

Douglas Congregational United Church of Christ -- Pastor's Report

January 18, 2022

Happy New Year: This year is our church's 140th Anniversary. Despite the ongoing pandemic, we remain grateful and hopeful for the blessings this new year will bring. As Scripture says, "*You crown the year with Your goodness, and Your paths drip with abundance*" (Psalm 65:11).

Christmas Eve Service: We are so grateful to our Director of Music, Peter Black; Cantors, Jeff Spangler and Stan Greene; Readers, Sue Scott, Chris Clark, John Willming, Lynne Snyder, Robert Trenary, Kathleen Mueller; and our A/V Team of Chris Clark and Kelly Wright for such a beautiful Christmas Eve service of the "Lessons & Carols," which had more than 300 views on YouTube.

Sunday Worship: With the increasing number of Covid cases, as well as the frigid winter weather (and the fact that our "snow birds" have flown the coop!) our in-person attendance this past month has ranged between 35-45 people. That said, our weekly online viewership (weekly average: 553) and weekly giving (weekly average: \$11,118) were extremely strong this past month, for which we are very grateful.

Afghan Task Force: The Afghan family we are sponsoring arrived on January 12. Several members of our church's Afghan Task Force and I greeted them at the airport and helped them get settled into the Spring Street house. We are so very grateful to Bob Kenny and the entire Afghan Task Force for all of their hard work in preparing the house for the family's arrival, and thank you to all who donated clothing, toys, furniture, household items, and financial support.

Congregational Meeting: More than 60 church members attended our Congregational Meeting on January 9 via Zoom. Thank you to our Church Council; our Moderator, Peter Mueller; Karen Clark from our Grant Proposal Committee; our Retreat House coordinator, Kathleen Mueller; and our Administrative Assistant, Julie Ridl. For the meeting, I created and shared a "Year in Review" video, highlighting all the amazing things our church accomplished in 2021.

Building Improvements: As was mentioned at the Congregational Meeting, Bud Baty has agreed to lead the Facilities Team in making some improvements to our church building this upcoming year, including refurbishing our front doors and putting up new wallpaper in the sanctuary. The gift of \$10,000 from the estate of Walt Lawrence (as well as an additional \$2,000 from the UCC Michigan Conference) will help cover the cost of these improvements.

Church Meetings: I met with our church's Stephen Ministers on December 28 for their monthly supervision meeting, and I met with the Afghan Task Force at their meeting on Zoom on January 10. I also met with eight church members for one-on-one sessions in my office this past month.

Kudos: We are so grateful to Jim Bailey, Greg Harvath, and Floyd Fleming from our church's Art Guild for putting up (and taking down) all of the beautiful Christmas decorations. And, thank you to Michelle Turner from V.S. Flowers in Douglas for gifting the beautiful poinsettia plants to our church.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Salvatore Sapienza, Pastor