

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)



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Email: fccsavannahmo@gmail.com

Website: www.fccsavannahmo.org

Facebook: Savannah First Christian Church Phone: 816-324-3322

rev kate's Office Hours: Wed & Thurs 9:00am-12:00pm

WINTER DOLDRUMS

Sometimes the period of time between Advent/Epiphany and Lent (most of January and February, some of March) is called the winter doldrums. It's a combination of things, it's cold, it's dark, we're stuck inside for a lot of the time. The excitement of Christmas and New Year's is over, there's nothing really exciting happening at church. Ash Wednesday is on Valentine's Day? What's that about?

At least there will be new TV episodes.

How do we keep ourselves in touch with our spiritual lives during this time?

The word doldrums carries over into common usage from the days of sailing ships. There were parts of the ocean near the equator where the water was very warm and winds could suddenly die down. Sailors could be stranded for long periods of time. Well, our temps weren't warm, and there was plenty of wind, but we were all cooped up for a few days. After surviving the pandemic, we get a little anxious about being cooped up, don't we? And in addition to anxiety, the doldrums also means a period of listlessness, depression or stagnation. The doldrums can bring on a serious case of "I don't wanna."

But this time also forces us to face what can be unpleasant truths. Coming off of Christmas and New Year's we've been on a spiritual surge – a time when there are continual "highs" in our time with God. But those are kinda gone. We want God to continue that feeling, right? So how can we get God to do things that will keep us in that spiritual high?

Wait, are we trying to control God? Are we using God to maintain a sense of control over our own lives?

But God is God. We are not. We cannot control God, and in reality, we can't really control much about our own lives either. Jesus

said, "Apart from me, you can do nothing" (John 15:5). It's a terrifying truth, but in order for it to break through and become life-giving to us, we have to be made aware, sometimes painfully so, that we can't coerce or control God by our own frantic maneuvering.

The doldrums help us learn to trust in God and not in your own frantic maneuvering. There will be, even must be, times when nothing happens, even though we are doing everything "right." We read the living word, but it does not seem alive. We pray to the living God, but it seems like no one's listening. We worship, but it just sounds like noise. You're doing all you know how to do, yet you are stuck.

The doldrums remind us that it is the real God we seek, the God who will, when we wait, lift us up on eagle's wings to soar. We wait on God because God is God. They are not in our service. We are in theirs. Waiting on God means... waiting.

And while you're waiting, practice some random acts of kindness and beauty! Spend some time admiring the beauty and wonder of the creation around you. Look outside and see the snow sparkle like diamonds! Talk to God about the beauty. Thank God for the wonder of ice crystals in frost, the fun of watching the squirrels. Just be with God. Be with Jesus. Use the doldrums to deepen your relationship. Find your joy in everything, or at least, most, of the things you do. And keep coming to church.

P.S., this background is a closeup of "sparkle snow" in my front yard.



Our deepest sympathies to the families of John Clevenger and Gary Roderick.



Your continued faithful support of the Food Pantry is especially appreciated at this special time of year. Your donation of 119 pounds of food benefits our community greatly. Thank you for your generosity.

Andrew County Food Pantry

This has been a trying month for snow removal at the church. Special thanks to Donnie Blair, Ron Moutray, Len & Susan Zalenski and others for taking care of this task.

Thank you for the casserole and the Christmas card. Barbara Tipton Duncan



- 1st Nicholas Schweizer
- 7th Colton Willougby
- 14th Jason Malotte
- 18th Beth Malotte
- Vickie Miller
- 22nd **Norma Tipton #92**
- 24th **Connie Graham #82**
- 27th Megan A Baumann
- Jerry Williams

- *Pastor Doug Gilpin
- *Terri Gromowski
- *Amy W.
- *Maggie
- *Lily (& her drs)
- *Kenna McCracken
- *Donna Trierweiler
- *Carol Teter
- *Michael Earhart's dad
- *Larry
- *Sharon Patton
- *Family of Ed Steeby
- *Family of Jack Brown
- *All Caregivers
- *Lee Wandfluh
- *Richard Dick
- *Roger Latham
- *Tony Lupo
- *Jeannie Barbosa
- *Ed McCray
- *JoAnn Bennett
- *Carol Power
- *Danny Floyd
- *Family of Larry Atkins

The **Kids Party** (sponsored by Christian Pathways) was held on January 5. The cooks and kids prepared mac & cheese, fruit and brownies. As Joan Moutray gave a lesson on setting the table, the kids read scriptures and learned lessons from God as each piece was set on the table. They then enjoyed movie time and a game!



Our Outreach Committee met recently and prepared casseroles that were shared with our homebound members.

February is the month we have an opportunity to give to Week of Compassion. There are so many disasters in our world that we may feel overwhelmed. For those who would like to help those who suffer in these tragedies, you are encouraged to respond.