



# THE LAMPLIGHTER

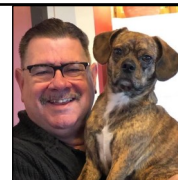
**MAY**

*Join us for our*  
**MOTHER'S DAY**  
*Service*

**May 11, 2025 – 10:00am**

First Congregational Church invites all mothers and grandmothers to join us for Mother's Day as we honor all the women of our church during the 10:00am Sunday Worship Celebration. Come join us!

## FROM THE PASTOR **A BALANCE OF PIETY AND PATRIOTISM**



There is no denying the fact that our culture has been in a state of confusion and division for at least the five years dating back to the beginning of the Covid-19 Pandemic. Since I have not lived for all of history, I will not characterize the turmoil as the worst in history, but I can say it is the worst in my lifetime as political, racial, gender, and economic fault lines have created intense anger and left broken relationships, even among family and friends, in their wake. Sadly, the Body of Christ has not been immune as Christian denominations have divided, pastors have been fired and churches have split over political issues, church members have broken fellowship with their local congregation over masks during Covid and political loyalties since, and brothers and sisters in Christ can no longer stand to be in the same room. I am convinced of two things in all of this: First, it must break the heart of Jesus who declared, "I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome"

Continued - see "From the Pastor on p. 2

**DO YOU DEVO?!**



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

facebook



## **MAY VOLUNTEERS**

Thanks to those who have already volunteered to serve in Worship during the month of May! Would you like to help out, too? Contact Pastor Steve!

### **May 4, 2025**

Liturgist: TBD  
Ushers: Linda Russell  
Mark Russell  
Acolytes: Sue O'Brien  
Panny Caverly  
PowerPoint: TBD  
Camera: TBD  
Childcare: Lori Childs  
Snacks: TBD

### **May 11, 2025**

Liturgist: Mary Golden  
Ushers: Mary Jane Edwards  
Cindy Stull  
Acolytes: Amy Dewald  
Brian Dewald  
PowerPoint: Penny Caverly  
Camera: Sue O'Brien  
Childcare: Sherry Dean  
Snacks: Mary Golden

### **May 18, 2025**

Liturgist: TBD  
Ushers: Terry Childs  
Lori Childs  
Acolytes: TBD  
PowerPoint: Mary Golden  
Camera: TBD  
Childcare: Doreen Clark  
Snacks: Trudy Nicks

### **May 25, 2025**

Liturgist: TBD  
Ushers: Mary Golden  
Penny Caverly  
Acolytes: Mark Russell  
Linda Russell  
PowerPoint: TBD  
Camera: TBD  
Childcare: Mary Golden  
Snacks: TBD



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

it" (Matthew 16:18), taught us to, "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:34-35), and prayed, "...that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me, and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me... that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity" (John 17:20-23). Second, the Body of Christ, the Church in the United States with some exceptions has lost its way by deemphasizing the Gospel, ignoring the teachings of Jesus, and placing personal opinions, political agendas, and a warped sense

of nationalism at the head of the local congregation — a position reserved for Christ alone.

Having said all that — and I know it is a lot to process — I hasten to add that through God's Grace and providence First Congregational Church has somehow managed to avoid the damage of conflict so prevalent in many local churches during the last five years. As pastor, I take absolutely no credit for the peace of our fellowship. It is all due to the power of the Holy Spirit and the love of God's people for one another. Give God all the glory for that. I know we all have opinions that land on all sides of these "hot button" issues, but you who are members and friends of First Congregational Church have put

your love for Jesus above all of it and he has blessed us with peace — we give him praise and our gratitude for that. Still, we must remain diligent. We have to pay attention because the fellowship of a local church, while held in the Lord's hand, is a delicate thing since it exists between us, and we are all so very human. So, what are we to do? I humbly offer the following and ask each of you to prayerfully consider these things:

### **Pray, pray, and pray some more.**

FCC has had a strong and active Prayer Ministry for many, many years. The emphasis on prayer in our church has increased in the last five years and you all have been faithful while participating in our Prayer Chain, more than one 24-Hour Prayer Vigil, a couple Prayer Workshops, a Season of Prayer, and Prayer Visits. The emphasis on prayer cultivated and continues to cultivate God's power among us. Let us continue to humble ourselves daily before the Lord asking him for wisdom, guidance, discernment, and unity until he returns, no matter the circumstances.

### **Check your sources.**

While the internet is amazing technology and a wonderful tool to gain useful knowledge on a variety of topics, it is also a cesspool of lies, misinformation, and misguided agendas. Anyone with a modem can put themselves into cyberspace as a "reliable," source of "real news." This has led to an abundance of conspiracy theories and wackadoodle ideas condensed into memes, tik-Tok videos, and social media posts that spread

**Continued - see "From the Pastor on p. 3**

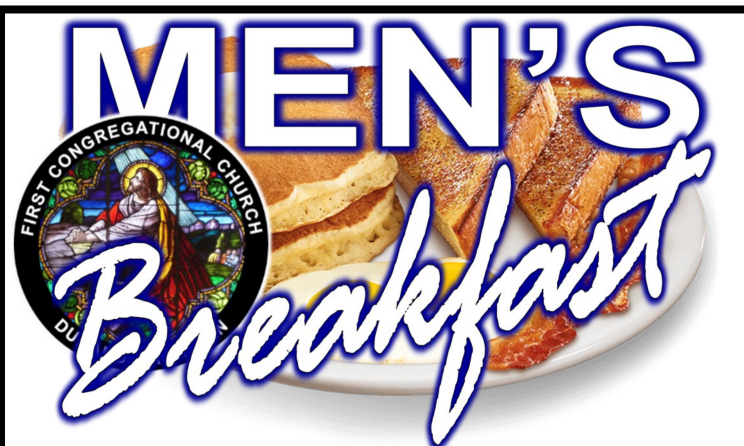


## THROUGH THE BIBLE

- May 1: Acts 14; Josh. 22; Job 31
- May 2: Acts 15:1-21; Josh. 23-24; Job 32
- May 3: Acts 15:22-41; Jud. 1; Job 33
- May 4: Acts 16:1-15; Jud. 2-3; Job 34
- May 5: Acts 16:16-40; Jud. 4-5; Job 35
- May 6: Acts 17:1-15; Jud. 6; Job 36
- May 7: Acts 17:16-34; Jud. 7-8; Job 37
- May 8: Acts 18; Jud. 9; Job 38
- May 9: Acts 19:1-20; Jud. 10:1-11:33; Job 39
- May 10: Acts 19:21-41; Jud. 11:34-12:15; Job 40
- May 11: Acts 20:1-16; Jud. 13; Job 41
- May 12: Acts 20:17-34; Jud. 14-15; Job 42
- May 13: Acts 21:1-36; Jud. 16; Psalm 42
- May 14: Acts 21:37-22:29; Jud. 17-18; Psalm 43
- May 15: Acts 22:30-23:22; Jud. 19; Psalm 44
- May 16: Acts 23:23-24:9; Jud. 20; Psalm 45
- May 17: Acts 24:10-27; Jud. 21; Psalm 46
- May 18: Acts 25; Ruth 1-2; Psalm 47
- May 19: Acts 26:1-18; Ruth 3-4; Psalm 48
- May 20: Acts 26:19-32; 1 Sam. 1:1-2:10; Psalm 49
- May 21: Acts 27:1-12; 1 Sam. 2:11-36; Psalm 50
- May 22: Acts 27:13-44; 1 Sam. 3; Psalm 51
- May 23: Acts 28:1-16; 1 Sam. 4-5; Psalm 52
- May 24: Acts 28:17-31; 1 Sam. 6-7; Psalm 53
- May 25: Rom. 1:1-15; 1 Sam. 8; Psalm 54
- May 26: Rom. 1:16-32; 1 Sam. 9:1-10:16; Psalm 55
- May 27: Rom. 2:1-3:8; 1 Sam. 10:17-11:15; Psalm 56
- May 28: Rom. 3:9-31; 1 Sam. 12; Psalm 57
- May 29: Rom. 4; 1 Sam. 13; Psalm 58
- May 30: Rom. 5; 1 Sam. 14; Psalm 59
- May 31: Rom. 6; 1 Sam. 15; Psalm 60

## CHURCH SEEKS CUSTODIAN AND GROUNDSKEEPER

FCC is still seeking a part-time custodian and a part-time groundskeeper. These at-will positions include responsibility for general maintenance and cleaning of our building, as well as mowing and maintaining the church grounds. Combined these positions involve 10-12 hours per week. If interested, contact Jim Schuyler or Pastor Steve.



## MEN'S BREAKFAST

FCC's men will gather for breakfast at 10:00am on Saturday, May 3, 2025. Join us at Union Station Smokehouse (205 E Main St, Durand). There is no agenda, just good food and conversation. All men are welcome!



## FROM THE PASTOR (continued from p. 2)

among us like wildfire and leave many asking the question Pilate asked Jesus, “*What is truth?*” (John 18:38). The Apostle John wrote, “*Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world*” (1 John 4:1). In other words, check your sources. Lean more heavily on the ones with a history of accuracy and journalistic integrity. To help with that here are some reliable fact checking tools that we published in last month’s Lamplighter. They are all members of the International Fact Checking Network, which requires a commitment to unbiased sources, nonpartisanship, primary source material, multiple lines of evidence, transparency, and a commitment to honest reporting:

- <https://apnews.com/hub/ap-fact-check>
- <https://www.factcheck.org>
- <https://thedispatch.com/category/fact-check>
- <https://leadstories.com>
- <https://www.poynter.org/news/fact-checking>
- <https://www.politifact.com>
- <https://www.reuters.com/fact-check>
- <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/tag/fact-check>
- <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/fact-checker>
- <https://checkyourfact.com/>

### Focus on the red letters.

In recent months I have begun to study and focus more on the “red letters” in my New Testament. Some of you may have a version of the Scripture in which the words of Jesus are printed in red ink, and I believe this is a valuable tool. This is not to say we should neglect the study of the rest of the Bible — the Old Testament is foundational to the New Testament and the Epistles of the New Testament give apostolic commentary and application of the teachings of Jesus. However, if Jesus is our Savior and Lord, the author, foundation, and keeper of our faith, as well as our church, shouldn’t we pay a little more attention to his

teachings in Scripture?

So, what did Jesus teach and how does it apply to live in 2025, especially in light of all that has gone on for the last five years? Jesus taught:

- “*The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength [and] love your neighbor as yourself.*” (Mark 12:29-31).
- “*A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another*” (John 13:34-35).
- “*Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven...*” (Matthew 5:11-12), and, “*...love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven...*” (Matthew 5:44-45).
- “*Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you*” (Luke 6:37-38), and “*...if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not*

*forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins*” (Matthew 6:15).

- “*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make 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. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age*” (Matthew 28:18-20)

Of course, there is a whole lot more of Jesus’ teaching in the red letters of your New Testament, but these are a pretty good place to start. How does the teaching of Jesus impact your response to life in 2025? I encourage you to study more deeply and apply what Jesus taught.

### Be humble

Humility is the doorway to strong fellowship and peace between followers of Jesus. Even when we are walking in Christ to the best of our ability in the power of the Holy Spirit we must remain humble enough to be gracious and kind to those with whom we disagree, especially those who have not yet accepted Jesus. Humility is willing to leave space to be wrong even if I am convinced I am right. It includes patience, kindness, compassion, and a willingness to let God work on those we disagree with. As Paul wrote, “*...I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of*

## NECROLOGY SUNDAY

May 25, 2025

FCC will hold our annual Necrology Sunday during the Worship Celebration on May 25, 2025. We will honor and remember the members and friends of our congregation who departed this life during the last 12 months.



## CHILI COOK-OFF

FCC held the 3<sup>rd</sup> (sort of) Annual Chili Cook-Off March 27, 2025. The event featured seven different kinds of chili prepared by FCC chefs including: “Smokehouse Chili,” “Green Chili Hancock,” “O.G. Chili,” “Cocoa Chili,” “Smoked Chicken Chili,” “Pepperoni Pizza Chili,” and “Venison Tex-Mex Chili.” After sampling all seven kinds of chili those in attendance “voted” for their favorite with cash donations placed in that chili’s specified container. Once everyone had a good laugh over “chili gate” (trust us, you had to be there), Nancy Grumley was declared the winner for her “Venison Tex-Mex,” Chili. The night was a great success, raising \$693 for FCC’s Mission Board, which we are told will be sent to Loaves and Fishes. Congratulations, Nancy and thanks to everyone who planned, cooked, and took part in FCC’s Chili Cook-Off.



2025 Chili Cook-Off

<div>  <div>MAY</div>  </div>						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				<b>1</b> NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER SHERRY DEAN ASHLEY BLIGHT	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> 10:00am Men's Breakfast 
<b>4</b> National Star Wars Day TORI CHILDS 9:00am Women's Mtg 9:30am Coffee Fellowship 10:00am Worship Celebration 11:00am Social Time	<b>5</b> CINCO DE MAYO	<b>6</b> SUE O'BRIEN	<b>7</b> 7:00pm Wednesday Nite LIVE(stream)	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> National Stamp Out Hunger Day
<b>11</b> MOTHER'S DAY BRAD COLE 9:30am Coffee Fellowship 10:00am Worship Celebration 11:00am Social Time 11:15am CE Board	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> 7:00pm Wednesday Nite LIVE(stream)	<b>15</b> SANDY BLIGHT	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 1:00pm Durand Railroad Days Parade
DURAND RAILROAD DAYS						
<b>18</b> 9:30am Coffee Fellowship 10:00am Worship Celebration 11:00am Social Time 11:15am Deacons	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> 7:00pm Trustees	<b>21</b> 7:00pm Wednesday Nite LIVE(stream)	<b>22</b> Last Day of School	<b>23</b> AMY DEWALD	<b>24</b> National Brother's Day
<b>25</b> NECROLOGY SUNDAY 9:30am Coffee Fellowship 10:00am Worship Celebration 11:00am Social Time 11:15am Missions	<b>26</b> MEMORIAL DAY NOAH FRYER	<b>27</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> TRACI CEKANDER

## FROM THE PASTOR

(continued from p. 3)

*the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all”* (Ephesians 4:1-6).  
**Live as a citizen of the Kingdom of God.**

Always remember the Kingdom of God is a present reality and a future hope. Jesus said, *“The kingdom of God is here”* (Mark 1:10) and taught us to, *“...seek first his kingdom and his righteousness...”* (Matthew 6:33). In other words, if you are a follower of Jesus live as a citizen of his kingdom. Of course, this does not preclude patriotism and a love for our country because we are certainly blessed to be free citizens. However, we cannot and must not attempt to blend patriotism with Christianity. While we are blessed to be citizens of the United States because of all the freedoms we enjoy God does not love us more than the

rest of the world. We are blessed to e sure, but we are not God’s chosen nation, never have been. That title is exclusive to the descendants of Abraham and his promise to them will be kept in his time. You are I are not better Christians or closer to Jesus because of the way we vote, we prayerfully vote our convictions asking for his guidance as we do in all areas of life, but those who might vote differently can still be as close to him as any of us. Of course, that begs the question, am I more faithful to Jesus or a political leader? Only you can answer that before God.

So, be a patriot if you choose to be. George Washington said, *“That which makes us followers of Christ makes us good citizens,”* and he was right. However, the opposite is not always true, especially if the values espoused by so-called citizens and elected leaders contradict the teachings of Jesus.

If you have read all the way through this article, thank you.

Please receive these words in the love and humility with which I offer them and prayerfully ask our Lord Jesus to guide you going forward.  
 God bless you!  
 Dr. Steven Wood  
 Pastor



## May 15-17, 2025 RAILROAD DAYS

Durand’s annual Railroad Days festival is schooled for May 15-17, 2025. As usual, the Railroad Days Parade will make its way down Saginaw Street on Saturday of that weekend and FCC will be there with fresh popcorn and bottled water right here on our property at the point of Saginaw and Washtenaw Streets. This is a great time to be out in our community and LOTS OF VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED! We are accepting donations of bottled water from now until May 17. We also need volunteers to set up at 11:00am, pop popcorn, hand out water, popcorn, and promotional cards, and then clean up once the parade



goes by about 1:00pm. If you can help, please contact Pastor Steve at: pastor-steve.fccdurand@gmail.com. Come join us!

