

July
2023

Still Speaking

Newsletter of First Congregational United Church of Christ of Alpena

Board of Directors

Deborah Butler,
Chairperson
Sandy Jarmuzewski,
Vice-Chairperson
Nancy Wedge,
Treasurer
Beverly Bodem
Bill Dempsey
Ann Diamond
Joe Garant
Boris Gerber
Jim McNeil

Dates to Remember

Sunday, July 2

Worship Service,
Church Family Reunion
50-Year Member
Celebration

Sunday, July 9

Worship Service,

Monday July 10

Board meeting

Sunday, July 16

Worship Service,

Sunday, July 23

Worship Service,

Sunday, July 30

Worship Service,



Summer, the Season of Change

Pastor Jon

When you read this I will have at least one foot out the door on my next great adventure as God's servant. I have always said that I believed God called me as a preacher, and so I continue until I determine God is done using me in this way. I believe I may have learned more about being the pastor of a church since I "retired" (I use that term very loosely) than before. Every place I have preached over the last 2 years has been different (understatement). Yet, I found that the message of salvation found in faith in Jesus Christ and his redeeming acts of dying on the cross and rising from the dead still resonate even in these times. Pursue Christ and his salvation, stop worrying so much if you are politically correct and love one another. Truly love God with all your heart, mind and strength – your entire being. Then you can love your neighbors as yourself.

Remember church is about being in community and whichever sides of the political or social spectrum you fall on, you are probably not 100 percent right. Many times in the scriptures we read of people doing what is socially acceptable, legally allowable, and religiously acceptable (to some) yet may not be looked upon favorably by God and will have many unintended consequences. The vast majority of these stories are in the Old Testament; the part of the Scriptures Jesus knew and read. Perchance that is why many 21st century moderns avoid reading it.

So, as I move on to my next step in the journey as follower of Christ I thank you for receiving Kitty and me so graciously and supporting us with your prayers and grace and mercy. I pray and hope for only the greatest of God's blessings, graces, and mercies for you all. Know God's peace, know and share God's love. Remember that God is still speaking, God's words are found in the living and inspired words of Scripture and through them and the Holy Spirit, God is still speaking to us all.

I close with this poem, somewhat irreverent I know but it does make a point of growing in faith and service to the Lord.

Farewell friends,
I will pray for you out in Hillman,
Pastor Jon

Butt-prints in the Sand

One night I had a wondrous dream:
one set of footprints there were seen.

The footprints of my precious Lord,
but mine were not along the shore.

Then when some stranger prints appeared,
I asked the Lord "What have we here?"

Those prints are large and round and neat,
but Lord, they are too big to be my feet."

"My child," He said in a somber tone,
"for miles I carried you alone."

I challenged you to walk in faith,
but you refused and made me wait."

"You disobeyed. You would not grow.
The walk of faith you would not know.

So I got tired and I got fed up,
and there I dropped you on your butt."

"Because in life there comes a time
when one must fight, one must climb.

One must rise and take a stand
or leave his buttprints in the sand."

– Author unknown

Board of Directors Highlights

Board of Directors

June 2023 Board Meeting

Present: Beverly Bodem, Deborah Butler, Bill Dempsey, Ann Diamond, Joe Garant, Boris Gerber, Sandy Jarmuzewski, Jim McNeil, Nancy Wedge. Staff Present: Pastor Gougeon, Judy Suszek.

- The cleaning crew continues their work cleaning out and sprucing up rooms in the church.
- Lions Club thanks the church for fundraising support provided through the Mission Committee by sponsoring a bowling lane for the event.
- Habitat for Humanity requested a Letter of Support for a major grant they are pursuing. The letter was approved.
- Board Appointed Committees - Security Committee was added as a new committee. The slate of Committee Members was presented and approved.
- Housing for the Interim Pastor is identified and we are currently completing a leasing contract.
- Security Committee - Progress is being made. The Church will be open during worship services and special occasions. With the rekeying of exterior doors we are in the process of distributing keys. Paid staff will be issued keys, church members will be issued keys as needed with a suggested \$10 deposit. A key distribution list will be maintained and reviewed annually by the Security Committee. With revised security and safety guidelines in place, we will allow groups to utilize the church again although outside groups will not be allowed to use the basement at the present time. We have not yet found a good security system that will work for our building and needs, we will continue to work on that.
- It has come to our attention that our entire WIFI system needs some updating and maintenance. The church laptop needs to be replaced due to a failed internal microphone and processing system. These items are in the research process.



Ladies Summer Luncheon

Peg DiNegro

Food, Fellowship and Kabitzing — The First Congregational Church Ladies Luncheons are back!

The gatherings are scheduled for the second Friday of each month for the remaining summer months at Hunan Chinese Restaurant on M-32 in Alpena. 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 14, August 11, September 8

Hope to see you there!

Thank You

Judy Suszek

Thank you so much for the lovely “going away” fellowship time reception. And many thanks for your kind words and well wishes as I embark on the next chapter of my journey. It was truly a pleasure getting to know all of you, serving First Congregational UCC, and sharing with you the church’s special place in the Alpena community. Wishing you all the very best!

*Take good care,
Judy*

Food Needed

Bill Haase

Feed A Family Needs—Individual crackers & cheese packets, crackers & peanut butter packets or cookies packets, Jell-O or pudding 4-packs, canned Spaghettios or macaroni & sauce, soups (any kind). *Thank you for your continued support to our food pantry.*

~Kathy, Salvation Army



Welcome Reverend Laura Hoffman

Rev. Laura Hoffman

Rev. Laura Hoffman is the Spiritual Care Manager for MyMichigan and the Chaplain at MyMichigan – Alpena. She has 30+ years in the spiritual care arena. Laura was chosen by Gift of Life Michigan to receive the Hospital Spiritual Care Champion Award for 2023. Laura and her husband, Warren, lived in Alpena from 1998 – 2005 during which time she and her husband co-pastored Huron Shores Fellowship. They returned to Alpena in 2018. Having grown up in west Texas, Laura loves living on the shores of Lake Huron with her husband and her two furry children (yellow labs), Augie and Dieter (named for theologians August Rauschenbusch and Dietrich Bonhoeffer). Laura holds a BSE, MSE, and a MDiv in Pastoral Counseling. She is a certified Life Coach and a lover of really good tea! She also loves meeting new people and making new friends!



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

Phone: 989-356-1795

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

Interim Minister:

Pastor Emeritus: Reverend Dr. H. Robert Case

Organist/Choir Director: Kat Tomaszewski

Treasurer: Denise Fusina

Office Administrator: Nancy Ross

Custodian: Mike LaMarre

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Dates to Celebrate

Allison Modrzynski July 9
Charlotte Wilson July 12
John Caplis July 13
Wendy Lewis July 16
Sandy Jarmuzewski July 18

**Happy
Birthday**

Boris Gerber July 20
Esther Donald-Briggs July 25
Edith Gerber July 26
Dennis Bodem July 27

Anniversaries

Dennis & Janet Artley July 2
Jeffrey & Ann Gerow July 3
Paul & Patty Lance July 14
Esther Donald-Briggs & John Briggs July 15
Laura & John Caplis July 19
Terry & Jackie Bell July 30

