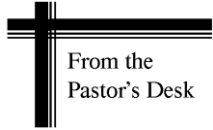


# Pilgrim's Progress

## October 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."



From the  
Pastor's Desk

### The Spiritual Discipline of Silence and Solitude

From the book, Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life by Donald S. Whitney  
(Navpress, Colorado Springs, 1991)

"The Bet" by Anton Chekov

In the book I've been reading this year on Spiritual Disciplines, the chapter on Silence and Solitude includes a description of a short story by the great Russian writer Anton Chekov in which a wealthy banker, wanting to prove that solitary confinement is worse than death, challenges an upstart young lawyer with a bet. If the young lawyer can withstand being alone for five years, the banker will give him 5 million rubles. He will have everything that he requests, but without human contact. The lawyer offers to do 15 years and so is imprisoned in a fine house on the estate of the banker, with everything he could request, save any human contact. Guards were hidden on the estate to see if the lawyer would escape and so lose the bet.

The lawyer did not leave but stayed in his private house for fifteen years. He received good food, any book he wanted and had access to a grand piano. For the first few years people heard the grand piano day and night. Over the next few years, he read dozens of books from the classics, and then taught himself how to read in several languages. Then he spent years studying the Scriptures and theology. The last couple of years he added reading in a variety of subject in addition to the Scriptures and theology.

The night before the bet was to end, the banker, now impoverished and desperate not to lose the 5 million rubles, decides to sneak into the house and kill the lawyer, now forty years old. He finds the lawyer asleep in a chair, his head resting on a table with a letter addressed to the banker. In it he tells the banker that all the wisdom of this world amounts to nothing in the face of eternity and he has decided God is far more valuable than money. To show his contempt for earthly wealth, the lawyer wrote that he plans to escape his house five hours before the time limit, thus losing the bet. The banker, ashamed, leaves and the last we read of the lawyer was the report of the guards watching him leave the estate hours before the deadline to win the bet. The years of silence made the lawyer wise, and aware that the things of this earth are as nothing compared to eternity.

Moses and Paul, in the Scriptures, spent years in the desert, often alone and in silence. I'm not suggesting that we all move to the desert of the Middle East, or we lock ourselves in our houses for fifteen years, but an hour spent in silence before the Lord in prayer may do wonders to our perspective, especially in the busy culture in which we live. God bless you and have a wonderful month.

### Sermons- October-A Shared God

October 1	Authority to Judge	Ezekiel 18:25-32; Matthew 21:23-32
October 8	The 10 Commandments	Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 5:1-21
October 15	The End of Death	2 Corinthians 4:4; Revelation 21:3-4
October 22	The Presence and the Purpose	Exodus 33:12-15; Romans 8:27-30
October 29	What was Denied Moses...	Deuteronomy 34:1-12; Hebrews 12:18-24



***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



James & Katie Lundberg	October 17, 2009	14 years
Greg & Kristin Meyer	October 18, 2003	20 years
Tracy & Lori Wildman	October 20, 1979	44 years
Dan & Sharon Propst	October 20, 1980	43 years
Doug & Krystal Randall	October 27, 1984	39 years
Bob & Shirley Nott	October 29, 1949	74 years
John & Nichole Kersbergen	October 30, 2021	2 year



October 1	Julie Lavender	October 18	Melanie Brandt
October 6	Julianne Packer	October 20	Joan Smith-Legg
October 8	LaRae McGahuey, Cherryl Woltjer	October 22	Destiny Gepford
October 10	Gary McKibbin	October 23	Lori Wildman
October 12	Bob McGregor, Mallory Fowler	October 26	Steve Storjohann
October 13	Nan Tha Zin Win	October 27	Hannah Shirar, Leiah Paustian
October 14	Bob Hibbs	October 28	Mason Moyer
October 15	Marilyn Fruin, Lincoln Lavender	October 29	John Blabaum, Bob Nott,
October 17	Bill Maas		Jonathan Tuttle



**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.**

## Mission and Benevolence Committee Wants YOU to be Engaged and in the Know

9/26/23 - Kim Schryver, Chairman



### *Benevolence*

We admire the values and the engagement of My Kinsman Ministry: 1) to supply opportunity, not simple charity; 2) recognize, train, and empower the most effective disciples in Sierra Leone – Sierra Leonians; 3) expect those helped by MKM to HELP OTHERS. FCC supports their fruitful work financially (\$5,000 in 2023), through material donations (e.g. bibles, backpacks, and first aid supplies) and spiritual support. Our prayers for the safety and effectiveness of MKM disciples in Sierra Leone is one way this church can stand in with these committed missionaries. We urge all FCC members to include MKM success in their prayers. A second way to spiritually support them is by befriending them through correspondence, making ourselves known to them, inviting them to correspond with us and communicating our care and encouragement. A few members of the church (including some youth) have participated in letter writing campaigns in the past. Join members of the Benevolence and Mission Committee at the **Women's Ministry Meeting on Monday, October 2, 2023 (5:30 pm in Fellowship Hall) to write letters to members of MKM.** We'll provide church letterhead, ideas on what to write and deliver your letters to local MKM leadership who will be traveling with our letters of encouragement to Sierra Leone in November, 2023.

The committee researched homelessness in Marshall County and the limited resources available to help people out of this difficult life circumstance. Nearly 2,500 people are experiencing homelessness in Iowa at any given time. As of September 26, 2023, 754 people are without stable lodging in the Two Rivers Region (Boone, Greene, Hardin, Marshall and Story counties). Of these, 153 individuals are in Marshall County. **The Bridge Home** is the source of our information. It is a national agency, and the Two Rivers Region affiliate provides unique help to those who have fallen on hard times. Their mission includes "to bridge the gap between homelessness and housing by providing shelter, support, and inspiring a pathway forward to individuals and families experiencing or on the verge of homelessness." (See <https://www.thebridgehome.org>) Our local United Way endorses and supports their work. We know that they work with local agencies to help fill this gap and to empower those who need assistance to find a way out of homelessness. With no free shelters in Marshall County, emergency shelter is purchased one hotel room at a time. While some hotels do give this non-profit a break in price, the cost of emergency shelter in Marshall County consumes the majority of the budget allocated to our area. The committee agreed unanimously to help support this important work through a financial contribution of \$1000.

Hands on opportunities abound in support of our Youth Program. Shelly Speas, Youth Director, has issued a schedule of meeting times for our younger youth (Tuesdays in the next 3 months) and teens (Wednesdays in the next 3 months). They need help transporting participants and providing a meal. Every member of Missions and Benevolence endorses this need; each committee member individually volunteers throughout the year in various ways to our youth. We urge ALL members of the congregation who can to do so as well.

Johnny Guzman from Guzman Family Ministries will be in the Midwest in November 2023. Pastor Dan and the committee are considering ways to facilitate Johnny and his wife Mary visiting FCC to get an important update of their work. Watch for more news to come in the next month.

Two final words for now. First, YOU ARE IMPRESSIVE! The Meals on Wheels Volunteer Calendar for 2023 has been filled! The 2024 calendar is now also in the narthex. Keep on raising your hands, fellow congregants! The program relies on all of us to help meet the needs of shut-ins and elderly for nutritional support. Contact Kristi Hassler, MOW Leader, for more information. Kristi does wonderful work keeping volunteers tuned into their commitment and recruiting. About 50 % of slots for delivery are filled by volunteers who are NOT members of the Benevolence and Missions Comm. Way to go FCC team!

Second, Jonna Wagar will be cluing us into our Adopt-A-Family plans for Christmas 2023. The House of Compassion is finalizing a roster of recipients who qualify for this service and the recommended guidelines for support. As soon as the committee has this information, we will identify how many people/families FCC will commit to adopting. Watch for more news soon on how YOU can participate in making Christmas a holiday of personal charitable giving and joy.



## **News from Diaconate Board**

The Organ Rededication was wonderful. We were so pleased to see our members and friends from Glenwood Place be able to attend. Our guest organist, Dr. Babcock, is also the chorale director at Central. He asked us if we would be interested in hosting a concert by his choir when they were touring in our area. We couldn't say "yes" fast enough.

**DID YOU KNOW?** 4 members of the Diaconate – Judy Gaynor, Bob Gaynor, Kristi Hassler and Donn Anderson visit our members in facilities every month. Every visit they take them greeting cards made by our Stamp Club. In addition the Stamp Club makes treat boxes for them on Halloween, Christmas and Valentine's Day. The Stamp Club sends out about 400 cards a year and is funded by the Diaconate budget. Most of the supplies are donated by our Stamp Club members because our budget covers basic expenses. At Christmas time we give all of our members in facilities a poinsettia.

We have begun thinking about our annual Harvest Dinner. Jane VerMulm from the Diaconate will head the committee this year. Looking way back in our church history, the Women's Fellowship held the Harvest Dinner. It was one of their biggest fundraisers. You were required to purchase a ticket. They also sold homemade mincemeat. Cars would line up at the backdoor before the holidays to get their jars of mincemeat on a Saturday distribution day. After Women's Fellowship felt they could no longer hold the dinner the dinner responsibilities went to the Diaconate.



# Youth Group News

## Youth Activities:

Power Hour is Sunday mornings for Preschool-12th grade, 9:15-10:20am.  
October 1,8,15,22,29

DOG's (Depend on God) is Tuesday nights for preschool-4th grade, 5-6:30pm with a meal.  
October 3,10,17,24 (not Oct. 31st)

Jr PY (Pilgrim Youth) is Wednesday nights for 5-8th grade, 4:45-6:15pm with a meal.  
October 4,11,18,25

PY (Pilgrim Youth) is Wednesday nights for 9-12th grade, 6:30-8pm with a meal.  
October 4,11,18,25

In September for Labor Day, we had the wonderful opportunity to put up and take down American flags around Marshalltown as a youth group fundraiser.



During the Oktoberfest Parade the youth group sold popcorn, pop, and water as a youth group fundraiser.



On September 17th the FCC youth shared their faith and talents during the 10:30am worship service for Rally Day. We were blessed as they led the whole service with musical & dancing talents, skits, prayers, a puppet show, a game with a message, and the sermon.



The youth groups will be putting together gift boxes for Operation Christmas Child and praying over the children that will be receiving them in November. We will be collecting items to put into the boxes for the youth to pack together. We will have a box in the back of the sanctuary in the Narthex labeled Operation Christmas Child for the month of October and the first week of November for anyone who has items they would like to donate for our kids to bless children with. Things we can't pack are lotions, shampoos, conditioners, toothpaste, and candy. Thank you so much! This is an amazing mission through Samaritan's Purse and if you would like more information about the ministry here is a link: [Operation Christmas Child®](#)



### Operation Christmas Child®

Operation Christmas Child, a project of Samaritan's Purse, has delivered millions of gift-filled shoeboxes to boys and girls around the world. We praise God for so many children whose lives have been changed as the result of a simple gift.

It takes a whole community of believers to do God's work. God uses all different kinds of gifts and talents He instilled in His children to continue His missions!

We have some wonderful youth connected to our church and we provide meals and rides for them during the week so they can be fed both physically and spiritually by Jesus. If you feel called to provide a meal or be one of our rotating church van drivers, please contact Shelly Speas and she will give you more details. We need your help, talents, and love. Also we have some wonderful youth leaders for our weekly youth ministry but would love to have other adult leaders come along side us in ministry to our young people. Shelly Speas leads the lessons at these groups but needs other volunteer adults to help supervise the kids and help with the activities during the groups. If you are feeling called to help in any of these ways please contact Shelly Speas, [641-751-9868](tel:641-751-9868) or [shellzncheese2004@yahoo.com](mailto:shellzncheese2004@yahoo.com).

Lastly, we would love to have your prayers over our time with all the wonderful young people as they hear the Word of God. Please pray with us that the youth will come to know or be strengthened in their understanding of Jesus's redemptive love and God's life changing truths.



### **Women's Ministry:**

Thank you to all of you for the help with our "tidy up" venture September 5. Let's get together again in a few months to maintain our efforts!

**October 2** General Meeting at 5:30 in the Fellowship area. Kim Schryver will join us for an activity involving MKM ministries. Thank you, Kim!

#### **Bible Study of Ephesians with Jane**

October 9 and October 23 at 5:30 in the library.

Thank you, Jane!

Please join us. We look forward to welcoming you!

Always praying for you,  
First Congregational Women's Ministry



### **Chancel Choir:**

#### **Practice**

September 29 at 5:30  
October 6 at 5:30

#### **Practice at 10:00 a.m. for 10:30 service:**

October 1  
October 8

Please sing with us. We have a chair and music waiting for you!







## Welcome, Maggie!

Rev. Dr. Ashley Cleere, Executive Director

Please join us in welcoming our newly-named Editor of *The Congregationalist*, Maggie Helmick. A recent graduate of Harvard Divinity School, Maggie worked with the admissions team writing and editing articles for their publications. In her application, she expressed:

“The position . . . speaks to my personal and academic passions through its core religious foundation and my career development as a writer and editor. I deeply respect and admire The Congregationalist’s vision, mission, and values, and I would love to play a role in supporting its success.”



I thank the members of the search and transition team, Sandy Leonard, Robb Tarr, and Curt Schmidt, for their thoughtful discernment. Further, I extend gratitude to Marianne King for her abiding dedication to the publication and willingness to orient our new editor during the production of the December 2023 issue.





## Pastor Appreciation Month

Rev. Dr. Gerry Brannon Krupp, NACCC Director of Programs

October has been designated Pastor Appreciation month (particularly the 2nd Sunday). A good pastor who works hard and cares for the flock is a precious commodity. Do you show appreciation for your pastor? Here's a list of ways to show appreciation for your pastor:

1. Review the pastor's salary and compensation package.
2. Take up a love offering for your pastor.
3. Take a collection for some special gifts.
4. Send the pastoral household on a spiritual retreat for the weekend.
5. If there are children in the home; offer a night out for the adults.
6. Do a wall of appreciation where the entire congregation can write "graffiti" of appreciation for those God has placed in your church.
7. During a worship service, offer kind words of appreciation from the congregation; end with a "huddle of prayer" around the pastoral household.

The benefits of saying thank you or expressing appreciation are many. Kind words expressed publicly are a testimony of congregational health within the community. Please consider showing appreciation for your pastor this October.



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><b>color code:</b>            youth events            Church mtgs            Special events            Comm. Events            Color copy on            bulletin boards</p>						
<p><b>1 Communion</b>            In-Person Worship            8am and 10:30 svcs            10:30 Svc/YouTube            Fellowship follows            10:30am Svc            Power Hour @ 9:15</p>	<p><b>2 Women's Ministry</b>            5:30pm</p>	<p><b>3 DOG's 5-6:30 pm</b></p>	<p><b>4 Men's Church coffee</b>            8am @ Hy-Vee             Jr PY 4:45-6:15pm PY            6:30-8pm</p>	<p><b>5 Bell choir</b>            practice 5:30</p>	<p><b>6 Chancel choir</b>            practice 5:30</p>	<p><b>7</b></p>
<p><b>8</b>            In-Person Worship            8am and 10:30 svcs            10:30 Svc/YouTube            Fellowship follows            10:30am Svc            Power Hour @ 9:15</p>	<p><b>9 Women's Bible</b>            Study @ 5:30</p>	<p><b>10 8:45am BMC</b>            meet             DOG's 5-6:30 pm</p>	<p><b>11 Men's Church coffee</b>            8am @ Hy-Vee             Jr PY 4:45-6:15pm PY            6:30-8pm</p>	<p><b>12 Bell choir</b>            practice 5:30</p>	<p><b>13</b></p>	<p><b>14 IA / NEB Assoc.</b>            Fall meeting            (Hyannis NE)</p>
<p><b>15</b>            In-Person Worship            8am and 10:30 svcs            10:30 Svc/YouTube            Fellowship follows            10:30am Svc            Power Hour @ 9:15            11:45am BCE</p>	<p><b>16</b></p>	<p><b>17 Diaconate Meets</b>            6:30 pm             DOG's 5-6:30 pm</p>	<p><b>18 Men's Church coffee</b>            8am @ Hy-Vee             Jr PY 4:45-6:15pm PY            6:30-8pm</p>	<p><b>19 Bell choir</b>            practice 5:30             Trustees meet            @ 7:00pm</p>	<p><b>20</b></p>	<p><b>21</b></p>
<p><b>22</b>            In-Person Worship            8am and 10:30 svcs            10:30 Svc/YouTube            Fellowship follows            10:30am Svc            Power Hour @ 9:15</p>	<p><b>23 Women's Bible</b>            Study @ 5:30</p>	<p><b>24 DOG's 5-6:30 pm</b></p>	<p><b>25 Men's Church coffee</b>            8am @ Hy-Vee             Jr PY 4:45-6:15pm PY            6:30-8pm</p>	<p><b>26 Bell choir</b>            practice 5:30</p>	<p><b>27</b></p>	<p><b>28 11am MOW</b>            Volunteer:            Jonna Wager</p>
<p><b>29</b>            In-Person Worship            8am and 10:30 svcs            10:30 Svc/YouTube            Fellowship follows            10:30am Svc            Power Hour @ 9:15</p>	<p><b>30</b></p>	<p><b>31</b>  </p>				



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

