

Douglas Congregational United Church of Christ

Pastor's Report: February 16, 2021

Dear Church Council:

Season of Lent: The season of Lent begins tomorrow on Ash Wednesday. Though it is unsafe for us to distribute ashes in person this year due to the pandemic, I will be sharing a short "Ash Wednesday At Home" service on our church's YouTube channel and Facebook page tomorrow.

Centering Prayer: During the season of Lent, I will be facilitating a "Centering Prayer" group on Zoom every Wednesday night on Zoom at 5:30 p.m.

White Privilege Class: Later this month, our Douglas UCC Social Justice Team will, once again, be facilitating a six-week class on Zoom based on the UCC's "White Privilege" curriculum. You may remember that the Social Justice Team facilitated this class in 2019, and it was such a powerful and moving experience for all who took part. Details are in this week's E-pistle newsletter.

Stephen Ministry: On Sunday, January 28, I attended the Stephen Ministry Supervision Meeting on Zoom. I am grateful to our Stephen Leaders and Stephen Ministers for their dedicated weekly care to our church members. We still have two Stephen Ministers who are available to serve, so we've been reminding people of the program during our Sunday worship and in our weekly E-pistle newsletter.

Interfaith Action: In 2019, Douglas UCC partnered with Interfaith Action of SW Michigan. You may remember the Symposium of Gun Violence Reduction we co-hosted with them at our church. Next month, we've been invited to join them in an online book discussion group for *The Beauty of Your Face*, the bestselling book by Sahar Mustafah, who will join in the discussion. Details are in the E-pistle newsletter.

UCC Planning Committee: On January 26, I attended the UCC Grand West Association Planning Committee meeting on Zoom.

World Interfaith Festival: On January 25, I was honored to be one of the faith leaders invited to speak at the 36th Annual World Interfaith Festival, which was held online this year. The festival was broadcast to thousands of people around the world on YouTube and Facebook Live.

In Addition: I officiated a memorial service for Warren Plantinga (father of church member, Nancy Plantinga) on January 19 in Illinois...I officiated a small wedding at our church on February 8. The couple made a \$200 donation to our church...I was a guest on the Morning Grind Radio show on February 6...I attended a UCC "Daily Devotion" writing webinar on February 6 on Zoom...I will be a guest on the "Saugatuck on Sunday" radio show on February 21.

Online Services: The past month, our worship videos on YouTube received 9,997 views, plus another 2,088 views on Facebook. We now have more than 1.2K followers to our Facebook page and more than 2.6K subscribers to our YouTube channel. We are so grateful that our services are continuing to reach people far-and-wide beyond our church walls.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pastor Sal

Rev. Salvatore Sapienza, Pastor