



FCC PILGRIM PULSE

DECEMBER 2021

A Message from our Pastor...

We recently celebrated Thanksgiving Day. On that day many gathered together with family and enjoy a traditional Thanksgiving meal. There was turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy, stuffing and many other family favorites. As the families gathered around the table, people started sharing about things they were thankful for. Some members of the family had something to be thankful for. There were others that have a tough time coming up with anything to share. It seems like in this day in age, people struggle to find things to be thankful for.

It seems like every time we turn around there is more bad news about the state of our community, nation and world. As we listen to all that bad news, it can be hard to find those things in our lives that we can give thanks for. It was the same for the early settlers of this country. The state of their world was upside down. They were sick and dying. Nothing seemed to be going their way. Their crops would not grow and what did grow was certainly not bountiful. They were in an extremely bad situation. In the midst of this depressing situation, those settlers realized they had many things to give thanks for. I have to pause here and ask a question. Who were these settlers giving thanks to in the midst of their great struggle?

They were giving thanks to God for all He had provided. William Bradford, the governor of Plymouth Colony, wrote in his journal *Of Plymouth Plantation*, *"Thus they found the Lord to be with them in all their ways, and to bless their outgoings and incomings, for which let His holy name have the praise forever, to all posterity."* They were well aware that God had blessed them by His own hand and they praised him for it. They did not praise and give thanks to God because they were overloaded with food and everything was going right for them. They gave thanks because they were able to endure the hard times. Once again God provided for His people of faith. Now I am not so naive to think that every single person in the Plymouth settlement was a deeply religious person who walked daily with God. This I do know, when God blesses His people there is plenty for everyone. We just need to be willing to share the blessing. That is what those early settlers did. Nobody was left out. They all were fed and enjoyed the blessings from God.

The Bible has many examples of God meeting the needs of the people. One I would like to share is in the Gospel of Mark in the 6th chapter. This is the account of Jesus feeding over five thousand people with five loaves and two fish. How in the world do you feed that many people with such a small amount of food? Jesus took the little bit they did have and in verse 41, *"Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people. He also divided the two fish among them all."* Jesus gave thanks to God for what they had and God blessed everyone there. It all started by giving thanks.

As we gather together during the next few weeks to celebrate Christmas with friends and family, remember that it all starts by giving thanks. The early settlers knew where the blessings came from. The people who were feed with the loaves and fish knew who provide for them. The blessings came from God. Let's not forget that giving thanks to God on Thanksgiving is how the holiday started. If we take the time to think about it, we have many things to thank God from this past year.

With Love,

Pastor Ed

If you wish to have your name or your loved one to be placed on our prayer list, please contact the church office. *Please remember you must have permission to do so. Thank you!


IN OUR PRAYERS

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.

ONGOING PRAYERS FOR:

Lucas Hopkins	Jerry Haverdink	Gloria McPherson	Trudy Petersen	Michele Kocher
James Griffith, Jr.	Rob Sansom	Jerry Kiste	Theresa Loper	Mar Newkirk
Holly Case	Jerry Garner	Brian Adair	Deb Kazmierczak	Chris Curtice
Brian Adair	Joe Mejia	Lynne Rowland	Brian Tiffany	Tom Deal

FCC FAMILY AT CARE FACILITIES:

Lois Hazelwood		-at Hathaway Hills Assisted Living Room #31
Bette Houle		-at The Brook Assisted Living, Cedar Springs
Corla Morgan		-at SHUM RNC, Room #103
Jelane Hamper		-at Green Acres, Room #206
Barb Hoy		-at Canal View Houghton County Medical Facility
Jackie Kocher		-Homebound
Mable Tate		-at United Rehab and Nursing, Room #108
Pat Toth		-at Hathaway Hills Assisted Living, Room #15
Shirley Kalbfleisch		-at Lakeview Terrace Assisted Living, Room #13

MEMBERS, FAMILY AND FRIENDS:

Owen Crouch	Friend of FCC
Darcie Jorgensen	Daughter of Candy Outman

SPECIAL PRAYERS FOR:

- The Karen Hulbert and the Cristofoli Family, for the passing for Karen's sister, Kathy Cristofoli.

Prayer Notes:

***Thank you to all for your Prayers! Please feel free to send a card to anyone listed above.**

PASTOR'S NEW EMAIL!

Pastor Ed has a new email address. If you are in need of prayers or other assistance, please feel free to email him at pastor.edfccog@gmail.com

BOARD MEETINGS:

Deacons: Tuesday, Nov. 9th at 6:30pm
Trustees: Monday, Nov. 22nd at 6:30pm

Trustees of the Month: Jack Corner and Larry Snow

Deacon of the Month: Jerry McPherson

~ FCC NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS ~

PASTORAL SEARCH COMMITTEE NEWS



We held a vote last month on the 14th to extend a call to Ed Milam to become our Senior Pastor. We are happy to announce, he was voted in unanimously and with much love and support by all!

Then on Nov. 21, we held a coffee service and cake in celebration of Pastor Ed and Jenny, welcoming them! We look forward to the coming months as we will prepare to grow in our faith and church family!

NEW MEMBER CLASS!

We are so blessed to have an exciting and active church family. We have all come together to form the Body of Christ. Every one of us plays an important role in the service of God through the ministries of His church. There will be an opportunity for anyone who feels led by the Spirit to learn more about the history, ministries, organization, and beliefs of this Congregational church. Starting in mid-January, we will be holding a series of New Members Classes. Please contact the church office or Pastor Ed for more info if you are feeling led to join this community of faith by becoming a member.

CHURCH OFFICE NEWS

The church office hours are Mon. through Thurs. from 9:00 to 3:00 with a break from 2:00-2:30pm. Please call ahead if you need assistance.

- Due to a recent upgrade to our church office email, if you are not receiving your emails from the church email, please make sure to check your "junk/spam folder" and mark "safe" or "not spam." If you continue to have issues, please call the office. Thank you!

FCC CELEBRATIONS

Happy Birthday! To Taylor McPherson (12/1), Betty Lincoln (12/9), and Kevin Venema (12/28).

PRESCHOOL NEWS

Last month we celebrated our Thanksgiving Feast with family and friends! This month we will begin to learn about the Christmas season, the birth of Jesus, & a visit from Santa!

- We will be on Christmas Break beginning Dec. 20th with classes resuming Jan. 3rd.

PARISH NURSE NEWS

COVID vaccines are now available for everyone over 5, and booster doses available for everyone over 18. The flu is also hitting this area hard this year, vaccines are available for anyone over 6 months old. If you'd like help obtaining a vaccine or have questions contact Patrice.

CHILDREN'S PRAISE CHOIR NEWS

Practices are every Thurs. from 4-5pm. Our next performance will be Dec. 19. We invite children of all ages to join us! We are also asking for donations of individually wrapped/pre-packaged treats and/or drinks for the children. If you are able to donate treats, please drop them off to Candy. Thank you!

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP NEWS

- **Hanging of the Greens:** 'Thank you' to all who came in to help decorate our Church with our festive decorations to help celebrate the Advent Season! We will be taking the decorations down in Jan. (date TBA) and would love your help once again with this!
- **Holiday Bake Sale "Plus":** 'Thank you' to everyone who donated baked goods and beautiful hand-crafted items for the sale! We also thank those that came to help setup, work, and clean up after the event.
- **Terri Lynn Nuts** for sale beginning Dec. 5th, until supplies are gone. *See Chris Hubbard.
- We have restocked supplies for the kitchen for events as they occur. Please write on the whiteboard if supplies run low.
- Our missions this December include gift cards for the staff, Lion's Club, and Have Mercy.

CHRISTIAN ED NEWS

- We welcome all the children at Sunday School who are in Preschool through Grade 5. Sunday School will be held on Nov. 28, Dec. 12, and Dec. 19. We are taking a break during the Holidays and will resume on Jan. 9. Our lessons are now centered around the Birth of Jesus, using our new winter curriculum. Come enjoy the lesson, usually a craft, or a game, and fun learning about our faith.
- Some new faces are providing Children's Sermon! If you would like to participate, please call the office, or see Fran Gibbs to get on the calendar.

MUSIC COMMITTEE NEWS

Here is our Special Music line-up for December:

- Dec. 5 – is a performance by the Chancel Choir.
- Dec. 12 – is a performance by the Chancel Choir.
- Dec. 19 – is a performance by the Praise Choir.
- Dec. 26 – performance TBA.

*If you would like to sing with the choir, please join us during our rehearsals at 9:30 on the Sundays that we sing. If you would like to provide special music when none of the choirs are singing, please contact Julie Momber or the church office.

- Harrison Witt, who has accompanied and directed the choir so well during the pandemic, is moving to California for a new job. The choir will miss him, and his great skill set. Please pray for the choir while we are again in transition to find a new accompanist and leader.

LOCAL NEWS AND EVENTS

- **Focus on the Family Marriage Retreat Center:** in Greenville at 8042 Snows Lake Rd. This is an excellent resource for struggling marriages. They offer both intensive counseling and enrichment weekends. Open house is Saturday, Dec. 11 from 3-5pm. There is a presentation of the program at 4pm by Dr. Sara Lynema. For more info contact: Heather.Wyse@fotf.org or by calling 616-225-8700.
- **Greenville Community Center Holiday Craft Fair:** Sat., Dec. 11 from 9am to 2pm.

DEACONS NEWS

- **FCC Holiday Mission 2021:** We are still collecting items for those in need through Dec 12 for *Have Mercy* here in Greenville. You can participate by providing the following items or by making a monetary donation: disinfectant spray (Lysol etc.), toilet paper, 39-gal. and/or 13-gal. trash bags, bottled water. *If you chose to make a monetary donation, please make checks out to *Have Mercy* or cash in an envelope marked "Have Mercy".
- **Thank you** all for the generosity shown to Have Mercy, our local organization dedicated to the homeless. Two deliveries have dropped off items on their list of needs and the Trustees gave a generous donation of \$1,000 from their Missions Fund.
- **Coffee Service:** Last Sunday we welcomed Senior Minister Ed Milam and Jenny at a special coffee service. The next coffee service is scheduled for December 12 with beverages only in a self-serve format, hosted by the Deacons. The goal is to increase fellowship in a safe manner during the pandemic by providing beverages once a month.
- **Christmas Pointsettias** are on sale now! All proceeds will go towards our Deacons Discretionary Fund. We are offering a 6" plant for \$10 per plant in honor or in memory of a loved one. All orders are due by December 6th! Plants will be on display at our Christmas Eve and Dec. 26th Worship Service. Anyone who purchases a plant may pick it up after the 11pm service on Christmas Eve or on Dec. 26th.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT (NOVEMBER)

- The House family: joined FCC in 2005, after the children met Claude and became involved in the youth group. John is co-owner of Grand Rapids Building Repair and Traverse City Building Repair. Deb is a doctor of nursing practice, working as medical director of the Lakeview Youth Clinic, provider at the Greenville walk-in clinic, and teaches as adjunct faculty at MSU. They have 4 children: John Jr (Megan) lives in Greenville with their two sons (Mason and Beau), Dr Jodi (Aaron) Petersen lives in Greenville with their two daughters (Sawyer and Layla), Dr Joe (fiancé Kelly Altizer) lives in Belding, and Jordan (Justin) Zimmer lives in Buffalo, NY. John's hobbies include hunting, fishing, and collecting coins, guns, fly rods, old bullet boxes, and tractors. Deb's hobbies include working, watching football, and spending time with the grandchildren.
- Darlene Petersen: has been a member since 2001. Her husband passed away in 2002. She has 3 children: Oldest is Dennis (Barbara) who recently retired, daughter is Stacy, and her youngest, Gary, passed away in Feb of this year. She is blessed with 5 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren. She lives on "Indy 57" as Stacy likes to call it! She retired as Deputy City Clerk from the City of Greenville after 26 years. She loved spending winters in Florida but recently sold her place so will be staying in the cold and snow for the first time in years. She belongs to the Danish Sisterhood and the Danish Cultural Center and is an avid quilter.

PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) has announced that Michigan is presently experiencing another wave of infection driven by the Delta variant, which is estimated to be twice as infectious as the original strain of COVID-19. The Delta variant has driven sharp increases in COVID-19 infections among both adults and children. In addition, Michigan is seeing an uptick in cases of other respiratory illnesses, including influenza. MDHHS is advising the following mitigation strategies:

1. Wear a mask in all indoor public settings, regardless of vaccination status.
2. Get vaccinated against COVID-19. If vaccinated, get a booster shot – everyone 18 and older is eligible.
3. Get a flu shot. Everyone ages six months and older are recommended to get a flu shot.
4. Get tested for COVID-19 if exposed or symptomatic, regardless of vaccination status.
5. Avoid holiday travel if not fully vaccinated.

* The information above is intended as an aid to our congregation in determining best practices for yourself and your family. It is not any sort of requirement or mandate.

PF YOUTH NEWS

We look forward to you joining us for all or as many of the events that you're able to. As we close out the year 2021, let's end it with great joy and adoration for what the Lord has in store for us. It has been a while since we have met, and we are excited to get together again.

- We are collecting new "Coats for Kids" for children in our community, in need of a coat for the winter. From Nov. 26th to Dec. 24th, coats can be dropped off at the church or call Claude (616) 894-5595 to pick up!
- Dec. 5th – MCC's Alumni and Friends Choir presents: "Handel's Messiah" at GHS Performing Arts Center at 7pm. Admission is FREE, tickets must be reserved by calling 616-225-6109.
- Dec. 12th – there will be a short meeting directly after church in the office to briefly discuss Christmas Eve Service and what's ahead for 2022. I pray you can join us!
- Dec 19th – Possible PF Christmas party 4-6 pm and maybe go Christmas Caroling with others.
- Dec. 24th – We will place luminaries in front of the Church and assist with the first service – meet at 5:30 pm
- 25th MERRY CHRISTMAS; Blessings to you and yours
- 2022 HAPPY NEW YEAR – May you continue to be in His care and Blessed!

MEAL SITES

- Opening in Nov. at the Greenville Area Senior Citizens Center 715 S Baldwin. Food with Friends meals are served Thursday at noon. Call 616-894-225 to reserve your lunch.
- Take out Wednesday meals at CoA 613 N State St. in Stanton. Serving starts at noon.
- Take out or dine in starts Dec. 15. Must call 989-831-7476 option #4 to reserve meal the Monday before and let them know take out or dine in. Seniors 60+ \$3 donation, under 60 is \$6.50 charge.

Christmas Poinsettias 2021

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 must be turned into the church office before Monday, December 6th.** 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 26th 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): _____

Mark #amount/number requested:

Red _____ White _____ Pink _____ Jingle Bells _____

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

***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.

***MAKE SURE TO TURN IN ORDERS
BEFORE MONDAY DECEMBER 6TH!!!**

~ December 2021 ~

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
 <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Merry Christmas</i></p>			1 4p Girl Scouts	2 11a GAMA 4p Praise Choir 4:30 Scouts (all) 7:30 AA	3 6p Santa Parade Venture Crew lock-in	4
5 Communion 9:30 Choir 10:30 Worship Special Music <i>Chancel Choir</i> 3p Venture	6 	7 Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day 5:30 Girl Scouts	8 10a PURLS 4p Girl Scouts	9 4p Praise Choir 4:30 Scouts (all) 7:30 AA	10 Scouts lock-in	11
12 9:30 Choir 10:30 Worship Special Music <i>Chancel Choir</i> *Coffee Service 3p Venture	13 	14 5:30 Girl Scouts 6:30 Deacons	15 10a PURLS 4p Girl Scouts	16 4p Praise Choir 4:30 Scouts (all) 7:30 AA	17 	18
19 10:30 Worship Special Music <i>Praise Choir</i> *Last day of Sunday School 3p Venture	20 	21 5:30 Girl Scouts	22 10a PURLS 4p Girl Scouts	23 7:30 AA	24 Christmas Eve 7p Service 11p Service	25 
Christmas Break Dec 20, 2021 - Jan 3, 2022						
3p Venture		5:30 Girl Scouts	4p Girl Scouts	7:30 AA		
26 10:30 Worship Special Music <i>TBA</i>	27 	28 	29 10a PURLS	30 	31 New Year's Eve	
Christmas Break Dec 20, 2021 - Jan 3, 2022						
3p Venture	6:30 Trustees	5:30 Girl Scouts	4p Girl Scouts			

Calendar Notes:

~ January 2022 ~

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 <i>Happy New Year!</i>
2 Communion 10:30 Service Special Music <i>TBA</i> 12:15 PF Youth 3p Venture	3 <i>School Back In Session</i>	4 5:30 Girl Scouts	5 10a PURLS 4p Girls Scouts	6 4p Praise Choir 4:30 Scouts (all) 7:30 AA	7	8
9 10:30 Service Special Music <i>Chancel Choir</i> *Coffee Service	10	11 5:30 Girl Scouts	12 10a PURLS 4p Girl Scouts	13 4p Praise Choir 4:30 Scouts (all) 7:30 AA	14	15
16 10:30 Service Special Music <i>Chancel Choir</i> 12:15 PF Youth 3p Venture	17 <i>MLK Day</i>	18 5:30 Girl Scouts	19 10a PURLS 4p Girl Scouts	20 4p Praise Choir 4:30 Scouts (all) 7:30 AA	21	22
23 10:30 Service Special Music <i>TBA</i>	24 6:30 Trustees	25 5:30 Girl Scouts 1p WF Board	26 10a PURLS 4p Girl Scouts	27 4p Praise Choir 4:30 Scouts (all) 7:30 AA	28	29
30 10:30 Service Special Music <i>Praise Choir</i>	31	*No Deacons Meeting this month.				

Calendar Notes: