

## **Douglas Congregational United Church of Christ**

### **Pastor's Report: August 18, 2020**

Dear Church Council:

Our church building has been closed for five months now due to the pandemic, but our church continues to grow and to thrive. Our YouTube channel welcomed more than 300 new subscribers just last month alone, and our worship videos continue to be viewed by hundreds of people each week from all over the world. Our Sunday Zoom "Coffee Hours" continue to be well-attended each week, as well. Here's a brief snapshot of the past month in the life of our church:

**Stephen Ministry:** I met with our Stephen Ministers via Zoom on July 27. During the pandemic, they have continued their ministry to congregants in need, though most of their weekly one-hour visits with their care receivers have been via phone or FaceTime. Next month, a new group of Stephen Ministers (Demethrea Terrien, Pat Denner, Michael Valdez, Doug Sipsma) will continue with their 50-hours of training. New training manuals and DVDs were ordered and received. I am grateful to our Stephen Leaders, Paul Burdick and Laurie VanDenBeldt. I will next be meeting with the Stephen Ministry team on August 20 via Zoom.

**Christian Neighbors:** This month, Christian Neighbors Food Pantry in Douglas made their move from St. Peter's Catholic Church to the Community Church of Douglas. Christian Neighbors was founded more than 40 years ago by two women from our church. Currently, two of our church members (Wendy Hamlin and Tim Lemanski) serve on the board of Christian Neighbors, and Carey Idema serves as our Christian Neighbors coordinator. Thank you to our church member, Alan Weathers, and to all who helped with the move. We received a lovely thank-you note from Christian Neighbors thanking us for our help and for the \$6,150 grant they received from our church.

**Pastoral Relations Committee:** I met with the Pastoral Relations Committee on July 27 via Zoom. We welcomed new PRC members, Betsy York and David Miedema. The PRC meets on a quarterly basis and serves as a liaison between the pastor and the congregation.

**Creation Justice Team:** On July 29, I had a meeting with Sarah Swift, our church's Creation Justice Team facilitator, to discuss plans for next month's "Creation Justice" season at our church. Every September, we devote our weekly worship services to a different aspect of Creation: Forest/Wilderness, River/Water, and Animals. Members of our Creation Justice Team will lead our worship each week with opening remarks and prayers. The CRT will also be facilitating an online book-read event next month on the book, *The Overstory*, by Richard Powers.

**Upcoming:** I will be officiating a small wedding in the church on August 22 and a "Celebration of Life" in Saugatuck for church member, Jim Lemons, on August 29. I will also be attending an online UCC "Boundary Training" class for pastors on August 24 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Pastor Sal*