

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

March 2021

Rev. Rick Hamilton, Minister

Carol Clifford, Editor



During the
*Season
of Lent*
contemplate
your heart and
look at our
world with
Hope.

Artwork: Mary Judine Bruch, BVM

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



It was a year ago on March 16 when the word came down from Springfield that the entire State of Illinois was in quarantine. We scrambled around and found a way to create a video feed, set up zoom accounts, and stumbled and bumbled our way into online worship. One of the mixed blessings of online worship, is we have followers from basically coast to coast. We have regular viewers of worship in Virginia, California, Florida and even tune-ins from other countries. In our isolation, our reach has expanded beyond anything we would have done as a “bricks and mortar” only based church.

I think it is safe to say that we will never stop broadcasting our worship services. That said, as of the day of this writing, we are solidly back in phase four of restore Illinois, and the county has continually posted improved numbers in terms of infection rates and hospital availability. Therefore, it is my happy privilege to announce to you that beginning March 7, we will reopen our doors for in person worship while continuing to offer our online live feed!

There are still important guidelines:

Everyone will be expected to wear a mask (or two) as much as possible

Seating remains in social distance spacing (though I have taken off assigned seats)

Sit together only if you arrive together in the same vehicle/are from the same house

Singing should be limited to our song leaders, while the rest of us sing along “in spirit”

There is no coffee hour (or coffee even being made)

Communion cannot be outside due to weather, but it will be served to you in your seat for a quick removed mask partaking of the elements.

Things are still not going to feel completely normal. We still are at risk of some snow and weather problems to boot. Fellowship time will be limited. But most importantly: the live feed of worship and a Zoom gathering of fellowship will still happen each Sunday! Just because our doors are open, does not mean you should feel “forced” to come back until you are comfortable doing so. Like learning to walk, everyone will do it in their own time.

I look forward to the day when we can return to food, fellowship, hugs and hearty handshakes, smiles (with teeth), and singing praises to God aloud.

For now, we’ll take what we can get. I look forward to seeing you (live or virtually) around Our Lord’s Table, Rick

REFLECTIONS AND IDEAS



We are in the midst of the Lenten season which is a season of hope and expectation. Of course, we can all hope that our health pandemic will end. We pray that people will receive vaccines soon and be able to go back to more normal activities. We do want to return to our church home and be able to worship together and experience a fellowship time without being socially distant and overly cautious. We are hopeful that this time will come soon, but we must still be careful.

I am a life-long member of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ.) Jim and I both had parents and grandparents who were also brought up in our denomination. In our church annual planning guide, our mission is stated: "To be and to share the Good News of Jesus Christ, witnessing, loving, and serving from our doorsteps to the ends of the earth." An emphasis is on sharing the Good News, nurturing faith and practicing spiritual disciplines, and engaging in ministries of reconciliation, compassion, unity and justice. It is always important to remember our church covenant:

We affirm our need to be an anti-racist/pro-reconciliation church, strengthen relationships among all expressions of the church, share mutually and more fully the stewardship of God's gifts of our life in Christ, encourage our growing diversity within our church family and community, work with our many ecumenical and global partners to heal the brokenness of the body of Christ and the human community.

This Lenten period can be a time of new beginnings and excitement to be a follower of Jesus Christ. I look forward to warmer days, more sunshine and the seasonal change in the trees and flowers. God provided us with the beauty of nature and it is appreciated.

Stay safe and healthy and remember that you are all part of a caring church family and we want you to keep in touch.

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! 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!

Please note: There will be no MIP on Monday, March 15, 2021, but please join us any other Monday!

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



Good News! Rev. Rick is considering reopening the Church on March 7th. Christian Ed will be cautious and email any changes as things open up!

In March, we are in the midst of celebrating Lent. We hope the children are following the Lenten calendars to keep focused on Lent and grow closer to God. Each Sunday we are also working to complete a puzzle of holy week. Each week another scripture is provided as a clue to the puzzle piece. Of course each Sunday we are also continuing to provide Children Bulletins for the worship Scripture. With the reopening, we will provide printed Children Bulletins and also the Scripture for the Lenten puzzle in the sanctuary in addition to the emails.

Adult Sunday school remains on hiatus. As things open, we will consider opening our God of Surprises video series based on attendance, interest and of course safety considerations. For Lent, however, we have provided a Lenten devotional, *Go to Jerusalem*, by Mary Allen Mulligan. Mary invites you to follow Jesus to Jerusalem during Lent. We hope you will take advantage of this special offering. If you need one, contact Carol in the office and let her know if you need it mailed or if you can pick it up at Church.

Enrich the Soul is taking a break for Lent to allow a special bible study provided by our LGBTQ+ ministry on the Radical Inclusion of God. It is a wonderful opportunity to strength our open and affirming pro-reconciliation ministry. The sessions started February 24 and will continue on Wednesdays at 6:30 pm though March 24. Of course you can still join us at 6:00 pm on zoom for fellowship before the study. Please join us!

We know these are challenging times, but we know God is with us giving us faith that brighter times are close at hand. In the meantime, 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

Budget - 2021

1/1/2021 through 12/31/2021 Using Budget 2021 Annual

Category	1/1/2021 Actual	- Budget	12/31/2021 Difference
INCOME	18,627.23	135,355.00	-116,727.77
100_income	18,627.23	135,355.00	-116,727.77
120-Identifiable Giving	18,296.00	133,655.00	-115,359.00
130-Loose offering	0.00	100.00	-100.00
140-Space Use Donations	0.00	100.00	-100.00
150_Fundraising	0.00	100.00	-100.00
160-Other Income	331.23	1,400.00	-1,068.77
EXPENSES	20,269.87	135,355.00	115,085.13
200-Ministry	400.00	3,300.00	2,900.00
210-Worship	0.00	600.00	600.00
220-Evangelism	0.00	100.00	100.00
230-Disciples Mission Fund	400.00	2,400.00	2,000.00
250-Stewardship	0.00	100.00	100.00
260-Christian Development	0.00	100.00	100.00
300-Property	3,147.05	25,000.00	21,852.95
310-Maintenance & Repair	753.50	4,000.00	3,246.50
320-Equipment	0.00	0.00	0.00
330-Grounds	1,220.00	8,000.00	6,780.00
340-Utilities	1,173.55	7,000.00	5,826.45
350-Improvements	0.00	6,000.00	6,000.00
400-Office Administration	1,047.42	12,020.00	10,972.58
410-Insurance & Bonding	58.39	6,500.00	6,441.61
420- Office Expense	739.62	4,500.00	3,760.38
430-Payroll Service	249.41	1,020.00	770.59
500-Personnel	15,675.40	95,035.00	79,359.60
520-Sr. Min. Housing Allowance	6,832.00	41,000.00	34,168.00
530-Sr. Min. Pension	1,000.00	6,000.00	5,000.00
540-Sr. Min. Prof. Expenses	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
550-Office Manager Salary	3,688.00	22,135.00	18,447.00
560-Pianist Salary	2,266.00	13,600.00	11,334.00
570-Choir Director	0.00	0.00	0.00
580-Custodian Salary	666.00	8,000.00	7,334.00
590-Staff FICA	557.40	3,300.00	2,742.60
Net Difference:	-1,642.64	0.00	-1,642.64



*“Your storms are only temporary,
but the blessings of God last forever.”*

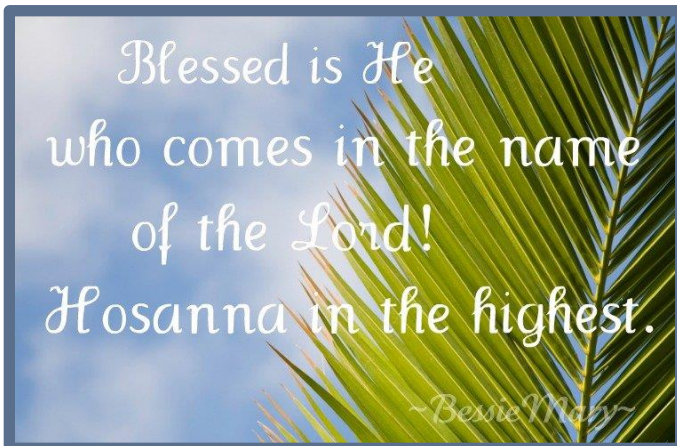


Current Fund Balances --by date - As of 2/28/2021

Account	2/28/2021 Balance
Bank Accounts	
General Fund - (Operating Budget)	-1,642.64
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	0.00
Property Reserve	1,366.14
SPECIAL Disciples Mission Outreach ...	985.00
SPECIAL Music & Worship Fund	7.45
The Back To School Fair Fund	6,857.37
Youth Fund	1,330.77
TOTAL Bank Accounts	65,972.16
- OVERALL TOTAL	65,972.16



Palm Sunday, March 28th



Belarus Ministry



The people are conducting a quiet revolution to get rid of Alexander Lukashenko who became their President in 1994, was supposed to leave in 2002, he is still there and has turned dictator. (go to charter 97.com) The per capita number of Covid 19 cases is better than Illinois, but they still have had 272,273 cases with 1876 deaths.

At the orphanage, your gifts paid for a new medical department phone system and a large quantity of medicine. They are still not fully funded and are getting more children. There are no real adoption systems in place. At the Isle of Hope camp, they had no 2020 sessions due to Covid 19, so your money went to continue improving the facilities. This year they plan to have sessions, so you will again be sending needy children and orphans to Christian Camp.

Put your gifts with your regular offering marked for Belarus or send them direct to me. Be generous, these children need us.

Dick and Martha



COVID-19 Vaccine

It's safe, effective and will help us beat the pandemic.

Make your decision based on the facts. There is a lot of wrong and fake information out there. You can trust the information shared by doctors and experts.



Fact: The vaccine will not give you COVID-19

Fact: The vaccine will not make you fertile.

Fact: The vaccine will not change your DNA.

Fact: The vaccine does not have a microchip in it.

Find out when you can get the vaccine, what it's made of, what side effects you might have and more at aah.org/VaccineInfo

When you get your shot, take it.

PROPERTY REPORT



ComEd Electric Bill - Church

January 2021

<u>2021</u>	12/22/2020 – 1/25/2021	\$172.65
<u>2020</u>	12/20/2019 – 1/24/2020	\$219.05

We are in the process of updating the parking lot lights with more energy efficient bulbs.

Spring is on the way,
Barb and Dan



Did you know...?

By: Bobbie Dean



In Mali, the economy is principally based on the cultivation of cotton (Mali is the second largest producer of cotton in Africa), food crops (rice, millet, sorghum, fonio, peanuts, and corn), and livestock (cattle, sheep, and goats). Malian families invest more than half of their household income in food expenditures.

In the cities, rice is the preferred dish, followed by cereals (sorghum and millet), peanuts, sugar, and oil. In the rural areas where rice is produced, farmers tend to consider rice a luxury item and they sell it. Their basic staples are millet, sorghum, and fonio (a West African cereal) that are consumed in a variety of ways: served with sauces with fish or meat and various vegetables, or in the form of porridge (mixed with water, sugar, and fresh or powdered milk).

MARCH BIRTHDAYS



Mar. 3	Scott Daigle
Mar. 6	Larry Carley
Mar. 7	Hanzel Flores
Mar. 9	Garrett Allen
Mar. 9	Bob Reese
Mar. 11	Jeff Franklin
Mar. 18	Nina Carley
Mar. 26	Rachel Chandler
Mar. 26	Alison Daigle
Mar. 31	Robert Phillips
Mar. 31	Chy'enne Phillips



Church Chuckles

By Bobbie Dean



Taste of Heaven

One day, a cat and mouse died and went to heaven. When they met St. Peter at the Pearly Gates, he asked the mouse what he would like to have for eternity. "I've spent my whole life running from this cat," the mouse said, "so, I'd like to have a pair of in-line skates."

"Granted," St. Peter replied, and immediately the mouse was equipped with skates, and he sped off into heaven. Then the saint put the same question to the cat.

"I'd like a nice, soft, fluffy pillow," the cat said, and immediately he found himself lying on the most luxurious pillow he had ever known.

A week later St. Peter saw the cat and inquired how he was doing. "This is wonderful!" the cat purred. "And I especially enjoy your Meals on Wheels!"

SERVING SCHEDULE



ELDERS

Lectern

Table

Mar. 7	Martha Anderson	Becky Daigle
Mar. 14	Barb Bates	Joy Claffey
Mar. 21	Daphne Hayes	Karen Johns
Mar 28	Joy Claffey	Martha Anderson

DEACONS

Prep and Serve

Serve

Mar. 7	Dan Johns	Marve Huizinga
Mar. 14	Mac Flores	Jeff Igel, Don Peterson
Mar. 21	Galilee Flores	Marve Huizinga, Gail Reese
Mar. 28	Sandy Allen	Suellen Cook, Galilee Flores

POWER POINT

Feb.	No power point at this time
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SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS

Mar. 7	Joy Claffey
Mar. 14	Joy Claffey
Mar. 21	Joy Claffey
Mar. 28	Deb McClelland

COUNTERS

Mar. 7-28	Marve Huizinga
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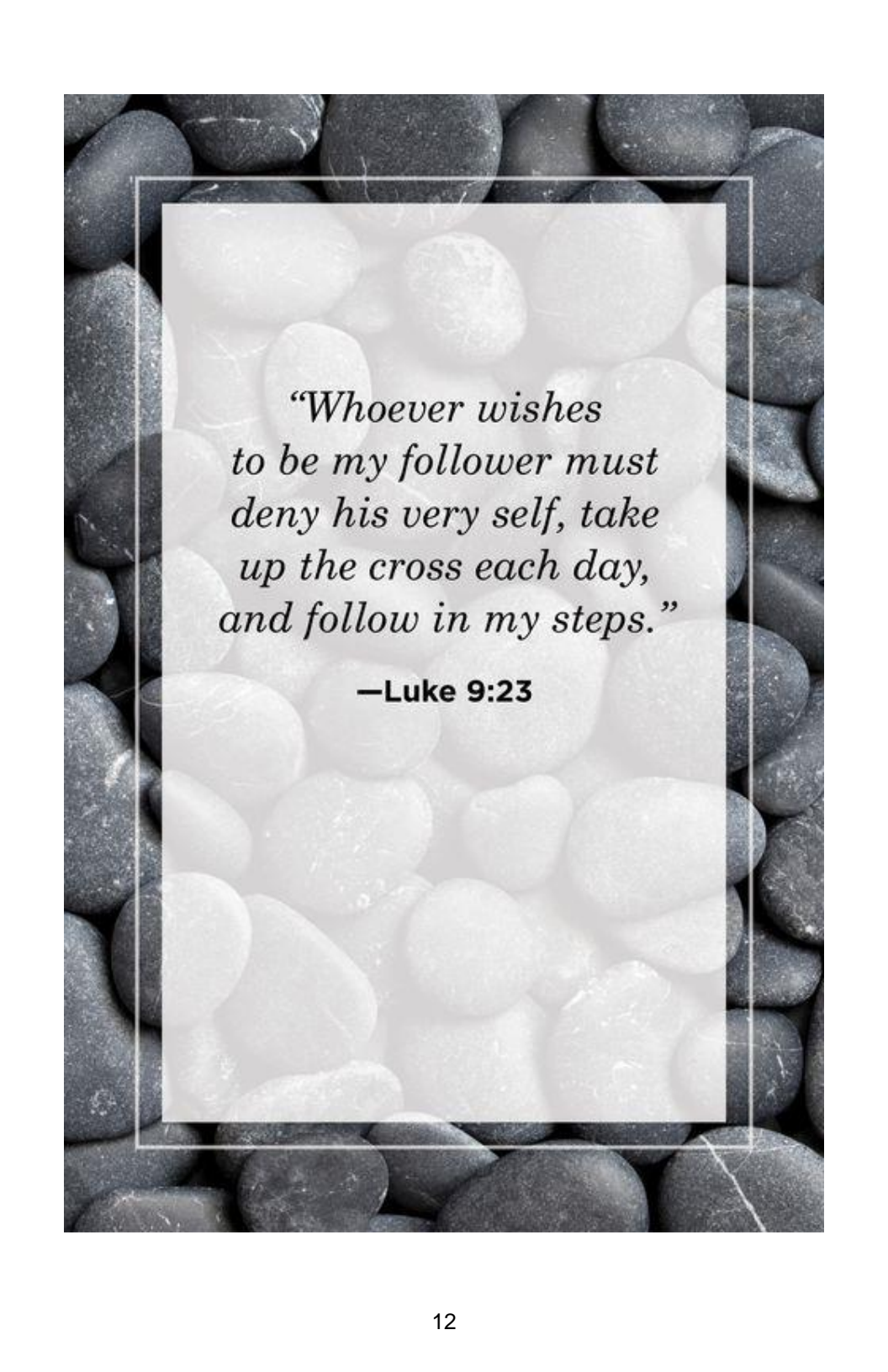


Thank you note received from Kathy Payne...

Thank you for your card. Give my love to all you beautiful people. God bless you for thinking of me. Someday I will get out and see all.

Love and God Bless you all, Kathy Payne





*“Whoever wishes
to be my follower must
deny his very self, take
up the cross each day,
and follow in my steps.”*

—Luke 9:23