



# March, 2025

*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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## Pastor's Column, March, 2025 "Meet our New Communications Manager"

Back in December, Stephanie let me know that she would not be able to continue in her role here at church. With Jeff's recent retirement, the Kalembers would like to travel, spend time with each other and their family, and other fun things. Stephanie wrote:

*I love this job. I love the people...unfortunately, Jeff's retirement has shifted my priorities and, as much as I enjoy being on this side of our church's day-to-day workings, it is unfair of me to try to balance our travel and family plans with my commitments here.*

Thoughtfully, Stephanie gave us as much time as we needed to find an appropriate new person for this role. With the help of Indeed, we have found such a person. Before I tell you more about her, I'd like to thank Stephanie for all her service to the church in this role and wish her well in her future. Of course, she will still be among us in the choir, Reaching Out team, worship, and other activities of the church. **Thank you, Stephanie!**

Beginning in March, a new person will serve in this role. Her name is Elizabeth Larson (Elizabeth without the “E” on the front). Liz lives in Traverse City, but has a home here in the Gaylord area as well, so being in the office will not be an issue. Soon, we will let you know her office hours and contact information. The office email will stay the same.

Liz brings with her not only history working in churches both as a volunteer and paid staff person, she also brings experience in Human Resources, Finance, Community College teaching (Mathematics), and City Council service. Liz holds a Master’s Degree in Elementary Education (Ohio State University) and a Bachelor’s Degree in Business Administration in Accounting (University of Michigan). Recently retired, Liz looks forward to this position to keep her busy, use her many skills, and she is a person of service. **Welcome, Liz!**

**Stephanie will continue to serve through the end of February, and Liz will begin March 3.**

Change can be difficult, but I assure you that Stephanie, Liz and I will work together to make sure the transition is as smooth as possible. Please speak with me if you have questions. Share with Stephanie your thankfulness for her service. Welcome Liz with generous hearts.

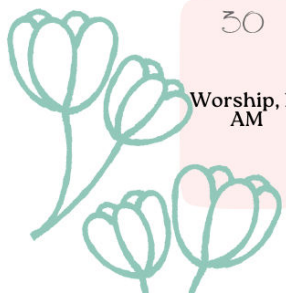
In Christ,

Pastor Greg

# 2025 March



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2 Worship, 10 AM	3 Gratitude Group, 6-7 AM Liz's first day. Pastor Parish, 1 PM	4	5 Gratitude Group, 6-7 AM Ash Wednesday Service, 6 pm	6 Bible Study, 11 AM Choir, 4 PM Book Study, 7 PM	7 Gratitude Group, 6-7 AM Community Meal, 4 PM Talking Circle, 7 PM	8
9 Worship, 10 AM Snowbird Zoom @ 11:15 AM	10 Gratitude Group, 6-7 AM Reaching In @ noon	11	12 Gratitude Group, 6-7 AM	13 Bible Study, 11 AM Choir, 4 PM Book Study, 7 PM	14 Gratitude Group, 6-7 AM Community Meal, 4 PM Talking Circle, 7 PM	15
16 Worship, 10 AM	17 Gratitude Group, 6-7 AM Reaching Out @ 7 PM	18 Lunch group @ noon	19 Gratitude Group, 6-7 AM Trustees @ 7 PM	20 Bible Study, 11 AM Choir, 4 PM Book Study, 7 PM	21 Gratitude Group, 6-7 AM Community Meal, 4 PM Talking Circle, 7 PM	22
23 Worship, 10 AM	24 Gratitude Group, 6-7 AM	25	26 Gratitude Group, 6-7 AM	27 Bible Study, 11 AM Choir, 4 PM Book Study, 7 PM	28 Gratitude Group, 6-7 AM Community Meal, 4 PM Talking Circle, 7 PM	29
30 Worship, 10 AM	31 Gratitude Group, 6-7 AM		Gratitude Group, 6-7 AM	Bible Study, 11 AM Choir, 4 PM Book Study, 7 PM	Gratitude Group, 6-7 AM Community Meal, 4 PM Talking Circle, 7 PM	



# March's Mission Project

2025 OGHS Newsletter Article

Created by C.Goller Page 1 of

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 today, March 2nd, 2025 through Sunday, March 30th, 2025..

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

Matthew 5:14-15 (The Message)

In Matthew 5, Jesus teaches that God is already transforming and loving the world, already empowering God's people to be all they can be—lights bringing God-colors to every corner of creation. Jesus challenges his disciples—and us—to live as if believing in and trusting God makes a difference. To be light because that, simply, is who we are.

Jesus sets a high bar for discipleship: preaching and teaching despite resistance from some and outright hostility from others; healing on the spot instead of keeping office hours; meaningfully engaging those cast out and on the margins of society; breaking bread with the ne'er-do-wells at tables denied to them. Jesus challenges us to do likewise and from a place of blessedness—we already have everything we need to be light-bearers. We need only to shine. Jesus is not promoting transactional faith. We don't bargain with God for favors or blessings. We expect nothing in return for being fully who God has created us to be. We do good works in gratitude for all that God has done for us, as a response of thankfulness. Jesus' call for us to be light is ongoing. Communities are in crisis. Storms devastate the countryside. Far too many persons are vulnerable—lacking power, resources, and social support—and are brutally mistreated. The earth is abused and creation is disrespected. Justice is denied. When you give to One Great Hour of Sharing, you are light for people in need.

You offer light when disasters hit. You offer light when conditions threaten families and communities. When you give to One Great Hour of Sharing, you are light for communities here and across the globe. You offer light that restores structures and transforms lives. You offer light that blesses others to shine. When you give to One Great Hour of Sharing, you are light that shines today, tomorrow, and well into the future. You—we—are light-bearers. Let us be the light. Let us shine. Let us go public. Find a hilltop. Let us keep open house and be generous with our lives and in our giving. Let us make a difference—give to One Great Hour of Sharing!



You can note One Great Hour of Sharing or OGHS on your check or envelope – or contributions to the One Great Hour of Sharing can be made online, as well, by going to the church’s website [firstuccgaylord.org](http://firstuccgaylord.org) and clicking the Donate Now button at the very bottom of the home page



# BE THE LIGHT

## SHINING THE LIGHT ON FOOD SECURITY.

Orfelina works with families in the northern regions of Honduras to help them understand how to transform their families and communities through agriculture. The list of things she does is mindboggling: Checking on local farmers' harvest. Monitoring water projects. Teaching the women in the community how to prepare more nutritious meals for their families. Chatting up community leaders for support. Running workshops for things like creating organic fertilizers and sprays.

But Orfelina doesn't just work with farmers and their families, she supports and encourages them. Visiting them in their homes. Bringing God's light to everyone she meets. And all of this is made possible through your giving to One Great Hour of Sharing. Because of your giving, projects like these and thousands more around the world are changing lives. Transforming communities. And spreading God's light. Be the Light. Give to One Great Hour of Sharing.

**One Great  
Hour**  
OF SHARING

 UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST



*You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—**shine!***  
— Matthew 5:14-15

**Gaylord Community Schools and the Gaylord Band Boosters  
cordially invite you to the Third Annual**

# **Fundraising Dinner & Silent Auction Thursday, March 20, 2025**

**This fun filled evening will feature musical entertainment  
of the Gaylord High School chamber ensembles  
and a dinner prepared by the GHS  
Culinary Arts Department.**

Doors open at 5:30 PM, Dinner served at 6:30 PM

Tickets: \$25.00 per person and must be purchased in advance.

Tickets available through March 2nd, at  
GHS front Office, 90 Livingston Blvd.

Table Sponsors, silent auction donations  
and monetary donations are being  
accepted.

All funds raised will go towards repair  
or replacement of aging musical  
instruments, uniforms and other  
GCS band related needs.

Thanks to our generous sponsors & donors of  
our 2023 and 2024 dinner, we reached  
our goal and replaced the GHS  
Marching band uniforms in Fall 2024!

**Questions?**

**Contact: [gaylordbandboosters@gmail.com](mailto:gaylordbandboosters@gmail.com)**

**Or Amber at (989) 390-5019.**

*The Gaylord Band Boosters are a  
501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation*

**GAYLORD BAND**  
BOOSTERS, INC.



Updated



Meeting Links

**New Zoom Link for Trustees:** Going forward, the long-term Zoom link for Trustees' meetings is this: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84006659065>

**New Reaching Out meeting link:** Like the Trustees' link, Zoom was persnickety this week and Reaching out has a new link going forward: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86904855449>





# Snowbird Zoom Coffee Hour!



In December, we began hosting a zoom coffee hour so that we might all have the opportunity to stay in touch with our snowbirds and others who are unable to travel to church. Anyone can join! For those at the church, we will set up a computer in Fellowship Hall just as fellowship starts. Via that computer, people will and have a chance to check in with friends.

This will occur on the second of the month (starting December 8 through April 12) at about 11:15 AM Eastern Time.

The zoom link will always be: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81144435007>

We hope you'll join us! The link will be shared in the weekly eblast in case you misplace it or you can ask Stephanie to print the QR code below. If you're unsure of how to use the code, Stephanie can help with that too!



**For easy-access to the link, scan the QR code to the right. Open the camera on your cell phone, center the image in your view finder, and a yellow text box will show. Touch that text and it will take you to the Zoom.**

**If you choose to access the Zoom on your phone, it may be a good idea to download the Zoom app before you scan the QR code.**



# Ash Wednesday



## ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

On March 5 at 6pm we will have an Ash Wednesday service. The service is not very long, but will give the opportunity to receive ashes for those who wish you. You don't need to receive ashes to be a part of the service.

It is a reflective service that helps us begin our Lenten Journey. This year, our theme is everything [in] between: a Lenten series in Luke's Gospel from the Sanctified Art Creative Team.

# 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
- 18 Jack Wambold
- 27 Carol Lienerth
- 30 Ryan Anderson

## **Anniversaries:**

- 28 Norm & Pat Dressel



## 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.*



Thank you for your participation in the 2024 Otsego County Angel Tree program. Our program continues to increase each year. We became a 501 (c) (3) charitable organization on 3/27/2024 due to the continued growth of the program. In 2023, we provided clothing to 593 families which included 1,425 children. In 2024, we provided clothing to 650 families which included 1,595 children.

Our mission at Otsego County Angel Tree is to provide quality clothing to all children who receive gifts from Otsego County Toys for Tots. It is important to us that children receive a new outfit at Christmas time to make them feel special thus improving their self-esteem. A child's upbringing is a communal effort involving many different people and groups. We appreciate the help of all who make Christmas more significant for the children.

Janice Kwapis	Treasurer	<u>Janice Kwapis</u>
Rose Mary Warner	Secretary	<u>Rose Mary Warner</u>
Sharon Kwapis	Vice Chairperson	<u>Sharon Kwapis</u>
Kara Rogers	Member at Large	<u>Kara Rogers</u>
Keri Hunter	Chairperson	<u>Keri A Hunter</u>



## **~ In Our Prayers ~**

*During the month of March, the UNA is holding the Benzonia  
Congregational Church UCC in prayer.*

**Don Hinman** – Don Hinman wanted to inform the congregation that on Feb. 7 he had successful surgery to remove a cancerous tumor on one of his fingers. He expects a full recovery over the next few weeks, after which he must report to Washington, DC for the next several months for his federal job in the US Department of Agriculture. He'll miss the UCC community, but hopes to stay connected through the Thursday night book discussions.

**Family and friends of Roy Wolf** – as they grieve his recent passing.

**Family and Friends of Stacy Wright** – as they mourn her recent passing.

**Rick Boughner** – who is recovering from recent surgery for a detached retina.

**Mary Peterman** – as she undergoes some medical testing.

**George Dunn** – as he is recovering at home.

**Trish Jachym** – Prayers for healing, as she is dealing with some health concerns and will be returning to her home soon.

**Jason Peterman** – as he is dealing with a variety of health issues.



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## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**New Zoom Link for Trustees:** Going forward, the long-term Zoom link for Trustees' meetings is this: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84006659065>

**New Reaching Out meeting link:** Like the Trustees' link, Zoom was persnickety this week and Reaching out has a new link going forward: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86904855449>

**Book Study:** Several weeks ago, Pastor Greg introduced us to the book We Survived the End of the World: Lessons from Native America on Apocalypse and Hope, by Steven Charleston. Now, we get a chance to study the book ourselves! Beginning January 9, meeting each Thursday night for eight weeks at 7 pm on Zoom. Anyone is welcome to join whenever you can come. There is no need to be there every week. Mary Fox will help Pastor Greg facilitate the course. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84943982197>

**Snowbird Coffee Hour Zoom:** The Snowbird coffee hour will take place the second Sunday of the month at 11:15 AM from through April 12<sup>th</sup>. The next snowbird coffee hour will be on March 9<sup>th</sup>. This Zoom link will not change. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81144435007>

**Snow Removal** – We need people to help with the sidewalks throughout the winter. If you are interested in helping or have questions about what this work entails, please see Pastor Greg.

**Join us for lunch!** – a group of people from our church family meet for lunch on the third Tuesday of each month. Everyone is welcome! Please join us. The next scheduled lunch is Tuesday, March 18<sup>th</sup> at The Pine Squirrel. Sign up in Fellowship Hall if you would like to attend. Throughout the winter, the lunch group will cancel if Gaylord Schools is closed.

**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.



# 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: \$378 (2024)**

## **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: \$495 (2024)**

## **Strengthen the Church**

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

*Collected around Pentecost*

**Received to date: \$329**

## **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)**

## **Blanket Sunday, 2024**

Received to date: \$936





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## 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>