



The Open Door



1st Congregational UCC

Opening the Doors of Possibility

An Open & Affirming Church



**May
2025**

FROM THE PASTOR...

The month of April will be one we'll all remember for a long, long time. The great ice storm of 2025 was the worst storm of any kind that Northern Michigan has seen since the 1970s. It brought life to a virtual standstill with no power, no available gasoline, and no access to food, whether at a restaurant or a grocery store. It was a really scary week for many of us.

In our communion celebration on Sunday, April 6th, many of us shared the experiences we had of being helped by human angels – neighbors who looked beyond themselves and their own needs in order to assist others. I was one such recipient of angelic ministers. My first angel was our office manager, Stacey Luoma. Not only was I, like everyone else, unable to get gas at a gas station for a 5-day stretch, but my car was completely empty. Given that my car had been my phone charging station, I was really out of luck. But then Stacey showed up with 5 gallons of gas for me. Because much of East Jordan was not hit by this storm and did not lose power, their gas stations were open, and Stacey purchased gas and delivered it all the way to Petoskey. I was deeply grateful and profoundly moved.

About the same time, the basement in my rental house completely flooded due to no power to the sump pump. The combination of that, no heat, no hot water, and trees continuing to snap and fall all around my rental house, led to my need to evacuate. That's when Teri and Bud Stout called from all the way down in Anguilla to offer me their home on Lake Charlevoix. They had a generator and everything I needed. What a gift!

Last but not least, when I went over to check on my Bay View cottage, I discovered that 5 trees had fallen on various parts of the structure. I was devastated. My first instinct was to try to get these trees and their weight off this 137-year-old rickety, foundation-less structure. Enter Jeff Mason with his chainsaw and MacIver-type skills. He spent hours with me on Friday after work getting the worst of the trees off my roof. This was neither easy nor light work, but Jeff was more than willing to do what needed to be done.

(Cont'd on next page)



From the Reaching Out Team



Community Discussion on Workforce Housing

True Story! A worker with a job offer comes to Charlevoix and can't find year-round housing that he/she can afford and must turn the job down.

What can we do? What can we learn? We want to help the worker, the employer, and the City of Charlevoix!

1st Congregational UCC will be hosting a Community Discussion on Workforce Housing on **Wednesday, May 28, from 7:00 - 9:00 pm.**

Please bring anyone interested in the current housing situation. We will have local housing experts and representatives on hand to inform us. We will also be able to ask questions.



On **Thursday, June 12th**, the Reaching Out Team will be touring the Meadowlands, near Alanson. This is a property development that is a Northwest Michigan Habitat for Humanity project. You are welcome to sign up and join us on that day.

We will also participate in a "Work Bee" at a new house. Weather dependent, we will be inside cleaning up after construction, or outside doing landscaping around the new house. There will be no heavy lifting. You should wear work clothes, bring a bag lunch, and plenty of water. We will be there about 4 hours and we will carpool.

We will see first-hand the work Habitat does. Northwest Michigan Habitat for Humanity will be doing a development closer to Charlevoix, hopefully soon.

Join us in doing some good work! You can call the church office at (231) 547-9122 to sign-up.



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www.CHXUCC.org

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION ON WORKER HOUSING

MAY 28TH

7:00 TO 9:00P

A worker with a job offer comes to Charlevoix and can't find year-round housing that he/she can afford and turns down the job.

What can we do? What can we learn? 1st Congregational UCC wants to help the worker, the employer, and the City of Charlevoix!

Please bring anyone interested in the current housing situation. We will have local housing experts and representatives from various organizations on hand to inform us. We will also be able to ask questions.

Join us at 101 State Street, at the corner of State and Park!





Happy *May* Birthday

To These Fellow Participants...

Dave Garland 5/11 * Sue Dixon 5/13 * Nancy Noggle 5/15
Linda Weller 5/16 * Bruce Herbert 5/22 * Laura Ford 5/22
Marge Merz 5/26 * Barb Wilson 5/29 * Ted Dumbauld 5/29
Jan Anderson 5/29 * Greta Gappy 5/30 * Sharon Schultz 5/31

Wishing you all a bright and sunny year ahead!

MAY MEETING TIMES:

Reaching In Team,
5/6 @ 4:30P

Reaching Out Team,
5/14 @ 9a

Church Council,
5/18 @ 11:45a

Board of Trustees,
5/25 @ 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

“God could not be
everywhere, and
therefore he made
mothers.”

RUDYARD KIPLING

Just a Reminder...



Toby will be out
of the Office on
May 1, May 5,
and May 6th. He
will also be out
of the office May
23-26.

From the Reaching Out Team

The recent ice storm was a scary challenge for all of us, and while we all made it through, the storm did expose some weaknesses in our overall preparedness for such emergencies. With this in mind, our team has decided to work with the Reaching In team to make sure that we are far better prepared for the next storm, power outage, or unexpected crisis.



limitations in our facility, it makes sense for us to pivot and use those two months to enhance our emergency preparedness – not just for our own sake, but for the larger community's as well.

There were two populations that we felt were hardest hit in the recent storm that we want to be sure to have a plan for moving forward. The first is our own homebound participants who are living alone and with mobility limitations. The second group moves beyond our church family to anyone in the area who couldn't stay warm, fed, and in communication with others who could help them. Our plan will be sure to address these and other vulnerable populations, as we seek to be better prepared to provide tangible and compassionate support the next time a crisis arises.

If you would like to help our Reaching In and Reaching Out teams to formulate an emergency plan, please let Stacey know in the office by either calling her at 231-547-9122. Thank you!

To that end, we have decided to dedicate the months of September and October this year to developing a comprehensive plan for future emergencies. This revised two-month focus will replace our original plan to focus on developing affordable childcare here in Charlevoix. Since we were not able to make the arrangement with Little Ducklings to move their operation here, due to



MAY VOLUNTEERS

GREETERS

May 4 **The Dumbaulds**
May 11 ... **Tim & Murphy Watts**
May 18 ... **OPEN**
May 25 ... **Denise Fate**

COFFEE & CONVERSATION HOSTS

May 4 **The Morris Family & Dianne VanHuysen**
May 11 ... **John & Anna Young**
May 18 ... **Lynette Webb & The Minches**
May 25 ... **Janet VanAlsten & Bob Dion**

LAY READERS

May 4 **Alice Pletz-Miller**
May 11 ... **Hugh Hansen**
May 18 ... **Denise Fate**
May 25 ... **Judy Seibert**

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.

Next Issue!

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

- ***Special Announcements from our Teams***
- ***Muffin Sale information***
- ***Outdoor Summer Worship Schedule***

From the Pastor (cont'd)

What did I learn from the great ice storm of 2025? First, I learned that it is a tremendous blessing to be a part of a loving, caring church family when disaster strikes. I don't know how I would have made it through without the people of 1st Congregational United Church of Christ. The second lesson is related to the first, as I continue to think about the fact that 3/4ths of the population of our wonderful town have no church connection in their lives. I can't help but wonder where they would have turned at a time like this? Certainly, some of them have family or close friends in the area, but what about the ones who don't? I continue to believe that we have all got to get better at telling the uplifting story of our church with the purple doors and all that we provide one another in good times and in bad. We need to be active, articulate ambassadors for this incredible community of which we are a part, and what better time than on the heels of this storm that pushed so many Charlevoixians beyond their own resources?

The third lesson I learned from this storm is picked up by the Reaching Out Team in their article on page 6, and that is the fact that we were not nearly as well prepared as a church as we could and should have been for a storm and sustained power outage like this one. I was really proud of our brothers and sisters at The Community Reformed Church, who immediately opened their doors as a warming shelter, a device-charging station, and a provider of simple sandwiches for those who had nowhere else to turn. That struck me as exactly what Jesus would want those of us with church buildings to do with them when disaster strikes. I'd like to think that we, too, can put together a comprehensive emergency plan for this church, designed to help not just our own participants, but the community at large the next time an unexpected crisis hits.

Thank you all so very much for being the community that I've always dreamed of being a part.



Charlevoices* Presents
**TRUE STORIES
TOLD LIVE**

FRIDAY, MAY 30, 2025, 7:00PM
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
101 STATE STREET, CHARLEVOIX



THEME FOR THE EVENING:
OVERCOME:
STRUGGLE TO STRENGTH

**ADMISSION: DONATION TO THE CHARLEVOIX
RAYDER'S GENEROUS HEARTS FUND**

The Generous Heart Funds for Charlevoix students in Middle and High School makes resources available through the counseling office for emergency/needs as they arise such as medical expenses, transportation, home repairs, winter clothes, sporting equipment and field trips. The beauty is in its flexibility. It makes a huge difference. All proceeds will go to this Fund.

*Charlevoices promotes live stage storytelling as entertainment. We involve and mentor a variety of voices based on one's true life experience. Stories will be 10 minutes long and be inspired by a unifying theme. For information: Contact: Betty Wadland, bettyjeanwadland@gmail.com or call: (231) 237-9887

May 2025*

***for more details, please go to
the Calendar page
on our website,
www.CHXUCC.org**

				THU May 1	FRI 2	SAT 3
				Toby Out of Office		
				• 11am NO CMA HOURS	Church Offices Closed	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
In-Person & Virtual Worst • 10:30am COMMUNION	Main Church Office Closed • 6pm Products Pantry	NO CMA HOURS NO Scripture Discussion 2 more	• 5pm Centering Prayer C • 6:30pm Choir Rehearsa	• 11am CMA Hours 11a-2p	Church Offices Closed	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
In-Person & Virtual Worst	Main Church Office Closed • 6pm Products Pantry	• 10am Scripture Discuss • 11am CMA Hours 11a-2p	• 9am Reaching Out Mee • 5pm Centering Prayer C • 6:30pm Choir Rehearsa	• 11am CMA Hours 11a-2p	Church Offices Closed	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
In-Person & Virtual Worst • 11:45am Church Council	Main Church Office Closed • 6pm Products Pantry	• 10am Scripture Discuss • 11am CMA Hours 11a-2p	• 5pm Centering Prayer C • 6:30pm Choir Rehearsa	• 11am CMA Hours 11a-2p	Toby Out of the Office Church Offices Closed	
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Toby Out of the Office		• 10am Scripture Discuss	• 5pm Centering Prayer C	• 11am CMA Hours 11a-2p	Church Offices Closed	
In-Person & Virtual Worst • 11:45am Trustee Meetin	Main Church Office Closed • 6pm Products Pantry	• 11am CMA Hours 11a-2p	• 6:30pm Choir Rehearsa • 7pm Community Discus		• 7pm Charlevoixes Presi	

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**."*