



January, 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

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Church Service: Sunday, 10 am



Pastor's Column – January 2024

“Happy New Year?”

Did you notice the question mark? Happy New Year is supposed to have an exclamation point, isn't it? Well, I guess that depends on your perspective. Is it really going to be a happy new year, or will it be more of the same, or even worse? In his *Daily Meditations*, Father Richard Rohr tells us:

Here is the mistake we all make in our encounters with reality—both good and bad. We do not realize that it wasn't the person or event right in front of us that made us angry or fearful—or excited and energized. At best, that is only partly true. If we had allowed a beautiful hot air balloon in the sky to make us happy, it was because *we* were already predisposed to happiness. The hot air balloon just occasioned it—and almost anything else would have done the same.

~Continued~

How we see will largely determine *what* we see and whether it can give us joy or make us pull back with an emotionally stingy and resistant response. Without denying an objective outer reality, *what we are able to see and are predisposed to see in the outer world is a mirror reflection of our own inner world and state of consciousness at that time.* Most of the time, we just do not see at all, but rather operate on cruise control.

If he is right, then that would lead us to wondering about what our inner world and state of consciousness are at any time. Are we predisposed to finding good, or happy, or joyous things today? Or are we predisposed to finding fault, anger, or frustration. Yes, happy or frustrating things can come unexpectedly, but our inner disposition has a lot to do with how we see it.

I guess that means that happy new year has a lot more to do with what is going on inside of each one of us, rather than what is going on in the world. So maybe our time is best spent, as this new year begins, working on our inner disposition – our inner spirit. And may your spirit be filled with hope, possibility, and opportunity in 2024. That doesn't mean everything will be perfect and full of happiness, but it might mean that each of us may experience more than brings us joy and hope.

Wishing you all the best in this new year.

In Christ's Love,

Pastor Greg

First Congregational UCC

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Worship 10 AM	1 Gratitude Group, 6 AM	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 Reaching In @ noon	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	22 Gratitude Group, 6 AM	23	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
28 Worship 10 AM Council, 11:30 AM	29 Gratitude Group, 6 AM	30	31 Gratitude Group, 6 AM	<i>January 2024</i>		

With Love and Gratitude...

Thank you to all who sent cards and gifts for us this Christmas. We are so blessed to be part of this church family. The greatest gifts we receive are community and friendship from each of you. Thank you for another great year! Blessings to all for a fantastic 2024!

Love,

Pastor Greg Watling and Cindy Goller



To each and every one of you,

Thank you for who you are and what a joy you make my job. Retirement has given me the opportunity to reinvent myself and you all are part of why it has been a wonderful time for me. Thank you for the cards, gifts, love, kind words, office chats, emails, support, and friendship.

With much love,

Stephanie

Committee Rosters, 2024

Position	Name	Term	Year
Moderator	Maggie Wallin	2	1
Asst. Moderator			
Financial Secretary	Margaret Hafner	2	1
Treasurer	Mary Fox		
Council (must have 5 members, but may have up to 3 add'l)			
Position	Name	Term	Year
Moderator	Maggie Wallin	2	1
Reaching in Rep.	Sallie Anderson	1	1
Reaching Out Rep.	Cathy Otto	2	1
Trustees Rep.	David Schopp	2	1
At large	Laura Hotelling	3	1
At large	Margaret Hellenberg	1	2
At large	Jeanine Wambold	1	2
At large	Helen Mate	3	1
Trustees (must have 3-5 members, in addition to Treasurer and Financial Secretary)			
Position	Name	Term	Year
Chair	Dave Schopp	2	1
Liaison to community Meal and Women's Fellowship	Vicky Rigney	3	1
Trustee Representative	Dave Schopp	2	1
Financial Secretary	Margaret Hafner	2	1
Treasurer	Mary Fox	3	2
Assistant Financial Secretary		1	1
At large	Paul Balliet	1	1
At large	Ken Wade	1	1
At large	Becky Trenda		
Reaching Out (3-5 members)			
Position	Name	Term	Year
Chair	Kathy Menkes	2	1
	Cindy Goller	2	1
	Margaret Hellenberg	1	1
	Stephanie Kalember	1	1
	Cathy Otto	2	1
Reaching In (3-5 members)			
Position	Name	Term	Year
Chair	Sallie Anderson	2	2
	Rokko Jans	2	2
	Maggie Wallin	2	2
	Mona Viviano	1	1
	Sharon Wade	1	1
Pastor Parish			
Position	Name	Term	Year
	Cathy Otto		
	Joe Wambold		
	Maggie Wallin		
	Mary Fox		

Richard Rohr's Daily Meditation

From the Center for Action and Contemplation

Week Fifty: Moving Toward Greater Love



Becoming Agents of Change

Arab-American poet Naomi Shihab Nye recalls a transformative, unexpected occasion of generous acceptance:

Wandering around the Albuquerque Airport Terminal ... I heard an announcement: “If anyone in the vicinity of Gate A-4 understands any Arabic, please come to the gate immediately.”

Well—one pauses these days. Gate A-4 was my own gate. I went there.

An older woman in full traditional Palestinian embroidered dress, just like my grandma wore, was crumpled to the floor, wailing loudly. “Help,” said the flight service person. “Talk to her.... We told her the flight was going to be late and she did this.”

I stooped to put my arm around the woman and spoke to her haltingly. “Shu-dow-a, Shu-bid-uck Habibti? Stani schway, Min fadlick, Shu-bit-se-wee?” The minute she heard any words she knew, however poorly used, she stopped crying. She thought the flight had been cancelled entirely. She needed to be in El Paso for major medical treatment.... I said, “No, we’re fine, you’ll get there, just later, who is picking you up? Let’s call him.”

~Continued~

We called her son and I spoke with him in English. I told him I would stay with his mother ... and would ride next to her.... She talked to him. Then we called her other sons just for the fun of it. Then we called my dad and he and she spoke for a while in Arabic and found out of course they had ten shared friends. Then I thought ... why not call some Palestinian poets I know and let them chat with her? This all took up about two hours.

She was laughing a lot by then. Telling about her life, patting my knee, answering questions. She had pulled a sack of homemade *mamool* cookies—little powdered sugar crumbly mounds stuffed with dates and nuts—out of her bag—and was offering them to all the women at the gate. To my amazement, not a single woman declined one. It was like a sacrament. The traveler from Argentina, the mom from California, the lovely woman from Laredo—we were all covered with the same powdered sugar. And smiling. There is no better cookie.

And then the airline broke out free beverages ... and two little girls from our flight ran around serving us all apple juice and they were covered with powdered sugar, too. And I noticed my new best friend—by now we were holding hands—had a potted plant poking out of her bag, some medicinal thing, with green furry leaves. Such an old country traveling tradition. Always carry a plant. Always stay rooted to somewhere.

And I looked around that gate of late and weary ones and thought, this is the world I want to live in. The shared world. Not a single person in that gate—once the crying of confusion stopped—seemed apprehensive about any other person. They took the cookies. I wanted to hug all those other women, too. This can still happen anywhere. Not everything is lost



Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays:

- 7 Diane House
- 9 Jill Brazelton
- 18 Joanna Morse
- 21 Larry Ward
- 21 Pastor Greg
- 22 Jeff Kalember
- 27 Rokko Jans

Anniversaries:

- 22 George & Carol Lienerth
- 22 Paul & Jane Balliet

~ In Our Prayers ~

During the month of December, the UNA is holding the
Charlevoix First Congregational UCC in prayer.

Tom and Jenni Johnson, friends of the Kalembers – as Tom has been diagnosed with probable pancreatic cancer. They await confirmation, staging, and the start of chemotherapy.

Carol Leser and family – as they grieve Bo's passing.

Friends and Family of David Black – David has passed away. Services were held on December 22, 2023. Let's keep his friends and family in our prayers as they grieve his passing.

Gloria House's son, Gary, as he is having open heart surgery on the 12th of December. He has a defibrillator and a leaking valve that needs replacing.

Jason Peterman - as he has been having some health problems.

MarySue Evans' son Jerry, who had ear drum replacement surgery and a tumor removed from the ear.

English Family – as Jordan & Jeffrey's dad, Michael, passed away. Prayers for the boys and Natassja as they grieve his loss. Prayers for the entire family as they struggle to regain custody of Max.

Leona, Jason Peterman's stepmom – as she has had a stroke and is nearing the end of her life.

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.

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.



Prayer Requests

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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.



Led by our own Sharon Wade!

Unlock Your Creative Potential &



Join the 100 Day Project Community!

Every Thursday | January 25 - May 2, 2024

Time: 4:00pm - 5:00pm
Location: 125 E. Main St., Gaylord
Cost: Free (Donations appreciated)
All Ages and Skill Levels Welcome!



More Info & RSVP



gaylordarts.org | 989-732-3242

Unlock your creative potential and join us in a fun, supportive environment!

What to Expect: Each member is asked to commit to working on something for 100 days. You can learn something new or work on a skill. It can be 5 minutes a day or longer. We will meet weekly & share our work and lift each other up.

Creative Activities to Consider: Activities can encompass a wide range of creative endeavors. These include capturing a daily photograph, filling a sketchbook, crafting a quilt square, constructing a mini collage, painting, writing, building a website, woodworking, and concocting innovative recipes. The possibilities for creative expression are boundless.



All Gaylord Arts programs, activities and services are provided equally, without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex or disability. Regarding Art News and other GACA projects: These activities are supported in part by an award from the MICHIGAN COUNCIL FOR ARTS AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS and the NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS.



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.*



Community Causes



Help Support No-Cost Camps & Programs for Kids Affected by Cancer



Tavares
Tavares' is a camper from Flint Michigan. His mother shared their family's story.

"Tavares was diagnosed with osteosarcoma just before his 11th birthday. Working in a hospital, I see sick patients all the time, but I never thought it would happen to my own child.

After treatment, Tavares said 'Mom, you know what that means. I get to go to Camp Quality!' Tavares, like the other campers, gets to be a kid. At home, it's all these appointments, all these medications. At camp, they're still getting their medication, but they get to have fun. Camp Quality, they literally let kids be kids."

Tavares says that what makes Camp Quality so special is that "we get to go with kids. Kids who went through the same thing as me. I'm lucky that I beat it before I went. Some aren't so lucky that they're still going through it. All that matters is they still get to have fun in and out of treatments."

November 11, 2023

Dear Camp Quality Michigan Supporters,

For over 35 years, Camp Quality has served kids affected by cancer and their families at no cost to everyone. We exist for the sole purpose of 'helping kids affected by cancer be kids again.'

Your Gift to Camp Quality Michigan Today Can Go Twice as Far



\$10,000 Matching Gift Campaign
March 1st - 12/31/23

At Camp Quality Michigan we provide summer camps and year-round programs that provide opportunities for 'community' to form, centered in JOY, HOPE, and CONNECTION wherever kids and families are on their cancer journey. Our dedicated volunteers and staff have had the privilege to witness hundreds of brave and strong fighters who are so much more than the challenging things that have happened to them.

We are excited to let you know about a special opportunity to participate in our Matching Gift Campaign. The NSF Foundation has generously given \$10,000 in match funds and all gifts will be doubled up to that amount. We hope you can help us reach our match goal, which will help us continue to provide no-cost opportunities for children affected by cancer to connect, grow, be fearless, and create lifelong memories and friendships. Regardless of where a child is on their cancer journey, our programs provide the opportunity to meet other campers who understand what they're going through in a safe, supportive community, where JOY, HOPE, and CONNECTION are at the center of all we do.

Your gift will be matched through this special campaign and will have a very real impact on the lives of so many families across Michigan. Our parents say it best. "Camp Quality is the best thing to happen to my child and our family." "Camp Quality has really created an incredible opportunity for these kids to not only connect but experience all the same things as other kids, without the burden of cancer looming in their present or past, get to experience."

Seeing a child with cancer and their family fearlessly thrive in a supportive community is priceless. Extending these programs at no cost for these amazing cancer heroes, however, is not. Thank you for considering a gift to help us continue to provide these programs at no cost to every family who needs them.

With gratitude,
Dave Meirels
Executive Director
Camp Quality Michigan


CampQualityUSA.org

Detach -----

Yes, I want to help provide no-cost camps and programs for kids affected by cancer.

Mail Check To: Camp Quality Michigan | PO Box 345, Boyne City, MI 49712

☐ \$150 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$75 ☐ \$50 ☐ Other: \$_____ Monthly Donation: \$_____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Phone () _____

☐ Credit Card ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Discover ☐ Amex CC Number _____

☐ Check Enclosed: Make Payable to Address Above Exp ____ / ____ CVV _____



To Donate Online, Visit - www.campqualityusa.org/ways-to-help/donate-money

Community Causes

Kate Felicia

Paul Sheron

Aini Tracy

Ruby Candy

James Jason Kore



" May you be inspired by giving, changed by love, filled with peace and touched by miracles. "

During this season, we take time to reflect upon the good things we have...like our partnership with you. We appreciate working with you and hope that the holidays and the coming year will bring you happiness and success.

with gratitude.
Otsego-Antrim Habitat for Humanity Board of Directors, Management Team and Staff



SAVE THE DATE!
OAHFH's Annual
Golf Scramble is
Sunday, May 19th,
2024!





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: \$482

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: \$220

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: \$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)

As of April, our donations to Blanket Sunday totaled \$509





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>