

July
2025

Still Speaking

Newsletter of First Congregational United Church of Christ of Alpena



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From the Pastor's Desk

Pastor Dick Hotchkin

We human beings may sometimes wish that we were more gifted, richer, or more attractive – but it is not likely that we would be willing to lose everything we have and everything we are in order to be someone else, or to live in some other part of the world, or to exist at some other time. We Christians believe that God puts us together as we are, places us in a particular family, in a specific country, in a given season of history – and that God has a reason for doing so.

You may think that you are a biological accident, but remember that there is no other person quite like you in all the world – there never has been, and there never will be. This sobering thought ought to open our minds to the fact that there is a unique spot for each of us in God's amazing world.

In a family of 12 children, some siblings may resemble others, but they are all different. In the billions of people in God's family, no two individuals are exactly alike. And if a father and mother can love each of their 12 children, different as they are, our heavenly Father, with infinite powers and love, can love each of us.

Let us not feel trapped. We did not choose to be born, nor did we elect our family, nor our country, nor our moment in time. But God did, for us. Had it been up to us, would we have done as well? In God's infinite plan, God has a specific purpose in having us be alive. To believe other than that is to give up on ourselves and ultimately on God. We have a choice. We can believe that we are caught in a web of birth and death that has no meaning, or we can believe that we are children of our heavenly Father, with a destiny on earth of great meaning, and an eternal destiny that defies death and puts us in God's loving arms forever.

Membership Declaration Cards

Membership Declaration Cards are required annually. We will soon review submitted cards to identify any that are missing for 2025. If you haven't submitted yours yet, please do so—it's a great help to have everyone's information up to date. Thank you!

"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 are 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

July Birthdays

Allison Modrzynski ~ 9th
Charlotte Wilson ~ 12th
John Caplis ~ 13th
Sandy Jarmuzewski ~ 18th
Esther Donald-Briggs ~ 25th
Dennis Bodem ~ 27th

July Anniversaries

Dennis & Janet Artley ~ 2nd
Jeff & Ann Gerow ~ 3rd
John & Esther Donald-Briggs ~ 15th
John & Laura Caplis ~ 19th
Terry & Jackie Bell ~ 30th



Days to Remember

Friday	4th	Independence Day	
Sunday	6th	Prayer Service on the Lawn	10:00 a.m.
Monday	7th	Worship Committee Mtg.	5:30 p.m.
Friday	11th	Ladies Luncheon (Connie's Cafe, Ossineke)	11:30 a.m.
Sunday	13th	Worship Service	10:00 a.m.
Monday	14th	Board Meeting	5:30 p.m.
Sunday	20th	Worship Service	10:00 a.m.
Sunday	27th	Worship Service	10:00 a.m.



Bring your lawn chair
(if you have an extra, bring it for a guest)

A CELEBRATION of FAITH FAMILY FREEDOM

July 6, 2025
10:00 a.m.

Prayer Service on the Lawn
Music, Scripture and Meditation

Followed by a Picnic
Hot Dogs and Beverage Furnished
Sign Up to Bring a Salad or Dessert




 FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
 UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
MEMBERSHIP CELEBRATION
SUNDAY

Bring Your Family, Friends, and Neighbors as
 We Honor the Past and Embrace the Future.

AUGUST | 24 | 10 AM
Reception Following
 201 SOUTH SECOND AVENUE
 ALPENA, MI

Ladies Luncheon

July 11, 2025
Connie's Cafe
11:30 a.m.

Contact Dottie Haase
for more information.
Telephone: (989) 916-4104



In anticipation of upcoming postage increases this July, we will be changing how we mail our newsletter in an effort to be more fiscally responsible.

Currently, we send a booklet-style newsletter to several individuals and families. However, this format significantly increases mailing costs by more than double.

Beginning in July, we will continue to mail the newsletter to anyone who wishes to receive it by mail. To reduce expenses, the newsletter will be sent as individual pages in a standard #10 envelope rather than as a booklet. This small change will help us better manage our mailing costs while still keeping everyone informed and connected.

Thank you for your understanding and support!



July Worship Schedule Update

In Rev. Richard Hotchkin's absence this month, we are grateful to have Rev. Laura Hoffman and Rev. Gene Bacon share the preaching responsibilities during the last three Sundays of July. This week, we will gather in a special Prayer Service format.

Worship Schedule:

- **July 6** – Prayer Service
- **July 13** – Rev. Laura Hoffman
- **July 20** – Rev. Gene Bacon
- **July 27** – Rev. Gene Bacon

Together, we trust God's guidance and give thanks for the many voices who will lead us in worship this month.

Feed-A-Family

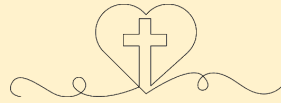
Bill Haase

Food pantry needs:

- TUNA AND HAMBURGER HELPERS
- BAGGED OR BOXED POTATOES
(MASHED, AU GRATIN, SCALLOPED, CHEESEY)
- RICE OR NOODLE SIDES (BAG/POUCH)

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





July Laity Schedule

	Greeters	Ushers	Lay Readers	Fellowship	Altar Guild	Communion	Counter(s)
6th	Prayer Service on the Lawn						
13th	Joe & Pat Garant	Penny Anderson Jim Straley	Marilyn Kettler	Jim & Cindy Straley	Joan Chrzan (All Month)		Tammy Veasy
20th	OPEN	Max Lindsay Vicky Lindsay	OPEN	OPEN			
27th	OPEN	Gary Jarmuzewski Sandy Jarmuzewski	Lori Mayer	OPEN			Nancy Wedge

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



Thank You to all who have signed up to host Fellowship during the summer months. Openings for July and August are still available. Can't commit to the whole month? No problem — just sign up on the roster in the middle hallway for the weeks you're available!

We are in the process of filling the Greeter Schedule for July-December. An email was sent to past Greeters on Tuesday, June 24th. We have openings for July if you are able to serve. If you haven't served as Greeter in the past and wish to receive information, please contact Leslie in the church office (Tel. (989) 356-1795 or Email: officeuccalp@gmail.com) so the schedule and information can be shared with you.

Heifer International Project

Marilyn Kettler, Mission Committee

The Heifer International Project is a mission to end hunger and poverty in a sustainable way by supporting and investing in poor farmers and their communities. Working alongside local farmers, the goal is to create lasting change from the ground up. It begins with investing in seed, livestock, or seed money for a business, followed by mentorship to help the participants. The families are then hopefully able to earn a living income and/or raise enough to feed themselves. By supporting and training the world's poorest farmers, ranchers, and female business owners, the project is investing in a new breed of success.

We will be hosting a donation Sunday in August where individuals will have a choice on how exactly they want to support this mission. Stay tuned to the announcements Sunday mornings for exact dates.



Board Notes from June

- ❖ The Search Committee has finalized and completed the new Church Profile.
- ❖ Pastor Hotchkin asked the Board to determine the next five individuals who will be involved in Cultivating Generous Congregations this fall. He also noted that continuing to support the Search Committee remains a priority for him.
- ❖ The Board is supportive of creating an ad hoc committee to assist with the development of a new Narrative Budget.
- ❖ The Board is supportive of creating an ad hoc committee to begin reviewing *Article XII - Property* which guides dissolution of church property and assets.
- ❖ Congratulations to Bev Bodem on receiving the Cora Reynolds Anderson Award. Cora Reynolds Anderson was the first female state representative in Michigan (U.P.) in 1924. Bev served from 1991 to 1998.

Treasurer's Report

Denise Fusina

Report as of June 30, 2025

<u>Giving:</u>	<u>Pledge</u>	<u>vs</u>	<u>Received</u>
May	\$10,417		\$ 7,155
YTD	41,667		72,129

Thank you for continuing to fulfill your pledges!

As of May 31, we are at a \$26,437 loss; however, you will see a positive change in the next report as we received the Comstock Operations Grant of \$56,265 in early June.



VANCO
FAITH

☀ Summer Faith Challenge (July Edition!)

Each week in July, try one simple activity to grow your faith and bless others:

- **Week 1:** Write a thank-you note to someone in the church.
- **Week 2:** Invite a neighbor or friend to a Sunday service.
- **Week 3:** Spend 15 minutes outdoors praying or journaling.
- **Week 4:** Donate one item to the food pantry or shelter.