## First Congregational United Church of Christ

218 W. Second Street, Gaylord, Michigan 49735 <u>www.firstuccgaylord.org</u> (989) 732-5726

## 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:		Anni	versaries:				
4	Margaret Soller	et Soller 1 Eric & Meredith Anderson					
8	Helen Crandall	7	Dale & Margaret Rehkopf				
12	Joe English	12	Kevin & Staci Brown				
15	Marcella Fahselt	29	Mary & David Evans				
20	Jean Kassuba						
20	Paul Balliet						
22	Becky Trenda						
23	Meadow Kassuba						
24	24 Tyler English						



#### **Announcements**

- Food Pantry Volunteers are needed call Don Storing
- For prayer concerns, joys, announcements, or news to share, contact Liz at <u>office@firstuccgaylord.org</u> or Pastor Greg at <u>pastorg@firstuccgaylord.org</u>
- 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 11<sup>th</sup>. 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.

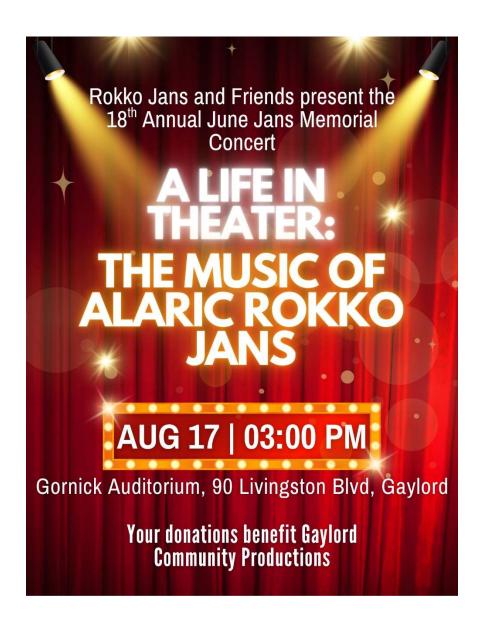
The English Family - as they manage medical and family challenges.

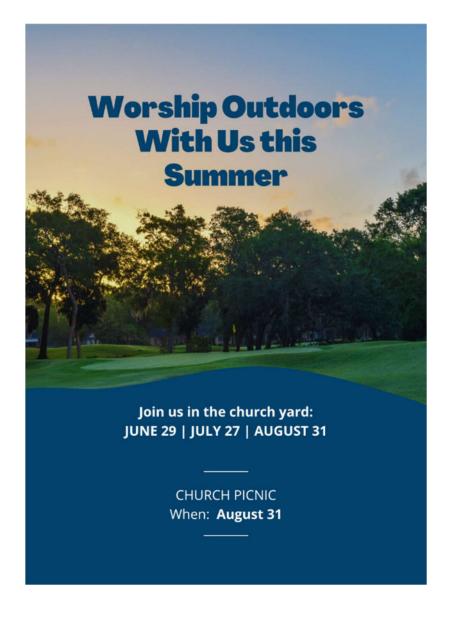
Chris Crubaugh - who is dealing with medical issues. Continued prayers Chris and Laura Bantens as they adapt.

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.





## Minutes are Available and Attached



## 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

JUNE 22-26

JUNE 29-JULY

JULY 6

JULY 13-17

JULY 20

JULY 27-31

AUGUST 3-4

AUGUST 7

AUGUST 10

AUGUST 17

AUGUST 24

BISHOP DAVID

BARD

BRIAN MCLAREN

MARY LUTI

TRYGVE JOHNSON

MARILYN

MCENTYRE

GRACE IMATHIU

WILL WILLIMON

ANN VOSKAMP

ROBIN WALL

LUKE POWERY

AARON TREDWAY

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





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