



THE CHURCH WINDOW

October
2023



FROM THE PASTOR'S KEYBOARD

Dear Ones,

Throughout the month of October, we will be talking about Communion—it's various meanings, what it inspires us to do, and who it inspires us to be. Many Christians regard the Communion meal as central to the Christian community, since it symbolizes Christ's gift of self to us, God's grace, and God's love for us. In many ways, Communion is why I am in the UCC. You see, when I was in college, I started to consider converting to a different Christian faith in order to gain more acceptance into the family that would eventually become my in-laws. At the time, I figured that Christians basically all believed the same thing, so officially converting to one form of it shouldn't be a problem. So I attended a Palm Sunday service and was shocked to find that I was not allowed to take Communion with them. Why, I wondered, would any faith community leave me out of something so sacred? A huge argument ensued between me and my friends I had attended the service with. They claimed that Communion was a sign of *inclusion* in the community, so I would certainly be allowed to take part once I had converted. I argued that not letting me take it now meant that I was being *excluded* from that community and, in my understanding of their theology, out of God's grace. Knowing how terrible I felt at that moment, understanding the depth of alienation and loss, I decided that I couldn't convert. I didn't want to be part of excluding people like that. I wanted and needed a community that focused on *inclusion*, so I stayed in the UCC.

Once my youngest child and I were diagnosed with celiac disease, we went through a similar situation. No church that we attended provided gluten free Communion bread safely. Since even tiny amounts of wheat (like dust or crumbs) can make us dangerously sick, we couldn't join in the meal unless we were 100% sure that any gluten free Communion bread was prepared in a separate space, on separate equipment that had been fully cleaned, and with hands that had not touched regular bread (or, at least, that had been thoroughly washed with soap and water) before touching our gluten free bread. That's a lot to ask and a lot to have to check on. To avoid having to put Communion planners and servers through that incredible stress, and to avoid having to ask a thousand questions every Communion Sunday, the safest thing for everyone like us is for Communion to be entirely gluten free for everyone. Again, many churches are unwilling to make this change. They like their

small morsel of bread to taste good and they felt that gluten free bread tasted bad. In some other faiths, their theology requires that the bread contain some small amount of wheat. So we went through many Sundays, watching others take part in a meal that was supposed to connect us to one another and to God, and wishing that we could be a part of it, but excluded. I can't fully explain how painful it is to be left out of this central meal, but every time it happens, it's as if the church we are visiting is telling us that they aren't interested in being in community with people like us, and that God's grace is not for people with our medical disability. That tiny piece of bread carries a powerful symbolism.

Eventually, my home church switched to serving only gluten free bread. The joy, the thanksgiving, the connection we felt understanding that the rest of the church was willing to make that sacrifice, that they thought us important enough to make that sacrifice...I cannot explain what that felt like, except to say that we felt like we had come home.

This meal, this central meal--how we serve it, what it consists of, what we say about it, how we share it, and *that* we share it—it all matters. It sends a message about what we believe and value, about *who* we value. It sends a message about who we are as a community, who we believe God is calling us to be, and about what we believe about God's grace, love, and inclusion. That is why our church works as hard as we do to accommodate all allergies, all abilities, all needs regarding alcohol content in our Communion. We truly want to include everyone in our community, and we hope that in this small act, everyone can feel that they, too, have come home.

Goodbye and Thank you!

Hello! I wanted to take a moment to thank you all for being so kind and welcoming during my time here. While short, I have enjoyed every moment of working with this community. If you would like to swing by before I leave, my last day will be October 5, 2023. Thank you all for giving me this chance! - Larry

SISTERS OF RUTH

The Sisters of Ruth gathered for our first luncheon on September 11, 2023 at Flour Child Bakery. We discussed our two community projects for this program year – The Baby Jesus Tree in December and the collection of personal care items for the packets for S.I.R.E.N. in April. More will be in the newsletter and the Thursday Pause as the projects get closer.

Our next luncheon is on October 9, 2023 at Aggie Mae's. We will meet at 12:30 p.m. for lunch and conversation. Please join us.

WOMEN GATHERING OVER DEVOTIONS (WGOD)

Women Gathering Over Devotions met for lunch on Monday, September 18, 2023, in the Fellowship Hall. We each brought our own lunch and had a great discussion. We also decided to read the book "Tired of Apologizing for a Church I don't Belong To" by Lillian Daniel. She is a UCC minister. The book can be purchased through Amazon or as an ebook.

For the October 16, 2023, meeting, we will meet in the Fellowship Hall at noon and bring our own lunch. The discussion will be "Part 1" (through chapter 6) of the book. You are welcomed to join us.

Income and Expense Report

	Actual	Actual	Budget	Annual
	August, 2023	Year-to-Date	Year-to-Date	Budget
INCOME	\$ 7,758.05	\$ 97,057.86	\$ 86,690.67	\$130,036.00
EXPENSES	<u>8,088.06</u>	<u>98,259.07</u>	<u>107,488.67</u>	<u>162,783.00</u>
BALANCE	(\$ 330.01)	(\$ 1,201.21)	(\$ 20,798.00)	(\$ 32,747.00)

As summer ends and winter begins, the expenses will increase. Now that school has begun and we are back from most vacations, it is time to catch up on your pledge if you need to by dropping it in the collection plate or mailing it to the church. It is a wonderful blessing to give.

On behalf of Christian Education:

This church year, the Board of Christian Education wants to learn from you! We are creating a series of "Lunch and Learn" sessions where members and friends can share information and facilitate conversations about topics of their choice. These can be directly related to our church life or can be something that you are passionate about. These Lunch and Learn sessions will be very informal- if you'd like to attend, pack a lunch and hang out after service.

Our first Lunch and Learn session will be on Sunday, October 8, and will be a reflection on the Bystander Intervention Training that took place in early September. Led by attendees of the event, we'll share resources, discuss what we learned, and then talk about ways we can implement it into our daily lives (and maybe even do some demonstrations!).

If you have any questions or would like to host a Lunch and Learn, please contact Kelly Stuible-Clark at kstuibs@gmail.com

Interfaith Opportunity

The Foglio Speaker Series on Spirituality (<https://foglio.cal.msu.edu>) is thrilled to announce the following in person event for our 2023 Annual Keynote dedicated to exploring the connections between spirituality, peacemaking, and justice.

Third Annual Keynote

“Peace and Spirituality: Towards an Ethic of Interdependence” by Najeeba Syed, Inaugural El-Hibri Endowed Chair and Executive Director of Interfaith, Augsburg University

Time: Tuesday, October 10, 6:30-8:00 PM

Location: Room 303, Third Floor, MSU International Center (427 N Shaw Ln, East Lansing, MI 48824)

If you have any questions, suggestions, comments, or difficulties registering, please contact Morgan Shipley (shiple18@msu.edu).

In advance, thank you for your support as we seek to expand on Father Jake Foglio’s vision of virtue, love, empathy, and

Donations for the Grand Ledge Food Bank

Beginning October 1, we will once again collect donations for the Grand Ledge Food Bank.

As we have done in the past, the collections will take place on the first Sunday of each month.

Below is a list of the common items used by the Food Bank. You can use this when you shop.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Spaghetti/elbows | Tomato soup |
| Pasta sauce | Mushroom soup |
| Ramen noodles | Chicken noodle soup |
| Rice/potato mixes | Broth or gravy mixes |
| Helpers | Canned stew/tuna/chicken |
| Hot/cold cereal | Chili/kidney/refried beans |
| Syrup | Peanut butter/jelly |
| Baking mix (Bisquick/Jiffy) | Juices (large bottles) |
| Canned fruit | Cake mix/frosting |

**MSU FOGLIO SPEAKER SERIES ON SPIRITUALITY
THIRD ANNUAL KEYNOTE**



Najeeba Syed
Inaugural El-Hibri Endowed Chair
Executive Director of Interfaith
Augsburg University

Peacemaker, Healer, Scholar, Najeeba Syed has been a professor, expert practitioner and public speaker for the last two decades in the fields of conflict resolution, interfaith studies, mediation, education, deliberative democracy, social, gender and racial equity.

**Peace and
Spirituality:
Towards an
Ethic of
Interdependence**

**Tuesday, October 10
6:30-8:00 PM**

**Room 303
Third Floor
MSU International
Center**

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

SPONSORED BY THE FOGLIO ENDOWED CHAIR OF SPIRITUALITY, AFRICAN AMERICAN & AFRICAN STUDIES, CENTER FOR INTEGRATIVE STUDIES IN THE ARTS & HUMANITIES (IAH), COLLEGE OF ARTS & LETTERS, DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES, INTERFAITH CLERGY ASSOCIATION OF GREATER LANSING, MSU CAMPUS INTERFAITH COUNCIL, MUSLIM STUDIES PROGRAM, PEACE AND JUSTICE STUDIES

BLESSING OF THE PETS



To donate to FCUCC or to Capital Area Humane Society hover over the QR code above and indicate designation where provided



Back parking lot of
**First Congregational
United Church of Christ**
210 W. Saginaw
Grand Ledge, MI 48837

**Treats for All Guests:
Pets and People!**

**Sunday,
Oct. 8th, 2023
3PM - 4PM**



**JOIN US! ALL ARE INVITED
TO THIS COMMUNITY EVENT!**

Date	Greeter	Head Usher	Liturgist	Fresh Perspectives	Homily
11/5	Sandy Sipes	Chris Cypher	Marcia Kent	Pastor Laura	Pastor Laura
11/12	Gary Burt	Kathy Burt	Greg Elbin	Demphna Krilorian	Pastor Laura
11/19	Church By- am	Tina Lamer	Rich Brown	Demphna Krikorian	Pastor Laura
11/26	Charlene Avery	Kim Dible	Leah Horn	Thea Oatman	Thea Oatman
12/3	Bil Turner	Cheryl Mattson	Lisa Reed	Pastor Laura	Pastor Laura
12/10	Lynn Hart	Nate Oliver	Ron Erskine	Demphna Krikorian	Pastor Laura
12/17	Churck By- am	Tina Lamer	Sue Sackett	Demphna Krikorian	Pastor Laura
12/24 AM	Mason Lipsey	Chris Cypher	Tamera Lipsey	Demphna Krikorian	Pastor Laura
12/24 PM					
12/31	Fay Schroed- er	Susan Elbin	Bil Turner	Elain Donnoe	Elain Donnoe

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 August 29, 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, Fay Schroeder, Kelly Stuible-Clark and Bil Turner

Spiritual Reflection

Pastor Laura facilitated a discussion on those items that had been listed last month regarding what the Executive Board might want to concentrate on in the future. The Board focused on two items from that list.

Intentional involvement of more individuals in the work of the Church. The discussion emphasized that an effort in this area should also be realistic about how many are available and willing to participate and our recent history at recruiting help.

Making ourselves better known in the community. The discussion touched on several ideas; internet identity, sponsoring events such as date night child care, family events in the Fellowship Hall, after school child care, and others. The common thread was; find a local need and then make a plan to meet that need.

The Board is encouraged to contemplate these items before our next meeting.

Open Forum

No one was present for this item.

Consent Agenda

Pastor Laura handed out a schedule of Fall, 2023 Church Events. The Consent Agenda was accepted.

Action and Discussion Items

Email Votes

- The Board voted yes on allowing James to use the organ for private lessons.
- The Board voted yes on the Stewardship Sermon Series.

The Board voted yes on the Position Description and the job posting for the Office Administrator. FYI – Larry’s last day will be October 5th.

Storm Damage to the Church

There are piles of tree limbs and brush and some damage to the church fascias. Our front sign was damaged but has been fixed. It’s not clear how much of the tree damage is on the Church property versus the Apartment property. The apartment management has done quite a bit of the clean up. A claim has been initiated with our insurance company.

Time Off Policy for Staff



EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES (CONT.)

Thea and Fay had submitted proposed policy language by e-mail. There are a few areas that require some changes. Fay will make changes and re-submit the proposed language. The decision was made to handle requests for time off without pay on a case by case basis.

QR Codes for Donations

After discussion, it was moved by Bil, seconded by Karen to add a QR Code to some Church Internet pages to facilitate donations. Motion passed. Kelly will implement.

Misc. Updates

- AED Purchase. The cost has been covered by donations.
- Status of Office Administrator Recruitment. There are 24 candidates and winnowing is ongoing before interviewing begins.

Kitchen upgrade. Work may start soon.

Pastoral Sabbatical in 2024. No current activity on this front.

Vitality Day. A few individuals have signed up. More are desired.

Parking Lot. Work will resume soon, now that the heat has lessened.

Handicapped signs are done.

Church Roles and Ministries. This group has not reconvened yet.

New Business

Comcast charges

Fay told the Board that Comcast charges for Phone plus Internet have gone up by \$87 per month since January. After discussion, Fay will talk with Larry and have him call Comcast to plead our case.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM

The next Executive Board Meeting will be Tuesday, September 26th, 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/>

October 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 10:30am In-Person and Facebook Worship Ser- vice Darlene Banks Funeral Service 3pm	2 6pm Grand Ringers	3 Congrega- tors at So- phia's 1pm	4 6pm AA 7:30pm Al- Anon 8pm AA Community Meal at 5:30pm	5 Choir—6pm 8pm AA	6	7 10am AA Women
8 10:30am In-Person and Facebook Wor- ship Service Lunch and Learn Pet Blessing	9 6pm Grand Ringers	10	11 6pm AA 7:30pm Al- Anon 8pm AA Anti Racist Book Descus- sion	12 Choir—6pm 8pm AA	12	14 10am AA Women
15 10:30am In- Person and Facebook Wor- ship Service New Member- ship Class	16 6pm Grand Ringers	117	18 6pm AA 7:30pm Al- Anon 8pm AA	19 Choir—6pm 8pm AA	20	21 10am AA Women
22 10:30am In-Person and Facebk Wor- ship Service New Member- ship Class	23 6pm Grand Ringers	24 Exec Board Meeting	25 6pm AA 7:30pm Al- Anon 8pm AA Anti Racist Book Discus- sion	26 Choir—6pm 8pm AA	27	28 10am AA Women
29 10:30am In-Person and Facebook Worship Ser- vice Pumpkin Dec-	30 6pm Grand Ringers	31 6:30pm Ex- ecutive Board Meet- ing				

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

DATE	Oct. 1	Oct. 8	Oct. 15	Oct. 22	Oct. 29
THEME	We Encounter Jesus During Communion Where We Are Reminded of his Presences Now and in life to come.	As we feed others, God feeds us	Finding a Promising Way Forward:	Abiding in Jesus	
TEXT	Psalm 78:1-4 and 12-16 Gospel Lesson: Matthew 26: 26-29	Proverbs 11:24-25 Gospel Lesson: Mark 6:30-44	Ezekiel 34:1-10 Gospel Lesson: Luke 13:22-30	Psalm 91 Gospel Lesson: John 6:53-56	
HEAD USHER	Kim Dible	Gary Burt	Nate Oliver	Cheryl Mattson	Susan Elbin
GREETER	Connie Dible	Kathy Burt	Erica Oliver	Bil Turner	Kelly and Nora
LITURGIST	Lisa Reed	Leah Horn	Ron Erskine	Sue Sackett	Bil Turner
SOUNDBOARD	Charlynn Walker	Charlynn Walker	Charlynn Walker	Charlynn Walker	
VIRTUAL COORDINATOR	David Wee	David Wee	David Wee	David Wee	



October BIRTHDAYS

Judy Nielsen	2nd
Jane Gilson	2nd
Ben Banks	6th
Jim Robinson	7th
Charlynn Walker	14th
Gwen Knight	19th
Dave Gooley	28th



210 W. Saginaw Hwy.
Grand Ledge, MI 48837

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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 Stuble-Clark, Christian Education Kim Dible, Congregational Life Ron Erskine, Outreach Board</p>
Goodbye and Thank you Sisters of Ruth WGOD Income and Expense	3	
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