

**January
2023**

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

January 1
Worship Service
Happy New Year!
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January 2  
Office Closed  
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January 8
Worship Service
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January 9  
Board of Directors  
Meeting  
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January 15
Worship Service
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January 22  
Worship Service  
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January 29
Worship Service
followed by
Annual Meeting



A Meditation for January

Pastor Jon Gougeon

Wow, here it is January 2023, where did the year go? Many things have happened around the world and in our lives. We pause in retrospect and think about all the events that took place in the past year. But the past is past and we look to the future with the hope of a new year of living with and in Christ. Let us with renewed hopes press onward to the goal, that is eternal life with Christ as Paul says, “but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead,¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.” Phil 3:13-14 (NRSV)

This is traditionally the time for making resolutions that will make a us healthier, happier, or a better person. Personally, I am not a fan of this approach, for it is my experience that only through faith in Jesus Christ, and repentance from sin will the God of the universe indwell us with the Holy Spirit and create change in our lives. We really cannot do it ourselves.

So let us consider some small steps of renewal of our faith, our hope and our love. First off, let us set aside a portion of time each day to spend with the Lord. It can be reading the bible, praying, or just quietly listening for God’s word for us. Start with 10 minutes and work from there.

Let us try to see all other people as Christ sees them, with a concern that we might make their day a bit better for having come in contact with us. To do this we can remember John Wesley’s three simple rules:

Do no Harm.
Do Good.
Stay in love with God.

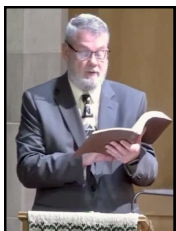
This sounds easy but in reality, can only be done if we lean into the third rule first. To stay in love with God, we must strive to be aware of God’s presence every day. When we live intentionally in God’s presence everything we do and say can be a praise and blessing to God.

I am praying for God to bless all our lives in this new year. May God’s love surround you, God’s mercy fill you, God’s hope and peace be your way in 2023.

In God’s service, Pastor Jon

Pastor Jon Named Part-Time Interim Minister

Welcome Aboard!

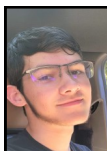


The Board of Directors has named Pastor Jon Gougeon to the position of Part-Time Interim Minister effective January 1. His regularly scheduled office hours are Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. Pastor Jon is also available by appointment at other times as needed. You may contact him by calling the church office at 989-356-1795, by email at alpuccpastor@gmail.com, and by phone or text at his personal cell number – 989-255-2884. Please note: If you choose to contact Pastor Jon via text, you will need to identify yourself.

Welcome aboard, Pastor Jon! We are happy to officially have you with us, and we look forward to sharing many blessed moments and memories with you at First Congregational United Church of Christ.

New Live-Stream Technician Onboard

Welcome Brayden



We are pleased to announce that Brayden Broad has been hired to facilitate the live-streaming services needed to more successfully reach our online worship participants. You will see him around most Sunday mornings. It's great to have you with us, Brayden!

Many Thanks

The Worship Committee

The Worship Committee would like to thank all the extra volunteers for the time that was given to the church to ensure the Advent and Christmas Season was filled with expectation and promise through worship and celebration. To list a few of the volunteer involvement activities: decorating the sanctuary, decoration of the exterior doors, poinsettias for Christmas Eve, the All Church Christmas Lunch, the Mitten Tree, making of hats and mittens for the Mitten Tree, Advent Candle Lighters, Choir and special music. We may have missed some, but please be assured that your volunteer involvement is what makes this congregation such a special place.

Thank you to our staff for the extra hours and efforts that are required during this extra busy time of the year. With your extended assistance, duties, and input, we are able to bring to our members, those in attendance, and shut-ins, the blessings of the Advent and Christmas season.

May God's blessing and the Hope, Peace, Love and Joy of the Advent and Christmas season be with you throughout the coming year.

Christmas Luncheon

A Festive Fellowship Time



Church members and friends were treated to a fun and festive time of fellowship, great food, and lots of merriment and jollity at the Christmas Luncheon last month. We extend our gratitude to Nancy Wedge and Ashley Wedge for planning the event and bringing us all together to share the joys of the season!

Committee Updates

The Welcoming Committee

January 15 Covenant Conversation

Immediately following fellowship time on Sunday, January 15, Jay Kettler of the Welcoming Committee will facilitate a discussion regarding Open and Affirming covenants. Should our church sometime in the future decide to become Open and Affirming, what would we like our covenant statement to include and look like? All are welcome and encouraged to attend this discussion to share their thoughts and ideas. Members of the committee are planning to provide a light lunch at this session.



Resource Table

On a table in the church hallway, the Welcoming Committee has placed an assortment of Welcoming and Open and Affirming resources (DVD's, books, pamphlets, and papers) for any and all to review and/or borrow. You are welcome to take any of this material home with you, but we ask that you return it the following week, so that it is available for others.

Welcoming Committee Meeting

The Welcoming Committee is meeting at 7:30pm on Thursday, January 5. The meeting is via Zoom and all are welcome to attend. To join us, just click the "Join Fellowship Hour Here" button on our church webpage. We continue to share ideas for our church's exploration as a welcoming church.

Reports Due Notice

Judy Suszek, Office Administrator

If you have not already done so, please complete and submit your committee's/group's summary report for the church's 2022 Annual Report. Due to limited activity for many committees, the report may be quite brief, but necessary all the same. Thank you!

Annual Meeting

January 29, 2023

Our 2023 Annual Meeting of the Membership is scheduled for Sunday, January 29 in the sanctuary following the 10:00 worship service. All are invited and encouraged to attend. Topics of discussion and action include membership updates, committees and elected positions, budget review and approval, and much more.

PLEASE JOIN US!



Lest Ye Forget

A Few Quick Reminders

- ◆ The 2023 hosting line-up for Sunday Fellowship Hour is available on the table behind the sanctuary. Please review and sign-up for hosting/helping services where needed. Thanks!
- ◆ Remember to check the members' mail pouches in the hallway outside the pastor's office for correspondences, notices, etc.
- ◆ Please call or email the church office if you know of someone who would appreciate receiving a care letter.
- ◆ Donations for our Feed A Family program are always welcome. Kindly leave donations on the long tables in the middle hallway.



*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 a.m.
In Person and Online**

Pastor Emeritus: Reverend Dr. H. Robert Case

Part-Time Interim Minister: Pastor Jon Gougeon

Organist/Choir Director: Kat Tomaszewski

Treasurer: Denise Fusina

Office Administrator: Judy Suszek

Custodian: Mike LaMarre

Live-Stream Technician: Brayden Broad

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Dates to Celebrate

Birthdays

Joe Garant	January 5	James Park	January 13
Herbert Knowlton	January 10	Beverly Olsen	January 17
Max Lindsay	January 10	Vernie Nethercut	January 23
Lillian Banas	January 12	Kathy Moore	January 27
Vicky Lindsay	January 12		



Anniversary



Joan & Sonny Chrzan January 26 60 Years

In this new year let us resolve to jump to POSITIVE conclusions!