



First Congregational
United Church of Christ
Charlotte, Michigan
July 2025
Volume 2
Issue 7



Never place a
period where God
has placed a comma

In This Issue

Pastor's Corner	3
Outreach Moment	5
July Giving Tree	6
The Recess Project	7
Crop Walk Dining Op	7
Summer on the Commons	8
Thank You Notes	10
July Happenings	11
Communication Notes	13
In Celebration & Prayer	14
Meeting Times/Places	15
Calendar Highlights	16

Still Speaking



Leaders and Staff of the Church

Council* President	Bren Wood	BrnWdMI@gmail.com
Vice President	Stephanie Tighe	StephanieTighe@gmail.com
Buildings and Grounds	David Frost	Black_ice@att.net
Business Team	Bill Oatman	Oatman701@att.net
Care Community	Pam Rinckey	Rinckey1@hotmail.com
Church Clerk	Barbara Anderson	BarbaraF5543@icloud.com
Church Life	Amy Frost	FrostAmy58@gmail.com
Endowment Team	Mike Fulton	Mjfulton@sbcglobal.net
Education Team	Diane Hudson	DianeKHudson@sbcglobal.net
Financial Secretary	Don Johnson	DonJohnson106@mac.com
Outreach	Mary Normand	DavidNormand@att.net
Soc. & Env. Justice Team	Mary Kohmuench	Mtheoharis@gmail.com
Treasurer (Finance Team)	Kathie Cook	Crkcook@hotmail.com
Worship Team	Jeannine Scott	Scottj21@msu.edu
*Church Council	3rd Thursday, 6:30 pm	Annex Large Meeting Room

Staff

Minister	Pastor Adam Droscha	Pastor@uccCharlotte.org
Director of Music	Ramona Kime	Ramona.Kime@gmail.com
Communications	Caryn Hansen	Editor@ucccharlotte.org
Bookkeeper	Sher Brown	Office@ucccharlotte.org
Custodian	Rex Todd	Office@ucccharlotte.org

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: "Ramona," wearing an 'old' shirt on Open and Affirming Sunday, June 29, 2025. Ramona is not only our Director of Music, but she is also the organizing force behind our Social and Environmental Justice team, our organizer of Grounds Groupies (cleaning and weeding our church grounds), a contributor to the Outreach team.



Pastor's Corner

Pastor Adam Droscha

Attention is Prayer, Prayer is Attention

As I was considering what to write for Pastor's Corner this month, a few words and phrases started coming to mind, some of which were, "rest," "slowing down," "making time for silence," "stillness," and "prayer." As I considered these words and phrases, I realized I was touching on a topic I wrote about for a previous edition of Still Speaking. That topic is 'attention.' I knew I had written on attention for a Pastor's Corner before, but I had to look up when it was. Sure enough it was last July. You all know me; I don't ascribe divine will or intention to most things, but every now in then coincidences seem too providential to not bring spiritual consideration to them.

So a year after I wrote my first Pastor's Corner on the topic of attention, here I am reflecting on it again. I can't be certain why it timed out that way, but I can put a finger on why it's important to annually reflect on it.

People smarter than me have identified attention as one of the things innate in us that is sort of like a sacred gift. The ones we usually think about are time, love, and health, but attention is another. Our ability to possess our attention, to focus it, and put it to use in work, projects, rest, and reflection is not only important for productivity's sake; it's important because it belongs to us. Attention and our conscious self-possession of it is one of the things that makes us human, and persons unto ourselves.

Our ability to possess our attention, to focus it, and put it to use in work, projects, rest, and reflection is ... one of the things that makes us human...

As we all know, there are more things than ever to capture our attention. Phones, social media, internet, shopping, the news, world events, politics, television, video games, work, podcasts, and on and on. Although there is no end to what can capture our attention, some things are uniquely capable of fixing our mind's gaze. There is plenty of solid research to confirm that, especially when in regard to television, phones, video games, and social media; they're stimulating with minimal effort, and they trigger the reward and pleasure

centers of our brains.

Attention as an innate possession and our brains' ability to give it up easily reminds me again how attention is central in our spiritual lives. One could argue that at the level of subjective experience it is the center of spiritual life. Honing the ability to be attentive is as old as spiritual and religious traditions themselves. French philosopher, Simone Weil, wrote, "Attention, taken to its highest degree, is the same thing as prayer. It presupposes faith and love. Absolutely unmixed attention is prayer." That quote and others like it fundamentally changed the way I thought about prayer and spiritual practices in general. Who knew that prayer may be primarily about focusing our attention and our concern, as opposed to pleading and negotiating with a deity? Or more to Weil's point, who knew that our attention is really a form of prayer?

Slowing down, stillness,
and making time for
silence are vital for
gathering our
attention. Prayer is
attention, attention is
prayer.

To close, I want to come back to some of the words and phrases that I mentioned in my introduction. "Rest," "slowing down," "making time for silence," "stillness," and "prayer." There is a thread holding these words together, and I believe it's attention. Resting is a form of attention.



Slowing down, stillness, and making time for silence are vital for gathering our attention. Prayer is attention, attention is prayer. As we come to the middle of summer, I encourage you to prioritize your attention, take stock of what distracts you regularly and easily, and both receive your attention as a gift and gift it to others as a form of love.

Our multi-talented minister, Pastor Adam, opened for the Nikki Holland Summer on the Commons Concert on June 28. He was a filler for a previously scheduled act. Thank you to Deanna Rendel for capturing this moment.



Outreach Moment

Mary Normand, Outreach Team Chair

Outreach meets (usually) the third Sunday of the month. This information is from our June 15 meeting.

Giving Tree

April We collected 55 bags of personal care items and nonperishable food that were distributed to Siren, Eaton Clothing and Furniture Center, and Helping Hands.

May We collected \$384 in our loose change collection. This along with \$500 from Outreach will be divided between Siren and Housing Services.

June We hosted a Dessert auction and raised \$2410 for Eaton Clothing and Furniture Center.

July This month we are participating in the Recess project which is being mostly handled by SEJ with some help from Outreach. Please refer to the article by Ramona and Makenzi for information on this.

We are also collecting new socks and underwear for Eaton Clothing and Furniture Center's Back to School project. These items can be left in the annex in the large tub.

Concert on the Square We are once again helping to sponsor a free Concert on the Square as part of the Charlotte Summer on the Square Concert Series. Our date is July 24 and the band is Kathleen and the Bridge Street Band. We will have our free homemade ice cream sandwiches. We will be baking the cookies and scooping the ice cream on July 22 starting at 9 am. Assembling of the sandwiches will be July 23 starting at 9 am. Help is needed for these projects. To help, sign up on the back of the Welcome Card on Sunday or contact Mary Normand directly at 517-231-6647 or davidnormand@att.net. Thank you in advance for your help.



Loads of Love* There was a meeting June 12 with those churches and agencies that have participated in Loads of Love or are interested in possibly participating. Peace Lutheran Church started doing it approximately five years ago. Then they contacted our church about participating. I then reached out to

St Mary’s Church and now there are six organizations/churches participating and an additional church interested. It has grown tremendously but so has the need. If anyone is interested in helping financially, it would be much appreciated. You can give directly to one of the Outreach members or through the church office, being sure to indicate it is for Loads of Love. There is another meeting scheduled for October 9 at 2pm at St Mary’s if you are interested in learning more about this project.

Spring Shoe Boxes It is never too early to start thinking about this March project where we fill shoe boxes with small toys, games, books, crayons, pencils, puzzles, coloring books, sidewalk chalk, bubbles (anything that a child would like and is small enough to fit in a shoe box). Stores will start having clearance sales on summer toys and sales on school supplies. If you see something like this, we would appreciate any and all donations. They can be left on the credenza in the Bess Fulton room or in the tub in the annex. We generally fill 70 boxes so we need lots of stuff.



In A World Where You Can Be Anything, BE KIND.

Stay tuned

*Loads of Love is a laundry project that takes place at the Quality Dairy Laundromat once a month on a Saturday. Participating organizations provide coins, soap, and conversation. FCUCC also provides children’s books.

July Giving Tree—Part 1: The Recess Project!

The Recess Project’s primary goal is to raise funds to help schools and communities purchase inclusive playground equipment for their students who can’t play on “normal” playground equipment, such as children in wheelchairs who can’t swing on a swing or climb the stairs to the slide. (See separate article for more information about The Recess Project.)

To donate to this worthwhile cause, put your cash or check in the jar at the front of the Commons stage during Sunday worship. Make your check out to “The Recess Project Inc”.

July Giving Tree—Part 2: “Back to School” socks & underwear

This is our annual “help ECFC with their August Back to School project,” so we’ll be collecting children’s UNDERWEAR (no adult sizes, please) and SOCKS of all sizes. Donations can be placed in the Giving Tree space in the Annex hall or on the Giving Tree in the Bess Fulton Room. The children, youth, and their parents will thank you!



The Recess Project

(a joint project between the Outreach Team and Social & Environmental Justice)

Ramona Kime

The Recess Project is a fairly new non-profit of which our own Makenzi Farmer is a board member. The Recess Project started with the mission to include children with disabilities on the school playground. Due to lack of accessibility, recess is one of the first places that many children with disabilities feel excluded and isolated from their peers. Recess is a critical aspect of education and even mandatory in many states. It gives students the opportunities to gain cognitive and social emotional skills, create friendships, and gain self-esteem. There are nearly 240 million children in the world that have a disability, including roughly 7.3 million school-aged children with disabilities in the U.S. Unfortunately, inclusive playgrounds are not commonly built in communities and are almost impossible to find on any school grounds.



The Saturday and Tuesday emails will have links to a couple short videos that share information about the Recess Project. Check them out!

To donate, place cash or a check made out to “The Recess Project” in the jar on the Commons stage during worship. With our support, we can help bring joy to a child with disabilities and we can help create a more inclusive world!

Because everyone benefits.

Because all children deserve to play.

Because we all have value.

And because inclusion is the right thing to do.

EAT to SUPPORT Charlotte Area CROP WALK!

Tues, July 8th; 4:00 - 9:00 PM

Applebee's: 1642 Packard Hwy, Charlotte

20% donated to Crop Walk

RSVP at: <https://www.groupraise.com/events/306166>



SUMMER ON THE COMMONS

Concert Series



Bring a lawn chair and a friend
– we'll join you on the
Commons.

In Concert LIVE

Congregational Commons
128 S. Bostwick Street
Charlotte, Michigan

July 12
5:00 pm

Baseline Band



July 26
5 pm

CHARLOTTE COMMUNITY
JAZZ ENSEMBLE

Bring a lawn chair
and a friend –
we'll meet you
in the Commons!

Konstantin Polyakov, Opening

Congregational Commons
128 S Bostwick Street
Charlotte, Michigan



Help us get the news out!

Do you know a good place to hang a concert poster? Talk with or text Caryn Hansen, or drop an email to editor@uccCharlotte.org. We're always looking for cost efficient ways to reach our audience.

You can also find the event on our Facebook page and share from there - which is more environmentally friendly.





A Few Notes

Charlotte First Congregational United Church of Christ

Renay and I cannot thank you enough you and your donors enough for your contribution for keeping her housed. Your support to the community does not go unnoticed and we wanted to share our appreciation with you. Thanks to your donation we are able to keep Renay in housing until we can secure her more stable income. It is organizations like yours that keep our communities afloat. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you.

Savannah Kison, Community Mental Health Worker

Sending a huge very blessed thank you with all my heart for the gift of love to help with rent as I was unable to due to major illness.

May the Lord bless you all and keep you safe always.

R. Donley

Concert Notes

We always have so much fun together listening to your concerts.

Fantastic show very talented band!

Excellent program tonight.

Notes from Facebook in response to a post that included our Welcome statement:

"As a staunch atheist, I approve [your] message. If most churches had this idea, we'd have a far more progressed society." - MR

"This is what all Christians and churches should be like." - PSC

"As an agnostic I think you are a compassionate church." - DM

"As it should be every where! Good to know that there are churches out there that follow what Jesus taught! They are few and far between for sure." - TS

"How refreshing!" - MSP



July Happenings

Fair News

July 7 to July 12 We will have a booth (inside) at the Fair. This is a great chance to meet and chat with folks. We will have some kids' activities as well. This will be a big event for us and so if you can volunteer for a shift, please see the sign up sheet on Sunday. We are looking for LOTS of volunteers, pretty please. We have shifts from 11-2 and from 2-5. See the sign up sheet on Sunday or text Amy F. at 517 231 2941.

Concerts

July 12 Congregational Commons, **Baseline Band - Classic Rock!** We'll be grilling hotdogs!

July 24 Eaton County Courthouse Square, **Kathleen and the Bridge Street Band**, 6:30 pm - We'll be making ice cream sandwiches and giving them away during the concert!

July 26 Congregational Commons, **Charlotte Community Jazz Ensemble** with Konstantin Polyakov opening

Bonfire at LT and Peggy's!

July 19 Bring a lawn chair and your choice of beverages (including cocktails), a side dish if you choose - Brat's, hotdogs, S'mores, and Faygo will be provided.

1080 White Birch Trail, Charlotte, MI.

Let's Take a Trip!

July 25 Scheduled visit to the Michigan State Capital Building. The tour starts in Heritage Hall which is at the rear of the building on Ottawa Street. The tour takes an hour and we can eat at One North Kitchen on West Saginaw.

Sign up on the back of the Welcome Card or contact Bill Oatman at 517 983 3748 or oatmanb1@gmail.org if you're interested.

Groups taking a midsummer break:

Choir & Bell Choir ● Building and Grounds Meeting ● Communications Team ●
Tuesday Night Bible Study for Adults ● Blanche Moyer ● Art Ministry Team ●
Men's Group ● Church Council ● Godly Play ● Healthy Lifestyles Class
● Mental & Spiritual Wellness Support Group (see page 15)



An Invitation from the SEJ Team

Ramona Kime, Social and Environmental Justice Team

As some of you are starting to notice, SEJ—the Social and Environmental Justice Team—is getting more involved with advocacy efforts and activism. As a church we can't do anything that is directly partisan, such as campaigning for a specific candidate, but we can definitely be politically active (see note at the bottom), and we are clearly moving in that direction!

If any of you would like to join our next protest at the Pocket Park or help us call our members of Congress, please email me at ramona.kime@gmail.com or see me at church, and I'll add you to our SEJ email list. You don't need to attend meetings, although we'd love to have you join us, but anything we can do together to help move our community and our country toward greater compassion is a positive step!

Note: Jesus was political, after all, in his challenging of the political structure and social norms of his time. He also taught love, compassion, and concern for the poor and marginalized, all of which are a call for social justice and economic equality. We are following Jesus when we fight for social justice!



Nikki Holland & the Dirty Elizabeths on stage June 28. It was a fun evening filled with joy!



C o m m u n i c a t i o n B o l t s a n d N u t s

Caryn Hansen, Communications Editor

The primary communication hubs at our church are these:

Our Website, where you can find our calendar of events. uccCharlotte.org

Still Speaking, our Monthly Newsletter, published on the first day of the month. We are always looking for items to include - a write up on an interesting book you've read or documentary you've watched, for instance. Or a poem you've written.

The newsletter is available via email, online, or in print.

Deadline to enter articles is the 15th of the month.

Send articles to editor@uccCharlotte.org

The Tuesday email, sent out by Amy Frost - the goal is to primarily to prepare us for the upcoming events.

Items to be included in the weekly email should be sent to both Amy frostamy58@gmail.com, and Caryn at editor@uccCharlotte.org

The Saturday email, sent out by Caryn Hansen via Mail Chimp - the goal is prepare us for Sunday.

The Sunday Slide Show - It matches closely to the Saturday email and is intended to reach those people who may be watching virtually.

Our **Facebook** page (facebook.com/ucc48813) contains events generally considered of interest to the public. We are also on Instagram and Threads to a lesser extent.

Our **Sunday insert** contains weekly information and "looking ahead" information (things out beyond one week in the future). To include something in the Sunday insert, we need to receive it by Thursday morning, BUT if you think you missed the deadline, feel free to send it anyway. Sometimes we don't print until Friday.

Welcome Card Generally, this is a place to share prayers, thankfals, and to volunteer. Because it is a Volunteer Hub, it also is a Communication Hub too!

Being Church Pastor Adam shares highlights from upcoming events at the beginning of Sunday Worship.

If you are missing any of these vital communication places and would like to be included, please use the Welcome card to alert us, or drop an email directly to Editor@uccCharlotte.org.

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	Summer Hiatus	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	Sandra Field yourstrulycollection@hotmail.com
Mental & Spiritual Wellness Support Group	Summer Hiatus	Kate Durda, KateDurda@gmail.com
Pub Theology	2nd & 4th Thurs. 7 pm	Adam Droscha pastor@uccCharlotte.org
Adult Bible Study	Summer Hiatus	Curt Scott, CurtisJScott@hotmail.com
Coffee Hour with a Pastor	Evelyn Bay, Tuesday, 10 am	Pastor Droscha, pastor@uccCharlotte.org
Healthy Lifestyle Class	Summer Hiatus	Deb Cogswell, cogswell2003@gmail.com
Music		
Choir Practice	Summer Hiatus	Ramona Kime, Ramona.Kime@gmail.com
Bell Choir	Summer Hiatus	Jenny Bohms, rjbohms@yahoo.com
Committees & Groups		
Art Ministry Committee	Summer Hiatus	Sandra Field, yourstrulycollection@hotmail.com
Blanche Moyer	Summer Hiatus	Judi Cates, JudithCates68@gmail.com
Church Life	1st Monday, 6:30 pm	Amy Frost, frostamy58@gmail.com
Communications	Summer Hiatus	Matt Slot, MattSlot@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	Mary Kohmuench, mtheoharis@gmail.com
Women's Fellowship	As Needed	Mary Normand, DavidNormand@att.net
Men's Group	Summer Hiatus	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

Full calendar of events:

www.uccCharlotte.org/calendar

We're in summer hibernation, but we still have a few things on the calendar...

- July 2** Care Community, Annex Library, 10 am
- July 3** Prayer Group, small prayer room in the church, 10:30 am
- July 5** Prayer Shawl, bring your knitting needles and crochet hooks, Church Lounge, 9 am
- July 7** Devotional Bible Study, Annex Large Meeting Room, Your choice: 10 am or 4 pm
- July 8** Coffee with a Pastor, Evelyn Bay's, 10 am
- July 10** Pub Theology, Riedy's Pizza and Pub, 7 pm
- July 12** Baseline Band, Summer on the Commons Concert Series, 5 pm
- July 14** Devotional Bible Study, Annex Large Meeting Room, Your choice: 10 am or 4 pm
- July 15** Coffee with a Pastor, Evelyn Bay's, 10 am
- July 17** Prayer Group, small prayer room in the church, 10:30 am
- July 19** Prayer Shawl, Church Lounge, 9 am
- July 19** Cozy Congregational Creators, Art Room (floor 2), 10 am to 2 pm
- July 19** Bonfire at LT and Peggy's, see page 11 for additional details.
- July 21** Devotional Bible Study, Annex Large Meeting Room, Your choice: 10 am or 4 pm
- July 22** Coffee with a Pastor, Evelyn Bay's, 10 am
- July 24** Pub Theology, Riedy's Pizza and Pub, 7 pm
- July 25** Let's Take a Trip! See page 11 for more details
- July 26** Charlotte Community Jazz Ensemble, Summer on the Commons, 5 pm
- July 28** Devotional Bible Study, Annex Large Meeting Room, Your choice: 10 am or 4 pm
- July 29** Coffee with a Pastor, Evelyn Bay's, 10 am