



THE CHURCH WINDOW

August 2021



FROM THE PASTOR'S KEYBOARD

Dear Ones,

One of my favorite books is Rachel Naomi Remen's *My Grandfather's Blessings: Stories of Strength, Refuse, and Belonging*. It is a lovely book full of wisdom about how to live life to the fullest, especially in the midst of difficult situations. I have gone back to it recently, as I have been thinking a great deal about how to support you all and our community in the midst of the ongoing pandemics of Covid-19, structural racism, homophobia, heterosexism, and poverty. As I've said a few times during worship now, the trauma we, as a world, are experiencing due to Covid is affecting our bodies, emotions, minds, spirits, and relationships in multiple ways. Remen's book offers ways to rest, strengthen ourselves, and heal. It reminds us of how very important it is to bless life, to bless one another, and to find the blessings offered to us by God and one another every day, especially during times like this.

I have decided that it could be helpful to structure the six sermons I provide from Aug 1st through Rally Sunday (Sept 12th) around the six sections in her book. If you're interested, pick up a copy of the book from the library, Audible, or your local bookstore and read or listen to the section that precedes the sermon dealing with the same theme. Although I can't directly quote from the author, due to copyright restrictions, the stories she tells in those sections will hopefully combine with the scripture and sermon in some helpful ways. Here is the plan:

Aug 1: Receiving Your Blessing

Aug 8: Becoming a Blessing

Aug 15: Finding Strength, Taking Refuge

Aug 22: The Web of Blessing

Sept 5: Befriending Life

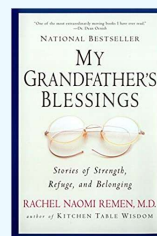
Sept 12: Restoring the World (This combines with the Rally Sunday theme, "Restart")

*Please know that if you have a diagnosed reading disability, the Library of Congress can provide you with free audio books. If possible, follow this website or contact me and I'll help you get it set up: <https://nlsbard.loc.gov/nlsbardprod/login//NLS>

I look forward to exploring the blessings of our lives together, Dear Ones.

Blessings,

Pastor Laura



MEMBER AND FRIENDS SPOTLIGHT

This month's column spotlights the Gruner family, Kelly Sandula-Gruner, and David, Nate, and Declan Gruner.



What brought you to FCUCC?

During the pandemic/lockdown period, we had started to research more progressive, inclusive churches. We thought it might be a good time to just see what was out there. We'd imagine a lot of people went through some self-reflection during this time. The last political cycle and the alignment of many Christian churches was extremely disheartening and exhausting. We had been curious about FCUCC, as it's very near our house. We remember liking a lot of what we saw posted on your outdoor signs as we'd drive by every day!

What has encouraged you to stay with us or what do you like/love about this congregation?

A lot of churches claim to be welcoming but unfortunately that seems to only be a façade for many. We found your online services, started watching regularly, and were inspired that you truly meant what you said. People of all backgrounds—even people who weren't even sure what they believed spiritually—could come together and not be judged or forced into a specific set of dogma. Acceptance as is is huge...not acceptance with the expectation that you will eventually “fall into line”.

Can you tell us a little about yourself?

We've been in Grand Ledge for 3 years now and before that, Lansing's west side (Waverly area) since 1999. Kelly did some grad work at MSU and we just ended up staying in Lansing area. Both life-long Michiganders. We were both raised Catholic and went through all the expectations growing up that came with that...First Communion, Confirmation, etc. Big Catholic wedding. It was tradition and we both have a huge amount of respect for our families, so even though we've both struggled with a lot over the years, there's a certain amount of comfort from just knowing what to expect. You can go to any Catholic church in the world and aside from language spoken, the ritual is all the same. In college and throughout our early 20s, we sought out progressive/liberal churches—well, progressive for Catholic!—on campuses. First at Central where we went to school and then at Michigan State. We got heavily involved in the music programs and still have a lot of good friends because of choir. That kept us going. We were driving from west Lansing into MSU's student parish for years; we've now been in Grand Ledge for 3 years and trying to fit in at another, more conservative church became increasingly difficult for us. It just got to the point where we really needed to find something that felt more in line with us, at this point in our lives. We want to teach our boys about how to treat people of all walks. Maybe it's middle age, but it's just gotten to the point where we can no longer say, “Well, we belong to this church, but we really don't believe this, this and this...”

What are some things you'd really like the church to know about you?

Just a little about us: David is a software developer (computer nerd!) working for Dewpoint in Lansing. He enjoys gaming and jazz, and plays saxophone with a couple groups. Kelly is a graphic designer—spent 17 years in corporate communications before starting her own business (Gruner Graphics) in 2019. She plays French horn with Lansing Concert Band, sings in several ensembles including Singers on the Grand based here in GL, and is active with a few community theatre groups (she has desperately missed being on stage this past year, haha!). Our boys: Nate is now 15, learning to drive, and plays percussion in the GL school band and marching drumline. He loves gaming, water skiing and awesome sports cars. Declan (aka “Dex”) is 12 and will be starting band this year on euphonium. He's a total comedian, loves watching funny videos on YouTube and also a big gamer.

What are some things you'd really like to know about our congregation?

We've been truly inspired by what we've seen and heard so far. Looking forward to getting to know people.

CHURCH INSTAGRAM

Our church now has an Instagram account! If you do, too, then please follow us!

CHRISTIAN EDUCATOR POSITION

First Congregational United Church of Christ, an inclusive open and affirming church in Grand Ledge, is seeking a Christian Educator to provide Christian educational experiences for school-age children and youth, ages 5 and up.

During our current hybrid in-person/on-line worship period, this program includes a multi-age class of young people from age 5 through sixth grade (all but the first Sunday of the month). On the first Sunday, there will instead be an event for teens.

Curricula from “Shine” or “Deep Blue” will be provided as will supplies for crafts and activities. Salary is \$20 per hour for two hours per week, for 40 weeks per year. The ideal candidate will have training and/or experience in working with special education children and will support our progressive beliefs and traditional worship.

If this sounds like you, please send a letter of interest to Office@grandledgeucc.org, Attn: Personnel and Christian Education



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.

Health concerns: Pray for family and friends with health concerns and those who have 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., Sarah B., Stacy S., Jenna P., Philip C., Ron, Katy R, Sue C., Caieya C., Ashley R., Eric, Heather and their families, Lee W., and Dan B.

In being consistent with the HIPAA Law and people's privacy, we only list individuals with their explicit permission and no last names. During worship, please do not use personal identifiable information for others when asking for prayers.



WORKING IN THE CHURCH YARD

We usually have spring and fall church grounds clean up. Pulling weeds, pruning shrubs, mulching. Sometimes a little help to pull weeds off and on between those two times would be great. If you would like to be contacted to do the bigger seasonal cleanups, or ‘touchups’ in between, please let me know!)

Charlene Avery 517.281.5019



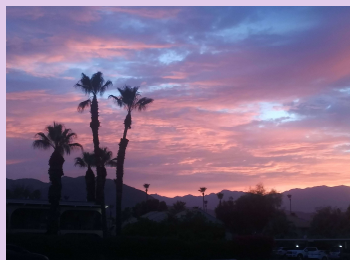
CONGREGATORS

Beloved Congregators ... Tentative plans to meet during July have been delayed to August. In the meantime, we are joyful that church services started back in our beautiful building on July 11 as we wear masks, sit in friend and family pods, quietly follow along and reflect on the hymn verses printed in the bulletin while enjoying the music as it is being played and sung by our music leader. Big changes that we will happily adapt to for the continued health and safety of our beloved Pastor Laura and young, unvaccinated children. In the meantime, we stay connected with caring phone calls back and forth. Our love continues flowing to all of you! ...Jim (517.627.7968), Sandy (517.420.2121) or Charlene (517.281.5019)


FORMER MEMBER UPDATE

We have been blessed to hear from one of our former members, Sarah Robinson, who moved to California! Sarah says:

I have really been enjoying living in Palm Desert with my sister and having my mother as my roommate. The weather is hot but beautiful! I miss my UCC church family dearly. I think about you guys often. I have started attending Saint Margaret's Episcopal Church with my sister, which is a wonderful pro-active church in the community. I have also included some pictures! The sunset with Palm Trees is a picture I took from the patio, The ocean is at ocean beach in San Diego, and the baby is my sister's baby, Lola :)



INCOME & EXPENSE BALANCE SHEET

| | Actual June 2021 | Actual Year-to-Date | Budget Year-to-Date | Annual Budget |  |
|----------|---------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|---|
| INCOME | \$ 9,736.00 | \$ 76,141.53 | \$ 67,857.00 | \$135,714.00 | |
| EXPENSES | <u>11,951.60</u> | <u>63,084.21</u> | <u>72,123.83</u> | <u>144,681.00</u> | |
| BALANCE | (\$ 2,215.60) | \$ 13,057.32 | (\$ 4,266.83) | (\$ 8,967.00) | |

The quarterly property insurance and half of our pledge to OCWM were paid in June. We will have a larger internet bill as it was necessary to upgrade the internet to be able to continue livestreaming. There will also be large bills for the month of July for the COVID cleaning of the church and the purchase of the necessary equipment for the livestreaming. We have begun our in-church services and with this equipment we will be able to continue livestreaming for the people who cannot attend in person. Your continued support will help this church continue our mission to this congregation and community.

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Carolyn Bernardi – 1st | Freida Schneeberger – 19th |
| Kay Turner – 2nd | Pastor Laura Miller-Purrenhage – 21st |
| Darlene Hockin – 7th | Lily Wilson – 23rd |
| Tim Lipsey – 9th | Sarah Robinson – 23rd |
| Stacy Sipes – 12th | Patty Moore – 26th |
| Hildegarde Oatman – 13th | Marty Shoemaker – 27th |
| Joy Leonard – 14th | Louise Wirbel – 30th |



SUNDAY SCHEDULE AUGUST 2021

| Date | August 1 10th Sun after Pentecost Green | August 8 11th Sun after Pentecost Green | August 15 12th Sun after Pentecost Green | August 22 13th Sun after Pentecost Green | August 29 14th Sun after Pentecost Green |
|------|--|--|---|--|---|
| Text | Gen 1:1 & 2:3 Eph 4:1-7 & 11-16 | Psalm 130 Eph 4:25-5:2 | Job 1: 13-19, 2:7-8, 11-13 Luke 22: 39-44 | 1 Kings 8:(1,6,10-11), 22-30, 41-43 Eph 6:10-20 | TBD TBD |

EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES

June 22, 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, Lynn Hart, Pastor Laura, Karen Holcomb-Merrill, Charlene Avery, Lisa Reed, Fay Schroeder, Kim Dible Glasser, Chris Clark, and Bil Turner. Also present, Chuck Byam.

Spiritual Reflection

Pastor Laura offered a prayer. We come to this meeting from a variety of other efforts and cares of the day and week, but we also bring hope and excitement. Help us to remember your living breath, to breathe out the concerns and breathe in the hope.

Open Forum

Chuck Byam brought two items to the Board; equipment needs and returning to in person worship. Regarding equipment, Kraig Westfall has put together a video and a package of equipment that he recommends for us. The package could be in the \$4000 area, but there is variability depending on the quality and quantity we choose. Chuck believes that it is very important that we buy quality and that we move forward ASAP. Craig will help us set up and start up. Regarding returning to in-person worship, Chuck recommends we return soon and without masks. If masks are required, that should be reviewed on a frequent basis.

Leah commented that the Tech Team is Kelly, Thea, Charlynn and David Brunner.

Consent Agenda

Lynn commented that one giving unit has recently converted from electronic funds transfer to writing checks. With that comment, the Consent Agenda was accepted.

Action and Discussion Items

Pastor's Report

Pastor Laura reported that worship preparation, pastoral care and Board and Committee meetings have taken the majority of her time. She noted that our church is an integral part of the surrounding community, and we should be aware that there have been very disruptive events at the GL School Board meetings recently. We might consider individually showing our support for our School Board Members. She has been asked to be a delegate to the July 2021 Synod meetings and she will attend virtually. She will be using compassionate leave for a family member late this month. She had planned on vacation at that specific time.

Technology Update

As mentioned above, there is a brief video explaining what we might want as equipment to live stream our worship service. There is a pressing need to move forward with decisions in this area. If it means extra meetings, those would certainly be appropriate. The Tech Team will meet with Kraig Westfall and recommend a plan of action to the Executive Board.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES continued

Resuming In Person Worship

Some members are anxious to resume in-person worship services, while many members can't or won't come to that type of service, and some members are not able to receive live streamed services. These factors suggest the possibility of two services. Pastor Laura has had in-depth discussions with her health care providers about how she might conduct services in the sanctuary, the risks involved for her, and she believes that with some accommodations that type of service seems possible. A lengthy discussion about many possibilities followed. The church would need to be thoroughly cleaned before inside services could resume. Leah is working on this. Moved by Bil, seconded by Chris Clark to aim for a July 11th in-person worship service, conditional on cleaning the church. Since cleaning the church is a pending issue, it was decided to vote on this motion by email, when that issue is resolved. Motion tabled.

Update to church use by groups

Several groups would like to resume their use of various parts of the church. The discussion on protocols included: wait until the church has been cleaned, each group should wipe down all surfaces used after their use, let all groups know that others are using the same spaces and those some may be immune-compromised and/or not masking. Moved by Fay, seconded by Charlene, that with the conditions noted above, outside groups are allowed to resume their use of church facilities. It was also moved to take down the "church closed" signs. Motion passed.

New Business

Pastor Laura vacation days

Pastor Laura's contract year with the Congregation ends on June 30. She is using Compassionate Leave during that last week, and hence will lose two vacation days. Moved by Karen, seconded by Charlene, that due to the extenuating circumstances of this particular situation, she be allowed to carry over those two vacation days into the next contract year. Motion passed.

Outreach payments.

Bil recommended that we make payments of half our budgeted amounts to OCWM and the Covenant Association. Fay agreed to make the payments.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM

The next Executive Board Meeting will be Tuesday, July 27, 2021 at 6:30 PM. (Very possibly a Zoom meeting)

Respectfully submitted,
Bil Turner, Church Clerk





August 2021



| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|-----------|-----------------------------|---|---------------------|-----------|----------------------------|
| 1 10th Sun after Pentecost 10:30am In-Person and Facebk Worship Service | 2 | 3 | 4 6pm AA 7:30pm Al-Anon 8pm AA | 5 8pm AA | 6 | 7 10am AA Women |
| 8 11th Sun after Pentecost 10:30am In-Person and Facebk Worship Service | 9 | 10 | 11 6pm AA 7:30pm Al-Anon 8pm AA | 12 8pm AA | 13 | 14 10am AA Women |
| 15 12th Sun after Pentecost 10:30am In-Person and Facebk Worship Service | 16 | 17 | 18 6pm AA 7:30pm Al-Anon 8pm AA | 19 8pm AA | 20 | 21 10am AA Women |
| 22 13th Sun after Pentecost 10:30am In-Person and Facebk Worship Service | 23 | 24 6:30pm Exec Bd | 25 6pm AA 7:30pm Al-Anon 8pm AA | 26 8pm AA | 27 | 28 10am AA Women |
| 29 14th Sun after Pentecost 10:30am In-Person and Facebk Worship Service | 30 | 31 | | | | |

Eaton County Department of Resource Recovery

RECYCLE-PALOOZA

AUGUST 21, 2021 9 am - 1 PM

*****REGISTRATION REQUIRED*****

LOCATION IS RELEASED UPON COMPLETION OF REGISTRATION
REGISTER ON OUR WEBSITE OR CALL (517) 543-3686

<http://www.eatoncounty.org/913/Recycling-Events>

ELECTRONICS: COMPUTER ACCESSORIES, CPUs, PRINTERS, FAX MACHINES, SCANNERS, TVs, CELL PHONES, LAPTOPS, CD PLAYERS, CAMCORDERS, VCRs, COPIERS, KITCHEN APPLIANCES, REMOTE CONTROLLED ITEMS, FANS, BLENDERS, HAIR DRYERS & CURLING IRONS, OR ANYTHING WITH A CORD! ****NO REFRIGERATORS, FREEZERS, DEHUMIDIFIERS, AIR CONDITIONERS, Large appliances, or Large exercise equipment****

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE: ACIDS & BASES, AEROSOLS (NO empty cans), ASBESTOS, ASPHALT & ROOFING tar, AUTOMOTIVE FLUIDS, Cleaners & POLISHES, CFL BULBS, FIRE EXTINGUISHERS, FLAMMABLES, FLEA COLLARS & SPRAYS, FLUORESCENT LIGHT BULBS, GLUES & CAULKS, HOUSEHOLD CLEANERS, MOTOR OIL & ANTIFREEZE, MERCURY & MERCURY CONTAINING ITEMS, PAINT, PAINT THINNERS, POOL CHEMICALS, SOLVENTS, VARNISHES, PESTICIDES, SHARPS (MUST BE IN A PUNCTURE-RESISTANT CONTAINER), WEED KILLERS, WOOD PRESERVATIVES.

MEDICATIONS: Leave in original container & cross out all personal information.

TIRES: Passenger tires only. **LIMIT OF 10 TIRES PER VEHICLE.**

*****FUNDING FOR SCRAP TIRE COLLECTION WAS MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH A STATE OF MICHIGAN EGLE SCRAP TIRE CLEANUP GRANT*****

PARTICIPANT RULES:

1. Events are for private (non-commercial) residents of Eaton county.
2. **Registration is required and your participation is important.** If cancellation is unavoidable, please provide 48 hours notice.
3. **NO refrigerators, freezers, dehumidifiers, air conditioners, large appliances, or large exercise equipment will be accepted.** Please visit our website for disposal options.
4. **\$10 suggested donation per TV or monitor.**
5. **Anything over 10 1-Gallon Cans of Paint will be charges \$1 per can.**
6. Due to public health and safety concerns, **YOU MUST REMAIN IN YOUR VEHICLE for the duration of the event.** Workers will retrieve your recyclables for you.
7. For the safety of everyone involved, **PLEASE WEAR A MASK** when interacting with others at this event.



For updated event information, cancelation notifications, or volunteer information visit: <http://www.eatoncounty.org/913/Recycling-Events>



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 Emergency Contact 517-374-0145
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First Congregational UCC Mission Statement

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.

| | | | |
|--------------------|-------|---|---|
| PASTOR'S KEYBOARD | 1 | <p style="text-align: center;">STAFF</p> <p>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</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS & BOARD CHAIRS</p> <p>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</p> |
| MEMBER SPOTLIGHT | 2 | | |
| CONGREGATORS | 3 | | |
| THOUGHTS & PRAYERS | 3 | | |
| MEMBER UPDATE | 4 | | |
| INCOME & EXPENSES | 4 | | |
| BIRTHDAYS | 4 | | |
| SUNDAY SCHEDULE | 4 | | |
| EXECUTIVE MINUTES | 5 & 6 | | |
| CALENDAR | 7 | | |