

# Douglas Congregational United Church of Christ

## Pastor's Report

June 21, 2022

**Pride Month:** June is LGBTQ+ Pride Month. Douglas UCC is proud to be one of the very first “Open & Affirming” churches in all of the United States. We have been “ONA” for over 30 years. As we say in the UCC: “No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here!”

**Community Pride:** More than 1,500 people attended “Pride in the Park” in Douglas on June 4!! Our church was proud to be a “Silver Sponsor” of the event. Thank you to all who helped with our participation in the car parade and all who worked our church's booth: Shannon Connell; Ted Sommer and Dale Lower; Wendy Hamlin; Bill Briggs and Jeff Chinski; Julie Hebding; Tim and Maryjo Lemanski; Ed Korson and Arturo Inda; Jeremy Lund and Mark Johnston; Jerry Coates; Gregg Smith; Betsy York and Demethrea Terrien. And, thank you to the amazing Community Pride Committee for all of their hard work.

**140<sup>th</sup> Anniversary:** On June 5, we celebrated our church's 140th Anniversary. Former pastors and church leaders (Rev. Ruth McCarty; Rev. Saunterre Irish; Rev. Andy DeBraber; Joy Muehlenbeck) returned to share memories and celebrate with us. Afterwards, we enjoyed a block party outside and gathered for our annual group photo. More than 125 people were in attendance. Many thanks to those who helped with the service and the block party: Peter Black and Robert Trenary; Sue Scott and Larry Fuerst; Greg Plowe; Gregg Smith; Chris Clark; David Bohn; Jeff Spangler; Stan Greene; Lauri Donaldson; Mike VerMerris; Linda and Matthew McWebb; Rev. Fred Hamlin.

**Welcome, New Members:** On June 5, we welcomed 14 new members to our church: Brian Tubergen; Julie Hebding; Rich and Linda Marth; Bob Kruse and Ginny Mikita; Martha Bolin; John Rienstra; Marchiene Rienstra; John Roselle; John and Nancy Grib; Joe and Elisabeth Mannancheril. We are so happy to welcome them all into our church family.

**Stephen Ministry:** On June 12, we officially commissioned Beverly Hawkes as a Stephen Ministry leader, presenting her with a certificate and pin. Earlier this month, Bev completed an intensive months-long training to be certified as a Stephen Leader. We are grateful for her leadership and service to our church.

**Christian Neighbors:** On May 22, I represented our church at a benefit for Christian Neighbors Food Pantry in Douglas. Joining me were church members, Joyce and Kelly Wright; Eric Lejeune; Kathleen Klage; Larry Gammons; Betsy York and Demethrea Terrien.

**Pastoral Relations Committee:** I met with our church's Pastoral Relations Committee on May 18 in the Friendship Hall. Betsy York's term on the PRC is coming to a close, and her seat will be filled by Ginny Mikita.

**Afghan Family Update:** On June 16, the True North Women's Group held a baby shower for Nazanin, who is due to deliver a baby boy next month. Thank you to all who attended and/or gave gifts. A “community garden” project was also begun last week at the property adjacent to the Spring Street house.

**Interfaith Action:** As part of our church's partnership with Interfaith Action of SW Michigan, I was invited to take part in a virtual clergy roundtable event entitled “Faith and Pride,” which can be viewed on Interfaith Action's Facebook page and YouTube channel.

**Upcoming:** Following a successful “SoulCollage” workshop in the Friendship Hall on June 11, we are excited to announce several upcoming programs this summer. We welcome humanitarian photographer, Brooke Townsend, on July 5, and we'll have a weekly book discussion group this August on the book, *Refugia Faith*.

**Kudos:** Thank you to David Geen for planting the zinnias in front of the church in memory of Jim Shewell.

Respectfully submitted,

*Pastor Sal*