

**August
2021**

Still Speaking

Newsletter of First Congregational United Church of Christ of Alpena

Board of Directors:

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

Dates to Remember

August 1
In person & Live Stream
Worship

August 8
In person & Live Stream
Worship

August 9
Board Meeting at 5:30pm.
If not vaccinated, please
wear a mask and social
distance

August 15
In person & Live Stream
Worship

August 22
In person & Live Stream
Worship

August 29
In person & Live Stream
Worship



A Word From Our Minister:

Rev. Dr. H. Robert Case

Newsletter Article August 2021

I would like to share with you a story about my grandfather. Albert Kent was my mother's father and we lived in the same house as my grandparents. (We could not afford a home of our own until I was in college.) Grandpa Kent came to this country at the turn of the 20th century from Cornwall England and brought with him the wonderful food known as a Pasty. He was sent to America because his parents could not feed the entire family and so he landed in New York and went immediately to the Keweenaw Peninsula of Michigan to work in the Copper Mines. Now what I want to talk to you about is what he taught me about taxes as an immigrant to the United States.

Growing up my entire family was Republican and were proud of paying taxes. Grandpa was *actually proud when his taxes went up because he used to say something like this; This country has been good to me and I am proud to help support it and every time I pay more taxes it means I am doing better.* Our house voted for every school mileage. He would, along with everyone, complain about how the money was spent but never about paying your Fair Share to help the community and country. He died before Ronald Regan, but I am sure he would have said at the most. President Regan was only partially right. The government may sometimes be the problem, but it also many times is the solution. The government can do things individuals cannot do. This meant I grew up believing paying my fair share was not only my duty, but my honor to help support the county we love. What does this have to do with Christianity? Let me now turn to that concept of rendering unto Caesar what is Caesar's.

I thought about my grandfather when I read this quote from Vance Morgan in the Christian publication *Patheos*. "*There is more about taxes in the gospels than we might choose to remember or talk about—none of it justifies hating having to pay them. As a matter of fact, there are reasons to believe that, if we take our faith commitments seriously, Christians should welcome the opportunity to pay taxes.*"

It is not like we do not get anything for our taxes. I remember a cartoon with a person arguing that taxes are a waste of money while standing at a street corner surrounded by people repairing the street, a police officer directing traffic an EMT person taking care of a person and teacher on the way to school. We all know Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security, SSI, WIC, money to homeless shelters; state universities, etc. all come from taxes.

Vance Morgan continues: *Paying taxes can help me recognize that there are many people in need, many programs designed to improve the lives of everyone, that are more appropriate recipients of my money than my bank account. Paying taxes might remind me that occasionally what serves my own narrow interests is not best. Paying taxes forces me to admit that other people are at least as important, and maybe even more important, than I am.*

We certainly can ask and discuss what a fair share is and is everyone doing their part or whether the dollar is being spent wisely. In the United Church of Christ years ago they suggested that that part of our taxes that goes to help the poor, the sick, those in need be considered part of your Christian Tithe. That didn't catch on, but let us look not only at the failings of government, but also how it helps all of us live better lives. My grandfather would be proud.

Bob,
Rev. Dr. Robert Case, Transitional Minister

July 12th Board Meeting Summary

- * Open & Affirming questionnaire was passed out to the board along with a mail send out to the congregation.
- * No financial changes, reports look good.
- * Chez Ami sister, Angela Barz and her husband Ed Barz, are continuing the Chez Ami cooking here at First Congregational! With all paperwork and certificates in place, they are hoping to start September 7th! Their schedule will be Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 8am-4pm. Healthy and home cooked meals. Pick up will be drive thru style.
- * A few board members mentioned bringing back passing the plates. Also we hope to bring back our ushers. Boris will make some calls and see who will be available to do so come this fall. The Board also brought up trying to figure out an easy way to take attendance. More details to follow.
- * We are talking with the Larsen carpentry, with hopes to refinish some of our doors. This should only be a week long process and will begin mid-August. We will have them look at the front double doors as well, since there is a bit of a gap. Doing this job should not interfere with Sunday worship or any other entries.
- * Boris mentioned that it looked like everyone was able to donate to Strengthen the Church and he plans to put together a small Heifer fair. More details to follow.
- *Bill and Deb Dempsey are our new chairpersons for the Stewardship committee and Laura Caplis is the new

board appointed member from the Comstock committee! **Welcome!!**

Welcoming Task Force Note



We are a welcoming congregation who extends hospitality, fellowship, and companionship to those who desire to follow Jesus in the service to all God’s children. A big thank you to those who participated in the Welcoming Task Force Survey. If you have not yet had the opportunity to turn in your survey, you may still do so. We are hoping to work together in growing our Outreach to others to join us in our pilgrimage to be more like Jesus. Thanks to your input, our committee will be contacting the congregation on the next steps for conversation on how we can better extend the Welcome at our open communion and in the life of our congregation. No one is turned away from the table, as we sing “build us a table, there is room for us all.”



Heifer Fair – Sunday, August 15

Dedicated to Gordon Nethercut

Gordon was a huge supporter of Heifer International, serving on their National Board.



On Sunday, August 15, we will have information (probably no live animals this year **L**) on Heifer farm animals you may “purchase” to help alleviate hunger and poverty around the world. Here’s an example:

From a single cow named “Bahati” came . . .

More than 5 gallons of milk per day + Income from selling the extra milk + Money to buy a flock of chickens + That produces plenty of protein-rich eggs + Which provide even more income + Abundant fertilizer to grow vegetables + Three offspring: two heifers and a bull! 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

BABY KITS: A BIG Thank You goes to *Margo Evans*, member of our UCC Needle crafters, who was very busy knitting at home during the pandemic. She recently donated 39 baby blankets, 16 hats, 16 pairs of booties, 4 baby sweaters, and 4 bibs. We will be packing baby kits this fall to be donated to Lutheran World Relief. A truck will be at Immanuel Lutheran Church Sat., Oct. 16. Many churches in NE Michigan will be bringing kits and quilts to be distributed worldwide. We started making baby kits 14 years ago for Church World Service, but a few years ago this project was discontinued. Our church donates 50-100 baby kits a year. Currently baby sweaters are needed.
-Diana Standen and Priscilla Homola

We are sad to announce that Kristi has submitted her two week notice and will be leaving us on 7/29. Thank you Kristi for your support and kindness during this difficult and challenging time during Covid. Please take our prayers and support in your new ventures. I would ask the congregation to pay attention to the changes in the office until we can find a new person to fill the position held by Kristi. The Board of Directors has begun opening up the church and we have started to let outside groups such as AA and the Boy Scouts resume using the church. We will be asking everyone who uses the church, including me, to keep an eye on the calendar in the hallway outside the office to make sure who is going to close the church after its use and to make sure we do not lock anybody out by closing too soon. I want to thank everyone for continuing to live out the faith by taking care of each other during this ongoing Covid Pandemic. You have worked with us during this time to be our sister and brothers keeper by following all the guidelines over the past year. It is important that we realize that the pandemic is not yet over and the board has set a policy about mask wearing. If you have NOT been vaccinated the policy is still to wear a mask and be aware of social distancing. We are still watching the progress of the Delta Variant and we may in the future have to revisit our policy. Keeping each other safe is one way not to have to go to more restrictive measures. I hope all of you have either had the vaccine or have talked to your family physician. Once again thank you for your cooperation. Bob

Are you in need of a new dish cloth or two? I have dish cloths that are of great value, high quality and inexpensive. They are double layered knit, ravel proof, sanitary and made in the USA! Cost is \$2 each and is available in colors of red, blue, green and natural (profit helps to defray the cost of altar supplies).

Call Nancy Wedge, 356-4402 or send an email wedge.nancy@gmail.com to place your order.



Our 50 year member celebration!

Time to Celebrate

*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
Office Hours: 10:00 am – 2:00 pm Monday – Thursday

**Sunday Worship: 10:00 a.m.–
In person and Virtual**

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

Still Speaking

Newsletter of First Congregational United Church of Christ of Alpena

Birthdays and Anniversaries in August

Birthdays:

| | |
|------------------|------|
| Keith Titus | 8/2 |
| Carmen Grubaugh | 8/4 |
| Ashley Wedge | 8/6 |
| David Zeller | 8/12 |
| Dixie Julian | 8/14 |
| Priscilla Homola | 8/19 |
| Heather Bodem | 8/23 |

Anniversaries:

| | |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Nathan & Kristin Barden | 18 years |
| Ronald & Vlinda Borke | 28 years |
| David & Lori Zeller | 11 years |
| Michael & Cheryl Mack | 25 years |
| Bill & Dottie Haase | 61 years |
| Jon & Megan Petty | 10 years |
| Brian & Miranda Plume | 28 years |
| Bob & Diana Kelly | 61 years |
| Dan Kibbe & Lois Gibbs | 35 years |

