

**November
2020**

Still Speaking

Newsletter of First Congregational United Church of Christ of Alpena

Board of Directors:

- **Dennis Artley, treasurer**
- **Bill Dempsey**
- **Blair Diamond**
- **Boris Gerber**
- **Ann Gerow, vice-chair**
- **Nancy Wedge**
- **Vicky Lindsay**
- **Jim Mc Neil, chair**
- **Beth Petty**

Dates to Remember

1

Daylight Savings Time
(Set clocks back)

1

Sunday Worship
at 10am

Virtual Worship is also
available

8

Sunday Worship
at 10am

Virtual Worship is also
available

9

Board Meeting in
Fellowship Hall 5:30pm
Everyone is welcome
(masks required to enter;
seated more than 6-feet
apart)

15

Sunday Worship
at 10am

Virtual Worship still
available

22

Sunday Worship
at 10am

Virtual Worship still
available

26

Happy Thanksgiving
(Office Closed)

29

Sunday Worship
at 10am

A Word From Our Minister: Your Transitional Pastor

Rev. Case

It was more than 50 years ago, how many I'm not sure, and I was sitting in a class listening to a professor talk about how to write and deliver a sermon. I really don't remember much about what he said, but one thing stuck in my mind. Why this one sentence I am not sure. He said: "Never start a service by saying Good Morning." You may notice that to this day I very rarely do and when I do it's because I forgot this simple lesson.

You might ask why would you not start a Sunday morning service with a friendly greeting. He went on to say something like this; "You never know how many of the members of the congregation are having a terrible morning and they are there because they expect something from the church that will give them strength, comfort, courage and hope." Those are my words trying to get the essence of what he said. So how do you do start a service. I do remember that was to be left up to us to decide. How do you open a service. I came up with these words you may often hear me say "May the Peace, Grace and Love of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all."

In a chaotic world filled with anger, mistrust and division there must be a place out of which peace can come. Jesus is the bringer of peace and if we find the peace of Jesus then we live a life that shares that "Peace" with others. A peace that does not deny the anger etc. but does not let it rule our lives. Grace is to know that as we seek to love God with all our heart, soul and mind, God's love is freely given to us. We cannot earn God's love but we live out of that love. That is true grace that gives peace and moves us to live lives that are filled with justice, forgiveness and hope. Any morning that begins with God's Peace, Grace and Love then is a Good Morning and situates our lives looking in the right direction.

The prophetic tasks of the church is to tell the truth in a society that lives in illusion, grieve in a society that practices denial, and express hope in a society that lives in despair. Walter Brueggemann (UCC Biblical Scholar)

Bob,
Rev. Dr. H. Robert Case
Transitional Pastor



Dear church members and friends,

I feel very fortunate to have been your Minister since September 2013. Patty and I appreciate the dozens of cards and personal notes we received wishing us well in my retirement. We particularly want to thank you for your extravagantly generous “farewell” gift of over \$6,000 of personal donations, matched by the Board of Directors’ gift of \$2,000. Patty and I are not only grateful for the financial support (we’ll be putting a new roof on our house!), but we see in it a sign of your deep love and respect for our seven years together here in Alpena.

Joan Chrzan and Nancy Wedge put on a lovely ice cream & cake reception on Oct. 11 following the worship service, and I had a chance to speak to many of you about how meaningful these years have been. Thank you for allowing me into your lives in such memorable ways. It makes me think of something the Apostle Paul wrote in his first letter to the Thessalonians (1:8): “So deeply do we care for you, that we were determined to share with you not only the Gospel of God, but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us.” How true that is! Patty and I have wholeheartedly appreciated these years together as members of First Congregational UCC of Alpena.

As was stated in the Liturgy of Farewell that Jim McNeil led us through on my final Sunday in the pulpit: (1) I commend you to the pastoral care of your Transitional Minister, Rev. Dr. Bob Case; (2) I will not perform ministerial services for church members; and (3) I will not interfere with nor intrude upon the search process for my successor. Our friendships may continue, of course, but space must be given for the new person to build strong relationships with you all, even as Patty and I have done.

I put it this way in a song: “Like two streams in one riverbed, you’re mingled with me; now, as we divide, we’re not really free. And I know as I go, I may never pass by your way again; still the love I have known along this way will always last. And though the present may be sad, still I will be grateful for the past.” May God bless you, one and all. – Rev. Paul Lance (retired)

BABY CARE KITS-Diana Standen

Mary Minnick and I delivered 50 Baby Care Kits to Immanuel Lutheran Church, and on October 10 the kits, along with kits and quilts from several area churches, left on a U Haul truck bound for the Orphan Grain Project in Sebewaing, Michigan. This project is an international relief project found in 26 states and 60 countries.

Thanks goes to our UCC Needle crafters: Priscilla Homola, Mary Minnick, Jennie Morey, Diana Standen, and Elaine Thompson for knitting, crocheting, and embroidering many hand-made items; and Mike LaMarre for his help moving boxes. Cloth diapers were purchased through your mission funds.

Thanks to Paul Lance for all his support and help for the last seven years. He will truly be missed.

MITTEN TREE-Diana Standen

A Mitten Tree will be set up in the display case Sunday, November 8, and basket provided for donations of mittens, hats, scarves, gloves, slippers and sweaters for our annual drive. Items will be given to elementary schools, Salvation Army, and Soup Kitchens. We will be collecting through Christmas. Let's make this season a little warmer for those in need.



The Salvation Army's Community Center Director is requesting food commodities for November 2020. The request list (following) is the same as the October 2020 list. Our church's support would be very welcome.

Food items that Kathy is requesting are:

Soup - Chicken Noodle, Tomato, Vegetable

Veggies (canned): creamed corn, mixed veggies, peas, carrots

Dry goods (boxed): Au Gratin Potatoes, Scallop Potatoes or any kind of potatoes in a box.

What am I doing here? I've been asking myself that question every day? I know what I am not and that is important part of knowing who you are. I am not your full time residential pastor who plans on staying here many years. I am not an interim pastor who evaluates a church and makes structural changes if needed as a full time position. I am your pastor emeritus, which is a great honor after serving as your residential pastor for 19 years. However, a pastor emeritus is suppose to stay out of the life of the church and out of the way of current pastor. Obviously in my current position I am active in the life of the church. So, what am I doing here as a Transitional Pastor? Here is what I see myself doing. First, I am a place holder simply holding the spot that will be filled with your next pastor. There will be no major planning or programming. That will stay the same.

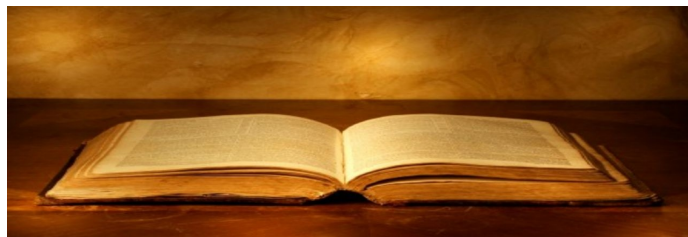
Right now I see myself as a story teller. You may notice in my sermons I have a long term plan. It is my hope that at the end my ministry here you will have a chance as a congregation to take a deep dive into who we have been historically, where we are now, and what our broad future as Christians looks like. What is the purpose of our individual lives, our corporate lives and our lives as human beings.

It is my hope and prayer that our worship life together aids in that goal and the discussions/classes give us a chance to make our common journey clear. What does God O Mortal Require of us? The age old question of the prophet Micah. To that end we will have a two session discussion on what the "Christian Response" to the Covid-19 crisis should be. We will use N. T. Wrights book *God and the Pandemic* as a guide. Then we will look to see what it means to be a Spiritual Person in the 21st Century. Finally, will look at what Christianity is NOT and will use the work of theologian Douglas Hall to help guide our discussion. It will not be necessary to purchase or read the books to participate in the dialogue. If you are interested in any of these please let me or Kristi in the church office know. We will start in early November and pause Thanksgiving to the New Year. This opportunities will be offered in person, using social distancing and by Zoom. The reason I am waiting to November is to try and learn how to host Zoom sessions.

As Transitional Pastor and because of the pandemic I will only be making calls when it is absolutely necessary. I am suppose to be in the pastor's study one day a week and that will be Monday 10-2.

Here is my contact information
989-657-0477
Revdrcase@hotmail .com

Bob,
Rev. Dr. H. Robert Case
Transitional Pastor



We will start our study/discussion class on November 10th at 2:00. All classes will be 2-3 weeks long and do not require reading the books I will use. The first two weeks will be on *God and the Pandemic*, the second and third will be on how do we talk about God and Spirituality in the 21st century.



The Stewardship campaign this year begins on November 1. The goal is \$128,000. Letters will go out at the end of October and announcements are made on three consecutive Sundays (Nov. 1, 8, & 15).

First Congregational United Church of Christ
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Alpena, MI 49707

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Web Site: <http://uccalpena.org>
Email: officeuccalp@gmail.com
Office Hours: 10:00 am — 2:00 pm Monday — Thursday

Sunday Worship: 10:00 a.m.

Transitional Minister: Rev. Dr. H. Robert Case
Choir Director/Organist:: Kat Tomaszewski
Treasurer: Denise Fusina
Secretary: Kristi Blackaby
Custodian: Mike LaMarre

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Birthdays and Anniversaries in November

Let's Celebrate November- Birthdays for:

Thomas Watkins	11/01
Dan Kibbe	11/01
Diana Kelly	11/03
Deborah Butler	11/05
Chris McCoy	11/06
Marilyn Kettler	11/08
Andy Lindahl	11/08
Bill Haase	11/10
Margaret Nielsen	11/11
Gary Jarmuzewski	11/12
Diana Standen	11/14
Sherry Allen	11/15
Kathryn Beland	11/16
Leigh Copeland	11/20
Brionna Fastnaught	11/25
Wyatt Hanna	11/26
Dan Storey	11/30

Wedding Anniversaries in November

Keith & Virginia Titus 39 years

