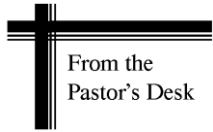


Pilgrim's Progress

March 2023

"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."



Main Article: Reading the Bible

Food for the soul

The Bible is, admittedly, not an easy book to read. Even highly trained scholars sometimes struggle with some of the passages of this great book. But reading it remains one of the most important of spiritual disciplines because while it is a great book—even avowed atheists recognize it as one of the most influential books in Western Civilization (I think that it is The most influential book in Western Civilization), it is more than that. The Bible is the inspired Word of God from beginning to end. All of it has a purpose, even the parts that are difficult to understand or are very challenging. The Bible claims for itself divine authority that strengthens and nourishes our souls the way healthy food nourishes our bodies. The Apostle Peter wrote, "Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the world, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious" (1 Peter 2:1-3. Paul added his endorsement in the last of his biblical letters: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The Bible is inspired, and it is good for you. Numerous other examples exist, but I think the biggest problem reading the Bible is in the matter of how to do it. Many people recognize the authority of the Bible but don't know how to get started.

Different plans

Some people find that they can meditate on the Bible by reading straight through a book of the Bible. They take notes of both the insights and the questions they gain. Others find it helpful to use Bible study workbooks, with a focus either on a book of the Bible or a particular theme of the Bible. Some people don't find reading that much fun, and they can use the Bible on some sort of audio format, which is particularly helpful if you have a job that requires a lot of driving. In the early days of the church, the letters of the New Testament were meant to be read aloud in church, so the earliest students of the New Testament were listeners. I highly recommend that you buy a good study Bible, if you don't already have one. The "Life Application" Study Bible is a good format with very practical study notes, but there are others that will also serve you well. Getting deeper into the study of the Bible is an excellent discipline for Lent. Let me know if I can be helpful to you with this. Have a wonderful March and God bless you.

Pastor Dan

Sermons:

March 5 2nd Sunday of Lent

Genesis 12:1-4; Romans 4:1-5 "A Multi-Generational Journey"

March 12 3rd Sunday of Lent

Exodus 17:1-7; Romans 5:1-11 "Into this Shared Grace"

March 19 4th Sunday of Lent

Ephesians 2:8-10; John 9:1-4 "Into This Shared Work"

March 26 5th Sunday of Lent

Ezekiel 37:1-14; Romans 8:6-11





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, Bonnie Pappas

Glenwood Place: Loretta Stubbe #150, Jan More #112, Mildred Lathrop #145,
Bob Becker #175, Lenora Brown #147, Iva Howard #164



Jeremy & Julie Lavender
Bing & Dorothy McHone

March 4, 2010
March 28, 1998

13 years
25 years



March 2 Kayla Bogenrief
March 3 Leta Lacina
March 4 Barbara Ellcey, Erin Stanley
March 7 Barb Hibbs, Erin Jensen
March 8 Caroline Lavender
March 9 Bob Bauer
March 10 Greg Meyer, Reed Swartz

March 14 Dorothy McHone
March 15 Julie Paustian
March 17 Jenny Sauer
March 21 Dave Dysart
March 22 Raymond Kersbergen
March 24 Lenora Brown
March 31 Nick Carson



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.



News from Diaconate Board

As we enter the season of Lent, you will notice the altar cloth and pulpit scarf are purple. Purple is a **penitential color**, in contrast to a festive one. It is appropriately used during Lent. The forty days of Lent, including the six Sundays that fall during this season, use this deep, rich color which has come to represent somberness and solemnity, penitence, and prayer. The only time the altar cross is draped is during Lent and the Easter season.

Upcoming events:

March 1st – postponed Ash Wednesday at 7 P.M. in the church sanctuary

April 2nd – Palm Sunday

April 6th – Maundy Thursday Tenebrae service at 7 P.M. in the church sanctuary.

We will be having the Easter Memorial Garden this year. Forms and envelopes will be in the Sunday bulletins beginning March 19th. Cost per Easter lily is \$20.

We were happy to bring into church membership the 8 Confirmands and the Lundberg's during the month of February.



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

May 27	June 24	July 22	August 26
September 23	October 28	November 25	December 23

March is our month to supply the House of Compassion with much needed items for the Supply Closet. When I recently talked with Chad Hammer he told me they served 295 families and nearly 2,200 people in 2022. He said he saw the needs continue to increase last year and anticipates with increasing inflation/poor economy that clients' needs will be even higher.

The most needed items are laundry detergent, dish soap and toilet paper. He also has a great need for empty sports drink bottles as they divide the laundry detergent and dish soap when they get large containers. There will be shamrocks hanging in fellowship hall and the back entrance. Feel free to take one! They list the needed supplies and last day to drop off at the church.

Body wash and shampoo are also greatly appreciated as are cleaning products such as Pine Sol, Disinfecting wipes, or cleansers.

Don't feel like shopping but want to help. You can leave a check with HOC supply closet drive in memo and I will be happy to shop for you. 😊 Thank you for your donations! They can be dropped off at the church office. We will collect them downstairs in fellowship hall through March 26th. I will have a table downstairs for them. Any questions contact Cheryl Woltjer, 641-751-2466. You can leave me a message or text, and I will get back to you!



YOUTH GROUP NEWS



Power Hour Sunday mornings at 9:15pm in the Loft for preschool-12th grade. March 5,19,26.
No Power Hour March 12th because of Spring Break.

DOG's Tuesday night is 5-6:30pm in the Fellowship Hall for preschool-5th grade with a meal provided. March 7,21,28.
No DOG's March 14th because of Spring Break.



Jr PY Wednesday night's 5-6:45pm in the Loft for 6-8th grade with a meal provided. March 8,22,29.
No Jr PY March 15th because of Spring Break.

PY Wednesday nights 6:15-8pm in the Loft for 9-12th grade with a meal provided. March 8,22,29.
No PY March 15th because of Spring Break.



The Chosen adult Bible study will begin again with Season two of The Chosen on Sunday March 12 in the Loft at church. Please join us for this awesome Bible study!



In February we had a photo scavenger hunt in the neighborhoods surrounding the church with our DOG's group.



February 10th we took some of our youth group to the Winter Jam Christian concert in Des Moines.



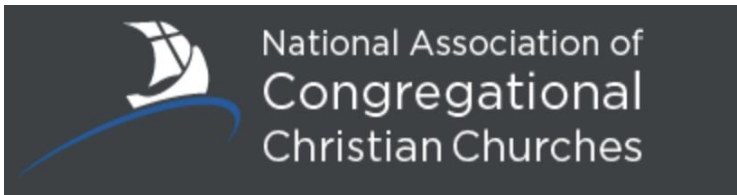
Eight confirmands were welcomed as members of the church on Sunday, February 19th. On Feb. 18th, there was a banquet with the confirmation class and their mentors and families where the youth shared their statement of faith papers, expressing their love for God and faith in Jesus Christ. They celebrated with a reception after church on Sunday.



February 25-26 was our Youth Winter Retreat for our Jr PY & PY groups. We had 32 youth join us for the retreat where we went winter tubing, saw Jesus Revolution at the movie theater, had an overnight at the church, and went to church service together Sunday morning.



FCC SHOWED REAL HEART IN SUPPORT OF SYRIA AND TURKEY!!!!
Submitted by: Kim Schryver, Chairman FCC Mission and Benevolence Comm.



One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS)

<https://www.naccc.org/missions-outreach/>

In recent years, the member churches and the NACCC have contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars through the One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) program to a host of missions and ministries targeting hunger, homelessness, wild fires, earthquakes, flooding, hurricanes, tornadoes and typhoons.

Every effort is made to work through member churches and missions closest to those in need. Where our churches and missions are not present, we work through respected and responsible organizations such as the [Salvation Army](#), [Habitat for Humanity](#), [World Vision](#), [Samaritan's Purse](#), and [Church World Services](#), all of them Christian, four star [Charity Navigator](#) recommended agencies.

FCC Benevolence and Missions Committee (BMC) embraced the NACCC call to support Turkey and Syria following the February 6, 2023 earthquakes through not one but two Great Hours of Sharing on Sunday, Feb. 19 and again on Sunday, Feb. 26, 2023. The committee pledged to match up to \$1000 in donations from the congregation. We are humbled by our congregation's response. After church on Feb. 26th, the treasurer totaled all donations for this fund drive in coins, bills and checks. Contributions totaling \$3,246.36 were supplemented by the BMC with an additional \$1000. FCC has forwarded a check for \$4,246,36 from our congregation to NACCC OGHS for Turkey and Syria Earthquake Relief.

Marshalltown KNOWS the heartache and travails that natural disaster wrecks on communities, and we were so fortunate to have not lost lives in either of the recent catastrophes – 2018 tornado and 2020 derecho. We can only imagine in part the horrors of the recent earthquakes in Turkey and Syria where over 50,000 people have died to date, three times as many have been injured, and whole cities, towns and villages have lost infrastructure to access potable water and food supplies, let alone shelters over their heads and medical supports.

The BMC THANKS YOU ALL for the outpouring of financial support in this OGHS x two Sundays. As a committee, we understand that our benevolence ought not end with these donations; please, continue to pray with us for ongoing relief and restoration in earthquake riddled areas.

If you feel called to contribute more, go to the OGHS website for more information and how to give - <https://www.naccc.org/missions-outreach/>



Moderator Report

March 2023 NL MODERATOR – mb

These words from an article by *Reverend Dr. Shawn Stapleton (The Congregationalist, Dec. 2021) express the mutual goals of our church and the NACCC – that of being Stewards of Congregationalism.

Dr. Stapleton writes....“I thought of the powerful individuals and congregations who have gone before us, fighting for the freedom to be who Christ called them to be under his headship. They were human and they made mistakes but they leaned on each other for strength and together sought the Holy Spirit for guidance. Today we are the stewards of that...We have been given a 3 fold charge – Honor our past, be thoughtfully engaged in Christian worship and ministry through Congregational system of governance today and teach others to carry on this legacy.

At its simplest our stewardship takes its greatest form in three areas – FAITH, FREEDOM & FELLOWSHIP.

Rev. Ashley Cleere, Executive Director, speaks about the human tendency to do the same thing

repeatedly and expect different results.(June 15,2023 NACCC News).

As the leadership of FCC Marshalltown begins its service, we look to each member of our congregation for encouragement, support and participation in our worship and work. *Hebrews: 3*

In keeping with the Theme for our year – SHARE

Please “SHARE” yourself in what we are being called to be.

The prayer below which concluded our Annual Meeting is shared by request.

Our Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for our faith. We pray for its increase. We thank Thee for that faith which lives in the witness of the prophets of old, in the gospel and in the life of Thy Son our Saviour. We thank Thee for that faith which for us has its expression in the faith of our mothers, the faith of our fathers, the faith of others who have been an influence in our lives by their witness, and we pray, our Heavenly Father, that this sustaining faith may become the faith of our children and that we by precept and example may contribute to that end; and that they, amid the pressures and the problems of the world in which they live may have the anchorage, the buoyancy, the inspiration of a wholesome faith. Bless all gathered for prayer this day and all of our dear ones, wherever they are. Keep them and us in the shadow of Thy great protection. In Jesus’ name. Amen.



Lent is a period of 40 days during which Christians remember the events leading up to and including the death of Jesus Christ, whose life and teachings are the foundation of Christianity. The 40-day period is called Lent after an old English word meaning 'lengthen'.



Lent will be observed from February 22 to April 8 this year. It is a period of religious observance in the Christian liturgical calendar, marking the 40 days that Jesus spent fasting in the desert, enduring temptation by Satan.



NACCC NEWS

Being Church

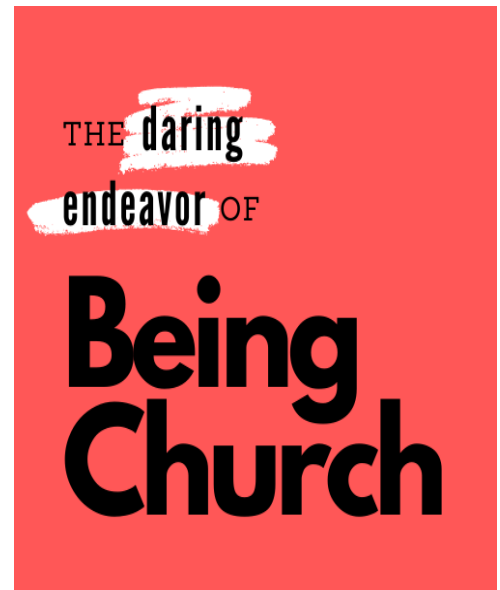
Rev. Arthur Ritter, Moderator

In anticipation of this June's Annual Meeting and Conference theme, "[The Daring Endeavor of Being Church](#)," we are calling what used to be workshops "[Sharing Endeavors](#)." We look forward to the information that will be presented by our speakers and shared by others who attend.

In addition, at various times in our business meeting, we will also enjoy hearing examples of "Being Church." In previous years we were

privileged to hear stories from individuals about the importance of the Congregational Church in their lives. This year we look forward to hearing stories of the exciting and perhaps unusual ways in which God's Spirit is working within the ministries of specific churches. We hope that these stories will inspire listeners to consider similar ways of "being church" when they return from the AMC.

There is much to be excited about this June's gathering. I hope that you and your church will make plans to attend.





March 2023

FCC CALENDAR OF EVENTS!
 Sunday Worship Services:
 8:00am & 10:30am

SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY



Monday-Friday
 9am-Noon
 641-752-4239

<p>color code: youth events Church mtgs Special events Comm. Events Color copy on bulletin boards</p>			<p>1 Men's Church coffee 8am @ Hy-Vee Open Chapel 1-2pm Jr PY 5:15-6:30 PY 6:45-8pm</p>	2	3	4
<p>5 Communion In-Person Worship 8am and 10:30 svcs 10:30 Svc/YouTube Fellowship follows 10:30am Svc. Power Hour 9:15am</p>	<p>6 Women's Ministry 5:30pm</p>	<p>7 DOGS 6:15pm</p>	<p>8 Men's Church coffee 8am @ Hy-Vee Open Chapel 1-2pm Jr PY 5:15-6:30 PY 6:45-8pm</p>	<p>9 RCT meets 6:30pm</p>	10	11
<p>12 Daylight savings In-Person Worship 8am and 10:30 svcs 10:30 Svc/YouTube Fellowship follows 10:30am Svc. Adult Bible Study 6:30pm</p>	<p>13 Women's Bible Study 5:30pm</p>	<p>14 BMC meets 8:45am</p>	<p>15 Men's Church coffee 8am @ Hy-Vee Open Chapel 1-2pm</p>	<p>16 6:30pm Trustees</p>	<p>17 St. Patrick's Day</p> 	18
<p>19 In-Person Worship 8am and 10:30 svcs 10:30 Svc/YouTube Fellowship follows 10:30am Svc. Power Hour 9:15am 11:45am BCE</p>	20	<p>21 Deacons Meet 6:30pm DOGS 6:15pm</p>	<p>22 Men's Church coffee 8am @ Hy-Vee Open Chapel 1-2pm Jr PY 5:15-6:30 PY 6:45-8pm</p>	23	24	<p>25 11am MOW Volunteers: Lisa Blabaum</p>
<p>26 In-Person Worship 8am and 10:30 svcs 10:30 Svc/YouTube Fellowship follows 10:30am Svc. Power Hour 9:15am Cabinet Meeting 11:45am</p>	<p>26 Women's Bible study 5:30pm</p>	28	29	30	31	



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

A member of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches

