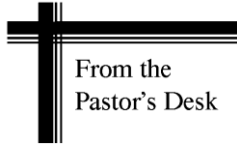


# Pilgrim's Progress

## April 2020

"The purpose of this church shall be to bind together followers of Jesus Christ, for the object of sharing in the worship of God and in making His will dominant in the lives of men and women, especially as that will is set forth in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ."



From the  
Pastor's Desk

### **LIFE IN THE MIDST OF A PANDEMIC**

As we enter into the first full month of Spring, we get to enjoy the weather in the midst of circumstances many of us have never before experienced. There are reports of illness all over the globe, some of it severe and life threatening. We have the President of the United States and the Governor of Iowa asking that churches not gather, and most businesses, especially retail, are closed. Restaurants can offer take-out service only. We've faced epidemics before, but this is more severe than ever before.

#### **NEED TO RE-ESTABLISH SCHEDULE**

Among the lesser troubles of this terrible situation is that the schedule of our church came to a complete halt. Sunday School, the Depending on God children's ministry, both Youth Groups, choir and the new men's group have all stopped any person-to-person meetings. The Sunday worship service is limited, for now, to Scripture, prayers and a sermon on YouTube and posts on Facebook. Our dear friends at the Pentecostal Church of Abundant Love have needed to make other arrangements and stop meeting in the Sanctuary on Sunday afternoons. Different committees have to find alternative ways to meet and my schedule is limited to office hours and working at home. Pastoral care is mostly done by phone.

#### **ONLINE SERMONS AND FACEBOOK POSTS**

In the meantime, thanks to the help of church members with technical skill, we have an online church service on "YouTube" Sunday mornings at 10:30 a.m. It remains on YouTube after filming for those who can't see it live. If you want to take a look, the easiest way is to access the church's website [www.fccmarshalltown.org](http://www.fccmarshalltown.org) and in the upper right-hand corner of the page you'll find three icons. One looks like a magnifying glass (don't worry about that), the other is the letter "f" (double click that and you'll find the church's Facebook page. There will be written and video posts there) and then to the right of the "f" there is a little triangle. Double click that triangle and you will find the church's YouTube page and the video to last Sunday's sermon. This Sunday's sermon will be there as well and, most likely, all Sunday sermons for the rest of April, including Easter. You will also find links to past Bell Choir and Chancel Choir performances. Our volunteers with children's Sunday School and Youth ministries are doing a great job of utilizing these resources to reach out to the children and teens involved. We hope to continue to utilize these resources even after we can safely gather and resume our original busy schedule.

#### **CLAIMING PSALM 91 AND ACTING IN WISDOM**

During one of the last Sunday worship services we enjoyed before this pandemic reached our area, one parishioner told me that she was praying according to Psalm 91, the great psalm of our God's oversight and care for His people. It is a wonderful idea to use this psalm as a guide for praying for ourselves and our loved ones during this time. Note also that this psalm still requires us to be wise and not reckless during this time. Even Satan quoted this psalm (Psalm 91:11-12, quoted in Matthew 4:6) in an effort to entice Jesus to take foolish risks. Jesus didn't fall for it. You do the same. Pray Psalm 91 and take all necessary precautions according to the Centers of Disease Control ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)). Take care of yourself.

**PRAYING FOR THOSE WHO SUFFER**

Finally pray for those who suffer. There are people who are desperately ill with this disease, and medical personnel who work feverishly to help them, often risking health and even life in the process. People involved in food distribution, grocery stores, gas stations and other essential businesses who risk their health serving the public. There are people who cannot work but still have expenses and bills and will soon face financial hardship. Everyone in all levels of government have to make difficult decisions daily. Pray, and take care of yourself. Here's to seeing you all face to face again soon.

-Pastor Dan

**Sermons for April**

**Theme-The View From Eternity**

Sermons



April 5	Isaiah 50:4-9	"A Face Like Flint"	Palm Sunday
April 12	Colossians 3:1-4	Your Life	Easter
April 19	Acts 2:22-32	What Prophecy Looks Like	
April 26	Joshua 1:7-9	How to Have Success	



Troy & LaRae McGahuey	April 9, 1988	32 years
Dwayne & Maxie Shultz	April 12, 1967	53 years
Bill & Lynn Maas	April 13, 1996	24 years



April 4	Joy Kreykes	April 19	Linda McGregor
April 7	Nancy Carmer	April 20	Don Mackaman, Sara Schwab
April 8	Sam Good, Foster Hawkins	April 21	Katie Paustian, Shelly Speas
April 9	Vicki McKibbin	April 23	Thomas Stanley
April 10	Leah Stanley	April 25	Kirk Shirar
April 16	Lisa Blabaum	April 26	Ken Niehouse
April 17	Sam Speas	April 27	Ron Estabrook
April 18	Liz Meyer	April 28	Adam Swope

***Please keep our Members in Care Facilities in your thoughts & prayers:***



**Bickford** : Joanie Smith-Legg #108; Marilyn Rhodes # 123, Dorothy Peterson #105  
**Grandview**: Pattye Morrison #107, Ken Niehouse #413 **IVH**: JoAnne Ainley  
**Suites of Ankeny**: Don & Romaine Mackaman **Southridge**: Betty Runner #212  
**The Willows**: Lee & Valois Brintnall #317, Sanny Thompson #205  
**Glenwood Place**: Loretta Stubbe #150, Jan More #112, Mildred Lathrop #145,  
 Bob Becker #175, Bonnie Pappas # 177, Lenora Brown #147

**“VISITING” HAS TAKEN ON A NEW TWIST!!!**



COVID-19 has changed all our lives and daily activities!! But we are adapting! See here, Bob and Judy Gaynor are visiting Judy's mom thru the window at her nursing home! What a great, safe way to keep in touch!

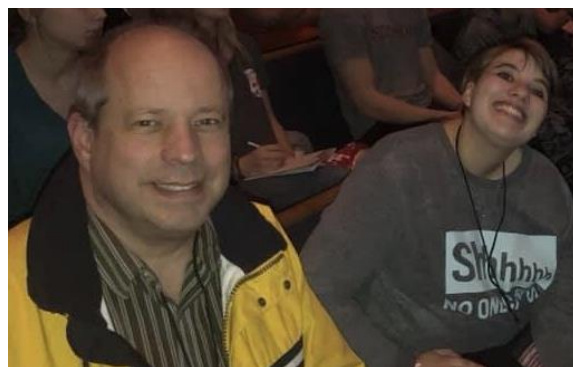
We encourage you all to stay safe and healthy! This is a great way to do that!



Youth Director: Shelly Speas  
Contact # 641-751-9868

## **HIGHLIGHTS FROM MARCH WITH OUR YOUTH!!**

A group of our youth and leaders were blessed by attending the Ignite Youth Leadership Conference in Des Moines in early March!! We gained so much insight and encouragement, and came home with great tools to use in our ministry here at FCC!! What an amazing opportunity for Christian leadership training and spiritual refreshing!



## **HIGHLIGHTS FROM FEBRUARY WITH OUR YOUTH!!**

In February a group of youth and leaders traveled to Bayport MN to meet up with other NA youth groups for our winter Retreat. We had a blast skiing & tubing down the slopes and having fellowship with each other! We loved the getaway time!!!





One of the greatest quotes I have seen on social media lately said: **“The Church is NOT closed, only the building”**. This couldn't be truer!!! The CHURCH is people who are believers in our wonderful Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! This time, physically apart, has its difficulties and we miss being together, but this has also opened up so many opportunities to branch out and try new things to glorify God! We will continue following the guidelines of protection set in place by our state and government leaders for as long as necessary, however our Facebook page is going to be very active! Also keep watch for things in the mail from FCC! We will have lessons, Bible study, uplifting and thought-provoking messages, videos of our leaders guiding youth through skits & story reading, Christian art tutorials and an art gallery, music, prayer time, and different youth challenges with prizes to keep

us connected. Not being together can't keep God from moving and sharing his love and word with us! We will continue to keep our members and community engaged with Scripture and faith growth adventures during this time! If you have any questions please contact Shelly Speas (641-751-9868) or email: [shellzncheese2004@yahoo.com](mailto:shellzncheese2004@yahoo.com)

## **SISTERS IN CHRIST ACTIVITIES!!!**

We had a wonderful time at Glenwood Place playing Bingo for our Sister's in Christ meeting in February! We love getting out and getting involved in our community!



Some familiar faces obviously having a great time! Shelly...CALL THOSE NUMBERS!!!!



Thanks to all who make these events happen!!!



### Christian Ed News

First off, something to look forward to! We have chosen a VBS theme this year called

**"Breakout VBS: Find Clues, Solve the Puzzle!"**

I just read the intro and saw how timely it is with what we are going through:

"Sometimes our ordinary life can make us feel trapped. We can feel trapped by our worries, our doubts, our fears, and our sin. Sometimes we just wish we could break out and be free from these struggles. Through this escape room-themed VBS, kids will not only solve fun puzzles throughout the week, but will also learn that only God has the power to come in and break us out of the ordinary to lead us to the extraordinary."

The dates for VBS have not been set yet. If you would like to help with VBS this year, please let me or Shelly know.

In other news..... it's been discouraging that so many things have been cancelled or postponed. God did not create this virus, but He can certainly use it for his purposes. One of the positive outcomes has been that many of us have needed to step up a little technologically. To that end, Dan is doing Facebook lives, zoom meetings, and YouTube sermons. Shelly and her crew have done some amazing videos and other online activities to keep the kids connected and ministered to. **Hats off to all of you, you rock!**

A group of adults who work with the kids, and some youth members were able to attend the Ignite Conference In Des Moines in March. They found it very informative and encouraging.

Kinsmen for Christ, the men's group, will meet on the first and third Friday at 7:00pm on Zoom. If you would like to participate, contact Dan with your email, and he will send you the information you will need to join in.

I encourage you to lean into God during this time. Make sure you take time to pray and read your Bible. Now might be a great time to do one of the bible studies offered through YouVersion online. There are many different authors and topics. God bless you all, Jeanne Vellinga, Chairperson

400 YEARS OF *Faith*  
AMERICAN  
CONGREGATIONALISM  
SINCE 1620

## A BAND OF BELIEVERS

Contributed by Miriam Bryant

To our Pilgrim ancestors as well as the whole world, America was the land of opportunity and new beginnings. Here, as one Congregational minister would say, God's people would be free to carry out "a lively experiment," a Holy Commonwealth. In the famous words of Massachusetts Bay's Governor John Winthrop, they could be "a city set on a hill," sending forth the light of the Gospel unto the uttermost ends of the earth.

Plymouth Governor William Bradford described in his journal the tearful farewells of friends and families as the Pilgrims prepared to sail to America. Pastor John Robinson forced by circumstances to stay behind with part of the colony, gave a tearful farewell sendoff with the following words, "...The Lord knoweth whether ever we see your faces again, but I am confident that the Lord has more truth and light yet to break forth out of His Holy Word." Then on "the tide which stays for no man," as William Bradford would write, "they set sail into the unknown, leaving behind friends, families and everything they had known. But they looked not much on such things," Bradford wrote, "but lifted their eyes to heaven, their dearest country, for they knew they were but strangers and Pilgrims in this world."

Against all odds, the "Pilgrims" survived the treacherous ocean voyage to establish a colony of Protestants in New England. There in Plymouth, Massachusetts, "in the desert of dismal circumstances," their faith was shaken but not destroyed. The Pilgrims established a Christian community of courage and faith which many others would emulate. William Bradford, after serving many years as governor of Plymouth, looked back on the experience of the Pilgrims: "As one small candle may light a thousand, so the light here kindled has shown to many yea, in some sort to the whole nation." Such was the influence of this faithful, courageous little band of believers.

*When the Mayflower sailed home after that tragic first winter in Plymouth, not a settler left with her. Our numbers have halved, our prospects dim, grief and fear abounded, yet every man, woman and child stayed the course, as widowers and orphans were absorbed into surviving families.*

*Mayflower Passenger & Plymouth Colonist Edward*

*I heard the drums beat the call to worship, and then saw the congregation assemble to march to church. It was a military procession; Miles Standish marshaled it, the governor, with the minister at his side, led it, and the men carried their arms. Together men, women and children made their way up the hill to the fort which served as the meeting hall. Dutch Observer 1627*

*"Thus out of small beginnings great things have been produced by His hand that made all things of nothing and gives being to all things that are; And as one small candle may light a thousand, so the light first seen here has been handed to many, in some fashion even unto the whole nation. Let the glorious name of God have all the praises."*

*Plymouth Governor William Bradford*



Graduation will have a different “look” this year, if it happens at all...but we still cannot forget our Senior Students who have reached this milestone in their lives. In our May newsletter, we like to feature graduating students from our youth group, children and grandchildren of our church members and anyone else who deserves recognition! Please send me a photo (or bring one in and I will scan it) along with an article telling about your student, their parents, where they’ve attended school and what their future plans include. Please have this information to me by April 23<sup>rd</sup>. Thanks!



This pandemic, COVID-19, is at the forefront of our lives...in everything we do, eat, and worship. The Deacons and Pastor Dan had an extensive discussion this week about the immediate future of services at our church. First, and foremost, please know that we are here to help any church member in any way...just reach out to us so we can respond. You are all very important to us.

Pastor Dan sent out this note on 4-1...as a reminder, here it is...

**Palm Sunday**-The Deacons, at the suggestion of one of our parishioners, has decided to go ahead with Holy Communion on Palm Sunday after all. If you want to partake, then have some bread and grape juice handy when worship is on YouTube at 10:30 Sunday morning. If you don't have bread or grape juice on hand but still want to participate, just do the best you can. The Lord will understand your heart.

**On Wednesday of Holy Week**- I'll have a video on Facebook Live at 7pm about the First Holy Communion, which was a traditional Jewish Passover Seder. A full Seder meal takes some time, but this will be a short presentation about the elements and the meaning of the Passover Seder and how it applies to us because of the Lord Jesus.

**Holy Thursday**-No Tenebrae Worship this year, but we plan on bringing it back next year.

**Good Friday**- I'll post a Good Friday devotional at 9:00 a.m. Starting at 3:00 p.m. we'll have a prayer meeting on Facebook Live for anyone who wants to pray.

**Easter Sunday**-I plan to get on Facebook Live from someplace out in the country, just before dawn, and have a short worship service of prayers, Scripture and a devotional as the sun rises behind me. We'll still be having church at 10:30 a.m. on-line.

Pastor has been making many calls to our church members and now the Diaconate Board will assist him. So during the month of April you will probably hear from one of the Diaconate members via phone, just to chat and see how you're doing. We hope you will enjoy this visit.

We encourage you to watch for emails, snail mail and other communications from the church. We will do our best to keep you all informed of changes or progress being made until we get back to NORMAL! Please do not hesitate to call us if there is anything we can do to assist you during this “life interruption”! Blessings to all our Church members.



2020

FCC CALENDAR OF EVENTS!

Sunday Worship Services: 8 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.

Adult Bible Study: 9:30am

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
 Monday-Friday 9am-noon 641-752-4239						
			1	2	3 7pm Kinsmen for Christ bible study via Zoom	4
5 Palm Sunday 10:30 You Tube Service Communion	6	7	8 7pm FB Live : traditional Jewish Passover Seder	9	10 Good Friday 9am FB Devotional 3pm FB prayer meeting	11
12 Easter Sunrise Service and 10:30 You Tube Service	13	14 8:30am MBC meets	15	16 6:30pm Trustees meet	17 7pm Kinsmen for Christ bible study via Zoom	18
19 10:30 You Tube Service  11:45am BCE meets	20	21 6:30pm Deacons meet	22	23	24	25 11am MOW Volunteers: Shelly Speas
26 10:30 You Tube Service	27	28	29	30	<u>color code:</u> youth events Church mtgs Special events Comm. Events Color copy on bulletin boards <b>Page 8</b>	





First Congregational Church  
312 W. Main St.  
Marshalltown, IA 50158

Office hours 9 a.m. - noon Mon - Fri 641-752-4239  
Worship Services: 8 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.  
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m. All ages in the LOFT  
web page: [www.fccmarshalltown.org](http://www.fccmarshalltown.org)

A member of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches

