

First Congregational
United Church of Christ
Gaylord

October 2019

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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Church Service: Sunday: 10:00 am

From Your Moderator -

“10-3-2-1”

Our “search and call” for a new pastor for the church is entering an exciting new period that I call “Phase Four.” Here is a review of the process so far:

In the weeks after nationally posting a synopsis of the church profile that the Search Committee fashioned with input from the entire congregation, we received interest from ten well-qualified candidates for the pastoral position.

We sent our full profile to several of the candidates we were interested in, and after further evaluation, narrowed our focus to the top three. In September, we interviewed all three via “Zoom,” a web-based video system. All gave impressive interviews; we are now inviting our top two candidates to Gaylord for a chance to continue the discernment process in-person.

A word about “discernment:” this is an undertaking in which a search committee, a congregation and a prospective pastor all seek God’s guidance in determining whether to pursue a productive spiritual partnership. The process may go swiftly; if all goes well, we may have a pastor by the end of the year!

The timetable must remain fluid, of course. We may receive further applications, which due diligence will require us to evaluate (we already shuffled our top three selections, before the interviews, based on new applications).

Continued on next page...

The Search Committee is currently setting up neutral pulpits to assess the prospective pastors' preaching styles; this is dependent on the schedules of these churches, and, of course, how soon our candidates can carve out a weekend from their current positions. But because we are an attractive church in a vibrant community, our search and call is proceeding at a steady pace and we hope to have our in-person interviews take place in the next few weeks.

So before long, we may be down to our final selection, who we will invite to meet the congregation and lead us in Sunday worship. A vote of the congregation will ensue, and if the candidate is approved, we will once again have a pastor to help guide our gathering: in reaching in, reaching out, and becoming the most loving versions of ourselves as possible. May God continue to guide us in our efforts.

Rokko Jans
Moderator

ANNUAL MEETING

Please plan to stay after worship for our annual meeting Sunday, October 27th



Stewardship Dedication, Sunday October 6

As you prayerfully consider your financial commitment in support of our church for the coming year, consider the following reflection on tithing courtesy of UCC minister Rev. Dr. Jo Hudson. (Please bring your pledge to the dedication service on October 6, or mail it to the church office in advance if you're unable to attend.)

Bring the full tithe into the storehouse...and thus put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts; see if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing.

- Malachi 3:10

Shortly after arriving at her church in Dallas, Texas Rev. Hudson participated in a New Member Class on the topic of stewardship. After hearing a member of the congregation quote this scripture from Malachi, then explaining in genuine, heart-felt terms how he'd begun practicing tithing and what an impact it had made in his life, she decided to follow his example, to practice tithing. Here is her account ...

It is now six years later and I have never regretted that decision. This one passage of scripture, and the practice of it in my daily life, has changed how I feel about money. Now, if I am honest, I often wish I had more money. I frequently have to limit the things I buy. Sometimes I have to postpone the plans to do something for my home or yard. I have to carefully plan for major purchases. Those are the realities of our living, but since beginning the discipline of tithing, I have consciously given away more of my resources than ever before in my life, much more than just ten percent. What I have discovered is that God is true to God's promises.

I am happier now than I have ever been and while there are many reasons for my happiness, I believe that one of the most important reasons is that I now spend my days in gratitude. I have shifted from being fearful of what I do not have to being grateful for what I do have. I am learning, day by day, week by week to be a generous person. I am learning the deep and profound joy of giving. In short, I have been set free. Money no longer owns me and I am grateful to God for that.

So, why not try it? What do you have to lose? After all, it is God who says, "Test me in this!" Why not try bringing God the full tithe, a full ten percent of your resources, and see what God does. I am convinced that God will do exactly as God promised and will open the windows of heaven and pour out blessings upon you.

Prayer: Holy One, you are so very generous to me. Let me be wholly yours so that I might be a blessing just as you have blessed me. Amen.

Church Financials

Remember, we have not had to pay a pastor's salary/benefits for several months, resulting in \$16K in staffing cost savings from May through August. As a result, the Net Operating Income shown below is improved by this amount compared to what we would have otherwise experienced.

INCOME		JAN 1 – AUG 31, 2019
Tithes / Offerings		\$ 53,721.68
Other Operating Income		\$ 3,793.00
Total Operating Income		\$57,514.68
EXPENSES		
Staffing		\$31,566
Facility (excludes windows)		\$13,830
All other operating costs		\$ 5,509
Total Operating Expenses		\$50,905.00
Net Operating Income		\$ 6,609.68

Note: operating expenses are based on the budget approved each year at our church annual meeting. The figures above do not include the window replacement project or special donations that get passed along to specific ministries such as Food Pantry, Our Church's Wider Ministry (OCWM), Kidz on a Mission, etc.

THEME FOR AUTUMN WORSHIP

As kids have returned to school and we look forward to the changing of the leaves, our congregation continues to explore our worship theme for the fall “Fruit of the Spirit”, based on Galatians 5:22-23. Each week, we concentrate on aspects of the fruits, as named in Galatians: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

The Reaching In Team invites anyone who might like to preach to volunteer. Volunteers are responsible for the sermon and can plan as much or as a little of the service as they wish. Members of the Reaching In Team will work with preaching volunteers to provide everything from liturgy needs to theme specific Bible readings.

Please contact Miriam Hollar at Miriam.Hollar@gmail.com if you are interested.

Kidz on a Mission

SOCKS – The Kidz on a Mission will be collecting socks from now until their annual trip downstate the first weekend in December. One of the items we noticed last year that was most requested and most missing were socks for people to be able to obtain at One Stop Shop. So, please, go through your sock drawer and bring in socks that you don’t need and that are still in good condition. These can be any size and for any age. If you would like to buy some socks to contribute, we would suggest children’s socks, as we think we will have a predominance of used adult socks donated. There will be a box in Fellowship Hall for collecting the socks. THANKS!

If you have any questions, or would like to volunteer to help, please contact Brenda Brummel at 810-623-1691 or brendabrummel@me.com.

Crafting for a Cause – Mark Your Calendars!

Our Reaching Out team recently adopted “Crafting for a Cause” as a fun project to expand awareness of First Congregational UCC Gaylord, enhance relationships, and support human rights / social justice causes. We plan to host crafting sessions invite the community, and create hand-made items to sell on consignment at Lady Latte in downtown Gaylord will all proceeds donated in support of social justice and human rights causes (similar to other initiatives our generous church community has supported in the past).

As an initial project we’ll be creating quilted pet placemats (examples pictured below). Based on how our trial project goes, we might adopt a different project another year or season.

Everyone is invited to take part and invite friends / neighbors to join in the fun! If you can trace a line or know how to use scissors, there’s a task for you ... and if that’s not your jam, come purely for the social interaction! Crafting for a Cause production will take place:

Tuesday, October 8 from 4 – 7 pm

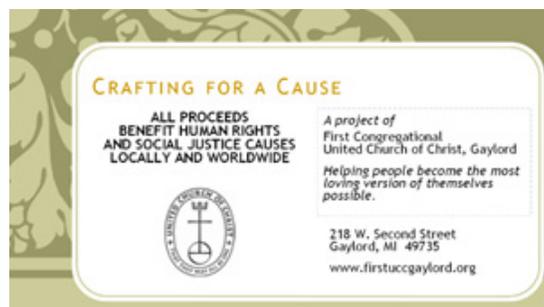
Tuesday, October 15 from 4 – 7 pm

Drop in anytime and stay as long as you’d like. All materials have been donated, instructions will be provided, and we’ll have refreshments on hand! If someone would prefer to work on their own craft(s) in the company of others, they’re welcome to join us too!

Samples of pet placemats



Tag attached to each handcrafted item



School of Love



Much to Love in the School of Love

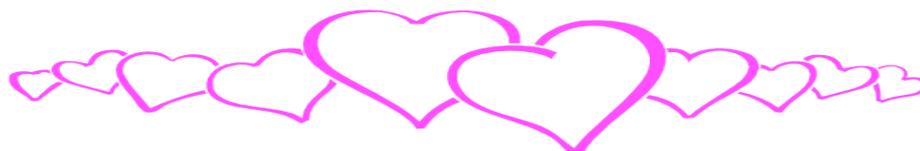
Our School of Love invites all children in preschool through sixth grade to join us on Sunday's mornings during worship (immediately following the Children's Moment). We have a wonderful team of volunteers (which we're always seeking to expand) who are helping to cultivate and develop the most loving version of our children possible. Our weekly studies closely parallel our church sermon themes. From September through November we will focus on the nine different gifts or fruits of the spirit: goodness, peace, love, joy, kindness, faithfulness, self-control, patience, and gentleness. On the fourth Sunday of each month we're planning special joint lessons that will involve both our older youth (Kidz on a Mission) and our School of Love participants.

Occasionally, these joint lessons will involve a local field trip.

New children are always welcome to join in on any lesson at any time. Consider inviting friends or offer to bring neighborhood kids along with you to church some Sunday!

Recruiting Additional School of Love Volunteers

If you enjoy the adventure and entertainment that comes from working with children, you might want to consider volunteering as a teacher on Sundays for our School of Love. If you've observed that most of our teacher volunteers are women, rest assured it's not a requirement ... we welcome male volunteers as well! The only "requirement" is a passion for kids – we can help to support the rest by providing lesson materials and teaching volunteers what they need to know. If you'd like to visit a School of Love class or two before deciding, you're more than welcome. We encourage anyone who might have an interest to contact Mary Fox, our current School of Love coordinator, at maryfox32@yahoo.com.



Person of the Month

Dave Henson and Margaret Hafner

It became clear that Dave Henson's and Margaret Hafner's love story had to be told at the same time.

"We didn't start to live until we got together," Dave said. "We had both been married before and I had a very abusive wife and Margaret had an abusive husband."

Margaret smiled and nodded as he spoke. But it would be many years before they found each other. Dave was born in Cincinnati and lived there until the end of 2002.

"I went to work for Kroger after high school and stayed there for 19 years," he said. "I worked for Cincinnati Coin Laundry, installing, repairing and maintaining washers and dryers, and delivering computers, stoves, refrigerators to apartments for seven years. Then I worked for a foundry until it closed and then Stanley Steamer."

Margaret was born in Chelsea, near Ann Arbor.

"I worked for a book manufacturer for 35 years," she said. "I started at the bottom and worked my way up." The couple first met in an AOL Chat Room. Although there were other participants in the room, they soon focused most of their attention on each other.

"We could relate so much to each other and we listened to each other," Margaret said.

"We chatted and chatted," Dave said. "I shared music with her and we listened to classical, rock and roll, opera, anything but rap. It felt like we really knew each other."

Both had been burned before so it took five years before they actually met, and Dave joked he wanted to be sure she wasn't a serial killer.

"She drove down to Cincinnati in October of 2002 and stayed at the Holiday Inn," Dave said. "We had dinner several times and in December I moved to Michigan. I was 52 and she was 47. I had five children and she had two. We consider all of the children to be both of ours. As a couple we have 19 grandchildren."

Margaret added, "A friend of mine asked me to take in her 13 year old daughter. Dave said 'what's one more' and she stayed with us until she was out of high school. We considered her like the rest of our children. All of our children attended her wedding."

Dave took a job at Meijer in Ann Arbor and Margaret stayed at the book manufacturer. They spent all their leisure time together - fishing, concerts, visiting different spots in Michigan and Ohio. Then eight years after they moved in together they had the first big challenge to their relationship.

"Margaret had a stroke," Dave said. "She was sent to University of Michigan Medical Center. She had to go to rehab. It took years to teach her how to walk, talk, wash her face. We got through it together."

Dave said the family had been a little wary of him - he joked they probably worried he was a serial killer - but when they saw Dave's devotion to her during her recovery, they voiced their approval of their relationship.

Margaret could no longer work and they decided to move to Gaylord to be close to Margaret's older sister. Her sister helps in various ways, including taking them grocery shopping and on trips out of town and out of state.

Dave took a job at Gaylord Meijer's gas station until he retired. Three years ago they faced their second challenge when Dave was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. He is also required to wear compression hose due to right leg artery clots.

“Now we help each other,” Margaret said, but they haven’t let their challenges prevent them from living a full life. They joined First Congregational. “People were so welcoming,” she said. “They welcome everyone. Toby (Pastor Jones) seemed like he was speaking right to me.”

“The music is so wonderful,” Dave added. “Joanna greets everyone. We go to the Community Meal every week. In the summer we help mow the lawn and clean the flower beds.”

Among many other activities they still listen to music together and listen to each other. They go out to dinner with family once a month and go to events in downtown Gaylord. Both work on their yard.

“I read all the time, but I can only do it for so long because of my stroke,” Margaret said. “I’m also into ancestry and crocheting.”

Dave loves to cook, and to bake cookies which he shares with neighborhood children. They hope they’ll be able to visit Margaret’s son in California someday.

They decided to not get married officially for financial reasons, but their bond couldn’t be any closer if they had. The love on their faces when they talk of each other, the challenges they’ve faced and the time they spend together speaks for itself.



Going Green(er) by Saving Energy

In keeping with our sermon series on “Loving Our Planet”, we’re always looking for ways to reduce our church’s carbon footprint. The Trustees have identified an opportunity to lower energy consumption, making us “greener” in two ways: 1) helping our planet by using less fossil fuel; and 2) saving money by reducing air conditioning demands. The key is to **close curtains and blinds when the Fellowship Hall is not in use**. By reducing radiant heat produced when sun streams through the windows, the Fellowship Hall stays cooler, reducing the demand on our air conditioning system and in turn lowering our energy use and our electric bills. Insulated curtains already adorn the three large fellowship hall windows, and we’ll install blinds on the west-facing kitchen windows in the near future. (Reduce splatter by raising the blinds while the sink is in use.)

If you are the last one to leave the Fellowship Hall, please close window curtains and blinds ... that’s all it takes to shower our planet with a little more love.



UNA Happenings
UNA Moderator, Helen Crandall

The UNA just had the Fall Association Meeting in Alpena. We learned a lot about our UCC “roots” and will be looking forward to sharing some exciting information with you over the next few months. You will each be receiving a wallet size card that you can share with friends when they ask, “What is your church all about?” We also learned some new songs in the New Century Hymnal that were written for and describe our UCC roots; you’ll be introduced to those soon.

We appreciate the per-capita giving from each church. We are presently supporting FIVE people seeking Ordination within the United Northern Association. It costs us about \$2,000/individual to fulfill the national requirements to become ordained. We are so excited to have so many! We have written a grant to help us defray some of these costs, but meanwhile, we so appreciate all that our local churches are doing to help with this. You have already heard Rosie Gibson and Liz Larrivee who are two of our MIDs (Members In Discernment). Please keep these individuals in your prayers.

There is a “Poverty Simulation Workshop” coming up in Northport: Sunday, 10/20/19 and a presentation on Poverty in Northport Saturday, 10/12/19; contact philgarrison1@verizon.net for more information.

The UNA will be brainstorming, along with youth leaders across the Association, “How to get youth involved,” via ZOOM meetings in the next upcoming months. Contact mfcucc@gmail.com for these valuable, challenging events.

Our Spring Association Meeting will be held in Cheboygan, 4/25/20; the Fall Assoc Meeting will be held in Lewiston, 9/26/20.

Shalom!

~ Ministry Opportunities ~

WANTED:

We are looking for an individual willing to help track and acknowledge memorial gifts. If you have any interest, please contact the office or let Mary Sanders know!

Have you ever wanted to preach, write a prayer or offer something else special for worship? The Reaching In Team is organizing the worship schedule until we have a new pastor and would love your help! Our theme for the next three months is “Fruit of the Spirit” though we can work most offerings in to the theme even if the offering is not directly related. Please contact Miriam Hollar at miriam.hollar@gmail.com if you wish to contribute your time and talents to worship.

LITURGIST:

We still need a liturgist for the last two weeks of December.
Please let Jessica know if you are willing!



Announcements

- **Women's Luncheon** - This year we shall gather at The Thirsty Sturgeon, 11900 Scott Road, Wolverine, MI 49799, at noon for lunch. We shall leave from the church on Wednesday, October 16th, at 11:15 to car pool to the restaurant. We anticipate lots of great food, laughter, and hopefully amazing scenery. The sign-up sheet is in the Parish House.
- **Reaching Out is sponsoring Crafting for a Cause** – a fun-filled gathering for socializing while lending a hand to a worthwhile project. Mark your calendar for Tuesdays, Oct. 8 and Oct. 15, 4-7 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Drop in when you can and stay as long as you'd like. Materials, instruction, and food provided! We'll be creating pet placemats for consignment at Lady Latte, with all proceeds to go to social justice and human rights causes. Everyone is welcome (if crafts are not your jam, come for the comradery); invite friends and neighbors, too!
- **Fall clean-up will be October 13th.**
- **The Otsego County Food Pantry** is a program that allows individuals and families to come to the United Way building and get food when emergency situations or just bad luck in general prevents people from being able to purchase their own food like the majority of us do on a regular basis. Some of that food is purchased locally by the pantry staff but most comes from State or Federal programs, but is handled by local volunteers from churches and other organizations that offer their time to ensure the food is then made available to those who need it the most. It is not easy for those who need it to have to ask for it. Just try to put yourself in their shoes.
The volunteer's job is to set up boxes of food from the shelves according to the number of people in a family. Then, when a person or persons come in to get food, they are told how the pantry works and what options are available to them as our "customers". Our job as volunteers is not only to see to it that the customer get's the food they need, but, in the process, to treat them as people no different than ourselves, with courtesy and respect. Something they may not necessarily get at other times and places. Something I've learned since being the UCC representative is how good I feel at the end of the day, knowing I made a few people's lives easier just because I was willing to give a hand to someone who needed it and took at least one worry off their shoulders. I would ask every one who has the time to offer to take a shift at the pantry and experience the "Warm Fuzzies" we get when we see someone leaving the pantry. You'll be back, "I guarantee it".
- **Volunteers for Snowblowing are needed!** Don Storing will be gone the majority of the winter, so we do need a "back-up plan" for those days when he would often come and help clear snow. Please contact office or discuss with Don if you are willing.

Prayer Requests

This month, the UNA is holding the Cadillac Church in prayer.



Prayer Requests

The Hauschild Family – as they grieve the loss of their 21-year-old son, Tag

The Boughner Family - as they grieve Scott's passing.

Mirja "Miss Sue" Hoeft – as she recovers from a fractured leg at McReynold's Hall.

Rev. Ginny Titus

Pat Dressel's grandson, Bryce Bevil – as he is now in physical therapy and occupational therapy, as well as speech therapy.

Rev. Toby Jones - as he recovers from back surgery

Bo Leser

*When in
doubt-
Pray it out.*

See the prayer request / joys sheet in the Narthex to add to this list. If someone has been inadvertently omitted or if it is time to remove a name, please let the church office know.

If you know of any one who is in need of prayer or a pastoral visit at home or in the hospital, please contact the Church Office at or office@firstuccgaylor.org. The request will be passed on to the Reaching In Team which is taking on those responsibilities until we have a new pastor.

OCTOBER SCHEDULE

DATE	LITURGIST	USHER/GREETER	COFFEE HOUR
October 6	Don Storing	Shirley Matevia & Gloria House	Trustees
October 13	Sallie Anderson	Roger Brummel	NEEDED
October 20	Sallie Anderson	NEEDED	NEEDED
October 27	Sallie Anderson	NEEDED	Vicky Rigney & Friends

Birthdays

6 *Rod Anderson*
 20 *Todd Chwatun*
 25 *Sallie Anderson*
 25 *Marilyn Kaczanowski*
 25 *Lauren Rigney*
 25 *Mary Sanders*

Anniversaries

6 *Tony & Mike Fobar-Dockery*
 8 *Mischelle Stone & Jean Sasso*
 10 *Mark & Jill Brazelton*



OCTOBER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3 <i>Bible Study, 11am Women's Fellowship, 12:15pm Kidz on Key, 6pm</i>	4 <i>Community Meal, 6pm</i>	5
6 <i>Worship 10</i>	7	8	9	10 <i>Bible Study, 11am Reaching In, 12:15pm Kidz on Key, 6pm</i>	11 <i>Community Meal, 6pm</i>	12 <i>UNA Meeting, 10am</i>
13 <i>Worship 10am</i>	14 <i>Columbus Day</i>	15	16	17 <i>Trustees, 9am Bible Study, 11am Kidz on Key, 6pm</i>	18 <i>Community Meal, 6pm</i>	19
20 <i>Worship 10am</i>	21	22 <i>Salad Luncheon, 11:30am (last one of season)</i>	23 <i>Church Book Club, 1pm</i>	24 <i>Bible Study, 11am Kidz on Key, 6pm</i>	25 <i>Community Meal, 6pm</i>	26
27 <i>Worship 10am ANNUAL MEETING</i>	28	29	30	31 <i>Bible Study, 11am Kidz on Key, 6pm Happy Halloween</i>		