

Douglas Congregational United Church of Christ Pastor's Report: October 10, 2023

A New Call: Last week on October 3, I announced to the congregation that I will be leaving Douglas UCC at the start of the new year, as I have been called as the Senior Pastor of a UCC church in Connecticut, The United Church of Rowayton. Though there is great sadness, I am grateful for the amazing outpouring of love, support, and understanding that I have received this week. Douglas UCC is blessed with an abundance of strong lay leadership, as well as seven ordained ministers in our congregation, so I have no doubts that the transition period will be a smooth one.

Search & Call Process: Our UCC Michigan Conference Associate Minister, Rev. Cheryl Burke, will be meeting with our Church Council, Pastoral Relations Committee, and staff on Thursday, October 12, at 10:30 AM to answer questions about the process of searching for a new settled pastor.

Beach Clean-Up: On Saturday, September 16, our Creation Justice Team led a Beach Clean-Up of Oval Beach in Saugatuck. Thank you to Brad Hopkins & Dave Bohn; Anne & Doug Petersen; Tom Fahlstrom; Emily Tieman; Linda Charvat; Jennifer Schwarb; and Kirsten Stannis for helping, and thank you to Kathleen Klage for facilitating.

Campus Stewardship: Thank you to all who attended our Campus Stewardship Meeting on Sunday, September 24. 64 people were in attendance, an excellent turnout. Pledge cards were distributed and will be returned on Sunday, October 15. We are grateful to Mark Johnston, Jim Kern and Peter Mueller for all their hard work in facilitating the meeting.

Blessing of the Animals: Our Sunday, October 1, Rev. Ginny Mikita and I officiated the 4th Annual "Blessing of the Animals" at Beery Field in Downtown Douglas. A record turnout (over 100 humans and over 75 dogs) received blessings, prayer cards, and treats from Lakeshore Pet Boutique.

CROP Hunger Walk: On Sunday, October 8, our church participated in the annual CROP Hunger Walk. Though the final tally is not yet in, our Douglas UCC Team (Chris Clark, Mike Mok, Kathleen Klage, Max Brown & Doug Sipsma; Julie & Jack Ridl; Jeremy Lund & Mark Johnston; Mike VerMerris; Rich Marth; Pete Wehle; Jennifer Schwarb) raised more than \$12,000, so far, to help the hungry in Allegan County and around the world. We are so grateful for their efforts and to all who sponsored them.

Upcoming Fall Concert Series: We are excited to announce two upcoming concerts this fall at Douglas UCC: We will welcome singer/songwriter, Michelle Willis, on October 25, and recording artist, Bobby Jo Valentine, on November 3.

New At-Large Member: At this month's Church Council meeting, we welcome church member, Bernie Lopata, who will be serving as an additional at-large Church Council member. We are very grateful for her leadership and service.

Respectfully submitted,

Pastor Sal

Rev. Salvatore Sapienza, Pastor