



First
Christian
Church

faith · compassion · community

CALLER

116 E. Boyer St.
Wadsworth, OH 44281
(330) 336-6697
fccwadsworth.org

Revealing Christ by building lives of compassionate faith.

Pastor Sarah West, Senior Pastor

Pastor Shelby Baxter-Andrews, Associate Pastor/Director of Youth Ministries

**December
2023**

WHAT'S INSIDE

Minister Musings	2
Board News	2
Stewardship	3
Visioning	3
Child/Fam. Mnstry	4
Youth News	5/6
First Men	7
J.O.Y. Fellowship	7
Outreach	8
FCC News Brief	8
Calendar	10



Salvation Army
Bell Ringing
Giant Eagle - inside
Sat., Dec. 2
9:00 am - 9:00 pm

The Secret Place

The daily devotional for December, January, and February is available in the Gathering Area and the office.

2024 Offering Envelopes will be available in the Gathering Area beginning Dec. 3.

Annual Reports

Due in the office Fri., Jan. 5!

If you would like to be on the email Prayer Chain to receive updates on our congregation, contact the office.

Please remember to let the office know of any address change, email change, phone change. Thanks.

**January Caller
Deadline
- December 10 -**



Sunday Mornings at 10:00 am

Take a break from the stress of the season and join us in worship for a time of quiet reflection on the "Gift of Presence". Each Sunday of Advent as we light the candles of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love we will focus on the most important present of Christmas - being present to God and to one another.

Lessons and Carols Service

December 17

This year will feature special music from Mary Ellen Huber on harp, our "God's Kids Club Choir", our Bell Choir, and our Chancel Choir. We hope you can join us for this festive service of scripture and song celebrating the birth of Christ. If you aren't able to attend worship on Christmas Eve, this service is a perfect alternative.

Christmas Eve

Contemporary ~ 5:00 pm

Traditional ~ 7:00 pm

Our annual Candlelight Christmas Eve services will be held the evening of Dec. 24. Each service will include a meditation on the gift of Emmanuel "God With Us", a special time for the children, familiar Christmas songs and conclude with the singing of "Silent Night" and the lighting of candles. We hope you can attend one of these special services and experience the true comfort and joy that Christ brings to every heart on this holy night!

Sunday After Christmas - Hymn Sing!

Join us for a special service on Sun., Dec. 31, as we keep the Christmas celebration going. Now is your chance to request YOUR favorite carols or hymns. Come raise your voice in glad adoration (and discover just how good our organist Donna is at sight reading)!

Epiphany Sunday

January 7

This special Sunday celebrates the arrival of the three magi who come bearing gifts for the Christ Child. It also marks the transition from the season of Christmas to the season of Epiphany - or season of Light. As we begin a new year, let us take a moment to seek God's guidance to illuminate the path before us.



Friday
December 1
6:00-8:00pm

50th Annual Search for the Christ Child

This is an opportunity for the whole family to celebrate Christmas - join the shepherd guides as they journey in search of the Christ Child, meeting a cast of characters along the way such as wise men, angels, and King Herod. Stop in the Carpenters Cave to make a nativity craft and in the Camelback Inn for hot cocoa and cookies before you begin your journey.



Ugly Christmas Sweater Christmas Socks

Join us for Worship Sun., Dec. 10, in your Ugly Christmas Sweaters and Christmas Socks!!!

Musings From the Minister



It's All About the Presents Presence

Preparing for Christmas can fill us with worry and stress. For me, a lot of it centers around finding Christmas gifts. I want the people in my life to know they are special and that I love them. But I struggle to figure out how to express this in the form of something tangible that doesn't end up collecting dust on a shelf or landing in the recycling bin. My standard gifts of pajamas and warm socks may be practical, but they don't exactly scream "you are precious to me"! This year, I am feeling even more inadequate than usual as I try to figure out how to pick up gifts, bake each person's favorite cookies, and decorate the house while going through chemo treatments.

That is why this year's Advent series "The Gift of Presence" has come at the perfect time! It is a powerful reminder that sometimes we overlook the greatest gift of all... the gift of presence. Each Sunday in Advent we will focus on God's gifts of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love and how we can be more present to these gifts in our lives and in our world. What if the best way we can celebrate is by simply being fully present? Fully present to God in wonder and worship, fully present to each other in comfort and joy.

This year, I encourage you to give yourself the gift of worship and connection. I will be the first to admit that offering this advice is a heck of a lot easier than following it! I love Christmas and all of the time consuming traditions that go along with it. But this year I have decided that it's ok if we put up fewer decorations. I'm alright with store-bought cookies. I can even dial back the stocking stuffers. Because what I want most this Christmas is to be fully present to God and to the people around me. To use my limited energy to create meaningful connections that foster hope, peace, joy, and love.

Isn't this the true meaning of Christmas, the celebration of Emmanuel - God PRESENT WITH US!

May God bless you and yours with a joyous Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year!

Pastor Sarah

Board News

Sharon Wright, Board Clerk

Highlights of the October 10 Board Meeting:

There were 19 Board members, 5 staff, and 6 guests present.

The Board approved the following motions:

- Personnel Committee - to change the current maternity leave policy from 12 weeks unpaid to 12 weeks total with 8 weeks being paid and clarifies that this policy extends to either legal parent.
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee - Permission to hold a fundraiser at Casa del Rio on Mon., Nov. 27, all day, with 20% of the proceeds to be donated back to FCC/DEI Committee.
- Permission to collect monetary donations and non-perishable items for Wadsworth FISH during the 2023 Search for the Christ Child.

Copies of the Board Minutes are available in the office.

Next Official Board Meeting

Tuesday, December 12, 7:00 pm

Fellowship Hall & Zoom

Everyone is welcome to attend!

2024 GENERAL FUND BUDGET

Passed November 14, 2023

Contributions	\$477,743.00
General Fund Expenses	
Salaries and Wages	\$336,451.00
Auto Expense (Mileage)	1,000.00
Insurance	17,800.00
Equipment/Copier	4,450.00
Supplies - Church & Building	7,275.00
Maintenance - Building & Music	20,300.00
Church Programming	4,850.00
Youth/Young Adult Programming	3,767.00
Utilities	25,650.00
Property Taxes	200.00
Continuing Education	1,000.00
Regional Assembly	500.00
Advertising	500.00
Technology/Social Media	3,500.00
Banking/Credit Card/Payroll Fees	5,500.00
Outreach	45,000.00
Total	<u>\$477,743.00</u>

Thank you to everyone for your consistent and generous giving! We wouldn't be able to accomplish the great things that we do without your continued support!

If you would like further details on the breakdown of the budget, please contact Lisa Jones at: ljones@fccwadsworth.org.

Inclement Weather Policy

In the event of inclement weather, the Pastor and the Board Chair shall determine whether Sunday School, Worship, and scheduled activities will be held. The FCC Web Page, the FCC Facebook page, and a notification to those who receive the Weekly Update will have the information no later than 7:00 am if the church is to be closed.

Our Call to Mission

"The only thing that counts is faith working through love." - Galatians 5:6

Treasurer's Report

General Fund as of October 31, 2023

Submitted by Lisa Jones

GENERAL FUND CASH BALANCE

\$220,551.74

	CURRENT MONTH	YEAR TO DATE	YEAR TO DATE BUDGET	ANNUAL BUDGET
<u>CONTRIBUTIONS</u>				
Offerings	\$33,842.15	\$359,979.86	\$404,516.64	\$478,065.00
<u>EXPENSES</u>				
Personnel	\$24,632.52	\$241,827.25	\$278,927.50	\$334,713.00
Admin/Programs	12,983.10	76,275.97	81,959.90	98,352.00
Outreach	-	41,966.75	37,500.00	45,000.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$37,615.62	\$360,069.97	\$398,387.40	\$478,065.00



I want to thank all of you who purchased an FCC shirt(s) in November. One of our visioning objectives is continued community visibility because we know what a wonderful church FCC is but we also want others to know and to lead people to Jesus.

And this month, we have the 50th annual, yes I said 50th, beloved Search for the Christ Child. Something that came out of visioning was to align church events with Wadsworth community events, so you saw a change from the Search on Sundays moved to Wadsworth First Fridays. This generates more foot traffic in our church to share the journey of the birth of Jesus so that others too could remember the reason for the Season.

May Advent and the Search help us to be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the Shepherds, the determination of the Magi, and the peace of the Christ Child.

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." (Luke 2:14)

With love and peace,
Val Baughman

Chairman's Minute

We like to think of Christmas as a time of peace and love. But considering our various pastoral unknowns over the coming months and my proclivity to plan ahead for all contingencies, I've been experiencing little peace. Thankfully, I was recently called to Mark 4:35 where Jesus calms the storm and asks, "Why are you so afraid Kevin? Do you still have no faith?" I was also led to Proverbs 15:22 which says, "Kevin, plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers, they succeed".

I raise up these scriptures because I've been investing a fair amount of time in counsel with various church leaders to ensure our ability to weather any storm that may arise in the coming months. I've talked to our Regional Minister, several Regional Elders and local pastors, Pastor Sarah, our own elders and many of you in an effort to review our plans and gain any insight that may help us through this valley. I can tell you that there are many people outside FCC-Wadsworth who care deeply about our pastors and our congregation and have offered their services if needed. I can say to you today, without question, we are not alone in this trial.

I certainly thank each of you for your continued prayers; willingness to be flexible and to come together in this time of common need. For me personally, Christ has used you and others to affirm plans, give me peace and show me a love that adds a unique spice to this Christmas season. May that same warm feeling of peace and love settle on you as part of this faithful congregation. Merry Christmas!

I invite you to connect with me as you are so called at 330-416-1232 or kkaufman@fccwadsworth.org. Yours in Christ, Kevin Kaufman, Board Chair. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.



Child and Family MINISTRIES

Keyshia Beverly, Director
kbeverly@fccwadsworth.org



Do you need time to finish your Christmas shopping, wrap your presents, or complete those last minute preparations? Let us help you out. Drop your children off (infants through 5th grade) at the FCC Ed Wing Door on Sat., Dec. 16, 1:00 pm. We'll spend some fun time together playing games, making crafts, and hearing the Christmas story. Please plan to pick up your children no later than 3:00 pm. Cost is \$5 per child or \$10 per family. Please pay upon arrival.

Dates to Remember

December 1

Search for the Christ Child

December 10

Ugly Christmas Sweater/Ugly Sock Day
Gingerbread House Making during SS Hour

December 16

Parents Day Out

December 17

GKC Choir Performance

January 28

All Church Bowling Night

God's Kids Club (GKC)

If you are in **K- 5th grade** you will want to be part of God's Kids Club! We meet in Room 102 during the Sunday School hour four times this school year (see church calendar). What do we do?? Well, we meet to talk, do craft projects, and write letters to all the Homebound members of our church. We make sure that every month they receive a letter and a small handmade gift. It's a very important ministry and so we need every K-5th grader to join this very important group. If you are interested in joining GKC, please come!!



God's Kids Club Choir
All Saints Day Service



Family Movie Night

Junior Youth Fellowship (JYF)

During this time of fellowship, kids participate in games or other fun activities to build relationships between their church peers.



Patrick & Shelby's
Baby Shower



Gabriel Howard Baxter-Andrews
October 25



MLK Day of Service

It's almost time for our annual MLK Day of Service! All youth (6th-12th grade) are invited to join us on January 15 from 1-4 pm at Marian's Closet. RSVP to Val Baughman at gbaughman1@neo.rr.com



PARENTS DAY OUT

We're having a Parents' Day Out so that parents of younger children can get some Christmas errands run during the day! We would love for some of our youth to volunteer to play with and look after the kids. Join us on December 16 from 1-3! RSVP to Keyshia at kbeverly@fccwadsworth.org.



REGIONAL CYF RETREAT

This year's CYF Winter Retreat (for those in grades 9-12) will be January 12-14 at Camp Christian! The focus will be on the Lord's Prayer. For more information and for registration and scholarship information, visit <https://www.ccinoh.com/regional-calendar.aspx?events=11157&action=details>

SAVE THE DATE

3/3 - Youth Sunday

3/17 - Youth Fellowship Event

Shelby's Maternity Leave

Shelby will be out on maternity leave until December 17. In her absence, our wonderful volunteers will be taking over! Elevate, the Hangout, and fellowship events will still be going on as usual.



ALL-CHURCH BOWLING NIGHT

A beloved tradition, our all-church bowling night will be a night of fellowship and fun! Join us January 28 from 5-7 pm at Kolony Bowl.



ALL-YOUTH RETREAT

Our all-youth retreat at Camp Christian is coming up in February and it's time to register! We'll carpool from the church parking lot, leaving Saturday morning the 24th and returning in the afternoon on the 25th. During our retreat we'll worship, play, study the Bible, have discussions about faith and life, enjoy meals together, and admire the beauty of camp in the winter! Friends are welcome and the retreat is entirely FREE! Sign up to attend [here:](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10COD49AFAE2FA4FCC25-44520325-fccyouth_)
https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10COD49AFAE2FA4FCC25-44520325-fccyouth_

First Men

Men of First Christian Church

Facebook Page: FCC First Men-First Christian Church, Wadsworth, Men's Ministry

Save the Dates – Derek Maul is coming!



Friday, February 16: All Church evening gathering with Derek

Saturday, February 17: Morning Men's Gathering @ The Lodge at Allardale
(Allardale Park - Medina County - Hinckley)

Sunday, February 18: Sunday Worship Service with Derek

We were disappointed that Christian Men's Ministry Author, Derk Maul, was not able to travel to be with us as planned this past fall for our Men's Kickoff Pig Roast Event due to unexpected family circumstances, but Derek was eager to reschedule and has agreed to spend the weekend of February 16-18 with FCC Wadsworth and FCC Medina. We are working on plan details, but generally are envisioning a mix of activities to give all a chance to meet and engage with him and each other.

Friday evening - An event featuring Derek for all our church members to attend ... could be a date night or just an evening out with our church family.

Saturday morning - A men's focused event at one of Medina County Park's premiere facilities, The Lodge at Allardale just off Rte 271 in Hinckley.

Sunday morning - Derek will deliver the message during our regular worship service.



Who is Derek Maul? Derek was raised in England, then became a naturalized American after graduating from Stetson University in Florida (where he studied psychology, played soccer, and met his wife, Rebekah). Derek added a degree in education and became known for his innovative work with emotional disturbed and autistic children. As a Presbyterian pastor's spouse, Derek helped redefine and reinvigorate ministry to men. Eight books, countless articles, and a widely read blog have created a national platform to share his passion for life and for following Jesus. Derek also enjoys photography, cooking, travel with Rebekah, golf, and walking his 105 pound Retriever, Max. (You can follow him at www.derekmaul.blog)

Watch for more information, details and the opportunity to sign up in the coming months.



All-Church Euchre Tournament!

It was a great evening for some friendly competition in our semi-annual Euchre Tournament. Twenty players competing for the coveted trophies and bragging rights...at the end of the evening, Sally Porter and John Hoover were bringing home the prizes.

We will do this again on Fri., Jan. 19. Watch for signups as we get closer.

50+ Anniversaries

Jan & Bob Eley	12/18/71
Bonnie & Bob Rasor	12/18/71
Lois & George Garman	12/26/53

80+ Birthdays

Jim Noe	12/01/40
Bill Wilson	12/12/43
Corinne Grady	12/17/34

Notes About Folks

Sympathies to Bill and Gwynne Roberts, and Paige, Chamberlyn, Arabella, and Brian on the death of their grandmother, and great grandmother, Jean Roberts, Nov. 16.

Sympathies to Patrick, Shelby, and Gabriel Baxter-Andrews on the death of their grandmother and great-grandmother, Joyce Baxter, of Kentucky, Nov. 10.





Red Bag Item Canned Fruit

Salvation Army packs and distributes food bags the second Friday of each month. This month is Dec. 8. Volunteers may arrive at 10:15 am to help box, load, unload and bag items for the distribution that runs from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm. This month's distribution will be held at Discover Church, 1825 Reimer Road. The packing of the bags will be outside on picnic tables under a pavilion. Dress warmly!

Plan now to join us for our Chili/Soup Challenge Sat., Jan. 6, in Fellowship Hall. Make a pot of chili/soup, or come enjoy ours. Proceeds will benefit The Garage (teen ministry) Laurie Beal will visit us Sun., Dec. 10 to update us on her local ministry.



If you can help on Thurs., Jan. 25, put it on your new calendar to help Feeding Medina County distribute food to Wadsworth area residents. We'll meet at 9:40 am on the south side of Art Wright Stadium, off of Grandview Ave. We helped put food into approximately 200 cars at our last distribution.

Coffee Collection



FCC Wadsworth donated over 90 pounds of coffee to the Haven of Rest in Akron. The Haven of Rest provides three meals a day, with coffee, to the homeless. They were very grateful for our generous donation that restocked their coffee supply.

Angel Tree

Thank you for participating in the Angel Tree so Salvation Army can bring Christmas cheer to families in and around Wadsworth.



Dear Church Family

Dear Pastor Sarah,
I am writing to you to tell you how very meaningful the service celebrating All Saint's Day at First Christian Church was to me. I was so pleased to be able to watch the service from New Hampshire. I have been to many services for all Saint's Day over the years and was especially struck how the entire service included remembering the saints even in the call for offering of how many saints had come before to keep the church going for future generations. The lighting of the candles, names, pictures and bell tolls were poignant. My mother-in-law, Phyllis Adamek, would have loved the Kid's Children Choir singing and signing Jesus Loves Me! I loved the selections of music and sang them loudly as I thought of Phyllis and could picture one day gathering with her at the river with the other saints. Your sermon especially touched my heart. My beloved mother-in-law, Phyllis Adamek, was and continues to be a pillar, mentor and touchstone in my life. God was so good to me in giving me the gift of Phyllis Adamek. Thank you for sending the letter so the family would know about the service. We are grateful for all you have done for us both with Frank Adamek and Phyllis Adamek's passings. In God's love, Linda Ulrich Adamek, (daughter-in-law)

FCC News Brief

Death

Rea Dot Sprang Nov. 11

Baby Dedication

Brian Michael Thomas Nov. 26

New Members

Kelly Evans Nov. 19

Jennifer Diroll Nov. 19

Welcome Kelly and Jennifer. They live at 280 Tanglewood Trail, Wadsworth.



Kelly and Jennifer helping with the Hanging of the Greens.



Gateway Class Event at the Kaufman Farm



FCC received the most donations (\$144.24) at the Candlelight Walk. Thank you to Karen Longfield for designing and decorating the Charlie Brown Christmas themed kettle!



Cheers! From Martha Everhard who is enjoying a hot cup of cocoa!

Sunday Morning Worship

Regular Hours
 Sunday School - 8:45 am
 Combined Worship - 10:00 am

YouTube
<https://www.youtube.com/user/FCCWadsworthMedia>

Facebook
<https://www.facebook.com/FirstChristianChurchWadsworthOhio/>

WCTV Channel 17
 Tuesday - 11:00 am, 5:00 pm, 9:00 pm
 Wednesday - 8:00 am

Office Hours

9:00 am - 4:00 pm ~ Monday, Tuesday, Thursday
 Closed Wednesday
 9:00 am - 1:00 pm ~ Friday



Follow Us!
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FCC CALLER

First Christian Church
 116 E. Boyer Street
 Wadsworth, OH 44281

Address Service Requested

December Dates to Remember

Find updated information regarding church events on the FCC Webpage, Facebook Page, and the Weekly Update sent out every Friday afternoon.

Weekly

Wed.	Chancel Choir Rhs	5:30 pm
"	Bells of FCC Rhs	7:00 pm

Daily

Dec. 1	Search for the Christ Child	6:00 pm
Dec. 2	Salvation Army Bell Ringing	9:00 am
Dec. 3	Red Bag Sunday	
"	Wmn's Mnstry Painting Event	11:30 am
"	Elevate	6:00 pm
Dec. 5	Elders Mtg.	7:00 pm
Dec. 10	Ugly Sweater Sunday	
"	Youth Christmas Party	6:00 pm
Dec. 12	Official Board Meeting	7:00 pm
Dec. 16	Parents Day Out	1:00 pm
Dec. 17	Lessons & Carols Sunday	
Dec. 19	Outreach Comm Mtg.	7:00 pm
Dec. 24	Christmas Eve Services	
"	Contemporary	5:00 pm
"	Traditional	7:00 pm
Dec. 25	Office Closed	
Dec. 31	Hymn Sing Sunday	10:00 am

2023 Financial Contributions Deadline

All financial contributions must be received in the office by Fri., Dec. 29, NOON, in order to be included on your 2023 Contributions Statement. To ensure the deductibility of your church contributions, do not file your 2023 tax return until you have received written acknowledgment of your contributions from the church. The church office closes at noon on this day.



Food Drop Off Box

The FCC Food Drop Off Box is located by the Boyer Street entrance. Thank you to everyone who has been donating. Leave what will help, take what you need.

Regional News

Camp Christian Christmas Market & Celebration - Sat., Dec. 2, 10:00 am - 6:00 pm. Celebrate Christmas at Camp Christian with a fun-filled day of shopping featuring a wide variety of arts & craft vendors, small businesses, and yard sale booths.

Annual Meeting

The Code of Regulations of First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Wadsworth, Ohio, requires that an Annual Meeting of the Congregation be held each year during January. This meeting will be held immediately following the 10:00 am combined worship service on Sun., Jan. 21, 2024. During the Annual Meeting the past year's highlights will be shared along with goals for the coming year. Nominees are presented for vote to fill the upcoming year's Board positions, the nominees for Board officers are presented, and other business matters are handled. Please take the time to attend this important yearly event.



Check out the FCC Facebook page (First Christian Church, Wadsworth, Ohio). You will find pictures of current activities, links to Regional and National Disciple events, and links to WCTV programming of our Sunday and Special Services. Make sure you "share" with others.