



Christian Fellowship Church Of Eldora



Jan/Feb 2026

A Newsletter of the
Christian Fellowship Church
1415 12th Street, Eldora, IA

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But Now I See

By Pastor Susan Schnieders

I mentioned in church recently that while asking God what to pray about in a pastoral prayer, the word “see” kept coming to mind. The very next day, a newsletter landed in my personal inbox by a writer who observed that in Charles Dickens’s *A Christmas Carol*, Scrooge’s radical transformation hinged on seeing what each ghost showed him. Scrooge’s willingness to see and understand the meaning of what he saw initiated his transformation. This seeing and understanding flips how he lives and who he is becoming, which ultimately transforms his and others’ futures.

At the end of his gospel, Luke writes that Jesus opens his disciples’ minds to understand the scriptures and then says to them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things” (Lk 24:45-48). Jesus helped the disciples make meaning of everything they’d seen over the last three years by connecting it all to Scripture. This connection of experience and understanding now qualified them to be witnesses, able to give a firsthand account of something seen, heard, or experienced. Not long after this they changed from clueless, fearful students to radical leaders and preachers of repentance for the forgiveness of sins to all nations beginning in Jerusalem (see Acts 1-2). Understanding that they’d seen God at work in their midst transformed who they were and what they did, and their testimony changed the world.

Jesus calls all disciples (us) to be testifying witnesses to the at-hand kingdom of God. But a witness’s testimony is only as good as their proximity to the reality of what happened. In other words, you “had to be there” to have any kind of credibility—seen it with your own eyes, heard it with your own ears, experienced it with your own body. So, having not been physically present when Jesus lived, taught, died, raised, and ascended, what makes us credible witnesses of his kingdom? It hinges on whether we can see God’s activity here and now all around us.

What do you look at every day? The news? Social media? Your neighbor’s flaws? The enemy wants our visual and mental focus on the terror, heartbreak, injustice, and instability of the world so that we’ll be shackled by fear and/or cynicism. And fearful, cynical people view others as enemies or with suspicion and do whatever they feel necessary (lying, cheating, stealing, killing, blaming) to survive and protect themselves and those they love.

Jesus’s disciples must have eyes to see the in-breaking kingdom of God even through the smoke of a world seemingly in flames. We must be those who see (bear witness to) God’s goodness, kindness, generosity, love, and healing—in other words, his kingdom—in the midst of our messed-up world, pointing to it and shouting, “There’s God!” We must be the seers of God’s right-now-in-this-place activity in the world.

When we look for the shimmers of truth, beauty, and goodness in the kindness of our neighbor (instead of their flaws); or look at a butterfly or our own hand and marvel at the complexity; or notice acts of forgiveness, generosity, and self-sacrifice, we see God. And hopefully, seeing God in our midst transforms us, changing who we are and what we do, which changes the world around us. May you live 2026 with 20/20 vision.



December 2025

	<u>YTD</u>	<u>BUDGET 2025</u>	<u>2024 YTD</u>
Income			
Pledges, Offerings and Donations	\$184,986		\$163,507
Expenses			
Staff Expenses	\$128,879	\$132,628	\$114,671
Buildings and Utilities	\$40,175	\$43,150	\$38,025
Worship	\$1,993	\$5,600	\$2,210
Ministries and Misc	\$2,948	\$4,275	\$3,024
Total Outflows	<u>\$173,995</u>	<u>\$185,653</u>	<u>\$157,930</u>
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Fund Balances as of 12/31/25			
General Fund	\$33,845		\$36,840
Building Fund	\$12,746		\$4,361
HOPE Fund	\$4,541		\$4,417
Savings Account	\$7,854		\$53,797
Memorial Fund	\$12,846		\$14,980
Youth Fund	\$9,428		\$9,435
Mission and Nurse Funds	\$2,721		\$2,715
Trust Fund	\$130,142		\$90,963
Davison Scholarship Trust	\$75,810		\$76,066
NON-BUDGET ITEMS		<u>YTD</u>	
HOPE expenditures		\$825	
Missional Giving		\$11,590	
Misc projects		\$29,397	

Members present: Pastor Susan, Pastor Pat, Valerie Soesbe, Scott Swartz, Jim Johnson, Dave Dunn, Rosanne Foster, Steve Foster, Trista Nelson, and Vic Reist. Mary Swartz took part by phone. Deb Mesch also attended.

Dave Dunn called the meeting to order, and Pastor Pat read the devotions.

The minutes were reviewed. Pastor Pat moved to accept last month's minutes; Jim Johnson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

TRUSTEES –

- The leaks appear to have finally been fixed.
- Rob's Heating & Cooling had to come to fix the boilers again. They stated that we need to start thinking about replacing the boilers. They are going to work up a bid to replace the boilers, and we need to get other quotes.

FINANCE – Scott reported that the total income for the year is \$151,000 which is around \$24,000 more than last year. Outflow was approximately \$138,000. The mission giving has more than doubled since this time last year. Steve Foster moved and Pastor Susan seconded to accept the financial report. Motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS –

- The balcony projector no longer works. Scott is getting quotes to replace it. The cost was suggested to be between \$15,000-\$16,000 for the projector and lens. Steve Foster made the motion to pursue purchasing a new projector, not to exceed \$16,000. Trista Nelson seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
- Cancellation process and notification due to bad weather was discussed. Carol will try to download the contact list so she can send an email to everyone. It was suggested to let the radio and TV stations announce any closures. Rosanne Foster, Val Soesbe, and Jim Johnson agreed to be a committee to plan.
- Sara Anderson has agreed to direct the Kid's Christmas Program again this year. It is scheduled for 12/14.
- Christmas Eve Candlelight service is scheduled for 5:30 pm on Christmas Eve.
- Pastor Susan explained the Alternative pregnancy program. This is a program that "offers free and confidential services to those who are expecting a child or have a child under the age of 1." This includes pregnancy tests, STD tests for men and women, ultrasounds, parenting education, fatherhood program, material assistance, and more. These services are offered free to the clients. They are looking for a place to have their clinic. They would like to meet at CFC once a month. Scott Swartz moved to make space available for them, Jim Johnson seconded. Motion carried.
- Pastor Susan introduced Deb Mesch to explain about her job as a Behavior Health Service Navigator. She helps people navigate Medicaid, SNAP, and other services. It was mentioned that she could have a room to meet with people here at the church on occasion as a Community Resource Liaison.
- There was a short discussion about changing the communion format, where trays would be passed. This idea was voted down and it was decided to leave it as it is for now.
- Scott will check with Nick LaVelle to determine if he will be moving the snow at the church again this year.

OLD BUSINESS –

- There were some problems with installing the new A/V equipment. The company is supposed to return Friday.
- The signs coming in to Eldora were discussed. Rosanne moved to purchase the white/non-reflective ones. Steve seconded. Motion carried, Scott will get back to Tracy Morlan. The church service time has been added to the outside sign.
- The bats house discussion was deferred for now.
- Carol has found several companies to order background checks for youth ministry workers. Dave and Carol will find the best one.
- The community meal has been scheduled for December 1. There will be money available through the Outreach fund if needed.
- Valerie mentioned Christmas Caroling in December with a soup meal after.
- The December council meeting may be canceled depending on what is happening. It will be decided at a later date.

Dave adjourned the meeting.



January Birthdays

- Jan. 4 Liam Silvey
- Jan. 10 - Ruthie Braymen
- Jan. 10 Joshua Hobson
- Jan. 11 Noella Donaldson
- Jan. 12 Roberta Creps
- Jan. 14 William Dunn
- Jan. 16 Ralph Drake
- Jan. 15 Rylee Nelson
- Jan. 16 Landon Minter
- Jan. 16 - Nicole Titus
- Jan. 17 Roger Fish
- Jan. 17 Jeremy Soesbe
- Jan. 18 Lynnette Minter
- Jan. 21 Maddox Minter
- Jan. 23 Holli Hillmer Carr
- Jan. 25 Marc Anderson
- Jan. 25 Gretchen Brown
- Jan. 25 Betty Coffman
- Jan. 29 Linda Gehrke
- Jan. 29 Valerie Soesbe

Sunday, Jan. 04

Communion/Bread of Life

9:30 Worship Service

Sunday, Jan. 11

9:30 Worship Service

Sunday, Jan. 18

9:30 Worship Service

Thursday, Jan. 21

3:00 Prayer Ministry

Sunday, Jan. 25

9:30 Worship Service



Sunday, February 01

Communion/Bread of Life

9:30 Worship Service

Sunday, February 08

9:30 Worship Service

Sunday, February 15

9:30 Worship Service

Wednesday, February 18

5:30 Ash Wednesday Service

Thursday, February 19

3:00 Prayer Ministry

Wednesday, October 22

9:30 am Coffee Fellowship

Sunday, February 22

9:30 Worship Service

February Birthdays

- Feb. 1 Jamie Rotgers
- Feb. 7 Ava Salvo
- Feb. 8 Ann Clemons
- Feb. 8 Randy Tjaden
- Feb. 9 Isaac Inks
- Feb. 9 Finnley Minter
- Feb. 10 David Dunn
- Feb. 14 Joseph Minter
- Feb. 14 Clarence Perrin
- Feb. 15 - Rosanne Foster
- Feb. 16 Paula Seward
- Feb. 18 Linda Haywood
- Feb. 20 Katie Dunn-Straudt
- Feb. 22 - Gary McEwen
- Feb 27 - Pegg y Rooks
- Feb. 27 Loree Salvo



Special Blessings



**Christmas Tea with
Healing Threads**



**Donaldson family
Lighting Advent Candle**



**Director Sara
Narrator Sophie
Pastor Susan**



**Cast of
"The Light Gift"**

Christian Fellowship Church of Eldora
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Eldora, Iowa 50627

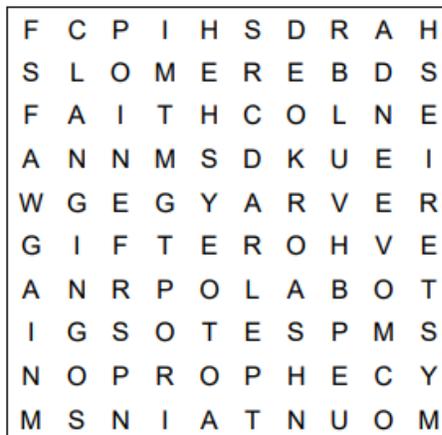
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Mini · Wordsearch

Find these words from
the first 3 verses of
1 Corinthians 13.

They may be going in any
direction, including diagonal.

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| ANGELS | LOVE |
| BOAST | MEN |
| BODY | MOUNTAINS |
| CLANGING | MOVE |
| FAITH | MYSTERIES |
| GAIN | POOR |
| GIFT | PROPHECY |
| HARDSHIP | SPEAK |



(All Bible references from NIV)



**Jan Piper has shared her gift
with our church for many years,
but has decided to retire. She
played her last scheduled Sunday
on January 4. Thanks, Jan.**