

**March
2024**

Still Speaking

Newsletter of First Congregational United Church of Christ of Alpena

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From the Pastor's Desk

Pastor Dick Hotchkin

It was the first Easter. Jesus had been raised from the dead. Some of his followers had seen him and heard him. That afternoon, walking toward Emmaus, Jesus joined two of his followers in conversation. Later, he sat down to eat with them. Not until then, when Jesus broke the bread, did they recognize him. Strangely enough, it was when Jesus did something, that they knew him.

Perhaps it is not strange, after all. Most of us know our Lord most deeply by what he has done for us, and not principally by what he has said to us. Jesus died for us! That is the towering message of the Bible. The Sermon on the Mount and the parables are among the most exalted literature in the world. They are words, however, not deeds. Jesus' death for our transgressions – this is the deed to dwarf all deeds. Because of what happened on the cross, we know that Jesus loves us. The Lord asks us to be his witnesses. This certainly means that we must use words to tell about him. But it means more. Because we are his followers, we are to reach out to people in love as Jesus did. We human beings are moved more deeply by acts of love than by words of love.

The opportunity for witness lies in the most commonplace situations. Someone is lonely, and we write a letter or make a phone call. Someone has lost a job, and we help him find another. Someone is old and lives alone, and we bring a warm meal. Someone is lied about, and we defend her. Someone is in jail, and we go to visit. You and I are ordinary, everyday people. We remember that Jesus was too. He was a young carpenter from a small town. Yet he was God come to earth. Jesus used all sorts of common, ordinary, everyday places to reveal himself and his love, deeds of mercy which finally brought him to the crowning deed, death for our salvation.

Dates to Remember

March 3
Worship Service
Communion

March 10
Worship Service
One Great Hour

March 11
Board Meeting
5:30 PM

March 17
Worship Service

March 24
Worship Service

March 31
Easter
Sunrise Service
Worship Service

I am encouraging those of you with internet capability to access the Daily Devotional website of the United Church of Christ: www.ucc.org/daily-devotional. There you find inspirational writings based on Holy Scripture.

Worship Opportunities for Lent and Easter

Worship Committee

Combined Community Worship Services

We will be joining with other Christian Churches for Lent Combined Worship Services. We will begin with a Soup Supper at 6 pm followed by Worship at 7 pm. The following is the schedule through Maundy Thursday:

March 6	Rev. Dick Hotchkin	First United Methodist
March 13	Rev. Tom Orth	First Presbyterian
March 20	Rev. Nystrom	St. Paul Lutheran
March 28 Maundy Thursday	Rev. John Shipman	Trinity Episcopal

- ◆ Good Friday, March 29, there will be a combined Tre Ore Service at First United Methodist at 12 noon.
- ◆ First Congregational United Church of Christ will hold an Easter Sunrise Service at the boat Harbor starting at 7:05 am followed by a continental breakfast at the Yacht Club. Later that same morning, we will worship at our normal time of 10:00 am in the sanctuary.
- ◆ The choir is planning special music for the Easter Service.

Miss Maggie's Nearly Famous Vegetable Soup

Sonya Titus, Trinity Episcopal Church

For the second year, Miss Maggie's Nearly Famous Vegetable Soup will be available at Trinity Episcopal Church. You can reserve a quart (or as many as you like) of soup for \$10, by phoning Cheryl Bates at 989-657-2939 or Sonya Titus at 989 354-6031 and then picking up your order on March 15 from 1 to 3 or March 16 from 11 to 1 in Trinity Episcopal Church Parish House, 124 East Washington Ave. Other pick up times can be arranged. In addition, on a first come first serve basis for as long as they last, small loaves of home-made bread will be available for \$3. Monies to support our outreach programs.

Free Math or German Tutoring

Marilyn Kettler

Free Math or German Tutoring by a retired teacher will be available at First Congregational UCC Alpena on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays. Call the church office 989-356-1795 or 989-595-6362 or text 989-255-8991 to make an appointment or for more information.

Community Choir Tre Ore Service Practices

Kat Tomaszewski—Sandy Jarmuzewski

Practice for Community Choir will be March 7 and 14 at the First Congregational UCC at 7:00 pm. The final practice will be held March 29 at 11:15 am at First United Methodist Church on Ripley Blvd. Please call Kat at 989-255-8750 or Sandy at 989-255-7894 with any questions.

Food Pantry Needs

Bill Haase/Boris Gerber

The following is a list of items the local food pantry is requesting at this time: boxed or packages of mashed, au gratin, scalloped, and/or cheesy potatoes; canned corn; canned pork and beans; cereal; chicken noodle soup; rice or noodle side dishes (in pouch).

Dates to Remember

Birthdays

Grady Barden 3/3
 Craig Waak 3/4
 Ty Barbeau 3/5
 Wendy Bailey Graves 3/7
 Beth Petty 3/8
 Eugene Bacon 3/12
 C. Patrick Labadie 3/17

Carol Knowlton 3/20
 Nick Jarmuzewski 3/24
 Belinda Hanna 3/26
 Cindy Straley 3/27
 Spencer Kibbe 3/27
 Jill Bailey 3/27
 Jackie Bell 3/28

Anniversaries

Jim & Patti McNeil 3/9



Membership Declaration Cards

The following Amendment for Membership was passed at the recent Annual Meeting held on January 28.

“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 reestablish good and regular standing by signing such a card at any time.”

Membership cards are 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.



Easter Flowers

We will have order forms for Easter flowers when we receive the final prices. Please look for these forms in the Sunday bulletin as we get closer to Easter.

Ladies Luncheons

Dottie Haase/Bobbi Zubi

The dates for the Ladies Lunches through June 2024 are: March 8, April 12, May 10, and June 14. We plan to meet at the Big Boy on Ripley Blvd at 11:30 am. All are invited. Feel free to bring family and/or friends. Please contact Bobbi Zubi at 989-657-9996 if you have any questions. We hope to see you there!

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

Phone: 989-356-1795

Web Site: <http://uccalpena.org>

Email: officeuccalp@gmail.com

Office Hours: 9:00 AM– 1:00 PM Monday – Thursday

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: Nancy Ross

Custodian: Mike LaMarre

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Newsletter of First Congregational United Church of Christ of Alpena

Mission Statement

As approved at the 162nd Annual Meeting

The Members of the Congregation of the First Congregational United Church of Christ in Alpena, MI aspire to embrace the inclusive love of Jesus Christ, so we make this covenant with the help of the Holy Spirit. We believe that all persons are created in God's image and are loved, valued, and blessed equally by God. This community of faith is an open and affirming congregation who seeks to welcome all persons, including those of all races, ethnicities, ages, sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, family structures, faith backgrounds, physical and mental abilities, and economic circumstances. All persons are invited to fully share and participate in leadership, ministry, mission and community service, fellowship, worship, sacraments, responsibilities, blessings, joys, and sorrows of our church family. Therefore, no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome in this house of worship.

St. Patrick's Day Trivia

St. Patrick's original name was Maewyn Succat and he was born to Christian parents in Roman Britain. His father was a deacon and his grandfather, a priest. We know that he was a Roman citizen, because Britain was Roman then, and then he was enslaved and taken to Ireland, where he either escaped or was released. He then became a priest and went back to Ireland, where he had "a lot of luck converting the Druid culture into Christians." The March 17 celebration started in 1631 when the Church established a Feast Day honoring St. Patrick.