

**January
2024**

Still Speaking

Newsletter of First Congregational United Church of Christ of Alpena

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From the Pastor's Desk

Pastor Dick Hotchkin

Church historians tell us that the earliest Christian creed was the simple affirmation, "Jesus Christ is Lord." Most churches today teach this same essential spiritual truth. Jesus is Lord in a sense that has no earthly parallel; Jesus is Lord of lords.

All the authorities and dominions that we know in this world can exercise only a limited lordship. Earthly dominions are limited in duration; they last only for a while. For instance, we human beings start under our parents, but we grow up and are no longer under their authority. But we never grow up out of the dominion of Jesus. We can't get rid of His Lordship by growing old, not even by dying! For physical death is precisely the place where the controls of life move out of our hands – into His.

Earthly dominions are limited in scope, too. We can move outside of their jurisdiction; we can leave home, quit school, move out of the country. This freedom gives a kind of veto power that stands over against the power of rulers. But we can't move outside of the dominion of Jesus.

Earthly dominions are also limited in how much of us they can command. They may tax our purses; they may govern our time; they may control our actions; but they cannot govern our will. They may discipline our outer person, but they cannot command our spirit. Someone might say, "I will think what I want to think; I will believe what I want to believe." But if we have truly encountered Jesus, we know that He will have none of that. It is precisely there, at the center of each human life, that Jesus would rule.

From earthly dominions, there is the possibility of an appeal. But there is no appeal above and beyond the Lordship of Jesus. The Heavenly Father has committed all judgment into His hands. To Jesus has been given all authority in heaven and on earth.

Dates to Remember

January 5
Annual Reports
Due

January 7
Worship Service
Communion

January 8
Board Meeting
5:30 PM

January 14
Worship Service
Rev. Cheryl
Burke

January 21
Worship Service

January 28
Worship Service
Annual Meeting

Hearing Devices

Board of Directors

Over the past few months it has become evident that we are in need of more Hearing Devices used to listen to the Sunday morning Worship Service and other events/programs going on at the church. We currently have 4 of these devices (headphones) on hand, but are in need of a minimum of 10. After much discussion about the pros and cons of these devices, we concluded that personal hearing devices may in fact be better as there would be less contamination between users. You may now purchase your own personal hearing device for \$135 and will be able to store your device here at the church in a secure location. These are the same devices we currently use. You may also wish to sponsor a headphone for general use. Please contact the office if you would like to order one of these devices. We will be placing an order January 15th to hopefully receive them before the January 28th Annual Meeting. For those who are unable to order now, we will be placing another order in the Spring or early Summer.

Invitational Ministry

Worship Committee

On the recommendation of Reverend Hotchkin, the Worship Committee is beginning a new and deliberate Invitational Ministry. This Ministry would first and foremost, **Connect** with a warm welcome, then **Engage** in conversation, and finally **Invite** to our Fellowship hour for more conversation about who we are as a church, what we do as a church, and any other additional questions they may have about our history, worship services, church membership, building, or activities/events. In others words, be **Intentional and Invitational**. The intent is to have a church member each Sunday designated to specifically seek out new and previously attending persons who will engage them with a warm welcome and assist them to be comfortable with us for future Worship, potential membership, and ongoing fellowship. If you are interested or thinking about being a part of this new and purposeful Ministry, please contact a Worship Committee member, Reverend Hotchkin, or the church office. Thank you.

Annual Meeting

Board of Directors

Our Annual Meeting is scheduled for January 28. Please get all of your reports in by January 5 in order to have them printed and available before the meeting.

Kitchen Reminders

The Cleaning Crew

Please be aware that the tape being used to hang notes and reminders in the kitchen is very difficult to remove and clean. If you need to put a note up for others, please use command strips, or if it is a note about the refrigerator, there will be sticky magnets to secure them to the refrigerator. We would prefer that all signage in the kitchen area have a cleanable surface. There is a laminator in the office for this. Thank you! The kitchen cleaning team.

New Year's Resolutions for 2024

- ◇ Love others.
- ◇ Pray for guidance.
- ◇ Forgive those who have hurt you.
- ◇ Take care of yourself.
- ◇ Be a role model.
- ◇ Don't be discouraged by failures.
- ◇ Value your friendships.
- ◇ Help those in need.

Dates to Remember

Birthdays

Joe Garant 1/5
 Max Lindsay 1/10
 Herbert Knowlton 1/10
 Vicky Lindsay 1/12
 James Park 1/13
 Beverly Olsen 1/17

Vernie Nethercut 1/23

Kathy Moore 1/27

Anniversaries

Joan & Sonny Chrzan 1/26



Thank You!

A heart felt Thank You to Ashley and Nancy Wedge for hosting a wonderful Christmas dinner. An enjoyable time was had by everyone who attended. We were able to begin our Christmas Season with fellowship, food, togetherness, and goodwill. The Fellowship Hall was beautifully decorated with a festive spirit and atmosphere.

Ladies Luncheons

Dottie Haase

The dates for the Ladies Lunches through June 2024 are: January 12, February 9, March 8, April 12, May 10, and June 14. We plan to meet at the Big Boy on Ripley Blvd at 11:30 AM. All are invited. Feel free to bring family and/or friends. Please contact Bobbi Zubi at 989-657-9996 if you have any questions. We hope to see you there!

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 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: Nancy Ross

Custodian: Mike LaMarre

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Our Mitten Tree

Pat Garant

Thank you everyone for the donations of hats, scarves, gloves, socks, and slippers. The response has been overwhelming and appreciated. Together we'll make a difference for those in need in our area! Our donated items went to Hope Shores Alliance (offering assistance to survivors of sexual and domestic violence, and their families), Ella White Elementary School, and the Salvation Army. This winter will be warmer for many this year thanks to all of you!

*Have a very joyful
and peaceful New Year!*

Food Pantry

Bill Haase

The following is a list of items the local food pantry is requesting at this time: canned Spaghettios, ravioli, macaroni and cheese, packages of crackers and peanut butter and/or crackers and cheese, 4 packs of jello or pudding, snacks, cereal, and poptarts.