

First Congregational
United Church of Christ
Gaylord

January 2020

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

From Your Moderator.....	1
UNA Moderator Report.....	2
Church Financials.....	3
Kidz on a Mission.....	4
Person of the Month.....	5
Ministry Opportunities.....	7
Announcements.....	8
Prayer Requests.....	9
Schedule, Birthday, Anniversaries.....	10
January Calendar.....	11



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From Your Moderator -

Pastoral Search Continues

The Search Committee had hoped to have a candidate to present to the congregation by January, but plans changed when the pastor on whom we had been focusing withdrew their application right before Christmas. As I confessed in my Moderator's Message during Sunday worship, our initial reaction was one of disappointment—this candidate had seemed very interested, we had met them and heard them preach, and we thought they would be a good fit for our church. However, factors in their personal life pulled them in another direction, and we now recognize that God has other plans for us. We are over our disappointment and back to work!

Because our church is a very attractive destination, we have received applications from many gifted pastors (and may receive more applications as the process continues). Renewing our efforts again this month, we have reached out to other promising candidates and started another round of “zoom” internet interviews.

The exercise we call “discernment” is subtle, and requires judgment and prayer from all of us—the candidate, the search committee, and ultimately from our congregation (who makes the final hiring decision). We are ready to join in partnership with a new church leader who reflects our goals and values, and we trust God is guiding us in the Search and Call.

Rokko Jans
Moderator

UNA MODERATOR'S REPORT
JANUARY 2020

Dave Engel, UNA Treasurer, reported that we have \$1222.26 in our General Fund. We know that our UNA churches will begin the process to send in their annual per capita contributions soon so we appreciate your continuing support. We had one church that sent in extra money in 2019, and that was a huge bonus, plus we will be receiving \$3500.00 from the Comstock Foundation to help offset the expenses for our MIDs (\$2,000/MID assessment; we have 5 MIDs)

Dave will also be sending out "Seeds For Service" applications this month, so look for them.

Prayer Circle: January/Clare, February/Gaylord, March/Harrison

Charlevoix and Gaylord are into their Search processes; both are interviewing candidates.

Liz Larrivee is our MI Conf Board Representative; she said the December meeting focused on Campbell's departure and Phil Hart's arrival. The Board is looking in to property management issues/decisions as well as supporting New Waves progress toward a permanent meeting place.

The Spring Association Meeting will be held April 25th in Cheboygan. Aaron, Jody, and Barb are working on a program dealing with educating our pastors and congregations about what more can be done to address the needs of those needing support for mental health issues and dementia. You will be hearing more about the program by the beginning of March. Jody is also going to do a presentation about 3-4 Way Covenants.

Note that the MI Conference Annual Meeting this year is two weeks later than normal due to scheduling issues
(October 23-24/Saginaw Valley)

We extend our sympathies to Eric Becks whose parents died within a week of each other in December. Please continue to keep the Titus family in your prayers. We received word today that Gaylord's retired pastor, Susan Webeler, has been recently seriously injured in an automobile accident. Please keep her in your prayers.

The next meetings for UNA Exec Comm & Church & Ministry will be March 14th. C & M will do another retreat for the MIDs this winter as they continue toward their ordinations.

Shalom!

Helen S Crandall, Moderator

Church Financials

Because we have not had to pay a pastor's salary since May, our bottom line is improved. Without a pastor, our operating income has exceeded expenses by \$19,982. Without that savings, we would have experienced an operating a deficit of \$8,018 as shown below.

<u>INCOME</u>	<u>Without pastor since May JAN 1 – NOV 30, 2019</u>	<u>IF we had been paying a pastor the entire time</u>
Tithes / Offerings	\$ 75,974	
Other Operating Income	\$ 4,806	
<u>Total Operating Income</u>	<u>\$80,780</u>	same
<u>EXPENSES</u>		
Staffing	\$35,428	\$63,428
Facility (excludes windows)	\$17,504	same
All other operating costs	\$ 7,866	same
<u>Total Operating Expenses</u>	<u>\$60,798</u>	
<u>Net Operating Income (shortfall)</u>	<u>\$19,982</u>	<u>(\$8,018)</u>

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 Mission (OCWM), etc.

Trustee Updates

We want to thank Mary Sanders for her dedication as chair of Trustees throughout 2019. Our Trustees team as well as our church overall have benefited from her leadership, and we appreciate her dedicated service. For the 2020 calendar year / church fiscal period, Mary Fox has agreed to serve in the capacity of Trustee Chair.

We are still seeking a volunteer to serve as Assistant Treasurer for the current year. The Assistant Treasurer would serve on Trustees and assume responsibility for paying bills when our Treasurer, Rod Anderson, is out of town. Rod is typically gone from late February through mid-April, so the period of time for which you would be asked to assume his duties is fairly limited. If this is a ministry role that might speak to you, please contact Jessica in the church office or let either Mary Fox or Rod Anderson know of your interest.

Trustees will begin paying bills on a monthly basis (rather than twice-monthly) starting in January. This action was suggested by our CPA firm as a step to reduce accounting expenses. If you are requesting an expense reimbursement, this may extend the timeline slightly and we appreciate your understanding. If you submit expense reimbursement requests as soon as they are incurred, we will include them in the very next bill payment cycle.

Finally, after exploring a number of options, the Trustees have agreed to the terms of a new copier lease with DBS. Our current lease was ending and the new arrangement will result in savings over the current lease. Anyone wishing to make copies with the new machine will need to be assigned a code number and will need to receive appropriate training before a code will be assigned. We appreciate patience and understanding with any temporary inconvenience. In the long run we will have a better ability to track usage and assure that we have the right copier best suited for all our church needs.

Kidz on a Mission

It is that time of year again, when the Kidz on a Mission sends cookies to college students. If you have a student to whom you would like cookies send, please submit their address to the office or Brenda Brummel.



Save the Date:

February 23: The Fourth Sunday program for Sunday School will start back up. Both classes will meet together for a special lesson.



Person of the Month

Rokko Jans

Although born in St. Louis, Rokko Jans' family moved him to Philadelphia when he was two. They remained for 10 years. Besides three brothers, Rokko has a sister, an African-American girl his parents fostered and brought with them from St. Louis and raised.

"I'm still close to her and we keep in touch," Rokko said.

A number of positive elements appear to have nurtured Rokko and helped him become the man he is now: spiritual, artistic, compassionate, and a gift to all those friendships he has maintained over the years. Certainly his contributions to First Congregational in his roles as music director and moderator have been a gift, but he is modest about his contributions.

"I'm happy to do it," he said. "But many of us here have gifts that help us function at a high level."

Rokko showed an infinity for the spiritual even as a child in Philadelphia.

"I attended a Quaker school," he said. "It had a strong influence on my spiritual path. The silent worship was important to me."

Rokko also showed a passion for music and an innate ability to perform and compose it at an early age. His parents, June and Paul, supported his talent and provided a model for a productive life.

"My parents' lifelong thrust was social justice, nurturing of the arts, and respect for the environment," he said. "They were both social workers and in Philadelphia they created the first Meals on Wheels program in the U.S. They also created a music school next door. Students learned every thing from classical to the Top 40."

The Jans next moved to Chicago. His parents worked at Hull House, a program that provided social and educational opportunities for people in need.

"My father revitalized theater at Hull House and sparked a big theater movement in Chicago," Rokko said. "I started working at the theater and wrote children's music."

Rokko attended Harvard with a major in music. He felt it was a "stimulating" experience, but left after two years to form a band. From that point on his career as pianist and composer seemed to 'march to the beat of a different drummer' than many musicians due to its versatility and variety of accomplishments.

"My parents had founded a music camp in Wisconsin and while at the camp we formed a jazz band," Rokko said. "I also had friends in Chicago that did rock music, so I combined the two groups into a 10 piece band. We got a lot of gigs right away."

He has played with numerous bands over the years, and still does, including one called Ned. They have been together 50 years. They will be appearing with Rokko this August at Farmfest.

Rokko is just a nickname and under his birth name, Alaric Jans, his career in music and theater flourished. There is not enough space to list all the accomplishments and awards he has garnered over the years, but to name just a few:

When the band broke up Rokko returned to Chicago. He became the resident composer for 10 years of original scores for Chicago Shakespeare Theater. He composed the original film scores for five of the films of Pulitzer Prize winning director, David Mamet. He composed and co-wrote the lyrics with James Quinn of the 19 songs for the musical "Do Black Patent Leather Shoes Really Reflect Up," based on a book by John Powers. It has played at venues across the country and is still performed by community theaters and high schools, including once by the St. Mary Cathedral Players. He was also active in Chicago community affairs and received an award for helping create a recycling program in Chicago.

“I’ve never been an ambitious person,” Rokko said. “I’ve never had a regular job. Anyone who chooses the life of an artist should be more concerned about doing good work than making money at it. As Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, ‘Remember the lilies of the field ...’”

There is a reason that Rokko chose Gaylord as his home base, although he still travels frequently to his shared loft in Chicago and maintains contacts with fellow musicians and a beloved son - a drummer - and granddaughter in other states.

“I’ve always considered Gaylord my home since 1954, although I didn’t stay year round. It is the one constant in my life,” he said. “For 65 years members of my family have had this compound of four cabins.”

His mother June retired to Gaylord in 1973. Every year Rokko holds a charity concert to honor her for the many volunteer services she provided Otsego County until her death in 2006.

One other element that nurtures Rokko at this point of his life is a relationship with someone who shares many of his interests and values.

“Melissa (Mannion) and I were friends who liked each other and like turned to love,” he said. “It is very meaningful to find a romantic partner at this stage of life. I feel blessed.”



~ Ministry Opportunities ~

WANTED:

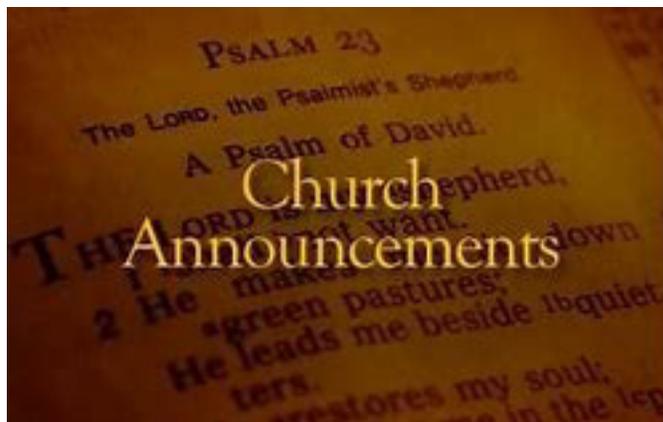
We are looking for an individual willing to help track and acknowledge memorial gifts. If you have any interest, please contact the office or let Mary Sanders know!

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 current theme is “Reaching for God: Different Ages, Different Calls” though we can work most offerings into 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.



Announcements

- **Snow Removal** – if you are able to help with snow removal around the church this winter, please email the office. We need a volunteer for the week of February 9th.
- Large print bulletins are available from the ushers.
- **Ushers and Greeters** - we do need an usher and greeter for the month of February and other months in 2020. Please see signup sheet in the parish hall.
- **Directories** – are printed in parish hall and you can view on our website under the “members only” section.
- **Name Tags** – please let Jessica know if you need a name tag!
- **Next Food Pantry dates** - Feb. 3rd and 4th (Monday and Tuesday), and March 25th and 26th (Wednesday and Thursday)
- **Committee members** - please submit meeting minutes to Jessica via email. Preferred formats are either PDF or Word so she can easily upload to website.



Prayer Requests

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



Prayer Requests

Rev. Susan Webeler - as she recovers at home from a serious auto accident.

Margaret Soller - as she grieves the loss of her twin sister, Liz.

Marcus and Samantha Fray - as they navigate Marcus's recent ALS diagnosis.

Marcus is married to George and Judy Dunn's granddaughter. He is in his thirties with two small children.

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

Rev. Ginny Titus and Family

*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@firstuccgaylord.org. The request will be passed on to the Reaching In Team which is taking on those responsibilities until we have a new pastor.

JANUARY SCHEDULE

DATE	LITURGIST	USHER/GREETER	COFFEE HOUR
Jan 5	Sallie Anderson	Cathy Otto Chuck Falk	Louanne Spearman, Shirley Matevia, Dave Henson, Margaret Hafner
Jan 12	Sallie Anderson	Cathy Otto Chuck Falk	Laura Hotelling and Mischelle Stone
Jan 19	Sallie Anderson	Cathy Otto Chuck Falk	Gloria House and Helen Mate
Jan 26	Sallie Anderson	Cathy Otto Chuck Falk	Roger and Brenda Brummel

Birthdays

7 Diane House
 7 Eloise Jones
 9 Jill Brazelton
 18 Joanna Morse
 21 Larry Ward
 22 Jeff Kalember
 27 Rokko Jans



JANUARY

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			<p>1</p> <p><i>New Year's Day</i></p> 	2	3	4
<p>5</p> <p><i>Worship 10am</i></p>	6	<p>7</p> <p><i>Reaching In, 12:30pm</i></p>	8	<p>9</p> <p><i>Bible Study, 11am</i></p> <p><i>Rokko & Friends, 6pm</i></p>	<p>10</p> <p><i>Community Meal, 5pm</i></p>	<p>11</p> <p><i>UNA Meeting, 10am</i></p>
<p>12</p> <p><i>Worship 10am</i></p>	13	14	15	<p>16</p> <p><i>Bible Study, 11am</i></p> <p><i>Rokko & Friends, 6pm</i></p>	<p>17</p> <p><i>Community Meal, 5pm</i></p>	18
<p>19</p> <p><i>Worship 10am</i></p>	<p>20</p> <p><i>Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day</i></p>	21	<p>22</p> <p><i>Church Book Club 1:30pm</i></p>	<p>23</p> <p><i>Bible Study, 11am</i></p> <p><i>Rokko & Friends, 6pm</i></p>	<p>24</p> <p><i>Community Meal, 5pm</i></p>	25
<p>26</p> <p><i>Worship 10am</i></p>	27	28	29	<p>30</p> <p><i>Bible Study, 11am</i></p> <p><i>Rokko & Friends, 6pm</i></p>	<p>31</p> <p><i>Community Meal, 5pm</i></p>	