

THE MESSENGER

Believing, Behaving, Becoming Like Christ

April 9, 2026

Pastor's CORNER



I find myself both grateful and amazed as I look back over the journey we have completed together so far in 2026! Since Christmas, we have been walking through our series, *From the Cradle to the Cross—following the story of Jesus from His birth, through His life and ministry, all the way to the cross... and ultimately to the empty tomb. What began in the quiet wonder of a manger led us through the weight and depth of Holy Week and into the joy and victory of Easter morning.* And what a journey it has been!

Holy Week this year felt especially meaningful. From Palm Sunday to Maundy Thursday, through the heaviness of Good Friday, and into the celebration of Easter, there was a deep sense that we weren't just remembering the story—we were walking through it together. Those services don't just happen on their own, and I want to take a moment to say thank you to everyone who helped make them so impactful. From those who planned and prepared, to those who led, served, cooked, decorated, sang, and showed up—it truly takes the whole church, and it was a beautiful reflection of what it means to be the body of Christ.

A special thank you as well to everyone who helped with the Palm Sunday Easter Egg Hunt and family event. It was such a fun and joy-filled day for our kids and families, and a great reminder that celebration and community are a vital part of who we are. The Easter breakfast was another highlight—great food, great fellowship, and a wonderful way to begin such a meaningful day together. Throughout Lent, many of you also participated in the prayer packets, intentionally lifting others up in prayer. That has been such a powerful and meaningful practice. If you haven't already, I want to encourage you to take a moment to send a note or card to the person you've been praying for—let them know they've been on your heart. You never know how much that simple act of encouragement might mean.

Looking ahead, we have some exciting things on the horizon. Our Pastor's Class is currently meeting on Wednesday and Sunday evenings, and it has been a great opportunity for learning, conversation, and spiritual growth. One of the things I'm especially looking forward to is celebrating baptisms on May 3rd. There is nothing quite like witnessing someone take that step of faith, and I hope you'll plan to be there as we celebrate together.

As we move through the rest of April and into May, life tends to pick up speed. This is a busy season—students wrapping up the school year, parents juggling schedules, farmers getting into the fields, athletes in the middle of their seasons, musicians and theater students preparing for performances... It's a full and often hectic time of year. But it's also a good and exciting time.

And before we know it, summer will be here—a season where things slow down just a bit and we have more opportunities to gather, connect, and enjoy time together. Be sure to keep an eye on the calendar and mark down some of those upcoming events—Family bowling, the church picnic, Vacation Bible School, and more. These moments of fellowship are not just fun—they're an important part of building relationships and strengthening our church family.

As we move forward from Easter, my prayer is simple: that we would continue to live like the tomb is empty. That the hope, the joy, and the truth we celebrated on Easter morning wouldn't stay in that moment, but would shape the way we live each day. Because he lives, everything has changed.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Isaac



THE MESSENGER

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH (Disciples of Christ)

201 S. Main St., Paris, Illinois 61944

Phone: (217) 466-3255 • Email: office@fccparis.org

Web page: www.fccparis.org • Facebook: FCC Paris

Office Hours: Mon.-Fri, 8 AM-1 PM

Pastor Isaac Mahler, Senior Minister

COME WORSHIP WITH US

COFFEE BAR AT 8:00 AM • WORSHIP AT 9:00 AM • SUNDAY SCHOOL AT 10:15 AM

PERMIT #147
Paris, Illinois
Non-Profit
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID



First Christian Church's mission is to grow disciples who are:

*“Believing in Christ,
Behaving as Christ,
Becoming like Christ”*

SPLINTERS FROM THE BOARD

- A congregational meeting is scheduled for Sunday, April 19, immediately following worship, to share information and gather feedback regarding the proposed new building and architectural plans. Members are encouraged to submit questions to the church office ahead of time to help guide the discussion.
- The church continues to remain in a **stable financial position**, currently in a stronger place than this time last year, even with some early-year fluctuations due to weather and scheduling challenges.
- **Vacation Bible School is set for July 13–17**, with preparations already underway. Leadership is in place, materials have been ordered, and planning is moving forward for another impactful week of ministry.
- The **Christian Education and Membership teams are working together** to plan events throughout 2026, with a continued focus on creating meaningful opportunities for connection, growth, and family engagement.
- FCC continues to invest in **local outreach**, including providing much-needed mid-year supplies to area schools and supporting the upcoming children's shoe distribution during Holy Week.
- **Evangelism efforts are expanding**, including welcome postcards for new residents through local partnerships and upcoming community events such as the Spring Break movie outreach.
- The church's **Week of Compassion offering is underway**, supporting disaster relief and care for communities in need. Thank you to all who have already contributed to this important ministry.
- **Facility updates and maintenance projects** continue, including elevator improvements, classroom renovations, and ongoing care of the building. Special thanks was expressed to our cleaning staff for their extra efforts during recent challenges.
- The Board continues to **discern next steps for the future building project**, including financial planning, potential loan options, and the importance of congregational unity around the vision and purpose of the space.
- The **New Building Fund continues to grow**, now totaling over \$480,000, reflecting the generosity and commitment of the congregation toward future ministry opportunities.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

CALENDARS!

UPCOMING EVENTS & MEETINGS:

- Apr 13th: Staff Relation Mtg 6 PM
- Apr 16th: Koinonia 9 AM
- Apr 19th: Congregational Meeting
- May 5th: Circle of Light 5 PM
- May 7th: Elders 5 PM
Trustees 6 PM
- May 10th: Mother's Day
- May 11th: Staff Relation Mtg 6 PM
- May 12th: Board Meeting 7 PM
- May 14th: Circle of Prayer 6 PM
Messenger
- May 17th: VBS Meeting 10:30 AM
- May 21st: Koinonia 9 AM
- May 24/31: Memorial Service
- May 31st: Bowling at Iron Pin

NEWS FROM THE PEWS

Paris Healthcare: Martha Stephen, Ron Odle, Chuck McClarey & Chuck Dean

Pleasant Meadows: Linda Driver

Twin Lakes: Irma Julian

Continued Prayers: Carol Winemiller, Linda Chittick, Rev. Mike Dixon, Brad Farnham, Marge Houghland, Roy Rogers, Sue Bennett, Russ Adams, Theresa Emerson, Nancy Weger, Betty Swanson, Karen Jobst, Dorothy Farnham, Cynthia Faulk, Larry & Sue Elliott.

BECOMING LIKE CHRIST

“See! The winter is past; the rains are over and gone. Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come, the cooing of doves is heard in our land.”

Song of Solomon 2:11-12

MARCH PRAYER

Heavenly Father, as the April rains fall, we thank you for the water that nourishes the earth and prepares the soil for new life. We are grateful for the blooming flowers and the vibrant green of the grass, reminding us of your promise of renewal and hope. Please help us to grow alongside the spring season, clearing away the old to make room for fresh joy and purpose.

In Jesus name we pray,
Amen.



RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE

The monthly blood drive will be held Monday, April 27th from 11:30AM -- 5:30PM at the VFW Hall.



SPRING CANDY CHALLENGE

A huge thank you to everyone who brought a bit of whimsy to our Kids & Families Spring Basket challenge! We had 47 guesses, ranging from a modest “1” to an ambitious “1,280!” After a careful audit, we are thrilled to announce that **Allie Moss** was our winner with a guess of 500 - coming incredibly close to the actual 508 candies in the jar! Keep an eye out for our next challenge coming in June with a Kids & Family Summer Basket display near the parlor!

VBS

Vacation Bible School 2026 dates have been set for July 13th-17th & Co-Directors, Kim Woods & Megan Mahler are already starting to plan! If you're interested in helping again (or for the first time) - please reach out & we'll get you plugged in! Also, for all Station Leaders, Crew Leaders & Adult Volunteers - please Save the Date for TWO important VBS Meetings! The meeting dates are May 17th & June 28th / 10:30-11am (both meetings will be in the Sanctuary, right after Service.) If you have any questions or would like to be involved in VBS this Summer, please reach out to Kim (217) 822-8775 or Megan (262) 475-4527!

THANK YOU!

Thank you all for the messages of sympathy and thoughtfulness after Brandon's passing. Many individuals and committees of our congregation sent cards to Brandon during his stays in nursing homes and we are also thankful for those. Pastor Isaac was always there when we needed him most and delivered a perfect memorial message.

-The family of
Brandon Nathaniel Bell

Date	Worship Elder	Bread Elder	Deacons	Deaconess	Jr. Deacons	Ushers
April 12, 2026	Candice Milam	Chris Milam	Team #1	Margo Y	Team #1	Team #1
April 19, 2026	Nels Kasey	Dean Muchow	Team #2	Evie G	Team #2	Team #1
April 26, 2026	Dennis Thiel	Tammy Terry	Team #3	Nicole B	Team #1	Team #1
May 3, 2026	Cindy Mathis	Angel Templeton	Team #1	Bev M	Team #2	Team #2

CIRCLE NEWS

Circle of Light will meet Tuesday, May 5th at 5:00 PM.

Circle of Prayer will meet at 6:00 PM on Thursday, May 14th.

Koinonia will meet on Thursday, April 16th at 9:00AM.

BLESSING CALENDAR

Please turn in your donations by **April 12th**. All donations will be given to Helping Hands Soup Kitchen.

YOUTH GROUP FUTURE DATES

- Apr 12th: No Youth Group
- Apr 19th: Middle School, High School Youth Group, & Club 3-5
- Apr 26th: Middle School & High School Youth Group
- May 3rd: Middle School, High School Youth Group, & Club 3-5

If you have any questions, please contact the office.



RELAY FOR LIFE YARD SALE

Items for the yard sale may be dropped off in the first upstairs classroom at any time before the June 10th. The sale will be held Friday, June 12th, from 9 AM to 5 PM and Saturday, June 13th, from 9 AM to 12 PM. Volunteers for setup and teardown are greatly appreciated!

FCC SCHOLARSHIPS

FCC scholarships are now open. You can access the application through our website. All completed scholarship applications and recommendation forms must be submitted in a sealed envelope by April 17th. Don't miss out on this amazing opportunity! Get those applications in!!



KID'S CORNER

It is with a full heart that I write this first newsletter update as your new Children's Director! I want to express my sincere gratitude for the opportunity to serve the congregation and, most importantly, your beautiful children. I am excited to take on this role and very hopeful for the future generation of this church. While I am a familiar face here at FCC, I am stepping into this new role with a renewed sense of hope and excitement for the future of our church's youngest generation

This past month has been a season of growth and planning within our Children's Ministry. We've officially launched "Kid's Connection," a dedicated monthly e-newsletter designed specifically for parents of children from birth through 5th grade. You can find physical copies on the bulletin board near the parlor, or simply let me know if you'd like to be added to the digital mailing list!

Our Wednesday programs, **God's Gang** and **Crossroads**, continue to be a source of great joy. I am endlessly thankful for the devoted volunteers who pour their soul into these programs every week. We have five weeks left of this mid-week ministry. Looking ahead, mark your calendars for **Vacation Bible School, July 13-17**. Our theme this year is *Illumination Station*, inspired by John 8:12: "Jesus is the light of the world." I invite you to join us in this wonderful mission to share your light, helping us build a foundation of love and faith in our littlest disciples.

I am so honored to walk alongside your families as we grow together in faith. My door (and my heart) is always open, and I look forward to the many milestones and memories we will create this year.

Warmly,
Kim Woods

FCC JOB POSITION

We are hiring a part-time director to lead our youth. If you are interested, please contact the church office.