

The Congregator



From the Pastor's Desk

Annual Meeting Re-cap

Thanks to everyone who attended our annual meeting. We successfully passed the budget for 2024, amended our by-laws, and elected our nominated slate of officers and team leaders. New copies of the by-laws are available upon request in the church office. The budget did increase a bit from last year, partly as a reflection of everyday expenses going up. We do respectfully ask the congregation to give a bit more as you are able in the new year to help us provide our mission and ministries as well as maintaining our building and grounds. We look forward to the finalization of the refinance work between the UCC and West Michigan Community Bank which will lower our monthly payments but we also want to continue to pay down our debt on a timely basis. We do this with your generous donations as well as with rental income.

December events

The season of Advent is upon us. We await the good news of a light shining forth from the darkness and the innocent cry of a divine infant who will grow up to change the world. As we await this annual joyous celebration we will prepare with the following upcoming events.

Please join us on Saturday, December 2 at 10am to help hang the greens and decorate the church for the season. Please join us on Sunday, December 3 for worship and communion followed by our Elf Workshop. This is a fun time for all ages to make crafts for the Christmas season. Please join us on Sunday, December 17 for our children's Christmas pageant. We will have a Sunday morning worship service on December 24 at our normal time of 10am and then also our traditional Christmas Eve celebration of lessons and carols at 7pm. 'Tis the season to be jolly. Let us celebrate together the advent of good news.

Prayer List

Active Prayers

Our elderly and homebound members.

Continual Prayers

George Drayton, Joan Edson, Helen Emelander, Jeanne Haynor, Paul Kunde, Alice Perrin, Delores Wheelock, & Al Wooton.

Church of the Month

Of our 23 UCC churches and agencies in our Grand West Association, we will pray this month for Joy Like A River UCC. This Spanish-speaking, new church start worships in the building that used to be Burlingame UCC in Wyoming. Let us remember their mission and ministry in our prayers for December.



Anniversary

December 14 marks the 20th anniversary of my ordination into ministry. In May of 2003, I graduated from Lancaster Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania, a UCC institution. In July of that year, I was called to become the Associate Pastor of Colonial Park UCC in Harrisburg, PA. And in December, I was ordained at my home church, First Park Congregational UCC in Grand Rapids. It was a bittersweet celebration as my loving father was silently battling major depression at the time and was unable to attend. When he won that battle he shared in the celebration later on his time. Being ordained is one of the greatest joys of my life, surpassed only by my marriage to Katrina and also by becoming a Bumpa. I love the Church! I love how and why we come together to give thanks to God, to learn about Jesus and to figure out how best to follow him, to attend meetings for the sole purpose of making this life better in any number of ways from: stewardship of the earth and church, to justice ministry, to feeding programs. There is so much good we can accomplish together when we put our minds, hearts, and pocketbooks together. God has led me from this area, to Lancaster and Harrisburg Pennsylvania, to Benzonia UCC in northern Michigan, and now here to Hudsonville UCC for nearly 10 years. How we have grown and evolved in these years. God is doing amazing things with us. On this anniversary, I celebrate God calling me into ministry and especially God calling me to this church where we are doing such good works of sharing God's unconditional love.

Friends, we have learned about the death of our former pastor, the Rev. Tom Mason. His family contacted us saying he passed from this life to the next on October 28. Since 2009, Pastor Tom lived with the debilitating effects of a series of strokes. The family is comforted knowing that he is at peace in God's loving arms. Pastor Tom's wife Betty lives in Grand Rapids. If you would like to send her a sympathy card, contact the church office for her address. Pastor Tom Mason served our church from 1982-1991. We are thankful for his service and dedication to the life of our congregation. Please keep the Mason family in your prayers." - Pastor Dan

Volunteer Schedule

Offering Counters

December 3: Taliyn Merchant & Russ Broderick
December 10: Katrina Furman & David Bendert
December 17: John Parker & Ruth Broderick
December 24: Sandy Lyon & Christina Breen
December 31:

Lay Readers

December 3: Pat Menkveld
December 10: Laura Baker
December 17: Christmas Pageant
December 24: Millie Bendert
December 31: Taliyn Merchant

Greeters

December 3: Angel & Rick Dannenberg
December 10: Pat Menkveld
December 17: Ann Martin
December 24: Laura & Tony Baker/Broderick
December 31: Kelly Lockwood



A Moment in Church History

Rev. Warke departed in 1960 and was replaced by Mr. Lohman who was a student at Western Theological Seminary. He served until 1963. During this time an organ fund was set up and a Vacation Bible School was held in our church in June. Mr. Lohman unsuccessfully attempted Sunday evening services. These were replaced with Wednesday evening Bible Study.

Council Updates

Friends, Council received word on Friday, November 24 of the immediate and unexpected resignation from Aron Duby of his responsibilities including Moderator, youth director, and worship audio/visuals tech. On Sunday, November 26, Council met and unanimously elected Christina Breen as our new Moderator effective immediately. The Christian Education team will meet in the new year to discuss future leadership for our senior high youth group. And the Facility team is working to create a rotation of folks to help with worship A/V.

We thank Aron for his service and leadership from the pandemic until now. And we are grateful for Christina as she leads us through Advent and into the new year. Let us boldly move forward continuing to serve Christ and share God's love in this new season of hope.

On Thursday, November 30, our new Moderator Christina Breen and our Treasurer Tali Merchant met at a title company in Grandville to finalize the refinance of our loan. With a few signatures and a wire transfer from the UCC, our loan with West Michigan Community Bank was paid off and our new loan with the UCC began. We also received a smaller loan to pay the HVAC company in full and to start the much needed repairs in the basement concluding the Sustain God's House campaign.

The benefit to the refinance is that our monthly payment now for the building will be lowered to \$8,800 saving us an average of around \$2,000 per month and eliminating the large quarterly balloon payment. We will still need your financial support to make these payments plus continuing to carry out the mission and ministry of the church. Thank you in advance for your continued support for our church and the work we are doing to love as Jesus loved and to bring hope and healing to a hurting world. Together we can do great things. - Pastor Dan

Christian Education

December is going to be a fun and jam-packed time for our kids. Our two big events are the Elf Workshop after worship on December 3, featuring lots of kid friendly Christmas crafts for kids to make and take home including melted no-man ornaments, reindeer food and some fun ornaments.

The highlight of the winter season is the Children's Christmas Pageant - "I Didn't Think it Would Happen this Way" on December 17th.

Missions Update

Hand2Hand

You are great! We asked for hats and mittens/gloves and, as always, you came through. We have enough hats to give every one of our kids a new hat, extras to leave at the school office to give anyone who loses their hat, and enough to do the same next November! Extra thanks to Eileen Slagter and Jeanne Haynor who each donated dozens of hats for the kids. By the time you read this, we should have enough mittens and gloves for each of the children too. Thank you, thank you, thank you!! Delivery of these warm items will be the last week in November, in time for the cold weather. Our basic pantry needs are posted by the donation cart - we always need these things. There is now a new "Monthly Feature Sign" by the cart announcing particular items we need now. This month we are in need of cream and kid-friendly soups, cake mixes and cans of frosting (for birthdays). Thank you for keeping these particular items in mind when making donations to H2H. Hope you are enjoying this holiday season. You are certainly making it brighter for our kids at South Elementary.

Hand2Hand items always wanted: Peanut Butter, Mac and Cheese, Granola Bars, small cans of Tuna and Chicken, Applesauce and Fruit Cups, Chicken Helper and/or Rice dinners, soup (cream and kid friendly), Oatmeal packets, individual serving cereal boxes, and small packages of crackers.

Feeding America

Feeding America food distribution to be held Dec 7th from 5-7 pm. Many hands make lighter work, come help bless families in our community. Sign up sheet on the Welcome desk.

Calling all bakers!!! Looking for baked goods for the mission team to plate up and pass out at Feeding America. Goodies can be brought to the church on Dec 3rd or dropped off by the 6th.

Adopt a family

This year we have adopted a family from Resilience. A list of items requested is on the round table by the coat room. All items need to be back to church by Dec 10th.

Stay tuned for another opportunity to bless a family. As we are also adopting a family from IOC. Details to come soon!

We continue to collect diapers and wipes for Nestlings and can tabs for the Ronald McDonald House.



Birthdays

Nate Fitton - 12/2
Kristen Lee - 12/5
Pam Jenkins - 12/6
Alice Perrin - 12/10
Melissa Huisman - 12/12
Ali Bendert - 12/13
Kathie Delaney - 12/21
Pat Hall - 12/21
Shirley Russell - 12/23
Bev & Barb Price - 12/28

Anniversaries

Andy & Aubrie Bruinsma - 12/17
Jim & Pat Thompson - 12/21
Lisa & Tom Sikkema - 12/26
Paul & Mary Slotegraaf - 12/30

PEACE Garden

Our beds have been put to bed for 2023! This was the first full growing season for the PEACE Garden, which provides produce to people in the community facing food insecurity. Together with our friends from Inclusive Ottawa County, we started this no-till garden with a goal of providing 135 servings of tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers and herbs to our under-resourced neighbors. But God had other plans. Our first-year garden exploded, providing more than 40 baskets of produce that went home with more than 50 people! Next year, we plan to double the size of the garden, adding green beans, basil and other fruits and vegetables are neighbors have asked for. We need your help to make it happen! Please consider contributing your time, talent or treasures to support this critical work. Contact Christa Ferguson ([link in christaferguson22@gmail.com](mailto:christaferguson22@gmail.com)) to find out more about how you can help.

Save the Date:

Sunday, Feb. 25, 2024: PEACE Garden Committee meeting after worship. This meeting is open to anyone interested in supporting the garden! We will brainstorm ideas to improve the garden and create a plan for the season.

Sunday, April 7, 2024: PEACE Garden grounds preparation after worship. Come with gloves and be ready to get dirty! Everyone is encouraged to bring a wish list donation, if they are able.



December Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
					1	2 Hanging of the Greens 10AM
3 Worship 10AM Elf Worship 11AM Mission Team 11:30AM Basketball 6-8PM	4	5	6 Pickleball 3:30-6PM Basketball 7-8:30PM	7 Feeding America 5-7PM	8	9 Pickleball 8:30-11AM
10 Worship 10AM Council 11:15AM Basketball 6-8PM	11	12 Basketball 6-8PM	13 Basketball 7-8:30PM	14 Pickleball 3:30-6PM Soccer 6-7:30PM	15	16 Pickleball 8:30-11AM Afternoon Rental
17 Worship 10AM Basketball 6-8PM	18	19 Basketball 6-8PM	20	21 Pickleball 3:30-6PM Soccer 6-7:30PM	22	23 Pickleball 8:30-11AM
24 Worship 10AM Christmas Eve 7PM	25	26	27	28 Pickleball 3:30-6PM	29	30 Pickleball 8:30-11AM
31 Worship 10AM						



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