

February 2026

Office Hours
Monday — Thursday
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.



**First
Christian
Church**

www.cantonfcc.org

**215 West Elm Street
Canton, IL 61520**

office (309) 647-1363

Lent Takes Us to the Wilderness

This month we're beginning a new season, Lent, 40 days of preparing our hearts and our lives for the good news of Easter. It's a time of self-reflection, of learning how to slow down, and sit in uncomfortable places as Jesus leads us to Jerusalem, calling us to pick up our crosses and to follow him.

Often, the story that begins this season is Jesus in the wilderness. This story will be our guide for our entire Lenten journey called ***The Wilderness Way***. This theme, developed by our regional church (*meet our new Regional Minister on page 3*) has wonderful resources we're going to use as we join Jesus in the wilderness, literally and metaphorically.

Our season begins Feb. 18th, Ash Wednesday, as we worship together at 7pm that life is fragile and we need God's love and grace. Also starting that night, and for the 5 following Wednesdays, you've invited to our Lent Supper & Study. Dinner is at 5:30, with a study of the book, *Entering the Passion of Jesus*, as we better understand Jesus' holy week.

Our worship committee has also created a weekly devotional to deepen your journey. Free copies are available for you to use and share. And our Holy Week promises to be special, starting with Palm Sunday on March 29th, continuing through a very special agape feast on Maundy Thursday, a musically-moving Good Friday and a joyous and beautiful Easter on April 5th. We hope this Lent is a season where you too are willing to join Jesus in the wilderness and discover what goodness God is speaking into your life.

February 18th
7pm
Ash Wednesday

*Resurrection begins
by asking for help.*

Lent 2026 Schedule

Wed, February 18

Lent Supper & Study Begins 5:30-7pm
(Every Wednesday during Lent)

Wed, February 18

Ash Wednesday Service @ 7:00pm

Sun, March 29th

Palm Sunday & Community Meal

Thurs, April 2

Maundy Thursday Agape Feast @ 5:30pm

Fri, April 3

Good Friday Tenebrae Service @ 7:00pm

Sun, April 5

Easter Sunday & Egg Hunt



LENT SUPPER & STUDY
WEDNESDAYS 5:30-7PM DURING LENT
yummy dinner.
meaningful book study.
everyone is welcome.

RSVP A BOOK 647.1363

Steve Mason: Pastor
Jessa Wenger: Office Coordinator
Email: contact@cantonfcc.org



Rick Coulter: Building Supervisor
John Davis: Director of Music
Gretchen Fuller: Organist

What can we do?

Lately I have heard this sentiment repeated, as our nation has laid bare divisions and brokenness in the images of violence and fear in Minneapolis. We have seen mostly peaceful protests being met by force, weaponry and government officials claiming that what we saw did not happen. It is disheartening, fear-inducing and has the potential for generational ruin and distrust. I'm not commenting politically; I'm speaking theologically. We are seeing the divine image of beloved children of God get threatened and trampled. We're seeing agents, charged to act on the good of our society, succumb to the sin of violence, racist profiling and hiding behind masks. These are evil acts, part of a larger system of sinful thinking and behaving.

What can we do?

As Paul wrote in Galatians 6.9, we can commit to not being weary of doing good. We persist in the hope of Christ, not because it is a tactical good to wear down some "other side" or win some strategic victory, but because the message of God in Jesus is that we are one—we all need healing, not more hurting. Jesus shows us a sacrificial love that shields those who are having stones thrown at them (John 8), a love that binds up our neighbor's wounds (Luke 10's Good Samaritan parable) and a love that refuses to give up on anyone, even those who persecute them (Luke 23, on the cross as Jesus says, "forgive them, they know not what they do").

What can we do?

We need to pray for those who are or have endured occupations, and for those who might be next. Pray for families who are grieving, who don't know where their loved ones are. We need to pray for our nation. We must also put those prayers into action. First, it means not denying the dangerous and sinful acts we're seeing. We need a deep systemic change in order to both make spaces for peace and abiding the law. Secondly, remembering that Minneapolis is just one stop, it is not unrealistic to ask ourselves, are we prepared? Are we prepared to protect innocent people from being hurt and calling out injustice on our streets? Would we risk our privilege to safeguard someone's life? And since all of this police force in ICE is happening because of a decades-old brokenness with our country's system of immigration and a history of racism and xenophobia, are we, as Christians, staying grounded in our sacred texts that remind us to love the immigrant, to provide for the stranger, to welcome the least of these because it is Jesus himself?

There is much we can and should do. We don't have to do it all, and I pray, that as a church we will figure out how we wish to proceed together. But I believe we're called to be a church that won't be silent or complicit while human rights and dignity are being systematically stripped away from people. I want us to talk about what matters, even when we disagree about specific steps, because hopefully we can affirm the belovedness of all God's children and that God cares about what happens in our lives. So, talk with me, let me know how you'd like to proceed. Do we need more community conversations? Do we need training and education? Do we need actions?

I don't have the answers. But I know there is a problem. And I trust that God's love can hold us and guide us together to be a part of the solution.

Peace,

Pastor Steve



Welcome to Our New Regional Minister

In the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), we say there are three "manifestations" of church. The primary one is that of congregation, but we are also in covenantal relationship with a "regional" church (currently there are 31 regions in the USA and Canada) and also with the overarching "general" church. Regional ministries usually involve bringing their congregation's clergy together for support, assisting congregations in administering pastoral transitions and youth and camping ministries. The general church, then, is that part of the church that speaks to national and global ministries—like missionary work, global disaster relief, representing the Disciples in ecumenical and interfaith gathering and leading with pastoral and prophetic words for issues the church faces writ large.



Starting at the onset of 2026, our regional church, (the Christian Church in Illinois, Wisconsin and Michigan...soon to be named the "Living Waters Region") gets to welcome a new Regional Minister and President, the Rev. Dr. William Eugene Crowder, Jr.

Dr. Crowder is a lifelong leader in the church, bringing deep pastoral experience, a commitment to justice, and a passion for community transformation to his role. His ministry is shaped by a conviction that the church is called to be both spiritually grounded and actively engaged in the life of the world. Dr. Crowder has served congregations in a variety of pastoral and leadership roles

and is widely respected for his ability to build partnerships, strengthen congregations, and lead with vision and integrity. He most recently served as Senior Pastor of Historic Park Manor Christian Church in Chicago, where his leadership has helped advance significant community development initiatives, including affordable senior housing and violence-prevention efforts in partnership with civic and faith leaders.

He is deeply engaged in the wider life of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), serving as President of the National Convocation Board of Trustees and previously as Chair of the Committee on Ministry for the Illinois, Wisconsin, and Michigan region. His leadership reflects a commitment to faithful governance, public witness, and collaborative ministry across the church.

Dr. Crowder holds a Master of Divinity from United Theological Seminary and a Doctor of Ministry from Memphis Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Dr. Stephanie Buckhanon Crowder, Full Professor of New Testament at Chicago Theological Seminary, are the parents of two adult sons. Together, they share a deep commitment to faith, education, and service.

Let's join together in welcoming Dr. Crowder as our new, settled, Regional Minister!



Find your **Minute at First** every Monday morning.

Information and spiritual formation on Facebook or in your email.

Watch, like and share!

Sharing Life Skills with Young People

Do you know about our Life Skills Academy ministry? It's a 5-session academy for juniors, seniors and first year post-high schooler to teach "soft" life skills that may not be taught in the classroom, but are essential for life as independent adults. The group is learning about applying for jobs, scholarships, colleges, we're working on curating our social media. In January, our session focused on interviewing skills and included mock interviews.

This ministry, supported by a grant from the National Benevolent Association (which is a ministry partner of the Disciples of Christ general church), is being led by Brian Spiva with the support of Greg Glomb, Shane Dixon, Bruce Edwards, Chuck Taylor, Kevin Dearing, Michelle Spiva, Kara Fitzjarrald, Pastor Steve and others who led these young people in monthly learning and discussion sessions. The goal is for participants to complete all 5 sessions, and if they do, they will receive a \$500 scholarship (funded through the grant). Currently, there are 6 students poised to complete each session and receive the scholarship incentive. Our next session will be Feb 25 at 7pm, where we'll be talking about financial literacy.

Thank you to Brian and the whole team for their leadership and guidance. The young people who are a part of this ministry will be impacted by your generosity and wisdom! Help us spread the word about this wonderful ministry we're doing!



First
Christian
Church

LIFE SKILLS ACADEMY





Prepare for the next steps of life with experts and one-on-one support in a welcoming space. This is the FOURTH session, focused on helping you manage, save and invest your money so that you have a financial plan and peace of mind.

Who: Juniors, Seniors and 2025 Grads

When: Wednesday Feb. 25, 7-9pm

Where: First Christian Church

Cost: FREE! And snacks provided!

Financial Literacy

309.647.1363

215 W. Elm St, Canton, IL

AND WHEN THEY COULD NOT BRING HIM TO JESUS BECAUSE OF THE CROWD, THEY REMOVED THE ROOF ABOVE HIM; AND AFTER HAVING DUG THROUGH IT, THEY LET DOWN THE MAT ON WHICH THE PARALYTIC LAY. + MARK 2:4

A NEW WAY

SPECIAL OFFERING 2026



A New Way

Support the "Week of Compassion" global disaster relief and response ministry to serve those in time of crisis and help rebuild struggling communities. Offerings will be received February 15th & 22nd. Thank you in advance for the support!

Trivia for Good

This past month we had the third installment of our Trivia for Good ministry. Each month on the 3rd Tuesday of the month our congregation has sponsored a trivia game night at Old Dog to raise funds for good causes in the community.

In November, we began with our biggest session, raising funds for Westview Elementary, where we raised over \$500. In December, we supported Fulton Mason Crisis Services. And in January, we raised over \$200 and had 4 teams competing in trivia to support our local Salvation Army. Special thanks to Trygve Mead and Sherry Hardy for leading this ministry.

You're invited to join us at our next Trivia for Good on February 17th where we'll be raising funds for the Fulton County chapter of Habitat for Humanity. As always, Old Dog is hosting us. Doors and food orders begin at 5:30, trivia begins at 6pm. The cost is \$5 per person to play trivia and there are mulligans available for purchase. Prizes are awarded to top teams. Come alone or bring a team, but help do some *Trivia for Good*.



February Birthdays

Neville Crossland	Feb 1
Shirley Taylor	Feb 1
Daryle Coleman	Feb 2
Sherry Hardy	Feb 2
Lexie Shaw	Feb 4
Nathan Bloyd	Feb 5
Chris Walters	Feb 10
Isaac Mason	Feb 12
Brenda Dilts	Feb. 13
Marsha Moore	Feb 19
Derek Schrodт	Feb 21
Olivia Walters	Feb 21
Jaiden Walters	Feb 22
Laiken Moser	Feb 24
Wes Wenger	Feb 24
Jo Potter Keen	Feb 25
Tate Bryant	Feb 26
Bruce Edwards	Feb 27
Frankie Kemper	Feb 27

February Anniversaries

Mark & Marla Reneau	Feb. 12
Larry & Eugenia Warden	Feb. 23
Tyson & Amy Smith	Feb. 26

BECOMING
DEDICATED
Disciples

Passionate **SPIRITUALITY**
Joyful **SERVICE**
Inspiring **GENEROSITY**

December 2025 Giving & Ministry Needs

	2025 Total
Ind. Giving:	47,177
Other Income:	928
Total:	48,104
Needs:	34,709
Difference:	13,396
	-2,131

Please Pray For:

Rickey Noe's Family; Henry Holladay; Carolyn Sue (Murphy) Tandy; Family & friends of Shirley Eskridge during her passing; Family & friends of Bea Meeker during her passing; Dennis Duckwiler; Family & friends of Randy Weaver during his passing; Diana Black Williamson; Donna Phillips; Christine Malott; Lori Coleman; Wendy Mayall; Blaine Hardy; Sharon Hall; Don & Shirley Edwards (Bruce's parents); Cathy Schoonover-Orwig (MS); Brenda Dilts (Lyn Snowman's mom); David Lueck (Janet White's nephew); Brad O'Brien; Steve Moore; Those battling with cancer: Beverly McComb, Mary Beth Powell, Beverly, Stephanie Parson, Tim Roberts, Katie Hill, Steve Lefferts, Barb Bishop, Gary (& Susan) Barnhart, Kim Schrodт, Lana Formal, Jodi Smith, Crystal Graybel, Pam Beadles, John Brown, Sharon Blair, Jason Lasseigne

Care Facilities:

Holly Brook Pekin - David Meeker
Heritage Woods— Bruce Christy, Barb Uno, Nancy Cluts
Renaissance C.C.- Angie Slater, Bill Brockett & Sue Weaver
Sunset - Lori Bieber; Ed Ford; Keith Munstedt

Scriptures, Sermons, & Serving Schedules

February 1		February 8	
Scripture	Galatians 6: 1-2, 9-10	Scripture	Galatians 5: 13-14, 22-25
Greeters	Bonnie Harn	Greeters	Bruce & Jean Edwards
Ushers	McLean Family	Ushers	Mark Taylor
Call to Worship	Lori Coleman	Call to Worship	Video
Scripture Reader	Kara Fitzjarrald	Scripture Reader	Judy Leitze
Children's Moment	Jennifer Miller	Children's Moment	Grant Stephenson
Invitation	Brian Spiva	Invitation	Kevin Coleman
Prayer	Michelle Spiva	Prayer	Shawna Axline
Children's Church	Rhonda Morgan & TBD	Children's Church	Jean & Bruce Edwards
Deacons (prepare)	Jean & TBD/Dave & Sheila	Deacons (prepare)	Carissa M & Amanda/Tom & Don P
Counters	Brian Spiva & Bruce Edwards	Counters	Kevin Coleman & Tammy Weaver
Coffee Fellowship	Don & Maida	Coffee Fellowship	Kevin Dearing
February 15		February 22	
Scripture	Eph. 4: 12-16	Scripture	Matt. 4.1-2
Greeters	Nancy Cluts	Greeters	Bill & Judy Kemper
Ushers	Keith Munstedt	Ushers	Carissa Moser
Call to Worship	Kara Fitzjarrald	Call to Worship	video
Scripture Reader	Michelle Spiva	Scripture Reader	Aja Lawson
Children's Moment	Rhonda Morgan	Children's Moment	Kevin Coleman
Invitation	Maida Williams	Invitation	Sherry Coffey
Prayer	Grant Stephenson	Prayer	Chuck Taylor
Children's Church	TBD	Children's Church	Michelle Spiva & Kathy Langlais
Deacons (prepare)	Shawn & Lyn/Shane & Chris	Deacons (prepare)	Allen & Eugenia/TBD
Counters	Grant Stephenson & Sherry Coffey	Counters	Sherry Coffey & Chuck Taylor
Coffee Fellowship	Paula Grigsby	Coffee Fellowship	Amanda & Grant

February 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Satur-day
1 Worship 9:00AM Bible Study 10:30AM Middle School Youth Group Bowling 1PM	2 Worship 9:00AM Bible Study 10:30AM Group Bowling 1PM	3 GEMS 10:00AM Elder's Meeting 6:30 PM	4 Choir Practice 7PM	5	6	7
8 Worship 9:00AM Bible Study 10:30AM	9 Worship Meeting 11:00AM	10 GEMS 10:00AM Finance Meeting 5:30PM	11 Choir Practice 7PM	12	13	14
15 Worship 9:00AM Bible Study 10:30AM	16 Christian Ed 6PM Cabinet Meeting 7PM	17 GEMS 10:00AM Trivia for Good @Old Dog 5:30PM	18 Choir Practice 7PM	19	20	21
22 Worship 9:00AM Bible Study 10:30AM	23 Property Meeting 4PM	24 GEMS 10:00AM	25 Choir Practice 7PM	26	27	28