

### **About the Christian Church:**

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) was born in the early 1800s as a dynamic movement for God that spread across the American frontier. Seeking to move beyond denominational division and toward being a New Testament Church, our founders envisioned a united community of faith grounded in the love and grace of Jesus Christ. Today we are over 3,700 congregations strong across the United States, Canada, and around the world. The red Chalice with St. Andrew's Cross symbolizes our focus on the weekly celebration of Holy Communion and the openness of the Lord's Table, where all are made welcome and invited to partake. Communion is open because Christ is both host and purpose.

We practice baptism by immersion at an age of understanding, yet we recognize all forms of baptism and therefore do not require anyone to be re-baptized. We are non-creedal; everyone is invited to love and serve God through Jesus Christ; how and why you move in that direction is between each soul and God.

### **About First Christian Church of Decatur:**

The members and friends of First Christian Church of Decatur (Disciples of Christ) are celebrating that we are 95 years young. In 1921, just like Jesus, this congregation was born on Christmas Day. Externally, the church's architecture is reminiscent of the open arms of Christ; inside the architectural lines are simple, clean and neat, lest one be distracted from the worship of God. Spiritually the congregation's ethos is grounded in being a welcoming home for all people. Our urban witness is both prophetic and pastoral, focused on justice and mercy in the human context. We are an "eight-days-a-week church" thanks to a wide range of programs, ministries, fellowship gatherings, worship services, local and regional missions, and two fine choirs that sing and ring with joy. Surely God has blessed this significant congregation with gifts of hospitality, healing, and hope.

### **About the Teacher/Preacher:**

Beginning in February 1998, James L. Brewer-Calvert has been the Senior Pastor of First Christian Church of Decatur. Previously, James served congregations in East Harlem, NY; Dallas, TX; and Jackson, TN. He was ordained in the United Church of Christ and has joint standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

James was born and raised in East Harlem in New York City, where his parents, Buffy and George Calvert, were urban missionaries, starting and sustaining multi-ethnic congregations committed to embodying the Gospel. James earned a B.A. degree from Hampshire College (1982); Master of Divinity degree from Union Theological Seminary (1985); and Doctor of Ministry degree from Lexington Theological Seminary (2006). Thirty-one years ago he married the Rev. Betty Brewer-Calvert, who is the Director of Women's Ministries for the Christian Church in Georgia. They have two adult children. Articles, liturgical resources, op-ed pieces and sermons of his have been published. He is delighted to be able to get up every morning, raring to go and serve God and the whole people of God.

# Belonging, Becoming, Believing



## *Short-Term Course & Sermon Series on The Christian Church, Our Story & Spirituality*

**Sunday Mornings in January – April 2017**

- 9:30 AM -- Teaching in the Parlor
- 10:30 AM -- Preaching in Worship in the Sanctuary



## **First Christian Church of Decatur**

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*Resolve to Love -- Agree to Differ -- Unite to Serve -- Break Bread Together*

Sunday, January 8     **“Baptism and Belonging”**  
*The only question asked of those who present themselves for baptism is the question of belief in God as revealed in Jesus Christ. We recognize all baptisms as outward expressions of an inner faith.*

Sunday, January 15   **“Come to the Table”**  
*Holy Communion is central in weekly worship. All people are made welcome at Christ’s Table; the Bread and Cup of Remembrance are freely offered; and believers serve as priests to each other.*

Sunday, January 22   **“Our Polar Star”**  
*The ecumenical nature of the Disciples inspires us to respect and accept other traditions and expressions of Christian faith, without suspicion or condition. Christian unity is both process and aspiration.*

Sunday, January 29   **“Equality & Fraternity”**  
*The opportunity and responsibility of leadership in the church and community is available to women and men alike.*

Sunday, February 5   **LAITY SUNDAY Service**

Sunday, February 12   **“God’s Got the Whole World...”**  
*Interfaith and multicultural experiences, missions, community service, and partnerships are happily embraced and encouraged.*

Sunday, February 19   **“Christ and Culture”**  
*The “whosoever will” of Jesus is the fundamental conviction undergirding the public witness of the Church. Therefore cultural biases and prejudices regarding race, gender, income, education, political affiliation, sexuality, and so forth have absolutely no place in the church.*

Sunday, February 26   **“My Way or the High Way”**  
*The gifts of God for ministry and meaning are meant to be shared, and are not given to be squandered, hoarded, or hidden under a bushel!*

Tuesday, February 28   **MARDIS GRAS Pancake Supper**

Wednesday, March 1   **ASH WEDNESDAY Evening Service**

Sunday, March 5       **“Continuing Ed”**  
*The study and absorption of Holy Scriptures is a lifelong commitment, with the acknowledgment that minds change, daily life is enhanced, and intellectual curiosity and faith are continually making new discoveries.*

Sunday, March 12     **“Worthiness Isn’t Questioned”**  
*The church never raises the question of worthiness when it comes to benevolence and tender loving care for the whole people of God.*

Sunday, March 19     **“One Church, Three Manifestations”**  
*The church is made manifest in three areas that serve in concert: the Congregation, the Regional Church, and the General Church. The freedom and independence of the congregation shall not be grounds for isolation or withdrawal from the common life and work of Disciples everywhere.*

Sunday, March 26     **“Judgment Free Zone”**  
*Any judgment, if and when God should choose to exercise it, belongs to God alone.*

Sunday, April 2       **“A Very Social Gospel”**  
*The Good News of Jesus Christ is a hope-filled message and mission of love for all the people, all the nations, all the time.*

Sunday, April 9       **PALM SUNDAY Service**

Thursday, April 13   **MAUNDY (HOLY) THURSDAY Service**

Friday, April 14      **GOOD FRIDAY Service**

Sunday, April 16      **EASTER SUNDAY Celebration Service**



*Several of the themes listed above were inspired by an article written by the late Rev. Dr. Fred B. Craddock and published in “The Disciple” magazine.*