



August, 2024

*Embracing people at every age and every stage
of life, helping them to become the most loving version of themselves possible.*

First Congregational United Church of Christ

218 W. Second Street
Gaylord, MI 49735
989-732-5726

www.firstuccgaylord.org

Pastor: Rev. Greg Watling
pastorg@firstuccgaylord.org

Moderator: Maggie Wallin
margaretwallin@msn.com

Finance: Jessica Benoit
finance@firstuccgaylord.org

**Communications
Coordinator:**
Stephanie Kalember
office@firstuccgaylord.org

Church Service: Sunday, 10 am



Pastor's Column – August 2024

“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.”

– George Bernard Shaw, Nobel Prize-winning playwright

Over the past month, we have had a LOT going on! It's wonderful and it's the sign of life and of good things to come in any organization. We've been busy making a lot of food (parade, Salad Luncheon, Community Meal, funeral dinners...) and organizing an important anniversary celebration! Overall, we've done a great job! Thanks to everyone who has worked so hard.

At the same time, we have had some struggles with communication. I think most of the time this happens when we're busy, but also it happens when we think everyone knows. The truth is, everyone doesn't know. I've heard it said that you have to tell people at least seven different times, seven different ways, the same thing, or no one hears! It is like no one ever said anything. I know that can be frustrating, but it's true.

Communication can lead to having more help when we do a project. Communication can lead to more attendance at functions we have. Communication can ensure that everyone feels loved, valued, appreciated, welcomed, included...you name it! We have many good examples of

when communication has really helped us make things happen that otherwise either wouldn't get done, or would get done by the same few people who are tired.

My favorite example is our yard clean ups. Prior to 2020, so I've been told, fewer and fewer people were helping take care of our yard. One or two people were mowing. Only a couple people were weeding and taking care of the flower beds. Not very many people knew about the sprinkler system and how it worked. People were tired and worn out.

Since that time, we told people we needed help and we set two clean up days a year. One happens in the spring, the other in the fall. We put some fun fellowship with it, like cider and donuts one fall. And, we told people! Please help us! And, when they came, other than general direction, we let people do what they loved to do without overdoing the supervision. We have several people mowing lawn, and we have several who help with the gardens and yard clean up.

Sometimes we forget that people don't mind helping, but they get hurt and upset if their contribution isn't valued -- or worse -- rejected without good reason.

All I'm hoping to do with this friendly reminder is to encourage all of us to communicate, to the best of our ability, what is happening and who is needed to do what. Further, when people do help, be clear in expectations, kind in corrections, and most of all thankful for people giving their time, talent and treasure. We'll all win in the end.

The call to be loving community is strong here. Once in a while, though, we need a reminder that community takes work. The most important work is communication.

In Christ,

Pastor Greg



August

SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY

			Gratitude Group 6 AM	1 Bible Study 11 AM Wmn's Fellowship 12:15 PM Choir 4 - 5 PM	2 Gratitude Group 6 AM Community Meal 4 PM Talking Circle 7-9 PM	3
4 Worship 10 AM (Communion)	5 Compassionate Friends 7-9 PM	6	7 Gratitude Group 6 AM	8 Bible Study 11 AM Choir 4 - 5 PM	9 Gratitude Group 6 AM Community Meal 4 PM Talking Circle 7-9 PM	10
11 Outdoor Worship, (Weather permitting) 10 AM Council, 11:30 AM	12 Reaching In, 12 PM	13	14 Gratitude Group 6 AM	15 Bible Study 11 AM Choir 4 - 5 PM	16 Gratitude Group 6 AM Community Meal 4 PM Talking Circle 7-9 PM	17
18 Worship 10 AM Council 11:30 AM	19 Reaching Out 7 PM	20 Salad Luncheon 11:30 - 12:30	21 Gratitude Group 6 AM Church Book Club 1 PM Trustees 7 PM	22 Bible Study 11 AM Choir 4 - 5 PM	23 Gratitude Group 6 AM Community Meal 4 PM Talking Circle 7-9 PM	24
25 Worship 10 AM	26	27	28 Gratitude Group 6 AM	29 Bible Study 11 AM Choir 4 - 5 PM	30 Gratitude Group 6 AM Community Meal 4 PM Talking Circle 7-9 PM	31



2024



Anniversary





This summer we will have outdoor worship on the second Sunday of June, July, and August. August 11th, will be the next outside service for this season. Please bring a lawn chair, if you are able.

Otsego County Housing

The Otsego Housing Task Force is a 17 member organization of community leaders focused on the task force mission of “moving housing forward” in Otsego County. Through education, outreach, and marketing the County to investors, the task force hopes to create more attainable housing options for residents across the county. To participate in the task force’s mission, please take the online housing survey using the included QR code below or at the following link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CCNNSNY>



The annual rummage sale is scheduled for *September 20th and 21st* in Fellowship Hall. Save your treasures and donate them to a good cause!



August Birthdays & Anniversaries



Birthdays:

- 4 Margaret Soller
- 8 Helen Crandall
- 12 Joe English
- 15 Marcella Fahselt
- 20 Jen Kassuba
- 20 Paul Balliet
- 22 Becky Trendera
- 23 Meadow Kassuba
- 24 Tyler English

Anniversaries:

- 1 Eric & Meredith Anderson
- 7 Dale & Margaret Rehkopf
- 12 Kevin and Staci Brown
- 29 Mary & David Evans



Salad Luncheon Season!



Salad luncheons are back! Below are the dates and sponsorship for each. Watch for a sign-up list each month, if you would like to help!

2024 Salad Luncheon Schedule

MONTH	COMMITTEE
May 28, 2024	Women's Fellowship
June 25, 2024	Scholarship
July 23, 2024	Reaching In
August 27, 2024	Council
September 24, 2024	Reaching Out
October 22, 2024	Women's Fellowship

School Supply Drive!

During the month of August, Reaching Out will, once again, be collecting supplies for the after-school programs. A list of supply ideas is below

If you would like to donate, bring them to church and place them in the box located in the narthex.

crayons
markers
colored pencils
construction paper
lined paper
blank paper
glue sticks
glue

craft items, such as beads , paints, ect.



~ In Our Prayers ~

**During the month of August the UNA is holding the Manistee
First Congregational United Church of Christ in prayer.**

Gloria House's granddaughter, Madison Crawford – as she suffers from cataplexy in narcolepsy along with other neurological struggles. Additionally, they have discovered that she has white blood cells in her cornea, which results in pain and swelling. It will also affect her vision. She is still in need of our prayers.

Gloria House's family – Prayers of joy as Gloria's granddaughter Chloe and her husband Ryan have welcomed a baby girl, Caylee Cook. Mom and baby are doing well!

Dave and Joann Schopp and family – as they grieve the passing of David's brother, James "Jimmy" Schopp.

Jason Peterman's cousin – as he is suffering from severe anxiety and is struggling to find solutions.

Jen and Sean Finnegan – Daughter and son-in-law of Helen Crandall. Sean is awaiting neurological test results for arterial blood flow in his brain. His activity level is extremely limited. Pray for diagnosis and treatment plan for this time. **The family of Maxine Dely** – as they grieve the recent loss of Maxine.

The Clark Family – As they grieve Charlene's passing on June 23, 2024.

Staci Brown's mother, Jean Radke – she is now home and recovering well from a recent stroke. Staci is asking for prayers for continued progress moving forward.

Laura Bantens' partner, Chris Crumbaugh – continued prayers for Laura and Chris as they adapt to the new medical issues Chris is facing.

Mike Termaat, brother-in-law of Pat Dressel – as he has had surgery to remove fluid from his lungs and is need of prayers.

Tom and Jenni Johnson– As Tom will soon begin the week-long round of radiation in an effort to further shrink the tumor on his pancreas.

Rev. Michael Bush, Tucson UCC Pastor – prayers for healing as he is now on medical leave until mid-August, as he faces surgery.

Laura Bantens' mom – is healing well. Continued prayers are appreciated as she navigates the road to recovery and her return to work.

Brad Derenzy – as he faces continuing health issues.

Jim Boughner – as recovers from his second carpal tunnel surgery.

Ariah House – (from Diane House) Ariah had her last in-hospital treatment in December 2023. She is doing great. I have to take her back to DeVos in March for the next step, providing she doesn't relapse. With this OMAS disease, there is a 50% - 75% chance of relapse. We are only going to focus on the wins.

□ Keep the prayers coming. God Bless you all. We really miss our church families.

Annual Meeting, November 1-2, 2024



MICHIGAN CONFERENCE



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST
a just world for all

Annual Meeting
November 1-2, 2024

Crystal Mountain
Resort

Thompsonville, MI

Two day event

- Worship
- Networking
- Learning
- Business
- Fellowship
- Rest
- Association Gathering
- Single rooms starting at \$149 per night
- Group accommodations starting at \$75 per person per night

Option to extend your stay



United Church of Christ President & General Minister

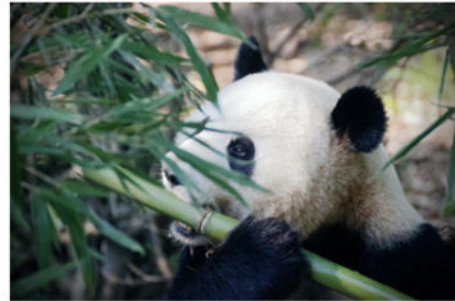
Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson will join us from 10.31.24 - 11.02.24 to be our keynote speaker for this Legacy Event. As we gather for worship on All Saints Day, we look forward to honoring our past, present, and future together.

The Environment is Your Backyard

by Lillian Daniel
Michigan Conference Minister

“Save the Environment!”

I saw the slogan everywhere growing up, on tee shirts and bumper stickers but it was the posters of exotic animals from far away that captured my childhood imagination. They were my first hint that the world was huge and I had only seen a small patch of it.



I lost myself in the posters of parrots in paradise, monkeys in the rainforest, polar bears staring at stars while lounging on glaciers, and of course the bamboo-nibbling panda couples on that special date night in the wilderness. All of them seemed to be beckoning me to jump on the hang glider of eco-justice and come rescue them. Later, I was somewhat disappointed to learn that none of these animals were looking for me to rescue them by bringing them home as pets. Apparently, these rare creatures wanted me to save them by saving their environment, and then by leaving them alone. As I matured, that mission of preserving some species' habitat inspired me. But in the interests of honesty, I'd also like to briefly thank Jesus for inventing stuffed animals, which got me through a potentially rudderless time.

Today, I look back on all those early imprinting visuals featuring animals that I would never see in my own block or backyard, and I now believe that I subconsciously internalized the message that the environment was somewhere else, far away, in a special spot much prettier than my boring neighborhood or block, and therefore much more deserving of preserving.

But there comes a time to put aside childish things, including the idea that the environment we should be saving is somewhere else, out on an iceberg our grandchildren may never see unless we get our Alaskan cruise tickets early.

The environment is right here.

It is the Flint River, whose natural force, blasted through lead pipes ten years ago, poisoned tens of thousands of people who still wait for their share of the legal settlement. The environment is the conference room where the decisions are made and the environment is the classroom where we learn from our mistakes. The environment is where we live, work, eat, pray and play. That idea was actually a gift of the [United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice](#) who back in the 1970's researched the disproportionate placement of landfills in Black communities, coined the term “environmental racism” and gave a new way of thinking to the rest of the environmental justice movement.

The environment is not somewhere far away, for the elite to visit, and cry over on social media. The environment is the pollinator garden at your church and the stray cat in the alley behind your apartment. The environment is the wildflowers on Michigan's highways who don't see themselves as weeds, but grow gloriously and boldly, around and above the litter that human critters toss from speeding cars.

Nothing in God's glorious creation is unconnected.
The environment is your backyard.
Save the environment.



On Voting, from Michigan Conference UCC

Power is in our vote. Know MI Voting Rights, GOTV and VOTE to PROTECT DEMOCRACY

In these times of “alternative” facts competing with facts, “selective” history being taught in our schools, equity and Inclusiveness being examined and questioned, and voting rights being restricted rather than expanded, many of us on the United Church of Christ Detroit Metro Area Social Justice Team are concerned that the very future of our Democracy is at risk.

We believe that as people of faith we must stand-up for our Christian values of equality and equal rights for all people. We must be the voice of those who unfortunately are marginalized and have no voice in our society. We must ensure that all our children receive a good quality education that prepares them to take their place in our society and earn a living which can support them and their families.

The Fall 2024 Election is very important, not just for the Presidential Office, but for all offices which are to be filled. We believe that as Christians, it is our responsibility to work in coalitions with people of similar values in a non-partisan way to make plans to GET OUT THE VOTE and PRESERVE DEMOCRACY. And we can individually urge support and vote for those candidates who demonstrate these values, not just by what they say, but by their actions as well.

But first we need to work to ensure that everyone gets registered to vote:

To register to vote you must be • a United States citizen; • a Michigan resident at the time you register and a resident of your city or township for at least 30 days when you vote; • at least 18 years of age (when you vote); • and not currently serving a sentence in jail or prison (in jail awaiting trial or already served sentence can vote, just have to re-register). You can register up to the day of the election at your local clerk’s office.

Visit the **Michigan Voter Information Center:** www.MI.gov/vote

and watch this video from our Michigan Unitarian-Universalist partners:

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Anniversary Video – Brenda is making copies of the anniversary video for \$5.00 each. Sign up in Fellowship Hall, if you would like one.

Join us for lunch! – a group of people from our church family meet for lunch on the third Tuesday of each month. Everyone is welcome! Please join us. The next scheduled lunch is Tuesday, August 20th.

Salad Luncheon – The next salad luncheon Tuesday, August 27.

Outdoor Worship – The next outdoor worship will be next Sunday, August 11th, weather permitting. Please bring a lawn chair if you are able.

Calling all Creatives! There is a new section our website for displaying all things creative by the members of this congregation. This can include poetry, paintings, needlework, gardens, prose, and anything else that you would like to share. We already have some poetry there and will welcome any additions. Please submit your project to Brenda at

brendabrummel@me.com or message to 810-623-1691. To view this new section, just go to the website and scroll down to the Special Events.

The website is www.firstuccgaylord.org.

Prayer Cards: In the pews, you will find prayer concern cards. When possible, to ensure accuracy in the bulletin and newsletter, please use the new cards.

Directory – If at any time you have changes, please forward them. You can access the most up-to-date directory via our weekly eblast or stop in the office for a copy. I appreciate your continued input.

Food Pantry – needs a few more volunteers. Please contact Don Storing if interested.

Reaching Out meeting link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83640729481>





2024 Flower Schedule

January: *Margaret Hafner and Dave Henson*

February: *Margaret Hellenberg*

March: *Jeannine Wambold*

April: *Cathy Otto*

May: *Mary Evans*

June: *Joanie Sietsema*

July: *Helen Mate*

August: *Evelyn Pratt*

September: *Sallie Anderson*

October: *Vicky Rigney*

November: *Louanne Spearman*

December: *Christian Ed.*



5 for 5

from your Reaching Out Team

OCWM (Our Church's Wider Mission)

Basic support for the Michigan Conference and National Settings.

Collected on an ongoing basis

Received to date: \$378 (2024)

One Great Hour of Sharing

Supports partners in countries with ministries that fund health, education and agricultural development, emergency relief, refugee ministries and both international and domestic response.

Collected in March

Received to date: \$495 (2024)

Strengthen the Church

Supports church growth, pastoral and lay leadership development, young and young adult ministers within conferences.

Collected around Pentecost

Received to date: \$329

Neighbors in Need

One third supports Council for American Indian Ministry and two-thirds is administered to Justice and Witness Ministers to support a variety projects. Due to Covid-19 the elected UCC officers have deemed this to be a priority.

Collected in October

Received to date: \$256 (2023)

Christmas Fund

Provides direct financial assistance to retired UCC ministers and lay employees and spouses.

Collected in December

Received to date: \$694 (2023)

Blanket Sunday, 2024

Received to date: \$936





Current Meeting Times

All are welcome to “attend” these meetings except where noted otherwise.

Reaching In* will meet the first Monday of each month at noon:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84945686588>

Reaching Out will meet the third Monday of each month at 7 PM:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83640729481>

Council will meet the after worship. Check monthly calendar for Specific dates.:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85297662581>

Trustees will meet the third Wednesday of each month at 7:00 PM:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83432888287>

Bible Study meets Thursdays at 11am

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84612895017>