

THE LAMPLIGHTER

MARCH / APRIL

Into the Wilderness

LENTEN SEASON CONTINUES LOOKING TOWARD EASTER

FCC started the Lenten Season March 2, 2022 with Ash Wednesday and will continue through Holy Saturday April 16, 2022. As you may already know, Lent is a 40-day period of repentance and self-denial that originated as a time of preparation for those who were candidates for Baptism. The early church traditionally celebrated Baptisms on

er and First Congregational Church is already making plans for the celebration of Jesus' Resurrection at 10:00am, on Easter Sunday, April 17, 2022. Here are some of the details regarding Lent at FCC.

ASH WEDNESDAY

First Congregational Church (FCC) started the Lenten Season of 2022 with our annual Ash Wednesday Service March 2, 2022. This marked our first in-person gathering for Ash Wednesday since 2019. Ash Wednesday has been an important part of the Christian church's calendar since the 6th century. It is a solemn time of Worship involving the impression of ash on the believer's forehead in the shape of a cross. This is done to symbolize repentance and sorrow over sin and the death of Christ. As we observed this ancient custom we not only connected with the Christians who went before us, but also with the Body of Christ throughout the world.

LENTEN DEVOTIONS

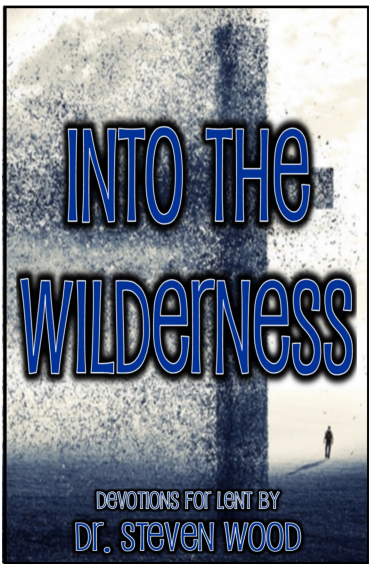
Pastor Steve invites everyone INTO THE WILDERNESS for this season of Lent. Based on Matthew 4:1-11, this year's Lenten Devotions focus on the wilderness as a metaphor for the unknown, sometimes dangerous, and even harsh realities of life everyone deals with. However, when it comes to the wilderness, we must all remember, Jesus has al-

ready been there.

The tradition of Lent covers the days from Ash Wednesday through Holy Saturday (excluding Sundays). INTO THE WILDERNESS is a book of 40 daily devotions, each designed to stand alone so the included New Testament readings, daily thoughts, meditations, and suggested fasts do not necessarily go together because that is the nature of the wilderness – we do not know what is coming next. Still, it is OK — Jesus has already been there. Come join FCC as we head INTO THE WILDERNESS!

MEMORIAL FLOWERS

As has been the case for many years, FCC will place flowers at the front of the Sanctuary in celebration of Jesus' resurrection, and in memory of friends and loved ones designated by individual donors. Lilies, daffodils, hyacinths, and tulips will be **continued - see LENTON SEASON on p. 2.**



Easter Sunday. Gradually the practice of repentance and self-denial expanded to include church members who wanted to show their support for Baptism candidates. Over time, the practice spread across Christendom and evolved into something similar to modern Lent. Partly because of the Protestant Reformation in 1517, and partly because preparation for Baptism takes place differently in different churches, Lent became the 40-day period of repentance and preparation for Easter that many Protestant denominations, as well as those of the Roman Catholic faith practice today. Of course, part of Lent is preparing for East-



COVID POLICY UPDATE

In light of updated guidelines from the CDC and Michigan Department of Health, FCC will no longer require or request masks for anyone attending Sunday Worship, volunteering, participating in any church activities. Anyone wishing to wear a mask may certainly do so. Of course, those who have any symptoms (fever, cough, runny nose, etc.) are asked to stay home and connect with our livestream.

THE WHOLE BIBLE READ ALOUD

IN OUR BUILDING

MARCH 13-19, 2022

LENTEN SEASON

(continued from p. 1)

placed. Cost is \$9.00 per plant and the deadline to order is April 10, 2022. To order, sign up at the back of the Sanctuary and submit payment to Pastor Steve or the Church Office.

SANCTUARY ELEMENTS

Beginning March 27, 2022 FCC will place important symbolic items in the front of the Sanctuary. Each of these items has a specific meaning relative to Easter and events in the life of Jesus during Passion Week. A basin and pitcher will be placed to remind us that Jesus advocated humility, and service of others through the act of washing the feet of his disciples. An authentic crown of thorns will be placed to remind us of the one Jesus wore on the cross. Palms and flowers will be placed to remind us of Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, as well as his resurrection. Banners will be placed to remind us that Jesus won overwhelming victory over death through his resurrection and offers eternal life to any who would choose to receive him. Watch for these items as they are placed on Sundays leading up to and including Easter.

COMMUNITY GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE

The annual Good Friday Service sponsored by the Durand Area Ministers' Association will be hosted by First Congregation-

al Church this year. Our entire Durand community is invited to join us for the service which is planned for Friday, April 15, 2022, at 7:00pm.

Watch next month's LAMP-LIGHTER for details about Palm Sunday, a very special Stations of the Cross / Holy Week prayer emphasis, and an amazing Easter Sunday with FCC!

Do YOU devo?!



FROM THE PASTOR

DO YOU KNOW WHERE JESUS IS, OR WHAT HE'S DOING?

You may have heard me tell the story of two boys who were giving their poor mother real problems. No matter what she tried the boys got into mischief around the neighborhood, had trouble at school, and made it almost impossible to attend church because they simply would not behave. Finally, she made an appointment with her pastor, hoping he could straighten them out. He agreed to see them after school the following day.

Upon arriving at the church building on the fateful day, the younger of the two boys went into the pastor's office while the older one waited in the hall. The little boy sat there in a high back leather with his feet dangling. The pastor sat behind his huge desk silently until he asked the boy a

question.

"Do you know where Jesus is?"

The little boy was silent, so the pastor leaned forward a bit.

"Do you know where Jesus is?"

The little boy remained silent, staring back at the pastor, but showing signs of nervousness. The pastor stood up and leaned over the desk, towering over the boy.

"Do you know where Jesus is?" the pastor said a third time.

The little boy could not take any more. He burst into tears, jumped out of the chair, and ran into the hall where his brother was waiting.

"Run for it!" the boy shouted as he ran past his brother. "Jesus is missing, and they think we took him!"

This cute story illustrates an important point – Jesus is not missing, but do you know where he is? What is he doing? We know that in his last earthly encounter with the Apostles Jesus told them (and us), "...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Then, "he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight" (Acts 1:9). While they stood there dumbfounded and staring up at the sky two angels appeared and told them, "Men of Galilee... why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:10-11).

So, we know where Jesus is, but what is he doing?

He is sitting as King at the right hand of God.

Mark wrote Jesus, "...was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God" (Mark 16:19). In fact, the Bible says he sat at the right hand of God at least four other times (Acts 2:23; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 8:1, 12:1-2). He is not just sitting there doing nothing, he reigns as King. He is "exalted" (Acts 2:33; Philippians 2:8) and the time will come when, "...every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:9-11). Jesus Christ is King of kings and reigns as he always has – he reigns over his church, as well as all of Creation.

He is serving as High Priest in the House of God.

Because we are Protestants and Congregationalists, more specifically, we do not have priests in our tradition, and we certainly do not have a high priest. However, the high priest was an important part of the Jewish faith, established first with Aaron (Exodus 28) and continuing through the days of Jesus in the New Testament (Luke 3; John 11). Jesus, however, is not our high priest in the earthly sense (Hebrews 7:26-27; 8:1), but is our "...great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God... For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet he did not sin..." (Hebrews 4:14-16). He "... is able to help those who are being tempted" (Hebrews 2:18). Unlike the priests in the Bible, Jesus,

continued - see FROM THE PASTOR on p. 3.

LORI CHILDS NAMED DURAND'S CITIZEN OF THE YEAR



FCC congratulates our own, LORI CHILDS, who was recently named the Durand Area Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the year. Lori is pictured here with her husband Terry (far right) and her daughters, Marissa and Tori (from left). Her son, Tyler was not available for this picture. Congratulations Lori!

Facebook LIVE
LIVE STREAMING

**"In-Person" AND
online**

WORSHIP CELEBRATION

**SUNDAYS
10:00am**

UPCOMING SERMONS

INTO THE WILDERNESS

As FCC continues with our Lenten emphasis, Pastor Steve is preparing messages that go along with the INTO THE WILDERNESS theme. Here is the schedule of upcoming sermons:

March 20, 2022

Part 3:

"When God Only Whispers"
(1 Kings 16-19)

March 27, 2022

Part 4:

"A Tale of Three Women"
(John 4, 8, 12)

April 3, 2022

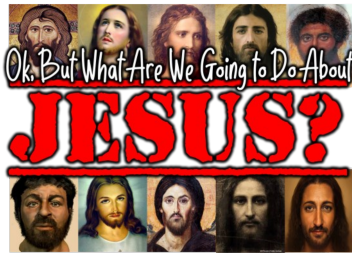
Part 5:

"Finding the Way Out"
(1 Peter 3:8-22)

April 10, 2022 (Palm Sunday)
Part 6:

**"The Path to Freedom
in Christ"**

(Matthew 18:1-5, 19:13-15)



April 17, 2022 (EASTER)

**"Ok, But What Do We Do
About Jesus?"**

(John 9)

- 1 - Numbers 14-15; Psalm 90
- 2 - Numbers 16-17
- 3 - Numbers 18-20
- 4 - Numbers 21-22
- 5 - Numbers 23-25
- 6 - Numbers 26-27
- 7 - Numbers 28-30
- 8 - Numbers 31-32
- 9 - Numbers 33-34
- 10 - Numbers 35-36
- 11 - Deuteronomy 1-2
- 12 - Deuteronomy 3-4
- 13 - Deuteronomy 5-7
- 14 - Deuteronomy 8-10
- 15 - Deuteronomy 11-13
- 16 - Deuteronomy 14-16
- 17 - Deuteronomy 17-20
- 18 - Deuteronomy 21-23
- 19 - Deuteronomy 24-27
- 20 - Deuteronomy 28-29
- 21 - Deuteronomy 30-31
- 22 - Deuteronomy 32-34; Psalm 91
- 23 - Joshua 1-4
- 24 - Joshua 5-8
- 25 - Joshua 9-11
- 26 - Joshua 12-15
- 27 - Joshua 16-18
- 28 - Joshua 19-21
- 29 - Joshua 22-24
- 30 - Judges 1-2
- 31 - Judges 3-5



FROM THE PASTOR (continued from p. 2)



PRAYER MINISTRY

CAN WE PRAY FOR YOU?

If you have a prayer concern we would be glad to pray for you. Just call the Church Office at (989) 288-6684 and your need will be communicated through our Prayer Chain.

- To participate in our Prayer Ministry by receiving prayer updates and remembering to pray over them, please text "@fccprayerc" to: 81010.
- To receive updates and information from FCC by email go to: <https://www.remind.com/join/fccprayerc> and follow the instructions.

"...is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. ...he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself" (Hebrews 7:26-28). In fact, "...Christ did not take on himself the glory of becoming a high priest. But God said to him... 'You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.' ...he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek" (Hebrews 5:5-10).

He is mediating the New Covenant.

The Bible records a handful of covenants beginning with Noah when God created the rainbow as a symbol of his promise never to wipe out life with a flood again (Genesis 9:8-17). What Paul referred to as the old covenant (Hebrews 8:6) was established with Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3, 15:18-20), confirmed with Moses and the Israelites (Exodus 20-40), and given more detail with David

(2 Samuel 7). God promised to make Abraham a great nation and bless the world through his descendants, the nation Israel, and promised David his dynasty as king would extend forever (2 Samuel 7). The old covenant included the law with all the pharaical expansions that existed in Jesus' day, as well as a system of sacrifices.

When Jesus established the Sacrament of Communion (Matthew 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:19-20) he said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you" (Luke 22:20). The new covenant is, "superior to the old one..." (Hebrews 8:6) in that it represents God's promise of forgiveness and offer of Grace in Christ. As such, "...Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance — now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant" (Hebrews 9:15). Therefore, "...Christ Jesus who died — more than that, who was raised to life — is at the right hand of God

and is also interceding for us" (Romans 8:34).

He is preparing a place in eternity for you.

Jesus said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am" (John 14:2). Paul indicated this place Jesus is preparing is beyond our ability to conceive because God loves us (1 Corinthians 2:9). So, Jesus is preparing a place in Heaven for all who follow him. Your place will be read when you leave this life and it will be part of the, "new heaven and... new earth" where God himself will wipe away every tear and death, mourning, crying, or pain will no longer be. **continued - see FROM THE PASTOR on p. 4.**



MARCH



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
<p>"Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things" (Colossians 3:1-2).</p>		1	2 Ash Wednesday 7:00pm Ash Wednesday Service (no livestream)	3 TINA WILHELM TAMMIE MAYER	4	5	
		Numbers 14-16; Psalm 90	LENT				Numbers 23-25
<p>6 9:30am Coffee 10:00am WORSHIP</p> <p>Numbers 26-27</p>	7	8	9 7:00pm Wednesday Nite LIVE(stream)	10 VICKI YOUNG	11	12	
		Numbers 28-30	Numbers 31-32	Numbers 33-34	Numbers 35-36	Deuteronomy 1-2	Deuteronomy 3-4
<p>13 Daylight Savings Time begins 9:30am Coffee 10:00am WORSHIP</p> <p>Deuteronomy 5-7</p>	14	21 7:00pm Trustees	22	17 St. Patrick's Day	18	19 CHRIS JOHNSTON BRUCE BENSON	
	READING THROUGH THE BIBLE						
			LENT				
	Deuteronomy 8-10	Deuteronomy 11-13	Deuteronomy 14-16	Deuteronomy 17-20	Deuteronomy 21-23	Deuteronomy 24-27	
<p>20 WALTER WILL 9:30am Coffee 10:00am WORSHIP 11:15am Deacons</p> <p>Deuteronomy 28-29</p>			23 DOUG BRUNER 7:00pm Wednesday Nite LIVE(stream)	24	25	26 NANCY GRUMLEY LARRY SHUMAN	
		Deuteronomy 30-31	Deuteronomy 32-34; Psalm 91	Joshua 1-4	Joshua 5-8	Joshua 9-11	Joshua 12-15
<p>27 9:30am Coffee 10:00am WORSHIP</p> <p>Joshua 16-18</p>	28	29	30 7:00pm Wednesday Nite LIVE(stream)	31			
		Joshua 19-21	Joshua 22-24	Judges 1-2			Judges 3-5

FROM THE PASTOR (continued from p. 3)

longer exist. Jesus is getting your place in heaven ready **He is waiting for the Father to tell him go get his Church.**

We believe Jesus will come back someday to take his church and all his followers up to that time to heaven in an event called the Rapture. Paul wrote, "Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest who have no hope. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive,

who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so, we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words" (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). However, even Jesus does not know when this event will occur (Matthew 24:36), so he waits for the Father to tell him it is time.

Kid's worship
SUNDAYS - 10AM!

WORSHIP VOLUNTEERS

FCC loves to involve as many people as possible in our Sunday Worship Celebrations. We thank those who have already volunteered. If YOU wish to serve as Liturgist, Greeter, Usher, or Nursery Attendant on an upcoming Sunday sign up at the Literature Table. There are openings available in March and April. Here is the schedule of those who have already volunteered for March 20 - April 3, 2022. Thanks!

March 20, 2022

Liturgist:	Sherry Dean	Tech:	Sherry Dean
Ushers:	Brett Bruner		TBA
	Amanda Bruner	Nursery:	Sue Baade
Acolytes:	Mary Golden	Kid's Worship:	Mary Golden

	TBA		
Tech:	TBA	April 3, 2022	
	TBA	Liturgist:	Sherry Dean
Nursery:	Tina Wilhelm	Ushers:	Mary Golden
Kid's Worship:	Doreen Clark		Cindy Stull
		Tech:	Brett Bruner

March 27, 2022

Liturgist:	TBA	Acolytes:	TBA
Ushers:	Mary Golden		TBA
	Cindy Stull	Nursery:	Trudy Nicks
Acolytes:	Rodney Dean	Kid's Worship:	Lori Childs

WEDNESDAY NITE LIVE STREAM
WEDNESDAYS - 7:00PM

The book of **REVELATION**
A Simplified, Expository Study

zoom LIVE