

First Congregational
United Church of Christ
Gaylord

July 2021

*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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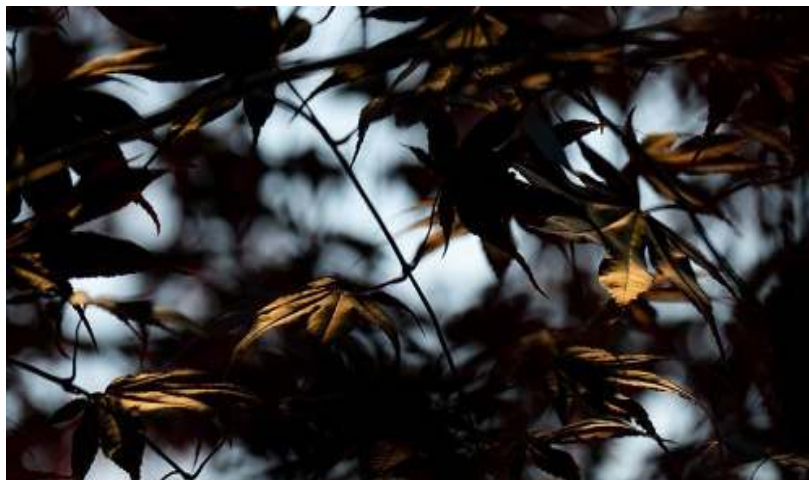
Church Service: Sunday, 10 am
*In-person worship has resumed—
please see inside for details and
guidelines.*

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Pastor's Column – July 2021

This month I want to share with you one of the daily meditations I receive from Father Richard Rohr at the Center for Action and Contemplation. This is used by permission from the Center.



Wednesday, June 16th, 2021

Richard Rohr's Daily Meditation

From the Center for Action and Contemplation

Continued on next page ...

The Shadow in Christianity

We can patiently accept not being good. What we cannot bear is not being considered good, not appearing good.—St. Francis of Assisi

If you are willing to bear serenely the trial of being displeasing to yourself, you will be for Jesus a pleasant place of shelter. —St. Thérèse of Lisieux

The two Christian mystics quoted above have helped me to escape the trap of perfectionism which always leads to an entrenched shadow. The wise Benedictine Brother David Steindl-Rast describes this common ploy:

In its enthusiasm for the divine light, Christian theology has not always done justice to the divine darkness. . . . We tend to get trapped in the idea of a static perfection that leads to rigid perfectionism. Abstract speculation can create an image of God that is foreign to the human heart. . . . *[A God that does not contain our shadows.]* Then we try to live up to the standards of a God that is purely light, and we can't handle the darkness within us. And because we can't handle it, we suppress it. But the more we suppress it, the more it leads its own life, because it's not integrated. Before we know it, we are in serious trouble.

You can get out of that trap if you come back to the core of the Christian tradition, to the real message of Jesus. You find him, for instance, saying, "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" [Matthew 5:48]. *Yet he makes it clear that this is not the perfection of suppressing the darkness, but the perfection of integrated wholeness. [Richard: Emphasis mine.]* That's the way Matthew puts it in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus talks of our Father in heaven who lets the sun shine on the good and the bad, and lets the rain fall on the just and the unjust alike [see Matthew 5:45]. It's both the rain and the sun, not only the sun. And it's both the just and the unjust. Jesus stresses the fact that God obviously allows the interplay of shadow and light. God approves of it. If God's perfection allows for tensions to work themselves out, who are we to insist on a perfection in which all tensions are suppressed? . . .

Continued on next page ...

[As Paul writes,] “By grace you have been saved” [Ephesians 2:8]. That’s one of the earliest insights in the Christian tradition: it’s not by what you do that you earn God’s love. Not because you are so bright and light and have purged out all the darkness does God accept you, but as you are. Not by doing something, not by your works, but gratis you have been saved. That means you belong. God has taken you in. God embraces you as you are—shadow and light, everything. God embraces it, by grace. And it has already happened.

David Steindl-Rast, “The Shadow in Christianity,” in *Meeting the Shadow: The Hidden Power of the Dark Side of Human Nature*, ed. Jeremiah Abrams and Connie Zweig (Jeremy P. Tarcher: 1991), 132, 133.

Image credit: Jenna Keiper, *dapple* (detail), 2020, photograph, Bellingham.

Image inspiration: *Shadows are always influential if not always obvious. Some, in focus in the foreground, are easier to name while others remain hidden in the background. How might we attend to the lessons of our own inner shadow landscapes?*

Faithfully,

Pastor Greg

LIVESTREAM VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

As you know, we have begun livestreaming our worship services. Each week, we gain more confidence in the system, and we’re very able to train others to use the system. What we need is a couple more people to help us run the system. Even if you take the training, you can back out if it’s more than you bargained for.

Livestream is an important connection with our out-of-town participants and friends, and it also is a great way to share our church with the community. Many people check out a church online before they ever come in person. Please help if you are able.

Contact Mary Fox, Pastor Greg, or Jessica if you will help.

OFFICE HOURS CHANGE

Pastor’s office hours will change from Thursday, July 15 to Wednesday, July 14 12noon-4 p.m. Book study will occur as usual at 7 p.m. that evening.

OUTDOOR WORSHIP JULY 11 at 10 AM.

May 12, 2021 Council Minutes (meeting via Zoom)

Present: Greg Watling, Helen Mate, Laura Hotelling, Mischelle Stone, Maggie Wallin

1. Mischelle led a prayer to begin the meeting.
 2. April minutes were unanimously approved.
 3. Reopening Concerns/Protocols
 - A. People are behaving; some are pushing for singing to return.
 - B. A few people have asked about coffee hour.
 - C. A couple of people have brought up using fellowship hall and are wondering about watching the service there.
 - i. Mischelle noted that there are other options to watch the service.
 - ii. There was discussion/inquiry about using fellowship hall for other church sponsored events, such as salad luncheon.
 - a. Vicky Rigney sent ideas about salad luncheon returning in July.
 1. Salads would be prepared at home.
 2. There would be two sittings, and people would have to make a reservation.
 3. There would not be self-serve.
 - b. Mischelle suggested that someone call the health department and have them double check protocols.
 - iii. There was discussion that having salad luncheons would spark conversation about returning the community meal to inside as well.
 - D. The Center for Congregational Song has said it's O.K. to sing with masks on for thirty minutes.
 - E. Maggie wondered if we could ask everyone to point out to people when masks are inappropriately placed.
 - F. There have been questions about when Rokko will be comfortable returning for live music.
 - i. What criteria would have to be in place for him to feel good about returning?
 - ii. Mischelle wondered if he'd be comfortable with an outdoor service. Greg figured yes and said he'd talk to him.
 4. There was a suggestion of sending out postcards about a return in in-person services.
 5. Carillon Bells
 - A. Verton will be at church on Monday to take a look at what we have.
 - B. Mischelle figured we'd probably need a gradual donation fund due to the cost.
 6. Graduation Sunday = June 13
 - A. Sallie Anderson is planning it.
 - B. Graduates will get their scholarships during the service, and an outdoor coffee hour is being planned.
 7. Laura asked if offerings have changed with a return to in-person services. They haven't.
 8. Maggie led a prayer to conclude the meeting.
-

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UCC, GAYLORD

REACHING IN

June 7, 2021

ZOOM Attendance: Rokko, Sallie, Helen C, Helen M, Maggie, Pastor Greg, Brenda

Opening Prayer: Offered by Maggie

DISCUSSIONS:

- Coffee Hour: Due to increased attendance at Worship and decreased attendance at ZOOM Coffee the committee recommended suspending ZOOM Coffee Hour for now; the committee will ask Council to consider offering beverages for outdoor coffee hour
- Special Music: Rokko continues to work with the young people to offer special music
- Communion: Recommend continuing with disposable cup/wafer at this time
- Bible Study: Continue with ZOOM and possibly introduce Hybrid, in person meeting combined with ZOOM; Rokko will check with the usual attendees to get some feedback
- Live Stream: Still some issues but continuing to improve
- Lay Readers and Greeters are still needed; suggestions were made for both positions; Greg will share with Jessica
- Brenda recommended putting the Lord's Prayer on slide for Livestream
- Rokko will be gone some this summer and we discussed contacting back up pianist
- Maggie will do 6/27 Worship
- We discussed "Members" vs "Participants;" no decisions made but Greg will review with Council
- Some interest has been shown in starting a Podcast; Greg will pursue

Closing Prayer: Offered by Rokko

Next Meeting: July 5, 2021

Submitted by Helen S Crandall

Announcements

JULY Greeters & Liturgists – please contact the office if you are able to help with greeting on Sundays and/or readings.

Lawn Mowing – It is that time again! Please contact the office if you are willing to help mow the lawn this season.

AV Operators – the church needs volunteers to operate livestreaming (cameras and slides) on Sunday mornings. If you are interested in training, please contact Mary Fox. This is a pick and choose commitment; you decide when it works for you!

Bible Study – every Thursday at 11:00am! All are invited. Please join us virtually by using either the following link or phone number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83040403820> Dial by your location: +1 929 205 6099; Meeting ID: 830 4040 3820

McLaren Book Study— <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83040403820> Dial by your location: +1 929 205 6099; Meeting ID: 830 4040 3820

Flower Schedule:

June: Jeannine Wambold

July: Joanie Sietsema

Aug.: Evelyn Pratt

Sept.: Sallie Anderson

Oct.: Vicky Rigney

Nov.: TBD

Dec.: 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: \$166

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 April

Received to date: \$314

Strengthen the Church

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

Collected around Pentecost

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

Christmas Fund

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

Collected in December

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/86109266574>

Reaching Out will meet the third Monday of each month at 7 PM:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7913585725>

Council will meet the second Wednesday of each month at 7PM:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81455642087>

Trustees will meet the third Wednesday of each month at 11:00 AM:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86536935740?
pwd=aXN0enQ5ODZvWDRNoeXlUZEVFdE1OQT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86536935740?pwd=aXN0enQ5ODZvWDRNoeXlUZEVFdE1OQT09)

This meeting requires passcode 452218

~ In Our Prayers ~

During the month of July, the UNA is holding the New Waves (TC) church in prayer.

Pastor Susan Webeler – as she recently suffered a stroke of her left (dominant) side.

Maryetta House's grandson, Wyatt – as he recently suffered many fractures due to an auto accident.

John Hellenberg – following a recent fall.

Monica Gentile – Mardee Storing's dear friend who is suffering from dementia.

Gloria House's granddaughter, Madison Crawford – as she suffers from cataplexy in narcolepsy along with other neurological struggles. She is currently at U of M receiving treatment and therapy.

Mary Fox's friend Ursula – who suffered a stroke while vacationing in Florida with family and is now back in Michigan continuing rehabilitation.

Brad Derenzy—as he awaits having to reschedule a needed surgery.

Bo & Carol Leser—as Bo is struggling with health issues.

The Crandall Family – as Don continues under the care of hospice.

The Family of Ginny Titus – as they grieve her recent passing.

The English Family—as they battle cases of COVID-19 within the family.

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

Mardee Storing's daughter, Lori – as she is doing better, but still in need of prayers.

All of those working on the frontline to fight COVID-19, those that are considered essential workers, those without jobs, those ill, and those affected by this pandemic in anyway.

Current address for Pastor Susan:

Regional Rehab Center

3715 US 280

Phoenix City AL 36867

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

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

July Birthdays

- 3 Joel Sietsema
- 4 Tony Fobar
- 4 Laura Hotelling
- 10 Bo Leser
- 16 Lori Ferguson
- 16 Harrison Kalember
- 18 Whitney Rigney
Mary Evans
- 21 Gloria House
- 23 Mardee Storing
- 26 Jackie Fry
- 31 Brianna Boughner



July Anniversaries

- 3 Roger and Brenda Brummel

July 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Virtual Bible Study, 11am Women's fellowship, 12:15pm Book Study, 7pm	2 Community Meal 4pm	3
4 In Person Worship, 10am <i>Independence Day</i>	5 Reaching In, Noon	6	7	8 Virtual Bible Study, 11am Book Study 7pm	9 Community Meal 4pm	10
11 <i>Outdoor</i> Worship, 10am	12	13	14 Virtual Council 7pm	15 Virtual Bible Study, 11am Book Study, 7pm	16 Community Meal, 4pm	17
18 In Person Worship, 10am	19 Reaching Out, 7pm	20	21 Trustees, 11am	22 Virtual Bible Study, 11am Book Study, 7pm	23 Community Meal, 4pm	24
25 In Person Worship, 10am	26	27	28 Church Book Club, 1pm	29 Virtual Bible Study, 11am Book Study, 7pm	30 Community Meal, 4pm	31