

May
2025

Still Speaking

Newsletter of First Congregational United Church of Christ of Alpena



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Nancy Wedge

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From the Pastor's Desk

Pastor Dick Hotchkin

There once was a brother who had a younger sister. The children were afraid of their shadows. The boy was so terrified that every time he went outside, he would run as fast as he could to get away from his relentless pursuer. Constantly worrying that his shadow would catch him brought the boy to an early grave. Even though the sister had the same fear, she lived to a ripe old age. Every time the girl went outside, she would rest in the shade of every tree that she passed. The longer the girl rested, the longer the shadow stayed away. The sister had found the secret of quiet rest, while her brother ate nothing but the bread of hurry and worry.

If we are always on the move, how can we expect God to find a time or a place to speak to us? Many individuals seem to be afraid of silence. Some people don't want long silences for prayer in a worship service. When alone at home, some folks avoid silence by keeping the TV on. When alone in the car, the radio helps many individuals wipe out silence. Jonathan Tauler (ca. 1300-1361), a German preacher, once suggested that perhaps the main reason that we human beings avoid silence is because silence is where God can come and speak to us. To be in the presence of God can be an unsettling thing for some people.

Dr. Albert Schweitzer once said, "It is not enough merely to exist. It is not enough to say, 'I am earning enough to live and support my family. I do well. I am a good father. I go to church.' That's all very well. But there is more to life than this. There is time alone with God."

Take time, slow down, and rest, so that you can hear God speak to you in the silence of your heart. Take comfort in these words of the Prophet Isaiah: "For thus said the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength." [Isaiah 30:15]

Membership Declaration Cards

Membership Declaration Cards were distributed at the recent Annual Meeting held on January 26th.

**"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 re-establish good and regular standing by signing such a card at any time."**

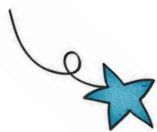
Membership cards will be available on the table at the back of the sanctuary, by calling the church and requesting one, or by stopping in the office during regular business hours.

Days to Celebrate



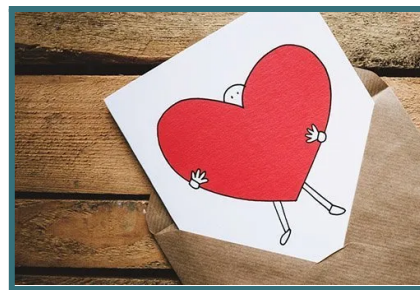
May Birthdays

Rev. Dick Hotchkin ~ 2nd
Ann Gerow ~ 5th
Debra Dempsey ~ 21st
Peggy DiNegro ~ 29th
Rev. Bob Case ~ 30th



May Anniversaries

Gene & Karen Bacon ~ 11th



Please consider purchasing or donating to the purchase of Birthday and Anniversary cards. You may drop your donation off at the office during regular business hours. Thank you!



Days to Remember



Friday	2nd	Great World Religions Class	10:30 a.m.
Sunday	4th	Worship Service	10:00 a.m.
Monday	5th	Search Committee Meeting	4:30 p.m.
		Worship Committee Meeting	5:30 p.m.
Friday	9th	Great World Religions Class	10:30 a.m.
Sunday	11th	Worship Service	10:00 a.m.
Monday	12th	Search Committee Meeting	4:00 p.m.
		Board Meeting	5:30 p.m.
Friday	16th	Great World Religions Class	10:30 a.m.
Sunday	18th	Worship Service	10:00 a.m.
Friday	23rd	Great World Religions Class	10:30 a.m.
Sunday	25th	Worship Service	10:00 a.m.

Feed-A-Family

Bill Haase

Food pantry needs:

- TUNA, HAMBURGER & CHICKEN HELPERS
- BOXED POTATOES (AU GRATIN, SCALLOPED, CHEESEY)
- PANCAKE MIX & SYRUP
- PUDDING (4 PACK JELLO OR FRUIT CUPS)
- PEANUT BUTTER & JELLY

Four bags were donated during the month of April! Feel free to use the bags on the table in the middle hallway for your shopping needs.





May Laity Schedule

	Greeters	Ushers	Lay Readers	Fellowship	Altar Guild	Communion	Counter(s)
4th	Penny Anderson Jim Straley	Ashley Wedge Nancy Wedge	Marilyn Kettler	Bill & Dottie Haase (All Month)	Nancy Wedge (All Month)	Janet Artley	
11th	Ann Gerow Dan Kibbe	Max Lindsay Vicky Lindsay	Lori Mayer				Dennis/Janet Artley
18th	Debbie Dempsey Bill Dempsey	Penny Anderson Jim Straley	Bill Dempsey				
25th	Ann Diamond Blair Diamond	Gary & Sandy Jarmuzewski	Kathy Thomas				Nancy Wedge

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



Sunday Fellowship Hosts Needed!

Connecting with others in fellowship is a wonderful way to celebrate God, share His love, and grow together in faith.

We are looking for Fellowship Hosts for June, July, and August. If you are able to assist, please call the office or sign up on the roster located in the middle hallway.

Can't commit to the whole month? No problem — just sign up for the weeks you're available! Thank you for helping us create a warm and welcoming space for all.

Blanket Sunday

Mission Committee

Blanket Sunday Share the Warmth

On May 11th, we will observe **Blanket Sunday**, a special opportunity for our congregation to partner with **Church World Service** in providing warmth and comfort to people facing hardship around the world. Whether recovering from disaster, fleeing violence, or struggling with poverty, a simple blanket can offer warmth, shelter, and a tangible reminder that they are not alone.

For someone who has lost everything due to a natural disaster, displacement, or poverty, a simple **blanket** can offer warmth, protection, and a sense of comfort and hope.

How You Can Help:

- A gift of **\$10** provides a warm blanket to someone in need.
- Special offering envelopes will be included in the service on **May 11th**.
- All gifts will be sent directly to Church World Service to support their ongoing disaster relief efforts.

Let's join with UCC congregations across the country in making a difference—**one blanket at a time**.

More information will be shared at worship service, or contact the office (989) 358-1795 for more information. Thank you for your compassion and generosity.

CWS BLANKETS

Blanket the World in Love

Blanketing the world in love is easy when people of faith unite through the Church World Service (CWS) Blankets and Kits ministry. Together, we can offer comfort, hope and warmth to our neighbors during their most challenging times.

Imagine the impact of your compassion. Each blanket and kit serves as a tangible expression of God's love—sharing warmth on a chilly night, relief in a crisis and a reminder that someone truly cares.



Join other generous donors and share tangible expressions of love with our neighbors in need:

- \$10** Provides a CWS Blanket to someone in need.
- \$25** Provides a CWS Blanket and a CWS Hygiene Kit, offering warmth and essential supplies.
- \$60** Family Bundle! Provides blankets and hygiene kits for an entire family, ensuring that they have what they need during challenging times.



God of hope and promises, we pray by sharing these blankets and kits that God's love will be spread far and wide.

Donate today! Give cash, write a check payable to CWS Blankets or visit cwsblankets.org/donate

"And when we take your gifts to those who need them, they will thank God."

-2 Corinthians 9:11



CWS

cwsblankets.org

Board Notes from April

- ❖ The Board received a thank you note from the North Eastern Michigan Rehabilitation and Opportunity Center (NEMROC) for the generous donation which will help those individuals hired with disabilities.
- ❖ Treasurer, Denise Fusina, reported on financial reports for March. She also presented an Internal Audit & Financial Review Report for the 1st quarter for 2025. The audit, conducted on April 14th, noted all records were balanced, detailed and neatly organized. A procedure to complete a quarterly Special Funds audit is in process. In addition, the Board voted to apply funds left from the LARCC account in the amount of \$1,289 to the financial needs for the Search Committee.
- ❖ The Board discussed the recent basement flooding during the ice storm power outage. In addition, the consistent leak in the elevator needs to be addressed. The Board will seek architectural consulting relative to redesigning the roof line in that area.
- ❖ The Board voted to approve a lease for an in-town rental that is available at the end of April. Arrangements for Pastor's move are well under way.
- ❖ The Search Committee has been meeting regularly. Reverend Lawrence Richardson offered great information during his meeting with the committee. The group's submissions to compile the Church Profile are being submitted. The committee is working to determine and finalize the top five qualities we will seek in a new Settled Minister.

Treasurer's Report

Denise Fusina

Report as of March 31, 2025

<u>Giving:</u>	<u>Pledge</u>	<u>vs</u>	<u>Received</u>
Mar	\$10,417		\$ 4,298
YTD	31,251		57,199

As of the end of the first quarter, we are ahead of our budget target. We planned on a balanced budget (+\$865.00), and we are currently at positive \$3,468.00.

Reaching out and helping others is a vital part of our mission ministry.

We are proud to be a "5 for 5" congregation, which means we support all five of the United Church of Christ (UCC) denomination offerings:

- **Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM)**
- **Neighbors in Need**
- **The Christmas Fund**
- **One Great Hour of Sharing**
- **Strengthen the Church**

In addition to these, we also participate in other meaningful initiatives such as the **Blanket Fund** and the **Heifer Project**. Through all of these special collections, we are able to reach out to our world family.

Locally, we serve our community through special collections and outreach programs, including:

- **Change is Good** – supporting causes like *Hope Shores Alliance* (March focus)
- **Feed a Family**
- **Call Us for Help** assistance program



VANCO
FAITH

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

**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: Leslie Reynolds
Custodian: Mike LaMarre**

Phone: (989) 356-1795
Website: <http://uccalpena.org>
Email: officeuccalp@gmail.com
Office Hours: 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM
Monday - Thursday

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spring
blessings