

First Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
415 N. Mill Street
Festus, MO 63028
Phone: 636-937-3416
Rev. Janet: 636-524-2771
fccfestus@sbcglobal.net

9:00 AM Coffee Fellowship
9:30 AM Sunday School
10:45 AM Worship

December 1, 2009

Christian Visitor

Moments with Janet

The Many Colors of Christmas

I love colors. If I'm tired or a little down, I look out the window and see that God has spilled all kinds of paint in our backyard and the woods beyond. When our world gets to look a bit too black and white, it's good to notice all the colors around us. And all the shades and all the hues.

Often we think of the sounds of Christmas. And the smells of Christmas. Let's think also of the many colors of Christmas. I thought of this when reading through a draft of our December newsletter. Thanks to the creativity of **Kathy**, our editor/assistant/multi-faceted office staff, this edition of the *Christian Visitor* is filled with colors – the colors of the season.

Green and red immediately come to mind. Ever wonder why? No, red doesn't come from Rudolph's nose. Nor is green inspired by Santa's elves. According to Christian tradition, green represents eternal life, specifically the evergreen tree and how it survives through the winter season. Red represents Christ's shed blood.



In the 14th Century, churches presented Miracle Plays—religious plays used to educate the public. Traditionally on December 24, the church presented The Paradise Play, the story of Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden. And in place of an apple tree—as they weren't available in winter—they fastened apples to the branches of a pine tree. Using a pine to represent the Tree of Good and Evil became a common practice among churches and they began incorporating the tree into their Christmas displays each year. But it didn't stop there. Following the church's example, people began assembling pine trees in their homes and decorating them with red apples. This act introduced two modern traditions: the Christmas tree and our seasonal colors, green for the pine tree and red for the apples.

Another color of Christmas is yellow – usually associated with candlelight. We have candle lighting services, we light Advent

candles and the Christ candle. The yellow flame flickers from the candles into our hearts. And warms us – like a good fire on a chilly winter evening.



And there's white. In the northern part of the northern hemisphere, during the time of year when we celebrate Christmas, white snow often covers the ground. We associate white with purity. Thus the liturgical colors change from purple to white on Christmas Eve and stay white until the first Sunday of Epiphany. *I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas*.

There's another important color of Christmas – blue. For many people, the approaching Christmas holiday does not bring with it the joy and happiness that is advertised on television or in greeting cards. They may be facing a holiday after the death of a loved one or after a divorce. Perhaps they have been unable to have a child, or have suffered through an emotional trauma. Or perhaps they feel pressured and overwhelmed by holiday preparations.



In recent years, many churches have attempted to reach out to people who feel such burdens by adding Blue Christmas services to their worship offerings. We will have our second one on *Sunday, December 13, 5 pm*, open to all. This service will have a quiet, somber feel. Scripture, music, and lighting memorial blue candles will help us focus on the comfort God offers during dark times.

My wish for all is that you enjoy all the colors of Christmas.

Rev. Janet

To be a faithful, growing church, that demonstrates true community, deep Christian spirituality and a passion for justice.

WORSHIP

Can you believe it? It seems like only yesterday that school was just starting, and here we are on the verge of Thanksgiving. And this year, the season of Advent starts the very next week. It is time for us to prepare for the coming of Emmanuel, God with us. What puts you in the mood for Christmas? Is it the carols or the decorations? The worship committee has made plans for a very special Advent season, and we need the help and participation of everyone in the congregation.



First of all, we would like everyone to bring an **ornament** for the sanctuary tree. Choose something that has special meaning for you. It can be new or old, homemade or store-bought. On **Sunday, November 29**, the first day of Advent, we will ask everyone to hang their ornament on the tree during worship. Together, all of our ornaments will be a beautiful expression of both our unity and diversity. These ornaments would be loaned to the church only for the Christmas season.



Secondly, we will be staging a display of **crèches (nativity scenes)** in the back of the sanctuary. Do you have a crèche to loan for the display?

Perhaps you have a crèche that is special, one that is unique or that holds special meaning for you. We would like to display a variety of crèches for everyone's enjoyment, to spread the joy of Christmas and remind us of its true meaning.

Finally, we need plenty of volunteers to "**deck the halls**" with all our Christmas decorations. Mark your calendars for **November 28, Saturday at noon**, for **Decoration Day**. We are asking the Sunday School classes to decorate their own rooms, and volunteers will help with the hallways and sanctuary. This is when we will set up the crèche display also, so it would be helpful if we could have your crèche by then. In addition, we are

encouraging people to bring cookies and such to share that day, and we'll play some Christmas music and make it a working party.



There's more in the works too, to make for a festive season in our worship. *'Tis the season....*

Everyone has been very pleased with the more active role the young people have been playing in our worship. We intend to continue this by having the children help with communion and offering more often. And the covers of our Advent worship bulletins will be designed by the youngsters as well. We will also be creating a collective display of their designs to hang in the hallway outside the sanctuary.

Keith Osterberg, chairperson

WORSHIP SERVICES

Sunday worship services are the same 10:45 AM.

Sunday, December 13
5:00 PM
Blue Christmas Service

Thursday, December 24
7:00 PM
Candlelight
Christmas Eve Service



EVANGELISM

Let us remember evangelism as a fire in reverse. Don't confine it. That way it will not spread. Tell the good news and let evangelism spread like wild fire.

Letetia Fanger, chairperson

DATES OFFICE CLOSED
&
KATHY'S VACATION TIME

December 24-Christmas Eve
Kathy off holiday

December 25-Christmas
Office Closed

December 29 & 30
Kathy on Vacation

December 31 News Year Eve
Kathy off holiday

January 1-New Years Day
Office Closed

PARI SH NURSE

Peace and joy in the coming of our savior. December is a month filled with family gatherings, eager anticipation, special services and programs, and more fellowship opportunities. Despite our best intentions, we can find ourselves hurried, harried and exhausted. This is especially true for caregivers of those with chronic illnesses. Care giving is as difficult as it is a loving job, and we need to watch ourselves, so we avoid the experience of caregiver burnout. We can be encouraged, that in Christ's church, we are called to bear each others burdens (Gal 6:2). If I can be of any help to you and your family please feel free to call me. I don't have all the answers but have a lot of resources. I'm as close as your phone.

Letetia Fanger, parish nurse

WORLD OUTREACH

Joy to the World--the Lord Is Come

The Gospel of Luke tells of the night that the shepherds' tedious routine was interrupted by an angelic announcement. There they were doing their hard, often boring, difficult work--not expecting anything new or different or exciting. Suddenly everything changed as they heard the wonderful news of God's gift to the world in a newborn child. In response, they hurried to Bethlehem to discover for themselves what God had done.

Sometimes the mission and ministry of our local congregations seems like the work of the shepherds--hard, boring, exhausting. How exciting when God is revealed to us in new ways that take our breath away and the work we do for God suddenly has new hope and new vision.

Across the Regions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) there are exciting stories of new congregations being established, existing congregations being renewed and transformed, and leaders equipped for ministry. Great things are taking place as we join God in God's mission for the sake of the world. In this holy season let us reach out to those broken lives that feel no joy. Let us be a beacon of light that will lead them to God's gift of new life.

With your Christmas Offering, you support your Region's ministry to enlist Disciples as members of a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world. The Christmas Special Offering will be received on Sundays, December 13th and 20th.

Karen Stoll, chairperson

WORLD OUTREACH ANNUAL REPORT

Celebrating the Joy of Giving

Even in these trying economic times, our church has shown generosity and compassion to those who are hurting and in need. In this Advent season, we are preparing for Christmas and the joy of the arrival of the Christ child. We are also thinking about giving in celebration of that joy. This seems an appropriate time to celebrate and thank everyone in our congregation for their generous outreach giving throughout the year.

First Christian Church-Festus has long had a commitment to tithe 10 percent of our giving to various divisions in the Christian Church-Disciples of Christ worldwide ministries. That tithe is apportioned as follows, along with the totals as of October, 2009.

**45%-Basic Mission Finance
\$2771.16**

5%-Regional Capital \$357.26

**10%-Week of Compassion
\$682.91**

**40%-Southeast Gateway Area
\$2,719.52**

Our outreach giving also goes above and beyond our 10% tithe. Each year we receive your gifts to six Special Offerings, as well as other important local and international missions. The giving totals for the past year are listed below.

Week of Compassion \$472.00

Easter \$327.00

Reconciliation \$105.00

Thanksgiving '08 \$10.00

Pentecost \$325.00

Christmas '08 \$195.88

Other donations include **\$210.00** for missionaries **Kimberly and Patrick Bentrott** in Haiti, as well as **\$1,253.00** for Church World Service's Alternative Gift Program in 2008.

We especially would like to thank the CMF and CWF for their work and contributions to both local and worldwide missions. CWF blessing boxes and other donations totaled **\$414.55**, and they also contribute to CWS kits and local needs. CMF donates to many local organizations, and made a generous contribution to the 2009 Jefferson County CROP Hunger Walk.

A new initiative this year was to reach out in ecumenical service to our community. We can be proud of our congregation's work and support for the 1st Annual Jefferson County CROP Hunger Walk, which raised over **\$7,000** to date for local and international hunger-fighting projects through Church World Service. Our own food pantry will receive funds from the CROP Hunger Walk, and we will continue to serve local needs through the diligent work of the Church in Society Ministry. Thanks to all who contribute their time, talents and treasure to one of our most important ministries.

As we welcome the Christ child, God's gift of love for us, may we also be a blessing by reaching out in love and compassion to all God's children.

In appreciation,
Karen Stoll, chairperson
World Outreach Ministry
First Christian Church-Festus



Baby Shower!

POINSETTIAS

It's that time again. As the Christmas season approaches we begin to think about Hanging of the Greens and decorating our sanctuary. This year the poinsettias will be **\$8.00** each. Place your order on the attached form. The **deadline for ordering is December 6**. We need your orders as soon as possible. The florist needs to get an early count so don't wait, order today!

Make checks payable to **First Christian Church**, Mark your check **poinsettias**.

Poinsettia @ \$8.00 _____

Total enclosed _____

In memory _____

In honor _____

By: _____



Everyone is Invited to a Baby Shower
For: Debbie Cresswell
Sunday, December 6, 2009
2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
First Christian Church
415 N. Mill Street
Festus, MO 63028
Wiles Fellowship Hall

It's a BOY
Debbie is registered at Baby's R Us and Wal*Mart
Given By:
Diana or Jack-e Merseal (636) 933-2421

CHOIR

Choir practice will be held on the **1st & 3rd Wednesday** of the month.

Next practices are on **Wednesday, Dec 2nd., & 16th** at **7:00 PM**.

All who enjoy singing are welcome.



Janet Taylor,
Director

CMF MEETING

CMF meeting will be held on Saturday, **December 12th** at **9:00 AM** in Wiles Fellowship Hall. All men are welcome. Delicious breakfast provided. Don't miss that!

Warren Reilmann, president



PRAYER CONCERNS

*Opening New Doors for the Future-
Building Campaign*

Members

- Dan Aders Dale Ray Adams
- John Baynes Buna & Les Dreiman
- Elise Humble Carole Jackson
- Charles & Alice Stacey
- Mike Huffman Doyle Taylor
- Phil Manns Jennifer Sickbert

- Kim Avery
(daughter of Dan Avery)
- Matt Wilson
(friend of Jack-e Merseal)
- Mae Wallace
(grandmother of Tammy Robinson)
- Hertha Taylor
(mother of Doyle Taylor)
- Bert Schmidt
(brother of Tom Schmidt)
- Liam Osterberg
(grandson of Carolyn & Keith Osterberg)

- Nan Hensley
(mother of Carolyn Osterberg)
- Kenny Roth
(friend of Steve Cornish)
- Dorothy Lavon Pace
(friend of Letetia Fanger)
- Brandi Aders USAF
(niece of Dan Aders serving in Afghanistan)
- Gabriel Purvis
(friend of Letetia Fanger)
- Austin Schwent
(friend of the Robinson family)

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DIACONATE SCHEDULE

Please remember to pick up attendance sheets at the end of worship service and leave in office.

Dec 6

Prep Karen Stoll
Homebound Keith Osterberg
Greeter & Server Londa & Dave Crump

Dec 13

Prep Jack-e Merseal
Homebound Lemmy Merseal
Greeter & Server Betty Aders & Diana Merseal

Dec 20

Prep Glenda Skinner
Homebound Andrea Skinner
Greeter & Server Tina & Bob Roberts

Dec 27

Prep Breanne Taylor
Homebound Karen Stoll
Greeter & Server Jennifer & Doug Sickbert

ELDERS SCHEDULE

Dec 6

Invocation-Barbara Buxton
Scripture-Janet Taylor
Homebound-Carma Howard

Dec 13

Invocation-Barb Buxton
Scripture-Margaret Means
Homebound-Doyle Taylor

Dec 20

Invocation-Steve Cornish
Scripture-Lisa Reilmann
Homebound-Warren Reilmann

Dec 27

Invocation-Margaret Means
Scripture-Letetia Fanger
Homebound-Doyle Taylor

Alternative Gift Market
Sunday, NOV. 29
Last day to purchase

DEACON STUDY

The Young Adult Class is beginning a study of *Your Calling as a Deacon* by Gary Straub on **Sunday, Dec. 6th at 9:30 AM.** in Wiles Fellowship Hall. The class will continue through February. All deaconate or those interested in the deaconate are invited to attend. Let the office know if you need a copy of the book.

BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT

Ashlynn Rose Mosley

Congratulation to Bonnie Meyer & Andrew Mosley on the birth their daughter, Ashlynn Rose, she was born on September 13, 2009. Proud grandparents Michelle & Tim Mosley & great grandparents Joe & Betty Combs.



NAME TAGS

Everyone please remember to wear your name tags on Sunday and other events. This way all new members and visitors can learn your name.



BIRTHDAY

05	Betty Aders	26	Lisa Reilmann
07	Ramona Bilkey	27	Tom Robinson
09	Janet Taylor	29	Glenda Skinner
11	Christine Brewer		
12	Mary Ann Lodholz		
15	Carol Keane		
16	Laverne Callahan		
16	Rev Janet Fowler-Tina Roberts		
17	Allyson Cresswell		



ANNIVERSARIES

06	Jeff & Kim Moring
29	Ron & Joann Williams
31	Jeff & LeAnna Obermeyer



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MEMBERSHIP

It's a cold, rainy day, and I feel uninspired to do much else other than lay back and dream of the wonderful smells of the food we'll be eating with our church friends Sunday for Thanksgiving Carry-in. And the fixing of the Care packages we'll be sending to our college students for their last minute cramming (of knowledge, not junk food) before finals. It is a time of waiting, of slow, meditative preparation, where we can take time to prepare, to reach out to others and invite them to join the festivals of fellowship, learning, and worship that are coming, and that are already around us. Prepare, invite, enjoy, support. We are members of a beautiful Body of Oneness.

Next Meeting Tuesday, December 1, at 6:00 PM
Thomas W. Schmidt, chairperson

NOVEMBER EVENTS

Saturday Nov. 28 -- Deck the Halls Decoration Day beginning at noon. Decorate your classroom, help with the halls, sanctuary, and fellowship hall. Bring cookies. Have fun. If you would like to loan/share a favorite crèche (nativity scene) with everyone for Advent, bring it to be placed in a display case at the back of the sanctuary.

Sunday, Nov. 29 -- First Sunday of Advent. Bring a tree decoration and help decorate the sanctuary tree during worship with the children. And sing out in a Favorite Christmas Carol sing.

Advent Book Study

The First Christmas

By: Marcus J. Borg & John Dominic Crossan

Tuesday, November 24
thru

Tuesday, December 15
6:30 PM

Wiles Fellowship Hall

WAYS & MEANS

The ***Chili Cook Off & Dessert Auction*** was a lot of fun. For those of you that haven't come out in the past, make sure to watch for it next year. The winning chili chef this year was **Brian Stoll** and the runner up was **Tom Carlisle**. We had 31 people who attended to sample the chilis and buy desserts. Thanks to all those who participated from making chili to sampling to buying the desserts and donating items. The total made for the *General Fund* was **\$411** with **\$247** being from the *Dessert Auction*.

We are looking for ideas for future fund raisers that are not labor intensive, like the chili cook off. If you have some let me know. The next event will be ***Trivia Night***, a ***Sub Sandwich Sale*** for super bowl and ***Baked Potato Dinner***, watch for the dates to come.

Chris Brewer, chairperson



Dear Members of First Christian Church,

On behalf of the members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society and all those who benefit from the work of the Society, we want to thank you for your gift in memory of Adelaide Blocher.

Because of your prayers and generosity, we are able to assist fellow parishioners and members of our community who are experiencing financial difficulties with a variety of services-emergency utility assistance, food, help with rent and medicine are just a few of the ways your donation makes a difference.

God Bless You!

Maureen Curran,

Treasurer, St. Vincent De Paul Society

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WORSHIP & SERMON FOCUS

December 6 – December 27, 2009

December 6	Second Sunday of Advent
First Reading	Malachi 3.1-4
Second Reading	Luke 1.68-79
Worship Focus	Hymn of Ecstasy and Blessing
December 13	Third Sunday of Advent
First Reading	Isaiah 12.2-6
Second Reading	Luke 3.7-18
Worship Focus	What Should WE Do?
December 13	5:00PM
	Blue Christmas Candlelighting Service
December 20	Christmas Sunday
First Reading	Micah 5.2-5a
Second Reading	Luke 1.39-55
Worship Focus	Subversive Laughter, Singing, and Astonishment!
December 24	Christmas Eve Candle Lighting Service
First Reading	Isaiah 9.2-7
Second Reading	Luke 2.1-20
Worship Focus	Telling the Story of a New Age
December 27	First Sunday After Christmas
First Reading	1 Samuel 2.18-20, 26
Second Reading	Luke 2.41-52
Worship Focus	Going to the Temple

CWF MEETINGS

December Meeting

Thursday, December 3, 2009, will be the Christmas luncheon held in Wiles Fellowship Hall. All ladies are invited.

Service Project: *Christmas gifts for mothers for the Christmas Baskets.*

Barbara Buxton, president

SERVICE PROJECTS

The CWF will once again be collecting **warm clothes** and **blankets etc.** for the Jefferson County Rescue Mission.

Any donations from the congregation will be appreciated. This is the last month you can turn in any warm clothes or blankets. Donations may be placed in the box on the table by the piano in the Wiles Fellowship Hall. Thank you for your support of this very worthwhile cause!

*CWF Service Officers
Betty Aders and Margaret Wiles*

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday, December 13, 2009

After Worship



Merry Christmas & Happy New Year
From Rev. Janet, Kathy, Judy & Don

From the secretary

Each week please check your mailbox outside the church office. Sometimes there is important papers for you to sign or just read.

Thanks, Kathy

Monday, Dec. 14, 2009
9:00 AM
Newsletter Articles Due
NOTE DATE CHANGE



December 2009



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 3:30 PM Loss & Grief Group 6:00 PM Membership Mtg 6:30 PM Advent Book Study	2 6:15 PM Elders 7:00PM Choir Practice	3 NOON CWF Luncheon	4	5
		6 9:30AM Class "Your Calling as a Deacon" 10:45 AM Worship-last day to order Poinsettias 2:00 PM Baby Shower (Cresswell)	7	8 6:30 PM Advent Book Study	9 6:15 PM Elders	10 7:00 PM General Board Mtg
13 10:45 AM Worship Christmas Offering Collected Noon Congregational Mtg 5:00 PM Blue Christmas Service	14 9:00AM Newsletter Articles Due NOTE DATE CHANGE	15 6:30 PM Advent Book Study	16 6:15 PM Elders 7:00 PM Choir Practice	17	18	19
20 9:00AM Coffee Fellowship 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:45 AM Worship Christmas Offering Collected	21	22	23 6:15 PM Elders	24 Christmas Eve 7:00 PM Candlelight Service Office Closed	25 Christmas Office Closed	26
27 9:00AM Coffee Fellowship 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:45 AM Worship	28	29 Kathy on Vacation	30 6:15 PM Elders Kathy on Vacation	31 New Years Eve Kathy Day off	Jan 1 New Years Day Office Closed	

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