

# Douglas Congregational United Church of Christ

## Pastor's Report

### September 20, 2022

**Conference Minister Visit:** Earlier this month – on Labor Day weekend – we were visited by our new UCC Michigan Conference Minister, Rev. Dr. Lillian Daniel. Sometimes referred to as “Bishop” in other denominations, the Conference Minister oversees all of the 148 UCC churches in our state. This was Rev. Daniel’s first visit to Douglas UCC, and she was very impressed with our worship, outreach, and extravagant welcome. She was also appreciative of her comfortable stay at our church’s Retreat House. On Sunday, September 4, Rev. Daniel preached at our church and met with some of our church leaders.

**Church Improvements:** This month saw the installation of brand new wallpaper in the church sanctuary, as well as the completion of a new A/V station. We are so grateful to our church’s Design Team (Bud Baty, Jodi Berault, Floyd Fleming) for overseeing the wallpaper project, and to Jeff Spangler and Doug Wierenga for building the A/V deck. Also, the carpets were cleaned at the Retreat House last week; our church’s historic front doors were professionally refinished this week; and new sod was laid alongside the church and in the garden.

**CROP Walk:** The annual Saugatuck/Douglas CROP Hunger Walk was held on September 18. Our Douglas UCC Team raised a new record-breaking amount of more than \$10,000, making us one of the top 15 teams in the entire United States. We are so very grateful to all our walkers and to all who donated to helping the hungry in Allegan County and around the world. And, thank you to Chris Clark and Mike Mok for their leadership.

**Stephen Ministry:** Next month, our church’s Stephen Ministry Team and I will be leading the congregation in a book read of Parker Palmer’s *On the Brink of Everything*. The book read will take place each Thursday in October at 3 PM in the Friendship Hall.

**Creation Justice:** September is Creation Month. On September 18, we welcomed Dr. Debra Rienstra, author of *Refugia Faith*, who delivered an inspiring message on caring for the environment. The day prior, more than 20 people from our church took part in a Beach Cleanup of Oval Beach. Thank you to all of them and to church members, Brad Hopkins and Kathleen Klage, for facilitating.

**Interfaith Action:** On September 19, I was honored to be the keynote speaker at Interfaith Action of Southwest Michigan’s symposium on “The Protection and Preservation of our Common Home,” which can be viewed on Interfaith Action’s YouTube channel.

**In Addition:** On Thursday, August 25, I gave a presentation about the life of Father Mychal Judge at Park Church in Downtown Grand Rapids...I also spoke about Fr. Mychal at PFLAG Plymouth/Canton on September 11 via Zoom...On August 26, I officiated a service in the Memorial Garden for church member, Sarah Scott...On August 28, I met with the Afghan Task Force leaders to discuss housing options for the Afghan family...On September 15, I attended the UCC Grand West Association meeting via Zoom...On September 18, I attended the Pastoral Relations Committee Meeting at the Retreat House.

**Upcoming:** On October 2, church member, Ginny Mikita, and I will be officiating the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual “Blessing of the Animals” in Douglas at Beery Field at 2 PM ...On October 12, church member, Dr. Shannon Connell, will be leading a “Cultivating a Spiritual Practice” workshop in the Friendship Hall at 7 PM.

**Kudos:** Thank you to Retreat House coordinator, Kathleen Mueller, and church member, Laurie VandenBeldt, for getting everything ready for Rev. Daniel’s stay at the Retreat House earlier this month. And, thank you to church members, Stacy Honson, Dick Bont, and Aase Monk for all of their work in the Memorial Garden.

Respectfully submitted,

*Pastor Sal*

Salvatore Sapienza, Pastor