



Connecting  
Us with God and  
one another

December 1, 2015

### CONTACTING THE CHURCH STAFF

**Main Church Phone Number:**  
(970) 667-1318

#### **Pastoral Leadership Team**

**Michael Stein**

Senior Minister  
Extension 30  
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**Pam Hilliard**

Minister for Grief and Loss  
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**Tracy Morgan**

Commissioned Minister  
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#### **Mission Support Staff**

**Kirsten Bayne**

Office Administrator  
Extension 21  
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**Max and Marcia Peters**

Building Managers  
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**Tammy Swartz**

Nursery/Childcare Director  
Extension 24  
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**Gina Schuh-Turner**, Choir Dir.

**Karen Gullickson**, Organist

**Troy Schuh**, Pianist



#### **Sunday, Nov. 29**

9:00am Hope Candle  
Lit by the children

#### **Sunday, Dec. 6**

9:00am Peace Candle  
Lit by veterans of the congregation – all invited

#### **Sunday, Dec. 13**

9:00am Joy Candle  
Musical Cantata during Worship

#### **Sunday, Dec. 20**

9:00am Love Candle  
Brunch and caroling following worship

#### **Thursday, Dec. 24**

Christmas Eve  
7:00pm Candlelight Communion

## KEEPING THE “ADVENTURE” IN ADVENT



The time is upon us when I frequently see expressions in various places a desire to “keep Christ in Christmas”. I’m not always sure what people mean

when they say that, but it’s not a bad idea when done with thought and sincerity.

And sometimes it’s not. This year’s popular outrage emerged when the Starbucks coffee chain launched their annual change of cup colors from white to red for the holidays. Although they have never had explicitly religious symbols before, some felt the plain red cups were an affront to Christmas and Christianity.

We should never be ashamed to be followers of Christ, but sometimes our fellow Christians can embarrass us and impede the spread of the Gospel through the battles they choose to fight. It makes us look foolish and petty when the public sees Jesus’ followers acting this way – especially when there are far more important causes to be addressed.

It should not be forgotten that half the Gospel writers don’t include the story of Jesus’ birth in their narrative, and there is no evidence that Jesus himself was aware of or celebrated his birthday. The earliest Christians also did not observe Christmas, and neither did the European Christians who settled America.

By the same token, our critics can be just as absurd. If it’s fair to point out that that Christians should be more concerned with helping the poor and homeless than the décor of coffee cups, it’s equally fair to mention that walking past the poor and homeless on your way to spend \$5 on a cup of coffee (in a cup you’ll throw away) is no more noble.

Some of our Disciples colleagues proposed we capitalize on the media attention to point out that we’ve always had a “red cup”; the official color of our chalice logo. I didn’t object, but thought it better not to jump into the controversy even in a humorous way.

Rather than get caught up in the anxiety of the season – a condition fueled just as much by

the desire to sell things as it is by earnest religious faith – we can instead choose the path of Advent. We can forego the instant gratification of the commercial season that starts well before Thanksgiving to embrace the discipline of waiting in anticipation.

This discipline has been practiced in the Christian tradition for over 1,500 years. It ties to together two important points of the faith – anticipation of the arrival of the baby Jesus as well as the expectation of Christ’s return.

But the season is more than anticipation and expectation. The tradition and discipline of Advent is also *preparation*. Just as we prepare for Christmas by buying gifts and decorating our houses, Advent reminds us to prepare for Christ’s coming through spiritual awareness.

How can we open ourselves up to the Spirit of Christ in this season? Here are a few suggestions for Advent Discipline:

- **Daily Devotions:** Through coordination of your worship team, many in our church family have contributed to an Advent devotional with daily readings. The booklet will be available November 29<sup>th</sup>.
- **Extra Generosity:** In addition to (or in place of) buying extra things for yourself or family, you can make contributions of time or money to help those in need. For instance, the Disciples *Christmas Special Offering* helps support our ministry throughout the Central Rocky Mountain Region.
- **Just Breathe:** Make time in each day to take a deep breath, separating yourself from the hustle and anxiety of the season. Remember who you are and whose you are; a child of God and not just a market segment.

As the new Christian year begins, I look forward with anticipation to new awareness and understanding of Christ in each of our lives. My prayers are with you for a blessed and peaceful advent.

*Love, Grace and Peace;*  
*Michael*

## YOUTH GROUP ACTIVITIES



Christian Church  
(Disciples of Christ) United Church  
of Christ

The Disciples-UCC shared youth group thanks all who donated items for our homeless assistance project in November. Together, we assembled over 200 hygiene kits and continue to distribute them through our churches and other community organizations.

This Sunday, November 29<sup>th</sup>, we will join with other Disciples and UCC youth groups for our big **"5th Sunday" Youth Event at Loveland Laser Tag!** We will meet at First Congregational Church (800 N. Lincoln) at 5:30p.m. and take the church van over to LLT.

The cost for our youth group participants is **\$12 per person.**

## FIRST SUNDAY FOOD BANK

On the first Sunday of each month, we invite our church family to contribute non-



HOUSE OF  
NEIGHBORLY  
SERVICE

"Help for today... Hope for tomorrow"

perishable food items for the community food bank. **Canned meat products** are the suggested food for

December, but any contributions are appreciated.

## HOLIDAY CELEBRATION

The **Older Wiser Livelier Seniors** are invited to a Christmas gathering at the home of Bonnie and Harvey Ruegsegger. This will be a time for sharing of a Christmas memory and coffee and rolls. We will begin at 10:00 a.m. on December 11. Please sign up on the OWLS sheet by the kitchen. Come join us!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

## HELP SPREAD THE CHEER!

The Fellowship of Elders invites everyone to join in sharing the joy of the season with those who are homebound.

**Following worship on Sunday, December 20,** we will enjoy a light meal together and then head out for caroling in groups.

Please sign up in the Gallery if you plan to participate.



# financial ministry

## October Stewardship

<b>Income:</b>		\$18,144
	\$3,523 <b>less</b> than budget	
<b>Expenses:</b>		\$18,550
	\$2,229 <b>below</b> budget	

*As we reported during the annual meeting, our income year to date is **\$22,301 lower than budgeted.** Fortunately, our staff and ministry teams have also held expenses to **\$18,432 below budget.** As a result, the shortage of income to expenses through the end of October was \$4,778.*

These continuing trends prompted the board to take additional actions this fall to realign expenses and to recommend a 2016 budget (which you approved) of \$10,000 less than the current year.

We hope that your generosity in the final two months of 2015 will erase the deficit so that we begin the new year in solid financial footing.

For those who claim charitable deductions for income tax purposes, you are encouraged to check with Office Administrator Kirsten Bayne to make sure your giving records are current before year end.

*Randy Kettenhofen, Treasurer*  
**FROM THE TRUSTEES**

Thank you for your enthusiastic reception to our report in the annual meeting, and for your support of the communications tower project. A lease agreement has been negotiated and signed, and the lessee is moving forward with necessary permits and regulatory steps.

Your Trustees are also working with the Mission Station team and others to complete the window replacement project we began last year. We hope to replace the last of the sliding glass doors on the courtyard and the windows in the north classrooms to improve energy efficiency so that we may reduce costs and reflect our care for God's creation.



# DECEMBER

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		<b>1</b> 6:30p Grief Share	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> 6p Bell Choir 7p Choir rehearsal	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>6</b> 9a Worship 10:15a Sunday School <i>First Sunday Food— Canned Meat</i>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> 6:30p Grief Share	<b>9</b> 9:30a Trustees	<b>10</b> 6p Bell Choir 7p Choir rehearsal	<b>11</b> 10a Owls Outing @ Ruegsegger's	<b>12</b> 3p Cantata Rehearsal
<b>13</b> 9a Christmas Cantata 10:15a Sunday School	<b>14</b> 9:30a Rachel Circle	<b>15 Link Deadline</b> 7p Mary Circle	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 6p Bell Choir 7p Choir rehearsal	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>20</b> 9a Worship 10:15a Sunday School	<b>21</b> 6p Worship Committee	<b>22</b> 7p Elders	<b>23</b>	<b>24 Christmas Eve</b>	<b>25 Christmas Day</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>27</b> 9a Worship 10:15a Sunday School	<b>28</b> 6p Worship Committee	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31 New Years Eve</b>		

# Birthdays

BREINER, Dick	12/01
HAUGHEY, Kay	12/02
MENZE, Helen	12/04
GROFF, Phyllis	12/05
DUNLAP, Gerry	12/07
SCHOTT, Luella	12/07
KOSCHEL, Doris	12/08
OLDSEN, Christi	12/08
SWARTZ, Tammy	12/11
BURCH, Travis	12/12
SPARKS, Lee	12/12
PICKERT, Scott	12/16
STEIN, Carla	12/16
DOESCHER, Jean	12/19
RUEGSEGGER, Dan	12/19
MOORE, Peggy	12/24
FINKBEINER, Cami	12/27
SWARTZ, Miranda	12/28
DYNOWSKI, Mazzy	12/29
PETERS, Max	12/29
WOHLMAN, Jeremy	12/30
BUROW, Don	12/31

# Anniversaries

WEBB, Gene & Judy	12/18
SCOHY, Richard & Donna	12/22
THOMPSON, Ed & Marsha	12/22
HYATT, Charles & Carolyn	12/25

**First Christian Church**  
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NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

PERMIT NO. 22

U. S. POSTAGE PAID

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

## 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.

**If you have information for our Link,  
please e-mail that  
information to:  
[kirsten@lovelanddisciples.org](mailto:kirsten@lovelanddisciples.org)  
By the 15th of each month.**

**Sunday Morning Services:**  
9:00 Worship Service  
10:10 Sunday School for all ages

