

**August
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

August 7
Worship Service
~~~

August 8  
Board of Directors  
Meeting  
~~~

August 12
Ladies Luncheon
~~~

August 14  
Worship Service  
~~~

August 21
Worship Service
~~~

August 28  
Worship Service  
(Godspeed)



## Waves on the Beach

*Reverend Eugene Bacon*

We went to the beach on this past very hot Saturday. Unlike other summers, we hadn't gone very often largely because my granddaughter, Aspen, has developed a fear of waves. She was knocked over by a wave early last summer and ever since has been afraid to venture into the water. She tends to exaggerate the size of the waves in her mind and often refuses to go in. Luckily this past Saturday the waves were quite small, little more than ripples really, and Aspen summoned up her courage, and holding my hand, waded out. Karen was walking the dog.

We had a good time seeing who could get to a floating stick first. Somehow Aspen always won. She also climbed on my back as I swam underwater, riding me like a dolphin. We had such a good time, in fact, that we didn't notice, at first, that the wind was picking up and the waves were getting bigger. At one point Aspen noticed. Her eyes got big. It wasn't just one wave that scared her but the army of waves, coming in one after another, that made her nervous.

Aren't we much the same? We survey the horizons of our lives and see only trouble ahead - one wave after another: serious concerns about children or grandchildren, terrifying medical diagnoses, threatening indebtedness, possible pay cuts or layoffs looming, spiraling inflation, climate change, gun violence, the great partisan divide splitting both our families and our nation in two.

It's easy to be overwhelmed. We may be so anxious that we can no longer fall asleep at night. Jesus understood how it is with us. This is why he so dramatically told us, in his sermon on the mount, not to worry. "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Matthew 6:28-34).

"Don't worry about tomorrow." Isn't that another way of saying, don't look ahead at all the problems pressing in on us like incoming waves; deal only with what's happening in the present moment. Our worries about the future may not even come to pass, so in effect we are worrying about phantoms or ghost like possibilities.

Aspen seemed to learn this on Saturday. At first she was scared of the incoming onslaught of waves. I said, "Watch Grandpa. Splash the waves as they come in - see." Aspen joined in and splashed and pushed each wave as it came in as if she were fighting one of her video game monsters. She started laughing and said, "Grandpa, these waves aren't so bad." No, they really weren't. Taken one at a time, they really weren't.

And a little child shall lead them.

Blessings, Gene

## A Message to the Congregation

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors has been notified by our transitional ministers, Reverend Bob Case and Reverend Gene Bacon that they will be stepping back from their positions at the end of August. They will no longer be available to perform weddings, funerals, baptisms or other pastoral duties as of August 28. We truly appreciate all Reverend Case and Reverend Bacon have done for our church, and will celebrate them as they leave this ministry with a Godspeed ceremony during our August 28 worship service. Please plan to attend this very special service and celebrate with us.

## Worship Committee Updates

Deborah Butler, Chairperson

- ◆ In collaboration with the Personnel Committee and the Board of Directors, the Worship Committee has developed an agreement to share the services of our Music Director, Kat Tomaszewski, with Trinity Episcopal Church.
- ◆ The Committee plans to apply to the Comstock Fund Innovative Ministries for funds to contract a person to perform live-streaming services for Sunday worship and special services.
- ◆ The Committee is identifying ways to welcome and more fully incorporate virtual participants.
- ◆ The Godspeed Service for Reverends Case and Bacon is scheduled for Sunday, August 28. We will celebrate communion.

## Discussion Opportunity

Reverend Bob Case



Our twenty-two years of official ministry together comes to an end this month. We then minister together as members of the church. I would like to take this opportunity to offer a final book discussion entitled **“A Word of Hope for the Church”** based on the book *“The Air We Breathe: How We All Came to Believe in Freedom, Kindness, Progress and Equality.”* by Glen Scrivener. We will ask that question in a three-part Wednesday afternoon study tentatively scheduled to begin August 10.

What is the last thing a fish would discover? Water is the answer. Surrounded by water for all of its life, the fish becomes unaware until it is no more. Christianity is the water in which we swim. Or, to say the same thing in a slightly different way, Christianity is the air we breathe. *“Jesus not only turned the ancient world upside down, but continues to underpin the way we think of life, worth, and meaning. Far from being a relic from the past, the distinctive ideas of Christianity, such as freedom, kindness, progress and equality, are a crucial part of the air that we breathe. As author Glen Scrivener says in his introduction: “The extraordinary impact of Christianity is seen in the fact that we don’t notice it.”*

If you would like to take part in this discussion group, in-person or via Zoom, please contact the office at 989-356-1795 or [officeuccalp@gmail.com](mailto:officeuccalp@gmail.com).

## In-House Comstock Applications Due

Judy Suszek, Office Administrator

All in-house requests for 2023 Comstock grant funds must be reviewed and approved by the church’s Board of Directors at the September 12 board meeting prior to being submitted to the Comstock Committee for their review. In-house applications may be submitted via email to [officeuccalp@gmail.com](mailto:officeuccalp@gmail.com), or in hard copy delivered to the church office by Tuesday, September 6.

## Change of Venue—Ladies Lunch

Peggy DiNegro, Coordinator

Please Note – The Ladies Lunch gathering scheduled for August 12, 11:45am has been changed to Chee Peng Restaurant at 1237 US 23-North, Alpena.

**IMPORTANT**

## Celebrating 160 Years Serving Christ and His People

*Historical Committee*

At the April 17, 1955 dedication of our facility, as we know it today, a souvenir book was presented to Anna and Jesse Besser. In the book was a poem that captured what the church thought of itself at that important moment in its life. The anonymous poem written in 1953:

*This is the church of our dreams;  
The church of the warm heart,  
Of the open mind, of the adventurous spirit;  
The church that cares,  
That heals hurt lives,  
That comforts old people,  
That challenges youth;  
That knows no division of culture or class,  
No frontiers, geographical or social;  
The church that inquires as well as answers,  
That looks forward as well as backward;  
The church of the Master,  
High as the ideals of Jesus,  
Low as the humblest human;  
A working church;  
A church that interprets the truth in terms of truth,  
That inspires courage for this life and hope for the life to come;  
A church of courage  
A church of all good men,  
The Church of the living God.*

## Congregational Conversations Postponed For Summer

*Welcoming Committee*

The next Congregational Conversations gathering is tentatively scheduled for Sunday, September 18 at 11:30 am, immediately following Fellowship Hour. 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 September gathering, please call or email the church office (989-356-1795, [officeuccalp@gmail.com](mailto:officeuccalp@gmail.com)).



## August Service Opportunities

*Fellowship and Feed A Family Teams*

- \* Looking for volunteers to host Sunday Fellowship during August. Contact Bill Haase (989-916-4104) for any August Sunday you can help with hosting.
- \* Our Feed A Family program is in need of pudding, jello and fruit cups, packages of cheese and peanut butter crackers, and chicken noodle soup. The Salvation Army sends along their sincere appreciation for the continuing support provided by First Congregational Church.

*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*

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## August Celebrations

### Birthdays

|              |           |                  |           |
|--------------|-----------|------------------|-----------|
| Keith Titus  | August 2  | Dixie Julian     | August 14 |
| Ashley Wedge | August 6  | Priscilla Homola | August 19 |
| David Zeller | August 12 | Heather Bodem    | August 23 |



### Anniversaries



|                         |           |          |
|-------------------------|-----------|----------|
| Kristin & Nathan Barden | August 2  | 19 Years |
| Ron & Lynn Borke        | August 14 | 29 Years |
| Dave & Lori Zeller      | August 14 | 12 Years |
| Bill & Dottie Haase     | August 19 | 62 Years |
| Megan & Jon Petty       | August 20 | 11 Years |
| Miranda & Brian Plume   | August 21 | 29 Years |
| Diana & Bob Kelly       | August 27 | 62 Years |
| Dan Kibbe & Lois Gibbs  | August 30 | 36 Years |

**A smile is contagious; be a carrier.**

# Collection for Heifer International Sunday, August 21 “Milk Menagerie”



On Sunday, August 21, we will have a special collection for Heifer International. There will be information on Heifer farm animals (bees, chicks, goats, alpacas, pigs, rabbits, sheep and water buffalo) that you may “purchase” to help alleviate hunger and poverty around the world.

In addition to individual animals as selected by donors, collectively as a congregation a goal this year is to raise \$1,000 to fund a “**Milk Menagerie**”:

The gift of a milk menagerie includes four milk-producing animals: two goats, a water buffalo and a quality-breed heifer. Families will also receive training on the animals' care. The donation of a milk menagerie:

- Provides an abundance of milk to improve both nutrition and income
- Enriches crops with fertilizer, producing better yields
- Sustains farming by providing livestock to work the land
- Improves the lives of families for generations by Passing on the Gift

Gallon after gallon of precious milk will provide nourishment for hungry families. Extra milk can be sold, and the money allows families to afford health care and education for those who previously had no access to them. And as the families Pass on the Gift to others in need, this generous gift will provide a better life for generations to come.

- Milk
- Nutrition
- Steady, Dependable Income
- Passing on the Gift
- Fertilizer
- Women’s Empowerment
- Self-Reliance
- Community Sustainability
- School Fees and Supplies



Donations without an animal preference indicated will go toward our congregation’s “Milk Menagerie”. You may also drop off or send your check to the church office (made out to First Congregational Church, with note “for Heifer”) anytime during August, noting the animals you wish to purchase if you have specific preferences.