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# First Christian United Church of Christ Newsletter Autumn 2020

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Who knew in October of 2019 that our time with you would be like none other? We are grateful to have enjoyed five months with you in person ... allowing for shared hugs, up-close conversations, table fellowship, communion face-to-face and smiles that could actually be seen. Then COVID happened. You all made wise choices on when and how to meet. Matt Rice quickly adapted to taping our services and we slowly figured out how to zoom together for Sunday School, make conference calls for committee meetings and safely meet for drive-by blessings and informal outside worship.

We are so grateful to all of you who welcomed us, patiently answered our many questions and prayed for us. It has truly been a joy. Now God is calling you into a new and blessed chapter.

Rev. Michelle Funk joins you with pastoral experience, a strong spiritual grounding as well as excitement and a clear sense of God's call to be among you. Please see page 2 for Michelle Funk's introduction This is a wonderful opportunity to re-imagine ... to dream anew your church life together.

For instance ... As a faith community, how is God calling you in 2021 to do both in-reach and outreach? How has the landscape around you changed and how

might that impact your ministry? What kind of social media presence do you want and how can you help make that happen? Are there changes to be made to the current church structure that could free up volunteer hours? **And most importantly: How is the Spirit calling you to courageously BE the church?**

It is our prayer that the God of Love continues to enliven your imagination as you journey together into this new and blessed time.

We love you,  
*Deborah Suess and Tim Jackson*



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## HELLO CHURCH FROM MICHELLE FUNK

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### *Hello Church!*

“Hear what God says! In the last days, I will offer My Spirit to humanity as a libation. Your children will boldly speak the word of the Lord. Young warriors will see visions, and your elders will dream dreams.” ~Acts 2:17

I'd like to thank your interim pastors, Deborah and Tim, for their amazing ministry, warm friendly hospitality, and the opportunity to write to you! I am sure most of you have already read my bio. Yet, if you haven't, it has been posted to FCUCC's website and you can check it out there!

When I realized my dream to open a dance studio, one of the first pieces I choreographed was “The Impossible Dream” from the 1965 Broadway musical, Man of La Mancha. It's a song about hope, about reaching for the stars, about dreaming big... even when you feel tired, worn out, and feel like it is impossible.

FCUCC has been doing a lot of good ministry as a small faith community with a big heart for Christ's mission in all the world! I've heard some of you have been working so hard you are beginning to feel a little tired and worn out. Yet, I believe you still have a spark, a vision, that drives you to continue to move forward and look ahead. As you stated in your profile, “We believe God has much more in store for this community of faith... We are not ready to end our history”

I truly believe that with God all things are indeed possible. We will soon be entering the season of Advent, a time of new beginnings, of preparation, and this year it is also a time for us to dream! To reflect

and to discern God's call for FCUCC in this moment in time and beyond.

For now, you will take time to give God thanks for Deborah & Tim's ministry among you, for their energy and loving Spirits! We will continue to “Hold them in the Light” as they transition, rest, and dream about where the Spirit is leading.

I feel blessed that we have been mutually called by God to be in ministry together. I look forward to visioning and “Dreaming Big” with you as we look toward the future for First Christian UCC, Christ's church, here in downtown Burlington.

Love & Light,

*Michelle*

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610-390-9624

\*A quick note, please feel free to call me Pastor Michelle or just Michelle, whichever you are comfortable with!



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## FUR BABIES OF OUR CONGREGATION



## ANNUAL REPORTS DUE SOON

All Board and Committee Chairman need to turn in their yearly report to the office by mid-December for the Annual Report for the year. This may be mailed ... emailed ... or handwritten. Thank you all for your service to First Christian UCC.

December Birthday's		
12/05 - Ken Little	12/30 - Barbara Mebane	12/08 - Elijah Johnson
12/21 - Elsie Bolick	12/30 - Robert Glenn	12/27 - Eleanor Lovgren
Anniversaries this Month		
12/31 - Robert and Barbara Price		

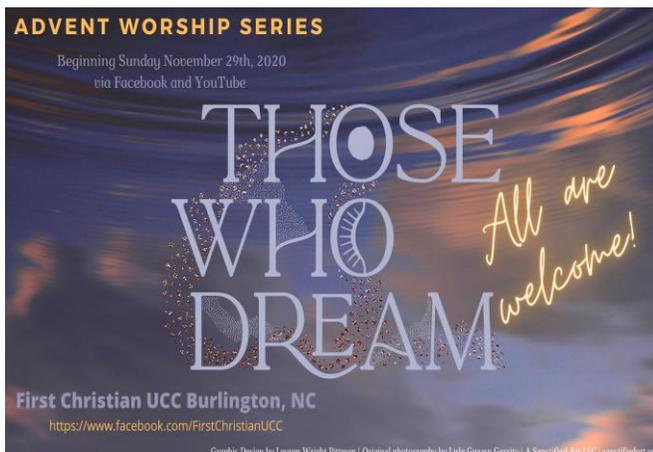
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## SERVICES ON THE LAWN



Our faithful photographer Ken Little took this picture at the close of one of our Vesper services. We have been gathering for outside worship since the third week in August – “as weather holds.” There have been between 14 and 22 participants each week. Amazingly, we have only had to cancel one time for weather and once for Election Day. It has been a joy to gather with our masks on/socially distant – to share scripture, prayer and words of encouragement from several of our members as well as your pastors. We even sang – very softly and into our masks – a hymn or two. On two wonderful occasions, Lucius Wilson closed our vespers by inviting us to sing a variety of songs accompanied by his guitar. He included one of my all-time favorites: I’ll Fly Away. **The plan is to continue these outside services as long as it doesn’t get too cold. We are currently gathering at 12:30 pm on Tuesdays. Hope to see you there!** With joy - Deborah

## LOOKING AHEAD TO OUR ADVENT SEASON 2020



*This advent season join us as  
“Those Who Dream”*

*What does it look like to live as those who dream? How can we embody and bring forth God's dreams? How do we dream of a better world when our current one is harrowing and disorienting?*

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

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## ***Sunday, November 29th - The First Sunday in Advent***

***those who dream... keep awake (hope)***

Those who dream do not fall asleep to the realities of the world. God prompts us to pay attention to where God's dreams for change and new life are emerging. In Advent, we remember that God's ultimate dream is to be intimately connected to us—to come down and dwell among us. As we keep awake, we join Isaiah and the psalmist in pleading for restoration and for God to draw near.

## ***Sunday, December 6th - The Second Sunday in Advent***

***those who dream... prepare the way (peace)***

John the Baptist calls the crowds into the journey of repentance and transformation. Similarly, we are called to prepare the way for God's message of love and liberation to be shouted, heard, and received. Those who dream make way for righteousness and peace to kiss, for faithfulness to spring up from the ground (Ps. 85:10-11). ~ Mark 1:1-8

## ***Sunday, December 13th - The Third Sunday in Advent***

***those who dream... sow joy (joy)***

Ultimately, dreams sow joy, even if that joy doesn't immediately spring forth. Sowing seeds into the soil always feels risky and feeble—how can something so small become something so beautiful, so big, and so nourishing? Like Mary, we are called to tend and nurture the dreams God has woven into us. ~ Luke 1:46-55

## ***Sunday, December 20th - The Fourth Sunday in Advent***

***“Advent Notes” 🎵 : those who dream... are not alone (love)***

This week, we recognize what preceded Mary's song of praise: news that was disorienting and bewildering, possibly threatening her life. Together, Mary and Elizabeth find courage and comfort in spite of their unusual circumstances. We, too, are called to carry, support, and encourage one another's dreams. ~ Luke 1:26-45

## ***Thursday, December 24th - Christmas Eve***

***this night, we are those who dream***

The Christmas story reminds us that we are all dreamers. Like those gathered around the manger, we come to this night each year with awe, wonder, and holy imagination for what is possible. Like Mary, we treasure God's dream in our hearts and commit to keeping it alive. Like the holy family, we believe and trust in a God who comes to us in the vulnerability of a child. ~ Luke 2:1-20

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## ***Zoom Trivia Night!***

***Wednesday, December 9th at 6:30 pm***

Join us from the comfort of your home as we learn more about our newly called Pastor, Rev Michelle Funk. We will do some guessing, enjoy some laughter, and begin to get to know each other better during this time of “at home” fellowship! Feel free to pop some popcorn, pour your favorite beverage, and login for some game night fun!

## ***“Meet N Greet” Outdoor Open House***

***Tuesday December 8th 11:30 am - 12:30 pm***

Join us outdoors for a “Meet and Greet” with our Newly called Pastor, Rev. Michelle Funk. Drop in during our outdoor “open house” to say hello! (Under the breezeway)

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## ***“Roll into Christmas”***

### ***Family Greet, Grab, n Go! All from the comfort of your car!***

Saturday December 19th beginning at 11:00 am

Invite your entire family & friends to our “Roll into Christmas” Drive In “Christmas-In-A-Bag” pick up! Socially distanced and safely prepared “at home” Christmas activities for the whole family! HO! HO! HO! A little elf gave us some news! Santa may even be joining us! Bring your cameras and tell your grandchildren, great grandchildren, your neighbors and friends! Help us spread the word, Christmas is almost here! It is almost time to celebrate the birth of the Christ Child!

### ***Coming soon...***

Stay tuned for details about our Christmas Season opportunities for Christmas Eve, Epiphany and more!

## **REMINDER ... COME OUT SUNDAY, NOV. 22<sup>ND</sup> AT 1:00 PM**

The Celebration honoring Deborah and Tim will be held in the Church Office parking lot at one o'clock p.m. this Sunday, November 22, 2020. Arrive in time to park your car in the area designated by our volunteers and bring a chair of you wish to sit outside your vehicle. A “Memory Basket” will be provided, as will love and fellowship of your church family. See you Sunday!

## **FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

### **Year to Date through 10-31-2020**

	Actual	Budget
Income:	\$140,963.31	\$157,714.10
<u>Expense</u>	<u>\$137,189.10</u>	<u>\$157,714.38</u>
Net Balance:	\$3,774.21	<.28>

Balance in Checking 10-31-2020 \$7,247.59

As you can see, everyone’s continued support is still greatly needed to carry on the ministry of the church. Please send in your giving today.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Ken Little and Connie Collins,  
Treasurer and Accounting Manager