



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF DURAND
 403 N. Saginaw St., Durand MI 48429 (989)288-6684 www.durandchurch.com



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THE LAMPLIGHTER

MARCH



EUCHRE / GAME NIGHT

March 14, 2026

EUCHRE / GAME NIGHT

First Congregational Church of Durand is excited to host a fun-filled Euchre & Game Night on Saturday, March 14, 2026, 7:00-9:00pm. This free, family-friendly event is open to everyone in the community. Whether you're a seasoned Euchre player ready for a little friendly competition or just looking for a relaxed evening of board games and laughter, there will be something for all ages. Games will include Euchre, Scrabble,

Connect 4, Yahtzee, ping pong, cornhole, shuffleboard, and more. In addition, families and friends can enjoy complimentary popcorn, hot dogs, and pop while spending time together. It's a great opportunity to connect, unwind, and have some good old-fashioned fun together. This event is open to the entire community — invite your friends, neighbors, and family and come enjoy a great night together!



FROM THE PASTOR A SMALL CHURCH IN A SMALL TOWN

It is no secret that I am an unapologetic 'city boy.' I was born and raised in Flint, Michigan and Durand, Michigan, the place I have been privileged to call home for the last 12 years is the smallest place I have ever lived. I confess that it took a little while to get used to our small, rural town but I have grown to love 'beautiful downtown Durand,' and our small, rural congregation that calls itself First Congregational Church. There are currently 10 churches in Durand and all of them are small, averaging less

than 100 in Sunday attendance. While some might overlook small churches or consider them insignificant in the work of God's Kingdom, this is an unfair characterization that often leaves small congregations discouraged and feeling like they are doing something wrong. Not only is the idea that small churches are ineffective blatantly false, but it also incorrectly elevates the importance of church growth, attendance averages, and big

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WORSHIP VOLUNTEERS

FCC is very grateful for all the volunteers who keep things running smoothly on Sundays. Here are those who have volunteered to help during Worship this month. If you would like to serve in any of the areas marked TBD, please sign up at the Literature Table located at the back of the Sanctuary, or contact Pastor Steve directly. Thanks!

March 1, 2026		PowerPoint:	Penny Caverly
Liturgist:	Jim Schuyler	Camera:	Rodney Dean
Ushers:	Dennis Younkin	Childcare:	TBD
	Doreen Clark	Snacks:	TBD
Acolytes:	Penny Caverly	March 22, 2026	
	Mary Jane Edwards	Liturgist:	Dennis Younkin
PowerPoint:	TBD	Ushers:	Penny Caverly
Camera:	Rodney Dean		TBD
Childcare:	TBD	Acolytes:	Mark Russell
Snacks:	TBD		Linda Russell
March 8, 2026		PowerPoint:	TBD
Liturgist:	TBD	Camera:	Rodney Dean
Ushers:	Terry Childs	Childcare:	TBD
	Lori Childs	Snacks:	Dennis Younkin
Acolytes:	Amy Dewald	March 29, 2026	
	Brian Dewald	Liturgist:	TBD
PowerPoint:	TBD	Ushers:	Mark Russell
Camera:	Rodney Dean		Linda Russell
Childcare:	TBD	Acolytes:	TBD
Snacks:	TBD		TBD
March 15, 2026		PowerPoint:	TBD
Liturgist:	Lori Childs	Camera:	Rodney Dean
Ushers:	Cindy Stull	Childcare:	TBD
	Mary Jane Edwards	Snacks:	TBD
Acolytes:	TBD		TBD
	TBD		



WOMEN'S MINISTRY

March 10, 2026
WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

ATTENTION LADIES! Linda Russell will lead our next Women's Bible Study on Tuesday, March 10, 2026, at 6:30pm. We will be studying the story of Esther, a story of courage and God working behind the scenes. Prepare by reading the book of Esther and our book, "The Good and Beautiful Bible Study," pages 73 thru 75. Come join us!

FROM THE PASTOR

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churches.

There is an axiom that has been quoted for decades among pastors, consultants, authors, and others who claimed, "healthy things grow." Usually when that quote is used it is illustrated with growing babies, growing puppies, or growing plants. It sounds true, but is it? I am 63 years

effectiveness in their community. So, permit me to offer some encouragement, not only to my small church, but small churches in small towns all over the United States.

Jesus never told his church to get bigger.

Yes, you read that correctly. More than a few of my friends and acquaintances who are pastors, authors, and church consultants probably disagree, but as my grandfather said, "We can disagree and still be friends, but I can't help you with being wrong." Jesus told us to "... go..." (Matthew 28:19), but he never told us to grow bigger in attendance, or buildings, or budgets. In fact, he said, "I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18) and Paul wrote, "I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been



Annual Meeting - January, 2026

making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor" (1 Corinthians 3:6-8).

So, am I saying I don't want our local church to grow in **Continued - see FROM THE PASTOR on p. 3**



Annual Meeting - January, 2026

old, and my doctor tells me I am healthy, but I am no longer growing. So, if the assumption of the statement, "healthy things grow," is healthy things get bigger, it is not true. Therefore, it is quite possible for a small church in a small town to be healthy by, "[equipping] God's people for works of service" (Ephesians 4:12), "[devoting] themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer" (Acts 2:42) and fulfilling Jesus' Great Commission to, "...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" (Matthew 28:19-20). In some cases, a healthy church will experience rapid attendance growth, but in others growth will be slow – neither one of these is necessarily a reliable indicator of a church's



THROUGH THE BIBLE IN 2026

FCC encourages our members and friends to read the Bible with us in 2026. This year's plan is chronological in that readings are scheduled in their historical order of events as much as possible. By reading five days a week we will read the entire Bible in 2026. A printed brochure is available on the Literature Table at the back of the Sanctuary, and the plan can also be accessed online at: <https://durandchurch.com/through-the-bible>. Here are the readings for the month of February:

Week 10

- Mar 2: Num 16-19
- Mar 3: Num 20-22
- Mar 4: Num 23-26
- Mar 5: Num 27-30
- Mar 6: Num 31-33

Week 11

- Mar 9: Num 34-36; Deut 1
- Mar 10: Deut 2-3
- Mar 11: Deut 4-7
- Mar 12: Deut 8-11
- Mar 13: Deut 12-14

Week 12

- Mar 16: Deut 15-19

- Mar 17: Deut 20-23
- Mar 18: Deut 24-27
- Mar 19: Deut 28-29
- Mar 20: Deut 30-32

Week 13

- Mar 23: Deut 33-34; Ps 91; Josh 1-3
- Mar 24: Josh 4-7
- Mar 25: Josh 8-10
- Mar 26: Josh 11-14
- Mar 27: Josh 15-19

Week 14

- Mar 30: Josh 20-22
- Mar 31: Josh 23-24; Jdg 1-2



PRAYER MINISTRY

PRAYER CHAIN

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

PRAYER SPACE

We invite everyone to use our Prayer Space in the north-east corner of the Sanctuary for prayer and meditation before, during, and after Worship, as well as any time throughout the week.

ONBOARDING

GETTING TO KNOW FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

March 1, 2026

ONBOARDING

FCC is absolutely thrilled that our fellowship is growing! Pastor Steve will be offering "FCC Onboarding," for anyone interested in learning what it means to be Congregational, as well as how our church gets things done. This one-hour orientation will take place Sunday, March 1, 2026, following Worship. Refreshments will be served.



Super Bowl Sunday - February, 2026

FROM THE PASTOR

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attendance? Of course not! However, attendance growth, drawing a crowd, or getting bigger must never be our focus – it is not the function of the local church. It is com-



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pletely in God's hands, not ours. Let me tell those of you who are part of First Congregational Church something you already know – FCC will never be a big church because we are not in a big community... and that is ok! In fact, it is more normal than you might realize. The most recent United States Census found about 76% of all the incorporated cities in our country have fewer than 5,000 residents and 42% have less than 500. In addition, 70% of churches in the United States have a weekly attendance average of less than 100 and 90% have less than 200. In fact, the median church in the U.S. averages 68 in Sunday attendance. That means an overwhelming majority of communities in our country are small and so are the churches.

Ok, what do we do with all that information – please keep reading...

Be who we are.

Paul wrote, "Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it" (1 Corinthians 12:27). For those of us who are part of First Congregational Church that applies. We belong and we

belong to each other. We are a small church of regular folks who live in and around Durand – some of us are farmers, some are small business owners, some are students, and some are retired. If we believe in a Creator and if we believe Jesus leads his church, then both you as an individual and all of us as his church are who he made us to be. Let's be that without apology.

Be good neighbors.

One of the many things I have come to love about Durand is our amazing community. We have good schools. We have a wonderful Chamber of Commerce. We have an active collection of service organizations. We have good churches. We get to be part of all that. Things like Railroad Days, the End of Summer Cruise, National Night Out, and many, many others give us a great opportunity to participate in our community. It is essential for our church to be part of those things, not to promote ourselves but simply to be good neighbors and represent Jesus.

Be Jesus for those who don't know him yet.

In the classic children's book, "The Velveteen Rabbit" (Margery Williams, 1922) the skin horse teaches the rabbit what is real, "Real isn't how you are made... It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time... really loves you, then you become Real." In other words, we need to be real – Jesus with skin on. Jesus said, "Love the Lord your
Continued - see FROM THE PASTOR on p. 4



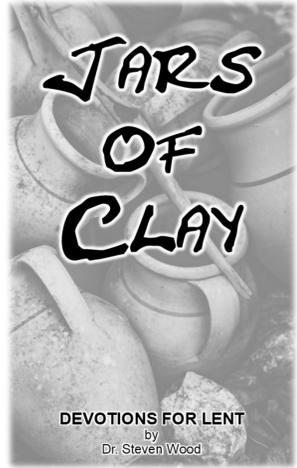
Super Bowl Sunday - February, 2026



Lenten Devotions

JARS OF CLAY

As First Congregational Church continues through the Lenten Season together, we invite everyone to use Pastor Steve's "Jars of Clay" devotions. This collection of 40 daily devotions was written especially for the members and friends of First Congregational Church, but everyone is invited to join the Lenten journey with us. Printed copies of the book are available free of charge at FCC, as well as on our Facebook page. A PDF is available on our website: www.durandchurch.com. The devotions are also part of our daily "CafeDevo" broadcasts on Facebook and YouTube.



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH MISSIONS

FCC MISSIONS

ONE ITEM A MONTH

FCC's One-Item-a-Month for March is CANNED FRUIT AND APPLESAUCE. Please leave these items and any other non-perishable items at the back of the Sanctuary. They will be loaded up and delivered to our friends at Loaves & Fishes for distribution to those in need. If you wish to donate cash, mark your contribution, "Loaves & Fishes" or drop them in the blue jug on the Literature Table. Thank you!

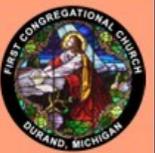
MISSIONS JUG

The five-gallon jug on the Literature Table is intended to raise money for Loaves & Fishes. Everyone is invited to drop in spare change (we take paper money, too!), which is collected by our Missions Board and sent on to Loaves & Fishes to purchase groceries for those in need. Thank you!





MARCH



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 9:00am Women's Mtg. 9:30am Coffee Fellowship 10:00am WORSHIP 11:00am Social Time 11:15am Onboarding	2	3	4 TINA WILHELM 7:00pm Wednesday Nite LIVE(stream) 	5 JACKSON DONLEY	6	7
LENT						
8 DAYLIGHT SAVINGS BEGINS 9:30am Coffee Fellowship 10:00am WORSHIP 11:00am Social Time 11:15am C.E. Board	9	10 6:30pm Women's Bible Study 	11 AYVA MASON 7:00pm Wednesday Nite LIVE(stream) 	12	13	14 7:00pm Game Night
LENT						
15 9:30am Coffee Fellowship 10:00am WORSHIP 11:00am Social Time 11:15am Deacon Board	16	17 ST. PATRICK'S DAY JOAN SMITHENGELL 7:00pm Trustee Board	18 7:00pm Wednesday Nite LIVE(stream) 	19 CHRIS JOHNSTON	20 WALTER WILL MASON PRITT	21
LENT						
22 9:30am Coffee Fellowship 10:00am WORSHIP 11:00am Social Time 11:15am Mission Board	23	24	25 ANNUNCIATION DAY 7:00pm Wednesday Nite LIVE(stream) 	26 NANCY GRUMLEY	27	28
LENT						
29 PALM SUNDAY 9:30am Coffee Fellowship 10:00am WORSHIP 11:00am Social Time	30	31				

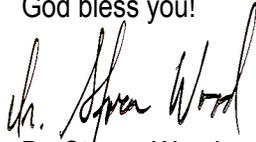
FROM THE PASTOR (continued from p. 3)

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 12:30-31). That's how we do it. **Be welcoming and assimilating.**

This one applies to our local church. Those of us who have been part of FCC for any length of time need to be careful and purposeful in this. We must make a conscious effort to welcome those who come through the door and look for ways to work them into our fellowship when they stick around. We need to remember how scary it can be to walk through the door of a church in the first place – nobody likes

to be the 'new kid!' We must also make sure those who show an interest have opportunities to serve and become part of what we're doing here. Yep. We are a small church in a small town... and I think that is very, very cool.

God bless you!



Dr. Steven Wood
Pastor

- Some of this material was drawn from an article, "The Urgent Need for Smaller Church," by Thom Rainer. Published at www.churchanswers.com (2025).
- The study, "America: A Nation of Small Towns," was published by the United States Census Bureau at www.census.gov (2020).

DO YOU DEVO?!



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

facebook  YouTube

UPCOMING SERMONS

THE JORDAN RIVER RULES



Pastor Steve will continue the "Jordan River Rules" sermon series in March with the following messages:

- March 1, 2026
Part 3: "Know Your History but Don't Live in It"
- March 8, 2026
Part 4: "Risk Helping Each Other"
- March 15, 2026
Part 5: "Remember God's Miracles"
- March 22, 2026
Part 6: "God Gives the Victory"

All of Pastor Steve's sermons are available on Facebook and YouTube, as well as our website: www.durandchurch.com.

