

Douglas Congregational United Church of Christ

Pastor's Report: October 18, 2022

Fall Blessings: Though the summer months are now behind us, the Fall Season remains a very active one here at Douglas UCC. Our Sunday services are full with several new and returning faces each week, and our "Spiritually Active" groups have been very active this month. Here is a brief summary:

Stephen Ministry: Our church's Stephen Ministry Team is leading us this month in a wonderful book study of Parker Palmer's *On the Brink of Everything*. 25 church members and I have been taking part in these weekly discussions, which have been so inspiring and moving.

Creation Justice: We are grateful to our church's Creation Justice Team for facilitating our Adopt-a-Highway cleanup on October 1. I took photos and gave "kudos" to the twelve people who participated in the clean-up, including visiting friends from our UCC church in Lake Worth, Florida. We are grateful for their service.

Christian Neighbors: This month, we are collecting cans of soup for Christian Neighbors Food Pantry in Douglas. As of this report, we have collected more than 200 cans! Thank you to everyone for their generous giving and to church member, Joyce Wright, for facilitating.

Growing Together Spiritually: On October 12, twenty-two people and I took part in Dr. Shannon Connell's workshop in the Friendship Hall on "How to Cultivate a Spiritual Practice." We are so grateful to Shannon for sharing her wisdom and for providing us with several practical ideas for becoming more contemplative.

Pet Blessing: On October 2, I was honored to co-officiate the annual "Blessing of the Animals" in Douglas with church member, Ginny Mikita. More than forty people attended with their dogs to receive a blessing and a treat. Photos from the event appeared in the local newspaper and on social media.

CROP Hunger Walk: Wow! Our amazing Douglas UCC CROP Walkers raised \$16,880 to help the hungry, placing us in the Top 3 nationwide fundraising teams out of more than 2,500 participating churches!! We are so grateful for their efforts and to all who sponsored them. Thank you to Chris Clark and Mike Mok for facilitating.

Honoring our Ancestors: On November 1, All Saints Day, Rev. Ruth Zwald will be facilitating an evening at our church to honor our loved ones who have passed.

New Members Class: On November 6, I will be leading a New Members Class at the Retreat House following our Sunday worship service.

UCC Meetings: On September 29, I represented our church at the Ecclesiastical Council for Rev. Keith Mannes. He made news back in 2020 when he left East Saugatuck CRC over their support of Donald Trump. At the Ecclesiastical Council, we officially welcomed Rev. Mannes as a minister in the UCC. Also: Later this month, I will be participating in Michigan Conference Annual meeting on October 22; the installation of Rev. Lillian Daniel on October 23; and the Grand West Association Fall Meeting on October 30, all via Zoom.

Sedona Pilgrimage: From November 10-16, I will be leading a group of 20 people from our church on a spiritual retreat to Sedona and the Grand Canyon. We will also be visiting our UCC church in Sedona, which is called "The Church of the Red Rocks." During my absence, Rev. Marchiene Rienstra will be preaching and leading worship at Douglas UCC on Sunday, November 13.

In Addition: On October 1, I appeared as a guest on the "Morning Grind" radio show to talk about our upcoming church events...On October 7, I gave a presentation at the YMCA Service Club in downtown Grand Rapids...On October 13, I attended the "Art-a-Loan" fundraiser for Saugatuck High School...On October 15, I officiated a wedding at the Ravines in Saugatuck.

Kudos: Thank you to our cantor, Jeff Spangler, for his leadership while Peter Black was on vacation. Jeff worked and rehearsed with our guest pianists, Robert Edwards and Bob Ruddy. We are grateful for his service.

Respectfully submitted,

Pastor Sal