

# The Courier

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



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## **UPCOMING** Events

*FCC Board meeting,  
Tuesday, January 20,  
7 pm on Zoom*

*Coffee Hour,  
9 am on Wed,  
Breakfast Club,  
9 am Sat*

## Annual Meetings set for January 18 and 25

**First Christian Church will hold its annual congregational meeting on January 18 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.**



In addition to the annual vote on nominations to the church board, the congregation will be voting on the revised Constitution and By-laws for First Christian Church. A revision committee (Pat Dunlop, Karen Kandik, Tammy Rottschaefter, Martha Harris) has been working on this revision since 2024. These documents have not been significantly revised since FCC moved to and began its covenant partnership with SpringHouse Ministry Center. Look for links to drafts of these documents in January eblasts.

Another new feature of the annual meeting will be the presentation of Annual Reports by the various committees, boards and leaders of the church. Interim Pastor Ben Masters has encouraged us to resume this tradition, which FCC has not done for several years.

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. Names of the nominees will be announced in upcoming eblasts and announcements.

**The SpringHouse annual joint meeting** will be Sunday, January 25, following the annual Joint Worship of the three member churches. Congregations will hear details about the 2026 SpringHouse budget, as well as a recap of the achievements and milestones of 2025. Both the joint worship and the annual meeting will be livestreamed for those who cannot attend in person.

## *In Our Prayers*



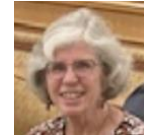
We pray in sympathy for **Diane and Duane Hackett** as they mourn the death of their daughter **Vicki**.

We pray for those with health concerns including **Carla Nelson**, for those having recent surgery including **Nat Rosenberg, Ali Hesano, and Pastor Dan's Uncle Merlyn**, and for those navigating cancer treatments including **Caila Rinker, Tammy Rottschaefer, Nancy Curry** and others.

We pray for peace talks between Ukraine and Russia, for our Minneapolis neighbors enduring harassment and even abduction because of their nationalities, and our trans neighbors whose healthcare is in jeopardy. Help us restore civility and democracy in our country.

*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 recap of First Christian Church's Year*



### ***Looking back at 2025 – Martha Harris, FCC Board Chair***

In my role as board chairperson, I am accepting Interim Pastor Ben's invitation to "give our people the gift of an annual report." I offer here a look back at the life of our congregation in 2025. (Actually, Margaret Hutchens and I wrote something along these lines in the Courier last January!)

2025 will be marked in First Christian's history as a year when we said goodbye to Rev. Dr. Laurie Pound Feille, our Senior Pastor of 12+ years. Pastor Laurie announced her retirement on February 16, and her retirement from ministry was celebrated in grand style on her last Sunday at FCC, May 18. Two groups of FCC members, a search team and a transition team, turned their attention to finding the next Senior Pastor for FCC. In September, the board invited Rev. Ben Masters to be the Interim Pastor for FCC, with the specific task of helping us reflect on who we are and what we want for the future. Associate Pastor Dan Adolphson stepped into new roles, particularly in pastoral care and increased leadership in denominational and congregational life. Dan took FCC's seat at the table with the Downtown Clergy, and oh yes – and he applied for and won a Lily Grant for a clergy-renewal sabbatical.

Led by the Mission and Outreach team, First Christian continued its extraordinary outreach to the community. Every month, we were engaged in charitable giving activities: sandwich making for Groveland Food Shelf, winter clothing for People Serving People, preparing food packages at Feed My Starving Children, food bags for families at Whittier School through the EveryMeal program; drives to collect diapers and winter clothing for various agencies, and baking cookies for the Aliveness Project. This is just a partial list – look for more details in the annual report from Mission & Outreach!

Through the Wholeness Fund, FCC also provided financial underpinnings for a number of community programs, such as Soo-Kyung's "Hope Fullness" program, a girls' support program called "God and Girls," the mental health program of All Nations Indian Church, and financial support for Groveland Food Shelf.

Seth Anderson-Matz started his role as Church Administrator in January 2025. He also led a Bible study during Lent and took on important technology tasks such as preparing eblasts and worship service slides. Chelsea Boyden's internship at FCC ended in May, but her work as SpringHouse youth minister continues. We welcomed Erin Roe as our new pianist and welcomed back Deanna Davis as soprano section leader.

In sum, 2025 was an amazing year for our church and we look forward to hearing more about FCC's work in the world at our annual meeting on January 18. We are a small but mighty force for good in our community, and we embrace the call to discipleship, trying our best to follow in the footsteps of Jesus and to be a force for wholeness in a broken world.

## January events for Women's Fellowship

The annual FCC women's brunch is scheduled for Saturday, January 10, 2026. Brunch is a great time to see people you haven't seen in person in a while or to see folks you've only seen in meetings! Again this year, we'll be at Heathers, at 5201 Chicago Ave in Minneapolis. We'll be seating at 1 pm. (There's an important trustee meeting that morning so our brunch is just a little later.) Breakfast menu available until 2 pm; lunch and dinner menu available all day. Parking on the street and in the adjacent parking lot. Brunch is self-pay. **RSVP by January 5** to Kathy Hintz at [kathymsw@msn.com](mailto:kathymsw@msn.com).

**Women's Fellowship** will gather Monday, January 5, 7 pm on Zoom. We're on Chapter 5 of **How We Learn To Be Brave** by Rev. Mariann Budde. Zoom will be sent closer to the date.

**FCC and Friends Book Group** meets Thursday, January 15, 7 pm, (Zoom link provided closer to the date), and the book is **The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie** by Muriel Spark. It's our classic! It's 148 pages

## Mpls faith leaders speak out on video



Pastor Dan Adolphson was part of an interfaith group of Twin Cities faith leaders who came together to share a powerful message affirming the need for dignity, safety, and belonging for Minnesota's immigrant and refugee neighbors. At a time that should be a season of hope and joy and when many

in our community are struggling, isolated, or in fear, the video calls on Minnesotans to come together in support of their neighbors and each other to build a future of hope and without fear.

The video can be viewed at this link:

<https://www.fccminneapolis.org/we-believe-in-minnesota-twin-cities-faith-leaders-unite-in-holiday-solidarity-video-to-support-immigrant-and-refugee-neighbors/>

Governor Walz called on these faith leaders and others in the community to be with him for a press conference held at Shiloh Temple on December 23 when he spoke about serious concerns around ICE actions in Minneapolis.

## First Christian Board Notes

Eighteen FCC board members and staff attended the December 16 meeting of the General Board. Highlights of the meeting include the following:

- Interim Pastor Ben Masters presented the idea of creating an Annual Report for the congregational meeting on Jan. 18. He is asking committee chairs and various leaders and groups to report on key highlights, activities and achievements from 2025. The board agreed on a deadline of January 8 to submit reports to the office administrator.
- Paul Rottschaefer of the Nominating Committee reported on the group's progress.
- Finance Chair Mike Cackoski reported on the Paid Leave for Staff, which is a new Minnesota law that begins January 1.
- Mike Cackoski also gave an update on the 2026 budget; the pianist's salary had to be corrected and the annual contribution to SpringHouse expenses will be \$60,873.
- Martha Harris spoke on the final drafts for the revised Constitution and By-laws which will be presented to the congregation for a vote at the annual meeting in January. Interim Pastor Ben raised some questions about the language regarding Senior Pastor and the minister hiring practices.

## FCC Calendar for January 2026

### 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

Saturdays 9 am – The Breakfast Club  
10 am Grief Support Group at Westminster  
Presbyterian (new location)

### MONTHLY MEETINGS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Mon., Jan. 5 7 pm - Women's Fellowship

Wed., Jan. 7 7 pm - Elders meeting

Thurs., Jan. 8 1:30 - SHMC Clergy Meeting

Sat., Jan. 10 1 pm - Women's Brunch

Mon., Jan. 12 5 pm - SH Building Committee  
7 pm - SH Finance Committee

Wed., Jan. 14 12:30 pm - Finance Committee

Thurs., Jan. 15 7 pm - FCC Book Group

Sun., Jan. 18 Noon - FCC Annual Congregational Mtg

Tues., Jan. 20 7 pm - FCC Board Meeting

Sun., Jan. 15 10:30 - SH Joint Worship followed by  
Annual Meeting

Mon., Jan. 26 7 pm -Worship Committee

*Note: Worship services are hybrid (In person and Streamed); most meetings are on Zoom unless otherwise noted. Links are sent in emails and eblasts.*



His second surgery was just as successful, and it was during his recovery that a visitor struck up a conversation. After their chat, she offered to train Joseph at their workshop. He learned to become a bicycle mechanic, then earned a certificate in mechanics through a vocational training program. Once he was fully healed, he stepped into a new future: he had a job, a place in society, and the means to provide for himself.

Some years later, he met a woman who'd also been born with clubfoot. She had never received surgery, and though he brought her to Kafika House, her condition was too advanced to be fully corrected. Where many saw disability, Joseph saw resilience – and the two were soon married. Clubfoot is hereditary, and their first child was born with the same condition as his parents. Joseph knew what to do: before his son could walk, and before the bullying could start, he brought the boy to Kafika House. By the time he had turned three, both feet had been corrected.

Joseph is just one of thousands of children that Kafika House has helped and healed. If you would like to support the work of Kafika House, here is a link:<https://friendsofkafikahouse-bloom.kindful.com/?campaign=1394275>

## From Kafika House: Joseph's story

*Note: Kafika House in Tanzania is supported by FCC's special Christmas Eve offering, '*

Joseph was born with two feet turned inward. His parents didn't know what to do about bilateral clubfoot, and they didn't have the money for hospitals anyway. As Joseph learned to walk, his steps were slow and painful; the bullying at school was bad enough that he stopped going.

When he was 11, a visitor to his community noticed Joseph, and took him to Kafika House, knowing we'd be able to help - and we did.

His first surgery successfully corrected one foot, and Joseph felt like he'd been given a second chance.

After a year in our care, he was discharged, and went back home with a new sense of possibility. Unfortunately, his family wasn't as invested in having his other foot corrected as he was. After seven years of dwindling hope, he ran away to Kafika House, where he was welcomed just as warmly as before.

## Thank You For Our Home!

If our Food Share program could talk, I am certain it would say to all of you, “Thank You for our Home!” When I reached out to Allison in August 2024 about setting up home with all of you, I knew the many benefits we would enjoy, including a good location and a well-managed facility. But I didn’t know how wonderful being part of the SpringHouse family would be.



When I drop off food, or set up a food share event, I run into people who are inviting and joyful. I’ve had the opportunity to speak at your church gatherings and meet many of you. It’s wonderful to interact with three congregations that really care about the community. After a visit

with Lyndale UCC, then Pastor Gail Irwin suggested we provide a donations bin so that members can contribute. It was a terrific idea. The donations bin is located upstairs near the piano and is regularly full contributions of much needed food, toiletries and grocery bags.

As we enter 2026 our team will be discussing more ways to support our local community. In addition to events three times a month at SpringHouse, we currently provide food support for the unhoused along Lake Street and youngsters coming out of Foster Care. This December we filled 400 boxes of food for families in need at the Whittier Elementary School and Ella Baker K-8. That contribution couldn’t have been timelier with so many changes in food support.

Please feel free to reach out if you want to donate (<https://gofund.me/b5e174f01>) or volunteer. My e-mail is [joan@thewedge.org](mailto:joan@thewedge.org)

Joan Moser, Lowry Hill East Neighborhood with Association Food Share (aka The Wedge)

## Family leave payments begin at SH

The governing bodies FCC, Lyndale UCC and Sael Lutheran, as well as the SpringHouse board voted to cover the premium for paid family leave for employees, as mandated by the State of Minnesota, starting January 1, 2026. Paid leave provides a partial wage replacement and job security for employees who take time away from work for medical or care-giving reasons.

Most churches are considered “small employers,” meaning that they will pay a premium calculated as 0.66% of employee wages instead of 0.88%.to

## Tax status changes for SpringHouse

At a special meeting on December 14, FCC’s congregation voted to approved the reformation of SpringHouse as a 501(c)(25) entity of which First Christian will own a one-third interest, and the replacement of the Springhouse Covenant with the Articles of Incorporation.

The SpringHouse Covenant from 2012 is the foundation of these Articles of Incorporation (or bylaws). Only a half dozen paragraphs have been altered (e.g. “stock” instead of “interest”). A couple articles have been set aside (e.g. children and youth ministry) from the new bylaws, but the Covenant will continue to be authoritative for our churches. The governing bodies of all three churches at SpringHouse have agreed to this change.

Finance Chair Mike Cackoski worked since last spring with representatives from Salem and Lyndale to research this legal change for SpringHouse. The incorporation application will be filed with the IRS by the end of 2025. It will take at least 250 days for approval from the IRS.

In the meantime, SpringHouse will proceed with changing the whole, complicated financial system that has been used since the ministry center started,

Sixteen FCC members attended the meeting in person; nine people attended online. The vote in favor of this change in legal status for SpringHouse was unanimous. Lyndale UCC and Salem Lutheran have also approved this change.

## **Sundays at First Christian Church**

**Worship** at 10:30, in person or  
livestreamed 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 Standard Lectionary**  
**The Holy Name of Jesus**  
**January 4, 2026**  
**Luke 2: 15-21**



**Mary Keep Watch,**  
by Kate Latimore

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

## Reflections on the Word

*Luke 2:21 – When the eighth day came, it was time to circumcise the child, and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb*

Jesus, like other firstborn males, is set apart for God as part of the special relationship that God solidified through his deliverance of Israel from slavery. However, this firstborn with the name Jesus, “God saves,” opens up a new chapter in the relationship between the God of Israel and all of God’s people – both Jews and Gentiles.

*Light of life, Open our eyes to Christ’s presence in the shadows of our world so that we, like him, may become beacons of your justice. Amen.*

From *Working Preacher*, online  
December 30, 2012

**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 1**