

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

November 16, 2021

Season of Giving: As we approach Thanksgiving next week, there is so much for which to be grateful. Though the pandemic continues to challenge us, we are grateful for the continued support, patience, and encouragement from our congregation.

Thanksgiving Drive: Once again this year, we are collecting bags of flour for the Christian Neighbors Thanksgivings boxes for families in need. We have already collected more than 400 pounds of flour! Thank you to all for their incredible generosity.

Community Book Read: We are so grateful to our church's Creation Justice Team for another successful Community Book Read. More than 30 people and I took part in the presentation and discussion of *The End of Night: Searching for Natural Darkness in an Age of Artificial Light*.

Afghan Refugee Families: On October 14, a representative from Bethany Christian Services gave a presentation in our Friendship Hall about the hundreds of Afghan refugee families moving into West Michigan in the coming months. More than 25 people from our church attended the presentation. Since then, a group of church members has expressed interest in sponsoring a refugee family and has been meeting regularly to plan for it. Thank you to church member, Bob Kenny, for his leadership.

Brother Al Concert: On November 13, we welcomed back Brother Al Mascia, for a special concert event at our church. He served as the pastor of Douglas UCC from 1996-2001 and now ministers to the homeless in the Detroit area. An offering was collected at the concert to support Brother Al's ministry.

Christian Neighbors Anniversary: On Saturday, October 16, I was delighted to join other local clergy in celebrating the 40th Anniversary of Christian Neighbors Food Pantry in Douglas. At the service, I shared the story of the founding of Christian Neighbors by a group of local women at our church.

Special Musicians Gathering: On November 10, our Director of Music, Peter Black, and I celebrated our church's special musicians with a night of food and fun at Alley's in Douglas. We are so grateful to all who share their gifts of music with us.

All Saints Installation: On November 7, I was delighted to represent our church at the official installation of Rev. Jay Johnson as the new rector at All Saints Episcopal Church in Saugatuck.

Grand West Association: On October 24, I attended the Fall Meeting of the UCC Grand West Association, where I was elected as Vice-Moderator of the Grand West Association and Chair of the Planning Committee. I am honored to serve our Association.

Kudos: We are grateful to our church members, Dick Bont and Stacy Honson, for taking such good care of our church's Memorial Garden. This month, they extended the picket fence; poured a concrete pad for the trash containers; and facilitated tree-trimming and the installation of new plants. We are grateful for their service.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Salvatore Sapienza, Pastor