



## The Carillon May, 2026

First Congregational Church  
Your Independent Worship Center  
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### THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES APRIL 27, 2026 DRAFT

Present: Pastor Luke Schmalz, Dean Morehouse – Men’s Fellowship, Bill Black – Trustees, Jack Stewart – Technology Board

Absent: Stacey Church – Moderator, Carrie DeMull – Clerk, Jean Morehouse – Women’s Fellowship and Board of Charitable Giving

Pastor Luke will run the meeting in the absence of Stacey Church

I. Meeting called to order at 6:45 pm. Pastor Luke offered the opening prayer.

II. The meeting minutes from March 23, 2026 were approved by those in attendance with the following revisions. Noisy Offering will be this coming Sunday, March 29, with the collection going to Community Closet. The Good Friday service will be Friday, April 3, in the sanctuary.

III. Public comments – See Below. No security update.

#### IV. Board Reports

A. Board of Charitable Giving – No Report

B. Board of Deacons – Pastor Luke

- Susan Stewart has joined the Deacon’s
- Luke P asked Pastor Rap to preach on July 19. He agreed to do so.
- Discussion about how Holy Week went.
- Deacons enjoy the revival prayer at the end of the service and will be in church of getting readers from the congregation to do the prayer.
- Discussion of how the Deacons can better serve communion to the singers

on communion Sunday.

- A discussion was held about providing prayer cards on Sundays to reach out for prayers.

- A discussion was held about how to better distribute the gift bags to visitors on Sundays.

- The Music Committee sponsored a cake thanking Rachel for playing the piano during worship. We thanked her on April 26.

- Jackson Brooks will be starting soon.

- Will also be recognizing Dave Vandenbelt at a later date.

#### C. Board of Christian Education – Pastor Luke

- 3 children were in church school this past Sunday.

#### D. Board of Trustees – Bill Black

- Pledge giving is nicely ahead of budget due to some early giving and generous congregational support.

- Offerings of non-pledges are also ahead of budget due to generous giving.

- Income from investments has not been needed the first quarter.

- All expenses are either within budget or slightly over due to the weather.

- New toilets have been installed downstairs.

- The casters on some of the library chairs have been repaired.

- Four new door closures will be installed soon to replace old leaking door closures.

#### E. Women's Fellowship- Jean Morehouse

- Bank balance at the end of March is \$7486.86.

- The dishwasher checkup has been tabled until the Fall of 2026.

- The bell cleaning will happen sometime this summer.

- The "White House" event will be held on May 4, at 12:00 pm in

Fellowship Hall.

- New lights will be purchased and installed in the Narthex and the hallway to make it brighter in those areas. They will be purchased with funds from Women's Fellowship along with the installation.

- On May 23, the kitchen downstairs was cleaned and floors were mopped.

#### F. Technology Board – No Report

#### G. Men's Fellowship – Dean Morehouse

- The April meetings meal presented by Jack Butterick consisted of Coney Dogs, potato salad, and cookies.

- Pastor Luke presented a interesting and detailed presentation on the sinking of the Edmund Fitzgerald.

- Ted Caris did the devotional.

- Men's coffee and the wood shop continuing as usual, but coffee hour has as many as eleven due to some outside interest.

#### V. Pastor's Report-Pastor Luke

- May 10 is Mother's Day and Crystal will preach that Sunday.
- 25 people attended the Good Friday service.
- No congregational service on Sunday, May 24. The Ecumenical service will be downtown.
- May 25-June 1 Rooms of Refuge will be downstairs. Look for a sign-up sheet to help with meals.
- Cost of Room and Board for 2 weeks for Pastor Luke's continuing education will be \$650.
- The cooking club that met in Fellowship Hall, Friday April 24, went well. It is primarily aimed for the women of the church and any guests.

VI. Acceptance of reports – There was no acceptance of reports, because there was not a quorum.

#### VII. Old Business

#### VIII. New Business

- A vote was taken via email to have FCC participate in the Ecumenical Church Services this summer. The vote was 5 yes, 1 no, and 2 abstained.
  - FCC will provide YFC meals when they are using our church in June.
- Meeting adjourned with a closing prayer.

Next Meeting is Monday, May? at 6:30 pm in the library.  
Respectfully submitted Carrie DeMull

#### The Taste of Our Words

I try to watch the words I say,  
And keep them soft and sweet;  
For I don't know from day to day,  
Which ones I'll have to eat.

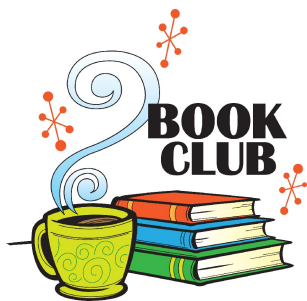


## Charitable Giving and Youth For Christ



Thank you for your donations so far toward camp scholarships for the students!! We continue to collect donations through the end of June but the deadline for camp scholarships is May 20. Please give generously as most of the students can't afford camp on their own and camp has proven to be a life changing experience! There is a donation box on the Narthex table and a basket on the serving counter in Fellowship Hall. Cash is great and checks can be made out to the church with YFC camp on the item line. Let's break the bank with donations!

Charitable Giving



### Book Circle:

Join us on Tuesday, May 5, 1:00 p.m. at the Fremont Public Library for our May Book Circle meeting. Interest in joining the discussion and would like more information - contact Bev Williams 924-2525

### Men's Fellowship Luncheon:

Wednesday, May 6 at 12:00 noon. Our speaker will be Ted Caris speaking on "Falling Beams and Life Changing Events." Ted will also be the chef - a Greek Lunch featuring grape juice, bread, salad, stuffed grape leaves and baklava. All are invited!!



**Refuge**  
*for the*  
**Homeless**

### Rooms of Refuge:

We will be hosting Rooms of Refuge on May 25 - June 1. A sign up sheet for meals will be posted soon.

### Ecumenical Worship:

We will be joining with other churches in the community of Sunday, May 24 at 10:00 a.m. Rain location will be the First Christian Reformed Church.



# M a y B i r t h d a y s

2 Kendra Pfeiffer  
3 Gail Cooper  
4 Jeannie Caris  
13 Craig Zeerip  
14 Linda White  
17 Tony DeMull  
23 Brian Stroschin  
24 Ted Clark



## May Anniversaries

3 John & Gail Cooper  
25 Brad & Stacey Church

## May Calendar Events

May 3 - Worship & Communion 10:00 a.m.  
May 3 - New Members Class following worship  
May 3 - Deacons Meeting - 11:30 a.m.  
May 4 - Women's Fellowship Presentation and luncheon with Nancy Claus  
May 5 - Book Circle - 1:00 p.m.  
May 6 - Men's Fellowship Luncheon 12:00 noon  
May 10 - Worship 10:00 a.m. Mother's Day  
May 11 - Women's Fellowship Board Meeting - 10:00 a.m.  
May 11 - Technology Board - 6:30 p.m.  
May 12 - Small Group 10:00 a.m. Pat Krehn's home  
May 17 - Worship & Communion 10:00 a.m. Special Music - Pastor Rap  
May 17 - New Members Class following worship  
May 20 - Trustees Meeting - 1:30 p.m.  
May 24 - Pentecost - Worship together in the Park  
May 25 - Church Office Closed - Memorial Day  
May 25 - NO Executive Council - date TBD  
May 26 - Small Group Pat Krehn's home 10:00 a.m.  
May 31 - Worship 10:00 a.m.  
May 31 - New Members Class following Worship



## Sanctification and Coffee

I want to make a surprising claim. Being passionate about coffee can be an avenue for sanctification. Yes, this is partly a justification for my own obsession with coffee. But not only that. My less surprising claim is that passion about almost anything can be an avenue to sanctification. Simply put, dedication to excellence in an activity and love for it can strengthen our walk with God and help us to become Holy. This particular thought experiment was inspired by a book I recently finished reading, “The Way of Excellence”



by Brad Stulberg, and a podcast called “Deep Work” by Cal Newport. While they approach it from different perspectives, they both come to a similar conclusion. That one should have a pursuit (hobby is too weak a word) outside of work that one loves and strives for excellence in. They argue that in the end, the pursuit doesn’t really matter, just that it’s something meaningful that you are growing in. The reason you should do this, they argue, is that it is the path to meaning, happiness, and greater creativity.

I want to take this idea and bring it into the arena of faith. Christians should have something in which they strive for excellence. We should, because doing so helps us be better Christians. One of the key parts of the Christian life is sanctification, becoming holy. We are called to always be growing more and more like Jesus. We are to be little Christs. And to achieve this, we must be disciplined and intentional in how we live our lives. Interestingly, the skills necessary to grow in holiness are the same as growing in a passion.

Which brings me back to coffee and how it helps me be more holy. Coffee is a surprisingly complicated drink. It has a vast array of flavor compounds, and each step of production affects what you taste in the cup. The same coffee bean will taste different depending on how it is roasted, brewed, and consumed. So coffee dorks spend a lot of time thinking about roast, brewing technique, and how to consume the coffee. We think about how to get the best flavor for the style of coffee we want, and so on. That doesn’t include learning how to taste and identify the flavors in coffee. And on it goes. All this takes attention and slows down. I can’t just down the coffee as fast as I can to get my hit of caffeine. I need to slow down and pay attention. How does it smell? How does it taste hot? How does it taste as it cools? Why does it taste like this? Do I like it? Why or why not?

It is this slowing down and paying attention that matters. As I learn to listen to the coffee, I am building a skill. Just as I act with coffee, so I should with God. Don’t just rush through my prayers, Bible reading, and life. Slow down and listen. Do I hear God in this moment? If not, why? Does how I feel affect my faith? And so it goes. The small pursuit of excellence in coffee. Seeking to know and understand, and appreciate this small thing. Helps me grow in the skills I need to know God and grow in holiness. And this is true of whatever you pursue, from sports to music, consuming or participating. It all can help you develop the skills to grow as a Christian. So what is it that you love and can grow in? Go ahead and embrace it; it just might be the thing that leads you closer to God.