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## **UPCOMING** Events

*Finance Committee,*  
Wednesday, Dec. 13,  
12:30 pm

*Pastor Laurie PRC,*  
Thursday, Dec. 14, 7 pm

*Trustee Meeting,*  
Saturday, Dec. 16,  
11 am

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

## 2023 Advent Events

### Coffee, Cookies and Crafts this Saturday Dec. 9

Join us for our second annual Advent event which will combine Coffee Hour, our outreach Advent project for Groveland Foodshelf (see below) and Aliveness Project cookie baking on December 9. Coffee Hour will be hosted live and on Zoom from SpringHouse. Join others for fellowship, crafting, coffee, baking cookies and fun! Drop in at your convenience between 9 am and 4 pm to start your Advent season.

### Personal Care products for Groveland Foodshelf

Our Advent giving project is underway, and some donations are already under the sanctuary tree. This year we are collecting personal care and hygiene products for the Groveland Foodshelf guests. These are things that SNAP (food shelf benefits) do not cover, but are items that everyone needs.

- Toilet Paper
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrushes
- Bar Soap
- Dish Soap
- Feminine Hygiene Products
- Body Wash
- Laundry Detergent
- Shampoo and Conditioner

You can bring these items to the Coffee & Cookies event on Saturday, Dec. 9 OR place them under the sanctuary Christmas tree until Christmas Eve.



If you wish instead to donate money towards this project, please use Groveland Food Shelf in the Givelfy app or in the memo line of your check. If you are donating in honor or memory of someone, please let Wendy Eidukas in the office know this information.

### An invitation to Advent soup & fellowship!

Lyndale UCC has graciously invited us to after-worship Advent soup in the Gathering Space on December 10 and 17. Lyndale is hosting for both FCC and Lyndale to provide hospitality and enjoy the season. Volunteers are welcome to do set-up, serving and clean-up. Please contact Nancy Homdrom at [nhomdrom@gmail.com](mailto:nhomdrom@gmail.com) or sign-up on the coffee hour sign-up sheet in the kitchen if you can help out.

### Two more Wednesday Advent studies coming

Two more Wednesday evening Advent study sessions are open to anyone who wants to take some time to breathe, reflect, and share with others and in personal journal reflections on the themes of the season. December 13 and 20 will focus on the traditional Advent themes of Joy and Love, using mindfulness practices. Here's the link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85636414854>

## In Our Prayers



Prayers of concern for **Gomer Pound** as he moves to a different care facility; for **Ardie Armstrong's** friend **Carol**; for **Katy Fall's** friend **Mary**; for **Jim Lee's** sister **Becky**; for **Pastor Dan's** husband **Keith**; for **Val Dunham's** sister **Betty** and brother-in-law **Jack**; for **Mitch Grauberger** and other wheelchair users who have a harder time navigating life in winter; for **Pastor Dan's** continued healing.

Prayers of sympathy for **Tom Curry**, whose stepfather **Chuck Nieves** passed away Nov. 16; for **Grant Schellberg** on the death of his grandfather; for the **Dunham family** on the loss of the son of dear family friends.

Hostages were released in Israel and Palestine, but the war resumes, so we pray that a solution can be found that doesn't involve continued war and death in this region. Prayers also for an end to the war between Ukraine and Russia.

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



## Views and Viewpoints



## Not too late to appreciate our pastors!

Life happens!

We postponed the usual October Pastor Appreciation recognition because Pastor Laurie was still on sabbatical and Pastor Dan was – surprise! – hospitalized with a severely fractured ankle.

A pastor's work in the church is always wildly busy and full of unexpected demands, but Laurie and Dan have been coping with bigger-than-usual challenges in their personal lives as well. While she was on sabbatical, Pastor Laurie's father Gomer Pound fell several times and was hospitalized. As soon as she was back at work in November as pastor of FCC, she and her family were faced with the extraordinary challenge of finding a new place for her father to live. This week, Laurie and Bryan are moving Mr. Pound into a new facility – always a hard transition, but especially hard when the move was not something he or anyone wanted or planned for.

Pastor Dan, a guy who rarely sits still, found himself virtually immobilized after his fall and subsequent surgeries – some of which are still to happen. It's going to be quite a while before he's up and around walking on that new bionic ankle, full of screws and pins. Although he currently can't yet walk or drive, he quickly started finding a way to carry on with his FCC work. He's been back in worship services via Zoom, sharing the congregation's joys and concerns, and is already sending out eblasts and Facebook posts. Yet, these efforts wear him out, something he's really not used to.

We may have missed October's Pastor Appreciation Month, but it's never too late to let Laurie and Dan know how much they are appreciated, and how valuable they are to our church and community. What can we do? Send a note or a text, give them a call, remember them in our prayers, maybe offer a ride to appointments. Understand when they may not be able to answer the phone or respond to an email. Understand when they have to miss a meeting. Even give them the grace to be crabby once in a while!

Pastors always do more than we ever know about. But sometimes, life happens to them like it does to all of us. As Laurie and Dan continue to cope with unexpected challenges, we pray that they know nothing but love and support from us. After all, each of them has reminded us countless times that God gives extravagant love and support to each of us.

## Strong response to surveys, groups

Members of First Christian have responded with enthusiasm to the congregational survey and small group discussions focused on what it is they value about our church. To date, 55 members of FCC have sent in responses to the survey and 50 people have already attended sessions or signed up for sessions scheduled this week. Add in the participation of the five members of the Cultivating Vision planning team (Jay Hillestad, Arlene Jorgenson Hillestad, Ron Keith, Kirsten Cackoski, Martha Harris), and you can see that people have been eager to share their responses to questions on the survey and in the groups.

The planning team is compiling all the results and will be presenting the findings to the church board and to the congregation sometime after the first of the year.

## Book Group update

The FCC and Friends Book Group will take a December break, but return in January to continue their stimulating and engaging readings and discussions.

2024 will start with these selections:

January 15, 2024

**Covenant of Water** by Abraham Verghese

"A stunning and magisterial epic of love, faith, and medicine, set in Kerala, South India."

February 19, 2024

**The Other Einstein** by Marie Benedict

"A window into a brilliant, fascinating woman whose light was lost in Einstein's enormous shadow."

The group meets on the third Monday of every month. Contact Kathy Hintz or Kirsten Cackoski to get a Zoom link for the meeting.

## Remembering Mary Lou Norman, Dec. 30

NancyGrace Norman invites FCC friends to gather together to celebrate the life of Mary Lou Norman on Saturday, December 30, from 1-3:00 pm at Parkshore Assisted Living (3663 Park Shore Boulevard, St. Louis Park). All are welcome to come and share stories and memories of Mary Lou, on what would have been her 96th birthday.



## FCC Board Notes

Twenty-one people attended the November 21 meeting of FCC's Church Board.

Highlights of the meeting include the following:

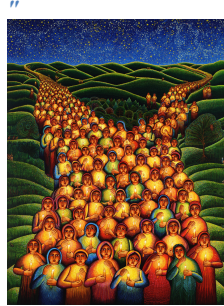
- Andy Rennert, SH Treasurer, went over the proposed 2024 SH budget. The proposed share for each congregation is \$55,762.30, which is slightly lower than the 2023 share. FCC's board voted to approve the 2024 proposed SH budget.
- Five motions from the Trustees were presented, discussed and approved. Three were policy motions (Trustees Structure and Responsibility, Memorial Fund policy, Permanent Endowment Policy) and all passed unanimously. Two were motions regarding allocation of funds: 1) Using Tipi Wakan funds to support 50% of youth camper fees, and 2) a loan of \$40,000 for FCC's budget, with a repayment plan to begin one year from the date given, contingent on a reduction in the church operating budget deficit in 2024. These motions also passed unanimously.
- Treasurer Pat Dunlop went over the current financial reports, pointing out that our deficit situation is slowly improving. Expenses have been kept in line, with no overspending in any category.

## **Sundays at First Christian Church**

**Worship** at 10:30, in person or  
livedreamed at [fccmpls.org](http://fccmpls.org)

**Children's Table Activities** in person during worship: **Join us!**  
Children's Activities are also available online at [www.fccmpls.org](http://www.fccmpls.org)

**Revised Common Lectionary**  
**Third Sunday in Advent**  
**John 1: 6-8, 19-28**



**Festival of the Lights,**  
**John August**  
**Swanson**

### Reflections on the Word.

*John 1: 7 – He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him.*

Like air or water, light is an ever-present aspect of our life. It's so fundamental to our existence that we rarely contemplate its power or our inability to live our lives without it. John's Gospel reminds us that Jesus is both entirely familiar and profoundly essential to our lives.

*God, allow us to hear the sharp, clear call of the Advent story and to encounter Jesus again, as if for the first time. Amen.*

By Benjamin Howard Disciplines,  
2020

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

*A Welcoming Community of Faith in the Heart of the  
City*

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**Next issue deadline is Sunday, December 17.**

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