

**March
2020**

Still Speaking

Newsletter of First Congregational United Church of Christ of Alpena

Board of Directors:

- **Dennis Artley, treasurer**
- **Bill Dempsey**
- **Blair Diamond**
- **Boris Gerber**
- **Ann Gerow, vice-chair**
- **Nancy Wedge**
- **Vicky Lindsay**
- **Jim Mc Neil, chair**
- **Beth Petty**

Dates to Remember

1

"Salt & Light" Singers
perform on our stage

4

Soup Supper and
Lenten Worship at
our church

8

Daylight Savings Time
begins

14

Rabbi Morrison leads
Shabbat service at
Temple Beth-El

15

Rabbi Morrison leads
community program
about the Passover

17

St. Patrick's Day

22

One Great Hour of
Sharing Special
Collection

A Word From Our Minister: Lent 2020

Rev. Dr. Paul A. Lance III

The seven-week season of "Lent" began on Ash Wednesday with a worship service at St. Paul Lutheran Church at which I was the guest preacher. Over 100 people in attendance received a smudge of ashes on their forehead to remind us of the suffering Jesus would endure on our behalf, and we also shared the bread and wine of communion.

Seven local churches took part in that worship service, as we will on every Wednesday between now and Holy Week. First Congregational will be the host on March 4, beginning with 16 crock-pots of homemade soup in Fellowship Hall at 6 pm. Father Joe from the All Saints Roman Catholic Parish will be our guest preacher. He will speak about "Jesus' Passion for Love" and Kat has gathered a "combined choir" to sing a rousing anthem at the 7:00 p.m. Lenten Worship Service. Please come!

My sermons will be about Jesus' Three Temptations in the Wilderness (March 1), Jesus' meeting with the Pharisee Nicodemus (March 8), and Jesus' conversation with a Samaritan woman at Jacob's well (March 15). Then Patty and I will be on a two week road-trip vacation. Our guest preacher on March 22 will be Rev. Toby Jones, former UCC minister at Gaylord's Congregational Church, and on March 29 Rev. Gene Bacon.

Looking ahead: April 5 will be "Palm Sunday", a day that recalls Jesus' much heralded arrival in Jerusalem at the start of Holy Week.

On Thursday evening, April 9, we will gather around a big cross-shaped table in Fellowship Hall to celebrate "Maundy Thursday", remembering Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples, his prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, his betrayal by Judas, arrest and trial by the Sanhedrin, and Peter's three-fold denials that all happened on that fateful Thursday night so long ago. We will offer numerous prayers and sing several old hymns as we share wine and olives and various breads with each other at the table. Please put Thursday, April 9, at 6:00 p.m. on your calendar and plan to come to this meaningful & memorable worship service.

The serious season of Lent ends with a rousing celebration of Easter on April 12. Our church hosts an Easter Sunrise Service out on the breakwall of the Small Boat Harbor at 6:45 am, followed by breakfast in the Alpena Yacht Club. Please put that date and time on your April calendar, too. May you enjoy the reflective time of Lent.

I'll see you in church.

Rev. Lance

Guest Rabbi Visiting Temple Beth-El Alpena, March 14 & 15

Temple Beth-El, 125 E. White Street, Alpena, is pleased to welcome back Rabbi Howard Morrison, the father of one of our members, who will once again bless us with his wit and wisdom. On Saturday, March 14, Rabbi Morrison will lead our Shabbat service, and at the luncheon, he will teach and lead Zemirot – classical Sabbath songs. On Sunday, March 15, Rabbi Morrison will host a Community Outreach program beginning with a question and answer period followed by a very informative seminar on Passover: “Get Ready for Passover - traditional and creative ways for making a memorable Seder and planting new memories for the future. A deeper understanding of the Passover Seder experience.”

Rabbi Howard Morrison, as the senior Rabbi of Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue in Toronto, leads prayer services; officiates lifecycle ceremonies including baby namings, weddings, and funerals; and offers pastoral care to its members. He previously held the position of president of the Toronto Board of Rabbis.



Seating is limited at both the Shabbat service and Community Outreach program so please call 989-595-3544 for reservations and important information. Temple Beth-El's Guest Rabbi program is sponsored in part by the generosity of the Ravitz Foundation Initiative for Michigan Small Jewish Communities as well as donations by Temple Beth-El members and friends.

Monday Bible Study to discuss “Jesus For President”

Back when John McCain was running against Barack Obama for President, two “emerging church” leaders **Shane Claiborne & Chris Haw** did a multi-city concert/speaking tour called “**Jesus For President**”. (They took the name from an Arlo Guthrie song from the 1930's: “If Jesus was our President and God alone our King.”) I have a DVD of that Bible-background **interactive sermon/concert** that we'll watch.

- (1) Before there were Kings and Presidents — 1 Samuel 8 describes what kings do.
- (2) A New Kind of Commander-in-Chief — If Jesus is Lord, that means Caesar is not.
- (3) When the Empire got baptized — “Dominant culture” today is like Babylon/Rome.

Come to the upstairs Conference Room on **Mondays at 10:00 a.m.** to be part of the discussion. See the “emerging church” in action!

Ladies' Luncheon

This month's ladies' luncheon will be on Friday, March 13th at the 19th Hole. Please come join our hosts June Perry and Jan Snell for some good food and even better fellowship! There will be a sign up sheet on the care letter podium outside the Sanctuary.



Kat's Music Ministry Newsletter Report

March 2020

I want to thank you all for making my first three years at the First Congregational UCC GREAT! They say it takes three years to fully learn and grow into a position and you have all been so supportive as I've found my way through the way things are done here. We've tried new things and we've kept some things the same. The only way to grow – is to be willing to try.

Last year, there were some praises and some concerns that were not disseminated to me. This year, I again would like to try something new – new to us – but not a new idea, by any means.

Matthew 18:15-20

- *“Now if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen, then take with you one or two others, that by the testimony of two or three witnesses every word may be established. ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.*
- *“Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.*
- *“Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are assembled in My name, there I am in their midst.”*

At the request of the Board, I would like to make sure you all know that you can **approach me directly** at any time and **I will always listen with an open mind and an open heart.** If you have a praise, I would love to hear it so we can continue to move in the right direction! ...and if you have a concern, I would love to hear it from you so I can ask the right questions and get the right information to remedy the situation to the best of my ability.

I am taking new steps to ensure that the lines of communication are wide open this year.

You can reach me by email: kat.tomaszewski@gmail.com

Or by cellphone, please leave a voicemail or send me a text: 989-255-8750

I would like to mention, the amount of communication I am going to strive for this year is different than years prior, but my efforts have not changed. I may be hired to work for the church, but I serve the Lord through the music ministry at this church and that is not an assignment I take lightly. I take into consideration many different things while performing my job duties here and I want to be sure you know that.

We all worship here together – and it is so important to me to make sure I am doing my best to serve YOU in your worship experience. That is why it is also extremely important to me that you know you can always approach me. Come up and see me before/after the service while I am up in the organ/choir loft, call me, text me, email me. I would be so happy to take the time to speak with you.

Please know that I am always here for you.

February Board Meeting Highlights

Bri Fastnaught, Secretary

Kat Tomaszewski, choir director and organist, will begin to share a monthly report each month with the Board. Kat shared an email sent from Gordon Nethercut, who has stepped down from the choir after 55 years of singing for the church, in which he thanks Kat and the choir for their ministry.

The Board welcomed its new member, Nancy Wedge, and officers were elected. Jim McNeil will serve as chairperson, Ann Gerow as vice chair, and Dennis Artley as treasurer.

The Scouts raised \$307 on Scout Sunday for Trinity Episcopal's Sunday Suppers. Temple Beth-El is hosting Nina Fine, a talented musician and ordained cantor, and is asking area churches for a \$250 show of support for a June 7th concert at Trinity Church. The Board agreed to show its support for this concert. The One Great Hour special collection will take place on March 22, along with a stone soup meal.

Rev. Lance will be taking a two week vacation from March 20th to April 2nd. Toby Jones, former minister for Gaylord UCC, will preach on March 22nd and Gene Bacon will preach the following Sunday, March 29th.

New members Sandy & Gary Jarmuzewski and Christin Sobeck & Jason Barbeau will be joining the church on Feb. 16th. Wyatt Smith's Eagle Scout ceremony will be held in Fellowship Hall on Feb. 23rd. The "Salt & Light" singers performance has been postponed to March 1st. Feb. 26th is Ash Wednesday and the first of the "Soup Supper" Lenten services. The Church hosts its soup supper on Wed. March 4th. On March 14th Rabbi Howard Morrison will lead Shabbat services at Temple Beth-El and on the 15th he will hold a community outreach class about "Passover". On April 9th we will hold a Maundy Thursday service with a light meal. April 10th is Good Friday and there will be a "tre ore" worship service at First United Methodist. On April 22nd and 29th and May 6th and 13th Rev. Lance and Bill Dempsey will lead discussions on basic economics. The United Northern Association "Spring Meeting" will be on Saturday, April 25th at Cheboygan UCC.

There will not be a Board meeting in March.

Thursday 1:00 p.m. Church History Class Topics

March 5 "Being a Roman Briton"

March 12 "Being Anglo-Saxon"

March 19 "Being a Viking Raider"

(three weeks off... March 26, April 2, and Maundy Thursday, April 9)

April 16 "Living Under Norman Rule"

April 23 "Being Medieval"

April 30 "Being Poor in the Middle Ages"

May 7 "Being a Medieval Woman"

May 14 "Being a Medieval Christian or Heretic" *(final class)*





One Great Hour of Sharing Offering Sunday, March 22

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 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 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 for a few good volunteers to bring bread.



ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING
SPECIAL OFFERINGS
HUNGER • DISASTER • DEVELOPMENT



Need some help with your taxes? AARP Tax Aide assistance is offered this tax season in Alpena. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays the assistance is offered at St. Paul Lutheran Church (for an appointment call 989-335-3728 between 3 and 6 pm on Monday, Tuesday, Friday or Saturday). On Thursdays the help is offered at the Senior Center (call 989-356-3585 for an appointment).

Monday Mid-day Movies (at Noon) in the Conference Room

March 2 – **“Invictus”** (2009 – 2 hours 13 minutes). Nelson Mandela (played by Morgan Freeman) was imprisoned 27 years for his heroic fight against apartheid. When he was elected President of South Africa, he rejected revenge, forgave his oppressors, and sought to promote national unity by getting the rugby team captain (Matt Damon) and his underdog squad to do the impossible and win the World Cup. Clint Eastwood directed this uplifting film about a team sport inspiring greatness.

March 9 – **“The Forgiven”** (2018 – 2 hours). When Archbishop Desmond Tutu (played by Forest Whitaker) is appointed to head a nationwide investigation called the “Truth and Reconciliation Commission”, he is summoned to a maximum-security prison by a notorious murderer (played by Eric Bana) who tests the limits of the priest’s ability to forgive. The film was directed by Roland Joffe (“The Mission”).

March 16 — **“The Great Debaters”** (2007— 2 hours) . Denzel Washington directs and stars with Forest Whitaker in this inspiring true story. Washington portrays a brilliant but politically radical debate team coach who uses the power of words to transform a group of underdog African American college students into an historical powerhouse that took on the Harvard elite.

(There will be no movies on March 23 & 30, while Rev. Lance is on vacation.)

April 6 — **“Freedom Writers”** (2007 — 2 hours). Hilary Swank stars in this gripping true story of inner-city (Long Beach, CA) kids raised on drive-by shootings and hard-core attitude, and the Wilson High School teacher Erin Gruwell, who gives them the one thing they need most: a voice of their own. Patty Lance is a graduate of Wilson High, and one scene in the film was shot near the Lance’s own house. In a school torn by violence and racial tension, this remarkable teacher battles an uncaring system in a fight to make the classroom matter in her students lives. A group of supposedly “unteachable” teens will discover the power of tolerance, reclaim their shattered lives, and change their world. Directed by Richard LaGravenese. PG-13.

Birthdays and **Anniversaries** in March

3/3 Grady Barden

3/5 Ty Barbeau

3/7 Wendy Bailey Graves

3/8 Beth Petty

3/9 Jim & Patty McNeil (24 years)

3/12 Gene Bacon

3/17 Jan Canode

Pat Labadie

3/20 Carol Knowlton

3/24 Nick Jarmuzewski

3/26 Belinda Hanna

3/27 Cindy Straley

Spencer Kibbe

Jill Bailey



LEFT: Rev. Keith & Rev. Ginny Titus perform Spoon River Anthology on February 9.

BELOW LEFT: The scouts that came to service for Scout Sunday pose with Rev. Lance and Boris Gerber, our liaison between the troops and the church.

BELOW: Another photo from Scout Sunday.



First Congregational United Church of Christ
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Office Hours: 9:00 am — 1:00 pm Monday — Thursday

Sunday Worship: 10:00 am

Minister: Rev. Dr. Paul A. Lance III
Pastor Emeritus: Rev. Dr. H. Robert Case
Choir Director/Organist: Kat Tomaszewski
Treasurer: Denise Fusina
Secretary: Bri Fastnaught
Custodian: Mike LaMarre

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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
United Church of Christ
Corner of Lockwood & Second

Salt & Light Singers

will perform on our Fellowship Hall Stage

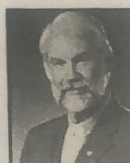
Sunday, March 1 at 2:00 p.m.

Open to the Public • No Charge

Eight homeschool girls and one Ella White boy (Gavin Barden) will perform eight lively and uplifting songs in a half-hour program. Please come to support them, and bring a couple neighbors.

Children will also like this program!

201 S. Second Ave. • Downtown Alpena
www.uccalpena.org • 989-356-1795



Rev. Paul Lance,
Minister

Wed., March 4th

**Lenten Soup
Supper here in
Fellowship Hall
at 6:00 p.m.,
followed by
Community
Lenten Worship
Service at 7 pm
with
Father Joe!**

