

January Edition 2025

Just three days after lifting high our candles in the sanctuary for the Candlelight Christmas Eve Service or two days after Christmas Day, Colton and I drove to Lowes for our annual “Seitz” tradition in search of significantly marked down decorations for next year. To my surprise, remember just two days after Christmas, the isles and shelves were completely empty. To be fair, when I twisted Colton’s arm to join me at Home Depot to double check there, we did discover a somewhat interesting looking four penguins stacked on top of each other with lights. This was much too large and even marked down 60% was still too high for Colton’s prudent father. Later in the afternoon, Mya and I were at Walmart to once again be surprised by Valentine’s items that were already replacing Christmas.



Like many of us, I find the shift after Christmas a bit jarring to say the least. The world seems eager to move on shoving items back in boxes, back into closets or up in dusty attics, to deal with them eleven (sometimes ten) months from now. However, what if we can intentionally hold on to the joy that we experience during this season and cherish fond memories a bit longer into the year. One of my favorite Christmas songs is a secular one, it comes from an album called *A Very Special Christmas Vol.2*, the band *Extreme*, and it has a track on this album that proclaims: “Christmas always goes so fast, it’s up to us to make it last.” This sentiment always sneaks up on me. How about you? By the time you read this, Christmas seems to be long gone, and it’s only been eleven Days...not even *12 Days of Christmas* (sorry, I had to toss in a dad joke to begin 2025). Only eleven days have passed since the presents, food, and family, but when we put that into the mathematics of time and space, preparation, shopping, cooking wrapping, cleaning, Christmas is seemingly over before it has begun. Like myself, if you have walked into a store the past week, you will know that consumerism is already moving on to the next thing. Christmas has been replaced by Valentine’s Day candy and President’s Day sales and even next year baseball tryouts for our family. This always serves as a reminder to me that we often rush through the holidays focusing on so much of the anticipation that we forget to savor the actual experience. Even in Scripture, in the Gospel of Luke, when you turn the page from Chapter 1 to Chapter 2, we discover Jesus already twelve years old. Where does the time go? There are a lot of forces at work seeking to pull us out of the present and into the future, pull us out of our identity in Christ and into the secular world, and it takes work to stay in the here and now. It takes focus, discipline, dedication, and commitment.

Let’s begin 2025 by not just remembering the Christ child, but also our identity in Christ as we are going to remember our baptism on Sunday, January 12. If you are familiar with the liturgical church calendar, after this week Epiphany (wisemen/magi visit our Lord), is traditionally known as the Baptism of the Lord. During the service you will be invited to come forward and dip your finger in a bowl of water and I will simply say to each of you: “Remember your baptism and be thankful.” Remember and be thankful is key to living out our faith! While some may have never participated in such a ceremony, I believe this will be a powerful way we can each remember our commitment to God and Christ’s church, God’s unconditional love and grace for each of us, and ultimately our identity in Christ. I look forward to meeting you by the waters of cleansing, mercy, and grace!



Last Month's Prayer Request

(The weekly "FMCC Cross Connection" email contains the ongoing prayer list)

Sylvia Neal, aneurysm in right eye, Anne Chisholm (daughter)

Rev. Ed and Diane Bodanske, praise God for latest good report, Church Family

Shirley Runyon, praise God for successful bladder surgery, Church Family

Steve Weaver, upcoming hip surgery in January, Church Family

Debbie and Bruce, in the death of their close friend Greg, Church Family

Jim and Ruth, in the death of their daughter Jennifer, Debbie and Bruce (friend)

Jim, Linda Garlow (brother-in-law)

Bobby and Kathy, began hospice, Joyce Turney (cousin)

Cadin, Shirley Runyon (grandson)

Nancy, lung issues and overall health, Betty Johnston (daughter-in-law)

Joyce and Sandy, in the death of their brother-in-law, Chuck, Church Family

Mary Rubin, healing after a fall, Church Family

Kate Seitz, Church Family

Leon Beaty, praise as he is doing better after two strokes, Church Family

Mackenzie Lee, prayers for ongoing migraines, Church Family



If you are a seasonal member back in town for the winter and spring or new to Fort Myers Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) you are welcome to join us in our Monday morning Bible Study from 10—11:30am as we are reading through the Bible. You can pick up a copy of the guide which is called *The Bible Year: A Journey Through Scripture in 365 Days*.

January Birthdays & Anniversaries

(Name Missing? Email the office.)

Scott Hamm	17 th
Steve Larson	20 th
Millie Dalrymple	21 st
Charlie and Sue Fink	21 st
Carol Vickers	27 th



Picture taken from 2024 Christmas Program
(Special thank you to Susan, Dr. Asya, and all the choir assemble on last year's Christmas Program)

Outreach Corner

Welcome to 2025!!! Happy New Year!!! Thank you to all who donated on Christmas Eve to send two children to camp. They will enjoy this experience. I am looking forward to an eventful new year. If you have any ideas, please feel free to share them with me. I am always looking forward to new ideas and working together.

Blessings to all and enjoy 2025.

Linda Lee, outreach coordinator