

August 2012
The Tie That Binds
First Congregational United Church of Christ
Cadillac, Michigan

PASTOR REYNOLDS' RAP

"...Very truly, I tell you, whoever receives one whom I send receives me; and whoever receives me receives him who sent me." (John 13:20, NRSV)

Since we've begun to engage the Open and Affirming (ONA) education process at our church, some have wondered why the scope of our study has been limited to the LGBT community. After all, they're not the only group that regularly experiences discrimination and other identity related challenges. Especially since we claim that ours is a God of universal love, doesn't the phrase "Open and Affirming" cover everyone?

In this particular context, the answer to that question is both "yes" and "no." In practice, yes, I believe that, to the best of our abilities, our congregation does accept and affirm every person who enters our doors. And, yes, there are certainly UCC churches that have chosen to phrase their Open and Affirming statements in totally open ended terms. In the recent past I probably would have encouraged us to follow their lead because I feared that too narrow a focus could cause us to inadvertently overlook marginalized persons who don't happen to fall into this particular category. But the thing I have come to understand is that, unlike some other groups, the LGBT community has historically been--and continues to be--targeted by churches for discrimination and hateful speech. In fact, probably no other institution has done more to harm LGBT people than the Church. This is one part of the reason it is important for us to issue words of affirmation that are specific to LGBT persons. Another is that while many, and perhaps most, churches say they welcome everyone, the reality is often somewhat different; i.e., judgment, condemnation, and/or attempts to "cure" people who identify as LGBT. Needless to say, for an LGBT individual to experience this kind of intolerance in a house of God can be extremely painful on an emotional level, but it is also liable to color and profoundly harm a person's spiritual life and relationship to God.

Going through a process of education and adopting an ONA covenant are the closest we can come to guaranteeing to LGBT persons that, not only will they be safe in our church home, but that we will appreciate them just the way they are and that we don't just tolerate but desire their presence and unique gifts for ministry among us. Thus the UCC defines ONA as follows:

***Open and Affirming (ONA)** is the United Church of Christ's (UCC) designation for congregations, campus ministries, and other bodies in the UCC which make a public covenant of welcome into their full life and ministry to persons of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions.*

This does not mean that we--the local church--and/or the UCC--the denomination, do not recognize and affirm other marginalized groups or important causes. To the contrary, ONA is just one of several "identity markers," which the UCC uses to define itself and which we too can explore and consider adopting as part of our congregational identity. Others include **Multicultural Multiracial, Accessible to All, Just Peace, and Whole Earth**. (For more information, please see the links at <http://www.ucc.org/vitality/what-matters/we-are-people-of-extravagant.html>).

My sincere hope is that, once we have completed our Open and Affirming process, we will feel called to stretch ourselves yet again and engage another identity marker. Toward that end, I encourage you to acquaint yourselves with the other 4 and to begin to discern where you might be feeling led.

Wishing God's Grace and Peace to each one of you, **Pastor Carol**

PASTOR'S SCHEDULE

Pastor Carol will be on vacation from **August 3-10**. If you have an urgent pastoral need during that time, please contact **Pastor Scott Torkko** at **231-775-9821 (church)** or **231-468-2224 (home)**. Rev. Torkko is pastor of Zion Lutheran and is authorized to provide pastoral care and counseling, as well as perform funerals on behalf of this church.

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR AUGUST 2012

August 5	Matthew 22:35-39; Mark 12:28-31 Luke 10:27; John 13:34	ONA/Pat Porter Preaching
August 12	Ephesians 4:25-5:2	Shaping Community
August 19	I Kings 2:10-12; 3:3-14	Wisdom Quest
August 26	Ephesians 6:10-20	At Home with God

JOYS AND CONCERNS

Congratulations!

- to **Linda B**, who just hit the half-century mark!
- to **Kelly McC** who recently accepted a job working for the State Department in Washington, DC. Not bad for a recent college graduate!
- to **Shannon**, who had another successful showing of her artwork, this time at the Cherry Festival in Traverse City.

Many thanks

- for the hard work of **Sue, Troy, Rita, Penny**, and **everyone else** who shopped, chopped, set up, cashiered, served, tore down, or helped in any other way to make our food booth at the Cadillac Arts Festival a success. The church netted **\$1700!**
- to **Robin, Donna, Penny, Sara, Sperry, Linda J**, and **Sue** for all they did to bring the new photo/address directory into being and into our hands. It took a village, and it looks great!
- to **Troy** and **Bob** for providing yet another terrific meal and movie at our July Dinner & an ONA Movie Night. Thanks also to **Bob** for facilitating our post-screening discussions and for donating the beautiful new storage cabinet that is now in the library, as well as to **Troy** for designing and distributing some very cool hand fans for weathering the summer in the sanctuary.
- to **Laura S** for donating a sofa and recliner for the GALLEY meeting room. It's getting pretty comfortable in there. We may just want to start holding some of our own meetings there too!

Prayer List*

Please hold these members, friends, and family in prayer: **Lee, Dorothy, Brian, Margaret, Jenny, Ruth & Bill, Adam, Sherry & Lynn, Skip & Carol, Tim**

*Please contact **Pastor Carol** to have a name added to or removed from the Prayer List.

PHOTO/ADDRESS DIRECTORY

The 2012 photo/address directories are here! A year in the making, they include photographs and addresses for all active members, families, and friends of the church. They will be available at the back of the sanctuary on Sunday mornings for a **suggested donation of \$5.00** to cover production costs. However, whether or not you are able to make this donation, you are invited to take a copy home with you.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Semi-Annual Meeting

Mark your calendars! The Semi-Annual Meeting is scheduled for after worship on **September 23**.

Summary of 7/12 Meeting

Sue W

Financial Reports - Total donations thru June 24: \$31,520. This is less than half of what is needed to cover the 2012 budget. It is hoped the food fair in July will help to supplement this shortfall. No other fundraisers have been planned as yet. Any ideas or suggestions welcome.

A very nice storage cabinet has been built in the library and hearing loop installation is progressing. Some donations have been given.

Safe Church procedures - Background check forms from Wexford Dept of Human services have been received.

Sunday Fundays - We need new organizers and more ideas. Sue will put forms together requesting ideas, hosts, coordinators for future events by the Semi Annual meeting.

Regarding plans for a PFLAG chapter, Carol invited anyone interested to join her in a conference call with a local PFLAG chapter to be held on Thursday, July 26 at 4:00 pm in Pastor's study.

Since Carol will be on vacation from August 3 - 10, it was proposed that the August 9 Board meeting be rescheduled to coincide with the board retreat.

Looking Ahead:

September 21/22 - UNA Fall meeting

September 23 - Semi-Annual Meeting - (including the 7th ONA Study Session)

October 6 - End-of-life Workshop

October 7 - Blessing of the Animals at 3:00 pm

January 27 - Annual meeting (Vote on ONA affirmation?)

WORSHIP & WELCOME

Coffee Hour

Beginning **August 5**, cake to celebrate the month's birthdays and anniversaries will be served on the first Sunday of each month in lieu of traditional coffee hour fare. **Bob** and **Sue** will take charge of ordering and picking up cake through December. We will check in with the congregation at the Semi Annual Meeting to see whether we'd like to adopt this new tradition and whether coffee hour teams would feel comfortable supplying the cakes. For now, coffee hour teams assigned to the first Sunday of the month will just need to set up and prepare the coffee.

Communion

Because Pastor Carol will be on vacation on the first Sunday of this month, we will celebrate communion on **August 12**.

Rally Day

This year's Rally Day will happen on **September 16**. During worship we will formally **recognize** last year's choir members and Sunday school teachers, then **commission** this year's choir and teachers to their respective ministries. In addition, we will hold our 3rd annual **Water & Stone Ingathering Ceremony** to share a bit of our summer vacations with one another in a meaningful way.

In preparation for the ingathering ritual, **please collect a little water or a small stone from a place you have visited over the summer and bring it to worship that day.** If you've already

completed your summer travels or if you did not venture far from home this year, local stones, tap, or lake water are equally worthy symbols.

MISSIONS

Our Mission Targets for August: Stehouwer Free Clinic and Shepherd's Table

We are all aware of the ongoing economic woes in Northern Michigan. Unemployment remains high, and many of those who are employed do not have health insurance. A trip to the doctor's or dentist's office—not to mention the emergency room—is a shocker, even with health insurance. Often seeing a health care professional or getting prescribed medicine is postponed because of the cost. We have a long-standing commitment to support **the Stehouwer Free Clinic** through our quarterly pancake brunches and our mission giving. Let's not succumb to complacency just because the problem has been going on for so long. Let's do what we can to help those in need in our community.

In 2010 **The Shepherd's Table** served over 35,000 meals, including almost 100 meals per day to homebound people in the Cadillac area! In addition to the critical importance of donations, The Shepherd's Table needs volunteers to help prepare and serve. If you are able, call 231 775 0608 or just go to the First Baptist Church on a Tuesday or Thursday between noon and 6:30 p.m.

Cadillac Area CROP Hunger Walk

Cadillac Area CROP Hunger Walk began in Cadillac in 1985. 2012 will be our 27th Annual Hunger walk for this area. Since the Walk began in the Cadillac Area over \$200,000.00 has been raised with over \$50,000.00 staying locally to help local food pantries provide food for hungry families. Our area has also provided over \$150,000.00 to hungry children and families in over 80 countries.

This year's Walk will be held on **September 23**. Walkers will depart from Rotary Park at **2:00 pm** and walk from 2 to 7 miles. Local organizers are **Marv Wallender** (mwallender@hotmail.com, 231-824-7336) and **Rev. Tom Ball** (tebpastor@yahoo.com, 231-250-1506). It would be great if someone could make contact with them and help to organize a group of FCC walkers to participate this year.

OPEN AND AFFIRMING (ONA)

Upcoming Events

- ***August 5:** Pat Porter Preaching, 10:30 am; Study Session #4, noon
- ***August 24:** Dinner and a Movie, "Outrage," 6:00 pm
- ***September 6:** Task Force Meeting, 6:00 pm at Troy's and Bob's home
- ***September 21:** Dinner and a Movie, tbd, 6:00 pm
- ***September 23:** Study Session #7 (presentation during Semi-Annual Meeting)
- ***October 21:** Study Session #6
- ***November 11:** Study Session #5

In addition, for those who have missed some of our **ONA Film Series** and would like another chance, **Bob** and **Troy** have graciously offered **Wednesday, 8/15** & **Tuesday, 9/18** as days they'd be willing to have people drop by their home for **make up screenings**. The movie most requested by each group will be played. **Please RSVP 48 hours in advance.**

UNITED NORTHERN ASSOCIATION

Pilgrimage Retreat

August 24—25

Are you tired of hurtling through life as though it were an out of body experience? Do you wish you had a closer connection to God? If so, the Pilgrimage Retreat at **Lake Louise Retreat Center**

may be for you. Facilitated by the **Revs Keith & Ginny Titus**, this spiritual retreat will provide an opportunity to put your everyday world on hold and "savor the journey" God has designed for you.

Depending upon the number of people with whom you share a room, meals and lodging are **\$69-80** per person. **Pastor Carol** and **Pat McC** intend to attend and invite others to join in. According to Keith, the more members/friends who participate, the greater and more positive the impact on the local congregation will be. For a registration form, please see Pastor Carol.

Sister Church

Our UNA sister church for August is **Brutus Zion UCC**. Please lift up the congregation and its new pastor, **the Rev. Michael Sanders**, in prayer during the coming month. If you wish to send the congregation a card, their address is **6590 Maple River Road, Brutus, MI 49716**.

MICHIGAN CONFERENCE

Back Bay Mission Adult Work Camp

April 7 - 13, 2013

Join other Michigan Conference UCCers to participate in a week-long work camp in Biloxi at Back Bay Mission. For 89 years this vital UCC mission has been serving the Mississippi Gulf Coast and the wider church community by faithful witness for social justice and compassionate service to the poor and marginalized. Volunteers are the core of the mission's success.

The cost of the 1-week experience is **\$250 per person plus travel expenses**. Part of this \$250 is considered tax deductible. It includes \$10 registration fee, \$75 Housing Fee, \$50 Materials fee, \$100 food and incidentals, and a t-shirt. Car pools will make the 2-day journey with a 1-night hotel stay each way, leaving **April 5** and returning to Michigan **April 14**. You may also plan your own transportation. Generally the work week takes place from Monday through Friday (8 am to 4 pm) with Wednesday afternoon reserved to explore the beautiful Gulf Coast region. April is a beautiful time to be on the Gulf. Professional contractors guide our work. There are tasks available for persons of multiple capabilities. The dormitory-style accommodations are new and air conditioned and include a lounge area with big screen TV, dining area, large industrial kitchen, laundry room, and internet.

To find out more visit www.thebackbaymission.org, then click on "housing recovery" and "work camp NEW policy for 2013." To reserve a space, please send a \$100 registration fee to Rev. Penny Lowes, c/o St. Paul UCC 31654 Mound Rd., Warren MI 48092. Make **checks payable to St. Paul UCC with "Back Bay Mission" in the memo**. Final payment of \$150 per person will be due **February 1, 2013**. After registering you will receive an application form and a skills inventory.

Rev. Penny Lowes and **Dean McMinn** are the Michigan coordinators for this event. Please contact Penny with any questions: revpen@comcast.net. We look forward to a rewarding and life-changing experience with you in Mississippi next year!

FUN!

Sunday Fun-Day(s)

Interlochen Free Concert

August 5

Marge & Bill would like to gather a group to attend Interlochen's final concert of the season, Les Préludes and Ode to Joy, together. This performance joins the amassed choruses of the Festival with 4 distinguished vocal soloists, as well as Interlochen's high school orchestras, bands, and dancers to convey a message of universal love and understanding. Interested? Please call Marge and Bill

Pool Party

August 12

COME ONE. . . COME ALL!! Grab your floaties, rubber duckies, and kids because it's time for the

2nd Annual Splash & Synchronized Swim Festival! Members of the First Congregational Synchronized Swim Team who need to rehearse before their much anticipated encore performance may contact Bob or Troy about pool time availability for practice.

***Please bring a dish to pass** (suitable for 10 people) and **a folding lawn chair**.

***We'll provide hamburgers/hot dogs & fixings**, as well as **soda/water**.

(Rumor has it that the "mixology" machine may also make an appearance.)

***Time:** Directly following church/coffee hour - ? (Perhaps an outdoor swim-in movie at dusk?)

***Place:** Twin Falls Resort of Cadillac (Bob & Troy's)

Chat & Craft Group

The Chat & Craft Group is now meeting on **Thursdays** from **9:30-11:30 am** on **Connie's** screened-in porch overlooking Berry Lake. All FCC crafters are invited to bring hand work for a time of casual conversation and crafting. Directions are available on the table at the back of the sanctuary or you may call Connie.

We are still in need of a creative, fun Fun-Day organizer to succeed **Sandy Gaunt**, whose schedule no longer permits her to play this role. If you are interested, please see **Pastor Carol**.

WHOLE EARTH

Transition Cadillac (www.transitioncadillac.org)

Shelley Youngman

***August 28 Canning (6 pm)** with **Shari Spoelman**. Do you have loads of tomatoes? Overrun with squash? Want to preserve wonderful fresh produce from the farmers' market? Learn how to can the bountiful harvest for use during the Winter. Call MSU Extension to register **779-5463**.

***August 30 Fermentation** with **Angela Norman Meadows** and **Fay Gradowski**. Learn how to make sauerkraut and pickles with Call 775-0921 to register.

***September 12 Root Cellars & Other Food Hideaways (6-8 pm)** with **Jim & Julie Peterson**. This workshop will provide basics on how to store food for Winter without canning or freezing. You will see old and new style root cellars, learn what to store where, and the best methods for doing so. Dress for a short hike. **18882 140th Ave. in LeRoy**

***September 20 Movie & Popcorn Night!** The Power Of Community: In 1990 Cuba's economy went into a tailspin. This film tells of the struggle and the creativity of the Cuban people during this difficult time. Cubans share how they transitioned from an industrial agricultural system to organic methods of farming and local, urban gardens. Discussion afterwards facilitated by **Craig Schaaf**.

***September 30 Harvest Celebration!! (4 pm)** This event will be held at **Fox Hill Event Center** and is open to all. Entree and dessert (ingredients sourced from local farmers), created by chef **Brian Williams** of the Blue Heron, will be included in the price of the ticket. Side dishes will be an OOOOBY potluck! ("Out Of Our Own Back Yard"). Bring a dish prepared primarily from local ingredients, to share with others at your table. Local musicians and fun, educational activities for all ages! Bring along your surplus produce for donation to a local food pantry.

***October 12 Good Grief Gardening Debrief** with **Craig Schaaf** from Golden Rule Farm and **Theresa Williams** from Wexford Conservation District. Share the joys and challenges of this season's gardening experiences with other gardeners.

NB: Unless otherwise noted, all events start at 7 pm and are held at the church.

PASTORAL CARE

Due to HIPAA privacy rules, hospitals do not notify pastors when parishioners are hospitalized. When

in doubt, please assume the pastor is unaware of a hospitalization and pass the word along to her. On days off (Mon, Tues), please direct emergency calls only to her cell phone (**884-9884**). Thanks!

NURTURE AND CARE TEAM

Diane can coordinate rides to church or doctor's appointments and meal delivery for those recuperating from surgery, illness, injury, grief or a family emergency.

AUGUST 2012						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 *Jazz. 5:30 pm	2 Craft Group 9:30 Office Hours 1-5 *Jazz. 5:30 pm	3 *Jazz. 8:30am	4 *Jazz. 8:30 am
5 Worship w/ Pat Porter preaching 10:30 am Study Session #4 12:00 pm	6 *Jazz. 5:30 pm	7 *Jazz. 8:30 am Spanish 4:00 pm	8 *Jazz. 5:30 pm	9 Craft Group 9:30 Office Hours 1-5 *Jazz. 5:30pm	10 *Jazz. 8:30am	11 *Jazz. 8:30am
12 Communion Sunday Worship 10:30 am	13 *Jazz. 5:30 pm	14 *Jazz. 8:30 am Spanish 4:00 pm *GALLEY 7:00 pm	15 *Jazz. 5:30 pm	16 Craft Group 9:30 *Jazz. 5:30 pm Office Hours 1-5	17 *Jazz. 8:30am	18 *Jazz. 8:30 am Board Retreat @ Twin Falls
19 Worship 10:30 am	20 *Jazz. 5:30 pm Items for Newsletter Due!	21 *Jazz. 8:30 am Spanish 4:00 pm	22 *Jazz. 5:30 pm	23 Craft Group 9:30 Office Hours 1-5 *Jazz. 5:30 pm	24 *Jazz. 8:30am ONA Dinner & Movie 6:00 pm	25 *Jazz. 8:30 am
26 Worship 10:30 am	27 *Jazz. 5:30 pm	28 *Jazz. 8:30 am Spanish 4:00 pm *Canning 6pm *GALLEY 7:00 pm	29 *Jazz. 5:30 pm	30 Craft Group 9:30 Office Hours 1-5 *Jazz. 5:30 pm *Fermentation	31 *Jazz. 8:30am	

*Non-Church activities that occur in the church.