

First Congregational
United Church of Christ
Gaylord

June 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.

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First Congregational United
Church of Christ
218 W. Second Street
Gaylord, MI 49735
989-732-5726

www.firstuccgaylord.org
[Facebook](#)

Moderator: Rokko Jans
rokko@alaricjans.com

Communications Coordinator
Jessica Benoit
office@firstuccgaylord.org

Church Service: Sunday: 10:00 am

From Your Moderator -

A Thriving “Open” Church

Many are wondering when the doors to our sanctuary will again be open for Sunday worship. The global pandemic and the social distancing required to “flatten the curve” have altered the habits of all of us, and the activity that anchored the week for many of us—congregating together at 218 W. 2nd St. at 10:00 AM every Sunday, followed by a time of fellowship next door at our coffee hour— has been absent from our lives for many weeks now.

Fortunately, we have a strong worship service produced week after week by a team headed by Brenda Brummel, available to anyone with a “smart device.” (Others receive our weekly sermon by mail). Many folks wait until 10 AM Sunday morning to click the “sermon link,” to keep the rhythm of sabbath worship. But some folks may catch up later in the week. This is actually one of the advantages of a recorded service—it allows for a flexible schedule. Another advantage is that people can watch from anywhere, and in fact, members of our “extended family” are watching each week from all over the country; here in Gaylord, some people who might have trouble getting to church on a Sunday morning are still able to take in the worship service. These are reasons why the Reaching In team is considering ways to maintain some version of video-recorded services, even when attending church in person becomes feasible.

By any measure, our church is thriving even during these troubled times. Rather than meet in person, our committees meet over the internet. The Reaching Out Team still meets regularly to address the needs of our neighbors, and after a brief hiatus, the Community Meal is active once again—with a pick-up instead of a sit-down meal.

Continued on the next page...

The Reaching In team, in addition to worship planning, works to keep track of our congregation, making sure that everyone's needs are met. The trustees have a firm handle on the finances of the church, and the church grounds are well cared for. Bible study meets each week, and our Council is continuing the Search and Call process for a permanent pastor, continuing to interview candidates via "zoom." And, in addition to these frequent meetings, Jessica sends out a link for a "virtual coffee hour" that is held every Sunday at 11:00 AM.

Our current church policy stresses safety above all else. The sanctuary is only open for the recording of our worship services. The fellowship hall is to be accessed only by our communications coordinator, our moderator, or a designated trustee, and Community Meal personnel may use the kitchen (maximum four at a time) to prepare meals for Friday evening pick-up. Volunteers tending church grounds may stop in to use the restroom; in all cases, safety protocols must be observed.

In our discussions about when to re-open the sanctuary for Sunday worship, we are following the recommendations of the United Church of Christ Insurance Board, the Center for Disease Control, and the State of Michigan. We have heeded the advice to have a Covid-19 Co-ordinator develop our action plan; Jean Sasso and Mischelle Stone have agreed to jointly take on this role. They have been involved in our meetings with other Northern Association church leaders, have consulted with expert epidemiologists, and are continually updating the church council on the latest science to guide our decisions.

We will open the church doors for Sunday worship when it is deemed safe for all to come inside. We are a welcoming church—no, we are an "extravagantly welcoming" church!—and we have no desire to open up and at the same time forbid some from attending, because they may be too old or compromised in health. We will open when we can safely welcome everybody. "No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here:" that is not a mere slogan for us; it is a fundamental principle. And recognizing how dangerous this virus is, how someone can be asymptomatic yet contagious, and how vulnerable our church population is—these are reasons for us to use an abundance of caution.

Interviews we have conducted with congregants indicate that though we all miss getting together in church, there is no desire to rush the process. The situation is still developing, as we observe whether Michigan's gradual re-opening leads to a new spike in cases, as we await an increase in testing capabilities, as we hope for the development of a vaccine.

Stay tuned! The question of re-opening our church doors is on council's agenda every week as we monitor the developing situation. In the meantime, we are blessed to have wonderful leadership that is providing wonderful services week after week, at the push of a button!

Hope to see you at coffee hour (look for the link in your email.)

Rokko Jans
Moderator

Report from Your Trustees – June, 2020

- Our continued gratitude to church participants who have been mailing in their financial contributions during these times of social distancing.
- As of May 24, we are 21 weeks into our church’s fiscal year and our income from tithes and offerings continues on budget. This is a particular blessing given that we’ve been unable to worship in person for nearly half of those weeks!
- We look forward to the time when we can again worship together in person. Until then, please continue mailing your contributions to the church office. We appreciate your ongoing financial support during these trying times.

<i>First Congregational UCC Gaylord</i>			
	Through April 30, 2020		
	Budget	Actual	Diff
TOTAL INCOME	\$32,427	\$31,506	(\$921)
<u>EXPENSES</u>			
Total Payroll	\$24,377	\$6,803	\$17,573
Total Facility	\$6,883	\$6,037	\$846
Total Other Operating	\$3,500	\$3,122	\$378
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$34,760	\$15,962	\$18,798
NET INCOME	(\$2,333)	\$15,544	\$17,877

Why Giving to Your Church Right Now Might Be More Important than Ever

Abbreviated from an Original post by Erik Cooper | Mar 25, 2020 | www.thestonetable.org

Keep giving to your local church.

I love the local Church ... its many forms and expressions, whether it's a building, an organization, or just the people. When we honor the Church, we're honoring God.

In the midst of this COVID-19 outbreak, [it's natural to be] concerned about financial wellbeing as our economy is complex and intertwined. Yet in the midst of these scary times, we are watching beautiful outpourings of generosity manifest in many different ways – families delivering food to their elderly neighbors, people donating and even making masks for front line medical workers, NBA stars covering the lost salaries of arena workers. It is encouraging to see humans respond to the needs around them in times of crisis.

But during this unprecedented historical moment full of countless unknowns, I want to encourage *all of us* to continue giving to our local churches.

The Church is not just some other nice charitable organization amidst a smorgasbord of philanthropic options. Something spiritually unique happens when you give to your church, something that goes far beyond just helping to pay salaries, facility costs, and program expenses.

“Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do,” says the Lord of Heaven’s Armies, “I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won’t have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put me to the test! Your crops will be abundant, for I will guard them from insects and disease. Your grapes will not fall from the vine before they are ripe,” says the Lord of Heaven’s Armies. “Then all nations will call you blessed, for your land will be such a delight,” says the Lord of Heaven’s Armies.
–Malachi 3:9-12

When I give to my local church, I am making a tangible declaration to me and my family that God is my ultimate provider and the foundation of my trust. ... When I give to my church, I am declaring boldly that no matter what is going on around me, my *ultimate* hope and trust are rooted in Christ. No matter what happens, I am *under* the shadow of His wings. He is *with* me at all times and in all seasons. That my God will supply *all* my needs according to His riches (Philippians 4:19). When the world is shaking, there is no place I would rather be.

In this terrifying time of uncharted financial waters, I just want to encourage you to keep giving to your local church. It's not magic. It doesn't mean you will be exempt from all the sinful effects of this fallen world. It's not a give to get rich scheme. It's a declaration. Give joyfully as an outward expression of an inward commitment that Jesus is where your trust is firmly rooted in this tumultuous season.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: After starting his career in the business world, Erik Cooper spent 12 years in full-time ministry. He currently serves as the Vice President of Community Reinvestment Foundation, a nonprofit real estate company that provides high-quality affordable housing all over Indiana while investing its profits into missions through The Stone Table.

Announcements

- A Notice from Women's Fellowship – unless an emergency arises, all events pertaining to WF have been cancelled at this time, this includes the rummage sale. A suggestion regarding salad luncheons has been made to Council.
- Jeannine Wambold – would like to thank everyone for lifting her son-in-law, Jordan, in prayer. He is healing from his broken ribs.
- Don Storing needs volunteers to help share the lawn mowing responsibilities this season. If you can help, please contact him directly: 989-464-9648 snod34@chartermi.net
- Virtual Coffee Hour - click the following link to join our virtual coffee hour this Sunday between 10:45 – 11 am; <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83811276546> call or text Rokko (773) 398-6767 or Brenda (810) 623-1691 if you have any difficulties connecting. Dial in phone number is: (929) 205 6099
- Through the years, Alpine Oven has been so supportive of our church. They have provided us with food and more recently the venue for our fund raiser for Kids on a Mission. We want to let you know that both Alpine Tavern and Crave are open for carry out service.

~ Ministry Opportunities ~

WANTED:

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 after Pentecost will be “Hope,” though we can work most offerings into the theme even if the offering is not directly related. Please contact [Rokko Jans at rokko@alaricjans.com](mailto:rokko@alaricjans.com) if you wish to contribute your time and talents to worship.

HEALTH NEWS

During this time of uncertainty surrounding corona virus, everyone is encouraged to practice the fundamentals of prevention: thorough and frequent hand washing, use of hand sanitizers, and avoidance of touching one’s face.

To stay up-to-date on the COVID-19 issue, please visit: www.CDC.gov



Prayer Requests

During the month of June, the UNA is holding the Manistee church in prayer.



Prayer Requests

Chuck Falk and Family – as they grieve the loss of Judy.

The Family of Shirley Matevia – as they grieve her passing.

The People of Mid-Michigan – as they deal with the catastrophic flooding.

Carol Leser's sister, Barbara Loomis – whose Gladwin home was flooded in the mid-Michigan catastrophe.

The Family of Judith Krieger – as they grieve Judith's passing. She and her husband, Don, were active members of our church when they lived in Gaylord.

Bo Leser – As he continues to experience health issues and is awaiting testing.

Katie Carlson's daughter and son-in-law, Karen and Buck Heide – as they deal with major health issues.

Cleveann Wolf – as she is now in a memory care facility.

Ilah Weaver – as she recovers at home from forehead surgery.

Doug Fopma – Doug has made huge strides! He is now recovering in a rehabilitation center in Grand Rapids and still in need of prayers.

Doug Galer – who is also hospitalized and fighting to recover from COVID-19.

All of those working on the frontline to fight COVID-19, those that are considered essential workers, those without jobs, those ill, and those affected by this pandemic in anyway.

Norman Reim – Rokko's bandmate, as he recovers from recent surgery.

Don Storing's longtime friend, Eric Larsen – as he navigates his recent stage IV lung and brain cancer diagnosis.

Lani English and Family – as they grieve the passing of Lani's cousin, Adam.

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.

Rev. Ginny Titus and Family

*when in
doubt-
Pray it out.*

IN THESE DESPERATE TIMES, JUST REMEMBER...

kindness is not canceled.

love is not canceled.

hope is not canceled.

faith is not canceled.

Birthdays

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

Anniversaries

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

JUNE

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4 <i>Virtual Bible Study, 11am</i>	5 <i>Drive-Thru Community Meal 4pm</i>	6
7 <i>Virtual Worship 10am</i>	8 <i>Reaching In (Zoom) 12:00pm</i>	9	10 <i>Virtual Reaching Out, 1:00pm</i>	11 <i>Virtual Bible Study, 11am</i>	12 <i>Drive-Thru Community Meal 4pm</i>	13
14 <i>Virtual Worship 10am</i>	15 <i>Reaching In (Zoom) 12:00pm</i>	16	17 <i>Virtual Reaching Out, 1:00pm (as needed)</i>	18 <i>Virtual Bible Study, 11am</i>	19 <i>Drive-Thru Community Meal 4pm</i>	20
21 <i>Virtual Worship 10am</i>	22 <i>Reaching In (Zoom) 12:00pm</i>	23 <i>Trustees (Zoom) 9:30am</i>	24 <i>Virtual Reaching Out, 1:00pm (as needed)</i>	25 <i>Virtual Bible Study, 11am</i>	26 <i>Drive-Thru Community Meal 4pm</i>	27
28 <i>Virtual Worship 10am</i>	29 <i>Reaching In (Zoom) 12:00pm</i>	30				