

THE MESSENGER

Believing, Behaving, Becoming Like Christ

August 13, 2026

PASTOR’S CORNER

The fall always seems to arrive faster than expected.

School starts again. Sports practices begin. Band, clubs, meetings, homework, church activities—and the list keeps growing. Before long, the slower rhythms of summer are replaced by calendars telling us where somebody needs to be next.

There is nothing wrong with those things. Many of them are wonderful! But there is a danger in becoming so busy that we simply fly through life instead of living it intentionally.

I recently had the opportunity to get away for a few days, spending some wonderful time with Megan and then enjoying a few days with our whole family. I came home refreshed, grateful, and excited about the fall ahead. I also want to say a special thank you to Kim for preaching and Nels Kasey for leading the other pastoral elements of worship while I was away. I am thankful to serve in a church where so many people willingly step up and serve.

As I look toward fall at FCC, my prayer isn't simply that we fill the calendar with more things to do. My prayer is that Sunday mornings, Bible studies, GriefShare, God’s Gang, youth group, and the other opportunities we share together become places where we can refresh, refocus, and refuel for everything else life asks of us.

I remember a season when I wasn't working at a church and Megan and I were part of a small group that met on Tuesday nights. Life was busy, and I can't tell you how many Tuesdays one of us would say, *“Do we really have to go tonight?” We were tired. There was work to catch up on. Staying home and doing absolutely nothing sounded pretty good. And, truthfully, sometimes that voice won. But almost every time we went, we came home saying, “I'm really glad we went.” We felt better. We were encouraged. We laughed. We talked about things that mattered. During a busy season of life, that group became one of the few places where we consistently experienced deep conversation, meaningful relationships, and genuine Christian community.*

Tuesday night wasn't simply another obligation on our calendar. It became one of the things that helped us make it through the rest of the calendar. That's my prayer for this fall at FCC.

On September 13, we'll celebrate our Fall Relaunch Sunday, welcome the choir back to worship, and enjoy a tailgate party together after church. Then, on September 20, we'll begin a new sermon series exploring the Fruit of the Spirit.

I'm especially excited that September 20 will also mark the launch of Youth Alpha for students in 6th–12th grade. Each Sunday from 10:15 a.m.–noon, we'll share a snack, have some fun, and work through one of the best youth series I've ever encountered. Together we'll explore the basic questions of Christian faith: *Who is Jesus? Why did He die? Can I trust the Bible? How do I pray?—and much more. I strongly encourage you to invite your kids, grandkids, and friends to join us!*

Our morning and evening Bible studies will also return, along with GriefShare, God’s Gang, and other opportunities to worship, learn, serve, and grow together. Watch for more details as those plans are finalized.

I know your fall calendar may already be filling up. Mine is too.

My prayer isn't that church simply adds more clutter to it. My prayer is that these become some of the moments that help you through it—a Sunday morning that reminds you what really matters, a Bible study that helps you grow, a GriefShare gathering where you don't have to carry grief alone, a youth group where a teenager can ask honest questions, or simply a conversation with someone who reminds you that you are part of a community that cares.

May these not simply be more things on our to-do lists. May they be places where God refreshes us, refocuses us, and refuels us for the lives He has called us to live.

I'm excited for the fall. I hope you are too!

Pastor Isaac



THE MESSENGER

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH (Disciples of Christ)

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Pastor Isaac Mahler, Senior Minister

COME WORSHIP WITH US

COFFEE BAR AT 8:00 AM • WORSHIP AT 9:00 AM • SUNDAY SCHOOL AT 10:15 AM

First Christian Church’s mission is to grow disciples who are:

*“Believing in Christ,
Behaving as Christ,
Becoming like Christ”*

SPLINTERS FROM THE BOARD

July 2026

Here are some of the highlights, celebrations, and important updates from our July Board meeting:

- **Christian Education & Children’s Ministry:** Vacation Bible School was a wonderful success, with **71 different children attending** throughout the week! Our kids also collected canned goods and reached their **\$1,000 mission goal** to support work toward a new homeless shelter in our community. We are incredibly thankful for the many volunteers who made VBS possible.
- **Evangelism Committee:** FCC has been busy connecting with our community this summer! The committee distributed popsicles during the **Shrine Parade**, participated in the **Paris Firefighters’ Block Party**, and prepared for outreach at the Edgar County Fair and Honeybee Festival.
- **Community Outreach Committee:** The committee donated **\$500 each to the Paris Ministerial Association and the Backpack Program**, provided a meal for Sauny Preston following her surgery, and continues looking for practical ways to care for people in our community.
- **Memorials Committee:** This year **eleven scholarships were awarded**, with eight recipients joining us during worship to receive their scholarships, with several families in attendance.
- **Membership & Congregational Life:** We are thankful to welcome **Charla Coombes as a new member of FCC**. We have also experienced several losses within our church family in recent months and continue to surround those who are grieving with our prayers, presence, and care.
- **Worship & Ministry:** Even during the summer vacation season, worship attendance has remained remarkably steady, averaging approximately **115 people in person each Sunday, with another 30–50 joining online**. We are grateful for the continued faithfulness of our church family throughout a busy summer.
- **Trustees:** Work continues behind the scenes to care for our facilities, including elevator certification, new downspouts, landscaping, technology upgrades, and numerous ongoing repairs and improvements around the church.

Thank you to all of our committees, volunteers, ministry leaders, and members who continue to serve so faithfully.

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CALENDARS!

UPCOMING EVENTS & MEETINGS:

- Aug 15th: Disciple Men’s Brkfst. 8AM
- Aug 24th: Bloodmobile @High Rise
- Aug 28th: Game Night 6 PM
- Sept 1st: Circle of Light 5 PM
- Sept 3rd: Elders 5 PM
- Trustees 6 PM
- Sept 7th: Labor Day (Office Closed)
- Sept 8th: Board Meeting 7 PM
- Sept 10th: PHS Football Dinner
- Sept 10th: Circle of Prayer 6 PM
- Sept 13th: Tailgate Sunday
- Sept 14th: Staff Relation Mtg 6 PM
- Sept 17th: Messenger
- Koinonia 9 AM
- Sept 19th: Disciple Men's Brkft 8 AM
- Sept 25th & 26th: Honeybee Festival

NEWS FROM THE PEWS

Paris Healthcare: Martha Stephen, Ron Odle, Chuck McClarey & Chuck Dean

Pleasant Meadows: Linda Driver

Twin Lakes: Irma Julian

Continued Prayers: Carol Winemiller, Brad & Dorothy Farnham, Marge Houghland, Jim Bennett, Betty Swanson, Sue Elliott, Saunny Preston, Lisa Young & Nila Hasler.

BECOMING LIKE CHRIST

“Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.”
1 John 4:11-12

AUGUST PRAYER

Dear Lord,
Let your love radiate through me! Let me perceive each person I encounter as your child and treat everyone and everything in my life as the gifts you have bestowed upon me.
Amen.

SUMMER BASKET WINNER

Congratulations to Briley Milam for her closest guess of lemon head candies in the jar! Her family wins the basket of summer fun! Our next basket will be in October!

THANK YOU

Thank you to all who made the church picnic at the Twin Lakes a great success. We appreciate your continued support.
-Membership Committee

Date	Worship Elder	Bread Elder	Deacons	Deaconess	Jr. Deacons	Ushers
August 16th, 2026	Chris Milam	Candice Milam	Team #2	Emily T	Team #1	Team #2
August 23rd, 2026	Dean Muchow	Dennis Thiel	Team #3	Cindy M	Team #2	Team #2
August 30th, 2026	Tammy Terry	Nels Kasey	Team #1	Megan M	Team #1	Team #2
September 6th, 2026	Steve Webb	Ellen Webb	Team #2	Jill C	Team #2	Team #3

SCARECROW PROJECT

It’s that time again! Our scarecrow project will take place during Honeybee weekend. If you have any long pants, shirts, or accessories you would like to donate, please bring them to the church. For further information, please see Coralie Smittkamp.

VBS THANK YOU

We would like to say a HUGE thank you to everyone who participated in the Food Drive during VBS! We were able to deliver 486 food items to the Paris Soup Kitchen to fill their pantry shelves! They were SO blessed by this & passed along their gratitude to share with all who donated!

New Building & Financial Update

As the New Building Committee read through, prayed about, and discussed the congregation’s feedback, two things became clear: **our congregation remains excited about building, and we want to do everything possible to avoid taking on debt.** The path forward is a one-year capital campaign with the goal of growing our current Building Fund of approximately \$450,000 to \$1 million, with at least \$800,000 raised before construction begins. If that goal is not reached, the project would be put on hold for a few years while our existing funds continue to grow.

However, our current General Fund budget also needs our attention. Regular expenses are outpacing regular giving, and we believe our first priority must be returning our yearly ministry budget to a strong and sustainable position. With that in mind, the Board unanimously voted to *"reaffirm its commitment to the Family Life Center project and authorize a one-year capital campaign, with the launch occurring once the General Fund is operating at a balanced or near-balanced budget in a sustainable manner."*

We are thankful for generations of faithful giving and wise stewardship that have put us in a strong position for the future. Our goal is to continue that legacy—faithfully supporting the ministry God has entrusted to us today while wisely preparing for tomorrow.

CIRCLE NEWS

Circle of Light will meet Tuesday, September 1st at 5:00 PM.

Circle of Prayer will meet at 6:00 PM on Thursday, September 10th.

Koinonia will meet on Thursday, September 17th, at 9:00 AM, with Mary K. Bradford serving as hostess and providing the lesson.

GOD’S GANG TO RETURN

Our God’s Gang program will **kick off on September 9**. For all team members and helpers involved, please mark your calendars for a **planning meeting on Wednesday, August 19**.

BIG KICK-OFF

Sunday, August 16

Sunday, August 16 is going to be an action-packed and meaningful day in the life of our church!

Promotion Sunday & Special Blessing:

During worship, our Christian Education Committee will be distributing Bibles to our young learners. We will also take time to lift up our children, our dedicated Sunday School Teachers, and all of our local school personnel in prayer as they step into a new academic year.

Sunday School Returns: We are thrilled to resume our Sunday School classes for children on August 16! This year, we are especially excited to introduce our newly developed **Pre-K Pals** class alongside our **K-2 Crew** and **Club 3-5**. We can’t wait to welcome everyone back to class! Thank you to the volunteers who make these classes possible!

Junior Disciples: We are officially launching our new Junior Disciples program! As Kim mentioned in Sunday’s message, children and youth will be serving in several capacities on Sundays as greeters, scripture readers, call to worship leaders, and the “Pew Patrol” will be helping collect communion cups and attendance sheets after the services. We are so grateful to all of the children who have volunteered already to serve God and the church in this way!



YOUTH GROUP FUTURE DATES

- Aug 16th: Youth Group & Club 3–5
- Aug 23rd: Youth Group
- Aug 30th: Youth Group & Club 3–5
- Sept 6th: No Youth Group & Club 3–5

KID’S CORNER

Summer is drawing to a close, but the energy and excitement in our children’s ministry are just getting started! As we transition into a new school year, I am filled with gratitude for our wonderful church family and excited for all the ways our young people will learn, grow, and shine in the months ahead. I want to first express my deep gratitude for the privilege of bringing the message during our morning service on Sunday, August 9. It was such a joy and blessing to share with you all, and I am continually thankful for your encouragement, support, and love for our children and families.

Looking Ahead

Pastor Isaac and I invite you to drop your children off at the church on Friday, August 28 for an **adult evening out**. You may join the Card Tournament & Game Night at Stagecoach Coffee, or use the time for a private date night. Kids will enjoy snacks, games, and a movie! Let us help bless your evening! **Dropoff is 5:30, pickup is 8:00.**

Supporting Our Kids Beyond the Church Walls

I love cheering on your kids in everything they do! Parents, please send me your child’s **schedules** for any sports, music, theater, or other extra-curricular activities they have this fall. I would love to mark my calendar and come out to support them!

Thank you for continuing to bless me with the opportunity to serve First Christian Church, and for your dedication and heart for our children’s ministry!

Warmly,
Kim Woods