

July  
2022

# Still Speaking

Newsletter of First Congregational United Church of Christ of Alpena

## 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

July 3  
Worship Service  
~~~

July 4  
Happy Independence  
Day!  
(Office Closed)  
~~~

July 8  
Ladies Luncheon  
~~~

July 10  
Worship Service  
~~~

July 11  
Board of Directors  
Meeting  
~~~

July 17  
Worship Service  
~~~

July 24  
Worship Service  
Congr. Conversations  
~~~

July 31  
Worship Service



## What Good is the Church?

Reverend Dr. H. Robert Case

*Now you are the Body of Christ and individually members of it. ~1 Corinthians 12:27*

The past two years have been strange for many of us as we create a new way of doing “church”. It has not only been the church, but also many other public institutions, from grocery stores to public education. Today I am reflecting on what has happened to our understanding of “church”.

Slowly we are returning to “new normal”. Our Board of Directors and committees are planning on being back to the “new normal” by September. But what exactly does that mean? I know many people have become comfortable watching Sunday services on YouTube and Facebook. We all know there is a lot more to church than Sunday services. There are so many things that seem missing in our church life. A church is a “faith community” or as many of you describe, your “Spiritual Home.”

My major question is how do we reconstitute our sense of community gathered and scattered? We need to find out how we can incorporate those we do not know who watch us online. However, my immediate question is how do we become community amid all this radical change? When we worship online at any time we want, we do not worship together, and we become fragmented. I think online worship is important, especially for those who are homebound, as it brings them closer to the community; and it is an important way of reaching those who may be interested in the church. However, online worship can become too individualistic.

When I think of the church, it is not the building that comes into mind, but the people who form the Community of Faith and how they support one another. How do we recover that sense of friendship, support, and closeness for which this church is known?

I can only start by mentioning words like Empathy, Compassion, Courage, and Love. Previously, there were a lot of common ministries going on all the time that we were not always aware of. The interaction we shared as the Body of Christ just came normally. We were able to celebrate the joys, concerns, and lives of each other. As the scripture says, we are the body of Christ and each of us are individual members of it wherever we may find ourselves. We were physically there when someone experienced a loss, we were there as we baptized children, and so much more. It is hard to show compassion without being physically present. We believe in “incarnation”; the making of faith real in the body. I am very impressed with how our members have dealt creatively with so much change. Now I think we need to be just as creative in finding safe ways to reconstitute our understanding of community.

The following passage mentions “consolation” almost too many times, I think, in just a few verses. However, it is difficult to be consoling when we are not present with each other. As we continue to return to the “new normal”, help us

(Continued on Page 2)

## What Good is the Church?

Reverend Dr. H. Robert Case

(Continued from Page 1):

think together how we can be a Community of Faith in a new era.

2 Corinthians 1:

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God. For just as the sufferings of Christ are abundant for us, so also our consolation is abundant through Christ. If we are being afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation; if we are being consoled, it is for your consolation, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we are also suffering. Our hope for you is unshaken; for we know that as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our consolation.*

Grace and Peace, Reverend Bob

## Ukraine Disaster Relief

A Letter From United Church of Christ

June 1, 2022

Dear Friends at First Congregational Church:

*Thank you for your generous donation to the United Church of Christ to support disaster relief in Ukraine. Your gift of \$2,000 was received on 4/25/2022. Through your gift, families that have been displaced and are in need of shelter and basic necessities will receive support.*

*Hand in hand with our Partners in Service and other volunteers, congregations, and conferences, UCC Disaster Ministries seeks to serve families and communities by identifying and meeting unmet needs and providing spiritual and emotional support.*

*Your love of neighbor will be made tangible through your gift. With the help of our global partners, you will provide welcome, shelter, and respite for families in local and international communities. Through your giving, those in need will be provided with spiritual support and physical resources to rebuild their lives.*

*United in prayer, action, and giving, we stand as a people of faith in love and compassion. Thank you again for spreading God's hope, peace, and love through your financial assistance as the United Church of Christ continues to build a just world for all.*

*In faith,*

*Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer, General Minister and President*

*United Church of Christ, 1300 East 9th St., Suite 1100, Cleveland, OH 44114*

## Pastor Pivot

Judy Suszek, Office Administrator



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



## We Celebrate Our Fifty Year Members

Worship Committee

On Sunday, June 26, we honored those who have been members of our church for fifty years or more. Seventeen of our twenty-eight fifty-year members were present (in-person or virtually) for our 10am worship service and the following reception. What a pleasure it was to share memories and fellowship with these wonderful church members!



The Worship Committee would like to thank the fellowship hour hosts, Joan and Sonny Chrzan for table décor and cleanup, Penny Anderson for set up and cleanup, and Dottie and Bill Haase for ordering the cake, preparing the fruit, setting up and clean up. Your hard work and extra effort in making our Fifty Year Member celebration a success are greatly appreciated!



Congratulations  
One and All!



## Choir Breaks for Summer

Thanks for the Music!

Following their June 26 worship service grand finale, our choir is taking a well-deserved summer break. Many thanks to all choir members for sharing your artistic talents with us, for enhancing our worship services, and for making a “joyous sound unto the Lord”! We look forward to your autumn return.



## Fellowship Hosts Needed

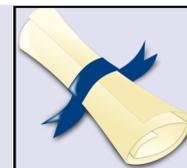
Fellowship Hour Team



**URGENT**— Fellowship hosts are needed for July and August. Please complete the sign-up sheet at the back of the sanctuary or call Bill Haase at 989-916-4104 for more information.

## Shout Out to Graduates —

Congratulations to **Emily Nicole Artley** who has graduated with honors from Loundes High School in Valdosta, Georgia. Emily is the daughter of Scott and Nina Artley and the granddaughter of Dennis and Janet Artley. She plans to attend Valdosta State University with a major in Accounting. Emily, we wish you much success in all you do!



Congratulations to **Madi Speaks** who graduated from Alpena High School in the top ten percent of her class. She is the granddaughter of Mary Minnick and the daughter of Jennifer and Scott Speaks. Wishing you much success, Madi!

## Celebrating 160 Years Serving Christ and His People

Historical Committee

### A Chronological History of First Congregational Church of Alpena (1862-1932) ~ Excerpts from the 125th Anniversary Book

#### First Congregational Church of Alpena Church Organized March 2, 1862

On Sunday, March 2, 1862, First Congregational Church of Alpena was regularly organized with the following Charter Members:

- Rev. Charles G. Bisbee, by letter, from the First Congregational Church, Oberlin, Ohio.
- Samuel E. Hitchcock, by letter, from the First Congregational Church, Sandusky, Ohio.
- Semantha Hitchcock, by letter, from the First Congregational Church, Sandusky, Ohio.
- Julia F. Farwell, by letter, from the First Congregational Church, Sandusky, Ohio.
- Elizabeth Mooney, by letter, from the Presbyterian Church, Birmingham, Michigan.
- Emily H. Plough, by letter, from the Presbyterian Church, Bay City, Michigan.
- Benjamin C. Hardwick, by letter, from the Evangelical Church, Quincy, Massachusetts.
- Lydia J. Martin, by Profession of Faith and Baptism.

Samuel E. Hitchcock and Hubbard Trowbridge were elected as the first Deacons and Rev. Charles G. Bisbee was elected Clerk and Treasurer.

The companion organization, **The First Congregational Society of Alpena, was organized**

**March 3, 1862**, with the following being elected as officers: Moderator, Rev. Charles G. Bisbee, Secretary and Treasurer, Benjamin C. Hardwick. Trustees, Samuel E. Hitchcock, Joseph K. Miller, Martin Minton, and George Bundy.

**1865** - Services were held in the new "Deacon's Court House" built by Samuel E. Hitchcock on the site of the present Centennial Building, corner of First Street and Washington Avenue.

**August 12, 1865** - The Ladies Benevolent Sewing Circle was organized with Semantha Hitchcock as Directress (the forerunner of Women's Fellowship). Paid \$194 toward the Pastor's salary and \$500 toward the original church building.

**Sept 3, 1865** - George N. Fletcher donated the lot on the corner of Second and Lockwood streets. The committee was authorized to "Clear the same for building and to procure the necessary materials and have them placed on the ground so that construction can begin next year".

**Oct. 4, 1868** - After a struggle for funds, the church building was finally completed and dedicated, during the pastorate of Rev. Rufus Apthorp.

As other churches were organized in the Village, the Episcopal in 1866 and the Methodist, Baptist and Catholic in 1867, many belonging to those denominations left the church to unite with their regular churches, but the First Congregational Church of Alpena continued to grow. In two years of Rev. Abram B. Allen's pastorate, 129 were received into the church, and the Sunday School attendance averaged 200.

**1869** - A 1,200 pound bell was purchased at a cost of \$400

**June 23, 1871** - An organ was installed

**1874**- A Chapel was added at the rear of the building on the Lockwood street side.

**July 17, 1874** - The women's Missionary Society was organized

**May 1885** - The Young Peoples Christian Association was formed, later becoming the Christian Endeavor Society with Junior, Intermediate, and Senior divisions.

**December 4, 1885** - A parsonage on Second Street was presented to the church by Miss Julia F. Farwell from the estate of her mother, Semantha Hitchcock.

**December 1885** - The Helping Hand Society was organized.

**January 31, 1886** - The Third Ward Sunday School was organized with meetings held at 220 West Lake Street where a building was erected on a lot purchased by the church. Sunday School and other services were held for many years, part of the time cooperatively with the Presbyterian Church.

**1885-1894** - During the pastorate of Rev. H.H. Van Auken, the church was entirely rebuilt of brick and stone and a new \$2500 pipe organ installed, and

**December 4, 1892** - One of the finest church buildings in the City was dedicated. At the morning service, 775 people were present, in the evening 825 people attended. Rev. Abram B. Allen, a former Minister, preached the two sermons.

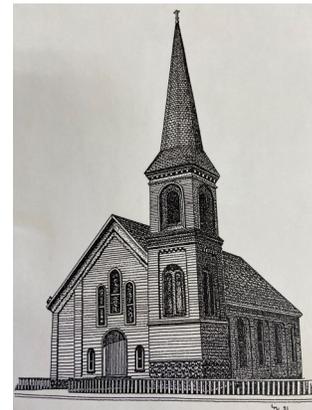
**January 1898** - The Boy's League was organized with Miss Emily E. Oliver in charge. This organization later became the nucleus of the True Blue or TB Club. The club held annual camps and regular weekly meetings until 1918, when it was reorganized as a Boy Scout Patrol.

**1904-1914** - Rev. I.W. Stuart organized the Congregational Brotherhood, one of the strongest church organizations of men in the city. The Campfire Girls were active under the leadership of Mrs. Stuart. The Stuarts were known for their intense interest in young people. The lots on Lockwood Street on which our new church is partly built were purchased by the Women's Association.

**January 7, 1926** - The dual organization of Church and Society was combined as one church organization.

**Easter of 1931** - Our Baptismal Font was given by Julia Wilcox.

**1932** - Mr. and Mrs. Irwin E. Scott presented the church with the tower clock.



First Church Facility on Current Site 1868-1892

## Ladies Summer Luncheons

*Food, Fellowship and Kabitzing*

The First Congregational Church Ladies Luncheons are scheduled for the second Friday of each month at Hunan Chinese Restaurant on M-32 in Alpena for the remaining summer months. We will gather at 11:45am, and all are welcome. Reservations are not necessary, but feel free to call Peg DiNegro with any questions. Peg may be reached at 352-281-2283. So, mark your calendars for July 8, August 12, and September 9. Hope to see you there!

## And Speaking of Food

*Bill Haase, Feed A Family Program*

The following items are currently needed for our Feed A Family Program:

Hotdog and hamburger buns

Tuna Helper and Chicken Helper

Au gratin potato packages

Rice A Roni or Pasta Roni

Noodles & Sauce or Rice & Sauce pouches



## CWS Blanket Appeal

*Missions Committee*



Thanks to all for your gifts to our Blankets program. At our Mother's Day Blanket Sunday we raised \$1,325 – that's 132-1/2 blankets that Church World Service will be providing to families in need.

As families and communities around the world recover from emergencies and struggle in the face of unprecedented challenges, we are standing with them. Your contribution provides warmth, comfort and hope to neighbors near and far.

## Congregational Conversations Continue

*Welcoming Committee*

On Tuesday evening, June 14 twenty individuals, including a few virtually via Zoom, participated in the second of a series of Congregational Conversations hosted by the Welcoming Committee. During a dinner prepared by Bill and Dottie Haase, with the conversation facilitated by Jay Kettler, the group initially selected this topic for discussion, "What does open and affirming mean to you? Do you have anxiety or concerns about our church changing if we become open and affirming?" 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.



**The next Congregational Conversation is scheduled for Sunday, July 24 at 11:30 am, immediately following Fellowship Hour.** A taco salad lunch will be served, and will again include virtual participation as an option. 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 July gathering, 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.

*"There shall be eternal summer  
in the grateful heart." ~Celia Thaxter*

*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.**

**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*

## July Celebrations

### Birthdays

|                   |         |                      |         |
|-------------------|---------|----------------------|---------|
| Alison Modrzynski | July 9  | Boris Gerber         | July 20 |
| Charlotte Wilson  | July 12 | Esther Donald-Briggs | July 25 |
| John Caplis       | July 13 | Edith Gerber         | July 26 |
| Wendy Lewis       | July 16 | Dennis Bodem         | July 27 |
| Sandy Jarmuzewski | July 18 |                      |         |



### Anniversaries

|                                    |         |          |
|------------------------------------|---------|----------|
| Dennis & Janet Artley              | July 2  | 62 Years |
| Jeffrey & Ann Gerow                | July 3  | 39 Years |
| Paul & Patty Lance                 | July 14 | 44 Years |
| Esther Donald-Briggs & John Briggs | July 15 | 22 Years |
| Laura & John Caplis                | July 19 | 19 Years |

*Happy Anniversary*



*Wishing you a fun and safe Independence Day!*