



April, 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

218 W. Second Street
Gaylord, MI 49735
989-732-5726

www.firstuccgaylord.org

Pastor: Rev. Greg Watling
pastorg@firstuccgaylord.org

Moderator: Maggie Wallin
margaretwallin@msn.com

Finance: Jessica Benoit
finance@firstuccgaylord.org

**Communications
Coordinator:**
Stephanie Kalember
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Church Service: Sunday, 10 am



Pastor's Column – April, 2024

Daily Meditations, Center for Action and Contemplation, Used by Permission.

Brian McLaren points to Jesus' time in the wilderness as essential to his spiritual journey, one that he invites his disciples to engage in as well:

Jesus needed that time of preparation in the wilderness. He needed to get his mission clear in his own heart so that he wouldn't be captivated by the expectations of adoring fans or intimidated by the threats of furious critics. If we dare to follow Jesus and proclaim the radical dimensions of God's good news as he did, we will face the same twin dangers of domestication and intimidation....

Soon he began inviting select individuals to become his followers.... To become disciples of a rabbi meant entering a rigorous program of transformation, learning a new way of life, a new set of values [and] skills. It meant ... facing a new set of dangers on the road. Once they were thoroughly apprenticed as disciples, they would then be sent out as apostles to spread the rabbi's controversial and challenging message everywhere. One did not say yes to discipleship lightly. [1] *Contemplative writer Joyce Rupp reflects upon Jesus' difficult teaching for followers to "take up their cross and follow him":*

What did the crowd following Jesus think when he

~Continued~

made that tough statement [Luke 14:27]? Did they wonder what carrying the cross meant? Did they have second thoughts about accompanying him? Jesus wanted his followers to know that the journey they would make involved knowing and enlivening the teachings he advocated. In other words, Jesus was cautioning them, “If you decide to give yourselves to what truly counts in this life, it will cost you. You will feel these teachings to be burdensome at times, like the weight of a cross.”


We can't just sit on the roadside of life and call ourselves followers of Jesus. We are to do more than esteem him for his generous love and dedicated service. We do not hear Jesus grumbling about the challenges and demands of this way of life. We do not see him “talking a good talk” but doing nothing about it. He describes his vision and then encourages others to join him in moving those teachings into action. [2]

APRIL 2024

"Let everything you do be done in love."

1 CORINTHIANS 16: 14

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1 Gratitude Group, 6 AM Reaching In 12 PM Fellowship Hall in use, 2:30-4:30 PM	2	3 Gratitude Group, 6 AM	4 Bible Study 11 AM Choir 4 PM	5 Gratitude Group, 6 AM Community Meal, 4 PM Talking Circle, 7-9 PM	6
7 Worship 10 AM	8 Gratitude Group, 6 AM	9	10 Gratitude Group, 6 AM	11 Bible Study 11 AM Choir 4 PM	12 Gratitude Group, 6 AM Community Meal, 4 PM Talking Circle, 7-9 PM	13
14 Worship 10 AM	15 Gratitude Group, 6 AM Reaching Out 7 pm	16	17 Gratitude Group, 6 AM Trustees 7 PM	18 Bible Study 11 AM Choir 4 PM	19 Gratitude Group, 6 AM Community Meal, 4 PM Talking Circle, 7-9 PM	20
21 Worship 10 AM Council 11 AM	22 Gratitude Group, 6 AM	23 Salad Luncheon 11:30 AM	24 Gratitude Group, 6 AM	25 Bible Study 11 AM Choir 4 PM	26 Gratitude Group, 6 AM Community Meal, 4 PM Talking Circle, 7-9 PM	27
			Pastor Greg out-of-town			
28 Worship 10 AM	29 Gratitude Group, 6 AM	30	May 1 Gratitude Group, 6 AM Church Book Club 1 PM	2 Bible Study 11 AM Choir 4 PM	3 Gratitude Group, 6 AM Community Meal, 4 PM Talking Circle, 7-9 PM	4
Pastor Greg out-of-town						
5 Worship 10 AM	6 Gratitude Group, 6 AM	7	8 Gratitude Group, 6 AM	9	10 Gratitude Group, 6 AM Community Meal, 4 PM Talking Circle, 7-9 PM	11



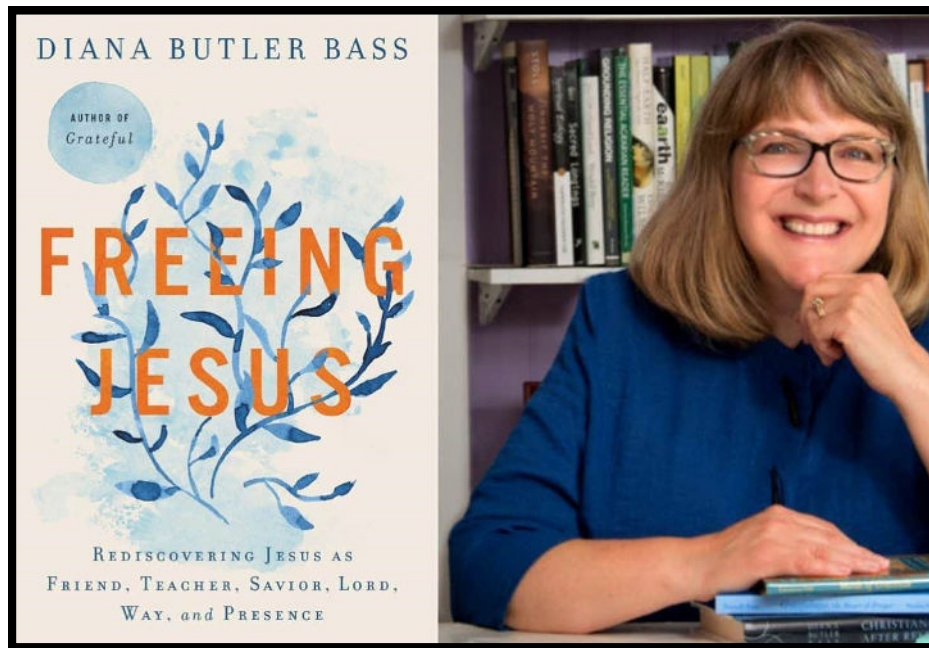
The new carillon has been installed!

*What a blessing it is to all of us
and to the community!*

Many, many thanks to Mischelle and Jean for securing the funding and doing the leg work to make this happen. We're also grateful to Don Storing for being here while the installation was happening!



BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP



Pastor Greg's book discussion group continues to meet Thursday nights, The book will be Diana Butler Bass *Freeing Jesus: Rediscovering Jesus as Friend, Teacher, Savior, Lord, Way, and Presence*. Butler Bass is a well-known writer from a Christian Mainline perspective. You are invited to order your own book, or let the church office know if you need us to help you get a copy.

Here are the remaining meeting dates:

April 4: Chapter 4 (Lord)

April 11: Chapter 5 (Way)

April 18: Chapter 6 (Presence)



April Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays:

- 1 Anna Kalendar
- 2 Avery Ball
- 3 Doreen Dobosy
Kathi Arnold
- 4 Duncan Palmer
- 7 Jenna Andrews
- 8 Paige Kassuba
- 9 Jane Balliet
Anna Fry
- 14 Ben Fry
Scott Fry
- 16 Cathy Otto
- 19 Aaron Hotelling
Caroline Compton

Anniversaries:

- 20 Alan & Becky Trendera

Blanket Sunday

For over 75 years, Church World Service has been helping people of faith bring God's hope and healing to people in the U.S. and around the world. When difficult times happen, a kind and loving response can make all the difference. That's why the CWS Blankets program was created—to give a kind, loving and tangible response to someone facing a difficult time, reminding them that they are not alone. Blanket Sunday is one of 5 special mission offerings that our church supports throughout the year. We will be asking for contributions beginning mid-April and wrapping up on Mother's day. We worship a God who gives generously and abundantly. God has given us so many blessings. The food we eat, the friends and family we cherish, and the precious gift of God's love for us. When that love abides in us, we are called to help keep our neighbors warm.

Blanket the world in love

CWSBLANKETS.ORG

Your Congregation is Making a Difference

How does your congregation's support change lives? Contributions to CWS Blankets mean Church World Service will be ready to help families recover from disasters and displacement. Like the miracle of the loaves and fish, your gifts to CWS Blankets multiply as they are joined by the contributions of other caring congregations, yielding a harvest of caring for those in need. Scan this QR code to see videos and read stories of how your support plays out in real life.

Scan me →

"Yes, you will be enriched in every way so that you can always be generous. And when we take your gifts to those who need them, they will thank God."
- 2 CORINTHIANS 9:11

CHURCH WORLD SERVICE
CWS
cwsglobal.org

CWS | CWSBLANKETS.ORG

Through this special offering for Church World Service Blankets, we join other people of faith to make God's love known to our neighbors who might feel forgotten—the hurting and the lonely. Our gifts, together, provide hope to our neighbors all over the world. Please give to the Church World Service (CWS) Blankets program through the offering that we will be collecting on May 12, 2024. You can note CWS Blanket program on your check or envelope. Contributions to the CWS Blanket program can be made online anytime, as well, by going to the church's website <https://www.firstuccgaylord.org/> and clicking the PayPal Donate button on the bottom left of the home page.

~ In Our Prayers ~

During the month of April, the UNA is holding the *Gaylord First* Congregational UCC in prayer.

Cathi Gatewood-Keim's cousin, Jacob – as he is suffering from stage 2 intestinal cancer, recovering from surgery, and awaiting further results for treatment options.

Brenda Brummel – prayers of thanks, as her lung biopsy was negative and she is cancer-free! She would like to thank everyone for their prayers thus far.

Sharon Bartone, sister of Paul Balliet and Aunt to Stephanie Kalember – as she continues to struggle with advanced Alzheimer's and has now been relocated to a memory care unit near her son.

Jim Boughner – as he is awaiting answers from testing regarding mobility issues.

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.

Louanne Spearman— as she is having back and leg problems and is in need of our prayers.

Stacy Wright, friend of Kathy Menkes – Stacy has been facing metastatic breast cancer. Meanwhile, Stacy's mother-in-law passed away recently.

Laura Bantens and family – For Laura's sister-in-law, Jasme, continued prayers as she progresses through the treatment for her MS. She starts her first med treatments this week! Continued prayers for Laura's mother as she starts the formation of her own consulting business in home decor and landscaping! May the doors keep opening! And continued prayers for Chris as she is trying to find her calling again.

Gloria House's granddaughter, Alyssa Crawford, – who faces surgery for Endometriosis in Texas in early March. And for Gloria's travel.

Raelene – Judy and Kathi Gatewood-Keim's friend, as she is recovering from shoulder surgery.

Judy Bird – as her son Scott has passed away unexpectedly.

Tom and Jenni Johnson— as Tom is now receiving chemo treatments for pancreatic cancer.

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

Gloria House's granddaughter, Madison Crawford – as she suffers from cataplexy in narcolepsy along with other neurological struggles. She

is at home and adjusting to new medication, which seems to be helping, but Madison is still in need of prayers. and adjusting to new medication, which seems to be helping, but Madison is still in need of prayers.



Prayer Requests

Prayer requests are received by the church office. Names will appear on the list for two months; please let the office know if this time needs to be extended, or if it is time to remove a name.



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
UCC GAYLORD
CELEBRATING

150
YEARS

21 JULY 2024

Save the date! July 21, 2024 We
will be Celebrating 150 years
Sunday Service 10:00 A.M.
Luncheon immediately following



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Book Discussion: A new book discussion group will begin Thursday night, March 7 at 7:00 pm via Zoom. The book will be Diana Butler Bass *Freeing Jesus: Rediscovering Jesus as Friend, Teacher, Savior, Lord, Way, and Presence*. Butler Bass is a well-known writer from a Christian Mainline perspective. You are invited to order your own book, or let the church office know if you need us to help you get a copy. Zoom Link: <https://s02web.zoom.us/j/84381946525>

Here's the schedule:

April 4: Chapter 4 (Lord)

April 11: Chapter 5 (Way)

April 18: Chapter 6 (Presence)

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>



Celebrate Mental Health Sunday



United Church of Christ™
**MENTAL HEALTH
NETWORK**

Go to mhn-ucc.org for resources or to donate

May is Mental Health Awareness Month and the UCC Mental Health Network wants to make sure you have resources to best equip you for a Mental Health Sunday!

MAY 19, 2024

MENTAL

HEALTH

SUNDAY



Download pdf [HERE](#)

Created by the UCC, UCC MHN, and United Church of Canada for use in your local church.



2023 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.*





SPRING MEETING

**UNITED NORTHERN
ASSOCIATION
OF THE
MICHIGAN CONFERENCE
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**



SATURDAY, APRIL 20, 2024
First Congregational Church
200 East Harris Street
Cadillac, MI 49601
9:00-10:00am Registration (\$20.00)
10:00am – 2:00pm Worship & Program
Lunch Included

Rev. Dr. Lillian Daniel - State Of The Church
Jenn Ringgold - Faith Formation For All Ages



SPRING MEETING REGISTRATION FORM

UNITED NORTHERN ASSOCIATION
OF THE
MICHIGAN CONFERENCE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Name _____

Church _____ Delegate/Clergy _____

\$20.00 at Registration For Lunch and Expenses

Make checks out to: United Northern Association

Lunch: Regular _____ Vegetarian _____ Gluten Free _____

Need Child Care _____

Due to the fact that the U.N.A. presently does not have a Registrar, please send this information to the Moderator. Please turn in your information by Monday, April 15th.

Rev. Vaughn Peterson
Church Phone (989) 539-7163
Office Hours: Monday - Thursday 9:00-Noon
Cell Phone (815) 762-4513

First Congregational U.C.C.
211 West Spruce Street
Harrison, Michigan 48625



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: \$208 (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: \$100 (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: \$75 (2023)

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)





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:

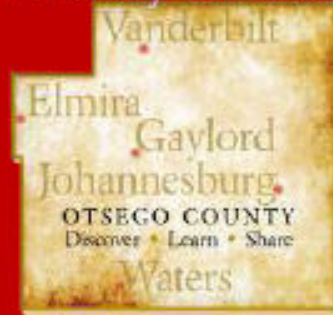
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83432888287>

Bible Study meets Thursdays at 11am

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

History Matters

Update # 119
July 2024



Phil Alexander
History Detective

Oldest Church Celebrates 150 Years

2024 is a milestone in the life of the Gaylord Congregational Church as it celebrates both its history and future. “We are Gaylord’s first church – Celebrating 150 years in 2024”, declared current pastor, Rev. Greg Watling. “But, that doesn’t mean we’re outdated or out of touch.”

The First Congregational Church of Gaylord began serving the souls of the newly created town of Gaylord, Michigan just months after it was carved out of the wilderness. It even predated the establishment of Otsego County by one year. Church services began in 1874 and were held in a “borrowed” building on W. Main Street.



A couple of years later, the fledgling congregation built its church on what is known today as the northeast corner of South Otsego Avenue and 2nd Street. (see above photo) This building still stands today although it has gone through several changes, additions, and remodeling efforts.

The physical structure of the church may have changed during the past 150 years, but the core mission of the

parishioners remains the same. “Some of the best traditions such as good food and good community are central to who we are”, noted Rev. Watling.



One example of the church’s outreach is their weekly community meal.

Another way the church promotes “good community” is when it donated its parsonage to a family in need of a home. In partnership with the local Habitat For Humanity chapter, the parsonage was moved to the Michaywe’ subdivision on February 18, 1998..

The history of the First Congregational Church is memorialized with the plaque shown to the right. It is one of only four state historical markers in Otsego County.



The First Congregational Church of Gaylord will celebrate its sesquicentennial on Sunday, July 21