

Douglas Congregational United Church of Christ

Pastor's Report: November 17, 2020

Dear Church Council:

I am grateful and humbled that our little church has received some national attention this past month:

National UCC Recognition: This past month, the National United Church of Christ shared two featured stories that mentioned our church. The first was all about our church's "Voter Shuttle" program. The article featured both photos of our church and a video of my "Our Faith, Our Vote" sermon. The second feature story was about how churches are addressing the contention following the election. Our church's efforts were highlighted, once again, and a portion of my November 8th homily was quoted in the article on the UCC's social media accounts.

CBS-TV Special: Thanks to last month's *Deseret News* article about our church, I was invited by a TV producer in New York City to appear on a star-studded, national television special, "Every Vote Counts," which aired on CBS on October 29. I appeared in a short segment from inside the church, with our church's name on the screen. Photos were also shown from the "Vigil for Orlando" that our church organized in 2016. In addition, our UCC Michigan Conference shared the segment in their weekly newsletter, and it was also shared by the UCC Grand West Association on their Facebook page.

GWA Fall Meeting: Peter Mueller, Dan Mack, and I represented our church at the UCC Grand West Association Fall Meeting, which was held on November 1 via Zoom. Douglas UCC was honored to be asked to film a short worship video from our church, which was shared at the GWA Fall Meeting. At the meeting, our church member, Dan Mack, was officially voted in as member of the "GWA Church & Ministry Committee," and I was affirmed to serve for another year on the "GWA Planning Committee."

Michigan Conference Annual Meeting: The UCC Michigan Conference Annual Meeting was held on November 14 via Zoom, with representatives from 145 UCC churches in Michigan. At the meeting, I was one of five people selected to serve as delegate at the UCC National Synod in 2021 and 2023. I am honored to represent our Michigan Conference on the national stage.

Centering Prayer: I am leading a "Centering Prayer" group on Zoom on Wednesday nights during the months of November and December. More than twenty people have been taking part in these weekly prayer sessions.

Stephen Ministry Training: Our Stephen Leaders, Paul Burdick and Laurie VandenBeldt, and I have been training a new group of Stephen Ministers to serve our church. The three of us teach the 2 ½ hour class each and every Friday via Zoom. The 50-hour training class will conclude in February 2021.

Christian Neighbors: We have collected more than 250 pounds of flour, so far, for the "Thanksgiving Boxes" for families in need, and all of the "Holiday Gift Requests" on our "Giving Tree" have been taken. Thank you so much to our amazing congregation for their generous giving!

In addition: In addition to my regular pastoral duties, I was also invited to give the homily (via Zoom) at the UU Church of Detroit on October 25, and I officiated a memorial service in Saugatuck on November 7 for Marilyn Wilson (mother-in-law of our church member, Liz Wilson).

Respectfully Submitted,

Pastor Sal

Rev. Salvatore Sapienza, Pastor