



Tidings

766 Graceland Ave.

Des Plaines, IL 60016



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Following Christ, We Connect a Diversity of People with each other and with God

Advent: A Season of Marinating

"And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways." Luke 1:76

The anticipation of a special new arrival, our soon-to-come grandchild, Mavis, fills us with both eagerness and a flurry of preparations. It's a process that includes doctor appointments, clothing, accessories, the baby room, etc. In these twelve days leading up to her birth, the process feels much like Advent – a time of readiness for the hope, peace, joy, and love that a new life will bring into our family.

This is beautifully captured in a reflection by Donna Schaper on the season of Advent. I love Advent. Advent, by the way, is not a Holiday. It is a process. Holidays overflow with significance, often leaving a mess behind. Advent, however, is a season of marinating, of getting ourselves ready for the resounding call of hope, peace, joy, and love that the holidays bring. In the preparing, we become witnesses of the divine birth, marveling at a God who chooses to become incarnate.

To truly celebrate the holidays and embrace Advent's essence, we must manage our expectations while holding onto high hopes. Advent reminds us that the sacred continually unfolds around us; it's like background music, enriching our experience.

During the holidays, our longing for change becomes baldly apparent. But during Advent, it's different – we hear the baby's heartbeat, relishing the anticipation of nurturing and tending to this new life. Just as food tastes better when marinated, Advent allows us to savor the process, appreciating the anticipation before, during, and after the actual event.

If the holidays are the overflowing bucket, Advent is the profound significance within it. One is hurried consumption, the other deliberate relishing. Advent invites us into a spiritual marination, slowly preparing ourselves for the birth of the divine. It's a time to marvel at the audaciousness of God's arrival as a child, bridging heaven to earth and spirit to flesh.

Let us not overlook the importance of marinating our souls this season, preparing ourselves for the miracles unfolding before us.

Warm regards,

Rev. Co

Worship Ministry

December 3	First Sunday in Advent/Communion/Church Brunch	
	Service of Worship	9:00a - www.fccdp.org
	Fellowship	10:00a
	Lay Reader	Jackie Schmitt
	Scripture Reading	1 Corinthians 1:3-9
December 10	Second Sunday in Advent/Christmas Pageant	
	Service of Worship	9:00a - www.fccdp.org
	Fellowship	10:00a
	Lay Reader	
	Scripture Reading	2 Peter 3:8-15a
December 17	Third Sunday in Advent	
	Service of Worship	9:00a - www.fccdp.org
	Fellowship	10:00a
	Lay Reader	Cindie Hoch
	Scripture Reading	1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
December 24	Fourth Sunday in Advent	
	Service of Worship	9:00a - www.fccdp.org
	Fellowship	10:00a
	Lay Reader	Mary Pittman
	Scripture Reading	Romans 16:25-27
December 31		
	Service of Worship	9:00a - www.fccdp.org
	Fellowship	10:00a
	Lay Reader	Marcia Urban
	Scripture Reading	Galatians 4:4-7

***Please join us on Christmas Eve for our Chrismon Family service at 5:00pm
and our traditional Candlelight Service at 11:00pm.***

Children's & Adult Education Ministry

Night Ministry Collection Underway

Our church once again is collecting needed items for clients of The Night Ministry in Chicago. The items will be stuffed into stockings after worship on December 3 by our Sunday School students and interested members of the congregation. Donations will be accepted at church through December 1. A complete list of needed items plus additional information on The Night Ministry can be found on the credenza outside the Church Office. For details speak with Sue Almerigi.

Sunday School Pageant Coming Up

Our annual Sunday School pageant will be presented during the 9:00am worship service on Sunday, December 10. The Story of Christmas is taken from the Books of Luke and Matthew. For details speak with Sue Almerigi.

Diaconate Ministry

About those Flowers...

Our Diaconate Ministry is looking for people to make a \$25 donation in honor or memory of a special person for the Altar Flowers each Sunday. Just call the Church Office and give the name and date. After the worship service, these flowers are taken to members and friends of our congregation who are ill or shut in or for special occasion or sympathy.

Membership & Communications Ministry



Thanks to church member Lowell Handy for creating this festive holiday display in the church hallway cabinet. "A Doggerel December" illustrates the many Christmas happenings at FCC this month, all of which are described in a "doggerel" or comic verse composed in irregular rhythm. Check it out!

All Aboard!

The FCC Christmas Caroling Bus is back! Join us on **Saturday, December 9** as we board a heated bus to spread holiday cheer to local shut-ins. Chili supper afterwards at the DuToit home. Plan to meet at the West Entrance at 3:00pm. The bus will return by 6:00pm. Sign up by **Wednesday, December 6** in the Church Office or through our website. Questions? Contact Debbie Walusiak at 847-337-1443.



Congratulations to Jacob Donlea & Ansebel DuToit (pictured) on their November marriage. Rev. Co officiated at the private ceremony, which was followed by a dinner celebration with the couple's immediate family members. A larger celebration will be held in South Africa at a later date.

Festive Womens Fellowship This Month

The next meeting of Womens Fellowship is at 1:30pm on Tuesday, December 12, in the Barwick Room (or maybe Webster Hall). All women of the church are invited to come and join in the fun and fellowship. Please bring a favorite treat to share – cookies, an appetizer, etc. – for our “Make and Taste,” along with a White Elephant gift to exchange. Questions? Speak with Nancy Meyer.

Ben Cooper, senior linebacker and tight end, concluded his football career at Maine West High School in November. Ben was team captain for the past two years and was named CSL North All-Conference, CSL North Defensive Player of the Year and was awarded First Team All-State honors. Ben has earned a full-ride scholarship to continue his athletic and academic career at Illinois State University. He is the son of Chris & Joy Cooper and the brother of Jenna, Ryan and Zoe. Congratulations, Ben - a true Maine West Warrior!



Creative Conversation Underway – All are Welcome

Creative Conversation is FCCDP's book club. It meets once a month, on the second Monday of each month, at 10 a.m. for about an hour. All are welcome. Each member of the group has the option of reviewing a book of her/his choosing, which others can read from the library (ordered ahead), audio book or on a tablet. The choice is the reviewer's and every genre is open for discussion. Reviewers may choose their own patterns for the review, which will ultimately involve opening the discussion to the others present. There have been some really powerful discussions in the past. The **December 11** selection is *The Rose Code*, by Kate Quinn. Whether you've had a chance to read the book or not, we hope you'll join us for what we expect to be a lively discussion.



FCC's Got Talent 2023 – Our November all-church talent show featured both serious and humorous acts and was well received by all. Pictured on stage is Tom Tucker, who performed the comical skit "True or False." Thanks to those who participated, and a special thanks to Marcia Urban for coordinating.

Mission & Outreach Ministry

Backpack Ministry Prepares for Holiday Season

First, a big thank you to everyone who donated food and helped pack and deliver the Thanksgiving Holiday bags for North Elementary. It was so very much appreciated. First Congregational will again be delivering special Christmas Holiday bags on December 21; special donations for these bags need to be dropped off at the church no later than December 19th. At this moment the most needed items for the holiday packs are kid-friendly cereal boxes [\pm 10 oz.], canned vegetables [green beans, corn, peas \pm 15 oz.], one-pound package of spaghetti, and canned spaghetti sauce. Weekly bags can always use canned vegetables, beef stew [or chili, chunky soup, chicken a la king, or hash], small cans of tuna or chicken. We still have a volunteer opening for delivering to North School the Christmas two-bag-a-child [= 40 bags] option on December 21 between 10:00 and 11:00 AM [sign up on the sheet in the church office]. Deliveries will resume January 11, 2024. The sign-up sheet for the 2024 portion of the school year will appear in the office soon. Questions? Contact handytreesh@att.net



Nancy Brink and John Foster made a delivery to Exodus World Service in November, to benefit a Ukrainian refugee family of three new to Chicago. John is pictured with Exodus staff members in Park Ridge.

Music Ministry

Christmas Concert Here December 17 – Don't Miss It!

A Christmas Cantata presented by our own Chancel Choir and accompanied by Anna Kovalevska is scheduled for **5:00pm** on Sunday, December 17. Soloists will include Cindie Hoch, Corrine Bachar, Mary Pittman, Nancy Novak, Mary-Lou Cameron, Dee Hardesty, Rev. Co, Don Cameron, Rick Warren, Rob Bachar and Garrett Pittman. The Concert will begin promptly at 5:00pm. There will be many moments during the *Joy to the World* performance where you can sing your favorite Christmas carols, too. Nursery care provided, and there might be a visitor from the North Pole! After the concert, you are invited to share your favorite holiday main dish, side dish, appetizer, salad or dessert at a festive potluck in Webster Hall. To learn more, contact Scott Emerick at scott_fccdp@yahoo.com.

Secret Santa Wants You!

You are invited to continue spreading Christmas cheer with a Secret Santa gift exchange. All gifts can either be made (even baked), or purchased, but must be \$20 and under. This is not a White Elephant gift exchange, and unfortunately no gift cards! Gift exchange will happen on Sunday, December 17 in Webster Hall after the Christmas Cantata, during the refreshments in Webster Hall. **Sign up before this coming Sunday, December 3** by emailing Ellie at: elliedutoit@outlook.com or on our website: [Secret Santa](#). Remember to add every member in the household that would like to participate. You will receive the name of your Secret Santa on Sunday, December 10.

Time for Christmas Bells...

The Christmas Eve Handbell Choir members will be dusting off their gloves and warming up their arms after a few years of rest. They will rehearse on Christmas Eve from 9:30pm to 10:30pm in the sanctuary. If you are interested in participating, please contact Ellen Alde at ealdefccdp@gmail.com by December 17 so that she can plan accordingly and let the Church Office know the name of the piece.

Youth Ministry



Did Someone Say “Cookies”?

The annual Pilgrim Fellowship (PF) Holiday Cookie Walk fundraiser will be held from 9:00am to 12:00pm (or whenever the cookies are gone) in Webster Hall on Saturday, December 9. The homemade treats can be purchased in various sized boxes. Proceeds will benefit the PF’s summer mission trip to Adam’s Camp in Colorado. For details speak to Matt Cameron or Marissa Anderson.

Finance Committee

Last Date for Gift Card Orders is December 10

There's still time to purchase gift cards for holiday gifts, for yourself, or for other needs throughout the year. But hurry; our Annual Gift Card Sale ends soon. Pick up an order form and full list of available cards from the credenza outside the church office. Or call our church secretary at 847-299-5561 to have one sent to you. Order forms are also included weekly in Co's Notes. Orders can be placed at the church after Sunday worship, by emailing Rod Beets at rodbeets99@gmail.com, or by calling Rod at 847-253-3293. Gift cards should be paid for at the time of order. To maximize profits, we will only be able to accept payment by check (made payable to FCCDP) or by cash.

Orders placed by 2:00 pm each Sunday, will be available for pick up at the church the following Sunday. Remember, the final order deadline for this year's Gift Card Sale, is Sunday, December 10, at 2:00 pm.

Financial Report

For the month of October, we had income of \$25,310 and expenses of \$26,811, for a monthly shortfall of \$1,500. The good news is that due to positive results during the first few months of the fiscal year, we are still running \$10,757 in the black, year-to-date. Thank you for keeping up to date with your pledges and offerings.

Donations Sought for Talent & Gift Auction

Plans are currently underway for our 2024 Talent & Gift Auction, set to begin in mid-January, and we need your help to make it successful. Bidding will be done via email, text, or telephone, as has been done for the past several years. Plus, we plan to accept in-person bids, during fellowship, after Sunday worship. The success of our Talent & Gift Auction doesn't just depend on people placing bids, it also depends on the donation of Auction items.

Please give some thought to what you might be able to donate. Baked goods or a home cooked specialty? A craft project or artistic creation? A service or lessons you can provide? Some of our most popular items in past years were theatre tickets, sporting events, artwork, and vacation packages. If you can donate an Auction item, please contact Sharon Urry at surry1024@comcast.net, no later than January 5.

Recurring Electronic Giving an Option

Many of our church members take advantage of electronic giving for their pledges and offerings. They like the convenience and comfort in knowing that even if they are not able to attend worship, their contribution is still available to further God's work in our church and the community. Electronic giving can be scheduled weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly. And it's easy to get started. Just contact Eliud Alvarez at fcc766finance@fccdp.org or the church secretary for more information.

Holiday Bake Sale This Month

Looking for yummy holiday treats? FCCDP's Holiday Bake Sale could be just what you're looking for! The Sale includes some all-time favorites, as well as some of our bakers' favorite holiday recipes.

Conducted similar to the Women's Fellowship Bake Sales in the past, Garrett Pittman has stepped up and will be overseeing this year's sale. All proceeds will benefit the church's general budget. Orders will be accepted through Sunday, December 10, with pick up the following Sunday, December 17. Order forms are available on the credenza outside the church office and will be included in Co's Notes and on the church website. To place your order, or if you have any questions, contact Garrett at gpittman7@gmail.com or by phone at 847/404-7635.

“Second Time” Rummage Sale Updates

STA sale update from co-chair Ellen Alde: It's time to mark your calendars!

We will be reaching out this month to those who have been room chairs in the past. with our chairman meeting scheduled for January 28, 2024.

Mark your calendars - our December drop offs will be Sunday, December 10 following the church service and Wednesday, December 20 from 10:00am to 11:00 am.

Thank you to everyone who has been dropping off items. (We still have plenty of storage room, in case you were wondering). Thank you for the continued labeling of boxes and bags. Also, if you are donating bed linens, please indicate the bed size they will fit. We are in the process of taking small furniture items so if it will fit in your car, please consider bringing that to us as well. Just a reminder - **NO OLD TUBE TV's**, sleeper sofas, couches, refrigerators or freezers.

If you have any questions, please contact your co-chairs: Chris Tomsic (ctomsic@mac.com) or Ellen Alde (ealdefccdp@gmail.com).

Thank you for your continued support, have a great month, we'll be back in January!!

Pastoral Relations Committee

In Case You Were Wondering...

The purpose of FCCDP's Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC) is to maintain an open relationship between the Minister and members of the congregation. It helps the Minister and church members share ideas, hopes, and dreams. It lets the Minister know what people in the church are thinking and provides a framework for dealing with conflict creatively. It also serves as a resource to the Minister and the Congregation Council for information and special projects throughout the year.

This year's PRC consists of:

Sharon Urry	(liaison with Youth and Education Ministries)
Bob Crocker	(liaison with Mission & Outreach Ministry)
Quinn Yost	liaison with Property Ministry)
Jana Haas	(liaison with Worship and MAC Ministries)
Joyce Petersen	(liaison with Diaconate Ministry)
Corrine Bachar	(liaison with Music & Drama Ministry)

Please feel free to reach out to any PRC member with your questions, concerns, or comments.

Personnel Committee



Eliud Alvarez



Marissa Anderson



Amanda Chen

Welcome to our new FCC staff

members! Financial Administrator Eliud Alvarez is an ordained minister at Star of Bethlehem Church in Chicago. He lives in Des Plaines with his wife, and they have three adult children and five grandchildren. Co-Youth Coordinator Marissa (Skarbek) Anderson is a former PFER who also attended FCC Preschool as a child. She is employed by Senior Move Management, and she and her husband are the parents of Hawk, a Wholly Ringers intergenerational handbell choir member. Church secretary Amanda Chen was a former school secretary in her native China. She and her son, Alex, were baptized at FCC. Alex, age 9, attended FCC Preschool. Amanda is married to Christos Dousmanis, and the couple also has three older children.

FCC Preschool News

Preschool Christmas Show This Month

The First Congregational Preschool is hosting its annual Christmas show on two dates this month – 11:00am on December 7 and 6:30pm on December 7. The show is directed by Sue Almerigi and will be held in the sanctuary.

Happy Birthday to You!!

Congratulations to the following church members/friends on their birthdays!!

If you would like to add a birthday, please contact the Church Office at 847/299-5561.

David Quam	03-Dec
Christopher Anderson	04-Dec
Stacy Hahn	04-Dec
Inge Eschenbach	09-Dec
Betty Brodie	11-Dec
Brad Schuller	14-Dec
Mark Schuller	14-Dec
Maxine Hubbard	17-Dec
Robbin Muhr	18-Dec
Kristina Haas	19-Dec
Danielle Rehder	24-Dec
Tom Fink	25-Dec
Mike Kaplan	27-Dec
Rev. Dr. Wm. Grice III	30-Dec
Bob Goerne	31-Dec

In Memoriam

Anna Darko

October 22, 2023

Florence Hoffman

November 16, 2023

FROM OUR HISTORIAN, NANCY MEYER

These are the notes I took for our Womens Fellowship meeting in October when we met in the sanctuary. The idea was suggested by the late Flo Hoffman.

Changes to FCC sanctuary over the years

Church built in 1929

In 1938, only American flag in front of sanctuary. Eventually the Christian flag, United Church of Christ flag, and designed by Rev. Scheuer (1972-1979), our own FCC of DP flag

1947- 1st improvement – beautiful “Life of Christ” window added, with dossal curtain behind it and scripture band “the greatest commandment”.

1953 – lots of new Sunday school rooms “created” but didn’t affect sanctuary

1956-1957 Full size music room added (choir practiced in sanctuary before that) and church office and study were moved from 2nd floor to the former “Loesch Chapel”.

1970 – dimmer lights installed for the 6 chancel lights

1973 – projection screen added to chancel

1976 – other congregations started using our sanctuary

1976 – Prayer cards used in worship

1977 – telephone ministry Homebound persons could call in on a special line to hear the entire service “live”.

1979 – anonymous donation of English handbells, with first performances in 1981 from back of sanctuary. Ultimately resulted in removal of the first 2 rows of pews in front of sanctuary to make room for the bell tables.

1982 – new altar cloths and pulpit scarves

1984 – anonymous donation for ceiling fans in sanctuary

1988 - new hymnals and Bibles added

1989 – anonymous donation to provide air conditioning to sanctuary

1992 – front steps to sanctuary rebuilt, first time since built in 1929.

1995 – Organ repair project.

Lots of new technology added to the sanctuary after the Covid pandemic hit in 2019.

When was back wall of sanctuary removed and replaced by folding wooden doors AND several rows of pews removed? When did carpeting replace the brown linoleum tile? (Still seen under pews?) When were cushions added to the pews? Anyone know???

December 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31 09:45a Family Worship 10:00 am Fellowship STA – drop-Off		Fundraisers: PF Cookie Walk			1	2
3 Communion Advent 1 9:00am Worship 10:00 am Fellowship 10:00am Confirmation Christmas Stockings 10:30a Sunday Brunch	4	5	6 9:00a WWC 10:00a Bible Study 11:00a Pre-school show	7	8 PF Cookie Walk	9 8:00a Pageant Rehearsal 9:00a PF Cookie Walk 3:00p Caroling
10 Advent 2 Christmas Pageant 9:00am Worship 10:00 am Fellowship STA – drop-Off 10:00am Ministry Staff Breakfast 3:00 Flo Hoffman	11 10:00a Creative Conversation	12 12:00p Staff Meeting Luncheon 1:30p Womens Fellowship	13 9:00a WWC 10:00a Bible Study	14	15	16
17 Advent 3 9:00am Worship 10:00 am Fellowship 10:00am Confirmation Wholly Ringers 5:00p Christmas Caritata	18 6:30p Property 7:00p Wholly Ringers	19	20 Tidings Deadline 9:00a WWC 10:00a Bible Study Brunch	21	22 Pre-school Closes	23
24 Advent 4 9:00a Family Worship 10:00a Fellowship 5:00p Christmas Tree Service 11:00p Christmas Eve Service	25 Office Closed Christmas Day	26 Office Closed	27 7:00p Chancel Choir 9:00a WWC	28	29	30

First Congregational United Church of Christ

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