

**August
2019**

Still Speaking

Newsletter of First Congregational United Church of Christ of Alpena

A Word from our Minister: "Toxic Politics"

Rev. Dr. Paul A Lance III

Board of Directors:

- **Dennis Artley**, *treasurer/ Secretary*
- **Blair Diamond**
- **Kathy Dempsey**
- **Boris Gerber**
- **Ann Gerow**, *Vice chair*
- **Dottie Haase**
- **Vicky Lindsay**
- **Jim Mc Neil**, *chair*
- **Beth Petty**

Dates to Remember

5

Friendship Room

9

Ladies Lunch
@ Hunan's Chinese

12

Board of Directors

14

"No Frills" Book Club

19-22

"Silly Week" with
Jeffrey Mindock

Every Sunday

"Thank God it's
Sunday" @ 5:00 p.m.
in Fellowship Hall

**FIRST
CONGREGATIONAL**



It will be another year and a half before we have an opportunity to vote whether or not our state & federal office holders keep their elected jobs or are sent home. So we are about as far from an election as possible in the current cycle. And yet it seems as if the campaigning, fund-raising, and mud-slinging has never let up!

I keep waiting for the political posturing and campaigning from the last election cycle to end and the "governing" to begin. I'm weary of the relentlessly polarized partisanship on display, the rude rhetoric, and the shameless inability of our elected leaders to reach any kind of public consensus on almost every issue. Surely our best and brightest can do better than this!

The Realm that God desires, and which Jesus embodied in his life and teachings, seems very far away these days. We see hate and division in the news... ceaselessly on the internet, on our phones, on TV, and in the newspaper. It seems that people are arguing everywhere! Always arguing -- which serves to mobilize their "base" by disrespecting their opponents -- often in vile, uninformed, or misleading manner.

All this partisan polarization takes its toll. In my own heart, I get frustrated, feel resentments rise, am tempted to withhold compassion, nurse my anxieties, and begin to hold grudges. In this toxic political environment, my heart becomes a less hospitable place to extend "love of neighbor" when I see the rancor of their deeply polarized opinions.

Perhaps the "Longest Table" experience on Sunday afternoon, Aug. 25, will move the public conversation toward more productive ends. (See the article on page 4 of this Newsletter.)

As Rodney King said back in 1992 (when he was the public flash-point of the Los Angeles uprising), "Can't we all just get along? Can't we get along?" That's my plea, too.

A year from now, when the field of candidates and issues get winnowed down to two or three "front runners", there will still be plenty of time to make an informed decision before we vote. In the meanwhile, can we give it a rest? Can we get something done for "the Common Good" and the betterment of life? Is that too much to ask of our elected political leaders?

Yes, the Realm of God seems far away in these divisive days. But Jesus said that God's Realm -- the only true and enduring reality -- is also already "among us". It's "within" us, he said, and "with us" always. For me, that's the antidote to today's "toxic" politics. That's the ultimate Truth which re-sets the compass of my heart and lets me get out of bed with renewed hope every morning.

May God's loving Spirit become ours in the midst of our frustrations and despair. May it start in our hearts, empowering us to see how Jesus Christ's way of life is, in fact, already showing up in our daily lives. And then may we be passionate advocates of that reality for the good of all. Amen.

Ladies Lunch

Peggy DiNegro

The Ladies of First Congregational United Church of Christ met at the Chee Peng Chinese & Thai Restaurant on July 12th for an afternoon of fellowship. Please join us on Friday, August 9th at Hunan's. We would love to see you there. All women are welcome and feel free to bring along a friend. We start at 11:30 a.m.



Alpena County Fair

The Alpena County Fair will take place Sunday, August 11 to Saturday, August 17.

The Borke Family, who serve on the Fair Board, ask for your prayers for a successful year. Please keep them in prayer and come join in the festivities at the Alpena County Fair Grounds.



Celebrating Marriage Anniversaries this month



August 2:	Kristin and Nathan Barden	16 Years
August 14:	Ron & Lynn Borke	26 Years
August 14	Dave & Lori Zeller	5 Years
August 15	Ben & Chelsey Wedge	4 years
August 16:	Gordon & Vernie Nethercut	66 Years
August 16:	Mike & Cheryl Mack	23 Years
August 19:	Bill & Dottie Haase	59 Years
August 27:	Bob & Diana Kelly	59 Years
August 30:	Dan Kibbe & Lois Gibbs-Kibbe	33 Years



Celebrating the Birthdays of August

<p>August 1 Mary Davison</p> <p>August 1 James Stewart</p> <p>August 2 Keith Titus</p> <p>August 4 Carmen Grubaugh</p> <p>August 6 Ashley Wedge</p> <p>August 12 David Zeller</p>	<p>August 14 Dixie Julian</p> <p>August 19 Priscilla Homola</p> <p>August 23 Heather Bodem</p>
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Board of Directors July 2019 Meeting Highlights

Gerrie La Cross, Secretary

Meeting was called to order by Chair, Jim McNeil, and opened with prayer led by Rev. Paul Lance.

Rev Lance has a video of the “Salt & Light” singers that he will be sharing with their parents and the church community.

Positive things are happening with the participants of Drug Court, through our Serenity Bible class and Mission Fund assistance. Received a note about someone helping another person in crisis.

Financial reports are in good shape. The church received \$25,000 from our Endowment Fund at the Community Foundation.

Mission Committee reports they continue to help people from drug court. Received a request from United Way to help with the back to school supplies for kids. (Personal hygiene items) We will place an announcement in the church bulletin that week.

Property Committee reports that mulch and flower-planting in the Memorial Garden has been completed, as well as work around the perimeter of the church.

Personnel Committee reports that two applicants have applied for the Secretary position. An ad will be placed in The Alpena News this month. Deadline to apply is Wednesday, Aug. 7.

Pastor’s report: Lots of activities going on. ACE VBS, LARCC meeting, Ladies Luncheon, “Lights for Liberty” march, and our Improv group @ Culligan Plaza, will all happen within three days. Followed by the first “Thank God, It’s Sunday” 5:00 pm worship on July 21. In August, Rev. Lance has a UNA meeting in Gaylord, and a “Silly Week” with kids led by Jeffrey Mindock. Rev. Lance will be on vacation from August 23 to September 4. Rev. Case will be the guest preacher on Aug. 25 & Sept. 1

Saturday, September 21, the UNA Fall Meeting will be held here with John Murphy providing lunch for 50 people. Rev. Barbara Brown Zikmund will be our keynote speaker. Church members are encouraged to attend the program about our UCC heritage and current challenges to “be the church.”

October 13, we will have a guest preacher since Rev. Lance will be in Kalamazoo for the UCC Michigan Conference Annual Meeting. Gene Bacon & Edith Gerber are our other two delegates.

Rev. Lance, Jim McNeil, Dottie Haase, and Ted Sherwood attended a workshop led by Trooper Ashley Simpson on an “active shooter in the worship space”.

Rev. Lance, Jim & Patty McNeil, and Max Lindsay attended an AED training session here at the church provided by the local fire department.

Feed a Family

Bill Haase, Coordinator

Feed a Family: Items needed are apple, orange, cranberry or fruit juice; Potatoes: mashed or Au Gratin (box or bag); Spaghetti Sauce (canned preferred); Hamburger Helper; & pasta/rice-a-roni (box or bag)

Anything you can provide will be muchly appreciated.



ONE DAY

ONE TABLE

ONE HUNDRED CONVERSATIONS



Sunday, August 25

NOAA Pedestrian Bridge, Alpena

3:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Free Meal

RSVP TODAY at (989) 354-2221



The United Way of Northeast Michigan, Downtown Development Association and Who Is My Neighbor are pleased to present “The Longest Table!-Alpena.” The free, public event welcomes residents to sit down and “break bread” with people they might not know, to foster conversations, strengthen and build connections, and to share ideas about Alpena County.

Open to adults and high school students who are willing to mix and mingle informally with people they meet that day.

Sunday, August 25, Pedestrian Bridge behind NOAA (Downtown Alpena Fletcher Street) 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

To help us prepare for you, email us at uwnemi@unitedwaynemi.org, or call (989) 354-2221.

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Classes on *Mythology* led by Rev. Ginny Titus will begin on Thursdays in September

Rev. Ginny Titus will be teaching a six-week class on “Mythology” beginning Thursday, September 5. This will be a series of classes held on September, 5, 12, 19, 26 and October 3 & 10. Class will be from 10:30 a.m. to noon in Fellowship Hall using the big-screen TV. Come join in learning of the Power of Myth with Bill Moyers and Joseph Campbell (a PBS special 1988). Open to the public.

Still Seeking a Church Secretary

Please go to the website uccalpena.org. Click on the staff page and download the application and job description. Deadline to apply is Wednesday, August 7. Please share this with potential applicants that you may know. Gerrie LaCross will be retiring at the end of September (and be taking a couple weeks vacation prior to that!), so we need to find the right person promptly. The job is 16-hours a week, Monday through Thursday, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Starting salary is \$10 an hour. Pass the word!



“Thank God It’s Sunday”

Our new 5:00 p.m. Sunday worship service uses the **big-screen TV for songs & video clips** as we did in “Underground Church”. This time, however, instead of being held in the Lower Level All-Purpose Room, we will: **be upstairs** in Fellowship Hall (with more light and with elevator access), seated around 6 round **tables** with 5 chairs at each one (30 people) instead of sitting on couches; we will start with a modified **“communion”** – soda pop, sparkling water, little wine bottles -- with crackers & cheese (and other *hors de’vours* appetizers), and folks will have **conversation** around their table instead of making remarks to the group.

On July 28, we will have a guest speaker: Rosie Gibson from Lewiston UCC. Services will continue on Aug. 4, 11, & 18 (skip two weeks due to my vacation); resume Sept. 15, 22, & 29 (skip Oct 6 due to “The Marvelous Wonderettes”); Oct. 13 & 20 (skip Oct. 27 due to the room being used for the “SERRV Bazaar”); resume Nov 3 (skip Nov. 10 due to Harvest Potluck) and end on Sunday, Nov. 17. -- This is a total of 12 worship services.

Please come, and also tell your friends. It is fun and informal... with food at the tables!

*First Congregational United Church of Christ
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Phone: 989-356-1795 Fax: 989-356-8825
Web Site: <http://uccalpena.org>
E-mail: officeuccalp@gmail.com
Office Hours 9:00 am -1:00 pm Monday - Thursday

Sunday Worship: 10:00 a.m.

Fellowship : 11:00 a.m.

Minister: Rev. Dr. Paul A. Lance III

Pastor Emeritus: Rev. Dr. H. Robert Case

Choir Director & Music: Kat Tomaszewski

Sunday School & Kids Club Leader: Jeffrey Mindock

Treasurer: Denise Fusina

Secretary: Gerrie La Cross

Custodian: Mike LaMarre

Still Speaking

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"Silly Week" with Jeffrey Mindock

When: Mon. Aug 19th - Thurs. Aug 22nd (10:00 AM - NOON)

Who: Children in First through 5th Grade (Teenagers may help)

What: A fun time with friends! *Singing and Dancing!*
*Stories... Snacks... Crafts... Games... and **FUN** !!*

Cost: **Free... and open to the public. Tell your neighbor kids!**

Contact: Jeffrey Mindock (Thunder Bay Theatre) or Rev. Paul Lance 356-1795

Please **register** in advance! www.uccalpena.org