

**December  
2018**

# Still Speaking

*Newsletter of First Congregational United Church of Christ of Alpena*

## **Board of Directors:**

- **Dennis Artley, treasurer**
- **Blair Diamond**
- **Kathy Dempsey**
- **Boris Gerber**
- **Ann Gerow, vice chair**
- **Dottie Haase**
- **Vicky Lindsay**
- **Jim Mc Neil, chair**
- **Beth Petty**

## **Dates to Remember**

**Dec 8**

Ladies Christmas Luncheon

**Dec 10**

Board of Directors

**Dec 15**

**Christmas Carol Sing  
Along with Kat**

**Dec 16**

Special "Christmas Fund Offering" for Veterans of the Cross

**Dec. 24**

**Christmas Eve**

6:30 pm Music

7:00 pm Candlelight  
"Lessons  
& Carols"

8 pm Christmas Eve  
Reception

**24**

Friendship Room

**Dec. 25**

**Christmas Day  
(Office Closed)**



## **A Word from our Minister**

*Rev. Dr. Paul A. Lance*

By the time you read this, Patty and I will have returned from our trip to Southern California, having spent Thanksgiving with her Mom and others in our extended family. It will be only about two more weeks before I am back in the pulpit (Sunday, Dec. 16) after a busy and restful sabbatical. My books and sermons are now out of their boxes and onto shelves and in filing cabinets, well-ordered and easily accessible. I am very grateful to the church for affording me this break in my usual activities and the balance it has restored to my life.

I want to take this opportunity to publicly and sincerely thank the Rev. Eugene Bacon, retired Pastor from the First United Methodist Church of Alpena, for filling in so ably during my three-month absence. I know that his sermons have been thoughtful and inspiring, his presence calm and compassionate, his Bible Study leadership vigorous and enlightening, and his pastoral care of hospitalized members diligent. Thank you, Gene, for thirteen weeks of coverage of the pastoral care of this congregation. I am deeply grateful to you. Sincerely, Paul Lance

## **A Word from our Guest Minister:**

### **Share the Love**

*Rev. Gene Bacon*



There are so many precious Christmas memories. As a child I can recall hanging ornaments on the Christmas tree, singing Christmas carols, helping our mother frost and decorate Christmas cookies, the beautiful service on Christmas Eve. Then, of course, there were Christmas mornings when Santa's wonderful gifts arrived as if by magic.

There were also the Christmases with our own children, so many Christmas morning memories. On our first Christmas as parents, Karen and I purchased fancy Fisher price toys for our little girl (who was only 6 months old at the time), but she cared far more about the wrapping paper! One year when our young son was interested in dinosaur, especially Godzilla, he awoke on Christmas morning to discover a five foot tall inflated Godzilla guarding the Christmas tree. How excited he was!

**(Continued on page 2)**

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It's interesting now; however, when I look back. All the Christmases blend and merge. I can't even recall what happened to all the toys; my own childhood toys (were they given away?) or even our children's toys. Whatever happened to the five foot tall inflated Godzilla?

In a way it doesn't really matter. What does matter are the things that last - the love, peace, joy, and faith that are so much a part of the season. They all came to earth with that Babe born in the stillness of the night at Bethlehem. When that child was born; God's Self, God's Spirit, God's Love was birthed in human form. The wise men brought gifts, but the real gift was the Christ Child. The world would soon come to know a love unlike any it has seen before.

As Christians we are called to share that love. Our church provides plenty of opportunities: the SERRV bazaar, Thanksgiving baskets, the Mitten Tree, poinsettias to beautify our sanctuary, the Hanging of the Greens, Veterans of the Cross offering and of course opportunities to worship together during this festive season.

So share the love. Let the peace and joy and light of the Christ Child fill your life and the world around you again this Christmas season.

Grace and peace, Gene

P.S. It has been a wonderful privilege to serve as a substitute pastor while Rev. Lance has been on sabbatical leave. Thank you for your support and encouragement these past three months.



Dec. 1 Brian & Belinda Hanna 28 years

Dec. 27 Avery & Marcia Aten 49 years



**A grateful "Thank You" to the Lindsay's , for the wonderful family Harvest Dinner. Much work was put into the project and it was a successful event. You deserve a big "star"!**

**Thanks also to the entire crew who helped set up and clean up afterwards. Many hands make light work.**



## Christmas Fund Offering for “Veterans of the Cross”

*Kathy Dempsey, Mission Committee Chair*

Our joy at Christmas is a response to God's promise of new life through the birth of Jesus. It is a joy we are called to share widely, through our witness and gifts, both to loved ones and to distant neighbors.



You have the opportunity to be a part of a ministry that cares for the active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ through your participation in the annual “Christmas Fund” All-Church Offering for “Veterans of the Cross”.

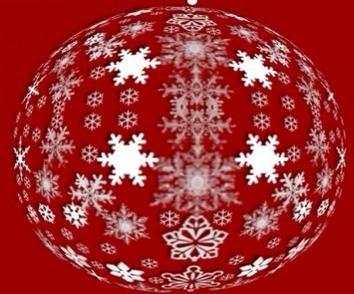
Your gift to the Christmas Fund on Sunday, Dec 30th, will help provide for the supplementation of small annuities, supplementation of health premiums, emergency grants, and provide Christmas “Thank You” gift checks, next December, to low-income church retirees.

Your gifts are needed more than ever to help the growing number of retirees whose low-income annuities make it difficult to meet increasing living costs. This is your opportunity to participate in God's promise of renewal by enabling this ministry of compassion and care.

Please know that any gift you make is truly appreciated and that it will brighten the life of one of God's servants who is facing a moment of personal need. Thank you.

### Celebrating the Birthdays of December

- |                      |                        |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| 12/8 Jan Snell       | 12/17 Clarence Rickard |
| 12/10 Jean Gilliland | 12/19 Robert Silver    |
| 12/13 Bill Dempsey   | 12/24 Sharon Stewart   |
| 12/15 Pat Leahy      | 12/28 John Mack        |



### Ladies Luncheon

*Dolly Zeller and Jan Snell*

Please mark your calendars and plan to join us for the **Christmas Ladies Luncheon** to be held in the Fellowship Hall on **Saturday, December 8th at 12:00 Noon. The cost is \$12.00.**

**Call Jan for reservations.** Please plan to pay when making your reservation. Jan and Lynne Stewart will be at coffee hour to collect money for the luncheon. We look forward to seeing you there.

Jan



## SERRV Saturday Sale

Marcia Aten and Belinda Aguirre

We had a good SERRV bazaar in October with lots of great help from volunteers new & experienced. Sales were below last year's record levels - which means we still have plenty of items, including new items we have added (and reduced prices on others) for our

### 11th annual December Downstairs Sale SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8, 10 AM to 2 PM

The sale will take place on the first floor instead of in Fellowship Hall. A few good helpers and a lot of good shoppers are needed! Please join us and bring a friend. Reminder slips are available at the care letter podium.



### An idea for Christmas Gifts

Christmas is just around the corner and I have the perfect stocking stuffer – dish cloths. These cloths are of great value, high quality and inexpensive. They are double layered knit, ravel proof, sanitary and made in the USA! Cost is \$2 each and are available in colors of red, blue, yellow, green and natural (profits help to defray the cost of altar supplies). Call Nancy Wedge, 356-4402 after 7 p.m. or send an email [wedge.nancy@gmail.com](mailto:wedge.nancy@gmail.com) to place your order.

## Christmas Eve Reception

We are in need of a Host for the Christmas Eve Reception.

If one is found. You will find sign-up sheets for the Christmas Eve Reception on the Care Letter podium.

We are in need of cookies, peanut brittle, fudge, cheese and crackers, and sweet breads for Monday, Dec. 24.



## The Mitten Tree

Diana Standen

A collection basket for children's mittens is by the display case in the hallway. Other items accepted are: hats, gloves, scarves, slippers, socks, and sweaters (any size). All the items collected will be donated to organizations such as Salvation Army or Trinity Church's Sunday Supper. Whether hand-made or purchased, your thoughtfulness is greatly appreciated.

We will be collecting items through Sunday, December 16. Thank you.



## Board of Directors November 2018 Meeting Highlights

Gerrie La Cross, Secretary

- Many positive comments for Max & Vicky for the Harvest Dinner. Excellent food and fellowship time.
- Also many positive comments to Rev. Karen Bacon on her sermon last Sunday.
- A review of the finances shows that we are in good shape. A motion was made to request funds from the Community Foundation from Capital Funds and the Jennie Kerr Restoration Fund. These funds will pay for boiler repairs, replacement of lights to LED fixtures in the hallway and offices, a new floor buffer, a printer, elevator repairs and 2 new file cabinets.
- First look at the 2019 budget. The Finance committee will be meeting in December to finalize the budget and will bring it to the Board to vote on at the December meeting.
- Discussion on five Comstock grants that were returned to the Board (Emerging Church Activities, First Church Seminars & Concerts, Dinners for 6 to 8, Church Blog/Forum and ACE-VBS for a total of \$15,080) . These items will be discussed at the budget meeting.
- Property Committee has contacted Leavesley Construction to come look at the front doors of the church.
- Worship Committee: Omega Electric is still working on screens and a sound system for the Sanctuary. The committee is also looking to purchase new magnetic name tags. Edith requested the Board look to form a membership committee to help new members feel welcome and help them get involved in the church. A team has begun to deep clean the nursery and sort through all the toys and the Christian Education room has been expanded and there is now a television and DVD player for the classroom. Church decorations will begin on Nov. 27 and be completed on Dec. 2. There will be a community Christmas Carol Sing Along with Kat on Dec. 15th. A chair person is needed for the Christmas Eve Reception.
- Mission Committee: Fifteen families received Thanksgiving Baskets this year on Nov 17th. There were cuts from the Comstock grants this year. The committee will be meeting to discuss how Local Mission and Human Needs Funds will be spent in 2019
- Stewardship Committee: Currently we have 47 pledges for a total of \$101,624 in General Fund and \$13,104 for Missions. Committee members will be making phone calls to those who have not yet responded to the pledge drive.
- Rev. Bacon reported on his visits to Sharon Stewart and others who have had medical issues this month. All is going well
- Charter will be in to install new phones and internet on Tuesday, Nov. 13.

## Sunday Hostess Help Needed

We have several Sunday's when additional hostess help is needed during Fellowship Time following Sunday Service.

If you would like to help out as a hostess for Sunday Fellowship—please contact Bill Haase @ 989-340-2123 or email dsbhaase@live.com for assignments and responsibilities.

Thanks Bill



## Our Newest Members

On Sunday, September 16th, We welcomed six new members into the congregation.

Please introduce yourself and help them feel welcome,



**Jan Canode, Jeffrey Mindock,  
John & Joyce Murphy, and  
Rev. Keith & Rev. Ginny Titus  
to the church where all are welcome!**

Isaiah 9:6-7

For to us a child is born,

To us a son is given;

And the government will be upon his shoulder,

And his name will be called

“Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

Of the increase of his government and of peace

There will be no end,

Upon the throne of David, and over his kingdom,

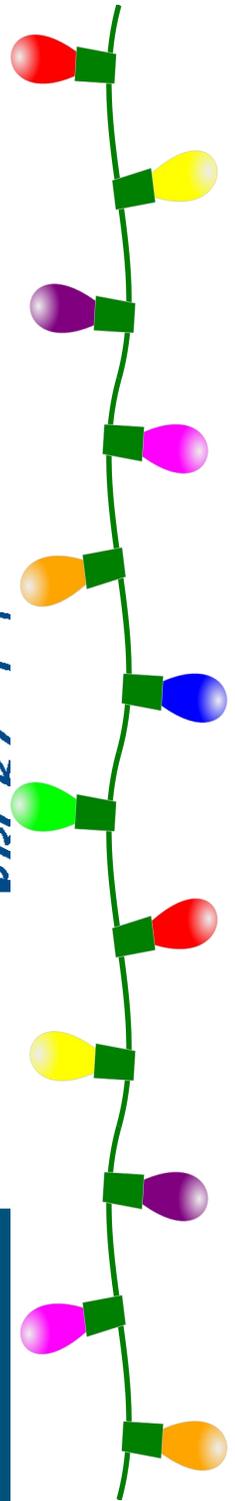
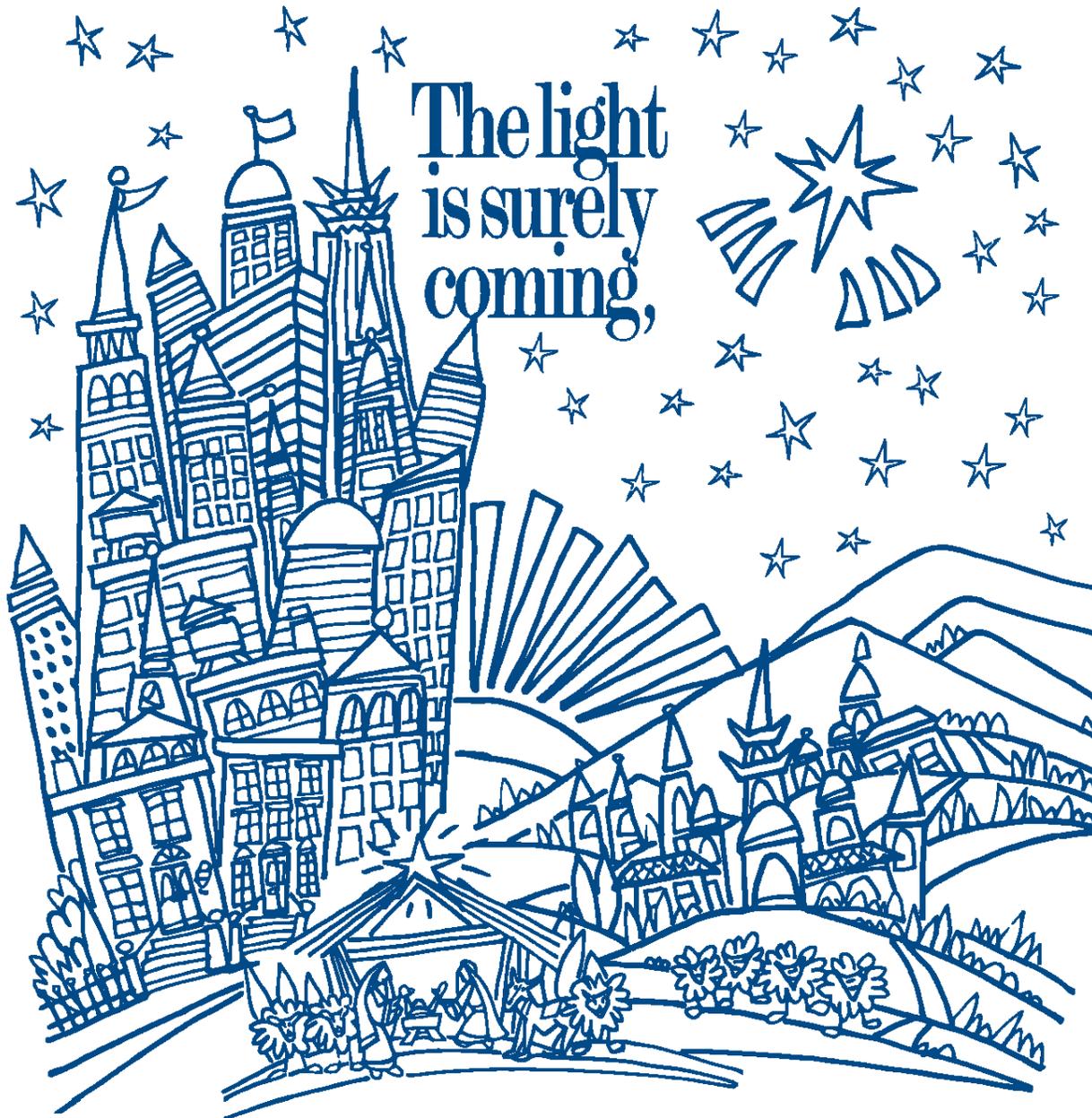
To establish it, and to uphold it

With justice and with righteousness

From this time forth and for ever more,

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.





Ted Dawson, Artist

2018  
**THE CHRISTMAS FUND**  
for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund



UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST

[www.christmasfund.org](http://www.christmasfund.org)



**The Pension Boards**  
United Church of Christ, Inc.  
WHERE FAITH AND FINANCE INTERSECT

**We will have this collection on Sunday, December 30, 2018**

*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.**

**Fellowship Time: 11:00 a.m.**

**Minister: Rev. Dr. Paul A. Lance III**

**Pastor Emeritus: Rev. Dr. H. Robert Case**

**Choir Director & Organist: Kat Tomaszewski**

**Treasurer: Denise Fusina**

**Secretary: Gerrie La Cross**

**Custodian: Mike LaMarre**

## *Still Speaking*

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# *Christmas Carols with Kat at the piano !*

*Come join in the fun on Saturday, December  
15th in Fellowship Hall. Songs, fellowship, snacks  
and drinks to bring in the Holiday Cheer.*

*We will start at 2:00 o'clock.*

*Community members welcome!*