

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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THE REV. W. BREWSTER WILLCOX, GUEST MINISTER

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER — APRIL 26, 2026

WELCOME & COMMUNITY NEWS

SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

PRELUDE

V. Air, from *Water Music*, HWV 348, by G.F. Handel

GATHERING PRAYER

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

The Lord is risen!

He is risen indeed!

Let us pray:

Glorious Lord of life,

**by the mighty resurrection of your Son
you overcame the old order of sin and death
to make all things new in him.**

**Grant that we who celebrate with joy
Christ's rising from the dead may be raised
from the death of sin to the life of righteousness,
through him who lives and reigns with
you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.**

Amen.

Those who wish may stand

OPENING HYMN

Those who wish may stand

Such Perfect Love My Shepherd Shows

The musical score is written on a single staff in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of four lines of music, each with a corresponding line of lyrics. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with a final cadence at the end of the fourth line. The lyrics are arranged in four lines, with some words hyphenated across lines. The final line of the score ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

Such per - fect love my Shep - herd shows, whose
Where streams of liv - ing wa - ter flow, my
When vain and fool - ish oft I strayed, you,
You spread a tab - ble in my sight, your

good - ness fails me nev - er, Whose
lov - ing Shep - herd leads me, And
faith - ful Shep - herd, sought me, And
gifts of grace be - stow - ing; And

hand all things I need be - stows and
where the ver - dant pas - tures grow with
on your shoul - der gent - ly laid, then
from your chal - ice I de - light to

watch - es me for - ev - er.
food from heav - en feeds me.
home re - joic - ing brought me.
taste your mer - cy flow - ing.

Text: Henry Baker, 1868, alt, Tune: DOMINUS REGIT ME, John B. Dykes, 1868

SCRIPTURE READINGS

John 10:1-10

Jesus the Good Shepherd "Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers." Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

Ephesians 4:1-3

I, therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

CHORAL ANTHEM

Jesu, Lover of My Soul, by Philip Stopford

Jesu, lover of my soul, let me to thy bosom fly, while the nearer waters roll,
while the tempest still is high; hide me, O my Saviour hide, till the storm of life be past;
safe into the haven guide, O receive my soul at last!

Other refuge have I none; hangs my helpless soul on thee; leave, ah! leave me not alone,
still support and comfort me. All my trust on thee is stayed, all my help from thee I bring;
cover my defenseless head with the shadow of your wing.

Thou, O Christ, art all I want; more than all in thee I find. Raise the fallen, cheer the faint,
heal the sick and lead the blind. Just and holy is thy name; I am all unrighteousness.
False and full of sin I am; thou art full of truth and grace.

Plenteous grace on thee is found, grace to cover all my sin.
Let the healing streams abound; make and keep me pure within.

Thou of life the fountain art; freely let me take of thee.
Spring thou up within my heart. Rise, rise to all eternity. Amen.

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MESSAGE

The Noble Art of Living

Those who wish may stand

HYMN OF REFLECTION

Those who wish may stand

Savior, Like A Shepherd

1 Sav - ior, like a Shep-herd lead us, much we need thy ten - der care;
2 We are thine, do thou be - friend us, be the guard-ian of our way;
3 Thou hast prom-ised to re - ceive us, poor and sin - ful though we be;
4 Ear - ly let us seek thy fa - vor, ear - ly let us do thy will;

in thy pleas-ant pas-tures feed us, for our use thy folds pre-pare:
keep thy flock, from sin de - fend us, seek us when we go a - stray:
thou hast mer-cy to re - lieve us, grace to cleanse, and power to free:
bless - ed Lord and on - ly Sav - ior, with thy love our bos-oms fill:

Bless-ed Je - sus, bless-ed Je - sus, thou hast bought us, thine we are;
Bless-ed Je - sus, bless-ed Je - sus, hear, O hear us when we pray;
Bless-ed Je - sus, bless-ed Je - sus, ear - ly let us turn to thee;
Bless-ed Je - sus, bless-ed Je - sus, thou hast loved us, love us still;

bless-ed Je - sus, bless-ed Je - sus, thou hast bought us, thine we are.
bless-ed Je - sus, bless-ed Je - sus, hear, O hear us when we pray.
bless-ed Je - sus, bless-ed Je - sus, ear - ly let us turn to thee.
bless-ed Je - sus, bless-ed Je - sus, thou hast loved us, love us still.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

. . . ending with the Lord's Prayer:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we
forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

OFFERTORY INVITATION

OFFERTORY MUSIC

Christ Jesus is Arisen, by Michael Burkhardt

Christ Jesus is arisen forth from the grave's dark prison.
Let all with joy be singing, glad alleluias ringing!
Rejoice today, rejoice today, for Christ the Lord is King! Alleluia!

Awake, arise, with gladness, leave now all gloom and sadness;
and sing with jubilation good news for every nation!
Rejoice today, rejoice today, for Christ the Lord is King! Alleluia!

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DOXOLOGY

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God all creatures here below, Alleluia, Alleluia!
Praise God above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father (*Creator*), Son (*Christ*), and Holy Ghost.
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.
Amen.**

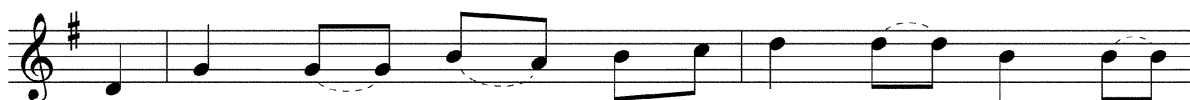
OFFERTORY PRAYER

Those who wish may stand

CLOSING HYMN

Those who wish may stand

Lord of the Dance



1. I danced in the morn - ing when the world was be - gun, And I
2. I danced for the scribe and the phar - i - see, But
3. I danced on the Sab - bath and I cured the lame: The
4. I danced on a Fri - day when the sky turned black; It's
5. They cut me down and I leapt up high; }



danced in the moon and the stars and the sun, And I
they would-n't dance, and they would-n't fol - low me; I
ho - ly peo - ple said it was a shame. They
hard to dance with the dev - il on your back. They
I am the life that - 'll nev - er, nev - er die; I'll



came down from heav - en and I danced on the earth; At
danced for the fish - er - men, for James and John; They
whipped and they stripped and they hung me high, And
bur - ied my bod - y and they thought I'd gone; But
live in you if you'll live in me: }



Beth - le - hem I had my birth.
came with me and the dance went on.
left me there on a cross to die.
I am the dance and I still go on.
I am the Lord of the Dance, said he.



Dance then wher - ev - er you may be; I am the



Lord of the dance, said he, And I'll lead you all, wher -



ev - er you may be, And I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.

BLESSING AND SENDING

POSTLUDE

II. Alla Hornpipe, from *Water Music*, HWV 349, by G.F. Handel

Today's Service

Rev. Brewster Willcox
Dr. Michael Match
John Mattson
The Motet Choir
Tom Hardy
Blake Filius

Guest Pastor
Music Director
Organist
Song Leaders
Liturgist/Prayer
Audio and Video

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Flowers sponsors by Dave and Nita Wikman in honor of their 68th wedding anniversary –April 25.

A white carnation is in memory of FCC member Donald L. Duffey who passed away on Monday, April 13, 2026 at the age of 72. Our deepest sympathy and prayers for his wife Barb and family.

Those whose last names begin with the letters O through S please bring cookies or treats during the month of May. Please label ingredients as we have many with allergies.

Child Care is available on the second floor for infants and toddlers.

Life-long Learning — This Sunday Paul Krause will continue the exploration of the rise of Christian Nationalism. We only scheduled two sessions for the topic, but if you want to add a third session we can do that. Which brings us to the next point... Several have said they'd like to continue some version of our gatherings through the summer. Perhaps we'll meet less often, or at different times, or at someone's house, or attend a relevant movie together, or incorporate a potluck dinner...it's wide open. So on May 3 (or May 10, as per the previous paragraph) we will use our Life-long Learning session to rough out a plan for the off-season. Everyone is encouraged to come add your ideas to the mix! (One wag's suggestion: Meet in back room of a bar and call the gathering "Think and Drink.")

Still time to sign up for decorating a table for Music Appreciation and Mother's Day Sunday. Sign up sheet at Welcome Center.

Eurythmy Classes are Tuesdays from 4:30-5:30. Wear loose fitting clothes. \$10 per class.

All are welcome to join us on Wednesday mornings from 9-10 AM in the Parish Hall for a Zumba Class emphasizing the 3's (Cardio, conditioning and choreography. \$3 per class) There is also a Cardio- Drumming exercise class on Thursday mornings from 9-10 AM in the Fellowship Hall. All are welcome to join either sitting or standing. \$3 per class.

The Single Women's Group will meet for a 1:00 pm lunch at Hobo's on Whitehall Rd. in North Muskegon on Tuesday, May 5, 2026. Contact Judy Dewall or sign up at the Welcome Center.

FCC IS AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING COMMUNITY "We, the people of First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, of Muskegon, care for the welfare of our community and welcome everyone, no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey. We welcome into our community people of every age, race, nationality, mental and physical ability, economic and social status, faith background, marital standing, family structure, gender identity and expression, and sexual orientation. We also invite you to share in the life, leadership, worship, fellowship, sacraments responsibilities, blessings, and joys of our congregation as we seek to grow together in faith and love."