

The Courier

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Minneapolis



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UPCOMING Events

Women's Annual Brunch, Saturday, January 11, 10:30 am at Heathers

FCC and Friends Book Group, Monday, January 20, 7 pm

FCC Board Meeting, Tuesday, January 21, 7 pm on Zoom

Coffee Hours continue, 9 am on Wed & Sat, Happy Hours 5 pm Tues & Thurs

Annual Meetings set for January 19 and 26

First Christian Church will hold its annual congregational meeting on January 19 at approximately 12 pm, following the worship service. The meeting will be in person or via Zoom; a link will be sent out in the days before the meeting.

The congregation will be voting on the nominations for Trustees, Elders and Deacons, as well as hearing details about the 2025 budget, which the General Board approved at its December meeting.

The **SpringHouse annual joint meeting** will be Sunday, January 26, following the annual Joint Worship of the three member churches. Congregations will hear details about the 2025 SpringHouse budget, as well as a recap of the achievements and milestones of 2024. Both the joint worship and the annual meeting will be livestreamed for those who cannot attend in person.

FCC ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING



Changes coming for FCC Board meetings

The regular third-Tuesday meetings of the FCC General Board will happen every other month starting in January. On alternate months, starting in February, the board invites interested members of the congregation to join the board in meetings to plan for a sustainable future for First Christian. The plan at this time is for this group, tentatively known as the Board Cabinet, to meet at least three times in the first six months of 2025 to provide a clear proposal for the future, including proposals for the 2026 budget with measurable goals for growth and/or budget reductions that will allow the congregation to grow and thrive long into the future.

Coffee Hour Volunteers always welcome: Each Sunday following worship, we gather for coffee fellowship with Lyndale. Steve Rusinak invites you to volunteer to bring a snack (fruit, veggies, something sweet, something gluten free) or assist with set up, serving and clean-up afterwards. Steve or another kitchen committee member will help train folks to make coffee, set up and run the dishwasher. Sign-up on the big green sign-up poster in the kitchen or contact Steve to volunteer.

In Our Prayers



We lift up prayers of sympathy for Mark Carlson and the Carlson family on the death of Genevieve, Mark's mother.

We offer prayers of joy for the wonderful Advent and Christmas services and events, including the beautiful decorations in the sanctuary; we also joyfully welcome Seth Anderson-Matz as our new office administrator.

We offer prayers of concern for Juanito Carter as he recovers from radiation treatment; for Anna Bliss, on the death of her friend Joan's mother Gladys; for Misha Grauberger's family and for his friend Boy; for Nat Rosenberg, recently hospitalized.

We pray for the family of President Jimmy Carter, who passed away recently at the age of 100, and we are grateful for his witness and life.

Continued prayers for our siblings in Gaza, Ukraine, Syria and other places of war and conflict in the world.

Gracious God, we lift up these persons in our prayers, asking the blessing of your Grace and outpouring of your Love upon them. Amen

A "State of the Church" Message from Co-Chairs Martha and Margaret

January: a time for looking back and looking forward. We, your Co-Chairs Margaret Hutchens and Martha Harris, want to look back with you at the church year in 2024 and look forward to what is ahead for us in 2025.

We continue to be a church that gives. In 2024, through member-giving apart from the budgeted church outreach, we made sandwiches (twice) for Groveland Food shelf, cookies for the Aliveness Project, and food-plus-monetary donations for Minnesota Foodshare; made Church World Service hygiene kits, and gave clothing and household items to People Serving People, the Samaritan Project, and Refugee Services. We hosted the Downtown Grief Support program every Saturday from May through August.

We joyfully celebrated the baptisms of three of our young people (Lucas Rennert, Adelynn Kregel and Kaden Hesser), and welcomed four new adult members to our congregation (Rev. Carla Nelson, Rev. Rita Nakashima Brock, K.C. Helmeid and Jennifer Stockdale). Our Stewardship working group (Rev. Tammy Rottschaefer, Jen Kregel, Arlene Hillestad, and Pat Dunlop) studied the results of the 2023 congregational survey and created a Narrative budget that mapped how the values of the congregation could be reflected in the budget. This working group also created the "5 Rs" rubric as a way for our church to proclaim its values to ourselves and to the public. The 2024 Stewardship invitation resulted in an increase of roughly \$20,000 in pledged income over the pledges of 2022 (the last time we had a Stewardship drive).

As we look to our future in 2025, we must acknowledge the challenges that are coming for our church, our nation and the world. Our Church Board and the new Board Cabinet will work to build a sustainable future for First Christian, as we continue the deep and honest discussion and planning about FCC's future that the Board members had in its December meeting.

As a congregation, we will continue to give generously to our community. Led by the creative ministries of our pastors Rev. Dr. Laurie Pound Feille and Rev. Dan Adolphson, we will strive to stand firm in our faith and be a ministry of public presence in the face of challenges to our fellow citizens. We will continue to gather both in person and online as a community to worship each Sunday and meet together for fellowship and for service each week.

So, we conclude that "the state of the church is good." We believe in the power and reality of transformation that Jesus taught us and showed us. We pray in gratitude for First Christian Church's 148 years of ministry and service, and fervently pray that we will discern God's will for our church as we move into the future.

Meet Seth, our new Church Administrator!

Seth Anderson-Matz is a multi-traditional community minister and public theologian. He served as Interim Minister at First Presbyterian Church of Mankato from 2023-2024, and Children, Youth, and Families Program Coordinator at First Universalist Church of Minneapolis from 2018-2021. He earned his Master of Arts in Religion & Theology from United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities in 2024. He was also a member of the National Trans Seminarian Leadership Cohort in the 2023-2024 academic year.



Seth was born and raised in St. Peter, MN, and lives in the Howe/Longfellow neighborhood of Minneapolis with his wife (Jenn), one big dog (Roxie), one little dog (Saul), and one weird cat (Lucy).

Two social action events coming

Rally and March, January 18: A March/Rally at the State Capitol in St. Paul is planned for Saturday, January 18. The focus is protecting rights - reproductive, civil, transgender, voting and more. Participants will gather at 11:30 am at St. Paul College, march at 1 pm to the Capitol, and rally from 1 to 2:30 to hear speakers. [For more information, click here](#)

Interfaith Service and Moral Mass Meeting, January 20: Bishop William Barber and other spiritual leaders will lead a service on January 20, 7 pm at Healing Cathedral Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Memphis. The theme is "For Such a Time as This: A Prophetic Response to America's Defining Moment." A livestream link will be shared; check the "Latest News" link on FCC's webpage for more information.

Check out Youth Newsletter

Chelsea Boyden, the SpringHouse Youth Leader, publishes a lively and informative newsletter for youth and families. Contact **Contact Chelsea** at springhouseyouth@fccmpls.org get signed up for this newsletter.

First Christian Board Notes

Eighteen board members attended a special budget meeting of the FCC Church Board on December 10. Pastors Laurie Feille and Dan Adolphson greeted the group and then were excused from the meeting, as per the custom of Board meetings for finalizing the budget.

The board first looked at the proposed 2025 budget for SpringHouse, with comments from SH Treasurer Andy Rennert. Insurance costs are up 30%; utilities, food & fellowship costs are up, and there is a Cost of Living increase of 2 ½% for all SH staff. The annual contribution for each church will be \$58,042.41. The board voted to approve this budget.

Finance chair Mike Cackoski went over FCC's proposed budget for 2025, as revised following the November board meeting. A lengthy discussion followed, focused on the following topics:

- **Concerns:** issues such as the declining number of giving units, the diminishing Look to the Future fund, and other items
- **Ideas:** ad revenue; grant-writing; increased membership; less expensive location; hard look at practices and expenses
- **Plans:** Look at Narrative Budget for what will provide most value; set goals to reach a longer future; revisit budget before year's end to see if we are moving in the right direction.

MOTIONS:

- 1) Board voted to approved the revised budget, 14 ayes, 1 nay.
- 2) Board voted to form a Cabinet made up of board members and interested others in the congregation to meet in alternate months from the General Board to establish measurable goals for growth and/or budget reductions that allow the congregation to continue beyond its current 2030 end date with current funding models. Motion approved 15 - 0.

Sundays at First Christian Church

Worship at 10:30, in person or
livestreamed at fccmpls.org

Children's Table Activities in person during worship: **Join us!**
Children's Activities are also available online at www.fccmpls.org

Revised Common Lectionary Water into wine at Wedding at Cana John 2: 1-11



Wedding at Cana, by Peter Koenig (20th Century)

*First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Minneapolis,
is a partner church at SpringHouse Ministry Center*

Reflections on the Word.

John 2: 11 - Jesus did this [miracle], the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him. John's story about a joyful wedding has much to do with earthly details such as laughter, hospitality, and carousing. This Gospel story makes the case for Jesus' unique relationship to God and us. Here he is, at leisure with his friends, the heavenly will of God bisecting the sweet traditions of a wedding.

Loving God, thank you for Jesus who made his way through earthly celebrations and storms, never turning away from loving those around him, as we follow his example. Amen.

Ray Waddle, in *Disciplines*, 2022

**FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH
OF MINNEAPOLIS
(DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)
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*A Welcoming Community of Faith in the Heart of the
City*

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Next issue deadline is Sunday, February 2.