

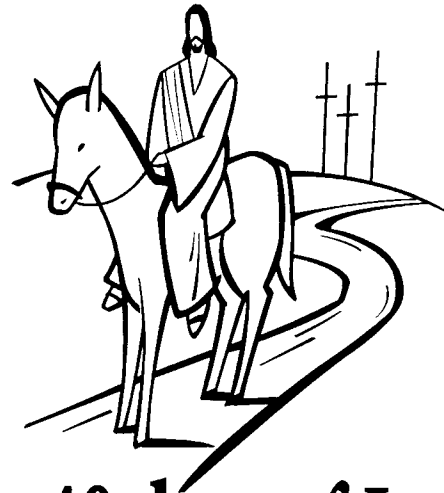
The Open Door

February 2012

Love for Truth

Passion for Righteousness

Enthusiasm for Service



The 40 days of Lent

*Join us for this forty-
day journey beginning
on Ash Wednesday,
February 22.*

*The door is open at
First Congregational Church*

All are Welcome

For Christ's Sake, People!



Pastor Jamey Nichols

In the 1.16.12 issue of *Time Magazine*, Jon Meacham explored the impact of one professional quarterback's faith on the rest of American evangelicalism. Tim Tebow, Denver's rising star, has been getting more attention than any other professional athlete on the public stage. In fact, many would argue that Tebow is, at this time in history, the most famous figure in all of professional sports. He sure has garnered more than his share of attention—positive and negative.

You may remember the controversy that surrounded a pro-life commercial at last year's Super Bowl. Many who hadn't yet seen the spot were apoplectic about the fact that a public event like the Super Bowl would air a commercial with political overtones. The irony of such an objection is hilarious. Amidst sex-charged ads to have something family oriented is a breath of fresh air. The ad featured Tebow's mom telling the story of her high-risk pregnancy with Tebow and her refusal to follow the medical recommendation for an abortion. She chose to let the child live or die in God's timing, and he wound up being a Heisman Trophy winner and then an NFL first round draft pick. Funny, isn't it, how a woman's right to choose is celebrated only when she

chooses abortion. Can't a woman choose life, too? It was a heartwarming commercial, and it's worth looking up online if you haven't seen it. It's on youtube.com.

In *Time Magazine*, the issue *de jour* was Tebow's outspoken love for Jesus/Our popular culture loves the idea that all religions are acceptable and that all people are free to choose their own religion. However, our culture also prefers that whatever religion you do choose, keep it to yourself! Tebow definitely doesn't follow that cultural value. You can often see him praying after the game or hear him thanking his Lord Jesus during a post-game interview. Some (many!) would just as soon he shut up about his Jesus.

Meacham, in his *Time* article, makes one particular statement that just about sent me apoplectic. He referred to the hatred of the outspoken Christian as, "inevitable backlash," and added that Christians, "ought not be surprised when they are talked about in ways that require them to turn the other cheek." What!? In America!? The home of the brave and the land of the freedom of religion! I had to reread the article several times to be sure that's what it said. That's what it said!. Meacham was basically saying that the verbal bullying of Christians is to be expected.

—continued on next page

Pastor Jamey's column continued ...

In other words, if you want to speak openly about loving Jesus, expect to be vilified, marginalized, and slandered. Just assume that you've got it coming. Of course, that's pretty much what Jesus said, too. His words were, "If the world hated you, keep in mind that it hated me first" (John 15:18).

I think that the part of the whole thing I found most disturbing was the fact that bullying in any other context is abhorred. Right now in public education, anti-bullying is the hottest subject. Even in other social contexts, bullying is often referred to as the most abhorrent, intolerant way to treat another human. And yet in America—one nation under God—to openly love his Son is grounds for ridicule and hatred. Such is the epitome of *intolerance!*

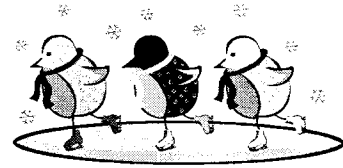
In the balance of the article Meacham never once hinted that the treatment Tebow has received is inappropriate. He just lets the fact of it hang there like it's as normal and natural as getting wet in the rain. In fact, he concluded his article with what could easily be considered a threat. He writes of the anti-Tebow sentiment, "Whenever and however the Bronco's postseason ends, their young quarterback has already given us a glimpse of what lies ahead for Evangelical Christianity and for America." And so he has. Let the family of God arise to praise the name of Him whose sufferings we share (Philippians 1:29; 2 Corinthians 1:5; 1 Peter 2:20-25, 4:16).

Pastor Jamey

NEW MEMBER SUNDAY - February 19, 2012 -

Some of the FCC congregation will become members on this Sunday. There's still time to be included. Contact the church office (989.831.5240) if interested.

REVOLT YOUTH . . . by Pastor Tara



What a fantastic start to 2012! On January 8, over 50 teens and their parents gathered in the REVOLT room for PARENTS' DAY, and our first meeting during our new time, Sundays from 1-3 p.m. Following an informational meeting during our lunch time, parents had the opportunity to experience a typical REVOLT meeting first hand, participating in worship, a whole group game where teams competed to build the tallest, sturdiest towers out of wooden play blocks, a time for small group discussions on the topic of "building up and tearing down: the power of words," and then prayer for the students and their families. This was a great experience for all who participated and reminded parents and their children of how important it is to be intentional in taking time to speak kind, loving, and encouraging words to each other.

For the entire month of January, Pastor Jamey and I promoted and preached on Pray 21, sharing with the congregation the importance of adults intentionally praying with youth. We asked for adults to volunteer as prayer partners with our teens for 21 days, and many of you answered. In fact, so many adults responded that we had to regretfully turn some away! Beginning January 29, 18 teens and 18 adults will begin a 21-day journey, studying God's word through daily devotions and journaling, exploring God's calling or "vocation" for their lives, and meeting together once a week at REVOLT on Sundays from 1-3 p.m. for a meal, activity, worship, and then one-on-one devotionals and prayer time. If you weren't able to sign up as a prayer partner or if we had to decline your offer at this time, please join us by praying for the teens, the adults, REVOLT Student Ministries, and FCC overall. "For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them" (Matthew 18:20, NIV). Be on the lookout for changed lives in the weeks ahead and please plan to join us for a very important service on February 19 as our Pray 21 participants come forward and share with our church family all God has revealed to them during this time.

Ash Wednesday will fall on February 22 this year. This is the beginning of our Lenten time of preparation, possible change, and spiritual growth. Let me encourage you to attend the Wednesday night get-togethers for fellowship and teaching.

Are you in need of spiritual growth? Do you feel you may be stuck and want to go to a new level in your relationship with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit? Let me make a suggestion based on my experience at FCC.

I have been a member for about 7-8 years. During that time, I have been asked to volunteer for various committees and duties. I always pray about these decisions, and while God doesn't always give me a clear answer, I have responded with "yes." Not because I wanted to but because I know God will do a good work through me. These duties usually take me out of my comfort zone, but I try to be a willing servant to God, our church, and congregation. Let me say this, "I LIKE MY COMFORT ZONE." However, my belief is that I cannot grow in my relationship with God if I am not willing to be outside that comfort zone. I will never be perfect this side of heaven, but I can continue to grow.

You have to be willing to go through the process if you really want to see a true change. Anything less is just a cover-up!

I left a trail of footprints deep in the snow. I swore
one day I would retrace them, but when I turned
around, I found that the wind had erased them.

—Lettie Fisher/*Rumors*

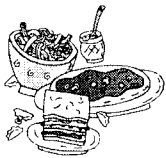
Winter Blahs continues . . .

The second meeting was as much fun as the first so Winter Blahs will continue through the months of February and March. The group gathers around 1 p.m. and the February dates are:



- Saturday, February 11
 - Saturday, February 25

Families are invited so bring the kids and invite your friends. Bring a favorite snack and game.



Remember ???

How much fun and good food we had at the November family fest? Hopefully you met some of our church folks you didn't know before. Here's another opportunity to meet more of the FCC family. Another potluck will occur at 6 p.m. on Sunday evening, February 5. Bring a dish to pass, table service, and plan to stay for a short devotional time. Beverages will be furnished.

Two marks of a holy person: giving and forgiving.

—*Heartwarmers*

Lent begins at FCC on Wednesday, February 22 . . .

Plans are underway for our annual Lenten Suppers beginning at 6 p.m. Bring a dish to pass and table service. Beverages will be furnished. This year's plans will include "something for all ages." Look for more information in the weekly church bulletin.



GUNG-HO for Alaska - July 21 - 28, 2012

Space is available and the enthusiasm is building!!! Roger Smith and his wife, Judy, answered many questions during the mission meeting January 24. Please let Pastor Jamey know if you would like to participate in this unforgettable ministry opportunity. Trip cost per person is approximately \$1,000 (depending on airfare). A \$600 deposit is due by April 1 in order to book the group. Late-comers are welcome but flight costs may be higher closer to the date. Contact Pastor Jamey for more information and visit www.alaskamission.org.



Women's Fellowship

Women's Fellowship met for their first meeting of the year on Thursday, January 12. Devotions were led by Donna Jorgensen and focused on the remembrance of past members. Several written articles and items made by past members were shared.

A vote to retain the name of Women's Fellowship passed.

Plans are underway to make some visits to shut-ins at the Pathways facility in Alma.

Their next meeting will be on Thursday, April 12, 2012. All women of the church are invited to attend.

FINANCIAL NOTES

Income/December 2011 \$ 19,841

Expenses/December 2011 \$ 14,848

Parking lot update as of : 01.25.12

\$ 47,376.04

An Update from Missions

Mission goals for 2012:

- To support missionaries with some changes (more information will follow as it becomes available).
- Donations will be made to the baby and food pattries.
- Other donations will be considered as funds are available.

The committee would also like to extend the opportunity for donations to OCWM and/or local missions. These donations help support one of the "special" projects that is near and dear to our hearts—Operation Christmas Child, which begins in the fall. It is not too early to think about and donate to this project. Cash donations or actual items would be appreciated.

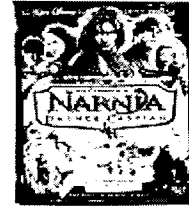
Hire a teenager (while they still know everything).

—Heart Warmers

**DIACONATE DVD/CD SELECTIONS
FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY . . .**

The Chronicles of Narnia available (in one packet) on CD are:

- 1 - The Magician's Nephew
- 2 - The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe
- 3 - The Horse and His Boy
- 4 - Prince Caspian
- 5 - The Voyage of the Dawn Treader
- 6 - The Silver Chair
- 7 - The Last Battle



The available DVDs are:

- Prince Caspian
- The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe

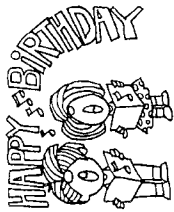
The selections are available for loan for one week and may be checked out through the church office.

TABLE GRACE

In the world's confusion,
may we know the grace of God.

In times of turmoil,
may we know God's spirit is with us.

In times of hunger,
may we know God's generous hand. Amen.



February 2012




First Congregational Church of Stanton
 Worship Service: 11 a.m.
 Phone: 989.831.5240
 Email address: beverlyb@fccstanton.org
 Website: www.fccstanton.org

- 02 Marvin Cannon
- 04 Graham Hansen
- 04 Catherine Hazekamp
- 09 Margaret Cook
- 10 Kiley Guelzo
- 10 Taylor Miller
- 11 Al Buchholz
- 12 Norma Nestle
- 13 Heather Guelzo
- 13 Michelle Miller
- 15 Terry Anderson
- 15 Elisabeth Newton
- 18 Dave Vander Schuur
- 20 Ayden Hansen
- 20 Myra Sprague
- 23 Bill Crawford
- 23 Debra Thomsen
- 24 Marlene Short
- 25 Nona Anderson
- 28 Judy O'Neal

Anniversaries

- 06 Tony/Dawn Sleet
- 14 Chester/Nancy Brush
- 14 Jamey/Michelle Nichols
- 15 George/Cindy West
- 28 Elton/Mid Jensen



| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|--|---|--|---|--|--|
| <p>Unless we have within us that which is above us, we soon shall yield to the pressures around us.</p> <p>—The Complete Book of Zingers/Pentz</p> | | | | | | |
| 5 11 am - Morning Worship 9:30 am - Adult Choir Practice 9:45 am - Morning Fellowship 1-3 pm - REVOLT Youth Mstry 6 pm - 20 Seconds of Courage Family Potluck Night | 6 | 7 7 pm Tuesday Nights Bible Study | 8 5 - 6:15 pm Bylaws Committee 6 pm Diaconate | 9 12 n - Rotary 7 pm Women's Community Bible Study | 10 "OVERTIME" After the game 'till 11 pm Lock-in until 8 am/02.04.12 | 11 1 pm Winter Blahs  |
| 12 11 am - Morning Worship 9:30 am - Adult Choir Practice 9:45 am - Morning Fellowship 1-3 pm - REVOLT Youth Mstry | 13 | 14  7 pm Tuesday Nights Bible Study | 15 | 16 12 - n Rotary 7 pm Women's Community Bible Study | 17 | 18 |
| NEW MEMBER SUNDAY 19 11 am - Morning Worship 9:30 am - Adult Choir Practice 9:45 am - Morning Fellowship 12:15 pm - Board of Trustees 1-3 pm - REVOLT Youth Mstry | 20 6 - 9 p.m. Christian Skate Night Rainbow Gardens REVOLT Youth Ministry | 21 | 22 ASH WEDNESDAY 6 p.m. Lenten Family Night | 23 12 - n Rotary | 24 "OVERTIME" After the game 'till 11:30 pm | 25 1 pm Winter Blahs  |
| NOISY CHANGE SUNDAY 26 11 am - Morning Worship 9:30 am - Adult Choir Practice 9:45 am - Morning Fellowship 1-3 pm - REVOLT Youth Mstry | 27 OPEN DOOR DEADLINE 7 pm - OFD | 28 | 29 6 pm Lenten Family Night | Spending the day with God does not usually involve doing different things from what we already do. Mostly it involves learning to do what we already do in a new way—with God. | | |

—Look Through God-Colored Glasses/John Ortberg