

Douglas Congregational United Church of Christ Pastor's Report: March 21, 2023

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, available for purchase in our Friendship Hall.

Lenten Book Read: More than 30 people have been participating this month in our Lenten book study of *Rise: An Authentic Lenten Devotional* by John Pavlovitz. We have been meeting every Wednesday from 3 to 4 PM in the Friendship Hall. The conversations have been so rich and meaningful.

An Evening with John Pavlovitz: A sold-out crowd packed Douglas UCC on Saturday, March 11, as we welcomed popular author and activist, John Pavlovitz, back to our church. More than half of the people in attendance were visitors. The event raised \$1,000 for our church.

Maundy Thursday: Our Maundy Thursday supper and service will take place on April 6 at 6 PM. This powerful service commemorates Jesus's last meal with his apostles and his seven last words. We will begin in the Friendship Hall with a simple meal of soup and bread, followed by a time of prayer and reflection in the church. More than 50 people have already signed-up.

Christian Neighbors: Last month, we have collected 121 jars of peanut butter for Christian Neighbors Food Pantry in Douglas. Thank you to everyone for their generous giving.

Easter Lilies: We hope to fill our altar with lily plants for our Easter Sunday service. Congregants can purchase a plant for \$15 in memory of a loved one whose name will be printed in our Easter Sunday program. More than 30 plants have already been sold! Thank you!

Creation Justice: We are grateful to our church's Creation Justice Team for leading us in a Community Book Read this month of *The Hidden Life of Trees*. A book discussion and presentation will take place at the Saugatuck/Douglas Library on March 22 at 7 PM.

DUCC Movie Night: We are excited to announce a very special "Movie Night" at Douglas UCC on Wednesday, April 12 at 6 PM in the Friendship Hall for a screening of the award-winning documentary, *Radical Grace*, followed by a Q&A with its director, Rebecca Parrish. Produced and narrated by Oscar-winner, Susan Sarandon, *Radical Grace* follows three fearless nuns who risk their place in the Church to follow another higher calling: social justice and inclusion. You won't want to miss this powerful and inspiring film. Popcorn and refreshments will be served. This event is free and all are welcome.

In Addition: On March 7, I met with our church's Stephen Ministers for their monthly supervision... On March 4, I appeared on the local "Morning Grind" radio show... On March 16, I attended the UCC Grand West Association Meeting... On March 11, I attended a UCC General Synod orientation for Michigan delegates with Conference Minister, Rev. Lillian Daniel.

Respectfully submitted,

Pastor Sal

Rev. Salvatore Sapienza, Pastor