



## BECKLEY DISCIPLES NEWS

First Christian Church  
119 N. Fayette Street., P.O. Box 5556,  
Beckley, WV 25801  
January-February 2021 Edition



Someone once said that it doesn't hurt to know people in high places because to get ahead in this world it's not what you know -- it's who you can count on.

For this season, I have been called to serve as your Interim Pastor. I come here having left a pastorate of 14+ years. Your previous pastor, Pastor Don, left claiming a new call upon his life after serving God with 17 years of faithful ministry to you. God is writing a new chapter for all of us. As I reflected on what to share in my pastor's column, I was led to a piece of Abram's story found in Genesis 12: 1-9.

Initially, God called Abram to leave his country, family, and ancestral lands to check out a new territory God was planning to give him. As encouragement for doing this, God made Abram fantastic promises, *"I'll make you a great nation and bless you. I'll make you famous; you'll be a blessing. I'll bless those who bless you; those who curse you I'll curse. All the families of the Earth will be blessed through you."* What remains amazing about this contract with Abram is that it was a free gift (an indicator of the grace we speak about so much now). Abram was not required to make a specific commitment in return for God's blessing. It was not long until we see God upholding his promises - in spite of Abram - rather than because of him. Eventually, the same blessing promised to Abram was repeated to Isaac and Jacob. God continued to be faithful in keeping his initial promises to Abram and, as a result, humankind was delivered from the worst angels of their nature.

Abram trusted God's promises and left his homeland, with his immediate family, to follow

his call. God led him to glimpse the land called Canaan. It was occupied by another group of people, but God promised Abram that land would eventually belong to his descendants – a land full of rich resources and promise. Having received this promise, Abram built altars in two different locations near that land where he worshipped God and prayed. Scripture tells us all of God's promises to Abraham were kept. The covenant reached its fulfillment in Jesus – the God-With-Us who still lives in and through us today as a sign of God's never-ending love for his people.

On the other side of this pandemic, I believe we are going to find God calling us to do church in new ways. Some people will not return to in-person church life, but new people will enter in. We must prepare ourselves for the changes because we are not going to return to the way things have always been. The technology the church has had to use through the COVID pandemic has opened new avenues for service and evangelism. Many have been reached with the Gospel and love of God that might not have been reached otherwise. Some of us might not have liked worshipping in this way, but isn't it beautifully creative that God found a way to not only protect us from physical harm, but also continue to reach us with the good news? To reach people with God's love in the future, we may need to spend less time in church buildings and more time on the streets, in places of business, in homes, and residential treatment centers. We are on the cusp of God doing a new thing. If we refuse to lean into the new thing God is doing - like Abram was willing to do - our personal spiritual growth and church life will begin to wither. It is a great time for First Christian Church, Beckley, to discern anew where God is leading. Yes, this church has known many sweet traditions, but it does not mean God does not have even sweeter traditions for us to discover. New is only as threatening as we make it up to be in our minds! Better and even more exciting things can be in the cards for this wonderful congregation if we will trust God and move forward with him step by step.

It is a privilege to walk this leg of your journey with you. I look forward to getting to know each of you personally – and that includes those

who are following through our live-streamed services. My love and prayers will surround you. Many blessings have been part of your past and deserve to be celebrated. Much richness is ahead of you. I look forward to discovering all of God's creative beauty in this congregation. I hope you find a blessing in rediscovering that beauty and celebrating with me the sure and certain future God has planned for you. Remember that Jesus said he has overcome the world and all within it. We can hope because all that would defeat us was crucified on the cross with Jesus. We are disciples of Jesus. His love and grace is still redeeming, transforming, and making new! We can count on him!

Serving the Risen King,

*Pastor Sharon*



Pastor Sharon will be in the church and/or church office Monday through Thursday and Sunday mornings. She can be reached in the church office at 304-252-8597. If you can't reach her in the church office, try her cellphone at 540-233-2534. Fridays and Saturdays will be her days off, although she will still be available by phone on those days in the event of an emergency.

Sharon also communicates through text messages and e-mails. Her e-mail address is [writingrev60@gmail.com](mailto:writingrev60@gmail.com). You may also leave her a message on the BeckleyDisciples Facebook page.

She does have a personal Facebook page, but makes it a policy to keep that page only for communication with family, close friends, and creative writing buddies outside the churches she serves.

*"All, everything that I understand, I only understand because I love."  
— Leo Tolstoy*



Pastor Sharon led her first live-streamed worship service for our congregation on Sunday, January 3rd. Yvonne Seay and Becky Leach will be assisting her in worship each week. You can access the live services through Facebook at the BeckleyDisciples page

Pastor Sharon and her husband, Keith, will be sharing live-streamed hymn sings on Thursday nights at 7:30 p.m. on our BeckleyDisciples Facebook page. We will be singing old favorites and making a joyful noise! Please join us for the fun!

If you do not have a Facebook account, but have access to the internet, you can go to our church's website at <http://www.fccbeckley.org> and click on the Facebook link under the "What's Happening" section of the website. This link will take you where you need to go to access our live-streamed services.



Guess what, friends? The season of Lent is just a breath away. **Ash Wednesday is coming up on Wednesday, February 17<sup>th</sup>.** Normally, we would have had a worship service that day to impart ashes, but with the COVID pandemic still raging, it isn't likely we can do that. However, if you would like to receive ashes and a brief prayer, drive over to our church parsonage that day and Pastor Sharon (with mask and gloves) will impart everyone in your vehicle with ashes and share a prayer with you. You will not have to leave your vehicle. Pastor Sharon will be outside the church parsonage and ready to share ashes with you from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. on February 17<sup>th</sup>.

Sharon will also be teaching a Bible Study during the weeks of Lent. The study will address the Sermon on the Mount, She will be using materials put together by Amy-Jill Levine, a professor of New Testament at

Vanderbilt University. The study will be informative, thought-provoking, and accessible to everyone. You do not need to be a biblical scholar in order to get a blessing from it. The Bible Study will begin on Tuesday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>. It will be live streamed at 3:00 p.m., but will be available after that on the BeckleyDisciples Facebook page. There are six sessions to the study – a new session streamed each week. Please join Pastor Sharon for the opportunity to learn more about the greatest sermon ever given!



### STATISTICS TO CROW ABOUT

During the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2020, *Carpenter's Corner* (providing meals for the homeless), served meals from our Educational Building for forty-six days of the quarter. ***The total number of meals served for the quarter was 8,145!*** What a blessing that our church can support this much needed ministry with space, prayer and love!

### PRAYER LIST

*Our country*  
*Members of the U.S. Military*  
*Our Regional Minister, Rev. Thad Allen*  
*Our President*  
*Victims of terrorism, both foreign and domestic*  
*Pastor Sharon and Keith Waters*  
*Members of your church staff*  
*Carolyn Bailey*  
*Susan Bailey Hoskyns*  
*Jayne Chafin*  
*Taylor Dacal*  
*Woody & Patty Dacal*  
*Jane Flowers s*  
*Pat Freeman*  
*Kevin & Susan Fry*  
*Amy Herrenkohl*  
*Nancy Kittle*  
*Yvonne Leach*  
*Betty McClung*  
*Derek Ross*  
*Alicia Terry*  
*Jim & Pat Trader*  
*Wayne & Gloria Tucker*  
*Kevin Winfree*



### Community Service and Outreach

Although our whole year of worship has changed this year, First Christian Church has taken part in some wonderful outreach projects. In the first part of 2020, our in-person services were cancelled, and worship took on a different look. Don and Becky began live-streaming services on Facebook which is a blessing for all of us.

In August we had a visit from a group of Mabscott teachers who shared their experiences with us. This service opened our eyes to the challenges some students face locally. Their expression of thankfulness and love touched all our hearts. Our backpack drive provides supplies to teachers to meet their classroom needs, as well as supplies for individual students.

It was great to take part in the Day of Hope this year. Dr. Weis of Mabscott joined Don and I in the sock distribution area. We handed out socks to people as they made their way through the car lanes on their path through the event.

The congregation donated money this year to make online shoeboxes for the Samaritan's Purse project in October and November. We "made" 40 shoeboxes online. The shipping costs were also provided by our church and directly sent to the ministry.

In November, we provided a ham dinner for students at Mabscott for Thanksgiving. It included ham steaks, green beans, instant potatoes, and rolls.

For Christmas, Our Angel project provided 11 students with gifts for Christmas. This allows underprivileged students to receive some nice gifts that would otherwise be impossible. We worked with Food Lion again this year to provide food boxes that were distributed or delivered to the families.

It goes without saying that I will miss Don in Beckley. I reflect and am proud of all the

accomplishments we made together. But I am also happy for he and Nancy on beginning a new chapter in their lives.

2021 is here and Rev. Waters will be here to start her own new chapter in Beckley. So, like Don and Nancy, we are all listening to Him to see what plans He has for each of us.

### *Tammy Runion*

Director of Outreach & Education

### **Worship and Music**

Happy New Year!

Prayers have gone up and BLESSINGS will continue to come down in 2021. The church celebrated Black History Month and the choir was busy preparing for a wonderful Easter cantata when suddenly everything froze in time.

I have missed our Choir “family” since March. I spent several Sunday afternoons driving to choir members homes, just to check on them and say hello, but most importantly to see if anyone needed anything. It was great to see members faces and their smiles to know that someone was thinking about them. How blessed we were, as a church, that Don and Becky streamed our services every Sunday morning to help keep all of us connected. It was even more of a blessing when we were able to come back into the sanctuary, though social-distanced and masked, for worship!

Then we receive the sad news that Don decided to retire. This leaves a magnificent void in our church. No one likes change, but it is something we all must get used to in the coming months. We pray that Don and Nancy will find happiness in their new endeavors. They will be missed. Godspeed, my friends!

This is a crazy time for anyone to move and change jobs because of the restraints that Covid-19 has put upon all of us. Let us continue to pray that the “new normal” will be reality and we all will be together in worship soon.

Rev. Sharon Waters has been called as our interim minister and I know that even though Don will be missed, we will receive Rev. Waters with open arms. To welcome her, work

with her, get to know her, and give her our open hearts and minds to be our Minister and Leader!

God bless each of you in 2021!

*Yvonne Seay*

Director of Worship



What a year! Most of the business of the Church in 2020 had to do with finding an interim minister, working to make the transition from Don to Rev. Sharon Waters as smooth as possible, and making difficult decisions about canceling in-person worship services and offering our folks the opportunity to worship remotely. All in all, 2020 presented some of the most significant and difficult challenges we have faced in many, many years. Don provided steady leadership throughout the year, and Don and Becky did a great job of making the remote services work, and we appreciate their efforts. The other staff also worked hard to keep things running—thank you Yvonne, Tammy, Nancy, Barbara and Angelo. And I must thank our Church lay leaders for carrying out their duties and persevering through a difficult time.

As you may recall, we brought Sharon in to preach and to meet the Search Committee and the congregation on August 30, all while following strict safety protocols. That visit went great, and we were fortunate to have Sharon accept the congregation’s call. In November we had her come in for an evening and we worked with Don and other staff on transition issues. We have worked out details of her call and the transition through many emails and phone calls. Chuck is in the process of directing some significant work at the parsonage, and we expect Sharon to be here to do her first service on January 3rd at 9:00 a.m. Unfortunately, that service will be remote, but we will welcome Sharon properly one Sunday when we can all be together.

On December 20, Don, Yvonne, Becky and Tammy presented a great worship service which was broadcast on live TV. They were joined by choir members John Welch, Kristin Canterbury and Carol Buklad. We should all be proud of their great work—thank you all!

Unfortunately, the pandemic has prevented us from meeting as a Church family to celebrate Don and Nancy’s seventeen years of service. We appreciate all that they have done for us, and we wish them well as they move on to new adventures. If you have not yet sent in your love offering for them, please do that by mailing it to the Church at P.O. Box 5556, and please note “Snyder love offering” on the memo line of your check. We look forward to having Don and Nancy join us for a belated celebration in 2021!

Things were challenging in 2020 and will continue to be in the coming year, but as you all know, it is always a blessing to be a part of this wonderful Church family. Best wishes to you all for a safe, healthy, and happy 2021!

*John File*

Chairman



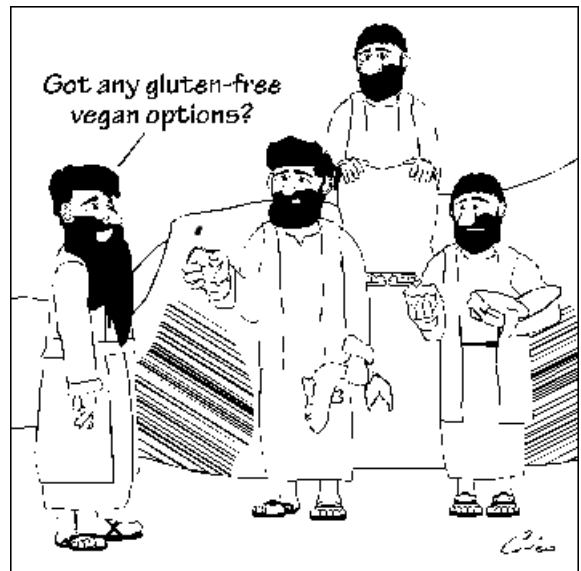
**January birthdays**

- January 5 Mary Ann Turner
- January 9 Delores Vaughan
- January 14 Celine Falcinella
- Jack McClung
- Keith Waters (Pastor’s husband)
- January 15 Anthony Anderson
- Carolyn Bailey
- January 21 Ashton Tredway
- January 23 Angelo Martin (custodian)
- January 26 Aaron Anderson
- January 28 Ryan Wheby

**February birthdays**

- February 1 Hailey Jones
- February 8 Jean Ann Mearns
- Pat Trader
- February 9 Kori Korczyk

- February 16 Gaynell Crouse
- February 17 Alicia Terry
- February 25 Shannon Bailey
- February 27 Becky Leach



*“Our human compassion binds us the one to the other - not in pity or patronizingly, but as human beings who have learnt how to turn our common suffering into hope for the future.”*  
*- Nelson Mandela*

**First Christian Church**

*(Disciples of Christ)*

119 N. Fayette Street

P.O. Box 5556

Beckley, WV 25801



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**Church Staff:**

*Rev. Sharon Waters*, Interim Senior Minister

*Tammy Runion*, Director of Outreach  
and Education

*Yvonne Seay*, Director of Worship

*Becky Leach*, Organist

*Barbara Adkins*, Bookkeeper/Office Assistant

*Angelo Martin*, Custodian

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED