

**October
2024**

Still Speaking

Newsletter of First Congregational United Church of Christ of Alpena

Board of Directors

Deborah Butler,
Chairperson
Sandy Jarmuzewski,
Vice-Chairperson
Nancy Wedge,
Treasurer
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Bill Dempsey
Ann Diamond
Joe Garant
Jim McNeil
Beth Petty

From the Pastor's Desk

Pastor Dick Hotchkin

The following words come from one of Johannes Tauler's (ca. 1300-1361) sermons: "Everyone should do for his neighbor what his neighbor cannot do so well as he, and in this way, by his love for others, he thanks God for His graces. Be sure of this: if we are not useful, profitable, and helpful to our neighbor, we shall have much to answer for before God. The Gospel says that everyone will have to give an account of his stewardship. Each one of us has an obligation to pay back as best he can what he has received from God, because God gave it to him for the benefit of others."

These words of Tauler remind me of an interesting story. When God created the cosmos, God blessed each angel with a talent to take care of a part of creation. One angel was blessed with the talent to make the stars shine brightly; another had the gift of making the ocean waves roll; and still another painted the sky blue. However, the angel in charge of the grass was not happy. "What kind of job is this?" thought the angel. "The grass is here today and gone tomorrow. Why should I worry about something so unimportant?" So the angel forgot all about the grass. After a month of leading a carefree life, the angel noticed that the grass had all turned brown. The animals in every land were starving; the earth was eroding away from the rains; and the angels in charge of these things complained to God. Feeling ashamed, the angel went and fell down before God, begging for forgiveness. God said, "I give no meaningless gift in this world. Everyone has a talent to use for the good of creation. When one angel refuses to take care of what I have given, no matter how insignificant the task may seem, all of creation suffers."

The spiritual reality is that each of us is created with a God-given talent that others need. If we refuse to share that gift with others, then the task is left undone, and all of creation suffers. Our blessed talents are not ours to do with as we please, but they are bestowed upon us by God in order that we might share them. When we withhold these gifts from others, then we become thieves stealing from our neighbor. Proverbs 25:14 captures the notion rather well: "Like clouds and wind without rain is one who boasts of a gift never given."

Dates to Remember

October 6
Worship Service
World
Communion
Sunday
Neighbors In
Need

October 13
Worship Service

October 14
Board Meeting
5:30 pm

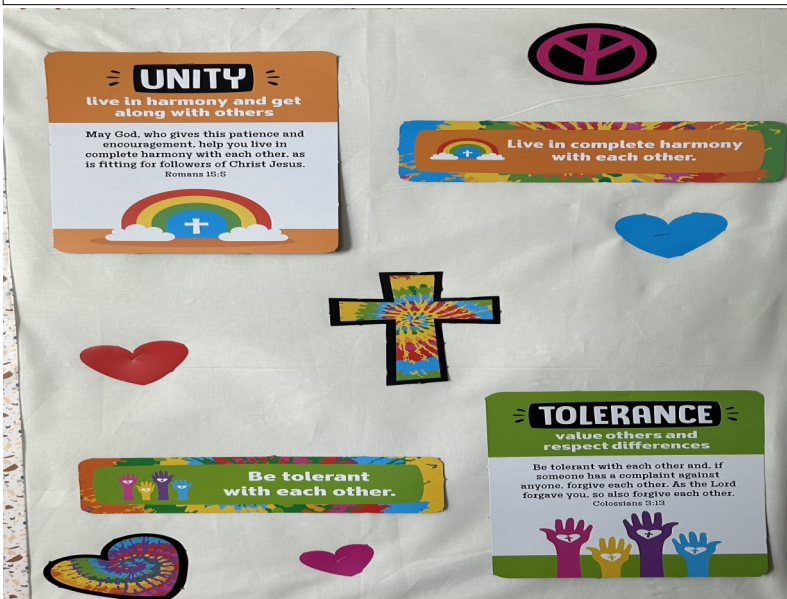
October 20
Worship Service
Cider Fest

October 27
Worship Service

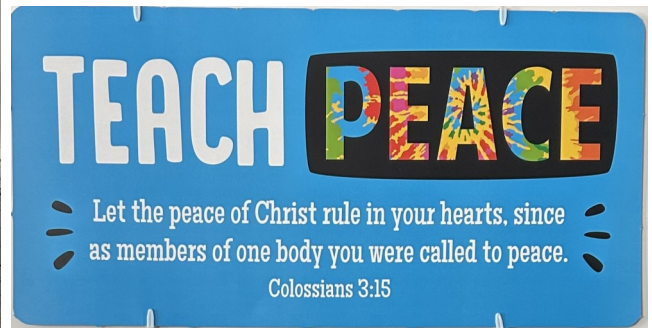


Bulletin Boards

Nancy Wedge



The upstairs Bulletin boards have graciously been updated by Nancy Wedge. They are included throughout this Newsletter. Be sure to check them out!



Investment Planning Opportunity

Nancy Wedge

Matt Bredow from Edward Jones Investments will be doing a presentation on tax efficient ways to fulfill your Annual Pledge, using Qualified Charitable Tax Distributions. This will take place on **Monday, October 28, 2024, 6:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall.**

Please use the sign up sheet in the middle hallway **before October 21** if you plan to attend.

Sandwiches, chips, and soft drinks will be provided. Bring your appetite and questions.

We are looking forward to seeing you!

Proverbs 3:9-10 "Honor the Lord with your wealth then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine."

Worship Committee

Deborah Butler Desimone

- ◆ Altar Flowers - take a moment to sign up. If you do not wish to purchase fresh flowers, think about flowers from your garden, or a Mum plant, Peace Lily, Blooming Christmas Cactus, gourds, Cornucopia, pine green, branches of fall leaves. Use your imagination to share a beautiful plant or arrangement.
- ◆ The Worship Committee and Special Events Team would like to host a Christmas Open House. For that to happen, we would need the Church decorated. Max & Vicky Lindsay have graciously agreed to organize the decorating of the Sanctuary again this year, but, we also need people to organize the decorating of the Chapel, Show Case, Lower Lounge, and Fellowship Hall. If you are able and willing to participate and organize the decorating of these specific areas, please contact the church office, Marilyn Kettler, or Deborah Butler Desimone.

Online Giving—A New Opportunity

Denise Fusina, Treasurer

We want to start by expressing gratitude for your unwavering support and generosity towards our church. Your contributions have been essential to our ability to continue carrying out our mission and serving the needs of our community.

Are you going to be out of town for a couple of weeks or months? You can now access our new e-giving platform, Vanco, and have your giving continue in your absence. This platform provides a secure and user-friendly way to give to our church online, and we are confident that it will make giving more convenient for many members of our congregation as well as friends from outside our membership.

You can choose to give via Vanco's mobile app, QR code found below, or by going to our web page on your desktop computer, phone, or tablet.

When going to our web page (<https://www.uccalpena.org/>), you will find a "Donate" button located near the top of the page. Click on the "Donate" button to go to our secure Vanco online giving page. There, you will find "tiles" for the General Fund, Mission Fund, or other special giving opportunities like Neighbors in Need. Click on the giving tile you choose to support, for instance General Fund, and it takes you to a form to complete. (You will need to create an account the first time you give,) Your online donation can be by credit card or ACH bank debit. You can also choose a one-time gift or a repeating gift (just like your current payments on your pledge) as well as covering the credit card service fee (2.9%) or ACH fee (1%). These are options offered for each gift.

Whether you choose to give online or in person, your support is vital to the continued success of our church community. We are so grateful for your generosity and commitment to our shared mission.

More detailed instructions can be found on the table at the rear of the sanctuary. Email me at apnucbookkeeper@gmail.com if you have any questions, and I will be happy to assist.



SAVE THE DATES!

Apple Fest

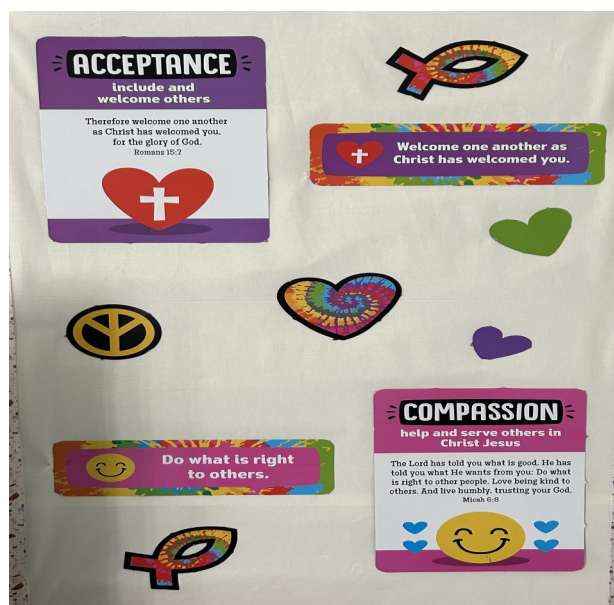
October 20

Thanksgiving Potluck

November 10

Holiday Luncheon

December 8



Feed A Family

Bill Haase



Food pantry needs are:: boxed or bagged potatoes; mashed, au gratin, scalloped, cheesy, etc. Hamburger, chicken, or tuna helper; cereal, crackers, kid snacks, soups. Feel free to utilize the donated shopping bags on the middle hallway table.

Treasurer's Report

Denise Fusina

PLEDGE REPORT

August 2024

Year to Date

◇ General Fund Pledge:

\$ 9,250

\$ 74,000

◇ Received:

6,492

77,611

INCOME AND EXPENSE REPORT

August 2024

Year to Date

◇ General Fund Income

\$ 6,610

\$ 157,043

◇ General Fund Expense

17,341

160,213

Neighbors in Need

Pat Garant

In 2024, the Neighbors in Need theme is "Mental Health, Justice for All!" This year's focus is on Mental Health Justice. In 2015, the General Synod of the United Church of Christ passed a resolution to become WISE (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaged) for mental health. A just world for all is a world where the human rights and well-being of people with mental health challenges are respected, no matter who you are in life's mental health journey. Please join us in promoting this year's NIN "**Mental Health is a Universal Human Right**". As you may recall, one-third of the offering supports Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two-thirds are used by Justice and Witness Ministries to provide grants to UCC churches and organizations as well as supporting a variety of justice initiative, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects.

In addition to donating during Sunday service, you may also drop off or send a check to the church office (made out to First Congregational Church with a note 'for NIN') anytime during October. You may also donate online using our secure Vanco online giving page. Use the Vanco app or go to our web page, uccalpena.org, and click the "Donate" button then choose the *Neighbors in Need* giving tile.



Dates to Remember

Birthdays

Paul Lance 10/1
Linda Clegg 10/3
Sarah Zeller 10/3
Linda Christiaens 10/4
Thomas Cook 10/5
Timothy Standen 10/5
Sharyl Davis 10/9
Thelma McDonald 10/9
Bonnie Bartz 10/18
Lori Zeller 10/26

Bobbie Zubi 10/21

Scott Beland 10/25

Nathan Barden 10/28

Anniversaries

Jim & Cindy Straley 10/1

Bill & Linda Clegg 10/21

Jay & Marilyn Kettler 10/23

Richard & Mary Bloom 10/28



Please consider purchasing or donating to the purchase of Birthday and Anniversary cards. You may drop your donation off at the office during regular business hours. Thank you!

Laity Schedule for October

Altar Guild:

Deborah Butler Desimone

Communion:

October 6 Janet Artley

Counters :

October 13 Dennis & Janet Artley

October 27 Boris Gerber

Greeters:

October 6 Dennis, Beverly, and Heather Bodem and Terry Bell

October 13 Ann Diamond and Blair Diamond

October 20 Ann Gerow and Jim Straley

October 27 Bev Olsen and Dan Kibbe

Lay Readers:

October 6 Bill Dempsey

October 13 Bill Dempsey

October 20 Jim McNeil

October 27 Lori Mayer

Ushers:

October 6 Boris Gerber & Penny Anderson

October 13 Nancy and Ashley Wedge

October 20 Pat Labadie and Vicky Lindsay

October 27 Max & Vicky Lindsay

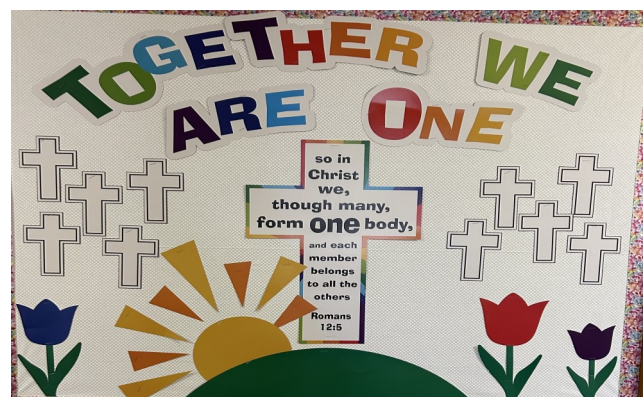
Fellowship Hosts:

October 6 Max & Vicky Lindsay

October 13 Joe & Pat Garant

October 20 Craig Waak & Lori Mayer

October 27 Max & Vicky Lindsay



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

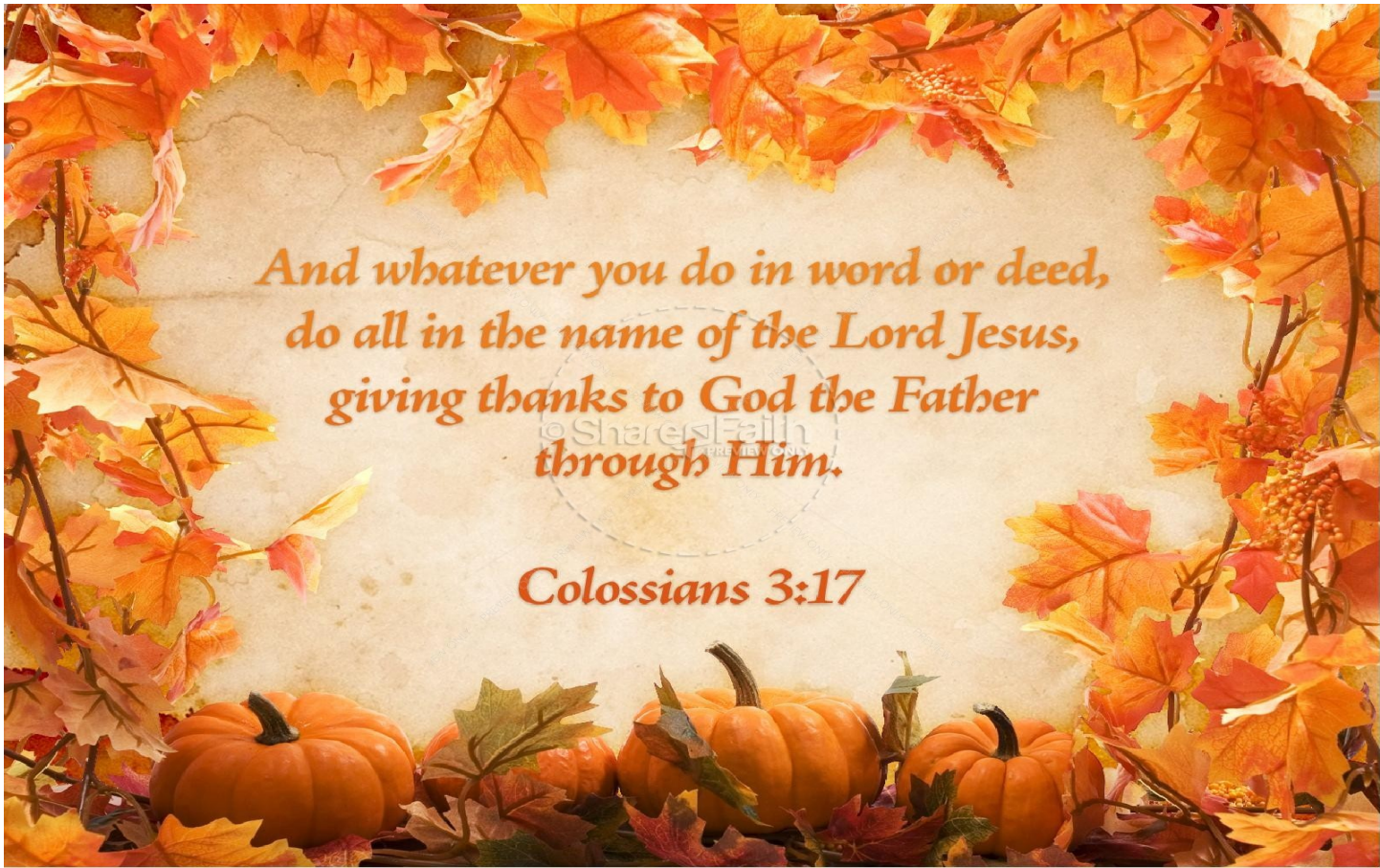
Treasurer: Denise Fusina

Office Administrator: Nancy Ross

Custodian: Mike LaMarre

Still Speaking

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*And whatever you do in word or deed,
do all in the name of the Lord Jesus,
giving thanks to God the Father
through Him.*

Colossians 3:17