

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

March 15, 2022

Season of Lent: This sacred Season of Lent provides an opportunity for us to draw closer to God each day through prayer and contemplation. During the Lenten season, we invite you to take part in our Thursday night meditations in the church from 5 to 6 PM, as well as to pray each day with the UCC's Lenten devotional. We also invite you to join us in the church on Thursday, April 14, at 6 PM for our annual Maundy Thursday service.

Afghan Family Update: It's been two months now since we welcomed the arrival of the Afghan family we are sponsoring at the church, and they are thriving! We are so grateful to all our church members (too many to list here!) who have been helping with transportation, English instruction, medical appointments, grocery shopping, driving lessons, etc., as well as those who have made financial contributions for the family. And, a big thank you to Louise and Bob Kenny (our Afghan Task Force facilitator) for their leadership and dedicated service.

140th Anniversary: This year marks our church's 140th Anniversary, and we will be having a "Block Party" celebration in front of the church on Pentecost Sunday (June 5) from 11 AM - 1 PM. More details to follow soon.

Pride Celebrations: As we've done in previous years, Douglas UCC will, once again, be a proud sponsor of both the Douglas Community Pride Event (June 1-5) and the Holland Pride Event (June 25). More details to follow.

Building Improvements: Our church's Design Team (Bud Baty, Josephine Berault, and Floyd Fleming) have been meeting to discuss improvements to our church building this upcoming year, including refurbishing our front doors and putting up new wallpaper in the sanctuary. Funding for this project will come from a \$2,000 grant we've received from the UCC Michigan Conference and a \$10,000 gift from the estate of Walt Lawrence.

Michigan Conference Minister: We are excited to share that Rev. Lillian Daniel has been announced as the candidate to be our new Michigan Conference Minister, who will oversee all 150+ UCC churches in the State of Michigan. We will share more information about Rev. Daniel in next week's E-pistle newsletter.

In Addition: In addition to my regular monthly duties, I also: officiated a wedding in the church on February 26... gave the message at Newaygo UCC on March 6 about being an "Open & Affirming" church... led a Lenten series at Park UCC in Grand Rapids on March 9... attended the Grand West Association Planning Committee Meeting on March 9... met with eight church members for one-on-one sessions in my office, and another member at his home in Fennville.

Kudos: Thank you to all who helped church member, Sidney Matheis, with his move to Appledorn Assisted Living Facility in Holland last week: Lynne Snyder, Larry Fuerst, Sue Scott, Chris Clark, and Pete Wehle. And, thank you to our church's Art Guild (Jim Bailey, Chris Maitner, Jodi Berault, Floyd Fleming, Greg Harvath, and Bill Kelleher) for the beautiful Lenten installation in the church.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Salvatore Sapienza, Pastor