



The MESSENGER

➤ *Bible Study* -- You are welcome to come read through the short Letters of Paul (currently Titus) on Wednesdays at noon in the Conference Room. Jim Warren leads the study.

➤ *Disciples Women's Ministries* -- We will begin 2018 with our first meeting on Thursday, February 1, at 1:00 PM in the Conference Room. Mary Helen Haskell and Kim Rott will lead our study "Rediscovering Our Spiritual Gifts." If you need the book, there will be some available on Thursday. After our meeting, we will fill the Love Boxes. Thank you to all who brought goodies to be put in the boxes. The boxes should arrive for Valentine's Day. Don't forget if you have not attended DWM before or have a friend you would like to invite, please feel free to come. We would love to have you!



➤ *Gifts for Another Table* -- During February we are collecting non-perishable food items to be given to Center For Hope Food Pantry. Needed items are rice, rice dinners, potato dinners, pasta & sauce, Hamburger Helper, dinner meals, cereal, and pull-top canned vegetables & fruit. This Food Pantry does a great job helping people!

➤ *Pastors' Class* -- A class for 6th graders and older youth preparing for baptism on Easter will be held on Sundays at 11:30 AM for 5 weeks in the Founders' Room beginning February 18. Lunch will be provided. If you are interested in the class, please see Jim Warren or Holly Irvin.



➤ *Budget Approved* -- The 2018 General Fund budget was approved as presented at the Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 21.

Witness of the Faithful

Attendance: 1/21: 143, 32 1/28: 158, 39
Offering: \$10,507.44

Prayer Concerns

Treatment: Sharon Warren
Awaiting Tests/Surgery: Mickey Armstrong, Richard Malone
Aftercare: Bob Corbett, Kathy Dailey, Dave Eyman, Peggy O'Neal, Jim Underhill
Hospice: Harold Goyen, Marilyn Thompson, Virginia Warren
Assisted Living: Alma Samuels (Taylors' home)
Nursing Homes:
Blm. Rehab -- Marilyn Thompson
Heritage, Blm. -- Merle Murray, Virginia Warren
Heritage, El Paso -- Sonna West
Heritage, Nrm. -- Harold Goyen
Liberty, Clinton -- Corena Meyer
Martin Health -- Dave Dungan, Marlyn Mahannah, Lois Murray, Barbara Thatcher
Sugar Creek -- Bobbie Blomgren
Military: Chris Kavanaugh (Marines, CA); Harley Scott (Phillis niece/Navy, VA)
Sympathy to: Marilyn Cope and family on the January 27 death of her husband, Paul Cope

Thank You

You baked cookies and made candy. You sent cards and dropped in to express your appreciation for the work we do. You made sure each of us was given a monetary gift for Christmas. Thank you for everything you did to make Christmas special and for all the nice things you do for us throughout the year! -- Your FCC Staff

Inclement Weather

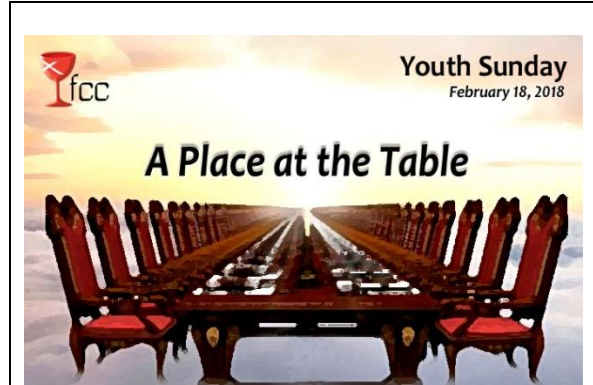
Please listen to WJBC radio, check our Facebook page, or go to the church website for information regarding cancellations.





Ash Wednesday –

February 14 is the beginning of Lent. You are invited to a meal at 6:00 PM in Fellowship Hall followed by a worship service 6:30-7:15 PM also in Fellowship Hall. Soups will be gluten free. We'll sing and pray together, the Chancel Choir will sing an anthem, and you'll have the opportunity to have ashes imposed on you.



Youth Sunday –

The youth will be leading worship at the 9:00 AM service on February 18, and the theme is "A Place at the Table."



Pancake Breakfast –

\$5 tickets for the Block Party fundraiser at Applebee's Restaurant will be available this Sunday at the Information Center. The pancake breakfast will be held on Saturday, February 17, 8:00-10:00 AM.



Upcoming Youth Special Events –

- February 25 -- Altitude Trampoline Park
- March 11 -- Serving a meal at Safe Harbor (TBD)
- April 15 -- Swim Party
- May 20 -- Cook-Out at Maxwell Park

A long obedience in the same direction...

Lent Approaches



I need Lent this year. So much has happened in my life over the last three months that I need time to pause, reflect, and pray. I need to create some space where I can attend to my soul.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, which is February 14 this year. We'll have a soup supper at church that evening at 6:00 PM, with a worship service to follow from 6:30 PM to 7:15 PM. I hope you'll join me and all of your sisters and brothers in Christ for this important Holy Day. We'll sing and pray together, and you'll have the opportunity to have ashes imposed on you. The season of Lent then continues up to Easter Sunday, which is April 1.

I'm excited about our Lenten theme: *Thy Will Be Done*. The title comes from Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane when Jesus asked that the cup of suffering and death be taken from Him. "Yet not my will," Jesus went on to pray, "but thy will be done." The series asks how we can seek God's will in all aspects of our lives. We'll use the biblical characters of Abraham, Moses, David, Mary, Paul, and Lydia as reference points.

The Ash Wednesday scripture is Genesis 15:12-15. This passage relates that "a deep sleep fell upon Abram (Abram was Abraham's name before God changed it to Abraham), and a deep and terrifying darkness descended upon him." God then tells Abraham that his offspring will be aliens and slaves in a foreign country, and they will be oppressed for four hundred years before coming to the Promised Land.

For me, the journey of Abraham and his offspring is the pattern for Lent. Lent is an opportunity to pull back a little and enter into a deeply reflective and prayerful time. Sometimes that can be terrifying and oppressive, as it was for Abraham and his offspring, as we confront the demons that afflict us. Other times it can be enlightening and freeing as we leave behind old ways of being that have held us captive for too long.

Regardless of how we experience Lent, the church sets aside these weeks leading to Easter as a time for us to examine ourselves honestly, to seek forgiveness for the sin in our lives, and to grow closer to our Friend and Savior, Jesus Christ. Our hope is that the Promised Land awaits us on the other side of our Lenten journey.

Wendy Wright, in her book *The Rising: Living the Mysteries of Lent, Easter, and Pentecost*, explains the purpose of Lent:

[Lent] is a call to continuing conversion or turning, a call to reorient, reassess, and rearrange our lives to more fully respond to God's invitation. The call is at once profoundly personal and uncompromisingly communal. It is a call to enter into a liminal season, a season of dying before being born, a season of creative chaos and upheaval, a season whose purpose is to knit us closer to our God.

I know I need such a season in my life.

I invite you to join me this Lent in seeking to become a more faithful follower of Jesus Christ. Journey with me through a season of reflection, growth, and prayer. Together, let us come to say *Thy Will Be Done* to whatever God is asking of us.

-- Jim Warren

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Bloomington's Oldest Continuing Congregation - Founded 1837



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Bloomington, Illinois 61701

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Serving Sunday, February 4

Mailed: January 31, 2018

Acolytes: Kenley Nichols, Mackenzie Nichols
Child Care: Trish Logan, Heather Damery
Deacons: 9:00 Holly Rocke, Robyn Loftin
10:15 Peg Larson, Holly Rocke
Jr. Deacons: Mason Janvrin, Logan Janvrin
Drivers: Rich Crusius, Ryan Newton
Elders: Marla McElroy, Becky White
Homebound Elders: Kathie Chapman, Naomi Kosier
Fellowship Hosts: Bill & Susan Chaney
Fill Candles: Becky White
Greeters: Doug & Stephanie Reed, Justin & Kim Cox
Information Center Host: Leslie Frizzell
Scripture: Camille Taylor **Time for Children:** Heather Damery
Sound Tech: James Nussbaum **Video Tech:** Chip Jamerson
Worship & Wonder Greeter: Karen Crusius
Pulpit: Jim Warren – *What's In It for Me?* Mark 1:29-39

Serving Sunday, February 11

Acolytes: Ellie Chapman, Maddie Chapman
Child Care: Trish Logan, Kathie Chapman
Deacons: 9:00 Dan & Amy Naughton 10:15 Ted Logan, Amy Nichols
Jr. Deacons: Seth Newton, Brennon Reed
Drivers: Ralph Lehmann, Darrell Arvik
Elders: Patti & Chip Jamerson
Homebound Elders: Marla McElroy, Becky White
Fellowship Host: Tamara Shields
Fill Candles: Becky White
Greeters: Nate & Heather Damery, John Dailey
Information Center Host: Mary Ellen Gottselig
Scripture: Tamara Shields **Time for Children:** Camille Taylor
Sound Tech: Dave Phillis **Video Tech:** Nate Damery
Worship & Wonder Greeter: Heather Damery
Pulpit: Jim Warren – *How to be Healed. The Story of Naaman.*
II Kings 5:1-14

Sunday Traditional Worship 9:00 AM
One and All Worship 10:15 AM
Sunday School for all ages 10:15 AM
Sunday Youth Group 5:00 PM

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John Trefzger

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