

The Link

Volume 42, Number 12

February 24, 2011

Sunday Worship:

2/27/11 at 9:20 AM
Sondra Eddings preaching

3/6/11 at 9:20 AM
YOUTH SUNDAY

3/13/11 at 9:20 AM
Tim Diebel preaching
FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

Prayer Themes:

February 27: **Week of Compassion:** Please pray for the special offering, and for all those around the world who will receive assistance through our financial gifts.

March 9: **Ash Wednesday:** Please pray for our collective and individual journey through Lent, as we seek to be more responsive to the movement of God's Spirit.

March 18: **Mission Trip:** Please pray for the group who will be traveling to Guatemala March 18-26, and for all those to whom the participants will minister.

Lenten Studies Focus on Central Precepts of Faith

Throughout the season of Lent - which begins on Ash Wednesday, March 9 - we will be utilizing a recent book by Ronald Allen, Professor at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis. The book, titled *A Faith of Your Own: Naming What You Really Believe*, gives attention to several of the "load-bearing walls" of the Christian faith - God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, God's Ultimate Purposes, the Church, Evil, etc. - and invites the reader into an adult process of reflection and consideration similar to what many did as youth in the "Pastor's Class", and perhaps haven't done since. Together, in sermons, in classes and special services, we will think carefully about the nuances of our believing.

One of the special worship opportunities will be the weekly Chancel Prayers experience each Wednesday at 12:15 on the sanctuary chancel. This simple, interactive worship experience offers a time of mid-week devotion accomplished well within the confines of the lunch hour, and includes music, readings, silence, guided reflection, and shared prayer.

First Christian Church will once again share the Maundy Thursday service during Holy Week with the members of Christ Community Church, in a simple supper and worship time in Fellowship Hall beginning at 6 pm. Good Friday will find us in the Sanctuary at 7 pm for a special experience reflecting on the day of crucifixion.

Grace Offering

WISDOM FROM THE CELTS

I don't know about you, but I always thought Celtic spirituality originated in Ireland - that seems to be what I heard referenced most often. But in PrairieFire class last month, I learned that Celtic spirituality originated in Britain, most notably from the teachings of Pelagius in the 4th century.

Celtic spirituality believes God is found in all of life. Within all of creation is found something of the presence of the Uncreated - whether the most beautiful flower or the smallest stone, something of God is there. The universe did not form out of nothing, it formed out of God. And if we are attentive, then creation becomes a transparency through which the light of God can be seen. "In the wind roaring through a great forest or in the colors of the sky at sunset we can perceive the sound and light of creation and find in them God's graces of healing and creativity." (J. Phillip Newell) ... This is what I understood of Celtic wisdom - the need to be attentive to the voice of God moving among us in creation as much as we are attentive to the voice of God in scripture, for both have something to remind us about the One who created us and gives us life.

But I have come to learn that at its heart, Celtic wisdom has an even deeper truth to impart for it teaches that the goodness of God is found within each of us, female and male from the moment of our birth. At a time when the Western church was forming around the doctrine of "original sin" - that the Genesis story tells us all persons are born depraved with no good in them and it is only through baptism within the church that the image of God is placed within us - the Celtic church taught that we are each born essentially good, with the image of God in us and that while there is bad within us, at times covering our view of the good, Christ came to return us to the goodness of our created nature. The spiritual and the material, heaven and earth, are not separate but intertwined through our very existence and throughout all of life.

Celtic wisdom would teach us that we do not need to strive to "find" God. We already have God in us, each of us, in the most fundamental, essential way. We are already "in Christ" - that is the place from which we move, the frame from which we view life. What we seek to do is use that frame to view and to understand the experiences of this existence. The more loving, just, grace-filled our actions are, the more they demonstrate who we are, our authentic selves. It's not that we seek to be "more" loving or "more" caring or "more" ... as if we need to add to who we are so we can become loving or become caring. I am loving, you are loving, and just, grace-filled, merciful, joyous - for we are in God and where God exists there is not room for anything else.

The desire, and the challenge, is to live in such a way that I see you through this lens, first, for the Celts believe that the divine image within is more profound than any outward distinction and division between men and women. ... Isn't this what we strive for at First Christian - to welcome all as the image of God?

I pray that we each become so deeply connected with God through the immediacy of our daily living that we are able to see and respond to the Christ-image in others. In that we will understand that heaven and earth are truly intertwined.

Grace and peace,
Suzanne



FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH STAFF

Senior Minister

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Nanette Johnson njohnson@fccdm.org

LOGOS



Wednesday Evenings

Grades K-5: 4:25 to 7:00 p.m.
Grades 6-12: 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Weekly Themes:

March 2 - Read Across America/
Dr. Seuss' Birthday

March 9 - Join the Safari

Worship Skills:

Sunday, February 27

K-2 - Worship Participation
3rd- 5th Grade - Bulletin/Greeters
Middle School - Serve punch and cookies
at Friendship Time

Sunday, March 6

Middle School - Bulletins/Greeters
High School - Youth Sunday

Please arrive at 8:55 a.m.

unless otherwise noted on take-home sheets.

Service Project

Children & Family Urban Ministries

Donation deadline: Wednesday, March 2

Last call to donate glue sticks, markers, construction paper, drawing paper, mechanical pencils, and children's books (gently used or new) for our neighbors at Children & Family Urban Ministries housed in Trinity United Methodist Church on the near north side. Cash or checks to First Christian Church with check memo marked "LOGOS Project" are also appreciated and we will shop for you. Contributions will be dedicated at LOGOS on March 2, when we celebrate Read Across America/Dr. Seuss' Birthday.

Disciples Women

Ramsey Guild

The Disciples Women will be selling Ramsey Guild memberships on Sundays, March 13 & 20, following worship time. Memberships are \$1 each, with additional donations accepted. Men are also welcome to join the guild.

Memorial Books

The Church library is for the use of all church members, and is funded through the Disciples Women's budget. During the year, monetary contributions are also received from groups and individuals who wish to memorialize a loved one through having a book added to the library. A book plate is placed in the front of each book, indicating the person honored by the contribution. The family of the deceased is also notified of the gift. In 2010, the following memorial books were added to our shelves:

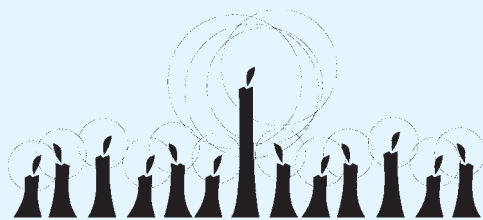
<u>Title</u>	<u>In Memory Of</u>
<i>Cold Tangerines</i>	Barbara DeHaven
<i>Catherine's Gift</i>	" "
<i>Queen Anne's Lace</i>	Kala Fay
<i>Blooms Again</i>	
<i>God's Enduring Presence</i>	Lois Goode
<i>Living Into Hope</i>	Grace Hendershott
<i>The Last Song</i>	" "
<i>Generous Faith</i>	" "
<i>In the Company of Jesus</i>	Nadine Machesney
<i>the Funny Shape of Faith</i>	" "
<i>Free Refill</i>	Lois Murrow



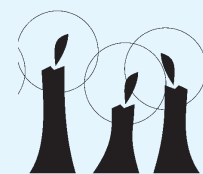
Youth SPRING FLOWER & PLANT SALE

Spring is just around the corner! It's time now to order your flowers and plants from the youth of the church. This annual fund-raiser will help to support our youth on their summer trip to the General Assembly in Nashville, TN.

The youth will be in the narthex each Sunday in March to take your Flower & Plant order. Payment is due when you place your order. The plants and flowers will be available for you to pick up at the church on Saturday, May 14 from 9 to 11 a.m.



The Contemplative Corner



for your Spiritual Journey



"The noise and frenetic character of modern life, the excessive chatter, so much information, so much entertainment—all of this has to quiet down."

— Fr. Thomas Keating, Trappist monk and priest

Calling on Nature's Music

Several years ago, before I learned the essential rhythm of giving and receiving, I found myself overburdened with seemingly endless responsibilities and activities that left me in a hyper frenzied state. A vacation to Colorado's Rocky Mountain National Park provided an opportunity to taste the soul-soothing benefits of nature's special music.

Desperate and on a whim, I headed to a scenic area of the park to be alone and settle my thoughts. I sat on a large boulder overlooking a rushing mountain stream and focused on the pulsating water splashing and ricocheting over jagged rocks and broken twigs, jarring debris from hidden crevices and whisking it away. The rhythmic sound of the icy, frothing current echoed in my ear and I gradually began to feel the weight of my burdens lifting from me, carried downstream with the other debris. I don't know how long I sat mesmerized by the musical notes of that stream, but I do know I left in a different state than I had arrived.

Now, when I am stressed and overburdened, I mentally return to that mountain stream, vividly recalling how the water sounded as it swirled and eddied downstream. And every time, I find the same comfort.

It turns out there's actually scientific research on this subject. It's called "guided imagery" and it is being used for everything from anxiety to cancer therapy. It works like this: when we re-image a peaceful moment in our memories— and do so with as much clarity and detail as possible— we will experience a calming that puts things into perspective again. (Of course, it helps if we were fully engaged in the calming moment we're using as our guide.)

I encourage you to try this. Search your memory for those moments when you were most at peace and re-image every sensory detail, allowing them to wash over you. And be on the lookout for new moments. You never know when you might need to call on them.

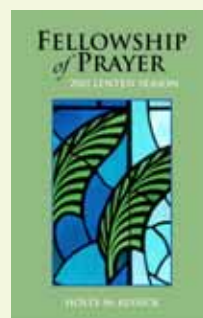
Blessings on your journey,

Mary Jo Franklin

FELLOWSHIP of PRAYER

Lenten Devotional Book

Daily devotional readings by Rev. Holly McKissick are contained in the 2011 *Fellowship of Prayer* booklet. The author writes, "If our goal is to be different people come Easter Sunday than we are on Ash Wednesday, we must take time ... engage in intentional practice, and participate in a supportive community."



These Lenten guides are available at a cost of \$3 each, and may be purchased on Sundays after worship, or from the church office during the week.

Giving to Outreach Soared in 2010

There are several community ministries that our congregation supports, such as the DMARC Food Pantry. There are numerous national and global efforts supported by the larger church, such as Week of Compassion and Reconciliation, Higher Education and our shared Regional work. And then there are those particular special offerings we receive from time to time that benefit special initiatives or needs around us – the Farmer’s Market, school supplies, etc. You might be interested to know that in 2010 our congregation contributed \$59,800 to those various non-budget projects and concerns.

A brief rundown of a few of those follows:

Christmas Offering (benefiting the Christian Church in the Upper Midwest Region)	\$1310
Easter Offering	\$1220
Pentecost Offering (benefiting New Church establishment)	\$ 895
Reconciliation Offering (combating racism)	\$1296
Thanksgiving Offering (benefiting Higher Education ministries)	\$1099
Week of Compassion (Disaster Relief)	\$11,574
Food Pantry (cash only)	\$11,441
Fifth Sunday offerings	\$1040
Blanket Fund	\$ 412

Good work, faithful congregation!

THANK YOU!!

A big thanks to all who attended the Sweetheart Dance put on by the Choir. We raised 750 dollars for robe cleaning and Drake Choral Scholars. Special thanks to Pat Oberbillig and Gladys Sawyer and their merry mint makers; Irene Wiltsie and Pat for the decorations; Pat Campbell heading the kitchen; and all the members of the choir and church who helped out. It was a great night. Thanks!

– Ben Allaway

Celtic Mass Tickets

MidwesTix.com is selling tickets now for **Heaven & Earth: Mass on the Celtic Journey, April 2** at First Christian Church. They will also be sold in the church office. The work will now be fully choreographed with 8 dancers, a 200-voice choir, Tommy Sands and many other fine guest artists. This is becoming one of the most talked-about concerts of the year. Get your tickets early, and as always, use this program as a fun way to invite friends to come and check out First Christian. IPTV will be filming that night, so it will have a special excitement. Pray for the preparations and program to be a blessing to God’s people. For more resources and info go to <BenAllaway.com>.

MISSION TRIP: YOU CAN HELP!

GUATEMALA - MARCH 18-26

As most of you are aware, First Christian Church (FCC) is participating in another mission trip to Central America. We are excited to be going again this year and want to invite you to be a part of this ministry as you have in the past.

FCC has always been active in mission work. We are involved in mission in our own community as well as around the world. We have participated in 8 previous mission trips to Central America.

This year we are returning to Guatemala along with several members of Ankeny and Newton Christian churches where we will build another greenhouse. We are again working with CIEDEG. We are also bringing packets of seeds prepared for Central America, purchased with a grant from the Des Moines Area Hunger Hike. Those participating from FCC are: Jerry & Gladys Sawyer, and Jerry & Vivian Mogensen.

This is your chance to participate in this ministry by donating items. We will be putting together school kits for children and health kits for women and families. Items needed are:

- 100 Nail clippers
- 100 emery boards
- combs

Please bring all donated items to the church by Sunday, February 27th.

Please call Jerry or Vivian at 253-0390 if you have any questions. We know you will be truly blessed.

First Christian Church

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Des Moines, Iowa 50311
515.255.2181

fax: 515.255.8759

Web: www.fccdm.org

Christian Church in the Upper Midwest:

www.uppermidwestcc.org

Sunday Morning Schedule:

9:20 am -- Morning Worship

10:45 am ---- Friendship Time

11:00 am ----- Learning Hour

OFFICE HOURS

Mon-Thurs — 8:30-4:30

Friday — 8:30-1:00

The Link ...

... is published twice per month.

Submissions are due Wednesday of the previous week and may be edited for length, clarity, or for consistency with other articles.

NEXT DEADLINE:

March 2 (March 10 issue)



The Tower Chimes played for Christmas Eve, and then were silenced for additional necessary work. Now they are ringing again. They sound the Westminster Chimes for the hour and half-hour, and at 10:00 am, 1:00 pm and 5:00 pm hymns are played. Be sure to listen for them when you are in the neighborhood!

WE ARE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST, an Open & Welcoming community of faith, called to witness to God's creative power in the midst of a richly diverse neighborhood. We are challenged to share in a vibrant Spirit-led common life. As we mature in the Spirit and respond to God's calling, we are empowered and compelled to reach out to neighbors near and far in a reconciling ministry partnership.



Board Authorizes Hymnal Purchase

At its February meeting, The Church Board approved a recommendation from the Worship Ministry that a portion of the bequest monies from the Rachel Tupper estate be used to purchase a sanctuary set of *Chalice Praise*, the hymnal companion from Chalice Press. Since the time this volume was published, we have increasingly used songs from the book (though reprinted as inserts in the bulletin with copyright permission). Purchase of pew copies of the book will relieve us of the need to burden the bulletins with so many inserts, enable us to be better environmental stewards, and make a wider variety of church music more readily and generally available for worship and other church gatherings.

We are also offering you the opportunity to purchase your own copy of *Chalice Praise* for personal use, at a special discounted rate. Individual copies will be available for \$12, including tax. Related resources will also be available, including the full-accompaniment version of *Chalice Praise*, the hardcover "pew edition" of *Chalice Hymnal*, the LARGE PRINT version of *Chalice Hymnal*, and a CD which contains 20 of the songs from the *Chalice Praise* songbook. Order deadline is March 8. Please use the order form enclosed in your Sunday bulletin (or available from the church office), and be sure to include your payment. Please do not include anything on your check other than for this music order, which will be processed separately from any donations.