

First Congregational United Church of Christ

218 W. Second Street, Gaylord, Michigan 49735

www.firstuccgaylord.org

(989) 732-5726

July 2026 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

“On to the Next!”

On Sunday, June 7, twenty-seven people stayed after worship to discuss the final proposal from the Convergence project related to the church's future. We spent time in small groups telling stories of times gone by. We shared impactful experiences we have had at the church. And we had fun, too! After all that discussion, we moved onto discussing the goals that the Convergence team recommend to the congregation for our next couple of years. We reached consensus about the following goals:

1. To help our community develop a community resource for sharing unbiased valid information within the community.

2. To use our church facilities more creatively to address the needs of the outside community for meeting spaces.
3. To do a better job telling our church's story to the community.
4. To move from being unintentional to intentional about loving people into a deeper relationship with the church community.

These will not happen overnight and are the responsibility of the whole congregation. Our Church Council will be the group that keeps track of where we are and will become the center clearing house for information related to these goals. Committees may work on them; individuals or small groups may engage and help make these goals happen. We may even find out that some of the goals don't fit us as well as we think they do! You're invited to check out the Council minutes when Liz sends them out (a separate links on the e-blast that comes with the newsletter) to see our progress and to determine where you might be a part of reaching each goal.

As always, if you have questions, please be in touch with me.

A big thank you to the Convergence team (Ken Wade, Helen Crandall, Vicky Rigney, Pete Amar, and Laura Hotelling) who put in a lot of time and energy to bring us to this point! Also, a big thanks to the Michigan Conference of the United Church of Christ, who provided \$5000 of the \$9800 cost that went into this project.

Blessings,

Pastor Greg

Office Hours

- ***Pastor Greg*** will be out of the office from July 26. Rosemary Gibson preaches that day.
- ***Liz*** is out of the office June 26-July 1 and July 8-10.



Special Offerings 1Q Update



FOR

ONE GREATER
HOUR OF
SHARING

\$684

STRENGTHEN
THE CHURCH

\$ 50



OCWM
(MICHIGAN
CONFERENCE)

\$312

NEIGHBORS IN
NEED

NOT
STARTED

CHRISTMAS
FUND

NOT
STARTED

BLANKET
SUNDAY

\$485

FOOD
PANTRY

\$387.50

THE REFUGE

\$177.50



Check out our meeting minutes, linked to the MailChimp mailing. Contact Liz for hard copies at 989-732-5726 or office@firstuccgaylord.org.

July Church Volunteers (as of 6/18/26)

Date	Liturgist	Greeter/ Usher	Coffee Hour	Digital Ministry	Mowing
5 th		Joe Wambold	Wambold/ Wade		
12 th Outdoor Worship	S Fuelling		Hellenberg /Cathi G-K		
19 th Father's Day					
26 th	M Walling				

Guest Preacher: Rosemary Gibson, July 26

Thank you!

YOU'RE INVITED:

Annual Church Picnic

August 2, 2026 After Church
Pete & Mary's

9580 M-32 East
Johannesburg, MI

GO EAST ON M-32 12 MILES FROM
DOWNTOWN GAYLORD. IT'S A WHITE 2-
STORY HOUSE ON THE NORTH (LEFT) SIDE.
CENTENNIAL FARM SIGN AT DRIVEWAY. IF
YOU GET TO M-32 AND GINGELL ROAD
INTERSECTION, YOU HAVE GONE 1/4 MILE
TOO FAR.

July Birthdays and Anniversaries

Birthdays:

4	Tony Dockery-Fobar
	Laura Hotelling
8	Jennifer Akans
16	Lori Ferguson
16	Harrison Kalember
18	Whitney Rigney
	Mary Evans
21	Gloria House
23	Nola-Jean ("Nola") Brown
26	Jacklynn Mate
31	Brianna Boughner

Anniversaries:

3	Roger & Brenda Brummel
4	Jim & Jennifer Akans

Announcements

- We are looking for **virtual greeters** to interact with those participating on social media. Sign up in the Fellowship Hall.
- *On July 1, Margaret Hellenberg takes over as the point person for Food Pantry.* Thank you to Don Storing for heading this up for many years and to Margaret for her willingness to step forward for our church.
- **Bay View** has begun its summer program of speakers. **Dr. Charles Marsh** will speak M-Th at 10a in Voorhies Hall the week of *June 28-July 2*. He is the Commonwealth Professor of Religious Studies at UVA and has written a biography of Deitrich Bonheffer *and God's Long Summer: Stories of Faith and Civil Rights*. **Professor HW Brands**, a critically and popularly acclaimed author and historian, is in residence *July 6-10*. He is lecturing on US history with a different daily topic. July 12-16 is **Rev. Gary Dorrien**, the Niebuhr Professor of Social Ethics at Union Theological Seminary and Professor of Religion at Columbia University. **Father Gregory Boyle**, a Jesuit priest and founder of Homeboy Industries in LA, the largest gang-intervention, rehabilitation, and re-entry program in the world. He is in residence *July 19-23*. Thought leader, speaker, Bible teacher, and author of *Human(Kind): How Reclaiming Human Worth and Embracing Radical Kindness Will Bring Us Back Together*, **Ashlee Eiland** will be in residence *July*

26-30. She was former Co-Lead Pastor at Mars Hill Bible Church in Grand Rapids and previously at Willow Creek Community Church.

- **Food Pantry** dates are *July 9 and 10*.
- 'Tis the season for mowing—**we need mowers** to claim weeks. Thank you in advance!
- A **celebration service of life** for past UCC Women of Michigan President and Antoinette Brown Award Recipient, **Donna Debney**, will be held on Sunday, *July 19* at 10:30 am at First Congregational UCC, 200 E. Harris St., Cadillac, MI 49601. Here is her obituary: <https://www.petersonfh.com/obituaries/donna-debney/#!/TributeWall> Please keep her family and close friends in your prayers.
- The **Lunch Group** will dine at noon on *July 21* at Pine Squirrel. All are welcome!
- We are celebrating a **wedding!** Mikayla Wright and Brady Reynolds are marrying *July 25*. Their rehearsal is *July 24*.
- *July 26*, our **guest preacher** is Rosemary Gibson.
- **Salad luncheon** is *July 28*.
- **There are no committee meetings in *July*.**
- Please **update your meetings** with Liz for next month **by the Newsletter Deadline (Monday after the Council Meeting)** so our church calendar is accurate.





Daily Meditation: Re-Enlivening Ministries **Juneteenth**

Father Richard Rohr turns to the apostle Paul's advice to the first churches to envision church renewal today.

Prior to the imperial edicts in the fourth century that pushed Christians to the top and the center of the Roman Empire, the church was still countercultural and non-imperial—a social movement for the reign of God. In a two-hundred-year period, Christians went from being complete outsiders to directing the inside! Christianity increasingly accepted, and even defended, the dominant social order, especially concerning war, money, and authority.

While Christian churches today do much good, they are still largely aligned, especially in the West, with cultural and political power. To recover the early church's emphasis on faith as a loving and communal way of life, we clearly need to support good and compassionate pastoral and healing practices. We must begin to validate Paul's original teaching on "many gifts and many ministries" (1 Corinthians 12: 4–11) that together "make a unity in the work of service" (Ephesians 4: 12–13). We need Christian people who are trained in, validated for, and encouraged to make home and hospital visits; do hospice work and jail ministry; support immigrants and refugees; help with soup kitchens; counsel couples before, during, and after marriage; teach classes in parenting; offer ministries of emotional, sexual, and relational healing; help with financial counseling;

build low-cost housing; take care of the elderly; run thrift centers—all of which put Christian people in immediate touch with other people. Remember, healing was most of the work Jesus appeared to do. It is almost too obvious. Either we see Christ in everyone, or we hardly see Christ in anyone. Either we are Christ to everyone, or we cannot be Christ to anyone.

My vision of any future church needs to be much flatter and much more inclusive. It is much less “churchy,” surely less patriarchal, and more concerned with fulfilling its mission statement than with endlessly reciting its heavenly vision and philosophy statement—the Nicene Creed—every Sunday. Simply put, any notion of a future church must be a fully practical church that is concerned about *getting the job of love done—and done better and better*. Centuries of emphasis on art and architecture, songs, liturgy, and prescribed roles have their place, but their overemphasis has made us a very top-heavy, decorative church that is largely, and constantly, concerned with its own in-house salvation.

Most people today, in fact, understand church to mean a building, rather than “where two or three gather in my name,” where the Divine Presence is promised just as certainly as it is promised in the bread, in the Bible, in the Sacraments, or in any anointed leadership: “There I am in your midst” (Matthew 18: 20).

Authentic leadership, I think, implies people who can spot, affirm, train, support, finance, and validate gifts and leadership wherever they see them in actual practice (think multipliers instead of monarchs). Then we are not all striving toward the top but striving toward supporting the supreme work of love flowing into the world.



**FOOD PANTRY
DATES**

Noon to 2P Otsego County
United Way

JUN 11, 12, JUL 9, 10, AUG 3, 27, 28,
SEP 3 & 4

CONTACT MARGARET
HELLENBERG FOR MORE INFO

116 E. 5TH ST., GAYLORD
(989) 732-8929

~In Our Prayers~

***The UNA is praying for Charlevoix First
Congregational UCC in July.***

Chris Crubaugh..

George Dunn as he rehabs from surgery.

The English Family –Please pray for Joe to heal and adjust and for the English family.

Mary Sue Evans requests prayers for her husband as he goes through health issues.

Dr. Howard and Shirley Short (Helen Crandall's daughter and son-in-law) and their grandsons, Hudson Short and Krue Morais, are going on an annual medical mission trip to Kenya from June 24-July 5. Please pray for their medical and missionary success and for a safe and impactful trip for all.

Our country, our neighbors, our leaders, and our world as we head into the next 250 years in America.



Prayer Requests

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.





ALPENFEST 2026

Alpenfest:
July 14-18, 2026

During Alpenfest:

- the Petoskey Steel Drum Band will use our lot after the parade
- support FCC fundraising efforts
- please carpool to reduce the pressure on parking nearby



Healthy Meals.
Happy Summer!

SUMMER MEAL Pickups!

7 DAYS OF BREAKFAST & LUNCH

FREE
TO ALL CHILDREN 18 AND UNDER

**NO ENROLLMENT NEEDED!
FREE TO ALL!**

THURSDAY PICKUP
11:00 AM – 1:00 PM
BEGINS JUNE 25TH
ENDS AUGUST 13TH

CHILDREN DO NOT NEED TO BE PRESENT TO PICK UP.
JUST SHOW UP AND LET US KNOW HOW MANY KIDS YOU'RE PICKING UP FOR.

MEAL PICKUP LOCATION:
GAYLORD HIGH SCHOOL
90 Livingston Blvd, Gaylord, Michigan 49735

SEE WHAT'S INCLUDED!
HERE'S A SAMPLE OF WHAT EACH CHILD RECEIVES.
Menus change throughout the summer, but each package includes 7 days of nutritious breakfasts and lunches.

MILK INCLUDED

FRESH FRUITS & VEGGIES

SAMPLE MEAL PACKAGE ITEMS VARY WEEKLY

BREAKFAST & LUNCH ITEMS

KID FRIENDLY ITEMS

EXAMPLE MEAL PACKAGE SHOWN. FOOD ITEMS MAY VARY BASED ON AVAILABILITY.

We could use donations of new adult socks. The donation box is in the Fellowship Hall Entry.

July



2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
UNA Prayers for Chadievoix First Congregational UCC	Flowers provided by Helen Mate	10 a – M-Th Religious Topics/Speakers @ Bay View	6a Gaylord Gratitude 5p Ukelele Group	11a Bible Study 11a Kids' Summer Meal PU @ GHS 12:15p ♀ Fellowship 4p Choir 5p 5 Guys for Food Pantry	6a Gaylord Gratitude CANCELLED – Community Meal	Independence Day 4
5 10a Worship/Communion	Deadline for Bill 6 6a Gaylord Gratitude CANCELLED – Reach in 6p Compassionate Friends	7	Liz Ooo 8 6a Gaylord Gratitude 5p Ukelele Group	Liz Ooo 9 11a Bible Study 11a Kids' Summer Meal PU @ GHS NOON Food Pantry 4p Choir	Liz Ooo 10 6a Gaylord Gratitude NOON Food Pantry 4p Community Meal	11
12 10a Outdoor Worship	6a Gaylord Gratitude	AlpenFest 14	AlpenFest 15 6a Gaylord Gratitude 5p Ukelele Group CANCELLED – Trustees	AlpenFest 16 11a Bible Study 11a Kids' Summer Meal PU @ GHS CANCELLED – Council 4p Choir	AlpenFest 17 6a Gaylord Gratitude 4p Community Meal	AlpenFest 18
19 10a Worship	6a Gaylord Gratitude CANCELLED – Reach Out	21 NOON Lunch Group @ Pine Squirrel	22 6a Gaylord Gratitude 1p Book Club CANCELLED – Ukelele Group	Newsletters Deadline 23 11a Bible Study 11a Kids' Summer Meal PU @ GHS 4p Choir	24 6a Gaylord Gratitude 4p Community Meal 6p Wedding Rehearsal (FH unavailable)	25 4p Brady/Wright Wedding (FH and Sanctuary unavailable all day)
26 10a Worship/Rosemary Gibson preaching	6a Gaylord Gratitude	28 11:30a Salad Luncheon	29 6a Gaylord Gratitude 5p Ukelele Group	30 11a Bible Study 11a Kids' Summer Meal PU @ GHS 4p Choir	31 6a Gaylord Gratitude 4p Community Meal	Aug 2 Church Picnic @ Mary & Pete's