



The MESSENGER

Maundy Thursday, March 29
at Centennial Christian Church
(1219 E. Grove, Blm.)
Dinner at 6:00 p.m. Worship at 7:00 p.m.

Good Friday, March 30
at First Baptist Church
(2502 E. College, Blm.)
First Christian, Wesley Methodist, First Baptist, and
Second Presbyterian Churches participating
Worship at 12:10 p.m. with Combined Choir
Lunch following

Easter Sunday, April 1
7:30 a.m. Sunrise Service
8:00 a.m. Breakfast throughout the
morning in the Centrum
Fifteen minutes before the 9:00 and
10:15 a.m. services you are invited to
place flowers (provided) on an Easter cross.
Baptisms at the 9:00 service.
Combined children/youth Sunday School
with crafts and games in Major Hall.
Youth group will not meet in the evening.



➤ *Disciples Women's Ministries* –



Sign up has begun for our Spring Event on Saturday, May 5. There will be a 9:30 AM brunch followed by a program presented by "The Tea Ladies." We hope you can come. Sign-up sheets are at the Information Center. Our next regular meeting will be on April 4 at 1:00 PM in the Conference Room. We will be ready for Session 3 in our "Rediscovering Our Spiritual Gifts" book. See you there.



April 8

**Let us gather
for lunch and to discern!**

DISCERN
SHARE LUNCH MAY 5 11:30-1:00

We will review and summarize October and November discussions regarding the current state of our building and finances, as well membership trends at FCC and in the broader church.

**Mark your calendar now! Details will follow-
11:30 to 1:00 at First Christian Church**

- *Gifts for Another Table* – Items brought to church during April will be given to The Boys & Girls Club. Needed items are: tall white kitchen garbage bags, 55 gallon garbage bags, toilet paper, latex gloves, band aids, ziplock bags (sandwich, quart, gallon), and quality ice cube trays.
- *Blood Drive* – Tuesday, April 17, 2:00-6:00 PM in Major Hall. Sign up at the Information Center.
- *Congregational Meeting* – Sunday, April 29, 10:00 AM, Sanctuary, for the purpose of electing Board Officers & Ministry Stewards.
- *Block Party Bake Sale* – Friday, May 11, is the day to bring your goodies to FCC. See sign-up sheets and guidelines at the Information Center.

We've met to share facts and figures, hear about new ways of worshipping in the 21st century, listen to questions, discuss concerns, and consider options for the future of First Christian Church. On April 8 we'll get together again to learn about the next steps on our path of discernment. Lunch will be provided in Fellowship Hall at 11:30 AM followed by a brief review of where we've been and a discussion of where we are going next. Please plan to attend and participate in this important dialogue. Indicate your attendance by signing up at the Information Center, calling the church office, or through Facebook or our website.

A long obedience in the same direction...

Our Suffering God

We are in Holy Week, the final week of Jesus' life. This is an intense week for us Christians as we revisit the events that culminate in Good Friday, which is the day that the religious and civil authorities execute Jesus by nailing him to a cross and leaving him to die.

While hanging from the cross, Jesus cries out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mt. 27:46) In that moment, Jesus' experience of God was one of abandonment and rejection. He didn't utter that statement with his fingers crossed, or a wink in his eye, or his hands making air quotes. Jesus' experience of being forsaken by God was real and true.

The statement, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" is the opening line of Psalm 22. The Psalm goes on to explore what this forsakenness looks like:

I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint;
my heart is like wax;
it is melted within my breast;
my mouth is dried up like a potsherd,
and my tongue sticks to my jaws;
you lay me in the dust of death.



For dogs are all around me;
a company of evildoers encircle me.
My hands and feet have shriveled;
I can count all my bones.
They stare and gloat over me;
they divide my clothes among themselves,
and for my clothing they cast lots. (Ps. 22:14-18)

What a bizarre picture these verses paint: a poured-out, dried-out, wasted-away nothing who has been stripped of everything. This was Jesus on the cross.

Psalm 22 is a "Psalm of Lament," and these psalms comprise a significant portion of the book of Psalms. Patricia Adams Farmer writes, "Whether it is a nation or a single wounded soul, [a Psalm of Lament] is a cry for justice and mercy and relief from suffering."

One biblical scholar writes of the purpose of these psalms:

Lament counters a false, naïve and overly romantic view of [life]. [Christian] charity does not mean that everything is lovely, that we never get upset, that we sit around holding hands and saying how wonderful everything is. This is unreal. Negativity, injustice, hatred, brokenness are part of our lives and part of our world. In the face of this, we can have an instinctive feeling for retaliation in kind, for returning hatred with hatred. I do feel pain, hurt and anger, but these are not a good basis on which to act. The fact that I feel a certain way does not give me permission to go out and dump my negativity wherever and on whomever I want. Lament suggests that it is all right to express our uncensored feelings before God.

Life is not always good and fair, and we are right to be upset and angry over life's injustices. Just as Jesus cried out in his

abandonment to his father, so can we cry out to God when we experience life's wrongs and hurts.

Not only does God hear our cries of despair, God accompanies us through the darkness. Though we may not feel God's presence, we know God is present with us nonetheless. God is our companion, our fellow-sufferer, who understands because God has been in our place. In Jesus Christ, God suffers, too.

None of us is alone. No matter how dark the way may appear, no matter how hopeless the future may seem, no matter how bleak our life may feel, God is with us, coming alongside us, crying with us, and offering us divine love.

We know Good Friday is not the end of the story. Three days later, on Easter Sunday, Jesus will be resurrected to new life. We may experience a heavy darkness, but we can always cling to hope, as tenuous as it may feel, that God will prevail.

The Psalm ends by proclaiming this hope:

Posterity will serve [the Lord];

future generations will be told about the Lord,
and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn,
saying that he has done it.

The Lord has done it! The Lord has saved us! Thanks be to God!!

— Jim Warren

Witness of the Faithful

Attendance -- 3/18/18: 137, 39

3/25/18: 123, 37

Offering -- \$12,802

Prayer Concerns

Aftercare: Betty Beer, Bob Corbett, Dave Eyman, Mary Lou Mercier, Peggy O'Neal, Connie Rapp

Hospice: Harold Goyen, Marilyn Thompson, Virginia Warren

Assisted Living: Mickey Armstrong (Luther Oaks),

Alma Samuels (Taylors' home) **Treatment:** Sharon Warren

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 – Myrna Cable, Niola Daily, Dave Dungan,

Marlyn Mahannah, Lois Murray, Barbara Thatcher




Military: Chris Kavanaugh (Marines, CA);

Harley Scott (Phillis niece/Navy, VA)

Thank You

- Posted on the Centrum bulletin board are notes received from Paige Metz, Logan Robb, Brock Taylor (Love Boxes).
- Every week 3 AMAZING people ensure community needs are met with "Gifts for Another Table." Pete Whitmer and Jim & Nancy Guither gather the donations, count & weigh them, and take them to the agency for the month, bringing joy to many. Please join me in taking a moment to say "Thank You" and give them a big hug for all they do on behalf of FCCI — Michele Pugh

APRIL 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1  Gifts for Another Table 7:00 AM Sunrise Breakfast 9:00 AM Worship Service 10:15 AM Adult Sunday School 10:15 AM COMBINED Youth Sunday School 10:15 AM One and All Worship 5:00 PM Youth Group WILL NOT MEET	2 10:30 AM Bridge 12:00 PM CCIW 5:30 PM Elders' Circle 6:45 PM Bridge 6:45 PM Voice Lesson	3 9:30 AM Staff Meeting 5:00 PM NA 5:30 PM Worship Committee & Sacred Spaces	4 12:00 PM Bible Bunch 3:00 PM Seedling 6:30 PM Hand Bells 6:30 PM Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM One and All Rehearsal	5 1:00 PM Disciples Women's Ministries 3:30 PM Private Voice Lessons	6 7:00 PM Square Dance	7 12:30 PM Seedling
8 9:00 AM Worship Service 10:15 AM Adult Sunday School 10:15 AM One and All Worship 10:15 AM Youth Sunday School 11:30 AM Discernment Meeting 5:00 PM KFC & Youth Group Meal Provided	9 10:30 AM Bridge 12:00 PM CCIW 5:45 PM Bridge 5:45 PM Voice Lesson	10 9:30 AM Staff Meeting 4:30 PM Worship Committee Meeting 5:00 PM NA 7:00 PM VBS Planning	11 12:00 PM Bible Bunch 3:00 PM Seedling 5:30 PM Hand Bells 6:30 PM Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM One and All Rehearsal	12 1:00 PM CCIW 3:30 PM Private Voice Lessons	13	14 9:00 AM CCIW
15  9:00 AM Worship Service 10:15 AM Adult Sunday School 10:15 AM One and All Worship 10:15 AM Youth Sunday School 2:00 PM Youth Group - Swim Party	16 10:30 AM Bridge 12:00 PM CCIW 5:45 PM Bridge 5:45 PM Voice Lesson	17  9:30 AM Staff Meeting 2:00 PM Blood Drive 5:00 PM NA	18 12:00 PM Bible Bunch 3:00 PM Seedling 5:30 PM Hand Bells 6:30 PM Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM One and All Rehearsal	19 3:30 PM Private Voice Lessons	20 4:30 PM Ruth Fletcher 4:30 PM Trustees Discernment Meeting 7:00 PM Square Dance	21 10:00 AM Ruth Fletcher Thrive @ Parkway Christian - Splid.
22 Choir Lunch Drexler's last Sunday 9:00 AM Worship Service 10:15 AM Adult Sunday School 10:15 AM One and All Worship 10:15 AM Youth Sunday School 2:00 PM Christian Motorcycle Association 5:00 PM Youth Group	23 10:30 AM Bridge 12:00 PM CCIW 5:45 PM Bridge 5:45 PM Voice Lesson	24 9:30 AM Staff Meeting 5:00 PM NA	25 12:00 PM Bible Bunch 3:00 PM Seedling 6:30 PM Hand Bells 6:30 PM Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM One and All Rehearsal	26 8:00 AM CCIW 3:30 PM Private Voice Lessons	27	28 8:00 AM CCIW
29 9:00 AM Worship Service 10:00 AM Congregational Meeting 10:15 AM Adult Sunday School 10:15 AM One and All Worship 10:15 AM Youth Sunday School 5:00 PM Youth Group	30 10:30 AM Bridge 12:00 PM CCIW 5:45 PM Bridge 5:45 PM Voice Lesson	1 9:30 AM Staff Meeting 5:00 PM NA	2 12:00 PM Bible Bunch 6:30 PM Hand Bells 6:30 PM Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM One and All Rehearsal	3 1:00 PM Disciples Women's Ministries 3:30 PM Private Voice Lessons	4	5 9:30 AM DWM Brunch

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Bloomington's Oldest Continuing Congregation - Founded 1837

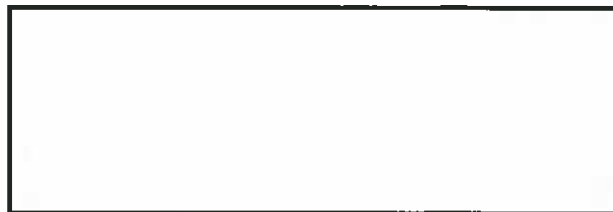


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Serving Easter Sunday, April 1

Acolytes: --

Child Care: Trish Logan, Corin Chapman

Deacons: 7:30 Scott & Valerie Fisher 10:15 James & Libby Nussbaum

9:00 Pat & Jenny Lawler, Nate & Heather Damery

Jr. Deacons: Rebekah Warren, Sadie Newton

Drivers: Ryan Newton, Darrell Arvik

Elders: Becky White, Marla McElroy

Homebound Elders: Naomi Koiser, Kathie Chapman

Fellowship: Easter Breakfast

Fill Candles: Ryan Newton

Greeters: Mark & Michelle Gramley, Brian Metz, Austin Metz

Information Center Host: Kathy Dailey **Recycle:** John & Debbie Schultz

Scripture: Darrell Arvik **Time for Children:** Heather Damery

Sound Tech: James Nussbaum **Video Tech:** Austin Metz

Worship & Wonder Greeter: Sue Bandy

Pulpit: Jim Warren – I Corinthians 15:1-11 – "Of First Importance"



Mailed: March 28, 2018

Serving Sunday, April 8

Acolytes: --

Child Care: Trish Logan, Kathie Chapman

Deacons: 9:00 Kenny & Penny Bland 10:15 Stacey Erickson, Matt Davis

Jr. Deacons: Madison Varner, Jaden Eft

Drivers: Ralph Lehmann, Gary Thompson

Elders: Chip & Patti Jamerson

Homebound Elders: Becky White, Marla McElroy

Fellowship Host: Bill Robitske

Fill Candles: Ryan Newton

Greeters: Justin & Kim Cox, Doug & Stephanie Reed

Information Center Host: Nancy Pool **Recycle:** John & Debbie Schultz

Scripture: Marla McElroy **Time for Children:** Camille Taylor

Sound Tech: Dave Phillis **Video Tech:** James Nussbaum

Worship & Wonder Greeter: Corin Chapman

Pulpit: Jim Warren – Psalm 104:14-30 – "Honoring Our Past"

All that we are and all that we have are gifts from God. The first sermon in this series will remind us that everything is a gift; stewardship is multi-faceted. God's grace will overflow into our lives as we live with this realization.

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

Senior Pastor

James Warren.....212-6873

jwarren@blmfcc.org

Minister Emeritus

John Trefzger

Music

Holly Irvin, Dir. Music & Youth Ministries

hirvin@blmfcc.org.....1-864-921-4874

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M-F 8:00-4:30; Closed Noon-1:00

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Website & Calendar.....www.blmfcc.com