

**October  
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

October 2  
Worship Service  
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October 9  
Worship Service  
~~~

October 10  
Board of Directors  
Meeting  
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October 14  
Ladies Luncheon  
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October 16  
Worship Service  
~~~

October 23  
Worship Service  
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October 30  
Worship Service  
~~~

October 31  
Happy Halloween!



## Transitional Pastors Retire

*Congratulations to Reverends Dr. H Robert Case and Reverend Eugene Bacon*

Reverend Bob Case and Reverend Gene Bacon celebrated the conclusion of their transitional ministry services with a Godspeed service and reception Sunday, September 11.



Reverends Case and Bacon – We wish you all the best in your well-deserved “re-retirement”. Thank you so much for sharing your time, talents, knowledge, prayers and spirituality with our church family as well as our community. Congratulations to you both!

## Pastoral Search Update

*Search Committee*

As the Church transitions into Supply Pastors and an Intentional Interim to fill the pulpit and spiritual needs of our congregation, the Search Committee would like to provide an update to the status of the search for a Settled Pastor.

Since December 2020 we have received a total of 28 profiles with many of them not viable candidates. There has been a broad base of experience, current locations, ages, and interests of our candidates but none of them an excellent match for our congregation. In 2022, we have received a total of 6 candidate profiles. Of those 6 candidates, 2 have withdrawn.

Although the Search Committee is disappointed at the lack of applicants, we remain optimistic that the right candidate is beginning their search process for their perfect church - our church. We don't believe any of us thought that in 2 years we would be in this situation but we truly thank Rev. Case and Rev. Bacon for serving as Transitional Ministers, our Supply Ministers that will be filling the pulpit, and eventually an Intentional Interim to offer the Search Committee the much needed time to secure a qualified Settled Pastor to move First Congregational UCC well into the future.

On behalf of the Search Committee, Dennis Artley, Terry Bell, Ann Diamond, Gary Jarmuzewski, Jay Kettler, Mary Minnick, and Nancy Wedge, thank you for your thoughts, prayers and confidence as we continue our work for First Congregational Alpena.

If you have any questions or comments regarding the Search process, please contact Ann Diamond, Chair at (989) 916-6091.

## October Pulpit Supply Pastors

*Board of Directors*

Extending a warm First Congregational UCC welcome to the Reverends Jon Gougeon and Laraine Sundin! Throughout the month of October these ministers will lead our Sunday worship services and bless us with their knowledge and compassion for sharing the Word of Christ.



- Born and raised in Alpena, Reverend Jon Gougeon and his wife, Kitty, have recently returned to the area. They have two children and two grandchildren, all of whom live in Alpena as well. Rev. Gougeon received a call to ministry while serving as youth leader at First United Methodist Church. He took training and classes to become a Licensed Local Pastor in UMC, and was appointed to the Garfield, Alger and Sterling United Methodist Churches in 2003. While serving the three churches, he attended Methodist Theological School of Ohio in Delaware, Ohio, completing his seminary studies in 2009. He was appointed to Reese United Methodist Church in Reese, Michigan in 2010. Rev. Gougeon has retired to the Alpena area and has served as pulpit supply pastor at Hope Lutheran Church in Hubbard Lake and Alpena Free Methodist Church in Alpena.
- The Reverend Laraine Sundin has served as pastor of churches of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in Northern Indiana and Northeast Michigan for 38 years. She and her husband, Greg, have two grown children, Andrew and Elizabeth. Greg and Laraine are retired and live in Alpena, sharing their home with Bailey, a spoiled black lab/pit mix rescue dog. Greg enjoys working in his yard and Laraine loves to read.

Welcome Reverends Gougeon and Sundin. We are happy to have you onboard, and look forward to worshipping with you in the weeks to come!

## Care Letter Suggestions Encouraged

*Judy Suszek, Office Administrator*



The importance of continuing the practice of signing and mailing Care Letters has been expressed by many members of our congregation. We have heard from numerous people that they truly appreciated the Care Letters they have received and to know that they are being held up in prayer by their church community. Care Letters may be requested for those celebrating good news and happy occasions as well as those experiencing hardships and challenges. Please remember to contact the church office if you know of someone who would benefit from receiving a Care Letter.

## Opportunities to Serve

*All Are Welcome!*

- ♦ The Friendship Room Soup Kitchen at St. Bernard Church has begun to serve indoors again. If you are interested in being part of a team from First Congregational Church, please call Sandy Jarmuzewski at 989-255-7894 or email her at slouisajarmu@gmail.com. The time commitment will be one evening per month for approximately 2-1/2 hours. We need five to six people for the team. Thank you for your consideration and hope to hear from you soon! Sandy
- ♦ As we continue to bring members back into our in-person worship services, we are looking for added persons or couples to assist the assigned Fellowship hosts (Lynne Stewart–October, Mary Minnick–November, and Bonnie Bartz–December). If you have been a Fellowship host, you know it's a big job for one person. Contact Bill Haase at 989-916-4104 or complete the sign-up sheet in the Narthex if you can help host any of the Sundays. Please sign up to help! Thanks, Bill Haase



## Neighbors In Need Offerings Accepted

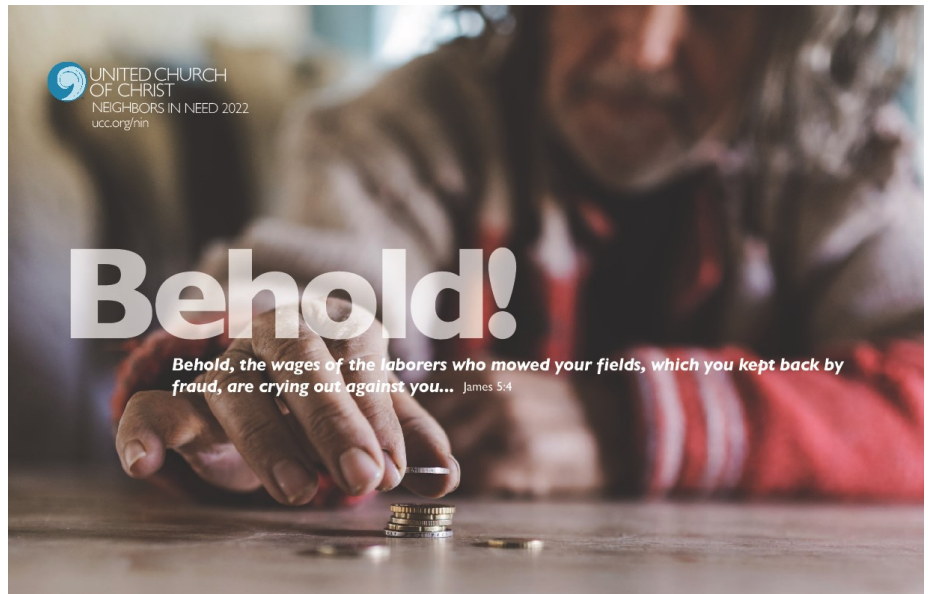
Pat Garant, Missions Committee

In 2022, with inflation impacting all of our households, the Neighbors in Need “BEHOLD!” offering is focusing on economic justice.

One-third of NIN funds support the Council for Indian Ministries. The Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM) is the voice for American Indian people in the UCC. CAIM provides Christian ministry and witness to American Indians and to the wider church. Justice issues that affect American Indian life are communicated to the whole UCC by CAIM.

Two-thirds of this offering is used by the UCC’s Justice and Witness Ministries to provide funding grants to UCC churches and organizations leading justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects in their communities.

In addition to donating during Sunday service, you may also drop off or send your check to the church office (made out to First Congregational Church, with note “for NIN”) anytime during October. Thank you!



## Heifer International Update

Boris Gerber, Missions Committee

Thanks to all who helped purchase farm animals at our special collection for Heifer International!

In total we have sent **\$1,865** to Heifer International to help end poverty and hunger! This includes \$1,000 for a “Milk Menagerie” (two goats, a water buffalo and a quality-breed heifer).



Here’s the total list of animals we are providing:

|                                      |                               |                           |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 2 Hives of Bees (\$60)               | 1 Heifer (\$500)              | 3 Flocks of Chicks (\$60) |
| 1 Alpaca (\$145)                     | 1 Flock of Ducks/Geese (\$20) | 1 Pig (\$120)             |
| 1 School of Fish Fingerlings (\$100) | 1 Sheep (\$120)               | 2 Goats (\$240)           |
| 2 Water Buffalo (\$500)              |                               |                           |



## Congregational Conversations Update

*Welcoming Committee*

Thank you to all who participated in the Congregational Conversations held over the last several months. We hope everyone had an opportunity to attend one or more of the sessions. The pandemic brought us apart, and for many of us, these conversations have helped reduce the communication problems the pandemic caused. We feel it is important to continue talking to each other as we go forward. Future meetings will be available, and we invite those who have not yet participated to share their thoughts at these conversations.

The Welcoming Committee is working to prepare and share a summary of the thoughts, concerns and ideas expressed at these conversations.



## Display Case — Baby Project

*Diana Standen*



The September/October display case in the main floor hallway is gladly dedicated to the Baby Care Kit Project. The featured knitted and crocheted items were made by Priscilla Homola, Marilyn Kettler and Diana Standen. We will be assembling this year's kits on Friday, October 7, in the Fellowship Hall from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. and all are welcome to help. We need packing boxes (not too big). Cloth diapers and baby clothes have been purchased with your mission funds. The kits will leave Immanuel Lutheran Church on Saturday, October 15, to be distributed to missions throughout the world by Lutheran World Relief. If you have any questions about this project, please call Diana Standen at 989-356-2356.

## Dishcloth Fundraiser

*Altar Guild*



A new shipment of handmade dishcloths has arrived. The cloths are of great value, high quality, and inexpensive. They are double layered knit, ravel-proof, sanitary, and made in the USA! They cost \$2.25 each and available in red, blue, dark green and yellow. The dishcloths are perfect for Christmas stocking stuffers, Easter basket fillers, etc. Contact Nancy Wedge at 989-356-4402 or email [wedge.nancy@gmail.com](mailto:wedge.nancy@gmail.com) if you would like to make a purchase. Proceeds from the sale of the dishcloths help to defray the cost of our altar supplies. Thank you!

## CWS Blanket Contributions — Over the Years

*Email Received from Church World Service*

*Hello First Congregational UCC Alpena,*

*I wanted to simply thank you for your support of Church World Service. Your congregation has given \$38,750.94 in the last thirty-seven years. How incredible!*

*Thank you for the ways that you have made a tremendous impact over these thirty-seven years through the work of Church World Service.*

*Thank you,  
Rachel Kessel, Church World Service*

**WOW!**

## Stewardship Drive Kicks Off

*Stewardship Committee*

Well, it's that time of year again. The time of year when we conduct our annual Stewardship Drive and begin the budgeting process for the year to come. We can all agree that 2022 was another challenging year. However, with the help of God we can look forward to a brighter 2023.

Within a short period of time all of you should be receiving your pledge packets in the mail. There are two possible ways of pledging. You can pledge to the General Fund, which pays for local ministries, staff salaries, music, the maintenance of the church, utilities, and everything connected to the workings of the church. One item that creates special concern this winter is utilities. Natural gas prices are at a multi-year high and not expected to come down anytime soon. Another way of pledging is to the Mission Fund, which for the most part supports Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM), the United Church of Christ's ministry beyond the local congregation.

Our goal for 2023 for the General Fund is \$130,000, a 4% increase over last year's goal. The Mission Fund goal for this year is \$18,000, the same as last year's goal. The Stewardship Committee is asking everyone to be as generous as possible in order for the church to meet our goal in these trying times. Your completed pledge card may be returned in person or by mail to the church by Sunday, October 30.

Many thanks from your Stewardship Committee,

Bill & Deb Dempsey and Bill & Dottie Haase



## Ladies Luncheon

*Food, Fellowship, and Kabitzing*

Our next Ladies Luncheon is scheduled for Friday, October 14, 11:45am at Hunan Chinese Restaurant on M-32 in Alpena. 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. Please note: This is the final luncheon hosted by Peg this year. Anyone interested in hosting/organizing future luncheons may do so by contacting the church office.

## DVD's Available

*Cleaning/Organizing Crew*



The long-awaited sorting, organizing, and cleaning of the Sunday School rooms in the church's lower level has commenced. There are many, many DVD's in Room 104 that are available for the taking for all who are interested. If you have any questions, please contact Nancy Wedge, Mary Minnick or Janet Artley.

“Winter is an etching, spring a watercolor, summer an oil painting, and autumn a mosaic of them all.” ~Stanley Horowitz

*First Congregational United Church of Christ*  
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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**

**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*

**Dates to Celebrate**

**Birthdays**

|                   |           |               |            |
|-------------------|-----------|---------------|------------|
| Paul Lance        | October 1 | Sharyl Davis  | October 9  |
| Linda Clegg       | October 3 | Bonnie Bartz  | October 18 |
| Sarah Zeller      | October 3 | Bobbi Zubi    | October 21 |
| Linda Christiaens | October 4 | Scott Beland  | October 25 |
| Thomas Cook       | October 5 | Lori Zeller   | October 26 |
| Timothy Standen   | October 5 | Marcia Aten   | October 27 |
| Thelma McDonald   | October 9 | Nathan Barden | October 28 |



**Anniversaries**



|                       |            |          |
|-----------------------|------------|----------|
| Jim & Cindy Straley   | October 1  | 16 Years |
| Bill & Linda Clegg    | October 21 | 61 Years |
| Jay & Marilyn Kettler | October 23 | 52 Years |
| Richard & Mary Bloom  | October 28 | 55 Years |

“Success means we go to sleep at night knowing that our talents and abilities were used in a way that served others.” ~Mariann Williamson