

Douglas Congregational United Church of Christ Pastor's Report

May 16, 2023

Season of Easter: Easter isn't just one day, but an entire season. It will officially come to a close on the last Sunday of this month. Until then, we continue to celebrate this time of new growth and new life.

Spring Street Update: We are excited to announce that the refresh project of the Spring Street house is nearing completion. The Open House is scheduled for Sunday, May 21, after our worship service. We can't wait for everyone to see our beautiful new Administrative Office building and meeting space.

GWA Spring Meeting: On Sunday, May 7, Douglas UCC was honored to host the Spring meeting of the UCC Grand West Association, where a service of "Release & Farewell" was held for Rev. Ruth Fitzgerald, who is retiring as our Area Conference Minister. Thank you to all our church volunteers who helped: Peter Black, Mike VerMerris, Peter & Kathleen Mueller, Beth Stallinga, Ruth Vandenbosch, Debra Carr, Vicky Cobb, Kathy Hartman, Virginia Stuart, and Lynne Snyder.

Fennville Sculpture Installation: On May 5, I was honored to represent our church at a reception held for the sponsors of the new public art installation in Downtown Fennville. The sculpture, entitled "Reaching for the Stars," celebrates the Latino migrant farm workers. It was created by renowned sculpture, Hector Vega, who joined us for worship on May 7. In gratitude for our donation of \$2,500, our church was gifted with one of Vega's framed lithographs, which will hang in our new Conference Room.

Afghan Family Update: This past month, both WZZM 13 news and the *Holland Sentinel* newspaper did feature stories on Reza and his success at Haworth. It is such a joy to see the family thriving. Though the family has moved to Holland, members of our church's Social Justice Team still visit them regularly.

UCC Synod: On May 6, I attended a three-hour training for UCC Synod delegates. I am honored to represent the Michigan Conference at the Synod from June 30 – July 4 in Indianapolis.

Stephen Ministry: On April 17, I accompanied our church's Stephen Ministry team on a fun outing to Meijer Garden in Grand Rapids for the "Butterflies are Blooming" exhibit, followed by lunch.

In Addition: On April 20, I attended the Grand West Association meeting via Zoom...On April 25, I attended the Stephen Ministry monthly supervision meeting...On May 6, I appeared as a guest on the Morning Grind radio show to talk about the Christian Neighbors Cereal Drive.

Kudos: Thank you to all who helped clean-out and organize the Spring Street garage on May 5: Kelly Wright, Bill Kelleher, Larry Fuerst, Carol Rice & Bernie Lopata, Floyd Fleming; Chris & Karen Clark; Chris Maitner; and Jim Bailey.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pastor Sal

Rev. Salvatore Sapienza, Pastor