

## Board of Directors

- Blair Diamond, Chairperson
- Deborah Butler, Vice-Chairperson
- Dennis Artley, Treasurer
- Bill Dempsey
- Boris Gerber
- Sandy Jarmuzewski
- Vicky Lindsay
- Tammy Veasy
- Nancy Wedge

## Dates to Remember

June 5  
Worship Service  
Pentecost Sunday  
and  
Congregational  
Conversations  
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June 12  
Worship Service  
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June 14  
Congregational  
Conversations  
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June 19  
Worship Service  
and  
Happy Father's  
Day!  
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June 26  
Worship Service  
and  
50 Year Member  
Celebration

## **Gray Areas**

*Reverend Eugene Bacon*

So much in life seems to be approached from an either/or perspective. Is a person bad or good? Are we liberal or conservative, Democrat or Republican, Catholic or Protestant, religious or secular, pro-life or pro-choice, supportive or not supportive of LGBTQ rights? Do we believe in vaccinations or not? Do we believe in wearing masks or not? Do we believe in climate change or not? Do we believe in science or not? Wherever we see ourselves on these issues we suspect people on the other side are judging us.

The Gospel of John uses these either/or dichotomies frequently. It speaks of light/darkness, life/death, truth/falsehood, spirit/flesh whenever it tries to hammer home the seriousness surrounding important faith issues. Perhaps this is because dichotomies like these are powerful literary devices. This is especially so in fantasy adventure stories, like the Lord of the Rings trilogy. Even a casual reader of Tolkien's books knows without a doubt that Sauron is evil while Gandalf is good.

Still, despite their usefulness from a literary view point, I wonder if these either/or dichotomies are always helpful. Isn't it true that we may be mostly good but still occasionally do bad things? Perhaps we see ourselves as mostly liberal yet are drawn to certain conservative principles or vice versa. Maybe we believe in science in general and climate change in particular, but question vaccinations. Polar opposites may be helpful in making certain points, but what about the in between places, all of the shades of gray **between** light and darkness?

In the synoptic Gospels, the Pharisees and Sadducees seem to represent the either/or approach. Either one obeys the Sabbath laws **completely** or not. Jesus says to them "The Sabbath is made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27), and is willing to break some of the minor Sabbath rules. The Pharisees know that the punishment for adultery is death by stoning, but Jesus forgives a woman caught in adultery and says "Go and sin no more" (John 8:11). Again Jesus seems to recognize that exceptions, extenuating circumstances, and gray areas exist in life and acts accordingly. He also suggests that we are too quick to judge and place people in one box or another, when in reality they may be in some gray area in between. He once said simply, "Judge not, lest you be judged" (Matthew 7:1).

I was impressed by the Welcoming Committee gathering because it encouraged everyone to share thoughts, concerns and feelings **without** judgment. Those attending were gathered in a circle and given a talking stick. Whoever held the stick could speak freely. No one was allowed to interrupt. In fact, we were told simply to listen attentively and respectfully. When someone else was given the stick they were told not to attack the ideas of anyone else, but simply to share their own thoughts on the statement under consideration. I found it quite interesting to hear the stories and ideas different people shared. If you haven't had the opportunity to attend one of these sessions please give it your serious consideration. I suspect that we will discover new things about each other, our church, and the way Jesus would have us go. I doubt very much that everything will be either black or white, but some complex combinations of gray.

Blessings, Rev. Gene



## Strengthen the Church Special Offering

Missions Committee

The Strengthen the Church offering supports the expansion of ministry and growth of United Church of Christ local congregations. Your support of this offering will help the UCC fulfill its commitment to creating a just world for all by investing in new ministries and practices that meet the emerging needs of local communities. As God calls our congregations to be the church in new ways, your generosity will plant new churches, awaken new ideas in existing churches, and develop the spiritual life in our youth and young adults.



## All Together!

Thank you for your continued support of this vital United Church of Christ ministry. In addition to contributions at church on Sunday, donations may be mailed to the church office.

## Seeking Committee Members

Board of Directors



Calling all First Congregational United Church of Christ members – If you are interested in serving on one of the following board-appointed committees, please call the church office (989-356-1795), Blair Diamond, Board Chair (989-354-4714), or Deborah Butler, Board Vice-Chair (989-255-2812):

Budget/Finance Committee  
Comstock Committee  
Counters Committee  
Investment Committee  
Missions Committee

Personnel Committee  
Property Committee  
Stewardship Committee  
Worship Committee

Thank you for considering to assist with these key, integral panels in service of our church family.

## Rotating Reverends

Judy Suszek, Office Administrator



Our transitional ministers, Reverend Bob Case and Reverend Gene Bacon will share duties during the month of June. Reverend Case is scheduled to preach the first two Sundays, and Reverend Bacon is scheduled to preach the last two Sundays.

As always, to reach Reverend Case you may call him directly at 989-657-0477, and to reach Reverend Bacon you may call him directly at 989-340-0358, or simply leave a message at the church office, 989-356-1795.



Far up in the deep blue sky, great white clouds are floating by.  
All the world is dressed in green, many happy birds are seen.  
Roses bright and sunshine clear, show that lovely June is here.

~F. G. Sanders

## We Celebrate Our Fifty Year Members

Worship Committee

Please join us Sunday, June 26 to celebrate our fifty year members at the 10:00 worship service followed by a special reception in the Fellowship Hall to honor these special people.

<i>Dennis Artley</i>	<i>1962</i>	<i>Chris McCoy</i>	<i>1963</i>
<i>Janet Artley</i>	<i>1962</i>	<i>Mary Minnick</i>	<i>1966</i>
<i>Lillian Banas</i>	<i>1956</i>	<i>Vernie Nethercut</i>	<i>1962</i>
<i>Joe Beland</i>	<i>1963</i>	<i>James Park</i>	<i>1950</i>
<i>Kay Beland</i>	<i>1963</i>	<i>Carl Silver</i>	<i>1963</i>
<i>Richard Bloom</i>	<i>1959</i>	<i>Robert Silver</i>	<i>1962</i>
<i>Alison Bloom-Storey</i>	<i>1953</i>	<i>Janet Southwell</i>	<i>1965</i>
<i>Jeannine Boyce</i>	<i>1955</i>	<i>Jere Standen</i>	<i>1957</i>
<i>Joan Chrzan</i>	<i>1950</i>	<i>Bonnie Watkins</i>	<i>1962</i>
<i>*Ann Diamond</i>	<i>1972</i>	<i>Nancy Wedge</i>	<i>1970</i>
<i>Blair Diamond</i>	<i>1964</i>	<i>Rebecca Wells</i>	<i>1971</i>
<i>Jean Gilliland</i>	<i>1956</i>	<i>**Dick Wilson</i>	<i>1940</i>
<i>Dixie Julian</i>	<i>1950</i>	<i>David Zeller</i>	<i>1966</i>
<i>Herb Knowlton</i>	<i>1958</i>	<i>Dolly Zeller</i>	<i>1951</i>

\* Denotes newest member — \*\* Denotes longest member

Congratulations  
One and All!



We Celebrate  
You!

### Shout Out to Graduate —

Congratulations to **Sarah Beland**, graduating May 26 with a Masters Degree in Education from Harvard University. We wish you much success in all you do! Sarah is the daughter of Steve & Fay Beland, and granddaughter of Joe & Kay Beland.



## Historical Committee Organizes

*Deborah Butler, Board of Directors*

### Birth of a Town, Birth of a Congregation *A narrative shared from our 125th Celebration Booklet*

The Village of Fremont, changed to Alpena Feb. 9, 1859, was founded Nov. 26, 1856 with the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Carter and their daughter, Mary Lovina, as permanent residents.

In 1857, a number of persons arrived in the Village to organize the Thunder Bay region for lumbering. These people were mostly from the Eastern States and were church-minded. At that time the total population of the entire County was about one hundred.

The first public meeting for the study of the Bible in the Village, of which we have any record, was held in 1857, less than a year after its founding, at the River Street home of Daniel Carter. Joseph K. Miller acted as teacher with Miss Mary Lovina Carter assisting. Five children of the families of Joseph S. Irwin and Cyrus Erwin attended. These meetings were continued until the year 1860, with an occasional sermon being read to those present.

In the spring of 1860, a Sunday School was organized with James K. Lockwood Superintendent, William H. Potter Treasurer and Librarian, and Abram Hopper Secretary.

Joseph K. Miller requested the Congregational Association of Michigan to send a minister to Alpena to survey the religious situation. Rev. William W. Robson of Lexington, MI was sent and in June of 1860 he preached the first sermon ever given in Alpena. The service was held in a room of the Miller and Fletcher building at the corner of Second and Water Streets.

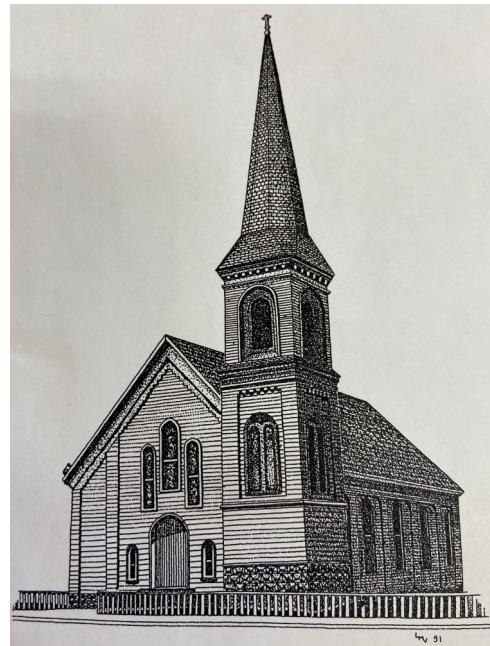
During the visit of Rev. Robson, \$300 was subscribed to secure a minister, but no choice of a church denomination could be made as there were several denominations represented among the one hundred inhabitants of the county.

On Sept. 5, 1860, at the request of the leaders in the church movement, Rev. Charles G. Bisbee and wife of Oberlin, Ohio arrived in Alpena and on Sunday Sept. 9, 1860, Rev. Bisbee preached his first sermon in the room of the Miller and Fletcher store building used for court purposes and other public gatherings. He took charge of the Sunday School and preached twice each Sunday and acted as clerk and janitor. He augmented his salary of \$300 per year by teaching school and giving music lessons. He served until 1864, his pastorate being of outstanding achievement, as there was so little with which to work and so much to be done.

On Jan. 14, 1862, at a meeting of the Christian people of the village, the matter of the organization of a church was discussed and it was decided that "Whereas the Christian people of Alpena, Michigan---having some from various denominations--feel it a privilege and duty to unite ourselves in a church relation, that we therefore adopt a Constitution, Confession of Faith and Covenant, as a basis for a church organization." The name of the church is to be "First Congregational Church of Alpena" with the customary dual organization of Church and Society.

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\*For all who are interested in becoming part of this short-term board of directors ad-hoc committee to share the rich history of our congregation, your assistance and input are welcome. We'd love to have you join us. Contact Deborah Butler 989-255-2812 or email [deborah.lynne53@gmail.com](mailto:deborah.lynne53@gmail.com) or plan to attend a brief organizational meeting June 12 following worship in the Board Room about 11:15 am.



First Church Facility on Current Site

1868–1892

## Congregational Conversations Commence

Welcoming Committee



On Sunday, May 15th twenty-one members participated in the first of a series of Congregational Conversations hosted by the Welcoming Committee. During a lunch prepared by Jay and Marilyn Kettler, all three table groups selected the same topic for discussion, "What do we mean when we say whoever you are and wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here?" We listened to each other in a "sharing circle" as each spoke equally and uninterrupted. Participants gained a better understanding of what each person thinks and believes concerning the future of our church.

Future Congregational Conversations will include the option for virtual participation, with tentative dates set for Sunday, June 5 at 11:30am and Tuesday, June 14 at 6:00pm. We encourage everyone to participate with the goal to recognize, accept, and understand our differences in open and respectful exchange of personal experiences and knowledge.

To sign up for the June gatherings, please call or email the church office (989-356-1795, officeucalp@gmail.com) or complete the sign-up forms at the back of the sanctuary. If you are uncertain about sharing in these conversations, please contact any member of the Welcoming Committee, or speak to prior participants in the conversations.

### A PRAYER FOR ALL FATHERS AND THOSE WHO ARE FATHER FIGURES AND ALL MEN WHO STRIVE TO REFLECT CHRIST'S LOVE

*Heavenly Father,  
You entrusted your Son Jesus, the child of Mary,  
to the care of Joseph, an earthly father.  
Bless all fathers as they care for their families.  
Give them strength and wisdom, tenderness and patience;  
support them in the work they have to do, protecting those who look  
to them, as we look to you for love and salvation, through Jesus  
Christ our rock and defender. Amen.*

**Community Announcement—The Martin Luther King Day Committee is planning a Juneteenth event and all members and friends of First Congregational UCC are invited.**

Remembering the Past  
1869



#### Knowing Better is Doing Better

Saturday, June 18, 2022

10:00 A.M. ~ 1:00 P.M.

Alpena County Library

Judith Stillion Conference Room

This Photo by Unknown

*Light morning refreshments and a post-presentation box lunch to share over conversation will be served. Please Register by: June 12, 2022. Registrations and questions should be submitted to: [abelovedcommunity.alpena@gmail.com](mailto:abelovedcommunity.alpena@gmail.com)*

**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  
Office Hours: 9:00 am – 1:00 pm, Monday – Thursday

**Sunday Worship: 10:00 a.m.  
In person and Online**

**Transitional Pastors: Rev. Dr. H. Robert Case  
and Rev. Eugene Bacon**  
**Organist/Choir Director: Kat Tomaszewski**  
**Treasurer: Denise Fusina**  
**Office Administrator: Judy Suszek**  
**Custodian: Mike LaMarre**

*Still Speaking*

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

## **June Celebrations**

### Birthdays

Caitlin Borke	June 2	James McNeil	June 11	Jeffrey Gerow	June 21
Carol Lund	June 2	Brandon Borke	June 11	Levi Straley	June 22
Pat Garant	June 4	Dolly Zeller	June 15	Emeline Hanna	June 23
Ferrol Osgood	June 4	Carl Silver	June 16	Olivia Lindahl	June 23
Judy Cook	June 5	Ann Diamond	June 17	Judith Case	June 24
Noah Modrzynski	June 5	Lynne Stewart	June 19	Jared Plume	June 25
Karen Bacon	June 7	Sonny Chrzan	June 19	Gavin Barden	June 29
Curtis Davis	June 8				

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!

### Anniversaries

Gary & Sandy Jarmuzewski	June 1	9 Yrs	Roger & Janice Snell	June 18	67 Yrs
Sharon & Clarence Rickard	June 2	43 Yrs	Edith & Boris Gerber	June 19	46 Yrs
Joe & Kay Beland	June 4	71 Yrs	Bob & Judith Case	June 21	53 Yrs
Herbert & Carol Knowlton	June 12	51 Yrs	Chris & Julie McCoy	June 21	52 Yrs
Steve & Jill Bailey	June 14	53 Yrs	Joe & Pat Garant	June 26	2 Yrs

CONGRATULATIONS!