



FCC PILGRIM PULSE

DECEMBER 2019

This thing I wrote about myself several years ago came up in conversation recently. It was strongly suggested that I should share it with you all. I considered editing it first, but I think I will share it exactly as it was originally written:

My history may be Lutheran, but that is not my heritage.
I may appreciate liturgy, but that is not the only way I worship.
I may cherish old hymns, but I'll fall on my knees & weep to today's songs.
My favorite music isn't even "Christian"; I don't think it even has to be.
Modern Christian authors are alright, but I know well the early Church Fathers who said it first and said it best.
I love to study the heights of theology, but I'm passionate about communicating it to the lowest and most broken people in their own language.
I am compelled by holiness, but legalism tastes foul and repulsive to me.
The Church may house the saints, but it exists for the lost and broken sinners.
I'm comfortable in a preacher's collar, and I'm comfortable in jeans.
I'll meet you where you are, but I love you too much to leave you there.
I live to comfort the afflicted, and I live to afflict the comfortable.
If you're a Pharisee, woe to you.
If you're a slave to sin, let me show you how to be a child of the King.
I enjoy reading Wright, Wesley, Augustine, Chrysostom, Cyril, et al, and I enjoy watching Breaking Bad, Shaun of the Dead, Vikings, Anime, et al.
I'll coach you higher and further into sanctification, and I'll coach another through their addiction and into the open arms of Christ.
I'll dine with you in your alcohol free home, and I'll dine with the ones you least would in a bar.
Sometimes I say things with the tongue of an angel, and sometimes I say things with the tongue of a soldier.
I won't always tell you what you want to hear, but I'll always try to tell you what you need to hear.
That may be uplifting love, or it may be correcting love.
I'll lead our youth in "sword drills" challenges, and I'll sit down and play Halo or Battlefront with them.
I once carried a gun - at a time even into war, and now carry a Bible out into the world; and in both cases I've done for the express purpose defending the defenseless, protecting the championless, and rescuing the lost.
I may not be as safe or tame as you might like, but I am real and I am relentless in my desire to follow my rabbi, Jesus.
I may not stay out of the places you refuse to go, but I will follow Christ wherever he leads.
Encourage me and I will love you, Attack me and I will love you.
Seek division and I will seek unity, Seek to tear down and I will seek to build up.
I may be unorthodox in my methods, but I am orthodox in my doctrines.
If I'm not pure enough for the saints in your church, it may be because I'm trying not to be so pure that I can't even being to speak to the dirty, broken, desperate, confused, addicted, besieged, marginalized and lost.
Maybe sometimes I say things I shouldn't, and maybe one of those times is now.
GOD once spoke through the mouth of a donkey, and it's possible that he is once again.
In any case, I am a peacemaker and a healer, an idealist visionary and a counselor.
I am, whether it be easy or hard, a pastor.

Peace of Christ,

Revered Jason Dillingham

IN OUR PRAYERS

IN OUR MILITARY: Matthew Crittenden, Jordan Varney, Paul Lepley, TJ Curry, Joshua Roose, Stephanie Roose, Melissa Staffen, Rick Grimes, Joe Suchowolec, Griffin Gloden, and Kyle Durdle.

WE CONTINUE TO PRAY FOR:

<i>Marta Lores</i>	<i>Jackie Kocher</i>	<i>Rob Sansom</i>	<i>Pat Toth</i>	<i>Mike Tuin</i>
<i>Lucille McLachlan</i>	<i>Betty Lincoln</i>	<i>Sandra Tiffany</i>	<i>Roxy Rice</i>	<i>Michael Balars</i>
<i>Barb Hoy</i>	<i>Marjoan Wohlfert</i>	<i>Gloria McPherson</i>	<i>Gary Petersen</i>	<i>Carrol Minard</i>
<i>Lucas Hopkins</i>	<i>Bonnie Braman</i>	<i>Coreen Johnston</i>	<i>Jade Hannah</i>	<i>Tom Deal</i>
<i>Larry Moss</i>	<i>David Crittenden</i>	<i>Bill & Jean Boyd</i>	<i>Susan Beauvais</i>	<i>Jasmine Luce</i>
<i>Holly Case</i>	<i>Judith Rice-Lesage</i>	<i>Pat Flashaar</i>		

FCC FAMILY AT CARE FACILITIES

<i>Millie Crowe</i>		<i>-at Maple Creek, Grand Rapids</i>
<i>Lois Hazelwood</i>		<i>-at Hathaway Hills Assisted Living Room #31</i>
<i>Bette Houle</i>		<i>-at The Brook Assisted Living, Cedar Springs</i>
<i>Natalie Kilfoil</i>		<i>-at Hathaway Hills Assisted Living Room #20</i>
<i>Corla Morgan</i>		<i>-at SHUM RNC Room #103</i>
<i>Mary Crittenden</i>		<i>-at SHUM RNC Room #109</i>
<i>Norma Nicholas</i>		<i>-at Green Acres Room #201</i>
<i>Jelane Hamper</i>		<i>-at Green Acres Room #206</i>
<i>Lois Visch</i>		<i>-at Masonic Pathways in Alma Room #282A</i>
<i>Bob Dunn</i>		<i>-at Metron</i>
<i>Keith King</i>		<i>-at Hathaway Hills Assisted Living Room #25</i>
<i>Polly Boatwright</i>		<i>-at Green Acres Room#204</i>

FAMILY AND FRIENDS

<i>Mark Iverson</i>	<i>Brother-in-law of Deb Dieckman</i>
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A Christmas Message From Your Secretary:

Hello FCC Family,

I hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving with their families and can look forward to all that we can be thankful for in the coming year! I am thankful to have my husband, children, and family, all home for Christmas!

There have been many losses of loved ones this year, but we can still be thankful for the loved ones we are blessed to still have with us every day! I pray for all soldiers who are overseas, all who we have lost, and for those struggling to find their way. I hope we all take the time to be grateful and thank God for all our loved ones that we are able to gather together with for Christmas. Please take the time to let them know how much they mean to you!

I hope you have a wonderful month filled with love, laughter, and togetherness! As always, I thank you all for your kindness throughout the year! Blessings to all for a wonderful Christmas and Happy New Year!

Message of Thanks!

Thank you to all members for the cards and prayers. The prayers are working, & I am healing! I am feeling much, much better. God bless each & every one of you! – Bonnie Wickerham

Continue Prayers for:

The Family of Sharla McCoy as she passed away November 17th, Mary Haskins, Coleen Venema (*for her recent eye surgery*), Jack Corner (*for recovery from his recent surgery*), Jerry Garner, and Barb Hoy.

~ December 2019 ~

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
 Merry Christmas						
1 Communion & 1st Sunday in Advent 9:30 Prayer Group 9:30 Choir 11a Worship 12:45 CC 3p Venture	2 5:30 CS 6:30 Council 7p CE Mtg.	3	4 10a PURLS 1p Winslow 4p Girl Scouts 5p Free Dinner 6p Group Study 6:30 Bethany 7p Boy Scouts	5 11a GAMA 4p Prayer group 6:30 Tp. 125G 7:30 AA	6 11:30 AA Santa Parade 5:30 CS meet	7
8 9:30 Prayer Group 9:30 Choir 11a Service 12:15 PF Youth 12:45 CC 3p Venture	9 5:30 CS 6:30 Deacons	10 5p HCA Potluck	11 10a PURLS 4p Girl Scouts 5p Free Dinner 6p Group Study 7p Boy Scouts	12 4p Prayer group 6:30 Tp. 125G 7:30 AA	13 11:30 AA <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Troop 125G Lock-in 6p on the 13th to 12p on the 14th </div>	14 2p WF Christmas Tea 
15 9:30 Prayer Group 9:30 Choir 11a Worship Special Music – Children's Choir 3p Venture 4p PF Party 5:30 Christmas Caroling	16 5:30 CS Pack Mtg./Christmas Party 6:30p Trustees	17 7p Beer & Hymns	18 10a PURLS 4p Girl Scouts 5p Dinner 6p Group Study 7p BS Groups	19 7p Preschool Christmas Pageant (4 & 5's) 4p Prayer group 5:30 F.A.N. 6p OA Group 6:30 Tp. 125G 7:30 AA	20 11:30 AA Preschool Christmas Party (3's)	21
22 9:30 Prayer Group 9:30 Choir 11a Worship *Sunday School 12:15 PF Youth 12:45 CC 3p Venture	23	24	25	26 4p Prayer group 7:30 AA	27 11:30 AA	28
<div style="background-color: #d9e1f2; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black;"> Christmas Break December 24 to January 6th </div>						
29 9:30 Prayer Group 11a Service *no Sunday School	30	31 New Years Eve				
<div style="background-color: #d9e1f2; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black;"> Christmas Break </div>						

~ January 2020 ~

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 10a PURLS	2 10a Boxing up day	3 11:30 AA	4
			<div> <div>Christmas Break December 23 to January 5th</div> <div> <div>New Year's Day!</div> <div>11a GAMA</div> <div>4p Prayer group</div> <div>6:30 Tp. 125G</div> <div>7:30 AA</div> </div> </div>			
5 Communion 9:30 Prayer Group 9:30 Choir 11a Worship 12:45 CC 3p Venture	6 <i>School Back In Session</i> 5:30 CS 6:30 Council		8 10a PURLS 4p Girl Scouts 5p Free Dinner 6p Group Study 7p Boy Scouts	9 4p Prayer group 6:30 Tp. 125G 7:30 AA	10 11:30 AA	11
12 9:30 Prayer Group 9:30 Choir 11a Service 12:15 PF Youth 12:45 CC <i>*2p CS Arrow of Light Ceremony</i> SHUM Service 3p Venture	13 <i>MLK Day</i> <div>*Reports due for Annual Report</div> 6p CS 6:30 Deacons	14	15 10a PURLS 4p Girl Scouts 5p Free Dinner 6p Group Study 7p Boy Scouts	16 4p Prayer group 5:30 F.A.N. 6p OA Group 6:30 Tp. 125G 7:30 AA	17 11:30 AA	18
19 9:30 Prayer Group 9:30 Choir 11a Worship 12:45 CC 3p Venture	20 <i>MLK Day</i> 6p CS	21	22 10a PURLS 4p Girl Scouts 6p FCC Potluck <div>7p Annual Meeting</div> 7p Boy Scouts	23 4p Prayer group 6:30 Tp. 125G 7:30 AA	24 11:30 AA <div>Cub Scout Sleep-Over 6pm to 12pm</div>	25
26 9:30 Prayer Group 9:30 Choir 11a Service 12:45 CC 3p Venture	27 6p CS Pack Mtg. 7p Trustees	28 7p Beer & Hymn	29 10a PURLS 1p WF Board 4p Girl Scouts 5p Free Dinner 6p Group Study 7p Boy Scouts	30 4p Prayer group 6:30 Tp. 125G 7:30 AA	31	

~ FCC COMMITTEE NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS ~

PASTORAL NEWS

Community Life (CL): Dinner is at 5pm with group study at 6pm. Volunteers needed to help cook and serve supper on Wednesday nights. Food prep begins between 2-3pm and cleanup is done by around 6pm. Please see Megan Dillingham if you can help!

- **Pastor's Office Hours:** Open office hours are Monday & Wednesday (10am-2pm). Study day on Tuesday. Visits on Thursdays or as needed. Evening visits are available by appointment. To schedule an appointment or visit, please call the church office, email Pastor Jason or call the Parsonage.
- **A sincere thank you!** to everyone who donated cash, food, or volunteered for the Community Life Thanksgiving meal. Your generosity is very appreciated -Community Life Leadership Team.

TRUSTEE NEWS

There is a shortage of \$12,446.87. The next meeting will be Dec. 16th at 6:30pm in the upstairs conference room. Tithing boxes for 2020 will be available soon. If you do not see your box, please leave a note for the office and one will be issued to you. Pledge cards are still available in the Narthex. Thank you for your continued support and care for this wonderful church!

COUNCIL NEWS – CONGREGATIONAL VOTE

There will be a vote after service on Dec. 8th regarding the two new proposed Amendments to the Bylaws: **1. Gender Inclusive Pronouns throughout the Bylaws** – adding: 'Wherever gender specific pronouns are used in the Bylaws in reference to a member, a leader, or a staff member, they shall be amended to be inclusive of both male and female terms (i.e., he=he/she, his=his/her(s), etc.) Note: there are at least eight (8) instances needing such correction scattered throughout the full document.' and **2. Article VII, Section D: Voting** – adding: 'In the event a church member is not able to attend a meeting, that member may vote by either absentee ballot or by proxy, as outlines in the Standard Operation Procedures.'

CHURCH OFFICE NEWS

Office hours are Mon-Fri from 9-3 with lunch from 2:00 to 2:30. The door is locked early on Tues. and Fri. If you need assistance, please call ahead.

PARISH NURSE NEWS

Patrice is in on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8-4pm and on Fridays from 8-11. If you have any questions or concerns, or to make an appointment to meet with her, please call (616) 894-7288.

CELEBRATIONS

Happy Birthday! To Taylor McPherson (12/1), Valerie VanderMark (12/2), Betty Lincoln (12/9), and Kevin Venema (12/28). **Happy Anniversary!** To Rev. Jason & Megan Dillingham (12/31).

CHOIR NEWS

- **Sound Techs NEEDED!** If you can help run the soundboard at Sunday service, please contact Greg.
- **Chancel Choir** practices every Sunday at 9:30am.
- **The Children's Choir** practices every Sunday at 12:45 in Fellowship Hall.
- We are still looking for volunteers for our *Special Music* program, contact Greg VanderMark.
- Mark your calendars – the Children's Choir will be performing Sunday, December 15th!

CHRISTIAN ED NEWS

- **SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS NEEDED!** If you can help, please contact the church office. No Sunday School Dec 1st. Classes will resume Dec. 8, 15, and 22. There is a "gift" waiting for you at the Children's Sermon this week! Teachers get a well-deserved break on Dec. 29 and Communion Sunday, Jan. 5, 2020. Sunday school will start back up on January 12th.
- **Helping Those In Need:** On the 3rd Sunday of every month, we encourage everyone to fill our food basket for those in need!

PRESCHOOL NEWS

- November is over already! But what a wonderful month of celebrating thanks for all we have!
- Both classes joined together this year, for our annual Thanksgiving Feast with their families! It was a wonderful day filled with love, joy, friendship and lots of yummy food!!! There was laughter, play, and some songs from the preschools, as they performed for their families who were able to come!
- We now move into one of the most joyous times of the year! The Children will learn about the journey of Mary and Joseph and the birth of our Savior! The children will have a Christmas Party Celebration on the 29th and 30th. they will exchange gifts and have a Pageant in Fellowship hall for their families.
- The Preschool will be accepting registration packets in January 2020. Please stop in the church office to pick up a packet; a packet is also available on our church website under "all" News/Events at www.firstccog.org. For additional questions, please contact Ms. Candy on Facebook, or by calling the office at 754-7608 or preschool at 754-2445.

DEACONS NEWS

- **POINSETTIA ORDERS:** We are taking orders NOW! for the 2019 Christmas Poinsettias. **See form below for more information.*
- **NEW COFFEE HOUR GUIDELINES:** Anyone (or a group) can voluntarily sign up to sponsor a coffee hour on any available Sunday. A simple pot of coffee and something store-bought to munch on is sufficient. Paper products, coffee, sugar and creamer are provided by the Women's Fellowship. Coffee hour sponsors set up before service and clean up afterwards. If no one sponsors coffee hour, the Deacons will simply provide coffee. For the remainder of 2019, we will follow the assignment calendar as it stands, however, if someone has to cancel or forgets, the Deacons will provide coffee that Sunday. Sign-up sheets for January through April 2020 are now posted on the main bulletin board outside the church office. No one has to volunteer for coffee hour and should not feel obligated to do so. Questions? See Deb Dieckman.
- **2019 ANGEL TREE:** This year, the board of deacons is sponsoring an angel tree to benefit Have Mercy. This local agency supports homeless families in crisis. We can assist in this by providing a variety of items for their family interim housing facility. A tree with tags and lists will be in place in the narthex by Dec. 1 and will remain until Dec. 24. Unwrapped gifts can be left under the tree or in the church office. You are welcome to take a tag from the tree or simply provide any of the following: small & large trash bags, dish soap, laundry detergent, hand soap, pillows (we have plenty of pillowcases), bath towels, hand towels, & washcloths, plastic totes, twin size comforters (no mattress covers please), blankets, paper towel, toothpaste, deodorant (men & women), shaving cream & razors, new (packaged) underwear (men & women) & bras, scrubs &/or sweatpants & t-shirts, coffee grounds, gift cards for haircuts, gas gift cards, dollar tree gift cards, and fast food gift cards.

PF YOUTH NEWS

PF Youth meetings are the 2nd and 4th Sunday's of the month. Upcoming events/mission trips:

- Dec. 15th will be the PF Christmas party from 4-6pm.
- Dec. 15th PF will join members after party to go Christmas Caroling!
- Dec. 22nd no meeting – holiday break!
- Dec. 24th place luminaries in front of the Church, assist with 7pm Christmas Eve Service; group meeting at 5:30pm.
- Retreat in Jan. 2020. More info will be posted soon.
- See Claude for more info on events & mission trips.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP NEWS

- **Terri Lynn Nuts:** If you would like to purchase any of our available products, contact Chris 754-7464.
- **WINSLOW CIRCLE:** will celebrate their Christmas dinner at the Winter Inn on Wed. Dec. 4th at 1pm; hosted by Michele Kocher. All ladies of the church are welcome! We will order off the menu. Please contact Michele Kocher with any questions.
- **BETHANY CIRCLE:** will celebrate their Christmas Dinner at the Winter Inn on Wed., Dec. 4 at 6:30 in the small banquet room. We will order off the menu. Marian will be leading us in holiday fun, & we will finish *Two Steps Forward* discussion. If you need a ride, contact Fran at 754-7714 and leave a message!
- **CHRISTMAS TEA – UPDATE!** THE ANNUAL CHRISTMAS TEA has been moved to Sat., Dec. 14 at 2pm, due to the death of our beloved Circle and Church Member, Sharla McCoy, whose funeral is December 7. Many of our church friends will be wanting to attend Sharla's funeral. For more info Call Chris at (616) 754-7464.

BUILDING MAINTENANCE NEWS

- If any Member has a two stage snowblower they are willing to donate to the church, it would be much appreciated!
- Donations of salt are still also needed to keep the sidewalks clear over the winter months! Thank you!

COMMUNITY NEWS & OTHER EVENTS

- **Grand Rapids Chorus of Sweet Adelines & the Great Lakes Chorus Presents:** "A Winter Wonderland" Musical. Sat., Dec. 14th at 3pm at Grandville High School Auditorium. Tickets: General \$15, Seniors 60+ & Students \$12 Groups of 10 or more \$10. Kids 8 & under are free. Online orders at grsa.net or greatlakeschorus.org. For more info, see Dave Jones!
- **Greenville Community Center Craft Fair & Flea Market:** Sat., Dec. 7th from 9-3. Shop local, new and vintage items, handmade gifts, crafts, and baked goods. Call 754-9163 for more info.
- **Grandparents Parenting:** Support group class for grandparents & relatives raising children of all ages. on Wed., Jan. 15th at 2pm in Stanton. Call CoA, option 4, by Jan. 8th to sign up.
- **Social Security News:** read about the possible ways your benefits might be reduced at www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/EN-05-10018.pdf.
- Check out the **CoA website** or call 989-831-7476 for more important news & upcoming events at: www.montcalmcountymissiononaging.org

Trustees of the Month: Jack Corner and Kirk Faber
Deacon of the Month: Don Gibbs

BOARD MEETINGS:

Deacons: *CANCELLED*
Trustees: Monday the 16th at 6:30pm

General Fund: Operating Budget Income

Oct 2018 YTD \$181,353.56 ♦ Oct 2019 YTD \$168,906.69
Shortage YTD \$12,446.87

MUTUAL MINISTRY

December 1 – *Communion Sunday*

Greeters: The Stek Family

Liturgist: Linda Jones

Children's Message: Pastor Jason

Ushers: Doug & Lisa Stek and Don Gibbs

Coffee Hour: Carla Durdle, Carol Magoon, Michele Kocher, and Roxy Rice

Sound Techs: Bruce Beauvais

December 8

Greeters: Corey Norman and Family

Liturgist: Don Gibbs

Children's Message: ***NEEDED***

Ushers: Larry Alman, Corey Norman, and Patrick Lake

Coffee Hour: Larry & Karen Carbonelli and (*2 more needed*)

Sound Techs: Bruce Beauvais

December 15

Greeters: Anita Putnam and Darlene Petersen

Liturgist: Karen Hulbert

Children's Message: ***NEEDED***

Ushers: Wilson Hoy, Darlene Petersen and Anita Putnam

Coffee Hour: Cheryl Flashaar, Patricia Butts, Marta Lores, and Terri Merritt

Sound Techs: Bruce Beauvais

December 22

Greeters: Hollie Stephenson Family

Liturgist: Patrick Lake

Children's Message: ***NEEDED***

Ushers: Hollie & Tom Stephenson and Scott Rowland

Coffee Hour: Paul & Kris Jager, Chris Hubbard, and Corey Norman

Sound Techs: Bruce Beauvais

December 24 – *Christmas Eve Service (7p & 11p)*

Greeters: ***TBA***

Liturgist: Susan Beauvais

Ushers: ***TBA***

Sound Techs: Bruce Beauvais

December 29

Greeters: Steve & Diane Roose

Liturgist: Sandra Tiffany

Children's Message: ***NEEDED***

Ushers: Steve & Diane Roose and Greg Gardner

Coffee Hour: *Congregation's Leftover Christmas Cookies!*

Sound Techs: Bruce Beauvais

Christmas Poinsettias 2019

We invite you to place a poinsettia in the sanctuary in memory or in honor of a friend or loved one. The Deacons are offering you a convenient, affordable and mission-centered way to order your poinsettia through the church office. For the cost of **\$10.00 per plant**, you can help support our Deacon's Discretionary Fund and celebrate or remember a loved one. Orders made through the church office need to be placed **before Monday, December 9th**. Simply fill out the order form below. You may pick up your poinsettia after the 11:00 PM service on Christmas Eve, or on Sunday the 29th after service. You may also choose to have your poinsettia delivered to someone on the friendship list.

We are offering a 6 ½" potted red poinsettia with 4 to 7 blooms. Please indicate below the number of plants you would like to order along with who it is in Memory or Honor of.



Name (please print): _____

of plants _____ X \$10.00 = \$ _____ total

Color Choices: Red _____ White _____ Marble _____

***PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: First Congregational Church or FCC**

☐ In Memory of ☐ In Honor of: _____

☐ In Memory of ☐ In Honor of: _____

☐ In Memory of ☐ In Honor of: _____

☐ In Memory of ☐ In Honor of: _____

☐ **Yes**, I would like to pick up my plant(s).

☐ **No**, please deliver my plant(s) to someone on the prayer list.

