



THE CHURCH WINDOW

*November
2022*



FROM THE PASTOR'S KEYBOARD

Dear Ones,

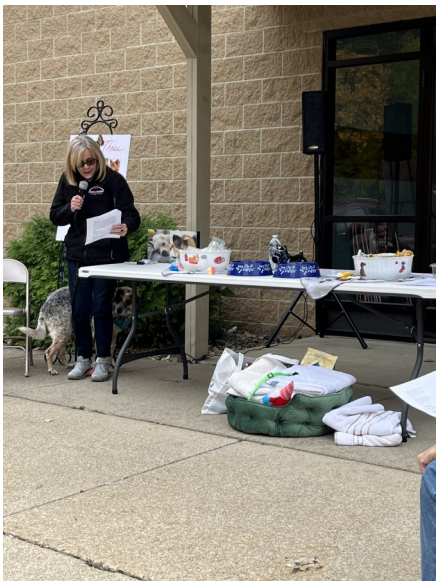
The seminary I attended is regarded as more socially conservative than the UCC. Considering how variable UCC churches are, I am not sure if this is true, but I can say that many of the students there were more socially conservative than I am. A short time after I started attending, one of our professors published a book about gender, sexuality, and the Bible in which he claimed that the Bible supports same-sex love. The book had come from his own journey back into scripture upon finding out that his son is gay. Immediately, there were calls on the seminary president to fire this professor. In order to promote honest and open dialogue, the president and the professor held a public discussion about their theology and their understanding of what the Bible says about gender and sexuality. The president openly disagreed with the professor, but he didn't fire him. This public discussion, in turn, promoted discussions among the students. What struck me was how loving and congenial our discussions were, despite some strong disagreements. We all tried so very hard to be reasonable, to avoid judgmental language, and to ask questions with caring curiosity. Our goal was to maintain our community and our fellowship in the face of forces that seemed to seek to divide us. Nevertheless, at the end of the term, some of the students left and moved on to seminaries that were openly antigay. Were these discussions the only reason why they left? Probably not, but the timing and their choice of new seminary were suggestive. I have been thinking of that story a lot recently as I watch what is happening to churches across the United States right now. The political divides in our country are moving into our churches, causing liberals and conservatives alike to leave their congregations. Some leave to seek more like-minded congregations, but many are ending up unchurched, without a faith community.

As you know, in our worship services, we have been putting together the pieces of the puzzle that is our mission as a church. I believe that there are few pieces to that puzzle that are the same for every church and I have preached about three of those so far: Every church worships God, learns about God, and offers fellowship to one another. Having just preached about fellowship, that story from seminary comes to mind again. As I write, the general election is about a week away. Many of us are terribly anxious about election day (Will there be violence at the polls? Will election deniers try to overturn this vote?), and about the outcome of the elections which could have life-altering impacts on our schools, on future elections, as well as on

the rights of women, people of color, and our LGBTQ+ siblings. And so I wonder, how might we support each other, provide fellowship and hope in these difficult times? Is there a place in the church for loving, open dialogues about political views? Is there a place where we can ask ourselves what scripture and our theology say about the issues, so that our votes can be guided by our faith? How do we maintain our community and fellowship, despite the forces moving in this country and this world that seem to seek to divide us?

I believe that we already know the answers to these questions. The people of this church have a strong commitment to one another, a commitment based on our love of God, neighbor and self. Our Open and Affirming process many years ago is a good example of that. The way we held conversations then, the way we approached one another with curiosity, forgiveness, and love, the way we sought theological grounding, the way we ultimately decided that what love looks like is a joyful welcome, a celebration of diversity, and open support of all of God's children—these can be a model for how we support one another now and how we have conversations now. So I invite us as we go into this election month to remember the positive take-aways from those times and, perhaps, use them as a model for how we can have difficult political conversations now. And, as always, let us be guided by the hand of the Holy Spirit, which seeks to bring us all into loving fellowship.

Photos from our Pet Blessing!



Introducing the
**Louise J. Wirbel
Journalism Scholarship**

Louise J. Wirbel spent her career working in journalism, from editor of the Grand Ledge Independent to trusted advisor to the staff of The Lookout, Lansing Community College's student newspaper. For more information on how to support this Scholarship, please go to the link below.



Thank-You !

<https://www.lcc.edu/foundation/givenow/wirbel.html>

CONGREGATORS

We have been enjoying the beautiful autumn colors throughout October...are they just the most brilliant ever! We look forward to talking about them and many other happenings since we last met. Next get together for lunch will be at Sophia’s restaurant on Tuesday, November 1, at 1pm. New friends are always welcome to join the ‘regulars!’ Let one of us know if you can attend!

Charlene (517.281.5019) or Sandy (517.420.2121)

WOMEN GATHERING OVER DEVOTIONS

We gathered on October 17, 2023 to enjoy our brown bag lunches and discussed the last six chapters of the next book will be “The Infinite Jeff, Part 1” by Will Holcomb.

The next meeting will be Monday, November 21, 2022. Bring your own lunch and meet us in the Fellowship Hall at noon. We have decided to continue the series of books by Will Holcomb. Therefore, we will be discussing the book, ‘The Infinite Jeff, Part 2” Chapters 1 through 33. This book may be purchased through Amazon or Barnes and Noble.

If you are thinking of joining us, just come and see what we are all about. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me: Fay Schroeder, at either (517) 627-2727 or fschroeder4200@yahoo.com.

SISTERS OF RUTH

Our November luncheon will be on November 14, 2022. We will meet at Red Robin at 12:30.

Income and Expense Report

	Actual	Actual	Budget	Annual
	September 2022	Year-to-Date	Year-to-Date	Budget
INCOME	\$ 20,090.54	\$125,191.90	\$ 98,907.00	\$131,876.00
EXPENSES	<u>12,204.13</u>	<u>109,541.34</u>	<u>113,119.50</u>	<u>152,326.00</u>
BALANCE	\$ 7,886.41	\$ 15,650.56	(\$ 14,212.50)	(\$ 20,450.00)

Blessings come in many forms. Our church is blessed by the amazing generosity of our congregation by your donations and pledges. Your continued support through your pledges for the 2023 year will allow us to share our ministry with all of you and our community.

Special Birthday Party!

There will be a special birthday party for Joan Perry on November 13, 2022. The party will take place after worship!

Ways to Keep In Touch with the Church!

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/uccgrandledge>

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcmU3DDWy-JbJ04TgjLtgWg>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/grandledgeucc/>
<https://grandledgeucc.org/>

EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES
First Congregational United Church of Christ – Grand Ledge
Executive Board Meeting Minutes September 27, 2022

Call to Order:

Moderator, Leah Horn, called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

To accommodate a Zoom meeting, it was held in the choir room with 10 members in attendance including one member via Zoom.

Board Members present were: Charlene Avery, Gary Cypher, Ron Erskine, Lynn Hart, Karen Holcomb- Merrill, Leah Horn, Pastor Laura Miller-Purrenhage, Mary Lou Prevost, Fay Schroeder and Kelly Stuible-Clark who attended via Zoom.

Excused Members:, Kim Dible-Glasser and Thea Oatman.

Spiritual Reflection:

Leah began with a prayer.

Open Forum: No one was present.

Consent Agenda:

All items were accepted as submitted. Pastor Laura added that she will be providing substitute pastoral care during October and November for someone out for surgery.

Action and Discussion Items:

Update of Call Agreement Language Regarding Hours of Work:

Karen reported that she is in the process of updating Pastor Laura’s call agreement in accordance with the decision of the Board at the August meeting, to change her hours of work from 20 to 25 to a 23 hour work week; and to change the language going forward concerning her salary and housing allowance to reflect any changes which occur with the budget.

Possible Bystander Training Cost and Update:

Kelly summarized her meeting with the representative from “Right To Be” for the bystander training. This 60 to 90 minute training is all virtual which can be conducted in a group setting and could include people who would tune in from home as well. We could invite an unlimited number of other churches and community members to attend and possibly share the discounted cost which is \$1,450 for 60 minutes and \$1,600 for the 90 minute presentation. It would require 6 weeks lead time to set up the training session which could possibly be held in February. This item will be tabled until the October meeting for further discussion.

Proposed Triangulation Training at October Meeting:

This type of training is beneficial as a problem-solving tool whenever one person complains to another about a third person. This type of gossip happens in literally every church, which can be very damaging. It is recommended by the Pastor-Parish Committee that this type of training be conducted by Pastor Laura in October. Staff members have already had this training. It was decided that all of the mem-

EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES (CONT.)

bers of the other boards will be invited to participate in this training which is scheduled for the October 25 meeting from 6:30 to 7:00 p.m. Leah will send an e-mail to everyone.

Stewardship Campaign for 2022:

The Stewardship Committee met and the theme for this year is “We are all pieces of the puzzle”. Pat Reed is working on a logo which will be a picture of the church in a puzzle form. There will be four people presenting the Stewardship Moments with the kickoff scheduled for October 16. The first person will be Julie Wilkinson, Karen will be on the 23rd, Jim Robinson will speak on the 30th and either Greg or Susan Elbin will speak on November 6. Stewardship Sunday will be November 13.

Proposed New Sunday Morning Announcements:

Leah sent out an e-mail with two possible announcements for consideration. The first one concerned limiting announcements during worship to those pertaining to activities and events that our congregation is directly participating in, and encouraging those specifically political in nature to be discussed before or after the service. The second announcement is related to asking people to mask while in the building if they are experiencing any symptoms similar to allergies and the common cold. After a lengthy discussion, a motion was made by Mary Lou to disregard the use of the first announcement and only use the second announcement concerning the wearing of masks. This was seconded by Karen. The motion passed with one nay and one abstention.

Worship Questions:

Passing of Offering Plate: After discussing whether or not to begin passing the plate, it was decided since people are so spread out in the sanctuary, it would be best to continue the current procedure of placing it at the entrance of the sanctuary.

Coffee Hour: Several people have mentioned that they miss the fellowship and being able to talk to each other over coffee after the service. Also, coffee hour allows the opportunity to sit down with visitors to talk with in a more personal and welcoming way. After much discussion, it was decided that we would try having coffee hour every week, but keeping it simple. Such as, the church would supply store-bought cookies and regular and decaf coffee and pay for it out of hospitality. The host/hostess could prepare coffee and juice along with placing the cookies on a tray to serve.

Services on December 25th: Congregational Life expressed concern that because we were having a Christmas Eve service, there may not be any attendance on Christmas morning. They were leaning toward having an all on-line service that day. During our discussion, there was concern expressed by a few about not having the church open and holding a service on Christmas Day. Fay made the motion to have a service on Christmas Day and if we can stream it we will. Seconded by Ron. Motion passed with one abstention. Leah will check with the Sunday staff members to learn who will be available.

Grand Ledge Chamber of Commerce Clergy Meetings:

The Chamber of Commerce holds meetings for community leaders and clergy twice a year which allows the community to learn about your church. For instance, we are having a pet blessing and if we

EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES (CONT.)

let the Chamber know this, they can get this event information to the public. Both Chris and Gary attend these meetings and Gary volunteered themselves to represent our church. The Pet Blessing flyer is almost ready and Gary will get it to the Chamber prior to the event.

Updated Pastor Responsibilities Discussion:

This item has been tabled until the October meeting. All Executive Board members are asked to review the Ministries of the Church list prior to the meeting.

Miscellaneous Updates:

Grounds Work: The clean-up of the area which was created from the repair of the church sign has been completed. The removal of the tree is scheduled for September 29.

Ceiling Fan Installation: The delivery of the fans had been pushed back, but it looks like installation may be happening fairly soon.

Kids Hope Coordinator and Mentoring Program: Leah reported that she did not have a strong response to this outreach on Sunday. The program may have to wait until a future time when we could try again to get volunteers for the program.

Sandy did receive a nice monetary donation towards the effort she is making with Hayes school. Ron read a note from her that said there is a great need for personal care items for the children, and a need to provide Christmas bags for children who are homeless and living in hotels. She asked if the church could do a fund-raiser for GLEAP which has a need for food, clothing and housing expenses.

Outreach thought that they should not wait any longer to begin a collection of personal items which are needed now. They will make an announcement to the congregation and place a box for donations in the narthex. Ron asked if there were any endowment funds available. He was told that there are two separate funds available for Outreach to use. He will complete the necessary form and get with Frieda.

Bil Turner is organizing a Blood Bank to be held the Monday after Thanksgiving. Ron plans to help with this. They are looking for volunteers who will pass out cookies and juice.

Volunteer Nursery Caregiver List:

There is an article going into the Thursday Pause asking for nursery volunteers who would be required to be screened through I-Chat. They would serve only if there is a need. If it proves that the need is a continual one, we would try to hire someone to fill this position.

Pastor Laura's attendance at Michigan Pilgrimage:

There was an e-mail vote for Pastor Laura to attend a Michigan Pilgrimage as part of her continuing education which was approved by the Board members.

Rescheduled Executive Board Meeting for November

The Ecumenical Thanksgiving service is the same night as our normal meeting time. Because of the Board members schedules, the November meeting has been moved to **6:30 p.m., November 15, 2022.**

Parking Lot Repairs:

Gary discussed the repair of the blacktop at the entrance to the church as well as the strip which was removed for the electrical replacement for the sign. Because we are getting late in the season for



EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES (CONT.)

blacktop repair, it was suggested that Gary obtain a price for repairing both areas and sharing the information to the Board in the form of an e-mail for voting purposes.

Preparedness/Emergency Plan:

Because of the lateness of the evening, it was decided that we would only deal with the initial concern which recommends locking the back door of the church during the service. This was brought to the attention of the Board as a result of the August meeting of Congregational Life where the concern was raised. After researching this, it is recommended that the back door should be locked at the beginning of the service, which could keep an intruder from entering the building without being seen, gaining access to the sanctuary as well as the nursery and Sunday school rooms. It is recommended that the Head Usher would lock the door when the service begins and place a sign on the door which may state: For Safety Reasons, the doors are locked. We are happy to welcome you at the Front Entrance. After discussion, a motion was made by Ron that all doors would be locked 10 minutes after the service begins, and someone would be up in front to keep an eye on things in case people come in late. Charlene seconded. After further discussion, Ron made a friendly amendment to his motion that persons serving as ushers and greeters will need a training for this new procedure which will become effective November 1, 2022. There was a second to the friendly amendment. Motion passed.

The next Board meeting will be Tuesday, October 25, 2022, at 6:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectively submitted,
Mary Lou Prevost, Church Clerk

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: Darlene 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., Marty S, Maryann, Patricia R., Sarah B., Jenna P., Ron, Katy R, Sue C., Caieya C., Ashley R., Eric, Heather and their families, Lee W., Dan B., Phillip C., Ann E., and Denny E. *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.*

November 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Congregators meetings, 1pm at Sophias	2	3	4	5 10am AA Women
6 10:30am In-Person and Facebook Worship Service All Saints Day	7 6:30PM Grand Ringers Practice	8	9 6pm AA 7:30pm AI-Anon 8pm AA	10 6pm Chancel Choir Practice	11	12 10am AA Women
13 9:00 Christian Ed Meeting 10:30am In-Person and Facebook Worship Service Stewardship Sunday Birthday Party for Joan Perry after Worship.	14 6:30PM Grand Ringers Practice Sisters of Ruth, 12:30pm - Red Robin	15 6:30pm Executive Board Meeting	16 6pm AA 7:30pm AI-Anon 8pm AA	17 6pm Chancel Choir Practice	18	19 10am AA Women
20 10:30am In-Person and Facebook Worship Service Decorating for Thanksgiving	21 6:30PM Grand Ringers Practice WGOD , 12pm Fellowship Hall	22	23 6pm AA 7:30pm AI-Anon 8pm AA	24 Office Closed due to Thanksgiving Holiday.	25	26 10am AA Women
27 10:30am In-Person and Facebook Worship Service Hanging of the Greens	28 6:30PM Grand Ringers Practice	29	30 6pm AA 7:30pm AI-Anon 8pm AA			

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

DATE	November 6	November 13	November 20	November 27	
THEME	All Saints Day	Stewardship Sunday: We Are the Church To- gether	Serving God's World	Hope	
TEXT	Ephesians 1:11-22	Exodus 18:13-23 Corinthians 12:4-14	Isaiah 58:1-9 James 2:14-18	Isaiah 2:1-5 Romans 13:11-14	
HEAD USHER	Kim Dible	Leah Horn	Cheryl Mattson	Lisa Reed	
GREETER	Connie Dible	Sandy Sipes	Karen Walker	Pat Reed	
LITURGIST	Bil Turner	Rich Brown	Ron Erskine	Sue Sackett	
SOUNDBOARD	Charlynn Walker	Charlynn Walker	Charlynn Walker	Charlynn Walker	
VIRTUAL COORDINATOR	David Wee	David Wee	David Wee	David Wee	
HYMN SINGER	Choir	Choir	Choir	Choir	



November BIRTHDAYS		
Virvinia Schiefelbein	1st	Anniversary of ordination as Minister
Jack Bernardi	3rd	
Nathaniel Oliver	12th	
Brandon Frost	17th	
Sue Sackett	19th	
Chris Clark	21th	
Karen Holcomb-Merrill	29th	
Terry Bouck	29th	



First

Congregational

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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	1-2	STAFF Rev. Dr. Laura Miller-Purrenhage Larry Patterson Office Administrator Brandon Frost, Choir Director Carol Orsborn, Bell Choir Director Chuck Byam, Organist & Accompanist Rev. Demphna Krikorian, Christian Educator Ben Sackett, Custodian Rev. John Baumgartner, Pastor Emeritus	EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS & BOARD CHAIRS Leah Horn, Moderator Karen Holcomb-Merrill, Vice Moderator Mary Lou Prevost, Clerk Fay Schroeder, Treasurer Lynn Hart, Financial Secretary Charlene Avery, Member-at-Large Thea Oatman, Member-at-Large Gary Cypher, Member-at-Large Kelly Stuible-Clark, Christian Education Kim Dible, Congregational Life
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Louise Wirbel Scholarship	4		
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