FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

1212 1ST AVE WEST | SPENCER, IOWA

CONGREGATIONAL Communicator

WORSHIP | GROW | SERVE | SHARE

NOVEMBER 2026

A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

SEPTEMBER 17, 2026

Dear members of First Congregational Church,

We are writing today out of love and hope for our church and church family. This is a wonderful opportunity for us to come together to recover and rebuild. We cannot deny that we have gone through some very difficult months at our church, even to the extent that relationships have been strained and broken. Ephesians 4:3 addresses this:

"Our identity is not found in our disagreements, but in Jesus Christ. We are called to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of Peace."

Remember our church covenant:

We covenant with the Lord and with one another and do bind ourselves in the presence of God, to walk together in all His ways according as He is pleased to reveal Himself unto us in His blessed work of truth. We purpose to devote ourselves to the study, the practice and spread of Christianity. We will endeavor to be loyal to this fellowship, to help one another in the Christian life, to support the work and attend the meetings of this church according to our strength, ability and opportunity, and in every way to strive to make it a power in the service of God and man.

And our 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.

We would appeal to you to:

Prayerfully consider the words of our covenant and mission statement.

Attend worship to praise God and strengthen relationships.

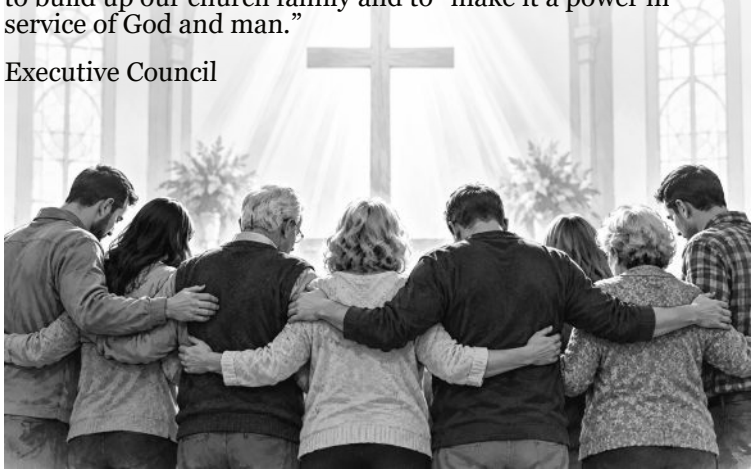
Volunteer to serve in a capacity that interests you and builds up our church.

Reach out to other members out of love and support.

Prayerfully consider other ways we can work toward a stronger community of faith.

As we close, we appeal to your sense of belonging to the Body of Christ. Grace and peace be with you as we all work together to build up our church family and to "make it a power in service of God and man."

Executive Council



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UPCOMING EVENTS

NOV 05 — Prayer Vigil
7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

NOV 15 — Heratage Dinner
11:30 a.m.

NOV 21 — Mayflower Bakesale
9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

CHURCH NEWS

HOSPITALIZATIONS/SURGERY TESTING:

• Matt Bryant - upcoming back surgery November 5

• Gloria Tingle – breast cancer

• Tom Van Tassell – Hyperbaric oxygen treatments

• Kella Klinker-Simonin – heart issues

• Mother-in-law of Dan Winkowitsch health issues

• Rikki Hamrick – lymphoma

• Louise Simpson – heart oblation

• Becky Johnson – knee surgery

• Bonnie Hoover – knee surgery

• Sally Holck – broken arm

• Don Schoorman – prostate cancer

• Bob Rose – health issues

DEATHS:

• Joyce Wagner

THANK YOU'S:

• Thank you for all the cards, hugs, phone calls, visits, and meals I received from you during my daughter Sherry's, illness and after her passing. And to the church ladies who hosted the visitation after her service, words cannot express what it meant to me. - Betty Weikum

• Dear VBS Team, Thank you so much for your donation to People for Pets! We feel blessed that your church took an offering for our shelter. Lately, times have been tough in every direction you turn, but we keep hold of our faith and remember God puts us where we are for a reason. Your donation helps us to continue saving hundreds of pets every year.

- Jenna & the People for Pets Family

• On behalf of the Board of Directors of LOVE Takes Root, we thank you for your contribution to the Haiti project in the amount of $1,947 for the Easter Offering. Your generous contribution helps to improve the lives of children through the provision of food, shelter, education and health. - LOVE Takes Root

• Jenna Mart has donated 12 flameless candles to the church for future weddings! A HUGE thank you to them! We appreciate the gift.

- Wedding Committee, Gayle Bailey & Susan Wedel

• Thank you to Mueske Electric and Linda Norgaard. Muske Electric graciously donated their labor and bulbs to improve the lighting in the Fireside Room and the auxiliary office (formerly Amber's office). What a special gift to give to the church.

EVENTS & INFO:

CONGO NIGHT OUT:
There will be no Congo Night Out in November due to the election. Congo Night out in December will be at Sammy's Italian on December 1st from 5:30 - 7 p.m.

12 HOUR PRAYER VIGIL:
Thursday, November 5th - 7 a.m. -7 p.m. You may pray in the chapel or from home.

MAYFLOWER CIRCLE MEETING:
November 19th at 1:00 in the Fireside room, all women of the church are invited to attend.

5TH SUNDAY POTLUCK:
There will be no 5th Sunday Potluck in November due to the Heritage Dinner and the Thanksgiving holiday.

2027 PLEDGE CARD: 9 month giving statements will go out soon, 2027 Pledge Cards will be included. Pledge cards need to be returned by **November 23.**

OFFICE CLOSED: November 26 & 27 for Thanksgiving

NOTES FROM ELINA:

- **November 1st** - bells & choir perform for All Saints Day
- **November 8th** - Veteran's Day - Patriotic Medley program
- **November 15th** - bells & choir perform - Heritage Meal

THIS AND THAT:

THE RESPONSIBILITY POEM

"There was a most important job that needed to be done,
And no reason not to do it, there was absolutely none.
But in vital matters such as this, the thing you have to ask
Is who exactly will it be who'll carry out the task.
Anybody could have told you that Everybody knew
That this was something Somebody would surely have to do.
Nobody was unwilling; Anybody had the ability.
But Nobody believed that it was their responsibility.
It seemed to be a job that Anybody could have done,
If Anybody thought he was supposed to be the one.
But since Everybody recognized that Anybody could,
Everybody took for granted that Somebody would.
But Nobody told Anybody that we are aware of,
That he would be in charge of seeing it was taken care of.
And Nobody took it upon himself to follow through,
And do what Everybody thought that Somebody would do.
When what Everybody needed so did not get done at all,
Everybody was complaining that Somebody dropped the ball.
Anybody then could see it was an awful crying shame,

And Everybody looked around for Somebody to blame.
Somebody should have done the job, Everybody should have,
But in the end, Nobody did
What Anybody could have."

by Charles Osgood

A LETTER FROM THE VICE MODERATOR

As October draws to a close and we look toward November, it has finally begun to feel like fall. The autumnal equinox occurred way back in September, but Mother Nature apparently didn't get the memo! Since the first day of fall, we have endured early-spring-like rain showers, mid-summer-like temperatures, and, finally, the cooler temperatures and shorter hours of daylight one would expect in autumn.

If you have ever discussed the change of seasons with a young child, you are probably aware that, in their mind, when the calendar says a new season has begun, then "poof!"—all signs of the new season magically arrive. In reality, change doesn't typically happen that way for most of us. Nonetheless, much change lies ahead in the next few weeks. The days get shorter (at 2 a.m. on Sunday, November 1, Daylight Saving Time officially ends), the weather gets colder, trees grow bare, and we hunker down, awaiting the first snowfall of the year.

Our busy lives don't slow down, though, and we have a full slate of fall holidays to keep us busy—Halloween, All Saints' Day, Veterans Day, and Thanksgiving. November is a busy month!

Our church is in a season of change right now. Some days, it feels as long as a cold Iowa winter—a bit overwhelming and a bit uncomfortable. At other times, it feels like a warm spring day, when everything just seems right with the world.

I am reminded of Ecclesiastes 3:1–8: "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven. A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace."

You may be asking yourself, "Where am I in this season? What is my role, and where am I headed?" The answer is that you can't possibly know the whole picture. We weren't created to see everything that lies ahead. Rather than making a checklist and ticking off completed items, God wants us to orient ourselves toward Him. As we navigate this season of change in our church, may we remain open to new possibilities, embrace change, and be willing to try something new. Take time to prayerfully consider what your role might be in this season and listen for where God is leading you. You may be surprised by the opportunities He places before you. Fix your eyes on our Creator, seize each day, and live life to the fullest.

Above all, let us come together in this new season, working together for God's great plan and praising Him for all He has done for us and given to us.

Praising God for all of His blessings,

Barb Jacobson
Vice-Moderator

CONGO CACKLES

"If you look at it like this you can see God Smiling"

"The last thing I remember is being thrown into the dryer."

A LITTLE CHURCH HUMOR

One Sunday morning, the pastor noticed that little Billy was staring intently at a large plaque hanging in the church entryway.

The plaque was covered with names, and small American flags were mounted on either side.

Curious, Billy asked, "Pastor, what are all those names for?"

The pastor smiled and replied, "Those are the names of people from our congregation who died in the service."

Billy stood quietly for a moment, studying the names.

Then his eyes grew wide.

He looked up at the pastor and whispered,

"Was it the 8:00 service or the 10:30 service?"

Wedding ANNOUNCEMENT

CONGRATULATIONS!

Logan & Jenna (Mart) Huckfelt

Married at the church on October 17th!

All Saints DAY

NOVEMBER 1ST
DURING WORSHIP

We will be honoring our loved ones that have passed since November 25, 2025.

This will look a little different than the past few years. Pictures will be on the rolling screen with their name; a bell will be rung as their name is read.

We will not have the family come up to light a candle, instead we will have one Unity candle representing all.

Mayflower Circle Bakesale

Southpark Mall

November 21st
9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

The ladies are asking for donations of baked goods or other items to be sold.

Please have them at the mall by 8:30 a.m. on the day of the bake sale.

Heritage Meal

November 15
11:30 – 12:15

Turkey, Mashed Potatoes
Gravy, Stuffing, Vegetable,
Roll, Dessert

Free Will Donation

Thanksgiving OFFERING

Feed Our Children has been chosen as our Thanksgiving Offering recipient by the Core Ministry of Missions.

Feed Our Children are in their 20th year of providing weekend bags of food to our local children in need. They are a local Spencer program. Over the years they have provided so many kids with not only food but self-confidence and the ability to focus on other important needs such as learning. Stories of dumpster diving, and suffering through empty bellies are real and present, even here in Spencer, Iowa.

Rising costs have made it even more difficult to provide the resources needed to roughly 200 children.

Your generosity is much appreciated! All funds collected will stay in the Spencer community.

FEED OUR CHILDREN
NOURISHING NEEDY ELEMENTARY CHILDREN

EDUCATION

Come join our Adult Sunday School from 9:00 – 10:00 am in the Fireside Room. We are watching "Understanding the New Testament" with Dr. David Brakke. After watching the 30-minute DVD, we have discussion and Bible Study suggested by Dr. Brakke. This is a 24-week study. You are not required to meet every Sunday as each lesson is complete by itself.

Join Us!

PREK-5TH GRADE
9:30 A.M. – 10:15 A.M.

Bring a friend and enjoy the word of God!

SPENCER HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP

Calling all High School Students!

Youth group will meet each Wednesday at 7 p.m. beginning October 28th. Jared Gerlock is leading this group with help from Jim Montgomery and Dave Jacobson. All are welcome, please spread the word to your friends and family!

YOUR GIFTS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

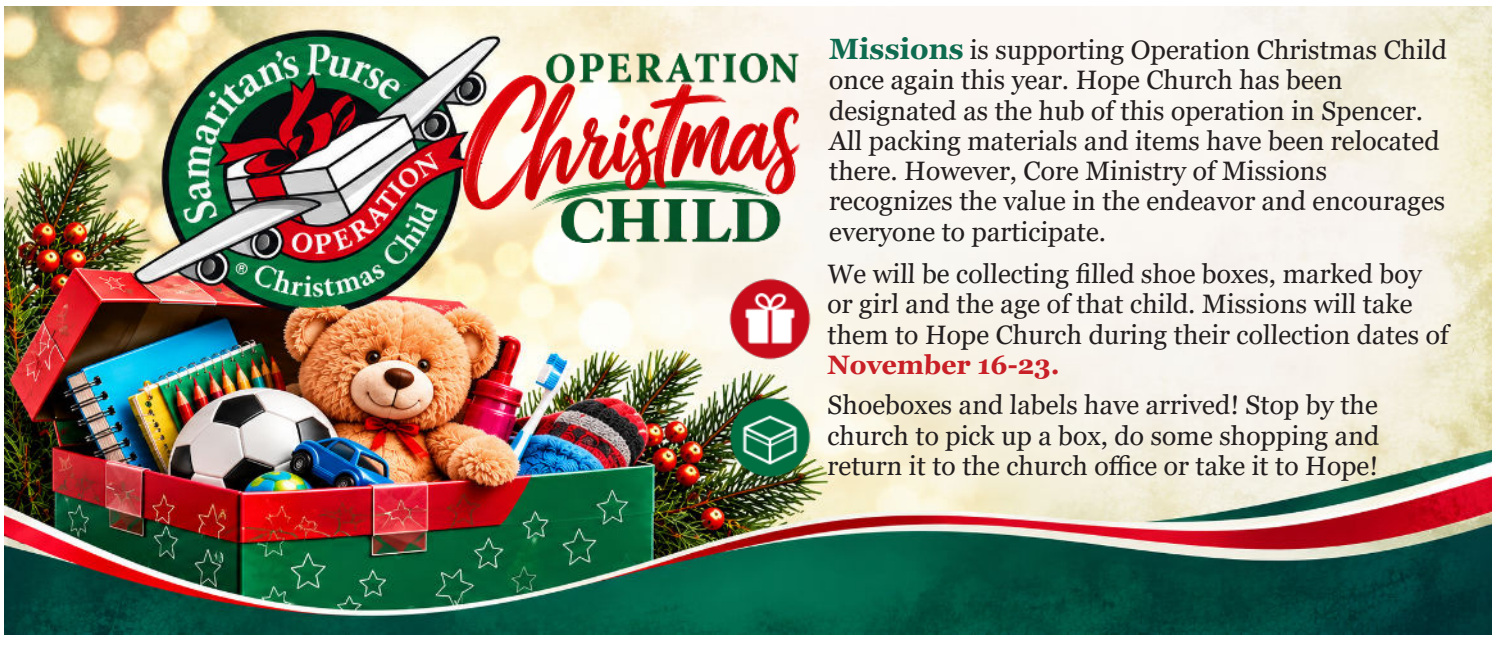
Have you been considering serving on a Ministry Team?

God has blessed each of us with unique gifts and talents. Whether you enjoy working with others, sharing ideas, organizing activities, or lending a helping hand, there's a place for you!

Prayerfully consider joining a Ministry Team and helping our church grow in faith, fellowship, and service.

Ministry of Congregational Care
Ministry of Fellowship
Ministry of Education
Ministry of Asset's & Resources
Ministry of Mission
Ministry of Worship
Pastor Search Committee

Every gift matters. Every helping hand makes a difference. If you are interested in serving on a committee, please contact the office or let a team member know.



Missions is supporting Operation Christmas Child once again this year. Hope Church has been designated as the hub of this operation in Spencer. All packing materials and items have been relocated there. However, Core Ministry of Missions recognizes the value in the endeavor and encourages everyone to participate.

We will be collecting filled shoe boxes, marked boy or girl and the age of that child. Missions will take them to Hope Church during their collection dates of **November 16-23.**

Shoeboxes and labels have arrived! Stop by the church to pick up a box, do some shopping and return it to the church office or take it to Hope!

MISSIONS

There's something special about receiving a holiday card in the mail — especially one that brings a little extra good into the world.

This holiday season, share the joy with our one-of-a-kind greeting cards featuring three festive, hand-drawn designs, each created by a child at La Concorde. These meaningful holiday cards are an opportunity to share love beyond your own mailbox.

When you purchase cards through the LOVE Takes Root Holiday Card Fundraiser, you help support our mission to give children in Haiti opportunities to grow, learn, and thrive.

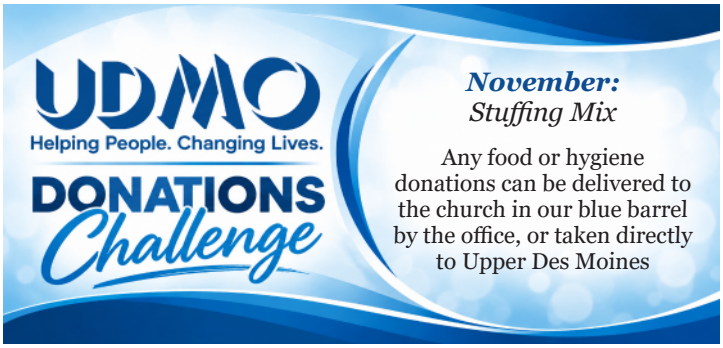
✨ Send a little holiday happiness.
💌 Share a holiday greeting with someone you love.
🌱 Help a child's future take root.

Make your holiday greetings mean more this year!

🛍️ Scan here to order your holiday cards!

6 of a single design: $18
12 assorted designs: $30
24 assorted designs: $50

LOVE takes root



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

Evan Ball
4120 Van Buran Avenue
Sutherland, IA 51058
(Grandson of Jackie Ball)

Brandon Black
brandon.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
(sond of Deb Jepson)

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

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

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

BIRTHDAYS

Nov 1 Bradley Miller
Nov 3 Xainder Norgaard
Nov 4 Beth Halverson
Katie Simpson
Nov 5 Larry Forbes
Nov 9 Diane Berg
Rod Castenson
Nov 11 Mikaya Miller
Barb Mugge
Nov 12 Lynn Dotson
Nov 15 Tom R. Howe
Nov 16 Stewart Lewis
Julie Soma
Nov 17 Jim Sieh
Nov 19 Linda Edwardson
Nov 22 Barb Garnatz
Nov 26 Robin Byrn
Nash Dietz
Nov 28 Kris Allen
Becky Johnson
Julie Lewis
Nov 30 Brian Fassbender

ANNIVERSARIES

Nov 21 Chris & Sandi Nielsen
Nov 27 Larry & Donna Dailey

First Congregational Church
1212 1st Ave West, Spencer, IA 51301
712.262.4392 · www.congospencer.org
FirstCongregationalChurchofSpencerIA

Church Secretary:
Michelle Tullburg
office@congospencer.org

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

Building Manager:
Darin Storm

NACCC

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

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search for "CongoSpencerIA"

November 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Communion Sunday 9:00 Adult Education 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 11:30 Fellowship 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous	2	3 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous	4 5:00 Bells 6:00 Choir 7:00 Youth Group	5 7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. Prayer Vigil	6	7
8 9:00 Adult Education 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 11:30 Fellowship 11:45 CME 11:45 CMM 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous	9	10 9:00 CMCC 7:00 CMF 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous	11 5:00 Bells 6:00 Choir 7:00 Youth Group	12 5:00 MARS 6:00 CMW	13	14
15 9:00 Adult Education 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 11:30 Heritage Dinner 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous	16	17 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous	18 5:00 Bells 6:00 Choir 7:00 Youth Group	19 1:00 Mayflower Circle 5:00 MARS 7:00 Executive Council	20	21 9:00 - 1:00 Mayflower Circle Bake Sale at SouthPark Mall
22 9:00 Adult Education 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 11:30 Fellowship 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous	23	24 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous	25 5:00 Bells 6:00 Choir 7:00 Youth Group	26 Office Closed 	27 Office Closed	28
29 9:00 Adult Education 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 11:30 Fellowship 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous	30					

First Congregational Church
1212 First Avenue West
Spencer, IA 51301

Return Service Requested

Remember to Pray for our sister churches:

Lemon Grove Community Church, Lemon Grove, CA

First Congregational Church, South Paris, ME

NACCC Missions

ChildVoice, Newmarket, New Hampshire

Hosanna Industries, Pennsylvania