

June
2025

Still Speaking

Newsletter of First Congregational United Church of Christ of Alpena



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Nancy Wedge

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From the Pastor's Desk

Pastor Dick Hotchkin

On the wall of one of the catacombs, the burial tunnels under the city of Rome, is the faint inscription of a man with a cross. Underneath the cross are these words, "Alexos worships the Christ." Gone today are the glory that was Greece and the splendor that was Rome. Forever stilled are the marching feet of Caesar's columns. But the Christ whom Alexos worshiped is enthroned in the hearts of millions of people, and his cross crowns thousands of stately cathedrals and village chapels. This Jesus is the one unique figure in all of history. He is God the Son, come to earth to save us human beings.

It is because of this that Jesus could say in truth, "I am the way." It is in Jesus that life for us has meaning here in time, and a glory hereafter in eternity. Neither theologies, philosophies, nor ideologies have the power to give us that. Ideas do have persuasive powers. Ideologies, however, do not control us as profoundly as do people. A man does not become a good husband and father by believing in monogamy and by understanding the sociological importance of the family. People make him a good husband and father – a wife and children whom he loves, and who love him and count on him.

As Christians, we may know the Church's doctrines and be persuaded that no teaching about life and the universe can compare with Christianity. Deep down, however, we know that behind whatever we believe about the faith, there is the spiritually powerful, magnetic, commanding, and comforting person of its Lord, Jesus the Christ. We are drawn to Jesus, as to no ideology or theology. If someone asks us, "What is the way of the Christian?" we really have but one answer, "The way is Christ himself." You and I are not saved by embracing an idea; we are saved by Jesus.

Attached to Jesus, we believers become attached to his Church and to the people Jesus died to redeem – all people. It is Jesus himself, God come into view, with his tenderness and strength, with the love that drove him to the cross for you and me – it is Jesus that is the "way," the fountainhead of all other worthy loves.

Membership Declaration Cards

Membership Declaration Cards were distributed at the recent Annual Meeting held on January 26th.

"To maintain membership in good and regular standing, a member will annually sign a card that reads: 'I declare that I am a member of First Congregational United Church of Christ of Alpena, Michigan.' A former member may re-establish good and regular standing by signing such a card at any time."

Membership cards will be available on the table at the back of the sanctuary, by calling the church and requesting one, or by stopping in the office during regular business hours.

Days to Celebrate

June Birthdays

Ron Borke ~ 1st
 Pat Garant ~ 4th
 Judy Cook ~ 5th
 Karen Bacon ~ 7th
 Curtis Davis ~ 8th
 James McNeil ~ 11th

Terry Bell ~ 15th
 Carl Silver ~ 16th
 Ann Diamond ~ 17th
 Jeff Gerow ~ 21st
 Lynn Stewart ~ 19th
 Judy Case ~ 24th

June Anniversaries

Gary & Sandy Jarmuszewski ~ 1st
 Dick & Toni Hotchkin ~ 6th
 Herb & Carol Knowlton ~ 12th
 Roger & Jan Snell ~ 18th
 Rev. Robert & Judy Case ~ 21st
 Lori Mayer & Craig Waak ~ 22nd
 Pat & Joe Garant ~ 26th



Days to Remember

Sunday	1st	Worship Service	10:00 a.m.
Sunday	8th	Worship Service	10:00 a.m.
Monday	9th	Search Committee Meeting	4:00 p.m.
		Board Meeting	5:30 p.m.
Friday	13th	Great World Religions Class	10:30 a.m.
		Ladies Luncheon (19th Hole)	11:30 a.m.
Sunday	15th	Worship Service	10:00 a.m.
Monday	16th	Worship Committee Mtg.	5:30 p.m.
Friday	20th	Great World Religions Class	10:30 a.m.
Sunday	22nd	Worship Service	10:00 a.m.
Friday	27th	Great World Religions Class	10:30 a.m.
Sunday	29th	Worship Service	10:00 a.m.



A CELEBRATION of FAITH FAMILY FREEDOM

July 6, 2025
 10:00 a.m.

Prayer Service on the Lawn
 Music, Scripture and Meditation

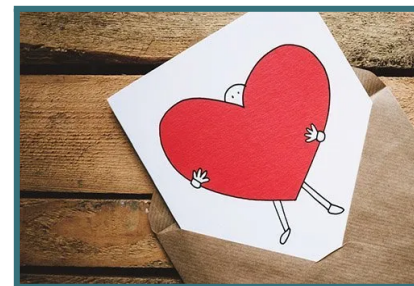
Followed by a Picnic
 Hot Dogs and Beverage Furnished
 Sign Up to Bring a Salad or Dessert

Bring your lawn chair
 (if you have an extra, bring it for a guest)


 FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
 UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
MEMBERSHIP CELEBRATION
SUNDAY



Bring Your Family, Friends, and Neighbors as
 We Honor the Past and Embrace the Future.
AUGUST | 24 | 10 AM
Picnic to follow
(Bring a lawn chair)
 201 SOUTH SECOND AVENUE
 ALPENA, MI



*Thank you to Lori Mayer
for stocking us up with
birthday greeting cards!*



Feed-A-Family

Bill Haase

Food pantry needs:

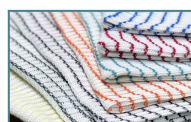
- TUNA AND HAMBURGER HELPERS
- BAGGED OR BOXED POTATOES
(MASHED, AU GRATIN, SCALLOPED, CHEESEY)
- RICE OR NOODLE SIDES (BAG/POUCH)



Four bags were donated during the month of May! Feel free to use the bags on the table in the middle hallway for your shopping needs.

Dish Cloths & Brooms

Nancy Wedge



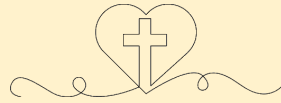
DISHCLOTHS

A friendly reminder that dishcloths are available for \$2.50 each. Colors available are red, blue, yellow and green. Contact Nancy Wedge if you would like to make a purchase. (wedge.nancy@gmail.com or 989.356.4402)

BROOMS

Brooms previously sold during the SERRV Bazaar are available for purchase. They are lightweight and good for 97 miles of sweeping. Cost is \$20 each. Contact Nancy if you wish to purchase one, two or more. (wedge.nancy@gmail.com or 989.356.4402)





June Laity Schedule

	Greeters	Ushers	Lay Readers	Fellowship	Altar Guild	Communion	Counter(s)
1st	Bev Olsen Craig Waak	Gary & Sandy Jarmuzewski	OPEN	Jay & Marilyn Kettler	Jackie Bell (All Month)	Nancy Wedge	
8th	Kathy Moore Joe Garant	Penny Anderson OPEN	OPEN	Kettlers Bev Olsen			Ashley Wedge
15th	Trish McLaren Ron Borke	Max Lindsay Vicky Lindsay	OPEN	Jim & Cindy Straley			
22nd	Bobbi Zubi Jim Straley	Ashley Wedge Nancy Wedge	Lori Mayer	OPEN			
29th	Tammy Veasy Dan Kibbe	Ashley Wedge Nancy Wedge	Marilyn Kettler	Ron & Lynn Borke			Dennis/Janet Artley

Note: If you see openings where you can help, please feel free to step in.



Thank You to all who have signed up to host Fellowship during the month of June. Openings for later June, July and August are still available. Can't commit to the whole month? No problem — just sign up on the roster in the middle hallway for the weeks you're available!

*We do have a number of **OPEN** Usher and Lay Reader spots. If you can help, please call or email the office (officeuccalp@gmail.com) to add your name to the schedule.*

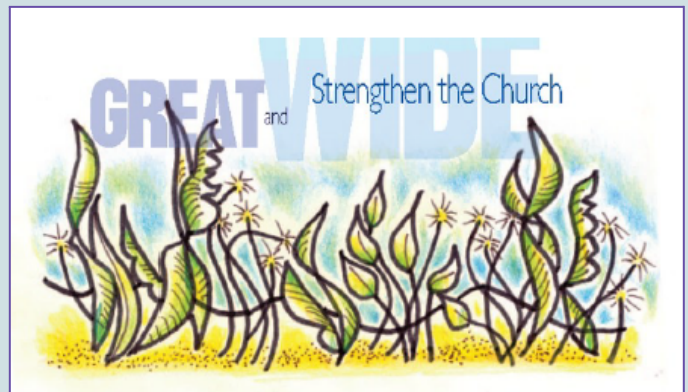
Strengthen the Church ~ June 8, 2025 (Pentecost Sunday)

Mission Committee

The Holy Spirit gathers us together. From across the country and the spectrums of human experience, we become united in Christ. And, united, the Spirit commissions us to work for a more just world for all.

The Strengthen the Church Offering supports congregations and leaders across the United Church of Christ as they respond to the Spirit's call to be united in Christ for a more just world for all. The challenges our congregations face vary:

- Some seek ways to strengthen youth ministry.
- Some hope to start new congregations.
- Some look for innovative ways to renew existing congregations.
- Some need help developing leaders.



The giving in your congregation can ensure congregations get the help they need from their conference and the national ministries of the UCC. Together we can answer the Spirit's call to be united in Christ for a just world for all.

Board Notes from May

- ❖ The Search Committee's work continues with the review of a proposed informational letter which will be sent to the Congregation in the week following the Board meeting.
- ❖ After reviewing several design options, the design of the new name tags was approved by the Board.
- ❖ The Board discussed ways to further promote Change for Good.
- ❖ The roof over the elevator is being assessed to determine if an architectural change to the roofline will help with ongoing leaking.
- ❖ The administration of the church webpage and creation of a new webpage to happen over the summer months was discussed. The Board moved the Web Administrator responsibilities to the church office as an office function.
- ❖ Pastor Hotchkin noted church staff has indicated more people are watching Sunday Worship services on the internet. It's nice to see members who have returned from warmer winter climates, in addition to new visitors.

Treasurer's Report

Denise Fusina

Report as of April 30, 2025

<u>Giving:</u>	<u>Pledge</u>	<u>vs</u>	<u>Received</u>
April	\$10,417		\$ 7,775
YTD	41,667		64,974

Good News!

You continue to fulfill your pledges, and we're grateful for your commitment. While monthly giving is currently below the projected monthly budget, it's important to note that – thanks to several pledges paid in full – total donations for the year are actually above budget and more generous than last year. **Thank you all for doing your part!**

Year to date, we are currently operating at a \$6,621 loss, meaning our expenses have exceeded our income. However, don't lose heart—we anticipate moving much closer to our balanced budget target with the upcoming allocation from the Comstock Fund. Thanks to your continued generosity and the thoughtful decision to keep the Comstock Funds invested (earning interest) until our checking account reached a lower balance, we're positioned to recover and return to a positive financial footing.

One of my goals for this year is to transition to a narrative budget—a format that integrates dollars, people, and mission into a story. Rather than focusing solely on line items, a narrative budget reveals how our financial choices bring our shared values and ministries to life. The traditional budget will remain in the background to support the details, but the real focus will be on OUR story.

So, what is our story?

- Who are we as a community of faith?
- Where are we headed?
- What do we have to share with others?
- What are the pillars of our church?

Are you passionate about:

- Serving others?
- Growing and celebrating our faith?
- Connecting and sharing with our community?

Answering these questions grounds us in our purpose and **inspires how we connect our financial resources with the life of our church**. It's not just about numbers—it's about impact, mission, and meaning. Let's use our gifts faithfully and boldly to be a light in our community.

"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden." – Matthew 5:14



VANCO
FAITH

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

**Sunday Worship ~ 10:00 AM
In Person and Online**

**Transition Minister: Reverend Dr. Richard E. Hotchkin
Pastor Emeritus: Reverend Dr. H. Robert Case
Organist/Choir Director: Kat Tomaszewski
Treasurer: Denise Fusina
Office Administrator: Leslie Reynolds
Custodian: Mike LaMarre**

Phone: (989) 356-1795
Website: <http://uccalpena.org>
Email: officeuccalp@gmail.com
Office Hours: 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM
Monday - Thursday

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Today love others

*for who they are. See the beauty in the
journey. Hold your head high and be brave.
Extend a hand, give back and believe in the
power of simply being kind.*

— unknown

