

THE CHURCH WINDOW



**JANUARY
2021**



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FROM THE PASTOR'S KEYBOARD

Dear Ones,

I think I speak for many of us when I say that I am SO glad 2020 is over! For so many of us, it felt like just one thing after the other kept piling on. At times, I was very much reminded of the book of Job. In that story, Job loses almost everything he could possibly lose—wealth, material goods, prestige, friends, his children, and his understanding of who God is and how God behaves. In the midst of all of that loss, a whirlwind forms and out of that whirlwind, God speaks. This is one of my favorite images in scripture—that when it seems like our lives have been turned into a tornado of terrors, we find that God is there, supporting us, and teaching us. In the end, seeing and talking to God changes Job's perspective of what happened to him and helps him embrace a new life. So I wonder what God might be saying to us out of this whirlwind of 2020? What might we learn from these experiences and how might we use them to form a new and better life?

For me, 2020 forced a decision I was already leaning toward, and that was to quit my part-time job at Kettering University. I had already been planning to do that so that I could devote more time to supporting my parents and children. But once I got Covid last spring, keeping that job was impossible and so, with Kettering's blessing, I left at the end of April. Once I recovered from Covid, this change allowed me to provide much needed care to my family, and I am very much looking forward to being able to do more of that. But this year has also forced me to spend more time alone and in quiet. Although I normally seek out and enjoy company, I found that the quiet, alone time allowed me to reflect and provided me with peace. I am hoping not to lose this when then pandemic has ended and plan to build quiet meditation time into all of my days.



FROM THE PASTOR'S KEYBOARD (continued)

Likewise, our church has made some changes in this last year. We were forced to use new technology, since we couldn't meet in person. As a result, we've reached more people with our worship services than we do when we meet in person! So although we will come together in person as soon as it's safe to do so, I would love to see us continue offering an on-line worship option during our in-person services. This is a way we can truly offer a type of radical inclusion, reaching folks who physically or mentally cannot come to the church space. This past year has also encouraged our church to expand our racial justice efforts, as the events of last summer and the election have highlighted how pernicious racism is in our community and in our country. I would like to strongly encourage us to keep up and expand this important work. Our church has so often been a voice of love, extravagant welcome and inclusion in Grand Ledge. It is truly wonderful to be a part of such an amazing church!

So as this year ends, I wonder what lessons you will take away, as an individual and as a member or friend of this church community? What changes should we keep? What new ways of being and living should we adopt? Who are we becoming, my Dear Ones, after such a difficult year? I am excited to find out!

Many blessings,

Pastor Laura



Happy
New Year



CONGREGATORS

Beloved Congregators,

The New Year of 2021 is fast approaching. We don't know what it will bring or when we can be together in person again, but rest assured, that we are all in this together as a church family and within our small but precious group of Congregators. As always, please be sure to get in touch with one of us if we can help you in any way! **Our prayer is: Even if we can't join together in song, help us remember *pues si vivimos, somos del buen Dios*. We belong to you. Amen.**

Jim (517.627.7968), Sandy (517.420.2121) or Charlene (517.281.5019)

GRAND LEDGE UNITED

BUILDING A MORE RACIALLY DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE GRAND LEDGE COMMUNITY!

UPDATE AND ACTIONS REQUESTED FROM OUR DECEMBER 8 MEETING!

Pastor Laura moderated a great Zoom discussion with Grand Ledge Police Chief Tom Osterholzer, Jon Horford and Rachel Kuntzsch from Grand Ledge United the evening of December 8. Over a dozen FCUCC folks joined the conversation.

Even though I attended GL United's November community meeting, our December 8 discussion was an eye opener to me regarding some pushback against the GL United signs at the library.

Another learning experience was to hear Jon's two stories about community Black youth reacting to the yard signs. On a hot summer day, when one youth rested in a yard with a sign, the homeowner asked why he chose her yard. It was the reassurance of safety and caring the sign presented that allowed him that respite from the heat. Another youth mentored by Jon was in tears to see the signs around our community, again feeling the safety and reassurance that his life mattered.

As a follow-up to our meeting, there are two ways we can act as a church to increase awareness of racial justice issues evolving in Grand Ledge. **The first is to put a GL United sign in your yard.** If you don't already have one, I will gladly bring one if you contact me. A couple of community people have been negatively and loudly outspoken about the GL United signs at the library. **A second action would be to call or email Lise Mitchell (pronounced Lees, not Lisa), library director, to state your support of the library for its racial justice role in our community by continuing to display a GL United outside of their building.** Contact Lise at 627.7014 or director@gladl.org. If you prefer to send a written note, the address is 131 E Jefferson St, Grand Ledge, MI 48837.

Our Outreach team will be working next year to develop a plan on how we can move forward as a church to increase racial justice and diversity in our church and community. We also hope to schedule another meeting with GL United in the early months of 2021.

If you have questions, please contact me, Charlene Avery, at averyc@provide.net, or Pastor Laura at pastor@grandledgeucc.org). We would love to hear from you!

SISTERS OF RUTH

Sisters of Ruth (SOR) is happy to report that with this church's wonderful generosity, we were able to put together 40 personal care packets for S.I.R.E.N. this year in the mist of this pandemic. Our church donated 26 women's, 4 men's, and 10 children's packets. We also donated the additional items that we did not have enough to put together personal care packets. With the of people that the S.I.R.E.N. Shelter has helped this year, they were very appreciative to receive these packets to help their clients.

GLEAP CHRISTMAS BASKETS

WOW!! WITH YOUR HELP, DID WE EVER SURPASS OUR GOAL FOR GLEAP CHRISTMAS FOOD!! YOU GAVE AN AMAZING \$1,650!

WE CAN'T THANK YOU ENOUGH!! So many of you drove by the church on Sunday afternoon, December 13, to drop off cash, checks and Meijer gift cards!! **Car after car after car – we called it a traffic jam!** It was a wonderful event, not only to receive your gifts, but for Pastor Laura, Sarah, Karen W, Charlene, Erica and her puppy Stella to wave at you, say thank you, chat a little with some who lingered for a few moments with their window rolled down, wearing our masks of course. The \$1,650 included gift cards and checks that arrived in the mail. We felt the love you gave!

We also want to tell you how much gratitude was expressed as we delivered the gift cards to our three families. We tucked in a Christmas card and a simple letter from our church so they knew where the gifts came from. One family got a little fruit basket, another got a lap blanket, and one gluten free family was given a generous amount of gluten free goodies.

Because you helped us exceed our fundraising goal of \$600, which we divided among our three families based on family size, a check will be sent for the balance of \$1,050 to GLEAP (Grand Ledge Emergency Assistance Program). As we know, GLEAP is in the midst of incoming requests for short term emergency assistance for help with food, utility bills, water bills, gas for cars, and many other needs. **Thank you again so very much from the bottom of our hearts!!** ..Charlene, Sandy, Sarah, and Karen W.

Sunday Schedule for January 2021

Date	January 3rd 2nd Sunday after Christmas White	January 10th Baptism of the Lord White	January 17th 2nd Sunday after Epiphany Green	January 24th 3rd Sunday after Epiphany Green	January 31st 4th Sunday after Epiphany Green
Text	Jeremiah 31:7-14 John :1(1-9), 10-18	Genesis 1:1-15 Mark 1:4-11	1 Sam 3:1-10, (11-20) John 1:43-51	Jonah 3:1-5, 10 Mark 1:14-20	Deut 18:15-20 Mark 1:21-28
Head Usher	Leah Horn	Jane Gilson	Chris Cypher	Kathy Burt	Nate Oliver

Sunday Schedule for February 2021

Date	February 7th 5th Sunday after Epiphany Green	February 14th Transfiguration White or Green	February 21st First Sunday in Lent Violet	February 28th 2nd Sunday in Lent Violet
Text	Isaiah 40:21-31 Mark 1:29-39	2 Kings 2:1-12 Mark 9:2-9	Genesis 9:8-17 Mark 1:9-15	Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16 Mark 8:31-38
Head Usher	Leah Horn	Jane Gilson	Kathy Burt	Nate Oliver

GRAND LEDGE FOOD BANK

Souper Bowl of Caring February 7, 2021

Personal reflection regarding the Grand Ledge Food Bank from Lynn

I have been working at the Grand Ledge Food Bank every week since March, when the pandemic began. And I have learned so much about the organization

First, that the people working there are loving, caring folks who want to help others. They are donating their time out of the goodness of their hearts. They care about feeding families just like our congregation does.

Second, and most importantly, is that all donations are greatly appreciated because that is how the Food Bank runs. And even though food donations are welcome, it's the cash donations that do the most work. The shoppers can use that money to purchase food at prices we as shoppers can't match at the grocery store.

So even though we can't do our monthly food drives right now, we can make cash donations through our annual Souper Bowl of Caring project on February 7, 2021.

Please come to the church that day from 1-2pm to make drive-by donations to the Food Bank. Our youth will be holding the soup pots at the front door.

Let's continue to tackle hunger here in Grand Ledge.

Grand Ledge Meijer is once again offering their Simply Give Program until **January 2nd, 2021**. There are cards available near the check-out lanes to purchase for \$10.00. Each card purchased will be matched by Meijer and result in a \$20.00 donation to the food bank. Thanks for your help spreading the word about this program. It truly is a way to stretch every dollar to help our neighbors.

Grand Ledge Food Bank
4980 Burt Ave. Grand Ledge, MI 48837
517-627-4348

Open for donations:

Tuesdays 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Thursdays 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

The food bank is in need of a few **volunteers** to help in the food room. This involves **sorting food and packing food orders** which have been received by telephone. The recommended precautions are in place. Masks are required. There is minimum client contact. Clients ring the doorbell and the food order is brought to the door. Clients are allowed in the building by appointment only and are required to wear a mask. Please call Mary Holz, 517-627-4348, if interested.

The clothing room remains closed as a precaution due to the outbreak of COVID at Liberty Church in Grand Ledge. The clothing room had been accessible by appointment only. No clients will be allowed in the building. Food will continue to be available by telephone ordering at 517-627-4348 and may be picked up at the door.

Senior lunch at City Hall
Tuesdays and Thursdays at 12:00 Noon
is postponed until further notice.

THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS

Just as individual prayer time is very important to each of us, so is **prayer as a faith community**. We invite you to call the **church office at 627-2336** to notify the pastor of any prayer concerns you would like to share. If no one is available to speak with you, please leave a voicemail.

Health concerns: Pray for family and friends with health concerns and especially those who have contracted the Coronavirus.

Those who are struggling be it: financially, mentally, spiritually, individually, or collectively.

Those in a time of transition or turmoil.

Those who serve: soldiers, teachers, police officers, firefighters, counselors, public servants, our congregational leaders, politicians, and many more.



Prayer request: Please pray for those rallying for peace and justice, and all who have been directly affected by the Coronavirus, as well as; Pam and Jim P., (parents of Angela P.), Ben B., Dave G., Corey, Kaleb, Linda O., Beth P., Doris B., Lili B., Kathy H., Cindy G., Carole S., Barbara N., Geri L., Robert E., Larry and Carol S., Jim H., Karen W., Anna C., Sandy S., Marty S., Maryann, and Patricia R.

In being consistent with the HIPAA Law and people's privacy, we will only list individuals with their explicit permission and not use last names. During worship, please do not use personal identifiable information for others when asking for prayers.

NEW OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR

Hello, my name is Angela Spialek (SPY-leck), and I am happy to be your new office administrator! I have already had a chance to meet a handful of warm and welcoming congregation members, and I look forward to getting to know all of you.

My husband, two teenagers, two dogs, and I moved to Lansing from central Wisconsin in 2019. We live in the Waverly school district where the kids are active in theater. In Wisconsin, I worked as a congregational administrator at a Unitarian Universalist Church.

Please email or call me in the office if there is anything you need, or just to say hi!

INCOME & EXPENSE BALANCE SHEET

	Actual November 2020	Actual Year-to-Date	Budget Year-to-Date	Annual Budget
INCOME	\$ 9,660.00	\$116,609.57	\$119,399.50	\$130,254.00
EXPENSES	<u>10,008.91</u>	<u>110,171.50</u>	<u>120,619.42</u>	<u>135,244.00</u>

Our monthly balance is negative again this month but we are still on the positive side. The heating bills have increased and we will have snow removal, insurance, and pension bills during the month of December. Therefore, your continued support with your pledges and donations is still very important. With the hope of opening our church soon, we must continue to support our church financially and spiritually. If at any time during this crisis it becomes difficult for you to continue giving, please contact the financial secretary, Lynn Hart.



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

John Schneeberger – 4th

Kathy Burt – 7th

Jim Johnson – 9th

Matt Cypher – 9th

Ben Walther (Marcia Kent's Husband) 10th

Dashal Jason Gooley – 10th

Leah Horn – 13th

Tony Bray – 16th

Chad Frost – 16th

Kelly Stuible-Clark – 17th

Fay Schroeder – 21st

Mae Clark – 21st

Robin Horn – 22nd

Quinn McWilliams – 28th

Karen Holcomb Merrill – 29th

(Anniversary of commissioning as a minister- 2012)

Caleb Pier – 31st

Sheila Wilkinson – 31st



If your birthday has been inadvertently missed, please contact the church office at 627-2336 or office@grandledgeucc.org

HEALTH CONCERNS

Please follow these links for accurate and up to date information regarding the Coronavirus.

https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus/0,9753,7-406-98178_99557---,00.html

*Resources found on this website are for individuals experiencing mental and emotional health challenges during this time. Many of these resources are free.

<https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html>

<https://www.barryeatonhealth.org/covid-19-resources-and-update>

https://www.ucc.org/news_ucc_churches_establish_protocols_preach_awareness_not_panic_as_covid_19_cases_grow_03102021



Due to the Coronavirus our *Free Little Library* will be temporarily closed until it is safe to reopen it.

Gracious God, You have redeemed us through Jesus Christ, the first-born of all creation, whose birth we celebrate as the child of Bethlehem. Bless us with every spiritual blessing, that we may live as your adopted children and witness to your glory with unending praise and thanksgiving. Amen.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES

Executive Board Meeting Minutes October 27, 2020

Call to Order

Moderator Rich Brown called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM.

This meeting was conducted electronically due to the Covid-19 virus distancing recommendations. Most members logged on to the Zoom website and some were connected by telephone.

Board Members present: Rich Brown, Anita Calcagno, Chris Cypher, Lynn Hart, Chris Clark, Karen Holcomb-Merrill, Charlene Avery, Pastor Laura, Fay Schroeder, Marsha Kent and Bil Turner.

Spiritual Reflection

Pastor Laura offered some positive and encouraging alternatives to all the current negativity. We have the power to advocate, to vote, to welcome those who are discriminated against. Stay in the struggle, seek justice, and do not be daunted.

Open Forum

No one was present for this item.

Consent Agenda

Consent Agenda was accepted with the following correction; Thea Oatman gave the message on October 4th, not Fay.

Action and Discussion Items

Pastor's Report

Pastor Laura reported that she worked with Jen this month to gain a clearer understanding of many of the less obvious things that Jen does for the congregation. Other items she reported on included:

- The building and grounds could use more cleaning attention than they have been receiving.
- She has attended many meetings this month, including GLAMA meetings. She will be offering the message at the Grand Ledge Community Thanksgiving service.
- It would be very helpful if, in this time of isolation from one another, cards could be sent to church families, especially those with children in the home. Showering one another with love can provide a very special and needed boost.
- A big thank you to Kim Dible, Kathy Burt and others for creating the new Church Directory. If you would like a copy mailed to your home, please contact the church office.
- Kudos to Marsha Kent and the Christian Education Board for their preparations for the Trunk or Treat event.
- Preparations have begun for both the Thanksgiving and Advent services. Pastor Laura discussed the possibility of a pre-recorded Christmas Eve Service and/or an earlier brief service in the parking lot with social distancing and masks. The Executive Board was asked to contemplate this.
- Should we have hanging of the greens on the outside of the building? There was general agreement.

Monthly Financial Update

Fay reported that at the end of September we were about \$1500 in the black for that month and about \$7600 in the black for the year. Lynn reported that receipts for October are good.

(continued)

EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES (continued)

Office Manager Vacancy

Anita reported there were many applications for the vacancy, and that the Personnel Committee has narrowed the search to 6 candidates. They will further reduce that group to 2 or 3 and then have an in-person interview with those individuals. Anita will be acting as temporary Office Manager.

Worship Team Compensation

This item was discussed via email after the September meeting and the Exec Board members weighed in as part of that discussion. The proposal is:

- Increase Chuck Byam's salary to make it comparable to Judy's. Chuck's current salary is based on being solely the choir accompanist. Currently he is providing all the music support for worship.
- Give Chad a \$500 honorarium. This would be as a thank you for all the work he has put into the worship service up until now. We would need to revisit this at the end of the year to provide some form a compensation for the period going forward through December 31st. Chad had a request that the compensation not occur while he is laid off because of the impact it would have on his unemployment compensation.
- Give Troy a \$100 Meijer gift card (his store request) for his work as the liturgist each Sunday.

Motion made by Fay, seconded by Anita to approve the above three items. Motion passed.

Office Manager Compensation

This item was also discussed via email after the September meeting and the Exec Board members weighed in as part of that discussion. Moved by Anita, seconded by Karen to start the new Office manager at \$15 per hour. Motion passed.

Church Reopening Status.

It is the advice of the Barry/Eaton County Health Departments, the State of Michigan and the UCC that indoor gatherings such as church services not be conducted at this time. It was the consensus of the Exec Board that we not reopen. Rich will compose a letter to the congregation on this topic. A team is to be created to begin planning for an outside service or services when winter is over.

Finance Committee

Kim will call Leah and ask her to reactivate the Finance Committee so that they might study and create a 2021 budget proposal.

Stewardship Update

Rich reported that the Stewardship Committee will meet again this week, another mailing will go out and that Stewardship Sunday will be November 8th. A drive by pledge drop off is being planned.

New Business

Jeannette. Anita asked if anything has been discussed regarding honoring Jeannette for her 10 year service to our congregation. Apparently this has been discussed with Jeannette, and the decision was made to wait until we can gather in person. Until then, cards would certainly be appropriate.

Annual Meeting The Exec Board was asked to think about how we might conduct the next Annual Meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 7:39 PM

The next Executive Board Meeting will be Tuesday, November 24th at 6:30 PM. (Very likely a Zoom meeting)

Respectfully submitted,
Bil Turner, Church Clerk



KIDS CORNER



God Hears and Answers Prayer



JANUARY 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat.
3 2nd Sunday after Christmas 10:30 am Worship Service on Facebook Zoom Café' Fellowship 12:00pm	4 6:30pm Pastor Parish Relations Committee	5	30 6:00 pm AA 8:00 pm AA	7	8 Office Closed	9
10 Baptism of the Lord 10:30 am Worship Service on Facebook Zoom Café' Fellowship 12:00pm Outreach Meeting 2:00pm	11	12	30 6:00 pm AA 8:00 pm AA	14	15 Office Closed	16
17 2nd Sunday after Epiphany 10:30 am Worship Service on Facebook Zoom Café' Fellowship 12:00pm	18 Martin Luther King Jr. Day Office Closed	19	30 6:00 pm AA 8:00 pm AA	21	22 Office Closed Newsletter items due	23
24 3rd Sunday after Epiphany 10:30 am Worship Service on Facebook Zoom Café' Fellowship 12:00pm Annual Meeting—Time TBD	25	26 6:30pm Executive Board Mtg	30 6:00 pm AA 8:00 pm AA	28	29 Office Closed	30
31 4th Sunday after Epiphany 10:30 am Worship Service on Facebook Zoom Café' Fellowship 12:00pm						

Due to the Coronavirus the church office will be closed until further notice. Items on this calendar may change depending on the Coronavirus and our local Government. We will keep you updated.



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Emergency Contact 517-374-0145

grandledgeucc.org



*Following Jesus, our mission is to serve God
by building an inclusive community
where uplifting worship and relevant messages deepen spirituality
and inspire acts of justice, service, and compassion.*

Mission Statement for First Congregational UCC

STAFF

Rev. Dr. Laura Miller-Purrenhage
Angela Spialek, Office Administrator
Brandon Frost, Choir Director
Chuck Byam, Choir Accompanist
Judy Nielsen, Organist
Darlene Banks, Bell Choir Director
Sue Sackett, Custodian
Nicole Finney, Nursery Care Provider
Rev. John Baumgartner, Pastor Emeritus

**EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS &
BOARD CHAIRS**

Richard Brown, Moderator
Anita Calcagno, Vice Moderator
Bil Turner, Clerk
Fay Schroeder, Treasurer
Lynn Hart, Financial Secretary
Marcia Kent, Christian Education
Kathy Burt, Congregational Life
Chris Clark, Christian Outreach
Charlene Avery, Member-at-Large
Kim Dible, Member-at-Large
Karen Holcomb-Merrill, Member-at-Large

**If you would like to receive your Newsletter via email,
please contact the office at office@grandledgeucc.org**