



## ZOE EMPOWERS AT CHRISTMAS

In the last few years at First Church, we have seen radical generosity at work through our Christmas missions offerings. We've supported relocated refugees from Afghanistan and supported Coshocton Grace UMC's rebuilding project after their devastating fire. Last year alone we gave around \$10,000 in this special offering; in celebration of the loving gift of God's son, we have been giving to those in need most during the season of giving!

This year, we are embracing a tremendous opportunity to broaden our Christmas generosity. We'll be starting a three year commitment to support a cohort of vulnerable orphans in Zimbabwe through ZOE Empowers as a part of their push to transform the lives of 250,000 orphans, their families, and their communities across the world.

ZOE was started in 2007 by United Methodists from North Carolina and a social worker in Rwanda, using an empowerment model rather than a traditional charity model. A cohort of orphans is connected to business and agriculture leaders, educators, clergy, and other mentors who help the young person learn to support themselves (and potentially younger siblings), receive the medical care they need, know their rights, and give back to their own community as they grow into adulthood. ZOE graduates learn how to become entrepreneurs, providers, and leaders to make a positive difference for themselves and for the next generations who follow them.

This model is less staff-dependent and significantly more cost-effective, empowering 75 or more orphans for around \$9,500 per year. Spend some time listening to the stories we'll be sharing through Advent at worship and on our social media. Check out ZOE's website at [www.zoempowers.org](http://www.zoempowers.org) for more information on their work and story after story of young people around the world who have been given the ability to lift themselves out of the cycles of poverty and contribute to their own community!

Through our special Christmas offering and other fundraising, we will need to raise \$9,500 each year for the next three years. Please give prayerful consideration to how you might be able to help us reach this goal!

Blessings,

Pastor Jon



## Worship with Us

### Advent Remembrance Service - December 6 at 7 p.m.

The first holiday season after the loss of a loved one brings noticeable missing pieces and traditions and an empty seat at the table. This is especially challenging since the Christmas season also brings so much anticipation and joy. The holidays can bring back waves of fresh grief from a death of a loved one or loss of a job, pregnancy, or relationship. Join us at First Church for our annual Advent Remembrance service of worship at 7:00 pm on Wednesday, December 6 as we gather to faithfully bring our grief and loss before God in worship.

If you are planning to attend, you are invited to bring an ornament that symbolizes your loss or grief to hang on the Advent Remembrance tree that evening. The ornaments will be prayed over during the service. This service will also be streamed if you are unable to attend in-person.



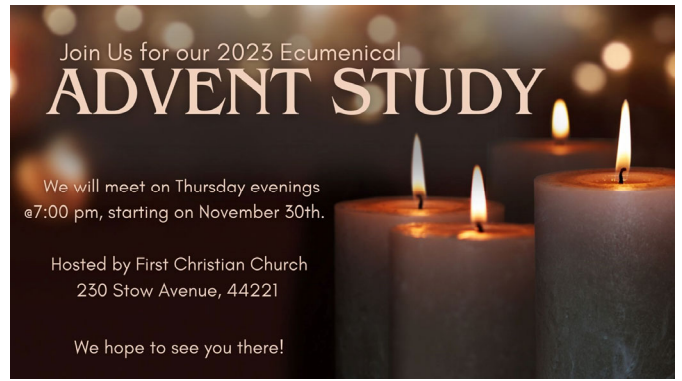
Do you know someone who is grieving a relationship, loss, or the death of a loved one? Please invite them to join you at this service of Christ's light.

### Christmas Eve Candlelight Services at 6pm and 8pm

*Christmas is built upon a beautiful and intentional paradox—that the birth of the homeless should be celebrated in every home. – G.K. Chesterton*



As we've emerged from the COVID pandemic, we've gone through a process of adjustments to our ministries to position us to most faithfully and effectively fulfill our mission of making disciples. This year, we are making an adjustment to our Christmas Eve services. On the 24<sup>th</sup>, we will have Sunday morning worship as usual, then two candlelight services in the evening. This will allow children and families to celebrate the birth of Jesus at 6pm and the Chancel and Epworth choirs to share in leading at 8pm. Epworth alumni traditions will be honored at this new service and both choirs will contribute individually and together. We are looking forward to these beautiful services of worship with you!



Brunch with St. Nick Everyone is invited to a St. Nicholas Brunch on December 10 in Wesley Hall. This special breakfast will be served from 9:30 a.m. to noon and all are welcome. Come whenever you are free. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Donations will be requested to cover the cost of the event.

A special guest will be present and family or children's pictures can be taken. If you'd like a picture, please bring either a winter hat and gloves or a \$5 contribution to be given to Family Promise. Pictures and crafts will be from 9:30 to 10:30 and 11:30 to noon.

Registration is required by December 3. Sign-up sheets are available at the Welcome Center and in the church office.



All the men of the church and community are invited to gather on the first Saturday of every month for some food, a time for discussion, and lots of fellowship! It runs from 8:30 to 9:30 in Asbury Hall and the next one will take place on **Saturday, December 2.**

**Are you new to First Church?** Not new, but thinking about joining? We want to help you get connected through our Discipleship Pathway. Please let Pastor Pippin know you are interested and mark your calendar for an initial gathering on Sunday, December 10, at 9:45 in Asbury Hall. You may reach him through the church office, or at [fallsfirstpippin@gmail.com](mailto:fallsfirstpippin@gmail.com).



**Stewardship Goals...** If you haven't received a Stewardship packet by now, please make sure you contact the church office. This year, we have set two goals for our campaign as we make commitments to God to support the church through our prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness:

**YOUR GIVING MATTERS!**

An increase of 40 pledging families; from 220 in 2022 to a goal of 260 in 2023  
An increase of \$50,000 in pledged dollars

Please prayerfully consider how you might be able to help us achieve these goals this year!



The Annual Advent Event will take place during ROCK on December 3. It will include snacks, a chance to help prepare for Christmas Eve, a craft, making cards for

our shut-ins, and coloring for Christmas. Registration is requested and will be needed **by November 27**. Sign-up sheets are available at the Welcome Center and in the church office.



*The Gift/Memorial Book* is located in the parlor and is open to **Sandy Zikursch**.

***Our Sympathies to Brent***

**(Christy) Meyers** and family on the death of his father, **Carl Hamilton**, on 11/5.

**Did You Know?** We will be glad to publish (space allowing) milestone birthdays, anniversaries, births and other special events in your family if you send a note c/o Kathy Kuzas, call us at 330-923-5241 x212 or email [kkuzasfumccf@gmail.com](mailto:kkuzasfumccf@gmail.com).

**Expressions of Thanks From Bill and Janet Blank...** A warm and sincere thank you to our church family and pastors for your prayers, cards and visits during our summer of health issues! We are healing because of all of you and hope to see you very soon. **From Jim Bailey...** Thank you to the Altar Guild for thinking of him and bringing him the altar flowers.



The deadline for the next issue of the FCN is **Friday, December 15** (early because of Christmas.) Please submit your articles to Kathy Kuzas at

[kkuzasfumccf@gmail.com](mailto:kkuzasfumccf@gmail.com).



For years First Church has partnered with OPEN M to provide Christmas gifts for children and turkeys for Christmas dinners. We will again help, but part of it looks a little different this year!

**Christmas Gifts:** You may make a check out to First Church with Open M in the memo and turn it in to the church office or you may go online to [www.openm.org/christmas](http://www.openm.org/christmas) and follow the instructions to either make a donation or choose to sponsor a child. They are also looking for volunteers to shop for the gifts with the money given. If you would like to do that, please contact Kelly Daw at 330-434-0110, Ext. 418.

**Turkeys:** We have committed to help OPEN M provide turkeys for 200 Akron area families for Christmas. You may sign up to donate a frozen turkey or you may sign up to make a cash donation until Friday, December 1. If you are going to donate a turkey, please let us know as OPEN M would like a count by December 1 so that they know how many turkeys they must buy. **Please bring your frozen turkey donations to the OPEN M refrigerator truck in our parking lot on Saturday, December 9 between 8-10 am.**



**Holiday Nuts:** The nut sale is back! You may purchase them between and after services on Sundays, in the office during the week, or you may pre-order and pick

them up on the Sunday of your choice. We have Deluxe Mixed, whole cashews (both at \$10/lb.) and raw pecans (\$12/lb.) You may drop your order form off at the Welcome Center. Proceeds will benefit Work Camp.

# First Church News

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Jon Priebe - Lead Minister x211; Howard Pippin - Associate Minister x217; Forrest Waller and Marvin Brown - Senior Ministers Emeriti; Dean Wagner - Director of Music Ministries/Organist x221; Jennifer Brooks - Director of Weekday Preschool x220; Tim Zuschin - Assistant Choir Director; Donna Curfman - Children's Ministry Coordinator x219; Kathy Kuzas x212; Christy Meyers x210; Nancy Yeager x216; Ann Kaiser; John Fox; Joe Demeter

## Christmas Eve Worship

8:30 and 10:30 a.m.

*Pastor Howard Pippin preaching*

6:00 p.m. *Candlelight Service*

*Children's Choirs*

*Pastor Jon Priebe preaching*

8:00 p.m. *Candlelight Service*

*Chancel & Epworth Choirs*

*Pastor Jon Priebe preaching*

## DECEMBER WORSHIP

Sunday, December 3

**First Sunday of Advent**

8:30 & 10:30 - Pastor Jon Priebe preaching

Sunday, December 10

**Second Sunday of Advent**

8:30 & 10:30 - Pastor Jon Priebe preaching

Sunday, December 17

**Third Sunday of Advent**

8:30 & 10:30 - Pastor Jon Priebe preaching

Sunday, December 31

One service only

10:30 - Pastor Jon Priebe preaching

