

Douglas Congregational United Church of Christ

Pastor's Report

April 19, 2022

Happy Easter: It was with great joy that we celebrated our first in-person Easter service in two years. In this season of rebirth and new life, we give thanks to God for the promise of Easter and for making all things new.

Maundy Thursday: More than 50 people attended our Maundy Thursday supper and service on April 14. We are so grateful to Jim Bailey for facilitating the evening, and thank you to Noelene Wilson, Gregg Smith, Joyce & Kelly Wright, Brenda Marcy, Jeff Spangler, and Peter Black for sharing their gifts with us.

Attendance/Giving: We are so grateful that our in-person attendance continues to grow each week. Last Sunday, we had more than 100 people in attendance for the first time since the pandemic began. Each week, we are seeing more-and-more returning faces, as well as several new faces, too. And, we are very thankful that our online viewership and weekly giving remains so strong.

Afghan Family Update: On April 14, I attended the Afghan Task Force meeting in the Friendship Hall. At the two-hour meeting, we received an update on all that's been happening with Afghan family we have been sponsoring at our church. The family has been with us for three months now, and they are thriving. We are thankful for their presence and for all our church members who have been assisting them, and we are especially grateful to Bob and Louise Kenny for their leadership and service.

Stephen Ministry: On April 12, I attended the Stephen Ministry Supervision meeting in the Friendship Hall. Our Stephen Ministers continue their dedicated service of meeting with congregants one-on-one each week. We are so grateful for their service. I am also happy to share that Beverly Hawkes is currently training to become a Stephen Leader.

Creation Justice Team: With Earth Day and Dark Sky Week this month, our church's Creation Justice Team has a few events planned. On April 23, they will be leading us in a Highway Cleanup, and on April 27, they are hosting the screening of the documentary, "The City Dark," at the Saugatuck/Douglas Library. We are grateful for their leadership. And, thank you to everyone who purchased a Dark Sky children's book for the library.

UCC Conference/Association Meetings: I attended the election of our new Michigan Conference Minister, Rev. Lillian Daniel, on March 19... I attended the Grand West Association Planning Committee meeting on April 6... I will be attending the GWA Council Meeting on April 21...I will also be representing our church at the GWA Spring Meeting on May 1 at Hudsonville UCC.

Upcoming: On April 22, I will be attending a benefit in Douglas for Rainbow Railroad, an international non-profit organization that helps LGBTQ people who are escaping violence and persecution...On May 7, I will be interviewed on the "Morning Grind" Radio Show on 92.7 FM...On May 10, I will be officiating a Memorial Service in the church for Paul Murphy...On May 15, I will be teaching a New Members Class at the Retreat House...On May 22, I will be attending a benefit for Christian Neighbors Food Pantry in Douglas.

Kudos: We are so grateful to our church's Art Guild for their beautiful Lenten and Easter installations. Thank you to Jim Bailey, Bud Baty, Josephine Berault, Floyd Fleming, Greg Harvath, Bill Kelleher, Chris Maitner, and Noelene Wilson.

Respectfully submitted,

Pastor Sal

Rev. Salvatore Sapienza, Pastor