

# THE LAMPLIGHTER

## JANUARY

January 26, 2025

### FCC TO HOLD 129TH ANNUAL MEETING

First Congregational Church will hold its 129<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting January 26, 2025. Moderator Jim Schuyler invites all FCC members and friends to attend and participate in this important meeting. This is the only scheduled congregational meeting for the purpose of conducting church business in 2025. Members and friends of FCC will hear reports from

church officers, boards, committees, and ministries, as well as act on the 2025 budget and nominations for the year. The meeting begins a few minutes after Sunday Worship.

Following the Annual Meeting, FCC's annual Potluck Dinner will be held in the Social Hall. As usual, the church will supply fried chicken as the entrée, and everyone is asked to bring a side dish and a dessert to share. Everyone is wel-

come!

Please be in prayer for the Annual Meeting and come join FCC Sunday, January 26, 2024, for Worship, important decisions, good food, and fellowship.

**NOTE: Annual Reports from all officers, boards, and committees must be submitted by January 20. Please email them to the Church Secretary at: [fcccauthen1@gmail.com](mailto:fcccauthen1@gmail.com).**



### JANUARY VOLUNTEERS

Thanks to those who have volunteered so far this month:

#### January 5, 2025

Liturgist: Lori Childs  
 Ushers: Mary Golden  
 TBD  
 Acolytes: Freida Glass  
 Penny Caverly  
 PowerPoint: TBD  
 Livestream: TBD  
 Childcare: TBD

#### January 12, 2025

Liturgist: Mary Golden  
 Ushers: Dennis Younkin  
 Doreen Clark  
 Acolytes: TBD  
 TBD  
 PowerPoint: Penny Caverly  
 Livestream: TBD  
 Childcare: TBD  
 Snacks: Doreen Clark

#### January 19, 2025

Liturgist: Sue O'Brien  
 Ushers: TBD  
 TBD  
 Acolytes: Freida Glass  
 TBD  
 PowerPoint: TBD  
 Livestream: Penny Caverly  
 Childcare: TBD  
 Snacks: TBD

#### January 26, 2025

Liturgist: TBD  
 Ushers: Mark Russell  
 Linda Russell  
 Acolytes: Dennis Younkin  
 Doreen Clark  
 PowerPoint: Penny Caverly  
 Livestream: TBD  
 Childcare: TBD  
 TBD

### FROM THE PASTOR SPEAK LORD, WE ARE LISTENING



As we begin 2025, I am resisting the very normal and well-meaning pastoral tendency to lay out a vision or chart a course for First Congregational Church in the year to come. This stems, in part from what I call "The Folly of 2020." As 2019 ended and 2020 began I delivered a sermon entitled, "20/20 Vision." I confess, I thought it was a very clever and original title – 20/20 Vision in the year 2020, you get it – until I realized thousands of pastors across the country used it, too. Most of those sermons (including mine) laid out plans for the year to come ... and then Covid-19 hit and everything, and I do mean everything changed. I suppose we all looked a little foolish and I learned yet again this fact: I

am not omniscient, only God is. How presumptuous for someone who has no idea what lies around the bend to attempt charting the course! Still, there are those who are going to try – various leaders, consultants, church grown advisors, and yes, pastors will write books, produce podcasts, and hold conferences designed to help churches chart a course by drafting a mission statement, a vision statement, and a strategy for this year and the years to come. It really should be obvious by now that Jesus Christ who said, "I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18) has already given us a vision statement: "...go and make  
**CONTINUED - see "From the Pastor" on p. 2**





## FROM THE PASTOR (continued from p. 1)

FCC invites everyone to join us in reading through the entire Bible in 2025. This year we are returning to a classic system in which each daily reading includes a New Testament passage, an Old Testament passage, and a passage from Psalms or Proverbs. The daily readings are designed to take about 30 minutes a day. The readings will also appear in each week's bulletin. Here are January's readings:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| .Jan. 1: Luke 5; Gen. 1-2; Psalm 1              | .Jan. 17: Luke 13:18-35; Gen. 24; Psalm 17         |
| .Jan. 2: Luke 6:1-26; Gen. 3-5; Psalm 2         | .Jan. 18: Luke 14:1-24; Gen. 25; Psalm 18          |
| .Jan. 3: Luke 6:27-49; Gen. 6:1-7:24; Psalm 3   | .Jan. 19: Luke 14:25-35; Gen. 26; Psalm 19         |
| .Jan. 4: Luke 7:1-17; Gen. 8-10; Psalm 4        | .Jan. 20: Luke 15; Gen. 27:1-45; Psalm 20          |
| .Jan. 5: Luke 7:18-50; Gen. 11; Psalm 5         | .Jan. 21: Luke 16; Gen. 27:46-28:22; Psalm 21      |
| .Jan. 6: Luke 8:1-25; Gen. 12; Psalm 6          | .Jan. 22: Luke 17; Gen. 29:1-30; Psalm 22          |
| .Jan. 7: Luke 8:26-56; Gen. 13:1-14:24; Psalm 7 | .Jan. 23: Luke 18:1-17; Gen. 29:31-30:43; Psalm 23 |
| .Jan. 8: Luke 9:1-27; Gen. 15; Psalm 8          | .Jan. 24: Luke 18:18-43; Gen. 31; Psalm 24         |
| .Jan. 9: Luke 9:28-62; Gen. 16; Psalm 9         | .Jan. 25: Luke 19:1-27; Gen. 32-33; Psalm 25       |
| .Jan. 10: Luke 10:1-20; Gen. 17; Psalm 10       | .Jan. 26: Luke 19:28-48; Gen. 34; Psalm 26         |
| .Jan. 11: Luke 10:21-42; Gen. 18; Psalm 11      | .Jan. 27: Luke 20:1-26; Gen. 35:1-36:43; Psalm 27  |
| .Jan. 12: Luke 11:1-28; Gen. 19; Psalm 12       | .Jan. 28: Luke 20:27-47; Gen. 37; Psalm 28         |
| .Jan. 13: Luke 11:29-54; Gen. 20; Psalm 13      | .Jan. 29: Luke 21; Gen. 38; Psalm 29               |
| .Jan. 14: Luke 12:1-31; Gen. 21; Psalm 14       | .Jan. 30: Luke 22:1-38; Gen. 39; Psalm 30          |
| .Jan. 15: Luke 12:32-59; Gen. 22; Psalm 15      | .Jan. 31: Luke 22:39-71; Gen. 40; Psalm 31         |
| .Jan. 16: Luke 13:1-17; Gen. 23; Psalm 16       |  |

*disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you*" (Matthew 28:19-20); a vision statement: "...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8); and a strategy: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer" (Acts 2:42).

So, as we begin 2025, I am not proposing any of those things for First Congregational Church – I am not attempting to 'chart the course' for the coming year. I simply propose a beacon, a plumbline, a guiding principle for the year to come: "Speak Lord, for your servant is listening" (1 Samuel 3:10). Let's make Samuel's statement our prayer and our banner for 2025.

God," first published 35 years ago, Dr. Henry Blackaby wrote, "God speaks by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, prayer, the church, and circumstances to reveal himself, his purposes, and his ways" (Blackaby and King, 1990). There it is. From Genesis to Revelation the Bible



teaches us about God who speaks to His people. He revealed himself then and he continues to do so now. If not so much audibly or in dramatic dreams and visions as he did then, he still communicates to us enabled by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, prayer, circumstances, and the church. When God spoke to Abraham, Moses, Samuel, David, or Paul (just to name a few) in the Bible, they knew it was him speaking. In addition, they understood what he was saying, and they knew what they were to do in response. The same can be true for us whether he speaks to us individually or as a congregation.

### HOW DO YOU KNOW GOD IS SPEAKING?

Great question! This would all be so much simpler if God just grabbed a microphone and spoke, wouldn't it? Since he doesn't seem to be doing much of that we need to be careful that the voice we hear **CONTINUED - see "From the Pastor on p. 3**



### GOD SPEAKS

We serve a God who speaks to us. While most if not all of us have never heard him speak audibly (no, I haven't either), he speaks to us through the Holy Spirit. In his classic work, "Experiencing

## DO YOU DEVO?!



STREAMING DAILY AT 6:00AM (AND THE REST OF THE DAY)



## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

FCC is always looking for volunteers to facilitate worship on Sundays. We need liturgists, ushers, acolytes, and people to run the computer and camera each week. If you can help, please sign up at the Literature Table in the back of the Sanctuary.





## MISSIONS OPPORTUNITIES

Here are some opportunities to spread the Gospel and help those in need:

### One Item a Month

FCC's One-Item-a-Month for January is CANNED SOUP. Please leave soup and any other non-perishable items at the back of the Sanctuary throughout the month. They will be delivered to our friends at Loaves & Fishes for distribution to those in need. If

you wish to donate cash please mark your donation, "Loaves & Fishes," or drop it in the big blue Missions Jug in the back of the Sanctuary.

### Thank you! MISSIONS JUG

The five-gallon jug on the Literature Table is intended to collect change for "Loaves & Fishes" to purchase groceries for those in need. Thanks!



## CHURCH CALENDAR

FCC's 2025 Church Calendar is available on the Literature Table at the back of the Sanctuary. It includes church activities and events (so far), as well as birthdays of our friends and family, and a few 'special days.' NOTE: If we missed your birthday we apologize! Please let us know so we can add it to future printings. Pick up your copy!



## FROM THE PASTOR

(continued from p. 2)

in our spirit is him. History is full of people who claimed to have a revelation from God just before misleading a whole group of folks – let's not do that! Do not buy in to any message that devalues Scripture, or anyone who claims to have a "new revelation." Solomon got it right when he said, "There is nothing new under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9). That is not to say we know everything there is to know about God or his Word, but that God, "...does not change..." (James 1:17); and "...the word of the Lord endures forever" (1 Peter 1:25). So, a new book of the Bible is not coming, and 2,000 years of Christian scholarship is a pretty safe theological guide.

So, how can you know God is speaking?

First, the Bible is always the most reliable way to hear God speaking. It is right there in print! The psalmist wrote, "Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path" (Psalm 119:105); and Paul wrote, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Yes, God speaks to us in other ways, but the Bible is absolutely the most reliable and any voice that contradicts Scripture is not God.

Second, remember God speaks by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, prayer, the church, and circumstances. In nearly all cases, when he speaks, he will speak through more than one at a time. For example, what he seems to say through prayer will be confirmed through the Bible, or when circumstances seem to line up, he will give confirmation through prayer, or when a church is set on a decision it will be confirmed through prayer and the Bible. God confirms what he says, and he never contradicts himself.

Third, look to Jesus Christ. The Bible says, "In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but

in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation



of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven" (Hebrews 1:1-3). Jesus is God Incarnate and, as such the complete revelation of the Trinitarian God we worship and serve. So, if we want to hear the voice of God (or if we think we are) look to Jesus – read his teachings and follow his life in Scripture, pray and live the way he taught us, trust in his resurrection, and walk in him daily.

Say it with me (and with Samuel), "Speak Lord, for your servant is listening" (1 Samuel 3:10). We are going to come back to this sentence again and again in 2025. God will speak to us. Then we will follow him.

Happy New Year and God bless you!

Dr. Steven Wood  
Pastor





# JANUARY



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 NEW YEAR'S DAY	2	4	4 10:00am Sanctuary Clean-Up
5 JOSEY DEYOUNG 9:00am Women's Mtg 9:30am Coffee Fellowship 10:00am Worship Celebration 11:00am Social Time	6 EPIPHANY	7 MICHELLE GLASS	8 7:00pm Wednesday Nite LIVE(stream)	9 6:30pm Pastoral Relations Cmte 7:00pm Prudential Committee	10	11 TREVOR RITTER
12 DICK YOUNG 9:30am Coffee Fellowship 10:00am Worship Celebration 11:00am Social Time 11:15am CE Board	13 <i>National Clean Out Your Desk Day</i> BEVERLY BALDWIN	14	15 7:00pm Wednesday Nite LIVE(stream)	16 <i>National Religious Freedom Day</i> ANNA MONROE	17	18 <i>National Winnie the Pooh Day</i>
19 <i>National Popcorn Day</i> SHIRLEY POLEN 9:30am Coffee Fellowship 10:00am Worship Celebration 11:00am Social Time 11:15am Deacons	20 MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY GREG DREW	21 <i>National Squirrel Appreciation Day</i> 7:00pm Trustees	22 7:00pm Wednesday Nite LIVE(stream)	23	24	25 <i>National Opposite Day</i> SHARI SCHUYLER
26 KARLIE DEFRENN JUDY WHITTEN 9:30am Coffee Fellowship 10:00am Worship Celebration 11:00am Annual Meeting 11:15am Fellowship Dinner	27	28 MARISSA YOUNGS	29 7:00pm Wednesday Nite LIVE(stream)	30 DOREEN CLARK	31 LARRY GOLDEN	



**MEN'S**  
*Breakfast*

**Saturday, February 1, 2025**  
**10:00am**  
Union Station Smokehouse, Durand




First Congregational Church  
**PRAYER**  
*Ministry*

## PRAYER

### PRAYER CHAIN

To submit praises and prayer requests text Pastor Steve (810-624-2418).

### PRAYER SPACE

We invite everyone to use our Prayer Space for prayer and meditation before, during, and after Worship, as well as any time throughout the week.



**RESPITE VOLUNTEERS**  
OF SHIAWASSEE  
*Giving the Gift of Time*  
989-725-1127



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