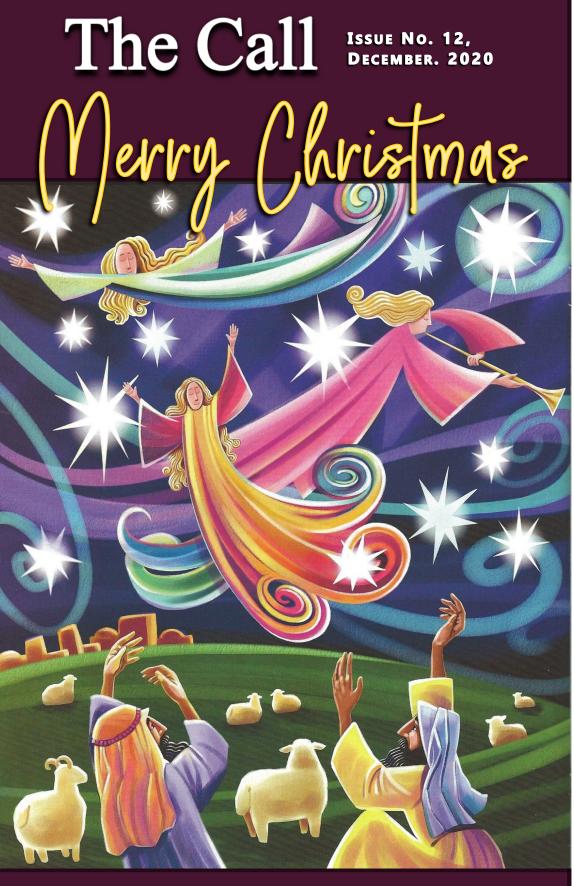


Inside This Issue

Merry Christmas	1
Worship Theme & Schedule	2
Looking Back, Moving Forward	4
Stewardship & Annual Congregational Mtg.	6
January Calendar	7
Christmas Offering	8
Regional News	9
News from the Pews	11
From the Trustees	13
Opportunities to Serve	14

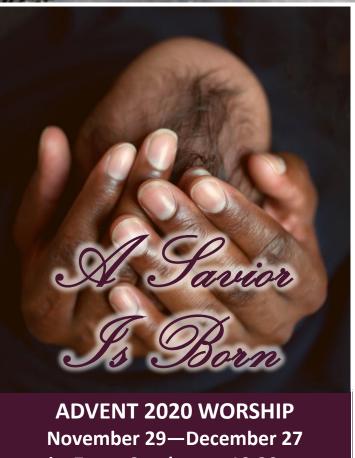
Ways to Connect with 15

FCC



From Pastor Mary Jane & Tim Button-Harrison, Janet Lott, Liz Collazo, Ty Schwartz, Sherri Khan, and Karen LeCount





via Zoom Sundays at 10:30 am

December 20 **ADVENT 4** Love

To Lift the Lowly Luke 1: 26-38

December 27 Christmas 1

Featuring Leadership from the Upper Midwest Region

CANDLELIGHT CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

via Zoom

Thursday, December 24, 2020, 7:00 PM **Zoom Online Link:**

fccames.org/SundayWorship

Meeting ID: 835 4977 8613

Passcode: 789716

Phone Connection: 1 312 626 6799

ID: 83549778613#



DECISION 2021: To Follow Jesus – No Turning Back

Epiphany, Lent, and Easter Worship 2021

I have decided to follow Jesus, I have decided to follow Jesus, I have decided to follow Jesus, No turning back, no turning back. Chalice Hymnal #344

The election is over. "DECISION 2020" language will not be part of our newsfeeds and newspapers. Whether your candidate won or lost, the decision has been made; the voters and electoral college delegates have spoken. After a contentious and heated election season, hopefully we, as people, and as a nation, can move forward and work together for the good of the people, especially those who are suffering due to economic, health, and so many other issues making so many people vulnerable.

For we who see Jesus as Savior, Messiah, Lord, Prince of Peace, we have another decision to make. It is a decision we make in all times and seasons. It is the decision, no matter what is happening around us, to follow Jesus. The year 2020, with all its unique challenges, presented us an opportunity to have a spiritual awaking; to realize what really matters, and to get our priorities straight. With the coming of a new year we have another opportunity to recommit ourselves to faithfully following Jesus and serving God with a clarity and an urgency that Jesus' first disciples experienced. To help us on the journey, we will turn to the Gospel of Mark. Between January 3 and April 4 (Easter) we will go through the entire book! Mark's gospel is a succinct, no nonsense, fast-paced, urgent telling of the Good News of Jesus Christ that can inspire and revive us. As we begin a new year, filled with hope and promise mixed with a bit of fear and doubt, may we strengthen our resolve... DECISION 2021: To Follow Jesus - No Turning Back!

—Pastor Mary Jane

January 3 Christmas 2	Journeying from Water to Wilderness Mark 1:1-20				
Epiphany					
January 10	Building Bold Faith Together Mark 2:1-22				
January 17	Sowing the Gospel Mark 4:1-9; 30-32				
January 24	Dealing with Demons Mark 5:1-20				
January 31	Healing Faith Mark 5:21-43				
February 7	Persisting Through the Pain Mark 6:1-29				
February 14	Coming in and Going Out Mark 7:1-23				
February 21	Listening and Following Mark 8:27-9:8				
LENT					
February 24	Ash Wednesday				
February 28	Putting First Things First Mark 10:17-31				
March 7	Becoming Great Through Serving Mark 10:35-45				
March 14	Loving God and Neighbor Mark 12:28-44				
March 21	Keeping Watch Mark 13:32-37				
March 28 Palm/Passion Sunday	Entering Jerusalem Mark 11:1-11				
	EASTER 2021				
April 4 Easter Sunday	Rolling Stones Mark 16:1-8				

Looking Back,

Moving Forward...

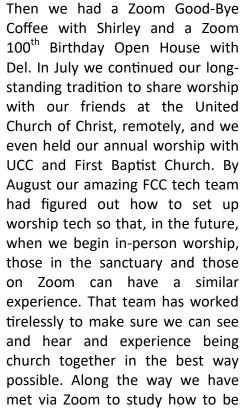
e began 2020 like every other year. We worshipped, studied, prayed, served, and gathered around tables of food and fellowship together, face to face, in our building at

6th & Clark Ave. We met a new friend named Pat who debuted from a puppet wall in front of the pulpit in our sanctuary. Pat was such a hit with children of all ages that Pat continued to show up each Sunday once Lent began. Then on March 11th the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic and our lives as we had known them changed dramatically.

On March 15th we experienced our first Zoom worship at First Christian Church. In just a few days we figured out how to move from inperson, in the building worship to remote online worship. Still "together" but now mediated through our screens we have been learning more and more how to do

this new kind of worship. And we began to record the Zoom worship and upload it to Facebook and YouTube so people unable to connect to Zoom could still share in worship. And we've been so grateful for friends, new and old, near and far, who have joined us using this new medium. Of course, our Zoom experiences also became the norm for our church gatherings, meetings, classes, and prayer groups. We started a weekly check in Coffee Fellowship and did everything we could think of to keep our connections to one another and to God strong. The Elders immediately went to work going through the list of our active fellowship to make sure everyone contact church" (remember, "we are the church together," as the song goes!).

In the summer we invited people to be video-taped offering greetings to the church, heart-felt good-byes to Shirley Malaby who moved to Oregon, and Happy 100th Birthday greetings to Del Woodward.



anti-racist and young adults have met to discuss theological ideas and issues. In the Fall, we had a drive-through distribution of Fall Kick-Off Worship bags complete with communion supplies, a hymnal, and many other items, and a coupon for drive-through ice cream to continue our Sunday Sundaes tradition! And the children through 6th grade have been receiving Sunday School To Go bags to keep them learning and engaged! We had a Zoom Hanging of the Greens Party and last Sunday we were filled with joy to experience the Children's Christmas Pageant during our Zoom worship and then follow that with our Annual Congregational Meeting where we successfully approved leadership and a budget for 2021!



Through these months we've learned and brainstormed and problem-solved and continued to offer ourselves in worship and giving and praying and serving. Our Stewardship Team made their appeal using the new "friends of Pat" puppets. Now in Advent we have mini-Tim leading us in the Advent Candle-lighting song each Sunday. And stay tuned. You just may meet the newest little friend this Sunday as we draw near to Christmas. And we will still experience the quiet and peace of Christmas Eve through our Zoom Candlelight Service. We've had mail-in baby showers and YSS Christmas gifts. We've continued to work with our ministry partners, especially Good Neighbor and Food at First through all the changes and distance and need. We even figured out how to present Bibles to 3rd graders and welcome a new member in new ways! Just think of all the memories we've created together in 2020!

Some of those memories are a mix of joy and sorrow. During this pandemic we said good-bye to our dear friends in faith, Dorothy Hayes and Lee Hogle. We are thankful for the gift of their lives among us and that they will continue to live in our hearts and memories. We have also prayed with and for so many who have been affected directly and indirectly, physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually by this pandemic.

As 2020 comes to a close many of us (maybe most/all) are glad this year is coming to an end. We have lost much, and grieved much, and endured much. Yet, we have gained much as well. We have learned what's truly important, and to put our trust and faith in God more fully. We have embraced our sacred traditions while thinking of new ways to keep them alive. And again and again we have seen that when we bring our gifts together, with God's help, we can do amazing things!

As we look to 2021, may we continue to hold one another nearly and dearly in our hearts, thoughts, and prayers as we seek God's wisdom and guidance in the coming year. May we continue to follow the leading of the Spirit and be open to new ways of being church. May we continue to welcome newcomers in our midst and live out our motto, "Come as you are, you belong." May we continue to

deepen our connection to one another and to God. And may God bless us and keep us and may the face of God shine upon us and grant us peace as we close 2020 and look to 2021!

—Pastor Mary Jane

Zoom Weekly Activity Ichedule

Sunday						
9:30 AM	Zoom Room Open Tech People Setup/ Check Musicians Practice	Online Link: fccames.org/ SundayWorship				
10:00 AM 10:25 AM 10:30	Fellowship Time Before Worship Greetings Video Worship	Meeting ID: 835 4977 8613 Passcode: 789716 Phone Connection: 1 312 626 6799 ID: 83549778613#				
AM	Wednesd					
12:15 PM	Midweek Prayers Online Link: fccames.org/ WednesdayPrayers	Meeting ID: 826 9816 5415 Passcode: 645905 Phone Connection: 1 312 626 6799 ID: 82698165415#				
Thursday						
10:00 AM	Coffee Fellowship Online Link: fccames.org/ CoffeeFellowship	Phone Connection: 1-312-626-6788 ID: 86790917856#				

Keep this Schedule Handy

Updated Tuesday, September 1, 2020

Annual Congregational Meeting December 13

The Annual First Christian Church Congregational Meeting was held via Zoom after worship on Sunday, December 13. This is the first time that the annual meeting was held online, and it went very smoothly thanks to the technical expertise of Jake Ewalt, Stacey Maifeld, and Marv Prins. A slate of 28 church leaders and a \$247,149 church budget for 2021 were considered, and both items approved were unanimous vote. Thank you to the 28 newly approved 2021 church leaders for stepping up during this difficult time to accept your leadership roles. And thank you to everyone who has submitted pledges of financial support for 2021. (By the way, if you intended to submit a pledge for 2021 but forgot to do so, it's not too late! Send your pledge to the church office to get us closer to our pledge goal of \$185,000!!)

Also, a sincere thank you to all who attended the annual meeting via Zoom. You – the First Christian Church congregation – have demonstrated once again that even when COVID-19 makes us alter how we do things, we are still able to focus on our ministries and on accomplishing God's work. So give yourselves a big pat on the back for a job well done!

Vern Hawkins, General Board Chair



With the holidays upon us, we understand that life gets really busy with preparations and family gathering. In this unique year and holiday season, we would like to give a gentle reminder that if you have not already done so, please take a moment to submit your pledges for 2021, and fulfill your remaining pledge commitments for 2020.

Now, more than ever, the work of the Church continues as we come alongside folk and provide much needed support and relationship to all, but especially to the most isolated among us.



Calendar

Scheduled Meetings:

- ◆ Elder's Circle Every Monday, 11:30 am via Zoon
- Intercessory Prayers
 Every Wednesday, at 12:15 pm,
 Coffee House
- FCC Makes Lunch for Food at First Saturday, January 2, 9:30 am—1pm
- Council of Ministries
 Tuesday, January 5, 5:15 pm
- Faith Formation Team Meeting Tuesday, February 12, 6 pm
- Property Meeting Tuesday, February 12, 7:15 pm
- Newsletter Deadline Monday, January 18, by NOON.
- Trustees Meeting Monday, January 18, 7 pm

Monday, January 18, the Church Office will be closed in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

Scheduled Events:

- Candlelight Christmas Eve Service
 Thursday, December 24, 7 PM via Zoom
- MLK Day Events: Sunday, January 17 (see p. 10)
 2 pm MLK Interfaith service at 2 pm via Zoom
 7 pm Christian Church of the Upper Midwest
 Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciliation Discussion
 via Zoom

VACATION

December 21 - 25, Liz Collazo is on vacation.

She will be back in the office on Monday, December 28.

December 25 - January 1
Pastor Mary Jane will be on vacation.

Deb Lewis (515-290-6736) and Gwen Mitzel (515-292-3385) are the Elders on Call, or contact the Elder who has been contacting you during COVID 19 if you have a pastoral care need.

Keeping Connected...



One important way we can stay connected during this time of social distancing and shelter-inplace is to continue to pray with and for one another, our community, and the world.

You can now submit prayer requests using a new "Prayer Request Form" using this link: bit.ly/FCCPrayers. Using the form, you choose how extensive you'd like your prayer request shared.

One option is through our email prayer chain called "Prayers of the People." If you'd like to be part of that email prayer chain so you receive and can offer prayers, please sign up by clicking on this link: "Prayers of the People."

If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Mary Jane, Administrative Assistant Liz Collazo, or ask an FCC Elder.





Click to see a special message from our Regional Minister,
Rev. Joshua Patty.

This regional offering will be received now, through Sunday, Dec. 27th. 100% of the funds received through the Christmas Offering remain here in the Upper Midwest Region and are put towards vital regional ministries. These ministries include everything from church camp and youth retreats to education of future ministers and supporting churches in conflict or in search.

You may give **ONLINE** (please make sure to designate your offering as the "Christmas Special Offering" from the designated giving dropdown menu), or mail your check to the church.

Our gifts support the work of regional ministries this Christmas. Your regional ministry works to:

- Connect congregations to each other
- Foster faith development
- Gather Disciples in camps, conferences, and assemblies
- Nurture the development of a new generation of pastors
- Assist churches in calling new ministers
- Interpret the global mission of the

Church

- Represent the Church in ecumenical gatherings
- Counsel and pray with those who are troubled of spirit
- Lead the Church to address racism
- Inspire leaders to experiment and create
- Witness to the power of God to make things new

The Christmas Special Day offering supports all of these and many other ministries of our regions.

A Thank You Note from the Women's Gathering!



We were able to provide each of them a laundry basket, laundry and dish detergent, cleaners, paper goods and a gift card to support them on their journey to independence. Because of your overwhelming generosity, we were also able to give an additional donation to YSS for other families! Thank you!

- Co-leaders, Deb Lewis and Janis Pyle

In the Words of Dr. King

Annual Interfaith Service honoring Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Sunday, January 17 AT 2 PM

YOU MUST REGISTER WITH ZOOM AT

https://bit.ly/MLKDream2021

Zoom worship hosted by First Christian Church of Ames

There will be a love offering received for the Dream Seed Scholarship during the service.

Checks can be made out to YSS/AMP with Dream Seed on the memo line and mailed to Unity Church of Ames 226th 9th Street, Ames, IA 50010

Sponsored by AARLA (Ames Area Religious Leaders Association)

Christian Church in the Upper Midwest Region

Anti-Racism/
Pro-Reconciling
Discussion
January 17
via Zoom at 7PM



All laity and clergy are invited to participate in a AR/PR discussion: "What does it mean when people say Black Lives Matter?" We will meet by zoom for this discussion on Sunday, January 17, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. You must register for the event in advance. There will be articles to read and videos to watch in preparation for the discussion. These will be sent to you in January. The number of participants is limited so register today!

Register in advance for this meeting:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAqcOqsrz4qE9KyaCqLZmrab35QkelhsRqa

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.



Around the Region — Things We Do Together

For more info or to register for events:

http://

www.uppermidwestcc.org/ regional-newsletter-dte

Below, @CCC = held at the Christian Conference

Center

Dec. 24-Jan 3

Regional Office & Christian Conference Center Closed for Holidays

Dec. 27

All-Region Worship Service

Jan. 8-10

Minister's Institute Session 1

Jan. 11-13

Minister's Institute Session 2

Jan. 18-20

Minister's Institute Session 3

Jan. 28

Regional Operations Council

Feb. 1 2021

Camp Registration Opens

Feb. 8-10

Minister's Institute Session 4

Feb. 12-13

Regional Committee on Ministry

Oct. 2 2021

All Congregational Gathering

Wishes

Rev. Joshua Patty
Regional Minister and President
of the Christian Church in the
Upper Midwest



e wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! The words of this familiar song imagine holiday celebrations and also point to the hopes we have. We encourage wishes at this time of year, especially with Christmas lists and New Year's resolutions.

Some wishes, through the generosity of others and our own hard work and commitment, become realized. That is easiest to see when a child opens a gift that they really want -- their joyful reaction embodies a fulfilled wish.

Our resolutions usually do not yield opportunities for such immediate gratification. Instead, they require determination, often in the face of setbacks, to bring pieces of those wishes into reality. Our wishes for 2021 may be harder to achieve than in years past. I am confident that God will faithfully -- and more important, patiently -- be with us. Even more, I am hopeful that some of God's wishes for our lives will become real in this new year.

Our entire regional staff wishes you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Read the Upper Midwest Region's Newsletter



News from the Pews

December 21 - 25, Liz Collazo is on vacation. She will be back in the office on Monday, December 28.

The Church office is currently closed to the public. But our office hours remain 9 am—2 pm, Monday-Thursday

Need anything? CALL US! 515-232-5766 Email Liz Collazo at: fccames@fccames.org

Stewardship Report

Current Data Not Available at this time.						
Income:						
Expenses:						
Difference:						

In and Out of the Hospital: Terry Lewis

January Birthdays

- 01 Ginny Khan
- 01 Guillermo Velez
- 09 Randy Allman
- 13 Tiffany Walker
- 17 Traverce Harrison
- 18 Nathan Schmitz
- 19 Don Withers
- 25 Janis Pyle
- 26 Kris Mesenbrink







Food at First Thanksgiving Dinner, November 26, 2020

It took over 100 volunteers to serve over 600 meals were served at the 33rd annual Food At First COMMUNITY-WIDE Thanksgiving Meal on Nov 26

Pictured left: Carol, Patty Yoder, and our very own Doan Schmitz

Pass-Along Christmas Party, Saturday, Dec. 12

The Food at First Pass Along Party was a wonderful event this year, thanks to the help of so many volunteers and helpers, and folks who donated presents. On the left, before the event, Carol & Patty, and volunteers in festive Christmas attire.

The Ames High Girls Basketball Team + other volunteers lined up and ready to hand out bags of gifts. Can you see their happy smiles under the masks? The party was a safe, outside, drive through event in the beautiful 5" of fresh overnight snow. Presorted gifts were handed to patrons outside as they drove thru.

Thank you AHS Girls Basketball !!

A big thank you also to CUMC, Collegiate United Methodist Church 2622 Lincoln Way, Ames Iowa for hosting the 2020 Pass Along Party. Special thanks to Lauren (from CUMC) for organizing Pass Along Party 2020 along w Patty Yoder and Tiffany Walker. Thank you!!



Alternatives to the Offering Plate

- You can always send a <u>check</u>
 through the mail to: First
 Christian Church, 611 Clark
 Ave., Ames IA 50010. If you
 add "Attention: Dave or
 Jeanne Fitz," the envelope will
 be delivered directly to our
 Financial Secretaries.
- Now might be a good time to set up, through your bank, some form of automatic payment to FCC. This can be done either as a <u>direct deposit</u> (in which funds are transferred electronically), or as <u>online bill pay</u> (in which your bank sends an actual check to the church). Contact FCC's Financial Secretaries, Dave or Jeanne Fitz (515-232-9306), for more information.
- You can also make your offering by debit card, credit card or PayPal, using the **DONATE** button on the FCC website. This button is also regularly included in the electronic version of The Call, and in the online Weekly Update. It's safe, secure, and convenient! For more information, contact the church office.

An Update from the FCC Trustees

s the December issue of *The Call* goes to press, we do not yet have financial updates for the month of November or a clear picture of financial outcomes for the year 2020. Please watch for a



more complete report in the next (January) issue of *The Call*. In the meantime, enjoy the season! And if the spirit of Christmas moves you to make an extra, end-of-year donation to First Christian Church, know that it will be *greatly* appreciated!

As always, we'd like to thank each and every one of you for your generosity throughout the year, and for helping to ensure that the church can continue its ministries and meet its financial obligations during these challenging times.

The Trustees would also like to thank our colleagues on the Stewardship Team for a lively, fun, and productive Stewardship Campaign that continues to raise pledges for the 2021 budget. Our pledge goal this year is \$185,000, set at the same level as last year—in part because the pandemic has made both church and personal finances more difficult to manage. So far, we have received written pledges totaling \$137,800.89, which represents roughly 74.5% of our goal.

Rest assured, it's not too late to pledge! You can continue to submit your pledge card by mail to the church office, even into the New Year. If you need a pledge card, please contact the office or any one of the FCC Trustees.

Likewise, if you have questions, comments, or concerns about the church's finances, please feel free to reach out to any one of us.

--David Gregory, Roger Bertelsen, and DeLores Hawkins (2020 FCC Trustees)

UPDATED 12/18/20

Opportunities to Serve

We are the Church...



In his many letters to churches, the Apostle Paul reminds believers that **WE are the church** — **We, the Body of Christ.** (Not a building.) With our talents and our gifts, we can serve one another, meet one another's needs, uplift one another, and BE Christ to one another. While for some, "church" has come to mean "building," Christians haven't always had a building in which they could worship. Instead, they had one another — the *true* Church.

While we may not be able to meet in our *building* right now, we CAN meet as the Church! Through Zoom worship, Zoom Coffee Fellowship, prayers, book studies, phone calls and letters, we can stay connected. We can BE the body.

We are here for you. Do you need...?

- Help with Zoom or other technology
 - never miss a Zoom gathering again!
- Pre-stamped offering envelopes
- Church directories
- Church library books
- Fall Devotionals (small or large)
- Groceries
- Errands
- Someone to talk to



BUG ME! Email me at fccames@fccames.org or give the church a call at 515-232-5766. We are happy to place any items in the mail, or deliver them to you. If you need help with Zoom, you may contact David Gregory at 708-9004, or Amy Kuehl at 520-1896, and they would be THRILLED to help you.

We love and miss you, but we know we'll be together again soon.

Liz Collazo
 FCC Administrative Assistant



"Each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift... The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ..." (Eph. 4:7;11)

- PLEDGE your financial support to the Church. The "Church" is a community the Body of Christ and not a building. Giving to support the mission and vision of our community is a discipline. Even while we are not gathering in our building, the work of the church continues, and expenses keep coming in. Please keep supporting your Church during these challenging times.
- FIGHT HUNGER by joining FCC's core team of Food at First Volunteers by helping to serve a meal every first Saturday of the month. For more information, you may contact Cynthia Gaunt at cygaunt@hotmail.com. There are new guidelines in place to keep everyone safe, and ALL meals and markets will be TO GO now. Food at First also needs volunteers during the week. 515-344-4357.
- FIGHT racism by becoming involved with community discussions and worship on MLK Day.

Thank you so much for what you do! Keep watching this box and respond as you are able. It takes a lot of people contributing their gifts to keep the ministry of FCC moving, growing and vital.

Ways to Know What's Happening at FCC

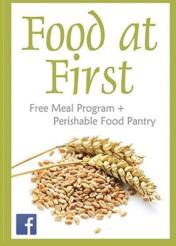
- The Call Newsletter –
 3rd week of the month
- Weekly News Update an email sent every Thursday
- Prayers of the People –
 an email sent as needed
- Announcements during Sunday worship – every Sunday
- Word of mouth ongoing
- Facebook First Christian Church (Disciples) Ames

- Website www.fccames.org
- Our YouTube
 Channel

To receive a hardcopy newsletter, please contact the church office.

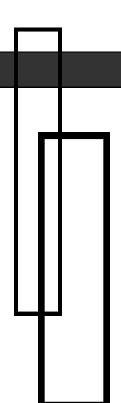
To receive newsletter, news updates and prayers via email please sign up by clicking on an icon below.





VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Food at First currently needs a dedicated volunteer for Friday afternoons from Noon to 3 pm, to help prepare "to go" meals and market offerings. They also need a person to help as a "floater," who can fill in when a volunteer is not able to do their shift. If you are interested, please contact Patty Yoder at 515-451-6967, or email her at patty@foodatfirst.com.



The people of First Christian Church accept these values as core...

Genuinely accept, welcome and love everyone as Jesus did.

Connect people to God and to one another.

Cultivate an environment where people grow in faith and discipleship.

Celebrate everyone's gifts for ministry and encourage people as leaders.

Minister in the community with God's healing love.

Staff at First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Ames, IA:

Minister: Mary Jane Button-Harrison

Minister of Worship & Discipleship: Tim Button-Harrison

Minister of Worship Arts:
Administrative Assistant:
Worship Musician:
Building Custodian:
Nursery Attendants:
Janet Lott
Liz Collazo
Ty Schwartz
Sherri Khan
Karen LeCount

Nursery Helper:

Return Service Requested

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
611 Clark Avenue
Ames, Iowa 50010-6137
Phone: (515) 232-5766
Website: http://www.fccames.org/