

The Open Door



1st Congregational UCC

Opening the Doors of Possibility

An Open & Affirming Church



**July
2025**

FROM THE PASTOR...

Summer in Northern Michigan is such a precious and all-too-brief season, that I always hate to do anything that hastens it along or causes me to miss any of its opportunities. But in our church, summer is also the time when our leaders and ministry teams start to prepare for the next calendar year by setting goals and priorities. Your Council, Trustees, Reaching In, Reaching Out, and Personnel teams are in the process of establishing their ministry focal points for 2026, along with the dollar amounts they're going to need to turn their dreams into reality.

On Sunday, August 10 – both during and after worship – our entire congregation will be celebrating 2025's accomplishments AND sowing seeds of hope for 2026. When the offering plates are passed at that outdoor service, we will not only be placing our weekly offerings in them, but we'll also be dedicating our annual pledges for the 2026 ministry year.

As we approach this crucial crossroads in the life of our congregation, our various ministry teams are working on clear, concise, bulletin-point lists of both what they were able to accomplish in 2025 with your support and what they hope to accomplish in 2026. We'll get those into your hands later this month. But in the meantime, I'd like to highlight just a few of their accomplishments so far this year.

Council:

- ♦ Established 5 Identity Statements
- ♦ Hosted a leadership retreat
- ♦ Honored outstanding participants
- ♦ Developed an organizational flowchart identifying key volunteers and their back-ups

(Cont'd on next page)



From the Pastor (cont'd)

Trustees:

- ♦ Re-roofed the church, paid down the roof debt
- ♦ Made significant technological upgrades and are implementing a plan to replace one staff computer per year
- ♦ Purchased a new water heater
- ♦ Made significant improvements to all bathrooms
- ♦ Purchased a battery-powered lawn mower, saving the church hundreds per year

Reaching In:

- ♦ Planned and led several incredible study groups
- ♦ Expanded/improved congregational care
- ♦ Developed a comprehensive emergency communication plan for the entire church
- ♦ Worked with Toby & Shelley on bringing outstanding music to our worship services

Reaching Out:

- ♦ Hosted affordable housing summit
- ♦ Established a partnership with Guatemala
- ♦ Established a volunteer host team
- ♦ Established an outreach to the incarcerated
- ♦ Began a support initiative for migrants, immigrants, & temporary/guest workers

Personnel:

- ♦ Reviewed/updated all employee contracts
- ♦ Worked with Toby to evaluate all employees
- ♦ Met with Toby and evaluated him
- ♦ Began a succession plan for our custodian

As you can see, all of our ministry teams have been extremely productive on our behalf. I hope you'll make it a point to thank your fellow participants for all they've done in 2025. And, even better than your verbal expressions of thanks would be for you to increase your pledge to the church for 2026, for it is your tithes and offerings that will enable these volunteer teams to plant even more seeds of hope next year than they did this year.

If you are a new participant, you may not be familiar with our annual pledging process. Every year – usually in late August or early September – we ask every participant to make a financial commitment to the church for the next calendar year. Your pledge is a dollar amount that we can count on receiving from you over the course of the year that will help us fund our ministry priorities. While some may think, “I don’t want to pledge because there are too many unknowns in my life right now,” the church simply can’t operate without knowing the income we will receive from our participants. A pledge is not a contract; it is an intention. Life happens, and, yes, sometimes people can’t quite come up with their pledged dollar amount. We all understand that, but setting an intention for the year where your church family is concerned is one concrete way to express your gratitude and to help our trustees more effectively manage the budget year by year.

We are anticipating a budget in the neighborhood of \$310,000 to sow seeds of hope in 2026. With approximately 100 regular participants, that works out to an average annual pledge of \$3100 per person. Of course, many of us pledge more than that, which is great, while others of us can’t quite reach that threshold. But if we all do our best and partner with the Holy Spirit in this vital endeavor, we believe it will all work out.

Thank you all so very much for ALL you have done to make 2025 such a fantastic year for our church with the purple doors. I couldn’t be any prouder of this amazing church family. It is a genuine privilege to serve as your pastor.



Join Us for a Memorial Butterfly Release *In Honor of Those Loved and Lost*

DATES AND LOCATIONS



Cadillac Senior Center

Thursday, August 7, 2025 at 3 pm
601 Chestnut St., Cadillac, MI

Manistee Senior Center

Friday, August 8, 2025 at 11 am
260 St. Mary's Parkway, Manistee, MI

Mineral Springs Park

Friday, August 8, 2025 at 3 pm
630 Main Street, Frankfort, MI

Grayling City Pavilion

Wednesday, August 13, 2025 at 3 pm
211 Cedar St., Grayling, MI

Charlevoix Hospital

Thursday, August 14, 2025 at 3 pm
14700 Lake Shore Dr., Charlevoix, MI

Medalie Roadside Park

Friday, August 15, 2025 at 11 am
1910 W. South Airport Rd., Traverse City, MI

REQUEST A BUTTERFLY

Butterflies are \$15 each* through Sunday, June 29, and you may purchase multiple. Butterfly prices will increase to \$20 each on Monday, June 30, through Monday, July 7. A portion of each purchase will be designated as a gift to support hospice and bereavement services for patients and families living in Northern Michigan.



**SCAN TO
LEARN MORE!**

The last day to reserve a butterfly online is Monday, July 7!

*Please Note: If the cost of a butterfly might prohibit you from attending, let us know. A limited number of butterflies will be available for individuals experiencing financial constraint.

No registration is required to observe any of the butterfly release events.

Contact Erin Gray, Bereavement Coordinator for Munson Healthcare Hospice, with questions about these events or how to request a butterfly at 800-252-2065 or egray4@mhc.net.



HAPPY JULY BIRTHDAY

To these fellow participants!

David Bowen 7/7 * Don Smith 7/7

Ellen Zienert 7/12 * Teri Stout 7/15

Lynette Webb 7/17 * Gerry Morris 7/17

Darlene Heine 7/22

All the best for a sizzling good year ahead!



JULY

MEETING TIMES:

Reaching In Team,
NO MEETING IN JULY

Reaching Out Team,
7/9 @ 9a

Church Council,
7/20 @ 11:45

Board of Trustees,
7/27 @ 11:45a

Reaching In Team meets on
the 1st Tuesday at 4:30p

Reaching Out Team meets on
the 2nd Wednesday at 9a

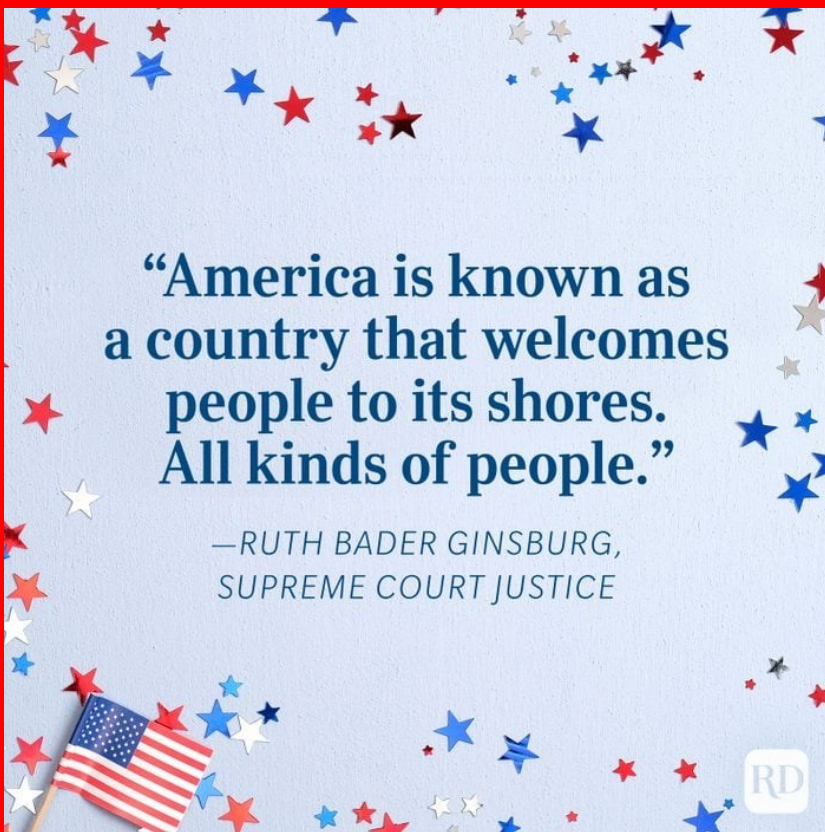
Church Council meets on
the 3rd Sunday at 11:45a

Board of Trustees meet on
the 4th Sunday at 11:45a

THOUGHT FOR THIS MONTH

“America is known as
a country that welcomes
people to its shores.
All kinds of people.”

—RUTH BADER GINSBURG,
SUPREME COURT JUSTICE



Just a Reminder...



The church office will
be closed on Thursday,
July 3 in observance of
July 4th.

Stacey will be out of
the office on Thursday,
July 24th due to the
Venetian Festival.

From the Music Director...

Thank you to all of those people who have participated in our choir for your ongoing commitment and sharing your talent! Welcome to our new participants, Laurie DeYoung and Dave Robinson!

Practices will continue on our new day and time: Thursday evening June 26 through all of July beginning at 6:30. Please arrive a few minutes early to make sure you have your folders up to date. Let's begin singing promptly at 6:30! Thank you to John Borths who will be providing our devotion and prayer on June 26th.

We will not sing June 22, 29, July 13 or 27th.

We will also welcome Nancy Smith back as a guest choir director in July and again in August! I, particularly, am SO grateful for her input and guidance as we grow our skills and improve our sound.

Bayview artists will be joining us on June 29th, July 13th and 27th to share their particular talents!

Centering Prayer has a new day and time: Thursdays from 5:15p - 6:15p inside our Sanctuary. All are welcome to attend, and there is no registration needed.

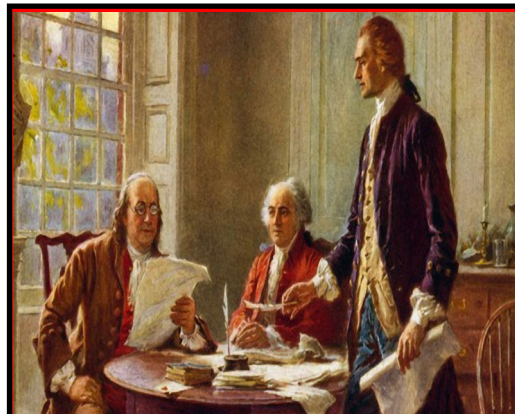
Happy summer everyone, and as always, please contact Shelley at anytime for questions, concerns, and ideas @ (616) 723-3062.



Next Issue!

Things to keep an eye out for coming in August...

- ***Updates from our Teams***
- ***Muffin Sale information***
- ***Details about our 2026 Seeds of Love Fundraiser***



JULY VOLUNTEERS

GREETERS

July 6 **OPEN**

July 13 ... **OPEN**

July 20 ... **OPEN**

July 27 ... **OPEN**

COFFEE & CONVERSATION HOSTS

July 6 **The Schairbaums**

July 13 ... **The Manker Family**

July 20 ... **OPEN**

July 27 ... **OPEN**

LAY READERS

July 6 **Suzanne Balter**

July 13 ... **Alice Pletz-Miller**

July 20 ... **OPEN**

July 27 ... **Ellen Zienert**

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS!!

Please contact the office or sign up on the bulletin board in the lobby if you would like to volunteer for any of the openings above.

CMA INFORMATION:

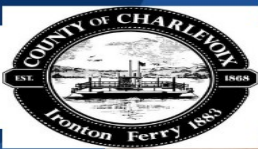
**CMA Hours:
Tues. & Thurs, 11a-2p
Appointments are recommended.**

From the Reaching In Team...

“Blessed are those that mourn, for they shall be comforted” (Matthew 5:4)

Comfort is a central promise to those who mourn. We are here for those of you who have lost a loved one & are mourning. A new Grief Support Resource Center has been established - you will see this on the table in Ransom Hall four times during the year. You may help yourself to any/all of the resources. Also, if at any time you or someone you know needs these resources, please call the office & Stacey can get them for you.

Hospice of Michigan is our partner resource provider. Even if you did not have a loved one in service with Hospice of Michigan, their resources are available, free of charge. Visit www.hom.org for a complete listing of their services. Sometime in October we shall have a meeting on “Handling the Holidays” lead by the hospice director from Gaylord. Should you have any questions, please feel free to call Denise Cruz BSN, RN at (248) 961-2616



**COMMISSION
ON
AGING**



GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

at the Shirley Ruloff Senior Center

**SECOND FRIDAY OF EVERY MONTH
12:30 PM**

13513 Division St (Old Elementary School)
Charlevoix, MI

Community Discussion on Workforce Housing



On May 28th, 1st Congregational hosted a Community Discussion on Workforce Housing. This included a panel with representatives from many local organizations and employers.

It's great to know that there is progress on the building of several year-round workforce housing projects in the Charlevoix area. The discussion was positive and informative. Panelists Emily Boehm of Habitat for Humanity; Zach Samples of Housing Ready; Jonathan Scheel from Planning and Zoning, City of Charlevoix; Jane MacKenzie of Northern Homes Development; and Paul Silva, Developer/Businessman (The Earl Hotel & The Irene Event Center), all gave us their perspectives on what is needed to bring more housing to our area. Our community will be looking for more opportunities for developing year round workforce housing that would benefit employers, employees, and the Charlevoix area.

Shown are some photos taken from that event. We look forward to seeing what grows out of the very healthy discussion that was had on that evening!



July 2025*

		TUE Jul 1	WED 2	THU 3	FRI 4	SAT 5
		• 11am 11a-2p CMA Hours		Office Closed - July 4th H • 11am NO CMA HOURS - 2 more	Church Offices Closed	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
In-Person & Virtual Worsh • 10:30am COMMUNION	Main Church Office Close • 6pm Products Pantry	• 11am 11a-2p CMA Hours	• 9am Reaching Out Mee	• 11am 11a-2p CMA Hours • 5:15pm Centering Praye • 6:30pm Choir Rehearsa	Church Offices Closed • 12:30pm COA Grief Sup	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
In-Person & Virtual Worsh	Main Church Office Close • 6pm Products Pantry	• 11am 11a-2p CMA Hours		• 11am 11a-2p CMA Hours • 5:15pm Centering Praye • 6:30pm Choir Rehearsa	Church Offices Closed	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
In-Person & Virtual Worsh • 11:45am Church Council	Main Church Office Close • 6pm Products Pantry	• 11am 11a-2p CMA Hours		• 11am 11a-2p CMA Hours • 5:15pm Centering Praye • 6:30pm Choir Rehearsa	Church Offices Closed	
27	28	29	30	31	<p>*for more details, please go to the Calendar page on our website, www.CHXUCC.org</p>	
In-Person & Virtual Worsh • 11:45am Trustee Meetin	Main Church Office Close • 6pm Products Pantry	• 11am 11a-2p CMA Hours		• 11am 11a-2p CMA Hours • 5:15pm Centering Praye • 6:30pm Choir Rehearsa		



Upcoming Gigs

6
JULY

Bay View Campus

4:30P

Main Stage on Campus Lawn

10
AUG

1st Congregational UCC

11:30A

Fundraiser Entertainment Lawn

101 State Street, Charlevoix, MI

**FOR MORE
INFORMATION:**

(231) 881-6734
tobyjones48@gmail.com

NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE,
OR WHERE YOU ARE ON
LIFE'S JOURNEY, ✨
YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!



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Toby Jones, Pastor

Stacey Luoma, Office Manager

Shelley Fisher, Music Minister

Larry Minch, Custodian

Lynette Webb, Childcare Supervisor

101 State Street, Charlevoix, MI 49720

(231) 547-9122 (office)

www.CHXUCC.com

Our Covenant

*"Our church community seeks to embody God's Spirit and live the teachings of Jesus. We offer a sense of belonging to each other and to all our neighbors, as we build a just and sustainable world for **all**."*