

First Congregational  
United Church of Christ  
*Gaylord*

 June 2018 

We aim to embrace people at every age and every stage of life, and help them become the most loving version of themselves possible.

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First Congregational United  
Church of Christ  
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Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday  
10:00 am - noon or by appointment

Moderator: Rokko Jans  
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Church Service: Sunday: 10:00 am

***From Your Pastor...***

Let's Get Outside!

It's been a long, cold winter, and spring was more than a little late in arriving. So let's get out and celebrate summer in Northern Michigan! Our outdoor services begin on June 10 and will continue through August on the second Sunday of each month. (June 10, July 8, and August 12)

These services are informal and a lot of fun, but their purpose runs even deeper than that. We are a congregation that does our most important work outside the church building – volunteering, serving, and loving the people out there who need it most. So it is only fitting that we worship outside our building from time to time. Additionally, we are a church becoming more and more aware of our fragile relationship with this precious planet. The more we can be in physical touch with our blessed Mother Earth, the more likely we are to treat her with the gentle kindness she deserves. Last but not least, those who happen to walk or drive by when we are outside on a Sunday morning may get a helpful glimpse of our unique, energetic, and positive community.

I continue to be very proud of the work our church family is doing and increasingly excited by all the amazing things that go on around here. But I also worry that people “out there” in the larger community still have no idea what they are missing by not joining with us in loving service. We've all got to do everything in our power to get that word out. 1st Congregational UCC of Gaylord has something very powerful and very unique to offer. Let's not hide our light under a bushel; let it shine!

When was the last time you invited a friend, neighbor, or co-worker to worship with you? Perhaps one of our outdoor services would be the perfect chance. Have you ever shared something from our Facebook page or website with anyone else out there? Have you ever emailed or texted the link to one of your favorite recent sermons to someone who might benefit from it? (If these ideas sound too technologically advanced for you, call Jessica, Brenda, or Mary Fox for a quick and easy tutorial!)

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### *From Your Pastor Continued...*

Coming up in July and August, we will be turning our attention to loving those who are struggling with addiction. Perhaps during those 8 Sundays you could invite someone you know who is dealing with addiction, whether his/her own or a family member's. The people who have found our church and made it their home in the last couple years are extremely grateful they did. Let's spread the good news of what God is doing here! Amen.

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### *From Your Reaching Out Team...*

We have been thrilled with the results of our first year of using a theme-based approach to coordinate our outreach efforts. Together we have done a fantastic job of loving our brothers and sisters who are hungry, elderly, homeless, at risk, women, or struggling with addiction. It's amazing how much we can accomplish when we coordinate all our efforts. We are proving the meaning of the word TEAM – Together Everyone Accomplishes More!

We are continuing to find ways of making a difference in the lives of women who need an extra boost of support. Thanks to all of you, we were able to raise over \$825 for C.A.R.E. in Baldwin after Luka Knight spoke! We were also able to send a check for \$520.00 to the Women's Resource Center (WRC). That money came from both the children's offerings for May and from the May salad luncheon. (Special thanks to Helen Mate for doing an incredible job of pulling that luncheon together!) So far our donation of needed items for the WRC has been lagging a bit. Our box in the parish hall needs some help! We need your donations by this Sunday at the latest! Thank you!

Believe it or not, we are already beginning to discuss possible outreach themes for next year – defined as September 2018 through August of 2019. We may recommend that some of this year's six themes be revisited, and we will surely be focusing our love on several new groups as well. If you have any outreach themes you'd like us to consider, please email our chairperson Jeff Kalember at [906jkal@gmail.com](mailto:906jkal@gmail.com). We will solicit congregational input in July and August, so we can hit the ground running come fall.

As we close out the current outreach calendar, this July and August we will be focusing our loving efforts on those who are struggling with addiction. Nowadays, every single one of us knows or has been affected by an addict. Addiction takes many forms, and no one is immune from it. During these summer months, Toby will use the 12 Steps as the starting point for his sermons, and we will have a guest preacher or two to share their first hand experience with addiction. If you know anyone struggling with addiction, be sure to invite them to these 8 services in July and August.

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*From Your Reaching In Team...*

Let's begin this month with some thank you's! Thank you to our Music Director, Rokko Jans, for all the powerful and meaningful music he has brought to us on a weekly basis. Thank you also to Sandra Soderberg, our organist, for soldiering through some health difficulties to play for us. Thank you to Miriam Hollar, whose expertise in spiritual practices is filtering through our entire church family. Last but not least, thank you to Joanna Morse for continuing to donate countless hours and dollars seeing to it that our audio and visual equipment grows right along with us.

We hope that many of you have integrated Breath Prayer into your regular, daily spiritual practices. The more we attach simple prayer to our breathing patterns, the closer we will be the One who loves us more than we can even imagine. Keep an eye on each of the four bulletins in June for more scriptural breath prayers.

Looking ahead to July and August, we plan to use Reinhold Niebuhr's "Serenity Prayer" in worship during our 8-week series on addiction. We are confident that this prayer in its entirety along with the 12-Steps will deepen your walk with God whether you are an addict or not! There is tremendous spiritual power for everyone in the 12-Step program!

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**From Your Trustees...**

**New Locks to be Installed in the Parish Hall on June 5!**

Please familiarize yourself with the new system for using our parish hall beginning this Tuesday. With all the outside and inside locks changed, all existing keys out there will be rendered obsolete. One key to the Parish Hall will be kept in a lock box attached to the kitchen door due to greater handicap accessibility. The code for that lock box will be given to those participants and organizations who use the building regularly at times when the offices are closed. Only those outside organizations with current, updated building use forms on file with Jessica will be given the code to the lockbox.

The most important thing in using this lockbox key is that you NOT enter the building until you have put the key back in the lockbox and relocked it. Do not put it in your pocket or purse and expect to remember to return it later. Simply unlock the door with the key and return it to the lockbox immediately before entering the building. You will not need to key to relock the building when you leave.

Obviously, there will be an adjustment period for all of us as we get used to this new and necessary system. Your trustees and office staff are confident that once all the kinks are worked out, this will be a much better system for all of us, including our many guest users of the building. Thank you for your cooperation and positive spirit!

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## *An Update on Toby's Continuing Education...*

As most of you know, I've been blessed with the opportunity to be a part of a small cohort of progressive pastors from all over the country – and one from Scotland – who are studying and working together on major issues facing the church and the world. Our leaders are Brian McLaren (author of *The Great Spiritual Migration* and about 20 other books) and Cameron Trimble (the director of the Center for Progressive Renewal).

I'm really excited to share some of the insights I gain from this power-packed group. Much of our recent work has focused on the planet, God's creation. We have heard from world experts on everything from climate change to recycling. Like many of you, I have been a dedicated recycler for many years. I did it because it made sense to me and felt like it was a responsible way to approach part of my relationship to Mother Earth. But I never really researched the way recycling works until this class, and because of that I never knew that:

- Most plastics can only really be recycled **once**. After that they wind up in landfills
- The companies that collect and process our recycling bins eventually sell the compressed blocks of recycled materials to other companies, most of which are in China. In the last couple years, however, China has increased their own environmental protection measures to the point that they have stopped buying most of our recycled materials. **The result of all this is that our recycling companies are now often forced to take all these blocks of supposedly recycled goods to American landfills, which, as we know, are already overflowing.**

As a result of this recent learning, I have become more convinced than ever that while recycling is good, it is not nearly as important as reducing the amount of harmfully packaged products that I buy in the first place. In the spirit of spreading the good news, I'd like to start offering one or two "For the Love of the Planet" tips each month in the newsletter. I hope that if you have planet-loving things you are doing to reduce your consumption of plastic and other environmentally harmful packaging, you will let Jessica and me know, so we can include your wisdom in this vital effort too! So here goes...

### **For the Love of the Planet...**

**Tip #1** - If you like beer, don't buy cans or bottles at the store anymore. Go to a local microbrewery and buy a growler (a large 32 or 64 ounce glass jug). The brewery will refill it whenever you bring the empty back – using the very same growler!

**Tip #2** – If you're already using your own reusable bags when you go to the store, take your environmental consciousness a step further by buying as much as you can from the bulk bins (totally unpackaged products – nuts, candy, granola, etc.) Since these products are sold by weight, most stores will let you use your own reusable bags for their bulk products.

*Thank you for loving this planet we all share!*

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Introducing...

## *Soul Stream*

A new feature has been added to the web site – you can now hear Toby’s sermons using a podcast, which is called Soul Stream. Not only are the last few sermons there, but also some of the Lenten sessions.

To get to the podcast, go to the web site: [www.firstuccgaylord.org](http://www.firstuccgaylord.org).

Scroll down to the bottom right hand corner.

You can then select either iTunes or Google Play.

Either one of them will take you to a free podcast selection. From there, you can listen to the podcast and also choose to subscribe in which case you will be notified when a new podcast is added.

\*Please note that the sermons are still available on the website by going to the site and selecting The Sermons on the menu bar at the top of the page.

If you have any questions, please contact Brenda Brummel.



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## ***What Your Pastor Has Been Reading...***

*The Spirit Photographer* by Jon Michael Varese

This is a terrific novel set in the late 1800's here in the U.S. A photographer specializes in portraits of people who have lost a loved one. Inexplicably, in the photos, the deceased relative often "appears" in the background of the photo. Is this man a charlatan or does he have some spiritual gift for communicating with those in the great beyond? The book really gets interesting when a prominent US senator has his portrait done with his wife and instead of their deceased son appearing in the picture, their African American housekeeper does.

*Raising Strong Daughters* by Meg Meeker

This book was given to me by a dear friend and mentor, who has raised a fantastic daughter. Meeker emphasizes the absolutely pivotal and unique role a father plays in his daughter's life, for better or worse. She gives you specific guidelines and benchmarks for creating the healthiest possible relationship with your daughter, one that will launch her out into the world with strength, determination, wisdom, and love.

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# JUNE SCHEDULE

DATE	LITURGIST	USHER/GREETER	COFFEE HOUR
June 3	Don Storing	George Lienerth	Vicky Rigney and The English Family
June 10	Don Storing	NEEDED	Miriam Hollar, Chris Meyer, & Thomas Schulingkamp
June 17	Don Storing	Mardee Storing & Pat Sepura	Shirley Matevia & Louanne Spearman
June 24	Don Storing	NEEDED	Cathy Otto & Margaret Hellenberg

## *June Birthdays*

- 4 Jenna English
- 6 Jim Boughner
- 7 Vicky Rigney
- 9 Katie Amar-Fox
- 11 Kenzie House
- 12 Kay Huntoon
- 17 Erin Rigney
- 21 Meredith Anderson
- 21 Gavin Ball
- 23 Mary Fox



## *June Anniversaries*

- 3 Rod & Sallie Anderson
- 9 Don & Helen Crandall
- 10 Aaron & Laura Hotelling
- 21 Steve & Lori Ferguson
- 23 Terry & Diane House
- 30 George & Judy Dunn

# JUNE

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1  Community Meal, 5pm	2
3  Reaching Out, 11:30am	4	5  *bulletin deadline	6	7  Bible Study, 11am	8  Community Meal, 5pm	9
10	11	12  *bulletin deadline	13  AAUW Potluck, 5pm	14  Flag Day   Trustees, 9am Bible Study, 11am	15  Community Meal, 5pm	16
17  Father's Day  	18  *newsletter deadline	19  *bulletin deadline	20  Church Book Club, 1pm	21  Bible Study, 11am Reaching In, 12:15pm  Summer Solstice	22  Community Meal, 5pm	23  Craft Show, 10am
24	25  61st Anniversary of the United Church of Christ	26  Salad Luncheon, 11:30 pm  *bulletin deadline	27	28  Bible Study, 11am	29  Community Meal, 5pm	30