



THE FLAME

Monthly Newsletter

for

Central and Algonquin United Methodist Churches

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JUNE 2026

REFLECTIONS FROM THE PASTOR

When God “Laughs”



There is an old saying: “If you want to make God laugh, tell Him your plans.”

I have heard it called a Russian proverb. Others have traced it elsewhere. Whatever its exact origin, the saying has a way of finding us sooner or later. Most of us know what it is to make plans, hold plans, look forward to plans—and then watch those plans change.

Tina and I had hoped to travel to Portugal this year. It was something we had looked forward to, talked about, and imagined. But because of my prolonged recuperation, we have had to cancel that trip. Now we find ourselves wondering whether our fall cruise plans may also be affected, especially if surgery becomes necessary.

That is not a tragedy, of course. Many people are carrying far heavier burdens. But disappointment does not have to be catastrophic in order to be real. A cancelled trip, a delayed healing, an unexpected diagnosis, a changed family plan, a financial strain, a relationship that does not unfold the way we hoped—these things can all leave us feeling unsettled.

And perhaps that is where the old saying does its work. I do not believe God laughs at us in a cruel way. God is not in heaven mocking our calendars or taking pleasure in our disappointment. The God revealed in Jesus weeps at tombs, touches lepers, welcomes children, restores the wounded, and walks beside confused disciples on the road.

But maybe, if God “laughs,” it is more like the smile of a loving parent when a child announces exactly how life is going to go. Not with scorn, but with tenderness. Not because our plans are foolish, but because our vision is limited. We see the next step, the next appointment, the next trip, the next season. God sees more.

There is a line from an old poem that has stayed with me:

“Disappointment—His appointment;
Change one letter, then I see
That the thwarting of my purpose
Is God’s better choice for me.”

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That is easier to quote than to live. When our purpose is thwarted, we do not always immediately see God's better choice. Sometimes we mostly see the loss. Sometimes we see the empty place where something hoped-for used to be. Faith does not require us to pretend otherwise.

But faith does invite us to trust that disappointment is not the end of the story.

In Scripture, God often meets people in the middle of changed plans. Abraham and Sarah waited longer than they expected. Moses found his life redirected in the wilderness. Mary's future was reshaped by an angel's announcement. The disciples' expectations were shattered by the cross—and then remade by resurrection.

Over and over, God's people discover that changed plans are not necessarily abandoned plans. Sometimes they become the place where grace meets us in a way we would not have chosen, but deeply need.

So perhaps the question is not simply, "Will my plans work out?" Perhaps the better question is, "Can I trust God with the road I did not choose?"

Proverbs 3:5–6 reminds us, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make straight your paths." That does not mean every path will be easy, or that every disappointment will quickly make sense. But it does mean we are not left to walk by our own wisdom alone. God's faithfulness is not cancelled when our plans are.

June brings its own reminders of grace. Children gather for Vacation Bible School. The longest day of the year comes with its generous light. Gardens grow. Summer unfolds. Life continues to offer beauty, even when some of our plans have been set aside.

So make your plans. It is good to dream, prepare, hope, and look forward. Just hold those plans with open hands.

And if God "laughs," may we trust that it is the laughter of One who loves us, sees farther than we can see, and is already at work—even here, even now, even in the changed plans.

Grace and peace, **Pastor Marty**

PRAYER WHEEL FOR OUR MILITARY



Lord, hold our troops in your loving hands. Protect them as they protect us. Bless them and their families for the selfless acts they perform for us in our time of need. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

We keep our country's military in our prayers, be they young people who are in "for just a hitch" of maybe a few years, or those who choose a military career.

Thank you to our veterans and all those who have served their country.



A special 101st Happy Birthday, on June 2nd, to Bob Noble who served in the U.S. Coast Guard in WWII in the Pacific area.

NOTES AND NOTEWORTHY

FLAG DAY IS JUNE 14

“Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.”

Psalm 33:12

HAPPY FATHER’S DAY ON JUNE 21st

**TO ALL THE GENTLEMEN OF
ALGONQUIN AND CENTRAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCHES!**

THANK YOU, THANK YOU!!

Our June “Flame” has received \$100.00 to go towards the publishing of it. This is an anonymous gift and it is very appreciated. You know who you are and you have a big “Thank You!”

Who would like to sponsor an upcoming issue? It is done by donating \$90.00, and it can be put into the offering plate or brought into the church office. Be sure to include the information and exactly what the donation is for. You will be recognized and thanked in a coming issue.

CENTRAL CHURCH RUMMAGE SALE

Central’s Annual Rummage Sale has been held and \$700 was raised. This will go toward the repair of the elevator ceiling, which has a leak. We would like to thank Jim, Karen, Dorothy, Gigi, Robin, Tricia and Wendy for their invaluable help. It is much appreciated.

Submitted by Diana Morgan and Mary Beth Aikens

REMINDER: The deadline for material to be submitted for our next *Flame*, the July/August 2026 issue, is due on June 15, 2026 at noon. Please note that this is a two month issue, so with this in mind, please plan ahead for any articles wished to be included.

**ALGONQUIN AND CENTRAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCHES
MISSION: CONNECTING ALL PEOPLE TO GOD BY BUILDING
BRIDGES OF CARING, OUTREACH AND ACCEPTANCE**

BAZAAR WORKSHOP

The Bazaar Workshop picked up a few more painters with the return of the Snow Birds! We have lots of crafts to work on since our amazing lady with a saw, Lori Horner, brought in 2 large boxes of cut out wood with patterns. We should very soon share the theme for the November Bazaar with posters to follow in late summer or early fall. As always, you are invited to stop by on Wednesday for coffee and a chat.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Women at Central received decorative fans for Mother's Day. The men will receive a special gift on June 21 to celebrate Father's Day.

Submitted by Robin Myers

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

Ben Jones who was selected by the Sault Area Public Schools to receive the Nick Oshelski Lifetime Achievement Award. He was chosen for this honor in recognition of his decades of service, leadership and unwavering dedication to the students and staff of Sault Area Public Schools. The award was presented at the May meeting of the Board of Education.



Family Night – Thank-You



As we complete another year of Family Night, we wanted to express our thanks to all the children and families who participated and made our year a great success. We also wanted to thank those volunteers who provided yummy dinners to our families: Susan & Tom Brown, Jackie Willey and Robin Myers, Linda Bell, Sherry Hutchins, Bev Proulx and Terri Bush. Thank you to the Endowment Fund who provided program funding for some meals and for our special outreach events. A big thank you to Mallory Baier, Bev Proulx, Sherry Hutchins and Pastor Marty for their teaching and leadership in developing powerful Christian lessons for the children and adults.

We hope to see everyone back on Wednesday, September 16th as we begin again in the fall.

BIRTHDAY AND ANNIVERSARY BLESSINGS AND WISHES
SPECIAL BIRTHDAY BLESSINGS TO BOB NOBLE ON HIS 101ST BIRTHDAY

Central Birthdays

June 2 - Bob Noble (101st)	June 25 - Patti Kaunisto
June 7 - Marv DeWitt	June 26 - Bob Johnson
June 11 - Hollis Taylor	June 27 - Emily Baker
June 14 - Sharon Jones	June 28 - Arla McDowell
June 16 - Cathy Wilkinson	June 28 - Melissa McLain
June 17 - Tina Johnston	June 29 - Gayle Johnson
June 24 - Charlene DeWitt	

Central Anniversaries

June 20 - Sharon and Ben Jones (67th)
June 21 - Sue and Tom Brown (51st)
June 21 - Marge and Chan Huff (57th)
June 22 - Hazel and Hollis Taylor (68th)
June 29 - Lisa and Bob Vincent (12th)



Algonquin Birthdays

June 1 - Debbie Wilson	June 5 - Jim Wilson
June 4 - Bev Atkins	June 22 - Taryn Pratt (20th)
June 4 - Madison Atkins	

Algonquin Anniversaries

June 2 - Becky and Chris Meicher
June 2 - Sarah and Ryan Atkins (19th)
June 6 - Bernita and Bob Sibbald (39th)

*Remember to keep up with your pledge and your giving to our two
churches. Your continued faithfulness will help us keep
current with our bills and obligations!!*

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL
Monday, June 29th thru Thursday, July 2nd

9:00 am until 12:00 Noon

Central & Algonquin United Methodist Churches, Faith Lutheran & First United Presbyterian Church are exploring together for our community VBS

At First United Presbyterian Church, 555 Bingham Avenue



At **RAIN FOREST FALLS** Children plunge into a lifelong adventure of discovering the nature of God. They will explore what it means to be rooted in a relationship with God their creator, a safe place in life's storms. Here are some ways you can support VBS:

I can help BEFORE **RAIN FOREST FALLS** VBS. I can: (circle choices)

Donate Toilet Paper/paper towel rolls

Prepare/Assemble Crafts

Provide a monetary donation to help with expenses

Pray for VBS

Dear God; Provide the opportunity for families in our community to attend VBS. Help us meet our needs for volunteers, supplies and decorations. We pray that through VBS, kids will grow in their relationship with you and their young hearts receive your love. Let our church be a great influence in our community through our VBS. Let our doors be open and our hearts be welcoming to all the children and their families who attend our **RAIN FOREST FALLS** VBS.

I can help DURING **RAIN FOREST FALLS** VBS. I can: (circle choices)

Be a Teacher Assistant

take photos to upload on church Facebook page

Be a Group Leader

Help Wherever needed

I can help AFTER **RAIN FOREST FALLS** VBS. I can: (circle choices)

Help with Clean Up

Take Down decorations

Send Thank you notes

Please contact Terri Bush at 906-440-2850 or terribush@lighthouse.net if you can volunteer during the week of VBS or if you have questions on how you can help.

RECIPE ROUNDUP CORNER

(We know we have many wonderful cooks in Algonquin and Central churches. We invite the sharing of your favorite recipe. Just write them out, include your name, and turn them into the box marked for "the Flame" outside of our secretary's office, or email them to Barb Larson at blarson1517@charter.net. It can be desserts, entrees, beverages, appetizers, etc.)

SCONES

Mix together: 2 cups flour 1/4 cup sugar 1 tsp baking powder

Cut in 1/4 pound butter and stir in 1 cup buttermilk

Pat into a round on a cookie sheet. Cut and separate 12 wedges.

Sprinkle lightly with sugar and bake 12-15 minutes at 400 degrees.



Submitted by Barbara Larson (found this recipe in my 2026 devotional, Guideposts "Mornings With Jesus". I've not tried it yet, but just for fun, let me know if you do, and if they're really as good as they sound!

ALGONQUIN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

1604 W Fourth Avenue
Sault Ste Marie, MI 49783

Our Worship Servants for the month of June are:

June 7 - Liturgist - Bev Atkins, Communion Steward - Bernita Sibbald,
Greeter - Sharon Bennett, Usher - Bob Sibbald

June 14 - Greeter and Usher - Laura Anderson

June 21 - Liturgist - Bev Atkins, Greeter - Rachel Pratt, Usher - Bob Sibbald

June 28 - Greeters - Todd and Mary Beth Vollick, Usher - Todd Vollick

News to Share: The congregation collected \$138.00 from the April Change Jar which will help to pay to have the steeple cleaned.

Submitted by Bernita Sibbald

CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATE

Taylor Pratt graduated from Lake Superior State University on May 2 with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, a minor in International Business and an Associate in General Studies. Taylor is the daughter of Peter and Michele Pratt, sister to Taryn and granddaughter of Rachel Pratt and Jeff Krull. Taylor attends Algonquin UMC. She has accepted a job with Eastern Upper Peninsula Transportation Authority.



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR GRADUATES

We have previously honored the following in our spring issues of our newsletter; Emma Largent (high school) and Eric Donarski (PHD and Masters) We are proud to add the following to our list of graduates.

Adelle East has graduated from Riverton High School in Wyoming. She attended the Career Center and studied in the nursing program and Automotive Technology program. Adelle was also a member of the high school choir and enjoyed Community Theater. She is the daughter of Nicolas East and Jessica East, the granddaughter of Patti Kaunisto and great granddaughter of the late Peggy Kaunisto and her aunt is Kim Harris. Patti writes, *I am so proud of all Adelle has done and I left on May 7, with my sister Kim and daughter Jenna and granddaughter Payton for her graduation. I wanted to share our joy!*



Glance Filkins will graduate from Harbor City International School in Duluth, Minnesota on June 6. Glance plans to continue studies in the fall at Lake Superior College in Duluth with enrollment in the College Aviation Mechanics program. Glance is the child of Andrew and Holly (Hutchins) Filkins, grandparents are Ron and Sherry Hutchins, and great grandmother is Phyllis Cousins. The family is very proud of Glance.



Katelyn Bell graduated on May 15 from Bay Mills Community College with a Bachelor of Arts Childhood

Education. She did all of this on line while working full time at Community Action as a Head Start teacher and raising 3 girls. She is pictured here with her husband Nick and daughters, Marah, age 10, Kinley, age 7 and Cora (and her bunny), age 4.



We offer this Prayer For Graduates to all of our young people:

God of truth and knowledge, by your wisdom we are taught the way and the truth. Bless our high school and higher education graduates as they now finish their courses of study. We thank you for those who taught and worked beside them, and all who supported them along the way. Walk with these graduates as they leave and move forward in life. Take away their anxiety and confusion of purpose. Strengthen their many talents and skills, instill in them a confidence in the future You plan, where energies may be gathered up and used for the good of all people, for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.



RAINFOREST FALLS VBS – REGISTRATION FORM

CHILD'S NAME: _____

DATE OF BIRTH: _____ AGE: _____ LAST SCHOOL GRADE: _____

PARENT/FAMILY/GUARDIAN NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CONTACT PHONE NUMBER _____ EMAIL: _____

HOME CHURCH (if any) _____



Allergies; Medical condition; or special needs: _____

Emergency Contact Information:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Photo Release: First United Presbyterian; Central/Algonquin UMC; and Faith Lutheran churches have my permission to use my children photograph publicity in VBS materials. I understand the images may be used in print publications, on publications, presentations, websites and social media. I also understand that no royalty fee or other compensation shall become payable to me by reason of such use.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

A Pastoral Word About Pride, Prayer, and Worship

Dear Church Family,

Recently, news broke of a 22-foot golden statue of our president being unveiled in Florida, followed by a dedication involving religious leaders. I will be honest: I found this spiritually troubling.

If someone had told me that the leader of a nation had a golden image of himself displayed, my mind would have gone immediately to the Old Testament. I might have thought of Nebuchadnezzar in the book of Daniel, who built a golden image and commanded the people to bow before it. Or I might have thought of the golden calf in Exodus, when God's people confused religious devotion with something they could see, touch, and control.

What concerns me is not simply that such a statue exists. What concerns me even more is the participation of Christian clergy in its dedication. That should give all of us pause.

This is not a call to mock, despise, or dehumanize our president. Scripture commands us to pray for those in authority. Paul writes in 1 Timothy 2 that "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings" should be made "for kings and all who are in high positions." Whether we voted for a leader or not, whether we admire a leader or not, Christians are called to pray for wisdom, humility, justice, restraint, courage, and righteousness in all who govern.

But praying for a leader is not the same as exalting a leader. The first commandment remains the first commandment: "You shall have no other gods before me." When Jesus was tempted by the devil and offered all the kingdoms of the world, He answered with Scripture: "Worship the Lord your God, and serve only Him." That word "only" matters.

The Church must always be careful not to confuse patriotism with worship, admiration with discipleship, or political loyalty with faithfulness to Christ. Leaders may be respected. Leaders may be prayed for. Leaders may even be appreciated for the good they do. But no leader deserves our worship. No party deserves our souls. No nation, however beloved, can take the place of the Kingdom of God.

Scripture repeatedly warns us about pride. Proverbs says, "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." Esther gives us the sobering image of Haman, whose hunger for honor became his undoing. Daniel shows us Nebuchadnezzar humbled when he forgot that his power was not ultimate. These warnings are not only for presidents, kings, or rulers. They are for all of us.

I remember once feeling deeply uneasy when I saw an oil portrait of a pastor hanging prominently in the lobby of the very church he was serving. It felt spiritually unhealthy. Pastors, presidents, bishops, celebrities, and public figures all face the temptation of ego. So do congregations. So do ordinary people. The human heart is remarkably capable of turning almost anything into an idol.

That is why moments like this matter. They ask us to examine not only the actions of others, but also the loyalties of our own hearts. So let us pray for our president. Let us pray for Congress, the courts, governors, local officials, and all who carry responsibility. Let us pray that those in power would be protected from arrogance, surrounded by wise counsel, and guided toward justice and mercy. And let us also pray for the Church.

May we have the courage to honor what is honorable without bowing before what is merely powerful. May we love our country without confusing it with the Kingdom of God. May we respect leaders without making idols of them. And may our worship belong to God alone. The Lord alone is worthy.

Grace and peace, *Pastor Marty*

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June 2026

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The 23rd Psalm

*The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;
he leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths
of righteousness for his name's sake.
Chapter 1, vs 1-3*