

First Congregational United Church of Christ

218 W. Second Street, Gaylord, Michigan 49735

www.firstuccgaylord.org

(989) 732-5726

June 2026 Newsletter



a just
world
for all
ucc.org

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 "It Must Be Summer in Gaylord"

It took me several years to realize that summer is the busiest time of year in Gaylord! Knowing this, I am sharing our upcoming church events, so you have them all together. We will continue to remind you through newsletters, bulletins, and the church calendar posted in the entry to Fellowship Hall.

- **Sunday, May 31 Confirmation Sunday.** Celebrate Bri and Nola who have completed their confirmation classwork and

chosen to affirm their baptism. Service is at 10 followed by a cake reception.

- **Sunday, June 7** *Convergence Forum*. This is the last step in the Convergence visioning process. The team recommends the over-arching goals that will be our “true north.” Please attend and provide your input. The material is compiled here: <https://sites.google.com/cordmin.com/convergencereport/home>. Thanks to Ken Wade for pulling that document together.
- **June 8-19** *Hosting AmeriCorps workgroups*. There will be two groups housed in Fellowship Hall. They will sleep at church, make some meals here, and shower at SportsPlex. Please be aware when having evening functions that they may be here.
- **Sunday, June 14** *Graduation Sunday and Outdoor Worship*. We meet in the churchyard (weather permitting) for worship and to celebrate Callie English’s high school graduation. The invitation to her open house on **June 20** is on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall.
- **Tuesday, June 28** *Salad Luncheon*, sponsored by our Scholarships Team. The sponsorship schedule is on the credenza.
- **Sunday, July 12** *Outdoor Worship Service*
- **Saturday, July 18** *Alpenfest Grand Parade*
- **Tuesday, July 28** *Salad Luncheon*
- **Sunday, August 9** *Outdoor Worship Service*
- **Thursday, August 20** *Project Connect*. We will partner with other churches to provide lunch for this event sponsored by the United Way at the Eagles Club. More details to follow.
- **Tuesday, August 25** *Salad Luncheon*
- **Tuesday, September 22** *Salad Luncheon*
- **Sunday, September 27** *CROP Walk*. Gather at 1pm in the Pavilion with the walk at 2. The route is the same as last year.

There are so many opportunities to be involved. Please reach out to our committees or our staff if you’d like to be a part of them!

Blessings,
Pastor Greg

Office Hours

- **Pastor Greg** will be out of the office from June 21 through June 28. Judy Gatewood-Keim will preach on the 21st and Laura Hotelling preaches June 28.
- **Rokko** will be off on June 14.
- **Liz** is out of the office June 1 and 26-29.

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
	David Henson
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
25	Laura Bantens & Chris Crubaugh
30	George & Judy Dunn



Do Not Be Afraid: Breathing in Love, Breathing out Fear

by Richard Rohr, April 29, 2026, printed with permission

Author Diana Butler Bass recounts how fear continued to accompany the disciples well after the resurrection:

If you remember back several weeks, you might recall the reading for the first Sunday of Easter:

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."... Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you...." When he had said this, he breathed on them.... [John 20:19–22].

.... The end of the Easter season is also the end of the first half of the Christian year. The cycle of Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, and Easter focus on the story of Jesus—the promise of his coming, his birth, the light he brings to the world, the seriousness of his mission, his execution, and the mystery of his resurrection....

And here's the odd thing, something I never really noticed until this year. Fear is foundational to the first half of the year. It isn't just that the disciples were afraid after Jesus died. The story began—way back in Advent—with the angel telling Mary, "Fear not!"...

Six months later in the church year, Jesus' story ends with "Peace I leave with you ... do not let your hearts be afraid."...

As the author of 1 John later wrote, "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear" [1 John 4:18]. I think that is the point of Jesus' life, the story we retrace in the first half of the Christian year, the culmination of which is the Easter season: Perfect love casts out fear.

Butler Bass acknowledges that fear is a biological response and universal experience, but that Jesus's assurance is also true:

"Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you....' When he had said this, he breathed on them..."

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you."

The door opens toward love—the love of God, the love of neighbor.

I can't explain it. All I know is that it is right. And I feel it. When I'm scared, I breathe. My breath. Sacred breath. Spirit breath. The in, out, in, out, in,

out of life. My heart slows and opens, making room for the other, giving space to love. In, out, in, out. Breathe in peace. Breathe out love.

Peace, love. Peace, love.

Fear abates.

Perfect love casts out fear.

I think of the first words of scripture, how “in the beginning” there was nothing but chaos. Then, God breathed. Chaos was transformed by that breath into a world of beauty and sustenance.

Easter began in confusion and terror behind a locked door. Now, it comes to a quiet conclusion in the breathing ... the promise and possibility of new creation. Peace, love.

Perhaps that’s what is meant by resurrection. Being raised from the deadened weight of fear to love.

June Church Volunteers (as of 5/25/26)

Date	Liturgist	Greeter/ Usher	Coffee Hour	Digital Ministry	Mowing
7 th	C Goller	M Peterman		M Fox	
14 th Graduation Sunday/ Outdoor Worship		Carol Leser	M Fox & M Derenzy	P Amar	
21 st Father's Day	C Gatewood- Keim	C Otto	Pie Day	M Wallin	
28 th		C Leser	C Otto	M Fox	

Guest Preachers: Judy Gatewood-Keim, June 21; Laura Hotelling, June 28.

Guest Accompanist: Sarah Peterson, June 14.

Thank you!



Announcements

- **Confirmation Sunday is May 31.** Join us for a reception to follow worship and to celebrate our confirmands, Brianna M. Boughner and Nola-Jean Gabrielle Brown.
 - **June 2** join the Refuge at a **community Town Hall** at the library regarding homelessness. It is at noon and a light lunch will be served.
 - We will celebrate our **Graduation Sunday June 14 at outdoor worship.** Stay tuned for more details!
 - **The Convergence Forum follows worship June 7.**
 - **NCCC AmeriCorps Volunteers will be lodging at Fellowship Hall from June 9-18.**
 - **Food Pantry** dates are June 11 and 12.
 - 'Tis the season for mowing—**we need mowers to claim weeks.** Thank you in advance!
 - In June, our **lay preachers** are *Judy Gatewood-Keim on June 21 and Laura Hotelling June 28.* Sarah Peterson will provide music on June 14.
 - The **Lunch Group** will dine at noon on June 16 at Big Buck. All are welcome!
 - **Callie English's graduation party is June 20.** RSVP to Lani by the 13th.
 - **Salad luncheon** is June 23.
- On July 1, **Don Storing hangs up his Food Pantry leadership role. Margaret Hellenberg takes over** at that point. Thank you to Don for heading this up for many years and to Margaret for her willingness to step forward for our church.
- Please **update your meetings** with Liz for next month **by the Newsletter Deadline (Monday after the Council Meeting)** so our church calendar is accurate.



FOOD PANTRY DATES

Noon to 2P Th & Fr
APR 30, MAY 1, 21, 22, JUN 11, AND 12
CONTACT DON STORING FOR
MORE INFO

Otsego County
United Way

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

July 1, Margaret Hellenberg replaces Don Storing as the contact for Food Pantry volunteers at our church.

The United Church of Christ

June 25th, the UCC marks its 69th anniversary as a denomination. From its origin in a small group of Christ-followers more than 20 centuries ago to today, the UCC is the product of the Reformation, Luther, Calvin, the Pilgrims, German and Hungarian Protestant immigrants, the abolitionist movement, and an effort to reunite the divided branches where several groups of Protestant Christians forged their identity as the United Church of Christ.

For more information about the UCC and a short course on our history, check it out at ucc.org/who-we-are/about/history/.



JOIN US FOR OUR CONTINUING DISCUSSION
GETTING REAL ABOUT HOMELESSNESS IN OTSEGO COUNTY

REFUGE TOWN HALL

TUESDAY, JUNE 2ND

OTSEGO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

700 S. Otsego Ave, Gaylord

12 noon to 1:30 pm

free, light lunch included

KEEPING IT REAL GUEST SPEAKERS:

MEGAN BECKETT, VICTIM ADVOCATE, MI STATE POLICE

TAYLOR CAREY, PROGRAM MANAGER, PATRIOT PLACE

FRANK CLAEYS, CITY OF GAYLORD CHIEF OF POLICE

TAYLOR JOHNSON, HUMAN SERVICES OFFICER, CITY OF GAYLORD POLICE DEPT

TOBIAS NEAL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NMSAS RECOVERY CENTER

JOSH PERRY, ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES

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



We could also use donations of new adult socks and underwear.

~In Our Prayers~

The UNA is praying for Cadillac First Congregational UCC in June.

Laura Bantens.

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

Chris Crubaugh – who has medical issues. Continued prayers for Chris and Laura Bantens as they adapt.

George Dunn as he rehabs from surgery.

Ann Eicher and her daughter, Carrie, on the death of Carrie's husband and Ann's son-in-law, Mark Zelmer.

The English Family –Joe is now back at home. Please pray for Joe to healing and adjustment and for the English family. Prayers also for Callie as she graduates!

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

Anna (Kalembert) Fiorani's father-in-law has been diagnosed with prostate cancer. He asks for prayers for comfort and healing for himself, his wife, Theresa, Brendan, Anna's husband, and the rest of their family. He is undergoing treatment.

Maggie Shanahan Menkes (Kathy's daughter-in-law) is doing well and appreciates all the prayers

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



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.



UCC WOMEN OF MICHIGAN

**Registration OPEN NOW
For Spring Gathering 2026
“Early Bird” discount due by March 25th!**

JUNE 5-7, 2026
Friday evening thru Sunday morning

THEME: “Fortified in Faith, Clothed in Strength!”
Scriptures: Proverbs 31; Acts 16: 14-16

*She is clothed
IN STRENGTH
AND DIGNITY,
and she laughs
WITHOUT FEAR
OF THE FUTURE.
When she speaks,
HER WORDS
ARE WISE,
and she gives
INSTRUCTIONS
WITH KINDNESS.*

PROVERBS 31:23-25



ABOUT OUR KEYNOTE SPEAKER & PREACHER

The Rev. Dr. Lillian Daniel

The Michigan Conference Minister is responsible for the spiritual care of our clergy and 140 congregations. Since starting July 1, 2022, the Rev. Dr. Daniel has focused on encouraging, equipping and connecting our Michigan churches in Christ's love and justice. Lillian is based in Grand Rapids and travels most weekends to worship with folks in the Michigan Conference.

***We are excited to announce the 2026 Gathering
event at The Lake Huron Retreat Center
Located at 8794 Lakeshore Rd, Burtchville Twp, MI***

JOIN US FOR OUR CONTINUING ADVENTURE!

**REGISTRATION BROCHURE AVAILABLE NOW!
Watch for it in your email, ON THE UCC WOMEN OF MI FACEBOOK
PAGE, or the MI Conference UCC e-newsletter & website.**

Co-Chairs: Penny Lowes	248-762-5551	revpen73@gmail.com
April Reh	586-291-8827	a.rehofcolor@gmail.com
Kristen Rieder	231-818-3831	k3teacher@hotmail.com
Registrar: Shari Hoppe	614-403-2364	sfhoppe@gmail.com

June



2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 6a Gaylord Gratitude NOON Reaching In 6p Compassionate Friends Liz OoO	2 NOON Getting Real About Homelessness Town Hall @ Library w/lunch Lodging for NCCCG Volunteers 9	3 6a Gaylord Gratitude 5p Ukelele Group Lodging for NCCCG Volunteers 10	4 11a Bible Study 4p Choir Lodging for NCCCG Volunteers 11	5 6a Gaylord Gratitude 4p Community Meal Lodging for NCCCG Volunteers 12	6 Lodging for NCCCG Volunteers 13
7 10a Worship/Communion	6a Gaylord Gratitude					
	8 Lodging for NCCCG Volunteers 14	9 Lodging for NCCCG Volunteers 15	10 Lodging for NCCCG Volunteers 16	11 Lodging for NCCCG Volunteers 17	12 Lodging for NCCCG Volunteers 18	13 Lodging for NCCCG Volunteers 19
10a Outdoor Worship/Graduation Sunday	6a Gaylord Gratitude 7p Reaching Out	NOON Lunch Group @ Big Buck	6a Gaylord Gratitude 5p Ukelele Group 7p Trustees Lodging for NCCCG Volunteers 17	11a Bible Study 4p Choir 5p Church Council Lodging for NCCCG Volunteers 18	6a Gaylord Gratitude 4p Community Meal Juneteenth 19	20
	21 Father's Day		22 Pastor Greg OoO	23 Pastor Greg OoO	24 Pastor Greg OoO	25 Pastor Greg OoO
10a Worship—Judy Gatewood-Keim preaching	6a Gaylord Gratitude Newsletter Deadline 22	11:30 Salad Luncheon 23	6a Gaylord Gratitude 1p Church Book Club 5p Ukelele Group 24	UCC Anniversary 25 11a Bible Study 4p Choir	6a Gaylord Gratitude 4p Community Meal Liz OoO 26	Liz OoO 27
10a Worship—Laura Hotelling preaching	6a Gaylord Gratitude Liz OoO 28	30	UNA Prayers for Catholic First Congregational UCC	Flowers provided by Joanie Sletstema	Last day of school GCS June 5	