

Congregational Communicator

Volume 4, Issue 5

May 2024

Special points of interest:

- Church News
- What's Happening
- Tith.ly Giving
- Prayer Vigil
- Love Takes Root
- Baby Bottle Campaign
- Contemplative Corner

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“NOTES FROM THE PASTOR”

Greetings Congo family, May is the month we celebrate mothers and I wanted to keep this reflection short and meaningful with some humor and a reflective poem. On Stacie Gorkow's blog (<https://www.sincerelystacie.com>), she asked children about their mothers, and some of the responses were as follows:

[How did God make mothers?

He must have used dirt, just like the rest of us. Magic, superpowers, and a lot of stirring. God makes mothers out of clouds, angel hair, everything nice in the world, and one dab of mean.

What kind of little girl was your mom?

I don't know because I wasn't there, but my guess would be pretty bossy. They say she used to be nice.

If you could change one thing about your mom, what would it be?

I'd make my mom smarter. Then she would know it was my sister who did it and not me. I would like her to get rid of those invisible eyes on her back.

What is the difference between moms and dads?

Moms work in two places: at home and at their workplace, but dads don't work at home. Dads are taller and stronger, but moms have the real power because that's who you got to

ask if you want to sleep over at your friends.

Moms have magic because they make you feel better without medicine.]

I'll share a poem by Erma Bombeck:

When God Created Mothers

When the good Lord was creating mothers, He was into His sixth day of overtime, when an angel appeared and said, "You're doing a lot of fiddling around on this one." And the Lord said, "Have you read the spec on this one? She has to be completely washable, but not plastic; have 180 moveable parts, all replaceable; run on black coffee and leftovers; have a lap that disappears when she stands up; a kiss that can cure anything from a broken leg to a disappointed love affair; and six pairs of hands."

The angel shook her head slowly and said, "Six pairs of hands...no way."

"It's not the hands that are causing me problems," said the Lord. "It's the three pairs of eyes that mothers have to have."

"That's on the standard model?" asked the angel.

The Lord nodded. "One pair that sees through closed doors when she asks, 'What are you kids doing in there?'" when she already knows. Another here, in the back of her head that sees what she shouldn't, but what she has to know, and of course,

the ones here in front that can look at a child when he goofs up and say, "I understand and I love you," without so much as uttering a word."

"Lord," said the angel, touching his sleeve gently, "Rest for now. Tomorrow..."

"I can't," said the Lord. "I'm so close to creating something close to myself. Already, I have one who heals herself when she is sick, can feed a family of six on one pound of hamburger, and can get a nine-year-old to stand under a shower."

The angel circled the model of the mother very slowly. "She's too soft," she sighed.

"But tough!" said the Lord excitedly. "You cannot imagine what the mother can do or endure."

"Can she think?"

"Not only think, but she can reason and compromise," said the Creator.

Finally, the angel bent over and ran his finger across the cheek. "There's a leak," he pronounced. "I told you you were trying to put too much into this model."

"It's not a leak," said the Lord. "It's a tear."

"What's it for?"

"It's for joy, sadness, disappointment, pain, loneliness, and pride."

"You are a genius," said the angel.

Somberly, God said, "I didn't put it there."

Con't. on next page...

“NOTES FROM THE PASTOR” con’t

To all who have taken the role of a motherly figure (biological or adoptive mother, stepmother, aunty, grandmother, sister, stepsister, foster parent, kinship caregiver, including the men who have taken on the role of a mother), THANK YOU!

**CHURCH NEWS****Hospitalizations/Surgeries, Testing...**

- Barb Joenks had a watchmen procedure on April 12th.
- Cliff Hoover fell and fractured his pelvis and clavicle late April.

Condolences...

- To the family of Sandy and Doug Hart on the passing of Sandy's sister on April 18th at the age of 80.

Thank You...

- To Church Members,
Thank you very much for the Easter Lily. It's on my kitchen table reminding me of the memories of my church family. It was so nice to visit with the Patten's when they delivered the lily. It's always nice to be remembered.

Regards,
Dean Saunders

- Dear Church Members,
Thank you so much for bringing me the Easter lily! So

nice to be remembered. Thanks for your prayers.

- Ken Emmert

- Special thanks to the confirmands and their mentors who helped to clean and polish our handbells. They are so shiny and beautiful! We so appreciate all your hard work.

- JuBELLations

- Thank you so much to Kathy Anderson, Carli Krukow, Jim & Vickie Montgomery, Mike Patten, Denny Phillips, Bob Rose and Amy Simpson for mentoring our confirmands and helping lead them further in their spiritual journey.

- I would like to express my sincere thanks to all who personally wished me for my birthday, sent a card or gave a gift. It really means a lot. Love y'all!

- Pastor Shazzy

HUMOR**A PLACE FOR MOTHER**

By Joanne Seltzer

PRELIMINARY ADVICE

Remember how you once went shopping for the right nursery school and when the teacher asked you if your child was toilet trained you lied and said she was.

Use the same strategy in shopping for a nursing home.

Later - when you are told of Mother's incontinence - you will clench your fist and shout: "What have you done to my mother?"



Use scrap paper to fuel new growth and make a gift that keeps on giving.

What you need:

- Scrap paper
- Water
- Herb or flower seeds
- Blender
- Strainer
- Cookie sheet
- Towel
- Adult help

**What you do:**

1. Tear the scrap paper into strips and place in a bowl. Cover the paper with water and let it soak overnight.
2. Pour the mixture into a blender and blend about 10 seconds.
3. Strain and squeeze the paper pulp to remove excess water. Place in a bowl.
4. Sprinkle seeds over the pulp and mix to incorporate them into the pulp.
5. Shape the pulp into a flat layer on the cookie sheet. Use a towel to soak up excess water. Allow the paper to dry completely.
6. Tear paper into shapes or fold into a card. You can plant the paper directly into soil. Water it and then watch your plants grow!



HAPPY
Mother's
Day

WHAT'S HAPPENING



WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP HOSTS THE May Breakfast & Bake Sale

WEDNESDAY, MAY 1ST • 7 A.M. - 10 A.M

Join us for egg bake, sweet rolls, fruit cup and their famous egg coffee! Pecans and dishcloths will be available to purchase as well!



SUNDAY, MAY 5TH

MUSIC, TEACHER & VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION SUNDAY!



Join us during this special recognition Sunday for all those that have made a difference in the life of the church!



Congratulations Graduates!

Alec Edington

Jersey Norgaard

Emma Fassbender

Curtis Swanson

Carly Larson

*Join us in celebration on Sunday, May 12th
as our youth continue to grow and spread their wings.*



SUNDAY, MAY 19TH

Join us to welcome our confirmands into our church.

Mallory Adams

Max Moser

Ada Conover

Max Munter

Nash Dietz

Maisy Schmidt

Tommy Gerlock

Evalynn Simpson



GRIEF SHARE

Each Monday through May 20th
6 p.m. - 8 p.m.

*We will take a break through the
summer.*



JOIN US ON

SUNDAY, MAY 5TH
5 - 7 P.M.

Core Ministry of Missions hosts the last Messy Church event of the school year! Don't miss the fun! Join us for an engaging evening with friends, share a meal, partake in crafts, activities, and a wonderful message! This event is open to ALL ages.



CONGO NIGHT OUT

Join us for Congo Night Out
Tuesday, May 7th at
SPENCER GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB.
5:30 - 7:00 pm ~ Dutch Treat

RSVP by May 3rd
if you plan to join us!

*This will be the last
Congo Night Out until October!*



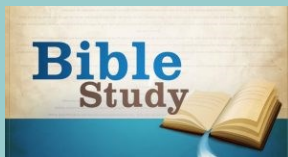
MAYFLOWER CIRCLE

will meet at the church on
Thursday, May 16th at 11 a.m.
and will carpool to Pub 19
for their meeting.

ALL WOMEN OF THE
CHURCH ARE INVITED.

**UDMO
Food Donations**

**MAY
Hamburger and
Tuna Helper**



**Tuesday Morning
Bible Study
10:00 am**

ALL ARE WELCOME!

**Wednesday Night
Bible Study
7:00 pm**

We will start studying
"Jesus' Farewell Message"

through
Right Now Media
from
April 24th - May 29th.

Feel free to join us
for a time of
learning and fellowship.



The 12 hour prayer vigil is on
May 2nd from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

You are free to pray here in the
chapel or at home, wherever you
feel most comfortable.

Prayer information and resources
will be sent out and also available
in the chapel.

Thank you for filling all the time
slots! If you have signed up and
need a reminder of your time,
please call the church office.

**LOVE TAKES ROOT
IS LOOKING FOR GOLFERS!**



LOVE Takes Root Annual Golf Event
June 30th, 2024
Registration at Noon
Brooks Golf Club
1201 Brooks Park Drive, Okoboji, Iowa

**Grab a 4-some and be ready to
have a fun day supporting
Love Takes Root!**

We are a home.
We are a hope.
We are here.



cherishhouse®
A Place of Caring Support.



*First Congregational Church ~
Your Change Changes Lives!*

Take home an empty baby bottle
BEGINNING SUNDAY, MAY 12, 2024
fill it with coins, cash, or
check (payable to Cherish House)
and **RETURN IT TO THE CHURCH BY
SUNDAY, JUNE 16, 2024.**

THANK YOU for participating
in our Baby Bottle Campaign
and supporting Cherish House
and Cherish Center!



**Cherish
center**

Community. Hope. Renewal.

1004 22nd Street
Milford, IA 51351
712-338-3333
info@cherishcenter.org
www.cherishcenter.org

CONTEMPLATIVE CORNER: “A Three-Cross Doctrine of Salvation”

As we continue in our journey to un-pack what the complete image of calvary can teach us about salvation, we're going to ask what the gospel text does to answer questions like: Who is being saved? What does this story tell us about what we are saved from? Who is doing the saving and how is it being done? What are we saved for?



Today we are going to focus on “Who is being saved?” I encourage you to re-read Luke 23:32-43 and ask yourself how does this text provide us with an answer?

Now to give some background, this question has plagued theologians for time immemorial. As best as I can tell, there is no clear answer. The spectrum runs the gamut from an ‘elect’ few of only 144,000 - all the way to the universalist’s simple answer of ‘everyone.’ I posit that our text’s gives an answer somewhere in between. Clearly, one thief is saved in the sense that he will be with Jesus “in paradise,” while the other thief simply ceases to exist from the narrative. It is impossible to give any definitive answer if one expects me to know how the cosmos works. However, if we can ground our expectations in actual practice then I believe a more useful answer can elucidate itself.

First, let’s look at a passage from Luke 4 which NT scholar, Robin Ryan, considers to be the “hill that becomes symbolic of the hill of Calvary.” In other words, this passage in Luke could be considered a primer for what is to come later at Golgotha. In Luke 4:14-28, Jesus reads from a scroll containing the words of Isaiah and outlines his missional orientation. He has been sent “to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the prisoners, and recovery of sight to the blind, to liberate the oppressed, and to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” His message is clearly for those at the bottom, the outcasts, those whom society would typically deem as unworthy of salvation - and yet - this is precisely who he has come to save. As the story goes, at first, his hometown audience was very impressed by his preaching skills. However, once he drove home the idea that salvation is for the outsider, and not the insider, they were enraged and wanted to kill him. They simply could not deal with the idea that salvation was for Sidonians and Syrians, in other words, hated others.

This category of ‘outsiders’ or ‘those at the bottom’ is not meant to be a literal line in the sand. First off, if we were to use such a relative measure then it would quickly fall apart as everyone is an outsider to someone else. No, what I believe Jesus is trying to get at is that his salvation is a healing for those who are aware that they are sick. Consider two verses from Luke 5:27-39: “Jesus answered, ‘Healthy people don’t need a doctor, but sick people do. I didn’t come to call righteous people but sinners to change their hearts and lives.’”

If Luke left things here than one could assume that Christ’s salvific efforts are for anyone who is ‘sick.’ However, let us turn our gaze towards our two thieves to gain clarity. The first thief, now known as the “impenitent thief,” joins in with others in the crowd who mock and insult Jesus. It can be reasonably argued that all those who would do such a thing to a person mutilated in such a way are indeed very unhealthy souls. Therefore, there’s more to it than simple mental/soul illness. The “penitent thief’s” response unlocks the answer:

“Don’t you fear God, seeing that you’ve also been sentenced to die? We are rightly condemned, for we are receiving the appropriate sentence for what we did. But this man has done nothing wrong.”

Can you see the key? The difference between him and the other thief’s response is that he knows he’s sick. Furthermore, something in him senses that the person next to him is the one who can heal. The answer is simple after all. Who is being saved? Those who know they need it.

Joseph Leggett

MISSION OPPORTUNITIES

MISSION IN CHEYENNE RIVER, SOUTH DAKOTA • July 21 - 27, 2024

There is a full crew going in partnership with other churches and Next Step Ministries to serve the Cheyenne River Reservation in South Dakota.

We will be working along side Cheyenne River Sioux tribal members at the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation in the middle of South Dakota focusing on construction based work.

This is an incredible opportunity to learn about the tribe's history, culture and the challenges they face today as well as provide some much needed help.

Ways you can still help:

Pray for us and the tribal community and/or sponsor a youth!



National Association of
Congregational
Christian Churches

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

The 70th Annual Meeting & Conference of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches takes place in Spokane, Washington from June 22-25, 2024! Hosted by the Pacific Northwest Association, the conference will take place at The Centennial. For more information or if you're interested in going contact Pastor Shazzy or the church office.

NAPF/HOPE 2024 MISSION TRIP

THERE'S STILL ROOM! NAPF/Hope 2024 is scheduled in Spokane, Washington from June 22 through June 27. This is for youth of the church who have completed 8th - 12th grade by May of 2024. There are scholarships available through the IA/NE Association; it offers \$150 and the youth only need to fill out the application and then commit to writing a short "what I got out of the trip" letter after. Please get with Joseph if interested.

REMEMBERING OUR MILITARY

Evan Ball
4120 Van Buren Avenue
Sutherland, IA 51058
(grandson of Jackie Ball)

Brandon Black
1804 Division Rd., Apt #110
Great Falls, MT 59404
Bradon.black85@yahoo.com
(son of Jon & Lori Black)

LTC Mark Ivey
21326 Thimbleweed Ct.
Ashburn, VA 20147
(husband of Cara
Wilkerson-Ivey)

Nathan Jones
29 E. Campus Drive
Campus Center 116
Bluffton, SC 29909
(son of Deb Jepson)

MSG Adam Norgaard
519 East 10th Street
Spencer, IA 51301
(son of Linda Norgaard,
grandson of LaVonne Peterson)

Major Kathryn Polking
949 MDVSS
APO, AE 09366
(sister-in-law of Alison Munter)

Lt. COM Patrick Sullivan
PSC 817 Box 3327
FPO AE 09622
(grandson of LaVonne Peterson)

SGT Daniel Wilkerson
616 Willow St W, Unit 2
Harrisburg, SD 57032
(son of Rick & Barb Wilkerson)

Captain Matt Wilkerson
326 W Barry Ave, Apt 4N
Chicago, IL 60657
(son of Rick & Barb Wilkerson)



**SEND A CARD, NOTE OR
CARE PACKAGE
TO OUR DEDICATED
SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN.**

GIVING MADE EASIER!

We are excited to announce that giving to First Congregational Church is about to become easier and more convenient than ever! Tithely Giving is an easy-to-use platform that will allow you to give online and on your phone. You can make both one-time and recurring gifts, give with a credit/debit card or ACH transaction, and even Cover the Fees (which will help your gift go even farther!)

Here's how to get started with Tithely.



OPTION 1: Give on the Tithely Mobile App!

1. Download the Tithely App from the App Store (iPhone) or Google Play Store (Android). Once you've downloaded the app, select your church and follow the steps listed below (for using a Giving Form).
2. Since this is your first time giving with Tithely, you will be prompted to create an account that you can use for all future gifts.
3. The first time, you will also need to add your credit/debit card or ACH/banking info.
4. Once your account has been created, you won't need to enter your personal or payment information. Just enter your PIN and give!

To make this process even easier, you can also set up a recurring gift that will automate your regular giving.

OPTION 2: Give on the Website!

1. If you don't want to download another app, or are unable to and have access to a computer you can go to their website and give online.
2. Open your chosen search engine and type **get.Tithe.ly** into your search bar.
3. The website will pop up and you can hit the orange button that says **"Sign Up Free"**. Choose **"I Am A Giver"** and then choose **"Give Online Now"**; this will direct you to a page to set up your tithe.ly account.

OPTION 3: Give on Our Website - COMING SOON!

1. You will be able to access a Giving Form on our church website.

With any of these options you'll be able to set up a recurring gift that makes your regular giving automatic.

Do You Give With Cash or Check?

If you regularly make donations in cash or with a check, we strongly encourage you to switch to digital giving! Online giving with Tithely makes it fast and simple to donate, and also reduces the amount of administrative labor we need to process gifts in cash or with a check.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to email or call the office, we'd be happy to assist you further.

Thank you for your generosity. Your financial partnership helps to build the Kingdom of God in our community and world.

Rodney Meendering, Treasurer, rodney@congospencer.org



First Congregational Church is a member of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches and the Iowa-Nebraska Association of Congregational Christian Churches.



Office Hours

Pastor Shazzy

Mon - Thurs
9:00 - 5:00

Joseph

Tue - Fri
10:00 - 4:00

Secretary

Mon - Fri
9:00 - 4:30

SUMMER OFFICE HOURS

May 28 thru August 30
9:00 - 12:30



Visit us on
Facebook

Congregational Communicator



BIRTHDAYS

- May 1 Vickie Montgomery
- May 2 Abbie Hinrichsen
Denny Phillips
- May 4 Jake Kluender
- May 5 Cliff Hoover
- May 6 Jason Moser
- May 9 Sophia Fassbender
Bonnie Hoover
- May 10 Judy Hemphill
Libby Hemphill
Angie Edington
- May 11 David Baish
Kayann Rose
- May 14 Sarah Ellis
- May 16 Doug Wedel
- May 17 Paul Robison
- May 19 Nicholas Sundblad

- May 22 Lisa Brown
Jason Ellis
Robert Krebs
Barb Nielsen
Kyle Rose
- May 23 Mary Lou Hoffman
Adam Norgaard
- May 25 Christopher Jones
- May 26 Nern Black
- May 27 Adam Black
Brandon Black
- May 29 Doug Hart
Addilyn Richter
- May 30 Noah Heiter
Becky Woolery

ANNIVERSARIES

- May 6 Joe & Gayle Conover
- May 9 Cliff & Bonnie Hoover
- May 12 Rod & Tami Meendering
- May 20 Jody & Peggy Halverson
- May 23 Andy Dietz & Bridget Bailey
- May 26 Ray & Barb Garnatz
- May 30 David & Shelly Robison

MISSION STATEMENT

The First Congregational Church of Spencer joyfully worships and praises God. Bound by our covenant, we strive to be the Body of Christ throughout the world by loving, helping and supporting our church family and others through fellowship, missions, and outreach. Our philosophy encourages all people to experience God's grace by freely thinking and building personal relationships with Christ to the glory of God.



First Congregational Church
1212 First Avenue West, Spencer, IA 51301
712-262-4392 ~ www.congospencer.org



[FirstCongregationalChurchofSpencerIA](https://www.facebook.com/FirstCongregationalChurchofSpencerIA)

Pastor: Pastor Sharon "Shazzy" Britz

pastor@congospencer.org

emergency contact 864-407-9022

Director of Youth & Family Ministry: Joseph Leggett

familyministry@congospencer.org

Church Secretary: Michelle Tullberg

office@congospencer.org

Organist/Accompanist/Bell Choir/Choir Director: Elina Ozolins-Leander

Building Manager: Lori Haburn



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
 1212 1st Ave West
 Spencer, IA 51301
Church Office: 712-262-4392
Pastor's Cell: 864-407-9022
Email: office@congospencer.org
Website: www.congospencer.org
Facebook: FirstCongregationalChurchofSpencerIA
YouTube: search for "CongoSpencerIA"

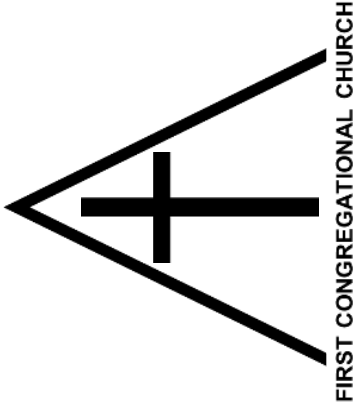


Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>KEY CME = Core Ministry of Education CMF= Core Ministry of Fellowship CMCC=Congregational Care CMM = Core Ministry of Missions CMW = Core Ministry of Worship MARS = Ministry of Assets & Resources EC=Executive Council B/G = Building & Grounds MFC=Mayflower Circle</p>			<p>1 <i>May Breakfast & Bake Sale</i> 7 - 10 a.m. 9:30 Pray As You Go 10:00 Staff Meeting 5:00 Bell Choir 6:00 Choir 6:00 - 8:00 Confirmation 6:00-8:00 PF 7:00 Bible Study</p>	<p>2 <i>12 HOUR PRAYER VIGIL</i></p> <p>9:30 Pray As You Go 6:30 Executive Council</p>	<p>3</p> <p>9:30 Pray As You Go</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>5 9:00 Adult Education 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship <i>Music & Teacher Appreciation</i> 11:30 Fellowship Hour Longhouse/Northshire Worship 4:30 5:00-7:00 Messy Church</p>	<p>6</p> <p>9:30 Pray As You Go 6:00-8:00 Grief Share</p>	<p>7 9:30 Pray As You Go 10:00 Bible Study 5:30-7:00 Congo Night Out Spencer Golf and Country Club</p>	<p>8 9:30 Pray As You Go 10:00 Staff Meeting 5:00 Bell Choir 6:00 Choir 6:00-8:00 PF 6:00 - 8:00 Confirmation 7:00 Bible Study</p>	<p>9</p> <p>9:30 Pray As You Go</p>	<p>10</p> <p>9:30 Pray As You Go</p>	<p>11</p>
<p>12 MOTHER'S DAY 9:00 Adult Education 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Graduation Sunday 11:30 Fellowship Hour</p>	<p>13</p> <p>9:30 Pray As You Go 6:00-8:00 Grief Share</p>	<p>14</p> <p>9:30 Pray As You Go 10:00 Bible Study 5:30 CMF</p>	<p>15 9:30 Pray As You Go 10:00 Staff Meeting 5:00 Bell Choir 6:00 Choir 6:00-8:00 PF 7:00 Bible Study</p>	<p>16</p> <p>9:30 Pray As You Go 11:00 Mayflower Circle at Pub 19 5:30 MARS</p>	<p>17</p> <p>9:30 Pray As You Go</p>	<p>18</p>
<p>19 9:00 Adult Education 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Confirmation 11:30 Fellowship Hour 11:50 CMM</p>	<p>20</p> <p>9:30 Pray As You Go 6:00-8:00 Grief Share</p>	<p>21</p> <p>9:30 Pray As You Go 10:00 Bible study</p>	<p>22</p> <p>9:30 Pray As You Go 10:00 Staff Meeting 6:00-8:00 PF 7:00 Bible Study</p>	<p>23</p> <p>9:30 Pray As You Go</p>	<p>24</p> <p>9:30 Pray As You Go</p>	<p>25</p>
<p>26 9:00 Adult Education 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 11:30 Fellowship Hour 11:50 CMW</p>	<p>27</p> <p>MEMORIAL DAY Office Closed</p>	<p>28</p> <p>9:30 Pray As You Go 10:00 Bible Study</p>	<p>29</p> <p>9:30 Pray As You Go 10:00 Staff Meeting 6:00-8:00 PF 7:00 Bible Study</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p>	

First Congregational Church
1212 First Avenue West
Spencer, IA 51301

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Remember to pray for our sister churches

THIS MONTH:

Our Sister IA/NE Churches

Allison Congregational Church, Allison, IA
First Congregational Church, McCook, NE

Our Sister Churches of the NA

Pilgrim Congregational Church, Pomona, CA
Plymouth Congregational Church, Wichita, KS

NACCC Missions

ECHO International, Florida
Christ to the Villages, Nigeria