

THE DISCIPLE



First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

P.O. Box 568, Downers Grove, IL 60515

801 63rd St., Downers Grove, IL 60516

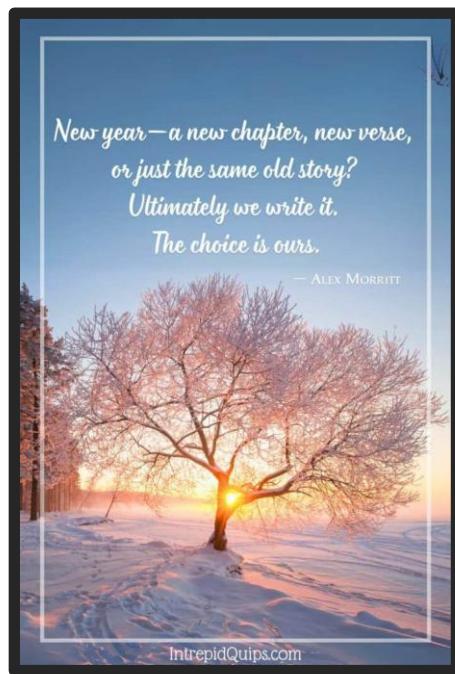
630-968-7818

Email: firstccdg@gmail.com Web: fccdg.org

January 2026

Rev. Daphne Gascot Arias, Minister

Carol Clifford, Editor



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



I'm writing these words just a few hours after I was in a minor car accident. (No one was hurt, at least not physically.) Reflecting on my role in the accident, I wondered how much of the fault was truly mine. Legally, the other party was found at fault. At the same time, could I have been kinder? Could the accident have been avoided? Turns out forcing their way into my lane was just one in a list of many bad choices made by the other party involved.

The truth is that I felt wronged by the other driver, and my reaction, though legal and "in the right," could have been kinder. We don't know what storm other people around us might be battling, so I want to choose kindness whenever possible. But, is there a chance that by standing my ground, a worse accident was avoided? So, the question becomes, how should I have acted? What is the loving, just, merciful thing to do?

The questions and paperwork continued at the police station. But something interesting happened: with every answer to a question and every piece of evidence, it was more evident that the other driver's day was getting worse. If you know me, you know I love Jesus, and I can also be a bit stubborn. I expected to feel victorious, vindicated—eager to gloat in my glory! Not only was I in the right, but the one who wronged me had set off a chain of consequences on themselves that Karma herself couldn't match.

My anger turned to anxiety, then to disappointment, only to become a thick mixture of embarrassment and sadness. So, what if it was my turn? So, what if I was there first? I won't make assumptions about the other driver, but I do wonder...

Although I was in the right, I had multiple opportunities to show kindness. I had the opportunity to "let it go," to avoid conflict, to sidestep anger and choose patience—and wait a few more minutes at the stoplight. What if I had just waited?

I don't do resolutions personally, but I do believe it's essential to have goals. In the new year, I will try to be kinder, even at the

expense of my ego. I will not lie and say I regret standing my ground (nothing wrong with this), but I do regret not choosing kindness. If I had to tell this story to the police in front of my kids, what would they learn? That it's more important to be right than to be kind? That it's more important to stand my ground than to be safe? That it doesn't matter if it was the right thing to do as long as it's legal?

I hear myself as part of the problem, the culture of doing just enough not break the rules, to do the bare minimum. Is this any different from corporations that allow harmful ingredients in their products simply because it is legal to do so? Any different from companies that damage the environment knowingly just because it meets the minimum requirements—requirements, by the way, that are “legal” but not enough if we are trying to preserve the environment? Any different from those who live off of technicalities and loopholes?

Christ's commandment to compassion and kindness is not a technicality, nor are there loopholes we can exploit. Kindness and compassion are the very essence of the Gospel. This year, I will work on myself because I don't want to be kind because I'm supposed to. I just want to BE kind. I want kindness to be essential to who I am, even when stuck in traffic, even when someone invades my space.

May the reason for the season remain in our hearts all year long, as our reason for life. Amen.



The staff at First Christian Church would like to thank you for the Christmas gifts presented to us at coffee hour on December 2. We are very appreciative of your kindness and generosity. Thank you.

Karen's Korner



As I write this, we are still counting down to Christmas, having just put together food bags for Parkway Gardens and packed up coats and toys for their party. They even shared us as a partner for the party. Thank you for all the generous donations!

January will bring our joint leadership meeting with the Elders and the Board. Now is the time to share any thoughts or suggestions you have with the Board and Elders.

Feed the Body and Soul will resume on Wednesday, January 7th at 6:00 pm for a light supper and fellowship, followed by a lesson at 6:30 pm. We will continue our study, We Call Ourselves Disciples. It is an interesting study delving into what it means to be a Disciple with lively discussions. Join us! And please sign up to supply a dinner, if you can.

Adult Sunday school will resume Sunday, January 11th. We will continue our study of Men of the Bible.

Monday Intercessory Prayer (MIP), on vacation for Christmas, will resume January 5th. We have a faithful group and many answered prayers! Please consider joining us on Mondays at 6:00 pm by calling 607-374-1123 and entering code 390193 at the prompt. It is a peaceful time sharing our joys and concerns for personal needs, our church, our community, our nation and world. Also continue to share your prayer concerns.

We also look forward to another year with the Korean Fellowship Church. They have been wonderful, honoring our Church and sharing in our missions. We look to continue our shared ministries in 2026 and hope to schedule another joint service

Faithfully yours,
Karen

PROPERTY REPORT



The property team is pleased to announce that we have not had any problems to confront recently. All of the repairs we have done over the last few months have been working well.

Some upcoming events: We will have our annual fire safety inspection this month; and we will be preparing for the use of our building for the upcoming General Primary Elections in March

We hope you had a Blessed Christmas and will have a Happy and Healthy New Year!

Barb and Dan



Did you know...? By: Bobbie Dean



Korean parents go to great lengths to provide for their children, especially when it comes to educational opportunities.

Because children are largely expected to have their education be their sole focus, many children do not do much to help around the house. In return for such care from their parents, children are expected to take care of their parents when they are older. An oldest son's aging parents are traditionally cared for by his wife, but this duty, while common, is often privately perceived as a burden.

A weakening of Confucian values in society has caused some to claim that parents are increasingly neglected in their old age.



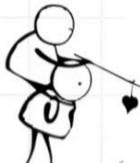
7 WAYS TO PRAY

Grow a deeper connection to God's love

#1 GO FOR A WALK

Search for the things you're thankful to God for. Sidewalks, trees, bird songs, smiles from other pedestrians, flowers in bloom, passing cars and buses that make travel possible.

So much to appreciate!

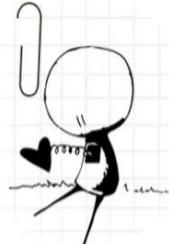


#2 USE YOUR BODY

Try this simple body prayer.

(3 deep breaths) God, you are above (reach toward the sky), below (touch your toes), inside (hands to heart) and all around (big arm circles).

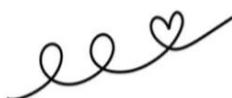
I worship you (reach toward the sky), and give my life to you (touch your toes). And I love you (hands to heart) with all that I am (big arm circles). (3 deep breaths)



#3 FILL-IN-THE-BLANK PRAYER

Start with a simple phrase like, "God is great, God is good, thank you God for _____." This is especially great in a group, or with children.

Discussing what is inside our hearts and minds with each other is a crucial way to build relationships. Consequently, this practice builds both relationships with God and with each other.

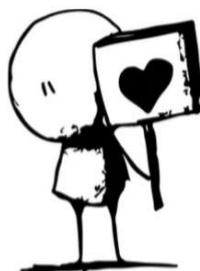
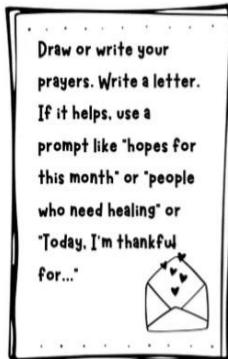


#5 BREATH PRAYER

First, choose a word or brief phrase to repeat in one breath. For example, when praying Psalm 56:3, on the inhale, think or say "When I am afraid." Then, on the exhale, think or say "I will trust you." Repeat!



#6 PRAYER JOURNALING



#4 SING A PRAYER

Our faith has many wonderful expressions of prayer in song. Grab a hymnal or simply sing one of your favorite songs from childhood.

"Jesus Loves Me, this I know..."

66
Praise God from whom all blessings flow.
Praise God all creatures here below.
Praise God above ye heavenly host.
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.
Amen. 99



#7 CENTERING PRAYER

Pray a repeated phrase or word silently to empty the mind and become open to God's presence. You might consider using a scripture like Ps. 46:1 "The Lord is my refuge and my strength" or a phrase like "God is Love" or repeating the name of Jesus. When you notice your mind wandering, refocus on the phrase or word. Begin with a minute or so and work up in 30 second or 1 minute intervals. With practice, Centering Prayer can truly ground you in God's presence.



FROM AN ELDER'S HEART.

Daphne Hayes



Christmas with my family was great. I put up my Christmas tree, which has not been up in over 10 years. It was nice to see it lit up while just sitting on the couch at night. We left off last month with knowing the Messiah is coming. This week, the Christ child will have visitors called the Magi. These wise men will be bringing gifts. These gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, as told in Matthew 2:11, will reveal to us who Jesus is, what He came to do, and how God's plan was unfolding through His birth.

The first gift, gold, has long been associated with kingship. This offering of gold represents Jesus as King. The second gift, frankincense, was used in worship and prayer. This gift recognizes Jesus not as King, but as divine, worthy of adoration and worship. The third gift, myrrh, is odd. It represents death, used in the burial and anointing of the dead. But myrrh to a baby? This gift will be evident in the future, showing the sacrifice of Jesus' death for our salvation. If we reflect carefully, the gifts of the Magi are far more than costly offerings. They form a declaration of faith to a King (Gold), worship to the Divine (Frankincense), and a look at a future sacrifice for our salvation (Myrrh). Jesus was born to save.

But, now in our capacity and in our times, we must find out how an immigrant, poor, and marginalized child is raised for a moment like this, with these kingly gifts.

Happy New Year! Remember the themes of Advent: Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.



Church Chuckles

By Bobbie Dean



Church News: The lecture on the religious history of circumcision has been cut from tonight's program.

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS



Jan. 1	Marve Huizinga
Jau. 1	Jose Morales
Jan. 3	Sue Huizinga
Jan. 3	Don Peterson
Jan. 7	Lexie Gagnier
Jan. 12	Christoher John
Jan. 17	Noreen Iaculla
Jan. 20	Daphne Gascot Arias
Jan. 22	Alexis Darling
Jan. 24	Becky Daigle
Jan. 25	Angela Reese
Jan. 25	Tammy Reese
Jan. 25	Katie Ritchie

SERVING SCHEDULE



ELDERS

Lectern

Table

Jan. 4	Karen Johns	Dahne Hayes
Jan. 11	Bill Cook	Barb Bates
Jan. 18	Sue Huizinga	Becky Daigle
Jan. 25	Daphne Hayes	Bob Reese

DEACONS

Prep and Serve

Serve

Jan. 4	Larry Carley	Gail Reese
Jan. 11	Lisa Johnson	Galilee Flores
Jan. 18	Kristine Kijowski	Dave Kijowski
Jan. 25	Jeff Igel	Galilee Flores

