

# Douglas Congregational United Church of Christ

## Pastor's Report: May 18, 2021

Dear Church Council:

The exciting news from the CDC last week (that fully vaccinated people can now gather safely without masks) fills me with so much hope about returning to in-person services soon. While many are ready and eager to get back into the sanctuary for worship, there are others in our congregation who don't yet feel safe. One of my colleagues said today, *"We're in an awkward position between jubilation and a desire for caution. It takes the wisdom of Solomon to know what to do."* That is our challenge, but I know that the Wisdom of Spirit will continue to guide us, just as She has throughout the pandemic. Please know how grateful I am to all of you for your continued leadership and dedicated service to our church.

**GWA Spring Meeting:** On May 2, Peter Mueller and I represented our church at the UCC Grand West Association Spring Meeting via Zoom. The keynote address, "Church on the Other Side of the Pandemic," stressed the importance of our continuing online worship and gatherings even after the pandemic is over.

**Community Pride:** June is Gay Pride Month, and Douglas UCC is so excited to participate in the Community Pride event on June 5. Our DUCC Pride Van (courtesy of Bob and Louise Kenny) will be a part of "Care-a-Van" car parade through the streets of Saugatuck/Douglas. We will also be sponsoring the Holland Pride event.

**Group Meetings:** This past month, several groups have been using our Retreat House and Spring Street lawns for their gatherings. These include True North, Knitting Group, and Qigong Group. The AA Group plans to return to in-person meetings in our Friendship Hall on Friday nights beginning in June.

**Leadership Kudos:** Max Brown is stepping down after two years of facilitating the Spring Street Men's Group. We are so grateful for his leadership. And, thank you to Stan Greene and Mark Reiman, who will take over as co-facilitators... Sarah Swift has moved up North and will no longer be facilitating the Creation Justice Team. We are so grateful to Sarah for her years of service. The CJT is currently seeking a new facilitator(s).

**HHW Day:** On April 22 (Earth Day), I presented a \$2,500 check on behalf of our church to Saugatuck City Council member, Garnet Lewis, and Jim Sullivan of the Saugatuck/Douglas Rotary Club to support their efforts with the Tri-Community Household Hazardous Waste Day. A photo of the check presentation on the front steps of our church appeared in the *Commercial Record* newspaper and on social media.

**Arts Initiative:** On May 5, I attended the kick-off event for SDFAI (Saugatuck/Douglas/Fennville Arts Initiative), which recently received a \$1,500 grant from our church.

**UCC Synod:** I am so very honored to have been selected as one of the delegates for this year's UCC National Synod, which is being held the week of July 11. I will be representing our UCC Michigan Conference.

**Holy Land Trip:** Due to the pandemic and the recent unrest in the Middle East, the Holy Land trip planned for October has been postponed until later next year.

**Upcoming:** On May 16, I met with the Grant Proposal Committee... On May 23, I am meeting with the Pastoral Relations Committee... On May 25, I am meeting with our Stephen Ministers... On June 12, I am officiating a wedding in the church... On June 13, I am officiating a Memorial Service for Larry Sharp at the SCA.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Rev. Salvatore Sapienza*, Pastor