

**March
2019**

Still Speaking

Newsletter of First Congregational United Church of Christ of Alpena

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A Word From Our Minister: "In Life, Things Change"

Rev. Dr. Paul A. Lance III

I have been wearing cleats on my boots these past three weeks as I walk to and from the church. There is an inch or more of ice on Hitchcock Street, and the sidewalk ice has a skiff of snow on it. We've had 17 "snow days" so far this year, and it has disrupted not only school lessons but choir practice and other programs all over Northeast Michigan. It has been a relentlessly cold winter.

But you all know that. What we also know is that, eventually, the cold spell will break, spring thaw will begin, crocuses will blossom here and there, and buds will return to the branches. The days will lengthen, and we will set our clocks to "spring forward" one hour on Sunday morning March 10. The turn of the season from Winter to Spring will be as inevitable as it has been every year. This is one aspect of what it means to be alive: things in life change.

Back in the 19th Century, veteran biologist Herbert Spencer defined life as "the continuous adjustment of internal relations to external conditions." A living entity is in a "vital" connection with its specific surroundings — its environment — influencing them (possibly) but especially being influenced by them. The organism's physical capacities for metabolism, for growth, for reaction to stimuli through the senses, and for reproduction are all "means" toward the end of sustaining life. The organism in its environment, the creature within its changing context, is like a single living fabric being woven on the loom of time.

I know that sounds a bit poetic, maybe even mystical. But the point is that living things have the ability to sense changes in their environment, to respond to stimuli, and to adapt to those changes for survival and flourishing into the future. To fail to do so — by keeping things as they are, forbidding innovation, disliking "surprises", taking no risks, making no changes — is like voting for death. Stasis and stagnation are also natural processes, but we would not call it "life" because in life, things change.

Some adjustments we make during these 40 days of Lent are (1) adding a Wednesday night soup supper & worship service at seven of our Alpena area churches (see back page for list of locations), (2) stopping Monday Midday Movies and Sunday "Salt & Light" Singers until after school lets out in June, & (3) trying to get closer to Jesus' Jewish roots by joining in services with Alpena's Temple Beth-El (Sat., Mar. 16 at 11 am, and Sunday, Mar. 17, at 2 pm) and our Thursday Theology Classes at 1:00 pm (see the enclosed calendar for each week's topic).

We are making these changes to our church program because we are a "living" congregation in a changing context. May we flourish!

March 2019

Dates to Remember

6

**Ash Wednesday
(First night of Lent)**

8

Ladies Luncheon

10

**Daylight Saving Time
Begins**

13

"No Frills" Book Club

18

Friendship Room

27

**Soup Supper @ First
Congregational**

Every Wednesday
is Soup Supper and
Lenten Worship
Services. (See the
back page for details)



“One Great Hour of Sharing” Annual All-Church Offering Sunday, March 31

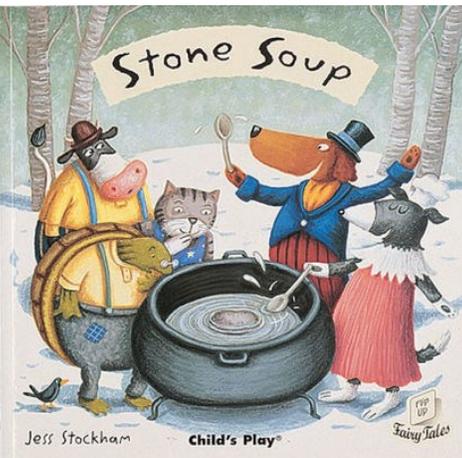
Refugees have been much in the news! There are world-wide emergencies: millions of people around the world are forcibly displaced either within or beyond their national borders. Our help is needed.

The One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) special mission offering of the United Church of Christ involves you in disaster, refugee/immigration, and development ministries throughout the world.

When a disaster strikes or people are displaced or made refugees by violence or extreme poverty, you are part of the immediate response and of the long-term recovery. Through OGHS you engage in holistic development programs including health care, education, agriculture, food sustainability, micro-financing, and women’s empowerment. Because the UCC relates in mutual partnership to churches and organizations through Global Ministries and worldwide response & recovery networks, your contributions to One Great Hour of Sharing put you in the right place at the right time for the relief, accompaniment and recovery of the most vulnerable. You meet immediate needs and you address the underlying causes that create those needs in the first place. Thank you for your generous contribution.

And after the service please join us for:

“One Great Hour of Sharing” Stone Soup - All Are Welcome!



Stone Soup is an old folk story in which hungry strangers, carrying nothing more than an empty cooking pot, add only water and a stone, and convince the people of a town to each share a small amount of their food in order to make a meal that eventually everyone enjoys. By all sharing their food, the “stone soup” is successfully transformed it into a tasty and nutritious meal which all share.

Bring yourselves, and whatever **frozen, cooked or canned goods you want to throw into the pot.** (The soup will be gluten-free.) We will have the broth started; any fresh vegetables already cut-up are welcome.

If your pantry is bare that morning, come anyway! A sign-up sheet is out on the podium for a few good volunteers to sign-up to bring bread.

200 HEROES



We are looking for **200** people to donate **\$100** to help us close out the 2019 **United Way of Northeast Michigan Campaign**



GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER.
LIVE UNITED™



Agencies and Programs We Support:

- Alpena Childcare & Development Center (Serving birth to 12-years)
- Alpena Public Schools (Homework Rescue)
- Alpena Senior Citizen's Center (Meals on Wheels)
- Alzheimer's Association (Caregiver Education)
- Boys & Girls Club (SMART/YVC/Club Bigs)
- Child & Family Services of NE MI (Trauma Caregiver Education)
- Hope Shores Alliance (Domestic Violence)
- Hospice of Michigan (Grief Support)
- Partners in Prevention (Power-Parenting)
- Salvation Army (Emergency Services/Summer Outreach)
- Sunrise Mission* (Mission Services)
- United Way School Clothes Initiative (Clothes & Supplies for Jr- High School Youth)
- United Way Community Garden



Rev. Lance is now a Board Member of the United Way of Northeast Michigan.

He is happy that our church is a donor organization to the combined community fund-raising effort on behalf of more than a dozen helping agencies in the Alpena area.

You may notice that several of the groups helped by the United Way are also recipients of our annual "Comstock Fund" grants as well as "Mission" money from our church.

There is a push right now to get 200 individuals who are able to donate \$100 in order to meet this year's financial goal.

Patty & I are on the list, and perhaps there are others from our church membership who would also make an extra contribution to this worthwhile community cause.

I thank you for all you do and for all you donate.

— Rev. Paul Lance

Your investment empowers people, creates, and inspires hope for a better tomorrow.

Donations can be mailed to or dropped off at United Way of Northeast Michigan, 701 Woodward Avenue, Alpena MI 49707 or at Anschuetz Chevrolet, 1074 US 23 North, Alpena MI 49707 (make checks payable to United Way of Northeast Michigan) or pledge online at www.unitedwaynemi.org.

We appreciate & want your business.



Board of Directors February 2019 Meeting Highlights

Gerrie La Cross, Secretary

There were many positive comments shared from the community about all the good programs we are currently offering and the good things the church does in the community.

Financial report, all is in good order. Rev Lance requested permission to transfer his health insurance from Blue Cross to Medicare beginning in April. Permission was granted. It will be a substantial savings to the church.

Officers were voted in to the following positions: Chair, Jim McNeil, Vice-Chair, Ann Gerow and Treasurer, Dennis Artley.

The Mission committee purchased dial a ride tickets for Call us for Help.

Property committee reports, the state inspector was here for the elevator, we have to have Otis preform a CAT 1 stress test within 30 days. The Lockwood Street door was frozen for a couple of days but seems to be working fine now. We will need to keep an eye on the operation and have it checked in the spring. Also in the spring the heat tapes will need repair and possibly additional tapes added to the system.

Pastor's Report: Shared the themes of the Forum through April 14th. They will then be held until after Easter. Rev. Lance will be on vacation April 22—May 7. Rev. Bob Case will be the preacher for those two weeks and also on May 26th.

We will have both the chair and vice chair absent in March along with one other board member, so the decision was to not meet in March.

Area Agency on Aging

Region 9 Area Agency on Aging is hosting a Caregiver Empowerment & Wellness Conference. This conference invites caregivers of all types, whether they are caring for a loved one with dementia or a chronic illness to attend.



We will be sharing practical resources, information and messages of empowerment under one roof on **Friday, April 25, at the Event Center, 701 Woodward Ave., Alpena, MI**. This conference is **free of cost**; however **registration is required** for individuals interested in attending. There will be free breakfast, lunch and door prizes.

See the flyer on the bulletin board for more information. If you have any questions please contact Brooke Mainville at 989-358-4616 or email her at mainvilleb@nemcsa.org.

March Birthday and Anniversary Wishes

- 3 Grady Barden
- 5 Ty Barbeau
- 8 Beth Petty
- 12 Eugene Bacon
- 17 Jan Canode
- 17 Patrick Labadie
- 20 Carol Knowlton
- 26 Belinda Hanna
- 27 Cindy Straley
- 27 Spencer Kibbe



Jim & Patty McNeil
March 9
 Wedding Anniversary

Sunday, March 10
“Spring Forward”



Forty Days –Forty Items

Wednesday, March 6 is the first day of Lent.
 We have a challenge for you!

Each day of Lent, remove one item from your home that you no longer wear or need (still in good condition) and put it in a bag. At the end of the forty days, donate these items to a place that can share them with someone in need.



Ladies Luncheon

The Ladies Luncheon group met at The 19th Hole Restaurant on Friday, February 15th (one week delayed due to icy weather) with Lois Gibbs hosting. Thanks, Lois, for the wonderful Valentine Candy. Our next luncheon will be on **Friday, March 8th, at 11:30 again at The 19th Hole.** Come join in the “Irish” fun. There is a sign-up sheet on the podium... hope to see you there.



Hosted by:
 Kay Beland

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Email: officeuccalp@gmail.com
Office Hours: 9:00 am – 1:00 pm Monday – Thursday

Sunday Worship Service 10:00 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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2019 Ecumenical Lenten Series “Stations of the Cross”

Date	Host Church	Theme	Preacher
Wed., Mar 6	Grace Lutheran	In Gethsemane	Rev. Paul Lance
Wed., Mar 13	First Presbyterian	Betrayed By Judas	Rev. Seok Nam Lin
Wed., Mar 20	First United Methodist	Condemned by the Sanhedrin	Rev. Tom Orth
Wed., Mar 27	First Congregational	Denied by Peter	Fr. Joseph Muszkiewicz
Wed., April 3	St. Paul Lutheran	Judged by Pilate	Rev. Bill Rayment
Wed., April 10	All Saints Catholic	Scourged and Crowned with thorns	Rev. Bill McClure
Thursday, Apr 18	Trinity Episcopal	Jesus takes up His Cross	Rev. Bob Case
Good Friday “Tre Ore” April 19	Trinity Episcopal	Remaining 7 Stations (from noon to 3:00 pm)	Seven preachers in three hours

The offering from the series will be split between the Salvation Army’s “Call Us for Help”, the “Friendship Room” at St. Bernard’s, and the “Wash Your Coat” program.

So mark your calendars for the upcoming dates as we travel together with these other churches through Lent. **Soup Suppers begin at 6:00 p.m.** followed by **worship services at 7:00 p.m.**