

First Congregational United Church of Christ

218 W. Second Street, Gaylord, Michigan 49735

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August 2025 Newsletter



Our mission is to embrace people of every age and stage of life and help them become the most loving version of themselves possible.

Pastor's Column "From Burn It Down to Build it Up"

I borrowed the title from an article that my oldest son shared with me by the same title. It was written by Len Necefer and was primarily talking about Native Communities and their relationship with colonizing culture. What I liked most about it was his notion that we need to blend reimagination with pragmatism. This idea clearly applies when making change in a variety of settings: government, church, society and so on. It got me thinking about this congregation.

If you haven't guessed already, I am really excited about our work that is commencing with Convergence. To be blunt, I see that we need to think about a future that both embraces our past and recognizes a future we can only imagine. I believe Convergence will help us reimagine ourselves while also being pragmatic.

We have always been a small congregation. That is true of most congregations in the United States and around the world. Small congregations bring with them both blessings and curses like any organization and our task is to figure out what needs to stay the same and what we must adjust or outright change to secure a positive future for this congregation.

The first question is: do we want to?

When I raise the notion of where we'll be in ten years, several people have commented that they may have passed on by then. That is a reality for some among us. I will likely be retired by then. That's my reality. There is no question that several of us won't be here in ten years one way or another. That can be depressing to think about! We love this place and these people and treasure what we have here. Our presence here in ten years is not the relevant question, however. The question is: do we want for those who come after us to experience anything of what we have come to love or will we resign ourselves to a church closure and say it was a good run? Either of those options are valid, but they elicit different actions in today's church.

If we want for others what we have come to love, then we must make the necessary choices and put in the necessary work to ensure that we are here in ten years or more!. That means we take seriously our present planning process. The goal is not to make a report that we all cheer and place on a shelf. Instead, it is to create a culture of present and future orientation. We know much of our past, but our future is – to a large degree – up to us.

Are we willing to update our worship services to reach a new generation of people? Are we willing to look at our structure, but more importantly, how do we act within and outside that

structure? Are we willing to have it not be about us, but about “them” we have never met? This is what we are embarking on over the next several months.

Our surveys of the past and present state of things are complete. Soon, our team will move forward with some interviews with members of our community. We’ll compile all that information, along with demographics of our county, and ask ourselves where we fit in the scheme of things.

Then we will start making choices. The truth is that no church can be all things to all people. We also cannot make our community based on a reaction to other churches around us. Instead, we must search out God’s call to us for this time and this generation engaging and empowering us to reach new generations. If it’s not hard work, we’re not doing it right. At that same time, I hope we have some fun with it as well.

I appreciate your willingness to try new things, sing new songs, and move out of your comfort zone in worship. Now we need to carry that to everything else we do and put our best efforts into what we decide together will best help us impact our county well into the future.

That is, if we believe that future people matter as much or more than we do.

In Christian love,

Greg

Changed Date for August Communion

As you may know, we generally celebrate communion on the first Sunday of the month. This month, communion will move to August 10—the second Sunday.

August Birthdays and Anniversaries

Birthdays:

4 Margaret Soller
8 Helen Crandall
12 Joe English
15 Marcella Fahselt
20 Jean Kassuba
20 Paul Balliet
22 Becky Trendera
23 Meadow Kassuba
24 Tyler English

Anniversaries:

1 Eric & Meredith Anderson
7 Dale & Margaret Rehkopf
12 Kevin & Staci Brown
29 Mary & David Evans



Announcements

- Food Pantry Volunteers are needed – call Don Storing
- For prayer concerns, joys, announcements, or news to share, contact Liz at office@firstuccgaylord.org or Pastor Greg at pastorg@firstuccgaylord.org
- Check Fellowship Hall to sign up for mowing, lunch group, or to serve on Sunday.
- Directory updates are in the works.
- Community Meal is CANCELLED August 29



~ In Our Prayers ~

During August, the UNA is holding Gaylord First Congregational UCC Church in prayer.

Maggie Shanahan Menkes (Kathy's daughter-in-law) – Maggie has been diagnosed with inflammatory breast cancer. Maggie gave birth to a healthy boy on June 11th. Prayers are also needed for Maggie's mother, Joan, who is recuperating from bladder/colon surgery, so she can be with her daughter and hold her month-old grandson, Quinn Michael.

George and Judy's son, Steve Dunn – as he recovers from his recent surgery and hospitalization.

Kathy Menkes' husband, Mike – may be facing hip surgery.

The Dockery–Fobar family – who are grieving the loss of Mike's dad, Glenn on June 30.

Jay Jans, Rokko Jans' brother—Jay has entered hospice in Illinois.

Jason Peterman – who is dealing with a variety of health issues.

Donna Kofler – who has returned home.

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

Chris Crubaugh – who is dealing with medical issues. Continued prayers Chris and Laura Bantens as they adapt.

Madison Crawford – as she suffers from neurological and vision issues.



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.



Rokko Jans and Friends present the
18th Annual June Jans Memorial
Concert

**A LIFE IN
THEATER:
THE MUSIC OF
ALARIC ROKKO
JANS**

AUG 17 | 03:00 PM

Gornick Auditorium, 90 Livingston Blvd, Gaylord

**Your donations benefit Gaylord
Community Productions**



Worship Outdoors With Us this Summer

Join us in the church yard:
JUNE 29 | JULY 27 | AUGUST 31

CHURCH PICNIC
When: **August 31**

Minutes are Available and Attached

HOW CAN WE REACH YOU?



We need your address(es), land line and cell phone number(s), family names, email(s), anniversary, and birthday(s). Please check the directory link or in the office.

Mission Trip 2025



Cinnamon Rolls

Cinnamon rolls have become a major fund raiser for Kidz on a Mission which will be helping to pay for the mission trip to South Dakota. We did well selling them at Alpenfest, and will continue to sell them at Salad Luncheons and on one Sunday each month during coffee hour. A huge thank you to Liz Larson not only for the recipe but for making the rolls for one day for Alpenfest!

If for some reason, you would like to order rolls, just let either Bri or Brenda know.

**BAY VIEW
ASSOCIATION
PREACHERS OF THE
WEEK**

JUNE 15-19

BISHOP DAVID
BARD

JUNE 22-26

BRIAN MCLAREN

JUNE 29-JULY
3

MARY LUTI

JULY 6

TRYGVE JOHNSON

JULY 13-17

MARILYN
MCENTYRE

JULY 20

GRACE IMATHIU

JULY 27-31

WILL WILLIMON

AUGUST 3-4

ANN VOSKAMP

AUGUST 7

ROBIN WALL
KIMMERER

AUGUST 10

LUKE POWERY

AUGUST 17

AARON TREDWAY

AUGUST 24

JULIE
GREYERBIEHL

**SUNDAY SERVICE @ 10:45 AM IN JOHN M HALL
AUDITORIUM. LECTURES M-TH AT 10 AM IN
VOORHIES HALL.**

Meaningful Things to Do in August

- Check in on loved ones
- Stretch daily
- Learn about something you have always been curious about
- Invite someone to do something with you
- Do something outside of your comfort zone to meet new people
- Listen to a motivational talk or podcast
- Check something off your bucket list
- Take a walk each day
- Visit somewhere you have never been
- Call someone you haven't spoken to in 2025
- Volunteer
- Donate things you no longer need
- Write a letter to someone to say thank you
- Join or start a group based on shared interests
- Do something kind for someone
- Take a nature walk complete with pictures
- Visit someone who is homebound
- Make cookies or dinner for a neighbor
- Do a task you have been procrastinating on
- Give someone a compliment
- Tip your server double
- Set small daily challenges for yourself
- Take a break from electronics for a day each week
- Eat the rainbow daily
- Smile at a stranger
- Pick a bouquet of flowers
- Pray for our world and its leaders, as well as for those who are hurting
- Weed a public space or a friend or neighbor's garden
- Clean out your car
- Make someone laugh
- Sit in a different place at church
- Pick some blueberries, raspberries, apricots, nectarines, peaches or pick them up at the farm market – they are in season
- Try a new recipe
- Read a book

AUGUST



2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 6 a Gaylord Gratitude 4 p Community Meal	2 8 a PBGV Team Evaluation
3 10 a Worship	4 6 a Gaylord Gratitude 12 p Reaching In	5 6 a Gaylord Gratitude	6 11 a Bible Study 12:35 p ♀ Fellowship 4 p Choir	7 6 a Gaylord Gratitude 4 p Community Meal	8 3 p AA	9
10 10 a Worship	11 6 a Gaylord Gratitude	12 6 a Gaylord Gratitude	13 11 a Bible Study 4 p Choir	14 6 a Gaylord Gratitude 4 p Community Meal	15	16
17 10 a Worship 3 p June Jane Memorial Concert @ Gaylord HS	18 6 a Gaylord Gratitude 7 p Reaching Out	19 Noon Lunch Group @ Big Buck Brewery	20 6 a Gaylord Gratitude 7 p Trustees	Newsletter Deadline 21 11 a Bible Study 4 p Choir	22 6 a Gaylord Gratitude 4 p Community Meal	23
24 10 a Worship	25 6 a Gaylord Gratitude	26 11:30 a Salad Luncheon	27 6 a Gaylord Gratitude 1 p Church Book Club	28 11 a Bible Study 4 p Choir	29 6 a Gaylord Gratitude No Community Meal— Labor Day weekend	30
31 10 a Outdoor Worship 11 a Church Picnic	Convergence and Council Meetings TBD					