

July
2019

Still Speaking

Newsletter of First Congregational United Church of Christ of Alpena

Board of Directors:

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

A Word from our Minister: Clergy salaries and realities

— Rev. Dr. Paul A. Lance, Minister

Just this week, I received notice from a fine professional here in Alpena who resigned their position as an Executive Director of a non-profit organization. In part, this person wrote: “My shoestring salary just got a bit tighter. I simply cannot afford to pay my bills and save with my annual wages. ... I really wish that I could stay, but Michigan’s car insurance (double Ohio’s rate), lack of affordable rental housing, expensive health insurance, and prolonged heating due to the long winters — and now back taxes — has become a tremendous strain to my budget and emotional well-being.”

While this person’s experience was not in a church, the financial realities that are in this letter of resignation is heard in congregations all across Northern Michigan.

I feel especially blessed that First Congregational UCC here in Alpena has been diligent in keeping my “pay package” in line with Conference guidelines for a full-time Minister with more than 35 years experience (and a Doctor of Ministry degree, in addition to the Master of Divinity I earned in 1983). Thank you!

Back in May, our neighboring UCC congregation in Gaylord lost their excellent Minister, Rev. Toby Jones, also due to financial hardship. You may recall that Toby Jones, Rokko, and Joanna have twice held concerts in our sanctuary, “It was a tough decision to leave,” he wrote to me last month, “but the economics of things at Gaylord was not sustainable.” His was a part-time position, as are many clergy.

The June 19 issue of *The Christian Century* magazine had a couple of articles about “what pastors get paid”. They begin with a comparison: “In 2017, the average elementary and middle school teacher in the United States made \$60,900 according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. For many clergypersons, that figure looks pretty good since the average clergy salary is \$50,800.” They later say: “In 2017, the average income of all wage-earning adults in the United States was \$50,620 — almost identical to the average income of clergy.” So, the basic numbers (the salary level) seem fair to me.

However, they also point out that the majority of ministers have masters level or higher education requirements, compared to only 14% of the general public. And “in 2018, new M.Div. graduates with student loan debt owed an average cumulative amount of \$54,600. ... In order to justify such a debt, a borrower would need a starting salary of more than \$65,000 to meet monthly pay-off guidelines.” I’m just sayin’...

July 2019

Dates to Remember

4

Independence Day
Office Closed

8

Friendship Room and
Board of Directors

8-12

ACE-VBS @ First
United Methodist

12

Ladies Lunch @
Hunan Chinese
Restaurant

17

“No Frills” Book Club

21

Thank God Its Sunday
begins

Every Monday

10:00 am Bible study

Every Wednesday

1:15 Serenity Bible
Study

Every Thursday 1:00

Theology Class in
Fellowship Hall

Alpena Community Ecumenical Vacation Bible School (ACE VBS)

First United Methodist
First Congregational UCC
First Presbyterian
Grace Lutheran
St. Paul Lutheran
Trinity Episcopal

are hosting...

“Peace Works: Empowering the next Generation of Peace Makers”

VBS DAY CAMP

Monday—Friday, July 8-12th. Each day from 9 AM to 2 PM

at: **First United Methodist Church**

167 S. Ripley Blvd, Alpena (989) 354-2490

*This is a **free** event for children Ages 5-12. Lunch and snacks will be provided.*

Activities include Bible Adventures, Arts & Crafts, Nature Activities, & Games!

Registrations can be mailed/dropped off at **First United Methodist Church**

Go to www.alpenafumc.org to print registration,

or pick one up from the display in our hallway..

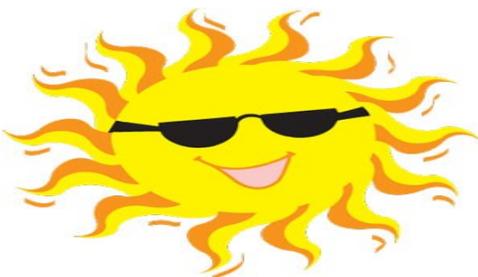
NOTE: Our day to provide snacks and Lunch is

Tuesday, July 9.

Please tell Beth Petty (989-916-6931)

if you are available

to cook or serve that day.



Feed a Family

Bill Haase

The bags of groceries were given to the Salvation Army Food Pantry. Lets keep in mind that during the summer months, with school not in session, local children may not have food at home. Please be generous with your donations to keep their pantry stocked with healthy choices for families in need.



Ladies Luncheon

The Ladies Luncheon in June was held at Hunan Chinese Restaurant on Friday, June 7th, at 11:30 a.m. It was a fun gathering.

The next two gatherings of the Ladies Luncheon will also be hosted by Peggy DiNegro... on Fridays, July 12th and August 9th, at the Hunan Chinese Restaurant at 11:30 a.m.

Please join her if you are able. She can be reached @ 989-739-5256.

On September 13th, lunch will be hosted by Patty McNeil; the place will be announced in the August Newsletter. Come join the fun.



Let's Celebrate July Birthdays for:

July 9 Allison Modzrynski	July 17 Mary Boes
July 11 Kathy Dempsey	July 20 Boris Gerber
July 12 Charlotte Wilson	July 25 Esther Briggs
July 13 John Caplis	July 26 Edith Gerber
July 16 Wendy Lewis	July 27 Dennis Bodem



Wedding Anniversaries in July

July 2: Dennis and Janet Artley	59 Years
July 3: Jeff and Ann Gerow	36 Years
July 14: Paul and Patty Lance	41 Years
July 15: John Briggs and Esther Donald-Briggs	19 Years
July 19: John and Laura Caplis	16 Years



SERRV 2019

This year's SERRV bazaar is on the calendar for October 25 and 26.

Many of you have already helped with this special sale of handcrafts from around the world and fair trade food items during the last 45 years(!). A "**Foods from around the world**" church fundraiser is planned in conjunction with the sale this year, but if the SERRV sale is going to happen, we need a little extra help ahead of time.

Areas needing help are publicity in the media and with local churches, choosing and ordering the sale items, and recruiting people to work.

Most of this work takes place in August and September, and we need to identify the people who can help with these tasks by mid-July. Hopefully we can meet one time in July and make our plans.

Whether you are an experienced SERRV veteran or someone brand new, we would welcome your help.

See or call **Edith Gerber** (340-0338) or **Marcia Aten** (370-1256) for more information...



and much gratitude.

“The Young Americans” Dinner Theatre Bus Trip

Saturday, August 3, 2019

Since 1978, The Young Americans Dinner Theatre has been entertaining and enchanting audiences of all ages, making it one of Boyne Highlands' most popular traditions, and a Michigan dinner theatre destination.

The [Young Americans](#) ensemble is made up of young, up-and-coming performers, handpicked from across the nation for much-anticipated performances at Boyne Highlands each June, July and August. To enhance the experience, the Broadway-style performances are paired with sophisticated cuisine, resulting in an unforgettable evening of delicious fun.

While you enjoy dinner, The Young Americans sing songs from the classics you've always loved to today's favorite pop hits. Watch as charismatic young singers, dancers, and actors dazzle on stage while you savor the satisfaction of the evening and create the kind of memories that set Boyne Highlands apart.

Date for this trip is **Saturday, August 3**. We will leave the church approximately **3:30 p.m.** and arrive back home around midnight. **Cost is \$100 per adult and \$75 for children 12 and under**. The cost includes hors 'devours, full course meal, gratuity, and the comfort of a motor coach bus ride. This is open to First Congregational Church family & friends. Any questions call **Nancy Wedge** (356-4402) after 7 p.m.

There is a sign-up sheet on the Care Letter podium in the church hallway.

DEADLINE to sign up is July 10. Payment is due July 12 (or before).

UCC Fall Association Meeting coming to Alpena: Saturday, September 21

Head's UP! There will be a lot of UCC folks from the 13 United Northern Association churches coming to Alpena on Friday, Sept. 20, to attend our "Fall Association Meeting" the next day in our church.

Our keynote presenter will be **Barbara Brown Zikmund (BBZ)**, an American historian of religion. She served as the editor for a history of the United Church of Christ in seven volumes, titled *The Living Theological Heritage of the United Church of Christ*, which was published from 1995 until 2005. Our church has a set in our upstairs Conference Room library. She was ordained a minister in the United Church of Christ in 1964. In 1969, BBZ received her PhD from Duke University. **Rev. Lance met BBZ in 1981**, when she was academic dean at the Pacific School of Religion, and she taught his required "UCC Polity" Class. BBZ then went on to become the President of Hartford Seminary until year 2000. For folks who have come to the UCC from other denominations, BBZ will help us see how the UCC may be quite different, unique aspects of our theology and practice, anecdotes from our long legacy in America (since 1620), as well as current changes in UCC polity, and the challenge to "Be the Church".

We're asking members to consider opening a guest-room in their home to host overnight lodgers coming to this event. If you have a room available, call Gerrie or Rev. Lance (356-1795). Thanks!

Board of Directors June 2018 Meeting Highlights

Gerrie La Cross, Secretary

The church received many "thank you" cards this month. Also cards from fellow UCC churches who have held us up in prayer. A letter from a visitor with her thoughts and feelings about our church building and how can we be more welcoming and inviting of people who use it. Good insights.

Memorial Garden and grounds need some attention, Board will ask building committee members to contact one of several lawn service people for pricing on this project. Flower beds also need weeding.

Finances were approved as presented. Board will request \$25,000 from the Endowment Fund for general fund expenses through the summer.

AED training to be held on Friday, June 14, and three or four of our members will attend a security workshop at Holiday Inn Express on Friday, June 21.

A new Sunday night service, from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall, will begin on July 21 titled "**Thank God It's Sunday**". Small group discussions around a general theme, with music and scripture, wine and other beverages with crackers and cheese appetizers at the round tables. Fun!

Mission Committee has responded to several requests for "Human Needs" Funds.

Property Committee reports the elevator has passed inspection.

Worship Committee recommended that Rev. Lance be granted two additional weeks of vacation in 2019, with pay. Board discussed it and approved. The Board does not recommend buying new name tags in magnetic holders at this time.

Many activities are scheduled for June, July, and August, including a children's singing group (June 30), the community ecumenical VBS (July 8-12), a "Silly Week" with Jeffrey Mindock (Aug. 19-22), and more. Watch the Sunday bulletin and weekly calendar for more information.

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@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

Kids Club Leader: Jeffrey Mindock

Treasurer: Denise Fusina

Secretary: Gerrie La Cross

Custodian: Mike LaMarre

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**Peace Works: “Empowering the
next Generation of Peace Makers”**

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(989) 354-2490

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print registration, or pick one up
from the display in our hallway.

Our Office will be closed on
Thursday, July 4.

Celebrating our Nations
Independence Day.

**HOME
OF THE
FREE
BECAUSE
OF THE
BRAVE**