

**First Congregational  
United Church of Christ  
Gaylord**

# February, 2023

*Embracing people at every age and every stage of life, helping them to become the most loving version of themselves possible.*

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United Church of Christ**  
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## **Pastor's Column – February 2023**

### **“No Matter Who You Are”**

Every Sunday morning, we say, “No matter who you are, or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.” They are beautiful words, but they are words. It’s important that congregations (and other groups, even individuals) put their words into action. We are doing just that!

Several months ago, it was brought to the Trustees and Women’s Fellowship that we needed a 2<sup>nd</sup> higher toilet in the women’s restroom. The Trustees looked at the project and we could have stopped there. Yes, it would have been cheaper, probably already done, and we could have moved on. But someone said to me, “You know, while we’re at it, maybe we should think about making our restrooms gender



inclusive, in keeping with being an Open and Affirming church.” I also wanted us to think about making the restroom American Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant. In the end, we decided to make a restroom for “no matter who you are”.

Over the course of a few months, we met with contractors, an architect, and several of us spent way too much time checking out bathroom configurations and set ups. What worked? What features did we like? What’s possible in our space?

Eventually, that led to a bid that was detailed and gave us options. Again, we could have taken a slightly cheaper route, but then someone reminded us that our present bathrooms have been around perhaps 40 years or more. Maybe we should plan for 40 years or more going forward? If we’re going to do this, let’s do it right. Yes, it costs about \$3000 more, but it’s the right thing to do.

Trustees talked about it for months and approved moving forward by sending their recommendation to the Council. The council met January 23, and not only approved the Trustees recommendation, but added to it, believing that at least one of the new bathrooms should have a changing table. It’s a low-cost addition and makes us have a restroom for “no matter who you are”, even if you’re an infant!

The project will cost around \$11,000. That is a big amount for a church our size. However, we have some memorial money we can use for this project, and Women’s Fellowship will likely donate to the project as well. Soon, we’ll let you know when construction will begin, but just know that there will always be one open, gender-inclusive bathroom available, even while we fix them both.

So what are we getting? Here’s a list:

- both restrooms will have a high toilet (we will keep the urinal in the present men’s room. It seems not worth the cost to remove.)
- both restrooms will have adequate turning radius for wheelchairs/ walkers.
- both restrooms will have an electric hand dryer (saving cost of toweling and better for the environment)
- the dividers in each restroom will be removed and the floor will be replaced.


- each restroom will have a lock on the door for privacy for anyone using the restroom. This means we will still have two toilets available at any given time, just in two different rooms. One restroom will have a .. changing table.
- the entry doors will be widened to 36 inches, and new signage.
- using the restroom. This means we will still have two toilets available at any given time, just in two different rooms. One restroom will have a changing table.
- the entry doors will be widened to 36 inches, and updated signage will be added.

That is most of the list. Yes, I'm excited about this project. It was a goal of mine that we do this in 2023. More than that, I am excited about the process we used. We talked with each other directly about needs, questions, concerns, ideas, hopes and dreams. We are doing this project together. Trustees, Women's Fellowship and Council honored our process for decision-making. Don Storing helped me secure the necessary bids. Together, and most importantly, we put into practice what we say every Sunday. *That* is authentic ministry; people notice when what we do matches what we say.

Thank you all!

Pastor Greg

# February

Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Sat.
29 <div>10 AM Worship</div> <i>From Family to Friends meal after worship</i>	30	31	1 6 AM Gaylord Gratitude AA	2 11 AM Bible Study 4-5 PM Choir 7-8 Book Study with Pastor Greg	3 6 AM Gaylord Gratitude AA 4 PM Community Meal	4
5 <div>10 AM Worship</div>	6 6 AM Gaylord Gratitude AA Reaching In 12 PM	7	8 6 AM Gaylord Gratitude AA 7 PM Council	9 11 AM Bible Study 4 PM Choir 7 PM Book study	10 6 AM Gaylord Gratitude AA 4 PM Community Meal	11 AA 3 PM
12	13 MLK Day 6 AM Gaylord Gratitude AA	14  "You yourself, as much as anybody in the universe, deserve your love and affection." - Buddha	15 6 AM Gaylord Gratitude AA 11AM Trustees NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS DUE, PLS	16 11 AM Bible Study 4 PM Choir 7 PM Book study with Pastor Greg	17 6 AM Gaylord Gratitude AA 4 PM Community Meal	18
19	20 6 AM Gaylord Gratitude AA 7 PM Reaching Out	21	22 6 AM Gaylord Gratitude AA 1PM Church Book Club	23 11 AM Bible Study 4 PM Choir 7 PM Book study with Pastor Greg	24 6 AM Gaylord Gratitude AA 4 PM Community Meal	25
26	27 NEWSLETTER FINALIZED & POSTED 6 AM Gaylord Gratitude AA	MAR 1	2 6 AM Gaylord Gratitude AA	3 11 AM Bible Study 4 PM Choir 7 PM Book study with Pastor Greg	4 6 AM Gaylord Gratitude AA 4 PM Community Meal	5

*"I have decided to stick to love; hate is too great a burden to bear." – Martin Luther King, Jr.*



# Books of the Bible

P D F E B R C W F Q K T M Y K D C V O N W I L P C N M A Z R  
 Y V A S U C G D O S R G G O Y B D I Y F L W L X I V R C C R  
 V T B Z B W U A Y R K W T V R M H S G Y S E C C C I I W L U  
 J M D E Z N D O U F E S T H E R U L I G N Y M L I Z J P N Q  
 Z Z W A U D K U N K R P W U X T C X L Q H X K S O C M K T V  
 C I L G R K G N I E Y S T J I X L Y F U R H G G F N Q V X X  
 F J N P Z T D M B L E V I T I C U S O B G N N Q N G T S R L  
 H N P F A H B M A L A C H I Z E P H A N I A H A B A K K U K  
 G Y F T S F U X C V J P S Z Q X K E H K Y S L M Y Q D H T U  
 K P Y I R N G I Z C P B Q P F L S O I Z E C H A R I A H H X  
 F X S M A B N A Z R J Q Y D R O J X F G A D T B T I P H M M  
 H C E O U O N X O V Q F M Q H O C S D C S Z W J M I A Y Z F  
 A C T T R S W B L N E Q Q X H Z V U R M E P H E S I A N S R  
 Z K B H U C O V Q K D Q H D T J J E L V U R R N D H R N N S  
 J R C Y X J I N U I K S S G S X U A R O L E A A J A M E S O  
 H F P O M K W L G L N T Y B B N S N W B J I B I Q S F N D C  
 W I Y M R Y E T V O P H I L I P P I A N S O M N X T A J C W  
 L X K A I I D I I U F E Y E Q B T R S S P G N V H M A T I H  
 W H M D K C N T X M V S A C A O Z W O E T I X A O U V O A S  
 B B B E G U A T O I T S O C R E P L H E C N I R H E I I C K  
 H T Z U E T R H H K Y A U L L I O O F S O M B S E M A B T X  
 T E K T N X P M L I B L N E O C L M M I E X O D U S R O S I  
 O F Q E E T W E A S A O I S U M V B T H W J U H I P K K X F  
 J Y M R S W O G T S M N K I A P O A E E X J A Q C B W U G P  
 B A R O I J G W J E A I S A L M L N H B Q N V N C X T B C X  
 L G M N S A K V L D R A P S W E U T V R F L L R B U S R T I  
 F A W O H G A I W Z D N U T V W T E K E L T R W D V L I E U  
 X F R M S N H Q K M T S I E D A M P L W H P Q N O C V V Q Y  
 G R B Y W P F S V F G T R S M K F N X S V K X N H B R C O R  
 V Z Y L C T J Y G S A I R H B E V Y B O A Y V X E A U V D Z

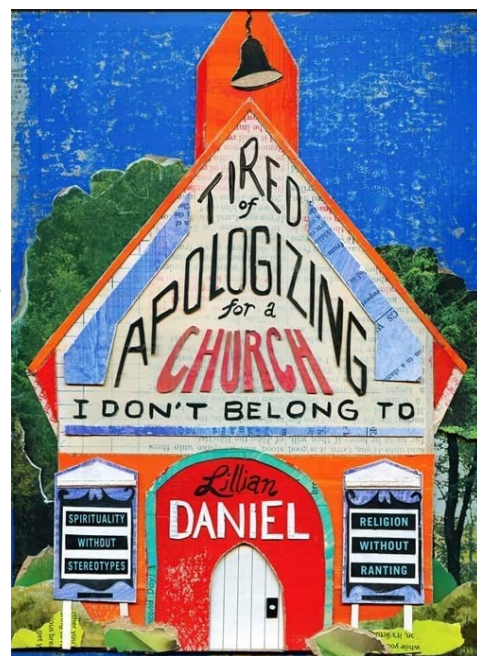
Acts	Habakkuk	Lamentations	Psalms
Amos	Haggai	Leviticus	Revelation
Chronicles	Hebrews	Luke	Romans
Colossians	Hosea	Malachi	Ruth
Corinthians	Isaiah	Mark	Samuel
Daniel	James	Matthew	Song of Solomon
Deuteronomy	Jeremiah	Micah	Thessalonians
Ecclesiastes	Job	Nahum	Timothy
Ephesians	Joel	Nehemiah	Titus
Esther	John	Numbers	Zechariah
Exodus	Jonah	Obadiah	Zephaniah
Ezekiel	Joshua	Peter	
Ezra	Jude	Philemon	
Galatians	Judges	Philippians	
Genesis	Kings	Proverbs	



# BOOK STUDY CONTINUING THROUGH THIS MONTH

On Thursday night, just for January and February, you are invited to participate in an online book study of Rev. Lillian Daniel's *"I'm Tired of Apologizing for a Church I Don't Belong To"*. Rev. Daniel is the Conference Minister for the Michigan Conference of the United Church of Christ. She will be visiting our congregation in May 2023. The book is available for purchase through whatever platform you use. We no longer have a local bookstore, so you are invited to get your own copy. If you need help, please let Pastor Greg or Stephanie know and we'll get it for you.

The book is helpful for churches like ours and giving us language about how to talk about church in a culture that has experienced much hurt and judgment on the part of the Christian church. How is our church different? How is our faith expression different?



The book has fifteen chapters, so we'll try to do two a week if we can! We'll meet at 7:00 p.m. via zoom. Here's the link: <https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/88171572216>. Come when you can, join anytime. If you have questions, please speak with Pastor Greg.



# CONGRATULATIONS ARE IN ORDER!



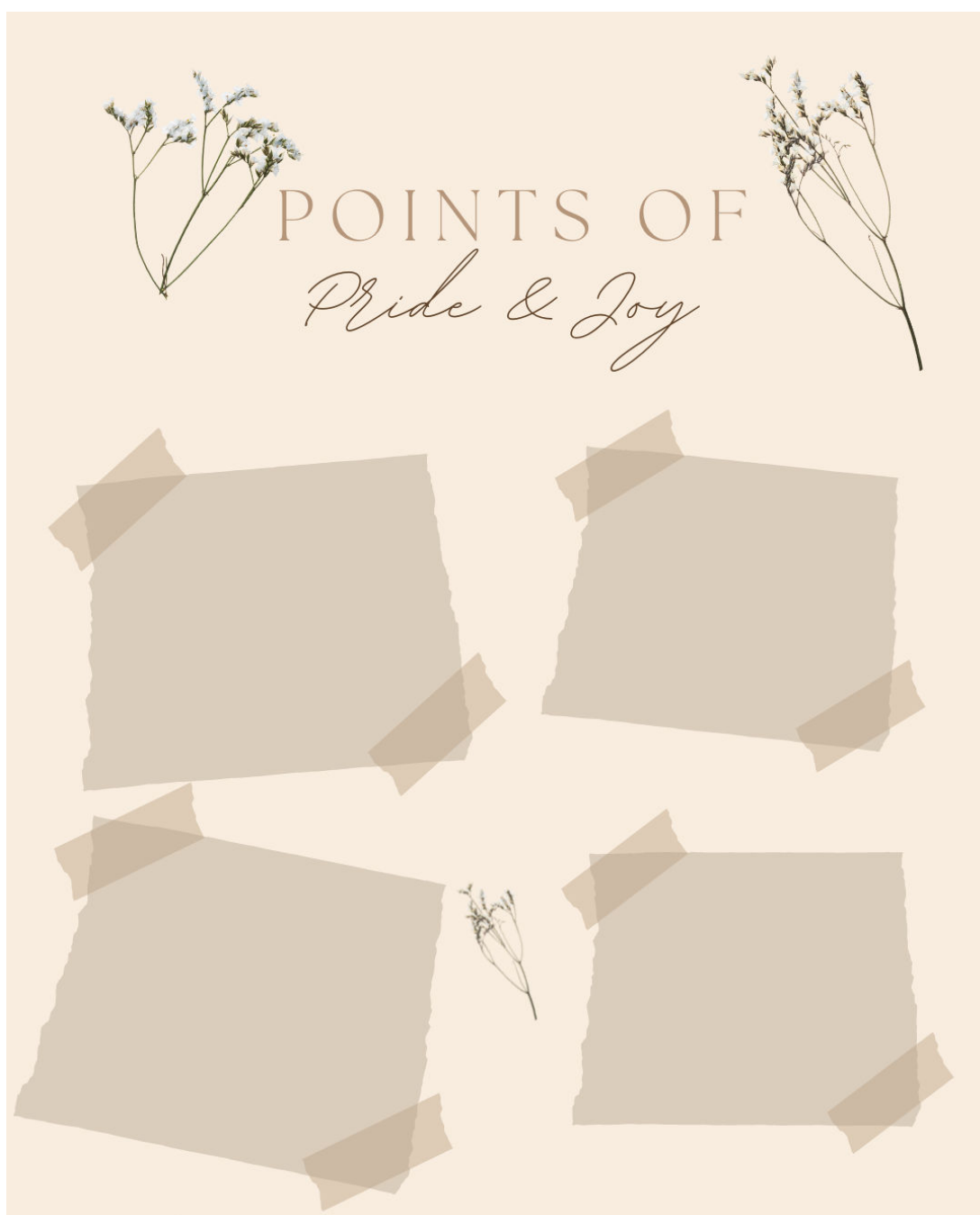
**“JoBurg's Gloria House wins first GHT Player of the Week Award of 2023”**

(Click [here](https://www.petoskeynews.com/story/sports/2023/01/10/joburgs-gloria-house-wins-first-ght-player-of-the-week-award-of-2023/69795429007/) or Copy/Paste the link below to your browser to read the full article!)

<https://www.petoskeynews.com/story/sports/2023/01/10/joburgs-gloria-house-wins-first-ght-player-of-the-week-award-of-2023/69795429007/>

The congratulations on page 6 inspired me! I'd like to include a Newsletter section in which we share our joys—that might be a moment we're proud of (like Gloria's honor on page 6) or any other happy news there is in your life. My thinking is that, as a church family, we share joy and the difficult times. We highlight difficulties when and where it is appropriate; I thought you might enjoy space for sharing happiness each month. Below is a draft of the format I have in mind. If you have thoughts, ideas, or questions, please let me know!

~ Stephanie





# A Bunch of Mutts



This January, I taught the History, Theology and Polity of United Church of Christ Polity to seminarians at Chicago Theological Seminary. When I say “at,” I use the term loosely. The class, originally planned as an intensive week in person in Hyde Park, switched to online, so my students were zooming in from Texas to Rhode Island. Their religious backgrounds also spanned a distance and yet they had all been led by the Holy Spirit to take this class as part of their discernment if they are called to preach, teach and lead our people. We had people raised Southern Baptist, Wesleyan, Roman Catholic, Nondenominational, or without much religion at all, each of them bringing the gifts and the struggles of their past spiritual lives into their new home under the big tent we call the United Church of Christ. You get the picture. My students were as big a bunch of “mutts” as the average UCC congregation in the Michigan Conference.

Each weekend, as I preach and visit at one church after another, I continue to learn about the people, both the clergy and the congregations. I meet church members who come from multi generational families whose ancestors actually, even physically, built the church, laying the bricks or raising the funds for the very first pastor. I meet young parents who have attended the church for only a few weeks, tentatively searching for a loving Christian community that represents the inclusive welcome they want for their small children as they grow up. I meet people who chose the church specifically because it was UCC and I meet people who chose the church and then, later, discovered the UCC as a denomination and church family. But the one common denominator seems to be the openness to the search itself, and the way the Holy Spirit keeps sending us all her best mutts.

Peace and Blessings,

Michigan Conference Minister  
Lillian Daniel



*Used with permission.*  
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During the month of February the Outreach team is asking you to consider a donation to help The Refuge. In just the past three months need has almost doubled their largest season.

Our church family have played a huge role in the homeless situation in Gaylord throughout the years, they are asking for help again.

On February 5<sup>th</sup> a representative from The Refuge will share more information during our Sunday morning church service.

Cathy Otto



Birthdays:

- 3 Alan Trendera
- 5 DeLayni Brown
- 6 Joanie Sietsema
- 7 Callie English
- 7 Evelyn Pratt
- 10 Margaret Hellenberg
- 18 Aysia House
- 27 Jay Anderson

Anniversaries:

- 28 Jim & Vicky Rigney



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**~ In Our Prayers ~**  
**During the month of December,**  
**the UNA is holding the New Waves UCC in prayer.**

**Cindy Goller, Pastor Greg, and family** – as Cindy’s dad, Marty Goller, fell twice the weekend of 1/23/23 and fractured his left hip. He went to the ER, spent a night in the hospital and has been admitted to a local nursing home for the short term for physical therapy. If you would like to send him a card, the address is:

**Marty Goller**  
**c/o St. Joseph Residence**  
**07 East Beckert Road**  
**New London, WI 54961**

**1**

**Paul Balliet and family** as Paul recovers from cardiac issues.

**Joanie Sietsema and family**– as they grieve Joel’s sudden passing.

**Margaret Hellenberg and family**– as they grieve John’s recent passing.

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

**Laura Bantens and her partner, Chris** – as Chris is experiencing health issues and they are both encountering major life changes.

**Gloria House’s granddaughter, Madison Crawford** – as she suffers from catalepsy in narcolepsy along with other neurological struggles. She is at home and adjusting to new medication which seems to be helping but is still in need of prayers.

**Brad Derenzy**—as he has continuing health struggles.



**Ariah House** – as she is finally home but still in need of prayers. She will be traveling to Grand Rapids for monthly infusions.

*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.*



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# ***ANNOUNCEMENTS***

**Food Pantry** – needs a few more volunteers. Please contact Don Storing if interested.

**Bible Study** – 11 AM on Thursdays, but please keep an eye on your email for communication from Rokko. The Zoom link is provided: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84612895017>

## ***February Upcoming Dates to Remember***

- ◇ “Tired of Apologizing For a Church I Don’t Belong To” Book study with Pastor Greg, every Thursday evening this month at 7 PM via Zoom. Contact Stephanie if you are in need of the Zoom link.

## ***Looking Ahead:***

- ◇ May 21<sup>st</sup>, Rev. Dr. Lillian Daniel, Michigan Conference minister, visits.





## 2023 Flower Schedule

January: *Margaret Hafner and Dave Henson*

February: *Margaret Hellenberg*

March: *Jeannine Wambold*

April: *Cathy Otto*

May: *Bill and Maxine Dely*

June: *Joanie Sietsema*

July: *Helen Mate*

August: *Evelyn Pratt*

September: *Sallie Anderson*

October: *Vicky Rigney*

November: *Louanne Spearman*

December: *Christian Ed.*





# 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: \$420**

## **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: \$935 (2022)**

## **Strengthen the Church**

Supports church growth, pastoral and lay leadership development, young and young adult ministers within conferences.

*Collected around Pentecost*

**Received to date: \$84 (2022)**

## **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: \$255 (2022)**

## **Christmas Fund**

Provides direct financial assistance to retired UCC ministers and lay employees and spouses.

*Collected in December*

**Received to date: \$565 (2022)**

***In Addition, we gave \$521 for Blanket Sunday this year!***



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## Current Meeting Times

*All are welcome to “attend” these meetings*

**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 11:00 AM:

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

**Bible Study** meets Thursdays at 11am

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