

# Douglas Congregational United Church of Christ

## Pastor's Report: December 15, 2020

Dear Church Council:

This is my final Pastor's Report for 2020. Looking back on this challenging year, I am so grateful for the resilience, adaptability, and generosity of our congregation. They have been simply amazing! Though the doors to our church building have been closed since March, our church continues to grow and to thrive. Please know how grateful I am to all of you for your leadership and guidance this past year.

Here is my report for December:

**Advent Season:** As you will see from the attached analytics, our online video services for the Season of Advent have been reaching thousands households per week. We continue to receive letters, emails, and tithes from people from all over the world. This month, we learned that a retirement village in New Zealand has been broadcasting our services to its residents each week. They even made an online donation, too. We are so grateful that our worship videos are continuing to reach people far and wide.

**Centering Prayer:** More than twenty people have been taking part in the "Centering Prayer" group I have been leading on Zoom on Wednesday nights. We have people joining us from Saginaw, Flint, Miami, and New York.

**Stephen Ministry Training:** Our Stephen Leaders, Paul Burdick and Laurie VandenBeldt, and I continue to train a new group of Stephen Ministers to serve our church. We teach the 2 ½ hour class on Friday afternoons via Zoom. Our new Stephen Ministers will complete their 50 hours of training in January 2021.

**Christian Neighbors:** On November 23, I joined with several members of our congregation in delivering food to Christian Neighbors Food Pantry in Douglas for their Thanksgiving baskets for families in need. Thank you to our church members, Molly and Kelly Huggett, Denny and Gail Babel, Cathy North, Joyce Wright, Larry Fuerst, Michael Mok, and Wendy Hamlin for helping out that day. And, on December 7, we delivered all of the holiday gift requests from our "Giving Tree." Thank you to our amazing congregation for their generous giving, and thank you to Ruth VandenBosch, our Christian Neighbors coordinator.

**Christmas Eve:** Our Douglas UCC Christmas Eve tradition of the "Lessons & Carols" will continue this year with a beautiful online service, which will feature video clips of our choir from previous years, plus some new elements, as well. The service will be broadcast on YouTube and Facebook on Christmas Eve at 7 PM.

**United Church Homes:** I was invited to take part in an online meeting on December 2 with representatives from United Church Homes, who are exploring the idea of an "Open & Affirming" assisted living facility in Saugatuck/Douglas.

**In addition:** On December 5, I was a guest on the "Morning Grind" Radio Show, talking about our church. And, on December 12, a small wedding was held in our church for a couple who attend Holland UCC. My husband, Gregg Smith, and I assisted with the service.

**Kudos:** We are so grateful to Floyd Fleming and Jim Bailey for the beautiful Advent decorations...to the estate of Jewell Hall for the \$1,000 gift to our church... to church member, Bud Baty, whose "Christmas Greens" sales generated \$750 to our church...and to our Trustee, Marty Coffin, for maintaining our church grounds.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Pastor Sal*

Rev. Salvatore Sapienza, Pastor

## YouTube Views for the past 30 days:

Geography	Views
<input type="checkbox"/> Total	10,142
<input type="checkbox"/> United States	58.6%
<input type="checkbox"/> United Kingdom	3.1%
<input type="checkbox"/> Canada	2.6%
<input type="checkbox"/> South Africa	2.5%
<input type="checkbox"/> Russia	1.2%
<input type="checkbox"/> Australia	1.0%

## Facebook Views for the past 30 days:

	"3rd Sunday of Advent" - Video Worship Service	1.4K
	"1st Sunday of Advent" - Video Worship Service	1.4K
	"Second Sunday of Advent" - Video Worship Service	1.1K
	"Reign of Christ" Sunday - Douglas UCC Video Worship Service	1.1K