



**First Congregational**  
United Church of Christ  
Charlotte, Michigan

August 2026  
Volume 3  
Issue 8

Never place a  
period where God  
has placed a comma



## Still Speaking

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## Leaders and Staff of the Church

|                                     |                     |                            |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Council* President</b>           | Bren Wood           | BrnWdMI@gmail.com          |
| <b>Vice President</b>               | Stephanie Tighe     | StephanieTighe@gmail.com   |
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| <b>Care Community</b>               | Pam Rinckey         | Rinckey1@hotmail.com       |
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| <b>Soc. &amp; Env. Justice Team</b> | Mary Kohmuench      | Mtheoharis@gmail.com       |
| <b>Treasurer (Finance Team)</b>     | Kathie Cook         | CrkfcCook@hotmail.com      |
| <b>Worship Team</b>                 | Jeannine Scott      | Scottj21@msu.edu           |
| <b>*Church Council</b>              | 3rd Thurs., 6:30 pm | Annex Large Meeting Room   |

### Staff

|                          |                     |                         |
|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Minister</b>          | Pastor Adam Droscha | Pastor@uccCharlotte.org |
| <b>Director of Music</b> | Ramona Kime         | Ramona.Kime@gmail.com   |
| <b>Communications</b>    | Kaleigh Slot        | Editor@uccCharlotte.org |
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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](mailto:Editor@uccCharlotte.org). Article deadline is the 15th of each month.

**About the cover:** Sunday July 12, morning service on the Commons, handshakes and hugs are shared during our passing of the peace and we were treated to a medley of hymns from Don Sovey on guitar.

# PASTOR'S POST

Pastor Adam Droscha

## **Cold Mountain Lakes and Being Received by the World**

As many are aware, I made a trip to Colorado in July with some close friends from college. In that group was my college roommate and his wife, both of whom I have been close friends with since high school and before. This group of friends delights me; they are all genuine, funny, intelligent, and driven people. We have seen each other through our best and our worst, many seasons of growth and change, and times of great celebration and tragedy. Truly, these are the kinds of friends we all need in our lives, and I am thankful for them beyond words.

This trip was my first time to Colorado. Two of our group, who are married, moved out to Denver last summer seeking a change of scenery and time of adventure in the mountains before they settle down to start a family of their own. They showed us around their corner of Denver, took us to some of their favorite spots, and brought us to three of their best hiking trails, two of which were in Rocky Mountain National Park. I love hiking and being outdoors, and the trails we hiked and the sights we saw were incredible. It was exactly the kind of Colorado trip anyone could hope for: great friends, good outings and sights, and plenty of laughter and love. Truthfully, I didn't want to be there.

Don't mistake me, I was so filled with joy to see my friends and to make that trip to a new place that is one of the most beautiful in the world. I'm not a curmudgeon, I swear. I so enjoy traveling, especially with people I love. Even so, I was already worn out by the time we arrived to Colorado, I had almost called off going at all, and I felt like I was performing the whole time for a group of people I know I never have to perform for. For a social butterfly like me who HATES canceling plans and aims only to present myself authentically, this was a difficult position to be in. Seeing

those beautiful people and being in that fantasy-like landscape felt was a tainted experience.

Our second day of hiking was gorgeous. The weather was good, the trail was challenging but not exhausting, and we came to one reverent view after another. Our last stop on that trail was a high mountain lake with water clean and clear like glass. And then it inevitably happened, one of our troupe said, "Alright, I'm doing it. I'm getting in." Then one after another each person in our group set down their bags and removed their shoes. I wasn't the last to get in, but I was likely the most hesitant. You see, I have never been a friend to cold water. I enjoy the beach, being near water, boating, fishing, and more. I enjoy winter, playing in the snow, and that special joy of bundling up in cold seasons and watching the snow fall. But swimming in cold water is a hard pass from me, and I knew that mountain lake was cold before the first of us dipped their toes and confirmed for us the obvious.

Yet my hike to that high body of water had been an ongoing prayer. As my dearest friends chatted and laughed, I was uttering silent prayers of anger, frustration, disappointment, confusion, lament, and pleading. By the time we arrived at the lake I was 'prayed out,' so to speak, from 'praying to' the mountains and hills, trees and shrubs, the gravel and the path. Furthermore, I don't like being the non-participant in a group. I want to be present and active in what's happening, not sitting on the sideline.

One of my favorite poems by one of my favorite poets is called 'Everything is Waiting for You' by David Whyte. (Some might remember this poem appearing for a contemporary reading on more than one Sunday.) The poem opens with, "Your great mistake is to act the drama as if you were alone." A couple lines later, Whyte writes, "To feel abandoned is to deny the intimacy of your surroundings." One of the last lines of the poem is, "Put down the weight of your aloneness and ease into the conversation." It's a poem about letting our guard down, allowing

ourselves to be open, and being received by the world. Whyte invites us to remove the distance between us and our surroundings to realize we are already a part of what's happening, and we are invited deeper.

We all have these experiences of being in good places at the wrong time, or of being with people we love while our minds and attention are elsewhere in our little inner worlds of worry, anxiety, anger, and self-centeredness. I think far fewer of us, however, have the clarity, capacity, or courage to let our guards down in those moments or seasons so that we can be present to the more beautiful and bountiful reality happening around us. It can be incredibly difficult to recognize ourselves as intimately connected to the event unfolding before us and to let ourselves be received by the world. Yet becoming present and connected, immersed and received, open and vulnerable is often the exact remedy to our inner toil.

So as the dreaded moment came at the stoney edge of that cold mountain lake, I saw the invitation again to be received by the world, to become intimately present to where I was and who I was with. I not only came to the end of a trail, but to the end of a morning of troubled prayer. As Whyte writes in his poem about how "the window latch grants you freedom," or, "the stairs are your mentor of things to come," the cold mountain lake called me to immerse myself back into beautiful and messy reality, as shocking as it may be. And yes, it was damn cold. But I was with friends in a sacred place and moment.

Friends, let this be your reminder and invitation to go with openness, allowing yourself to be received, shaken out of your troubled inner world of worry and anxiety back into the intimate closeness of all things. Stop living, as Whyte writes, "As if life were a progressive and cunning crime with no witness to the tiny hidden transgressions." Instead, be vulnerably present, invited deeper into each moment and unfolding event as if you are not only an observer but an accepting participant.

# OUTREACH MOMENT

Mary Normand, Chair

## **Giving Tree:**

Our August Giving Tree is toilet paper for Helping Hands. We are going to be building a pyramid in the front of the sanctuary. Lets see how high we can go.

## **Concert on the Square:**

Each year we cosponsor a concert on the Courthouse Square. These take place every Thursday evening during the summer. We make our famous homemade ice cream sandwiches and hand them out for free. This year we will be there August 6. We will be baking the cookies and dipping the ice cream on August 4 at 10am and assembling the sandwiches on August 5 at 11am. Many hands make light work so please come to the Bess Fulton room, on those days, and help out. Thank you in advance for your help.

## **Loads of Love:**

Our next and last Loads of Love for the year is August 15. Help is always much appreciated. For those not familiar with the program, we go to Quality Dairy Laundromat from 8-10 and pay for folks' laundry. There are a number of churches/organizations that participate in this program. Currently another group is there every month on the third Saturday. We are there 3 times a year.

Outreach generally meets the third Sunday of the month right after church. We meet in the large room of the Annex. If anyone is interested in what we do and/or being a part of it, please come to a meeting.

In A World Where You Can Be Anything, Please Be Kind.

Stay tuned

Mary Normand, Chair

# RECYCLE-PALOOZA

The Eaton County Department of Resource Recovery is hosting an event to collect old electronics, household hazardous waste, and eyeglasses/hearing-aids. Registration is required to participate with a limit of two per household. Read the flyer or go to <https://www.eatoncounty.org/913> for more information about accepted items and how to sign-up.

Eaton County Department of Resource Recovery

## Recycle-Palooza

Eaton County Residents Only (Non-Commercial)

**August 8, 2026, 9 AM – 2 PM**

Registration Required (limit 2 per household)

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

Charlotte Location released upon completion of registration

### ELECTRONICS

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

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

### HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE

Acids & Bases, Aerosols, Asphalt/Roofing Tar, Automotive Fluids, Cleaners, Polishes, Fluorescent Light Bulbs/Tubes, Fire Extinguishers, Smoke Alarms, Flammables, Glues, Caulks, Flea Collars & Sprays, Mercury-Containing Items, Oil-Based Paint, Stains, Varnishes, Paint Thinners, Wood Preservatives, Pool Chemicals, Solvents, Pesticides, Herbicides, Sharps/Lancets (must be in a Puncture-Resistant Container)

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

### EYEGLASSES & HEARING AIDS

**Charlotte Lions Club - Recycle for Sight**

will be accepting used eyeglasses & hearing aids

Questions? Contact Eaton County  
Department of Resource Recovery  
Email: [Recycle@EatonCounty.Org](mailto:Recycle@EatonCounty.Org)  
Phone: (517) 543-3686



Scan to register or volunteer!



# ART MINISTRY CORNER

Sandra Fields, Chair

The Art Ministry team welcomes Pat Bursch Pastels as our next Art Exhibition. Her work will be displayed in the annex from September through October.

Pat attended Lansing Community College where she received an Associate of Applied Arts/Commercial Art Illustration degree. The artist states that she does all her own framing. They are all custom made with appropriate profile face details and textures so that they become part of the art.

The Art Ministry team will introduce Pat with a reception in September, date to be determined.

## CELEBRATE SHER!

TUESDAY AUGUST 18, 2PM—5PM

### **Retirement Party**

We will be honoring Sher Brown for her years of service to this church; in many changing job responsibilities and bosses!

While many of our church family have only known her as the behind the scenes foundation of finance and, in early years, our communications editor, she has been the weekday presence in our Church office for almost 23 years.

Join us on Tuesday, August 18 from 2pm to 5pm in an informal party/open house in the Church Annex large meeting room celebrating Sher with cake and treats, as is our tradition! AND be sure to find a thank you card to sign at coffee hour in the next two weeks.

# PLAY MUSIC ON THE PORCH DAY

Ramona Kime, Church Life

**Saturday, August 29, 2026**

Play Music on the Porch Day is an annual, world-wide event, and this year, the Church Life Team and Music are organizing our church's own event, adding to the growing list of participating cities and organizations. So far there are over 70+ countries and 1000+ cities that are participating this year, and the number keeps growing!

This event has been happening for a number of years, and it all started with the simple question: **What if for one day everything stopped? And we all just listened to the music.** The goal is very simple: Musicians and non-musicians from all walks of life, with an interest in any genre of music, come together to help “stop the world” to just enjoy music and our community.

This year the event will be held around the world **on Saturday, August 29<sup>th</sup>**. For our church's event, we're also including a meal to add even more social time:

**5:30—potluck in the annex**

**7:00—play and sing music on the Commons stage**

A number of our church musicians will be participating in this fun and informal event, and we'd like YOU to be a part of this as well, either by singing along or by just listening, tapping your toes or clapping your hands!



# BUZZING FOR BAZAAR

Amy Krizek

**“Crafts from the Congregation”** is the official name for this event. Lovingly called “Bazaar” this is the 90<sup>th</sup> year and it is scheduled for Friday November 6 and Saturday November 7 with outtake viewing for church family that Sunday following worship.

It may seem early but the title describes it all – we count on the congregation and friends of this church to donate toward its success. Mark your calendar, save the date, we need MANY hands.

## **If you**

- ♦ do a craft (or many)
- ♦ garden or do canning
- ♦ cook or bake
- ♦ have vintage costume jewelry to donate
- ♦ have good “attic treasures” to donate

We need YOU! Contact Mary Normand or Amy Krizek (517) 652-1579 for more information on any of this.

**Craft sessions** with planned ideas are underway, watch your emails. We will pickle beets and process butternut squash the later part of September, so kitchen help is welcomed, watch your emails. Jewelry donation boxes are placed in the Annex and Bess Fulton Room basement for your donations of grandma’s or auntie’s or your own repurposed jewelry. Attic Treasures are being gathered in the choir music file room on the tables.

It takes a lot of work and a LOT of people to put this event on and the money from the events fund several projects around the church as well as assisting MANY local charitable agencies/projects in the community.



## INTRODUCING OUR NEW STAFF

### **Morgan Englehart, Contemporary Music Director**

Born and raised in Charlotte, Michigan, I am proud to call this community home. I graduated from Charlotte High School in 2010 before earning my Bachelor of Arts degree in Music Theatre, Dance, and German from Carthage College in Kenosha, Wisconsin, in 2014.

I am the owner and instructor at Spotlight Performing Arts Studio, where I have the privilege of teaching private voice and piano lessons, as well as theatre classes. Helping students discover their confidence, creativity, and love for the performing arts is one of my greatest joys.



Outside of teaching, I am a devoted wife and the proud mother of seven wonderful children. As a family, we embrace a simple, intentional lifestyle centered around faith, sustainability, and wholesome living. In my free time, I enjoy gardening, cooking from scratch, singing, and creating organic, sustainable food and home goods for my family.

Sharing my gifts with this community has always been my dream. I truly believe God gave me these talents for a purpose, and I am incredibly grateful to finally be living that calling. It is a blessing to invest in others through music, creativity, and the values that have shaped my life.

### **John Nulf, Contemporary Music Director**

Hi everybody, I'm John Nulf! These past couple months, I have been serving as Contemporary Music Director alongside Morgan Englehart. I am honored to come alongside the musical talent here at First Congregational Church to create a brand new evening service with a different flavor of music.

I grew up in Charlotte from late elementary school through graduation and have lived here for most of my time since. You may have seen me floating around town performing with my keyboard or hosting open mics at Evelyn Bay to give others a platform to share their art. I also like to fill my free time with disc golf, learning how to create and build new things (3D printing is my current obsession), and a bit of doomscrolling on my phone of course.



Music has connected me with so many wonderful and talented individuals in the community, and many of my relationships, including with Pastor Adam, have been formed during my time playing on various church worship teams. For me, worship music is music that binds us together and allows us to see and feel that we are all part of a divine mosaic. That our individuality is not a curse, but an opportunity to encounter the mind of God and experience love through the other. When I look at the teachings of Jesus, I see a consistent message--that loving God and loving people are not separate commandments but one in the same message. I am excited to be taking on the project of contemporary music here at First Congregational Church because I get to use my creativity to answer

a question: what can music sound and look like when it embodies this message and speaks to us in our language? I believe words are just the tip of the iceberg, and I look forward to having more conversations with all of you here at FCC to understand your language and to speak it back to you. I've seen so much diversity of thought and background in my time here already, and I am grateful to be welcomed into this church where I feel I can truly be myself.

### **Sandy Lopez, Bookkeeper**

My name is Sandy Lopez, and I am excited and grateful for the opportunity to serve as the church's new Bookkeeper. I bring nearly 30 years of experience in accounting, bookkeeping, and office administration. I truly enjoy helping organizations stay organized and financially healthy behind the scenes. While numbers and spreadsheets are a big part of what I do, I also believe that integrity, trust, and serving others are just as important.

Outside of work, I'm a proud mom of three amazing children who keep life busy, active, and full of joy. I'm also an animal lover and enjoy spending time with my dogs. When I have the chance, you'll often find me hiking, exploring the outdoors, or planning my next travel adventure. I love discovering new places and appreciate the opportunity to recharge and enjoy God's beautiful creation.

Stepping into this role is more than just a new job for me—it's an opportunity to serve a church family and use my skills in a place that values faith, community, and caring for one another. I'm looking forward to getting to know everyone. I feel truly blessed to be here and am excited to see what God has in store for this next chapter.

Thank you for such a warm welcome. I look forward to serving alongside each of you.

# JOIN THE CHOIR

Ramona Kime, Director of Music

*(adapted from the Facebook page of Dr. Kristina Rizzotto)*

**POSITIONS OPEN:** Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass—no others need apply.

**PHYSICAL QUALIFICATIONS:** Must be able to carry light musical notes part way across the church. Must have sufficient vision to see the director ten feet away.

**EXPERIENCE:** No application accepted from persons who have not sung, hummed or whistled in the tub or shower.

**WAGES:** Satisfaction and joy in God's service.

**FRINGE BENEFITS:** Social Security—we promise you the security of fun social fellowship with other members of the choir.

**HOURS:** Sunday mornings with occasional opportunities for overtime (at above mentioned wages).

**VACATION:** Missed rehearsals and church services are primarily a matter of conscience and ability to return the glares and pointed remarks of the director and other choir members.

**RETIREMENT:** No particular age, but it is generally determined by prayer, printed notes getting too small, notes too high, church too hot (or cold), or pianist is unable to play the notes you sing.

**REHEARSALS:** Once a week, on Wednesday evenings at 7 PM, except in the summer.

**APPLY:** By contacting Ramona Kime, Director of Music, at 269-967-4478 or [ramona.kime@gmail.com](mailto:ramona.kime@gmail.com), or talking with her before or after church. We'd love to have you join us!

# When We Come Together . . .

| 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    | Pastor Adam, pastor@uccCharlotte.org           |
| Prayer Group              | 1st /3rd Thurs, 10:30 am   | Sandra Field, yourstrulycollection@hotmail.com |
| Pub Theology              | 2nd/4th Thurs, Acapulco    | Pastor Adam, pastor@uccCharlotte.org           |
| Adult Bible Study         | Summer Hiatus until Sept.  | Curt Scott, CurtisJScott@hotmail.com           |
| Coffee Hour with a Pastor | Evelyn Bay, Tuesday, 10 am | Pastor Adam, pastor@uccCharlotte.org           |

## Music

|                |                             |                                    |
|----------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Choir Practice | Summer Hiatus               | Ramona Kime, Ramona.Kime@gmail.com |
| Bell Choir     | Wednesdays, 2 pm, Sanctuary | Jenny Bohms, rjbohms@yahoo.com     |

## Committees & Groups

|                                          |                              |                                                |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Art Ministry Committee                   | Summer Hiatus                | 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 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                              | Summer Hiatus                | Larry Taylor, TaylorLT1752@att.net             |



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

## Still Speaking

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
106 South Bostwick - Charlotte, MI 48813  
office@uccCharlotte.org [www.ucccharlotte.org](http://www.ucccharlotte.org)

Find us on  
Facebook & 



## Calendar Highlights

- Aug 5** Care Community, 10 am, Annex Library
- Aug 6** Crafting for Bazaar, 10 am, Annex Large Meeting Room
- Aug 6** Prayer Group, 10:30 am, Small Prayer Room
- Aug 7** Matt Slot's Barbecue Class, 6-8 pm, Bess Fulton Room
- Aug 8** Concert on the Commons (Open Mic, 100 Proof), 6 pm, Commons
- Aug 9** Outdoor Service, 10 am, Commons
- Aug 9** Social & Environmental Justice Team, 11:30 am, Annex LMR
- Aug 9** The Evening Liturgy, 6 pm, Sanctuary
- Aug 10** Blanche Moyer Circle, 5:15 pm, Bess Fulton Room
- Aug 13** Crafting for Bazaar, 10 am, Annex Large Meeting Room
- Aug 13** Pub Theology, 7 pm, Acapulco Mexican Grill
- Aug 15** Newsletter Submissions Deadline
- Aug 15** Prayer Shawl Group, 9 am, Lounge
- Aug 15** Cozy Congregational Creators, 10 am, Art Room
- Aug 16** Outreach Team, 11:30 am, Annex Library
- Aug 17** Communications, 6:30 pm, Annex Small Meeting Room
- Aug 20** Crafting for Bazaar, 10 am, Annex Large Meeting Room
- Aug 20** Prayer Group, 10:30 am, Small Prayer Room
- Aug 20** Church Council Meeting, 6:30 pm, Annex Large Meeting Room
- Aug 23** The Evening Liturgy, 6 pm, Sanctuary
- Aug 25** Art Team, 11 am, Art Room
- Aug 27** Crafting for Bazaar, 10 am, Annex Large Meeting Room
- Aug 27** Pub Theology, 7 pm, Acapulco Mexican Grill
- Aug 29** Play Music on the Porch Day, 5:30 pm in the Annex, 7 pm on the Commons
- Aug 30** Worship Team, 11:30 am, Annex Small Meeting Room
- Aug 31** Church Life, 6:30 pm, Annex Small Meeting Room

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