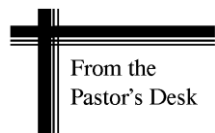


Pilgrim's Progress

February 2025

"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."



How to Think Like a Missionary

Ecclesiastes 3:11 "He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end."

There's a book that came out in the '70's that told the story of a brave missionary who moved to the village of a notorious Indonesian tribe that was hostile to outsiders. They tolerated the missionary only because he introduced them to modern hand-held tools. After he eventually learned their language, the missionary told them the story of Jesus. They were attentive until they reached the point in the narrative where Judas betrayed Jesus. At that point, they erupted in celebration, for they considered treachery to be an art form. The missionary was at his wit's end, until he learned of the peace child. Whenever this tribe ended a war with another tribe, they were have a ceremony in which the leaders of the two tribes would meet with each other, each delegation bringing an infant. The two tribes would exchange infants and as long as the infants were alive, the two tribes would not go to war with each other. Each infant was a "peace child" and represented the vow never to go to war again. When the missionary explained that Jesus was God's peace child, a church was established in that tribe that continues to this day.

Western civilization, influenced extensively by Christianity, is far removed from the setting of the "peace child" story, but the waning influence of Christianity in the U.S. requires us to thing like missionaries, so here are a few suggestions. First, know that people need what the church offers, even though many may not believe that statement. Let it color your prayers for your neighbors and the people of this town. Second, become a student of people. What are their deepest needs, hope and concerns in this life. Ask yourself, in what way has God put "eternity in their hearts." Finally, be true in speech and action. People will accuse the church of hypocrisy, but lives of integrity and break through those accusations. While we are far removed from those brave missionaries in far flung fields, we do well to think like missionaries right here in Marshalltown.

-Pastor Dan

Sermons:

February 2	Luke 4:21-30	"Physician, Heal Yourself"
February 9	Luke 5:1-11	"A Call to Discipleship"
February 16	Luke 6:1-26	"The Beatitudes"
February 23	Luke 6:27-38	"Do Unto Others"





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

Bickford: Joanie Smith-Legg #108,

Mill Pond Care Center: Romaine Mackaman

Veterans Home: Marian Gerdes

Southridge: Betty Runner #212,

Glenwood Place: Mildred Lathrop #145, Anita Niehouse #116, Elenor Tjossem #160, Lenora Brown #161

Creekside in Grundy Center: Leta Lacina

Cross Creek in Lee's Summit, MO: Vicki Long



Robert & Barbara Hibbs

February 28, 1970 55 years



February 3 Angela Dickey

February 4 Marian Gerdes

February 5 Kathryn Peiffer

February 10 Katie Vogeler

February 16 Pat Anderson, Brian Mattingly

February 19 Deacon Lunsford

February 20 Betty Runner

February 22 Jane Symons

February 25 Stacy Moyer

February 26 Jeanne Vellinga

February 27 Jo Dysart

February 28 Mildred Lathrop

February 29 Terry Paustian,
Katie Lundberg



News from The Diaconate

If you would like to volunteer for Fellowship Time this year please call the church office and let Katie know. She will relay the message to the Head Deacon for that month. It's a quiet time in the church calendar right now. Coming up on March 5th is Ash Wednesday which is the start of the Lenten season. Stay tuned for details on the Ash Wednesday service.



Meals On Wheels



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. We will now pick up and drop off the coolers and tubs for meal delivery at the hospital under the canopy by the entrance to the emergency room. The hospital has asked drivers not to park directly in front of the ER doors, and for no longer than 10 minutes. There should be enough room for two cars to fit under the canopy. This will be helpful during inclement weather, and it will allow the

kitchen staff to keep an eye out for our arrival and return directly from their window. 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. Any questions please call me Kristi Hassler 641-753-3276 or Doris McCarty 641-752-7604.

The following 2025 dates available are:

July 26

August 23

September 27

October 25

December 27



YOUTH GROUP NEWS

D.O.G.'s (Depend on God) February 11,18, 25, No group on 4th (prayer night)- is a group for K-4th grade kids on Tuesday nights from 5-6:30pm with a meal.

Jr. P.Y. (Pilgrim Youth) 12,19, 26, No groups on the 5th (prayer night) is a group for 5-8th grade youth on Wednesday nights from 5-6:30pm with a meal.

P.Y. (Pilgrim Youth) 12,19, 26, No groups on the 5th (prayer night) is a group for 9-12th grade youth on Wednesday nights from 6:15-8pm with a meal.

Power Hour (Sunday School) February 2,9,16,23 – is a group for K-12th grade youth on Sunday mornings from 9:15-10:20am.

In January we had our make up Christmas Party with our DOG's group eating some yummy food and playing some fun Christmas games.



In January we had our make up Christmas party with our PY group eating good food and playing some fun Christmas games.



In January we had our make up Christmas party with our Jr PY group eating some tasty food and playing some fun Christmas games.



We are planning a Winter Retreat for 5th-12th grade youth for Saturday, February 15th-Sunday, February 16th. Please contact Shelly Speas if you have a youth who would like to go and to get more info.



Women's Ministry

Calling all First Congregational women!

You are invited to a soup/fellowship supper on Monday February 3 at 5:30. We will meet in the Fellowship Hall. The Women's Ministry will provide the meal.

Please RSVP Georgia Thomas (641-751-5191) by Wednesday, January 29.

The First Congregational Women's Ministry is hosting this event and is looking forward to having you join us.

Our February schedule is as follows with all meetings being at 5:30 PM

- Monday February 3 Women's Ministry Soup Supper
- 2 Monday February 10 Bible Study
- 4 Monday February 24 Bible Study

We have a special place for you!



Benevolence and Missions Committee

We Feel Another's Pain

Photos such as the ones below of eastern North Carolina taken after Hurricane Helene wreaked havoc create visceral reactions. We who experienced the 2018 tornadoes and 2020 derecho disasters first hand carry a sense-memory of living through weather assaults and clean up. Such empathic responses are a God thing. They help to motivate us to help others in need. Members of the committee were humbled once again by the generosity of our membership. Jonna sent an all-church email showing the heartfelt response of our congregation to the appeal by our National Association of Christian Congregational Churches in One Great Hour of Sharing for victims of Hurricane Helene. We want to acknowledge again that much appreciated donation totaling \$3,100 and share the following update from Rich and Kay Miller-Todd (email dated January 18, 2025) who have personal connections with victims in the area:

Rich and I have been to the mountains of Western North Carolina this week. Our nephew took us on a tour of the destruction near his home. Rich and I went to another town that was hard hit east of Asheville. There are many damaged businesses and homes. The destruction is heartbreaking months later. Some folks are just now being able to deal with the removal of their damaged homes. Main roads are passable, but lined with piles of trees and brush. The recovery will be slow and painful. Thanks for all of your help. - Kay



We Celebrate a New Volunteer to Our Committee!

With regret but understanding and full support our committee accepted Cherryl Woltjer's resignation. Her family needs her right now. The Nominating Committee was quickly mobilized by our Church Moderator, Miriam Bryant to find a volunteer to help fill out Cherryl's term. Thank you to that committee led by Lisa Blabaum for rapid response and a wonderful new member! We welcome Diane Speas to our ranks and invite you to tell Cherryl Woltjer thank you so much for your years of valuable service and thank you Diane Speas for your enthusiasm in becoming part of the Benevolence and Missions team! Diane has already attended an orientation to committee work and two regular meetings.

Looking Forward to A New Year of Service

The committee did disperse its full budget augmented by all of you in various fund drives. We look forward to sharing the summary of all your giving through this committee and the projects you helped to make a success. You can expect a detailed report for the Annual Meeting on February 2, 2025. In preparation for the new year our committee met in January to review the Guidelines for Giving from last year. These ARE NOT regulations, policies nor rules. Rather, they are a common set of priorities we value and identify at the beginning of each year as a help in choosing the best ways we can commit our church's time, talent and dollars from the many many many worthy options. In a nutshell highest priority is given to non-profits who serve the full spectrum of human needs while providing a way for those served to know God. We believe we need to serve locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. Additionally, we established a minimum-15 percent of our committee budget would be reserved for disaster relief as the needs arose.



Pillars of Faith @ F. C. C.

For those of you who read "Pillars of Faith" in January, the person was Pat Anderson. 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, Pat, 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. The Biblical definition of faith is found in Hebrews 11:1 which says, "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." Revised Standard Version. Also 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 February.

The background for this month's Pillar of Faith starts in Keokuk, Iowa, a town in the far south eastern corner of our state. This person was raised in the Episcopal Church there and after the move, with parents, to Marshalltown at junior in high school age, this faith continued. In fact years later, this Pillar of Faith was married at St Paul's Episcopal Church in Marshalltown in 1975. When children started joining the family this couple started visiting other churches with less ritual. They visited several churches looking for somewhere comfortable and that would become their church home. They visited the First Congregational Church in 1989 and felt right at home. They were familiar with the church at large and Pastor Ellcey made them feel welcomed when they visited. Then Dick and Lucy Grossman started recruiting them to become members. They and later Pastor Ellcey visited them in their home; it was this personal touch and Congregationalism that grabbed them. They joined the church in 1989 or '90.

Pastor Ellcey was very personable and had a gift for encouraging members to fill roles within the church. Committees ran themselves but Pastor Ellcey always had his antenna up as to talents members showed to engage them in the church. In the late 1990s this Pillar of Faith served as Moderator. While in this role she attended two National Association of Congregational Christian Churches conferences, which were very inspiring to her. She taught Sunday School mostly at the high school level. She participated in many Bible studies, and with Cheryl Holmes designed a woman's Bible study on the book of Psalms. She also designed a Bible study based on the book "The Jesus I Never Knew" by Philip Yancey. She was a member of the "Go Team Mission Monterrey" each year between 2007-2010. The State Department urged this group not to go in 2010 because the unrest in Mexico made it unsafe for them and their hosts. She was a member of the Pastor Search Committee when Pastor Ellcey retired, and Barry Holmes was hired. She participated in VBS in supportive roles for several years, served on the Board of Christian Education and the Diaconate. She has also been on Missions & Benevolence for a decade and chaired it many times. She worked in partnership with Habitat for Humanity after the Derecho in Marshalltown. She was the chairperson of the Renewal Committee.


When asked which of these activities did you enjoy the most? The reply was, "I loved learning through Bible studies with my church family and teaching high school Sunday School. It was spiritually uplifting to be a part of the renewal committee and I learned so much."

When asked, do you have any advice for the future of our church? The reply was, "The renewal process for our church is a valid and exciting guide for our future. This is the mission focus of our church in the next two years. To nurture a growing sense of belonging to God so that we can authentically embrace and express our belonging to one another and to our wider community."

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 March 2025 newsletter. The answer will be there under the title "Pillars of Faith @ F. C. C.".



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
 <div> <p>Monday-Friday 9am-Noon 641-752-4239</p> </div>						
<p>color code: youth events Church mtgs Special events Comm. Events Color copy on bulletin boards</p>						1
<p>2 Communion In-Person Worship 8am and 10:30 svcs In Sanctuary 10:30 Svc/YouTube Fellowship follows Power Hour 9:15 Annual Mtg 11:45 AM</p>	<p>3 Women's Ministry 5:30 in Library</p>	<p>4 D.O.G.S 5:00 - 6:30</p>	<p>5 Men's church coffee 8am @ Hy-Vee JR PY 4:45-6:15 PY 6:30-8:00</p>	<p>6 Bell choir 5:30</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>8 Remove Christmas decorations 2PM</p>
<p>9 In-Person Worship 8am and 10:30 svcs In Sanctuary 10:30 Svc/YouTube Fellowship follows Power Hour 9:15</p>	<p>10 Women's Bible Study @ 5:30 in Library</p>	<p>11 BMC meets @ 8:45AM D.O.G.S 5:00 - 6:30</p>	<p>12 Men's church coffee 8am @ Hy-Vee JR PY 4:45-6:15 PY 6:30-8:00</p>	<p>13 Bell choir 5:30</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15</p>
<p>16 In-Person Worship 8am and 10:30 svcs In Sanctuary 10:30 Svc/YouTube Fellowship follows Power Hour 9:15 BCE meets 11:45am</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18 Diaconate meets 6:30 pm D.O.G.S 5:00 - 6:30</p>	<p>19 Men's church coffee 8am @ Hy-Vee JR PY 4:45-6:15 PY 6:30-8:00</p>	<p>20 Bell choir 5:30 Trustees meet 5:30 PM</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22 11am MOW Dian Speas</p>
<p>23 In-Person Worship 8am and 10:30 svcs In Sanctuary 10:30 Svc/YouTube Fellowship follows Power Hour 9:15</p>	<p>24 Women's Bible Study @ 5:30 in Library</p>	<p>25 D.O.G.S 5:00 - 6:30</p>	<p>26 Men's church coffee 8am @ Hy-Vee JR PY 4:45-6:15 PY 6:30-8:00</p>	<p>27 Bell choir 5:30</p>	<p>28</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.fccmarshalltown.org

A member of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches

