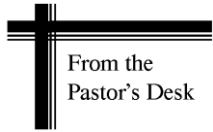


Pilgrim's Progress

January 2024

"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

Epiphany is Saturday, January 6, 2024

The Bible shrouds the Wise Men who came to Jerusalem seeking Jesus in mystery. We don't know from where they came and we don't know much about why they knew to follow the star that led to Bethlehem. Some scholars think that these men, called the Magi, may have historical connections to the wise men of ancient Babylon, and were familiar with the prophecies of the great Hebrew sage Daniel. For now, we'll just consider that these men traveled far to meet and worship the Lord Jesus sometime after His birth. After their visit, they are warned in a dream not to return to King Herod and they return to points east and the Bible says nothing about them after that. Suffice it to say that Jesus, though His was born in a humble stable to poor parents, still gained the attention of people near and far as someone special, someone great. Locally, shepherds came to Bethlehem telling everyone about the angels they say up in the hills, so the who area was talking about the baby in the stall. And the Wise Men made a long and probably dangerous trip just for one visit with Jesus and His family. There is a saying, "wise men seek Him still." May this be a year in which we grow in the ways of Christ and in which the Holy Spirit meets us in our prayers with wonder, faith, encouragement and inspiration and may we find ourselves seeking Him always.

The Baptism of Jesus is Sunday, January 7, 2024

The very next day after Epiphany is the commemoration of the Baptism of Jesus, an event that took place many years after the visit of the Magi. Here Jesus, as a grown man, visits the ministry of His cousin John the Baptizer and, despite John's protests, submits to the Sacrament of Baptism Himself in order to "fulfill all righteousness." Soon after, the heavens are torn open and the Holy Spirit descends upon Jesus in the form of a dove. From there, the Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan, and then His public ministry begins. In contrast to the Magi who traveled far to see the Son of God, we find that God, in the form of our Lord and of the Holy Spirit, have traveled far to be with people. I believe His policy remains the same. The Holy Spirit is present with us in the everyday, ordinary works of our lives. He doesn't guide from afar, He is near and will always be near forever. All the more reason to be like the Magi and seek Him, His Presence and His Kingdom every day. Make this your daily prayer and ask the Holy Spirit to guide you accordingly and see what happens over time. God bless you.

-Pastor Dan

Sermons:

January 7 Genesis 1:1-5; Acts 19:1-7

January 14 Harlan Nuss leads worship services

January 21 John 1:51; Genesis 28:10-22

January 28 Mark 1:21-28; 1 Corinthians 8:1-13

The Most Unruly Part of Us

Angels Descending and Ascending

The Nature of Spiritual Authority



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: Mildred Lathrop #145, Lenora Brown #147, Iva Howard #164,
Bonnie Pappas #112, Marian Gerdes #166, Anita Niehouse #116
Willows of Marshalltown: Evelyn Thompson



Todd & Leah Stanley 1/04/2003 21 years



January 1	Bing McHone, Quinton Norman, Isabella Liew	January 19	Kristin Meyer
January 3	Janice Jordan	January 22	Harriet Arklie
January 6	Aaron Dickey	January 23	Brandon Goken
January 8	Rod Hassler	January 25	Jonna Wager, John Olson
January 13	Larry Koepnick	January 26	Deborah Estabrook
January 15	Midajah Propp	January 29	Blake Latham, Hunter Diggins



News from The Diaconate

The Diaconate gave poinsettias to all of our members in local care facilities, including the Embers.

January 14th Pastor Dan will be on vacation. Harlan Nuss will fill the pulpit that Sunday.

The Lenten season is fast approaching. We will begin the season on Ash Wednesday, February 14th with an Ash Wednesday service. Details to be established.

Thank you to all who gave of their time and talents for our Christmas Eve services.

We will be putting away the Christmas decorations in the sanctuary on Saturday, January 13th at 10 A.M. Many hands make light work.



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 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.

The following Dates for 2024 are available! Thank You!

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

Greetings from the Missions Team. In December we delivered food items to the Presbyterian food pantry, The Extension pantry, and the one on 9th and Summit. Please consider this little mission when you do your shopping. Think winter items such as rice, dried beans, cereal, granola bars but avoid glass and metal cans. Thank you so much for your donations!



YOUTH GROUP NEWS

Power Hour Sundays at 9:15am for preschool-12th grade.

January 7,14,21,28

DOG's (Depend on God) Tuesdays, 5-6:30pm with a meal for preschool-4th grade.

January 9,16,23,30

Jr PY (Pilgrim Youth) Wednesdays, 4:45-6:15pm with a meal for 5-8th grade.

January 10,17,24,31

PY (Pilgrim Youth) Wednesdays, 6:30-8pm with a meal for 9-12th grade.

January 10,17,24,31



Middle School Winter Retreat: Saturday, January 20th-Sunday, January 21st for 5-8th grade students. Planning to ski, snowboard, or tube in Boone, IA and have a lock-in at church. Please contact Shelly Speas for more details.

Sunday, January 28th some of our youth will be performing a puppet show during the 10:30am service. There will also be a soup luncheon after church that day.





What a wonderful Children’s Christmas Program we had on Christmas Eve! The kids did a wonderful job sharing their musical talents and performing “How the Grinch Found Christ at Christmas” and sharing the message of how Jesus transforms the hearts of those who know Him.



We are so thankful for everyone who helped make our Christmas cookie ball fundraiser a huge success!! We are raising money for our 2024 NAPF/HOPE summer youth mission conference.



What a wonderful time we had in December taking our youth around town surprising some of our church members with Christmas carols at their doors.



We had so much fun having Christmas parties in DOG’s, Jr PY & PY the week before Christmas!!



Pillars of Faith @ F. C. C.

For those of you who read “Pillars of Faith” in December, the person was Bob McGregor. If you haven’t read this article in the church’s newsletter and you have a computer, you can find it at this web site: <https://www.fccmarshalltown.org/newsletter> Thanks Bob for all you have done, do and will do!

One of the definitions of a pillar is: a person or thing regarded as reliably providing essential support for something. In the New King James Version of the Bible, Paul writes in Ephesians 2:8-9, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” This gift of God is the reason the receivers of this gift want to be the hands and feet of Jesus on earth. So, with these two things in mind, we would like to present the “Pillar of Faith” for January.

When we think of this person, an old Hymn, “Brighten the Corner Where You Are,” comes to mind. The Lyrics, based on Matthew 5:14 - 16, were written in 1912 by Ina Mae (Duley) Ogdon and the music was composed by Charles Hutchinson Gabriel. The fifth verse goes like this:

Refrain: “Stay in fellowship with Jesus and behold His face
 If His glorious radiance you’d impart.
 Love and serve the Lord sincerely; this
 will touch men’s hearts;
 Brighten the corner where you are!
 Brighten the corner where you are!
 Brighten the corner where you are!
 Someone far from harbor you may guide across the bar;
 Brighten the corner where you are!”

The maternal Grandmother of our January Pillar of Faith was a Baptist and her mother was raised a Baptist. They all went to the Baptist Temple on the southwest corner of State and 2nd Streets. Rev. Trickey, the minister at First Congregational Church at the time, lived one half block from her family home. Knowing him from the neighborhood, the family decided to give F. C. C. a try and liked it so much they joined the church. Our Pillar of Faith truly belonged, at age 14, when she joined the church through “Confession of Faith” on January 1, 1945. Then in 1951 she and her husband were joined in marriage by Rev. Dixon. The activities she was involved in were: playing basketball in the church league, where going to church was a requirement to play. She sang in the choir when Lois Sauer was the director. She also played in the bell choir. She taught young children’s Sunday School. (As a benefit, her children got perfect attendance because they were with her very Sunday.) She and her husband taught junior high age student’s Sunday School. She served on the Diaconate and Board of Christian Education. She belonged to the women’s groups as president of Aminty and Women’s Fellowship where she helped with the Christmas bazaars.

When asked which activity she enjoy most? She replied, “Teach young children’s Sunday School and singing in the choir.”

This is the advice she has for the future of our church. “You need to keep the church active with God loving people who are willing to take on any position when asked.”

Now if you are wondering why this person’s name was not mentioned, it wasn’t a mistake. Can you guess who this person is? If not be sure and read your February news letter. The answer will be there under the title “Pillars of Faith @ F. C. C.”



Women's Ministry

Our next Women's Ministry general meeting is February 5 at 5:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. We welcome having you join us!

Bible Study and prayer with Jane will be January 8 and January 22 in the church library at 5:30 p.m. We are studying Ephesians. We have a chair and a book with your name on it! We are usually finished by 6:30 or 6:45.



Chancel Choir

Choir Alert!

Our Chancel Choir schedule has changed.

There is NO PRACTICE Friday January 5, 2024. We will NOT sing Sunday January 7.

We WILL practice:

Fridays January 12 and January 19 at 5:30 for Sundays January 14 and 21.

January 26 and 28 are yet to be decided.

Thank you!

Let the earth REJOICE!



*Wishing you a
fabulous New Year
with the hope that
you will have many
blessings in the year
to come!*

*Happy
New Year*





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

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  Office Closed	2	3	4 Bell choir 5:30	5	6
7 Communion In-Person Worship 8am and 10:30 svcs In Sanctuary 10:30 Svc/YouTube Fellowship follows Power Hour 9:15	8 Women's Bible Study @ 5:30 in Library	9 D.O.G.S 5:00 - 6:30	10 Men's church coffee 8am @ Hy-Vee JR PY 4:45-6:15 PY 6:30-8:00	11 Bell choir 5:30 Open Trustee meeting 6:30pm	12 Chancel Choir 5:30pm	13 Remove Christmas decorations 10am
14 Harlan Nuss guest pulpit In-Person Worship 8am and 10:30 svcs In Sanctuary 10:30 Svc/YouTube Fellowship follows Power Hour 9:15 BCE meets 11:45am	15	16 Diaconate meets 6:30 pm D.O.G.S 5:00 - 6:30	17 Men's church coffee 8am @ Hy-Vee JR PY 4:45-6:15 PY 6:30-8:00	18 Bell choir 5:30	19 Chancel Choir 5:30pm	20 Middle School retreat
21 In-Person Worship 8am and 10:30 svcs In Sanctuary 10:30 Svc/YouTube Fellowship follows Power Hour 9:15	22 Women's Bible Study @ 5:30 in Library	23 D.O.G.S 5:00 - 6:30	24 Men's church coffee 8am @ Hy-Vee JR PY 4:45-6:15 PY 6:30-8:00	25 Bell choir 5:30	26	27 11am MOW Shelly Speas
28 Puppet show & soup lunch In-Person Worship 8am and 10:30 svcs In Sanctuary 10:30 Svc/YouTube Fellowship follows Power Hour 9:15	29	30 D.O.G.S 5:00 - 6:30	31 Men's church coffee 8am @ Hy-Vee JR PY 4:45-6:15 PY 6:30-8:00			

JANUARY

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.fcmarshalltown.org

A member of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches

