

The Messenger

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Our Mission is to Celebrate and Share Christ's Love through feeding the Body & the Soul.



9540 Fifth St. Highland, IN 46322

219/924-5400

www.fcchighland.net

Winter 2025

Moderator Overview 2024

We started the year concerned about the future of our little church. Our membership was down, giving was down, due to the loss of several members, and costs were going up. Our projected budget was \$40,000 more than our projected pledges. We were concerned about how long we could keep our doors open. We were worried how would we still do all the wonderful things we were called to do. We had to start drawing on our Sass Bequest Funds to make ends meet. BUT we had faith in God, faith in our people and HOPE that we could survive and continue to be the "Little Church With The Big Heart". Well things did get better, Our finances are stable and we ended the year with a healthy checkbook balance. Our giving increased, We didn't need as much of the monthly drawn from Sass money, so we redirected it into 2 CD's that are getting a good interest rate. We have welcomed some awesome new people into our family. And we had a great year filled with fellowship, sharing and caring. We still need to be concerned about the future and what it will hold for us, but we can never lose our faith and hope.

Here's the highlights from 2024. Everyone should be proud of the great things we are doing here.

---We had a steady attendance averaging 25 a Sunday in person and an average of 7 watching online

---Souper Bowl of Caring smashed the goal of 150 cans of soup by collecting 176 cans that was used in our Blessing Pantry

--Tania & Kevin Messmer ran our 1st Super Bowl Squares that raised \$3575 for our Blessing Pantry.

--- "Stitch in Time" ministry Blessed 49 Blankets and 15 Kid Activity Kits for cancer patients. And through it's raffle and bake sale raised \$305 for the Nick Foundation.

--- Easter Egg Scramble with Ridge Methodist church complete with the Easter Bunny and 15 kids scrambling for candy

--- Easter Breakfast

--- Yoga classes in the Labrynith

-- Garedn Produced 497 pounds of food that was donated to Community Services of Northwester Indiana

---Served 7 Homeless Lunches at the Hammond Homeless Shelter

--- Church Picnic with Ridge Methodist

--- Animal & Backpack Blessings

---Spooky Faith Sunday including Chili Cook-off & Pumkin Contest with Tim Brown being crowned The Chili Champ

--- All Saints Day

--- Veteran's Day Celebration honoring our veterans for their service

--- Senior Food Box program every month not matter the weather

--Provided 10 "Angels" from Highland schools with gifts and food cards to 10 families for Christmas.

--- Wonderful Christmas Season - Blue Christmas & Christmas Eve Services with special music by Delia & Leah Helpingstine and Cheryl Sorrell.

It was a great year - GREAT WORK FAITHFUL SERVANTS!!!!

-Debbie Benson, Board Chair

Upcoming Church Events

- February calendar (p. 2)
- Prayer concerns (p. 4)
- Serving Schedule (p. 5)
- Mission & Ministry opportunities (pp. 6-7)
- Remarks from Rebecca (pg. 8)
- March calendar (p. 9)

Sundays @ FCC

Disciples Café
9:30 A.M.

Worship

10:30 AM

Youth Group
5- 6:30 P.M.



February 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 Homeless Lunch
2 Disciples Café 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Youth Group @ Ridge 5-6:30	3 B: Jay Korman	4	5 Game Group 10-12 Midweek Meditation 6-6:45 P.M. on Zoom	6 Lunch with the Pastor at Les Café' 11 A.M.	7	8
9 Disciples Café 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. No Youth Group	10	11 Stitch of Time 10-12	12 Senior Food Box Distribution 10-12 Midweek Meditation 6-6:45 P.M. on Zoom B: Herbie Peck	13	14 Valentine's Day	15 Youth Ski Trip
16 Disciples Café 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Youth Ski Trip	17 President's Day	18 Stitch of Time 10-12	19 Game Group 10-12 Midweek Meditation 6-6:45 P.M. on Zoom	20 B: Lori Brown	21	22
23 Disciples Café 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Youth Group @ Ridge 5-6:30	24	25	26 Midweek Meditation 6-6:45 P.M. on Zoom B: Debbie Benson	27 Pastor's Office Hours at Sip Coffee House in Highland 10-12	28	

FCC & RIDGE UMC YOUTH

SKI TRIP

FEB. 15-16, 2025
BITTERSWEET SKI RESORT



Youth Group Dinner Sponsorships

If you would like to support the Senior High/Junior Youth Group meetings this winter/spring, providing dinner at one of our weekly meetings a fantastic way to support this important and growing ministry. Please see Rev. Becky with a list of available dates!



Resumes August 18th
5-6:30 P.M.

Youth Group @ Ridge UMC



A Ministry Partnership of Ridge United Methodist Church and First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Boomwhacker Rehearsal
rehearsal dates to be
announced soon!



Every Morning

*Every morning, we are born again.
What we do TODAY is what matters most.
The past is behind us, with its mistakes and regrets,
and the future is yet to be written.
What you do today is what truly matters.*

*It's the choices we make,
the actions we take,
the intentions we set.
These are what shapes our lives and create our reality.
As you rise with the sun, pour your energy
into making the most of this precious day.*

Praying for our Friends & Family

Members of the Congregation:

Tim & Kathy Drury, Dolores Cave, Don Dean, Judy Olen, Ashley Moss, Grace Kristoff, Tom Cushing.

Friends of the Congregation: (Please let me know if there are updates to this ongoing list) The Yuris Family, The Murphy Family, Jerry Zolmer, Liz Griffin, Cherie Coolidge, Jim Pasour, Ron Straker, Nikki Sweeny, Barbara Blaze, Taft/Weber Family, Terry Mavity, Sophia Morgan, Paul Graegin, Christine Phillips, Marian Huizenga, Val Rushing, Bill Murphy, Matt Murphy, Spencer Gordon, Michael Cole, Chris Cole, Tim Gasaway, Anne Fairfield, Kaden & Mara Luthringer, Jim Moss, Dave Horvat, David Cole, Scott Bridges, David Cole, Susan Worrell, David Harding, Pam Wynne, Annie Haschke; Than; Molly, Tony, the Beres Family, Sue Bigger.

The Wider Community: War in Ukraine and War in Middle East; global natural disasters; violence and division throughout the nation; Fires in California; Earthquake in Tibet.

Joys: Ally Messmer received the Principals Award

Fifth Street Figures

Description	Offering
Worship (12/1/24)	\$2073.64
Thanksgiving	\$25.00
Sass Distribution	\$6147.73
TOPPS	\$150.00
TOTAL	\$8371.47
Worship (12/8/24)	\$900.04
Worship (12/15/24)	\$1661.04
Christmas Offering	\$100.00
TOTAL	\$1761.04
Worship (12/22/24)	\$2155.53
Christmas	\$105.00
TOTAL	\$2260.53
Worship (12/29/24)	\$714.85
Worship (1/5/25)	\$684.87
Initial	\$50.00
TOTAL	\$734.87
Worship (1/12/25)	\$1367.55
TOTAL	\$1460.00

Fifth Street Figures Continued...

Worship (1/19/25)
\$4870.83

Worship (1/26/25)
\$1440.00
Initial
\$20.00

November 2024 Figures

General:

Income: \$7,899.35
Transfer from Capital Funds: \$4000.00
Expenditures: \$9,999.66
Wash Transaction for Angel Tree: \$30.00

Outreach

Income: - \$50.00
Expenditures: -

December 2024 Figures

General:

Income: \$13,170.96
Transfer from Capital Funds: \$3,794.13
Expenditures: \$11,796.64

Outreach

Income: \$1,070.64
Expenditures: \$1170.64

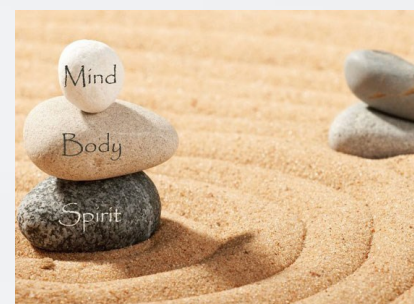
Thank you for your faithful giving to the ministries of our beloved church!
If you are interested in receiving the financial statements for First Christian Church, please contact Delia Helpingstine and she will be happy to share that information with you.

The mission of First Christian Church

(Disciples of Christ) in Highland, IN:

“to celebrate and share Christ’s love though feeding the Body and the Soul.”

This amendment was made in 2023 to identify our passion for food justice as well as spiritual growth in God in all we do.



**Our Mission Statement is to
celebrate and share Christ's love
through feeding the Body and the Soul.**



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9540 Fifth St. Highland, IN 46322
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www.fcchighland.net
email: fcchighland9540@gmail.com
Check us out on Facebook!

Disciples Café 9:30 A.M.
Worship: 10:30 A.M.

Pastor Office Hours:
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
(9:30 A.M.—1:00 P.M.);
or by appointment

Pastor Rebecca Sundquist
Cell phone: (217)341-4105

Email: becky.sundquist@gmail.com

YouTube: First Christian Church Highland IN

Facebook: First Christian Church Highland IN

Elder & Deacon Serving Schedule

February 2, 2025
Elder—Debbie Benson
Deacon—David Michalak

February 9, 2025
Elder—Mary Ellen Carpenter
Deacon—Tania Messmer

February 16, 2025
Elder—Delia Helpingstine
Deacon—Don Dean

February 23, 2025
Elder—Sharon Worrell-Schroader
Deacon—Brad Chandler

March 2, 2025
Elder—Brenda Michalak
Deacon—Linda Messmer

March 9, 2025
Elder—Debbie Benson
Deacon—David Michalak

March 16, 2025
Elder—Mary Ellen Carpenter
Deacon—Tania Messmer

March 23, 2025
Elder—Delia Helpingstine
Deacon—Don Dean

March 30, 2025
Elder—Sharon Worrell-Schroader
Deacon—Brad Chandler



News from the Christian Church in Indiana!

The CC(DOC) in Indiana Mission

Indiana Identity Statement

The Christian Church in Indiana is a diverse community of congregations called by God to act together in love.

We Value . . .

Christ's Table: We extend Christ's welcome to all through worship and communion.

Connection and Care: We are called to accompany one another.

Shared Wisdom: We gain insight in community.

Mutual Ministry: We do our ministry and mission more effectively together.

Spiritual Leadership: We nurture each one's call as gifted by the Spirit.

We Imagine . . .

A region that engages in networks of diverse relationships which shape our shared mission and ministry. We envision collaborative efforts that assist individuals in expressing their spiritual gifts, equip congregations to serve in their context and give witness to God's hope for a new community. This compels us to allocate our energy and resources in fresh ways and to call forth leadership throughout the region to fulfill this vision.

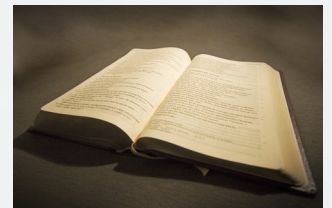
Written by the Manna Process,
2010-2012



CHRISTIAN CHURCH
| DISCIPLES OF CHRIST | IN INDIANA

If you are interested in serving as a lector/
worship leader on Sunday mornings, please
see Brenda Michalak
or the church office
for open Sundays.

Your voice is im-
portant in worship





Ways You Can Be A Part of the Action!

Lunch Bunch News

2025 Serving Dates:

February 2nd

April 5th

June 7th

August 2nd

October 4th

December 6th



If you are interested in being a part of this amazing team of servants, see Sharon W.S.!

Blessing Box and Book

Nook News

Many thanks to Kevin and Tania Messmer for sponsoring the 2025 Super Bowl Squares fundraiser! Many thanks to all who purchased squares! Proceeds go toward supplies for the Blessing Box.



Puzzles, coloring books, and board games are fun additions to the Book Nook!

Senior Food Box Ministry

We have an awesome team who distributes the senior food boxes (Patrick, Marc, Linda and Debbie)! If you want to be a part of the action, see Debbie Benson!

Opportunities to Serve

Souper Bowl of Caring



Goal = 175 cans of soup

FCC Highland is collecting cans of soup throughout the month of February for the Blessing Box! All donations are greatly appreciated!

2/11, 2/18, 3/11, & 3/18

A STITCH OF TIME

A Ministry of First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of Highland, IN

Creating handcrafted blankets for those undergoing chemotherapy.



Mindful Midweek Meditation

Beginning February 5th, Rev. Becky will be hosting an online devotional check-in time each week. These midweek opportunities to refresh and reset are weekly on zoom (6-6:45 P.M.) The link will go out in each weekly email. Join us for devotion and prayer.

Meet-up at Sip Coffeehouse in

Highland every 4th Thursday of the month 10-12! This is a mobile office hours opportunity to meet with me about church "business", spiritual concerns, and other opportunities for us to meet. Our 1st time to gather will be February 27th!

HEARD AND SEEN

Weekly Compassion

SPECIAL OFFERING 2025 FEBRUARY 16 & 23



Many Thanks

Thanks to Linda, Kevin, Tania, Ally, and Samantha Messmer, Debbie Benson, Rev. Becky and Wells Sundquist for helping put away the Christmas decorations this year!

Dear Church,
I would like to offer my thanks to all of you for your generous Christmas gift to me this year. I am humbled by your generosity. Thank you all so much!
-Rev. Becky

Thank You!

Game Group
1st & 3rd Wednesdays of each month!
10-12.
Join this fun group and be blessed!



Well Done Stitch of Time!
20 chemo blankets were blessed in January through the Stitch of Time ministry. 8 of these blankets are children's blankets which have a hospital kit that comes with the blanket. The children's blankets and kits are donated to NICK (Northwest Indiana Cancer Kids).



News From the Pews

Thank You!!

We would like to give a BIG Thank You to everyone for your generosity this year!!! The Outreach Department is dedicated to feeding God's people and helping those in need whenever we can. When we put out a call for help, you are always there to help. This year we were able to provide 86 Health Kits to Sojourner's Truth House, a place that serves abused women and children and the Hammond Homeless Shelter. We also collected for Sojourner's boxes of women and children clothing that they really need. Most times they arrive at Sojourners with just the clothes on their backs. During the "Souper Bowl of Caring" we put out the call for 150 cans of soup, and again you kicked it through the goal post with 176 cans!! We also helped the Highland Schools with their Angel Tree. Gifts were bought for 10 "Angels" and grocery cards were given to 10 families. And finally, thanks to those of you have given money and food to help stock our Blessing Box. None of these great things would be possible without YOU. We look forward to another great year of helping those that need help.
Blessings,
Sharon Worrell-Schroader
Debbie Benson



PANCAKE DINNER & ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE 3/5



Pancake Dinner - 5:30 P.M.
Worship Service - 7:00 P.M.

@ Ridge United Methodist Church
(8607 Columbia Ave. Munster)

This is a joint partnership with Ridge UMC & FCC Highland.
Please RSVP for the Pancake Dinner with Rev. Becky.



Lenten
Soup & Study
Wednesdays in Lent
12:00 P.M.
Studying
"Bread of Life" series



The Mission of First Christian Church is to celebrate and share Christ's love through feeding the Body and the Soul.

- amended August 7, 2022



The mission of First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Highland, IN:
"to celebrate and share Christ's love through feeding the Body and the Soul."

Lunch with the Pastor

Thursday, February 6th at Les Café in Highland!

11:00 A.M.

No agenda, just a time to connect!



O God, you
are my
God;
earnestly I
seek you;
my soul
thirsts for
you;
Psalm 63:1

Dear FCC Sisters and Brothers,

At last year's meeting, we discussed hard truths that we were facing about the future of the church. At that meeting, there was a very clear message of hope and intention about giving our "little church with a big heart" everything we've got. We left that time together filled with joy and expectation and certainly hope. That isn't to say, we had everything figured out and that all fear was gone, but we moved forward together in faith. As your pastor, this has been a beautiful thing to witness. It truly is a privilege to serve alongside you.

In this past year, Stitch of Time has grown and expanded to include hospital kits for children going through chemotherapy and partners with NICK (Northwest Indiana Cancer Kids). The Senior Food Box program continues to be a strong and vital presence for the clients who are under our care. The Farm has produced good, nourishing produce for those who do not have regular access to healthy vegetables. Thanks to the Football Squares fundraiser led by Kevin and Tania, the Blessing Box has maintained its vital roll of giving to our neighbors no-questions-asked.

Our Labyrinth ministry continues to connect with people in our community. Yoga at the Labyrinth was a new initiative that started last summer with plans to continue this year! I am also signed up for Advanced Labyrinth Facilitator Training with Veriditas with hopes of learning new ways to connect our labyrinth to the community. Lights were donated to the labyrinth so that people can walk it anytime of day or evening.

We continue to make new friends while also saying goodbye to others we have known for a long time. Our children teach us new lessons and we gain wisdom from those with years of experience. Our partnership with Ridge is ever-evolving, and yet we stand on our gifts to share the "Celebrate and Share Christ's Love through feeding the Body, Mind, and Spirit". This year, I do not come to this meeting with a sense of fear for our church but conviction in the important work God has for us to do in these tenuous times. We are and will continue to be a vital light for our neighbors to receive. We are called to BE Good News!

While I continue with my MA in Clinical Mental Health Counseling, I believe we are building that "field of dreams" where others can and will find healing, strength, and friendship with our little church with the great big heart. We are called to do good work, my friends. I write this in awe of what God's Spirit is leading us toward together.

Blessings on our congregation and those whom we serve together. In Jesus' Name!

Grace and Peace,

Rev. Becky

March 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
<p>2</p> <p>Disciples Café 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Youth Group @ Ridge 5-6:30</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Ash Wednesday</p> <p>Game Group 10-12</p> <p>Dinner— 5:30 P.M. Service—7 P.M.</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Lunch with the Pastor at Les Café' 11 A.M.</p> <p>B: David Michalak</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>8</p>
<p>9</p> <p>Disciples Café 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Youth Group @ Ridge 5-6:30</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Stitch of Time 10-12</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Senior Food Box Distribution 10-12</p> <p>Soup & Study-12</p> <p>Midweek Meditation 6-6:45 P.M. Zoom</p>	<p>13</p> <p>B: Dorothy Barrett, Suzanne Brown</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15</p>
<p>16</p> <p>Disciples Café 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Youth Group @ Ridge 5-6:30</p>	<p>17</p> <p>St. Patrick's Day</p> <p>B: Alivia Neyhart</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Stitch of Time 10-12</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Game Group 10-12</p> <p>Soup & Study—12</p> <p>Midweek Meditation 6-6:45 P.M. on Zoom</p> <p>B: Tom Cushing</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22</p>
<p>23</p> <p>Disciples Café 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Youth Group @ Ridge 5-6:30 B: Sheila Cushing</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Soup & Study—12</p> <p>Midweek Meditation 6-6:45 P.M. on Zoom</p>	<p>27</p> <p>Pastor's Office Hours at Sip Coffee House in Highland 10-12</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p>
<p>30</p> <p>Disciples Café 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M.</p>	<p>31</p> <p>A: Ray & Debbie Benson</p>					



Bread of Life: Gather. Savor. Share.

The world feels heavy—divided and uncertain. Hearts ache, minds seek peace, and souls hunger for hope. In these moments, many search for a way forward. Amid injustice and tragedies, we remember we must first gather around the table for strength so we can respond with love and grace.

This Lent, let us gather together to break bread, savor the divine generosity of God, and rise to share with the world out of the abundance we have received from the bread of life.

The table is open. Come, be renewed, and take this bread.

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Website:
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PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE

