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## From the Pastor's Heart

### "The Greatest Gift"

Last week was my first week as serving as a volunteer chaplain at Sarah Bush hospital. I had made a promise to God that if I was blessed with an Associate Minister I would volunteer for one week every two months. What a blessing it was to visit and pray with up to as many as 70 patients last week.

On Tuesday, I visited a man who is 78 and he had not been able to eat for several months. He was very thin and facing surgery on Thursday. His girlfriend of over 20 years and family members were present. I introduced myself as the chaplain for the week and asked if I could visit, he said "sure."

So, I sat down and prompted some conversation and found some common ground and listened for at least 30 minutes. We had both been in the Navy. I finally mentioned that he had not listed a church on his admission and asked if I could notify someone for him. He said he didn't have a church. I asked if I could pray for him, he said "sure." I did and used the Lord's Prayer.

On the way out the door his beloved stopped me and asked if I would bring him to Jesus. Many had tried, including his brother and pastors and he had stubbornly refused. I told her I did not feel the time was right and I would visit again. I did visit again and we had more relationship building.

On Thursday, as I walked by the room I was surprised to see him in his room with all of his family members. As I walked in his girlfriend told me the surgery did not work and that he had made a decision to have no further surgery.

I asked everyone to leave the room and I had the privilege of offering the greatest gift, the gift of salvation and it was received.

This was not by my effort, this was from the Holy Spirit. Someday, a man by the name of Aaron will greet me when I get to heaven because I decided to visit more than once.

If we will simply build relationships, discover their story and share the love and promises of God someday there will come a harvest. Just keep planting seeds and trust God that He will bring the increase.

With this experience and a great service Sunday, I can't wait to see what God is going to do today. Are you excited? Praise God!

We Are the First Christian Church,  
Pastor Steve

## Ladies Small Group

All ladies are invited to a "Ladies Day-time Small Group". This group will meet on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month at 1:30 pm at Joy Eident's home (820 S 23rd Street). The first lessons will be from *A Woman Who Doesn't Quit—5 habits from the book of Ruth*. If you are interested in checking out this group, please call Joy at 246-2834.

Please change Angie Davis's phone number to 234-3222.

All men are invited to the Men's Breakfast on Saturday at 7 am. Come and meet some new friends and unpack a brand new Bible Study entitled "Unfolded" with a video led by Eric Geiger with group discussion to follow.



Most men know specific Bible stories, but do they know the overarching story of the Bible? While the Bible is a collection of 66 books, the reigning theme that still holds eternal implications for our lives today is God's powerful story of redemption.

They will explore the story of a God who loves, longs to be known and ultimately invites into His story. Though there are many heroes in the Old and New Testaments, come and discover the one true hero of our faith, Jesus.

## Singles @ First

The Singles @ First Group is invited to a Valentine Dinner and Dance on Saturday, February 11th at the American Legion. Dinner will be served from 6-7:30 pm and Sister Kate will play from 8-11 pm.

## Night in Italy

The youth group will be hosting their annual *Night in Italy* on Saturday, February 18th from 5-6:30 pm in Campbell Hall. Pagliacci's will be catering the dinner for us with choices of lasagna, spaghetti or fettuccine for the main entrée and they will also bring salad, garlic bread and drinks. We will also have delicious desserts provided by our youth leaders. Our own Mabelle Morgan will provide some live entertainment! Tickets will cost \$8 with all the proceeds going to the Wishard Kidney Fund to help support Scott and Dolo Wishard. Tickets are available in the narthex.



## SALT (Seniors Group)

The SALT Group will go out for lunch to Yoder's in Arthur on Tuesday, February 21st. All seniors are invited and they will leave from the church at 11 am. Please sign up in the narthex if you plan to attend.

## FROG/ROCK Group



The FROG and ROCK Group will have a Super Bowl Party on Sunday at 5 pm at Dolo's home (3213 Marion Ave). Boys need to bring a 2 liter of pop and girls bring a bags of chips to share.

## Church Life

### Saturday, February 4

7 am Men's Breakfast  
8:30 am Elders' Meeting

### Sunday, February 5

8:30 am Traditional Worship Service  
9:30 am Sunday School  
10:30 am Contemporary Worship Service  
5 pm FROG/ROCK Super Bowl Party

### Monday, February 6

10-11:30 am Staff Meeting  
5:30 pm Worship Meeting  
7 pm Personnel Meeting

### Tuesday, February 7

7 am Prayer Time

### Wednesday, February 8

9 am "Crafts Are Us" Group  
5:15 pm Bell Choir Practice  
6 pm Chancel Choir Practice  
6 pm Mid-Week Outlet Program  
7 pm Praise Team Practice

### Sunday, February 12

8:30 am Traditional Worship Service  
9:30 am Sunday School  
10:30 am Contemporary Worship Service  
5-7 pm FROG/ROCK Group Meetings

### Monday, February 13

10-11:30 am Staff Meeting  
6 pm Trustees Meeting  
7 pm Church Board Meeting

### Tuesday, February 14 ♥

7 am Prayer Time

### Wednesday, February 15

9 am "Crafts Are Us" Group  
5:15 pm Bell Choir Practice  
6 pm Chancel Choir Practice  
6 pm Mid-Week Outlet Program  
7 pm Praise Team Practice



## Serving Communion

### Sunday, February 5

**8:30 am** — John Armstrong, Steve Ballinger, John Greathouse, Jim Long, Don Inman, Tim Cyr, Dan Cunningham, Tom Dickerson

**10:30 am** — Jeff Maninfior, Nick Maninfior, Bob Morgan, Josh Recker

### Sunday, February 12

**8:30 am** — John Armstrong, Steve Ballinger, John Greathouse, Jim Long, Don Inman, Steve Lane, Jack Little, Gene Swearingen

**10:30 am** — Herb Ault, Max Betty, Donica Brand, Chanon Fine



Building Fund balance:  
\$254,229.54

## Heartland Christian

The Heartland Christian Village auxiliary is having the "Circle of Friends" donation drive this month. Donations to the HCV Auxiliary are always put to good use.

On the third Thursday of each month volunteers from FCC go to Heartland and serve brunch. We have had 2 new volunteers in December and January! If you want to feel blessed, come and help us serve. If you have any questions please contact Joy Eident at 246-2834.

## Thank You Note

I want to thank Steve, Richard and friends for the visits to see me in the hospital. I also want to thank all of you for all the prayers and cards!

Love, Nancy Long

We want to thank you all for the prayers, concerns and support shown to us. We appreciate all the donations, those who gave to the TV Raffle and those who came to the Brunch. A big thank you to all the ladies who made the food for the Brunch.

Scott and Dolo Wishard

The church invites members to apply for the *Laura Catherine Van Gundy Young Memorial Scholarship* established in 2012 in loving memory of Mrs. Young by her grandson and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Randal Decker. This scholarship honors her legacy of care and concern for others. Mrs. Young was an active member of FCC for many years.



Scholarships are awarded to members of FCC who attend U of I, Urbana-Champaign; EIU, Charleston; or Lincoln Christian University, Lincoln (Christian ministry majors only). Recipients must be enrolled in a course of study that culminates in a bachelor's or advanced degree in one of the following fields: Engineering or sciences, Medical sciences or services, Christian ministry or Business.

For more information and how to apply please visit the church website at [www.mattoonfcc.com](http://www.mattoonfcc.com). Deadline to apply for this scholarship is March 31st.

## Church Attendance

January 22: Traditional: 114, Contemporary: 59 = 173

January 29: One Service: 158

Phone: 234-2928  
Email address: [fcchurch@consolidated.net](mailto:fcchurch@consolidated.net)  
Website: [www.mattoonfcc.com](http://www.mattoonfcc.com)

Senior Pastor: Steve Hayes

Return Service Requested

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