. Yet, I wonder how the spirit of Christ is there...how it's possible to feel peaceful so early in the morning, surrounded by people who are all coveting what you are coveting. For me, tuning that sort of thing out is of vital importance, for the perfect Christmas happens when I sit in the stillness, gazing upon our tree adorned with white lights and paper chains that the girls and I lovingly crafted together. The world goes away, and for but

only a moment, I tune into what Christmas is all about.

Do you have a ritual? One that brings you peace and is something you look forward to every year? If not, I highly recommend starting one. Another of our activities is to bake cookies together, and put together gift boxes of cookies for all of our neighbors, along with a handmade card telling them how special they are to us. This is the work of Christ, and is a tasty task as well, especially when a cookie "unfortunately" breaks and isn't fit for a gift box.

This month, I wish you the blessings of a peaceful, reflective season, and the knowledge that this month is one of hope, renewal, and starting anew as January falls upon us.

Tune out the noise, slow down a bit, and quietly serve Christ. You might be surprised to find that this could become your favorite holiday, too.

In Christ's Love, Debra Whitledge

Library

Marin, Andrew. *Love is an Orientation: Elevating the Conversation with the Gay Community*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009. 204p.

During the last fifty years, tension has grown steadily between many factions of the Christian faith and the ever-more-visible gay and lesbian population in America. Christians with fundamentalist leanings have not hesitated to declare homosexuality a sin and to damn gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) people to hell for their sexual orientation, quoting scripture freely to support their stance. In response, the GLBT community has abandoned organized Christianity in droves, taking with them feelings of abandonment, hurt,

guilt, and anger. Many have sought churches where they will be accepted; others have worked tirelessly to change the attitudes of the Christian right; still others have worked equally hard to confront and shock. Andrew Marin is a young minister from a fundamentalist Christian background, who has worked to build bridges between the two bickering factions. Written for the Christian community, *Love is an Orientation* is a bold analysis of the growing tension between Christianity and the GLBT community. Marin takes a close look at the scriptures most often cited by the Christian right in support of their rejection of and hostility toward GLBT people, and attempts to dispel Christians' fears and hostilities through logic, education, and scriptures advocating love, understanding, and the neces-

sity of leaving judgment to God. He proposes sixteen Commitments that Christians should pledge to accept and put into practice. These include a commitment to build bridges between the two factions; seek knowledge of the GLBT community, seek truthfulness, be patient, develop credibility, address the tough questions, and form a one-on-one relationship with the Lord. Marin has written a powerful book that the Christian communities—both fundamentalist and liberal—and the GLBT community should read. There's more than enough wisdom and insight in this book to warrant its reading, in spite of the author's use of many personal stories, his tendency to generalize both the Christian and GLBT points-of-view, and his occasional forays into emotionalism.—Thomas Kilpatrick.

First Christian Moving Into the Future

November 15th, Pastor Katherine led the congregation in showing appreciation for leadership and service from those concluding their terms at the end of 2009. Those who were presented with certificates were: Greg Whittlege, Service Leader for Facility & Finance; Monica Tichenor, Service Leader for Outreach; Juli Claussen, Treasurer; Oval Myers, Trustee; Martha Beck, Imogene Huffman, Rachael Nelson, Elders; Juli Claussen, Tim Damien, Nancy Mallett and Toby Nelson, Deacons. Thanks also to Martha Beck for preparing the turkeys and everyone else for the wonderful variety of side dishes and desserts!

Dia Parr called our annual congregational meeting to order. Dia introduced the members of the Nominating Committee and the new roster of leadership with their respective terms of office for congregational approval. She also presented the 2010 budget for the congregation to see how and where pledges, offerings and funds from investments were being employed. Gayle Pesavento was asked to present the proposed Statement of Identity and Core Values for congregational vote and a revision was submitted by Dia Parr to correct wording in the By-Laws concerning the terms of office for members of the nominating committee. Ballots were distributed and counted and all business items received a unanimous YES vote from those in attendance and our congregational meeting concluded.

Roster of FCC Leadership approved by congregational vote is as follows:

2010 through 2011

Dia Parr, Board Chair
Jak Tichenor, Vice Board Chair
Donna Waller, Treasurer
Sandra Lowell, Leader for Congregational Care
Brice Dion, Leader for Facility & Finance
Debra Whittlege and Christy Christensen, Leaders for Outreach

2010 through 2012

Ron Graves, Trustee
Sandy Lowell, Nancy Mallett, Marcia Phelps, Ed Workman, Elders, Sara Bean, Christy Christensen, Kathy Deutsch, Vanessa Thomas, Deacons

The approved annual budget is \$165,757 supported by 40 pledges to date and income from our investments from member wills and estates. This budget reflects a 2% increase over last year – all of which reflects additional costs in supporting the needs of our facility.

Our Newly Adopted Statement of Identity & Core Values

“Historic Traditions/Progressive Practices”

The First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Carbondale is a Christ-centered congregation with a 150 year tradition based on faith, spiritual study, service, and missions. We are a vital church, open to new ideas, while always mindful of our Christian heritage. We embrace the diversity God has created and celebrate individual differences that make each person unique. FCC is a universally inclusive church, welcoming individuals of every race, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, and at all stages of life, health, and ability. No matter who you are or where you are in life's journey, we welcome you to explore personal pathways in community with us.

CORE VALUES

We believe in God and Jesus as the Christ while accepting other traditions, practices, neighbors of other faiths, and other members of the body of Christ.

Worship

We extend Christ's invitation to everyone to share the Lord's Table in worship. We celebrate believer's baptism as a symbol of commitment and of God's grace. We provide a place of peace, comfort, and safety. We empower all people who call FCC home, regardless of membership, to do ministry here as they feel called. All are invited to participate in any aspect of worship, study, and service.

Spiritual Growth and Study

We provide opportunities to deepen spirituality. We encourage questioning

as a way to seek theological understanding. We are grounded in Biblical study and reflection.

Service and Outreach

We recognize that we are all part of the family of God and seek peace and justice for all people and our home the earth. We support missions locally and worldwide, and work independently and jointly with other churches, interfaith groups, social service agencies, and civic organizations. We meet individual and community needs with tangible action and authentic relationships. We open our doors to the community through the arts, festivals, workshops and programs, our health ministry, and show our hospitality in good food and good company.

Season's Greetings! I hope this Christmas finds your family with blessings to spare and share! As usual, First Christian will be abuzz with holiday events for the whole family.

Young Disciples in December
Instead of performing at the Christmas dinner, our Christmas Play will be during worship on Christmas Sunday, Dec. 20. The children will be a part of the entire worship service much like the Children's Sabbath in October, and the sermon that day will be replaced by their play of the Christmas story. The drama focuses on the experiences of Mary and Elizabeth, following our lectionary. There are many ways children can be involved. We need actors, readers, soloists (or duets), choir singers, musicians, and helpers with offertory. Please let me know as soon as you can if your child is participating and what they might like to do, so we can plan for them. Also, Santa will visit during coffee hour following this special worship service, so please let me know what children will be there so the Jolly Old Elf will have a special

gift for every child who comes. Also, I'm in need of adult helpers Dec. 6, Dec. 13 & Dec. 20 to prepare the children for the play and put it on. We will spend those weeks in Sunday School working on the play and music, and making props and costumes for it while learning the Christmas story. Sunday School will break over SIU's Christmas break and resume when the university does the week of Jan. 17.

Our other special events for Christmas are the Hanging of the Greens during worship Sun, Nov. 29, and the Lights Fantastic Parade at 6:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 5. First Christian will have cookies and hot cocoa, so be sure to stop by after the parade. Our beloved Candlelight Christmas Eve Service is at 7 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 24.

Warm Christmas Greetings,
Marleen Shepherd, Ministerial Intern /
Christian Education Coordinator
(618) 457-6817, mshepherd@fcc-carbondale.org

Important Dates

Saturday, Dec. 5 – Lights Fantastic Parade 6:30 p.m. with cookies @ FCC following.

Sunday, Dec. 20 – Christmas Play during Sunday worship & special visit from St. Nick during Coffee Hour.

Thursday, Dec. 24 – Candlelight Christmas Eve Service 7 p.m.

Friday, Jan. 8 – Australia Slideshow Dinner 6 p.m. at FCC



My Trip to Australia

I will be attending the Parliament of the World's Religions in Melbourne, Australia Dec. 1-11. Thank you to everyone who has supported me in providing money or preparing or buying baked goods at Fall Fest. I will have a slideshow dinner in thanks at 6 p.m. Friday, Jan. 8 at First Christian. If you have contributed in any way, you are invited! I look forward to sharing this once-in-a-lifetime experience with my church family, and I am so grateful for your help in getting there.

Good Luck and Safe Travels Marleen!

There is still time to donate to help Marleen on her trip

Friday, Jan. 8 – Australia Slideshow Dinner 6 p.m. at FCC



December 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
		1	2	3	4	5 6p: Lights Fantastic Parade 7p: Open House	
				10	11	12 9a-12p: Cookie Walk	
6 Dedication of Christmas Gifts	Office Closed Pastor's Sabbath	8	9 9a-2p: Lisa Moore Community Alter-native Mtg.	10a-12N: Morning Etrude & Salad Luncheon	6p-8p: Girl Scouts		
13 10:3a Christmas Carol Service	Office Closed Pastor's Sabbath	14	15	16	17 6p-8p: Girl Scouts	18	19
20 10:3a: Children's Christmas Pageant 11:3a: Santa Visit during Coffee Hour 5p: Dieken's Christmas	Office Closed Pastor's Sabbath	21	22	23	24 6p-9p: Girl Scout Leaders 12N: Office closed for holiday 7p: Christmas Eve Service	25 6p-8p: Girl Scouts	26
27 Office Closed Pastor's Sabbath	28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve	Office Closed	Guiding Elder: Rachel Nelson Deacon of the Month: Toby Nelson Worship Coordinator:	

First Christian Church Birthdays and Anniversaries

December Birthdays

12/4 - Andrea Schmulbach	12/20 - Katherine Graves
12/4 - Greg Maddox	12/21 - Vera Felts
12/8 - John Nance	12/21 - Lila Hall
12/8 - Carrie Barthelme	12/21 - Reon Chancey
12/9 - Katie Legan	12/29 - Peggy Stockdale
12/13 - John Klein	12/29 - Nancy Mallett
12/16 - Maya Kayne	12/31 - Tristen Ellis
12/17 - Sandy Lowell	
12/19 - Les Miller	

Anniversaries

12/12 - Michael & Amanda Eddings
12/18 - Richard & Chris Klein
12/26 - Ron & Katherine Graves
12/31 - Stephanie Graves & David Schremp



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