

# March 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



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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](mailto:uccsecretary319@gmail.com)

**Web Site Address**

[www.fairmontucc.org](http://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.**

# March 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b> 10:00 "Sing Along" Worship Sunday school	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> 4:00 NO Confirmation <b>5:30 Lenten service</b> 6:00 Worship Bd 6:10 Mission Bd 7:00 Choir	<b>5</b> 11:30 MRCI (FS/HH) 1:00 TOPS (Narthex)	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8 Daylight Saving Time begins!</b> 10:00 Worship Communion Sun- day school	<b>9</b> 5:30 Hospital Foundation	<b>10</b> 6:00 Facilities Bd	<b>11</b> 4:00 Confirmation 4:30 Hospitality Bd <b>5:30 Lenten service</b> 6:10 Diaconate Bd 7:00 Choir	<b>12</b> 11:30 MRCI (FS/HH) 1:00 TOPS (Narthex)	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> 10:00 Worship Sunday school	<b>16</b> 9:00 Council agenda items due	<b>17 St. Patrick's Day</b>  10:00 Gold- finch Communion	<b>18</b> 4:00 Confirmation <b>5:30 Lenten service</b> 6:00 Church Council 7:00 Choir	<b>19</b> 11:30 MRCI (FS/HH) 1:00 TOPS (Narthex)	<b>20 First day of Spring</b> 9:00 April newsletter items due	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> 10:00 Worship Sunday school	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> 4:00 Confirmation <b>5:30 Lenten Service</b> & Free Community Meal 7:00 Choir	<b>26</b> 9:30 Bible study 11:00 April Newsletter assembly 11:30 MRCI (FS/HH) 1:00 TOPS	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29 Palm/ Passion Sunday</b> 10:00 Worship Noisy Sunday Blessing Box Collection Sunday school	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>				

## *The Reverend's Ruminations - March 2026*

*"In like a lion, out like a lamb..."* So goes the old saying about March, but will it be the case this year? So far the opening days of March are not predicted to be all that cold or stormy, but as one of my favorite quotes from the Fats Waller musical *Ain't Misbehavin'* says, *"One never knows, do one?"* After the wide range of temperatures we saw in late January and early February, it truly is anyone's guess!

No matter what our March weather does, we will inevitably adapt as good Minnesotans do. Perhaps in a way, it would actually be *helpful* to have a cold and snowy early March. Blasphemous, I know, but hear me out: we're only about ten days into the forty solemn days of the church season known as **Lent**. And while I don't necessarily *prefer* the cold, snow, and ice of a Minnesota March, don't those conditions more readily invite you to spend time spend a bit more time by a crackling fire, praying or reading your Bible or a daily devotional? Some will site the beautiful sunsets and how being out walking on an unseasonably warm afternoon makes them "feel closer to God," but are you honestly spending those moments contemplating Jesus and his forty days of temptation in the wilderness, his trial before the Roman governor Pilate, or the gruesome death he endured upon the Cross? Maybe being forced inside by biting windchills wouldn't automatically change your perspective; but then again, maybe it would inspire more reflection for some.

Much like the New Year's resolutions that I made brief mention of last month, **Lent** inspires many Christians to give up the comfort of a favorite food, drink, or habit for a season in order to gain a better understanding of our Savior's suffering and temptation in the wilderness. If you have done something along those lines, how has it affected your view of Lent? While such activities (or the denial of them) can seem depressing to some — especially when we are still battling against shortened daylight and generally cold temperatures — they're not meant to make our mental condition even more stressful. The intention of Lent is to appreciate Christ's temptation, and ultimately his willing sacrifice on our behalf.

Even if you have not chosen to give up something, one of the most important aspects of Lent is **confession** — although not in the foreboding sense of a confessional booth that you may be picturing from some old movie. As pastor and author Rev. Sarah Phillips once wrote, *"... [the forty days of Lent] are set aside to really examine areas of recurring sin in our lives that prevent us from being conformed to God's Will... The goal is to honestly examine your life in light of God's Word and to make a commitment to change in any areas you have not submitted to the Lord."* None of us have yet managed to fully live up to Christ's example, so just be honest as you examine your Christian walk — and then look for ways to make improvements, incremental as they may be.

A good way to start your own examination of conscience is by praying the words of **Psalm 139:23-24**: *"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."* After opening yourself to God with these words, then hold up your life to the Ten Commandments. Confess to God, to me as your pastor, or to an accountability partner (as suggested in James 5:16) the ways you may have sinned against God. But don't stop there, or you may really feel stuck! Remember also to thank God for the forgiveness offered through Christ's sacrifice, and then ask God for the grace to change. You may be pleasantly surprised where and when God chooses to respond in your life.

My prayer for you this month is that you approach the remainder of Lent with a renewed sense of purpose, and find yourself connecting more deeply to our Savior's temptation and sacrifice in the coming weeks. Throughout March I invite you to pause at church each Wednesday at 5:30 pm for our 30-minute Lenten services, where we will sing, pray, and share in some additional thoughts on the season's epistle lessons as we move toward the ultimate joy of Christ's glorious resurrection on **Easter morning** — celebrated this year on **April 5<sup>th</sup>**. See you along the Lenten journey!

Yours in Christ,

*Rev. Cory Germain*



**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC  
FAIRMONT, MN  
CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES FOR 2-18-2026**

**Members Present:** Cynthia Celandier, Amanda Forstrom, Christina Hainy, Donne Grotte, Larry Lasch, Joy Pollock, and Michael Rowan. **Members Absent:** Carol Barrick, Kay Campe, Jon Neitzel, and a CE representative. **Ex-officio Members Present:** Pastor Cory and Dara Bliesmer, Asst. Treasurer.

The Council met in the Heritage Hall at 6:10 PM. Moderator Amanda Forstrom called the meeting to order. After a family sharing time, a motion was M/S/C to accept an amended agenda (Cynthia Celandier/Michael Rowan).

A motion was M/S/C to approve the minutes from the special council meeting on January 25, 2026 (Larry Lasch/Michael Rowan).

**Treasurer's Report:** Cynthia Celandier reported that Catherine Johnson has been training her in on the treasurer's financial duties. At the end of January, the church is at 10% of the budget received. A motion to receive the treasurer's report was M/S/C (Michael Rowan/Larry Lasch).

**Pastor's Report:** Pastor Cory reported on his activities for the month, including two Honor Guard funerals in one day. He will be attending an Air Force Wing Chaplain Course from February 22 to March 7, 2026.

**BOARD REPORTS:**

**Christian Education:** No representative was present. There is an open position on the board that needs to be filled.

**Hospitality:** Donna Grotte said they will serve the February free community meal, and they are planning to have the Pie and Ice Cream Social with BBQs during Interlaken Heritage Days, Saturday, June 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Facilities:** Michael Rowan reported that they did not have a February meeting. The board did some work at the church, including fixing a lock on a bathroom stall in February.

**Diaconate:** No representative was present. The board has been making some home visits.

**Mission:** Joy Pollock told us that the Kids Against Hunger pack was a good day, and the church team packed nineteen boxes of food.

**Worship:** No representative was present. The Community Ash Wednesday service was at our church with around forty attendees.

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

**OLD BUSINESS:** Cynthia Celandier will check with Lindsey Preuss on meeting with council in April about our investments. Carol Barrick will be working on the church directory.

**NEW BUSINESS:** A motion was M/S/C to pay the \$250 dues to the Greater Plaza Area Council (Cynthia Celandier/Larry Lasch). A motion was M/S/C to add Dara Bliesmer as a signer on the bank account and to add the current church moderator, Amanda Forstrom, as a signer for the safe deposit box (Larry Lasch/Joy Pollock). A motion was M/S/C to pay \$500 for Pastor Cory to attend the Presbyterian Board of Pensions CREDO Mid-Career Conference in Little Rock, Arkansas April 21-27, 2026 (Michael Rowan/Joy Pollock).

Amanda Forstrom, Moderator, adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted, Christina Hainy, Church Clerk



## Lenten Worship Schedule

**Every Wednesday in March (4th, 11th, 18th, 25th):**  
5:30 PM Lenten Service

### **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

**Sun Apr 5: Easter**  
10:00 AM Easter Worship



*DAYLIGHT SAVINGS BEGINS ON*

*Sunday, March 8th.*

*REMEMBER TO "SPRING FORWARD"  
ONE HOUR!!*



## Noisy Sunday

is on Sunday, March 29th!  
Let's make some noise!

### **March Partners in Ministry:**

**Diaconate: Abigail Anderson**

**Usher: David Huset**

**Readers:**

**1st: Cynthia Celander**

**8th: Ellen Germain**

**15th: Margo Weaver**

**22nd: Abigail Anderson**

**29th: Kay Campe**

### **April Partners in Ministry:**

**Diaconate: Jon Neitzel**

**Usher: Tom Barrick**

**Readers:**

**5th: Carol Barrick**

**12th: Blakely Weber**

**19th: Amanda Forstrom**

**26th: Margo Weaver**



Minnesota Food Share is the focus of the **BLESSING BOX** offering for March. The story of Joseph and his colorful coat is our theme this year.

The many colors of Joseph's coat represent the multifaceted nature of God's favor, which encompasses blessings, provision, and abundance. The length of the coat signifies God's divine protection, as Joseph was shielded from harm and adversity. The adornment of the coat reflects the anointing for greatness that Joseph carried, enabling him to fulfill his purpose and rise to prominence.

We are reminded that just as Joseph experienced divine favor, we too can experience God's blessings and protection. Through faith and obedience, we can embrace the spiritual lessons behind Joseph's coat and walk in the fullness of God's plan. Let us DREAM like Joseph, and share our abundance.



Do you have a bag full of bags tucked away? We are encouraging you to bring your food donations in **bags of many colors** to share on our table. Heaven's Table can make use of the bags as well as the food donations. And remember that your financial donations can be stretched as they make use of their buying opportunities as well.

GMCC (Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches) -Each year, thousands of Minnesotans

come together for the largest grassroots food and fund drive in the state—the Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign. To date, Minnesota FoodShare has distributed over \$18.5 million to March Campaign participating food shelves via the FoodFund. Allocations are determined according to the following: 1. Total dollars and pounds raised by a food shelf during the March Campaign, as reported to Minnesota FoodShare 2. The number of individuals a food shelf served annually, as reported to Minnesota FoodShare

It was red and yellow and green and brown and Scarlet and black and ochre and peach And ruby and olive and violet and fawn And lilac and gold and chocolate and mauve And cream and crimson and silver and rose And azure and lemon and russet and grey And purple and white and pink and orange.....And blue! Musical: Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat. Song: Joseph's Coat. Broadway musical soundtrack lyrics.



Easter is Sunday, April 5th this year.

If you wish to order flowers to grace the altar for Easter, the **last day to order will be Sunday, March 22, 2026.**

Price list for a 6" blooming plant with wrap & a bow:



- Easter Lily \$18
- Cyclamen \$18
- Kalanchoe \$18
- Hydrangea \$40

\*The sign up sheet is in the back of the church, or call the church office, (507) 235-5382.



Please submit good news to the newsletter to share with our church family! Honor roll, Dean's list, participating in club or team activities, etc. We love to hear what is happening in each other's lives! Email the office at [uccsecretary319@gmail.com](mailto:uccsecretary319@gmail.com), call (507) 235-5382, or stop in!



**Congratulations to Kim Skog, Ivy Barnes and Rose Barnes on their baptisms on Sunday, January 25th!**



**Congratulations to Paige Hainy for making the Dean's list for the Fall Semester at SDSU!**



**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.



# MEMORIALS

Date	Memory/Honor of	Designation	From
01.04.26	Memory of Wes Heinrich	Starfish	Les Heinrich
02.09.26	Honor of Jon & Cindy Anderson Anniv.		Margo Weaver
02.22.26	Memory of Woody Woodward		Jane Kotewa



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](mailto: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 February 2026

During the last 4 weeks, \$11,432.35 (5.72%) worth of Hy-Vee slips were received. After 12 weeks, Hy-Vee is at \$43,406.86 (21.70%) toward the 19<sup>th</sup> goal of \$200,000.

During the same time, \$5,933.62 (3.96%) worth of Fareway slips were received. After 11 weeks, Fareway is at \$9,996.90 (6.66%) toward our 6<sup>th</sup> \$150,000 goal.

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

MAY THE ROAD RISE TO MEET YOU,  
MAY THE WIND BE ALWAYS AT YOUR BACK.  
MAY THE SUN SHINE WARM UPON YOUR FACE,  
THE RAINS FALL SOFT UPON YOUR FIELDS.  
AND UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN,  
MAY GOD HOLD YOU IN THE PALM OF HIS HAND.



## IRISH BLESSING



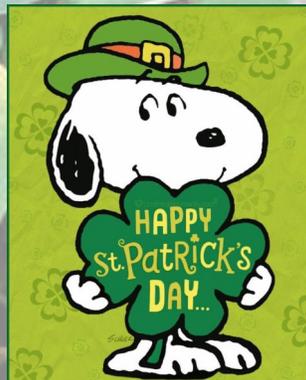
**Ronald  
McDonald  
House**

Truman 3rd graders are collecting pop tabs for the Ronald McDonald House. Pop tabs are great, but we can also use tabs off of soup cans, fruit lids, and adult beverages. We will be collecting **until the end of March**. The students have a pail in the back of the church to drop off any contributions. Last year our church contributed to the 158 pounds we delivered to Rochester!



Looking for a member who would like to be the **Prayer Chain leader** for the church. You would

be the contact for prayer requests and would email or call members of the prayer chain. Please call the office, (507) 235-5382, if interested!



**Thank you** to the wonderful newsletter assembly team that put together the February newsletter!

-Christina



### **Promo Video:**

Please send **10 second video clips of church events** to Abby Shoen, [abby.shoen43@gmail.com](mailto:abby.shoen43@gmail.com). Abby is graciously planning to compile them into a promotional video for our church!

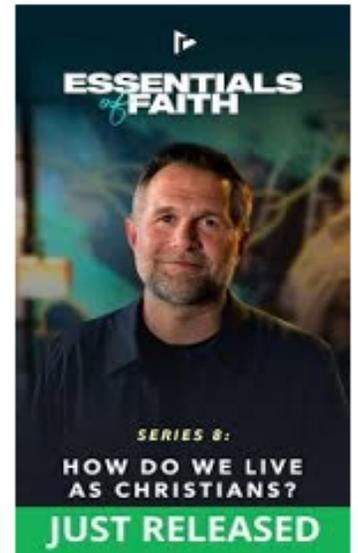
# rightnow MEDIA

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

It seems like such a simple statement: "Sure, I'm a Christian." But in addition to attending church, praying, and reading the Bible, there's quite a bit more to it than just claiming to "have faith." March is a great time to explore the actions of the faith in a six-session series called **How Do We Live as Christians?** Here's a brief synopsis:

*Life as a Christian seems simple enough. After all, "Follow me" (Matt 4:19) is one of the foundational commands we've been given. But follow who? And follow where? Surely there's more to it than that, right? In this six-session series, pastor and bestselling author Kyle Idleman will help us answer the question, "How do we live as Christians?" While following Jesus is our first and most important marching order, Kyle will help us answer some of the other questions that follow and that are essential to living faithfully as Christians. Regardless of where we're at on our faith journey, Kyle will teach us what it looks like to live a Christian life.*

\*As with many RNM series, there is a free downloadable study guide that can help you follow along and explore this subject more fully.



If March is still feeling like midwinter and your kids (or grandkids) seem to be running out of wholesome things to do inside as they wait for warmer temperatures, then maybe it's time to allow them some positive screen time with a Christian message. I recommended the previous season of *Tinley's Treehouse* several months ago, but just in time for the March's "winter doldrums," **rightnow MEDIA** has continuing adventures available in ***Tinley's Treehouse - Season 2:***

*It's time for another season of Tinley's Treehouse. Join Tinley and Max as they document their adventures in nature while learning important truths from God's Word. Engaging enough for the whole family, Tinley's Treehouse will have you laughing and learning right alongside this delightful duo. Come and explore God's world with Tinley's Treehouse!*

\*A free downloadable family study guide is also available to 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?

There are 3 convenient ways: Go to <https://app.rightnowmedia.org/join/FCONG>

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

Abigail Anderson shared this recipe with us!

# White Chicken Enchiladas

## Ingredients:

- 2 cups shredded Monterey Jack cheddar cheese
- 8 flour tortillas
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 4-oz. can diced green chilies
- 2 cups shredded chicken breast (about 1 big chicken breast)
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 2 cups chicken broth
- Salt & pepper
- Salsa, cilantro, other toppings



## Instructions:

1. Preheat the oven to 425 degrees.
2. Cook/shred chicken breast. Mix it with 1 cup of the shredded cheese.
3. Lay 8 tortillas out and fill each with the chicken mixture, making sure they are all even. Roll them up tightly and put them in a greased 9 x 13 inch baking dish.
4. In a saucepan, melt the butter and add 3 tablespoons flour. Mix and cook for about 1 minute.
5. Add 2 cups chicken broth, whisking until it's smooth. Whisk over medium heat until it is thick and creamy (about 5-8 minutes).
6. Mix in the sour cream, salt/pepper, and the can of chilies to the pan.
7. Pour the creamy sauce over the rolled up tortillas evenly.
8. Add 1 cup of the cheddar cheese over the top.
9. Bake for 20-25 minutes or until the cheese is golden brown. Add salsa or cilantro and you're ready to eat!

From [craftymorning.com](http://craftymorning.com)

# March

## Birthdays:

Mar 1	Greg Grotte	Mar 12	Jayden Huset
Mar 2	Barb Bock	Mar 14	Jim Grotte
	Dave Wallien		Tatum Garlick
	Sophia Brummond	Mar 15	Darwin Kuhlert
Mar 3	Bill Thompson	Mar 20	Brad Cone
Mar 6	Ann Hartmann	Mar 24	Michael Meschke
Mar 8	Erin True		Deb Thate
	Ivy Barnes		Clint Forstrom
Mar 10	Tabb Meyer		Presley Wegner
	Koda Massey	Mar 28	Blakely Weber
	Kira Massey	Mar 29	Jennifer Weaver
		Mar 30	Amy Derrera
		Mar 31	Curt Luetgers

## Anniversaries:

March 3	Robert & Alexis Thate	8 years
March 17	Vince & Angela Vaughn	12 years
March 29	Jim & Judie Orr	41 years

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