

# 'Love is Bigger than any of that'

By Jody Betten - Interim Pastor First Congregational UCC, Charlotte, MI



Image of shredded Progress Pride Flag from Facebook

Many churches in the United Church of Christ have faced this issue. It is part of what makes us the UCC; we dare to go against the status quo when it clearly is discriminatory. We are willing to pay a price, the cost of a new Pride flag – over and over again – or the cost of being called the “gay” church (like that’s pejorative somehow) loss of members or even arrest for the sake of love and justice.

The folks who are part of the **First Congregational UCC in Charlotte** are a group of people who truly live into the reality that “no matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.” When the **Lansing State Journal** picked up the story of the vandalism from Facebook, it wasn’t because of the hate exhibited by the vandals, but because of the tenacity of the members of the church who, first of all, refused to give in. They will replace the flag over and over again. Not only are they tenacious but they are welcoming, of even the vandals who are invited to join them and see the love (and forgiveness) that is available when they follow the ways of Jesus.

The **local TV channel** picked up the story and interviewed several of the members of the church. Amy Frost and Mary Kohmuench reiterated the church's care for all, even the vandals. They expressed some dismay at the tactic of hate used to make a point in the dark when no one can see. But, love is bigger than any of that! [READ MORE](#)



Image of vandalized A Just World For All Rainbow Flag from St Paul UCC Chelsea, MI

\* For additional resources related to Church Security and Safety from the National UCC you can read



# Picnic!

## ANNOUNCING!

All-Church Picnic, September 10, 2023

After church we will enjoy the professionally cooked (by Greg) hotdogs. Bring a dish to pass, if you are able. Our picnic will take place in Fellowship Hall. Be sure to sign up on the sheet available on the credenza. Let us know how many are coming and what dish you intend to bring. Food will be inside, but eating can happen inside or out!





## There's MORE!

We are excited to announce the launching of our beautiful new website! Brenda Brummel has been hard at work redesigning and building our website. During the picnic, a site demonstration and tour will be available for all to experience. We're sure you'll love the new and improved design,

## THANK YOU, BRENDA!



# Salad Luncheon Season!



**Salad luncheons are back! Below are the dates and sponsorship for each. Watch for a sign-up list each month, if you would like to help!**

MONTH	COMMITTEE	CHAIR
✓ May 23, 2023	Women's Fellowship	Mona Viviano
✓ June 27, 2023	Scholarship	Sallie Anderson Brenda Brummel
✓ July 25, 2023	Council	Maggie Wallin
✓ August 22, 2023	Reaching In	Sallie Anderson
September 26, 2023	Reaching Out	Louanne Spearman
October 24, 2023	Women's Fellowship	Mona Viviano

# September

## **Birthdays:**

- 2 Robbie Watling
- 3 Amallia Kassuba
- 7 Kevin Brown  
Margaret Hafner
- 11 Louanne Spearman
- 12 Mary Peterman
- 13 Stephanie Kalember
- 14 Gage Boughner
- 17 Chuck Falk
- 18 Melissa Mannion
- 19 Carol Leser  
Helen Mate
- 21 Ken Wade
- 22 George Lienerth
- 25 Judy Dunn
- 27 Jean Sasso
- 30 Staci Brown

## **Anniversaries:**

- 6 Ken and Sharon Wade
- 15 Kay and Jim Boughner
- 20 Joe and Lani English

**BIRTHDAYS AND  
ANNIVERSARIES**

## **~ In Our Prayers ~**

During the month of August, the UNA is holding the  
*First Congregational Manistee 1<sup>st</sup> Congregational UCC* in prayer.

**Kristine Achney, relative of the Boughner family** – was seen in the emergency room and diagnosed with 2 brain aneurysms. She was admitted to the local hospital and has since been transferred to a hospital downstate down state.

**Brenda Brummel** – as the latest MRI revealed a lesion on her liver. She is awaiting more details.

**Carol, a friend of Vicky's** – as she has been suffering from seizures and is hospitalized in Grand Rapids.

**Tony Dockery-Fobar** – as he had a stroke, was treated at Munson in Traverse City and is now home, recovering well, and going through more testing.

**Janet Holmes** – as she needs continued prayers.

**Jason Peterman** – as he's dealing with some personal issues.

**Brad Derenzy**—as he has resumed chemotherapy.

**Charlene Clark** – Charlene's surgery went "really well" and she is recovering at home. She has sent thanks for the many prayers.

**Tony and Mike Dockery-Fobar** – as Mike awaits testing and a possibly serious diagnosis.

**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** – as she is finally home but still in need of prayers. She will be traveling to Grand Rapids for monthly infusions.



*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.*

*Prayer Requests*

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## ***ANNOUNCEMENTS***

**Rummage Sale** – The 2023 Rummage sale will be held September 15 and 16<sup>th</sup>. Please keep that in mind when you're sorting and cleaning in the coming weeks. Thank you!

**Crop Walk** – This year's Crop Walk will take place at 1:30 PM on September 24<sup>th</sup>. It will begin at Peace Lutheran Church. See

Helen Crandall or Sallie Anderson for contribution envelopes or to make a contribution.

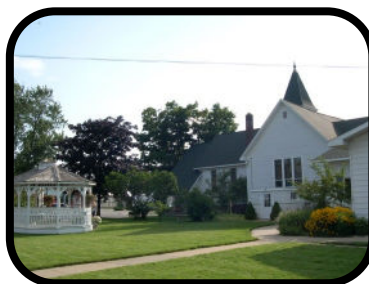
**Directory** – The several additions and changes I received this week have been updated in the directory; however, if at any time you have changes, please

forward them. You can access the 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.

**Trustees** – they will now meet on the third Wednesday at 7 pm (same day as previously, but a change in time).

**Annual Meeting** – This year's annual meeting is scheduled for after church on Sunday, October 29, 2023.





## 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.*





# 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: \$266**

## **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**

## **Strengthen the Church**

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

*Collected around Pentecost*

**Received to date: \$50 (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: \$255 (2022)**

## **Christmas Fund**

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

*Collected in December*

**Received to date: \$565 (2022)**

***As of April, our donations to Blanket Sunday totaled \$509***





## 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>