



# BFCC e-Caller

December 2020

*Reaching Outward to Connect People with God's Abundance*

## Pastoral Ponderings

How do you prepare for Christmas in the midst of a pandemic? That is the question before us as we move into the season of Advent: the time of waiting and watching and hoping for the Christ to come anew into our midst; the time of allowing the Spirit to prepare our hearts for Christmas.

It will be a very different Advent and Christmas season; that much is sure. No singing of carols in large groups, smaller family gatherings, we don't even know how much we'll be able to gather in person for worship. Celebrating Christmas and pandemic almost seem like a contradiction in terms.

How do you prepare for Christmas in the midst of a pandemic? How, for that matter, do you prepare for Christ's coming in the midst of a sinful world? And how do you prepare for eternity to enter time and take on flesh? These questions are filled with incongruity, to say the least. When you look behind our traditional festivities and think deeply about what it is that we're really celebrating; well, it's almost crazy for crying out loud. The eternal Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Really?! Yet this is the miracle that we celebrate each Christmas. This is the wonder that we hope will happen again each Advent. What we hope for seems downright impossible: Christ will come again, and this world that is so deeply enraptured by sin will somehow be transformed into God's Beloved Community.

But, yes, this is indeed what we hope for; and pray for; and look and long and wait for. Impossible, you say? Perhaps. But scripture says that with God, all things are possible.

So here are some seemingly impossible things for which I am hoping as we journey through Advent:

- I am hoping that we can gather for live worship on at least a few occasions
- I am hoping that our nation can bind-up its wounds so that we are once again able to work together as fellow citizens
- I am hoping that racism and injustice will be abolished
- I am hoping to see you all, face-to-face, before the end of December, in order to say a proper good-bye.

Will we really be able to worship together? I don't know. We will certainly have Advent and Christmas worship online. And we will have at least some decorations up in our Sanctuary. And maybe we can keep the building open during certain hours so that people can come into the Sanctuary to pray and listen to pre-recorded Christmas music and enjoy the decorations.

I hope for all of this. Because we need these symbols of hope and peace and joy and love and eternal life. We need these reminders that the Word became flesh at Christmas, and remains with us still, and nothing in all Creation can separate us from this love of God, made flesh in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Blessings,  
Pastor Bruce

## A Final Thanksgiving Reflection from Pastor Bruce

Before we get Thanksgiving completely behind us and move into Advent, here's a thought:

### Now Thank We All Our God

Now thank we all our God,  
with heart and hands and voices,  
Who wondrous things has done,  
in Whom this world rejoices;  
Who from our mothers' arms  
has blessed us on our way  
With countless gifts of love,  
and still is ours today.

by Martin Rinkart

As we sang the hymn ***Now Thank We All Our God*** during our online worship this past Sunday, I found myself remembering the amazing story behind this powerful hymn.

Martin Rinkart was a Lutheran pastor in the German city of Eilenberg. A walled city in Saxony, it became a place of refuge for people in the surrounding countryside who were fleeing the ravages of the Thirty Years War. But, the crowded conditions in the city led to an outbreak of bubonic plague in 1637. The other two pastors in the city fell victim to the plague, leaving Pastor Rinkart as the only one left to bury the dead and minister to their families. At one point he was conducting 40-50 funerals a day, including the service for his own wife. But the good pastor believed deeply in St. Paul's admonition to "give thanks

in all circumstances" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Thus it was that in the midst of war and pandemic, he penned a poem that began with the words, "Nun danket alle Gott" ("Now thank we all our God"). First offered as a table grace for himself and his children in the midst of these dreadful conditions, Pastor Rinkart eventually added more verses. By 1647 it had been set to music, and the hymn was sung in 1648 to celebrate the Peace of Westphalia, which brought the Thirty Years War to a close.

So, yes, it is possible to give thanks, even in the midst of a pandemic. Happy Thanksgiving to all of you, my dear congregation, whom I hold so close to my heart.

### It's Time for Our Adopt a Family Project.

We are asking for monetary donations this year. Please make the check payable to First Christian Church with a memo for Adopt a Family, or if you prefer cash, please include a note specifying Adopt a Family. Donations can be mailed to the church or bring them in person on Wednesdays from 11:00-1:00. Thank you for your support of this ministry.



**December 13 & 20,**

Disciple churches across the US and Canada will collect the **Christmas offering**. Our finest gifts support the Ministries of our region. Please give generously to this year's offering.



## Lord, Hear Our Praise

We rejoice that **April Schooley** is home from the hospital and doing well.

### Prayer List

Prayer requests will remain in the e-caller for one month. If an individual for whom prayer has been requested still needs prayer after one month, please contact the church office, or email Bonnie Fye at [bonniefye\\_1@comcast.net](mailto:bonniefye_1@comcast.net). Updates are always appreciated. And please remember those on our Prayer List during your daily prayers.



## In Your Mercy, Lord, Hear Our Prayers

**Our Friends and Family:** Paula Austin, Charles Bouldin, Bob and June Briscoe, Brittney, Hannah Brooking, Brandy Busz, Janie & Larry Chenault, Megan Clark, Fred Colvin, Aaron Evans, Mitzi Flynn, Danny Gillock, April Glen, Rita Jenkins, Nell Jones, Amber Kay, Don Mains, Jean Martin, Felix Miller, Steve Mills, Sheila Miskuf, Marilyn Olson, Colleen Robbins, Natalie Sides, Sally Sides and family, Greg VanCleave, Carol Wieneke, Doris Wykoff, Matt Wykoff

**Those away from home serving:** the church, in military, civil service, education and work.

**Those unable to be with us in Worship:** Barbara Hall, Jacob Householder, Ellie Grissom, Marilyn Olson, Laverne Speer, Jimmy Waggoner.

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY

## December

Happy Birthday  
to you,  
Happy Birthday  
to you,  
Happy Birthday  
dear friends,  
Happy Birthday  
to you.

12/01	<i>Pastor Bruce</i>
12/02	<i>Grant Robbins</i>
12/06	<i>Ava Bunch</i>
12/10	<i>Cathy Allman</i>
12/11	<i>Maggie B. Lewis</i>
12/13	<i>Ramona Kudla</i>
12/15	<i>Michael Bellush</i>
12/15	<i>Nancy Mains</i>
12/18	<i>Harrison Parker</i>
12/22	<i>Merian Jones</i>
12/24	<i>Rhonda Zimmerman</i>
12/26	<i>Wanda Jones</i>
12/26	<i>Gracie Walls</i>
12/30	<i>Cheryl Byrd</i>



Please let our office know if  
we don't have your birthday.

**First Christian Church  
(Disciples of Christ)**

**1101 15th Street - Bedford, Indiana - 47421 - 812-275-4497**

**We are Disciples of Christ.**

**A movement for wholeness in a fragmented world. As part of the one body of Christ,  
we welcome all to the Lord's Table as God has welcomed us.**

**\*Disciples of Christ Statement of Identity**



**CHURCH STAFF:**

**Pastor:**

Rev. Bruce Ervin

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**Organist:**

Mary Ruth Yates

**Administrative Assistant:**

Mitzi Flynn

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**Custodian:**

Steve Harrell



**We are collecting Beans and  
Cornbread for L.I.F.E Pantry  
during the month of  
December. Please place all  
packages in the baskets  
located in the foyer. Any  
food you wish to donate is  
welcome any month.**

**CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:**

**Wednesday:**

**11:00 am - 1:00 pm**

**CUSTODIAN'S HOURS:**

**Monday - Friday:**

**8:00 am - 12:00 pm**

**SOCIAL MEDIA**

**Web Page:** [www.firstccbedford.org](http://www.firstccbedford.org)

**Facebook:** First Christian Church Bedford - DOC

**Camp Facebook:** Bedford Christian Camp