



FCC PILGRIM PULSE

FEBRUARY 2023

A Message from our Pastor... "Finding Balance and Hope"

Our lives can sometimes be overwhelmed with busy schedules, financial issues, family problems, and any number of other stresses that cause us to become down and depressed. Life is no longer enjoyable, and we can't seem to find peace with anything in our lives. During these times, the issues that plague us seem to be so big and so undefeatable that we begin to lose hope that we will ever feel good again. We are told by people around us that we need to get our heads right. We need to get our minds focused on the right things. Others tell us that we need to go out and exercise. By strengthening our bodies, it will help improve our state of mind. We sometimes believe that by getting our minds and body in harmony that our mental issues will simply disappear. Even when we do those things, we still struggle to find peace and contentment in our lives. Trust me, I know how it feels. I have felt the same way. Not having any answers to the questions and sometimes not even knowing what the questions are. I have, however, found that when I add spiritual strength and peace into my life, I can better cope with the obstacles and challenges that life throws at us.

If we only focus on improving our mind and body, which are both very important, without improving our spirit, our lives will be like a three-legged stool that is missing one leg. It is impossible for that stool to work correctly unless it has all three legs. We need all the legs attached to make the stool solid, secure, and able to hold our weight. Growing in our relationship with God and being in connection with those who believe in Jesus Christ, helps to guide our spirit towards peace even when life seems out of control. The Gospel of John tells us in Chapter 16 verse 33 "I (Jesus) have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

When someone finds spiritual peace, it puts a whole different perspective on the trials that we face. We began to understand that regardless of our situation, there is always hope for a better tomorrow. It is in that hope that we can find our stress reduced and the mental pressures of life relieved. Christian author Hal Lindsey says this, "Man can live about forty days without food, about three days without water, about eight minutes without air...but only for one second without hope." Hope is the key to a peaceful and joy filled life. Spiritual strength and contentment come with intentional focus and growth. If you are struggling with life's challenges and feel overwhelmed with what is going on in your world, I encourage you to find some time to nurture your spirit and grow in your relationship Christ. Please feel free to contact or visit the First Congregational Church of Greenville if you have any questions about finding the hope and peace in Jesus Christ that will help balance your three-legged stool.

Blessings in Christ, Pastor Ed Milam

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:

<i>Lucas Hopkins</i>	<i>Jerry McPherson</i>	<i>Dr. Joe & Valerie Mejia</i>	<i>John Koppenol</i>	<i>Brian Tiffany</i>
<i>Rob Sansom</i>	<i>Gloria McPherson</i>	<i>Ken & Kathy Reed</i>	<i>Wilson & Barb Hoy</i>	<i>Jerry Haverdink</i>
<i>Nic (Perry)</i>	<i>Pearl Fulton</i>	<i>James & Pauline Griffith</i>	<i>Dawn Dickinson</i>	

FCC FAMILY AT CARE FACILITIES:

<i>Bette Houle</i>		<i>-at The Brook Assisted Living, Cedar Springs</i>
<i>Corla Morgan</i>		<i>-at SHUM RNC, Room #103</i>
<i>Barb & Wilson Hoy</i>		<i>-at Canal View Houghton County Medical Facility</i>
<i>Pat Toth</i>		<i>-at Hathaway Hills Assisted Living, Room #15</i>
<i>Doris Dieckman Marshall</i>		<i>-at Boulder Creek Assisted Living, Room #8</i>
<i>Ray (Cap) Tower</i>		<i>-at Hathaway Hills Assisted Living, Room #12</i>

PRAYERS FOR MEMBERS, FAMILY AND FRIENDS:

<i>Diane Jones</i>	<i>Friend of Darlene Petersen</i>
<i>Michael Dexter</i>	<i>Brother-in-law of Michele Kocher</i>
<i>Marjoan Wohlfert</i>	<i>Sister of Michele Kocher</i>

SPECIAL PRAYERS FOR:

- *The Enbody family; parents of Toni Enbody-Clayton, for the recent loss of her parents.*
- *The McCowen family; for the sudden loss of their young son, Miles.*
- *Hazelwood family for the loss of their mother, Lois on Sun., Jan. 22nd.*
- *Danielle McConnell (daughter of Candy Outman)*
- *Roxanne Faber (daughter-in-law to Kirk & Celeste Faber)*
- *James Griffith, Sr. (brother to Marian Griffith)*
- *Brian Adair (husband of Deb Adair)*
- *Stacey Garlick (daughter of Darlene Petersen)*

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

Pastoral Contact Info:

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

BOARD MEETINGS:

Deacons: *No Meeting this month*
Trustees: Mon., Feb. 27th at 6:30pm

Trustees of the Month: Dan Eagles and Larry Snow

Deacon of the Month: Don Gibbs

~ FCC NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS ~

PASTORAL NEWS

- **New Member Class:** This class gives anyone (current member or interested persons) the opportunity to learn more about the history, ministries, organization, and beliefs of this Congregational church. 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 or would like more information on transferring your membership.
- **Baptisms:** We are also looking for any member that would like to have their child baptized or would themselves like to be rebaptized to "refresh" your faith in the Holy Spirit.



CHURCH OFFICE NEWS

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

- **Contact Info:** Please update your contact info (new address, email or phone number) to receive church mailings, with the church office. *You need not be a member to receive all the latest news and updates!

PARISH NURSE NEWS

Our Nurse is available Mon. and Tues. from 8-4, and Thurs. from 8-12. Call/text Patrice at (616) 894-7288 for assistance.

- **Medical Assistance:** If you have medical questions, concerns, or need a ride, please call or text Patrice.
- **Mental Health Emergency Number:** call "988" for mental health crisis help.
- **RSV, the flu and COVID** continue to be hitting our community hard right now. If you feel sick please stay home to get well. Infants, toddlers and the elderly need to be especially careful at this time. Please call if you have any questions.

PF YOUTH NEWS

Church youth are encouraged to join us to plan for upcoming events and fellowship trips!

- Our next meeting is Sun., Feb. 19th after service to plan for our youth trip to Eaton Rapids in March.
- To join the group or for more information on upcoming PF Youth trips, call/text Claude Johnson at 616-894-5595 or email: claudej2002us@yahoo.com.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS

- **"Noisy Coin" has returned!** Every Sunday in February, the kids will be collecting coins to benefit IMKids 3rd Meal. This program provides food for school kids to take home. One out of four kids in Montcalm County is food challenged. Please bring your coins to church and let's make some noise!
- We are partnering with the Praise Choir by donating supplies for them to make Valentine's Cards for outreach to those on our Prayer List. Thank you, singers, for helping with this project!
- **WE MISS YOU!** Sunday School continues every week at 9:30 AM and the staffing is full. Now we need more kids! The spotty attendance is hard on our volunteers who give of their time and talent to prepare and conduct lessons. It is disheartening when students are missing.
- **Children's Sermons** are being reserved through Fran Gibbs and the church office. Fran has her calendar at church every Sunday so you can schedule directly with her. We have a new policy if you wish to do a Children's Sermon: Please keep your message to 4 minutes or less (practice to make sure). Please do not read a book (you can show a book and paraphrase what it is about). Please do not feel obligated to give a handout, gift, or candy to kids (strictly optional). You can check with the office to see what the readings are for that Sunday to keep your message relevant, but you can also do your own thing. Occasionally, we may have to juggle the schedule, but you will be notified in advance.

MUSIC COMMITTEE NEWS

Special Music Performances for February:

- Feb. 5: Chancel Choir
- Feb. 12: Praise Choir
- Feb. 19: Chancel Choir
- Feb. 26: TBA
- *Chancel Choir will practice at 9:30am on Feb. 5, 12, and 19 – in the sanctuary.
- If you are of high school age or older and interested in singing with the Chancel Choir, contact Deb Dieckman, the office or come to a rehearsal. No audition is necessary!

CHILDREN'S PRAISE CHOIR NEWS

The group practices every Tues. evenings from 4-5pm and sings once a month at our Sunday Services. This group is for children ages pre-k through middle school. Please come join us one and all!

PRESCHOOL NEWS

We are now beginning preparations for our Valentines party (in class) on Tues., Feb. 14th. The children will be making valentine's boxes to bring in for the class party and will get to wear pjs and watch a movie! Then on Friday Feb. 17th, we will have an afterschool Valentine's dance with our families from 6-8pm with pizza, drinks, snacks, and lots of dancing!

DEACONS NEWS

- **Church Service Cancellation:** We recently had to cancel church due to the weather. A three-way collaboration has been coordinated by Pastor Ed, (Deacon) Don Gibbs, and (Trustee) Duane Putnam, to make this decision and take the necessary steps to announce the closing church services to our Congregation. After a consensus is made to close, each person has specific duties to notify church members. Pastor Ed will announce the closing to Facebook and through email, Don will notify WOOD TV-8 and WZZM 13, and Duane will put signs on the church doors if he can get out. The primary concern is to keep everyone safe whether driving or even walking into the building. *Every effort was and will be made to get the word out.
- **Nursery Staff needed!** If you know of someone who can be consistent and would like to have a small stipend for providing this service to our church, please let the church office know. Thank you to those who fill in when available. The hours are 9:25am to 11:35am every Sunday.
- **Easter Flowers:** Flowers orders will be available for Easter. To keep pollen to a minimum, Tulips, Hyacinths, and Daffodils will be available. The Deacons will purchase just a few Easter Lilies for the altar. Flowers will be \$10.00 each. The orders are due March 20. *Flowers will be available for pick up at Easter Sunday, April 9th.
- **Maundy Thursday:** Deacons will host a simple seder supper on April 6. More information and reservations will be available in the March Pilgrim Pulse. The dinner consists of beef stew, biscuits, and a beverage. Last year, Pastor Ed did a demonstration of the seder and this year, all participants can join in!

STEWARDSHIP NEWS

Tithing boxes are still available by the church bulletin board. If you did not receive a tithing card or do not see your box, please contact the church office and we can provide you with a card or box. Thank you for your continued support!

CELEBRATIONS

Happy Birthday! To Patty Ritzema (2/1), Ken Reed (2/4), Ellia Devitt (2/5), Rex Venema (2/10), Jerry Jones (2/12), Nancy Staffen (2/14), Coleen Venema (2/15), Michele Kocher (2/17), Barb Hoy (2/19 – cards would be appreciated!) Patrick Emerson (2/20), and Celeste Faber (2/24). **Happy Anniversary!** To Myron & Sandra Tiffany (2/14).

- **Card Party!** Ken Reed will be celebrating his 90th birthday on Feb. 4th. The family is asking to please send a card or call to make his day extra special! His number is 616-805-3987 or send cards to: 2510 Lake Michigan Dr. NW C 207, Grand Rapids, MI 49504 c/o Ken Reed. Thank you!

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP NEWS

- **Terri Lynn Nuts** We still have a few items left: lt. walnuts, praline pecans, almonds roasted and salted, dark chocolate almonds, pecan clusters (9oz), dark chocolate sea salt caramels, jumbo chocolate covered raisings, malted milk balls, cranberry granola, and bridge mix. *All bags are 1lb. bags unless indicated otherwise. To purchase any of these items, please contact Chris Hubbard.
- **We welcome all to The Silent Breakfast** on Wed., Feb. 22 at 10am. The Silent Breakfast is a symbolic communion to focus on preparation for Lent. Pastor Ed will be the speaker that day and he will conduct an Imposition of Ashes for those who wish to partake. *Please meet in the front lobby before 10am.
- **Circle Meetings:** Winslow Circle meets with Rosel Eagles at 1pm and Bethany Circle meets with Fran Gibbs at 6:30pm, on the first Wed. of every month. Come and try out the group and see if you like it! All women are welcome.
- **WF Board Meeting:** We have a board meeting after church on Feb. 5th.

MUTUAL MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

We are always looking for ways for our congregation to be involved in our Sunday Service! Here are some ministries we are needing volunteers for:

- **Nursery** (background check required)
- **Coffee service**
- **Liturgist:** If you would like to join our rotation of readers, please contact the church office. *If you are already on the rotation, no need to contact the office, unless you would like specific dates or would like to be taken off the list.
- Please see the signup sheets by the church bulletin board in the lobby. *Many dates are still available!
- *We are also needing sound tech volunteers to help learn our sound booth system and streaming services. If interested, contact the church office (training is available).

Order Your Easter Flowers Today!

We invite you to place an order for a 6" Tulip, Hyacinth, or Daffodil in memory of or in honor of a loved one. Once again, this year, the Deacons are offering you a convenient, affordable and mission-centered way to order your flowers through the church office. For the cost of **\$10.00 per plant**, you can help support the Deacon's Discretionary Fund. Orders must be placed **by March 20th**. Simply fill out the form listed below. You may pick up your flowers after the 10:30am service on Easter Sunday, April 9th, or have it delivered to someone on the Friendship list (please indicate below).

Please make checks Payable to: **First Congregational Church or FCCoG*

Name: _____

☐ **Tulip** (Qty) _____ ☐ **Hyacinth** (Qty) _____ ☐ **Daffodil** (Qty) _____

Total number of plants ordered _____ **x \$10.00 = \$** _____

In Memory of _____

In Memory of _____

In Honor of _____


In Honor of _____

PLEASE CHECK ONE:

☐ I will pick up my plants ☐ Please deliver my plant to someone on the Friendship List



~ February 2023 ~

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p><i>*We will collect coins for Noisy Coin throughout the month! Please bring in your loose change to help fight hunger in our community!</i></p>			1 10a PURLS 1p Winslow 6:30 Bethany	2 11a GAMA 4:30 Scouts (all) 7:30 AA	3	4
5 Communion & Scout Sunday 9:30 Choir Practice 9:30 Sunday School 9:30 Bible Study 10:30 Worship Special Music – <i>Chancel Choir</i> *WF Board Mtg *Council Mtg 3p Venture	6	7 4p Praise Choir	8 10a PURLS	9 4:30 Scouts (all) 7:30 AA	10	11 1-4 McPherson Family Celebration of Life/Family Gathering Luncheon
12 9:30 Choir Practice 9:30 Sunday School 9:30 Bible Study 10:30 Worship Special Music – <i>Praise Choir</i>	13	14  4p Praise Choir	15	16 4:30 Scouts (all) 7:30 AA	17 6p Preschool Valentine Dance	18
19 Transfiguration Sunday 9:30 Choir Practice 9:30 Sunday School 9:30 Bible Study 10:30 Worship Special Music – <i>Chancel Choir</i> 12p PF Youth Mtg 3p Venture	20 <i>President's Day</i> Easter Flower Orders are DUE!	21 4p Praise Choir	22 10a PURLS Ash Wednesday 10a Silent Bfast & Imp. of Ashes 	23 4:30 Scouts (all) 7:30 AA	24	25
26 1st Sunday of Lent 9:30 Choir Practice 9:30 Sunday School 9:30 Bible Study 10:30 Worship Special Music – <i>Larry Snow</i>	27 6:30 Trustees	28 4p Praise Choir	<p>*Ash Wednesday Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10a WF 64th Silent Breakfast • 11a Prayer & Imposition of Ashes • 6p Lenten Supper Begins • 7p Service & Imposition of Ashes 			

Calendar Notes:

~ March 2023 ~

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
"Spring Forward" Sun. March 12th! Daylight Savings Time Begins			1 10a PURLS 1p Winslow 6:30 Bethany	2 11a GAMA 4:30 Scouts (all) 7:30 AA	3	4
5 Communion & 9:30 Choir Practice 9:30 Sunday School 9:30 Bible Study 10:30 Worship Special Music – <i>Chancel Choir</i> 12p PF Youth Mtg. 3p Venture	6	7 4p Praise Choir	8 10a PURLS	9 4:30 Scouts (all) 7:30 AA	10 <div>Scout Lock-in</div>	11 12p Pinewood Derby
12 Daylight Savings Time Begins & Girl Scout Sunday 9:30 Choir Practice 9:30 Sunday School 9:30 Bible Study 10:30 Worship Special Music – <i>Praise Choir</i>	13	14 4p Praise Choir 6:30 Deacons	15 10a PURLS	16 4:30 Scouts (all) 7:30 AA	17 St. Patrick's Day  <div>PF Youth Retreat in Eaton Rapids 17-19</div>	18
19 9:30 Choir Practice 9:30 Sunday School 9:30 Bible Study 10:30 Worship Special Music – <i>Chancel Choir</i> 3p Venture	20 6:30 Trustees	21 4p Praise Choir	22 10a PURLS	23 4:30 Scouts (all) 7:30p AA	24	25
26 9:30 Choir Practice 9:30 Sunday School 9:30 Bible Study 10:30 Worship *Guest Speaker: <i>Tim Hyde</i> Special Music – <i>TBA</i>	27 <div>Spring Break March 27 -31 (all schools)</div>	28	29 10a PURLS	30 7:30p AA	31	

Calendar Notes: