

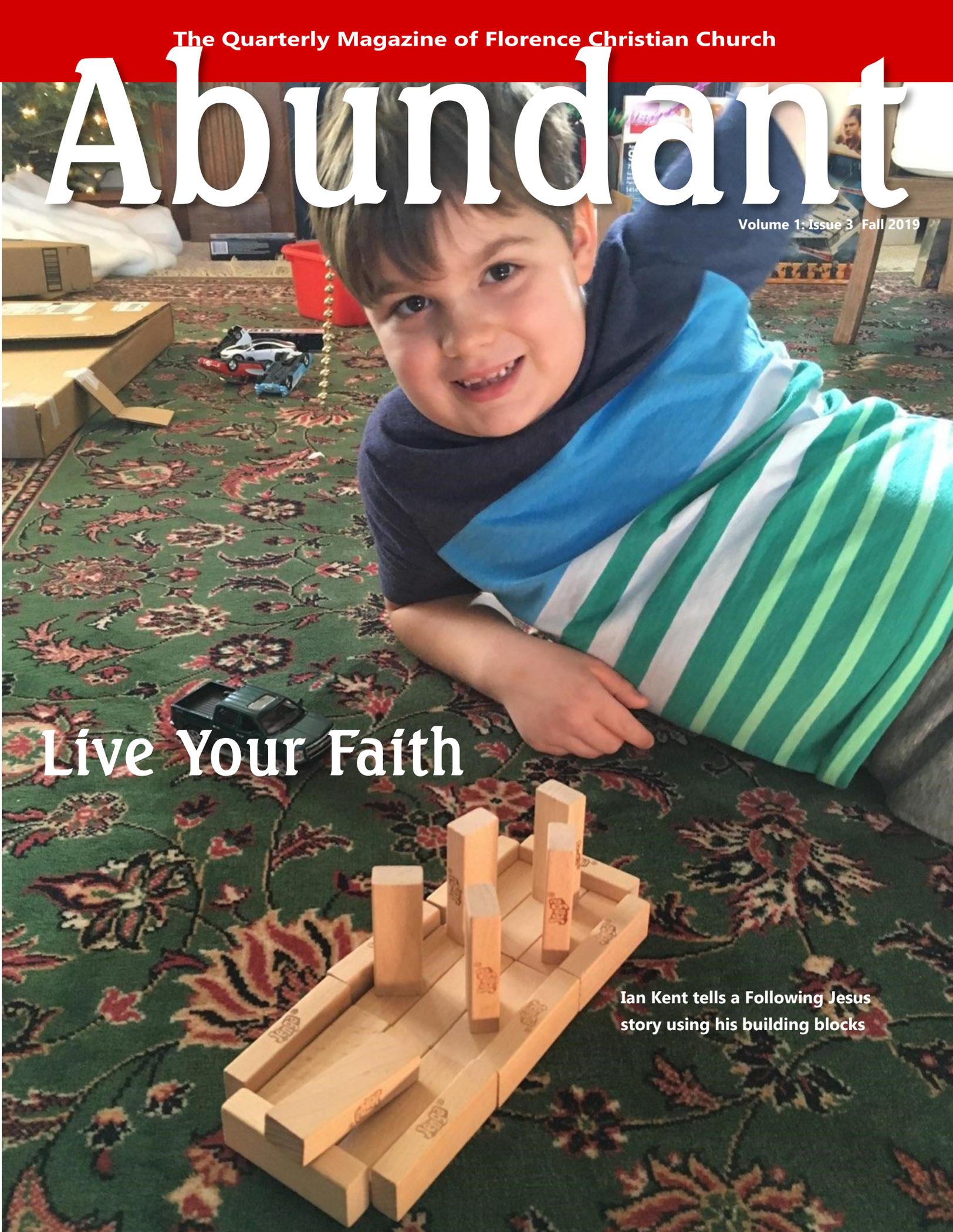
The Quarterly Magazine of Florence Christian Church

Abundant

Volume 1: Issue 3 Fall 2019

Live Your Faith

Ian Kent tells a Following Jesus story using his building blocks



WE FORM FAITH EVERY DAY

One of the three core values of Florence Christian Church is to FORM FAITH EVERY DAY.

It sounds good and all . . . But what exactly does that mean? How do we do that? Does that mean everyone needs to read the Bible every day? Or does it mean something else?

Over a year ago, as part of our vision process with Vibrant Faith, the Children, Youth and Adult Faith Formation teams set out to answer these questions. These teams have determined that Faith Formation is the approach to faith in which every one of us, at every age, at every stage needs to intentionally engage. Lifelong faith practices allow us to journey with God, growing in our understanding and relationships.

While there are a lot of different ways to form faith, Florence Christian has decided to focus on some specific areas and paths. We summarize our work saying, *"We Form Faith by Threes"* (See figure opposite)

Over the coming months, you will experience how we are going deeper and how Florence Christian is dedicated to helping you explore new paths and tools. Last fiscal year (July 2018-June 2019), 39% of our adult ministry partners and friends were engaged in a faith formation activity through this faith community. Our goal this year is to raise that participation level to 75%! In this issue, you will discover ways that people are already living into this value, a self-assessment for where you are now and opportunities for what steps you can take!

Join us as we continue to dive deeper and see what a difference forming your faith every day will make in your life!

Pastor Diana

Rev. Diana Hodges-Batzka



Abundant

The quarterly magazine of
Florence Christian Church

Contributors

Rebecca DeCecco
Rev. Dr. Susan Ward Diamond
Glenna Galbraith
Katie Hogan
Rev. Diana Hodges-Batzka
Luke Iden
Janet Jackson
Clara Justice
Nicole Kaufman
Dan Knecht
Patti Murphy
Debbie Orcena
Mary Alice Osterbrook
Phyllis Reed
Sharon Stanley

Photography

Damian Wallace
Glenna Galbraith
Nicole Kaufman
Rebecca DeCecco

Design

Melissa Stephens

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Cover Picture courtesy of Glenna Galbraith

WE FORM FAITH EVERY DAY

Everyone has a...



WE FORM FAITH WITH...



WE FORM FAITH BY...



WE SHARE FAITH...



CREATING A CULTURE OF CALLING



By Nicole Kaufman



Florence Christian Church is a part of a national movement to Create a Culture of Calling (C3). Team Members Pastor Diana, Pastor Susan, Rob Carroll, Beth Silvers, Nicole Kaufman, and Shari Iden have been working the multi-denominational program since 2017, guided by our coach, Rev. Shonda Gladden, to integrate calling language and calling culture into the life of our congregation.

The C3 team and elders are leading us with initiatives to understand the ways that God calls us. In September, the entire community studied "Stories We Live," reflecting on the ways God calls us *to* or *from* events or people in our lives. In 2020, our congregation will embark on telling their own stories in a study of the "Stories We Tell," articulating God's calling throughout our lives.

Church leadership is also guiding us through transition in our lives, such as entering Kindergarten, marriage, a new baby or retirement. As a congregation, we celebrate these transition times of leaving a previous calling and preparing to face a new one. By acknowledging transitions in our lives, we open our eyes to the ways that God is saying, "Yes!" to something new instead of mourning the ways that God has said, "No." Transition doesn't mean failure; transition is an opportunity to explore one of our previously devalued or unused gifts. A culture of calling can lead us to dust off our previously unexplored talents in order to find a new and meaningful way to live.

In this issue of **Abundant**, we explore forming faith and sharing faith in our everyday lives. In recognizing and understanding God's calling in our lives, we can wield newfound power to go out into the world as Disciples of Christ knowing our purpose. We can live our lives with a centralized vision of who we are and who God wants us to be. We can make sure that our daily actions are helping us live out our calling in our careers, with our families, and in our relationships. Our daily actions become more than just moving through the motions of our life, but truly advancing our purpose and role as an important part of the Kingdom of God.



With Our Families

FORM A GREEN FAITH

By Patti Murphy

The late evangelist Billy Graham once said, "of all people, Christians should be the most concerned for the environment," because God created the world and entrusted it to humanity. "When we see the world as a gift from God, we will do our best to take care of it and use it wisely, instead of poisoning or destroying it," Graham wrote.

In a world in which the environment too often becomes a controversial political issue, the Bible has a lot to say about God's creation.

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it." -Genesis 2:15

"The righteous care for the needs of their animals." - Proverbs 12:10

These scriptures tell us to care for the earth and the animals that inhabit it. Our dutiful response is to use our resources wisely. It all adds up when everyone does their part.



Our family recycles about 85% of our consumables each week. We recycle plastic, glass, aluminum, paper and cardboard at the Boone County Recycle Bins. We compost fruit and vegetable scraps, coffee grounds and egg shells. We recycle scrap metal (discarded trampolines, grills that don't work, old outdoor furniture and broken lawnmowers.



BSA Troop 1 from Florence Christian Church takes donations of metal and turns it into a recycling center for cash. All money received from metal recycling is used to support Scout programming.

Plastics in our oceans are harming marine life. Whales and dolphins are dying from plastic ingestion, having as much as 48 lbs of indigestible plastic in their bellies. Every year, 8 million metric tons of plastic end up in the world's oceans. To take that into perspective, it would be the same as five bags filled with plastic for every foot of coastline in the world.

This is astonishing and unacceptable. We should all be outraged and compelled to make a difference.

You can by avoiding single-use plastic. For example, grocery bags are easily replaced with reusable bags. If you don't use reusable bags, please recycle plastic grocery bags at the grocery store. Another thing we do is we reuse ziplock bags. It's really easy to wash them after they have been used and then let them air dry. It also saves money.

We must all take action and do our part. I urge each reader to think about ways they can make a difference and help our world become a cleaner and healthier place for all of us to live. Earth is our only home. Let's take care of it together.

The Green Chalice Program is to encourage and assist local congregations/Disciples Of Christ Offices and Assemblies who wish to live out their faith by caring for creation.



FORMING FAITH OVER THE SUMMER

By Luke Iden

As a teenager, I find it very hard to form my faith at church. Some kids feel like church is forced on them; others think its boring. But there are options for faith formation.

I form my faith at Camp Wakon'Da-Ho. It has a special place in my heart because I get close to God at church camp.

My favorite thing about camp is meeting with a small group of kids my age every day to play games, learn, laugh, and talk. We talk about our faith, feelings, and thoughts and we know we will be supported and helped with whatever we need. It's a much more fun way to form my faith. Also, the lessons we learn everyday at camp help me form my faith, because at the end of the week, after all the lessons are done, you really see how it all connects into a bigger picture. Camp gives kids a more interactive and fun way of forming their faith and connecting to God. Also, camp is just a super fun time so I recommend it for all kids. I promise it won't disappoint.

But, camp isn't the only place I form my faith. Each year, the youth go on a summer mission trip. When you see people in need, and you get to help them, it shows you that you have a big purpose. I think God sends me to these mission trips every year to show me where my faith can take me. He puts me into positions to meet new people, learn their situations, and help them in any way possible. I feel blessed to to help people and groups every year because it does a whole lot more to form my faith than sitting in church does.

I form my faith throughout the summer. I call it "recharging my faith." Anytime I am feeling down or feeling that God isn't on my side, I look back to these experiences I have had every summer. I remember the things I did and the people I met, and I remember all I learned when forming my faith. It reminds me to keep doing the same thing every day. I believe Camp Wakon'Da-Ho and our youth mission trips will help any kid form their faith.



2019 Christmas
SPECIAL OFFERING

COME *they told me*



Your gift to the 2019 Christmas Special Offering supports the Green Chalice Church and the Kentucky Region's camping programs. Please give generously.

As a welcome and outreach ministry of Florence Christian Church, the Discover Zone provides families with value-based educational childcare where children discover their

TEACHING CHILDREN IS AN EXERCISE IN FAITH

By Rebecca DeCecco, Executive Director

The Discover Zone staff and I are on a journey that requires one leap of faith after another. Trusting that God had sent me here and the staff trusting in DZ's mission to raise children in faith, we have set out together to be faithful when change and challenges come. We are committed to guiding children in love for Christ. Our days are filled with teachers leading children in prayer, Bible stories, chapel services, and chapel with our friends at Arcadia Park Apartments.

The staff is faithful in their efforts to use our new curriculum and to expand their knowledge of early childhood education through increased **professional development**. In the past 10 months, they have attended trainings on Creative Curriculum, professionalism in early childhood, and environmental rating scales. They are required by the state of Kentucky to receive 15 hours per year of training at a minimum. Most staff members voluntarily exceed it through online training and grant-sponsored professional development with 4C for Children. Three of our preschool staff are participating in coaching program called Connect the Dots. They attend monthly

training in the evening and then work with a coach on-site weekly for the 6 month course. Other staff members will begin their Child Development Associates (CDA) certification this winter to earn their Commonwealth Child Care Credentials. This program requires 9 months of dedication, study, and observations.

This staff truly loves and believes in the potential of all children to learn and grow in knowledge and in their love for Christ.

This staff truly loves and believes in the potential of all children to learn and grow in knowledge and in their love for Christ. They are unwavering during behavioral challenges from our high-risk children and love them through it. In the past few months, our demographics have shifted dramatically and we are serving an increasing number of high risk students,

*er Zone Preschool and Childcare Center serves
world in a nurturing, safe, Christian environment.*

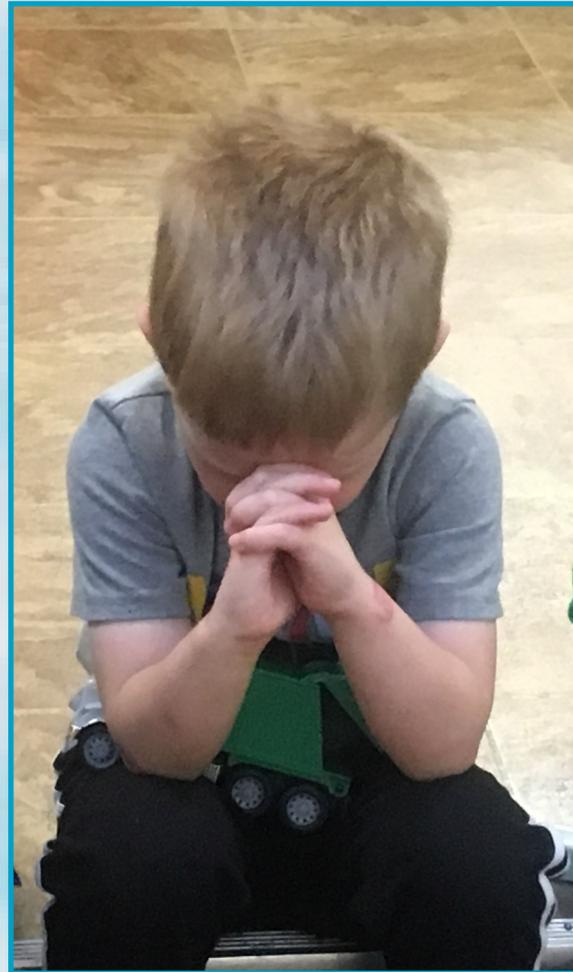
Florence Christian Church Discover Zone Preschool and Childcare



including children with trauma and developmental delays. As a result, the staff work side by side with First Steps, an early intervention service, and with parents to provide the best education possible for our most vulnerable children. Their patience and understanding is nothing short of a God send for Discover Zone children and the church.

As we continue on this journey to increase the quality of this childcare center, more challenges lie ahead of us. Kentucky now requires that all centers participate in the ALL-STARS rating system and we are currently a 3 out of 5 STARS. Fall of 2020, we will undergo a full rating visit which includes several hours of observation in each department, hundreds of pages of documentation collected by administration, and a thorough assessment of the services we provide for children and families. Our faithful staff has requested to be observed now using the environmental rating scales in order to improve their teaching practice before STARS comes. They want to be prepared, they want to improve their teaching, they want to care for children in the best way possible.

This is truly an exceptional group of people and Florence Christian Church is so blessed to have them on our ministry team!



Are you tired of how consumerism has stolen the soul of Christmas? This year, take a stand! Join the groundswell of Christ-followers who are choosing to make Christmas what it should be—a joyous celebration of Jesus' birth that enriches our hearts and the world around us, not a retail circus that depletes our pocketbooks and defeats our spirits.

REBEL NOW

in a holy, proactive call to celebrate this radical season



ADJUST FOCUS

to find the peace and promise of the season

WORSHIP FULLY

because Christmas begins and ends with Jesus.



SPEND LESS

and free your resources for things that truly matter.



GIVE MORE

of your presence: your hands, your words,
your time, your heart.



LOVE ALL

the poor, the forgotten, the marginalized, and the
sick in ways that make a difference.



*Christmas
can still change the
world when you, like Jesus,
give what matters most
—your presence.*

NOV. 10 - DEC. 24, 2019

WO



ADVENT CONSPIRACY

NOV. 10 – DEC. 24

Advent is a season of preparation for the coming of the Christ again and again. Our culture, however, has hijacked the season for its own consumerist purposes. Because of that, the four weeks leading up to Christmas are filled with frenetic activity and anxiety. Therefore, in order to set our hearts on the path of preparation and

celebration of the real reason for the season, here is a "radical idea:" *let's begin Advent early!*

Join the Advent Conspiracy and **REBEL** from a culture that calls us away from the manger! **Here are some great ideas for how your family can draw near to worship, give and love.**

SUNDAY WORSHIP at 9 AM and 10:30 AM beginning Nov. 10 through Dec. 29

Wed., Dec. 18, 7 PM

BLUE CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SERVICE,

Sun., Dec. 22, 10 AM

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT, **One Combined Service**

Tues., Dec. 24, 4 PM

"GIFTS OF CHRISTMAS" family worship service

Tues., Dec. 24, 8 PM

"LESSONS AND CAROLS" candlelight service

Sun., Dec. 29, 9 and 10:30 AM

"STORIES OF FREEDOM" worship services

Turkey Supper donations collected in November are given to agencies who feed the hungry

Thanksgiving Offering collected on Nov. 24 supports Disciples colleges and seminaries

The Giving Tree from Nov. 10 through Dec. 8 provides gifts and gifts cards for local children, seniors and shower guests

The Fur Tree from Dec. 15 through Dec. 29 collects pet food and supplies for local no-kill animal shelters and our senior neighbors

The Christmas Offering collected the whole month of December supports our local regional ministries, such as Green Chalice church, prison ministries, pastor search and call, and Kentucky camps

Produce distribution Nov. 12 & Dec. 10, 2:30 PM

Food Aid to Arcadia Park Apt., Nov. 18 & Dec. 16, 6:15 PM

College Student Care Packages

Breakfast with Santa and Homebound Caroling, Sat., Dec. 7, 9 AM

Extreme Weather Shelter beginning in January - commit to volunteer

WORSHIP:

GIVE:

LOVE:

Everyone has a...



By Katie Hogan

When Jen and I joined Florence Christian Church, we had no idea what we were getting into! We never expected to be welcomed with such a radical welcome nor did we know we would forge strong bonds with friends and make a new family.

Joining a new church family can be overwhelming - so many people to meet and many names to memorize. So the "Stories We Live" series came at a perfect time for us to get involved. We joined the **Independence Table Talk** faith group at Pastor Susan's house, where we met for dinner, conversation, prayer, and a Bible study lesson. Diving deep into the message of how God has a plan for our lives in a small, intimate setting has made our faith much stronger.

The Bible says that as "you use steel to sharpen steel, one friend sharpens another." We truly feel that meeting regularly with friends has helped us stay sharp and made us stronger people. We feel more connected to God than we ever have and we can't wait to see where our journey with Florence Christian Church takes us!



By Clara Justice

When my Mother did my room in Noah's Ark, she taught me about God and his promises. She made sure I attended Sunday School every week. Through her faith I was taught selfless sacrificial unconditional love, called Agape.

Daily Bible reading and prayers gave me a strong faith. As a kid, I made altars for clubhouses, tree-houses, and the back porch and I would get my friends to pray with me. This is a poem I wrote when my mother passed:

I do not know what still awaits or what tomorrow brings. But with the glad salute of faith I hail its open wings. For this I know: that in my Lord will all my hopes be met. For I can trust the heart of him who has not failed me yet.

Now, I start the day with a devotional reading, scripture and a Morning Prayer. During the day I listen to contemporary Christian music to feel God with me in all I do. Evening brings reflection on the day and an ending devotion. I begin and end each day in the presence of my Lord.



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By Glenna Galbraith

"Who has spiritual gifts?" Paul wrote, "Each one has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that." (1 Cor. 7:7) *"What are the gifts for?"* Peter wrote, "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms." (1 Peter 4:10)

Mother Teresa said, "I can do things you cannot, you can do things I cannot; together we can do great things." Each of us has different gifts that God has given us. If we all use them fully, wonderful things happen.

Since studying about my strengths and spiritual gifts in the **Discovering God's Vision For Your Life** class, I feel that I have been able to grow spiritually and move faster along on my faith journey. It began during my career at Proctor & Gamble by reading Don Clifton's StrengthsFinder; when using my strengths and gifts I felt more engaged, more productive and happier. This same thing happened when I started exploring my spiritual gifts at church. Through spiritual gifts' classes, I have been encouraged to use my gifts (what you do) and build up my strengths (the way you do it). For example,

taking the year-long class "Becoming Disciples" enabled me to be a better leader for the Faith Leaders class, our Mary-Deborah women's faith group and the children's Following Jesus class. Knowing I have a gift of leadership, I felt more confident to accept the call to be an Elder. My gift of hospitality led me to the staff role of Newcomer Coordinator for the church and to becoming a part of Pie Day.

Think of each of us as a snowflake – all those crystals coming together to form a pattern very different from the one next to it. God uniquely equips all people to fulfill God's purpose through spiritual gifts. I believe that these gifts are meant to be a normal part of the life of every Christian. If we understand them, we can use them for spiritual growth and service. In the **Spring 2020**, there will be another class offered to discover your spiritual gifts. I encourage you to participate in this class. If you have taken a class and are not sure how to use your gifts, our pastors can coach you in the right direction.

Express interest in participating in the Spring 2020 Spiritual Gifts class here:

florencechristian.breezechms.com/form/SG-Interest



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WE FORM FAITH WITH...



By Debbie Orcena

Special Olympics is dear to my heart. I have a niece, Nina, who has Down Syndrome and I watched her playing basketball, soccer, bowling and track and field as she grew up. I saw that raising children with disabilities required a strong faith.

Scott and I are parents of children with disabilities. Our son Brandon has played year round in all the sports. Scott volunteered to be a Head coach in every sport. I volunteered to do the paperwork or 'team mom.' It was a great experience for us. These athletes become your 'kids'. Playing with one arm, braces on their legs or in a wheelchair shows what true spirit is.

Children and adults can find love and relationships in families that welcome all abilities.



By Sharon Stanley

My Faith Story starts when I was a child. My parents would take me and my siblings to the Little White Church. I went to Sunday School in the basement and started scouting as a Brownie in the Educational wing. I was active in the Youth Ministry when I was a teenager. When the Christian Women's Fellowship needed a sitter for their children, I volunteered. I assisted with the Turkey supper with my parents, breaking bread for the dressing and today I am the coordinator for the Turkey Supper. The foundation that I got then has guided me to be the person I am today.

My faith is formed now by using my gifts and attending a Table Talk faith group. I am involved in the Children's Ministry team, Bell Choir, hospitality, Food Aid delivery to Arcadia, a Greeter before service, Food events coordinator, and I schedule leaders for Worship and Wonder/Following Jesus. I am a Deacon and attend church regularly. I am blessed to have Florence Christian Church in my life.

WE SHARE FAITH...



By Dan Knecht

The **Adult Bible study** faith group meets on Sundays at 10:30 AM in the conference room. The group consists of church members who have known each other for years. There is a lot of wisdom and experience brought to a serious Bible study. Everyone believes God's word is serious business.

The group has had several leaders over the years, each with different methods of teaching, ideas and opinions. Some leaders go by the book; others are a little more open.

Discussions and questions are encouraged. There can be different opinions, but they learn from each other. Everything is shared in a friendly way by everyone. No one is left out. Everyone listens, contributes and learns.

Members of the group have become close friends over the years and watch out for one another. This is a group where people feel welcome and wanted. A member feels needed and a part of the church. For all of us, this is an important part of being a member of the church.

WE FORM FAITH BY...



By Mary Alice Osterbrook

The **Listeners' Class** faith group meets on Sunday mornings at 10:30 AM and I've been a member for about 5 years. My life would be dull and boring without the friendships I have made through studying the Bible together and all the other things this group does. We just read the book "Stories We Live" together with the whole church. I get a lot out of reading the book, hearing the sermons and then discussing it together in class.

We do a lot of things besides studying the Bible. We have an annual Christmas party, go out to lunch together sometimes and occasionally go on trips together. And we do a lot of things for the church. We make pillows for breast cancer patients at St. Elizabeth, make blankets for shut-ins and sick people, stuff eggs for the annual Easter egg hunt, create HomeTouch gift bags for homebound members each month, and bake cookies for first responders. We have a "Love Box" offering that we use to sponsor one child and one senior on the Giving Tree at Christmas.

By Janet Jackson

One morning, while going through my late sister's pictures, I found her Vacation Bible School certificate awarded to her in 1956 by Pastor Donald Nunnally! This led me to thinking about my faith journey with Florence Christian. It began in the first grade and continues through today. There were seasons when I was on and off with the church, but God was always faithful. In 1958, Pastor Nunnally helped get my sister and me enrolled in Pinkerton High School, Midway, KY after our dad died in 1957. This was a critical time for my family and I know the church helped us through it all. Brother Nunnally married me and Ernie Hafer in the little white church. When Ernie got sick, Pastor John Murphy made regular visits to our home and performed Ernie's memorial service. He also married my daughter, Shannon to her husband Chris. What a blessing!

Life takes its many twists and turns, and I only seemed to turn to God when I had needs. God, however, was waiting for me as the Word promises. One Sunday in February of 2015, I found myself sitting in a pew at the 10:30 service. Wow, did the Holy Spirit move me, as I now know, from couch to church!

STITH
FUNERAL HOMES
FLORENCE & HEBRON
859-525-1100
"A TRADITION OF SERVICE SINCE 1937"

The advertisement features a light purple background. At the top center is a golden sunburst logo. Below it, the text "STITH FUNERAL HOMES" is written in a large, serif font. Underneath that, "FLORENCE & HEBRON" and the phone number "859-525-1100" are displayed in a smaller, sans-serif font. At the bottom, the slogan "A TRADITION OF SERVICE SINCE 1937" is enclosed in quotation marks. On either side of the central text are two photographs of funeral home buildings.

PRACTICE PRESENCE USING TECHNOLOGY

By Phyllis Reed

“So, brothers and sisters, because of God’s mercies, I encourage you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice that is holy and pleasing to God... Don’t be conformed to the patterns of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you can figure out what God’s will is—what is good and pleasing and mature.” Rom. 12:1-2 (CEB) In this scripture we’re told to present our bodies as a living sacrifice holy and pleasing to God, transformed by the renewing of our minds so we can figure out God’s will for our lives.

This requires PRESENCE. How many times have you driven past your exit realizing it only when you see it in the rearview mirror? Have you ever finished a meal with little recollection of how it actually tasted? We often go through the motions with little or no attention to what we’re doing! How can we transform without being present; authentically present to our lives as we live them,

to our family and friends, to the calling of God that speaks to us through nature, each other and through the still small voice within us?

I recently attended a class called “**Mindfulness: A Practice to Rekindle Your Flame**” by [Kim Lauch](#), that focused on simple practices to help one be present. It can be as simple as reading one verse of scripture or thinking of something in gratitude, sitting quietly and observing your breath for 5 or 10 minutes, and asking God for his presence throughout the rest of the day.

A practice I use is awareness as I walk outside—rather than daydreaming or listening to music, I pay extreme attention to my surroundings focusing on grass, trees, bugs, birds calling, and more. A resource for a simple seven minute mindfulness exercise is “[Sitting in the Presence of God.](#)” Explore ways to transform yourself. If you’d like more information, please call Phyllis at 859-620-9646.



GOING DIGITAL

Links from this article:

<https://relazenships.com/about/kim-lauch/>

<https://youtu.be/826gdM79UzA>

Apps for digital devices:

Pray As You Go

Centering Prayer

Calm

Digital Book with Guided Meditations

“Mindfulness For Beginners” Jon Kabat-Zinn

GETTING MY GLOW!

Rev. Dr. Susan Ward Diamond

The move from home to college is always a time of change. For me it was one of those milestone times in my life.

I was was a young freshman of 17 at Florida Southern College and my first time on my own. I was far away from my family, friends, and knew only a few people in my new home. Everything was new and exciting and challenging. I was a Christian at a Christian School, but not surprisingly, the label "Christian" does not ensure the experience. Quickly, I discovered that I was often the only one in the dorm on "pub" nights. I had little in common with the girls on my wing. I felt isolated and alone.

But then I saw a signup for "Glow Groups," small group Bible studies on campus. I joined a group of about 6-8 other girls from my dorm. During our time together we talked about life on campus, life in the world, and how faith makes a difference. We read scripture together, prayed together and were challenged to share our faith with others. In addition, I was invited to an on-campus worship service called "Joy Explosion." It was my first experience with someone leading worship singing with a guitar and a preacher in jeans! When I left one of those small or large group gatherings, I felt myself growing and glowing with the Spirit of God!

The friendships that I made that first year in college led me to a guy named Ronnie Diamond! We became close friends and spiritual partners long before the relationship

became romantic. I am so grateful for that foundation that has kept us growing together now over 40 years.

As I think about faith formation, I'm reminded of this and countless other ways in which God has led me in my life's journey. I am grateful for all of these experiences because they have shown me a little more about God. One of my professors once said, "the more I know about God...the less I know!" The God of the Cosmos is mysterious, amazing, grace-filled with Life and Love. And there's always more to learn. So, I'm still forming faith every day!

And that continues to make me glow!





Abundant Love, Grace & Acceptance

300 Main Street, Florence KY 41042

(859)647-5000

fccinfo@florencechristian.org

Florencechristian.org

kwcommercialagent.com



T.J. Schutte Jr
859-468-6799
tjschuttejr@kw.com



Derrick Plunkett
859-620-5830
dp.kwcommercial@gmail.com



Jake Meinzer
513-265-6348
jakemeinzer@kw.com