

Douglas Congregational United Church of Christ Pastor's Report: September 12, 2023

End of Summer: As the final few weeks of summer are upon us, we look back with gratitude on all the joyous activities of the season. We are thankful for all the church events, all the new faces on Sunday, and for all the enjoyable Coffee Hours outdoors.

Douglas Social: On August 24, our church participated in the Douglas Summer Social at the Saugatuck/Douglas History Center. Though it was one of the hottest evenings of the summer, so many people turned out, and our church's food booth was a great success! I took a lot of photos, which we shared on our church's social media accounts. We also collected \$327.25 in donations. A very big thank you to all who helped: Debra Carr, Greg & Sheryll VanPortfleet, Linda Charvat, Kathleen & Peter Mueller, Annie Hotwagner, Wendy Hamlin, Gregg Smith, Linda & Rich Marth, El Clough, Pat Denner, and Joyce Wright.

Stephen Ministry: I met with our church's Stephen Ministry Team on August 27 for their monthly supervision meeting and continuing education. We are grateful for their dedicated service to our church.

Creation Justice Team: In partnership with the Alliance for the Great Lakes, our Creation Justice Team is facilitating a beach clean-up of Oval Beach in Saugatuck on September 16. A press release appeared in the local paper and on our church's social media sites. Thank you to Kathleen Klage for facilitating. The Creation Justice Team is also planning our worship service on October 1 in celebration of Harvest season.

Afghan Family Update: Our Sunday, August 27, the Afghan family we sponsored in the Spring Street house last year returned to give us an update on how well they are doing. More than 50 church members gathered in the Friendship Hall to welcome the family and to ask questions. Thank you to Bob Kenny and our Social Justice Team for facilitating.

Retreat House Programming: An Open House took place at the Retreat House on September 3, as we began a monthly series of spiritual programming at our newly christened Spiritual Center. We are thankful to Rev. Marchiene Rienstra, Barbara Flynn, and Rev. Ginny Mikita for kicking off the series and for sharing their wisdom and gifts with our community.

Campus Stewardship: We will be kicking off a Campus Stewardship Drive on Sunday, September 24, from 11:30 AM to 12:30 PM in the Friendship Hall. In preparation, we have heard powerful stewardship talks the past few Sundays from Demethrea Terrien, Laurie Vandenbeldt, and Virigina Stuart. We are grateful to them and to Jim Kern and Peter Mueller for facilitating the Drive.

CROP Hunger Walk: The annual CROP Hunger Walk will take place on October 8. Walkers and sponsors can sign-up/donate via our church's website. Thank you to Mike Mok for facilitating this year's event.

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. Stay tuned for more details and ticketing information.

Respectfully submitted,

Pastor Sal

Rev. Salvatore Sapienza, Pastor