

Tidings

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December 2019 - Vol. 80 – No. 12

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

Merry Christmas!

"I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Jeremiah 29:11

It is almost that time of the year, again! Yes, you guessed it: Advent. Advent is the time of the year that we get ready to wait, to wait more and finally to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! Advent means that something is coming, something is about to happen. Churches use the four Sundays before Christmas to say, "Let's get ready for Christmas!" During this time of the year you may see some symbols in our sanctuary that we get out especially this time of the year. Very noticeable will be our advent wreath. On the Advent Wreath you will notice 5 candles, four smaller ones, three purple and one pink: Hope, Peace, Love, all purple, and a pink one, the candle of Joy. The bigger one in the center, the Christ candle. Our first candle is the candle of Hope. It was hope that kept Mary going on that long difficult journey to Bethlehem and it is also this candle that reminds us that Hope is the gift that we have received from the Christ Child.

On the note of gifts, the chances are great that some of us will get a box of chocolates as a gift for Christmas. And, by the way, I'm not complaining, just in case you were contemplating giving me some. Every time I open a box of chocolates I can't help thinking of Forrest Gump, and more specific Forrest's mama. She was right. "Life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you will get!" On our life journey we also encounter disappointments and heartaches along the way, but we never lose our hope in God's ability to take all the pieces of chocolate, all of life's ups and downs, and transform them into something new and powerful. We hope that God can take the disappointment, the heartache, and the pain of our journeys and make us stronger.

We do not just exist in this world, we were created for a purpose, and thus God will take even our disappointments and headaches and do a great work in and through us. The choice to live in hope is ours. Our outlook on life and

how we respond to life is determined by the hope that dwells within our spirit. Our faith in Jesus is what gives raise to hope. As followers of Jesus, God has poured into us eternal hope. This hope creates within us the power that helps us to rise above lives challenges. Yes, even when life looks bleak, when disaster surrounds us, and darkness has its grip on us, God is with us! The Light of hope still shines! At times, it may seem dim or weak, but as long as there is a spark of the Divine present with us there is hope for a better day, a better world, and a better life. But we must choice hope in spite of the piece of chocolate we draw from the box.

As we approach Christmas, let us put our faith in God's power to create within us a spirit of hope to sustain and transform us. Let us celebrate Christmas this year with our hope planted in God's will for our lives. Let us remember that just as God spoke to the people of Israel concerning their future, the same words hold true for us. Let us put our hope in Christ this Christmas.

With Love,

Rev. Co

Worship Ministry

December 1 – Communion and Advent 1

Service of Worship	8:00a & 9:30a
Coffee Hour (Webster Hall)	10:30a
Lay Reader	Dee Hardesty
Scripture Reading	Matthew 24:36-44
Usher Team	Jim Foster

December 8 – Christmas Pageant and Advent 2

Service of Worship	8:00a & 9:30a
Coffee Hour (Webster Hall)	10:30a
Lay Reader	Cindie Hoch
Scripture Reading	Matthew 3:1-12
Usher Team	Jim Foster

December 15 – Advent 3

Service of Worship	8:00a & 9:30a
Coffee Hour (Webster Hall)	10:30a
Lay Reader	Corrine Bachar
Scripture Reading	Matthew 11:2-11
Usher Team	Jim Foster

December 22 – Advent 4

Service of Worship	8:00a & 9:30a
Coffee Hour (Webster Hall)	10:30a
Lay Reader	Deb Alde
Scripture Reading	Matthew 1:18-25
Usher Team	Jim Foster

December 29

Service of Worship	8:00a & 9:30a
Coffee Hour (Webster Hall)	10:30a
Lay Reader	Larry Schimka
Scripture Reading	Matthew 2:13-23
Usher Team	Jim Foster

Join Us on Christmas Eve...

All are welcome at our 5:00pm Chrismon Family Service and our traditional 11:00pm Candlelight Service.

Ushers Sought

Church ushers are needed for the two Christmas Eve services. Please sign up in the Church Office or contact Jim Foster for details. Additional usher help also is needed on Sunday mornings year round. Ushering is a small time commitment that plays a large role in our church services – please consider!

Children's & Adult Education

Advent Coin Boxes to Benefit Heifer Project

Once again, the Sunday School children will be filling Advent coin boxes. The funds raised from these boxes will be used to purchase animals the children select through the Heifer Project, to help poverty stricken populations around the world. Anyone who would like to help the Sunday School children reach their goal is invited to also fill an Advent Coin Box. The boxes will be available at the beginning of December.

Membership & Communications Ministry

Evening Circle Plans Make & Taste

The women of Evening Circle will meet at 7:00pm on Tuesday, December 10 in Webster Hall to for their annual “Make & Taste” and White Elephant Gift Exchange. Guests welcome!

Get on the Bus...

The annual FCC Caroling Bus, that is. The bus will leave from church promptly at 3:00pm on Sunday, December 22 and return about 6:00pm. No charge but a free will offering will be collected on the bus. A chili supper afterwards will be held at the home of Rev. Co & Ellie. All ages welcome! Please sign up in the Church Office or through our website www.fccdp.org Questions? Speak with Debbie Walusiak.



Last year our Caroling Bus stopped at Midtown Crossing to carol to residents there, and Holly Naselius (left) prepared refreshments for the group. Also pictured are Holly's mother, Dee Hardesty, and our choir director, Scott Emerick.

FCC's Got Talent



FCC's Got Talent 2019: A wide variety of entertaining acts were presented in the church sanctuary in November with hot dogs and chips in Webster Hall at intermission. Pictured (left) are Miranda Villanueva and (right) Rod Beets, Ralph Murdy, Tom Tucker and Bob McCullough.

Check Out Our Website...

A reminder to check out our church website, www.fccdp.org, and to use it for submitting upcoming events and signing up for church events. Our webmaster, Ellie DuToit, welcomes your feedback! Contact her at elliedutoit@outlook.com.

Mission & Outreach Ministry

Night Ministry Stocking Stuffing December 8

Our church also will be filling Christmas stockings for The Night Ministry. Our goal is to fill 48 stockings with various hygiene items. Donations will be accepted until December 8, when the Sunday School students will fill stockings after the Christmas pageant. The stockings will be delivered on December 9 or December 10. (Volunteer driver sought!) Needed items include adult stretch gloves, full size deodorant, small memo pads, pens, lip balm, hand cream, small packs of facial tissue, travel size first aid kits, pairs of hand and foot warmers, mints/gum/candy. Contact Michelle Herrera for details at 847/338-5718 or michelleherrara48@gmail.com.

Drivers Sought for Meals on Wheels

Volunteer drivers are needed to deliver meals to local shut-ins from January 6 to January 31. If you can help or to get more information, contact Michelle Herrera at 847/338-5718 or michelleherrara48@gmail.com.

Christmas Kindness Tree Returns

Again this year, in lieu of sending Christmas cards to members of the congregation, why not consider a donation to the Kindness Tree? The Kindness Tree will be set up in Webster Hall during the week of Thanksgiving. The monies raised from these donations will be allocated to the Mission and Outreach Restricted Funds for future use.

Music Ministry

Christmas Cantata Here on December 15

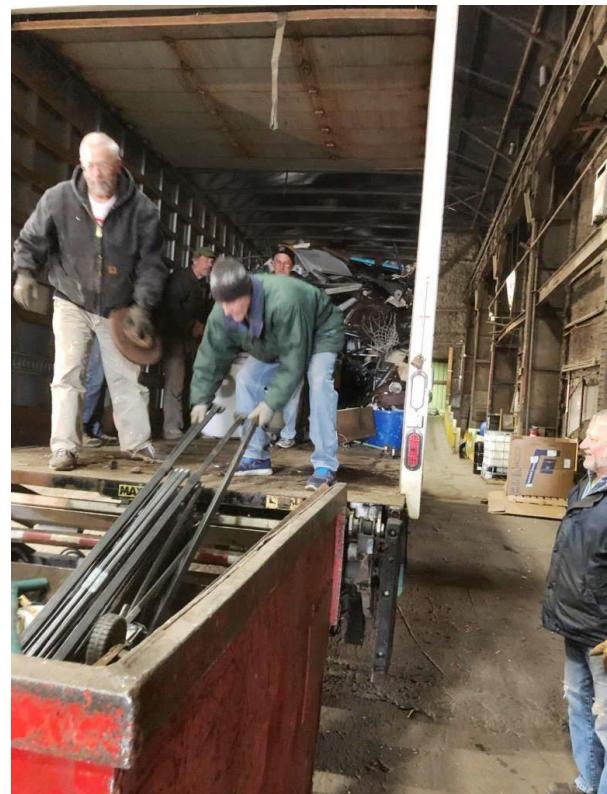
For thousands of years people were seeking the coming of the Messiah. They were seeking the light of God. Join with us to hear Mary and Joseph tell their story of how their own faith guided them to be a part of fulfilling a prophecy that had been foretold so many centuries before. Both shepherds and astrologers saw a light in the sky that led them by their faith to where the Savior had been born. May we likewise seek and find The Light for our own journeys of faith and transform our lives with a fresh touch of God's miraculous grace and gift of Love. Please join us at 4:30pm on Sunday, December 15 when our own Chancel Choir and friends perform the musical and drama presentation of "Seekers of the Light." A potluck in Webster Hall will follow at 5:30pm. For further information, speak with Scott Emerick.

Past and Present Ringers Sought for Christmas Eve Bell Choir

Our church handbell choir will play during the 11:00pm Candlelight Service on December 24, with a rehearsal scheduled for 10:00pm. Please speak with Ellen Alde for details.

Property Ministry

Our church's metal recycling program has collected 24,500 lbs. of metal to date in 2019 and raised \$2,211. Since the program's inception approximately \$26,000 has been raised to benefit our church's missions and ministries.



Youth Ministry



Caitlin Farrell and Madeleine Larson at the 2018 Cookie Walk

Cookies, cookies and more cookies...

The Annual PF Cookie Walk takes place from 9:00am to 12:00pm on Saturday, December 7 at church. Don't miss out on the chance to purchase delicious holiday treats from our very own Pilgrim Fellowship youth. All proceeds go toward this summer's PF mission trip to Adam's Camp in Colorado, for special needs youth. Cookie boxes come in a variety of sizes to suit your preference. The PF will be hard at work baking on Friday night in the church kitchen. The PF welcomes any donations of baked goods for this fundraiser. Please consider donating a batch or two or three! You can drop off your cookie donations in the church kitchen on Friday, December 6 from 6:00pm to 8:00 pm. Questions? Please contact Kirsten Tangeros at kirsten3204@mindspring.com. Thanks for your support!

Finance Committee

Talent & Gift Auction

It's not too early to start thinking about our 2020 Talent & Gift Auction. This year's auction will be held one week earlier than past years, running from Sunday, January 26, through Sunday, February 2. In order to allow adequate time for us to publicize and promote the auction, we are asking that all donations for the auction be submitted no later than January 10. In past years, we've had dinners, baked goods, outings and getaways, housecleaning and maintenance, artistic creations, a variety of lessons, tickets to plays and sporting events, gift cards and much, much more. To donate an item to the auction, or for more information, contact Sharon Urry at surry1024@comcast.net.

Save the Dates

December 8	Sunday School Pageant
December 15	Cantata
December 22	Christmas Caroling Bus
January 26 – February 2	Talent & Gift Auction
February 27	An Evening of Comedy at Zanie's

Financial Report

For the month of October, we had income of \$20,698 and expenses of \$22,968. Although this was a shortfall for the month of \$2,269, because we were running ahead of budget through the first quarter of the fiscal year, we are still in a positive position year-to-date of \$15,733. Thank you for keeping up with your pledges and offerings and helping to assure that funds are available for the work of our various Church Ministries.

Gift Card Sales Continue through December 8

There's still time to purchase your gift cards this holiday season. Orders will be taken on Sundays, after both the 8:00 and 9:30 worship services, through December 8. (Payment is due when orders are placed; please make any checks payable to FCCDP.) Cards can be picked up the following Sunday. Gift cards are available for a wide range of local businesses. This is a convenient way to stop up on cards for your own use, for gifts, and to help the church at the same time. For every gift card sold, our church will

receive 2%, 5%, 10% or more of the card's face value. All profits will benefit the church's general fund. For more information, contact Rod Beets at 847-253-3293.

From the Community

The second annual Forest School Area Turkey Trot, organized by church member Jennifer Nutley and friends, takes place on Thanksgiving morning. Join your Des Plaines friends and neighbors for a spirited "trot" around the neighborhood! The only entry fee is a nonperishable food donation to the Self-Help Closet & Pantry of Des Plaines. The trot will begin and end in the Beacon Tap parking lot. For further information, speak with Jennifer or visit www.forestschoolareaturkeytrot.com.

Happy Birthday to You!!

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

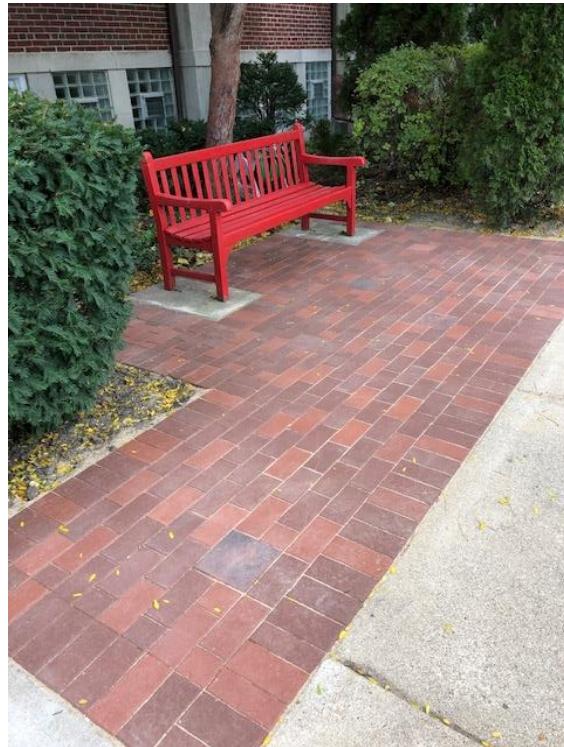
(Please notify the Church office if there are additions, deletions or corrections to be made.)

12/4	Stacy Hahn
12/5	Carol Bates
12/7	Lillian Bichel
12/9	Inge Eschenbach
12/11	Betty Brodie
12/11	Kimberly DeVitto
12/14	Bradley Schuller
12/14	Mark Schuller

12/18	Robbin Muhr
12/19	Kristina Haas
12/19	George Reichl
12/23	Jeffrey Hubert
12/24	Danielle Johnson
12/25	Thomas Fink
12/30	Rev. Dr. Wm. Grice
12/31	Rob Goerne

Memorial Garden

Orders once again are being accepted for engraved bricks, in honor of or in memory of a loved one, for our church's Memorial Garden. Bricks in size 8-inch by 8--inch are now available. 4X8 bricks are \$75 each and 8X8 bricks are 175 each. Orders will be accepted through June 2020. Forms are available on the credenza outside of the Church Office. For further information, speak with Bob McCullough.



Gifts & Memorials

In Honor of the Confirmation Class of 1961 from Donna and Duane Miller.

In Memory of Sue Wallace Crowder from Lorrie Perrone

From our Historian, Nancy Meyer

I thought I'd share these from our Sesquicentennial weekend.



I've written about FCCDP sponsoring the displaced Darko family when they arrived homeless from Germany in January, 1952. They were welcomed into the home of our members, Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Beckwith, who lived on Graceland Ave., just a couple blocks from church. Anna Darko and her daughter, Margit Ritchey, still attend our worship services occasionally, coming in from Rolling Meadows and Crystal Lake. One of the many former members I stay in touch with, via emailing the monthly Tidings, is Tom Beckwith of TN. He's related to this Beckwith family. He came in for the Sesquicentennial

weekend and when he found out they would be in church on Anniversary Sunday, he contacted his step-sister, Cindy Beckwith Knaack, the granddaughter of Elmer Beckwith.

A wonderful reunion on Sunday morning, as Margit and Cindy had lost touch. They had played together as little girls and had been bridesmaids at each other's wedding. Roger Alde joined in, as his mom was also a Beckwith. Lots of hugs and a few tears too.



Tom, Cindy, Margit, Anna, Roger



I've also written about the Suda family. Mr. Suda was our custodian for eighteen years, from 1952 to 1970. The first few years he and his young family lived in the apartment located in our church basement. To young Robert, Richard &

Priscilla, FCCDP was home. They played and rode bikes in the hallways and had school friends join them. They grew up and were confirmed at FCC. Priscilla attended the Sesquicentennial dinner at Manzo's, sitting with several close friends from her 1961 confirmation class. They reminisced about all those fun times, playing at Priscilla's "house". Priscilla even admitted remembering how she accessed and played in the bell tower!



Front (maiden names): Priscilla Suda, Gretchen Rivard, Donna Hostetler, Beth Radcliffe; Back: Scott Evans, Bill Grice, Carolyn Relph.

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First Congregational United Church of Christ
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