



NEWS FROM FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DOC)
September 3, 2019

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

Family of Rod Rumble, Nora Williams, Margaret Foody, Demorris, Earnestine Goggans, those impacted by natural and manmade disasters, China and the Ukraine

CONTINUING PRAYERS FOR:

Chuck & Ida Bassi, Susan Poster Ullmann Wanda Doleshall, Linda Cheadle, Selma Devich, Millie Clarke, Robin Brooks, Connie Moomjy, Jewel Jones, Dan McElvoy, Sally Clayton, Pastor Juan Rodiguez, our Regional Church, Eliza Husser Cave, Dr. Walter Allen, Neal Mitchell, Pam Owen, Connie Santee, Kenneth & Joanna Chatto, Sabrina, those in public service, military service and for our Country.

MESSAGE FROM PASTOR IRENE

I love our church's motto about being the church with Jesus at heart. To me, it tells us and others that Jesus is the center of all that we do. Proverbs 4: 23 says "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it." That is true for us as individuals and as First Christian Aiken. Heart health is an important part of physical living. It is also a central part of our spiritual life. Psalms 51:10 says "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." It is a joy to be with each of you every time we gather. Hope to see you this Sunday.

SPECIAL RECONCILIATION OFFERING

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2019

As a church body, the Disciples have “been on this journey to embrace and understand an identity as a Church that is pro-reconciling and anti-racist.” As we travel on this journey, we recognize that in spite of our differences as believers of God, that our beliefs in God unify us. He is present in all of us.

“Reconciliation Ministry is your mission of embodiment to love one another as Christ loves us.” Your donation to this Ministry will be used to build “beloved community through advocacy, intentional conversation and action” in the communities “where we live and serve!” You will have the opportunity to donate on Sunday, October 6th, to help our Christian Church (DOC) as we work toward reconciliation.

HOT CHILI AND A MOVIE

Let’s get together for good food and a movie, October 25 starting at 5:30 in the Fellowship Hall. There will be a sign up sheet in the Narthex for chili, corn bread, cheese and sour cream or cookies. Lots of people =lots of fun. Contact Paul Wilson 642-1960 if you have any questions.

ALL SAINTS DAY CALL FOR NAMES

We will observe All Saints Day on Sunday, November 3rd. We will honor all church members, family members and close personal friends who have died since last All Saints Day. Please call or email the names to the church office or turn them in on any Sunday during October. Their names will be listed in the bulletin and called out during the worship service.

FAMILY PROMISE UPDATE:

The next community meeting will be on Monday, October 28th at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church. There will be a Newcomer’s meeting at 6:30 for people interested in learning more about Family Promise. The general meeting will begin at 7:00 pm and end by 8pm.

MEMORIES

We recently lost one of our beloved members, a copy Pastor Irene’s comments from the service for Clara Benfield is attached at the end of the newsletter.

ACTS DONATIONS for the month of October is Shampoo and Deodorant.
Please leave your donations in the Church Office. Thank you for your support!

THIS MONTH IN SERVICE

Our Deacons this month are Shan Boening and Paula Jones
Our Elders are Jim Mitchell and Ida Bassi

DATES TO REMEMBER

October 3	DWF 10:00am, Fellowship Hall
October 6	World Communion Sunday
October 10	Board Meeting 6:00 pm, Fellowship Hall NO Elders Meeting
October 12	DWM 8:00 Fellowship Hall
October 13	Carry-In, following Worship Service, Fellowship Hall
October 19	Trash & Treasures Sale, 9:00 am Room 3 & Fellowship Hall
October 20	Elders Meeting, 8:30 am Offices

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Monday	Crafting	12:30 pm in the Library
Thursday:	Choir Practice	4:00 pm in the Sanctuary
Sunday:	Sunday School	9:30 in the Fellowship Hall
	Worship Service:	11:00 in the Sanctuary

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Remembering Clara

I met Clara about one year ago, and had the privilege of getting to know her through our visits. She told me several times that she wanted a "simple" service, so even though Vicki has told me I can talk as much as I want, I'm going to mind Clara keep my remarks brief and simple.

Clara loved the Bible. I started out taking mine for our visits and one day I forgot and had to use one of hers. It was the Bible of a beloved follower - filled with notes and underlining. It got to where I would "forget" my Bible on purpose in order to borrow hers because I loved seeing what she had written and underlined, which led us to wonderful conversations of faith and life. Later when her eyesight failed further, she was so proud of that little Bible player. She always showed me that it was right there in arms reach for whenever she needed it.

The scripture I want to read in memory of Clara is a scripture that is brief and simple and yet very profound - 23rd Psalm - a Psalm we read together and discussed many times. It will shape my remembrance of Clara. (Read 23rd Psalm)

Clara truly trusted that God was indeed her Shepherd! Her faith in Christ was deep and real, and guided all that she did.

When I met her last year, due to her health and her age, she was already walking in the "valley of the shadow of death" - although she was very much alive! She believed that life had meaning and that since she had lived so long, longer than she wanted to some times, especially after her last sister died, she had to figure out why God wasn't taking her since she was so ready. She told me a beautiful story about the process she and God went through that "restored her soul". This process included many rich conversations with God where God told her clearly that it wasn't her time and that she still had a purpose for her life and was still here for a reason.

I selfishly told her that the reason was so that I could meet her and get to know her - and we both enjoyed that thought. But the fact remained that she lived life with purpose and meaning right until the end.

She also lived with no fear. "I will fear no evil".... Last fall she wanted to meet my family so I took my husband and then 12 yr old son to meet her. Like me, they were smitten. Back then, she left the door unlocked and the wooden door open so that she could see out the glass door. As we drove down the dirt road in

front of her house, Joey looked back toward the unlocked door and said "is she afraid living there all alone?' I said I don't think so, but I'll ask her next Sunday. That next week, I shared Joey's fear and asked her if she was afraid - and without a doubt she replied "not one bit!". And then she told me about what made her so brave - she started with the alert button on her arm but more importantly it was similar to what the Psalmist said "I fear no evil because Thou art with me". She said in the off chance that something bad would happen, even though it wasn't how she wanted to go, she would be just fine. She had lived a good life and nothing could take that away. Clara loved her life and was not afraid to live it, nor to leave it when her time came.

Clara loved having communion. As Disciples of Christ, we celebrate it every week and I tried to do that with Clara as often as we could. In June, I was at a church conference and found a pottery communion set with a beautiful wooden box to store it in. I loved it and couldn't wait to show it to Clara. She fell in love with it as much as I had, and wanted to buy one. As I left her house that day, something moved to me to go back and give her the communion set to hold for us as long as she needed it. She kept it proudly in her view all week and on Sundays she and Lea had it ready. The week before she died, she told me it was time to take my box home. I knew then that this time she was really getting ready to leave.

Clara was a hospitable person too. She worried about me being busy on Sundays and was afraid I hadn't eaten. She and Lea started fixing me a tray of snacks - the first one was so beautiful that I took a picture of it! I never had the heart to tell her I had eaten lunch, and always enjoyed eating some of the food she had Lea set out. As good as the food was, though, my favorite part was watching the sheer joy on her face of serving me - of continuing her lifelong tradition of doing for others and making a difference in someone's life.

I know she has had lots of pastors - and they have all loved her for good reason. I am grateful that I've had this opportunity to be one of many and get to know and love her myself - And now even though I miss her deeply, I celebrate with her and with you that "goodness and mercy did follow her all the days of her life", and that she is now "dwelling in the house of the Lord forever."