



**First Congregational**  
United Church of Christ  
Charlotte, Michigan  
March 2026  
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Issue 3

Never place a  
period where God  
has placed a comma

## Still Speaking



## In This Issue

About the Cover 2  
Pastor's Post 3  
Outreach Moment 4  
Pockets of Prayer 5  
Organizer Needed 6  
Odds and Ends 7  
Holy Week 7  
Personal Testimony 8  
Celebration & Prayer 10  
Meeting Times 11  
Calendar Highlights 12



### Music in the Sanctuary for March

March 5 Thursday 3 - 4 pm  
March 16 Monday 2 - 3:30  
March 23 Monday 2 - 3:30  
March 30 Monday 2 - 3:30

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<b>*Church Council</b>	3rd Thurs., 6:30 pm	Annex Large Meeting Room

### Staff

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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. Article deadline is the 25th of each month.

**About the cover:** Congregation member Maria Davis, vocalist/guitarist of the Celtic musical group Fresh Pict. Other band members include Maple Valley band director Patrick DeWitt and Charlotte Community Jazz band organizer, Kurt Young. Fresh Pict will be singing at the Michigan Nordic Fire Festival on March 1, every half hour between 11:30 am and 4:00 pm in the Voyages of the 9 Realms tent. Our church will be handing out cookies at the Fire Fest.

# P A S T O R ' S P O S T

Pastor Adam Droscha

## **Using Lent to Reclaim Our Attention**

One of the ways being a pastor keeps me on my toes is that I have to continuously argue on behalf of various traditions, practices, and ideas. I suppose that's part of why I entered ministry to begin with; I've always kind of enjoyed that challenge. Lent poses this challenge in an interesting way because it's not just an idea, or a tradition, it's a season that invites specific practices, not to mention every year it comes around someone in my orbit asks some version of the question, "What is Lent, and why does it matter? I'm not going to give a history of Lent and I'm not going to give a five-point essay about the purposes and benefits of Lent. To keep it brief and simple, I'm going to give you the pastor Adam pitch about a central factor in many spiritual practices: attention.

Lent is an opportunity not merely to self-reflect, or exercise restraint, or fast, or pray, or be more charitable. It's an opportunity to reclaim our attention. Lent is a season for a spiritual cleanse, to flush out all the junk occupying our attention that keeps our minds distracted and our spiritual lives scattered. God might appreciate that we use Lent to reflect on the story of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness, but I'm quite sure God appreciates when we have possession of our spiritual and cognitive attention. God may want us to use Lent to find deeper solidarity with Christ, and I won't try to dissuade anyone from that interpretation. But I do know that we connect and commune with the Spirit of the living Christ better when we're less distracted, and that's also how we have healthier connection to ourselves.

Reclaim your attention, friends. Apply fasting broadly to anything that distracts you from your spiritual center, attunement in your relationships, or the moment you're in. Pray not simply to ask for help or communicate with the divine, but pray because it offers you silence and requires reflection on your thoughts and feelings. Practice almsgiving (charity,

service, sharing of resources) not out of religious obligation, but because it is a far better use of our attention than countless other distractions with which we fill our free time. May you be both emptied and filled in this season, friends.

## O U T R E A C H M O M E N T

Mary Normand, Chair

**January Giving Tree** We collected two throws, one baby blanket, thirteen sets of sheets, four blankets, and a bag of miscellaneous sheets, and throws. All were donated to Eaton Clothing and Furniture Center.

**February Giving Tree** We collected items for our Spring Shoe Boxes. These will be assembled March 19 starting at 10 am. Please come and help if you are able. They are assembled in the Bess Fulton room.

**March Giving Tree** We will have a loose change collection March 15 to support our Loads of Love event. Our next one is April 18. This program just keeps growing. People are struggling and anything we can do to help them is so appreciated.

**One Great Hour of Sharing** is a UCC Special Mission Offering that supports partners worldwide with ministries that fund health, education, and agricultural development, emergency relief, refugee ministries, and both international and domestic disaster response. This collection takes place in March. The official day is March 15 however you may donate any time during the month. Be sure and mark on the check or envelope that it is for One Great Hour of Sharing.

**Repair Fair** We are looking to possibly have some type of repair fair later this year. We have heard from a couple of people who can do sewing repairs but nothing else. If you can do small electrical repairs or simple furniture repair (gluing, nailing), please reach out to someone on the Outreach Team or sign up on the back of the Welcome Card on Sunday.

*"Not all of us can do great things but we can do small things with great love." - Mother Teresa*

# POCKETS OF PRAYER

Jeannine Scott, Prayer Shawl Ministry

## Reaching Out to Our Midwestern Neighbors

As the trauma being inflicted by federal agents in Minneapolis was revealed through all forms of media, the prayer shawl ministry considered how we might reach out to offer support. A plan came to light when we uncovered many small “prayer pockets” crafted through the Let Us Sow Love Initiative. Created as a mini-version of a prayer shawl, they seemed like a perfect way to carry some comfort to a church with values much like ours, located in downtown Minneapolis.



A quick count revealed approximately 160 pockets available, in various colors and stages of completion. The prayer shawl ministry folks set out to complete them for delivery. Prayer cards were printed, cut, and slipped inside, and various symbols of love and peace were attached to each of the pockets. As we assembled, we prayed. Prayed for an end to the fear, for understanding, and for justice. Importantly, we prayed that the recipients would feel seen, heard, and loved.

On February 15th, the “Sunday of Love,” Pastor Adam was joined by several members of our prayer shawl ministry to pray blessings over the pockets before being packed and shipped to Plymouth Congregational Church in Minneapolis with the following message:

*May these prayer pockets, merely tokens of the enduring love of God and God's people, be a tangible reminder that we are with you, you are seen, and heard, and loved.*

*Please share them with your congregants and friends as you see*

*appropriate with the full confidence that the blessings with which they have been sent will infuse the lives of your community with strength and comfort.*

*May our prayers for peace be felt this day, and every day, as we continue the work of bringing love and peace to a world so in need.*

Additionally, donations were offered by the congregation and, after a generous match of \$400 from Outreach, a check for \$2003 was prepared and mailed to help with efforts to provide groceries and other monetary support for members of the community that have been impacted by the ICE raids and ongoing trauma in the city. What a tremendous and beautiful act of kindness!

The prayer shawl ministry is deeply appreciative of the outpouring of our church's concern for our neighbors, care of those in need, and this bold example of love in action.

## **ORGANIZER NEEDED!**

**RE: GROUNDS GROUPIES**

Ramona Kime, Retiring Grounds Groupies Organizer

Ramona is stepping down as organizer of the Grounds Groupies, so we need to find someone else who can take on that role. Weeding is not required! We really just need someone who doesn't mind the organizing aspect, such as making sure each section has an assigned weeder and organizing the ordering and spreading of mulch (which is done usually only once a summer).

Jamie Curtis has been doing all the bigger work, such as pruning trees/shrubs/perennials, moving plants as needed, etc. Jamie's knowledge and experience are also very helpful in determining what activities need to be done when.

If you'd like more details on what would be needed, please email Ramona at [ramona.kime@gmail.com](mailto:ramona.kime@gmail.com), call her at 269-967-4478, or just talk with her at church! (Or, sign up on the back of the Welcome Card!)

## ODDS AND ENDS

**Chili Cook-Off and Game Night** March 13, 6 pm, Bess Fulton Room

Bring a game, a batch of chili or your favorite chili accompaniment (corn chips, corn bread, cinnamon rolls, peanut butter sandwiches, sour cream, cheese, potatoes - there are so many!) This is a family fun event. Feel Free to bring the kiddos!

**Meditative Art** March 21, 10 am, Church Art Room (Floor 2)

Sponsored by the Art Ministry Team, this is an opportunity to what your inner artist wants to express! This event is open to the public - bring a friend. This event is not really for children, but keep watching - the Art Ministry team has a couple of events coming soon with children in mind.

## HOLY WEEK

**March 29** Palm Sunday

**April 2** Ecumenical Maundy Thursday Service. This year we are hosting an ecumenical Maundy Thursday service with our friends from St. John's Episcopal Church, Lawrence Avenue United Methodist Church, and Peace Lutheran Church. Please join us at 7 pm as we observe the solemn event of the Last Supper with prayer, hymns, communion, and foot washing.

**April 3** Ecumenical Good Friday Service. On Good Friday we will again join our friends at St. Mary's Catholic Church for an ecumenical Good Friday service. Our friends from St. John's Episcopal Church, Lawrence Avenue United Methodist Church, and Peace Lutheran Church will also participate in this somber Tenebrae service. Time is still to be determined. St. Mary's Catholic Church

**April 4** Easter Egg Hunt for the Godly Play children on the Congregational Commons sponsored by the Art Ministry Team.

**April 5** Easter Sunday

# PERSONAL TESTIMONY

## **How I Came to Believe in Life After Death** by Mary Roessler

For many years, I questioned whether there was life after death. I hoped there was, but I rather doubted it – that is until some inexplicable things began to happen back in 2016.

The first occurred one morning when I was getting ready for work. I was combing my hair and set the comb down on the bed to go get something in the bathroom. When I returned, it was gone. I looked everywhere but couldn't find it; it had simply disappeared.

The next day while I was getting ready for work, I went in the closet to get a pair of shoes, and there was the comb, stuck in one of the shoes. There was no earthly explanation for how that could have happened, and it occurred to me that someone who had passed – probably my mother-in-law or father, the two people I had been closest to – was responsible.

A couple of weeks later something similar occurred. I was dusting the furniture and set the dustcloth down to go upstairs for a moment. As had happened before, when I returned the dustcloth had disappeared. A few days later, I mentioned to Mike what had occurred, and he told me he knew where it was – stuffed inside one of the pockets of the pool table. I shared my explanation for the occurrence with him, but he didn't believe it, although he had no alternative ideas.

Nothing else happened until my daughter Kate died. Of my eight everyday dishes, three had chips in the side. I mentioned to Mike that it would be nice to get a sixth good one so when Kate's husband James and the kids came to visit, all of us would have a good plate. However, I didn't do anything about it. One day, not long after that, I was emptying the dishwasher and discovered, much to my astonishment, that there were six good plates. I was certain Kate was responsible for the new plate but had no idea how she could have done it. When I die, I intend to ask her!

This brings me to my husband Mike, who died in 2024. He was certain that when he crossed the river, as he called it, that was it; there was no life afterward. I image he was rather pleasantly surprised to find that wasn't the case!

Fortunately for me, he didn't lose any time helping me out. I'll give you a couple of examples. Before he died, he had purchased some savings bonds which are worth quite a bit at maturity. He had done several things to set me up well financially, in case he pre-deceased me. One day I was looking for the savings bonds. I searched multiple times through the pile of papers on the desk and everywhere else I thought they could possible be, but I couldn't find them. I felt terrible and told Mike so. The next morning, on top of that pile of papers on the desk, were the savings bonds.

One more example: Mike had given me a lovely heart-shaped amber stone which I wanted to wear to church. As had happened with the savings bonds, I couldn't find it. It was supposed to be in my jewelry box, but it wasn't, nor was it anywhere else I searched. It had become my custom to tell Mike when I had a problem and ask for his help. The next day, Saturday, I opened my jewelry box, and, to my utter amazement and delight, there was the amber heart, just in time to wear it to church the next day.

As you can imagine, each of these occurrences has meant a great deal to me and has brought me much comfort. I don't know why I've been blessed with this incredible reassurance of life after death, but I am enormously thankful. I'm already thinking about whom I can help after I "cross the river" myself.



Mike and Mary Roessler. Mary is one of our liturgists who also shares through her poetry, her presence, her life experience, and her dynamic spirit

## When We Come Together . . .

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

Learning Opportunities	Meeting Times	Contact Person
Words and Tangents	Sun, 8 am, Annex/Library	Jan Shall, JanShall00@gmail.com
Godly Play	Sun, 10:20 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	Sandra Field yourstrulycollection@hotmail.com
Pub Theology	Unknown	Kate Durda, KateDurda@gmail.com
Adult Bible Study	Tuesdays, 6 pm, LMR	Curt Scott, CurtisJScott@hotmail.com
Coffee Hour with a Pastor	Evelyn Bay, Tuesday, 10 am	Pastor Droscha, pastor@uccCharlotte.org
Music in the Sanctuary		Kate Durda, spiritweavers@gmail.com
<b>Music</b>		
Choir Practice	Wednesday, 7 pm, Lounge	Ramona Kime, Ramona.Kime@gmail.com
Bell Choir	Wednesday, 4 pm, Sanctuary	Jenny Bohms, rjbohms@yahoo.com
<b>Committees &amp; Groups</b>		
Art Ministry Committee	2nd, 4th Tues, 11 am, Art Rm	Sandra Field, yourstrulycollection@hotmail.com
Blanche Moyer	2nd Monday, 5:15 pm, LMR	Judi Cates, JudithCates68@gmail.com
Church Life	Sept. 2nd Mon. 6:30, SMR	Amy Frost, frostamy58@gmail.com
Communications	3rd Monday, 6:30 pm, SMR	Matt Slot, MattSlot@gmail.com
Prayer Shawl	1st & 3rd Sat, 9:30 am, Lounge	Diane Hudson, dianehudson@sbcglobal.net
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	2nd and 4th Saturday, 10 am	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](http://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

A full calendar of events can be found at  
[www.uccCharlotte.org/calendar](http://www.uccCharlotte.org/calendar)

- March 1** Progressive Appetizer, 5:30 pm, Church Lounge
- March 2** Church Life Meeting, 6:30 pm, Annex Large Meeting Room
- March 4** Care Community, 10 am, Annex Lounge
- March 4** Community Dinner, 5 pm, Bess Fulton Room
- March 5** Prayer Group, 10:30 am, Small Prayer Room (Church)
- March 5** Music in the Sanctuary, 3 pm
- March 7** Prayer Shawl, 9 am, Church Lounge
- March 12** Pub Theology, 7 pm, Don Tequilas
- March 13** Family Game Night and Chili Cook-Off, Bess Fulton Room
- March 14** Safety Training Class, 8 am to 5 pm, Bess Fulton Room
- March 14** Men's Group, 10 am, Annex Large Meeting Room
- March 15** Loads of Love Loose Change Offering
- March 23** Music in the Sanctuary, 2 pm, Sanctuary
- March 16** Communications Meeting, 6:30 pm, Annex Small Meeting Room
- March 19** Spring Box Assembly, Bess Fulton Room
- March 19** Prayer Group, 10:30 am, Small Prayer Room (Church)
- March 19** Church Council, 6:30 pm, Annex Large Meeting Room
- March 21** Prayer Shawl, 9 am, Church Lounge
- March 21** Meditative Art, 10 am, Art Room
- March 23** Music in the Sanctuary, 2 pm, Sanctuary
- March 26** Pub Theology, 7 pm, Don Tequilas
- March 28** Men's Group, 10 am, Annex Large Meeting Room
- March 30** Music in the Sanctuary, 2 pm, Sanctuary