

Douglas Congregational United Church of Christ Pastor's Report: November 15, 2022

Thanksgiving Blessings: In celebration of Thanksgiving next week, I am giving thanks to all of you for all you do in service of our church. We are so grateful and blessed by your talents, gifts, and service.

Return of Coffee Hour: This past month, we returned to after-worship "Coffee Hour" for the first time since the start of the pandemic. Thank you to all who signed up to provide treats, and thank you to church member, Joyce Wright, for facilitating.

Season of Giving: Last month, our church collected more than 350 cans of soup for Christian Neighbors food drive. We are currently collecting bags of flour for Thanksgiving boxes for local families in need, as well as holiday gifts from our Giving Tree gift tag requests. Thank you to everyone for their generous giving, and thank you to church members, Wendy Hamlin and Joyce Wright, for facilitating.

UCC Michigan Conference: I represented our church at the annual UCC Michigan Conference meeting on October 22 via Zoom. Rev. Dr. Lillian Daniel was officially installed as our new Michigan Conference Minister. She will oversee the 150 UCC churches in Michigan.

Grand West Association: At our annual Grand West Association Fall Meeting on October 30, I was honored to be elected and installed as the new moderator of the GWA Council, which oversees 26 UCC churches in Southwest Michigan. I am humbled and excited to be stepping into this new leadership position. Thank you to our church members, Mike VerMerris and Kelly Wright, for serving as our lay delegates at the meeting, where Douglas UCC's 140th Anniversary and my 10th ordination anniversary were recognized with certificates.

All Saints Day: In recognition of All Saints Day, we gathered in our church's Memorial Garden for a "Remembrance of Names" following our October 30th service. Then, on the evening of November 1, we gathered in our Friendship Hall for an "Honoring Our Ancestors" ceremony led by Rev. Ruth Zwald. We placed photos of our ancestors on the altar, told their stories, and shared a potluck of their favorite foods in the tradition of Dia de los Muertos.

New Members Class: On November 6, I facilitated a New Members Class at our church's Retreat House, in which ten people participated. We plan on officially welcoming them with certificates and pins from the UCC later this month.

Transgender Day of Remembrance: Douglas UCC is proud to serve as one of the sponsors of this year's Transgender Day of Remembrance ceremony and candlelight vigil, which will take place at Herrick District Library in Downtown Holland on Sunday, November 20, at 4 PM.

Christmas Services: Christmas falls on a Sunday this year, so we will be having both a Christmas Eve and Christmas morning service. Our Annual Christmas Eve service of the "Lessons & Carols" will be at 6 PM, featuring the Douglas UCC Holiday Choir. At our Christmas morning service, we will be taking a special collection for the UCC's Christmas Fund. Afterwards, there will be a holiday cookie exchange.

Respectfully submitted,

Pastor Sal

Rev. Salvatore Sapienza, Pastor