

# THE DESERT DISCIPLE

Volume 67 Issue 12

First Christian Church - Tucson, AZ

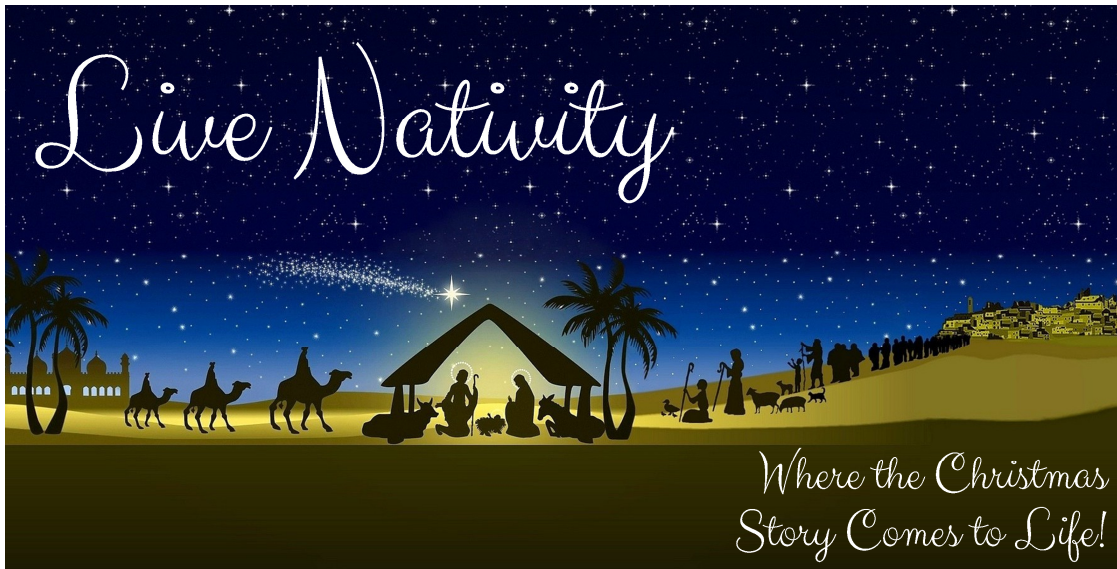
(520) 624-8695

December 1, 2016



## Advent Series: *Do Not Be Afraid*

The birth narratives in Luke and Matthew include visits from angles with a recurring message: "Do not be afraid." But we feel there is so much to fear! Come journey with us in this season of anticipation and preparation as we hear the message to not fear given to Zechariah, Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, and us.



## Thursday, December 22 & Friday, December 23

Members and Friends of FCC are invited to celebrate the birth of Jesus through a live nativity on the Speedway sidewalk on Thursday, December 22<sup>nd</sup> and Friday, December 23<sup>rd</sup>. There will be a manger, a bright star, and YOU! You can dress as whichever character you choose—a Wiseman, sheep, Mary, Joseph, or shepherds. Bring your costume or use one that we have.

**We will be live for 2 hours (6:00pm – 8:00pm) in the evening.** It's an open house type event, where you come when you can and stay for as long as you want. No assigned times or parts. Come help spread the cheer of this joyous season!

## Christmas Eve Services: Saturday, December 24



**6:30pm** – Family Service with children's walk-in pageant. Children wanting to participate should arrive by 6:10pm to choose a role and get in costume. Because there is no rehearsal, children are encouraged to invite friends and family to participate.

**11:00pm** – Candlelight service

Seek



Love

Serve

**Sunday Worship**  
**10:30am**

**Church School**  
**9:00am**

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## Pastor's Note

As another year comes to a close and we enter the season of Advent, we set our focus on the promises of hope, peace, joy, and love. We prepare for the coming of Jesus. We long for a deeper connection with the presence of God. We hope for God's love to be known, cherished, and experienced throughout the world. We pray, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

This time of preparation is perfect for slowing down and even stopping for a little while to take account of our lives, the world in which we live, and, most importantly, the God who calls us beloved. I know some of you are laughing at the idea that it is a perfect time for slowing down. Your calendars are filling up with Christmas parties, plans for shopping, the need to prepare for company or travel, and the activities related to church. Slow down? Who can slow down now?

But it is the perfect time to slow down, because we need to do so. We do not want to miss all this season offers. We do not want to miss its message that can renew us. We do not want to miss the hope that can sustain us, give us life, and heal us. We do not want to miss, for all the running around and all the noise, the message that breaks into the mess around and within us.

So we pray, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

We do not know exactly what Jesus' coming will bring, though. It takes courage to truly pray this prayer. Of what will Jesus' coming require us to let go? What new things will it have us embrace? Can we trust Jesus to come as he chooses? Can we trust without having closure or resolution? Can we trust when we see only the next step ahead? To pray, "Come, Lord Jesus," means we do trust. We do trust even when we cannot see the answer! We do trust, even when we must change! We do trust, even when it turns our world upside down! We do trust, even when things don't go our way!

We do trust. And as Richard Rohr writes in his Advent devotional, we trust "that he will come again, just as Jesus has come in our past, into our private dilemmas and into our suffering world. Our Christian past then becomes our Christian prologue, and 'Come, Lord Jesus' is not a cry of desperation but an assured shout of cosmic hope."

See you Sunday, Ailsa

## Staff Spotlight



Tyler Parks, Child Care Assistant

We have been incredibly blessed to have stability and quality with our child care staff at First Christian Church. One of the reasons is Tyler Parks. Tyler was hired to be a Child Care Worker when she was a senior in high school and she is now a junior in Education at the University of Arizona. Tyler also works for Amphitheater School District tutoring youth and is very involved in Job's Daughters, a young women's organization, where she has recently completed a term as Miss Arizona Job's Daughter.

Tyler brings energy, enthusiasm and dedication to her job. She approaches her responsibilities with concern and steadiness, always doing her best to meet each child's individual needs. Tyler provides an excellent early example to our young children of the gift of God's love and what it means to be part of a church family. Please take the time to thank Tyler for her outstanding work on behalf of the church and children.

## Staff Love Gifts



First Christian Church is very blessed by our staff. We have enjoyed great stability and consistency in employment, incredible commitment, dedication, and integrity in their work and willingness to be flexible with the unique challenges of working for a church. Each of our employees sees

their job beyond just a paycheck. They see it as a calling, a mission of their own within this faith community.

Therefore, we want to show our gratitude to them through a "love gift" that will be received through December 18. Please prayerfully consider their value gifts within our ministry and how you would like to show appreciation. Please make checks payable to First Christian Church, and put "staff gift" on the memo line and/or note it on the envelope if you give cash.

As always we are grateful for your generosity.

## Christmas Day Worship



PJ's and Prayers. Scripture and Stories. Carols and Communion. Celebrate the joy of Christmas morning with a casual and festive time of worship! Christmas Day falls on Sunday this year, and we will gather for a "come-as-you-are" worship service at which everyone is welcome to come in their pajamas. Wake up! Open the presents! Hop in the car! Come celebrate in worship!

## Christmas Poinsettias



Each year we provide the opportunity for church members and participants to purchase Poinsettias to decorate our worship space in memory or honor of loved ones. Well, that time is upon us once again. The Poinsettias that we buy are sold as a fundraiser for Our Family Services, a social service organization benefitting homeless and displaced women, elders, and families. **Order forms for Poinsettias will be in worship bulletins over the next two weeks (12/4 & 12/11).** You can fill out the order forms and submit them with your checks or cash. Checks can be made payable to First Christian Church with "poinsettias" on the memo line and/or envelope. Poinsettias will cost \$12 each.

## Christmas Music Program



Our beloved Janet Tolman will offer a special music program on **Tuesday, December 6 at Noon**. This event is open to everyone, and you are encouraged to invite a friend. The program is sponsored by Disciples Women's Ministries and is in lieu of the usual second Tuesday of the month meeting. Those who are interested are invited to bring a bag lunch and eat together at 11:30 a.m. (DWM will not meet December 11).

## Congregational Meeting



Mark your calendar for the congregational meeting following worship on **December 11<sup>th</sup>**. During our meeting, we will celebrate our ministry during the past year. We will also consider nominees for our church's leadership and the budget for next year.

## Christmas Meal & Caroling



Sharing in the spirit of Christmas joy, we will gather for a celebration meal on **Sunday, December 18**. We give thanks for the season of hope, peace, joy, and love. We also give thanks for the anniversary of our congregation! **Please bring a favorite family Christmas dish to share.**

Following the meal, everyone is invited to go caroling as we visit members unable to join us in worship.

## Christmas Special Offering

The Word from the church is to Believe in a Deeper Hope that moves beyond the “wrappings” of Christmas around us. We proclaim a Hope that brings Good News, Joy and Compassion for all of God’s people.



THIS DEEPER HOPE IS MADE REAL IN ALL OF OUR REGIONS AS WE:

- Assist congregations and leaders in claiming their unique mission and ministry, and provide resources and support.
- Call, commission and ordain new pastors, and support and equip all pastors for their ministries.
- Revitalize existing congregations and plan for new congregations.
- Connect Regional Disciples to give witness to ministries of justice, hope and compassion.
- Provide camps, conferences and retreats where children and youth find hope and Christ’s love and a community of faith that embraces “everyone.”
- Make visible the care for all of God’s family through ministries of reconciliation and anti-racism.
- Call and equip passionate leaders for today’s church.
- Provide pastoral care for clergy and congregations.

**Please give generously to this year’s Christmas Offering that goes directly to the Arizona Region. FCC will receive the offering on December 18 & 25! Our goal is \$1,000.**

## Children/Youth Activity

Following the Christmas meal on **Sunday, December 18th**, youth and children will join carolers in sharing Christmas cheer with members unable to join us in worship.

## Mind Wholeness Spiritual Support Group, December 5 & 19



The holidays can bring particularly difficult challenges for people as we remember loved ones no longer with us or face the challenges of gathering with family. Please pray for those in need of support in this time and for the Mind Wholeness Ministries as we seek to create a safe and supportive space for our church and community. Spiritual support groups for individuals and family members of those facing mental health challenges will continue to meet the 1st and 3rd Monday of each month. December meetings will be Monday the 5<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. For more information, please contact Rev. Mary Alice Do.

## Prayer Quilt Ministry



The prayer quilt ministry will meet **Tuesday, December 13**. Join us in creating prayer quilts and a quilt to be raffled for the H.A.G.A.R (Helping Abused Grow And Recover) Project. No experience required; there is a job for everyone. **We will meet at 6:30-8:00pm** with setup at 6:00pm. Hope to see you there! If you have any questions call Nancy Thompsen at 520-419-0760 or e-mail at [nancy.thompsen@yahoo.com](mailto:nancy.thompsen@yahoo.com).

## Thursday Small Group Bible Study

Our Thursday group will continue meeting December 1, 8, and 15 at 11:00 a.m. in the parlor. We will focus on scriptures for the Advent season.

## Sunday Evening Book Study

This study will take a break for the month of December. Information about the new study beginning in January will be released towards the end of the month. Look for that information in the weekly email.

## Epic Fun Fest was a Success!

Many thanks to all the volunteers who helped and donated to our Epic Fun Fest! Your presence and dedication made it possible for us to **Serve the World** through this gift to our community. We were so thrilled to see a couple hundred of our neighbors of all ages enjoying this evening of fun and celebration. Children thoroughly enjoyed the jumping castle, piñatas, cupcake walk, and many other games. Everyone enjoyed the amazing music and new connections made. We are grateful to community partners for providing the games and sharing the ways they bring hope to our community and world. In tense times, our congregation provided a safe space for renewal, engaging with community, and celebrating those making a positive impact in the world. Good work, First Christian!



### Special thanks to:

**Event Organizers:** Barbara Marshall, Belén de la Trinidad (XPLOR resident), Jenna Hosler, and Pastor Ailsa

**Community Partners:** Mind Wholeness Ministries of First Christian Church, Desert Spring Children's Center, Because We Care Foundation, The Guatemalan Consulate, Humane Borders, Community Food Bank, Al-Anon, Narcotics Anonymous, Sister Jose Women's Center, Guatemala Project of St. Michael's & All Angels Episcopal Church, St. Michael's Ecumenical Catholic Church.

**Musicians:** Bruce Phillips, Gus & Sean, Mariachi Herencia de Cuco del Cid, and the Jazz Trio led by Sean Gale.

**Photography:** Matt Sipos (XPLOR resident)

*To see pictures in color, visit our website.*

## Reflections from Regional Assembly

2016 Regional Assembly | Asamblea Convención

# CELEBRACIÓN

Christian Church in Arizona (Disciples of Christ)



**Jean Jackson:** “The Regional Assembly was well planned. The speakers were outstanding. Even the business sessions were presented in an entertaining way. The food was great. It was a hard act to follow.”

**Janis Sherick:** “My time spent at the Regional Assembly held in East Mesa November 4-5 was a memorable one from the beginning to end. We were welcomed that evening at a wonderful Kermes meal hosted by the Disciples Hispanic congregations with delicious food booths. Opening worship followed, in which we all gathered together to sing and hear Sheila Spencer’s inspirational message in English and Spanish. She taught us the importance of listening, being flexible, helping one another, and seeing each other, so that we can fulfill Christ’s mission in our daily lives. All weekend, we celebrated our oneness as congregations by listening to our speakers, participating in regional business meetings, and attending workshops to help us move into new areas of ministry with our congregations. We heard timely words from Rev. Dr. Michael Kinnamon who encouraged us to learn from our diversity as human beings and be willing to listen to each other to find common ground even in our disagreements. I attended a workshop with Rev. Julian DeShazier, a young minister and musician from Chicago who shared how church leaders can offer a different perspective on challenging issues in our communities if we are willing to find partners and encourage listening to others viewpoints, instead of just being with others who echo our own belief. The final closing worship brought us all together again as we celebrated the Lord’s Supper in a circle of unity in the Sanctuary. Truly, I was blessed by being in the presence of all who attended and shared. And it continues to make a difference as I live my daily life and am reminded of what I learned at the assembly. ¡Somos uno; We are one!”

## Music Recital – December 3

Zachary Van Houten, a music student at the University of Arizona, will perform his doctoral minor recital in the Sanctuary. The recital will feature music from the past century. Instruments include the French horn, piano, and tenor. All are welcome to enjoy this musical performance on Saturday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> at 4:00pm.



## December: At a Glance

- Elders Meeting** – Thursday, December 1 at 6:00pm
- Primavera Meal** – Friday, December 2 at 6:00pm  
(Contact Sharon Sorensen if you'd like to help!)
- Music Recital**—Saturday, December 3 at 4:00pm
- Mind Wholeness Spiritual Support Group**—1st & 3rd  
Mondays at 6:00pm (12/5 & 12/19)
- Christmas Music Program with Janet Tolman** —  
Tuesday, December 6, 11:30am-1:30pm
- Board Meeting**—Tuesday, December 6 at 6:30pm
- Congregational Meeting**—Sunday, December 11  
following worship
- Prayer Quilt Ministry**—Tuesday, Dec. 13 at 6:30pm
- Christmas Meal**—Sunday, December 18 following  
worship
- Christmas Caroling**—Sunday, December 18 following  
the Christmas Meal
- Receive Christmas Special Offering**—Sundays,  
December 18 and 25
- Live Nativity** – December 22-23, 6-8pm
- Christmas Eve Services**—Family Service and Walk-In  
Pageant 6:30pm, Candlelight Service 11:00pm
- Prayer Time in the Chapel** – Tuesdays at 11:00am
- Small Group Bible Study** – Thursdays at 11:00am  
(12/1, 12/8, 12/15 only for December)
- Book Study** – Taking a Break in December. :)



## “News from the Pews”

- ♥ With Love and Appreciation from the Vanderkolk Family:  
Thank you for all of your prayers, cards, phone calls, and visits during the last few years regarding our health issues and especially upon the recent death of Jack. The God in you has met a God in us during our darkest hours, thank you! We are reminded of the children's song “The church is not a steeple; the church is the people.” That spirit that pierces our hearts is called love thank you.  
- Jody Vanderkolk
- ♥ **Advent Devotionals** are available. If you haven't picked one up, please contact the Church Office to get your copy.
- ♥ **Prayers for Margaret Dean's husband, Alick**, dealing with health issues.
- ♥ **Prayers for Matt DeFer, the N.A. Groups that meet in our church, and others** struggling with addiction.
- ♥ **Prayers for The Mind Wholeness Ministries**
- ♥ **Prayers for people with mental health challenges** and their families.
- ♥ **Continued prayers for:** Peggy Brady, Lily Foster, Grace Judson, Bea Kimberlin, Ron & Patti Lemke, and Jody Vanderkolk.

## Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Children's Church School Art

As Pastor Ailsa mentioned in announcements during worship, the display of the Children's Sunday School artwork at the back of the Sanctuary is coming to an end. The children were involved in a year and a half study of scriptures where water is a prominent feature. The children first studied the scriptures involved that captured the “whole” story in context and discussed them, then focused on the section of the story where water was a significant element. After that they then selected an artistic style and medium and designed the art piece. This was a totally collaborative effort, as was the actual creation of the artwork. Old Testament stories included creation; Abraham, Hagar and Ishmael; the exodus and parting of the Red Sea; the book of Jonah; and Noah and the flood. From the New Testament, stories included the baptism of Jesus, water being turned into wine, calming of the storm, the Samaritan woman at the well, and Jesus walking on the water.



Artistic styles included impressionism, landscape, still life, abstract expressionism, and realism. Media included watercolor; oil; acrylic and gesso; pastels; collage; multi-media mosaic; and block printing.

We hope that you have enjoyed these works of art as much as we have enjoyed creating them. Some of these works will be put on permanent display, some of them will be given to the artists, and the block print will be available for sale as a limited edition (Jesus walking on the water). These would make great Christmas gifts for someone special and will cost \$25 each. See Debbie Stadle if you are interested.



# Sunday Schedule

9:00 am	Adult Education—Parlor*
9:00 am	Children/Youth Education—Room 107 & 110 *
9:00 am	St. Michael's ECC - Chapel
9:45 am	Children's Music *
10:30 am	Morning Worship - Sanctuary *
4:00 pm	No Book Study In December *

## Praying For Our Missionaries!



Please be in prayer for our missionaries serving through Global Ministries.

During the week of...

- December 4:** Jerri Handy, Mexico
- December 11:** Bruce Van Voorhis, Hong Kong
- December 18:** Toni Reynolds, Dominican Republic
- December 25:** Andy Jepson & Lindley Kinerk, Sri Lenka

For more information regarding our missionaries, overseas partners, or how you can make a difference, visit: [www.globalministries.org](http://www.globalministries.org)



VISIT OUR WEBSITE:



[firstchristianchurchtucson.org](http://firstchristianchurchtucson.org)

CALL OUR OFFICE: (520) 624-8695

## NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Articles for the December *Desert Disciple* should be received in the office no later than **Friday, December 9**

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