

The Courier

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Minneapolis



What's *INSIDE*:

A Message from
Pastor Ben Masters,
page 2

FCC Board notes,
page 3

Christmas events coming up,
page 3

December Calendar,
page 4

Information about
Special Congregational
Meeting Dec. 14,
page 5

UPCOMING Events

FCC Board meeting,
Tuesday, December 16,
7 pm on Zoom

Coffee Hour,
9 am on Wed
Advent Prayer,
5 pm Thurs
Breakfast Club,
9 am Sat

“Coats, Coffee & Creativity” this Saturday

Join with FCC folks and friends this **Saturday, December 6**, for an Advent time of fun, fellowship and service to others.

Our Mission & Outreach team invites you to a morning and afternoon of activities and outreach.



Sat. Dec. 6

Coffee, Coats & Creativity 9 AM

Aliveness
Cookie Baking
11 AM

Starting at 9 am, there will be coffee and a variety of activities including Chrismon-making in the Gathering Space. The Saturday Breakfast Club will be zooming in to connect with everyone.

Once again, during Advent, in lieu of buying poinsettias, we will be collecting presents for donation – this year it's winter gear for clients of the Aliveness Project. Below is the list of items they are looking for:

- Warm winter coats (all sizes, especially larger ones for layering)
- Thermal socks (wool or thick, moisture-wicking materials)
- Insulated gloves and mittens
- Warm hats and beanies
- Scarves and neck warmers
- Thermal underwear/base layers
- Waterproof boots
- Hand and foot warmers (disposable or reusable)

You can bring these items to our *Coats, Coffee & Creativity* event on Sat. Dec. 6, to worship on Sundays in December, or make a monetary donation towards purchase of items through Givelify!



And that's not all for Saturday's event! **Cookie baking for Aliveness Project will be at 11 am.** This is a long-standing FCC Christmas project.

So, get in the Spirit of Christmas giving and join us on Saturday and throughout the season. See page 3 for other Christmas season events at First Christian and SpringHouse.

In Our Prayers



We pray in gratitude for our SpringHouse community celebrating Advent and Christmas prayers and worship together.

We pray for those with health concerns including **Mark Carlson, Carla Rinker, Nat Rosenberg, Nancy Curry, Jen Krengel's mother and father, Jay Hillestead's great-great nephew Logue and nephew Gabriel.**

We pray for neighbors in this city and around the country who are living in fear of government's disruption to their lives, especially our Somalian and Latino siblings.

We pray for an end to destruction and death in wars around the world, especially in Ukraine, Sudan, and Gaza

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 Message from Pastor Ben



Heard the news? FCC Players are back for Advent

Deb Murphy is reviving this FCC tradition to tell the stories in the first chapter of Luke's Gospel. We'll get to witness how the Word takes on flesh through our people. We'll see Mary's astonishment in a Player's jaw hanging open. We'll feel Elizabeth's baby kick for joy in a Player's wince. Who knows? We might even get a musical number when Zechariah finds his voice again!

Dr. Anna Carter Florence compares the church to a repertory theater company. She regularly enjoyed shows at the Guthrie when she lived in Minneapolis and experienced the unexpected pleasure of observing how resident actors appeared in entirely new characters. Repertory companies show what it means to work together on a common vision over the long haul, rehearsing a play over and over to find something true to say.

Churches are like that: more or less the same group of people gathered around a script looking for something true. Anna teaches preaching and focuses on Scripture, but 'the way things are done here' is also a powerful script. Too often people get type-cast instead of having the freedom to explore new characters. Too often worshipers are assigned non-speaking roles while the preacher produces, directs, *and* stars on Sunday.

During this intentional interim I'm taking a page out of Anna's book, *Rehearsing Scripture*. Anna approaches Scripture 'verbs first,' giving preference to the actions that we share over nouns from a galaxy far, far away. "You might not know what a Samaritan is, but you definitely know his verbs (*came near, saw, was moved*)."

When she works with communities to 'block out' a scene, Anna will sometimes ask how characters might have chosen different verbs. How might things have gone differently if, for example, Cain had not chosen "attacked"? Even if Cain and Abel's verbs are set, we can still choose ours. God is on the move in our acts of imagination, truth-telling, and hope.

In this Advent season, I hope that you'll consider reaching out to Deb about stepping into a new part in an old story (deb.murphy@fccmpls.org). I pray that watching our people breathe life into Scripture's pages inspires you to see Mary, Elizabeth, and yourself in a different way.

In 2026, let's give ourselves permission to try out unfamiliar roles and to practice alternate verbs. Even if we fail gloriously—when does any theater company get it right at the first rehearsal?—God still comes near to strengthen our shaking voices and to share our verbs in Jesus

Onward in the Spirit! Rev. Ben, your interim minister

Christmas gatherings coming up



Thursday Contemplative Prayer, 5 pm on Zoom

“My Soul Proclaims” Contemplative Prayer will take the place of FCC’s Thursday Happy Hour during Advent. Singing with Mary of Nazareth, we will proclaim God’s love and pray for God’s peace. Log on at 5 pm for a brief community check-in; prayer starts at 5:45.

Blue Christmas, Sunday, December 21 at 5 pm.

SpringHouse is inviting you to a joint Blue Christmas service. This service is designed for those who find “holiday cheer” difficult because of personal situations, such as stress, grief or other challenges.

Christmas Eve, Wednesday, December 24, 5:30 pm

Our Christmas Eve service is a beloved tradition, with beautiful music and a circle of light to close. A special offering will be taken to benefit Kafika House in Tanzania.

Christmas Day service, Wednesday, December 25, 10:30 am

Lyndale’s Rev. T. Michael Rock invites the whole SpringHouse community to this service. Communion and guitar music will be a part of the service.

Holden Evening Prayer, Wednesday evenings, 6 pm

The SpringHouse community is invited to join the traditional Holden Prayer services on the Wednesdays before Christmas (12/3, 12/10, and 12/17). Soup will be served at 6 pm, followed by the service at 6:30 pm. Afterwards, there will be an opportunity to learn a brief Advent spiritual practice. There will be an online option for the prayer service; watch eblasts for links.



First Christian Players for FCC worship in Advent

Deb Murphy is calling all former FCC Players and anyone with a love of a little theatrics to be a part of special moments in our Advent worship services. ALL people interested should [email Deb](#). We will start the 2nd Sunday of Advent

First Christian Board Notes

Twenty-one FCC board members and staff attended the November 18 meeting of the General Board. Highlights of the meeting include the following:

- The Nominating Committee this year will be Ali Hesano, Paul Rottschaefer and Martha Harris. Martha announced that she will be stepping down as board chair at the end of this year.
- Two Wholeness Fund grant requests were presented and discussed. Both had been approved by the Wholeness Committee and the Trustees. A grant of \$10,000 was brought by the Mission & Outreach team to support Groveland Foodshelf. A grant of \$10,000 was submitted by Rev. Joan Conroy and Rev. Kelly Sherman-Conroy, pastors the All Nations Indian Church, to support their Mental Health ministry. Board members discussed both requests, and voted to approve both grants.
- Martha Harris reported another round of revisions to FCC’s Constitution and Bylaws. A draft of the new revisions will be sent out as soon as possible, so that the board can vote on them at the December meeting.
- Finance Chair Mike Cackoski presented the 2026 budget drafts for both SpringHouse and FCC. The board discussed the staffing issues that will affect FCC’s 2026 budget. The board voted to approve both budgets.

FCC Calendar for December 2025

REGULAR WEEKLY EVENTS

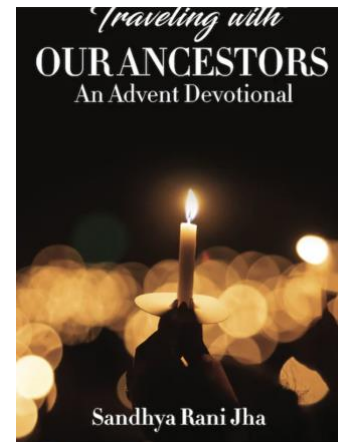
Sundays	10:30 am Worship, Children's Activity Table 9am -12:30 SH Youth Room & Activities
Tuesdays	8 am – SH Lectionary Group
Wednesdays	9 am - Coffee Hour with Community 6:30 pm Pray Without Ceasing
Thursdays	5 pm – Advent Contemplative Prayer
Fridays	8 am Pray Without Ceasing
Saturdays	9 am – The Breakfast Club 10 am Grief Support Group at St. Joan of Arc

Note: Check eblasts for changes in Coffee/Happy Hour dates

MONTHLY MEETINGS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Wed., Dec. 3	7 pm Elders meeting
Thurs., Dec. 4	1:30 SHMC Clergy Meeting
Sat., Dec. 6	9 – 11 am Coats, Coffee and Creativity 11 am Aliveness Cookie Baking
Mon., Dec. 8	5 pm SH Building Committee 7 pm SH Finance Committee
Wed., Dec. 10	12:30 pm Finance Committee
Sun, Dec. 14	12 pm following worship: Special Congregational meeting
Tues., Dec. 16	7 pm FCC Board Meeting
Mon., Dec. 22	7 pm Worship Committee 6 pm SH EveryMeal Packing
Wed., Dec. 24	5:30 Christmas Eve Service
Thurs., Dec. 25	10:30 am Christmas morning service with SpringHouse community led by Rev. T. Michael Rock

Advent booklet available



Pastor Dan Adolphson has made a Chalice Press Advent devotional booklet available to FCC members: *Traveling with Our Ancestors: An Advent Devotional*.

The booklet was originally written in 2021, but is equally usable in 2025. The daily devotionals even extend through January 5, incorporating the 12 Days of Christmas.

The booklet was written by Sandhya Rani Jha, an ordained Disciple minister and an author of many books, including *Room at the Table*, a history of people of color in the Disciples.

Contact Pastor Dan if you would like to use this interesting booklet during Advent.

EveryMeal food support provided by FCC and SpringHouse

Twice a month, a three-person team from FCC goes to Whittier School to put bags of food into kids' lockers. Volunteers for this fun and cardio-boosting activity are always welcome; sign up on the FCC website.

Once a month, people from all three SpringHouse churches, especially Salem members, go to the EveryMeal warehouse to pack the bags that eventually go in the lockers. December 22 at 8 pm is the next packing date. Email Pastor Rhonda at revrhonda@discoversalem.org if you would like to support kids and their families this way.



Special Congregational Meeting set for Dec. 14

The Congregation of First Christian is called to a special congregational meeting on Sunday, December 14, following the worship service. A Zoom link will be available for all members who want to attend online.

The purpose of the meeting is to vote on a proposal to make SpringHouse a legal entity. All three congregations have to vote on this proposal. The goal is to be able to proceed with the change by January 1, 2026. The reasons for this change are explained below.

The issue: SpringHouse is an entity that is not recognized by financial institutions (and insurance companies) due to its lack of a federal tax ID. This issue has already caused a problem with our bank accounts at Trustone.

Potential solution: Laurie Zaepfel, the Financial Secretary for SpringHouse, connected us with the board chair at New Branches. New Branches is an organization serving three Nokomis area congregations and has a charter school who rents space in their building. Laurie is a member of one of the congregations.

New Branches is organized as a 501 (c) (25) tax exempt corporation. New Branches owns the building, has several employees (custodian, etc.) and has three shareholders (the congregations) that hold the stock of the corporation (own the corporation). The three congregations and the school rent space in the building (as well as other community groups that rent space on a short-term basis). They hold a federal tax ID and report yearly income (none – they break even) to the IRS.

In addition to making SpringHouse “legal”, creating this corporation will streamline each congregation’s bookkeeping, greatly simplifying a complicated payment structure we have been using since we began operations.

A three-person team has been working on this issue. First Christian’s Mike Cackoski, Maria Thieling of Salem Lutheran and Sam Orbovitch of Lyndale United Church of Christ have been working on the details of this change for SpringHouse. This team recently completed a document based on the original SpringHouse Covenant. The new SpringHouse Ministry Center Bylaws, which will replace the SpringHouse Covenant, make changes to language in a very small number of the original Covenant articles and sections. For example, SpringHouse is referred to as the Corporation, and the member churches are the stockholders. The vast majority of the Covenant provisions for how the SpringHouse operates have not changed.

FCC’s board voted at the November meeting to approve this new legal arrangement, but the full congregation also needs to approve. Please plan to attend and vote on December 14.



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

The Annunciation of Mary
December 7, 2025
Luke 1: 26-38



**The Annunciation, by Henry
Ossawa Tanner**

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

Reflections on the Word

Luke 1: 28: "And he [Gabriel] came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you"

Mary is the most Christ-like human being in the story that opens Luke's gospel. Her words to the angel Gabriel are a direct parallel to what Jesus later prays in the garden: "Let it be with me according to your word" (Luke 1:38) = "Not my will but yours be done" (Luke 22:42). In both cases the ideal response to God is presented as a combination of humble trust and obedient service.

Loving God, Help us, like Mary and her son Jesus, be servants who embody faith and faithfulness.

By Mark Allan Powell, in Working Preacher, December 21, 2014.

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

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Next issue deadline is Sunday, December 28

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