

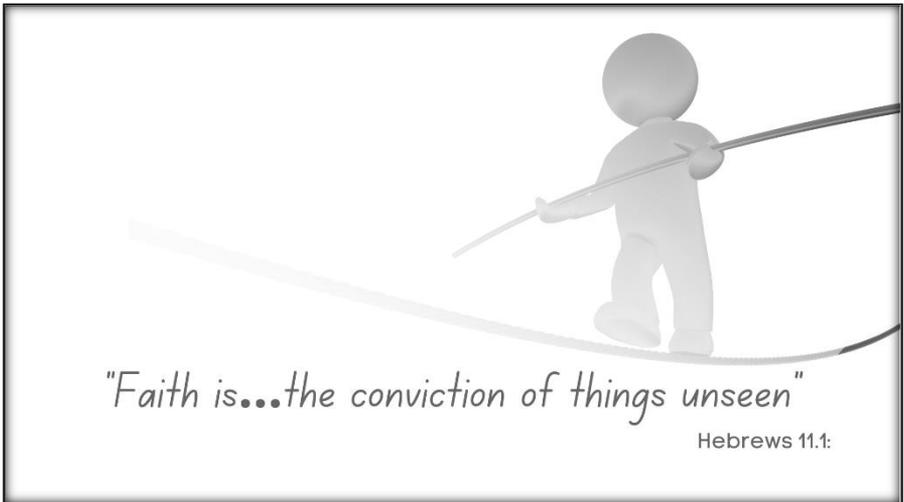
First Congregational United Church of Christ

218 W. Second Street, Gaylord, Michigan 49735

www.firstuccgaylord.org

March 5, 2023

Welcome to the First Congregational United Church of Christ. No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!



Our mission is to embrace people of every age and stage of life and help them become the most loving version of themselves possible.

Words of Welcome

(Adapted from "The Church's One Foundation", Samuel J. Stone, 1866)

Welcome to the First Congregational United Church of Christ. No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

Congregational Response: You are welcome to journey together with us!

****Call to Worship***

(By Rev. Dr. Chad Abbott)

- One: From the safety and comfort of home, God called Abram to go from all he knew to embrace a future yet to be revealed.
- All: "Go from," God says, and our hesitant hearts place one foot in front of the other to trust God with the unknown.**
- One: By night, Nicodemus came seeking greater insight into the teachings of God for the journey set before him. Jesus called him out of the shadows and towards a life born anew.
- All: "Go towards" God says, and a new life awaits us. We reach towards a God who has not come to condemn the world but to offer a salve that can heal all wounds.**
- One: We fear the unknown and that which we lack in understanding. "How can this be?" we proclaim with Nicodemus. And yet, God's call is one that urges us to go with our whole self into that unknowing, trusting that God will provide a way.
- All: Love calls us forth into lives of transformation, born anew into new paths of faith. Though we do not know where we are going, God has promised to never leave us alone. Let us worship the One who will show us the way.**

****Gloria Patri***

Glory to the Creator, the Christ, the Holy Spirit:
three in one!

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be
world without end. Amen. Amen.

****Invocation***

(By Rev. Dr. Chad Abbott)

All: God of calls and courage, you draw us towards your loving embrace even as we face what seems like impossibility. We experience heartache and grief, injustice and cruelty, fear and anxiety as daily teachers on this path of faith. As you call us to go into an uncertain and unknown future, O God, grant us the courage needed to let go of all that we have known so that we can take hold of the new life you are bringing about even now. Though we may not know where we are going, God, your way is revealed moment by moment, step by step, and breath by breath. In the name of the One who so loves the world we pray. Amen.

Kids' Chat

"Learning Something New"

Rev. Greg Watling

First Scripture Lesson

Psalm 121

****Hymn***

B. 202, "O God, How We Have Wandered"

Prayer For Transformation and New Life

(By Rev. Dr. Chad Abbott)

One: O God, we all too often wish to go our own way, maintain control, and rely on our own strength rather than trust that you will provide. Forgive us in our unwillingness to live by faith or to not trust you with providing all that we need for the journey.

All: **May God's mercy surround our weaknesses with grace for restoring us to hope everlasting.**

Words Of Grace

(Rev. Dr. Chad Abbott)

One: Friends, the call of God does not leave us isolated and condemned on a road of uncertainty, fear, and mistakes made. God's unending love and compassion is for all whose burdens are heavy and whose weary journey brings tears. May the tender arms of God carry you forth in strength.

All: **God has not come to condemn, but to offer a healing salve for our wounds. We welcome God's healing and salvation through Jesus Christ. Amen.**

Mission Moment

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

(By Louanne Spearman)

Invitation to Generosity

(By Rev. Dr. Chad Abbott)

One: God gives good things to us, so let us give good things to God. Let us bring gifts that can be like water in dry places. May these resources be used to testify to the goodness of God. Amen.

****Doxology***

Praise God from whom all blessings flow

Praise God all creatures here below

Praise God for all that love has done

Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One!

Amen.

Prayer of Dedication and Thanksgiving

(Rev. Dr. Chad Abbott)

One: O God who calls us to go out into the world with generosity, may these gifts call us from our lives of comfort and towards a faith journey that embraces your love, justice, and compassion for a world in need of your healing. In the name of Christ we pray. Amen.

Sharing of Prayer Concerns/Pastoral Prayer/Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever.
Amen.

Second Scripture

John 3: 1-17

****Hymn***

B. 205 Forty Days and Forty Nights

Message

“Scholarly Scruples”

Rev. Greg Watling

Special Music

"The Rose"

By, Amanda McBroom

performed by Stephanie and Rokko

Celebration Of the Sacrament Of Holy Communion

(Liturgy for the New Year was written by the Rev. Christine Battjes, member of the Seasons of the Spirit Editorial Team. Worship Ways: United Church of Christ. Used by permission)

Prayer

One: Keeper of our days, we are grateful for the ways you have been revealed to us in the past: through the love of community – gathered here and beyond; through nature and the beauty each season brings; through a shared hope ignited within us that does not flicker or fade. Confident of your love, bring our whole selves into your presence: our achievements and our failures, our proud moments and our hidden shame, our undying dreams and our detached resolve. At this gracious table we meet you in bread made of common wheat, broken and shared and made whole again a sacred communing with all of creation, holy, holy God of love and majesty, the whole universe speaks of your glory, O God Most High. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of our God! Hosanna in the highest!

Words of Institution

Prayer for the Holy Spirit

One: Spirit of All Life, move among this bread and this cup and make us mindful of our oneness with all creation so this meal of simple substance may become a true communion with the one who makes every tomorrow possible. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Receiving the Bread and Cup.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Blessing

(by Rev. Dr. Chad Abbott)

One: Friends, go forth with the courage of God to guide you into those places of restlessness and uncertainty. For we are called to go...From our places of comfort. From our certainties and complacency. From our old life and into the new. May the call of God not just call us from but toward a love so compelling that we are willing to trust our whole self into the embrace of the Creator, into the abiding love of Christ, and into the sacred dance of the Holy Spirit. We go forth in the peace of Christ. Amen!

Please note that we have two hymnals, one is red (R), the other is black (B).

*You are invited to stand if you feel comfortable doing so.

SUNDAY PARTICIPANTS:

Worship Leader: Rev. Greg Watling

Liturgist: Maggie Wallin

Greeter: Carol Leser

Flowers: Jeannine Wambold

Music Director: Rokko Jans

Altar & Banner Design: Helen Mate

Graphic Arts: Brenda Brummel

Production: Pete Amar

Coffee Hour: Maureen Derenzy

Pastor

Rev. Greg Watling

989-732-5726

920-472-9172

Monday: 8:00am – 12:00pm

Thursday: 12:00pm – 4:00pm

*Or by appointment*Email: pastorg@firstuccgaylord.org**Communications Coordinator**

Stephanie Kalember

989-732-5726

Monday: 10:00am – 2:00pm

Thursday: 12:00 pm – 4:00pm

E-mail: office@firstuccgaylord.org**Moderator**

Margaret Wallin

margaretwallin@msn.com**Finance**

Jessica Benoit

finance@firstuccgaylord.org**~ In Our Prayers ~**

**During the month of March the UNA is holding the
Cadillac First Congregational UCC in prayer.**

Jeannine Wambold's mother, Elne Garthe, as she has entered hospice care.
Cindy Goller, Pastor Greg, and family – as Cindy's dad is adjusting to his new apartment.

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

Mischelle Stone and family as they grieve the passing of Mischelle's sister-in-law, Judy Bouwman.

Janet Holmes, cousin of Kay Boughner, as Janet has been released from the hospital and continues her recovery.

Andrew Short, Helen Crandall's grandson, who was seriously injured in a motorcycle crash.

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 is still in need of prayers.

Cindy Goller's dear friend, Kaye as she was diagnosed with kidney cancer this week. She will be having surgery in the next several weeks.

Brad Derenzy—as he has been blessed with a bit of a reprieve from his illness.

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

Jen Crandall Finnegan - as she was recently hospitalized with migraine headaches.

Helen Crandall's family – as a cousin's son passed away unexpectedly last week.



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.

- ANNOUNCEMENTS -

Food Pantry – needs a few more volunteers. Please contact Don Storing if interested.

Bible Study –11 AM on Thursdays, but please keep an eye on your email for communication from Rokko. The Zoom link is provided:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84612895017>

PLEASE NOTE: we will be using a new zoom link for reaching out meetings from now on.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83640729481>
Meeting ID: 836 4072 9481

Birthdays:

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

Anniversaries:

13 Russ (Bo) & Carol Leser
28 Norm & Pat Dressel

Happenings at Church for the week of March 5, 2023

Sunday: Worship, 10 AM
 Council Meeting, 11:30 AM
Monday: Reaching In, 12 PM
Thursday: Bible Study, 11 AM
 Choir, 4 PM
Friday: Community Meal, 4 PM

*Our meetings are open to all, except where noted. If you have input for any of our teams and cannot make the meeting time, please email us your ideas at office@firstuccgaylor.org. Thanks!