



CONNECTING POINT

FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST

WHAT'S WRONG WITH PEOPLE?



Cars driven ridiculously fast and darting between cars like stunts on a movie set.

Road rage erupting in gunfire.

Behavior on airplanes akin to an MMA match.

School board meetings requiring police presence.

Social media trolling that has no bottom.

Nurses having to be outfitted with panic buttons.

A murder rate that rose by nearly a third in 2021 – the biggest increase ever recorded – that rose again in 2022.

Even a physical assault during the presentation of an Oscar.

What is wrong with people?

If you find yourself asking this question, you're not alone. Something really has changed with the way a lot of people are acting. It's as if the events of the last three years somehow, somehow, gave us permission to rush to our basest instincts and interact with others in ways we never would have imagined.

But why? Why did the pandemic, masks, quarantines encourage us to act so awfully?

An article in the *Atlantic*, written by Olga Khazan, queried more than a dozen experts on crime, psychology and social norms and worked through several possible explanations as to why, during the pandemic, "disorderly, rude, and unhinged conduct seemed to have caught on as much as bread baking and *Bridgerton*."

1. We're all stressed out. One of the more obvious explanations for the spike in bad behavior is the "rage, frustration and stress coursing through society right now." Christine Porath, a business professor at Georgetown University, collected data on why people behave badly and found that "the No. 1 reason by far was feeling stressed or

overwhelmed." Ryan Martin, a psychology professor at the University of Wisconsin at Green Bay who studies anger, notes that when someone "has that angry feeling, it's because of a combination of some sort of provocation." And today, people are constantly feeling provoked. And our moods aren't helping as there is a collective animus toward other people.

2. We're abusing substances. Keith Humphreys, a psychiatry professor at Stanford, finds that "a lot of these incidents involve somebody using a substance.... Whether they're drinking before they got on the flight.... A lot of auto accidents, including aggression-driven auto accidents, come from substances." Drug overdoses have increased since 2019, and drug treatment was hindered by COVID.

3. We're social beings and isolation is changing us. As noted in the *Atlantic*: "The pandemic loosened ties between people: Kids stopped going to school; their parents stopped going to work; parishioners stopped going to church; people stopped gathering, in general." And as Robert Sampson, a Harvard sociologist who studies social disorder, notes, "We're more likely to break rules when our bonds to society are weakened.... When we become untethered, we tend to prioritize our own private interests over those of others or the public." As Khazan writes,

The turn-of-the-20th-century scholar Émile Durkheim called this state *anomie*, or a lack of social norms that leads to lawlessness. "We are moral beings to the extent that we are social beings," Durkheim wrote. In the past three years, we have stopped being social, and in many cases, we have stopped being moral, too.

And that, to my thinking, is the heart of the issue. Regardless of the reasons we might give ourselves to justify or overlook bad behavior, the fact of the matter is that we are moral creatures acting immorally. It's as if we have taken the stress and isolation and let it become a permit to sin.

So will things improve as all things COVID continue to fall to the wayside? Perhaps. But I fear a more likely scenario is that just as the pandemic took existing cultural currents and accelerated them,

... it did the same with our lack of morals.

Shalom,

Pastor David

The Cold Hard Truth

Read

Amos 9:11-12 (NLT)

¹¹ *"In that day I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen and repair its breaches, and raise up its ruins and rebuild it as in the days of old, that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations who are called by my name," declares the LORD who does this.*"

Reflect

How do people tend to respond when their sins are called out? Is preaching against sin a popular message?

It is obvious in our culture today that people do not like to be called out for their sin. In fact, they don't even want certain choices and lifestyles to be called "sin." There is often nothing more offensive to people than to have someone tell them that they are in the wrong. And yet, that is the message that the prophet, Amos, was called to preach. It wasn't a popular message then and it isn't a popular message now. But it is a necessary message because people's souls are at stake.

Amos started out a simple shepherd and farmer from Judah but ended up a prophet of the Lord in Israel. He prophesied when King Jeroboam II ruled Israel. It was a time of economic prosperity and military might for the people of Israel. Their enemies weren't particularly threatening and Israel was thriving. Still, God sent the farmer prophet, Amos, up to Israel to call them out for their sin and warn them of coming judgment. But in their prosperity, they couldn't even grasp the possibility of their country's collapse.

Amos probably didn't relish his task and yet he faithfully carried it out. He boldly preached a harsh but true message to people who didn't want to hear it. They were not grateful for the warning. They didn't take heed of his words. And yet, Amos did not relent.

First, we read of how God called Amos to leave Judah to preach judgment on Israel. Amos first preached judgment on Israel's neighbors and eventually even on Israel herself in eight prophetic oracles. Then, he gave three sermons detailing the sins of the people and calling them to repent. Next, he described five visions of the coming punishment that awaited Israel: locusts, fire, a plumb line, summer fruit, and Israel's unavoidable judgment.

The vision of the plumb line is particularly significant. In [Amos 7:7-9](#), he said, "This is what he showed me: behold, the Lord was standing beside a wall built with a plumb line, with a plumb line in his hand. And the LORD said to me, 'Amos, what do you see?' And I said, 'A plumb

line.' Then the Lord said, 'Behold, I am setting a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel; I will never again pass by them; the high places of Isaac shall be made desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste, and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword.'"

A plumb line is similar to a carpenter's level. It is basically just a string with a weight on the end, but it provides builders an objective way to ensure that a wall is straight. If a wall is leaning slightly, steps can be taken to fix it. But if it leans too far in either direction, collapse is inevitable. God's point was that He gave Israel an objective standard by which to measure their lives. His law was the plumb line. He sent numerous warnings that they were crooked and needed to take corrective measures, but they ignored Him. Now, they were on the verge of total collapse.

Even today, our plumb line is the Word of God. Jesus's own life showed us God's perfect moral standard in action. When we measure our lives against His standard, it should be obvious that corrective steps need to be taken. But we can't straighten up on our own because we are too far gone. We need a Cornerstone.

A Scarlet Thread of redemption is found in today's verses. All throughout the book, Amos spoke the cold, hard truth to Israel. Judgment was inevitable. Israel was going to be utterly destroyed. But in the last five verses, he left them with a positive note. God promised to preserve the line of David, renew creation, and restore and rebuild the people. Amos wrote that God would one day "raise up the booth of David that is fallen." A booth is a temporary shelter, like a tent. In [Acts 15:16-17](#), James quoted this passage from Amos: "After this I will return, and I will rebuild the tent of David that has fallen; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it, that the remnant of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my name, says the Lord, who makes these things known from of old."

Amos preached the cold hard truth but he ended with a message of hope. Through the Messiah, He would rebuild David's house. But this promise wouldn't be just for the people of Israel. It was a promise even for the Gentiles, peoples of all nations, who are called by His name. Even though we are crooked, God promises to restore those of us who put our trust in Him.

Pray

Lord, I know that without You, I am crooked and too far gone. I don't measure up and I can't straighten up on my own. But thanks to Your grace and Your mercy, You've made a way for me to be restored. Thank You for the promise of restoration through Jesus, my Messiah. Amen.

VISION



Jesus: The Head of the Church

2023 Summer Sermon Series
First Church of Christ
Cherokee, Iowa

During His time here on earth, Jesus makes it clear that His Church will not fade away. Though the culture continues to press against it, we can be sure that the future of the Church is bright because Jesus is the Head of the Church. But what kind of role do we play in that? In this six-week sermon series, we will wrestle with different elements from scripture that have kept the Church strong in the past, and will ensure its strength in the future. Join us each Sunday morning this summer as we catch a vision of what we should be as His Church

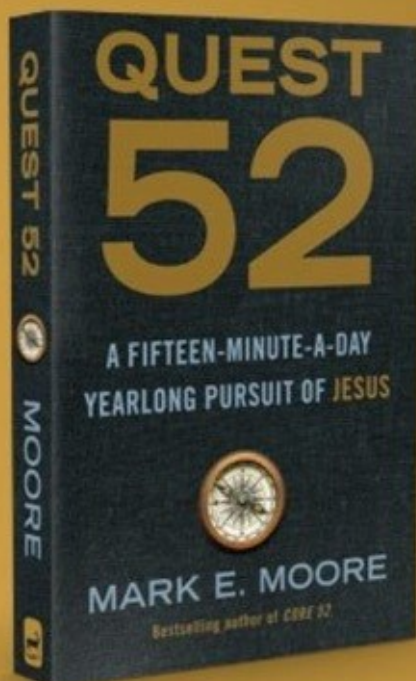
We all want a faith that won't let us down in times of trouble or loss, uncertainty or fear. A faith that can pull us through the worst—and best—times in our lives. This is the kind of faith that James writes about. It is a faith that we must practice day by day. This exciting study on the teaching of James will help us grow a steadfast faith that can carry us through all the ups and downs of life. Invite a friend and join us each Tuesday morning, beginning June 6th!

Summer Adult Bible Study



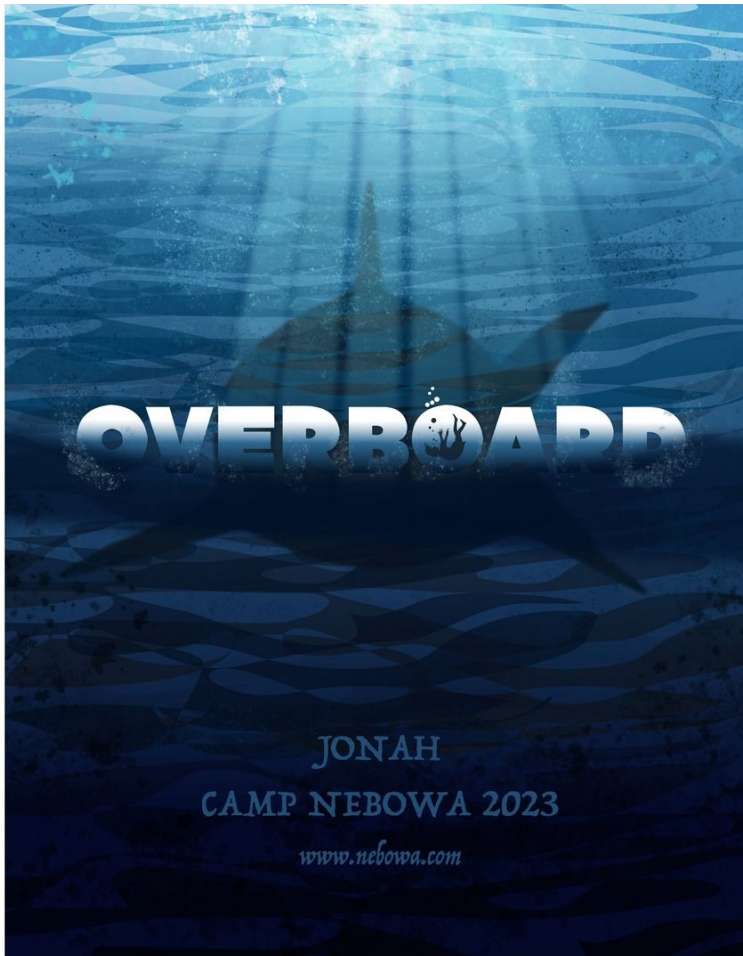
JAMES
FAITH THAT WORKS

Tuesdays at 10:30am in the Church Chapel
Join Us!



Next
Group Meeting
July 12th
6:30pm
In the FCC Chapel

Mission Moment



Awesome Sauce & Noodles



In an ongoing effort to keep camp costs low each year, Camp Nebowa asks for donations of food each year. This year the Mission Team has chosen to collect boxes of spaghetti noodles along with large jars and cans of spaghetti sauce. They will need A LOT of spaghetti and sauce throughout the whole summer. It is a popular dish at camp.

If you shop at Sam's Club the big gallon jugs of sauce would be ideal, however, any and all sizes of jars and cans are welcome. Keep an eye out for when noodles go on sale and pick up as many as you can.

Please bring your donations to the church. You can leave them on the lobby table or in the church office. We will continue to collect noodles and sauce throughout the camp season.

THANKS FOR YOUR HELP!!

**WE ARE STILL COLLECTING SPAGHETTI SAUCE
AND NOODLES PLEASE BRING YOUR
DONATIONS TO THE CHURCH**

Camps for All Ages

Camp Season is almost here! Guess what? If you want to go Camp Nebowa this summer, and we would love for you to go, there are camps for all ages including adults. First Church of Christ is offering to pay half of your camp fees in 2023. You simply register online to the camp of your choice at www.nebowa.com and enter the discount code **cherokee50** on the check out page. We want everyone who wants to attend camp to have the best opportunity possible to go. If you have any questions please contact the church office at 712-225-2667

Many Ways to Give at First Church of Christ



In Person

We love to see you!



Mail

*First Church of Christ
772 N. 2nd Street
Cherokee, IA 51012*



Our Ap

*Text FCCGIVER to
1-888-364-GIVE (4483)*



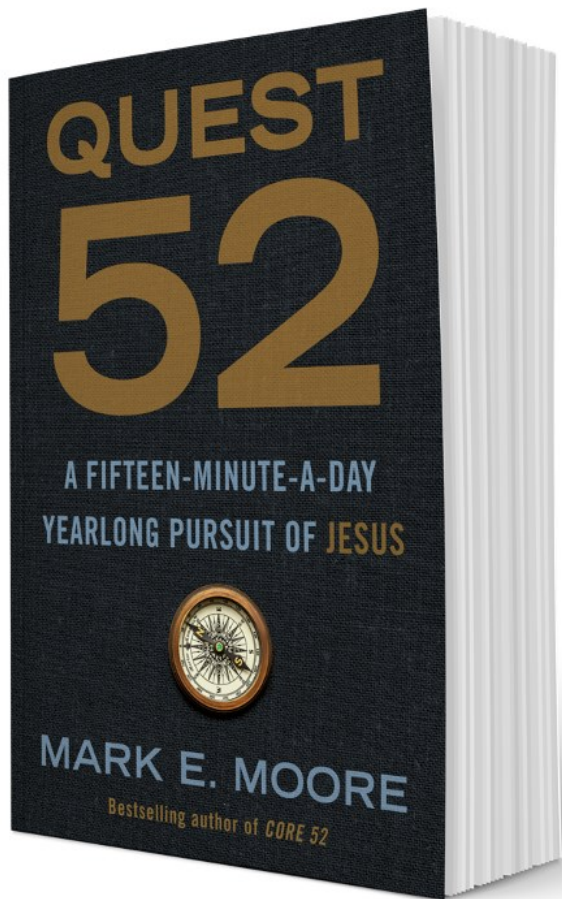
Online

www.cherokeefcc.com

Spend an entire year with Jesus.

TAKE THE JOURNEY

QUEST 52



QUEST 52 HIGHLIGHTS THE KEY MOMENTS FROM JESUS' LIFE, REVEALING HIS IDENTITY, HIS EXPECTATIONS, HIS PRIORITIES, AND HIS ULTIMATE PURPOSE.

Each week features a hand-picked Gospel reading from the life of Jesus — plus an Old Testament passage foreshadowing his coming, a New Testament story revealing his impact, an invitation to discuss insights with fellow travelers, and practical ways to practice what you've learned.

The topics address relevant issues such as:

- Does Jesus really care about your pain?
- How can you know God's call on your life?
- What does Jesus say about social justice?
- How can you hear God's voice?
- What are ways to survive these difficult days?

This quest will enhance your understanding of Jesus in ways that will forever change how you make choices, engage with others, interpret today's big issues, and even view yourself!

It's not too late to join us on the journey. To purchase a book (\$12) or to learn more, contact Pastor David.



WE HAVE AN APP FOR YOU

DOWNLOAD IT TODAY IN APPLE APPS OR GOOGLE PLAY



JULY CELEBRATIONS

July 1

Jay B. *(MCS Staff)*
Erin M. *(MCS Staff)*

Bob Johnston
Kendall Henkel

July 20

Curt & Rhonda Wiese

July 3

Betty Nelson

July 21

Shelley Mortenson
Bryce Curtis (BB)

July 6

Anthony F. *(MCS Student)*

July 9

Brenda H. *(MCS Staff)*

July 26

Kendall & Sharon Henkel

July 10

Joel M. *(MCS Staff)*

July 27

Anita Cougill
Rita Pearson

July 11

Mark Patten
Jozzlin Inman

July 28

Barry & Nancy Nelson
Zayden Lewis (BB)

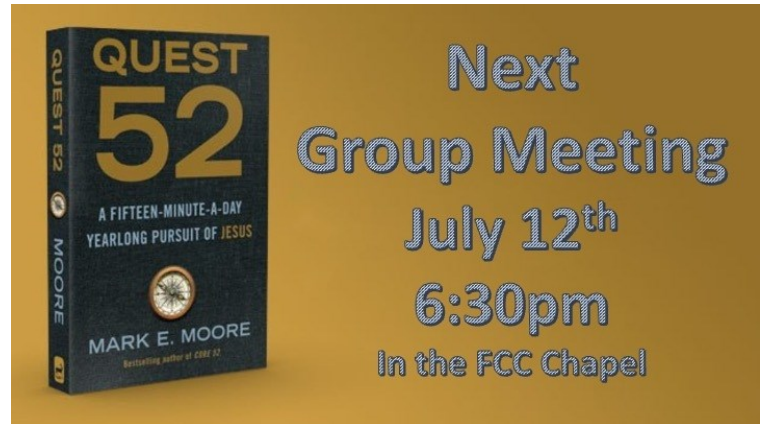
July 15

Mike Sparks

July 30

Judah N. *(MCS Student)*

July 19



Boy Scout Troop 107

Meets Every Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.
First Church of Christ



Boys in 5th - 12th grades are invited to join.
For more information call (712) 225-2650

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

Meets at First Church of Christ
every Tuesday & Thursday
7:00 p.m.
Fellowship Hall

If you struggle with addiction
this is the place to be.



July 2023				
2	9	16	23	30
Children's Church	Children's Church	Children's Church	Children's Church	Children's Church
Sholeen Sparks	Dixie Draper	Angela Hall	Polly Fishman	N/A
Children's Sunday School	Children's Sunday School	Children's Sunday School	Children's Sunday School	Children's Sunday School
Sholeen Sparks	Dixie Draper	Angela Hall	Polly Fishman	N/A
Communion Message	Communion Message	Communion Message	Communion Message	Communion Message
Guy Fishman	Mike Sparks	David Hall	Kirk Nelson	David Hall
Worship Leader	Worship Leader	Worship Leader	Worship Leader	Worship Leader
Sharon Henkel	David Hall	Sharon Henkel	David Hall	David Hall
Piano	Piano	Piano	Piano	Piano
N/A	Eleanor Johnson	N/A	N/A	N/A
Singers	Singers	Singers	Singers	Singers
Nancy Nelson	Marica Casey	Nancy Nelson	Angela Hall	Angela Hall
Larry Heschke	Mark Casey	Larry Heschke	Sharon Henkel	
PowerPoint	PowerPoint	PowerPoint	PowerPoint	Power Point
Braella Inman	Nancy Nelson	Braella Inman	Nancy Nelson	Braella Inman
Sound	Sound	Sound	Sound	Sound
Mike Sparks	Larry Heschke	Mike Sparks	Larry Heschke	Mike Sparks
Janitorial	Janitorial	Janitorial	Janitorial	Janitorial
Angela Hall	Angela Hall	Angela Hall	Angela Hall	Angela Hall
David Hall	David Hall	David Hall	David Hall	David Hall

Date	Offering	On Campus Attendance	Online Attendance
04/30/2023	1896.00	87	13
05/04/2023	2430.00	67	20
05/11/2023	3352.65	88	7
05/18/2023	1238.00	50	13
05/21/2023	3276.00	64	32

July Chronological Bible Reading Plan

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- Psalm 119:89-176
 - Song of Solomon 1-8
 - Proverbs 1-3
 - Proverbs 4-6
 - Proverbs 7-9
 - Proverbs 10-12
 - Proverbs 13-15
 - Proverbs 16-18
 - Proverbs 19-21
 - Proverbs 22-24
 - 1 Kings 5-6; 2 Chronicles 2-3
 - 1 Kings 7; 2 Chronicles 4
 - 1 Kings 8; 2 Chronicles 5
 - 2 Chronicles 6-7; Psalm 136
 - Psalm 134, 146-150
 - 1 Kings 9; 2 Chronicles 8
 - Proverbs 25-26
 - Proverbs 27-29
 - Ecclesiastes 1-6
 - Ecclesiastes 7-12
 - 1 Kings 10-11; 2 Chronicles 9
 - Proverbs 30-31
 - 1 Kings 12-14
 - 2 Chronicles 10-12
 - 1 Kings 15:1-24; 2 Chronicles 13-16
 - 1 Kings 15:25-34; 1 Kings 16:1-34; 2 Chronicles 17
 - 1 Kings 17-19
 - 1 Kings 20-21
 - 1 Kings 22; 2 Chronicles 18
 - 2 Chronicles 19-23