

THE DISCIPLE

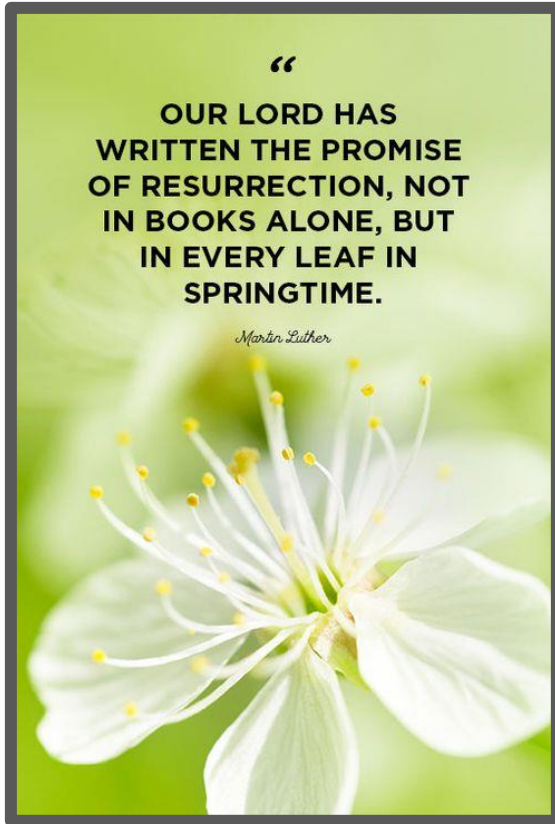


First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
801 63rd St., Downers Grove, IL 60516
630-968-7818 Fax: 630-968-6384
Email: firstccdg@gmail.com Web: fccdg.org

April 2021

Rev. Rick Hamilton, Minister

Carol Clifford, Editor



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



I expect this newsletter will go out on Maundy Thursday. As you read this we will be well into Holy Week, and possibly (if it was mailed) Easter will have already come and gone. This year, Easter is early (though not as early as it can be). The signs of spring are around us, the trees and flowers are showing signs of blooming, and the world is coming out of its very long cocoon.

Maundy Thursday and Easter services are good for the soul. A journey from cross to tomb to empty tomb grounds the whole of the good news in ways that hopping (yes, that was intentional) from Palm Sunday to Easter without looking at the tomb. I hope you will grab all you can this Holy Season, and not just catch another replay of “The Ten Commandments” and call it good.

Maundy Thursday is recorded, as it is not yet safe to practice our meal tradition, it will “premiere” on Thursday at 7:00 p.m. If you join the premiere, there will also be a live chat option through YouTube. You should have an email reminder and links in your email inbox already.

Easter Sunday will be live in person, or still broadcast on our YouTube channel. I hope you join us for the celebration of the resurrection!

Lots of other opportunities continue throughout the church.

- Enrich the Soul will continue online through May and we will be back to study of the New Testament Letters
- Our Belarus Mission Fund Raiser continues for a couple more weeks. We are getting closer to our goal, if you can spare a gift from your stimulus money, or just a special gift, please do.
- The Easter Special Offering for General Church Ministries also continues.
- Adult Sunday School is on its way back
- We are making our way back to life as we knew it.

It's a great time to be connected to the body of Christ, and to continue to gather however we can. I look forward to seeing YOU around our Lord's Table,

Rick



REFLECTIONS AND IDEAS



Spring has arrived! I am very optimistic that everything is looking up. More people are receiving their Covid vaccines. More stores and restaurants are opening up, and more people are back to work. Schools are also able to open their doors to allow more children to be educated in person. While we are still being careful and socially distant, it is so nice to be less isolated. In the coming month we will actually see the wonderful signs of spring with trees in bloom and flowers opening up.

Our denomination has a great focus for a special Easter offering. We will receive your donations for the general ministries of our Disciples of Christ. There are many special ministries in our church, but your giving at this time would go toward many areas such as our global mission partners, health and social service ministries, new congregation development, support for pastors and chaplains, and many others. Just designate how we should receive your giving. Our treasurer always keeps a record of your giving for our church needs and for any designated special offering.

Of course, we also consider your giving to include your time and talent – not just money! We do have a wonderful opportunity coming up later in the summer to use your talent. If you might be interested, Marve Huizinga is going to take advantage of an outreach effort for us in this CCIW area (Christian Church Illinois Wisconsin.) Similar to Habitat for Humanity there will be a mission trip organized through the regional office to travel to the Detroit area to work on many home projects like painting, repairing, fixing, building of handicap ramps, door locks, yard work and many other big and small jobs. You would not need to take any tools because necessary materials would be provided. Work would begin at 9 a.m. and close between 3 and 4 p.m. Devotions would close each day, and there would be free time at the end of your work. Meals and lodging would be provided. The cost would be \$180. per person. Scholarships are available and there is a required deposit of \$50. For more information on this fun and powerful mission, you would be expected to attend a Zoom

meeting on Tuesday, June 29 at 7 p.m. There are two trips: July 27 to August 1 or August 1 to 5. Marve is going on the second trip, and you can talk to him for more information. You can also contact Bill Kerns at 217-824-8181 if you have questions.

Over the years we have had many service projects, some big and some small. Many of you may remember our Head Start Christmas parties, PADS volunteers for time and meals on Mondays in February, the BTS Fair, and the Park Manor Christmas Party. The ability to do some service projects has been curtailed during our current pandemic so you may be interested in this CCIW opportunity. With our church open and with our special protocols in place, I look forward to seeing you all soon! Blessings to all!

Joy Claffey, Chairman



Trusting the Unseen

A gardener planted two peony bulbs side by side. In a few weeks, as expected, the first one poked a single stem through the ground. The other would soon follow, the gardener thought. But it didn't. Many more weeks went by with no sign of life.



Then one day, to his surprise, not one but five leaf points poked through the soil as once. When the peony bloomed, its flowers were more beautiful and numerous than those of the first bulb.

John Piper said, "In every situation God is doing a thousand things that we cannot see and do not know." When God seems to have forgotten you and hope fails, don't despair. God is at work, and someday you will see.

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! We are continuing to meet social distancing or not. Spending an hour with God feeling his support and love is a blessing at all times!

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

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



The Christian Education Team is enjoying worshiping back in the sanctuary and hopes that, as you feel comfortable, you will join us!

In April, we are wrapping up Lent with Easter on April 4. We hope the children enjoyed the Lenten calendar and the Holy Week Puzzle. Both should wrap up with our Easter Worship Celebration!

Adult Sunday school has plans to start again! Current plans are to begin Sunday school Sunday, April 18 (two weeks after Easter). We will resume our God of Surprises video series. We will meet socially distanced in Fellowship Hall at 9:30 a.m.

Enrich the Soul will resume our study of the Letters of Paul by zoom on Wednesday, April 7. We join together at 6:00 p.m. for fellowship before the study, which begins at 6:30 p.m. Please join us!

We are pleased that things are improving COVID-wise and hope that you will continue to join us as we move forward! We welcome all comments and suggestions.

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



APRIL BIRTHDAYS



April 2	Joy Claffey
April 26	Richard Sladek
April 26	Ethel Hayes

Budget - Q1 2021

1/1/2021 through 3/31/2021 Using Budget 2021 Annual

Category	1/1/2021 Actual	- Budget	3/31/2021 Difference
INCOME	34,548.06	33,831.00	717.06
100_income	34,548.06	33,831.00	717.06
120-Identifiable Giving	34,164.00	33,411.00	753.00
130-Loose offering	10.00	24.00	-14.00
140-Space Use Donations	0.00	24.00	-24.00
150_Fundraising	0.00	24.00	-24.00
160-Other Income	374.06	348.00	26.06
EXPENSES	32,388.35	33,828.00	1,439.65
200-Ministry	600.00	826.00	226.00
210-Worship	0.00	150.00	150.00
220-Evangelism	0.00	24.00	24.00
230-Disciples Mission Fund	600.00	600.00	0.00
250-Stewardship	0.00	24.00	24.00
260-Christian Development	0.00	28.00	28.00
300-Property	5,679.59	6,246.00	566.41
310-Maintenance & Repair	913.31	999.00	85.69
320-Equipment	0.00	0.00	0.00
330-Grounds	2,870.00	1,998.00	-872.00
340-Utilities	1,896.28	1,749.00	-147.28
350-Improvements	0.00	1,500.00	1,500.00
400-Office Administration	2,595.66	3,005.00	409.34
410-Insurance & Bonding	1,211.95	1,625.00	413.05
420- Office Expense	1,052.47	1,125.00	72.53
430-Payroll Service	331.24	255.00	-76.24
500-Personnel	23,513.10	23,751.00	237.90
520-Sr. Min. Housing Allowance	10,248.00	10,248.00	0.00
530-Sr. Min. Pension	1,500.00	1,500.00	0.00
540-Sr. Min. Prof. Expenses	0.00	249.00	249.00
550-Office Manager Salary	5,532.00	5,532.00	0.00
560-Pianist Salary	3,399.00	3,399.00	0.00
570-Choir Director	0.00	0.00	0.00
580-Custodian Salary	1,998.00	1,998.00	0.00
590-Staff FICA	836.10	825.00	-11.10
Net Difference:	2,159.71	3.00	2,156.71



Church Chuckles

By Bobbie Dean



A notice in the weekly bulletin...

The potholes in the church parking lot will be filled next week. In the meantime, welcome to the holey land.

Current Fund Balances --by date - As of 3/31/2021



Account	3/31/2021 Balance
Bank Accounts	
General Fund - (Operating Budget)	2,159.71
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	3,335.00
Property Reserve	1,366.14
SPECIAL Disciples Mission Outreach ...	1,530.00
SPECIAL Music & Worship Fund	7.45
The Back To School Fair Fund	6,857.37
Youth Fund	1,330.77
TOTAL Bank Accounts	73,654.51
OVERALL TOTAL	73,654.51

PROPERTY REPORT

ComEd Electric Bill – Church

February

2021	1/25-2/23	\$212.70
2020	1/24-2/24	\$197.46



New LED lights have been installed in the parking lot. Contracts with J&R Herra and Cintas have been signed, they do various types of maintenance at the Church and Annex. We are continuing to look into the repair of the stoop in front of the Annex. And, Fellowship Hall will be used as a polling place for the election on April 5th.

We hope to see you in Church soon.

Have a Blessed Easter. Barb and Dan

Did you know...?

By: Bobbie Dean



Turkish cuisine includes many different stews of vegetables and meat (lamb and beef); *borek*, *kebab*, and *dolma* dishes; and a sourdough bread eaten with almost every meal.

Borek is a pastry made of many thin layers of dough interspersed with cheese, spinach, and/or ground meat.

Kebab is the common word for meat roasted in pieces or slices on a skewer or as meatballs on a grill.

Dolma is the generic name for dishes made of vegetables (e.g., tomatoes and peppers) and leaves (e.g., grape, cabbage, and eggplant) that are stuffed with or wrapped around rice or bulger pilaf, ground meat, and spices. Turks are especially fond of eggplant.



Innocence is Priceless...



One Sunday morning, the pastor noticed little Alex standing in the foyer of the church staring up at a large plaque.

It was covered with names with small American flags mounted on either side of it.

The seven year old had been staring at the plaque for some time, so the pastor walked up, stood beside the little boy and said quietly, "Good morning, Alex."

"Good morning Pastor," he replied, still focusing on the plaque. "Pastor, what is this?" he asked.

The Pastor said, "Well, son, it's a memorial to all the young men and women who died in the service." Soberly, they just stood together, staring at the large plaque.

Finally, little Alex's voice, barely audible and trembling with fear, asked, "Which service, the 8:30 or the 10:45?"

Story of the Three Trees-



Source unknown

Once upon a mountain top, three little trees stood and dreamed of what they wanted to become when they grew up.

The first little tree looked up at the stars and said: “I want to hold treasure. I want to be covered with gold and filled with precious stones. I’ll be the most beautiful treasure chest in the world!”

The second little tree looked out at the small stream trickling by on its way to the ocean. “I want to be traveling mighty waters and carrying powerful kings. I’ll be the strongest ship in the world!”

The third little tree looked down into the valley below where busy men and women worked in a busy town. “I don’t want to leave the mountain top at all. I want to grow so tall that when people stop to look at me, they’ll raise their eyes to heaven and think of God. I will be the tallest tree in the world.”

Years passed. The rain came, the sun shone, and the little trees grew tall. One day three woodcutters climbed the mountain.

The first woodcutter looked at the first tree and said, “This tree is beautiful. It is perfect for me.” With a swoop of his shining axe, the first tree fell.

“Now I shall be made into a beautiful chest. I shall hold wonderful treasure!” the first tree said.

The second woodcutter looked at the second tree and said, “This tree is strong. It is perfect for me.” With a swoop of his shining axe, the second tree fell.

“Now I shall sail mighty waters!” thought the second tree. “I shall be a strong ship for mighty kings!”

The third tree felt her heart sink when the last woodcutter looked her way. She stood straight and tall and pointed bravely to heaven.

But the woodcutter never even looked up. “Any kind of tree will do for me,” he muttered. With a swoop of his shining axe, the third tree fell.

The first tree rejoiced when the woodcutter brought her to a carpenter’s shop. But the carpenter fashioned the tree into a feedbox for animals.

The once beautiful tree was not covered with gold, nor with treasure. She was coated with sawdust and filled with hay for hungry farm animals.

The second tree smiled when the woodcutter took her to a shipyard, but no mighty sailing ship was made that day. Instead, the once strong tree was hammered and sawed into a simple fishing boat. She was too

small and too weak to sail on an ocean, or even a river; instead, she was taken to a little lake.

The third tree was confused when the woodcutter cut her into strong beams and left her in a lumberyard.

“What happened?” the once tall tree wondered. “All I ever wanted was to stay on the mountain top and point to God...”

Many, many days and night passed. The three trees nearly forgot their dreams.

But one night, golden starlight poured over the first tree as a young woman placed her newborn baby in the feedbox.

“I wish I could make a cradle for him,” her husband whispered.

The mother squeezed his hand and smiled as the starlight shone on the smooth and the sturdy wood. “This manger is beautiful,” she said.

And suddenly the first tree knew he was holding the greatest treasure in the world.

One evening a tired traveler and his friends crowded into the old fishing boat. The traveler fell asleep as the second tree quietly sailed out into the lake.

Soon a thundering and thrashing storm arose. The little tree shuddered. She knew she did not have the strength to carry so many passengers safely through with the wind and the rain.

The tired man awakened. He stood up, stretched out his hand, and said, “Peace.” The storm stopped as quickly as it had begun.

And suddenly the second tree knew he was carrying the king of heaven and earth.

One Friday morning, the third tree was startled when her beams were yanked from the forgotten woodpile. She flinched as she was carried through an angry jeering crowd. She shuddered when soldiers nailed a man’s hands to her.

She felt ugly and harsh and cruel.

But on Sunday morning, when the sun rose and the earth tremble with joy beneath her, the third tree knew that God’s love had changed everything.

It had made the third tree strong.

And every time people thought of the third tree, they would think of God.

That was better than being the tallest tree in the world.

The next time you feel down because you didn’t get what you want, sit tight and be happy because God is thinking of something better to give you.

SERVING SCHEDULE



ELDERS

Lectern

Table

Apr 4	Martha Anderson	Barb Bates
Apr. 11	Karen Johns	Daphne Hayes
Apr. 18	Becky Daigle	Bob Reese
Apr. 25	Martha Anderson`	Joy Claffey

DEACONS

Prep and Serve

Serve

Apr. 4	Galilee Flores	Jim Claffey
Apr 11	Mac Flores	Jeff Igel, Don Peterson
Apr. 18	Dom Peterson	Dan Johns, Gail Reese
Apr. 25	Suellen Cook	Mac Flores, Jim Claffey

POWER POINT

Feb.	No power point at this time
------	-----------------------------

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS

Apr 4	Deb McClelland
Apr. 11	Deb McClelland
Apr. 18	Karen Johns
Apr. 25	Karen Johns

COUNTERS

Apr. 4 - 25	Marve Huizinga
-------------	----------------

