



First Congregational
United Church of Christ
Charlotte, Michigan

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Never place a
period where God
has placed a comma



Still Speaking

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

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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 15th of each month.

About the cover: Voices raise in song during our Easter Sunday service while our music director, Ramona Kime, leads us through a hymn. Join us for our Choir Concert featuring the Senior Choir & Celestial Bells on Wednesday, May 27th at 7 pm in the Sanctuary for a fun night of music!

PASTOR'S POST

Pastor Adam Droscha

In the last week of April I went to Boston, Massachusetts for the annual national gathering of the Post-Evangelical Collective. For any who may not be familiar with that mouthful of a name, the PEC is a national group of church leaders, academics, artists, pastors and ministers, and faithful seekers who lived, worked, worshiped, and served in evangelical churches and organizations and no longer identify with parts of evangelical spirituality, religion, or politics. For some, parting ways with American evangelicalism was due to theological dissonance – no longer believing theologies about salvation, hell and damnation, or unquestioned interpretations of biblical authority. For others the departure had directly to do with the diminishment of their humanity and dignity – women who were treated dismissively or passed over for leadership roles they actually earned, people of color were treated as second class by white leaders and churches, or LGBTQ people who were forced to remain silent or were cast out of their churches without a second thought. Others departed from evangelical ranks due to the damage that's been done and is still being inflicted by evangelical politicians and political actors. And for some leaving evangelicalism was due to abuse and corruption perpetrated by evangelical leaders that they experienced directly or witnessed happen to others.

The reasons people find the PEC are as numerous as those that compel people to seek a new church. There is beautiful diversity in the PEC not only of race, age, and life experience, but of tradition, thought, and theology. Even in all that diversity, there is unity around soul healing, deep care for one another, shared values, and the sense that God is not

done with us yet. But in the last two years a new group has quietly been joining the ranks of the PEC: ministers in the United Church of Christ. Now, some of you might read that and think, “Well duh, Adam. You’re a minister in the UCC.” Yes, fair point, but for a few years in what we now refer to as the ‘early days’ of the PEC, I was one of the only UCC people showing up to gatherings, if not the only one. At last year’s national gathering in Nashville, there were two others, one of which was like me and still fairly new to the UCC. This year there were about four new UCC folks from both the Midwest and the east coast.

Running into more UCC folks at this year’s national gathering was interesting to me; I wondered why more showed up and what drew them. Some of us UCC people were there because of past experiences and our relationships with people in PEC, but a few of the newbies were there purely out of curiosity, which made me more curious. But it hit me the final day of the gathering after the last of several conversations that week about the PEC/UCC connection: of course UCC people are showing up at a diverse gathering of religious and spiritual misfits of many backgrounds and identities and beliefs; it’s in the UCC’s DNA. The United Church of Christ was formed by the Congregational Christian Churches and Evangelical Reformed Church denominations, which were themselves later mergers of older denominations, including the Afro-Christian Convention. The UCC was the first denomination to come out as LGBTQ affirming, among other firsts that kind in social justice movements. So, even if the PEC is not a new denomination (though many are thinking of it that way), it’s natural, logical even that we UCC people find spiritual resonance and kinship there.

A couple of us UCC folks at the PEC gathering were feeling a sense of responsibility this year, even though several were new to the collective. That sense of responsibility came from the recognition that while we

certainly have much to learn from voices and experiences in the PEC, as a movement the PEC could benefit from the shepherding and support of an older tradition/denomination that has been leading and organizing around the same causes for a long, long time. One of the last speakers of the gathering was the Rev. Mariama White-Hammond, a minister in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, even invoked our words, "God is still speaking." For a few of the UCC folks in attendance, me included, we heard those words in that space and felt, 'Yes, God is still speaking. God was always speaking. You've heard the call too. Welcome.'

I don't know what the connection between the PEC and the UCC will look like in the days to come. Maybe someday I'll be the only UCC guy at PEC gatherings again. But as many of us have felt in these recent years of social and political upheaval we need each other, we need new connections, old and new have to come together, disparate groups and collectives have to work together, and people of diverse backgrounds and beliefs have to find common cause. Maybe the Spirit is really moving to reconcile all things to herself. Time will tell. But in closing, friends, comrades, kindred of the Spirit, followers of the Jesus way, and members of First Congregational Church in Charlotte, MI, I want to assure you that the Spirit who binds us is connecting us with those far beyond what we see in our church week-to-week. God is still speaking to 'them' over 'there' too. Thanks be to God.



MAY GIVING TREE

Ramona Kime, Outreach Team

May Giving Tree: We are focusing the May Giving Tree on donations to the Justice League of Greater Lansing, the group which gave our MLK Day presentation. Our donations will go to the Justice League's endowment which is providing help for descendants of enslaved African Americans in education, home ownership, and entrepreneurship. The Social and Environmental Justice team will also be contributing from their budget.

The Justice League was created in 2021 to repair the breach caused by the historical damage of slavery and its aftermath. In the spirit of repentance for racism, they are working to build relationships and facilitate reparations between houses of worship and collaborative partners.

Cash or checks, made out to "Justice League of Greater Lansing", can be put in the jar at the front of the sanctuary or in the offering plate. Be sure to indicate "Justice League" on any envelopes of cash.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Choir Concert featuring the Senior Choir & Celestial Bells, Wednesday,

May 27th at 7pm in the Sanctuary. Bring your friends and join our choirs in their annual spring concert. It will be a wonderful evening of beautiful and uplifting music, yummy treats, and 'quality time' spent with our friends and church family! Included in the concert will be favorite anthems and bell pieces from the last year, spanning a variety of genres.

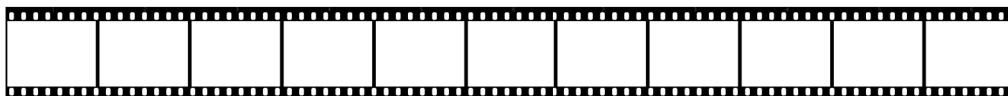


“Will & Harper” Film Showing, Sunday, 6/7 at 11:30 in the Sanctuary. In recognition of Pride Month, SEJ will be showing the film “Will & Harper”, the powerful documentary about Will Ferrell and his close friend coming out as a trans woman, Harper. Previously known as Andrew, Harper was a comedy writer for Saturday Night Live which is where she met Will. (Harper Steele is currently working as executive producer for a documentary about transgender youth titled “What Will I Become?”)

In this film’s intimate portrayal of friendship, transition, and America, Will Ferrell and his close friend of thirty years decide to go on a cross-country road trip to explore a new chapter in their relationship. Writing



about this highly-acclaimed documentary, the film critic, Peter Debruge, wrote that “It can sound like a cliché to say that any given movie is what the world needs now, but “Will & Harper” earns that distinction. Struggling to recognize her own beauty in a society that often seems determined to deny her identity altogether, Steele brings the trans experience down to earth. Meanwhile, by accepting his fledgling gal pal on her own terms—and asking how to make her more comfortable in her own skin—Ferrell sets the best kind of example. We should all be so lucky as to have friends like these.”



MEET THE EDITOR

Communications Editor, Kaleigh Slot

Hello! I'm Kaleigh Slot and I am excited to be stepping in as the new Communications Editor. I was born in Rochester, NY but I was raised here in Charlotte, and after graduating from CHS in 2019 I continued my education at Central Michigan University, earning both my BAA and my MS in Fashion Design and Merchandising.



While at CMU I played trumpet in the Chippewa Marching Band and the 6th Man (Pep) Band, and was initiated as a member of Sigma Alpha Iota, an all-women International Music Fraternity where I served as the Corresponding Secretary. Additionally, in 2022 I was the Submissions (Designer Liaison) Director for Threads Fashion Show, a student-produced fashion show on campus. While earning my master's I worked as a Graduate Assistant for three professors, whom I assisted with researching, teaching, grading, and designing.

I enjoy spending my free time outdoors, usually with a book in my hand, or you can find me crafting and creating through my sewing, knitting, sketching, music, writing, and whatever new hobby will inevitably pique my interest next. And if you know my parents, you would not be surprised to learn that I am a nerd, a film lover, and a video (and board) gamer.

My family joined this church community after moving to Charlotte when I was just two years old. This means I was lucky enough to grow up here, surrounded by the most loving and generous people who have shaped me into the person I am today. It is an honor to step into this position as it is the perfect opportunity to give back to the people who have done so much for me, for this community, and for our world. First Congregational UCC has been my home for so long that I am ecstatic that I can help welcome others into our church family by serving as your Communications Editor.

Kaleigh Slot

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	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 Thurs, 10:30 am	Sandra Field, yourstrulycollection@hotmail.com
Pub Theology	2nd/4th Thurs, Acapulco	Pastor Droscha, pastor@uccCharlotte.org
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
Contemplative Hour	Time varies	Kate Durda, spiritweavers@gmail.com

Music

Choir Practice	Wednesday, 7 pm, Lounge	Ramona Kime, Ramona.Kime@gmail.com
Bell Choir	Wednesday, 4:30 pm, Sanctuary	Jenny Bohms, rjbohms@yahoo.com

Committees & Groups

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	1st Monday 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

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

- May 3** Video: "The Dark Side of Data Centers", 11:30 am in the Sanctuary
- May 4** Church Life, 6:30 pm, Annex Small Meeting Room
- May 6** Care Community, 10 am, Annex Library
- May 7** Crafting for Bazaar, Thursdays from 10 to 3:30 pm, Annex LMR
- May 7** Prayer Group, 10:30 am, Small Prayer Room
- May 9** Men's Group, 10 am, Annex Small Meeting Room
- May 10** Social & Environmental Justice, 11:30 am, Annex LMR
- May 11** Blanche Moyer Circle, 5:15 pm, Bess Fulton Room
- May 14** Pub Theology, 7 pm, Acapulco
- May 16** Prayer Shawl, 9 am, Lounge
- May 16** Cozy Congregational Creators, 10 am, Art Room
- May 17** Outreach Team, 11:30 am, Annex Library
- May 18** Contemplation Hour, 2 pm, Sanctuary
- May 18** Communications Meeting, 6:30 pm, Annex Small Meeting Room
- May 21** Prayer Group, 10:30 am, Small Prayer Room
- May 21** Council Meeting, 6:30 pm, Annex Large Meeting Room
- May 23** Men's Group, 10 am, Annex Small Meeting Room
- May 26** Art Team Meeting, 11 am, Art Room
- May 27** Choir Concert, 7 pm, Sanctuary
- May 28** Crafting for Bazaar, 10 to 7 pm, Annex Large Meeting Room
- May 28** Pub Theology, 7 pm, Acapulco
- May 31** Worship Team, 11:30 am, Annex Small Meeting Room