



THE CHURCH WINDOW

September
2023



FROM THE PASTOR'S KEYBOARD

Dear Ones,

As we talk together about who we are as a church while contemplating our bivocational ministry together, a major topic continues to come up: We are an inclusive church focused on radical hospitality. For this reason, we are focusing on the concept of “One Big Table” for our Rally Sunday, on September 10 and the theme will continue in October and November so we can explore the many ways that we are One Big Family sharing One Big Table. “One Big Table” reminds us that God’s table is open, welcoming, and affirming of all people. The table is both a literal reference to the sacrament of Communion and a symbol of our life together. First, we know from the many stories of scripture that Jesus invites everyone to the table, especially those who the rest of the community leaves out. Jesus goes out of his way to invite Samaritans, tax collectors (who were widely disliked at the time), the poor and needy, the sick, others regarded as impure, Gentiles...the list goes on and on. He makes it clear that God’s table, the table of grace, love, and salvation is meant for every one of us. And so in our church, we stress this radical inclusivity, love, and affirmation.

On Rally Sunday, we will celebrate our One Big Table in a couple of ways: First, our worship service will be intergenerational—a service for both children and adults. Second, we will hold Communion during the service (even though it is the second Sunday of the month). Third, we will have a taco bar luncheon after the service, provided by Kamara and Ashley. They are celebrating their one-year wedding anniversary that day and asked if they could celebrate with us by providing the meal! We are very, very grateful to them!

As a part of our Rally Sunday tradition, we also would ask you all to bring a small travel

treasure to share with someone. These items should be small enough to fit inside a paper lunch bag and also very inexpensive or free. We ask that they be something you found during the summer, whether you traveled, worked at home, or worked outside of your home. Please also include a small note, explaining what the treasure is and what you were doing when you came across it. If you are worshipping with us from home, please consider dropping off your travel treasure in the blue bin outside of the church before Sept 10. Let me know that you've dropped something off, so I can make arrangements with you to get a treasure to you. Everyone there in person will get a travel treasure during the luncheon and we can share the stories with each other over the meal. We hope that you will join us on September 10 and that you will invite others to join us, too!

Many blessings,

Pastor Laura

SISTERS OF RUTH

The first gathering of Sisters of Ruth for this program year will be September 11, 2023. We will meet at Flour Child Bakery for lunch at 12:30 p.m. and discuss our plans for this year. Please join us to see what we are all about.

Special Mementos for Rally Sunday

As our congregation plans summer travel adventures, we encourage you to bring back special mementos for our Travel Treasures event that we'll hold on Rally Sunday. These items are meant to be free/found or low cost and should be able to fit in a paper lunch sack; we will then trade them so we can learn more about each others' travels. We look forward to seeing all of the exciting places that we all visit this summer!

WOMEN GATHERING OVER DEVOTIONS (WGOD)

Women Gathering Over Devotions is a group of members and friends meeting for lunch and discussing a chosen book or devotions. There is not a chosen book as of the printing of this newsletter, so if you have a good suggestion bring it to the lunch or let a member of WGod know the name and author. Many times our discussions enlightens our lives.

We will meet for lunch on Monday, September 18, 2023. It is a brown bag lunch, so please bring your own. We will have coffee and tea. Since there is not a chosen book, bring a devotion, poem, or song. Come be part of the group and discussion.

Income and Expense Report

	Actual July, 2023	Actual Year-to-Date	Budget Year-to-Date	Annual Budget
INCOME	\$ 10,218.02	\$ 89,299.81	\$ 75,854.33	\$130,036.00
EXPENSES	<u>9,124.34</u>	<u>90,297.59</u>	<u>94,052.58</u>	<u>162,783.00</u>
BALANCE	\$ 1,093.68	(\$ 997.78)	(\$18,198.25)	(\$ 32,747.00)

While we strive to reduce our expenses and deficit, we need to remember that the winter brings on higher expenses. Continued support through your generous donations will build our income to meet the expenses throughout the year.

Neighbors in Need Special Mission Offering

In 2023, the Neighbors in Need “**BEHOLD!**” theme continues. This year’s focus is on environmental justice. Plastics, electronics, and other non-compostable wastes are being shipped across, and even tossed into, our waterways, launched into space, as well as buried in landfills. As people of faith, we believe these egregious acts are sinful and unholy. We must be better stewards of our planet!

One-third of the offering supports Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). The remaining funds support Justice and Witness Ministries to provide grants to UCC churches and organizations as well as supporting a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects.

We will collect this special offering on October 1, 2023, as part of World Communion Sunday, contributions to this offering can be noted with ‘Neighbors’ on the memo line of a check, or marking a collection envelope. We thank you for your support and generosity.

COMMUNITY MEAL THANK YOU!

There will not be another community meal until Wednesday, September 6...but in the meantime, we want to say a **HUGE THANK YOU** to **Lon and Sheila Wilkinson** for helping set up the day before many meals, and to **Gary and Kathy Burt** for faithfully volunteering to serve and clean up. Another to **Gary Cypher** for his serving help when I asked him at the last minute...to **Kim Dible** for helping prepare a meal early on when we were all finding our way around an unfamiliar kitchen, where certain pots and utensils were, how to keep things up to Health Department standards. We partnered with Trinity Episcopal Church to cook one meal and are scheduled to do another in November. We will be gently nudging some of you to volunteer once meals get rolling again in September. We’d really like FCUCC and TEP to cook at least three meals next calendar year. So, rest up your cooking skills, you may be hearing from one of us in the fall ☐ Charlene and Sandy

CONGREGATORS

Our Congregators have decided to take the summer off and will look forward to meeting again the first Tuesday in September! ... Charlene (517.281.5019) and Sandy (517.420.2121)

Lunch and Learn

As the Education Committee works to broaden the scope of our educational offerings at FCGL, we're launching a "Lunch and Learn" series this church year. These are meant to be an opportunity for our church members to share knowledge or to host/facilitate conversations on topics that interest you. Part of what makes our congregation so special is the varied experiences and unique perspectives of our members and friends! Participants will bring their own lunch and the format will be very casual. The dates we hope to hold our Lunch and Learn series are Oct 8, Dec 10, Jan 14, Feb 11, and April 14. If you would like to host a date or have questions, please reach out to Kelly at kstuibs@gmail.com.



🎵 🎵 **“TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALL GAME”** 🎵

We took ourselves out to the ball game on Saturday evening, August 19. Our team won after a rocky start! We had a smaller crowd than first expected as summer is busy for today’s families. But seven from our church plus five friends had a great time watching the Lansing Lugnuts beat the Great Lakes Loons 7-5. It was a perfect summer evening to watch the close game, with some great plays including one amazing lonnnng throw from the wall at right field to third base for an out! We yelled almost as loud as other churches when FCUCC came up on the big screen as they announced churches attending throughout the evening! We will for sure plan to do this again next summer! ...Charlene Avery

Community Meal

The Grand Ledge Ministerial Association wants to start having a **monthly community meal**. Rev. Ron Brooks, pastor at Grand Ledge First United Methodist Church, held the first organizational meeting on November 22. A very enthusiastic group of people from five area churches decided to have a meal at GLFUMC on the first Wednesday each month, **starting February 1**, with games and fellowship time to follow the meal. The organizing committee took a break over the busy Advent season, but now we are going full speed ahead to be ready for the first meal on February 1. We are meeting next week to talk over details and will have more answers to all our questions...and yours!

Five Grand Ledge area churches are supporting the meal: GLFUMC, Wacousta Community UMC, Delta Mills UMC, Trinity Episcopal Church, and our church. We hope to reach families living in hotels, homeless kids, low-income families, anyone who is hungry in our community and invite them to come for a simple, hot and delicious meal. Grand Ledge school counsellors are helping to identify families that we hope will come to the meal and families whose children receive food through Blessings in a Backpack. And, of course, the meal will be open to anyone who wants to come from our community. The attached flyer will soon be all over the community and distributed through the schools.

Meijer is donating \$250 each month, which will pay for a large portion of the food, and will have employees fill some of the volunteer slots!! **The Lions Club** is donating \$300 for paper products. **Flour Child** is donating cookies for the first meal! We have such supportive **Grand Ledge community partners!!**

Below is a list of monthly volunteers needed. Remember that four churches besides FCUCC have people to fill the positions.

One person willing to get ServSafe Certified for the kitchen; GLFUMC already has one person but we would like another. This training would be done through the Eaton County Health Department.

Four is the magic number needed for each of these time slots:

- 2-4 pm a day head – set up tables and chairs
- 3-5:30 pm - prep and prepare the simple meal
- 5:30-6 pm - serve the food
- 6-7:00 pm - clean-up

We know many of our church families will want to volunteer to help fill these spots. **You would work perhaps every fifth month or so. Or more often if you want to. It's up to you. And perhaps some month we will try to fill all slots from our church families; otherwise, you'll have a chance to meet people from other churches and an opportunity to make a new friend!**

Just as we were about to send this out, we received the SignUpGenius link for the February volunteer signup: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0D45AEAC2BA6F8C43-community>. Please let Charlene know if you have questions about the signup but feel free to use it. Don't be discouraged if positions are full...there will be sign up opportunities soon for the next meal or two. We will also put the signup link in Thursday Pause for future meals. She would like to keep a list of people interested in volunteering as we go through the next few months so please let her know.

Please get in touch with either one of us with your questions...and it's never too early to volunteer! □

Charlene Avery 517.281.5019 and Sandy Sipes 517.420.2121

Date	Greeter	Head Usher	Liturgist	Fresh Perspectives	Homily	Soundboard
10/1	Connie Dible	Kim Dible	Vickie Korroch	Pastor Laura	Pastor Laura	
10/8	Gary Burt	Kathy Burt	Lisa Reed	Demphna Krilorian	Pastor Laura	
10/15	Erica Oliver	Nate Oliver	Ron Erskine	Demphna Krikorian	Pastor Laura	
10/22	Bil Turner	Fay Schroeder	Sue Sackett	Demphna Krikorian	Pastor Laura	
10/29	Kelly and Nora	Susan Elbin	Bil Turner	Brenda Foltz	Brenda Foltz	

Prayers, Cards, and Support

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.

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 on our prayer list: Darlene B, Ben B, Phillip C, Caiyea C, Sue C., Becky R., Gerry A. . *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.*



EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES
First Congregational United Church of Christ – Grand Ledge
Executive Board Meeting Minutes July 25, 2023

Call to Order

Moderator Leah Horn called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

Board Members present: Charlene Avery, Gary Cypher, Kim Dible-Glasser, Lynn Hart, Karen Holcomb-Merrill, Leah Horn, Pastor Laura, Thea Oatman, Fay Schroeder, Kelly Stuible-Clark and Bil Turner

Spiritual Reflection

Pastor Laura led a discussion on what items the Executive Board might want to focus on in the future. The Board made suggestions that included: Bi-vocational ministry, Congregational engagement, Accessibility, Greater in person attendance, White supremacy free zone, Sabbatical preparations, Deliberate involvement of more individuals, Evaluate how we approach things, Making our progressive stances better known in the community, Stronger social media presence. The Board will discuss these possibilities.

Open Forum

No one was present for this item.

Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda was accepted.

Action and Discussion Items

Email Votes

The Board voted yes on giving the old chairs to the Lions for disposal.

Planning & Publicity for Bystander Training.

The training will be at 6 PM on September 5th. It may be possible to attend by Zoom. Please send any Community Group and Service Group contact info to Kelly. We may allow attendance from our Sanctuary. Info should get into the Newsletter.

Possible Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Purchase.

The Grand Ledge Fire Dept has a contract with Stryker for AED supplies. Stryker is somewhat more expensive than Zole, but there are advantages to being synched to the GLFD. A device will require new batteries every five years. We have all but about \$500 committed as donations. The \$500 could come from memorial Funds. It was moved by Karen, seconded by Lynn to purchase the Stryker AED and to take \$500 from Memorial Funds. Motion passed.

Emergency Plan Updates.

The AED and its uses should be added to the Emergency Plan.



EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES (CONT.)

Time Off Policy for Staff

Thea and Fay have worked on this and will send out what they have. The Board had a general discussion about how to handle requests for time off without pay.

Misc. Updates

- Pastoral Sabbatical in 2024. Pastor Laura discussed with the Board that she has applied for a grant to study Women Contemplatives in Europe during her sabbatical. There would be no change of schedule. If she is successful, she may need to attend training in February. She would plan on offering classes about her studies on this topic after her sabbatical.
- Vitality Day. This event is planned for 10AM - 2PM on September 30 at the St John's UCC in Owosso. It will likely be a hybrid event. Leah will arrange for publicity in the Thursday Pause and in the Newsletter.
- Parking Lot. Some work on the weeds has begun. Painting will follow, but the heat has caused a temporary pause.
- Church Roles and Ministries. This group has not reconvened yet.
- Handicapped Signs. Chris Cypher will be repainting them.
- Kitchen Repairs. Lynn let the Board know that \$6850 has been pledged and/or donated.

New Business

Family Fun Day

Kelly informed the Board that this event is scheduled for August 27th. Outdoor activities, games and snacks are planned. She will arrange for publicity with Larry.

Balls for the Basketball Hoop.

This item was discussed and it was decided to put the tub of balls outside by the back door.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM

The next Executive Board Meeting will be Tuesday, August 22nd, 2023, at 6:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Bil Turner, Church Clerk

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/>

September 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 10am AA Women
3 10:30am In-Person and Facebook Wor- ship Service	4 Office Closed due to Labor Day.	5 Bystander Training— 6pm	6 6pm AA 7:30pm Al- Anon 8pm AA Community	7 Choir—6pm 8pm AA	8 Square Danc- ers	9 10am AA Women
10 Rally Sunday: One Big Table 10:30am In- Person and Face- book Worship Service Fellowship: Bring Travel Treasures	11	12	13 6pm AA 7:30pm Al- Anon 8pm AA Rest in the rush 5-7pm	14 Choir—6pm 8pm AA	15	16 10am AA Women
17 10:30am In-Person and Facebk Worship Service Baptism Fellowship	18	19	20 6pm AA 7:30pm Al- Anon 8pm AA	21 Choir—6pm 8pm AA	22 Square Danc- ers	23 10am AA Women
24 10:30am In-Person and Facebook Wor- ship Service Confirmation Information Mtg	25	26 6:30pm Ex- ecutive Board Meet- ing	27 6pm AA 7:30pm Al- Anon 8pm AA	28 Choir—6pm 8pm AA	29 Square Danc- ers	30 10am AA Women

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

DATE	Sept. 3	Sept. 10	Sept. 17	Sept. 24	
THEME	Synod Resolution: Guns to Gardens	Intergenerational Service Rally Sunday: One Big Table	Baptism		
TEXT	Isaiah 2:2-4 NT: Romans 12: 9-21	Isaiah 56:4-8 (Pastor's translation) Luke 14:1-14 (pastor's translation)	Isaiah 43:1 Matthew 19:14		
HEAD USHER	Susan Elbin	Chris Cypher	Tina Lamer	Cheryl Mattson	
GREETER	Lynn Hart	Sandy Sipes	Charlene Avery	Chuck Byam	
LITURGIST	Greg Elbin	Marcia Kent	Rich Brown	Leah Horn	
SOUNDBOARD	Charlynn Walker	Charlynn Walker	Charlynn Walker	Charlynn Walker	
VIRTUAL COORDINATOR	David Wee	David Wee	David Wee	David Wee	



September BIRTHDAYS

Linda Gooley	3rd
Alex Reed	4th
Chuck Byam	6th
Kay Kulp	9th
Julie Wilkinson	12th
Thea Oatman Oatman	13th
Ellen Robinson	18th
Charlene Avery	20th
Sue Ann Cole	25th
Connie Dible	29th
Pat Reed	29th



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First Congregational UCC Mission Statement		
<i>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.</i>		
PASTOR'S KEYBOARD	1-2	<p style="text-align: center;">STAFF</p> <p>Rev. Dr. Laura Miller-Purrenhage Larry Patterson Office Administrator Brandon Frost, Choir Director Carol Orsborn, Bell Choir Director Dr. James Sullivan, Organist & Accompanist Rev. Demphna Krikorian, Christian Educator Ben Sackett, Custodian Rev. John Baumgartner, Pastor Emeritus</p> <p style="text-align: center;">EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS & BOARD CHAIRS</p> <p>Leah Horn, Moderator Thea Oatman, Vice Moderator Bil Turner, Clerk Fay Schroeder, Treasurer Lynn Hart, Financial Secretary Charlene Avery, Member-at-Large Karen Holcomb-Merrill, Member-at-Large Gary Cypher, Member-at-Large Kelly Stuible-Clark, Christian Education Kim Dible, Congregational Life Ron Erskine, Outreach Board</p>
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