

**August
2023**

Still Speaking

Newsletter of First Congregational United Church of Christ of Alpena

Board of Directors

Deborah Butler,
Chairperson
Sandy Jarmuzewski,
Vice-Chairperson
Nancy Wedge,
Treasurer
Beverly Bodem
Bill Dempsey
Ann Diamond
Joe Garant
Boris Gerber
Jim McNeil

He is with us Always

Deborah Butler

Living in Northern Michigan, we often take our glistening lake shore and wooded splendor for granted. and forget that we have the best of both worlds at our beck and call. We often refer to Alpena and Northern Michigan as "God's country". Let's take a moment to be still, take a deep breath and pause to listen to what is around us. We may hear the sounds of the lakeshore or the songs and melodies of nature. As I stop to reflect on this, I am reminded to take a moment and listen for God's 'still gentle voice'. He has promised us that, "I am always with you..." He has been with us since the beginning, in 1862. He continues to be with us in times joy and hardship, sorrow and happiness, missions and ministry, war and peace and happiness and discouragement. We forget that through it all, His loving presence and grace has not left us. He has carried us and cared for us when we couldn't care for ourselves. The following is a wonderful reminder of this.

Footprints in the Sand

By Mary Stevenson

One night I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the LORD,
Many scenes from my life flashed across the sky.
In each scene, I noticed footprints in the sand.
Sometimes there were two sets of footprints,
Other times there were one set of footprints.

This bothered me
because I noticed that during the low periods in my life,
When I was suffering from anguish, sorrow and defeat,
I could see only one set of footprints.

So I said to the LORD,
"You promised me LORD, that if I followed You,
You would walk with me always.
But I noticed that during the most trying periods of my life,
there have only been one set of footprints the sand.

Why, when I needed You most,
You have not been there for me?"

The LORD replied,
"The times when you have
seen only one set of footprints,
is when I carried you."

I challenge us all these next few weeks of summer, to take a moment or two, as we walk though our daily lives or along the lake shore, maybe enjoying a quiet evening on the deck or perhaps a hike through the woods, to enjoy God's gifts and promises and remember that God is with us, and only through His grace are we people of hope, who are loved and encouraged.

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous hand. For I am the LORD, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you. Isaiah 41: 0, 13

Dates to Remember

Sunday, August 6
Worship Service

Monday, August 7
Worship Committee
Meeting 5:30 pm

Friday, August 11
Ladies Luncheon

Sunday, August 13
Worship Service
Heifer International
Collection

Monday, August 14
Board meeting

Sunday, August 20
Worship Service

Sunday, August 27
Worship Service



Board of Directors Highlights

Board of Directors

July 2023 Board Meeting

Present: Beverly Bodem, Deborah Butler, Bill Dempsey, Joe Garant, Boris Gerber, Jim McNeil, Nancy Wedge. Staff Present: Mike LaMarre, Nancy Ross

Mike LaMarre provided an update on completion off the following maintenance projects:

- ◆ The Boiler back-up pump has been repaired.
- ◆ The new boiler has been installed and will be tested this Fall.
- ◆ Meridian Contracting Services resolved the issue with the double doors allowing them to, once again, swing freely.
- ◆ Consultation continues regarding the replacement of the elevator roof heat tapes.

Thank you notes were read from Judy Suszek and Hope Shores Alliance

Security Committee—the Room Use Guidelines have been revised as follows:

- ◆ The building is now open for outside use.
- ◆ Groups will be asked for a \$10 refundable key deposit and lock the entry door when not attended. Letters will be sent to all groups who previously used the building.
- ◆ The Church is open Sunday mornings from 9:30 am until the worship service concludes.

To stabilize and enhance the Wi-Fi usage in the building, regular monitoring and a suitable mesh system was discussed at length.

Plans for Reverend Hotchkin, and his wife Toni, are in the final stages. An acceptable rental has been identified and plans are being made for their actual move.

Meet the Office Administrator

Max Lindsay, Chair Personnel Committee

Those of us who have been in our church building during the week have probably noticed a new face in the office. Nancy Ross has been chosen to be our new Office Administrator, replacing Judy Suszek who has moved to Traverse City to be closer to family.

Nancy is an Alpena native who has lived in our community virtually her entire life, with the exception of a few years in her twenties. She is the proud mother of 4 daughters and grandmother of 10.

Nancy has lived a life of service through Nursing. She received her associate of Nursing Degree from Alpena Community College and her Bachelor' of Science of Nursing Degree from Lake Superior State University.

Nancy began her Nursing career as a Nursing Assistant and then moved on to Inpatient and Home Care Nursing. She worked at Tendercare-Alpena for 10 years, ending with her being the Director of Nursing. She then became the In-home Services Co-ordinator for the Alpena Senior Center and ended her career as a Nurse Case Manager for adult mental health services at NE MI Community Mental Health Authority until her retirement in September 2020.

When asked what the best thing about working for First Congregational United Church of Christ-Alpena, she replied, "the people have been so kind and supportive." Please stop and say hello to Nancy if you are in our church home.

Ladies Summer Luncheon

Peg DiNegro

Food, Fellowship and Kabitzing — The First Congregational Church Ladies Luncheons are back! The gatherings are scheduled the second Friday of each month for the remaining summer months at Chee Peng Restaurant, US 23 N in Alpena. We gather at 11:45am. All are welcome. Reservations are not necessary, but feel free to call Peg DiNegro at 352-281-2283 with any questions.

So, mark your calendars for : August 11 and September 8. Hope to see you there!

Worship Committee July

Deborah Butler

August Pulpit Supply:

- * August 6—Reverend Bacon
- * August 13, 20, 27—Reverend Rosemary Gibson

Thank you to Kaitlin Borke for providing special music in July, It is always nice having her return to her home church and share her music ministry with us!

Thank you to Bonnie Bartz and Band, for sharing your talents with us at the Church Family Reunion and 50 Year Member Sunday. Everyone truly enjoyed themselves!

Another big thank you to Lynn, Ron and Kaitlin Borke, Patti and Jim McNeil, Dottie Haase, Ann Diamond and the Artley family (Dennis, Janet, Scott, Nina and their daughters), Mike LaMarre and all the others who lent a helping hand to make this event outstanding and successful!

- Mark your calendars for November 19, 2023, when Reverend Lillian Daniel,, Conference Minister for Michigan Conference, is scheduled to preach and deliver the sermon.



We will be welcoming the Reverend Richard Hotchkín and his wife Toni back to Alpena on September 3, 2023.

Everyone is invited to an informal 'meet and greet' in the Fellowship Hall immediately following the Worship and Communion service.

Hope to see everyone there!

Food Needed

Bill Haase

Feed A Family Needs—Individual crackers & cheese packets, crackers & peanut butter packets or cookies packets, Jell-O or pudding 4-packs, canned Spaghettios or macaroni & sauce, soups (any kind). *Thank you for your continued support to our food pantry. ~Kathy, Salvation Army*

August Worship Leader

Reverend Rosemary Gibson

My husband and I were both born and raised in the city of Hamilton, Ohio approximately thirty miles north of Cincinnati. We met in High School and after graduation left for school in Cincinnati where I eventually earned a Masters Degree in Nursing and Science. My husband was an accounting major. We married in 1971. Our daughter was born in 1973 and our son in 1982. We celebrated 52 years together this past September. Our daughter is a Nurse Midwife and our son is an Attorney. We also have three wonderful grandsons.

After more than 40 years at Cincinnati Hospital Medical Center in Pediatric critical Care, I took an early retirement while working on a PhD in Nursing. It was then that my husband and I decided to come to Northern Michigan. We love being surrounded by pine forests! This is where I rediscovered, with a new perspective, God's presence and love in my life.

After teaching Nursing at Kirtland Community College for two years, I applied to the Living School, out of the Center for Action and Contemplation, founded by Father Richard Rohr, in Albuquerque, New Mexico. This is where I spent the best two years of life studying with wonderful Christian mystics and teachers. Seven years ago I started an alternative path to ordination through the United Congregational Church of Christ and became a licensed Minister to both the Atlanta, and Lewiston Michigan UCC. I recently finished as the sustaining pastor at the Atlanta UCC but remain available for pulpit supply.

I am now a full-time Seminarian, in my second year working toward a Master of Divinity. It should be noted that when I began my alternative path in discernment I was fortunate to have Rev. Dr. Paul Lance as my mentor and spent some time in Alpena. I am excited and looking forward to serving you in August.

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 a.m.
In Person and Online

Interim Minister:

Pastor Emeritus: Reverend Dr. H. Robert Case

Organist/Choir Director: Kat Tomaszewski

Treasurer: Denise Fusina

Office Administrator: Nancy Ross

Custodian: Mike LaMarre

Still Speaking

Newsletter of First Congregational United Church of Christ of Alpena

Dates to Celebrate

Birthdays



Ashley Wedge	August 6
Dave Zeller	August 12
Dixie Julian	August 14
Pricilla Homola	August 19
Heather Bodem	August 23

Anniversaries

Nathan & Kristin Barden	August 2
Ron & Lynn Borke	August 14
Dave and Lori Zeller	August 14
Bill & Dottie Haase	August 19
Jon & Megan Petty	August 20
Brian & Miranda Plume	August 20
Bob & Diana Kelly	August 27
Dan Kibbe & Lois Gibbs	August 30

