

# Douglas Congregational United Church of Christ

## Pastor's Report: October 20, 2020

Dear Church Council:

The past 30 days have been very active ones for us at Douglas UCC. Here's a brief snapshot of the past month in the life of our church:

**Pride Celebration Garden:** On September 19, I was honored to officiate the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new "Pride Celebration Garden" in Douglas, which is in memory of our church members, Larry Gammons and the late Carl Jennings. The garden is such a special gift to our community. Coverage of the event was in the local newspaper.

**Wedding and Baptism:** This past month, I was so honored to officiate the wedding of our Director of Music, Peter Black, to our Robert Trenary on September 25 at their home in Douglas. And, on September 26, I officiated the baptism of Ellis Mae Nguyen, the daughter of our church members, Laura Nguyen and Amber Bryant, at the church.

**Blessing of the Animals:** On October 4, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, I officiated the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual "Blessing of the Animals" in Douglas. Though it was a cold, rainy afternoon, more than 30 people and their pets gathered at Beery Field to receive a blessing and a treat. Coverage of the event was in the local newspaper.

**Voter Shuttle Makes News:** The news of our church's "Voter Shuttle" this month made news locally in the "Commercial Record" and "Holland Sentinel" newspapers, and it also made national news as the featured cover story in last week's "Deseret News" out of Utah. The article was accompanied by more than a dozen photos of our church and community. I am so grateful to Stan Greene and all of our shuttle volunteers for their service.

**Neighbors in Need:** Thanks to the generous giving of our congregation, we collected \$255 for the UCC's "Neighbors in Need" fund, which our church will match for a total of \$510 to the United Church of Christ.

**CROP Hunger Walk:** We are so proud of our 12 Douglas UCC church members and their sponsors who raised \$7,500 (a new local record!) for the annual CROP Hunger Walk, which helps the hungry here in Allegan County and around the world. Thank you to this year's Douglas UCC CROP Walkers: Julie & Jack Ridl, Sue Scott & Larry Fuerst, Linda Charvat, Dan Mack, Barb Lucier, Mike VerMerris, Wendy Hamlin, Pete Wehle, Joyce Wright, and our incredible coordinator, Chris Clark. And, thank you to all who sponsored them. Before the walk, I said a blessing over our walkers, who were later treated to refreshments at Isabel's Market + Eatery.

**Pastor's Appreciation Day:** I am grateful for all the nice cards, emails, and phone calls I received for "National Pastor's Appreciation Day" on October 11, and I'm so thankful to the national UCC for providing a worship service for us that Sunday. Though our viewership that day was the lowest it's been since the pandemic, Peter Black and I were grateful for the time off.

**Upcoming UCC Meetings:** Next month, I will be attending the Grand West Association Fall Meeting on November 1 and the UCC Michigan Conference Annual Meeting on November 14. Both of these meetings are taking place via Zoom. The meeting links will be shared with our church members, as all are invited to attend.

**Centering Prayer Group:** For the months of November and December, I will be leading a Wednesday night "Centering Prayer" group via Zoom. Details in our weekly E-pistle church newsletter.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Pastor Sal*