

First Congregational United Church of Christ

218 W. Second Street, Gaylord, Michigan 49735

www.firstuccgaylord.org

June 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

"Resilience and Hope"

Unbelievably, we have been sharing ministry together for almost five years! Many good things have happened, and many more are happening. At the same time, we sometimes have a tough time focusing our energy, seeing new opportunities, or fine-tuning what

we already do well. To help us do things even better, the Church Council has entered a strategic planning endeavor with the help of Convergence – a nationally known progressive church development and growth organization. Convergence has partnered with congregations of all sizes, as well as denominations across the country to help all of us do ministry better.

From their website: At Convergence (formerly the Center for Progressive Renewal), we are transforming how faith communities engage with the world. As congregational consultants, we guide congregations through strategic planning, fostering renewal that reflects forward-thinking faith and social justice values. Our vision is rooted in inclusivity, collaboration, and innovation—helping congregations shift from "organized" to "organizing" spiritual communities.

A leadership group will help shepherd the process (Helen Crandall, Laura Hotelling (chair), and Vicky Rigney) in partnership with our coach from Convergence, Gregg Carlson. Our contract calls for some online coaching, community education, data retrieval and analysis, and vision/goal setting. The first step in this process is an all-congregation survey. You will hear a lot about it in the coming weeks.

In the meantime, if you are so inclined, you can access the initial congregational survey here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GaylordParticipant>.

For those without access to computers, or who would like assistance with the survey, we will set a couple of dates this summer during coffee hour where you can get help. We would like to have as many people participate as possible. This is not only for those who consider themselves participants, but anyone who feels a connection with the church and would be willing to share their insights.

If you have questions, see a member of the Council, the steering committee, or me. We are happy to answer any of your questions.

In Christ,

Pastor Greg

SALAD LUNCHEONS RETURN!

Sign up in Fellowship Hall

11:30 am

MAY 27 | JUN 24 | JUL 22 | AUG 26 |
SEP 28 | OCT 28

~ In Our Prayers ~

During June, the UNA is holding Clare Congregational UCC Church in prayer.

Jason Peterman – who is dealing with a variety of health issues.

Madison Crawford – as she suffers from neurological and vision issues.

Chris Crumbaugh – continued prayers Chris and Laura Bantens as they adapt to Chris' medical issues.

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

Vicky Rigney – Vicky is recovering after a fall and subsequent surgery. She is now walking, which is praiseworthy!

Becky & Alan Trender – while they help Becky's sister-in-law through life transitions.



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.

June Birthdays and Anniversaries

Birthdays:

4	Jenna English
6	Jim Boughner
7	Vicky Rigney
9	Katie Amar-Fox
11	Kynzie House
14	Max English
17	Erin Rigney
21	Meredith Anderson
21	Gavin Ball
23	Mary Fox
27	Liz Larson

Anniversaries:

9	Pastor Greg Watling & Cindy Goller
10	Aaron & Laura Hotelling
14	Cathi & Judy Gatewood-Keim
21	Steve & Lori Ferguson
23	Terry & Diane House
24	Laura Bantens & Chris Crumbaugh
30	George & Judy Dunn

Announcements

- Food Pantry Volunteers are needed – call Don Storing
- We are fundraising for Community Meal through bracelet sales in Fellowship Hall
- For prayer concerns, joys, announcements, or news to share, contact Liz at office@firstuccgaylord.org or Pastor Greg at pastorg@firstuccgaylord.org

- Check Fellowship Hall to sign up for mowing, lunch group, to help or be helped with the remnants of the ice storm, to serve on Sunday, and salad luncheons.

2025 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.*

UCC Women of Michigan Fall Gathering

Register by June 25th for the UCC Women of Michigan Fall Gathering held at the Lake Huron Retreat Center September 5-7, 2025. The keynote speaker is Sharon Sue Hiller. Contact Shari Hoppe at (616) 403-2364 or sfhoppe@gmail.com.

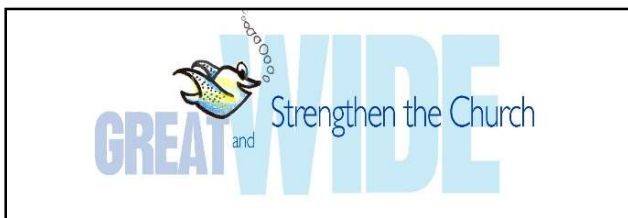
LAWN MOWERS NEEDED!

If you can assist in mowing the church lawn this summer, please see the sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall. The lawn typically needs mowing once per week with the church's lawnmower. Training is provided! See Dave Schopp with any questions.

2024 v 1Q 2025

FIVE FOR FIVE

	<u>2024</u>	<u>1Q 2025</u>
OCWM	\$378	\$212
NIN	198	N/A
OGHS	495	385
STC	329	20
Blanket Sunday	936	642
Cal Fire (Women's Fellowship)	N/A	500
Christmas Fund	810	N/A



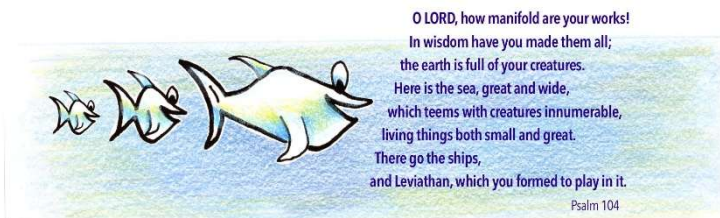
The Holy Spirit gathers us together. From across the country and the spectrums of human experience, we become united in Christ. And united, the Spirit commissions us to work for a more just world for all. The Strengthen the Church (STC) Offering supports congregations and leaders across the United Church of Christ as they respond to this call. The challenges our congregations face vary:

- Some seek ways to strengthen youth ministry
- Some hope to start new congregations
- Some look for innovative ways to renew existing congregations
- Some need help developing leaders

This special campaign can ensure congregations get the help they need from the conference and the national ministries of the UCC. Together we can answer the call to be united in Christ for a just world for all.

Throughout June we will accept your STC donations both in church and online. If you give via cash or check, please designate the funds as Strengthen the Church.

- All checks should be payable to *First Congregational Church UCC* with *Strengthen the Church* in the memo.
- To give online, follow this link: <https://support.ucc.org/ways-to-give/our-churchs-wider-mission/strengthen-the-church/strengthen-the-church-give>





Worship Outdoors With Us this Summer

**Join us in the church yard:
JUNE 29 | JULY 27 | AUGUST 31**

CHURCH PICNIC
When: **August 31**

HELP IS NEEDED AFTER THE PARADE FOR ALPENFEST!

In the parking lot adjacent to the church along Second Street, the Petoskey Steel Drum group will perform following the Alpenfest Parade. The City of Gaylord will be dropping chairs in the parking lot that need to be set up. Likely, we can set those up that morning, or during the parade itself, whichever is more convenient. At the end of the concert, we will need to re-stack the chairs. The date is July 12.

Alpenfest has also issued an invitation for us to sell concessions during the concert. That is being worked on, but help may be needed there as well. Please contact Pastor Greg with questions.

FIRST OF THREE GRANTS RECEIVED!

In Pastor Greg's column, he shared with us the strategic planning process that is in partnership with Convergence. The total cost of the program is \$9800 over two years. The Michigan Conference has several grant opportunities that will help underwrite over half of that cost. The first grant (\$1000) for church vitality and growth was approved and received. The following two grants, one in 2025 and one in 2026, will be from the Bertha Dayton fund which specifically assists rural congregations. We have received several of these grants before.

We anticipate receiving \$2000 in each of the two years (total \$4000) toward the cost of our strategic planning. Thank you to the Michigan Conference for supporting our ministry, mission, and growth.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP SEEKS GRANT

Pastor Greg, along with Melissa McDonnell of START Navigator, United Way and Dana Bensinger from the Otsego Community Foundation will write a grant to the National United Church of Christ to support Disaster Recovery in our county. The grants, which

can be from \$3,000 to \$20,000, can assist our community as we recover from the recent ice storm.

We will keep you updated on the progress of this grant opportunity!

Minutes are Available and Attached

TIME AWAY FROM THE OFFICE

IN JUNE, OUR AVAILABILITY WILL BE A LITTLE DIFFERENT AS PASTOR GREG ATTENDS THE ANNIVERSARY OF A FORMER CONGREGATION IN KANSAS CITY FROM JUNE 6-8. HE IS AVAILABLE BY PHONE OR TEXT DURING THAT TIME. JUNE 17-22, HE WILL ALSO BE OUT-OF-OFFICE FOR A RETREAT AND AS SUCH HIS AVAILABILITY IS LIMITED ON THOSE DAYS.

ROKKO WILL BE OFF JUNE 15 THROUGH JUNE 22. CHOIR AND BIBLE STUDY ARE CANCELLED ON JUNE 19 AS A RESULT.

LIZ WILL WORK JULY 2 INSTEAD OF HER USUAL JUNE 30 TO WORK AROUND THE HOLIDAYS.

Women's Resource Center of Northern Michigan

Tuesday, June 3, from 3:30 pm – 6:30 pm is an open house at the new WRCNM facility. The address is 2225 Summit Park Dr., Petoskey, MI 49770.

WRCNM is a community leader providing programs and services that strengthen and empower individuals and families. For more information, call (231) 347-0067.

June

2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>10 a - Worship</p> <p>1</p>	<p>6 a Gaylord Gratitude AA</p> <p>2</p>	<p>3:30 p Women's Resource Ctr Open House @ 2225 Summit Park Dr., Petoskey</p> <p>3</p>	<p>6 a Gaylord Gratitude AA</p> <p>4</p>	<p>11 a Bible Study 4 p Choir</p> <p>5</p>	<p>Pastor Greg in KC 6 a Gaylord Gratitude AA</p> <p>6</p>	<p>Pastor Greg in KC 7</p>
<p>Pastor Greg in KC 8</p> <p>10 a - Worship</p> <p>8</p>	<p>6 a Gaylord Gratitude AA</p> <p>9</p>	<p>10</p> <p>6 a Gaylord Gratitude AA</p> <p>10</p>	<p>11 a Bible Study 4 p Choir</p> <p>11</p>	<p>12</p> <p>6 a Gaylord Gratitude AA</p> <p>13</p>	<p>6 a Gaylord Gratitude AA</p> <p>13</p>	<p>FLAG DAY 10 a UNA Meeting 3 p AA</p> <p>4</p>
<p>FATHERS DAY</p> <p>10 a - Worship</p> <p>15</p>	<p>16</p> <p>NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS DUE 6 a Gaylord Gratitude AA</p> <p>16</p>	<p>Pastor Greg in MN 17 12 p Lunch Group @ Big Buck</p> <p>17</p>	<p>Pastor Greg in MN 18 6 a Gaylord Gratitude AA</p> <p>18</p>	<p>JUNETEENTH 11 a Bible Study CANCELLED 4 p Choir - CANCELLED</p> <p>19</p>	<p>Pastor Greg in MN 20 6 a Gaylord Gratitude AA</p> <p>20</p>	<p>Pastor Greg in MN 21</p>
<p>Pastor Greg in MN 22 10 a - Worship</p> <p>22</p>	<p>23</p> <p>6 a Gaylord Gratitude AA</p> <p>23</p>	<p>24</p> <p>11:30 a Salad Lunch - Women's Fellowship</p> <p>24</p>	<p>25</p> <p>68th Anniversary of UCC Women's Fall Gathering Registration DUE 6 a Gaylord Gratitude AA</p> <p>25</p>	<p>11 a Bible Study 12:15 p Women's Fellowship 4 p Choir</p> <p>26</p>	<p>6 a Gaylord Gratitude AA</p> <p>27</p>	<p>28</p>
<p>10 a - Worship</p> <p>29</p>	<p>30</p> <p>6 a Gaylord Gratitude AA</p> <p>30</p>		<p>68th Anniversary of UCC Women's Fall Gathering Registration DUE 6 a Gaylord Gratitude AA</p> <p>1 p Church Book Club 7 p Trustees**</p>		<p>**Meetings via Zoom</p>	<p>Pastor Greg is available via phone and text on a limited basis while out-of-town.</p>