



THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER

First Christian Church, Maryville, MO

fccmaryvillemo.com

April 30, 2025

She Will Not Fall: *A Letter to Mothers at Every Stage*

"God is within her, she will not fall." — Psalm 46:5

Let's get one thing out of the way: that mother on Instagram — the one with the colour-coordinated pantry, the homemade sourdough, the children who sit still for family photos — is not the standard. She is a highlight reel. Somewhere behind that grid is a pile of laundry and a child who just said "I hate you" over a screen time limit.

Welcome to motherhood. All of it.

To the New Moms: You Googled "is it normal if my baby—" at 3 a.m. last Tuesday. It's normal. You've also cried in the shower and felt simultaneously like the most in-love person alive and someone with absolutely no idea what they're doing. Both are true. Both are fine. The hardest part isn't the sleep deprivation — it's the quiet weight of feeling like you should be doing it better. Here's the secret: you are not failing. You are forming.

To the Mothers of Teenagers: Somewhere between "Mommy, watch me!" and the current situation — where you are apparently the most embarrassing person alive simply by existing near them in public — you may have lost your confidence. Teenagers will door-slam, eye-roll, and eat everything in the house and deny it. And yet you are still doing the invisible work: the driving, the waiting up, the texting back immediately when they take three hours to respond. They know you love them. They're just not ready to admit it yet.

To the Mothers of Adult Children: Nobody warns you about this phase. You raised them, released them, and now you're navigating the fine line between helpful and hovering. You bite your tongue about their apartment, their diet, and approximately forty-seven other things, because the relationship matters more than being right. You are not finished mattering to them. You've just changed roles. That's not loss — it's evolution.

To the Grandmothers: You get the best deal. A small person who shares your DNA thinks you are magic, you spoil them just enough, and then you hand them back. Your wisdom — hard-won and laugh-lined — is a gift those grandchildren won't fully understand until they're standing where you are now.

Psalm 46:5 says, "God is within her, she will not fall." Not "she will not struggle." Not "she will never say the wrong thing or miss the recital or feel completely out of her depth." She will not fall. There is a difference.

The perfectly filtered mother online isn't more devoted than you. She's just better at angles. You, in all your tired, trying-so-hard-it-hurts realness, are exactly the mother your children need — not because you're perfect, but because you're theirs.

You will not fall.

Happy Mother's Day to every woman walking this road — at whatever mile marker you find yourself today.



Pastor's Pen

A message from my heart to yours



The other day I received a text from my daughter, Gina. Nothing out of the norm, she was texting me her schedule for finals. This was just a short list of days and times, nothing out of the ordinary, but later it dawned on me...wow, she's already finishing her sophomore year. And in that moment, I paused in recognition that something so simple can suddenly carry more weight than it was meant to. It stirred a gentle emotion that produced a question in me, is anything ever really final? We call them "finals" as if they mark the end, as if something is wrapped up and completed, but sitting with that message got me thinking. I realized this isn't an ending but a continuation through a doorway into what's next. We try to define things, to put edges around moments but life doesn't seem to honor those boundaries the way we think it should. Jesus points to this when he says, "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit," so in other words, what looks like an ending is often the very place where something new begins to take shape. And here we are in spring, a season that shows us winter may be over, but spring still carries its share of chilly days, moments that don't quite feel like what we expected, and yet growth is happening anyway. Life is still unfolding beneath the surface. That simple text didn't just show me a finals schedule, it reminded me that what we often call an ending is rarely that at all. It can be an invitation to notice, to be present, and to trust that something new is already emerging, even if it doesn't yet feel warm because life isn't only about endings or conclusions; it's about unfolding.

Blessed to Be Unfolding Beside You,

Gina ❤️

The Bulletin Board

Following the Progress of FCC's Leaders

The following is a brief recap of the Board meeting April 13, 2026.

Finance Report: Finance Chair Coby Lamb reported contributions were up for March. Insurance premiums were higher due to an increase in required premium coverage amounts, but the premium should be reduced on the May payment to reflect the request for coverage changes. March's ending balance was a positive \$4,159 versus the expected negative \$3,000.

Team Reports:

- **Property Reports:** Property Team Member Marcia Jordan reported that property purchased a 20-foot extension ladder using Ed Brown Memorial Funds with the permission of Karen Brown.
- **Worship/Elders:** Worship Chair Guy Ebersole reported Easter went well and the Elders met Sunday, April 12, for a brief meeting and no one reported any issues that needed addressed. A few people mentioned wanting to keep the banners over the pews as they were for Easter, but due to large groups using the sanctuary, it would be problematic to leave them any longer.
- **Outreach/Evangelism:** Pastor Gina reported that the Maryville Leadership group contacted us offering their services to organize The Giving Tree. We will be working with them to move a shelving system from the craft room into the household room for The Giving Tree. Pastor Gina stated that the Forum is doing a series on local not-for-profits and will be doing a story on The Giving Tree. She will let the congregation know when that will be so they can attend as well.

According to Pastor Gina, Caring & Sharing requests were low to-date, and the Wednesday study group is going well. There are seven or eight individuals who signed up to be Caring & Connecting volunteers for in-home visits similar to pastoral care and serving with the service at Oak Pointe. A training session for these volunteers will be scheduled soon.

- **Christian Life:** Pastor Gina reported that the graduation brunch scheduled for Kendric Santos-Briggs and Chloe Petersen has been moved to 9:30 am April 19. There will be a special video during the service with pictures of the graduates sent to us by their parents and a basket for people to put cards in. We've also invited the congregation to send in money to add to the love offering we will be giving them on that Sunday.

New Business:

Personnel: Pastor Gina reported that Personnel members Pam Dougan, Sandi Mull, and Sue Schenkel, will be meeting with John Morrison-Keller, a current sophomore at Northwest, as a new hire for the A/V position, with his main responsibilities being the in sound booth and overseeing livestream. He will also be responsible for scheduling volunteers in those areas as needed. His pay will be \$20 per hour for three to five hours per week, the same as Kendric and Chloe were.

Minister's Report:

Pastor Gina expressed her gratitude for the week of vacation she had after Easter and to everyone for their support, attendance, and hard work. She enjoyed the week by doing very little other than spending time some time with her family, with herself, and with her significant other.

Pastor Gina closed the meeting with a prayer

CHRISTMAS IN THE SUMMER

We are looking for a volunteer(s) to organize this year's Christmas in the Summer.

Here are the things that need to be done for this ministry to be the awesome success it has continued to be:

- Organize item tags for gift buyers to pick up
- Organize returned, gift-wrapped gifts with tags into family groups
- Deliver gifts to Community Action on or before the due date of Aug. 5

Contact Pastor Gina to find out more.

Seeing Our Stewardship

April 2026

General Fund

Beginning Balance	\$	14,918.13
Income	\$	10,334.24
Expenses	\$	13,972.40
Ending Balance	\$	11,279.97

Missions

Beginning Balance	\$	1,907.78
Income	\$	566.53
Expenses	\$	155.02
Ending Balance	\$	2,319.29

Church Growth

Month

Points

April Highlights

- New web visitors 190
- Social Media comments/reactions/shares 168
- Worship Attendance 162
- Visitors 160
- Volunteer at service 144

Total Month's Points 1169

Elders' Meeting

Tuesday,
May 5

5:30 p.m.

Have your newsletter sent directly to your inbox!

Subscribe today!



fccmaryvillemo.com/news-letter

Welcome Home



Sunday Mornings

9 a.m.

Sunday School Classes

10:30 a.m.

Service in the Sanctuary

Sunday Worship Attendance

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FCCMaryvilleMO

Keeping in touch with our church families

For Healing & Comfort...

Kendric Santos-Briggs
Denise Reasoner's mother

Thank yous...

Thank you SO much to everyone who gave us cards last week for graduation! We really appreciate all the kind words, well wishes, and gifts. We both have enjoyed working for and with everyone at First Christian, and we hope to have left it better than when we started.

Sincerely,

Chloe Petersen & Kendric Santos-Briggs

The Nodaway Chorale is grateful for the opportunity to use your sanctuary as our rehearsal space throughout the recently concluded Spring 2026 season. The benefit of having such a welcoming place to rehearse cannot be overstated.

Please use our financial contribution to help cover any added custodial, or utility expenses, or to be applied in whatever way you deem best.

Thank you again for your generous hospitality and for your continued support of the arts in our community.

Sincerely,

Jim Rash

Music Director/Executive Director
Nodaway Chorale

Our Staff

Gina Johnson
Senior Pastor

Peggy Dowis
Custodian

Virginia Ripple
Office Administrator

Johnathan Morrison-Keller
Audio/Live Stream Lead

Anita Dew
Organist



FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH
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Did you know...

April 30 marks the day that Bugs Bunny first graced our screens in 1938, and we've loved him ever since! So share some of your favorite Bugs Bunny quotes today, or even set up a Looney Tunes marathon with your friends!



Looking Ahead...

- May 4:** Circle of Joy, 11:30 am
- May 10:** Elders' Circle, 11:30 am
- May 11:** Board meeting, 6 pm
- May 24:** Pentecost Sunday (wear your red!)
- May 25:** Memorial Day, office closed



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and Blue Sky

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Miss Sunday's message?
Never fear! We're on YouTube!

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Remember to Comment, Like, & Subscribe today!