



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC

*In the heart of Romeo
Where faith and compassion meet*



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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193rd Legacy Celebration

First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ of Romeo celebrates nearly two centuries of history, as it begins the process of dissolution and the creation of a new entity and makes major announcement impacting the Romeo Historical Society during weekend-long event

ROMEO, Michigan - In order to celebrate their 193rd anniversary, First Congregational, UCC in Romeo is having a four-day event to honor its history and prepare for a new future of mission to the community.

“Leaving this building is a bittersweet experience,” says Rev. Kim Newport, the church’s pastor and teacher. “We have loved it well and countless people have passed through it. However, we are excited to begin a new spiritual center in the community that will focus on outreach, social justice, and health and wellness. A place where all are accepted and opportunities are available for everyone.”

Open houses on August 13th from 1:00pm to 5:00pm and August 14th from 10:00am to 5:00pm, will give people the chance to take casual walks through the historic building, with antique artifacts and documents dating back to the 1800s. People can also take tours of the clock tower from 12:00pm to 3:00pm on Saturday, August 14th. Also, on Saturday evening from 7:00pm-8:00pm, a classical organist will offer a concert to the public on the church’s historic pipe organ.

On Sunday, August 15th, the church will hold a special worship service from 10:00am-11:00am followed by a celebration of the church's legacy from 11:00am-12:00pm. During the legacy service, a time capsule placed in the cornerstone of the building 145 years ago will be removed and placed on display for the public. The church will also announce their future plans for a new spiritual center in the community. Following these special services, a food truck will be available for a time of food and fellowship.

On Monday, August 16th at 7:00pm, the church leadership will make an announcement concerning the building currently occupied by the Romeo Historical Society. At this present time, the church owns the property being utilized by the Romeo Historical Society for their Bancroft-Stranahan Museum. The announcement will be made in front of the museum with the museum board members and trustees present.

“Over the course of almost two centuries, the church saw many changes,” says Rev. Kim. “We went from candlelight to electricity. Horse and buggy to cars. As society evolved, the church truly made an effort to stay ahead of the times. Community outreach and social justice have always played a major role in this church. From their earliest days of members fighting in the Civil War, to marching for immigration, LGBTQ rights, Black Lives Matter, and countless other causes.”

“This church has been a landmark in this community for almost two hundred years,” Rev. Kim continues. “(This event) is an opportunity for anyone to come and see us for who we have been, who we are now, and what we are becoming.”

She says the congregation is excited for this fresh start. Some of the features planned for the new entity include yoga, reiki, guided meditation, Native American spirituality, programs for racial justice, and LGBTQ support groups.

First Congregational Church officially trained and became certified as Open and Affirming in 2017, to ensure all are welcome. Through this Open and Affirming process, the church publicly announced their openness to including all people, believing God's love and acceptance is available to everyone.

“Leading this congregation is a privilege,” Rev. Kim says. “Our members have been and continue to be loving, dedicated, and inclusive people who truly wish to make the community a better place. We look forward to celebrating our history with the community and are excited to begin the next phase of developing a new spiritual entity that will fulfill the needs of Northern Macomb County.”

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A full agenda for the 193rd Legacy Celebration follows below.

193rd Legacy Celebration Agenda

Friday, August 13, 2021

1:00pm – 5:00pm

Historical walk through the church building featuring pictures, documents, and vintage items from 1828 through present day. The tour is at your leisure and free to the public, but donations are accepted.

Saturday, August 14, 2021

10:00am – 5:00pm

Historical walk through the church building featuring pictures, documents, and vintage items from 1828 through present day. The tour is at your leisure and free to the public, but donations are accepted.

12:00pm – 3:00pm

Clock Tower Tours

Organ Concert ~ 7:00pm – 8:00pm

Professional Organist, David Fox, will perform a combination of classical and sacred music on our historic pipe organ. Free-will offering will be taken.

Sunday, August 15, 2021

10:00am – 11:00am

Special Worship Service

11:00am – 12:00pm

*Historic Celebration and the
Opening of the Time Capsule*

12:00pm – 12:15pm

Announcement of our New Entity

12:15pm – 2:00pm

*Outdoor picnic and fellowship with food from
2 Chics Tasty Trailer*

Monday, August 16, 2021

7:00pm

*Special announcement concerning the
Historical Society Museum*

Biography of

David L. Fox

Organist

I knew that music was in my blood at a very early age.

My 'informal' training began as a toddler – I would sit on the kneeler at church, prop the hymnal up on the back of the pew and 'assist' the organist vigorously by 'playing my pew'. My formal training began at the piano in the second grade; moving to the organ in seventh grade. I served as organist for an entire service in the eighth grade and accepted my first professional church music position upon getting my driver's license at age 16. My musical training has included receiving my BMus degree from Oakland University, majoring in pipe organ performance and minoring in choral conducting and voice.

During my musical career, I have served six area congregations (Lutheran, United Church of Christ and United Methodist churches). In these roles I have had the opportunity to direct adult and youth vocal choirs, direct adult and youth handbell choirs, lead a praise band, and play many fine organs. The organ can provide thunderous sounds of praise and bring peace and tranquility to the listener. At the pipe organ, I enjoy exploring the various sonic colors available to bring the music to life.

I am a Senior Vice President for a Global Information Technology Firm headquartered in mid-town Detroit. During evenings and weekends, I serve the Utica United Methodist Church as Organist, Vocal & Handbell Choirs Director. I am married to Evie, who is a Nurse Manager for Beaumont Health Systems in Royal Oak. We make our home in Sterling Heights.

Psalm 150:6

"Let everything that has breath praise the LORD".