

THE CHURCH WINDOW



APRIL 2021



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FROM THE PASTOR'S KEYBOARD

Dear Ones,

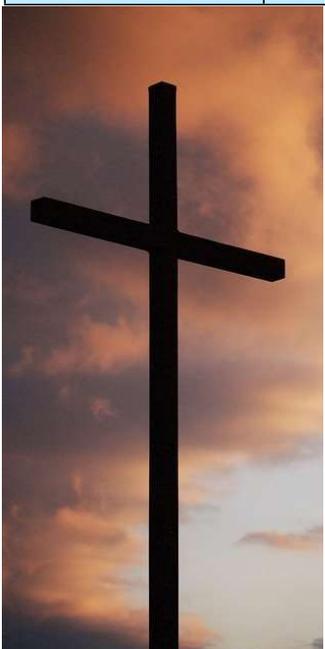
When my children were younger, every spring we would attend small animal day at the MSU campus. We would take a bus around to the several stops, excitedly hopping out and skipping over to see baby horses, bunnies, or chicks. We still have a picture from one of those days of my son at age five. Someone else is kneeling down to him, holding a baby duck, fluffy and yellow with brown wings. His eyes are wide open with a look of joyous wonder, as he delicately touches the baby duck with his finger. This is the look of spring for me.

There is something truly wonderful and joyful about the new life that grows and flourishes around us every spring. We are delighted by the crocuses peeking forth from the ground, by the blue skies, and the budding trees. All of this new life gives *us* new life, reminding us that we get a chance to start anew. For me, this feeling is particularly strong this year, as we start to come out of the pandemic. The newness of spring makes me think about how, like the cyclical seasons, our lives may cycle back to some of their normalcy. But the spring also makes me wonder how we might make some things truly new. Now that we've had a year in quarantine, what have we learned about ourselves, our society, our church? What might we want to make new?

The spring also coincides with Easter, this most important holiday in the life of the church, when we don't just celebrate renewed life, but redemption. We celebrate Easter every year partially to be reminded of the fact that we ARE redeemed people. But we also celebrate it because our understanding of our lives changes with time, which means that we might find new and different reasons that we need to start over. And so I wonder, what are we redeemed from, coming out of this pandemic? What do we need to allow ourselves to be forgiven of and for? And what new, redeemed life are we living into? How can we embrace it, with joy and wonder, like a child looking at a newborn duckling? I invite you to contemplate these questions as you walk or roll in the sun, as you tend spring flowers, or listen to the birds sing of spring. And I invite you to give thanks to our God and to Christ our redeemer for this chance to keep living, for this opportunity to live life anew.

Blessings,

Pastor Laura



ANNUAL SPRING CHURCH YARD CLEAN UP

We will have our annual spring church yard clean up sometime in the next couple of weeks. It will most likely be on a week day, late morning or early afternoon.

Please contact Charlene Avery at 517.281.5019 if you are able to help.

Thank you!



GRAND LEDGE UNITED SIGNS

If you would like a Grand Ledge United sign for your yard, please contact Charlene Avery at 517.281.5019. Small donations accepted but not required. The signs say Black Lives Are Worthy, Black Lives Are Beloved, Black Lives Are Needed. There is a growing number in the community yards but more would be great!

CONGREGATORS

Beloved Congregators,

April has arrived! Winter is over and Spring is officially here...though don't be surprised if we still have snowflakes in the air once or twice! Most if not all of our Congregators have had their second vaccination by now...something to celebrate! It's been a topic of concern for many months. Hopefully your anxieties are easing as we plan who we can be with safely in coming weeks and months. We're not ready just yet for our group to gather for lunch as we continue to watch COVID numbers, which are going back up, before we plan to get together. Until then, we will watch April showers bring lovely May flowers from the safety of our own homes, and enjoy early daffodils and tulips that April brings. We look forward with all our church families to celebrating Easter, still on Facebook Live. As always, please be sure to get in touch with one of us if we can help you in any way!

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

BLESSINGS IN A BACKPACK

Once again, we have been rescheduled to pack bags for Blessings in a Backpack. Hopefully, the third time is a charm. We will be packing bags on Wednesday, April 14, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. at Sawdon School in room 310. We still must follow COVID rules and wear masks and social distance so we will be walking around the tables. You may be asked the COVID questions and have your temperature taken as you enter the school. We will ask that you sign in with your name and phone number for contact tracing, if necessary. We are also limited to 10 people so please contact Fay Schroeder at either (517) 627-2727 or fschroeder4200@yahoo.com to volunteer. Since this is one of the very few community service projects our church has been able to do this past year, we hope to have all ten spaces filled quickly.



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

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

Jackson Lipsey – 2nd
 Ben Sackett – 5th
 Sue Lawens – 5th
 Bonnie Thompson – 6th
 Pastor Nicolette Siragusa – 7th
 Chuck Thompson – 8th
 Rich Brown – 9th



Daniell Gooley – 13th
 Brian Curran – 15th
 Lynn Hart – 19th
 Tina Erskine – 21st
 Tony Ramos – 26th
 Bil Turner – 28th
 Bruce Ramthun – 28th

If you would like your birthday included in the newsletter, please contact the office administrator at 627-2336 or office@grandledgeucc.org

WELCOME, BABY!



Congratulations to our nursery care provider, Nicole Finney, and her husband, Gary Hart, on the arrival of their own precious bundle of joy!

Gary John Hart, Junior, was born on March 3, weighing 7lbs, 11oz. Mother and baby are healthy and happy.

SPRING 2021 RECYCLING EVENTS IN EATON COUNTY

Please use the following link to learn more about spring recycling events for Eaton County residents only. Preregistration is required and now open for both May 1 in Delta Township and June 19 in Charlotte.

[Recycling Events & Special Collection Programs | Eaton County, MI](#)



Sunday Schedule for April 2021

Date	April 4th Easter White	April 11 2nd Sunday of Easter White	April 18 3rd Sunday of Easter White	April 25 4th Sunday of Easter White
Text	Acts 10:34-43 John 20:1-18	Acts 4:32-35 John 20:19-31	Acts 3:12-19 Luke 24:36b-48	Acts 4:5-12 John 10:11-18
Head Usher	Chris Cypher	Karen Ramthun	Bruce Ramthun	Kathy Burt

Sunday Schedule for May 2021

Date	May 2 5th Sunday of Easter White	May 9 6th Sunday of Easter White	May 16 7th Sunday of Easter White	May 23 Pentecost Sunday Red	May 30 Trinity Sunday White or Green
Text	Acts 8:26-40 John 15:1-8	Acts 10:44-48 John 15:9-17	Acts 1:15-17, 21-26 John 17:6-19	Acts 2:1-21 John 15:26-27	Isaiah 6:1-8 John 3:1-17
Head Usher	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

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 affected by the Coronavirus as well as all those on our prayer list: Pam and Jim P. , Ben B., Corey, Kaleb, Beth P., Doris B., Lili B., Kathy H., Cindy G., Carole S., Barbara N., Geri L., Robert E., Larry and Carol S., Jim H., Anna C., Sandy S., Marty S, Maryann, Patricia R., and Sarah B.

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.



COVID-19 INFORMATION

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

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

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

The following link is for individuals experiencing mental and emotional health challenges during this time:

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

INCOME & EXPENSE BALANCE SHEET

	Actual February 2021	Actual Year-to-Date	Budget Year-to-Date	Annual Budget
INCOME	\$ 24,953.06	\$ 33,258.36	\$ 22,619.00	\$135,714.00
EXPENSES	<u>9,562.05</u>	<u>19,182.09</u>	<u>24,113.50</u>	<u>144,681.00</u>
BALANCE	\$ 15,391.01	\$ 14,076.27	(\$ 1,494.50)	(\$ 8,967.00)

Thanks to your generous donations and members and friends giving their entire pledge in February, we are at a very positive balance. However, we must remember that this amount will be reduced as the year progresses. Please realize that your pledges and donations are very important to the continuation of this church serving you and our community.



EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES

February 23, 2021

Call to Order

Moderator Leah Horn called the meeting to order at 6:31 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: Leah Horn, Anita Calcagno, Lynn Hart, Chris Clark, Chris Cypher, Karen Holcomb-Merrill, Charlene Avery, Pastor Laura, Kim Dible Glaser, Lisa Reed, Fay Schroeder, and Bil Turner.

Spiritual Reflection

Pastor Laura had thought this week about the Native American woman who is nominated for the Secretary of the Interior, and her own experiences at the Badlands of South Dakota. She was helped there to be at peace, to just sit and be. She offered a prayer to the creator that during this Lenten period we can be one with the Universe, and that we can find peace within ourselves.

Open Forum

No one was present for this item.

Consent Agenda

It was noted that we can accept the Treasurer's and Financial Secretary's Reports, but that the Clerks Minutes of the Annual Meeting will be approved at the next Annual Meeting. With that understanding, the Consent Agenda was accepted.

Action and Discussion Items

Pastor's Report

- Pastor Laura reported that this month she has spent time on worship planning and pastoral care. There will be many Lenten related services.
- She asked how the Board felt about having a short outside service on Easter morning, with members present, following that she would do the regular Easter service from inside, but without members present. After discussion it was agreed. Details will be developed. It was also suggested that she be allowed to perform Communion services from inside the church, but without members present. It was moved by Lynn, seconded by Anita that Pastor Laura be allowed to perform services from inside the church, but with no members present, and to do so without asking for permission. Motion passed.
- She has been in contact with the Boards of Christian Education, Congregational Life and Outreach to discuss general topics.
- It appears there will be at least one new member joining in April.
- She bought a new computer today. It went slightly above the approved amount. Lynn offered that there are funds available in the Memorial Fund to support the purchase.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES (continued)

Staff Bonuses

This item had been agreed to by an e-mail vote. It was moved by Karen, seconded by Charlene to formally approve the yearend bonuses, previously discussed by e-mail. Those individuals who worked for the whole year were included. Motion passed.

Membership and Baptism question

The question of whether an individual must be baptized to become a member came up recently during discussions with potential new members. A general discussion took place. This item is tabled for further study.

Employment of Members

After discussion it was agreed that there is no conflict here.

Pandemic Preparedness Plan

Anita, Fay and others recently attended a meeting regarding churches developing a Pandemic Preparedness Plan. The plan that was presented at that meeting seemed very restrictive and would represent a lot of work and many changes for us. A small group was formed; Fay, Pat Reed, and another to study this item. A different team will be formed to study outside worship services.

New Phone System

Our present phone system has developed problems. Angela will be asked to study features and costs of potential new systems.

Pulpit Supply Team

We will need to form a team to become responsible for Pulpit Supply. This opportunity will be announced in the Thursday pause.

New Business

The advertisement for a Christian Educator position will go forward. No action needed by the Board.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM

The next Executive Board Meeting will be Tuesday, March 23, 2021 at 6:30 PM. (Very likely a Zoom meeting)

Respectfully submitted,

Bil Turner, Church Clerk



CHURCH CLERK'S UPDATE - JAN & FEB 2021

Linda Olds and Boyd Tyler died in the month of February.

There have been no marriages or baptisms in 2021 to date.



APRIL 2021



Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

				1 Maundy Thursday 7pm Facebook Taize Service	2 Good Friday 7pm Facebook Ecumenical Good Friday Service	3 Holy Saturday 10am AA Women
4 Easter Sunday 8:30am in-person outside prayer service 10:30am Facebk Worship Service 12:00pm Zoom Café Fellowship	5	6	7 6pm AA 8pm AA	8	9	10 10am AA Women
11 2nd Sunday of Easter 10:30am Facebk Worship Service 12:00pm Zoom Café Fellowship	12	13	14 6pm AA 8pm AA	15	16	17 10am AA Women
18 3rd Sunday of Easter 10:30am Facebk Worship Service 12:00pm Zoom Café Fellowship	19	20	21 6pm AA 8pm AA	22	23	24 10am AA Women
25 4th Sunday of Easter 10:30am Facebk Worship Service 12:00pm Zoom Café Fellowship	26	27 6:30pm Exec Board Zoom Mtg	28 6pm AA 8pm AA	29	30	



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*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	EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS & BOARD CHAIRS
Rev. Dr. Laura Miller-Purrenhage Angela Spialek, Office Administrator Brandon Frost, Choir Director Darlene Banks, Bell Choir Director Judy Nielsen, Organist Chuck Byam, Choir Accompanist Sue Sackett, Custodian Nicole Finney, Nursery Care Provider Rev. John Baumgartner, Pastor Emeritus	Leah Horn, Moderator Karen Holcomb-Merrill, Vice Moderator Bil Turner, Clerk Fay Schroeder, Treasurer Lynn Hart, Financial Secretary Charlene Avery, Member-at-Large Kim Dible, Member-at-Large Lisa Reed, Member-at-Large Thea Oatman, Christian Education Chris Cypher & Kim Dible, Congregational Life Chris Clark, Christian Outreach