




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"

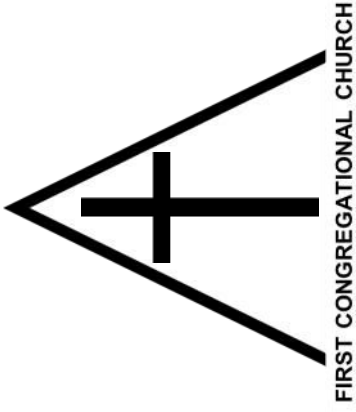


2026

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 PCC=Pastoral Care Committee B/G = Building & Grounds MFC=Mayflower Circle</p>					1	2
3 COMMUNION SUNDAY 9:00 Adult Education 10:30 Worship 10:45 Children's Church 11:30 Fellowship Hour 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous	4 9:00 - 2:00 LifeServe Blood Center 4:30 CME 6:0-8:00 Grief Share	5 10:00 Bible Study 5:30-7:00 Congo Night Out—Gonzalas Tortas Grand Avenue 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous	6 5:00 Bells 6:00 Choir 6:00 - 8:00 Spencer Congo Youth 7:00 Bible Study	7 7:00 am—7:00 pm 12 Hour Prayer Vigil	8	9
10 MOTHER'S DAY GRADUATION SUNDAY 9:00 Adult Education 10:30 Worship 10:45 Children's Church 11:30 Fellowship Hour 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous	11 9:30/10:30 Short Funeral 6:00-8:00 Grief Share Loss of Spouse	12 10:00 Bible Study 5:00 CMM 7:00 CMF 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous	13 5:00 Bells 6:00 Choir 6:00 - 8:00 Spencer Congo Youth 7:00 Bible Study	14 5:00 MARS 6:00 CMW	15 Piano Recital Set Up Fellowship Hall	16 Piano Recital & Reception
17 APPRECIATION SUNDAY 9:00 Adult Education 10:30 Worship 10:45 Children's Church 11:30 Fellowship Hour 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous	18 1:00 - 6:00 LifeServe Blood Center	19 10:00 Bible Study 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous	20 1:30 Staff Meeting 6:00-8:00 Spencer Congo Youth 7:00 Bible Study	21 1:00 Mayflower Circle - Fireside Room - 7:00 Executive Council	22	23
24 10:30 Worship 11:30 Fellowship Hour 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous 31 10:30 Worship 11:30 Fellowship Hour 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous	25 OFFICE CLOSED 	26 10:00 Bible Study 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous	27 1:30 Staff Meeting	28	29	30

**First Congregational Church
1212 First Avenue West
Spencer, IA 51301**

Return Service Requested



Remember to pray for our sister churches

THIS MONTH:

Our Sister Churches of the NA

Maple Hill Community Congregational Church, Maple Hill, KS
Sebago Lake Congregational Church, Standish, ME

NACCC Missions

Happy Life Children's Home, Kenya
Morgan Scott Project, Tennessee



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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Church News
- Graduates
- Ecumenical Worship
- Common Bond Quartet
- Appreciation Sunday
- A Mother's Beatitudes
- Flag Fest Float
- Katie's Notes
- Pastoral Care Committee
- Operation Christmas Child
- UDMO Needs
- Military



"NOTES FROM THE PASTOR"

Greetings, Congo family, By the time you read this, I will have had my surgery and will be recovering. However, as usual, I am blessed to share my reflection with you

As we step into May, I find myself wondering when this wonderful Iowa weather will be gracious. Aside from that, I reflect on the beauty and renewal that this season brings as nature bursts forth in vibrant colors; flowers begin to bloom, green grass spreads across the ground, and the warmth of the sun welcomes us back to outdoor gatherings and shared moments in fellowship with our friends and family. All these things are a wonderful reminder of God's faithfulness and the promise of new beginnings. Several things come to mind, and I hope you will be encouraged.

As I reflect on this month, I am reminded of the blessings that surround us and am drawn to Psalm 104:24-25, one of the many Bible passages that speak of God's creation with wonder, which should encourage us to appreciate the world He has made: "O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures." As we pause to enjoy the beauty of creation, may we also cultivate an attitude of gratitude in our hearts for

the everyday wonders around us.

May is also a time for spiritual and personal growth. As we look forward to the graduation season, let's celebrate the achievements of those around us and encourage one another in our journeys. Whether through formal education or personal development, every step we take can be an opportunity to honor God and fulfill the purpose He has set for us. The apostle Paul assures us in his letter to the church at Philippi, that God, the one who began a good work in every person, will bring it to completion on the day of Jesus Christ. Let's trust in His timing and be open to the work He is doing in our lives, as well as the work He will still do.

This month can also be a time to strengthen our relationships with one another; a time to focus on nurturing connections with family and friends, and most importantly, to support and encourage one another. As we gather for meals, cookouts, church gatherings, or just casual socializing, let's be intentional about sharing our faith and blessings. Hebrews 10:24-25 reminds us to "consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encourag-

ing one another."

Finally, as we journey through May, let me remind you of the Christian calendar that leads us toward Ascension Day (May 14) and Pentecost (May 24), which are significant moments in our Christian life, and all the more reason to make time for intentional prayer and reflection. Let's prepare our hearts to receive the Holy Spirit anew, so that we can be empowered to actively live out our faith in every part of our lives.

May this month remind us of the Promises from God, the hope we have in Christ, and the beauty of community. Let's commit to walking in faith, to love unceasingly, and to be the hands and feet of Jesus in all that we do.

REMEMBER: Without **GOD**, our week would be: Sindyay, Mournday, Tearsday, Wasteday, Thirstday, Fightday, Shatterday. Seven days **WITHOUT GOD** makes one **WEAK!!**

Wishing you a blessed and joy-filled month of May!

Pastor Shazzy



CHURCH NEWS

HOSPITALIZATIONS/SURGERIES, TESTING...

- Larry, brother of Diane Berg has issues with his kidney and possible cancer.
- Doug Hart is continuing to recover from his back surgery and rehabilitation.
- Denny Price had a stent in his heart and is recovering at home.
- Kaye Price is on hospice and is at home.
- Duaine Holck had hip replacement surgery on March 9 and is slowly improving with his mobility and pain.

CONDOLENCES...

- Continued prayers for the family of Karen Forbes, her funeral was held April 25.

THANK YOU...

- Thank You for keeping all of us in your prayers as we navigate life after mom's passing. The care that we have received has meant so much!
Forbes and Robison Families

NEW MEMBERS...

- Curtis Swanson April 19.
- Nancy Brooks and Gloria Nieman April 26.

THOUGHTS...

An Unusual Answer to a Mother's Prayer

Linda Jo Peters of Terre Haute, Indiana, felt her "worry button" get pushed when her daughter, Esther, called from college with an unexpected plan. Esther explained she wanted to go camping alone in a park in southern Illinois. She needed quiet time to think and asked her mother for Bible verses to read as she prayed about her future.

Linda knew Esther felt strongly about going, even if it made her uneasy. After the call ended, Linda dropped to her knees and began what she later called "a dialogue with God." She closed her prayer with a simple surrender: "I guess you want me on my knees that weekend."

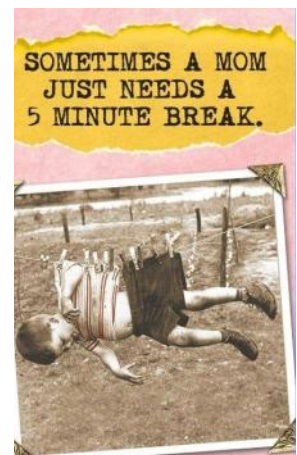
And that is exactly where she stayed.

The morning after Esther's first night at camp, she called home. She was safe, she said, and no one had come near her tent. All night long, however, a skunk had wandered nearby, circling the campsite.

Later, Linda reflected on the moment with quiet confidence. "There was no way anyone with evil intent would have approached Esther's tent," she wrote, "while the power of prayer, in the form of a black-and-white critter, was circling it."

ChurchArt

CONGO CACKLES



Congratulations Graduates!

High School

Nora Conover
Robbie Gerlock
Madilyn Lewis

Law School

Leah Halverson

*Join us in celebration on Sunday, May 10th
as our youth continue to grow and spread their wings.*

WHAT'S HAPPENING



TUESDAY MORNING
10:00 a.m.
WEDNESDAY NIGHT
7:00 p.m.



MAYFLOWER CIRCLE
will meet in the
Fireside Room @ 1 p.m.
Thurs., May 21st
ALL WOMEN OF THE CHURCH
ARE INVITED.

CONGO NIGHT OUT



TUESDAY, MAY 7TH
GONZALES TORTAS
GRAND AVENUE, SPENCER
5:30 - 7 p.m.
This will be the last one until fall.



ECUMENICAL WORSHIP
SUNDAY, JUNE 21
10:00 AM AT EAST LEACH PARK
FOOD TRUCKS
PASTOR SHAZZY WILL HAVE A PRERE-
CORDED SERMON POSTED TO OUR
WEBSITE AND YOUTUBE FOR THOSE
WHO ARE NOT ABLE TO ATTEND THIS
WORSHIP SERVICE IN PERSON.



SUNDAY, MAY 17TH
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!

JOIN US FOR GRIEF SHARE
LOSS OF A SPOUSE
MONDAY
May 11, 2026
6:00 P.M.

Your life has changed forever. The daily
emotions and challenges can seem too
hard to bear.

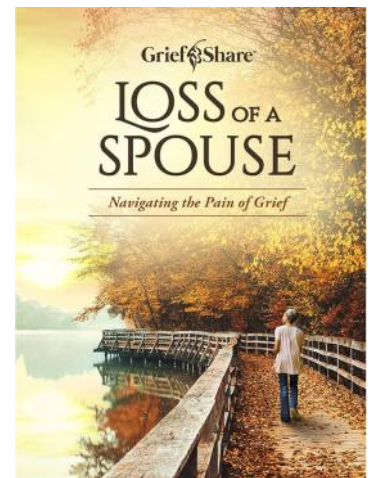
**Find help at a Loss of a Spouse
Seminar.**

You'll hear:

- Practical advice from others who've been there.
- What to expect in your grief.
- How to cope with life without your spouse.



WORSHIP WITH
COMMON BOND QUARTET
SUNDAY, JULY 26, 2026
10:30 AM





A Mother's Beatitudes

- Blessed is the mother who understands her child, for she shall inherit a kingdom of memories.
- Blessed is the mother who knows how to comfort, for she shall possess a child's devotion.
- Blessed is the mother who guides by the path of righteousness, for she shall be proud of her offspring.
- Blessed is the mother who is never shocked, for she shall receive confidences.
- Blessed is the mother who teaches respect, for she shall be respected.
- Blessed is the mother who emphasizes the good and minimizes the bad, for in like manner the child himself shall make evaluations.
- Blessed is the mother who treats her child as she would be treated, for her home shall be filled with happiness.
- Blessed is the mother who answers simply the startling questions, for she shall always be trusted.
- Blessed is the mother who has character strong enough to withstand the thoughtless remarks and resentments of the growing child, for, in due time, she shall be honored.

Shared by Pastor Shazzy- Credits: Leonora Zearfoss



First Congo will have a float in the FLAG FEST parade!

We are needing walkers and riders. Be at the fair grounds by 10:00 am on June 13

CONTACT KATHY ANDERSON IF INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING

UPCOMING MISSION TRIP WITH NEXT STEP MINISTRIES

Cheyenne River, South Dakota

July 19—25, 2026



YOUR CHANGE CHANGES LIVES!

Take an empty baby bottle and fill it with coins, cash, or check (to Cherish Center) **BEGINNING MAY 10. RETURN IT TO THE CHURCH BY JUNE 21.**



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



or give here 

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



LifeServe Blood Center is a nonprofit organization that provides blood and blood products to hospitals across Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota.

May 4th • 9:00 a.m. - 2 p.m.
May 18th • 1 p.m. - 6 p.m.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRY

Children's Bell Choir



Easter Egg Hunt



Agape Act—Fresh Start



Katie's Notes

Thank you to everyone who donated items to the Spencer Congo Youth Garage Sale. We made over \$1,200 and truly appreciate your support!

Our April Agape Act for Spencer Congo Youth Group was helping Fresh Start organize books. Fresh Start supports members of Spencer and surrounding areas with financial resources through their thrift shop on South Grand.

Thank you to Mike Patten for taking time to teach the Sunday School children how to play "Jesus Loves Me" on the bells.

We had a beautiful day for our Easter egg hunt!

Children's Church's last day will be May 17th, and Spencer Congo Youth Group's last day will be May 20th. BigStuf in Florida is scheduled for June 6–13. Our Arnold's Park day for Spencer Congo Youth Group will be June 24th.

VBS: *The County Fair* will be June 6–8 from 6-8pm with the last night being a family night at North Park. We are currently looking for volunteers to help with stations; baking, crafts, fishing, wood-working, tie-dye, and midway games. If you are interested, please reach out to Katie Baltes.

(RE)INTRODUCING THE PASTORAL CARE COMMITTEE



Dear friends in Christ,

Many of you may have heard of the term Pastoral Care Committee (or PCC) and wondered what its purpose is in the life of our church. A Pastoral Care Committee (also known as a Pastoral Relations Committee) is a small group of members whose primary role is to support the pastor and serve as a trusted channel of communication between the pastor and the congregation. Rather than focusing on tasks or administration, the PCC is a relational body, grounded in Christian care and mutual respect. Its work helps strengthen the overall ministry of the church by nurturing healthy relationships and open communication.

The heart of the PCC's mission is support, encouragement, and listening. Through regular meetings, the committee offers encouragement, clarification of concerns, and—when appropriate—loving, constructive feedback. This helps prevent misunderstandings from becoming crises and builds trust over time. The PCC is founded on acceptance, trust, and confidentiality, creating a safe space where honest sharing can occur without fear or judgment.

The Pastoral Care Committee does not evaluate performance, make salary recommendations, or function as a personnel committee. Its authority is limited and intentional, so that it remains a place of care rather than oversight. When concerns arise in the congregation, the PCC encourages healthy, direct communication whenever possible, while also helping listen to and discern the emotional climate of the church. In this way, the PCC quietly but faithfully supports both pastor and congregation, helping us grow together in trust, love, and shared ministry.

Current members of the Pastoral Care Committee are Barb Jacobson, Jennifer Lowdermilk, Joe Conover, and me. Please reach out to any of us if you have questions, comments, or concerns you wish to share with the PCC.

Jared Gerlock, Moderator

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD



Operation Christmas Child—Shoe Box Ministry

We are receiving notes from across the world from the recipients of our Shoe Box gifts that were sent in November. Here is one note.

“Hello thank you for your gift that has been packed with Love. I’m the one who received the Samaritan’s box. Yes Jesus is with me always. I’m happy to have this it reminds me of the Gifts Jesus Christ my Savior”

They don't say where they are from but Pastor Shazzy also received a note from a recipient of one of her personal boxes from the Philippines!

“Good day Pastor Shazzy, hope you are doing well. I am the mother of the kid who receive your box here at the Philippines. And I just want to say thank you so much, my daughter was very happy. May God bless you more and more. Thank you again pastor.”

Many of our boxes tracked to Mexico, Liberia and the Philippines. It's all about Jesus! Our Church's Shoebox gifts lead to evangelism, discipleship, and the multiplication of believers and churches even to the ends of the earth! It is an important mission that we continue to build upon. Thank you for your gifts that you can see have an impact! Please continue to shop for clearance items now for the packing parties we will hold again in the fall.



UDMO Donations Challenge MAY: Hamburger Helper & Tuna Helper

Any food or hygiene donations can be delivered here to the church in our blue barrel by the office, or taken directly to Upper Des Moines.



ONLINE GIVING WITH TITHE.LY



Do You Give With Cash or Check?

We strongly encourage you to switch to digital giving! Scan this QR code with your smart phone camera, click the yellow link that will pop up, it will take you to our online giving webpage.



REMEMBERING OUR MILITARY

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

Major Kathryn Polking
1770 E. McKinley Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50320
(sister-in-law of Alison Munter)

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

Lt. COM Patrick Sullivan
5850 Kyiv Place, Box #176
Dulles, VA 20189-5850
(nephew of Linda Norgaard)

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

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

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



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





WHEN?
Sundays!

WHAT TIME?
10:45

WHO?
Children in 5th grade
and under!

Congregational Communicator



BIRTHDAYS

- May 1 Vickie Montgomery
- May 2 Denny Phillips
- May 6 Jason Moser
- May 9 Sophia Fassbender
Bonnie Hoover
- May 10 Judy Hemphill
Angie Edington
- May 11 David Baish
Kayann Rose
- May 12 Katie Baltes
- May 16 Doug Wedel
- May 22 Lisa Brown
Robert Krebs
- May 23 Mary Lou Hoffman
Adam Norgaard
- May 26 Nern Black

- May 27 Matt Baltes
Adam Black
Brandon Black
- May 29 Doug Hart
- May 30 Becky Woolery

ANNIVERSARIES

- May 6 Joe & Gayle Conover
- 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



PASTOR SHAZZY
Mon-Thurs
9:00-4:30

KATIE BALTES
Mon, Tue, Wed &
Fri 9:00-3:30

SECRETARY
Mon - Fri
9:00-4:30

**SUMMER OFFICE
HOURS**
May 26 thru August 31
9:00 - 12:30



First Congregational Church is a member of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches.

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.



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Pastor: Pastor Sharon "Shazzy" Britz
pastor@congospencer.org
emergency contact 864-407-9022
Church Secretary: Michelle Tullberg
office@congospencer.org

Director of Children & Youth Ministry: Katie Baltes
dcym@congospencer.org

Organist/Accompanist/Bell Choir/Choir Director: Elina Ozolins-Leander
Building Manager: Lori Haburn

