

May  
2022

# Still Speaking

Newsletter of First Congregational United Church of Christ of Alpena

## Board of Directors

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- Dennis Artley,  
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## Dates to Remember

Sunday, May 1  
Worship Service

Sunday, May 8  
Worship Service  
and  
Happy Mothers Day!

Monday, May 9  
Board of Directors  
Meeting

Sunday, May 15  
Worship Service

Sunday, May 22  
Worship Service

Sunday, May 29  
Worship Service

Monday, May 30  
Office Closed  
Happy Memorial  
Day!



## Christ the Lord Is Risen Today!

Reverend Dr. H. Robert Case

Christ the Lord is Risen today! I know I have shared with many of you what one of my professors in seminary would say: “*So what? What difference does it make in the way we live?*” This is a question I still ask myself often and especially during the week following Easter. Christ the Lord is Risen Today!! I believe one place we can start is by thinking about the message in this poem by Dietrich Bonhoeffer. I pray you find as much meaning in this as I do.

This poem is haunting, beautiful and more than a little challenging. It was written from Bonhoeffer’s prison cell as he awaited his execution by the Nazi’s in Hitler’s Germany. He was one of a few Christian pastors and teachers who stood up to the anger, hatred and destruction of Hitler’s Germany. As we hear neo-Nazis making claims of white supremacy, and the division and anger in our nation it might help us if we read and listened to people like Bonhoeffer. Who are we called to be, and to whom do we belong? His book “Cost of Discipleship” may be one of the best manuals for living a Christian life today.

### Who Am I?

*By Dietrich Bonhoeffer in “Letters & Papers from Prison”*

*Who am I? They often tell me  
I stepped from my cell’s confinement  
Calmly, cheerfully, firmly,  
Like a Squire from his country house.*

*Who am I? They often tell me  
I used to speak to my warders  
Freely and friendly and clearly,  
As though it were mine to command.*

*Who am I? They also tell me  
I bore the days of misfortune  
Equably, smilingly, proudly,  
Like one accustomed to win.*

*Am I then really that which other men tell of?  
Or am I only what I myself know of myself?  
Restless and longing and sick, like a bird in a cage,  
Struggling for breath, as though hands were compressing my throat,  
Yearning for colors, for flowers, for the voices of birds,  
Thirsting for words of kindness, for neighborliness,  
Tossing in expectation of great events,*

(“Who Am I?” continued on Page 2)

*("Who Am I?" continued from page 1)*

*Powerlessly trembling for friends at an infinite distance,  
Weary and empty at praying, at thinking, at making,  
Faint, and ready to say farewell to it all.*

*Who am I? This or the Other?*

*Am I one person to-day and to-morrow another?*

*Am I both at once? A hypocrite before others,*

*And before myself a contemptible woebegone weakling?*

*Or is something within me still like a beaten army*

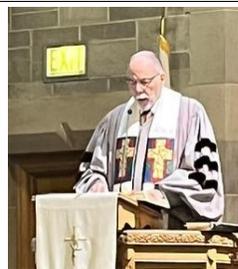
*Fleeing in disorder from victory already achieved?*

*Who am I? They mock me, these lonely questions of mine.*

*Whoever I am, Thou knowest, O God, I am thine!*

## Easter Celebrations

Nearly 40 people braved the frigid, windy, refreshing weather to attend our 6:30am Easter Sunrise Service at the Boat Harbor.



10am Easter Sunday Worship Service

**Many thanks to all who so graciously gave of your time and talents to help make our Holy Week journey meaningful and our Easter celebrations joyous!**

## Ministers in Motion

*Judy Suszek, Office Administrator*



Our transitional ministers, Reverend Bob Case and Reverend Gene Bacon continue to alternate months of service. Reverend Bacon is ministering during the month of May. He will perform all weekly worship services and any additional services, funerals, weddings, baptisms, visits/calls that occur during the month. As always, to reach Reverend Bacon you may call the church office at 989-356-1795, call him directly at 989-340-0358, or email him at [alpucppastor@gmail.com](mailto:alpucppastor@gmail.com).

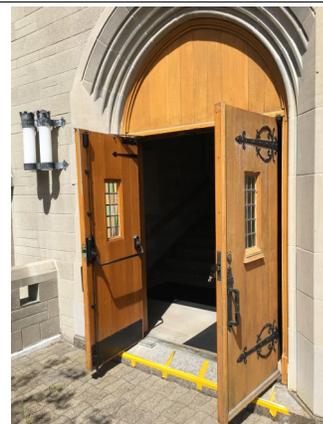


## Congregational Conversations

Avery Aten, Chair, Welcoming Committee

The Welcoming Committee invites one and all to attend small group discussions. We'll sit around a table in Fellowship Hall and share thoughts and experiences on topics such as:

- What do we mean when we say "whoever you are, and wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here"? Do you think some people fear rejection due to age, poverty, substance abuse, race, ethnicity, LGBTQ identity, and won't come "through our doors" to find out that we are truly welcoming?
- How can we let people who are not attending our church know they are welcome here?
- Does anyone here have family or friends who are LGBTQ?
- What does "Open & Affirming" mean to you? Do you have anxiety or concerns about our church changing if we become Open & Affirming?
- What is your understanding of our church's role in the community?
- How do you envision our church 5 years from now?



These will be open discussions, just the sharing of thoughts, with about 8-10 participants per session. Our first two sessions (more to be scheduled later) will be held in May:

- After Fellowship Hour on Sunday, May 15 (a light lunch will be served).
- On Friday May 20 at 7 pm (a light supper will be served).

A sign-up list to attend one of these sessions is located on the table in the Narthex, or call the church office at 989-356-1795. With questions or for more information, please contact a member of the Welcoming Committee: Avery & Marcia Aten, Terry Bell, Bill Dempsey, Bill & Dottie Haase, Boris & Edith Gerber, Jay & Marilyn Kettler, Beth Petty. To help us schedule future sessions, please let us know if other meeting dates or times are preferable, we'll schedule additional sessions to accommodate everyone. Please come, we want and need to hear the thoughts of all our members and friends.

*Just for giggles...*

*The prospective father-in-law asked, "Young man, can you support a family?"  
The surprised groom-to-be replied, "Well, no. I was just planning to support your daughter; the rest of you will have to fend for yourselves!"*

## Blanket Appeal

*Boris Gerber, Mission Committee*

### Church World Service Blanket Appeal - Mother's Day, May 8



On Sundays May 1 and May 8, you have the opportunity to give the gift of a blanket to someone in need. Church World Service blankets provide comfort as well as protection from harsh weather for refugees, the homeless, and victims of national disasters throughout the world. The simple gesture of giving a blanket to someone in need is an act of compassion with enormous significance. Each person wrapped in a blanket is enveloped in a sense of warmth, safety and love. It's a priceless feeling – just like a mother's touch!

Mother's Day Blanket Gift Cards are available to acknowledge your gifts. In addition, for each \$10 blanket purchased, you may fill out a "honor heart" with the name of an important woman in your life (mother, grandmother, wife, daughter, granddaughter, sister, ...). The hearts are pinned on our blanket in the sanctuary. By Mother's Day help us completely cover the blanket with love!

If you are not able to attend a "live" church service, and wish to purchase blankets, just send your check (made out to First Congregational Church, with note "for blankets") to the church office, with a note listing the names of the important women (or men!) in your life that you wish to honor, and "honor hearts" will be prepared and pinned to our sanctuary blanket. Donations will be accepted any-time in May.

When difficult times happen, a kind and loving response can make all the difference. CWS Blankets give a kind, loving and tangible response to someone facing a difficult time, reminding them that they are not alone, helping our most vulnerable neighbors around the world feel safe and keep warm. When our neighbors are in need, the gift of a blanket goes a long way!

### What Will Be the Design on this Year's "Honor Heart" Blanket Banner?



Thank You



**A note of thanks...**

*Extending our sincere gratitude to your congregation for your continued support of our food pantry. May God continue to bless you.*

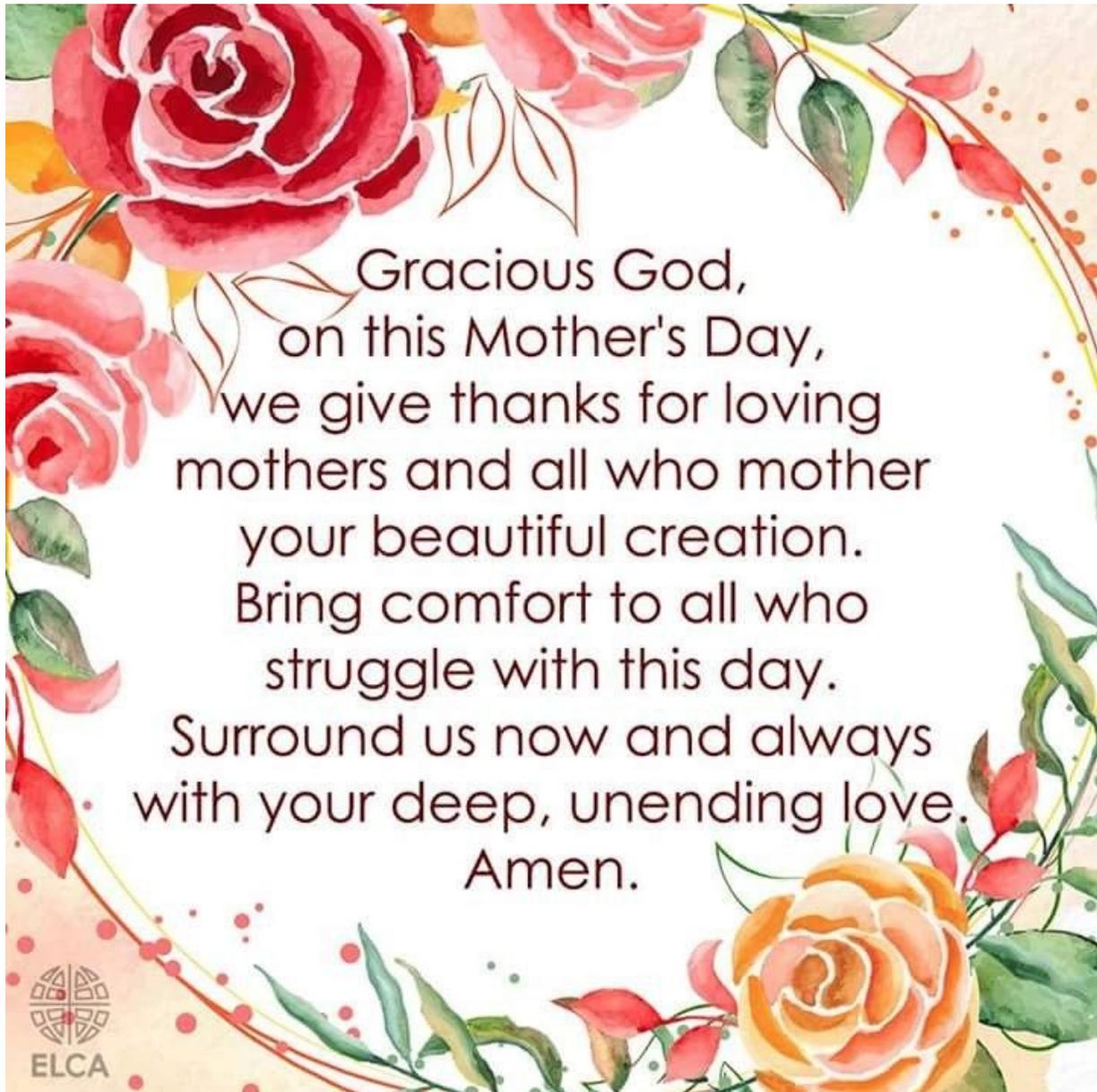
*~Cathy Ceci, The Salvation Army Food Pantry*

**A friendly reminder...**

Fellowship Hour hosting help is needed for June, July, and August. See sign-up sheet on table behind sanctuary. For questions or concerns, please contact Bill Haase at 989-916-4104 or [dsbhaase@live.com](mailto:dsbhaase@live.com).



**A PRAYER FOR MOTHERS AND THOSE WHO ARE MOTHER FIGURES AND ALL WOMEN WHO GIVE SO MUCH TO SO MANY**



*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](mailto:officeuccalp@gmail.com)  
Office Hours: 9:00 am – 1:00 pm, Monday – Thursday

**Sunday Worship: 10:00 a.m.**

**In person and Online**

**Transitional Pastors: Rev. Dr. H. Robert Case  
and Rev. Eugene Bacon**

**Organist/Choir Director: Kat Tomaszewski**

**Treasurer: Denise Fusina**

**Office Administrator: Judy Suszek**

**Custodian: Mike LaMarre**

## *Still Speaking*

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## May Celebrations

### Birthdays

Sharon Rickard	May 4	Jack Caplis	May 22
John Briggs	May 5	Ray Moore	May 29
Ann Gerow	May 5	James Standen	May 29
Debra Dempsey	May 21	Reverend Bob Case	May 30
Steve Bailey	May 22		



### Anniversary

Reverend Gene and Karen Bacon May 11 49 Years



*Wishing you a fun and safe  
Memorial Day Weekend!*