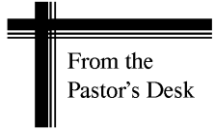


Pilgrim's Progress

September 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."



Thanks for help with VBS

As we start the month of September, I wanted to mention something that happened shortly before the beginning of Vacation Bible School. The volunteers who organized the school published as list of donations (a lot of it was food) they needed to be ready to feed all the children, teens and adults who participated, and by the beginning of the school they had all the donations they needed. I think that says something very positive about the support our church community gave to this, the biggest outreach we have on a yearly basis. The kitchen help, the people leading the opening and closing sessions, the group leaders, Bible teachers, art teachers and play leaders and others did a great job, with strong support from the church, which led to another successful Vacation Bible School. Thank you so much to all you participated, donated, and prayed for this endeavor. In writing this I hold close to my heart that promise in Isaiah 55:11- "So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it." I believe all those Bible lessons stay with children the rest of their lives, and the Holy Spirit can do great things in the lives of those children. Thank you for your prayers and for your hard work.

What's happening in September

The Lawn-The Women's Ministry will gather at 5:30 p.m. at the church fellowship hall to pull weeds and spruce up the greenery around the building. Everyone, including the men, are invited to help.

Our organ is rebuilt and will be dedicated in a special gathering open to the public on September 10. The prelude will begin at 2:45 with a special rededication service starting at 3:00. Mr. Mark Babcock, professor of music at Central College in Pella, Iowa, will be our special guest.

Rally Sunday is September 17. Believe it or not, all the wonderous activities of the Children's and Student Ministries officially starts with a bang on that Sunday. For many, Relly Sunday is the highlight of the church year.

A Spiritual Discipline to Consider

We're considering a spiritual discipline for every month this year, and for September that discipline is Silence and Solitude. Like fasting, silence and solitude may not be the most popular of disciplines, but in this culture of perpetual noise and constant verbal and written input of questionable honesty, some time to be alone and be quiet can be especially helpful. Some of the best times in prayer are times when we simply sit still and listen, knowing that God is near. It is also good to just stop every once in awhile and look; look around you and take it all in. All that you see and hear and take a few moments to live attentively during our busy schedules and responsibilities. Eilijah, the great prophet, heard the voice of God when he was able to simply be still and listen. Take some time to do the same this month.

Sermons-

September 3
September 10

I Am Exodus 3:13-15; John 8:53-58

Rosh Hashanah is September 15

Creation & New Creation Genesis 2:7; 2 Corinthians 5:17

September 17
September 24

Forgiveness Matthew 18:21-35; Genesis 50:15-21

Yom Kippur

The Mercy Seat Leviticus 16:1-2; Romans 3:21-25



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,

Glenwood Place: Jan More #132, Mildred Lathrop #145, Lenora Brown #147,

Iva Howard #164, Bonnie Pappas #112, Marian Gerdes #166, Anita Niehouse #116

Willows of Marshalltown: Evelyn Thompson



Jennifer Allison & Merrill Swartz	September 12, 1998	25 years
Bob & Linda McGregor	September 16, 1972	51 years
John & Lisa Blabaum	September 28, 1996	27 years
Donn & Pat Anderson	September 29, 1984	39 years
Larry & Sam Good	September 30, 1967	56 years



September 5	Joan Fry	September 19	Jane Benbow
September 6	Ian Meyer	September 21	Kolleen Shollenbarger
September 11	Jeanie Burt	September 22	Darcie Lunsford
September 13	Pastor Dan	September 23	Carol Edeker
September 16	Emily Carson, Sarah Latham, Troy McGahuey	September 24	Wayne Wagar
September 17	Kathaleen Hale	September 27	Roberta Olson
		September 30	Jeremy Lavender



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.

All Dates for 2023 are full! Thank You! The sign up sheet for 2024 is posted.



News from Diaconate Board

The indoor picnic was successful. Harlan Nuss filled the pulpit on August 23rd. It has been hard getting people to fill the pulpit on short notice. We are trying to expand our list of possible candidates.

The organ rebuild has been completed. A minor tuning will take place before the rededication service. Prelude music will be by our talented musicians at FCC. They will begin approximately at 2:45 P.M. The service will be taped and played sometime after the event because we wanted to encourage people to attend in person. We are excited that the activities director at Glenwood Place has agreed to drive the bus to bring our members to the service! Thanks Georgia Thomas for arranging that. A poster has been created, sent to area churches and taken to local businesses. We are excited to welcome our guest organist Professor Mark Babcock. We will have a reception after the service. Speaking of September, we are looking ahead the next few months. We will coordinate the annual Harvest Dinner the Sunday before Thanksgiving. Jane Vermulm will chair that committee. Pastor Dan will take one more vacation in the month of September with the Revs. Miller-Todds filling the pulpit.



CHURCH FINANCIAL INFORMATION THRU JULY, 2023

After seven months of 2023, we are behind budget by -35.2%

Below is the Actual and Budget numbers for our church through September. The Giving includes tithes and offerings. The Budget Expense values are those that have been budgeted through August for the church

The most important value is our tithes and offerings, which are behind budget by -35.2% through July.

JANUARY - JULY 2023 BUDGET UPDATE			
January - July 2023	Actual	Budget	Net
GIVING	66,209	102,091	-35.15%
EXPENSES	155,780	153,481	1.50%



Chancel Choir Practice Information

Friday September 1 at 5:30 pm
Sunday September 3 at 10:00 am

Friday September 8 at 5:30 pm is an **EXTRA IMPORTANT practice** for Sunday September 10. Sunday September 10 practice at 10:00 am. The choir will participate in the 2:45 p.m. preconcert for Mr. Babcock's Sunday afternoon organ concert.



Women's Ministry

Ephesians Bible Study with Jane

Monday September 11 5:30 Library

Monday September 25 5:30 Library

Come One! Come All! Men and Women!

Tuesday September 5 at 5:30 the Women's Ministry is gathering to "tidy up" the church grounds before our exciting visit from Dr. Babcock who is coming to help us rededicate our organ.

Our goal is to:

- 1) Pull errant weeds in the flower beds
- 2) Trim scraggly bushes
- 3) Re-trim the crabapple tree (Lisa did the mammoth first job in June)
- 4) Give special attention to the west side of the church
- 5) Tame the unwanted growth in the parking and sidewalk cracks.

This is much more than 6-7 of us can accomplish in 90 minutes. We need reinforcements! Thank you for joining us to make this effort a success. We have a beautiful building to share...inside and out. Thank you, Lord! Bring your favorite yard tools and a few garbage bags.

Thank you!

Always praying for you,

Your First Congregational Women's Ministry



Youth Group News

The youth of our church are busy planning and practicing a wonderful Spirit-led Rally Day worship service that will take place on Sunday, September 17th. The youth will be leading all the parts of the service and sharing their God given talents and special message with the congregation. So please come and be blessed on this fun and inspiring Sunday! The BCE will be hosting a luncheon following the 10:30am service.

Rally Day Youth Service Practices will be held on Sunday mornings at 9:15am and Wednesday evenings at 7pm for K-12th grade students. Saturday, September 16th there will be a special final run through with the kids. The time for that day will be decided soon.



We are excited to begin our regular weekly youth programs again at the end of September with Power Hour Sunday mornings at 9:15am for preschool-12th grade, DOG's (Depend on God) Tuesday night's 5-6:30pm, Jr PY (Pilgrim Youth) Wednesdays 4:45-6:15pm, and PY Wednesdays 6:30-8pm. Evening groups include meals that are provided. We also can pick up the youth who need rides.

Kickoff for Power Hour will be Sunday, September 24th.

Kickoff for DOG's will be Tuesday, September 26th.

Kickoff for Jr PY & PY will be Wednesday, September 27th.

We are needing volunteers who would like to provide meals on Tuesday or Wednesday nights. This is an important part of the youth ministry and a wonderful way to get to know our youth by connecting to our church. Please pray and consider signing up to help provide meals and contact Shelly Speas if you feel called to help in this way (641-751-9868).

We also need church van drivers who would be willing to drive the church van on Wednesday nights to pick up and drop off the youth. This is also a vital part of the ministry and would be such a great way to help! Please contact Shelly Speas if you feel called to help in this way!

In July the youth group put up flags for the 4th of July as a youth group fundraiser through the Morning Optimist Club. What a wonderful opportunity this is for our group!



In July we hosted an awesome week of Vacation Bible School! We were blessed with 46 kids who got to hear how amazing it is to know and follow Jesus through the twists and turns theme. It takes so many people to be able to host VBS and we are so very thankful to all the fantastic



leaders, people who provided financial support, people who provided food, and to all who prayed over us as we spent time sharing our faith and Jesus love with the kids.



In August we took a group of our youth to a fun day at Adventureland.



In August we had a water fun day with some of our kids at church followed by a devotional and ice cream treats.



Organ Project Finances:

Following is a summary of the finances regarding the Organ project as of 9-1-23. The contractor expenses were all associated with and required by Levsen in order to complete the project. We are thankful for the incredibly generous contribution by the Packer family and for those additional donations. Please prayerfully consider a donation to this very significant project and other capital projects at First Congregational Church.

FCC ORGAN UPGRADE PROJECT FINANCES	
EXPENSES	
LEVSEN ORGAN CO. =	(\$128,948.00)
ELECTRICAL, PLUMBING, DRYWALL & CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTORS =	(\$4,629.02)
TOTAL EXPENSE =	(\$133,577.02)
CONTRIBUTIONS	
AL PACKER MEMORIALS =	\$101,480.00
DONATION FOR ORGAN REPAIR =	\$9,768.00
SEVERAL ADDITIONAL DONATIONS =	\$20,700.00
TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS AS OF 9-1-23 =	\$131,948.00
BALANCE =	(\$1,629.02)

God bless you for supporting FCC's capital projects. it would be very difficult to fund these projects without your support.



Labor Day is a federal holiday in the United States celebrated on the first Monday in September to honor and recognize the American labor movement and the works and contributions of laborers to the development and achievements of the United States.



Our vision is like true north on the compass. It describes the place/the church we want to be in five to ten years. In our renewal process, we as a congregation discerned our vision and expressed it in "Key Elements of Our Story: What we Believe God is Calling Us to Be: The Future." *Seeing* the future is a critical first step, but *it will take action to achieve* that vision. There are many routes we could take to realize God's destination for us. And because no church can do everything at once, we will identify one church-wide direction (or maybe two) for starters.

That directional focus will be **our congregational mission** for the next one to two years. Choosing our congregational mission is like choosing a *road route or a tract to get to the place we believe God wants us to be*. Which direction should we take first? What should be our main direction in the next one to two years?

FCC Cabinet wants all who want to participate to join us in identifying one or two elements of our vision that are most important to the congregation as a whole to pursue. We are calling this initiative a "Vision to Mission Exercise."

Vision to Mission Exercise Coming for Boards/Committees/Staff/Other Standing Groups

If you are presently on a board or committee or engaged in an FCC group, you will have a chance to work with that assembly on this exercise at a meeting in September.

Vision to Mission Exercise - Open Focus Group Options

If you are not presently on a board or committee or can't make your regular meeting in September, join us in one of the following open focus groups. You need only choose ONE time.

- | | | | |
|------------------------|----------------|----------------------------|----------------|
| Focus Gr. I: SUNDAY | SEPT. 10, 2023 | 11:45 – 12:30 PM | IN FCC LIBRARY |
| Focus Gr. II: THURSDAY | SEPT. 14, 2023 | 7:00 – 7:45 PM | IN FCC LIBRARY |
| Focus Gr. III: TUESDAY | SEPT. 5, 2023 | FOR GLENWOOD LTC Residents | |



The FCC Cabinet met Sunday, August 27. Members are representatives of the Boards and Committees (usually the Chairs) that guide the work of our church: Board of Trustees, Board of Deacons, Board of Christian Education, Benevolence and Missions Committee, 3 Members At-Large (one is Assistant Moderator), Moderator, Assistant Moderator, Clerk , plus ex-officio members, Pastor and Treasurer. Names and contact information can be found in the current Blue Book, copies available outside the Church Office.

A description of the make-up and duties of each of the above Boards or Committees is prescribed in the By-Laws which govern our Church, copies also available from the Church Office.

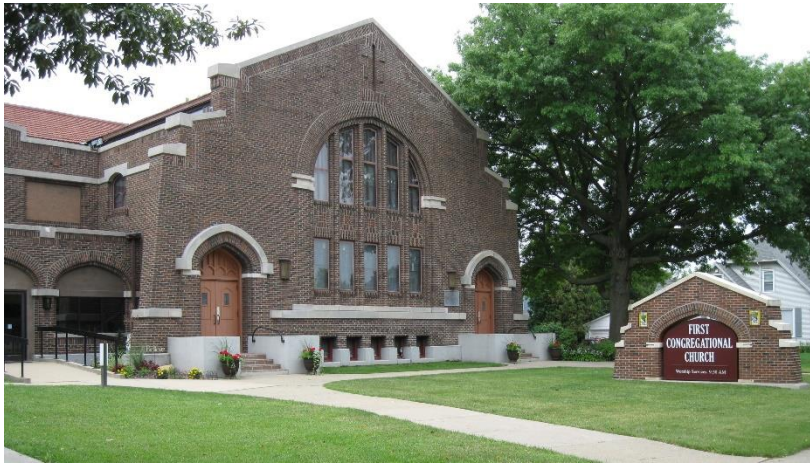
The Cabinet meets a minimum of four times annually to report, discuss and coordinate the business and activities of our Church.

On our agenda this meeting, in addition to discussion of the planning for Fall and Holiday activities,

it was reported the Nominating Committee and the Budgeting Committee of the Board of Trustees would soon begin work.

Your comments and inquiries are always welcome as is your support of the many folks who serve in so many ways.

With Respect & Responsibility,
Miriam Bryant, Moderator
First Congregational Church Cabinet

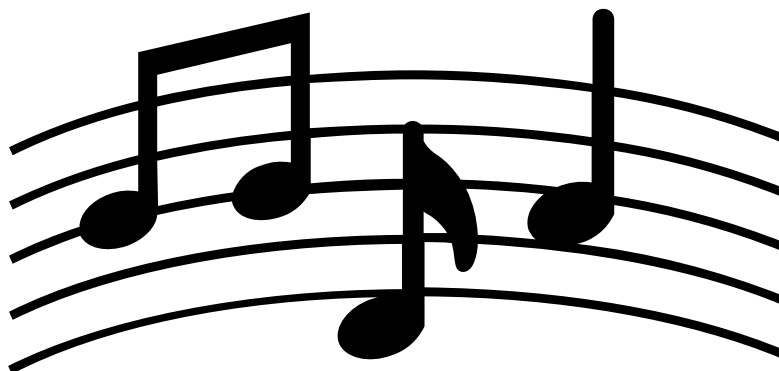


First Congregational Church is proud to present Mark A. Babcock, Principal Organist of St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral, Des Moines, as guest organist on Sunday, September 10th at 3:00 p.m. for the rededication church service of our rebuilt pipe organ. Musical members of the church will present a preservice prelude starting at 2:45 P.M.



A native Iowan, Mr. Babcock is the Farver Endowed Chair in Music at Central College, Pella and performs regularly on and off campus. His performances have included engagements in Brazil, China, Italy, and the National Cathedral in Washington.

This event is free and open to the public. A reception will follow in the church Fellowship Hall.



September

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				
color code: youth events Church mtgs Special events Comm. Events Color copy on bulletin boards					1 Chancel choir practice @ 5:30	2
3 Communion In-Person Worship 8am and 10:30 svcs 10:30 Svc/YouTube Fellowship follows 10:30am Svc	4 Labor Day  office Closed	5 Women's Ministry @ 5:30 "Tidy Up"	6 Men's Church coffee 8am @ Hy-Vee	7	8 Chancel choir practice @ 5:30 (important)	9
10 Rededication service @ 3pm In-Person Worship 8am and 10:30 svcs 10:30 Svc/YouTube Fellowship follows 10:30am Svc V2M focus I mtg @ 11:45	11 Women's Bible Study @ 5:30	12 8:45am BMC meet	13 Men's Church coffee 8am @ Hy-Vee	14 V2M focus mtg II @ 7:00pm	15	16
17 Rally Sunday In-Person Worship 8am and 10:30 svcs 10:30 Svc/YouTube Fellowship follows 10:30am Svc 11:45am BCE	18	19 Diaconate Meets 6:30 pm	20 Men's Church coffee 8am @ Hy-Vee	21 Trustees meet @ 7:00pm	22	23 11am MOW Volunteer: Kim Schryver
24 Power Hour @ 9:15 In-Person Worship 8am and 10:30 svcs 10:30 Svc/YouTube Fellowship follows 10:30am Svc	25 Women's Bible Study @ 5:30	26 DOG's 5-6:30 pm	27 Men's Church coffee 8am @ Hy-Vee Jr PY 4:45-6:15pm PY 6:30-8pm	28	29	30

September

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

A member of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches

