



September, 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

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Church Service: Sunday, 10 am



Pastor's Column – September, 2024 Intentional Community

We never know how our small activities will affect others through the invisible fabric of our connectedness.... In this exquisitely connected world, it's never a question of "critical mass." It's always about *critical connections*.

—Margaret J. Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*

Buddhist Quaker Valerie Brown encourages an intentional and loving approach to community:

As a teacher at Pendle Hill outside Philadelphia, I continue to grow in my understanding of community. A safe, brave space, Pendle Hill is where, on my better days I bring my most compassionate self forward. This compassion spirals outward as an invitation—an invitation that inclines others to do the same. In this community, I learn about connection and about sharing my vulnerability in ways that grow me, that grow others....

It's easy to have idyllic beliefs about community—that it is a place

~Continued~

where everyone is friendly, agreeable, and polite; a place where there is no conflict, connection is easy, there are no difficult people. What I've discovered, however, is that more often than not, community is about conflict and about how we together navigate it. Conflict often reveals something important, allowing me to yield to something bigger and more important than protecting my ideas around right or wrong. Community calls me toward recognizing the shadow side of myself: the ways in which I am hard, distant, rigid, and unforgiving. Community shows me when I am placing my needs before others, showing up distracted or late, and taking others for granted. The opportunity I am then given is to ask essential questions: Can I be transparent and undefended without collapsing when this feedback comes my way? Can I notice, name, and investigate with open curiosity what I am feeling? Can I offer myself and others kind attention without judgment or blame? The gift of community is the mirror that reflects back to me, that offers me a chance to live into a better part of myself.

In Christ,

Pastor Greg

New Worship Series Begins in September

Our next sermon series will be "Radical Resilience". The theme originates from the *Daily Meditations* from the Center for Action and Contemplation (cac.org) as it is their theme for 2024. They are going deeper and further with the theme as they have a whole year, but we, too, will explore what Radical Resilience means to each of us.

In the words of Dean of Faculty at the Center for Action and Contemplation, Brian D. McLaren:

The word "radical" means going to the root, going to the depths, going beneath the surface... In fact, that is what contemplation really is: it's paying deep attention to the deep dimensions of life. So, radical resilience means radical, deep attention to the deepest roots of resilience. Resilience is the capacity to withstand and recover from hardship or difficulty. It has to do with the ability to spring back into shape after you've been beaten down or knocked over or bent over.

Here are the scriptures and themes into October related to our theme:

- ⇒ September 8 - Radical Resilience: "The Dance of Hope" Isaiah 40: 26-31 and Romans 15: 1-13
- ⇒ September 15 - Radical Resilience: "Strength in Weakness" 1 Corinthians 1: 26-28 and 2 Corinthians 12: 8-10
- ⇒ September 22 – Radical Resilience: "As a Village" Romans 12: 1-21 and Galatians 6: 1-10
- ⇒ September 29 – Radical Resilience: "Growing Through Adversity" Isaiah 38: 9-20 and Matthew 26: 36-46
- ⇒ October 6 – Radical Resilience: "To Live is to Change" Psalm 103: 1-14 and Matthew 4: 12-17
- ⇒ October 20 – Radical Resilience: "Spirituality is the Key" Matthew 6: 5-8 and Matthew 14: 13-21

September

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

1 Worship 10 AM	2 Gratitude Group 6-7 AM Reaching In 12 PM Compassionate Friends 7-9 PM	3	4 Gratitude Group 6-7 AM	5 Bible Study 11 AM Choir 4 - 5 PM	6 Gratitude Group 6-7 AM Community Meal 4 PM Talking Circle 7-9 PM	7
8 Worship 10 AM	9	10	11 Gratitude Group 6-7 AM	12 Bible Study 11 AM Choir 4 - 5 PM	13 Community Meal 4 PM Rummage Sale 	14 Rummage Sale 
15 OUTDOOR (weather permitting) Worship 10 AM Council 11 AM	16 Reaching Out 7 PM	17	18 Gratitude Group 6-7 AM Trustees 7 PM Church Book Club	19 Bible Study 11 AM Choir 4 - 5 PM	20 Gratitude Group 6-7 AM Community Meal 4 PM Talking Circle 7-9 PM	21
22 Worship 10 AM	23	24 Salad Luncheon 11:30 - 12:30	25	26 Bible Study 11 AM Choir 4 - 5 PM	27 Gratitude Group 6-7 AM Community Meal 4 PM Talking Circle 7-9 PM	28
29 Worship 10 AM CROP WALK 1:30 pm	30					

2024

ANNUAL RUMMAGE SALE

September 20 & 21, 2024

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UCC

Helpers will be needed starting on Monday, September 16, 2024.

Typically we set up on Monday and Tuesday; price on Wednesday. . . all helpers are welcome.

Please check sign-up sheet in Parish Hall.

Clothing, Home Décor, Children's clothing, toys, Books. . .

Please NO ELECTRONIC DEVICES for the sale . . . they're too difficult to sell and to disburse after the sale, if not sold.

Helpers will also be needed on Saturday to tear down and deliver left over items



September

Birthdays:

- 2 Robbie Watling**
- 3 Amallia Kassuba**
- 7 Kevin Brown**
Margaret Hafner
- 11 Louanne Spearman**
- 12 Mary Peterman**
- 13 Stephanie Kalember**
- 14 Gage Boughner**
- 17 Chuck Falk**
- 18 Melissa Mannion**
- 19 Carol Leser**
Helen Mate
- 21 Ken Wade**
- 22 George Lienerth**
- 24 Laura Bantens**
- 27 Judy Dunn**
- 30 Staci Brown**

Anniversaries:

- 6 Ken and Sharon Wade**
- 15 Kay and Jim Boughner**
- 20 Joe and Lani English**

**BIRTHDAYS AND
ANNIVERSARIES**

GAYLORD AREA CROP WALK
SEPTEMBER 29,2024
UNITED WAY BUILDING/ FOOD PANTRY

THEME: MARDI GRAS

**LINK TO GAYLORD AREA CROP WALK: [https://
events.crophungerwalk.org/cropwalks/teams?event=gaylordmi](https://events.crophungerwalk.org/cropwalks/teams?event=gaylordmi)**

REGISTRATION AND WALK:

Start registration at 1:00 PM

Program starts at 1:30

Walk begins at 2:00 PM

**COLLECTION: We will be also collecting canned goods for the
Otsego County Food Pantry**

Peanut Butter

Mac and Cheese

Pork and Beans

Canned Veggies

Canned Condensed Soups

Dry Cereal

Jelly

Canned Meats

Ramen Noodles

Canned Fruit

**Donation packets and information will be available after our Sunday Wor-
ship Services in the Parish Hall. We would like to have all donations in by
the end of the WALK or that week at the latest. Checks made out to CWS
Crop Walk or utilize online giving through our church website**

**We can still count you as a Walker if you let us know ahead of time of your in-
tent to walk prior to the walk.**

**Thanks for being a part of our Mardi Gras March to help end hunger one step
at a time!**

Sallie Anderson

Helen Crandall

Come, join us for a
Disability Learning Day Event

Saturday, October 5th, 9:30 to 3:00

Peace Lutheran Church, Gaylord, Michigan

**Disabilities impact
ALL of us!**

The keynote speaker is
Victoria White,
Program Director at
With Ministries.
Victoria will share ways
of including people with
varying disabilities in
worship, and best
practices for building a
sense of belonging.

You are also invited to attend two
(of three) offered workshops:

- *Biblical Perspective on Disability*
led by Bishop Craig Satterlee
- *Ministry with People with
Dementia*, led by Pastor Clay
Bates
- *Normalizing Neurodiversity
(autism, etc.) in Your Context*,
led by Victoria White.

There will be group
discussion time to
share struggles,
challenges or ideas
and strategies that
useful in your
context.

Please register at <https://www.mittensynod.org/news/disability-learning-day/>

Registration is \$20 and includes lunch and a free book or fidget toy,
but don't put it off, as registration closes Friday, September 27th.

For more information, contact Pastor Clay Bates at clayhbates@gmail.com.

This event has been generously supported by a member of our synod
who shares our passion for ministry with people with disabilities.

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!



**Well done, First
UCC, Gaylord!**



~ *In Our Prayers* ~

During the month of September the UNA is holding the New Waves United Church of Christ in Traverse City in prayer

Maureen Derenzy and family – as they grieve Brad’s recent passing.

Jason Peterman – as he is dealing with a variety of health issues.

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!

Tom and Jenni Johnson – Tom has completed radiation and now awaits scans to see whether the tumor around his pancreas has reduced in size.

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.

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

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.

Stacy Wright, friend of Kathy Menkes – Stacy has been facing metastatic breast cancer. *All prayers are appreciated.*

The English Family – as they manage medical and family challenges.

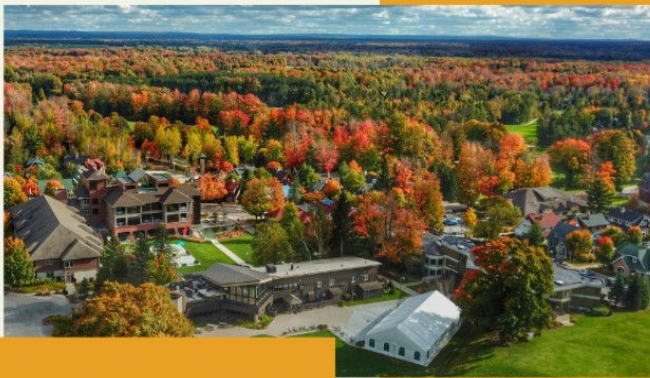
Woman's Fall Color Tour



On October 9th, First UCC Gaylord's women will head north amidst the beautiful colors of fall to Wolverine where they will experience a quaint gnome village. The excursion will be followed by lunch in the area with details to be determined. Watch for a sign-up sheet when the date gets closer.



Annual Meeting, November 1-2, 2024



MICHIGAN CONFERENCE



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.



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.*

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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Lawn Care – We are in need of people to help with the lawn through end of the season.

Crop Walk, 2024 is quickly approaching! It will take place starting at the United Way building on September 29th. starting with registration at 1:00 PM.

25% of proceeds will go directly to the Otsego County food pantry. Please consider participating or donating.

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, September 17th.

Salad Luncheon – The next salad luncheon is Tuesday, September 24th.

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>





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/8343288287>

Bible Study meets Thursdays at 11am

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