

# “What's the WORD?”



FIRST CHRISTIAN  
UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST

## Weekly Updates & Musings

### *Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!*

Christmas Eve worship is over, Christmas Day activities are complete and now we look toward A New Year, Epiphany, and the coming of the Magi.

This year we will be doing something new at First Christian! We will be joining the many other protestant churches around our world that have begun the spiritual practice of “Star Gifts” We will be receiving a word, a gift, that will carry us through the 2021 year. More information about star gifts can be found on page 3 of this e-news blast.

Last year my star gift was ‘Shelter’. For many reasons, that word has resonated with me through the 2020 year. The most obvious way ‘Shelter’ has touched my life is that we purchased a new home (shelter) in NC this year! There are several other ways this word has been an anchor for me in 2020.

My prayer is that your word will help you to deepen your own relationship with Christ. I hope you will take time to reflect and ponder your word's meaning in your own life. Keep in mind, your star gift may not reveal its meaning immediately, it may take some time. I hope you will look at it often and consider how God may be speaking to you through your star gift in 2021.

Prayers for you and yours for many blessings during the New Year! May 2021 bring you lots of Peace, Love, and Joy and may you grow in your relationship with Christ!

Love & Light,

*Michelle*



Do you have a pastoral concern, joy or announcement or just want to check in? Feel free to contact me:

Call or text: 610-390-9624

Email: [fcuccpastor@gmail.com](mailto:fcuccpastor@gmail.com)

\*please note Friday & Saturday are my Sabbath days. (with the exception of scheduled events.)

I am available for emergencies only those days

# Prayer Concerns

Please keep these individuals/families in your prayers...

Benji Terrell - having chronic headaches, taking new medication will have MRI on 2/10

Julie Miller - Next (and final) treatment is tomorrow, December 30th!

Joe Strickland - (Faye Strickland's son) squamous cell carcinoma he will begin treatments soon

Eleanor Lovgren - On new medication and is being treated for pneumonia, doing much better!

MaryBeth Linton - swollen lymph node that medication didn't help, will be going back to Dr soon.

Lewis Fowler, continue to keep him in your prayers

## ZOOM SUNDAY SCHOOL

Join us for Sunday school at 9:30 am via Zoom. Jamie Fonville will be guiding the class.

Here is the link for Zoom Sunday School at 9:30 am. Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/99385710248> or dial in by phone +1 (301) 715-8592 you will be prompted to enter meeting ID #993 8571 0248. Once you have entered, you will be placed in a virtual "waiting room" Please stay on the line and someone will admit you into the meeting shortly.

## Church Office Closed - Happy New Year one and all!

The Church office will be closed on Thursday, December 31st. The Staff of FCUCC wishes you and yours a very Merry Christmas and many blessings in 2021! May you be filled with Hope, Peace, Love and Joy always!

## BOARD OF DEACON MEETING ... TONIGHT (12-29-2020) @ 6:30 PM VIA CONFERENCE CALL

### WEBSITE UPDATE

Worship videos can now be viewed directly from our website!

[firstchristianucc.org](http://firstchristianucc.org)

# Prayers of Gratitude & joy

Giving God thanks for....

Matt Rice and his ability to bounce back even when all of the footage for Christmas Eve was lost! We continue to be blessed by his gift of technology and music!

Thank you to Nancey Simmons, Darla Jo, Bray and Phil Bray who were so

## December Birthdays



December 5 - Ken Little

December 8 - Elijah Johnson

December 21 - Elsie Bolick

December 27 - Eleanor Lovgren

December 30 - Barbara Mebane

## December Anniversaries



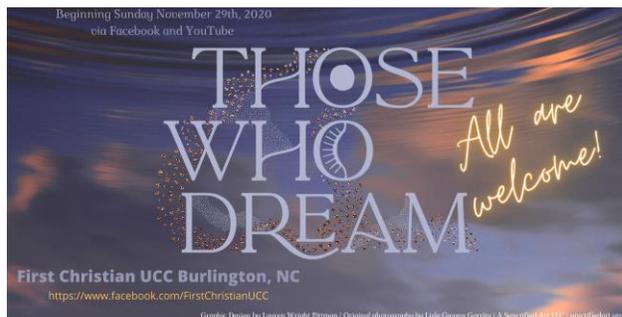
December 31 - Robert & Barbara Price

### Address update:

Deborah Seuss & Tim Jackson

532 Lindley Rd. Greensboro NC 27410

# Upcoming Events, Mark Your Calendars!



## **Sunday, January 3rd - Epiphany Star Gifts and Holy Communion**

**“those who dream... persevere”**

Liturgist - Mark Garrison

Matthew 2:1-12

On Epiphany, we celebrate how God’s love transverses cultural and geographical barriers to become good news for all people. We marvel at the persistence of God to shine the way for the Magi so that they might bear witness to the divine. We honor that the Magi trusted their dreams and returned home by another way. As we journey forward, we carry the dreams of our ancestors in faith.

With courage and resilience, we dream on.

\*All worship services will be pre-recorded and will be posted on Facebook and Youtube

### **What is a Star Gift? How will I be able to receive one?**

The use of star words, also called “star gifts,” is a prayer practice connected to Epiphany and the new year that has been growing in popularity in Protestant churches for nearly a decade now. The idea is that a list of intention words, or guiding words, are written or printed on paper stars. At some point during the Epiphany service, individuals are invited to draw a word from the basket or off the Table, and to use that word as a guiding word throughout the year. Typically, participants are encouraged to trust the word they have drawn, and not to replace the word. Individuals are often encouraged to place their star word somewhere they will see it regularly throughout the year to allow consistent reflection on how God has moved through, around, or in connection to that word.

### **There Are Several Theological Statements Being Made in this Tradition:**

1. The Magi followed a star, which ultimately led them to Jesus. Therefore, we also use all the resources we have available to us—including creative prayer practices and intention words for the new year—to move closer to Jesus.
2. We trust that God uses multiple ways to guide us and speak to us. Star words are one such lens that might provide us a way to look for God in our midst, both actively and in hindsight.
3. We trust that it is often easy to miss God in our daily midst. Having an intention word to consider both in present days, as well as to reflect on at the end of the year, allows for us to see God in ways we may not have seen God before. This is the greatest gift.
4. We know that the most common prayer practice for many involves speaking to God as opposed to silence or contemplation. We believe that star words invite a new prayer rhythm of reflection and review that can be a powerful new way to connect with God.
5. By not looking or sorting through the star words at their selection, we practice the spiritual task of receiving. It is not we who are in control in this moment. Instead, we trust that God is present, and we let go of our desire to cultivate or control.

### **This year’s distribution of Star Gifts....**

We will have several ways for you to receive your own star gift for 2021

First, There will be a zoom time from 11:30 am - 12 noon on Sunday January 3rd, Here is the link...<https://zoom.us/j/97797688128>

Second... You can call the church office and we will pick a word for you.

Third, you can stop by the church office sometime to pick your own star gift. Please call the office prior to coming to make sure Pastor Michelle is in the office.

Or Lastly... you can leave us a comment on the January 3rd worship video link on our Facebook page and we will pick a star for you and reply to your comment with the photo of your star.