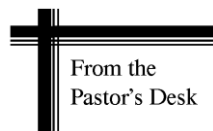


# Pilgrim's Progress

## December 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."



### Main Article: Incarnation

There's a story in the Book of Acts, about Paul and Silas visiting a village only to find the people thought they were the gods in disguise. It didn't end well, but it was an example that the ancients believed that the gods sometimes visited mortals in disguise. The events remembered and celebrated at Christmas are more profound. In the Birth of Jesus we have God the Son not visiting the human race in disguise, but rather actually becoming part of the human race. The Creator joined creation. Many parts of the Bible explore this. Here are just a couple of examples.

#### *Philippians 2:5-11*

- <sup>5</sup> Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,
- <sup>6</sup> who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,
- <sup>7</sup> but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men.
- <sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross.
- <sup>9</sup> Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,
- <sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,
- <sup>11</sup> and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Christ became a servant. Not only did He become part of the human race but he chose the role of a bondservant, a slave by choice. This text tells us that Jesus demonstrated and humble service is the road to true greatness

#### *Hebrews 4:14-16*

- <sup>14</sup> Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* confession.
- <sup>15</sup> For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin.
- <sup>16</sup> Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

We can approach God the Father in prayer because we have a great high priest, but we don't have a great high priest because He is a nice guy. We have one because He knows firsthand all the joys and trials of the human condition. We know this because our King embraced humble service and is now our great high priest all because our Savior entered the human race and was born as a baby so long ago.

### Sermons

December 7	Putting on Christ	Isaiah 2:1-5; Romans 13:11-14
December 14	8:00 a.m. Being Patient	Isaiah 5:1-10; James 5:-12
	10:30 a.m. Christmas Pageant	
December 21	Being in the Kingdom	Isaiah :10-16; Matthew 11:2-11
December 24	Christmas Eve Meditation	Isaiah :2-'7; Titus 2:11-14
December 28	After Everything Settled Down	Hebrews 2:10-18; Matthew 2:13-23



*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:** Elenor Tjossem #160, Lenora Brown #161



Breana & Luis Alvarado

12/4/15

10 years



December 2 Sarah Paustian

December 8 Don Bogenrief

December 11 Brent Vellinga

December 12 Shauna Banks

December 20 Nay Liew

December 25 Norma Dannen

December 27 Nate Speas, Kay Miller-Todd

December 28 Sarah Nullmeyer

December 29 Patrick Stewart

December 30 Todd Stanley

December 31 Cindy Shirar



The last day to have your 2025 donations in is **Monday December 29<sup>th</sup>**! They must be in the office by the start of the day Monday December 29<sup>th</sup> for them to go to count towards 2025!



## 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.

February 28

July 25

November 28

April 25

August 22

December 26

May 23

September 26

June 27

October 24



# NEWS FROM YOUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES

## CHURCH FINANCIAL INFORMATION THRU NOVEMBER 30th, 2025

We are now in the last 31 days of 2025. Year to date thru November 30th, our tithes and offerings are trailing the 2025 total year Budget by -26.6%. This is a significant improvement compared to tithes and offerings thru October! If you are able and willing to support your church through new or additional Tithes and Offerings, we gratefully thank you. It would be great if we were able to achieve our giving Budget goal for 2025.

Thru November 30, 2025	Current Actual	Total Year Budget	Total Year Net
GIVING	\$132,913	\$180,996	-26.6%
EXPENSES	\$225,313	\$305,684	-26.3%

## ONLINE GIVING

You may also contribute to First Congregational Church using On-Line giving. Simply click the link below to give to the church using On-Line giving.

[My Tithes and Offering Online Link](#)

Thank you for your continued support of First Congregational Church!

## CAPITAL DONATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR 2025

Capital Projects	Est. Cost	\$ Raised
New ovens for church kitchen	\$2,030	0
New chairs for Fellowship Hall	\$2,736	0
New fabricated gate system - east side of church	\$5,456	0
Upgraded church fire alarm system	\$6,800	0
Vented roof system - tip of roof over the Sanctuary	\$7,000	0
Replace 16 Education Wing windows	\$36,336	0
New 2023 15 passenger Ford Transit 350 van	\$57,458	\$4,000
Stain glass windows – Inspection/Repair/Replacement	\$100,000	\$40,000





# Youth Group News

Some of our youth and their families spent the afternoon having fun together at Center Grove Orchard in November.



We had the honor of putting up and taking down American Flags in our community for Veteran's Day. This is an awesome youth fundraiser provided by the Optimist Club.



Our youth groups collected and packaged supplies and gifts to put in Operation Christmas Child boxes in November. We are so happy to support this ministry through Samaritan's Purse!

Lydia Speas was excited to present finished dresses to the Bolands so they can be given to girls connected to My Kinsmen Ministry. Lydia has enjoyed finishing the dresses with the huge help of Debi Estabrook. The dresses were designed and started by Arlene Selby.



Sundays we have Sunday School 9:15-10:20am for Preschool-12th grade in the Loft.  
December 21st (Christmas Party/Jesus's Birthday Party)  
Not 28th—Christmas break

Tuesdays we have DOG's (Depend on God) 5-6pm for preschool-4th grade in the fellowship hall.  
December 2nd (Caroling), 9th (Caroling), 16th (Christmas Party with a meal)  
Not 23rd & 30th—Christmas Break

Wednesdays we have Jr. PY (Pilgrim Youth) 4:45-6pm for 5-8th grade in the Loft.  
December 3rd, 10th (Caroling), 17th (Christmas Party with a meal)  
Not 24th & 31st—Christmas Break

Wednesdays we have PY (Pilgrim Youth) 7-8:15pm for 9-12th grade in the Loft.  
December 3rd, 10th (Caroling), 17th (Christmas Party with a meal)  
Not 24th & 31st—Christmas Break



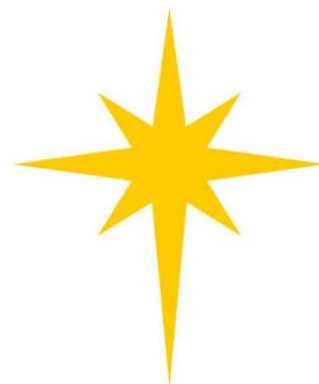
Tuesday nights are so fun with our DOG's group!



Wednesday nights with our Jr PY & PY groups are awesome!

Sunday, December 14th will be our Children's Christmas Program during the 10:30am service. There will be special Christmas music and a play called the New Star. Come to experience the wonderful story of the birth of our Savior Jesus through the eyes of the very first Christmas Star.

After the service there will be a soup luncheon and the youth will be hosting a bake sale. We hope everyone will join us downstairs after the service this wonderful Sunday!





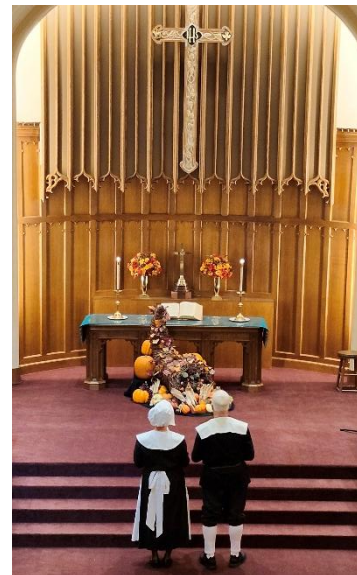


## Harvest Sunday

Thanks to all who came and those who helped make the Harvest Sunday and Dinner a success again this year! We served nearly 90 meals. Harvest Committee coordinators were Jane Symons, Kristi Hassler, and Lisa Blabaum. Special thanks to our Pilgrims this year, Doug and Krystal Randall for greeting, taking offering, reading the Thanksgiving Proclamation and reminding us of our heritage! Thanks to Arlene Selby for playing piano and Lynn Maas for leading us in a verse of "We Gather Together" before our meal, and to Pastor Dan for blessing the meal. Thanks to Pat Anderson for making the delicious cranberries, Kristi for all the grocery and miscellaneous shopping and the prep of green beans, and Jane for the prep of cheesy potatoes. (There are never any left, because they are so good!) Hy-Vee catered the turkey, ham, and rolls. Thanks to our Saturday volunteers Rod Hassler, Deb Estabrook, and Cheryl Woltjer, for assistance setting up, and decorating. The Sunday morning crew for cutting and plating pie, the servers in the kitchen, the youth servers for delivering meals to tables, and the clean up crew including Rod Hassler, Brent Vellinga, Shelly and Sam Speas, John Blabaum, Bob and Judy Gaynor, Miriam Bryant, Claire, Libby, Ian, Kristen and Greg Meyer, Lydia, Avayah, Shelly and Sam Speas, Mallory Fowler, Wayne and Jonna Wagar, Krystal and Doug Randall and Aaron Dickey. Thank you to our church Secretary Katie Vogeler for tracking the reservations and making place cards for reservations. There were so many that stepped forward to help, if anyone was missed, please accept our apology. And finally, Thank you to all who attended and enjoyed Harvest Dinner 2025!

With Gratefulness and Thanksgiving!

Lisa Blabaum  
Kristi Hassler  
Jane Symons



## **News From the Diaconate Board**

The Harvest Dinner on November 23rd was a big success with an estimate of 75 - 80 people being served. Doug and Crystal Randall were excellent as Pilgrims as were the food and fellowship.

November 30th was the official start of Advent. However, because of the thick blanket of snow on the ground Church Services were cancelled that day. The Christmas tree and sanctuary were not decorated on the 29th and will be done on December 3rd starting around 4:30 or 5 pm. Please come and help if you can.

The Board of Christian Education Children's Christmas program will be December 14th at the 10:30 Service.

The traditional candlelight Christmas Eve Service will be Wednesday, December 24th starting at perhaps, 4:45 pm. The rough draft of the program looks too good to be missed. This is still in the planning stages. So look for more information through an all church email, Sunday bulletins or Pastor Dan's announcements from the pulpit.

This month's newsletter contains the 27th addition of Pillar's of Faith. The first one appeared in October 2023 and was about Bonnie Pappas. Have you ever wondered how Pillars of Faith started? It came about when a couple of members of the Diaconate were talking about the Renewal Process the church had just gone through and the next step the Deacon board could take. There you have it! That is how Pillars of Faith started.



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

For those of you who read “Pillars of Faith” in November, the person was Kristi Hassler. 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, Kristi, 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 December.

This month’s connection to First Congregational Church began back in 2006. Our daughter started attending youth group with a friend and really enjoyed Barry and Cheryl Holmes. We were looking to switch churches due to internal upheaval and started attending services and Sunday school on a regular basis. We knew many in the congregation and they were so welcoming that we decided to join.

Growing up in a small rural church I had the opportunity to teach Sunday school classes in my early teens, sing in the choir, and help with VBS. As an adult at FCC I have served on BCE, Benevolence and Missions, helped with VBS, gone to Monterrey, Mexico on a mission trip, played bells and attended many bible studies and adult Sunday school. I also helped Cheryl Holmes lead the Girls of Grace group. My favorites were the mission trip and serving on Benevolence and Missions.

“My advice for the future of our church is to continue with our youth outreach and expand it wherever possible. We are still very traditional and intimidating to someone new listening to us or attending service. I would love to see more contemporary music and testimonials.”

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 January 2026 newsletter. The answer will be there under the title “Pillars of Faith @ F. C. C.”





Wishing you  
a safe and  
happy  
Holdiaiy Season





Arts@StPauls presents

*5th annual*

# Christmas Concert

Featuring

**MTunes**

**Trinity Bell Choir**

**MHS Holiday Singers**

**Hudson Lourenço-Feld**

Thursday Dec 18 7pm

**St Paul's Episcopal Church**

**201 E Church St**

**Marshalltown**







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

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	<b>Monday-Friday</b> 9 am-Noon 641-752-4239					
<b>color code:</b> youth events Church mtgs Special events Comm. Events Color copy on bulletin boards	<b>1</b> <b>Women's Ministry @ 5:30 PM</b>	<b>2</b> <b>DOGS: 5-6 PM</b>	<b>3</b> <b>Men's church coffee 8 AM Hy-Vee</b>  <b>Jr PY: 4:45-6 PM PY: 7-8:15 PM</b>	<b>4</b> <b>Prayer group 11:00 AM</b>  <b>Bell choir 5:30 PM</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7 Communion</b> In-Person Worship 8am and 10:30 svcs In Sanctuary 10:30 Svc/YouTube Fellowship follows <b>Power Hour 9:15 - 10:20 AM</b>  <b>All Church Bible Study 11:30 AM</b>	<b>8</b> <b>Women's Bible Study @ 5:30 PM</b>	<b>9</b> <b>DOGS: 5-6 PM</b>  <b>BMC meets @ 8:45 AM</b>	<b>10</b> <b>Men's church coffee 8 AM Hy-Vee</b>  <b>Jr PY: 4:45-6 PM PY: 7-8:15 PM</b>	<b>11</b> <b>Prayer group 11:00 AM</b>  <b>Bell choir 5:30 PM</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>14</b> In-Person Worship 8am and 10:30 svcs In Sanctuary 10:30 Svc/YouTube Fellowship follows <b>Christmas program 10:30 AM service</b>  <b>Power Hour 9:15 - 10:20 AM</b>  <b>All Church Bible Study 11:30 AM</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> <b>DOGS: 5-6 PM</b>  <b>Diaconate meets @ 6:30 PM</b>	<b>17</b> <b>Men's church coffee 8 AM Hy-Vee</b>  <b>Jr PY: 4:45-6 PM PY: 7-8:15 PM</b>	<b>18</b> <b>Prayer group 11:00 AM</b>  <b>Bell choir 5:30 PM</b>  <b>Trustees meet</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>21</b> In-Person Worship 8am and 10:30 svcs In Sanctuary 10:30 Svc/YouTube Fellowship follows	<b>22</b> <b>Women's Bible Study @ 5:30 PM</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> <b>Men's church coffee 8am Hy-Vee</b>  <b>Christmas Eve Service 4:45 PM</b>  <b>Office Closed</b>	<b>25</b> <b>Christmas Day</b>    <b>Office Closed</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> <b>11 AM MOW Jonna Wager</b>
<b>28</b> In-Person Worship 8am and 10:30 svcs In Sanctuary 10:30 Svc/YouTube Fellowship follows	<b>29</b> <b>Last day to have donations in for 2025!</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> <b>Men's church coffee 8am Hy-Vee</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

