

Still Speaking

First Congregational

United Church of Christ
Charlotte, Michigan

February 2025

Volume 3

Issue 2



Never place a
period where God
has placed a comma



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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.*

***About the cover:** "Will You Be My Valentine?" 5-year-old Colten Carabajal made a picture for his mother. Photo by his grandma, Caryn Hansen.*



Spirituality and Wellness Support Group starting!

Kate Durda, WISE* Team

Thursday, February 6

6:00 pm

Facilitators: Pastor Adam Droscha, Kate Durda

Why a support group?

In the recent WISE Survey, a majority of respondents indicated they were experiencing “big issue anxiety regarding the state of our country.” In addition, many people are interested in connecting spirituality and wellness practices to alleviate other wellness concerns, such as anxiety, depression, loneliness, feeling overwhelmed, and social isolation.



We hope to provide a place where you can share your feelings with others in a safe, welcoming space, find relief and hope, and share some laughs with others. We will also explore some self-help spiritual practices such as special breathing patterns, meditations, affirmations, prayer, and poetry.

Questions?

Contact any members of the WISE committee: Stephanie Tighe, Adam Droscha, Kate Durda, Judy Johnson, Ramona Kime, Mary Kohmuench, Amy Slot, Brenda Wood

Please join us!

Note: This support group is not a substitute for therapy. In the future, we are likely to continue to offer professional presentations and resources for those experiencing deeper psychological concerns.

*WISE = Welcoming, Inclusive, Supporting, Engaged





Pastor's Corner

Adam Droscha, Pastor

As we've worked through several readings from 1 Corinthians the last few Sundays, I am struck again at the simplicity and power of Paul's writing. In the famous 1 Corinthians 13 passage where Paul writes beautifully about love, he makes it clear that if we have all gifts, and powers, and good intentions but lack love, it all amounts to nothing. That's powerful; that's dangerous to any of us who believe our deeds, correct opinions, education, and charity are enough. But there's an extra contextual layer in that famous passage in 1 Corinthians that takes its profundity deeper and makes it ever more relevant for us today.

Douglas Campbell, professor of New Testament studies at Duke Divinity School, writes that 1 Corinthians was written for a church in the middle of a culture war. He writes that the church in Corinth was a troublesome mix of competing intellectual ideas, classes and social groups, and competing leadership. In short, there was infighting about what kind of culture the community should have. (This is why it's important to remember that Paul was not so much writing rigorous systematic theology — he wasn't — as he was writing about community formation and social ethics.) So in his letter addressing an audience in the midst of a culture war, Paul writes that love is the guiding factor, the foundation, and the hook from which everything else hangs.



The topic of love is inexhaustible. It's a lot like topics such as politics, ethics, or God (though there's a compelling case that love and God are the same topic); so much has been said about them, yet there are always new questions to ask and perspectives to be heard. We can make infinite claims, observations, and descriptions of love. Paul wrote some very simple, but inarguably profound claims of love. But there are other descriptions that disturb and disrupt all the nice ways we like to describe love. Love is risky, for example. Or, I would go so far as to say that love is dangerous.

Reconciliatory, redemptive love? Love that is capable of transforming communities in conflict, mending broken communication and relationships, and creating the third way alternative to

silence and violence? Yes, that love is dangerous. Why? Because it requires us to put our guard down and resist becoming defensive. That kind of love exposes us to the elements, challenges rigid ethics and rules, and causes us to see each other's raw humanity. To return to Campbell's culture war reading of 1 Corinthians, this dangerous love requires us to see all of the divisions, barriers, and differences of opinion as wholly secondary to the love for our neighbor. That is a dangerous love.

As always, I want to insert the caveat that we should not celebrate suffering, nor intentionally place ourselves in unsafe situations which could cause us and others harm. Reckless lack of safety is not the goal. In saying love is dangerous, I want to simply acknowledge the reality that love in all its beauty, hope, and power is still an agent of exposure and vulnerability. Transformative love that can speak through and break down unjust social barriers, systems of oppression, and culture war antagonizing is not low risk. But when we choose that dangerous love for the world, for our community, and for our most hard-to-love neighbors, we experience the magnitude of Paul's wisdom — "love never fails."



THANK YOU!

Amy Krizek, Women's Fellowship

A HUGE thank you needs to be extended to our congregation in the Still Speaking newsletter for all the donations that come in for the annual Bazaar "Crafts from the Congregation". Jewelry room income for 2024 was up \$700, Country kitchen up \$400, crafts up \$1000 from 2023 proceeds. The profits from Bazaar would not happen without the full support of our church membership and friends. Jewelry collection box, crafting workshops, Rachel's phone calls and Facebook publicity plus community enthusiasm for Craft bazaars in general are what we attribute to our success this year.



Many good projects and community donations happen with the proceeds from Bazaar. The annual meeting minutes detailing expected expenditures will be posted in the Annex Library.



Mission Moment

Mary Normand, Outreach Team

Our meeting in January was a wrap up of December and planning for 2025.

Christmas Family We sponsored a family of six. The gifts from this church filled a mini van and the backend of a Ford Explorer. We filled an 8 foot table and the entire space underneath. What a generous church we are. Thank you to all who were able to help with this project.

Winter Coat Project 115 coats were purchased and an additional 31 donated. \$2005 was donated and \$2069 spent.

December Giving Tree 80 hats, 23 pairs of mittens/gloves, 23 pair of socks, and 5 scarfs were collected.

Loads of Love It was a good day. We were slammed again. There is such a need for this service. Many good conversations took place too. We again gave out both children and adult books. This is very popular. We took the items from the December Giving Tree and offered them to the folks. Several took advantage of this. Our next one is May 10

2025 plans

- **Nordic Fire Festival** We will again participate in the Nordic Fire Festival in February giving out our Viking hat cookies. We will have our bucket for Walk for Warmth. Cookies will be molded and baked February 19 and frosted February 20. Help will be needed for this.
- **Spring Shoe Boxes** This is in March. Dates to be determined
- **Home and Business Expo** This is in April.
- **Concert on the Square** Date to be determined
- **Global Ministries** We will continue to support 2 children
- **Giving Tree** February Giving Tree is toilet paper, feminine hygiene products, and diapers

Our next meeting is February 16.
Stay tuned



A Word from the Kitchen Manager

Mary Normand, Kitchen Manager

Recently (December) the Health Department did an inspection of our kitchen. They found a container of pickled beets that were not dated (my fault) and some home canned pickles that someone had brought in. We cannot serve anything home canned to the public and I had to throw them out. If you bring something to the church that is home canned, and for your own use, then please put your name on it. We can serve our pickled beets because we make them in our licensed kitchen.



Recently there were several cupcakes in the refrigerator with no date or name on them. After being there for 3-4 weeks, we had to throw them out. We also found in the annex refrigerator 3 pizza boxes. 2 were empty and one had old pizza in it. Please take these leftovers home or throw them out. If you think you may eat them soon, then put your name and a date on the items. If you want them served at coffee hour, then indicate that on the item. If you have food items leftover from an event, please take it home or donate it. I threw out several things that were outdated.

Recently, I cleaned the big storage closet off the Bess Fulton room. We DO NOT need anymore plastic ware. If you are having an event requiring that, please check the closet first. We also have lots of cups and napkins. We also DO NOT need anymore containers for leftovers. Both tubs are full.



The Health Department seems to be more detailed in their inspections now than they used to be, so we need to be careful.

I appreciate your attention to these issues.



Women's Fellowship is Busy!

Judi Cates, Project Lead

As you know Women's Fellowship has had a few projects going for our church. The good news is we have some great progress on a few things and wanted to give an update.

Annex Cleaning We accepted a quote from ServePro of Charlotte to have all carpets cleaned, the tiles in each bathroom and the janitor's room, and the 57 chairs cleaned (yes, the Annex has 57 chairs!). Cleaning will take place on Tuesday, February 4 starting at 8:30 am.

Outdated Products The Annex basement has 9 cases of outdated chlorine bleach and multiple cases of a Hydrogen peroxide cleaner. Rex has been consulted on the use of these products and has no need for the bleach and only a small amount of the cleaner. Housing Services in Charlotte was offered and accepted the donation for their clients use. We will deliver to them. Amy Krizek is the lead on this project

Old Dishes The old dishes we have been trying to sell or donate now have a home. Haven House in Lansing would take all of the dishes we can give them! Haven House has many services and one is settling individuals into independent living apartments with support for items needed to set up a home. We are working with Haven House to get the dishes to Lansing. Mary Normand is the contact with this project.

Annex Basement Organization Project This item has many arms and legs as multiple groups have items stored in the basement. In the interest of harmony, WF is confining their efforts to only items under Women's Fellowship's control. We will install storage shelves to keep Women's Fellowship items.

We will be starting once all the items for Housing Services are removed. Judi Cates is lead on this project along with Amy Krizek.

We are excited to move on these projects and are excited that our fellowship continues to be a vital asset for our church.

Please direct Judi Cates, Amy Krizek, or Mary Normand with any questions or concerns.

We are all "one in the Spirit."



Olivet's Gospel Choir Performing Sunday, February 16

Ramona Kime, Director of Music

Sunday, February 16

4:00 pm

Sanctuary

Under the direction of Kwamise Taylor and accompanied by James L. Newby IV, the University of Olivet Gospel Choir comprising both music majors and non-music majors will once more perform in our Sanctuary.

The concert will feature music in the gospel and spiritual genres, indigenous to African American culture. We invite you to join us in a celebration of song with music from composer/arranger Isaac Cates, along with soul-stirring, exuberant music of gospel greats Ricky Dillard, Joe Pace, and James Bignon—just to name a few! It promises to be an uplifting event for Black History Month!



In Words and Song
*Celebrating
Black Voices*

**Monday
February 3
7 pm**

**Martin Luther King
Day Program**

Church Sanctuary



Progressive Appetizer

Amy Krizek, Organizer

Sunday, February 23

5:30 pm

Church Lounge

One of the intentions of a Women's Fellowship committee was to encourage interested persons to set up and organize meetings to create more fellowship of the congregation. The annual progressive dinner was in existence and very popular for many years and it wasn't until recent COVID worries modified our activities to a church "progressive appetizer" potluck event.

This year we continue the "Progressive Appetizer" but have scheduled it for VERY early spring: Sunday, February 23rd, instead of the historical April timing.

Sign up on the sheet in the Bess Fulton Room (or on the back of your welcome card) with your intention to join in on this fun adult event. Appetizers start at 5:30pm in the Church Lounge. You may want to indicate on the sign up sheet what type of hearty appetizer you will be bringing so that we have variety. Ice Cream sundaes at 8pm are dessert as we progress to the lower level. Adults, couples and singles are encouraged to join the fun evening.



ACOUSTIC MUSIC SATURDAYS

Evelyn Bay Coffee MARCH 2025 2pm to 4pm

134 S Cochran, Charlotte

MARCH 1
FRENZ
UNPLUGGED



FREE
Rat Pack,
Swing, & Great
American
Songbook

MARCH 8
12th
STREET



Irish
Traditional
Dance Music

MARCH 15
100 PROOF



Powerhouse Vocal/
Acoustic Duo with
Morgan Englehart
& Eric Strayer

MARCH 22
THE
FABULOUS
HEFTONES



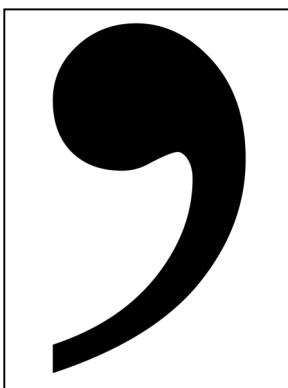
Fun 20s Songs,
vocal harmonies,
and Fancy "Uke"

MARCH 29
HARPISTS
DEDE &
ACACIA



Professional
Harpists and
their students in
performance

Event Supporters: Feighner Boat Lifts & Docks; Kane Heating, First Congregational Church Charlotte, Charlotte Chamber of Commerce, Evelyn Bay Coffee Company



February Photography Show

Thank you to all who contributed to the February Art Ministry Team's photography show. When you have a few minutes, we hope you will take a few minutes to enjoy the pictures. Each picture is a story and an opportunity to connect with the artist.

Grandma Mae's ring, pictures from Vietnam from the Rendell's, lighthouses, vacations to exotic spaces, fur friends, and rodeos - just a few of the visual stories shared.

NAMES FOR PHOTO

1. Ronald J. Field ALASKA
2. Deanna Rendel VENEZIA
3. Curt Scott FLUSHING, MI
4. Deanna Rendel DOG WASH. VIETNAM
5. Brenda Wood.
6. Deanna Rendel
7. Deanna Rendel JASPER
8. Brenda Wood
9. Vonda Stanton. EMMY IN WILDFLOWER MEADOWS
10. Judy Johnson. BANFF NATIOAL PARK
11. Judith Cates WALTER & PAM
12. Ronald J. Field AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM
13. Judith Cates. THE GIFT, GREAT GREAT GRANDMA MAE'S WEDDING RING
14. Jan Shall FULL MOON. 2/13/24
15. Ronald J Field LIGHTHOUSE. ST. JOSEPH, MI
16. Judith Cates RODEO
17. Diane Hudson DINGLE PENINSULA, TIPPERARY, IRELAND
18. Dan Plasman FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
19. Ethel Hallett HIKING IN CREEDE, COLORADO
20. Jim Rush MY CAR
21. Sandra Field PAPEETE ,TAHITI
22. Sandra Field ALASKAN HIGHWAY
23. Bill Yerkes GATLINBURG , TENNESSEE
24. Chris Reist Rush CHRIS & JIM
25. Mary Norman THE GIRLS
26. Mary Norman WHITEFISH POINT
27. Sandra Field RIO de JANEIRO
28. Ronald J Field SOUTH AMERICA
29. Ronald J Field TAHITI SUNSET
30. Ronald J Field STELLAR SEA LIONS. KENAI FJORDS ALASKA
31. Curt Scott
32. Diane Hudson JORDAN RIVER RD. ALTO MI
33. Judith Cates BALLET IS ART IN MOTION

DIA DE MERCADO

Friday.
Día de mercado.
Before daybreak the campesinos come
on foot, on burros, in busses,
from Sogamoso
Chiquinquirá
to the marketplace.
They bring
papayas large as moons,
cups and bowls of clay,
goat meat which they wrap
in plantain leaves,
yucca, guavas, papas criollas.
They fill makeshift stalls
with coarsely textured garments:
camisas, pantalones,
blusas, faldas y sombreros;
alpargatas with their
woven soles and long black strings that
tie about the ankle.
Only campesinos wear them.
Somber brown and gray for men;
teal, rose, and saffron
for rich women to wear in Bogotá.
Always the market is crowded.
The vendors are shrewd and wary.
I learn to clasp my money firmly
and to bargain.
 How much are the peas?
 One-fifty.
 Can't you do better?
 All right, miss, one twenty-five.
 Okay, give me half a kilo.
 Here it is.
 Thank you.
One woman has the largest stall
with the finest produce.
She had no need for gringo business.

The Poetry of Mary Roessler



Former Peace Corps volunteer,
retired educator, and published author,
member Mary Roessler shares from the poetry
she wrote while working on her masters thesis.

Once, in a flurry of curses,
she banishes me from her stall
for fondling her tomatoes.
I am determined to win her over.
The next week
I return with my camera
and ask to take her picture.
She consents gruffly,
scowls into the lens.
Afterward
she lets me pick out
mangos, melons, chirimoyas
and a few tomatoes.
I am careful to touch
only those I buy.

When We Come Together . . .

Sunday Worship, 10 am In Person and on Facebook, @ucc48813 and website: ucccharlotte.org

Learning Opportunities	Meeting Times	Contact Person
Words and Tangents	Sun, 8 am, Annex/Library	Jan Shall, JanShall00@gmail.com
Godly Play	Sunday, 10:10 am	Lexi Konietzko. akonietzko129@gmail.com
Devotional Bible Study	Mondays, 10 am and 4 pm	Adam Droscha, pastor@uccCharlotte.org
Prayer Group	1st & 3rd Thur, 10:30 am Small Prayer Room	Sandra Field yourstrulycollection@hotmail.com
Pub Theology	2nd & 4th Thurs. 7 pm	Adam Droscha adam.droscha@uccCharlotte.org
Adult Bible Study	Tues, 6:30 pm, Wed. 11:30 am Annex Large Meeting Room	Curt Scott, CurtisJScott@hotmail.com
Coffee Hour with a Pastor	Evelyn Bay, Wednesday, 10 am	Pastor Droscha, pastor@uccCharlotte.org
Music		
Choir Practice	Wednesdays, 7 pm	Ramona Kime, Ramona.Kime@gmail.com
Bell Choir	Wednesdays, 4 pm	Jenny Bohms, rjbohms@yahoo.com
Committees & Groups		
Art Ministry Committee	2nd & 4th Tuesday, 11 am 2nd & 4th Monday, 7 pm, Zoom	Sandra Field, yourstrulycollection@hotmail.com
Blanche Moyer	2nd Monday, 6:30 pm	Judi Cates, JudithCates68@gmail.com
Commons Committee	Times Vary	Matt Slot, MattSlot@gmail.com
Communications	3rd Monday, 6:30 pm, SMR	Amy Frost, frostamy58@gmail.com
Prayer Shawl	1st & 3rd Sat, 9:30 am, Lounge	Amy Krizek, Mom_Krizek@hotmail.com
Social & Environmental Justice Committee	2nd Sun, 11:30 am, Annex LMR	Ramona Kime, Ramona.Kime@gmail.com
Women's Fellowship	As Needed	Mary Normand, DavidNormand@att.net
Men's Group	2nd & 4th Sat, 10 am, Annex LMR	Larry Taylor, TaylorLT1752@att.net



Still Speaking

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
106 South Bostwick - Charlotte, MI 48813
office@uccCharlotte.org www.ucccharlotte.org

Office Hours
Monday to Thursday 9a - 2p
517 543 1310
Sunday Worship Service 10 am
In Person, Facebook, YouTube



Instagram



Find us on

Facebook



Calendar Highlights

- February 1, Luncheon for the Opening of the February Photo Show in the Annex
- February 3, In Words and Song, Celebrating Black Voices
- February 4, Carpet Cleaning in the Annex
- February 6, First meeting of the Wellness and Spiritual Support Group, 6 pm, Annex LMR
- February 9, One Large Heart! Coffee Hour
- February 16, University of Olivet Gospel Choir Concert, 4 pm, Sanctuary
- February 22, Nordic Fire Festival Viking Cookie Giveaway!
- February 23, Progressive Appetizer, We start in the Lounge and progress from there! 5:30
- March 5, Ash Wednesday Ecumenical Service, St. John's Episcopal Church, 7 pm

To see a full calendar of events, please:

- Check out our online calendar at www.uccCharlotte.org/calendar
- See the insert in the weekly program
- Subscribe to our weekly emails by sending an email to editor@uccCharlotte.org
- Check out our calendar of events on the bulletin boards around the church.
- Talk with Caryn Hansen or email her at editor@uccCharlotte.org for a paper copy