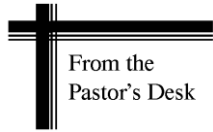


# Pilgrim's Progress

## December 2022

"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

### **Events:**

*December 18* Christmas Pageant and Soup for Lunch

*December 24* Worship Christmas Eve, but not on Christmas Day. The

next

worship service is New Year's Day

### From the Scriptures

The Incarnation, "your God reigns" Isaiah 52:7 and Romans 10:15

One of the Scriptures that are traditionally read during Advent is Isaiah 52:7, which ends with the phrase, "Your God reigns!" In its original context, the great prophet Isaiah, years before the fall of Jerusalem, has not only predicted her takeover by the Empire of Babylon, but also her ultimate deliverance after the fall of that Empire some years later. Isaiah sees the sovereignty of God is this prediction, in that, failures, disasters and the march of time cannot stop God's plans. He reigns, and even with impending doom approaching, Isaiah sees that God will have His way in the ends. Centuries later, the Apostle Paul quotes this very phrase from Isaiah in Romans 10:15, when he was writing about the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Advent is all about coming, Christ coming as a little baby born in Bethlehem, and Christ coming in power and glory sometime in the future, but perhaps Advent is also about sovereignty. God is sovereign and nothing can stop His plans from coming to pass. We are not in charge, and perhaps that is a good thing. Perhaps Advent is a good time to ponder that. Have a blessed season.

-Pastor Dan



### **Sermons: Overall Theme- The Kingdom of God**

*December 4* Preparation for the Kingdom Isaiah 11:1-10; Matthew 3:1-12

*December 11* Least in the Kingdom Isaiah 35:1-10; Matthew 11:2-11

*December 18* (8 a.m.) God with Us Isaiah 7:10-16; Matthew 1:18-25

10:30 a.m. worship is the Christmas Pageant put on by the children and youth groups. Soup will be offered for lunch after worship.

*December 24* Christmas Eve Children of God Isaiah 52:7-10; John 1:1-14

**No worship services on Christmas Day. There will be worship on New Year's Day.**



Your support of our church is always greatly appreciated. As the year comes to an end, please keep in mind that all donations for 2022 need to be at the church before December 29<sup>th</sup> for this year's records and taxes. Thank you!



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



**Bickford:** Joanie Smith-Legg #108,  
**Mill Pond Care Center:** Romaine Mackaman  
**Southridge:** Betty Runner #212, Carol Stanley  
**Glenwood Place:** Loretta Stubbe #150, Jan More #112, Mildred Lathrop #145, Bob Becker #175, Bonnie Pappas #177, Lenora Brown #147, Joan Carter #116, Iva Howard #164



Breana & Luis Alvarado	12/4/15	7 years
Greg & Barbara Ellcey	12/12/60	62 years



December 2	Sarah Paustian	December 25	Norma Dannen
December 6	John Beaty	December 27	Nate Speas
December 8	Don Bogenrief	December 28	Sarah Nullmeyer
December 11	Brent Vellinga	December 29	Patrick Stewart
December 12	Shauna Banks	December 30	Todd Stanley
December 20	Anita Niehouse, Nay Liew	December 31	Cindy Shirar
December 21	Loretta Stubbe		



### News from The Diaconate

December 4<sup>th</sup> we will celebrate Pastor Dan's 35<sup>th</sup> year of ordination! Dan was ordained in our church. Please come to Fellowship Time to enjoy a piece of cake in his honor. Our Pastor Emeritus, Pastor Ellcey is also celebrating his 60<sup>th</sup> year of ordination in December as well. Congratulations to both of you.

The Diaconate will be providing poinsettias and a Christmas card to our members who are in facilities.

Our Candlelight Christmas Eve service will be at 5 P.M. on December 24<sup>th</sup>. Please plan to attend our pre-service concert at 4:45 P.M. featuring Gary Heggen, Arlene Selby and other FCC musicians. There will be no services on Sunday, December 25<sup>th</sup> to allow our members to spend time with their families. We will have regular services on January 1<sup>st</sup>.



# NEWS FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

## CHURCH FINANCIAL INFORMATION THRU NOVEMBER 2022

Through November our year-to-date Tithes and Offerings are \$120,431.44. Compared to the 2022 total year budget of \$176,496, we are at 68.2% of Budget. If you are able and willing to support our church through new or additional Tithes and Offerings, we gratefully thank you. It would be great if we were able to achieve our Tithes and Offerings Budget goal for 2022.

### ONLINE GIVING

If you prefer Online Giving to First Congregational Church, simply click the link below to give to the church using On-Line Giving.

[My Tithes and Offering Online Link](#)

Thank you for your continued support of First Congregational Church!

### CAPITAL DONATION SUGGESTIONS

Your church has the need to invest significant dollars in several capital projects for the long-term health of the church. The financial plan approved at the 2021 annual meeting included the strategy of funding capital improvements through donations for designated projects. The Trustees have determined that the projects listed below are of the highest priority to be accomplished for the remainder of 2022. By donating to these projects, or to the general capital fund, you can assist your church in maintaining its strength for many years. Please prayerfully consider supplementing your normal giving with gifts directed to the following capital projects.

<u>2022 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS</u>		
<b>Capital Project</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>\$\$ Raised</b>
Two new security cameras – north entrance of church	\$1,000	0
Motion sensors for lights/fans in 4 bathrooms	\$3,000	0
New vented system for tip of Sanctuary roof	\$10,000	0
16 Education Wing windows – Refurbish and Paint	\$10,900	0
Stain glass windows – Inspection/Repair/Replace	\$40,000	0
Sanctuary organ cleaning and upgrade	\$140,000	\$103,000



### Inclement Weather Information:

When the weather is questionable, please refer to KCCI, KFJB, or Kix 101.1 for the latest weather updates about cancellations or postponements.



**Open Chapel ~ Open Chapel is available from 1:00-2:00pm every Wednesday. It is a time for Mediation and Quiet Reflection and is open to all.**



## **News from Missions and Benevolence**



The mission's team is still committed to doing our part for Meals on Wheels in Marshalltown! Our part is; one Saturday a month (the fourth Saturday) and we do the east route. What's new and exciting is that we now go to the new hospital and pick up and our old blue route has become the east route. Please sign up in the narthex or call the church office (641-752-4239) to volunteer. You will be making a difference for someone that day and it feels good to help out. Any questions please call me Kristi Hassler 641-753-3276 or Doris McCarty 641-752-7604.

### Open 2023 Dates

March 25  
July 22  
November 25

April 22  
August 26  
December 23

May 27  
September 23

June 24  
October 28

## **HOC Giving Tree at FCC 2022**



Thank you for voting for Adopt a Family project for 2022, making it a project to which FCC Missions and Benevolence Committee (MBC) is excited to commit our church.

Jonna Wagar is heading up the project, but the whole committee had a great time kicking off the Thanksgiving into Christmas season decorating the HOC Giving Tree just inside the south entrance of the church. The tree is decorated with gift tags describing the age, gender and when appropriate, size of one of our adoptees plus the gift items needed or wanted.

To receive these services, families had to demonstrate financial need. Only children less than 18 years of age will receive gifts of essentials (like clothing) and a couple of nonessential items. All families are offered a bible in the language they choose and a \$30 gift card from one of six local stores.

MBC has reserved funds to finance the purchase of bibles and the gift cards. We invite all church members to join us in the joy of giving as follows.

- **Take one or more gift tags from the tree. MAKE SURE TO KEEP THESE TAGS!**
- **Purchase the item on the gift tag**
- **Tape the gift tag to the unwrapped gift; if clothing, also attach the sales receipt**
- **Deliver the gift UNWRAPPED WITH THE TAG ATTACHED to the Choir Room at FCC NO LATER THAN TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2022.**

If you would like to contribute to this project, but are unable to shop, consider a cash donation. Write your check to FCC earmarked for HOC Giving Tree Project and mail or deliver it to our church secretary no later than TUESDAY, December 13, 2022. The MBC will use cash contributions to purchase of items on tags remaining on the gift tree after December 13<sup>th</sup> and additional gift items as funds allow.



# YOUTH GROUP NEWS



DOG's for preschool-5th grade on Tuesday nights in the Fellowship Hall from 5-6:30pm with a meal. December—6,13,20

Not on Dec. 27th because of Christmas Break



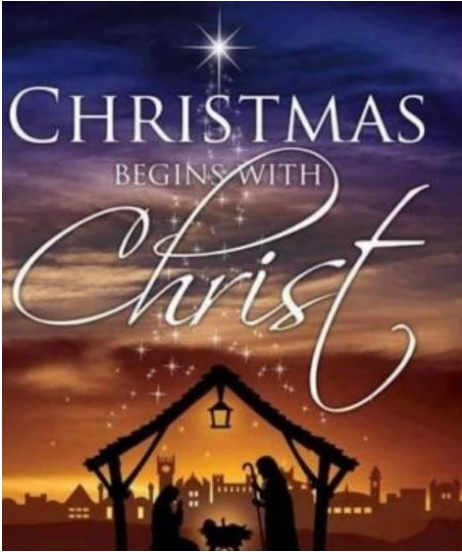
Jr PY for 6-8th grade on Wednesday nights from 5-6:15pm in the Loft and PY for 9-12th grade on Wednesday nights from 6:45-8pm in the Loft both with a meal from 6:15-6:45pm in the Fellowship Hall: December—7,14,21 Not on Dec. 28th because of Christmas Break



No regular Power Hour in December because we will be using that time to get ready for the children's Christmas Program. Also, no Power Hour on Sunday, Dec. 25th because of Christmas.



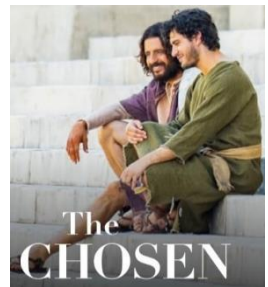
In November the youth groups had a wonderful time putting together Operation Christmas Child boxes to send to children in need of hope and love around the world! This is a Samaritan's Purse program. Many thanks to the church members who donated items for our kids to put in the boxes!



We are getting excited for this year's Children's Christmas Program which will be Sunday, December 18th during the 10:30am service. This year's play is "Christmas begins with Christ Ebenezer Scrooge" All kids in preschool-12th grade in our youth programs are welcome and encouraged to be a part of the play!! Please be at as many practices as you can so you know your parts and can practice with the group! We will have practices the following days and times in December:

- Saturday, Dec. 3rd—(6-7:30pm)
- Sunday, Dec. 4th—(9-10:15am)
- Saturday, Dec. 10th—(10:30am-12:30pm)
- Sunday, Dec. 11th—(9-10:15am)
- Friday, Dec. 16th—(5-7pm) Dress rehearsal #1
- Saturday, Dec. 17th—(10:30am-12:30pm) Dress rehearsal #2
- Sunday, Dec. 18th—Children's Christmas Program (kids be at church at 8:45am)

The Chosen adult Bible study will be Sunday nights starting at 6:30pm in the Loft on December 11th & 18th.



The House of Compassion Supply Closet is in need of supplies, especially laundry detergent, dish soap and shampoo for those that can help!





## **The Light of Our Life!**

As we anticipate the birthday of our Lord and Savior, we wish all of our fellow congregants and their extended families the warmest wishes for a season of joy and blessings. We leave you with three brilliant reminders.

“Once in our world, a Stable had something in it that was bigger than our whole world.” C.S. Lewis from “The Last Battle”

“God could, had He pleased, have been incarnate in a man of iron nerves, the Stoic sort who lets no sigh escape Him. Of His great humility He chose to be incarnate in a man of delicate sensibilities who wept at the grave of Lazarus and sweated blood in Gethsemane.” C.S Lewis personal correspondence.

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.  
1 John 4:16

Above all, wishing you an Advent full of amazement for and contemplation of the extraordinary gift of grace God has given to all who believe.

With Love for FCC,  
The Renewal Coordinating Team



## **Board of Christian Education Highlights**

**Adult Sunday School class is doing a series called The Commission. Anyone can join at any time!**

**Confirmation: Formal confirmation classes have ended. Confirmation Sunday has been moved to February, with a final date still to be determined.**

**Junior and Senior High Youth Groups went to Center Grove Orchard in October. They have some upcoming events scheduled as well:**

- **Winter Jam on Friday, February 10<sup>th</sup>**
- **Winter Retreat, date TBD.**
- **Ignite: March 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>, at Grace Church in Des Moines, IA.**

**They are continuing their curriculum which relates to asking tough questions to/about God. Shelly said that it has generated some great discussion with the kids.**

**DOGS: The kids are continuing to work through their planned curriculum for the year. They took a break one of the weeks surrounding Halloween, and Shelly presented the Gospel message using a pumpkin.**

**Most meals have been covered during the month of November for both DOGS and Jr. PY/PY. Shelly will order pizza on the weeks that there isn't a volunteer signed up to bring a meal.**

**The Adult Bible study group has been meeting twice a month to watch The Chosen. Shelly reports that the sessions are going well. The group is open to adults of all ages.**

**The Women's Ministries Group offers Bible study on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays. The first Monday of each month is a fellowship get-together.**

**NAPF/HOPE: The 2023 Conference will take place June 24<sup>th</sup> – June 29<sup>th</sup>. The theme will be "Onward and Upward", based on a verse in Philippians. They are still in the process of finding a specific location within the Milwaukee area to host the event.**

**The Christmas program will take place during the service on Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup>. BCE will host a soup supper following the service. People will be asked if they would like to make a crock pot of soup for the soup supper.**





## HARVEST DINNER 2022



Ilan Meyer & Savannah Piper

It was so great to see all the smiles of those who attended this year's Harvest Dinner.

There are MANY thanks to extend to our wonderful volunteers, without whom this celebration couldn't have happened. First and foremost, we thank our Harvest Dinner "prep" team: Rod & Kristi Hassler and Lisa Blabaum with Julianne Packer as event coordinator. From choosing the caterer to making sure the last dish was put away after the dinner ... they did a super job seeing that the event was a success.

A special thanks to Ian Meyer and Savannah Piper who greeted Sunday morning worshippers during the 10:30 a.m. service, portraying pilgrims. Ian and Savannah continued in their volunteering when they joined several FCC Youth in serving meals to the dinner attendees in Fellowship Hall. The Youth servers had turkey or ham dinners served to 94 hungry

people in no time! Thank you Arlene Selby and Lynn Maas for leading us in a verse of "We Gather Together" and to Pastor Dan for blessing the meal; Pat Anderson for making all the cranberries, to the Saturday set-up crew, the Sunday morning crew and the clean-up crew ... THANK YOU so very much: Julie Squiers, Georgia Thomas, Linda McGregor, Paul Packer, Dwayne & Maxie Shultz, Jane VerMulm & her friend Marian, Kim Schryver, Al & Judy Hays, Greg, Kristin, Ian, Clair & Libby Meyer, Brandon Goken, Layla Wimberly-Kersbergen, Shelly & Lydia Speas, Hunter Diggins, Melanie Brandt, Breanna Edwards-Hovey, Mallory Fowler. And last but not least, THANK YOU ALL that attended and enjoyed Harvest Dinner 2022!



Ilan Meyer, Pastor Dan, & Savannah Piper



Kristin Meyer, Rod & Kristi Hassler  
Paul Packer (back-left)



L-R: Breanna Edwards-Hovey, Hunter Diggins, Mallory Fowler, Libby & Clair Meyer, Brandon Goken



What does Christmas mean biblically?

It is a time of God showing His great love for us. It can be a time of healing and renewed strength. Sure, enjoy the season but remember to rejoice as well! After all, the true meaning of Christmas is **the celebration of God's ultimate gift: the birth of Jesus, the Christ child.**



Merry Christmas from all of us here  
at First Congregational Church!



FCC CALENDAR OF EVENTS!  
 Sunday Worship Services:  
 8am & 10:30am in person  
 10:30am Service is also on You Tube

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		Monday-Friday 9am-Noon 641-752-4239				
<b>color code:</b> youth events Church mtgs Special events Comm. Events Color copy on bulletin boards				<b>1</b> Bell choir 5:30-6:30 pm in library	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> x-mas program practice 6:30-7:30pm
<b>4</b> <b>Communion</b> In-Person Worship 8am and 10:30 svcs In Sanctuary 10:30 Svc/YouTube Fellowship follows x-mas program practice 9-10:15am	<b>5</b> Women's Ministry meeting @ 5:30	<b>6</b> D.O.G.S 5:00 - 6:30	<b>7</b> Men's church coffee 8am @ Hy-Vee  <b>Open Chapel 1-2 pm</b>  JR PY 5:00-6:45 PY 6:15-8:00	<b>8</b> Bell choir 5:30-6:30 pm in library  <b>6:30 pm RCT meets</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> x-mas program practice 10:30am-12:30pm
<b>11</b> In-Person Worship 8am and 10:30 svcs In Sanctuary 10:30 Svc/YouTube Fellowship follows x-mas program practice 9-10:15am Adult Bible Study @ 630	<b>12</b> Women's Bible Study @ 5:30 in Library	<b>13</b> BMC meets 8:45am  D.O.G.S 5:00 - 6:30	<b>14</b> Men's church coffee 8am @ Hy-Vee  <b>Open Chapel 1-2 pm</b>  JR PY 5:00-6:45 PY 6:15-8:00	<b>15</b> Bell choir 5:30-6:30 pm in library  <b>6:30 pm Trustees meet</b>	<b>16</b> x-mas program practice 5-7pm	<b>17</b> x-mas program practice 10:30am-12:30pm
<b>18</b> In-Person Worship 8am and 10:30 svcs In Sanctuary 10:30 Svc/YouTube Fellowship follows Christmas Program & Soup Luncheon 11:45am BCE Adult Bible Study @ 630	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> D.O.G.S 5:00 - 6:30  Diaconate meets 6:30 pm	<b>21</b> Men's church coffee 8am @ Hy-Vee  <b>Open Chapel 1-2 pm</b>  JR PY 5:00-6:45 PY 6:15-8:00	<b>22</b> Bell choir 5:30-6:30 pm in library	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> 11am MOW Pastor Dan  <b>Christmas Eve Service 5:00 pm</b>
<b>25</b> <b>Christmas Day</b>   <b>No Services</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> Men's church coffee 8am @ Hy-Vee  <b>Open Chapel 1-2 pm</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</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.fcmarshaltown.org](http://www.fcmarshaltown.org)

A member of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches

