



THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER

First Christian Church, Maryville, MO

fccmaryvillemo.com

February 5, 2026

Our Hearts Are One

By Elena Huegel

When peacemakers plant seeds of peace, they will harvest justice. James 3:18

I wish to share with you a little of the wisdom I have learned from the Mayan people of Chiapas as a mission co-worker with Global Ministries of the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ and United Church of Christ. When we picked up brother Nicolás Moshán on our way to a meeting of rural leaders of the Catholic church, he was wearing his traditional Huixtan clothing embroidered with beautiful patterns of red, black and white. Elena, my tocaya or friend who has my same name and who is trilingual as she speaks Tzotzil, Tseltal and Spanish, translates for the group, and I take notes. We are the only two women present. When the time comes for a lunch break, Elena and I realize we were not informed that everyone was to bring their own food, and the men take off together in twos and threes leaving us alone. Except for brother Nicolás. Seeing that we have nothing to eat, he motions us over to a bench in the plaza in front of the church, and under the shade of a tree, he takes the lunch his wife packed out of his morral, his traditional hand woven shoulder bag.

Then he pulls the bankilal from his morral. It is a small gourd, and Elena translates his explanation. "Inside this gourd is a mix of ash, crushed dried tobacco, and herbs. This is the way we receive the blessing of the bankilal, the older brother." The Mayan languages are very rich in words for the different family relationships, and younger siblings would never call their older brother by their first name; instead they use this title, bankilal, which denotes a deep respect. The older brother has the responsibility of caring for and blessing both his parents and his younger siblings. The traditions of the bankilal are ancient, from before the Spaniards arrived in these lands. The ritual of taking a bit of the powder from the gourd onto one's palm and then pinching a bit to taste and patting the rest on the top of one's head reminds us to be grateful and to appreciate our elders. It is also a way to receive the energy of the older brother needed to do good and make a difference in this world. Brother Nicolás explains that as a Catholic believer as well as a follower of his Mayan roots, Jesus is our bankilal who guides and blesses us. I bow my head and participate in the ritual, receiving and thanking our Older Brother for the blessing of the gifts from mother earth and asking God for the strength and courage to do good.



Then brother Nicolás carefully makes five little tacos with the two eggs he has and beans from a little pot, splitting the tortillas between the three of us. When we finish eating, he smiles at Elena and me and says: "Jun o'tonal, our hearts are one." This is how the Tzotzil Mayans see peace, all our hearts are one heart, beating with God's heart, all different but in perfect unity. Peace is harmony and the fullness of life for everyone in the community. It is closely linked to kindness, authenticity and integrity. Heart healing is very important to the Tzotzil. When all hearts are healed and able to beat in harmony as one, all of us will have abundant life with dignity, justice and equality.

Join us Sunday, Feb. 8, as Elena shares other stories during our morning service. Then stay for a delicious potluck lunch.

Pastor's Pen

A message from my heart to yours



Gratitude has been on my heart lately as I recognize it is not just a practice but a real spiritual posture that shapes how we navigate all aspects of life. I once read about a study where two groups of people were asked to focus on ten things each week for ten weeks: one group was to focus and write down ten things they were grateful for, and the other group was to focus and write down ten negative things they were stuck on. Over time, the gratitude group became more optimistic and reported higher enjoyment in life, while the other group experienced the opposite. Their focus seemed to bring forth a doorway that led to even more challenges. That reminds me of the story in Luke where Jesus heals ten men with leprosy, but only one comes back to say thank you. All ten received the gift, but only one paused long enough to return with a grateful heart. Just this week, my daughter Dorothea rolled her ankle playing volleyball, and I spent the day taking care of her. While watching her try to walk, seeing the pain in her face, helping her get comfortable, and just being present, I felt my gratitude in layers. I was grateful it wasn't worse, grateful it wasn't a broken bone, grateful it happened when I could be there, grateful she trusted me, grateful for the simple gift of being a mommy who can show up. That's when I remembered how faith and gratitude are connected. Our faith keeps us anchored in God's presence, and our gratitude keeps our hearts humble enough to recognize the good even when something hurts. I know there is ALWAYS something to be grateful for, even when times are tough. Don't just celebrate gratitude when life seems to fit your definition of good. Gratitude is not an action of the moment but a posture for life!

Grateful to be Your Pastor,

Gina ❤



Welcome Home



FCC
MARYVILLE, MO
You belong here.

Sunday Mornings

9 a.m.

Sunday School Classes

10:30 a.m.

Service in the Sanctuary

Wednesday Evenings

6 p.m.

The Table, dinner service

Sunday Worship Attendance

Jan. 11..... 37 Feb. 1 30

Jan. 18..... 24

Jan. 25 service
cancelled

Attendance at The Table

Jan. 7..... 11 Jan. 28..... 17

Jan. 14..... 25 Feb. 4 24

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the Tuesday before publication.

The next issue is
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First Christian Church Disciples of Christ

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FCCMaryvilleMO

Keeping in touch with our church families

Praises...

John & Sue Schenkel welcomed a new great-grandchild into the family weighing 9 lbs 13 oz.

Our Community Prayer List...

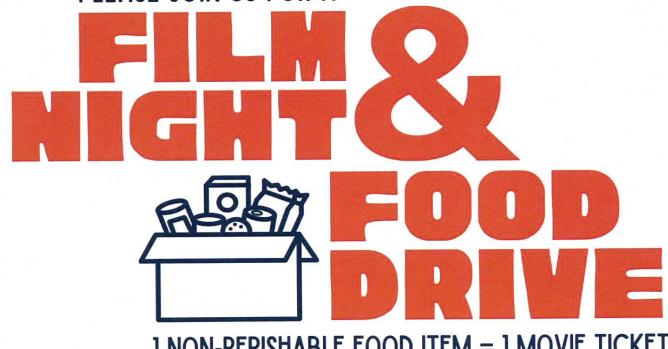
Bob Colville
Karla Parman
Linville family

Juno Hallock
Jacob Walter
Cara Colville

Dorothea Johnson



PLEASE JOIN US FOR A



MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9 @ 6:00 PM

THE HANGAR 1602 S MAIN ST. | ALL DONATIONS TO BENEFIT THE MARYVILLE MINISTRY CENTER

Our Staff

Gina Johnson
Senior Pastor

Peggy Dowis
Custodian

Virginia Ripple
Office Administrator

Kendric Santos-Briggs
Audio Lead

Anita Dew
Organist

Chloe Petersen
Live Stream Lead

The Bulletin Board

Following the Progress of FCC's Leaders

The following is a brief report of the Jan. 12 Board meeting. A full copy of the minutes are available upon request.

Finance Reports: Finance Chair Coby Lamb reported that December's contributions were up \$4,000 with most line items in good standing and a net income of minus \$1,600 versus the budgeted minus \$6,000.

Trustees Report: Trustee Chair Linda Baker reported that the General Fund, as of January 7, would be at a deficit of \$2,600. The Board approved the Trustees request to transfer \$5,000 from the Chalice Fund to the General Fund to cover necessary spending. Linda also reported that the Edward Jones CDs will come due February 4.

Property: Property Team Member Marcia Jordan reported that they will be replacing the lights outside the front doors. The new lights will be purchased at American Electric from money donated for them. John Praiswater and Mick Dougan will do the installation.

For clarification, Pastor Gina reminded the Board and Teams that, so long as the team has what they need, including funds, and are not asking for money to do a project because there isn't enough in the team's budget, there is no need for a vote before a project can move forward. The top priority in all projects is communication.

Outreach/Evangelism: Pastor Gina reported that The Table began last month with a slow start but is appreciated by those who attend. The highest attendance to date has been 22. Proctor & Associates has asked if we want to send our fourth quarter disbursements. After some discussion, the Board agreed that, having given more than the budgeted 5% to mission and outreach causes in 2025, the fourth quarter disbursements should not be sent.

Pastor Gina reminded the Board that the 2026 Outreach budget has been trimmed considerably and that the main focus going forward will be on local outreach. We are still doing quarterly disbursements to The Senior Center, The Ministry Center, North Star Advocacy, Mid-America and Disciples Mission Fund, as well as volunteering at The Ministry Center two months per year. Pastor Gina also reported her intention to connect with outside groups, as well as groups within FCC, to have them provide the meal for The Table perhaps once every three months and that she is always trying to find more ways to get people within the congregation to volunteer for The Giving Tree.

Christian Life: Christian Life Chair Marsha Meyers reported that we will have Fifth Sunday Potluck dinner in March. She will be meeting with Pastor Gina to discuss having a potluck dinner after service February 8 in honor of our guest speaker, Missionary Elena Huegel from Chiapas, Mexico.

Diaconate: Pastor Gina reported that Diaconate Chair Travis Johnson will be scheduling a first meeting for the Diaconate. The serving schedule has been made for the first four months. The suggestion was made that, since we have recently begun running out of communion during worship service, to prep three trays: two for the communion table and an extra at the back of the sanctuary.

Minister's Report:

Pastor Gina will be taking boundaries training and anti-racism pro-reconciliation trainings via Zoom to stay in good standing as a Disciples of Christ Minister. She reported that she had been asked to participate in a rally put on by a group with no political affiliation, but she chose not to for two reasons: 1) she did not have time to ask the Board for their input, and 2) regardless of the rally being non-political in nature, people would assume there is a political stance being taken, which she was unwilling to take at this time based on past challenges within the congregation.

FCC Leadership

Board Moderator: Bob Ferguson
Stewardship/Finance: Coby Lamb
Property: Pat Immel
Worship/Elders: Guy Ebersole

Christian Life: Marsha Meyers
Treasurer: Donna Rickman
Trustee Chair: Linda Baker



If you're looking for a tangible way to share God's love, serving The Ministry Center is a beautiful place to start. We need 3 volunteers Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays during February from 1:15-4:15 pm.

Sign-up information is available as a sign-up sheet at our welcome table or go to rebrand.ly/Ministry-Center-Feb2026 to sign up using our sign-up genius.

We'd love to have you serve alongside us.



Caring & Connecting

We are launching a new ministry opportunity to show up and offer presence, prayer, and care to members of our congregation who are in nursing homes, home-bound, or in a season where a visit would be meaningful. These visits are not about fixing or filling time but they are about caring and connecting with those who we hold dear.

We are inviting volunteers to be part of this ministry. Those who serve will do so on a rotating basis and will be paired with an elder or deacon for each visit. If you feel called to quietly sit, listen, pray, or simply show up in love, this ministry may be for you.

If you or someone you love would welcome a visit, whether in a nursing home, at home, or during a season of need we invite you to reach out. Communion is also available upon request.

If you are interested in serving or being served by this ministry, please contact Pastor Gina or the church office:

fccmaryvillemo@gmail.com

660.214.3414

Text 833.374.9501

Seeing Our Stewardship

January 2026

General Fund

Beginning Balance	\$	6,563.16
Income*	\$	15,120.86
Expenses	\$	14,988.30
Ending Balance	\$	6,695.72
Net Profit	\$	132.56

Missions

Beginning Balance	\$	1,890.15
Income	\$	887.98
Expenses	\$	512.46
Ending Balance	\$	2,265.67
Net Profit	\$	375.52

*Includes \$5,000 transferred from Chalice Fund

Church Growth

Month	Points
<u>January Highlights</u>	
• Social Media comments/reactions/shares	206
• Volunteer at service	174
• Attend Sunday Service	128
• Attend Wednesday Service	114
• New web site visitors	106
Total Month's Points	1133



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FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH
201 WEST THIRD STREET
MARYVILLE MO 64468

Return Service Requested



This Sunday!

Potluck meal

Visit with Guest Speaker Elena Huegel
as we have a meal together.



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Looking Ahead...

Feb. 9: Board meeting, 6 pm

Feb. 11: The Table, 6 pm

Feb. 15: Week of Compassion begins

Feb. 18: Lent Begins

Feb. 18: The Table, 6 pm



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and Blue Sky

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