



The MESSENGER



COME ONE! COME ALL!
FCC TASTING PARTY
December 10 9:45 to 10:45 AM
Centrum

Mingle with church friends!
Enjoy the provided homemade goodies!
First service, stay over ...
Second service, come early!

➤ *Adopt-A-Family* – Our Reach Out



Ministry invites you to look for the Christmas tree in the Centrum this Sunday. Choose a tag of a gift to give to a family in need in our community and then record it in the notebook nearby.

➤ *Advent Devotionals* – available Sunday!

➤ *Bible Study* – You are welcome to come read through the short Letters of Paul (currently I Timothy) on Wednesdays at noon in the Conference Room.

➤ *Gifts for Another Table* – Don't forget those who stop by the church office needing the following items: microwaveable meals, pull-top cans of soup, cereal bars, and instant oatmeal. During December please bring these items with you to church.

➤ *Christmas Greetings* – Rather than sending Christmas cards to all our church friends, our tradition is to send one card to the church to be placed in a basket in the Centrum for all to read. Enclose the amount saved on cards and postage, and this donation will be given to Camp Walter Scott. To date we have received greetings from the Damery family and Central Supply Company.



➤ *Poinsettias* – If you would like to provide a poinsettia for the Sanctuary during Advent, please complete this form and return it to the church office or place it in the offering with \$9.

Name: _____

Given in memory of or in honor of (circle choice):

____ In lieu of a poinsettia, I would like my donation to be given to the Christmas offering.

A long obedience in the same direction...

And It's All Small Stuff



The last several weeks have reminded me how important the small stuff is. This journey started almost six weeks ago when a small blood clot, so small that none of Sharon's many tests conclusively revealed its existence, lodged in a blood vessel in Sharon's spinal cord and cut off the blood supply to part of her spine. One tiny blood clot, and look what it did.

That spinal cord stroke left Sharon paralyzed and without feeling below the shoulders. Since then we've watched and waited and prayed for small stuff, for any indication that she's regaining lost function.

There were small improvements in the first few days. The fingers in her right hand started to move. She could feel the doctors touching her right arm. There were no big improvements, just small ones, but that was enough to give us hope that maybe she would get better.

She has continued to improve since then, and always in very small ways. She lifted her legs a few inches, the right leg more than the left. The fingers in her left hand moved, and then she could even pick up things with that hand. She began feeding herself, first with foam-wrapped utensils, and then with regular ones. Her legs, though nowhere near strong enough to support her weight, have begun to learn to walk again.

This will be the way her recovery goes. There probably won't be anything dramatic, just small things that accumulate over time to make something big.

As I've reflected on all of this, I've realized just how our lives are filled with small stuff. Big things happen along the way: We marry. We have children. Someone we love dies. But in between those large exclamation marks are many very ordinary, very small things, and it's the small stuff that defines who we are.

I've been reading *The Road to Eternal Life* by Michael Casey, and he talks about the "ordinariness of daily life." He asserts that it's in the ordinariness of daily life and in how we handle the countless small decisions we make each day that we give witness to our relationship with God. It's not in heroic displays of

piety that we show our true mettle, but in "sustained contact with the God of simplicity." Our faith is not to be lived only in crises, but it is to be "a full-time occupation with no time off." "Nothing is indifferent," Casey writes, meaning that everything we do and every choice we make have significance for our spiritual life. We cannot dismiss the small stuff in our lives as inconsequential; everything has a consequence.

Sharon and I have been discouraged at times, and no doubt we will be discouraged again as we continue on this up-and-down journey. We want to see spectacular progress. We'd love to go to a physical therapy session and have Sharon walk out on her own power. But that's not going to happen. She will improve, but slowly, in small steps.

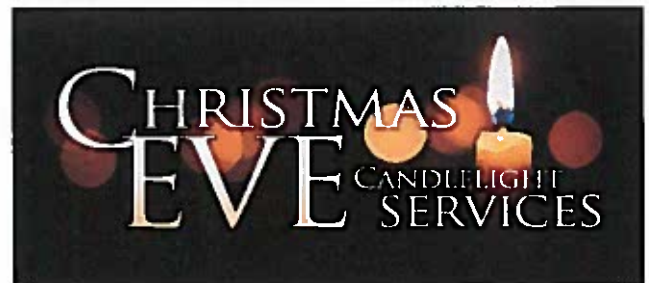
Your generosity and kindness encourage us every day. We are overwhelmed by how much you want to help us. Thank you for everything you're doing.

You often tell us, "Please let us know if there's anything we can do for you," and, "You're in our thoughts and prayers." Those may feel like small, perfunctory gestures and you may wish you could do more, but they mean so much to us. Just knowing that you're there for us, that you support us, that you're willing to help us, and that you're praying for us may seem small to you, but to us they're huge. The small stuff can be very big. Thank you.

I've started a CaringBridge site for Sharon where I can post updates on Sharon's progress. Go to <https://www.caringbridge.org/visit/sharonwarren2> and you can keep apprised of how she's doing. I'll add to it every so often. It's a small thing I can do to keep you connected with Sharon.

Each small moment of our lives is an opportunity to love and serve God and one another. So celebrate the small stuff. After all, it's all small stuff.

-- Jim Warren



10:00 AM, 5:00 PM, 7:30 PM

➤ *Wednesday Supper Club*

DECEMBER 20, 2017 5:30 PM

SHANNON'S 5 STAR DINER

Note number attending on Sunday attendance pad
OR PHONE FCC OFFICE (829-9327)
BEFORE 4:30 PM, MONDAY, DECEMBER 18



➤ *Youth Midwinter 24 hour Retreat*

For grades 6-12, January 20, Eureka College, \$20
Registrations due January 6. Leave FCC 12:30 PM.

➤ *The Constant in Our Change*

Once again we have entered into the season of Advent; our worship spaces have been decorated, the candle of Hope has been lit, familiar carols and special music proclaim the arrival of the long awaited Messiah! The joy and wonder of this special time take on even deeper significance when we consider that generations of worshippers at First Christian Church have been sharing in this experience for 180 years! We treasure the traditions and memories created over the years and marvel at the faithfulness of God who has walked with us. We may worship in different buildings and in different styles, but God remains our constant.

And, as we continue on our journey of discernment, we are confident God is still walking with us. His presence is evident in those who have committed to having open minds and open hearts as we seek His vision for our future church.

We still have a lot to ponder, question, and discuss, and there will be more opportunities to do that, but right now, we pause to give thanks for all those who are involved ... through participation and prayer. Most of all, we give thanks for Immanuel ..."God with us."

➤ *Disciples Women's Ministries*



Marcia Christensen has received copies of the books to be used for our 2018 study: "Rediscovering Our Spiritual Gifts." The cost is \$14.85. Please contact her if you have not already received your copy. Our first meeting of 2018 will be on January 4 at 1:00 PM.

Please be thinking of addresses of college students and military personnel to whom you would like to send a "Love Box." February always seems to sneak up on us. Details will follow later. You may email to Dawn at the church office. Please put "Love Boxes" in the subject line.

➤ *Block Party Update*



Thanks to all who stepped up and helped us pay off our deficit. We appreciate the support of all the churches involved. The Block Party is one of our major outreach projects, and everyone involved is always deeply touched by the joy the day brings. However, I am not going to co-chair the project this upcoming year. Having said that, unless some key people step up to help share the responsibilities, the Block Party may not happen this year. Please prayerfully consider what you might be able to do. The responsibilities can be broken down and shared by many. What gifts can you bring to this very important outreach event of our community and neighborhood? For questions call or email me.

-- Julie Robinson, *Outgoing Chair*

jerobinson21409@yahoo.com or 309-838-4335

Witness of the Faithful

Attendance: 11/26: 133, 42 12/3: 166, 44

Offering: \$27,469.69

2018 General Fund Pledge Campaign Update:

135 pledges = \$458,810. Pledge cards are available in the attendance pads in the pews or by calling the church office.

Prayer Concerns

Shirley Ryan AbilityLab: Sharon Warren
(Room #2236, 355 E. Erie Street, Chicago, IL 60611)

OSF St. Joseph: Juanita Elliott, Connie Lindenbaum

Aftercare: Bob Corbett, Lori Craig, Dave Eyman, Vicki Hall, Jackie Hux, Duke Kopp, Erma McDaniel, Peggy O'Neal, Brenda Phillis, Mary Smart, Don Wey

Hospice: Harold Goyen, Marilyn Thompson, Virginia Warren

Assisted Living: Alma Samuels (Taylors' home)

Nursing Homes: Blm. Rehab -- Marilyn Thompson; Heritage, Blm. -- Paul Cope, Merle Murray, Harry Schultz, 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 -- Roberta Blomgren

Military: Chris Kavanaugh (Marines, CA);

Harley Scott (Phillis niece/Navy, VA)

Sympathy to: ... Michael Lubbert family on the November 4 death of his wife, Deborah. Her memorial service will be held this Friday, December 8, at 3:00 PM in the Sanctuary. Visitation is 1:00-3:00 PM. A meal will follow the service.

.. Jordan (Ashley) Nechkash family on the November 23 death of his father, Jeffrey Nechkash.

Birth: Callahan Bradley Smith was born November 12 to Nick & Kylie Smith of LaGrange, IL. Great-grandparents are Frank & Lois Lipscomb.

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

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401 West Jefferson Street
Bloomington, Illinois 61701

Bloomington, IL 61701



Return Service Requested



Mailed: December 6, 2017

Serving Sunday, December 10

Acolytes: Evan Nichols, Alexis Nichols
Child Care: Trish Logan, Marcia Christensen
Deacons: 9:00 John & Kathy Dailey
10:15 Ted Logan, Amy Nichols
Jr. Deacons: Tyler Chapman, Abby Logan
Drivers: Rich Crusius, Gary Thompson
Elders: Sue & Joe Bandy
Homebound Elders: Susan Cleaver, John Hensley
Fellowship Host: Tasting Party
Fill Candles: Marla McElroy, Kathie Chapman
Greeters: Doug & Stephanie Reed, Justin & Kim Cox
Information Center Host: Pam Yerkes
Recycle: Frank & Lois Lipscomb
Scripture: Ryan Newton **Time for Children:** Camille Taylor
Sound Tech: James Nussbaum **Video Tech:** Todd Chapman
Worship & Wonder Greeter: Heather Damery

Serving Sunday, December 17

Acolytes: George Davis, Vincent Pozo
Child Care: Trish Logan, Amy Nichols
Deacons: 9:00 Kenny & Penny Bland, Vicki Hall
10:15 James & Libby Nussbaum
Jr. Deacons: Austin Metz, Brennon Reed
Drivers: Frank Lipscomb, Gary Thompson
Elders: Naomi Kosier, Kathie Chapman
Homebound Elders: Sue & Joe Bandy
Fellowship Host: Nancy Pool
Fill Candles: Marla McElroy, Kathie Chapman
Greeters: Nate & Heather Damery, John & Kathy Dailey
Information Center Host: Teri Arvik
Recycle: Frank & Lois Lipscomb
Scripture: Sue Brumme **Time for Children:** Linda Lehmann
Sound Tech: Dave Phillis **Video Tech:** James Nussbaum
Worship & Wonder Greeter: Jessica Davis
Pulpit: Regional Minister & President Teresa Dulyea-Parker
"Not the Light - Tell the Story" Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; John 1:6-8, 19-28

Sunday Traditional Worship 9:00 AM
One and All Worship 10:15 AM
Sunday School 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, Director of Music & Youth Ministries
hirvin@blmfcc.org.....1-864-921-4874
Lou Ann Fillingham, organ/piano
lafillingham@comcast.net
Bill West, One and All Music Coordinator
billwest211@gmail.com

Communications Coordinator

Jenifer Petri.....808-1181
info@blmfcc.org

Office Administrator

Dawn Craig
office@blmfcc.org

Financial Secretary & Editor

Deborah Stumm
dstumm@blmfcc.org

Custodian

Wally Calvert
calvert62@comcast.net

Child Care Coordinator

Trish Logan
tllogan4@hotmail.com

Office 829-9327

401 W. Jefferson, Bloomington, IL 61701

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

FAX.....829-2865

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