

Still Speaking

First Congregational
United Church of Christ
Charlotte, Michigan

June 2023
Volume 1
Issue 6

Never place a
period where God
has placed a comma

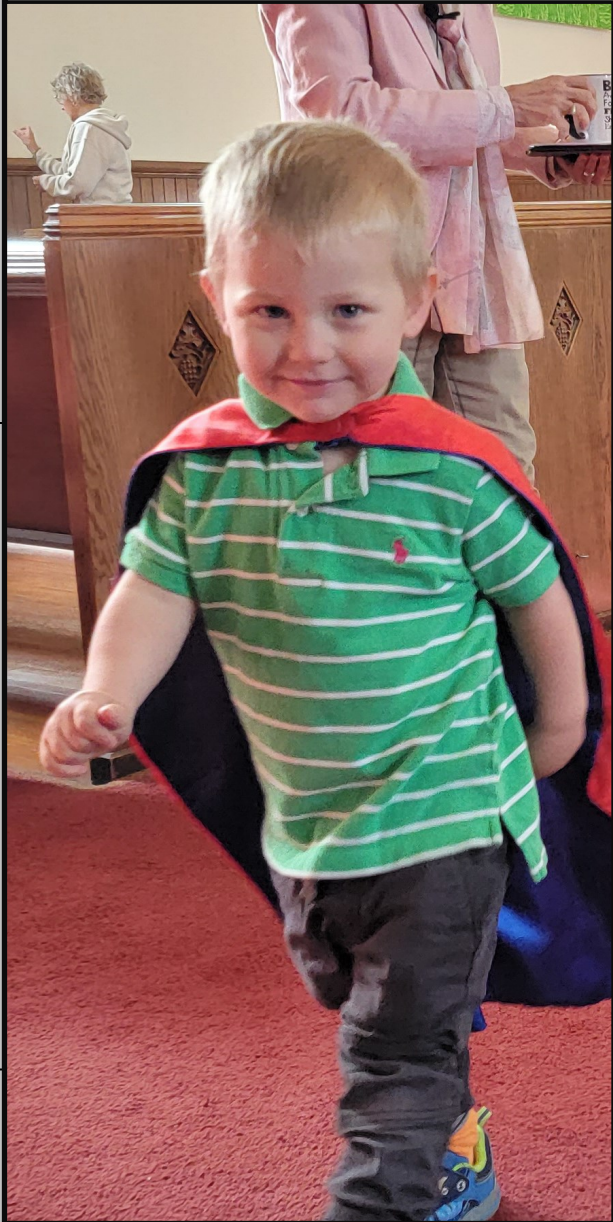
It's Pride Month

In this issue:

A Letter to the Trans Community	3
Member Reads (NEW) - God in the Closet	4
Our New LGBTQ Library	5
Pastor's Corner	6
Mission Moment - New Location!	8
Why the Kids Walked Away	9
Time to Celebrate: Our Graduates	10
Summer Story Hour	12
Colossal Cookie Challenge	13
Lansing Concert Band	13
Recycle Opportunity	14
Movie Event	15
Let's Take a Trip	15
Shamanism for the Curious	16
Poetry Workshop	17



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Still Speaking is the monthly newsletter distributed to members and friends of First Congregational United Church of Christ of Charlotte. We welcome inside and outside comments, creative writing, illustrative photos/art, and articles. We appreciate feedback; please send comments to the Editor @ Editor@uccCharlotte.org

Editor: Editor@ucccharlotte.org

Still Speaking article deadline is the 25th of each month. Queries are due by the 18th.



UCC Letter in Support of the Trans Community

The Council of Conference Ministers of the UCC, Officers of the UCC

We join together in this pastoral letter addressing the attacks on people of transgender or nonbinary experience across the United States.

As leaders in the UCC, we want every person of transgender or nonbinary experience to know this: you are beloved by God. No earthly power can separate you from God's love. God created you perfectly: your gender identity or expression is God's gift to you and the world.

Yet, across America, laws and executive orders are criminalizing the lifesaving treatment that transgender youth need to complete their journey to wholeness and, at the same time, are depriving parents of the right to make medical decisions for their children. These laws, enacted or proposed in states across the country, are part of a broader campaign to reverse basic rights for LGBTQ+ Americans. Alabama, Arkansas, and Arizona already ban medical care for trans youth. In Texas, the state government has defined gender-affirming care as "child abuse." Fifteen states have banned participation by transgender youth in school sports. Six states have adopted "don't say gay or trans" laws that have erased any mention of LGBTQ+ people from school life.

The harm done when governments seize control from parents of their freedom to provide care for their own children is obvious. Even more dangerous is the message states are sending to transgender and nonbinary youth: "Your lives don't matter." Suicide is an epidemic among LGBTQ+ youth and has been for years. When politicians stigmatize children and teenagers who simply wish to live their lives with integrity, the cost of mental suffering is egregious. The ripple effect of this stigma and discrimination reverberates throughout the whole community.

Jesus said: "I came that you may have life and have it abundantly." (John 10:10) The lives of trans and nonbinary people are precious. They are God's beloved children, our siblings, created like all of us for a life free from hatred and recrimination. The church cannot be silent while our trans and nonbinary youth are subjected to abuse and exposed to public defamation.

And so we are not silent. To our transgender and nonbinary siblings: we offer you our encouragement, support, and love. We will remain at your side as long as others threaten your dignity and worth. We honor your courage and your faith. The world needs you not as others want you to be, but as you truly are.

To the congregations and ministry settings of the UCC: We ask you to surround persons of transgender or nonbinary experience and their families and loved ones with compassion and care. Do not be silent when this wave of persecution threatens human life. This is a time to love – not behind closed doors but out in the open, with word and action. Your visible witness

demonstrates that all who struggle against defamation and hatred have a home in the UCC.

As Pride month begins in many states, we are reminded that “coming out” is a powerful moral force that transforms lives. This is true not only for LGBTQ+ people but also for churches. This is a time when congregations are called to come out to show the world that love is stronger



Member Reads: God in the Closet

Submitted by Deb Cogswell

Have you read something
that you want to share?
Tell us about it!

Member Reads is a new
Still Speaking column.

About the author: Rev. Maggy Whitehouse is an Independent Sacramental priest, stand-up comedian, broadcaster, radio presenter and former BBC journalist, a travel documentary presenter and producer, host moderator for BBC's Religion and Ethics message boards.

In her article “Bringing God Out of the Closet,” Rev. Maggy Whitehouse, author and specialist in Judeo-Christian mysticism, particularly Bible interpretation, takes an up-close look at why so many people claim the Bible brands homosexuality as a sin and details why they are wrong.

With a step-daughter who is gay and a best friend who is Jewish and gay, she says she has “flesh in the game of challenging the biblical teachings often used against the LGBTQIA+ community”.

Whitehouse writes about how these passages have been historically used out of context and how Paul's words have been twisted to mean something they do not. “Jesus did not say anything about same sex matters” she points out and “Jesus encapsulated all of His teachings by saying, ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your strength and love your neighbor as yourself’”. (Matthew 22:37-39)

In the Hebrew Scriptures, the laws of Leviticus and Deuteronomy made a lot of sense for people in that time period, because without them, there was the very real possibility of painful and possibly life-threatening injury. They were desert people with no hot running water, antibiotics, condoms, or paramedics to save them if they ate contaminated meat. They could also starve to death if their crops failed. The cultural norms and mores were such that we have to know them to interpret the passages appropriately.

Whitehouse believes the whole and only point of Jesus’ message is to be and to express love. That’s it. “Love one another as I have loved you.” (John 13:34 ESV) and you can validly follow that up with “he who is without sin cast the first stone.” (John 8:7 ESV)

For more from Rev. Whitehouse’s article in Unity Magazine, go to www.unity.org, or check out the magazine located in our new LGBTQ library.



Our New LGBTQ Library – How We Got There

With Ramona Kime, Social and Environmental Justice Chair

If you've perused our Annex library at all in the last month, you may have noticed a new section: LGBTQ books and resources.

Thanks to a \$1,000 grant last year from the Bertha Dayton Fund of the Michigan Conference of the UCC, Ramona has been buying LGBTQ books for events, LGBTQ groups, and our own church library. The initial purchase of books was for our church's booth at the Vermontville Youth Pride event last August. We bought age-appropriate books for children and youth which were given to people as they visited our booth.

The next book purchase was specifically for Christine Terpening's I'll Be Your Rock (IBYR) group for rural LGBTQ youth in the Vermontville area. Christine was given a list of age-appropriate books, and the youth in her group picked out the books they especially wanted in their own IBYR library. When Kallie Strouse recently started a youth IBYR group in the Charlotte area, her group picked out the books they were interested in from the same list, and a purchase was made for that group.

The initial grant request also included the plan to donate a number of LGBTQ books to the Charlotte Community Library. Unfortunately, Ramona was met with resistance when she approached the director of the library. While he was supportive of the idea, his concern was for the library, especially since numerous libraries and library staff members across the country have been targeted when they show outward support of the LGBTQ community. It's in that same unfortunate vein that book bans are becoming more numerous.

When the Charlotte Community Library turned down the offer to receive LGBTQ books for their shelves, it was decided that our own church library could become a collection place for LGBTQ books and resources. The first purchase for our library included many of the resources available on the UCC Resources website. Multiple copies of several of those resources are now available for the taking on the table in the back of the sanctuary.

There is still a little money left in the grant, so other resources will show up on the library shelf. Please take time to peruse the materials in the library and on the back table in the sanctuary. You may just find something that interests you or that helps you grow in your own support of our LGBTQ siblings!



Pastor's Corner

Reverend Jody Betten, Interim Minister

It's that time of the year, things change season by season. The program year ends, summer routines begin. An era (or year) of schooling ends, searching for a job, planning for the next educational endeavor, taking a Sabbath rest, begins. Staying indoors because of cold weather ends (at least, cold weather as an excuse), and venturing forth into the sunshine, garden, outdoor activities begins.

Sunday is often a time of relaxation and enjoyment with family and friends. BBQ's, beach and water fun, ice cream cones, camping, lake visits, getting out into nature walking or biking or kayaking.

There are so many things to do in this beautiful State of ours.



Our summer festivities begin with outdoor worship on Sunday, June 4. This is always a more casual time together, a good time to invite friends and neighbors to meet us and hang out. The first Sunday in June always kicks off Pride Month as well, more about that below. And, June 11 is Graduation Sunday. Our Commons will be used for at least 2 graduation parties this year and we will acknowledge our grads on that Sunday.

A special congratulations to those who experienced a milestone graduation, from high school, college, professional school or an advanced degree. (see pages 10 and 11)

Pride Month is a time to celebrate our truth that "no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey you are welcome here." Sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, the kind of family you live, all are celebrated as godly, loving truths.

Like Black History Month or Women's History Month or any of the other months we recognize with our emphases during the church year, Pride Month is an attempt to bring us "up to speed" on the ways that those particular minority groups have been discriminated against,

marginalized, and abused based on white supremacy culture or what we have always considered “normal.” By many, in many states, cities and churches, LGBTQ+ people are not recognized as loved by God or do not have the same rights as those of us who are so-called normal. The standards of normal are set so that minority groups are inherently prejudiced against. This includes the LGBTQ+ community, but also those with mental health challenges, physical disabilities, language barriers, the list goes on.

As people who believe in God’s beautifully created design, there is no distinction based on any criterion that permits injustice or oppression against another. We understand ourselves to all be created in the image of God, spiritual beings, connected to the source of life or ground of being all in the same way, with the same rights, privileges, responsibilities, and worthiness. It is our privilege in the name of love to get ourselves “up to speed” about the contribution that our LGBTQ+ sibs have made to the ability to flourish that we all enjoy. It is up to us to seek to be aware of the ways that systems and structures have made life difficult for the LGBTQ+ community, to uncover the ways we systematically refuse to change the status quo for the sake of justice, and to advocate and agitate for change where injustice remains that limits anyone’s ability to thrive in our world today.

We are excited to know of new Pride parades and events in our communities. This will be the second year that we participate in Vermontville Pride. We have begun an adult chapter of I’ll Be Your Rock here in Charlotte and an occasional event for IBYR youth. We see Gay/Straight Alliances at the local high school and junior high supportive of our young people. We know that just one significant relationship with an affirming adult can prevent a suicide.

Yet, we know that the mental health challenges of youth who identify as LGBTQ+ are significantly above the national average. We know that there are 491 pieces of legislation in 45 states seeking to deny the rights of our LGBTQ+ siblings. In Michigan alone there are 8 pieces of legislation (HBs 4546, 4510, 4539, 4540, 4345, 4257, 4195, 4075 see <https://www.aclu.org/legislative-attacks-on-lgbtq-rights?state=MI>) targeting the rights of, in particular, trans students, healthcare for trans folks, and giving religious organizations the right to discriminate against LGBTQ+ people.

This is not a “one and done.” Yes, we are an Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ. Yes, we have made a statement in this community about what inclusion looks like. Yet, we must not remain ignorant about the ongoing issues that our LGBTQ+ siblings experience in their lives. We live up to our own best ideals as people of love if we continue to engage those among us who best know what it’s like to live in their own skin and not be respected or accepted, who experience the expectation that they cannot be their true selves.

Happy Summer, and Happy Pride!

Mission Moment

Mary Normand, Chair

Home and Business Expo: This event went very well this year. We had many folks stop for a goodie. Had some good conversations and handed out several flyers on the Summer Reading program, Concerts on the Commons, and our annual Cookie Challenge. Several folks showed an interest in one or more of these events.

Giving Tree: We are extending the White Bags to the end of June. These are for personal care items that are then divided between Helping Hands, SIREN/Eaton, and Eaton Clothing and Furniture Center (ECFC).

July will be items for ECFC for their Back To School event. We will be checking with them to see what kind of things they want and will let you know.

August will be Stuff the Trailer again with non-perishable food items. More on this as it gets closer.

Strengthen the Church was May 28; however, if you didn't get your donation in and still want to, you can still contribute. Just mark on an envelope what it is for.

We worked with the Social and Environmental Justice group to coordinate some of our Giving Tree items with some of their events.

Please note that our next meeting will be June 25. This is one week later than normal.

Stay Tuned!





Why the Kids Walked Away

Curt Scott, Tuesday Night Bible Study

Tuesday evenings, 6:30-8:00, in the air-conditioned annex

It is said that the Eastern Orthodox Church changes doctrine every 500 years, while the radical West changes its mind about Jesus every 125, then starts killing any who don't go along. Each change is a chapter title in our history books. Every 500 years beliefs change, usually because new material has been deemed "true".

Every thousand years, everything changes, even the Eastern Orthodox Church, because there's too much new material and thought not to change.

That's where we are today.

On Tuesday's, lately, we have followed the path of thought from James, Paul and Clement I, to St. Augustine and lesser known, Pelagius: the first 500 years of Western Wisdom of and after Jesus. The latter two describe what Christian beliefs were in the Latin West at the moment thinking gave way to surviving.

By the collapse of the Roman West, the Teachings of Jesus in centers of power had faded into what Jesus was and by whose definition. Outside of Alexandria, Carthage and Milan, however, worship continued by many narratives from Constantinople to the British Isles. When we come back to the subject in the fall, Egyptian, Irish and German Monks will be resurrecting both Jesus' and Plato's teachings. Others will beatify Augustine.

The Early Medieval Church, however, is no place to spend the summer; so Tuesday's conversation will now shift to contemporary topics and, God willing, humor. I am going to twist a favorite topic: Who Sounds Like Jesus Now? In order to explain when and why my generation and those after left the Church, we'll hear from those prophets who cried out when holy haters and politicians started killing Jesus again.

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### Recycling Reminder

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We are a church committed to doing our best for the environment. To that end, we have recycling buckets in both the church building and annex.

However, if the items that are placed in the recycling are not clean (have food or drink on them) they cannot be recycled. In order to recycle products used for food and drink, please rinse your items before placing them in the recycling bucket!

And, be careful if you are actually throwing away trash not to put it in the recycling! Thanks!



A Few Words From Our Graduates

Written, mostly, by themselves

Kaleigh Slot

Kaleigh Slot, the middle child and only daughter of Matt Slot and Amy Slot, graduated from Central Michigan University on May 6, 2023, with a Bachelor of Applied Arts in fashion design and merchandising with the academic honor of Cum Laude. Throughout her undergrad, Kaleigh played trumpet in the Chippewa Marching Band and 6th Man Band (pep band) and is a member of the all-women international music fraternity, Sigma Alpha Iota. In the fall Kaleigh is returning to CMU to finish the Master's program in which she was dual enrolled during her senior year.



Adam Slot

After **Adam Slot**, youngest child and son of Amy Slot and Matt Slot, walks the platform on June 3, he will be closing the door on his experience at Charlotte High School. After a brief intermission, he will follow his love of music to Central Michigan University, where he plans to fill his schedule by joining multiple ensembles, hoping to perform as often as he can.

Adam is excited to compose new music while exploring everything university life holds. Throughout his short life Adam has followed Debussy's quote "*music is the space between the notes*" and is using it as a guide to perform, compose, and reinterpret the music he hears. At the same time he is excited to go this fall, he is ready to be humbled by many more experienced artists and amazing musicians.

Olivia Konietzko

Olivia Konietzko will be graduating from Charlotte High School on June 3, 2023. She is the daughter of Lothar Konietzko and Kelly Konietzko. Within our church, Olivia has been our Assistant Child Educator, working with Sarah Cook. (Note: As Olivia rotates out of this position, her sister Lexi will continue on in her stead.)



Olivia will be attending Lansing Community College for one to two years until she is more confident in her major, which at present is Psychology. After LCC, she plans to transfer to Michigan State University.

Olivia quoted Ephesians 4:32 *“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other just as in Christ God forgave you,”* and, added Olivia, “this verse compels me each day to be more like Jesus as I am surrounded by such wonderful people.”



Le V Nguyen

Le V Nguyen is the son of Thuc Nguyen and Deanna Rendel and grandson of David and Neola Rendel, and a recent graduate of Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT). On Saturday, May 13 with his parents cheering him on in the audience, Le walked across the stage to accept his diploma for a Masters of Data Technology.

He starts working for Soartech as a research scientist in Ann Arbor in June and is considering going back to RIT in a year for a PhD. But for now, his mom says, “he’s

tired of being a poor overworked grad student and is ready to work a 40 hour week and get paid.”

Deanna adds that Le is a cat whisperer and Panda is his kitty guide. That says a lot about the way Le leads his life.



STORY HOUR

Start a new tradition with your little ones!

Mondays, 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm

Starting June 12

Ending August 7

(With a break on July 3)

Ages 3 to 8, with a care giver

Story

Craft/project

Treat

A new book to take home

On the Congregational Commons when it is sunny.
In the Annex when it is rainy!

June 2023

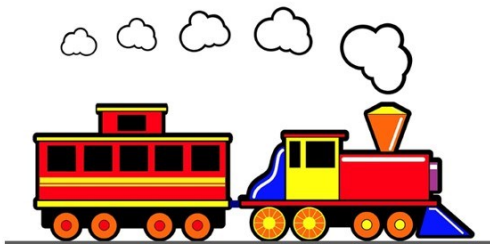
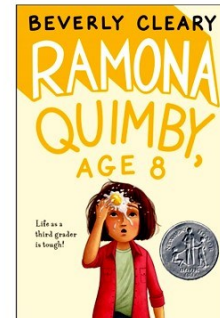
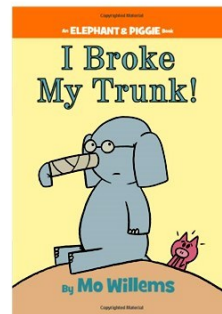
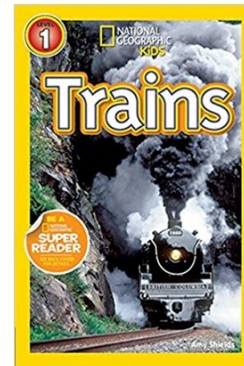
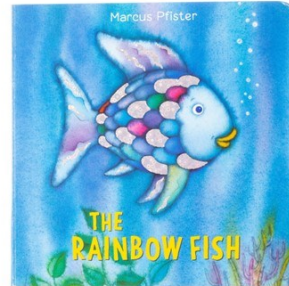
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
4	5	6
11	12	13
18	19	20
25	26	27

July 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
2	3	4
9	10	11
16	17	18
23	24	25
30	31	

August 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
		1
6	7	8



First Congregational
United Church of Christ
126 S. Bostwick Street
Charlotte, Michigan
uccCharlotte.org





Seeking Bakers Extraordinaire!

Are you a baker extraordinaire? Do you have a secret family cookie recipe that everyone raves about?

We are looking for you to bake your most delicious cookies!

Put your baking skills to the test in Charlotte's Colossal Cookie Challenge. Registration \$15. Please mail or drop off your \$15 entry fee by Tuesday, June 13, including your name, phone number, and email address, to:

Cookie Challenge, c/o First Congregational UCC, 106 S. Bostwick Street, Charlotte, MI 48813

On June 17 – during Charlotte Celebrates, bring 100 “tasting size” samples to the Commons Stage area at 126 Bostwick Street by no later than 2:30 pm. Multiple entries are fine with us. 1st, 2nd, 3rd prizes will be awarded by our celebrity judges. Fan favorite will also be awarded.

To be a Fan Favorite voter, bring \$5 to test the wares between 3 pm and 5 pm on June 17 during Charlotte Celebrates.



First Congregational United Church of Christ presents

Summer ON THE COMMONS

Congregational Commons • 126 S Bostwick, Downtown Charlotte

Saturday
June 17

Charlotte Celebrates

Lansing Concert Band: Big Band • 6pm

Colossal Cookie Challenge • 3-5

Walking Tacos, Sloppy Joes • 4-7

Special thanks to the [Charlotte Chamber of Commerce](#) for their generous support.

Eaton County Department of Resource Recovery

Recycling Fever

June 10, 2023 9 AM – 2 PM

Registration Required

Location released upon completion of registration

Register online: <http://www.eatoncounty.org/913>

ELECTRONICS

Computer Accessories, CPU's, Printers, Fax Machines, Scanners, TVs, Cell Phones, Fans, Laptops, CD Players, Camcorders, Copiers, Small Kitchen Appliances, Hair Dryers, Curling Irons, Remote Control Items, Almost anything with a cord

****NO FREON CONTAINING ITEMS, LARGE APPLIANCES OR EXERCISE EQUIPMENT****

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE

Acids & Bases, Aerosols (no empty cans), Asbestos, Asphalt/Roofing Tar, Automotive Fluids, Cleaners, Polishes, Varnishes, Fluorescent Light Bulbs, Fire Extinguishers, Flammables, Glues, Caulks, Flea Collars & Sprays, Household Cleaners, Mercury & Mercury-Containing Items, Oil Based Paint, Paint Thinners, Wood Preservatives, Pool Chemicals, Solvents, Pesticides, Herbicides, Sharps (must be in a Puncture-Resistant Container)

****NO LATEX-BASED PAINTS, MEDICATIONS OR BATTERIES****

PARTICIPANT RULES

1. Events are for private (non-commercial) residents of Eaton County.
2. Registration is required. Please provide 48-hour notice of cancellations.
3. Limit of **Two** registrations per household.
4. Electronics: **NO** refrigerators, freezers, dehumidifiers, air conditioners, large appliances or exercise equipment will be accepted. **\$10 suggested donation per TV or monitor**.
5. Household Hazardous Waste: **NO** latex-based paints, medications or batteries will be accepted - please visit our website for disposal options.
6. For your safety and ours, you must remain in your vehicle for the duration of the event. Workers will retrieve your recyclables for you.



For questions, cancellation or volunteer information:
visit <http://www.eatoncounty.org/913/>,
email Recycle@eatoncounty.org
or call (517) 543-3686.

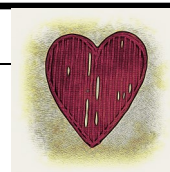




Movie Event: A Secret Love

Ramona Kime

Sunday, June 4, 11:20 am



This very highly rated film (Rotten Tomatoes: 100% critics, 91% audience; IMDB: 7.8/10) is a heartfelt, touching, deep, and beautiful love story. Falling in love in 1947, two women—Pat Hensel and pro baseball player Terry Donahue—begin a 65-year journey of love and overcoming prejudice. And amid shifting times, Terry keeps her lesbian relationship a secret from her family for over six decades.

One might say that Pat and Terry are brave for sharing their story so openly with the world. One might also say that they've been brave for being themselves for 65 years, no matter what they may have had to sacrifice.

June 4th starts our summer services on the Commons, so join us in the Annex after the service for coffee hour and a showing of this beautiful film.



Let's Take a Trip: Fun with Friends!

Bill Oatman, organizer

Thursday, June 22, 2023

Did you know Michigan has a castle? Curwood Castle is located in Owosso, Michigan which is approximately a 1-1/4 hour drive from Charlotte.



James Oliver Curwood was an American action-adventure writer and conservationist. His books were often based on adventures set in the Hudson Bay area, the Yukon, and Alaska and ranged among the top-ten best sellers in the United States in the early 1920s. He built Curwood Castle a place to greet guests and as a writing studio. The castle was listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is now operated by the city as a museum. Curwood Castle, located in Curwood Castle Park, stands on the banks of the Shiawassee River in Owosso among one of the richest collections of historic homes and buildings in the Midwest.

The museum is open from 1 pm to 5 pm. The plan is to take a self-guided tour through the museum which should not be more than an hour. Exact times TBD by those who attend. Please contact Bill Oatman @ 517 983 3748 or oatmanb1@gmail.com.



An Introduction to Shamanism - For the Curious Minded

Stephanie Tighe with Kate Durda, Spirit Weavers

June 9, 6:30 pm, Annex, Large Meeting Room

Church members Stephanie Tighe and Kate Durda of Spirit Weavers will be offering an introduction to shamanism class on June 9 at 6 pm for the curious minded among us.



Stephanie explains that Shamanism is the oldest known spirituality in recorded history, going back over 40,000 years. Traditionally shamans serve complex and multiple roles in their communities, which over the centuries have included divination, healing, spiritual counseling, and leading ceremony, among others. They perform soul retrievals (restoration of our essence and soul energy), psycho pomp (helping spirits cross over after death), power restoration, extraction (removal of spiritual blocks in energy), and many other services. Shamanism is an ancient and powerful spiritual practice utilized throughout history and still today to restore spiritual and physical health and obtain self-knowledge. The Shamanic Journey has been called one of the most remarkable visionary methods used by humankind to explore the hidden universe otherwise known mainly through myth and dream.

In this class we will discuss the role of shamanism in today's culture and learn the shamanic journey, a technique which assists one in accessing higher levels of consciousness. The journey is often done to the beat of a drum which helps your brain to shift from beta brainwaves to alpha or ideally theta brainwaves. The benefits of one type of brain activity, the alpha brainwave, are the ability to relax and keep the mind on idle when not focused on specific task, heightened feelings of well-being and euphoria, increased creativity, and deep emotional healing.

Another benefit of shamanic practice is that it allows us to engage in deep levels of self-healing, particularly on the subconscious level. You will learn methods for journeying to discover and study with your own individual spiritual teachers in non-ordinary reality, a classic step in shamanic practice. This class will include experiential exercises.

You may want to bring with you a journal and pen, an eye cover (bandanas work great for this), and a beverage of your choice. If you have a frame drum or a rattle you are welcome to bring it with you, but it is not necessary.



Poetry Workshop Offered at First Congregational UCC

With Mary Fox, Facilitator

June 8, 6:30 pm, Annex, Large Meeting Room

Mary Fox, retired teacher, a member of the Lansing Poetry Club and an organizer of The Ledges Writing Group, is offering a free poetry workshop at our church that is open to anyone in the community. Specifically, this is to help writers and lovers of poetry and prose, to prepare works to enter in the My Secret Lansing Contest, a contest open to residents of Ingham, Eaton, and Clinton counties. However, attendees of the workshop do not need to enter the contest, nor do they need to live in the specified counties.

For instance, those who love our church, labyrinth, children's garden, bell tower, art room, or any number of individuals connected with the church, may just want to create poetry to submit to our newsletter. Mary will help us with this, too. ♥

Those wishing to enter the contest, with or without attending the workshop, should follow the below guidelines.

- Must be residents of Ingham, Eaton, or Clinton County.
- May submit up to 3 poems or 2 non-fiction prose pieces. (Poems should be 50 lines or less; Prose should be 100 to 400 words.)
- Must be about 1 specific and real place, person, event, object within the Greater Lansing Area (Ingham, Eaton, or Clinton counties)
- If describing a place/object or event, include the name of the place/location. If you focus on a person, include a description and general location/context.
- Submissions must be made by July 14, 2023 to MySecretLansing94@gmail.com.
- Type your name in the Subject line, along with the title of your poem/prose piece. Attach 2 copies of your entry to your email (in a Word doc): one with your full name, address, phone number and email address, and **the other with no identifying information.**

In both categories (poetry and prose), the 1st, 2nd, 3rd place winners, plus two Honorable Mention winners will receive cash awards.

The contest and the poetry workshops are made possible with support of the City of Lansing Arts Project Grant program funded by the City of Lansing with administration by the Arts Council of Greater Lansing.



From Babel to Pentecost

Kenneth L. Samuel, Minister of Victory for the World Church, Decatur, Georgia

The Lord said, “Come let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.” – Genesis 11:7 (NIV)

Out in the vast deserts of present-day Iraq, there existed a plain called Babel. At Babel, God confused the language of a people who had united together to build a city tower that would glorify their names.

Some assume God confused the people’s language by interposing new and different languages among them. But most translations of the original Hebrew simply say that God confused or confounded their language.

Even without the introduction of a different language, people who speak the same language are often confused. I recently thought I’d booked a round-trip airline ticket from Atlanta to Miami, by phone. But when I reviewed my email confirmation, I discovered that the round-trip ticket wasn’t from Atlanta to Miami, it was from Miami to Atlanta.

The booking agent and I both spoke the same language, but our common language did not prevent confusion.

There is no greater confusion than people who speak the same language, but who mean different things when they speak it. Words like freedom ... patriot ... righteous ... race... all mean very different things among people who speak the same language.

Perhaps the confusion at Babel was not to punish the people’s common language, but to punish the disconnect of people’s values. Perhaps the dispersion of the people was a result of their own unwillingness to move past common words toward a greater common understanding.

In our communities today, common language is not the problem. The problem is failure to value one another’s history and identity. The problem is failure to listen past common language in order to recognize echoes of common ideals.

Prayer

Lord, let me perceive meanings beyond words and values beyond verbiage. Amen.

When We Come Together . . .

Sunday Worship, 10 am In Person and on Facebook, @[ucc48813](https://www.facebook.com/ucc48813) and website: ucccharlotte.org

Learning Opportunities

Words & Tangents	Sundays, 8:00 am, Annex/Library	Jan Shall janshall00@gmail.com
Godly Play (Children)	Sundays, 10:10 am, Church/Floor 2	Sarah Cook scook@olivetcollege.edu
Prayer Group	1st & 3rd Thurs, 10:30 am, Pr. Rm.	Sandra Field yourstrulycollection@hotmail.com
Pub Theology	[Summer Hiatus]	Adam Droscha Adam.Droscha@gmail.com
Tuesday Night Study	Tuesdays, 6:30 pm, Annex/LMR	Curt Scott CurtisJScott@hotmail.com

Music

Senior Choir	[Summer Hiatus]	Ramona Kime Ramona.Kime@gmail.com
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Committees and Groups

Art Committee	2nd & 4th Tuesday, 11 am	Sandra Field yourstrulycollection@hotmail.com
Blanche Moyer	2nd Monday, 6:30 pm	Judi Cates JudithCates68@gmail.com
Commons Comm.	Times Vary	Matt Slot MattSlot@gmail.com
Communications	3rd Monday, 6:30 pm, Annex/SMR	Curt Scott CurtisJScott@hotmail.com
Missions Team	3rd Sunday, 11:30 am	Mary Normand DavidNormand@att.net
Prayer Shawls	1st & 3rd Saturdays, 9 am, Lounge	Amy Krizek Mom_Krizek@hotmail.com
Social and Environmental Justice Committee	2nd Sunday, 11:30 am	Ramona Kime Ramona.Kime@gmail.com
Women's Fellowship	As needed	Mary Normand DavidNormand@att.net



Still Speaking

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

106 South Bostwick - Charlotte, MI 48813

office@uccCharlotte.org www.ucccharlotte.org

Office Hours
Tues - Wed & Fri 9am - 2pm
517 543 1310
Worship Service 10 am

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For complete schedule, go to
uccCharlotte.org

June 2023

Submit changes or additions to
office@uccCharlotte.org

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28	29	30	31	1 10:30 am Prayer Group	2	3 9:30 am Prayer Shawl Ministry
4 11:20 am Movie: A Se- cret Love	5	6 6 pm Bible Study	7 10 am Care Community	8 6:30 pm Poetry Workshop	9 6 pm Spirit Weavers Shamanism & the Technique	10
11 11:30 am Social & Env. Justice	12 6:30 pm Children's Story Hour	13 11 am Art Team 6 pm Bible Study	14 6:30 pm Council Meeting	15 10:30 am Prayer Group	16	17
18	19 6:30 pm Story Hour 6:30 pm Communications	20 6 pm Bible Study	21	22	23	24
25 11:30 am Mission Mtg. 11:30 am Worship Mtg.	26 6:30 pm Children's Story Hour	27 6 pm Bible Study	28	29	30	1

June 17:

9:30 Prayer Shawl
3 - 5 pm Colossal
Cookie Challenge
4 - 7 pm Walking Tacos
6 pm Lansing Concert
Band: Big Band (Jazz)