

# JOURNEY NEWS

A publication of Journey Church of Clinton, Iowa

## New Year + Same Jesus = A New Heart

*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Hebrews 13:8*

Many of you are perhaps wondering how it is possible that an entire year has come and gone! I always find myself in those days between Christmas and January 1<sup>st</sup> doing lots of reflection on God's faithfulness and goodness in all the chapters that marked the past 365 days. If you haven't done so, I would encourage you to take advantage of (hopefully) some less busy days after Christmas and spend time in reflection.

As we look at a calendar for 2024 that is not yet filled with events and activities, I would remind you of something that has already been stated at the start of this writing. Jesus remains the same. The author of Hebrews reminds us of this truth that often gets lost in the living of life.

Jesus was reliable in the past, we can trust Him today, and we can hold fast to the hope that is found in Him that is tomorrow. Knowing that He is constant, and unchanging, is a cornerstone of that trust. For the same reason, being reminded that Jesus and His gospel are timeless, changeless, and eternal should inspire believers to trust in what is true, rather than chasing fads or succumbing to fear.

The title I gave this article is something like a "spiritual math equation" to help foster our commitment to living for Jesus and allow Him to change our hearts. In the coming pages you will see reminders that at Journey Church we desire to "Make Much of Jesus" in 2024. One part of that equation is the churchwide Essential Jesus

Reading plan starting January 8<sup>th</sup>. On January 14<sup>th</sup> join us for an overview of our new Life Group called "Baseline" to equip you to live the Christian life. Each Sunday, I encourage you to make gathering for worship a priority in your life to be with God's people and find ways to serve others.

One word of caution: you can agree with the truths I've shared about Jesus, and yet not have a heart that is being changed by Him! Now when I say heart, I'm not speaking about the physical organ in your chest that's pumping blood throughout your body to allow you to live. The heart in the Bible was thought to be a sort of "control center" from which all our decisions were made. So, when we read about the *heart* in Scripture, it is about the place where you have your will, your attitude, and intentions, which is the source of your thoughts, actions, and words. This heart is the core of who you are as a person. Your heart is, essentially, *you*.

As we turn the page from year to another, may the one who is constant, unchanging, and the foundation of our faith, Jesus Christ, transform your heart and life. Commit today to not being satisfied with status quo as a believer and as a church. Let us together move into the new year with the one who is the same yesterday, today, and forever!

Make Much of Jesus  
and Happy New Year!

*Pastor Michael*

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### Contribution Statements

will be mailed out at the end of January. Your online giving (Rebel Give) will be available on their website.

Thank you for your faithful giving!

## Ladies Bible Study

### Resumes

**Tuesday, January 9**

9:30-11:30

Fellowship Hall

We will be studying women of the Bible. Study packets will be available at Connection Point beginning January 7. Please join us when you can.



# LIFE GROUPS

*connecting / caring / community*

Winter 2024

## SUNDAY LIFE GROUPS

Sunday Life Groups meet 9:00-10:15 am

Group <i>Topic of Study</i>	Audience	Leader Meeting Place
<b>Logos</b> <i>Bible Study</i> <i>Genesis Chapters 1-11</i>	mixed	Jon & Lisa Balk Parlor - Room F
<b>Yadah Yada</b> <i>Bible Study DVD Series</i>	mixed	Mike Ketelsen Fellowship Hall (Office Side)
<b>Men of Honor</b> <i>Bible Study DVD Series</i>	men	Gary Fier Fellowship Hall (Kitchen Side)
<b>Living Stones</b> <i>Marriage &amp; Family</i>	married couples	Ted Ellis Overflow—Rooms B & C
<b>Baseline</b> <i>Growing Deeper in Jesus</i>	mixed	Various Sanctuary

## TUESDAY LIFE GROUPS

<b>Ladies Bible Study</b> <i>Study books of the Bible</i>	9:30 a.m. women	Annette Eslick Fellowship Hall (Kitchen Side)
<b>Men of Honor</b> <i>Bible Study DVD Series</i>	6:30 p.m. men	TBD Parlor - Room F

## THURSDAY LIFE GROUP

<b>Home Group</b> <i>Topical or Book of the Bible</i>	6:45 p.m. Mixed	Jerry & Joyce Duey Rotate Homes
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Other groups can be started if there is interest  
Questions? Contact the group leader or church office

Jesus sets the example of small group community. As one of three of the Godhead, it is innate for him to be in community. While on earth Jesus chose twelve men to live life with him and out of those, he selected three men to develop an even more intimate relationship.

Life Groups offer opportunity to invest in the lives of others. Did you know that there are over 50 "one another" verses in the Bible? Life Groups give us opportunity to LOVE one another, SERVE one another, HELP one another or ENCOURAGE one another as we fellowship and build relationships within the Life Group. If you are not already in a Life Group, please consider joining one.

Life Groups resume January 7, 2024

## 2024 Deaconess Board

Members of the 2024 Deaconess Board are:

Debbie McCormick (Chair), Carolyn Livingston, Tove Witt, Marianne Fier, Monica Clarke, Sandi Von Thun, Kate Foster and Jenny Gordon.

Congregation assignments are as follows:

**A - C** Carolyn Livingston

**D - G** Tove Witt

**H - K** Marianne Fier

**L - O** Monica Clarke

**P - S** Sandi Von Thun

**T - Z** Kate Foster & Jenny Gordon

Debbie McCormick—Chair

Thank you Amy Von Holten and Joan Logan for your service as deaconesses these past few years.

If you have any specific needs please contact the appropriately assigned deaconess.





## THE ESSENTIAL JESUS CHALLENGE 100 DAY READING PLAN

**Reading begins January 8**  
**Reading planner handed out**  
**on January 7**

On January 8, we as a church will begin reading selected Scripture about Jesus – 5 per week for 20 weeks.

On the following Sunday of each week Pastor Michael will have a sermon in line with the theme of that week.

We are asking everyone to participate, from adults through High School and Middle School, so as a unified Body of Believers, we are all reading, studying, learning about Jesus and growing in Jesus TOGETHER.

There is great benefit in reading and learning about Jesus as was explained in the **"Make Much of Jesus"** article. But let's make it a fun activity also. Consider having a "reading buddy". Go out to lunch - spend 10 or 15 minutes each week talking about Jesus and your Bible reading. Ask each other how each of you are doing on the reading plan. "Are you keeping up?" "What are you learning about Jesus?" "How/where have you seen Jesus work in your life this week?"

Remember, start reading on Jan 8 and read 5 passages each week. Then attend worship to hear what God has revealed to Pastor Michael on the week's theme.

### January Readings

#### January 8 - 12

##### WHO IS JESUS?

The Word Made Flesh	John 1:1-18
Humbled Yet Exalted	Philippians 2:1-11
The Image of God	Colossians 1:15-23
Superior to All	Hebrews 1:1-4
The Cornerstone	1 Peter 2:4-10

#### January 15 - 19

##### THE NEED FOR A SAVIOR

The First Sin	Genesis 3:1-24
A Rebellious People	Exodus 32:1 - 33:6
No One Does Good	Psalms 14:1-7
Sin Has Consequences	Isaiah 59:1-21
A Call to Repent	Amos 5:1-27

#### January 22 - 26

##### PREVIEWS OF A SAVIOR

A Special Celebration	Exodus 12:1-30
God's Provision	Exodus 16:1-35
The Bronze Snake	Numbers 21:4-9
The New Temple	1 Kings 8:1-21
One Greater Than Jonah	Jonah 1:1 - 4:11

#### January 29 - February 2

##### PSALM ABOUT A SAVIOR

"You Are My Son"	Psalms 2:1-12
Scorned and Suffering	Psalms 22:1-31
Hated Without Reason	Psalms 69:1-36
A Royal Appointment	Psalms 110:1-7
The Stone Rejected	Psalms 118:1-29

The Deaconess Board would like to thank everyone for their very generous donations for the Christmas Blessings. We were able to bless many congregants with their generous donations this year.



From Ed and Linda Shockey

Ed and I are truly blessed to be part of the Journey family. Thanks for all the prayers and gift cards. God bless you.

## Missionary Focus

The third Sunday of January has been designated as National Sanctity of Human Life Day. We say that Life Matters, but can we defend that biblically? Is the act of abortion addressed in the Bible? Even though the Bible does not refer to the matter directly, it is not silent on God's absolute moral standards.

1. First, human life is unique in that God created us in His image. In Genesis 1:26, God distinguished humans from the rest of the animal creation. We have the capability of rational thought, personality and moral responsibility.
2. The Bible forbids the shedding of innocent blood. Proverbs 6:16, 17 states that the LORD hates hands that shed innocent blood.
3. Pre-natal life is fully human and is precious to God. Job affirms that God's hands shaped and made him in his mother's womb in Job 10:8-12. Also, evidence that an unborn child is fully human is seen in Luke 1:35-36; 39-44. Mary while in her first trimester of pregnancy with Jesus visits her cousin, Elizabeth. Elizabeth is pregnant with John. John recognizes the person of Jesus in those early months of Mary's pregnancy.
4. Jesus' view of the value of children is noted in Luke 18:15-17. The disciples criticized parents for bringing their babies to Jesus so he could touch them. The disciples considered it an inconvenience, but Jesus rebuked them and welcomed the children. God shows his great love for us by calling us his children (1 John 3:1). From the time of conception onward, we should have the same attitude as Jesus towards children.
5. God has a plan and a purpose for each individual. Psalm 139:16 reminds us that "Your eyes (God) saw my unformed body, all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be." Taken from What the Bible Says About Abortion, bible.org 2004

We can all come to the defense of the unborn child by praying, voting pro-life, and supporting our local Pregnancy Center. Clinton's Pregnancy Center's mission is to preserve the life of the unborn child and to offer direction to women by providing physical, emotional and

spiritual support during pregnancy and beyond. Grief support for women suffering from a past abortion is available. The Center offers abstinence until marriage educational programs as well as educating the community on issues related to the Sanctity of Human life. Their services are free and confidential.

### January Diaper Drive

One way we can come along side of The Pregnancy Center is to collect items needed for their boutique. The Center offers a boutique where women can obtain baby items. So far, this year 500 women have visited the boutique and 1,268 baby items have been distributed. Current needs include:

- \* Diapers sizes 5-6-7
- \* Pull-ups 2T-3T, 3T-4T, 4T-5T
- \* Both Boys and Girls need 4T-5T clothes, boots
- \* Wipes, bath & baby lotion



Adult Items:

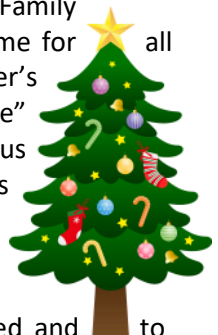
- \* Shampoo, conditioner, lotion, body wash, warm socks, gloves, slippers, snow boots

Bring an item or two to church any Sunday in the month of January to be donated to our local Pregnancy Center. Bless a new mom and her child.



## Family Christmas Celebration

This year's Family Christmas Celebration was a fun time for all with Dennis Lauver and Joy Lower's entertaining and funny "pirate" Christmas script, fellowship, hilarious attempts at making pipe cleaners into the word "Peace", and a splendid spread of brunch choices.



Many thanks to all who participated and those who prepared the food and the decorations. Thanks especially to Joy Lower, our Director of Children's Ministries, and all she did to make this a special family time for everyone.



New  
**BASELINE**  
 Life Group

**STARTS JANUARY 14**

***Have you ever wondered...***

*Where the Bible came from or if it is really true?*  
*What **IS** the Gospel? And what does it mean to be a “believer”?*  
*What is prayer, actually? And does it really work?*  
*Where did the “Church” come from? And what is it?*  
*What does “doctrine” mean? And what does it mean to me?*  
*What are the “rules” for a believer?*  
*What should I be doing as a church member?*

**Introductory Class on January 14  
 at 9:00 AM in Sanctuary**

***Come and learn more about this exciting  
 and informational class!***

**Planned Curriculum**

Introductory Class	all facilitators
The Bible	Jon and Lisa Balk
The Gospel	Pastor Michael and Christina
Prayer	Daryl and Wendy Yoder
What does it mean to be a Christian?	Jerry and Joyce Duey
What is the Church?	Jeff and Ann Reed
Roles of a Believer	Jeff and Ann Reed
Doctrine	Pastor Michael
Wrap Up/Celebration	all facilitators

**Go forth and  
 Make Much  
 of Jesus**

# Make Much of Jesus

If you are a regular attendee, a member, or someone who frequents Journey Church, you probably noticed that our mantra or vision is “**Make Much of Jesus**”. This is not just a cutie saying or something we take lightly; it is something we as an Elder Board and hopefully we as a congregation take very seriously.

With December and Christmas being over, Jesus (or at least the manger scene) fades from the public square. So what do we do about the rest of the year? How about in January? How can we/you get into a monthly or even daily habit of making much of Jesus all year long? And why should we?

First, let’s answer the how question. Starting in January, we will begin a Bible reading plan, which is entitled “The Essential Jesus Challenge”. The plan provides 100 scriptures, which lay out who Jesus is and what He is all about in an easy, daily format of five Scriptures per week for 20 weeks. It is exciting to think that each day the entire congregation will all together be reading and contemplating the same Scripture about Jesus. And then each Sunday, Pastor Michael will recap the verses that we/you have just read throughout the week and

draw us into a better understanding of the theme or lesson found in these scriptures.

Now to answer the why question. Why does Journey Church “**Make Much of Jesus**”, and why are we initiating the reading of “The Essential Jesus” plan? Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ lies at the very core of our belief system. Jesus has always existed. He was the Creator of all things. He didn’t just arrive on the scene as a baby in a manger in the Gospels, but His presence is evident from Genesis 1 to the final chapter of the Bible where He proclaims He is the “...the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end” (Revelation 22:13, NIV). Why do we prioritize “making much of Jesus” versus spending a lot of time speaking about the current culture or something else? First because of who Jesus is (Colossians 1:15-20) but, also, if an individual gets this right, if they understand more fully Who Jesus is, why He came down to earth in human form, and what He taught, everything else in life will fall into place. Through Jesus and the workings of the Holy Spirit, as we read God’s Word, the things of this world that are so confusing or hotly debated will become clear.

## Elder Board

Pastor Michael Bell  
Mike Ketelsen (Co-Chair)  
Jon Balk (Co-Chair)  
Gary Fier  
Jeff Reed  
Daryl Yoder

## Deaconess Board

Deaconess Board members are listed on page 2.

## Trustee Board

Trustee Board members are Mike Gordon (chair), Wayne Gordon, Dick Witt, Lynn Wiese, and Jim Tietjens.

The Trustee Board has been busy with upgrading and repairs to the church facilities and property. The church was built in 1988 and in need of attention as it ages.

- The leak at the front of the sanctuary has been repaired and the front of the sanctuary painted.
- The tower was removed and front of the facade repaired underneath.
- Lights throughout the church were upgraded to energy efficient which not only provides better illumination but reduces the monthly bill.
- Original furnaces have been evaluated with repairs and replacement.
- The parking lot was resurfaced and striped this fall.
- Concrete curbs and sidewalk were replaced.
- Supporting structure for the emergency exits near the front of the building have been replaced.
- Landscaping peninsulas at the front of the church have been removed along with dead and overgrown plants. Plans are in place to have the remaining landscaping upgrade finished after winter.



## OPEN POSITION

If you are interested in the position of Administrative Specialist in the church office, or know of someone who might be, resumés can be dropped off in the church office or emailed to [info@journeyclinton.org](mailto:info@journeyclinton.org)

A copy of the job description is available at the church office.



If a child lives with criticism,  
he learns to condemn.

If a child lives with hostility,  
she learns to fight.

If a child lives with ridicule,  
he learns to be shy.

If a child lives with shame,  
she learns to feel guilty.

If a child lives with tolerance,  
he learns to be patient.

If a child lives with encouragement,  
she learns confidence.

If a child lives with praise,  
he learns to appreciate.

If a child lives with fairness,  
she learns justice.

If a child lives with security,  
he learns to have faith.

If a child lives with approval,  
she learns to like herself.

If a child lives with acceptance and friendship,  
he learns to find love in the world.

Dorothy Law Nolt