March 2017

Still Speaking

Newsletter of First Congregational United Church of Christ of Alpena

Board of Directors:

Dennis Artley *Secretary/Treasurer*
Blair Diamond
Kathy Dempsey
Ann Gerow, *vice chair*
Dottie Haase
Vicky Lindsay
Mike Mack
James Mc Neil, *chair*
Beth Petty

March 2017

Dates to Remember

Tuesdays of Lent : Living The Questions @ First Presbyterian

Every Wednesday Lenten Soup Supper

1
Ash Wednesday

10
Ladies Luncheon

14
Board of Directors

15
No Frills Book Club

18/19
Reality Check Weekend

20
Friendship Room

Daylight Saving Time begins on **Sunday March 12th**. "Spring Forward" one hour.

A Word From Our Minister: "Add Something During Lent"

Rev. Dr. Paul A. Lance III

March 1 is the first day of "Lent" – an annual season of fasting and penitence in preparation for Easter, beginning on Ash Wednesday and lasting 40 weekdays, observed by Roman Catholic, Anglican Episcopal, and Lutheran churches around the world since the Middle Ages. It is traditional for members of those churches to "give something up" for Lent. It was thought that by depriving oneself of a habitual pleasure, or of meat and eggs, during the 40 days of Lent ("fasting and penitence") showed self-control, discipline, and shared in the suffering of Jesus.

I would suggest, instead, that you intentionally "add something" to your life during Lent. This year, the month of March brings a few new opportunities to deepen or broaden our spiritual lives, if we choose to do so.

The Lutherans, Anglicans, and Roman Catholics (plus Congregationalists) have organized a relationship here in Alpena called "L.A.R.C.C" for 16 years. We expand our group to include the Methodists and Presbyterians to host community-wide soup suppers and joint worship services in each other's churches every Wednesday night during Lent. (See the list of locations, preachers, and themes on the back page of this Newsletter.) I highly encourage you to attend each of the evenings, if you can. You'll enjoy super soup in great variety, sing and pray with all kinds of Christians, and hear some great preaching by seven local pastors, beginning on Ash Wednesday, March 1.

Another uplifting worship experience is available to you on Sunday evenings at 5:00 p.m. in our Lower Level All-Purpose Room: "Underground Church". We sit on comfortable sofas and chairs with no papers in our hands, enjoying conversation instead of a sermon, singing along with lyrics on a big-screen TV, or accompanied by Kat Tomaszewski on the piano and Leigh Copeland on the guitar. We meet a challenging Jesus in a mellow setting. Try it for Lent.

Beginning this month, on March 19, we will add another Sunday evening worship experience in our Fellowship Hall at 6:30 pm: "Infinity Church". Led by Kimberly Nunneley, Karen Bacon, Amy Truth, and others in our community, Infinity Church will feature dance movement, centering prayer, and other kinds of participatory spiritual practices from a variety of faith traditions. This service will be held every other week, alternating with "Common House" inter-faith discussions also led by Kimberly. (See the colorful flyer on the next page about "Infinity Church" and the article about both new programs elsewhere in this Newsletter.)

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Consider adding this to your life in Lent. If you like it, it will continue all through the year for your spiritual refreshment.

Finally, during Lent this year, our church will be focusing on themes related to world hunger and other global needs using a calendar for "One Great Hour of Sharing." Every day in March raises a particular awareness and asks us to deposit a coin in a special collection box that will be given out on Sunday, March 5. (See the article and OGHS calendar enclosed with this Newsletter.) Adding this daily discipline during Lent may broaden our awareness of the world as well as raise funds for the annual OGHS offering. May this year's Lent be meaningful and memorable.

Infinity Church

Begins March 19th @ 6:30 PM in the Fellowship Hall

First Congregational UCC, 201 S. Second Ave., Alpena

"The real Truth we are after is *something that holds us*; it holds us when we give ourselves, in those moments when we really open ourselves. Fear hangs on. Fear always grabs for something. There is only one Truth and it takes hold of each person in an individual way." ~~ David Steindl-Rast

Hindu. Horseback rider. Religious None. **Chef.** **Spiritual but not religious.** Healer. Buddhist. *Artist.* **Humanist.** Christian. *Dancer.* Sikh. **Poet.** **TAOIST.** Neo-Pagan. House-Husband. **Muslim.** Working Woman. Baha'i.

We accept all your labels...

or no label at all!

Expect

Laughter, contemplation, **ART**, music, dialogue, **writing**, **drumming**, movement, *chant*, poetry, **mysticism**, *play*, and the occasional tear—

Dare to be grasped by the Truth!

Contact Kim Nunneley at iantotobali@gmail.com or (989) 590-3862

Save the Date! Wednesday, March 22

Our church is hosting the Lenten Soup Supper on **Wednesday, March 22.** This is a wonderful opportunity to share with the LARCC churches by taking a turn during this special time of the church year.

Nancy Wedge and Pat Kreft are donating the rolls but we are in need of volunteers to make crock pots of soup for this event. We will be needing 16 pots of soup as we expect to serve 125 to 130 that evening. A sign-up sheet will be posted at the podium in the church hallway. We always have a nice variety of soups so whatever is your favorite recipe, please consider making a large pot for this event. As always, the smells of soup coming from the kitchen will be welcomed. Call Patty Lance for more information 340-0258

A New Community Group Requests Prayer

A group of individuals from various church communities are asking for prayers as they begin the process of planning a nondenominational, nonpartisan event in Alpena focusing on building peace, acceptance, and community in the midst of the divisions within our families, workplaces, schools, churches, and civic and service organizations. Through the arts with music, poetry, and positive rhetoric, we want to involve the community and surrounding area in a family oriented event that lifts our spirits, shines God's Light, and gives us hope for the future...hope that does not disappoint. Your prayers would mean a lot to us....God's Peace!

For more information contact Janice Boboltz at jboboltz@gmail.com or
Leslie Kirchoff at Kirchoffgl@charter.net

Two New Worship Experiences Come to First Congregational UCC!

Two new exciting worship and adult education programs have landed on Sundays at 6:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. **Common House**, started by a small group of interested folks in November of last year, moved to the church on February 19. This program uses You Tube and rich discussion to explore both teachers and world religious traditions, with an eye on spiritual practices vs philosophical beliefs and dogma. Upcoming subjects include Lao Tzu's *Tao te Ching*, Adyashanti and non-dual consciousness, and Merton and the True Self. The program is facilitated by comparative religion scholar Kim Nunneley. The Common House will meet on March 5, 12, and 26th and every other Sunday evening thereafter.

Infinity Church, the brainchild of Karen Bacon and Amy Truth, celebrates the many paths to spiritual union with God. Celebrate, create and enjoy the company of open-hearted others. Expect a lively mix of art, movement, live music and drumming, chant, contemplative arts and more! Infinity Church begins March 19, and will feature a variety of presenters. Kim Nunneley manages the program and you can direct specific question and comments to her (989) 590-3862. Infinity Church will meet every other Sunday evening, alternating with the Common House.

"Imagine our Church like a snack bowl"

Shared by Gerrie La Cross @ the Feb. 13th Board Meeting

Forest Gump said life is like a box of candy – it takes all kinds to make a world.

I like to think of us like a bowl of snacks – In a bowl you have a variety of snacks. Let's look at them closely . Let's look first at the **lemon drops** - Lemons can be sour or maybe tart is a better word. They pucker up our mouths – but they also clean our palate so we can really taste other things.

Someone here, or in the congregation, may be like a **lemon drop** - they are a bit tart in the way they approach other people or in the way they state their opinion. But they do serve to make us stop and think. Often they help us to back up and take another look. And when we look more closely we see that under the tartness there is a strong delicious flavor. So as you look at lemon drops, think about someone you know who has this quality of tartness – what do you like about them & what is difficult for you. Are you sometimes a lemon drop?

Move now to thinking about the **orange slices**. Orange slices can remind us of the sun – of people with sunny, friendly dispositions – people who are easy to get along with. Do we like to be around them because they give us joy and energy? Who do you know fits this description? Are you an orange slice in someone's life? Take a moment to give thanks to God for the orange slices who have come your way.

What about the **nuts**? We all know people who just seem to be on a different wave length – it may be someone in our congregation. Sometimes we act like nuts ourselves. Nuts are good because they can make us laugh, they can also drive us crazy. Who are the nuts in your life? Ask God to help you be patient with the next nut you meet and to relax and just enjoy their unique point of view.

Tootsie Rolls - They represent the sweet people we meet. The genuinely nice, pleasant, caring people. There are a lot of tootsie rolls in our congregation. Tootsie Rolls help to fill us up when we are hungry for love and care. Look around the room and ask yourself – is there a tootsie roll sitting here? Am I a tootsie roll? Give a quick prayer of thanks for such people in your life.

Pretzels – they are salty. After a sweet, we all like a bit of salt. Pretzels are real and down to earth. They see life as it really is and they can help us keep our feet on the ground. Salt seasons our friendships and our work. Sometimes salt surprises us because we didn't expect it – sometimes there seems to be a little too much salt and we don't know how to respond. Some of us may be on salt free diets. Think about the people you know who are salty like the pretzels. Don't they add spice to life? Thank God for spice!

Raisins – they are chewy. If you swallow them whole you don't get the flavor. Raisins need to be tasted, savored. A raisin doesn't look like much coming out of the box – some people are like raisins. You have to get to know them – to give them a chance to come out of their boxes so you can savor their wit and their wisdom. Some of us are like raisins, the quiet ones. How will you notice the raisins in the congregation? How will you savor them? How will you thank God for their wisdom?

Now you have a bowl of snacks. This bowl is much like the time we have together. There are some you know well – some people it is easy to identify as tootsie rolls, or nuts or lemon drops and others we don't know at all. We can have an adventure getting to know them. As we worship, fellowship, pray and play together. Enjoy the sweet, be refreshed by the tart and salty, laugh or cry with the nuts and savor the raisins among us. Above all give thanks to God for all of them. Amen

March Birthday and Anniversary Wishes

3 Grady Barden
8 Beth Petty
12 Eugene Bacon
17 Patrick Labadie
20 Carol Knowlton
23 Barbara Diamond
26 Belinda Hanna
27 Cindy Straley
27 Spencer Kibbe
28 Gail Parr

Jim & Patty McNeil
March 9

Welcome to Shelby Sexton, our new nursery attendant. She is doing a great job taking care of our littlest ones on Sunday.

Ladies Luncheon

Jan Snell and Dolly Zeller

The Ladies Luncheon group met at the Ramada Inn on Friday, February 10th. After some discussion by the group, it was decided that our next lunch will be on **Friday, March 10th, at 11:30 at the Hunan Chinese Restaurant.** Come join in the fun. There is a sign-up sheet on the podium… hope to see you there.

Hosted by Jan Snell and Dolly Zeller

Board of Directors February 2017 Meeting Highlights

Gerrie La Cross, Secretary

- Election of officers — Chair: James McNeil, Vice Chair: Ann Gerow, and Secretary/Treasurer: Dennis Artley.
- Board was saddened by the loss of two long time members, Ann Saretsky and Bernice Hawthorne.
- Financial records are in good order.
- New boiler did not pass state inspection. Weinkauf Plumbing will be in to make the necessary repairs prior to March 10.
- Board reviewed Board Committee Appointments.
- Board approved the purchase of 60” TV and stand for use in Fellowship Hall.
- Board concurs with Mission Committee for the support for Temple Beth El.
- ACE VBS held a meeting, Beth Petty attended. Making plans for this year’s week-long camp.
- Nursery is going well with new attendant, Shelby Sexton.
- Welcomed new Board member, Blair Diamond. All are glad to have him on the board.
- Condolences to Vicky Lindsay for the loss of her father.
- Two of the board members attended the First Baptist Church to hear Paul Moceri preach.

First Congregational United Church of Christ
201 South Second Avenue
Alpena, MI 49707

Phone: 989-356-1795 Fax 989-356-8825
Web Site: http://uccalpena.org
Email: officeuccalp@frontier.com
Office Hours: 9:00 am — 1:00 pm Monday — Thursday

Sunday Worship Service 10:00 a.m.
Underground Church 5:00 p.m.

Minister: Rev. Dr. Paul A. Lance III
Pastor Emeritus: Rev. Dr. H. Robert Case
Choir Director & Music: Kat Tomaszewski
Treasurer: Denise Fusina
Secretary: Gerrie La Cross
Custodian: Mike LaMarre

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2017 Ecumenical Lenten Series

Moving Toward the Cross

The offering from the series will be split between Call Us for Help, Friendship Room at St. Bernard's and Sunday Supper at Trinity Episcopal

Date	Host Church	Theme	Preacher
March 1 Ash Wed.	Grace Lutheran	Take Up the Cross	Rev. Sue Pratt
March 8	First United Methodist	Moving in Faith	Pastor Tom Orth
March 15	St. Paul Lutheran	Moving in Strength	Sr. Mary Hughes
March 22	First Congregational UCC	Moving in Love	Rev. Bill McClure
March 29	St. Bernard Catholic	Moving in Peace	Rev. Shirley Ross Jones
April 5	First Presbyterian	Moving in Suffering	Rev. Paul Lance
Maundy Thursday	Trinity Episcopal	Moving Through Death	Rev. Bob Case

Soup supper begins at 6:00 p.m. with a worship service to follow at 7:00 p.m. So mark your calendars for the upcoming dates as we travel together through Lent.