



March, 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

218 W. Second Street
Gaylord, MI 49735
989-732-5726

www.firstuccgaylord.org

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pastorg@firstuccgaylord.org

Moderator: Maggie Wallin
margaretwallin@msn.com

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finance@firstuccgaylord.org

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Church Service: Sunday, 10 am



Pastor's Column – March 2024 “A New Perspective”

Much of the month of March is in the season of Lent. Lent is meant to be a time of reflection. Many people get caught up in what to give up for Lent, and some improved on that by coming up with things we could take on for Lent. Both of them are admirable activities. For me, though, I think of Lent as a time of inward reflection, set off by an Ash Wednesday service that is relatively quiet and introspective.

Part of the task of reflection involves learning something new. Even though many of the scriptures and activities are familiar to many of us, each year I hope to bring new light and new vantage points from which to see ourselves and our faith in a new way.

This year, with the help of Sanctified Art, we are exploring the life of Peter. Many of us know parts of Peter's life, but we don't know how the stories fit together, and we struggle sometimes with who he was. He certainly was not perfect by any stretch, and like most of us,

~Continued~

he dealt with serious faith questions: doubt, misunderstanding, who is God?, who is this Jesus?, what's my role?, and so forth. I hope that the Sundays in Lent will help you not only see Peter differently, but see yourself in him. I hope the journey of the "wandering heart" will lead you to greater faith, an experience of grace, and ultimately, growth in whatever form that takes.

In the same vein, I'd like to invite you to join me in a journey of Diana Butler Bass' book *Experiencing Jesus Anew: Rediscovering Jesus as Friend, Teacher, Savior, Lord, Way and Presence*. The book, written in 2021, is by a well-known Christian theologian. Maybe many of you have heard of her or experienced her work before? Butler Bass is best known for her writing on religion and contemporary spirituality, especially where faith intersects with politics and culture.

I got my copy from ThriftBooks and it was relatively inexpensive. I suggest those who participate join me on Zoom on Thursday nights at 7pm, beginning March 7, with the exception of March 28 as that is Maundy Thursday. See later in the newsletter for a complete schedule and the zoom link.

May your Lenten experience be eye-opening and faith-deepening.

In Christ's Love,

Pastor Greg

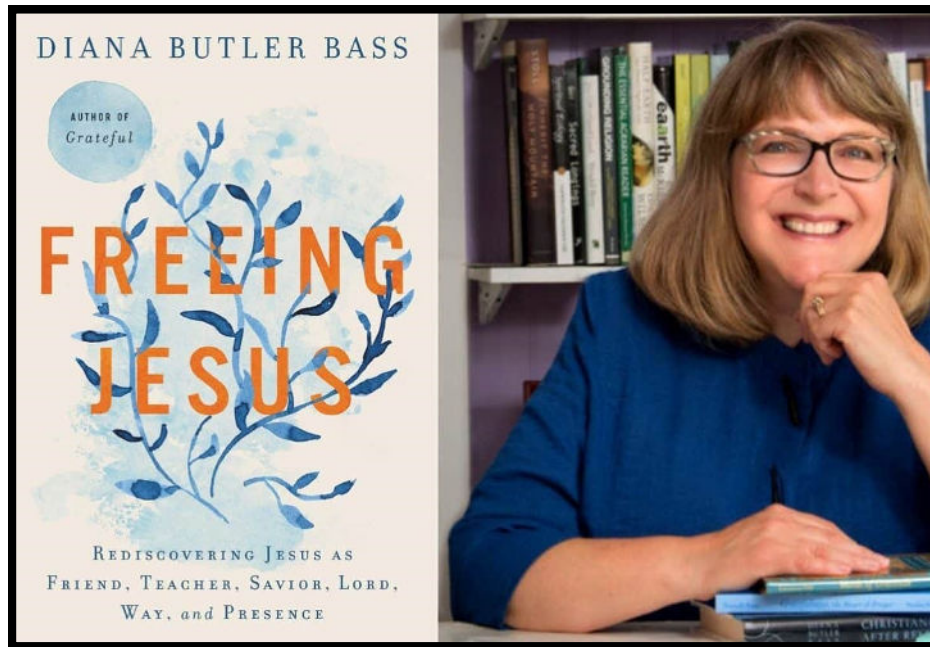


First Congregational, UCC Gaylord



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1 Gratitude Group, 6 AM Community Meal, 4 PM Talking Circle, 7-9 PM	2
3 Worship 10 AM Ecclesiastical Council, 3 PM	4 Gratitude Group, 6 AM Fellowship Hall in use, 2:30-4:30 PM	5	6 Gratitude Group, 6 AM Fellowship Hall in use, 2:30-4:30 PM	7 Bible Study, 11 AM Wmn's Fellowship, 1 PM Choir, 4 PM Book Study 7 PM	8 Gratitude Group, 6 AM Community Meal, 4 PM Talking Circle, 7-9 PM	9 Spring Forward at bedtime! 
10 Worship 10 AM	11 Gratitude Group, 6 AM	12	13 Gratitude Group, 6 AM BASEBALL NIGHT, 7-8:30	14 Bible Study, 11 AM Reaching In, 1:30 PM Choir, 4 PM Book Study 7 PM	15 Gratitude Group, 6 AM Community Meal, 4 PM Talking Circle, 7-9 PM	16 Otsego Cty. Democrats, 2:30 - 7:30 PM
17 Worship 10 AM	18 Gratitude Group, 6 AM Reaching Out, 7 PM	19	20 Gratitude Group, 6 AM Trustees, 7 PM	21 Bible Study, 11 AM Choir, 4 PM Book Study 7 PM	22 Gratitude Group, 6 AM Community Meal, 4 PM Talking Circle, 7-9 PM	23
24 PALM SUNDAY Worship 10 AM 	25 Gratitude Group, 6 AM	26	27 Gratitude Group, 6 AM Church Book Club, 1 PM	28 Bible Study, 11 AM Choir, 4 PM Maundy Thursday: dinner and service, 5 PM	29 GOOD FRIDAY Gratitude Group, 6 AM Good Friday Service, 12 PM NO Community Meal Tenebrae Service, 7 PM Talking Circle, 7-9 PM	30
31 EASTER SUNDAY Worship 10 AM 	2024 March					

BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP BEGINS MARCH 7



A new book discussion group will begin Thursday night, March 7 at 7:00 pm via Zoom. The book will be Diana Butler Bass *Freeing Jesus: Rediscovering Jesus as Friend, Teacher, Savior, Lord, Way, and Presence*. Butler Bass is a well-known writer from a Christian Mainline perspective. You are invited to order your own book, or let the church office know if you need us to help you get a copy. Here's the schedule:

March 7: Introduction (Liberate Jesus) and Chapter 1 (Friend)

March 14: Chapter 2 (Teacher)

March 21: Chapter 3 (Savior)

March 28: NO meeting, Maundy Thursday

April 4: Chapter 4 (Lord)

April 11: Chapter 5 (Way)

April 18: Chapter 6 (Presence)



Holy Week Schedule

March 24	10 AM, Palm Sunday,
March 28	5 PM, Maundy Thursday, Soup and Bread (by Reaching In Team) with service to follow,.
March 29	<i>Good Friday service:</i> 12PM at St. Andrew Episcopal Church 7PM, Tenebrae at Peace Lutheran Church
March 31	10 AM, Easter Sunday

March Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays:

- 3 Sharon Wade
- 6 Pete Amar
- 8 Andrew Brazelton
Natassja English
- 11 Eric Anderson
Emily Brazelton
James Brazelton
- 12 Kay Boughner
Roger Brummel
- 14 Maryetta House
- 27 Carol Lienerth
- 30 Ryan Anderson

Anniversaries:

- 28 Norm & Pat Dressel

"Mona Viviano"

Written and submitted by Maureen Derenzy

If you spend any amount of time at the First Congregational Church UCC of Gaylord, you'll soon notice a strong, quiet woman helping out in a myriad of ways to keep things running smoothly. Mona Viviano has been a part of the congregation for more than 60 years. Throughout the years she has served in most official positions, represented First Congregational at meetings around the state, and has always jumped in wherever needed for church services and events.

Ramona Evans was born an Indiana Hoosier, the first of seven children, to a father who made his living as a painter and a homemaker mother. For many years she lived on a farm that her father inherited, but in her teens moved to Gaylord and graduated from Gaylord High School in 1957.

From an early age Mona knew she wanted to be a hairdresser. She had two uncles who were barbers and was promised that they would help set her up in the business. The move to Michigan disrupted this plan, but Mona did not let her dream die. She attended Hillsdale Beauty College and spent 57 years working in her chosen career in Gaylord salons.

At the age of 42, Mona married Vincent Viviano and joined his family of 3 boys and 2 girls. The Viviano family has since added 32 grandchildren and great grandchildren. Mona and Vince were married for 28 years before he passed away 14 years ago. At the age of 84, Mona remains active by volunteering at the community food pantry, maintaining the church sharing closet, and playing golf.

Mona's early religious instruction began at a Baptist church in Indiana, but in her teen years the Baptist church no longer seemed a good fit. Several of her young classmates in Gaylord talked about their experiences at Gaylord's First Congregational, so she decided to give it a try. She joined the church in the early 1960s and has been a member ever since. Mona is currently involved in Women's Fellowship, takes part in the Reaching In/Reaching Out mission, attends state meetings, and volunteers to help in almost every aspect of church life.

When asked what it was about First Congregational Church that has kept her attending all these years, Mona says her faith plays a large part in it. She has practically grown up in this church and currently enjoys the friendliness and feeling of being part of a church family. In her quiet way, she serves as an inspiration to others, living out her favorite bible passage: *But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you* (Matthew 6:6-7 New International Version)



Baseball Night

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13, 6 PM

FELLOWSHIP HALL

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL, UCC, GAYLORD

**BOB AND CHARLENE AND ROKKO ARE HOSTING AN EVENING OF
WATCHING A COUPLE MLB ALL-STAR VIDEOS FROM BOB'S
COLLECTION OF GREAT BASEBALL DVDS. CHARLENE HAS
PROMISED TO MAKE SLOPPY JOES! SPRING TRAINING IS HERE;
LET'S GET READY FOR THE SEASON!**

One Great Hour of Sharing

Submitted by Cindy Goller

One Great Hour of Sharing® (OGHS) is one of 5 special mission offerings that our church supports throughout the year. This Lenten Offering supports the disaster, refugee, and development ministries of the United Church of Christ within Wider Church Ministries. We will be asking for contributions to One Great Hour of Sharing starting **2/18/24 through Palm Sunday, 3/24/24.**

You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world.

Matthew 5:14-15 (The Message)



"This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine... Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine..."

If Jesus had a playlist of music, surely this familiar hymn would be among the Top Five.

Jesus teaches that faith calls for action. Sharing our light, as the diverse and colorful expression of God's love here on earth, leads to making blankets, staffing food pantries, cooking meals, building houses and schools, signing petitions for worthy causes, and protesting injustices. A simple song with a simple message—our light is on a light stand, for all to see—shine and share.

On any given day, light is shining because we are there through our gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing.

Your contributions make a difference. Your dollars count. Give generously.

Share the light.

Gaylord High Drama Presents The Lightning Thief: The Percy Jackson Musical

March 7-9 at 7pm
March 10 at 2 pm

Please consider making
a monetary donation to this year's charity:
Otsego Wildlife Legacy Society

Online at www.our.show/ghspercy

\$7 students/seniors online

\$10 adults online

In person at Gaylord High School

\$9 students/seniors

\$12 adults

Available at GHS, online, or at the door

Call Gaylord High School
(989)731-0969 for info!



The Lightning Thief is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals.

~ In Our Prayers ~

During the month of March, the UNA is holding the
Clare First Congregational UCC in prayer.

Carol Kusrow, a friend of Vicky Rigney (and others), whose husband passed last week.
David, Maggie Wallin's friend, who is facing potentially life-threatening health issues.
Friends and family of Mirja Hoeft as she passed away on February 17, 2024. A memorial gathering to be held in the Summer. Memorial donations should be made to the VFW - Ralph Holewinski, VFW Post 1518, 1905 S. Otsego Avenue, Gaylord, MI 49735. Cards for the family can be send to Candace Muzak, 1384 Woodbridge Ct., Wixom, MI 48393.

Louanne Spearman— as she is having back and leg problems and is in need of our prayers.

Stacy Wright, friend of Kathy Menkes – Stacy has been facing metastatic breast cancer. Meanwhile, Stacy's mother-in-law passed away recently.

Laura Bantens and family – as there are many challenges facing the family. Neal, Laura's brother, and his wife, Jasme. Jasme just lost her mother a few weeks ago and has now been diagnosed with MS. Tests are ongoing so we don't know what kind yet but they're going through a lot right now. Laura's mom is going through some changes with trying to find out how to live alone and with disabilities with her hands and feet. They ask for prayers for discernment and resources. And asking for prayers for Laura's partner, Chris, as she tries to find her path through ongoing disabilities as well.

Gloria House's granddaughter, Alyssa Crawford, – who faces surgery for Endometriosis in Texas in early March. And for Gloria's travel.

Raelene – Judy and Kathi Gatewood-Keim's friend, as she is recovering from shoulder surgery.

Judy Bird – as her son Scott has passed away unexpectedly.

Vicky Rigney – who continues to recover at home from her heart valve replacement surgery on 1/25/24.

Tom and Jenni Johnson– as Tom is now receiving chemo treatments for pancreatic cancer.

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 – continued prayers for healing.



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.



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
UCC GAYLORD
CELEBRATING

150
YEARS

21 JULY 2024

Save the date! July 21, 2024 We
will be Celebrating 150 years
Sunday Service 10:00 A.M.
Luncheon immediately following



OPEN REGISTRATION

for NEW STUDENTS

**PRE-REGISTER
NOW**



GAYLORD
COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

SCHOOL YEAR

**2024
2025**

FOR

GRADES

K-12

➤ Computers / Laptops
available to use at
615 S. Elm Avenue

➤ Paper
Registration
Packets
available
upon request

Contact the District Registrar:

📞 **989-705-3027**

✉ **GCS.REGISTRAR@GAYLORD.K12.MI.US**

For more information:

WWW.GAYLORDSCHOOLS.COM/ENROLLMENT

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Book Discussion: A new book discussion group will begin Thursday night, March 7 at 7:00 pm via Zoom. The book will be Diana Butler Bass *Freeing Jesus: Rediscovering Jesus as Friend, Teacher, Savior, Lord, Way, and Presence*. Butler Bass is a well-known writer from a Christian Mainline perspective. You are invited to order your own book, or let the church office know if you need us to help you get a copy. Here's the schedule:

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ECCLESIASTICAL COUNCIL MARCH 3

On Sunday afternoon, March 3, our church will serve as host to the United Northern Association for an Ecclesiastical Council. The purpose of the Council is for the Association to discern whether or not to approve for ordination a candidate for ministry. It is held in a neutral pulpit, which is why we have been asked to host. Anyone can come, but only those delegates from each church may actually vote. Our church will select two delegates, as well as the Pastor, to represent us in this important gathering. If you have questions or would like more information, please see Pastor Greg.

MAUNDY THURSDAY

On Thursday, March 28, the Reaching In Team will host a special soup and bread dinner in honor of Maundy Thursday. That dinner will be followed by a worship service including the "Stations of Peter" (not the "Stations of the Cross" you are familiar with, this is all about Peter) and Holy Communion. The evening begins with the meal at 5:00 pm and worship will be held following the meal. Please join us if you are able!

GOOD FRIDAY

This year, for Good Friday, we have been invited to participate in two community services marking this special day. The first, at noon, will be held at St. Andrew Episcopal Church on Main Street. The second, a Tenebrae Service, will be at 7pm at Peace Lutheran Church. Each service will be different, and you are invited to attend either or both. Participating churches include: Peace Lutheran Church, St. Andrew Episcopal, First Presbyterian and First Congregational UCC.

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.





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.*





All Gaylord Area Churches:

**Please join us for the Annual
WHITE BREAKFAST**

**On Maundy Thursday
March 28, 2024 at 9:30am**

**Gaylord Methodist Church
Fellowship Hall**

**Speaker: Pastor Barry Sweet
Music: Jordan Kettlewell**

Menu:

**Hot Cross Buns, juice and coffee
or tea will be provided.**



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: \$744 (2023)

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 (2023)

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: \$256 (2023)

Christmas Fund

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

Collected in December

Received to date: \$694 (2023)





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>