

# THE DISCIPLE

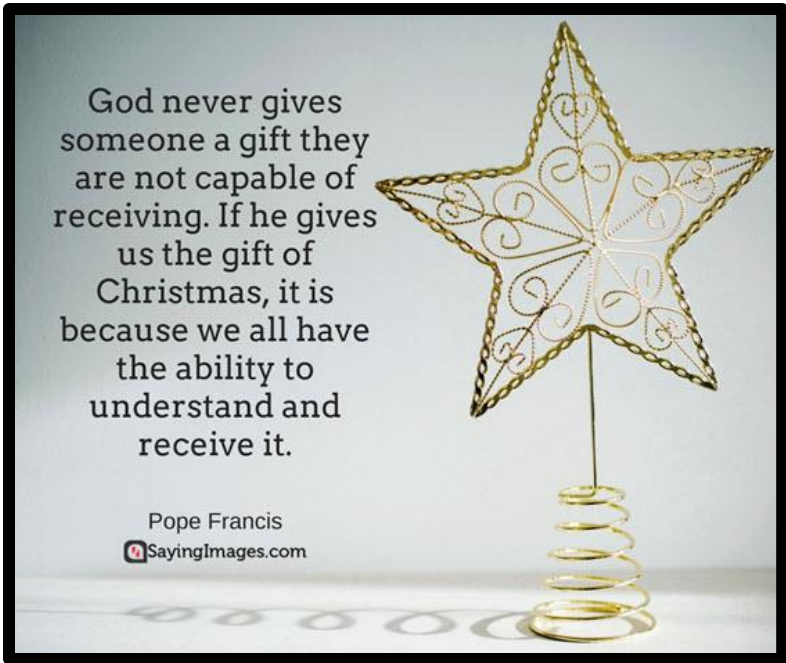


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## December 2020

*Rev. Rick Hamilton, Minister*

*Carol Clifford, Editor*



*“Called to be the presence of Christ in our community”*



Welcome to December and an Advent celebration like none we have ever witnessed before. I was remembering back in March when I was fondly wishing we would be back in person for Worship in time for Easter. I confess, I'm still hoping that, just now it's Easter 2021. I've been

asked frequently how we can celebrate Advent and Christmas Eve, without being in the Sanctuary. The answer is: basically the same as we always do, we just have to be on camera.

The congregational meeting was an important first test for Christmas Eve. My goal is to have us together on one Zoom webinar screen to be able to see one another take Holy Communion and sing Silent Night to the glow of lit candles. A lot of planning has gone and is going in to making this happen. I'm not 100% sure it is all going to work the way we have envisioned it yet, but I believe in our ideas, and I believe in God who inspired those ideas.

Advent will be different too. By the time you read this you will have already had a taste of that. Advent candles will be lit on video, so as to not ruin our counts or social distance protections. We are going to sing more than usual. Even if we are not singing in one room together, I believe music has healing power, and I believe Christmas music has extra healing power. I hope you will conspicuously belt out all the Christmas Songs we sing with gusto and passion.

This last pastor's article of 2020 would not be complete without a huge thank you to those who have made electronic worship work in an upside down crazy world of 2020. First the "Original Six" who have been here in the building each Sunday to bring you some semblance of worship as we know it: Rick Sladek, Bob Reese, Gail Reese, and our technical director Tammy Reese, and our floor director Angela Reese. I asked the Reese's to help because they had tech expertise, Bob is an Elder, and it meant most of the production work came from one household. They have come through in magnificent and wonderful ways and I cannot thank them enough.

As we expanded to “up to 10” folks, Marve Huizinga, Becky Daigle, Martha Anderson, and all the Elders boldly and readily said “yes” to being part of worship. Thank you all. I would be remiss if I didn’t also mention Dan Johns, who shows up and plays guitar every chance he gets, adding to our online experience.

Wow we have had a lot of ups and downs this year. We never know what the sound board, mics, and internet connection is going to do to us from week to week, but this faithful and wonderful group keeps trying! At the end of the month, December 27th, the worship committee and the board have voted to give all of them a day off. We will not be meeting in person or online for worship on December 27 to give these wonderful faithful leaders a day off.

Thank you for boldly trying all the new things that life and the world have thrown at us, you all have been “troopers”. I can’t wait to see you around our Lord’s Table,

Rick



## REFLECTIONS AND IDEAS

As we are getting ready to close 2020, I would like to wish everyone a happy Christmas and a safe, healthy 2021. I cannot ignore that many have had a difficult year with illness, loss, uncertain employment and isolation due to Covid-19. We have continued to experience great worship services, prayer groups and Bible studies through updated technology and the dedication of our church staff and our many wonderful volunteers. I do thank all of you for your service to our church in the many ways you might be contributing. Special thanks to our pastor Rick Hamilton, pianist Rick Sladek, drummer Bob Reese, guitar players Dan Johns and Bill Cook and song leaders Becky Daigle, Marve Huizinga and Martha Anderson. In addition, our valuable video and audio team of Angela,



Tammy and Gail Reese do a fantastic job enabling us to view our church services on Zoom and YouTube.

I also want to thank our church officers, chairmen, elders and deacons who have agreed to add one more year to their term of service. 2020 has been such an unusual year that we decided to ask people to extend their service instead of having a new slate for the coming year. With only two changes the list of these wonderful volunteers will remain the same for 2021.

Special recognition will be given again this Christmas season for our church staff – Rick Hamilton, Rick Sladek, Carol Clifford and Bill Martina. If you would like and are able to contribute to a monetary gift for them, please give it or mail it to me, Joy Claffey to be presented to them on Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup>. You may also include your special gift with your regular offering by designating the amount you wish to contribute to this special fund. I am sure we are all so very appreciative of their hard work and effort on our behalf. Please make your contribution by December 13<sup>th</sup> if at all possible. Many thanks!!

I do miss seeing and being with all of you. Hoping you and your families stay well and are able to enjoy a truly blessed Advent season. The music of the season is such a highlight and we will be using and singing many beautiful carols during our services. Hope you can tune in via Zoom and/or YouTube.

Stay safe and healthy and remember that you are all part of a caring church family and we want you to keep in touch. I would like to share a prayer found in an Advent booklet by John Killinger:

We haven't ever really given you anything for Christmas,  
O Lord, even though you have given us everything.  
Help us, this year, to give you what you really want, by  
offering ourselves to do your will, the way Jesus did.  
Amen

Joy Claffey, Chairman

## Join Us for Monday Intercessory Prayer (MIP)!



Prayers are being answered! Please join us for MIP Monday nights at 6:00 p.m. from the comforts of your own home!

Note: We are planning on praying through the holiday season on Monday but check the website for any last minute changes.

The **conference-calling** feature makes it easy to join from anywhere you are. Dial in to join us for the entire session or just to ask for your own prayer concerns. We welcome all prayer concerns!

We document our prayer concerns each week and if you provide us with your email we can send a copy to you each week.

Join us for a spiritually-enriching hour with God! You are free to join in silently or add prayers as you like!

Our Monday night sessions include:

- A brief gathering of any additional prayers and prayer priorities
- A prayer devotion
- Prayers for our joys and concerns:
  - Personal
  - Church
  - Community
  - Country
  - World
- A brief closing prayer

To Join by Conference Call:

1. Call (712) 770-3743
2. Enter the access code: 390193

For more information email Karen Johns:

[johns.karen@gmail.com](mailto:johns.karen@gmail.com)

# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



Christian Ed continues to miss our time with the children. We hope that your families will enjoy the Advent calendars with the opportunity to open a new scripture and picture for each day. Rev. Terri's daily devotions are also a nice way to celebrate the season.

During Advent, we will continue email children's Sunday school material. For the younger children we will be using Children's Bulletins on the Advent themes of Hope, Peace, Love and Joy. For the older children, we have an Advent Mystery Room adventure. There will be a mystery each Sunday to solve and a final code to determine from the four weeks. So each solved mystery should be saved until the quest is done.

Adult Sunday school remains on hiatus. We hope once things open up to pick up with our God of Surprises video series.

Enrich the Soul is continuing and well attended by Zoom! Rick will present a special lesson for Advent December 2nd – December 16th. He will cover the second, third and fourth Sundays of Advent based on material written by Fred Craddock. In this study, the class will look at how the themes of Advent take shape and how they relate to the scripture and Biblical themes. The Zoom sessions on Wednesdays start at 6:00 pm for fellowship and shared eating as desired. We ask that the fellowship and eating end by 6:30 p.m., which is when the lesson starts. After the Advent study, Enrich the Soul will take a break and resume January 14<sup>th</sup> continuing with the Letters of Paul.

We know these are challenging times, but we hope you will take advantage of these offerings. As always we are always open to comments and suggestions.

Karen, Beth, Sue, Deb, Joy, Alice, Tammy and Angela



## Back-to-School Fair End-of-Year Report

I missed the excitement, fun, and hard work of hosting the back-to-school fair this year; how about you? Our alternative to hosting the fair this year was providing 41 nylon carry bags with homemade bookmarks and graphing calculators (TI-83 Pluses, for the most part) to Downers Grove South High School, O’Neill Middle School, Thomas Jefferson Junior High School, and to several church members. The calculators are useful for solving mathematical problems, particularly those on standardized tests (SATs and ACTs). We have also answered calls from several families and provided them with backpacks made up from leftover supplies from last year. And, thanks to our long-term and ongoing relationship with Love Christian Clearinghouse, we were able to donate to their drive to provide 20 pairs of gym shoes to needy students at Highland Elementary School in Downers Grove.

Our 2020 fair budget was uncertain owing to the COVID-related cancelation of the Women’s Tea, so it was a special joy when we received a substantial grant from the Pro-Reconciliation, Anti-Racism committee of The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Illinois and Wisconsin. Having our church’s fundamental beliefs acknowledged by the CCIW is, indeed, a great blessing.

Thank you all for your contributions and support of the fair over the years. I wish I could say for sure that we will be able to host the fair in 2021. But it all depends on reaching phase 5 of the governor’s plan, which basically requires a well-distributed vaccine or a readily available, effective treatment. We keep praying for achieving this goal--for many reasons. I suspect that 2021 will require more “outside the box” thinking regarding the fair, requiring us to again adapt to whatever path God chooses for us. Please let me know if you have any ideas or insights about our community outreach.

Stay safe and healthy, and have a blessed holiday season!

Dan Johns

## Current Fund Balances --by date - As of 11/30/2020



Account	11/30/2020 Balance
<b>Bank Accounts</b>	
General Fund - (Operating Budget)	-2,082.05
Hope For The Future - Savings Fund	55,919.88
In-As-Much Fund	702.40
Ladies Annual Tea	0.00
Memorials	445.79
Pass Thru Funds	20.00
Property Reserve	1,366.14
SPECIAL Disciples Mission Outreach ...	500.00
SPECIAL Music & Worship Fund	7.45
The Back To School Fair Fund	4,257.37
Youth Fund	1,330.77
<b>TOTAL Bank Accounts</b>	<b>62,467.75</b>
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	<b>62,467.75</b>



## PROPERTY REPORT



### COM-ED ELECTRIC BILL – CHURCH October 2020

9/21 – 10/21      \$138.41      Down \$37.48 from Last Month

During the recent wind/rainstorm, a branch from the large tree in front of the Annex broke off. To save expenses, Marve removed it cutting it up for firewood. He also removed a large branch that fell from a tree located at the beginning of the driveway to the Church.

Damage was caused to the front porch of the Annex from the fallen tree limb making it more slanted than it already was. Dan, Marve and Bill will attempt to repair it on November 28<sup>th</sup>.

Barb Bates and Dan Johns



## Budget

1/1/2020 through 11/30/2020 Using Budget 2020 Annual

Category	1/1/2020 Actual	- Budget	11/30/2020 Difference
<b>INCOME</b>	<b>112,852.52</b>	<b>123,200.00</b>	<b>-10,347.48</b>
100_income	112,852.52	123,200.00	-10,347.48
120-Identifiable Giving	111,434.60	121,286.00	-9,851.40
130-Loose offering	46.60	319.00	-272.40
140-Space Use Donations	50.00	132.00	-82.00
150_Fundraising	0.00	88.00	-88.00
160-Other Income	1,321.32	1,375.00	-53.68
<b>EXPENSES</b>	<b>114,934.57</b>	<b>123,716.00</b>	<b>8,781.43</b>
200-Ministry	2,799.01	2,739.00	-60.01
210-Worship	277.00	550.00	273.00
220-Evangelism	0.00	88.00	88.00
230-Disciples Mission Fund	1,925.00	1,925.00	0.00
250-Stewardship	464.36	88.00	-376.36
260-Christian Development	132.65	88.00	-44.65
300-Property	14,852.57	24,750.00	9,897.43
310-Maintenance & Repair	1,957.95	3,850.00	1,892.05
320-Equipment	0.00	0.00	0.00
330-Grounds	7,340.00	8,250.00	910.00
340-Utilities	5,554.62	7,150.00	1,595.38
350-Improvements	0.00	5,500.00	5,500.00
400-Office Administration	11,508.91	10,526.00	-982.91
410-Insurance & Bonding	6,369.00	6,500.00	131.00
420- Office Expense	4,212.65	3,300.00	-912.65
430-Payroll Service	927.26	726.00	-201.26
500-Personnel	85,774.08	85,701.00	-73.08
520-Sr. Min. Housing Allowance	36,663.00	36,663.00	0.00
530-Sr. Min. Pension	5,500.00	5,500.00	0.00
540-Sr. Min. Prof. Expenses	0.00	913.00	913.00
550-Office Manager Salary	20,130.00	20,130.00	0.00
560-Pianist Salary	13,111.00	12,111.00	-1,000.00
570-Choir Director	0.00	0.00	0.00
580-Custodian Salary	7,271.00	7,271.00	0.00
590-Staff FICA	3,099.08	3,113.00	13.92
<b>Net Difference:</b>	<b>-2,082.05</b>	<b>-516.00</b>	<b>-1,566.05</b>



## WHAT IS CHRISTMAS

*Christmas is belief in the past, courage for the present and hope for the future. It is a fervent wish that every cup may overflow with blessings rich and eternal, and that every path may lead to peace.*

# Parkway Gardens Toy Drive



The toy drive at Parkway Gardens will take place on Saturday, December 19<sup>th</sup>. Due to the pandemic, they will not be providing a meal and volunteers will not be needed.

As in the past we will be collecting new toys for Parkway Gardens. We must have them by Dec. 17<sup>th</sup>. You can drop them off at the church or send them to Rick Hamilton at his home.

Thank you in advance for your support of this worthy cause.



## DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS



Dec. 5	Ann Head
Dec. 9	Bill Cook
Dec. 12	Nancy Wendt
Dec. 12	Christopher Hayes



## Church Chuckles

*By Bobbie Dean*



\*As Christmas approached, Liam drew a picture of the manger scene with all of the traditional characters, plus one – a fourth wise man, and a chubby one at that.

“And who is that, Liam?” His teacher asked.

“That’s Round John Virgin,” he replied.

# Did you know...?

By: Bobbie Dean



## Holiday celebrations from around the world:

**\*Las Posadas (Mexico)** - For nine nights during this Christmas celebration, people reenact Mary and Joseph's search for lodging in Bethlehem. In some communities, a man and a woman dress as Mary and Joseph. In other communities, children carry figures of them. People follow Mary and Joseph until they are granted entry to a home, where they have a party with a piñata for the children

**\*Año Viejo (Ecuador)** - On December 31, families make a scarecrow that looks like an old man. They write his will, which is a list of everyone's faults. They dance around him and read his will at midnight. Then they burn the scarecrow so they can start the new year without faults.

**\*Chanukah (Jewish)** - The Jewish Festival of Lights is a celebration of religious freedom. It is celebrated by lighting candles each night for eight nights, giving gifts, eating traditional foods, and playing dreidel games.

**\*Luciadagen (Sweden)** - This holiday has its roots in winter solstice celebrations. The oldest girl in each family plays the part of St. Lucia. According to the legend, she dons a white dress and a crown of candles and takes coffee and special buns to her parents.



## Christmas is Proof

Christmas is a time to be happy! ... A time for celebration and sharing. For God stoops down to be one of us, born as a poor baby so that we can be rich. He does not leave us to get along as best we can. He joins us where we are. God is committed to us. Christmas is proof that God cares. That is why we celebrate – and show our care in turn to those who need it. - F. Hebart -

# SERVING SCHEDULE



## ELDERS

Lectern

Table

Dec. 6	Joy Claffey	Bob Reese
Dec. 13	Karen Johns	Barb Bates
Dec. 20	Martha Anderson	Becky Daigle
Dec. 24	Daphne Hayes	Joy Claffey
Dec. 27	No Service	

## DEACONS

Prep and Serve

Serve

Dec. 6	Galilee Flores	Don Peterson
Dec. 13	Suellen Cook	Marve Huizinga, Jim Claffey, Mac Flores
Dec. 20	Dan Johns	Gail Reese, Galilee Flores, Ron Smith
Dec. 24	Galilee Flores	Jim Claffey
Dec. 27	No Service	

## POWER POINT

Dec.	No power point at this time
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## SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS

Nov. 1	Deb McClelland
Nov. 8	Deb McClelland
Nov. 15	Sue Huizinga
Nov. 22	Sue Huizinga
Nov. 29	Sue Huizinga

## COUNTERS

Dec. 6	Larry Carley and Marve Huizinga
Dec. 13	Karen Connery and Sandy Allen
Dec. 20	Dick Anderson and Marve Huizinga
Dec. 24	Bob Reese and Martha Anderson
Dec. 27	No Service

