



Connecting
Us with God and
one another

December 1, 2012

Senior Pastor:

Michael Stein (ext 30)

Office Manager:

Kirsten Bayne (ext 21)

Custodians:

Max & Marcia Peters

Music Ministers:

Troy Schuh, Pianist

Karen Lee, Organist

Gina Schuh-Turner,

Choir Director (ext 23)

Nursery Coordinator:

Tammy Swartz (ext 24)

Wedding Coordinator:

Kathy Vaughn

Youth Minister:

Rachel Nelson (ext 22)

Licensed Ministers:

Pam Hilliard

Tracy Morgan

Dennis Miller

LifeCare Email:

fcclifecare@comcast.net

Sunday Morning Services:

9:00 Worship Service

10:30 Sunday School for all ages

If you have information for our

Link, please e-mail that

information to:

kirsten@lovelanddisciples.org

By the 15th of each month.



ANNUAL MEETING

Annual Meeting Update and Follow-up Meeting

At the annual meeting on Sunday November 18th, Rev. Michael Stein was confirmed as Interim Minister. The 2013 officers, and other positions were also affirmed. However, the 2013 Budget Proposal recommended by Board of Directors was *not* confirmed by the majority of members voting at the congregational annual meeting.

**There will be a special follow-up meeting of the
FCC congregation on
Sunday, December 9th at 10:30.**

The purpose is to discuss and vote on a *new* recommendation for the 2013 Budget. Please attend and participate in this important meeting on the future of our ministry together.

MEET OUR NEW PASTOR



Reverend Michael Stein

In our congregation meeting November 18th, The Reverend Michael Stein was overwhelmingly approved for a minimum two year appointment as our Interim Senior Minister. Although a Nebraska native, Pastor Stein has longstanding ties in Colorado; his wife Carla grew up in Salida and both their adult children were born in the state. He also holds a degree from the University Of Denver College Of Law.

Like his father before him, the move to ministry was a midlife career change. At nearly 40 years old, Pastor Stein – who prefers to be called “Michael” – left a career in criminal justice and law enforcement to enroll in Phillips Theological Seminary. The family sold their house in Broomfield and moved to Oklahoma, where Carla worked for Oklahoma State University while Michael took classes and pastored a rural congregation outside Stillwater.

Upon graduation, Michael was ordained in the same Lincoln, Nebraska church where he was baptized 30 years earlier. He then accepted a call to be minister for the Disciples congregation in Scottsbluff, a Nebraska city just 150 miles northeast of Loveland. The call lasted for 13 years – the longest in the congregation’s history – until August, when the family decided to return to Colorado to be closer to family.

Carla Stein was appointed in July as Dean of Student Services for the Boulder County Campus of Front Range Community College in Longmont. Their daughter Emily, a graduate of Disciples-related Drury University, lives in Denver and teaches English as Second Language (ESL). Son David graduated in May from Texas Christian

University and is now an admissions counselor for the Fort Worth school. Among his responsibilities is recruiting students from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) nationwide.

As is typical of a small denomination like the Disciples, Michael is not a total stranger in our congregation. Longtime member Lee Sparks was in his last year of seminary when he arrived at Phillips, and Katherine Sparks was also pastor of a congregation in Oklahoma during that time. Youth Director Rachel Nelson also worked with Michael on International Affairs Seminar, a joint mission project of the Nebraska and Central Rocky Mountain regions. Several youth from our congregation accompanied them to New York and Washington, D.C.

According to Michael, the call to our church is in some ways a return to his roots. “Carla and I were members of First Christian Church in Boulder (now Cairn Christian Church in Lafayette) when I was asked to serve on the pastoral search committee. Our congregation had recently been through a lot of trauma with ministerial misconduct and deep divisions and mistrust among the members.”

In the course of a year-and-a-half search for a new pastor, Michael says he heard God’s call to ministry for himself. With the guidance of a congregation Elder and the Interim Minister – as well as his father who was in the final stages of lung cancer – Michael began taking classes at Iliff School of Theology in Denver to test the waters. He preached his first sermon on Easter Sunday at the eastern Colorado Disciples churches in Ordway and Manzanola where his father was pastor.

“My dad’s voice was virtually gone, and I stepped in to preach” Michael relates. “I told them preaching your first sermon on Easter is like being an NFL rookie and playing your first game in the Super bowl”.

The Reverend Jesse O. Stein died a month later, but his brother – a United Methodist minister who also has clergy son -- participated in Michael’s ordination service. In lighter moments, Michael jokes about the “genetic defect” that causes family members to enter ministry.

Pastor Michael Stein began his ministry with us immediately after the congregation vote, and looks forward to celebrating Advent and Christmastide in worship beginning December 2.

Rachel's Remarks

Fall Retreat

The first weekend in November, 30 youth and 15 adults from around the region gathered at John Wesley Ranch in Divide, CO for the regional CYF (high school) Fall Retreat, Andy, Miranda, and I among them. We played, sang, participated in workshops, and worshipped together, exploring the theme for the weekend, which focused on developing and growing a personal relationship with God. Worship services focused on checking in on the current state of our relationship with God, praying by candlelight for reconciliation or greater depth and renewed passion in our relationship, and watching the sun rise while making a new level of commitment to God. Small group workshops addressed important components of relationship: communication (nurturing a prayer life and learning to communicate with God as well as listen for God's voice), anger management (understanding anger and how to work through it), fun and laughter (celebrating God's presence in times of joy, silliness, embarrassing moments, and fun adventures), and everyday experiences (incorporating connections to God throughout a normal day, finding ways to include God in the inner workings of our life, both big and small).

It was a weekend rich with food for our souls, and we came home with deeper insights into our understanding of God's heart, God's desire to be known by us, and our ability to enter into a dynamic relationship with God that is more than just 'belief in' God, but a living, growing, interactive exchange of love. As we transition into the season of Advent and begin to anticipate once again our annual celebration of Christ's birth on earth, let us remember that Christ came to reveal God's heart to us, so that we may better know God and enter more fully into that most sacred of relationships. Let us take time to check in on that relationship, seek reconciliation and depth, and celebrate the many ways that we are blessed by the love of our Maker.

With hope and gratitude,
Rachel

Weekly Youth Meetings

for youth in grades 6 – 12

Sundays: Rush Hour

Our Youth class meets in the NW corner youth room after Sunday morning worship

Wednesdays: Xone 77

Youth Groups in Minnerly Hall,
6:00 – 8:00 pm
Worship, faith development,
fellowship, fun, and food!

Upcoming Youth Events

Clothing the Cold, Warming the World

December 1

Our youth will be participating in an ecumenical benefit hosted by Plymouth UCC in Fort Collins for the Homelessness Prevention Initiative, a nonprofit, grassroots organization that provides rental aide to families on the brink of homelessness, Homeless Gear, an organization which provides outdoor equipment, clothing, and hygiene items to those experiencing homelessness, and the Larimer County Food Bank, providing food to those in poverty. The youth event will include speakers and simulations to educate youth about homelessness and expand their understanding of compassion and justice.

Hands to Heaven

Christmas Eve

We will once again be contributing to Christmas Eve worship with the beauty of sign language interpretation of music. All youth are invited to participate – rehearsals will occur throughout December.

Want more info?

Email Rachel@lovelanddisciples.org if you'd like to join the youth e-news list, and/or "like" us on Facebook! – just search for "Xone 77 Youth" to find our page.

FCC Youth Ministry Mission Statement

Our Youth Ministry exists to **EXPOSE** teenagers to God's love, to **CONNECT** them with other Christians and help them **GROW** in their faith, challenging them to **SEEK** God's presence and to **SERVE** others for Christ.

OWLS Outing

The OWLS will gather on Friday December 14, 2012 at 10:00 AM. We be meeting for coffee and fellowship at the home of Bonnie & Harvey Ruegsegger, 2457 Nyssa Drive , Loveland. Rev. Michael Stein will be joining the group. Please see the sign up sheet in the hall near the kitchen.



Giving Tree

The holiday season is almost upon us! However, for all of us in the First Christian Church family we know that will be a great thing for those who benefit from our Christmas Giving Tree program.

If you have not been a part of this program in the past please consider volunteering. You will most definitely feel like you made a difference in someone's life, and what a great thing that is for everyone. Please contact Kirsten or Tom Boudreau if you would like to join in on the fun.

The schedule for this year is to put up the tree on Saturday, December 1st. We hope to get all of the presents and food returned to the church by the 16th of December. Delivery to those in need will be the weekend of the December 22nd.

So, with that I say Tally Ho, Ho, Ho to this year's Giving Tree program at our wonderful church

Christmas Caroling

It's that time of year where we break out our songbooks and sing a joyful song, to our distinguished members who are sometimes unable to attend worship.

Please join us on Saturday December 8th at 2:00 p.m. in Fellowship hall where we will gather to prepare our hearts and our voice's. Then afterwards we will meet back at the First Christian Church for dinner and fellowship. If you have any questions please contact Ken Keeler at 970-667-1202 or Tammy Swartz at 970-962-9612.



- December 16th at 9:00am will be the Christmas Cantata
- December 23rd at 9:00am regular worship service
- December 24th at 6:00pm will be our Christmas Eve Family Worship—nursery will not be available



Church in the World

Global Ministries has provided us with a year of missionaries that we can pray for each week. Each month I will give you the featured people that we can be praying for. Feel free to visit the Global Ministries web page to find a Weekly Prayer. www.globalministries.org

December 2nd Jayanthi and Jim Wilson- Botswana

December 9th Bruce Van Voorish-Hong Kong

December 16th Carlos Madrazo-East Timor

December 23rd Susan Valiquette and Scott Couper –South Africa

December 30th Elena Huegel-Chile

Today I Go To Worship...

...not to have a cultural experience.

...not to try to learn new words in the language.

...not to focus on the kids from the area.

...not to try to connect to friends.

...not to evaluate methods or traditions.

...not to analyze a preacher or style.

...not merely because I am called to...

...but because I can.

...I can because of what Christ has done for me on the cross, I can approach the throne of grace with confidence - for prayer and for worship. I don't have to be afraid of being struck down by the just wrath of a holy God because my sinfulness is so far removed & offensive to His holiness. I don't have to be afraid to say the name of the Lord or invent words to get around it. But because I am covered by the blood of Jesus, I am free now to join the heavenly beings, all of creation, and the saints from all of history in worshiping at the feet of Jesus.



First Sunday Food

First Sunday Food has been a great success in 2012. FCC as a Body of Christ will continue our efforts to support The House of Neighborly Service of Loveland. By doing this small act of kindness we are showing God's Love to our community along with being Church in the World. You will find a list of this year food items, that we will be collecting, be a list will also be posted by the Outreach board in the Fellowship Hall. We will be listing how much food items were collected from each month on this board. Be watching to see how we as a church are doing. What if you forget your food item on this given Sunday? That is ok, just bring in your items when you come the next Sunday and drop it off by the Nursery. The Nursery Staff will place it into a collecting bucket until the First Sunday collection date. What if you have food items in your pantry that you won't use? Bring those items in on the first Sunday and add them to our collection, the more food items the better. If you have any questions please contact Tammy Swartz at 970-962-9612

November food collected for HNS: 8 cans of Veggies, 1 can of chicken, 1 soup, 4-5 lbs of flour, 35 cake, brownie mixes, 28 muffin mixes, side items, 1 jello, 6 boxes side items, stuffing, potatoes ect. 1 box of cereal, 1 cookie mix, 4 bags of rice, 3 ramen noodles, 5 bottle of juices, 3 crackers, pretzels etc, 1 bisquick.

December-Canned Meat

Christmas Decorating Symbolism



Deck the Halls

The beginning of Advent is a time for the hanging of the greens and decorating the church with evergreen wreaths and trees that help to symbolize the new and everlasting life brought through Jesus Christ. When you arrive for worship, the church will be alive with symbolism of the Advent season. This article serves to identify the various traditions and meanings associated with the decorations.

We begin this season – this Holy season known at **Advent** four weeks before Christmas. It is a time when we prepare ourselves for the coming of the Messiah. Advent means

coming. We celebrate these days of Advent in preparation and expectation of Christ's arrival. It is a time for reflection but also a time for joy. It proclaims the revelation of God's love as expressed in Christ's birth in a humble stable, his sacrificial death on the cross, and his victorious resurrection. It points once again to the hope of Christ's coming as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Advent asks each of us to make room for the arrival of Christ the King.

The Sanctuary Evergreens – The most striking and most universal feature of Christmas is the use of evergreens. Among ancient Romans evergreens were an emblem of peace, joy and victory. Early Christians placed them in their windows to indicate that Christ had entered the home. Pine, fir, holly and ivy are called evergreens because they never change color. They are ever – green, ever-alive even in winter. They symbolize the unchanging nature of God, and they remind us of the everlasting life that is ours through Christ Jesus. In Isaiah 60:13 we find these words": "The glory of Lebanon shall come to you, the cypress, the plane, and the pine, to beautify the place of my sanctuary."

The Wreaths – Wreaths are hung in the sanctuary, lobbies and outside. Long before the birth of Christ, the custom of hanging wreaths of evergreens and sprays of pine and holly in the bleakness of winter was life in the midst of apparent death. They are also symbolic in that they are endless circles, which remind us of the endless love of God. Their green color – evergreen – once again reminds us of the new life that God gives to us will never die.

Advent Wreath – The circle of the wreath reminds us of God Himself, His eternity and endless mercy, which has no beginning or end. The green of the wreath speaks of the hope that we have in God, the hope of newness, of renewal, of eternal life. During this Advent time of preparation members of the congregation light an Advent Candle each Sunday of the season. The flame of each new candle reminds us that something is happening, and something more is still to come. The candles are arranged in a circle to remind us of the continuous power of God, which knows neither beginning nor ending. Each candle symbolizes various aspects of our waiting experience. The first candle is of Expectation or Hope; second – Peace; third – Love; fourth – Joy in fulfilled hope. On Christmas Eve we light the central white Christ candle which reminds us that Christ is the heart of the season, giving light to the world.

Continued on next page

The Poinsettias – The most popular flower of the Christmas season is the bright red Poinsettia. This beautiful flower was discovered growing wild in Mexico by Dr. Joel Robert Poinset, who was the first American Ambassador to Mexico from 1825 to 1829. He introduced this attractive flower to America in 1828. The people of Mexico and Central America call this brilliant tropical plant the “Flower of the Holy Night.” It’s also known as “The Flaming Star.” The poinsettia is a many-pointed star that has become a symbol of the Star of Bethlehem.

Chrismon Tree – The beautiful white and gold ornaments adorning the tree are called Chrismons. Chrismons comes from “CHRIST’s MONogram.” All Chrismons are combinations of white and gold; White, the liturgical color for Christmas, refers to our Lord’s Purity and Perfection; Gold refers to His Majesty and Glory. The symbols speak to Christians of the deep meaning of the gospel. The white lights on the tree point to Christ, “The light of the World.”

The Nativity – Placed in the lobby, one of the most heart-warming expressions of Christmas is the Nativity. It speaks of the mystery of God’s wisdom. Why God chose to send his son into our world as a baby of humble birth, born in common surroundings, we do not know. What we do know is that God reached out to all people including the poor and wealthy, the simple and the wise, the powerless and the powerful. All who found him knelt in humility before him. Whenever we see a Nativity we find ourselves with Mary and Joseph; with the shepherds and the Wise Men; bowing before the manger, overwhelmed by God’s expression of love in coming to us.

The Cross – The cross message is not separate from the stories of the Christ child. For Advent is but a beginning; it is the first chapter of the life of the One who came and lived and died. As Advent is hope, so is the cross. As Advent is peace, so is this symbol of human violence. As Advent is joy, so is this symbol of human pain. As Advent is love, so is this symbol of human hatred. In a sense they are similar.

Advent and the Cross – for both are really a beginning.

Wishing you a Blessed Advent and Christmas season,

Marcia Peters
Facilities Decorator





The Ankh is an ancient Egyptian hieroglyph representing life and regeneration. It was adopted by Christians as a symbol of eternal life.



The Chi Rho is one of the most ancient "sacred monograms" of Christ. They were developed by early Christians as a secret sign of their faith. The X and P in this monogram are actually a "Chi" and a "Rho" the first two letters in the Greek word for Christ. It has long been used by our Middle School youth as a symbol of their beginning life in Christ. The Chi Rho cross is also called the Cross of Constantine. The Chi Rho with the X turned to form a cross represents Christ the conquering King. The monogram has been styled in a variety of imaginative ways over the centuries. Other symbols are sometimes added to the monogram to call to mind a particular attribute of our Lord.



The circle because it has no beginning or end, is symbolic of eternity. It is used most often as a reference to God.

The Three Entwined Circles are symbolic for the Trinity. Circles represent the eternal nature of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Entwined, they remind us that God is one, even though he reveals himself in three Persons.



The Baptismal Cross. The Greek cross is superimposed on a Greek "Chi", the first letter of the Greek word for Christ. It forms a cross with eight arms. Since the number 8 is symbolic of rebirth and regeneration, this cross is often used as a baptismal cross.



The Latin Cross. This most common of all forms reminds us of the supreme sacrifice offered by Jesus for the sins of the world. The cross is empty to remind us of the resurrection and the hope of eternal life.



This is the Latin Cross with Sun Rays. This Cross in Glory is the rising sun behind the cross suggesting the new day when our Lord conquered death by His Resurrection.



This is the St. Andrew's Cross. According to tradition, St. Andrew felt unworthy to be crucified like his Lord, so he begged that his cross be made differently. It is a symbol of humility and suffering.



This Cross with Orb symbolizes the final triumph and reign of Christ over the world.



The Greek word for Fish is Icthus. The Greek word Icthus was used as an acrostic, with each letter beginning one word in the phrase, "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior". This symbol was used by believers in the early days of persecution as a secret sign of their shared faith. One person would draw an arc in the sand, and the other would complete the sign to show his brotherhood in Christ. Archeologists have found more than 75,000 such symbols etched on the walls of the catacombs.



The Fleur-de-lis is a stylized representation of the lily, a symbol of purity and so is a common reference to the virgin Mary. The triune representation has led to its adoption as a symbol of the Trinity.



This Heart represents love and the flames denote zeal in Christian love. 1 Corinthians 13: 13 says, "So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love."



The 5 Point Star represents the Star of Bethlehem. Shaped roughly like a human being, it represents Jesus' incarnation.



The 6 Point Star is the Creator's Star. The six points stand for the six days of creation. The six points are also said to represent the six attributes of God: power, wisdom, majesty, love, mercy and justice. This is also known today as the Star of David and is a symbol of modern-day Israel.



Early symbolic representations of the Trinity are rare, but the Triangle is probably the first. It represents God in three Persons. The doctrine of the Trinity comes first from the story of Jesus' baptism, where the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are each uniquely present. Jesus himself stated the doctrine in the Great Commission. Matthew 28: 18 "And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.'"



The Triangle and Circle represents the eternity of the Holy Trinity.

December Birthdays

BREINER, Dick	1-Dec
KNODEL, Ann	1-Dec
HAUGHEY, Kay	2-Dec
MENZE, Helen	4-Dec
GROFF, Phyllis	5-Dec
SPENCER, Keaton	5-Dec
DUNLAP, Gerry	7-Dec
SCHOTT, Luella	7-Dec
KOSCHEL, Doris	8-Dec
OLDSEN, Christi	8-Dec
KELLUMS, Kris	11-Dec
SWARTZ, Tammy	11-Dec
SPARKS, Lee	12-Dec
WALSTON, Elmer	13-Dec
PICKERT, Scott	16-Dec
DOESCHER, Jean	19-Dec
RUEGSEGGER, Dan	19-Dec
BRADY, Ryan	20-Dec
FARNHAM, Patricia	20-Dec
MOORE, Peggy	24-Dec
LYONS, Peggy	28-Dec
SWARTZ, Miranda	28-Dec
DYNOWSKI, Mazzy	29-Dec
PETERS, Max	29-Dec
WOHLMAN, Jeremy	30-Dec
BUROW, Don	31-Dec

December Anniversaries

HAYDEN, Kevin & Amy	7-Dec
FARNHAM, Steven & Patricia	16-Dec
WEBB, Gene & Judy	18-Dec
LYONS, Larry & Peggy	22-Dec
SCOHY, Richard & Donna	22-Dec
THOMPSON, Ed & Marsha	22-Dec
CHENEVERT, Richard & Sharon	23-Dec
HYATT, Charles & Carolyn	25-Dec
WALKER, Ron & Joyce	27-Dec



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2 9a Worship 10:30a Sunday School <i>First Sunday Food— Canned Meat</i>	3 6p Women's reunion group	4 6p Staff Meeting 6:30p Grief Share	5 10:30a Trustees 12p Life Tree Café 6p Xone 77 6p Reach 7p Life Tree Café	6 7p Chancel Choir	7 7:15a Men's reunion group 7p Friday Night Worship	8 2p Christmas Caroling to our shut-ins.
9 9a Worship 10:30a Sunday School <i>Christmas Special Offering</i>	10 9:30a Rachel Circle 6p Women's reunion group	11 6:30p Grief Share	12 12p Life Tree Café 6p Xone77 6p Reach 7p Life Tree Café	13 7p Chancel Choir	14 7:15a Men's reunion group 10a OWLS Outing 7p Friday Night Worship	15 Link Deadline
16 9a Christmas Cantata 10:30a Sunday School <i>Christmas Special Offering</i>	17 6p Women's reunion group	18 6:30p Grief Share 7p Mary's Circle	19 12p Life Tree Café 6p Xone77 6p Reach 7p Life Tree Café	20 7p Chancel Choir	21 7:15a Men's reunion group 7p Friday Night Worship	22
23 9a Worship 10:30a Sunday School 30 9a Worship 10:30a Sunday School	24 Christmas Eve 6p Christmas Eve Worship 31 New Years Day	25 Christmas Day	26 12p Life Tree Café 7p Life Tree Café	27	28 7:15a Men's reunion group 7p Friday Night Worship	29

First Christian Church
www.lovelanddisciples.org

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NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

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Last But Not Least

Vision Statement

Our vision is to be a growing, welcoming, diverse community of faith that worships, shares, and expresses through our service the love of God.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to know, grow, and show the love of God.

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