

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

July 19, 2022

Celebrating Summer: Though the summer season is a “slow time” for many churches, we here at Douglas UCC have been extremely active this past month. Our Sunday attendance continues to be strong with new and returning faces each week, and it’s been a busy month full of community events and church activities.

Annual Meeting: A packed house filled the Friendship Hall on June 26 for our church’s Annual Meeting. We are so grateful to all who attended and to all our church leaders who presented. We are excited about all of the upcoming improvement projects happening at the church this summer, including new wallpaper, new sound platform, new roof, as well as refinishing our historic pews and front doors. The Pastor’s Report I presented at the meeting is available on our church’s website and is posted in the Friendship Hall.

Celebrations of Life: On June 25, I officiated a memorial service in the church for our beloved church member, Walt Lawrence. The service was “standing room only” and filled with beautiful music by Peter Black and Elizabeth Estes, as well as touching eulogies from friends, family, and pastors. We are grateful that the generous financial gift from Walt’s estate will help us fund our upcoming improvement projects. And, on July 16, I officiated a memorial service in the church for Bill Gilmore, featuring a bagpiper and honor guard.

Human Rights Campaign: On June 23, I represented our church at the Human Rights Campaign event in Douglas, which stressed the importance of voter registration. Hannah Huggett also took part.

Stephen Ministry: On June 28, I attended the Stephen Ministry Supervision Meeting in the Friendship Hall. In addition to their weekly ministry to congregants in need, the group is also hoping to host some upcoming events in the church this fall around the topic of healthy aging.

Christian Neighbors: On June 30, Michael Mok (from our Grant Proposal Committee) and I went to Christian Neighbors Food Pantry in Douglas to present them with a \$9,500 check on behalf of our church. The money will help fund their annual “Back to School” drive, which provides backpacks, school supplies, and clothing to more than 300 area students. A photo of our check presentation was published in the local newspaper and shared on social media.

A/V Advisory Committee: On June 22, I met with Chris Clark and Mike White from our church’s A/V Team. We were joined by Peter Black, Jeff Spangler, and Julie Ridl to review our weekly YouTube services. A decision was made to establish an A/V Advisory Committee, who will meet on a monthly basis to review and make recommendations.

Afghan Family Update: We are excited to announce with great joy that our Afghan friends welcomed a brand new baby boy, who was born in Holland Hospital on July 9. Mother and baby are both doing great! Thank you to the True North group for the generous baby shower gifts.

True North: On June 6, I was invited to speak at the True North group meeting in the Friendship Hall. We had a wonderful discussion on faith and the meaning of God.

Ukraine War Presentation: On June 5, more than 30 people and I attended a presentation in the Friendship Hall by humanitarian photographer, Brooke Townsend, who spoke about her recent work with Ukrainian War refugees.

Upcoming: Rev. Ruth Zwald will be returning to Douglas UCC on August 6 for another “SoulCollage” workshop in the Friendship Hall. And each Tuesday in August, Rev. Marchiene Rienstra will be leading us in weekly discussion group on the book, *Refugia Faith*.

Kudos: Thank you to church member, Aase Munk, for weeding the Memorial Garden this past week.

Respectfully submitted,

Pastor Sal