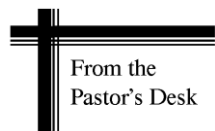


# Pilgrim's Progress

## March 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."



This year's Ash Wednesday Service will be in the Sanctuary at 7:00 p.m. March 5. Similar in theme to the Feast of Tabernacles in the Old Testament, Lent is a time to assess our time, values and priorities and ask ourselves if what is most important to us is the same as what is important to the Father in heaven. It is the time when we remember that Jesus "set His face like flint" in pursuing the plan of God all the way to the cross. Perhaps this is the most important point, not to reflect on our lives but to reflect on Christ's last days before His death, and reflect on what that means for us. Perhaps this is part of having a "holy Lent."

The Community Lenten Services have started again. They will start at 6:30 a.m. and include breakfast and a short devotional

March 12 Elim Lutheran Church 302 West Church Street

March 19 First Presbyterian Church 101 South Center Street

March 26 St. Mary Catholic Church 11 West Linn Street

April 2 First Methodist Church 202 West Main Street

April 9 First Congregational Church 312 West Main Street

This is a good opportunity for fellowship with the Christian communion in churches other than our own. I hope to see you there.

Pastor Dan

Main: Ash Wednesday and Lent

### Sermons

March 2	"The Transfiguration"	Luke 9:28-36; 2 Peter 1:16-19
March 9	"Temptation"	Luke 4:1-13; 1 Corinthians 10:13
March 16	"Perfected"	Luke 13:31-35; Hebrews 2:11-12
March 23	"The Fig Tree"	Luke 13:1-9; Isaiah 5:1-2
March 30	"Prodigal Children"	Luke 15:11-32; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21



*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, Anita Niehouse #116, Elenor Tjossem #160,  
Lenora Brown #161

**Creekside in Grundy Center:** Leta Lacina

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





Jeremy & Julie Lavender  
Bing & Dorothy McHone

March 4, 2010  
March 28, 1998

15 years  
27 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 21 Dave Dysart  
March 22 Raymond Kersbergen  
March 24 Lenora Brown  
March 29 James Allison

## 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  
December 27

August 23

September 27

October 25

Our annual Ash Wednesday service starts at 7:00 p.m. March 5, in the Sanctuary. Lent begins with this service and continues through Holy Week. You are welcome to come and we'll observe Lent together.

Lenten Breakfasts are returning this year. Here is their schedule...

March 12 6:30 a.m.  
Elim Lutheran Church  
302 West Church Street

March 19 6:30 a.m.  
First Presbyterian Church  
101 South Center Street

March 26 6:30 a.m.  
St Mary Catholic Church  
11 West Linn Street

April 2 6:30 a.m.  
First Methodist Church  
202 West Main Street

April 9 6:30 a.m.  
First Congregational Church  
312 West Main Street



## YOUTH GROUP NEWS

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

**Jr. P.Y. (Pilgrim Youth)** 5<sup>th</sup>, *(both groups at 6pm for Ash Wednesday) 12, 26, No group on the 19th (Spring Break)* - is a group for 5-8th grade youth on Wednesday nights from 5-6:30pm with a meal.

**P.Y. (Pilgrim Youth)** ) 5<sup>th</sup>, *(both groups at 6pm for Ash Wednesday) 12, 26, No group on the 19th (Spring Break)* is a group for 9-12th grade youth on Wednesday nights from 6:15-8pm with a meal.

**Power Hour (Sunday School)** March 2, 9, 23, 30 *No group on the 16th (Spring Break)* - is a group for K-12th grade youth on Sunday mornings from 9:15-10:20am.



We took the DOG's group to MHS for dinner to support the band pasta dinner fundraiser.

We had a great middle school/high school winter retreat in Marshalltown at Camp Juliette.



The cookie ball fundraiser was a huge success this year!! We sold over 100 boxes of cookies raising over \$1000 for our NAPF/HOPE youth mission conference! We are so thankful to everyone who supported this fundraiser and for all the prayers and encouragement we have received over our trip to St. Louis this year!





On behalf of our Women's Ministry we would like to thank the church for their very generous donations and immediate response to the need of gloves which were donated to the Triumph Center in Marshalltown! We had asked Sharon Swope what immediate needs we could help with and she said gloves was a big need. When they received the many gloves from our church they were so very grateful and got right to work distributing the gloves to the people they serve.



Bethany Wirin, Head of Marshalltown Christian School (MCS) met with Kim Schryver, Chair of FCC Benevolence and Missions Committee to get an update of the is school's programs, plans, students, faculty and facilities. Ms. Wirin graciously provided a tour. There are so many admirable elements of this accredited option for Begindergarten (pre-K) through 8<sup>th</sup> grade students.

The success of the school is evident in their growing numbers and waiting list for enrollment. MCS has basically doubled in student numbers in the last two years: 58 students in 2022-23; 99 students in 2023-24, and 125 students in 2024-25. Ninety-nine was the maximum capacity for their facility, so for this school year MCS arranged to lease classroom space from Journey Church to accommodate their 125 students. Next year they believe they hope to accommodate 1-2 additional youth in each of their nine classrooms, but no more. Forecasted census for 2025-26 is about 140 -145 students. The school has also been able to expand their

teaching staff to 11 full-time and 2 part time teachers. There are three members of their administration and one part-time staff members who runs their food service.

Seeing the student body work, play and create during the school session was a joy. Demographics are diverse including children from 30 different churches in our community (including FCC), several different races and ethnicities. There are about 17 – 18 students in each classroom. Strengths and interests are as varied as in any public school. In addition to the credentialed academic curriculum MCS provides vocal music, art classes and physical education as part of the regular weekly schedule. Cooperative agreements with Marshalltown Public School System enable MCS students to participate in instrumental music (band and/or orchestra), upper-level vocal music and art programs as well as sports and vocational training opportunities offered through the public system.



It is refreshing to learn about the Christ-centered start to each day at MCS. “Aroma” (for the sweet offering of praise lifted to God) includes worship music, U.S. Pledge of Allegiance, prayer and a brief acknowledgement of anyone with a birthday. The whole opening lasts about 10-15 minutes. Once a week, a 30-minute Chapel Service is held at the school. Every Wednesday morning a guest provides an age-appropriate message, praise music, scripture reading and prayer are included. Youth pastors (Shelly Speas from FCC has been a regular contributor; thanks, Shelly!), pastors, missionaries, alumni and occasionally a member of the student body serve as guest leaders for chapel. What an amazing blessing to be able to praise God openly during the school day.

MCS board of directors with the administration and faculty have just completed another four year strategic plan. Three main thrusts will guide their focus: 1) Build 3-4 new classrooms onto the present MCS building before the lease of classrooms from Journey Church needs to be renewed in 2029; 2) Investigate expanding grade level of instruction to 9<sup>th</sup> grade and beyond; 3) Improve faculty compensation closer to parity with public school instructors.

Mrs. Wirin was very responsive to having someone from administration provide a Mission Moment for our congregation sometime soon. We are working with Pastor Dan and the Board of Deacons to identify a date. Hoping you will enjoy hearing directly from a member of the leadership at this valuable community entity and feel blessed to know our church has been a loyal financial supporter since it opened.

To learn more go to this website - <https://mcsiowa.org/> and keep abreast of MCS happenings by reading their newsletter. Our secretary regularly distributes it in an all church email.



## Pillars of Faith @ F. C. C.

For those of you who read "Pillars of Faith" in February, the person was Kim Schryver. 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, Kim, 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 March.

Before I introduce this month's Pillar of faith, this author finds it interesting that the last few Pillars of Faith have originally come from different parts of Iowa and the surrounding area. Maybe it was a job that brought them to Marshalltown but what brought them to First Congregational Church? I believe it is a sense of belonging first to the Triune God, (God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit) which causes one to seek to belong to a like minded community. Our Pillar of Faith for March 2025 is no exception.

Sheldon, Iowa is a city in O'Brien and Sioux counties, along to Floyd River in far North Western Iowa. This person went to the American Reformed Church which was colloquially referred to as the Dutch Reformed Church, a mainline Protestant Church. There was no confirmation at this church and you weren't baptized until you were ready. At age 14 this person was baptized and then joined the church at age 25.

In 1982, this person's spouse opened a sewing machine store on Main Street in Marshalltown. They bought a house and settled down. The spouse was a Catholic so they attended St. Mary's Catholic Church. This Pillar believes that it was only right that husband and wife should go to the same church. So she went with him. Later when the husband was gone she started looking for a Protestant Church.

One day Margaret Klink, a friend and member of First Congregational Church invited her to come to a Sunday service. She liked it! It was like what she had known before. She joined FCC in September of 1998. The first activity she was involved in was being a member of the Diaconate for two years. Next she became a member of the Benevolence & Missions Committee and continues serve on this committee. She delivered Meals on Wheels with Mary Vellinga several years and visits people in care facilities.

When asked which activity she enjoyed most, the reply was, "Benevolence & Missions Committee, it is a serious thing and does good works."

When asked what advice do you have to the future of our church? The reply was, after much discussion, "We need to grow our church. Everyone in our church should be praying that we are 'A Church of warmth and welcome that makes each person who walks in our doors for whatever reason feel like they belong.' "

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 April 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
	Monday-Friday 9am-Noon 641-752-4239					
						1
<b>color code:</b> youth events Church mtgs Special events Comm. Events Color copy on bulletin boards						
<b>2 Communion</b> In-Person Worship 8am and 10:30 svcs In Sanctuary 10:30 Svc/YouTube Fellowship follows Power Hour 9:15	<b>3</b> Women's Ministry 5:30 in Library	<b>4</b> D.O.G.S 5:00 - 6:30	<b>5</b> Ash Wednesday @ 7PM  Men's church coffee 8am Hy-Vee  JR PY 4:45-6:15 PY 6:30-8:00	<b>6</b> Bell choir 5:30	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b> In-Person Worship 8am and 10:30 svcs In Sanctuary 10:30 Svc/YouTube Fellowship follows Power Hour 9:15	<b>10</b> Women's Bible Study @ 5:30 in Library	<b>11</b> BMC meets @ 8:45AM  D.O.G.S 5:00 - 6:30	<b>12</b> Men's church coffee 8am Hy-Vee  JR PY 4:45-6:15 PY 6:30-8:00	<b>13</b> Bell choir 5:30	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>16</b> In-Person Worship 8am and 10:30 svcs In Sanctuary 10:30 Svc/YouTube Fellowship follows Power Hour 9:15 BCE meets 11:45am	<b>17</b> St. Patrick's Day  	<b>18</b> Diaconate meets @ 6:30 pm  D.O.G.S 5:00 - 6:30	<b>19</b> Men's church coffee 8am Hy-Vee  JR PY 4:45-6:15 PY 6:30-8:00	<b>20</b> Bell choir 5:30  Trustees meets 5:30 PM	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> 11am MOW Shelly Speas
<b>23</b> In-Person Worship 8am and 10:30 svcs In Sanctuary 10:30 Svc/YouTube Fellowship follows Power Hour 9:15	<b>24</b> Women's Bible Study @ 5:30 in Library	<b>25</b> D.O.G.S 5:00 - 6:30	<b>26</b> Men's church coffee 8am Hy-Vee  JR PY 4:45-6:15 PY 6:30-8:00	<b>27</b> Bell choir 5:30	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>30</b> Cabinet meets @ 11:45am In-Person Worship 8am and 10:30 svcs In Sanctuary 10:30 Svc/YouTube Fellowship follows Power Hour 9:15	<b>31</b>					



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](http://www.fccmarshalltown.org)

A member of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches

