

April 2026

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
319 DOWNTOWN PLAZA
FAIRMONT, MN 56031-1776

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First Congregational UCC
319 Downtown Plaza
Fairmont, MN 56031



WHEELCHAIR
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*First Congregational
United Church of Christ
Fairmont, Minnesota*

Rev. Cory Germain
Minister

Christina Hainy
Administrative Assist.

Joyce Jorgenson
Choir Director

How to reach us....

Church Office
507-235-5382

Hours: Tuesday—Friday
9:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m.

E-mail

uccsecretary319@gmail.com

Web Site Address

www.fairmontucc.org

Rev. Cory Germain
Office Hours:

Monday 9:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m.

Tuesday 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Wednesday 12:30 p.m. through
evening meetings & activities

Thursday 9:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m.

Rev. Cory's phone: 507-399-8282

Worship Hours

Worship 10:00 AM

Sunday school 10:00 AM.

**Communion the second
Sunday of every month.**

April 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 April Fool's Day 4:00 NO Confirmation 5:15 CE Bd 6:00 Worship Bd 7:00 Choir	2 Maundy Thursday 11:30 MRCI (FS/HH) 1:00 TOPS (Narthex) 5:30 Maundy Thursday Service	3 Good Friday -Office Closed- 12:00 Ecumenical Service (Grace) 5:30 Good Friday Service	4
5 Easter 10:00 Easter Worship with Communion 11:15 Egg Hunt	6	7 10:00 Lakeview Communion	8 4:00 Confirmation 5:30 Mission Bd 5:30 Diaconate Bd 5:30 Hospitality Bd 7:00 Choir	9 11:30 MRCI (FS/HH) 1:00 TOPS (Narthex)	10	11
12 10:00 Worship with Blake Potthoff Sunday school	13 9:00 Council agenda items due 5:30 Hospital Foundation	14 6:00 Facilities Bd	15 4:00 Confirmation 5:45 Church Council 7:00 Choir	16 11:30 MRCI (FS/HH) 1:00 TOPS (Narthex)	17	18
19 10:00 Worship Sunday school	20 9:00 May newsletter items due	21 10:00 Goldfinch Communion	22 4:00 Confirmation 7:00 Choir	23 11:30 MRCI (FS/HH) 1:00 TOPS (Narthex)	24 11:00 May Newsletter assembly	25
26 10:00 Worship <i>Blessing Box collection</i> Sunday school	27	28	29 4:00 Confirmation 5:30 Free Community Meal 7:00 Choir	30 9:30 Bible study 11:30 MRCI (FS/HH) 1:00 TOPS (Narthex)		

The Reverend's Ruminations - April 2026

"In like a lion, out like a lamb..." I started with that familiar quote last month, and it seems now as though it will come true — albeit with that BIG blizzard right in the middle to remind us that funny little homespun quotes can't begin to predict or control the weather in Minnesota!?! As we look forward to the celebration of Jesus' resurrection on Easter Sunday (April 5), it seems though the hearty will be able to wear their springy Easter dresses and perhaps even sandals — as long as they have a light sweater and don't mind slightly chilly toes.

During the last week of February and the first week of March, I had the opportunity to escape to (mostly) warmer climates while attending the "Wing Chaplain Course" at the Air Force Chaplain Corps College at Maxwell AFB in Montgomery, Alabama. This iteration of my chaplain training was unique in that my senior enlisted counterpart from the chapel section at the 133rd Airlift Wing was able to attend the course with me. Officers and enlisted usually train separately (at different bases, in fact) in order to concentrate on the specific skills of their occupations, but finally at this level the training focused on working together as the Senior Religious Support Team (RST) to more effectively manage the other Chaplains and enlisted Religious Affairs Airmen at our wing, as well as preparing us for higher-level planning, programming, leadership advisement, and even budgeting that help us to support the spiritual resiliency of all the hard-working Airmen at our Wing. I thank you once again for your continuing flexibility and support of my military ministry, which truly is a form of our church's mission outreach to the military members of our great state. I enjoy sharing about the ministries of First Congregational UCC with the Airmen I support, as "civilian jobs" and hometowns are a frequent conversation icebreaker among military members, helping us create personal connections during drill weekends away from our families.

As the calendar page turns to April, we'll already be right in the middle of **Holy Week** and quietly preparing ourselves for **Easter Sunday on April 5th**. Have you managed to stick with a Lenten sacrifice such as giving up candy, pop, or salty snacks over the last nearly six weeks? I hope that no matter how the rest of your Lenten journey has unfolded, you will take the opportunity to experience the solemnity of our short **Maundy Thursday** and **Good Friday** evening worship services (5:30 pm on both April 2nd & 3rd). The betrayal, trial, and crucifixion stories we recount at each of these services are essential to understanding what makes the celebration of Easter so central to the Christian faith.

On Easter morning we will all share in Communion as we joyfully exclaim, "He is risen!" — proclaiming the good news from John 20:1-18 for all the world to hear. I invite each of you to read ahead from John's gospel, and then gather together as brothers and sisters in Christ to experience the familiar story again for the first time as we celebrate the resurrection of our Savior and worship our great God!

And then... all too soon, even the excitement and joy of Easter morning will seemingly come and go.

But as will be mentioned in our sermon that blessed morning, the challenge given to us is not only to remember Jesus' resurrection, but to continue believing and applying its joy in the days, weeks, and months afterward. I hope that you are always ready to boldly proclaim, "He is risen...He is risen indeed!"

My prayer for you this month is that, inspired once more by the Easter miracle, you will know such joy, grace, and hope in the resurrection of Jesus Christ that your life will become proof of that good news. Let all our words and actions, our love and service, bear witness to God's resurrection power; for the sake of our living Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen!

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Cory Germain

rightnow MEDIA

Worship services from First Congregational UCC are available & searchable by date alongside the other great content on the [free rightnow MEDIA website](#) & app!

Peter, one of the most famous apostles of Jesus, opens his first letter to a group of exiled believers with these words: *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time"* (1Peter 1:3-5). What an invitation!



We'll be hearing readings from 1 Peter during worship in April & May, so why not familiarize yourself with this powerful letter through a seven-session series called **The Book of 1 Peter**. Here's a brief synopsis:

This world looks nothing like the promised perfect kingdom of God. And yet we as God's people must live in it every day. In The Book of 1 Peter, Kyle Idleman walks through the short letter and unpacks the importance of our witness in this world.

The world's not as it should be. Until the day that God rights all wrongs, we have a job to do. Let's be about the business of the kingdom!

If you peruse social media, you likely have some favorite sources that entertain or inform you. If you have kids around the house, they are very much in tune to what particularly popular sources or personalities are saying, wearing, or listening to. Those characters or sources are called "influencers," and while some are wholesome, there are plenty who are just out to make a buck or stoke opinions one way or another. **JQHQ** is back with a second season, and they're exploring what it takes to be an "influencer" in the Christian world in **JQHQ - Season 2**:

Jemma and Quinn explore the world of influencers, asking, Am I an influencer? and What does it take to go viral? Their search takes them from starting a fashion label and testing one-star online products to visiting a WWII machine-gun barracks — and diving into the lives of some of the Bible's most influential figures.

*A free downloadable devotional is available to accompany each episode and guide some meaningful discussion with your young viewers.



*Do you still need your own **FREE rightnow MEDIA** account, OR would you like to share this great resource with a friend?

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Text **FCONG to 49775**, or scan this QR code with your smartphone camera or code reader—>



Once logged in to your **FREE** account, you can click directly on "First Congregational UCC" near the top of the page to access the "Fairmont Worship Services" channel, or "Pastor Cory's Picks"—which is where you'll find videos I've recommended here, as well as others that interest me. Stay tuned... the list grows as I discover new picks! If you've found a show or video on **rightnow MEDIA** that you think others would enjoy, email me and I'll promote it in next month's column.

~ Pastor Cory



**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC
FAIRMONT, MN
CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES FOR 3-18-2026**

Members Present: Michael Rowan, Rebecca Lunz, Cynthia Celander (treasurer), Larry Lasch (vice moderator), Joy Pollock, Kay Campe (past moderator), Amanda Forstrom (moderator). **Members Absent:** Sue Kruse (CE representative), Jon Neitzel (Diaconate representative), Carol Barrick (at large representative), and Christina Hainy (church clerk/admin asst). **Ex-officio Members Present:** Pastor Cory, Dara Bliesmer (Asst. Treasurer).

The council met in the Heritage Hall at 6:06 pm. Moderator, Amanda Forstrom, called the meeting to order and Pastor Cory provided the opening prayer. After a family sharing time, the agenda was accepted as presented.

A motion was M/S/C to approve the minutes from the February 18, 2026 council meeting (Michael Rowan/Joy Pollock).

Treasurer's Report: Cynthia Celander presented the report. At the end of February, the church is at 12% of the budget received (was 10% at end of January). Regarding the investment funds, the markets are down, but so far our accounts are barely holding their own. Cynthia will be meeting with Catherine Johnson on Tuesday evening (3/24/26), for further training in the online giving software. A motion to receive the treasurer's report was M/S/C (Joy Pollock/Michael Rowan).

Pastor's Report: Pastor Cory reported on his activities for the past month, including the good attendance at the community Ash Wednesday worship service we hosted (40), giving the invocation for the Student Government Day at the Legion, and attending the Air Force Wing Chaplain Course at Maxwell AFB that was a reschedule from 2025. He will be gone from April 21-27 for a continuing education conference (Presbyterian Board of Pensions CREDO Mid-Career conference in Little Rock, AR) that was approved at February council meeting.

BOARD REPORTS:

Christian Education: No representative present as Sue is sick today. Pastor Cory shared they will be having the Last Supper meal on 3/25/2026 at 6pm. They will be having the Easter Egg Hunt on Easter Sunday and planning for graduation Sunday is underway. It will be either May 10 or May 17th.

Hospitality: Becky reported on their hosting of the February free community meal: they served 72 in person with 45 take-outs for a total of 117. Planning for the Pie & Ice Cream Social on June 13, 2026 is getting underway.

Facilities: Michael Rowan reported they went over some open projects and got the report from the recent state elevator inspection. There are 3 small things to do, but nothing mechanical.

Diaconate: No representative was present. Will have communion with the Maundy Thursday service (4/2/26) and Easter Sunday (4/5/26), then NOT on 4/12/26.

Missions: Joy Pollock shared that the February Blessing Box for One Great Hour of Sharing brought in \$550. The Mission Board is doing the March free community meal on 3/25/2026. The Service Club (former Exchange Club) will be serving the April community meal. Meals on Wheels coming up May 1-15, 2026.

Worship: Kay Campe updated us on plans for Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. They are hosting the May free community meal and will be service taco salad.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: No committee reports. Pastoral Relations Committee has one opening.

OLD BUSINESS: Cynthia Celander shared that Lindsey Pruess from Edward Jones will meet with the council at the April meeting (4/15/26) at 5:45 and she'll be the first order of business. Dara Bliesmer presented info she's gathered on using QuickBooks for direct deposit for 3 employees (administrative assistant, choir director, and pianist). There is no extra fee associated with using this service through QuickBooks. Council decided to have her do a test run with one employee (admin assist) next month.

NEW BUSINESS: We had a brief discussion on ways to increase membership/attract new members. This is not only an issue we have ourselves, but other churches do locally, state-wide, and nationally too. We will initially look into any potential resources through the UCC conference and the UCC.org website.

Amanda Forstrom, moderator, adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted, Amanda Forstrom, filling in for church clerk



Lenten Worship Schedule

Holy Week

Sun Mar 29: Palm/Passion Sunday

10:00 AM Worship

Thu Apr 2: Maundy Thursday

5:30 PM Worship

Fri Apr 3: Good Friday

Noon: Community/Ecumenical Service at Grace Lutheran

5:30 PM Worship

6:00 PM Last Supper (for youth)

Sun Apr 5: Easter

10:00 AM Easter Worship

Egg hunt

Easter Egg Hunt

After Easter Sunday worship!





April Partners in Ministry:

Diaconate: Jon Neitzel

Usher: Tom Barrick

Readers:

5th: Carol Barrick

12th: Blakely Weber

19th: Amanda Forstrom

26th: Margo Weaver

Thank you to the Bible study ladies who put together the March newsletter!

-Christina

MISSION MINUTE:

April's Blessing Box: Strengthen the Church

The Strengthen the Church (STC) Offering reflects the shared commitment of people across the United Church of Christ to build up the UCC cooperatively.

Conferences and the national setting equally share the gifts given by members and friends through their local congregations. The funds raised support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and innovation in existing congregations. You build up the Body of Christ with your generosity to this offering.

As God calls our congregations to be the church in new ways, your generosity will plant new churches, awaken new ideas in existing churches and develop the spiritual life in you and your members/friends.

Please pray about your tithing towards this project.



MEMORIALS

Date	Memory/Honor of	Designation	From
03.08.26	John & Donna Holstine's Anniversary		Margo Weaver
03.08.26	Ann Hartmann's Birthday		Les Heinrich
03.08.26	Arlene Fancher		Les Heinrich
03.08.26	Peggy Heinrich		Les Heinrich

Pastor Cory is available for counseling, home visitation and hospital visitation. Please notify the church office (507-235-5382) or Pastor Cory (507-399-8282).

Flower Signup: If there is a Sunday that has a special meaning to you and you would like to provide the flowers, please sign up on the calendar by the coat closet. Write your name and who the flowers are in memory/honor of. Please know that we appreciate you sharing your special memories/days with us!

Contact Kay Campe with questions at (507) 236-9097 or kayanncampe@gmail.com.

Prayer Request Cards are on the table in the Narthex. Please share your joys and concerns on the card and return it to the usher prior to the Pastoral Prayer if you would like your request included in our prayers during the worship service.

Hy-Vee & Fareway Report as of Report as of 22 March 2026

During the last 4 weeks, \$9,231.1 (4.62%) worth of Hy-Vee slips were received. After 16 weeks, Hy-Vee is at \$52,637.96 (26.32%) toward the 19th goal of \$200,000.

During the same time, \$3,133.14 (2.09%) worth of Fareway slips were received. After 15 weeks, Fareway is at \$13,130.04 (8.75%) toward our 6th \$150,000 goal.

This program started the first of March 2011, so any slips from then until now can be used. If you don't remember the date, just turn in the slips and I will take out any that are earlier than that, as there was on for March 1, 2004 during the period that just ended. Any Fairmont Fareway and Hy-Vee food store register slip or deliver pages can be used. Hy-Vee slips from Fast & Fresh (Gas), Caribou Coffee, Food Service, and Pharmacy can be used toward the goal. Even those with small dollar amount help. Thanks to all who are turning in their slips at church, mailing them to me or bring them to my house.

Reported by; Jim Bock

BEST EVER BLUEBERRY MUFFINS from Jane Kotewa

3 c. flour
1 c. sugar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ t. salt
4 t. baking powder
Stir together with whisk.

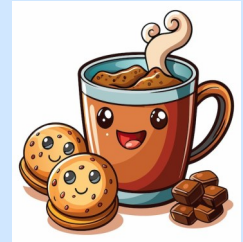
Add: 1 c. oil
2 beaten eggs
1 c. milk
Mix gently, then add:
2 c. fresh or frozen blueberries. (Fold in gently)



Sprinkle sugar over top, or use streusel mixture after pouring into muffin cups, greased or with paper liners. Bake at 375 degrees for 15 to 20 minutes.



If you would like to provide treats and coffee after a church service, please sign up in the binder on the back table of the sanctuary. Please ask a hospitality board member (Terri Luetgers, Rebecca Lunz, Sherry Larson, Donna Grotte, Pat Cowing or Deb Adams) if you have any questions.



2026 Graduates (High School & College) &

Parents: Please let us know if May 10, May 17 or a different Sunday in May works for a Graduate Recognition Sunday, if you have not done so already. Email the office at uccsecretary319@gmail.com.

If you would like to have an announcement for your graduate's party in the newsletter and on the bulletin board, please send one to the office, 319 Downtown Plaza, by April 19th (for May party) or by May 22nd (for June party).

Thanks!!

The church newsletter is available on the church website!
Upcoming events, birthdays & anniversaries and the church calendar are updated there as well.
Check it out at:
fairmontucc.org



Setting up online giving to First Congregational UCC, Fairmont

See the links on our church website, fairmontucc.org,

or

Scan the QR code



Or use this web address:

<https://firstcongoucc.churchtrac.com/give>

You will be taken to our ChurchTrac page where you will be asked to sign in or create an account. ChurchTrac will link you to Stripe, the secure payment system.

Giving can be done through your checking account or by credit card.

Welcome April

Happy Anniversary:

April 5	Curt & Vicki Bicknase	29 years
April 10	Douglas & Kris Fuller	44 years
April 16	Kirk & Gina Jorgensen	21 years
April 20	Jacob & Abby Shoen	13 years
April 20	Eugene & Polly Mosloski	22 years
April 23	Curt & Terri Luetgers	50 years
April 27	Tim & Kay Campe	41 years
April 30	Jim & Barb Bock	60 years

Happy Birthday:

April 4	Caleb Rachuy	April 16	Rev. Lyle Norris
April 5	Vonnie Cone		K.T. Magnussen
	Bill Cowing	April 18	Terry Riggs
	Dan Wenz	April 21	Cameron Hainy
April 6	James Marushin		Arianna Moller Smith
	Jan White		Jerry Norman
	Dave Meschke		Jackson Grefe
April 7	Dan Thate	April 22	Donna Grotte
April 10	Marcia Musser		Rachel Tonneson
April 12	Doug Guritz	April 26	Lorin Pollock
April 13	Joyce Knudson		Ken Schwieger
	Jayden Garlick	April 28	Nola Thedens
	Kris Fuller		Michael Neusch
April 15	Randy Rowan		
	Chris Draper		
	Maverick Grefe		

If your birthday or anniversary is not listed or is incorrect, please notify the church office.