

NOVEMBER

WORSHIP VOLUNTEERS

FCC is very grateful for all the volunteers who keep things running smoothly on Sundays. Here are those who have volunteers 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!

November 1, 2026

Liturgist:	TBD
Ushers:	Mark Russell
	Linda Russell
Acolytes:	TBD
	TBD
PowerPoint:	Sue O'Brien
Camera:	Rodney Dean
Childcare:	Mary Golden
Snacks:	TBD

November 8, 2026

Liturgist:	TBD
Ushers:	Lori Childs
	TBD
Acolytes:	TBD
	TBD
PowerPoint:	TBD
Camera:	Rodney Dean
Childcare:	Cheryl Davenport
Snacks:	TBD

November 15, 2026

Liturgist:	TBD
Ushers:	Doreen Clark
	Dennis Younkin
Acolytes:	Mary Jane Edwards
	TBD
PowerPoint:	TBD
Camera:	Rodney Dean
Childcare:	Tina Wilhelm
Snacks:	Dennis Younkin

November 22, 2026

Liturgist:	TBD
Ushers:	Mary Jane Edwards
	Cindy Stull
Acolytes:	TBD
	TBD
PowerPoint:	TBD
Camera:	Rodney Dean
Childcare:	Lori Childs
Snacks:	NA

November 29, 2026

Liturgist:	NA
Ushers:	Sue O'Brien
	TBD
Acolytes:	TBD
	TBD
PowerPoint:	TBD
Camera:	Rodney Dean
Childcare:	NA
Snacks:	NA



FROM THE PASTOR



THE PEACE THAT PASSES UNDERSTANDING

One of my favorite things that I do as your pastor is the conversations I get to have with people throughout the week. Some conversations are with church folks and others are with friends and neighbors around town as Bugsy and I take our daily walk. Some conversations are long and others are short. Almost all these conversations are a blessing, but lately I am noticing more than a few of them are about peace – peace of mind, peace in our emotions, a general state of peace regardless of specific situations. While Abraham Maslow wrote about what he called a "hierarchy of human needs," that included physiological, security, belonging, esteem, and actualization (Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation," 1943), I am of the opinion that peace is at the core of all our needs. We all crave peace.

Jesus said, *"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid"* (John 14:27) but he also said, *"In this world you will have trouble"* (John 16:33). Is it possible for both statements to be true at the same time? Yes! We all know life can be hard

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FROM THE PASTOR (continued)

and unpredictable as our circumstances can change in a moment with one phone call, a medical report, a financial setback, or an unexpected crisis (is a crisis ever expected?).

The peace we all crave is not the absence of trouble. The peace we all crave is only found in Jesus no matter what our circumstances might be. Peace is not pretending that everything is fine. It is trusting in God's faithfulness even in a crisis.

1. Peace comes through practicing the presence of God.

When peace eludes us, it is often in times of perceived isolation. Times when we feel alone and overwhelmed. Times when we forget God is always with us. One of the greatest sources of fear during a crisis is the feeling that we are facing it alone. When circumstances become overwhelming, we may wonder where God is and whether He understands our pain. The psalmist wrote, *"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging"* (Psalm 46:1-3). Notice God's presence, protection, power, and providence are there in trouble – right in the middle of it! He is there with us so we can have peace even in crisis. We move closer to the peace we all crave when we choose to practice the presence of God – we focus on his presence and keep focusing on his presence until peace comes.

2. Peace comes when we pray it through.

"Praying it through" is a phrase I learned from my grandfather and others in his generation. It is the act of praying and continuing to pray until peace comes – not necessarily until the situation is resolved to our satisfaction, but until peace comes. There is a difference.

Sometimes we pray for solutions when we should pray for peace. Our FCC ladies group recently had a Bible study on Hannah, the mother of Samuel. The Old Testament book of 1st Samuel tells us Hannah had more than her share of troubles – she desperately wanted a child and to make matters worse her husband's other wife had children and mocked Hannah because of it. *"In her deep anguish Hannah prayed to the Lord, weeping bitterly"* (1st Samuel 1:10). This went on for years. However, at some point Hannah received peace from the Lord, *"Then she went her way and ate something, and her face was no longer downcast"* (1 Samuel 1:18). Many of you know how the story ended as Hannah gave birth to Samuel. However, she received the peace of the Lord before her circumstances changed. Peace often precedes resolution and sometimes we need to "pray it through" – keep praying until we get peace whether resolution comes or not.

3. Peace comes when we choose to let God work.

When peace eludes us, especially in a crisis, the temptation is to attempt to manage our circumstances or even fix the situation. We feel an almost irresistible drive to do something ourselves instead of letting God work. We worry, we stress, we even panic which often leads to mistakes that make the situation even worse.

Jesus taught, *"Therefore… do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear... Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? …So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his*

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November 1, 2026

GREAT DIVIDE SUNDAY

If we're all honest (and we always should be) neither mitten team is tearing up the gridiron this season, but The team from east lansing comes to The Big House to take on the MICHIGAN WOLVERINES on November 7, 2026. That means First Congregational Church will hold our annual Great Divide Sunday on November 1, 2026. Even though MICHIGAN holds a 75-38 advantage in this game and have beaten sparty four times in a row, Pastor Steve is choosing to remain quiet this year while hoping the Paul Bunyan trophy will stay in Ann Arbor, and the beautiful MAIZE AND BLUE flag will be flying over FCC at game's end. Everyone is encouraged to choose a side and wear the colors of your choice for Great Divide Sunday, November 1, 2026. GO BLUE!

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
MISSIONS

ONE ITEM A MONTH

FCC's One-Item-a-Month for November is FINANCIAL DONATIONS FOR LOAVES & FISHES. This important ministry always needs additional support during the holiday season, so we are simplifying the process with cash. All donations marked "Missions," "Benevolence," or "Loaves & Fishes" will be sent directly. You can also drop donations in the blue jug on the Literature Table. Thank you!





FROM THE PASTOR (continued)

righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Matthew 6:25-34).

Jesus was not encouraging irresponsibility or discouraging wise planning. He was simply teaching us to trust him. In this life there are things we can control, but there are many other things we cannot control. Peace comes when we choose to trust God and let him work in the ways only he can.

4. Peace comes when we let others help us.

Our local church is one of our greatest resources in this life, especially in a crisis, but we often attempt to handle hard circumstances alone. Paul wrote, *"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ"* (Galatians 6:2). While we respect one another too much to violate privacy, we must not allow pride to keep us from reaching out to one another, especially when help is needed. Of course, the church is not equipped to fix every situation, but who is?

Sometimes we need a friend to listen, to "pray it through" with us, or to simply come alongside. The local church is uniquely equipped for this very thing. You and I were not created to carry every burden alone. Sometimes peace comes when we let the church help.

I suspect we all know the peace we crave is not found in perfect circumstances, financial security, predictable outcomes, or the ability to control every detail of life. It is found only in Jesus Christ. We can have confidence in his character, presence, and promises even when circumstances remain difficult. Your storm may not end when you want it to. Your answer may not come as quickly as you hope. However, you can have the peace of God because Jesus is with you.

God bless you!

Dr. Steven Wood
Pastor

THROUGH THE BIBLE

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. Here are the readings for the month of November:

Week 45
- Nov 2: Luk 16-17; John 11
- Nov 3: Luk 18; Mat 19; Mk 10
- Nov 4: Mat 20-21; Luk 19; Mk 11
- Nov 5: John 12; Mat 22; Mk 12
- Nov 6: Mat 23; Luk 20-21

Week 46
- Nov 9: Mk 13; Mat 24-25
- Nov 10: Mat 26; Mk 14
- Nov 11: Luk 22; John 13-14
- Nov 12: John 15-17; Mat 27
- Nov 13: Mk 15; Luk 23; John 18

Week 47
- Nov 16: John 19; Mat 28; Mk 16; Luk 24
- Nov 17: John 20-21; Acts 1-2
- Nov 18: Acts 3-6
- Nov 19: Acts 7-9
- Nov 20: Acts 10-12

Week 48
- Nov 23: Acts 13-14; Jam 1-3
- Nov 24: Jam 4-5; Acts 15-16; Gal 1
- Nov 25: Gal 2-6
- Nov 26: Acts 17; 1 Th 1-5; 2 Th 1
- Nov 27: 2 Th 2-3; Acts 18-19; 1 Cor 1

Week 49
- Nov 30: 1 Cor 2-7



WOMEN'S MINISTRY

CHRISTMAS PROJECT

FCC Women's group is assembling 20 bags to be handed out to those in need in December. Donations of warm scarves and comfy socks for both men and women are needed by the end of November.

BIBLE STUDY

ATTENTION LADIES! We will meet Tuesday, November 10, 2026, at 6:30pm as Linda Russell leads a Bible Study about "The Story of Lydia." Everyone is asked to read Acts Chapter 16 to prepare. Also read The Story of Lydia in your study book if you have one.

Thanksgiving AT FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

THANKSGIVING DINNER

First Congregational Church will celebrate Thanksgiving with Worship and dinner on Sunday, November 22, 2026. The day begins with coffee and fellowship at 9:30am and continues with Thanksgiving Worship at 10am. Following Worship, we will gather for dinner in the social hall. The church will provide the meat, and we ask everyone to bring a side dish and a dessert to share. It will be a great time with great food and fellowship, so come join us!

COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING SERVICE

First Congregational Church will host the annual Durand Community Thanksgiving Service on Tuesday, November 24, 2026, at 7:00pm. The whole community is invited to join us for fellowship, prayer, music, and a Thanksgiving message from our pastor, Dr. Steven Wood. In addition, a special offering will be taken for Loaves & Fishes. Those who wish can bring canned goods and nonperishable items for Loaves & Fishes, as well. Join FCC and give thanks in worship with our friends and neighbors.

November 29, 2026

SANTA'S LIGHT PARADE

Durand's annual Santa's Light Parade steps off at 6:00pm on Saturday, November 29, 2026, and travels down Saginaw Street to the Sandula Clock Tower. This year's theme is, "A Star-Spangled Christmas," and FCC will be there to welcome Santa Claus and kick-off the Christmas season with our friends and neighbors. Volunteers are needed to get our float ready to roll. We also need someone to pull the float in the parade and a few folks to walk along side. Contact Pastor Steve for more information ASAP!

DO YOU DEVO?! Cafe DEVO
STREAMING DAILY AT 6:00AM (AND THE REST OF THE DAY)
facebook YouTube

NOVEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Daylight Savings Time Ends **GREAT DIVIDE SUNDAY** 9:00am Women's Meeting 9:30am Coffee Fellowship 10:00am WORSHIP 11:00am Social Time	**2** CHEYENNE STULL	**3** ELECTION DAY	**4** TRUDY NICKS 7:00pm Wednesday Nite LIVE(stream)	**5** 4:30-7pm Roast Beef Dinner	**6**	**7**
8 9:30am Coffee Fellowship 10:00am WORSHIP 11:00am Social Time 11:15am C.E. Board	**9**	**10** 6:30pm Ladies Bible Study	**11** VETERANS DAY 7:00pm Wednesday Nite LIVE(stream)	**12** SHERYL ZDUNIC	**13** ALICE SPRINGSTEEN	**14**
15 BRIAN DEWALD TYLER CHILDS 9:30am Coffee Fellowship 10:00am WORSHIP 11:00am Social Time 11:15am Deacon Board	**16**	**17** BETH AUSTIN CONNIE KLEIN GRACE GILSON 7:00pm Trustee Board	**18** 7:00pm Wednesday Nite LIVE(stream)	**19**	**20**	**21** ANNA GLASS
22 9:30am Coffee Fellowship 10:00am WORSHIP 11:00am Thanksgiving Dinner	**23**	**24** MARY GOLDEN 7:00pm Community Thanksgiving Service	**25**	**26** THANKSGIVING DAY AMY DRURY	**27**	**28** 10:00am "Hanging of the Greens" Set-Up 6:00pm Durand Light Parade
29 1st Sunday of Advent 9:30am Coffee Fellowship **10:00am 13th Annual "Hanging of the Greens"** 11:00am Social Time	**30**	Thanksgiving AT FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH	"Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever." (Psalm 107:1)			

November 29, 2026

HANGING OF THE GREENS

FCC will kick off the Advent Season with our 13th Annual "Hanging of the Greens" Worship Celebration at 10:00am on Sunday, November 29, 2026. This very special time of Worship has become a much-loved tradition at FCC, and everyone is invited as we decorate our Sanctuary for the season.

As has been the case every year, those who wish to support "Hanging of the Greens," through financial donations toward specific decorations may do so using the Order Form in this issue of The Lamplighter. Please clip out the form, fill it out, and turn it in to Pastor Steve with your donation. If you wish to mail it, the church address is on the front page of this issue. Thank you!

"Hanging of the Greens" includes Biblical readings, explanations of many of the traditions of Christmas, and singing just about every Christmas Carol in our hymnal. By the time we reach the Benediction, our beautiful, historic Sanctuary will be decorated with a live tree, wreaths, garland, holly, ivy, and even mistletoe. The service is kid-friendly, family-focused, easy to take part in, and the perfect way to begin the Advent Season. Everyone is inviited to join us, take pictures, and Worship our Savior Jesus Christ as we begin preparing for the celebration of his birth. **PLEASE NOTE: We will gather to set up for "Hanging of the Greens" on Saturday, November 28, 2026, at 10:00am and we need all the volunteers we can get!** Come join us as we prepare for one of our favorite services of the year.

2026 ORDER FORM

Thank you for helping decorate our Sanctuary for Advent and Christmas this year! Please indicate the item(s) and quantity(s) you wish to donate on this form, fill in your name and the name of the individual(s) your financial gift is in memory of, and turn it in with your donation to Pastor Steve by November 23, 2026.

QUANTITY	ITEM	COST
_____	**Tree** (need 1)	$150.00
_____	**Altar Wreaths** (need 4)	$85.00
_____	**Sanctuary Wreaths** (need 10)	$60.00
_____	**Advent Wreath** (need 1)	$35.00
_____	**Large Poinsettias** (need 4)	$60.00
_____	**Medium Poinsettias** (need 24)	$25.00
_____	**Evergreen Garland Ropes** (need 4)	$50.00
	Undesignated Cash Donation (any amount)	_____
	TOTAL DONATION	_____

YOUR NAME: _____

IN MEMORY OF: _____

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