

Douglas Congregational United Church of Christ

Pastor's Report: September 15, 2020

Dear Church Council:

We are now six months into the pandemic, and I am so grateful to all of you for your continued leadership and guidance. Our church is not just surviving. We are thriving!

The viewership for our Sunday worship videos continues to grow. Last month, our YouTube videos had more than 11,000 views, and we now have more than 2,250 subscribers to our channel. Our Sunday Zoom "Coffee Hours" continue to be well-attended each week, as well. I am so grateful for the faithfulness and continued support from our congregation.

Here's a brief snapshot of the past month in the life of our church:

Creation Season: As we do each year at Douglas UCC, the month of September is devoted to the theme of "God's Creation." I am grateful to the members of our Creation Justice Team, who are leading our worship each week with opening remarks and prayers, and to our church's Art Guild for the beautiful "Creation" banner.

Stephen Ministry: A new group of Stephen Ministers (Demethrea Terrien, Pat Denner, Michael Valdez, Doug Sipsma) will continue with their 50-hours of training starting this Thursday. The weekly 2 ½ hour sessions will take place via Zoom. Our Stephen Leaders, Paul Burdick and Laurie VanDenBeldt, and I will be leading these classes. I met via Zoom with our current Stephen Ministers on August 20 for their monthly supervision.

Pastoral Relations Committee: I am grateful to our Pastoral Relations Committee member, Kathleen Mueller, for attending the UCC's webinar entitled, "Supporting Your Pastor, So They Can Support You." She will share her notes with me and the Pastoral Relations Committee on September 27 via Zoom.

Memorial Service: On August 29, I officiated an outdoor Memorial Service in Saugatuck for our church member, Jim Lemons, who passed away in May. Peter Black provided the music. I am grateful to all of our church members who attended and spoke at the memorial.

Boundary Training: On August 24, I attended a UCC "Boundary Training Class" for pastors. The 5-hour training class was held via Zoom, and was facilitated by our UCC Michigan Conference.

Celebration Pride Garden: I will be speaking and offering a blessing at the official opening of the "Celebration Pride Garden" in Douglas on Saturday, September 19. The garden is in recognition of our church members, Larry Gammons and the late Carl Jennings.

In Addition: On August 21, I met with Father Jay Johnson, the new rector of All Saints Episcopal Church in Saugatuck... On August 22, I officiated a small wedding in the church for a couple from Jenison, Michigan... On September 9, I was interviewed by Florida's Sunshine Cathedral on their weekly webcast, which received more than 3,000 views... On September 22, I offered a blessing at the opening of the new Isabel's Market + Eatery in Douglas, which is owned by four of our church members.

Upcoming: On Sunday, October 4, I will be leading a "Blessing of the Animals" service at Beery Field in Downtown Douglas at 2 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pastor Sal