

October
2025

Still Speaking

Newsletter of First Congregational United Church of Christ of Alpena



Board of Directors

Deborah Desimone

Nancy Wedge

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Joe Garant

Vice-Chairperson

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Sandy Jarmuzewski

Treasurer

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Beverly Bodem

Bill Dempsey

Ann Diamond

Beth Petty



From the Pastor's Desk

Pastor Dick Hotchkin

We are almost afraid to think of what God may want to give us. Perhaps it is much more than we want. What does it really mean when God wants to give us salvation, or the kingdom, or life abundant? If salvation, what are saved from, and what are we saved for? If the kingdom, what is the style of life of that kingdom? If the abundant life, just how does God define that kind of life? It may be that we are reluctant to have any of it – salvation or the kingdom or the abundant life.

God sets out to save us from our sins, their guilt, and their power. That may not be what we want. We know that it's wrong to hold a grudge, but we may secretly enjoy it. We know that it's wrong to ignore the needs of our neighbors, but we may hate to get involved. We know that it's wrong to pile up wealth when others are in need, but it's fun to see the pile grow.

And if God gives us a kingdom – which God has promised as a gift through Jesus – what changes may we have to make in our manner of life? We are not sure that we really mean it when we pray, "Thy kingdom come." And what does God mean by the abundant life? Perhaps it doesn't include expensive recreation or even many things we have counted as necessities.

We are given the gift of salvation, the kingdom, the abundant life. This means that we lose the comfort of being average and unimportant. It means that we lose the pleasures that we find in self-indulgence and in self-pity. It means that we are enlisted in a kingdom, to take orders from our king, and find life by losing it.

Little wonder that we may pause. Is this really what we want? Deep down, we know that it is, cost what it will. There is no other option if we truly want to experience fullness of life!

Membership Declaration Cards

Membership Declaration Cards are required annually. Submitting a card each year is important because it keeps our membership records accurate, helps the church stay in touch with you, and affirms your commitment as a member of First Congregational UCC. A former member may re-establish good and regular standing by signing such a card at any time.

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.'

For those who have not yet completed a card, one will be mailed the first week of October. Please watch for the mailing, and return your card promptly.



October Laity Schedule

	Greeters	Ushers	Lay Readers	Fellowship	Altar Guild	Communion	Counter(s)
5th	Mary Minnick	Ashley Wedge Nancy Wedge	Lori Mayer	Ann & Jeff Gerow	Deb Desimone	Sandy Jarmuzewski	
12th	Ann Diamond	Penny Anderson OPEN	Lori Mayer	Bill & Dottie Haase	(All Month)		Ashley Wedge
19th	Penny Anderson	Gary Jarmuzewski OPEN	Bill Dempsey	Cider Fest.			
26th	Bobbi Zubi	Max Lindsay Vicky Lindsay	Bill Dempsey	Vicky & Max Lindsay			Dennis/Janet Artley

Note: If you see openings where you can help, please feel free to step in.



Days to Celebrate

October Birthdays

Linda Clegg ~ 3rd
Linda Christiaens ~ 4th
Thomas Cook ~ 5th
Shari Davis ~ 9th
Toni Hotchkin ~ 11th
Bobbi Zubi ~ 21st
Scott Beland ~ 25th



October Anniversaries

Jim & Cindy Straley ~ 1st
Bill & Linda Clegg ~ 21st
Jay & Marilyn Kettler ~ 23rd



Days to Remember



Friday	3rd	Class: Wisdom of Faith	10:30 a.m.
Sunday	5th	Worship Service	10:00 a.m.
Monday	6th	Worship Committee Meeting	5:30 p.m.
			11:30
Friday	10th	Ladies Luncheon (Hunan Chinese Restaurant)	noon
Sunday	12th	Worship Service	10:00 a.m.
Monday	13th	Board Meeting	5:30 p.m.
Sunday	19th	Worship Service (Cider Fest)	10:00 a.m.
Sunday	26th	Worship Service	10:00 a.m.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!



**First Congregational
United Church of Christ**
201 S. Second Ave. ~ Alpena



Fresh Apple Cider
Cider Press Demonstration
WELCOME.
CIDER SUNDAY
Donuts & Coffee
Family Activities
OCTOBER 19, 2025
11:00 a.m.
Please join us for worship at 10:00 a.m.

Ladies Luncheon
October 10, 2025
Hunan Chinese Restaurant
11:30 a.m. **Contact Bobbi Zubi**
for more information.
Telephone: (989) 657-9996

Join us for a
Thanksgiving Potluck
Sunday - November 9th
First Congregational Church
201 S. Second Ave. ~ Alpena
Bring a dish to pass!
All are welcome!



Please join us
as we celebrate the season!
Sunday
December 7, 2025
Family & Friends Are Welcome!
HOLIDAY LUNCHEON
First Congregational Church
201 S. Second Ave. ~ Alpena



**Candlelight Christmas
Concert & Open House**
December 19th
5:30 pm - 7:30 pm



Stewardship Campaign 2026

Cindy Straley

Your Stewardship Committee will soon be kicking off our 2026 campaign! We are pouring our **"Heart & Soul"** into the promise of our future as a congregation, and we look forward to sharing our love of Christ, our church, and each other by pledging our time, talent and gifts.

Stay tuned – exciting developments coming your way!"

Sincerely,
Cindy Straley, Joe Garant, Bill Haase
Max Lindsay, Marilyn Kettler, Lynn Borke



Feed-A-Family

Bill & Dottie Haase

The food pantry is currently in need of the following items:



- Tuna, Hamburger & Chicken Helpers
- Ravioli, Spaghetios & Beffaroni
- Bagged or Boxed Potatoes
(Mashed, Au Gratin, Scalloped, Cheesy)
- Cans of Chicken Noodle Soup

Your continued generosity helps ensure families have dependable meals on their tables.

8 bags were donated during September!!

Feel free to use the bags on the table in the middle hallway for your shopping needs.

Friendship Room Volunteer Group

We are forming a volunteer group from First Congregational Church to help at the Friendship Room **once a month, Monday through Friday**.

Here's how you can join in:

- **Meal Preparation Group** – 12:30–3:30 p.m.
(cutting vegetables, making salads, light kitchen work; mostly sitting down)
- **Meal Serving Group** – 4:00–5:30 p.m. (serving the meal and cleanup)

This is a wonderful opportunity to serve our neighbors and share fellowship together. We are asking for just a **once-a-month commitment**.

If you're interested, please contact us so we can get our First Congregational Friendship Room Kitchen Volunteer Group ready to work!

Dottie & Bill Haase
dsbhaase@live.com
Telephone: (989) 916-4104



Mission Committee - Neighbors in Need

Pat Garant

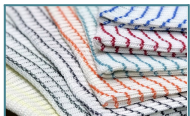


Our church has been a great supporter of the United Church of Christ's Neighbors in Need (NIN) campaigns. NIN supports justice and compassion ministries across the U.S. One-third of funds aid the Council for American Indian Ministries (CAIM), while two-thirds support local advocacy, service and systemic justice work. NIN is about long-term, dedicated work to create lasting change. Our commitment to this offering has brought the gospel of Jesus Christ to life in our world.

Our church's NIN collection will take place on Sunday, November 2nd. Thank you for your support and generosity!

Dish Cloths & Brooms

Nancy Wedge



DISHCLOTHS

A friendly reminder that dishcloths are available for \$2.50 each. Colors available are red, blue, yellow and green.



BROOMS

Brooms previously sold during the SERRV Bazaar are available for purchase. They are lightweight and good for 97 miles of Sweeping. Cost is \$20 each.

Contact Nancy if you wish to purchase one, two or more. (wedge.nancy@gmail.com or 989.356.4402)

Board Notes from September

- ❖ Replacement of the marbled sidewalks outside the church will begin in October. This work will make the sidewalks much safer in the winter.
- ❖ The Board will initiate the process of identifying a candidate to fill the recently vacated Board position, which carries a term through January 2027.
- ❖ Pastor Hotchkin is encouraged to receive positive visitor feedback and to see new individuals becoming engaged with the congregation.
- ❖ The Board appointed two new members to the Stewardship Committee and approved Cindy Straley as the Chairperson.
- ❖ The Board voted to replace the three computer workstations currently utilized by the church, as they are obsolete and will no longer supported by Microsoft security updates as of October 14, 2025.

Treasurer's Report

Denise Fusina

Report as of August 31, 2025

<u>Giving:</u>	<u>Pledge</u>	<u>vs.</u>	<u>Received</u>
August	\$10,417		\$ 6,385
YTD	\$83,336		\$ 91,379

Income & Expense

January 1 through August 31, 2025

Income

\$171,878

Expense

\$177,634

THANK YOU for continuing to do your part and stay up to date (or ahead) on payments toward your pledges!

As of the end of August, we have paid out more in expenses than we have received from pledges and other income; however, this will improve with the receipt of a planned distribution from the CFNEM Comstock Endowment Fund. We are still on track to end the year with a balanced budget.

We Care For One Another

We are a family, and as such, we care for one another in many ways, both structured and informal. This is part of our ministry supported through your giving. Sharing time together during Fellowship Time, special celebrations, and Ladies Luncheons help build our relationships with one another. Prayer Chain, Care Letters, Pastoral Care, and Funeral Meals help build one another up during difficult times. Sunday rides help people to join us and share in our ministries. These examples of encouragement and caring for one another are made possible through the efforts of volunteers, as well as the coordination and time of our Pastor and staff. Your gifts to your church become gifts to one another.



VANCO
FAITH