



SEPT 2026

Dancing in the Garden of Gratitude

Our Annual Celebration Picnic

Saturday, September 19, 2026 • 5:00–8:00 p.m. • Rain or Shine

Get ready for one of the most fun and important gatherings of the year! Our Annual Celebration Picnic — Dancing in the Garden of Gratitude — is coming up on Saturday, September 19, from 5:00–8:00 p.m. And this is one event you really won't want to miss!

This year's celebration is about looking back with gratitude and looking forward with excitement. We'll take time to celebrate the many accomplishments, ministries, activities, and moments that have made 2026 such a wonderful year for our church. But we won't stop there! We'll also be laying the financial groundwork for 2027, helping ensure that our church has the resources it needs to continue growing, serving, reaching out, and being a vibrant presence in our community. And, of course, we're going to celebrate in style—with great food, great fellowship, and dancing! The church will provide the Lion's Club Famous Chicken, and we'll provide a selection of beverages, both alcoholic and non-alcoholic. We ask everyone to bring a dish or dessert to pass, so we can create the kind of wonderful shared meal that makes a church family gathering so special. Come hungry and ready to enjoy an evening around the table with friends—old and new!

Then We Dance!

This year, we're adding something extra special: Contra Dancing! If you've never tried it, don't worry—you don't need to be an experienced dancer, and you don't even need to bring a partner. Contra Dancing is a traditional American folk dance in which people form lines or long sets and dance with a series of partners while following a simple sequence of steps. A caller guides everyone through the dances, teaching the movements as you go. It's energetic, social, and—most importantly—a whole lot of fun! You'll be dancing, laughing, changing partners, and enjoying the experience together. Think of it as a great way to get moving while meeting and connecting with people you may not normally dance with! Whether you're an experienced dancer or someone who thinks you have two left feet, come join us!

♥ Why Your Presence Matters

The Annual Celebration Picnic isn't just another event on the calendar. It is a celebration of who we are as a church family. It gives us a chance to pause from our busy lives, appreciate all that we have accomplished together, and strengthen the relationships that make our congregation special.

Your attendance also matters because we are looking toward the future. As we prepare for 2027, we need the participation, enthusiasm, generosity, and vision of our entire church family. When we gather together, we remind ourselves that the future of our church belongs to all of us.

So, please save the date, bring a dish or dessert, invite a friend, and plan to stay for the whole evening. And in keeping with our commitment to become an environmentally friendly church, please bring your own place settings (plates, silverware, cups). These can be rinsed out in the kitchen after the event. Come ready to celebrate 2026, dream about 2027, enjoy some famous chicken, share some delicious food, and maybe even learn a few new dance steps!

Rain or shine, we'll be together—and that's what makes it a celebration! We have so much to celebrate—and an exciting future to build - come be part of it!

🦃 **DANCING IN THE GARDEN OF GRATITUDE** 🌿 **SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19 • 5:00–8:00 P.M.**

🍗 *Lion's Club Famous Chicken* • 🥗 *Dish to Pass* • 🍹 *Beverages* • 🦃 *Contra Dancing* •
♥ *Fellowship*



SAVE THE DATE!

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2026

FOR OUR

Annual

CELEBRATION PICNIC

*We will honor our 2026 accomplishments
and lay the financial foundation for 2027*

Join Us for a

PICNIC!



5:00 PM - 8:00 PM

RAIN OR SHINE!



**1st CONGREGATIONAL
UCC
CHARLEVOIX**

*Open doors. Open hearts.
Open to all.*

*Bring a
dish to pass
or dessert
that will go
well with
Lion's Club
Chicken*

Love Without Boundaries

From the Trustee Team and Toby...

Congratulations to all our participants for an outstanding 2026 ministry year so far. Just think of all we have accomplished together in the last twelve months:

- Reaching In – systematized care visits, cards, and calls to our homebound and those in urgent need; led us through the study and series on Theo of Golden; and created a “40-Days in the Psalms’ devotional booklet for Lent with accompanying suppers.
- Reaching Out – led us through the certification process to become a Red Cross Emergency Shelter; deepened our partnership with Healthy Communities in San Antonio, Guatemala; advocated for affordable worker housing with city and township officials; established a 3-pronged inmate support program for residents in our county jail; and broadened community ties.
- Trustees – helped us gain release from previous EPA restrictions on our building; navigated us through the legal case against the roofer who defrauded us; made necessary and significant upgrades to our historic building, including replacing rotten wood and transitioning to LED lighting; managed the garden renovation without significant impact to our overall budget.
- Council – set a clear course for how we will become a true community center – a resource hub to get everyone (and especially newcomers) plugged into local service organizations; built on existing connections with community non-profits and established new relationships as well.
- Personnel – guided us through a smooth transition on our custodial services after Larry retired; updated all of our contracts and related procedures; worked with Toby to complete thorough and helpful evaluations of our staff; supported and encouraged all staff members and made sure they were compensated fairly.

Clearly, all our ministry teams were guided and inspired by this sentence from our vision document: “Our hope is that one day our church will be recognized throughout the community as the hub of a giant wheel, connecting people and organizations by means of dozens of spokes, which provide avenues and opportunities for meaningful service, spiritual revitalization, lifelong support, and terrific pastoral care.” We are far closer to achieving this vision than we were just a year ago, and that only happened because we have terrific ministry teams, committed and involved participants, and dynamic and effective leadership.

Now it is time to turn our attention to 2027. Our trustees have received input from all our ministry teams to determine what they will need to move even closer to our vision than we are today. The budget our financial leaders believe would satisfy our Church’s overall ministries is \$338,000, which is about 4% more than the budget we set for 2026. This amount recognizes both inflationary increases and a thoughtful approach to economize where we can.

From the Trustee Team and Toby... (cont'd)

Here are just a few of things we are hoping to do in 2027 with the resources we are asking you to provide:

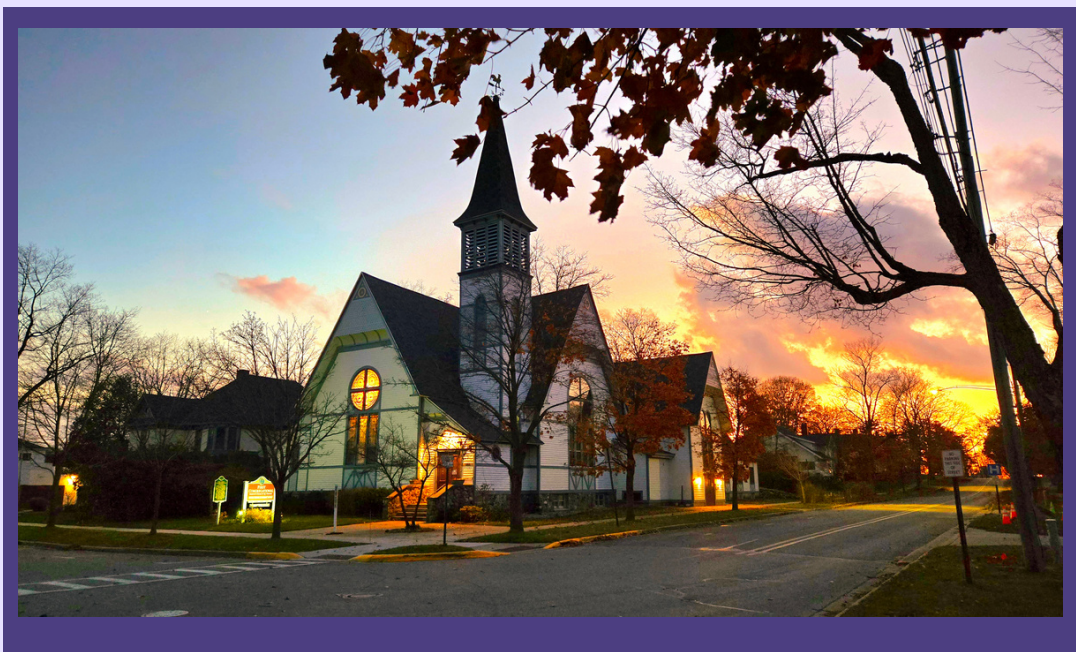
- Increasing our Reaching In offerings by affiliating with a certified Spiritual Director who can be available to help guide us on our unique spiritual journeys
- Expanding the use of Ransom Hall to be a Community Resource Hub
- Building a home for our homeless friend Lorenzo in Guatemala
- Adding a fully accessible ramp to our garden porch entrance
- Replacing our downstairs drinking fountain as a part of our shelter
- Continuing to pay off our loans for the roof and additional building repairs
- Gifts to build our endowment in order to grow our ministries in the future.

Our budget for 2027 represents your trustees' commitment to faithful stewardship and financial responsibility, all in alignment with our church's mission and purpose. **What we need from you is your commitment to pledging an amount that you will contribute that will enable us to reach our goals as a congregation. Some of you may have opted not to pledge in the past and have instead given as you could throughout the year. Although we are grateful for any type of financial support, receiving actual pledge commitments makes it much easier for your trustees to plan accurately, as we attempt to fully fund all our ministries. Remember that your pledges can be paid weekly, monthly, or at a pace you establish. Chris Gengle can easily set you up for automatic electronic giving, which most of our participants are already doing.**

We are incredibly excited about where we are and where we are going as 1st Congregational UCC here in Charlevoix. Thank you for being such a vital part of making us the growing, difference-making, Christlike community we are.

Gratefully,

Janet VanAlsten, Chair of Trustees
Toby Jones, Pastor



DIAPER DASH!

A BIG Little Blessing for Our Community

When it comes to diapers and wipes, this donation is no small thing!



Look at all those diapers and wipes! Now THAT'S something to celebrate.

The Diaper Pantry, which operates within our local Food Pantry, recently received a wonderful and generous donation of diapers and diaper wipes. This thoughtful gift will make a meaningful difference for families in our community who rely on the pantry for these essential supplies.

And this wasn't just a little delivery—it was a BIG one! Of particular note is the generous supply of size 4 diapers. There are so many that we may not need to purchase size 4 diapers for an entire year! That's a whole lot of diapers—and a whole lot of savings.

That savings means the Diaper Pantry can stretch its resources even further, helping us respond to other important needs in our community. In other words, this generous gift doesn't just fill shelves; it helps fill a need.

The Diaper Pantry is financially supported by the Reaching Out Team of 1st Congregational UCC. Their ongoing commitment helps ensure that families in our community have access to diapers and wipes when they need them most.

We are deeply grateful to the generous anonymous donor whose kindness made this gift possible. Their generosity will have a lasting impact on families throughout our community—and, quite literally, will help keep some little bottoms covered!

THANK YOU FOR HELPING US REACH OUT!

Every diaper, every wipe, and every act of generosity makes a difference.

Bring an old photo
or object that stirs a
strong memory.



Facilitator
Betty Wadland

Table Talk

*Where memories
become stories*

Turning family memories
and anecdotes into
stories worth telling



DATE:
September 30, 2026
1:00 – 3:00 PM



PLACE:
Charlevoix Public Library
Community Room A
220 Clinton St.
Charlevoix, MI

A STORY-MAKING WORKSHOP

*Bring a pen and paper—
and an open mind.*

Come join in the fun!



We all have memories that still
make us laugh, wonder, cry—or
shake our heads.



In this relaxed, interactive workshop,
you'll use simple prompts to uncover
forgotten moments and discover the
stories hidden within them.



No writing or storytelling
experience is necessary.
There is no pressure to share.
Come to reflect, laugh, and
rediscover a part of yourself.

Learn more: www.charlevoices.org

From the Reaching Out Team...



As you know, our team seeks to focus the congregation's thoughts and actions on a particular outreach theme for a two-month stretch of time. This September and October, we want all of us to focus on how we might better support the incarcerated, both while they are in jail/prison AND when they get out and must tackle the difficult transition of reintegrating into society.

To that end, we are hoping to hear from John Thorp, the counselor here at our local county jail, sometime this September. We'll learn about what he is seeing there in terms of unmet needs for our local incarcerated folks along with what benefits he is seeing the resources we've provided – books, clothing, financial resources, and mentors. We're working to set a date with John and will get you word as soon as we do.

In October, we will welcome Alice Diebel from Dayton, Ohio who has been running a ministry of support for the imprisoned for many years. Her stories and experiences will help shape our future steps, as we continue to do what the writer of Hebrews advised us to do: "Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering." (Hebrews 13:3) We have scheduled Alice to lead a single "Lunch and Learn" session on Wednesday, October 14 from noon to 1 pm in Ransom Hall. There will be more details to follow.

We would like to encourage you to pray for all those who are incarcerated or transitioning out of incarceration, along with their families and loved ones during these two months. Thank you!



Serve With Us!

Many hands make light work.
Thank you for sharing your
time and talents!



Lay Reader:

Sept. 6 – **OPEN**

Sept. 13 – **Hugh Hansen**

Sept 20 – **OPEN**

Sept. 27 – **OPEN**



Coffee Hosts:

Sept. 6 – **OPEN**

Sept. 13 – **OPEN**

Sept 20 – **OPEN**

Sept. 27 – **Potluck Collaboration**



Greeters:

Sept. 6 – **OPEN**

Sept. 13 – **OPEN**

Sept 20 – **OPEN**

Sept. 27 – **OPEN**



If you are interested in serving one of these
vital ministries, please sign up on the board
across from the office, or call the church office
at (231) 547-9122 to be added.





September BIRTHDAYS

Happy Birthday
and best wishes
for the year ahead! ♥

End of the Summer...
New Adventures
Great Memories
Wonderful You! ☀

♥ Sunsets are proof that endings can be beautiful. ♥
➤ HERE'S TO YOU AND THE YEAR AHEAD! ➤

★ Tim Watts	9/1
★ Phil Schairbaum	9/2
★ Meg Hargreaves	9/5
★ Margaret Benson	9/8
★ Mark Greyerbiehl	9/12
★ Mary Bascom	9/19
★ David Jones	9/23
★ Vicky Greyerbiehl	9/23
★ Ellen Kendall	9/25
★ Stacey Luoma	9/27
★ Lisa Copass	9/29

Team Meetings



Reaching In
9/3 @ 9a

Meets the 1st
Thursday of
each month



Reaching Out
9/9 @ 9a

Meets the 2nd
Wednesday of
each month



Church Council
9/20 @ 11:45a

Meets the 3rd
Sunday of
each month



Board of Trustees
9/27 @ 11:45a

Meets the 4th
Sunday of
each month

Thank you for your time, gifts and
commitment to our church family! ♥

SEPTEMBER

2026

WEDNESDAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY		THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Aug 30 • In-Person & Virtual Worship	Aug 31 • Main Church Office Closed	1 • 10am Prayer Group	2	3 • 9am Reaching In Mtg • 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal	4 • Church Offices Closed	5
6 • In-Person & Virtual Worship • 10:30am COMMUNION	7 • Main Church Office Closed	8 • 10am Prayer Group	9 • 9am Reaching Out Meeting	10 • 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal	11 • Church Offices Closed 12:30pm COA Grief Sup	12
13 • In-Person & Virtual Worship	14 • Main Church Office Closed	15 • Toby Out of Office • 10am Prayer Group	16 Toby Out of Office	17 Toby Out of Office 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal	18 • Church Offices Closed	19 • Church Annual Picnic
20 • In-Person & Virtual Worship • 11:45am Church Council	21 • Main Church Office Closed	22 • 10am Prayer Group	23	24 • 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal	25 • Church Offices Closed	26
27 • In-Person & Virtual Worship • 11:45am Trustee Meeting	28 • Main Church Office Closed	29 • Stacey Out of Office • 10am Prayer Group	30 Stacey Out of Office	Oct 1 • Stacey Out of Office *9am Reaching In Mtg • 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal	Oct 2 • Church Offices Closed	Oct 3
Oct 4	Oct 5	Oct 6	Oct 7	Oct 8	Oct 9	Oct 10



No Matter
Who You Are,
or Where You Are
on Life's Journey,
You are Welcome Here!



1st CONGREGATIONAL
UCC
CHARLEVOIX

1st Congregational UCC of Charlevoix
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**."

Toby Jones, Pastor
Shelley Fisher, Music Minister
Stacey Luoma, Office Manager
Lynette Webb, Childcare Supervisor