

THE MESSENGER

NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2022



First Congregational Church UCC
412 4th Street Manistee Mi



From The Pastor

Dear Friends,

I am in absolute shock that it is already August. It took so long to get through spring and into summer it feels almost impossible how fast August arrived. In the summer so many of you go on trips or have family visit and in general, just get busier. So there are fewer opportunities to catch up with what we have been doing with our summers. I'd love to hear from you, and hear about your adventures, your staycations, and all those wonderful quirky persons and pets who came to visit you! But I'd also like to talk about some of the highlights for our church community this summer.

As I'm sure you have heard we started our Family Faith Formation Sunday events. It's a bit of a clunky name but it is a wonderful experience. We offer two different opportunities for our congregation to further explore their faith. Our amazing Faith Formation co-chair has been leading a Bible study while Pastor Liz has done lessons and games with our younger church members. It would be a joy if you considered participating in this monthly event, or perhaps you have an activity or a lesson you might like to lead with either group. Tie Dye?

Geocaching? Handbells or other music making? Arts or crafts? We are open to all kinds of opportunities.

I was excited to be able to spend another week at our UCC church camp in Howell. For once we had perfect weather! It was a joy to get to know young adults throughout our conference. While it is true that young people today are facing incredible challenges and learning to navigate a very different world than any of us grew up in, they are smart, resilient, and kind. And I am grateful to get to spend some of my time getting to know them.

Coming up in August I have signed up for Sermon Boot Camp. This will be an 8-week course that is designed to have ministers and pastors coach each other into writing better sermons.

I'm not sure what to expect but I'm looking forward to getting to know new clergy friends, learning more about the writing process for others, and hopefully learning a new trick or two to become a little better at this work.

As a congregation, we are working hard to put together a rummage sale at the end of August. It will be an amazing two days of fundraising and perhaps even a little fellowship. It would be wonderful to see you there, either to find new treasures for yourself or maybe even help work the event.

However, you spend the last few precious days of summer I hope they are wonderful and life-giving. You are as always in my prayers.

Blessings, Pastor Liz

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Worship Team

On August 7, we will welcome back again Dr. Louis Yock to our pulpit. He is currently the minister for the People's Church Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Ludington. "Lou is a native of Mt. Clemens, Michigan. In 1987, he began his studies for the Roman Catholic priesthood at St. Meinrad Seminary in southern Indiana. He entered the Benedictine monastery of St. Meinrad Arch Abbey where he became a monk and continued his studies for the priesthood, receiving his Master of Divinity and ordination in 1995. Sent to the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, Italy, he received his MA and Ph.D in Ecclesiastical History.

He returned to Manistee, Michigan in 2002, and began teaching Philosophy and Comparative Religion at West Shore Community College. He currently lives in Ludington."

Holy Communion will be offered on August 14 this month when Pastor Liz returns from a weekend away. While she is gone, Maggie Patterson will be liturgist and John Helge will offer the welcome and announcements.

~Nanci Swenson and Joanne Cotugno

Crafts

The craft group is busy and with many different projects. We are making gnome ornaments, pet mats, ornaments in different languages, to name a few.

If anyone has some white yarn lying around they want to donate, the craft group could use some for a current project they are working on.

We meet on Wednesday 9-12 if you can stop in for a while to help.

Everyone is Welcome!

Family Faith Formation!

Please plan to join us on August 15h for the next family faith formation event.

After Coffee Hour there will be two faith formation activities to choose from. Jessica will lead a discussion on First Corinthians in the Parlor and Pastor Liz will lead the young and young at heart in a lesson and fun activity. Every one is welcome!

August Birthdays

Aug 1- Jerry Lewis

Aug 4- Linda Diesing

Erik Johnson

Aug 7- Abby Ault

Aug 11- Kiely Ohman

Aug 14- Chris Huizinga

Aug 17- Tootie Rowell

Aug 22- Linda Chick

Aug 23- Jane Schimke

Aug 26- Audrey Huizinga

Aug 29- Shannon Rourk

Aug 30 - Cindy Welsh

Happy Anniversary

Aug 2- Steve and Kristen Kimm

Aug 10- Jim and Nancy Goodwin

Aug 12- Mickey and Julie Finan

Aug 13- John and Jean Rowe

Aug 15- Robert and Tricia Carlson

Aug 16- Erik Wachlin and Leah Joy

Aug 18- Lauren and Ray Maycock

Aug 28- Steve and Carol Davidson

Aug 29- Bob and Sara Zielesch

Moderator's Musings

So far we have been able to enjoy the benefits of a glorious summer on the shore of Lake Michigan. I have met people visiting our area from the deep south and far west who are so amazed at our combination of low humidity and moderate temperatures combined with beautiful sandy beaches, pristine National Forest landscapes, and challenging golf courses. It is my sincere hope that you and your family are able to enjoy this summer also.

Whenever I meet someone new I always find a way to invite them to see our beautiful church and attend our Sunday morning services. We have welcomed many visitors to our newly renovated sanctuary this summer. I am so proud of our congregation for the ways that you make a point to welcome new faces each Sunday. Let's keep up the good work and continue to make our church a safe and welcoming place.

I am happy to report that we now have six volunteers to become certified to conduct weekly Bingo games in our fellowship hall. We believe that these games can be a major fundraiser for the congregation. We hope to have all the equipment and plans in place to begin calling "BINGO" in late September. We will need volunteers to help provide hospitality for the players. Let me know if you can help!

We continue to make progress raising funds for the sanctuary project. We have more than \$7000 in the bank towards the wonderful \$20,000 matching challenge. When we hit that goal we will have raised \$70,000 of the \$75,000 we borrowed from our existing funds. Please continue to share our progress with your friends and family and let them know how they can help!

We have a lot of great things happening here and I hope you will find a way to participate and enjoy your church family.
See YOU in church!

John Helge.

Cell Phone: 616-915-2403.

Email: johnmhelge@gmail.com

Outreach

August Monthly Mission: Family Life Center



This month we will be collecting school supplies for the Family Life Center.

This would include anything needed for school, such as: backpacks, water bottles, crayons, markers, notebooks, etc.

Lisa Clarke from Echo His Love will explain their mission further later in August.

Faith Formation Report

Christianity has a tendency to feel foreign, the Church can be disorientating, Jesus's teachings can feel confusing, and God can feel distant.

Sarah Bessey recently shared on her podcast, Evolving Faith, "What I thought was a dead religion that had nothing more to offer me but more pain and more burdens became a practice of faith that connected me not only to God but to my neighbors."

Often I find myself discouraged with church. I easily become frustrated when I hear teachings that are reminiscent of side-eye glances, racism, nationalism, or misrepresented teachings from Jesus that pervade our current culture.

But then there are our neighbors and fresh flowers. We gather together in the church parlor with depth filled conversations as bubbles from children float outside the windows. There are white capped waves on the beaches and forgiveness over a long walk. The horizon looks seamless, busy kids play wildly during Sunday morning service, and hugs are shared freely as we wait in line for coffee & crackers.

Religion can often feel like it has nothing more to offer but pain and burdens. But slowly, I'm finding small practices promise to connect us not only to God but to our neighbors.

This is our hope as a congregation. When religion can feel like it has nothing more than pain and burdens to offer, our collective faith, our best intentions, and our trust in showing up for one another week after week will continue to connect us not only with one another but with a God who loves us unconditionally.

Friends, we look forward to our continued conversation together, following coffee hour, each second Sunday of the month. We would love to welcome you & yours.

And something for you to look forward to? A community book club coming this fall centered on books that have recently been banned! Who doesn't love a little rebellious reading?

-Jessica Rozga

Please Sign Up!

In the Fellowship Hall there are 3 sign up sheets! Something for everyone to get involved. You can host coffee hour (ask Mary or Stu if you need help!) You can sign up to greet and hand out bulletins on Sunday Morning! We are also looking for people who would like to help lead worship by reading scripture (sometimes called a liturgist).

Pastor Liz will be happy to answer any questions you might have.

Fellowship

The Fellowship team is so happy that many of you are staying after church and socializing with one another. If anyone has thoughts about hosting, Stu or I would be more than happy to talk to you or help in any way. A big thank to all who have helped in any way. - Stu and Mary

There has been an interest shown in starting a women's fellowship group again. If you're interested in organizing and implementing this, please talk to Pastor Liz. I am not able to take this on right now, but would certainly be a participant! :) Sandy

Rummage Sale!

The rummage sale will be held on
August 19th and August 20th
9:00am - 4:00pm



Please continue to bring in your treasures, or clothes that have shrunk in the dark, or shoes that never really fit (but you loved), that plant stand that is only holding dead plants, or those Flinstone's jelly jars you used as drinking glasses. We will be looking for assistance in setting up and running the sale. If you have large ticket items, please give us an idea of their value, so we can price those fairly. The smaller items will be by donation.

Office Hours

Deb will be in the office Tuesday-Thursday from 9am-Noon

Pastor Liz will be in the office as much as possible Tuesday-Thursday. If you need to contact her when she is out of office, her email remains the best option, or call her home phone.

Reminder: During office hours please use the door bell so that Deb can buzz you in from her desk. the keypad lock is only for use when Deb isn't in the building.

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United Church of Christ
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