



THE FLAME

Monthly Newsletter

for

Central and Algonquin United Methodist Churches

Office: 111 East Spruce Street - (906) 632-8672 Sault Ste Marie, MI 49783

Pastor: The Reverend Marty Johnston

Administrative Assistant: Kathy Bankson

centralumc632@gmail.com/Website: www.cumcsoo.org

Editors: Barbara Larson and Sharon Jones

MAY 2026

REFLECTIONS FROM THE PASTOR

Signs of New Life



By the time May arrives, many of us are more than ready for it.

We are ready for longer days and greener grass. Ready to hear birds again. Ready to step outside and feel something besides cold wind on our faces. Here in the Upper Peninsula, May can feel like a deep breath after a very long winter.

That may be one reason I love this month so much.

Some of my favorite hiking memories have happened in May. There is something about getting back on the trail in spring—the smell of damp earth, the sound of moving water, the quiet evidence that life is returning. To be honest, some of my May hiking memories also include a few misadventures: mud, wrong turns, wet boots, and trails rougher than I had hoped. But perhaps that is part of why May feels so real. New life is beautiful, but it is not always tidy. It comes gradually. Sometimes unexpectedly. Sometimes a little messily.

The same is true in life.

May is filled with moments that carry both joy and tenderness. We celebrate Mother's Day and give thanks for the women who have loved us, taught us, sacrificed for us, and prayed for us. We honor graduates stepping into a new chapter, full of possibility and, no doubt, a few questions about what comes next. We observe Memorial Day and remember with gratitude those who served and sacrificed, as well as loved ones whose memory still moves quietly through our hearts.

And for the Church, May also gives us holy reasons to pay attention. We remember Aldersgate and John Wesley's heart being "strangely warmed." We look ahead to Pentecost and the gift of the Holy Spirit poured out upon the Church. Both remind us that God is still able to awaken what has grown dull, breathe into what feels tired, and set hearts on fire with fresh love for Christ.

Scripture tells us, "For everything there is a season" (Ecclesiastes 3:1). Most of us do not need to be convinced of that. We have lived long enough to know that some seasons are for rejoicing, some for grieving, some for planting, and some for waiting. Often, more than one season is present at the same time. A person can feel grateful and sad, hopeful and uncertain, proud and prayerful—all in the same day.

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Reflections from the Pastor Continued:

That is one reason I am so grateful for our faith in Christ. The gospel does not ask us to pretend. It does not tell us to ignore grief or rush past uncertainty. Instead, it reminds us that the risen Jesus meets us in every season.

He is the One who said, “I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25). And because He lives, we are never left to face life’s changes alone. He is present in the beauty of spring, in the joy of celebration, in the tenderness of memory, and in the unknowns that lie ahead. He is still at work, still bringing life where we only see weariness, and still making all things new.

So as May unfolds around us, I hope you will take time to notice the signs of new life— in creation, in the people you love, in moments of remembrance, and in the quiet places of your own heart.

Spring does not arrive all at once.

Neither does grace.

But both have a way of finding us, always as a gift from the God who is not finished with us yet.

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.

THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES DAY IS MAY 16, 2026.

Please keep the people serving our country in your thoughts and prayers.

If you see a veteran, please thank them for their service.

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

NOTES AND NOTEWORTHY

The month of May holds several special dates:

**HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY ON MAY 10 TO THE MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS OF
ALGONQUIN AND CENTRAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCHES!!**

Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you....

Deuteronomy 5:16

MEMORIAL DAY IS MAY 25, 2026. We honor those who have gone before us.

Central UMC will have the season's final **Soup Luncheon** on May 3, 2026 after the church service. On June 7 we will switch and have Salad Luncheons. (YES, spring and summer are truly coming!!)

THANK YOU, THANK YOU!!

Our May "Flame" is sponsored by **Bob Arfstrom** and we thank him very much.

It is so much appreciated, Bob!

Who would like to sponsor an upcoming issue! It is done by donating \$90.00 to cover the cost of a month's issue. The money can be placed in the Sunday offering plate or brought to the church office. Be sure to include your name and specifically what the donation is for. You will be recognized and thanked in an upcoming issue.

ANOTHER THANK YOU

I would like to take a moment to recognize and sincerely thank all the volunteers who faithfully give their time and energy each month to help put together the "Flame." Your dedication does not go unnoticed, and it plays an essential role in making this publication possible.

We are truly blessed to have such a dependable and committed group of individuals . Each of you brings a spirit of generosity, team work and care that strengthens not only this effort, but an entire church family. Weather working behind the scene or stepping in with a moments notice, your willingness to help whenever needed is deeply appreciated.

It is not easy to find people who consistently show up with such reliability and heart, and we are incredibly fortunate to have all of you. The success of the "Flame" is a direct reflection of all our work and devotion. While words can never fully express the depth of our gratitude, please know how much your contributions mean. Thank you for all that you do---you truly make a difference.

Submitted by Kathy Bankson

ATTENTION, FAMILIES OF GRADUATES

Do you have a high school or a higher education graduate in your family? If so, please submit some information on them so we can recognize them in an upcoming issue of the "Flame." Also include a photo of your high school graduate. You can phone me at 632-7958 or email me at blarson1517@charter.net.

Submitted by Barbara Larson

BAZAAR WORKSHOP

The bazaar workshop met this morning (April 8) with 4 of us making plans, starting our cleanup and getting ready for our snowbirds to return. Lori Horner has a stack of patterns to cut out and have ready to paint. At this time we do not have chair persons, but after reading this, if a couple of women would be willing to co-chair the bazaar it would be greatly appreciated. We have plans to take some of our crafts to Sidewalk Sales and possibly the Spring Show.

You are always welcome to join us if you are interested in crafting or just want to visit.

Submitted by Jackie Willey

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Happy Mother's Day to all of the women of Algonquin and Central United Methodist Churches. We will have a special gift for all women of Central in honor of Mother's Day on May 10. And on May 24 we will have a special presentation during the service in honor of Memorial and Armed Forces Day. It will honor all who have served.

Submitted by Robin Myers

MISSIONS COMMITTEE

We are still collecting shelf staple foods plus other items for elementary schools and personal hygiene items for the Mission/Outreach program. The lists are located upstairs and you may drop off your items in their appointed boxes or if you wish to purchase a gift card, please pass that to either Kathy (in the office) or to me. Thank you.

Submitted by Diane Bell

*Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart
to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God
loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:7 (NIV)*

EASTER FLOWER DEDICATIONS AT CENTRAL

IN MEMORY OF:

Pat Bennin by Hazel & Hollis Taylor

Bernard and Sara Aikens by James & Karen Aikens

Bonnie and Jamie Arfstrom by Bob & Mary Arfstrom

Ida and Ray Arfstrom by Bob & Mary Arfstrom

Ginny Tafelsky and Donna Williams by Bob & Mary Arfstrom

Dr. James and Veta Fyvie by Bob & Mary Arfstrom

Al and Lorraine Cheney by Diane Bell

Lynn Duciewicz by Diane Bell

Don and Elizabeth Brown by Tom & Susan Brown

Daryl and Ruth Fairbanks by Kris Donarski

Dale Hoornstra by Rhonda & Family

Robert Brown and Bob Larson by Kevin & Kathy Larson

Shelby Myers and Sue Mackie by Robin & Terry Myers

Our Parents and Grandparents by Ben & Sharon Jones

Frank and Wayne Morley by Dorothy Morley & Family

Mr. And Mrs. Vern Ball by Marla Nayback, Sharyn Faunt, Tyson & Ethan Nayback & Families

Mr. And Mrs. Anthony Settember by Marla Nayback, Sharyn Faunt, Tyson & Ethan Nayback & Families

Jim Nayback by Marla Nayback, Sharyn Faunt, Tyson & Ethan Nayback & Families

Mr. And Mrs. Wilford Nayback by Marla Nayback, Sharyn Faunt and Tyson & Ethan Nayback & Families

Kimberly Ann Rogers by Larry & Janet Rogers

Our Parents by John & Cathy Wilkinson

Our Parents by Ronald & Diana Morgan

Dale Hoornstra by Great Grandson, River Dale Kyle

IN HONOR OF:

Bob Noble by Hollis & Hazel Taylor

Our Grandchildren by Colleen and Bernie Arbic

FOR THE GLORY OF EASTER :

Ron & Sherry Hutchins ,Carl Ball & Marcia Jenkins-Ball, James & Katherine Bankson

Barb & Jerry Cook and Hazel & Hollis Taylor



BIRTHDAY AND ANNIVERSARY BLESSINGS AND WISHES

Central Birthdays

May 2 - Lois Horner

May 4 - Ron Morgan

May 6 - Vicky Hoy

May 7 - Nora Baier

May 11 - Shelby Mackie

May 15 - Teri Bush

May 16 - Kris Donarski

May 18 - Marli Moran (6 years old)

May 25 - Art Smart

Central Anniversaries

May 3 - James and Kathy Bankson (23rd)

May 10 - Larry and Janet Rogers (51st)

May 22 - Charlene and Marv DeWitt (55th)

May 27 - Melissa and Tony McLain

May 29 - Linda and Jerry Bell (62nd)



Algonquin Birthdays

May 7 - Taylor Pratt (22nd)

May 10 - Maxine McCrory (92nd)

May 18 - Becky Meicher

May 18 - Erv Price

May 20 - Mindy Wilson

May 26 - Sherri Voeglina

Algonquin Anniversaries

May 26 -- Connie and Erv Price

May 28 - Shelley White-Thomas and Eric Thomas (32nd)

May 30 - Sue and Brent Belleau (37th)

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!!

FAMILY MINISTRIES UPDATE



The Families Ministries Team was sad to see Sophie leave us and have been brainstorming plans and ideas for how best to move forward. We ask that you prayerfully consider how you may be able to support children's worship and family ministries. With our staff vacancy in the family ministry position we have made the difficult decision to suspend children's worship for the summer. The last day for children's worship will be Sunday, May 31st and we hope to begin again as of September 6th. During the summer months a nursery will be available for children birth through 3 years of age with Mallory Baier and a volunteer from the family ministry team in the nursery. Malloy will join us for worship if there are not infants or young children for a nursery.

Our Family Ministry Team continues to work hard this summer for Vacation Bible School and planning for monthly Family Nights. We were excited with participation for the special events we held this winter such as bowling, watching Blue Devil Hockey and ice skating and will be planning more of these outreach activities for this fall and next winter.

Our Family Ministry Team is committed to providing worship and fellowship for our children and families. Please reach out to us if you have ideas on how you can support our efforts.

Your Family Ministry Team
Mallory Baier
Bev Proulx
Sherry Hutchins
Kay Miller
Kristen Hartman
Terri Bush

A REMINDER: The deadline for material to be submitted for our next "Flame," the June 2026 issue, is May 15, 2026, at noon.

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.)

CREAMY TOMATO TORTELLINI SOUP



1 Tbsp olive oil 1# bulk sweet Italian sausage 1 medium onion, diced 1 tsp. paprika
1 tsp. salt 6 cloves garlic, minced ½ tsp pepper 1/4 tsp. red pepper flakes, crushed
2 Tbsp. Tomato paste 1 (28 oz.) can tomato puree 8 cups vegetable or chicken stock
28 oz. Pkg. frozen cheese tortellini 1 1/4 cup half & half 1 lemon, juiced
1 bunch chard, leaves stripped & chopped ½ cup basil grated Parmesan cheese/ optional

Instructions: Heat oil at med. high heat in heavy bottomed soup pot. Add sausage and cook, breaking up with a wooden spoon as you do, until no pink remains Drain all but 2 Tbsp of grease. At med. heat add onions, garlic, paprika, salt, pepper, and red pepper. Cook until onions are soft and beginning to turn golden brown, about 4-5 minutes. Add tomato paste and cook about 3 minutes. Add tomato puree and stock. Raise heat to a boil, and then lower until soup is simmering. Add tortellini and cook 3 minutes. Add chard and basil, cook 2 more minutes. Remove pot from burner. Place ½ & ½ in a med. size bowl. Temper it by stirring in 2-3 Tbsp. soup. Repeat this process until mixture is fairly warm. Pour mixture into warm soup. Stir in lemon juice. Serve immediately with grated Parmesan cheese

Submitted by Kathy Larson

Balcony Update

We want to keep the congregation informed about an important building matter involving the church balcony. Signs of movement have been observed, and a preliminary inspection by an engineering firm has indicated that this is something we should take seriously and investigate further.

We do have a proposal in hand for a more complete inspection and diagnosis. This will be an involved process, and at this stage we do not yet have an established timeline. The expense for this work would come from our building fund, and we will also be submitting the matter to the Endowment Committee for consideration.

For now, our goal is simply to move forward carefully, responsibly, and prayerfully. Thank you for your continued support, concern, and prayers as we seek the best way to care for the church building entrusted to us.

Submitted by Pastor Marty

Tom Brown / Trustee Chairperson

God is our refuge and strength, and ever present help in trouble.

Psalm 46:1

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR GRADUATES

Emma Largent, daughter of Scott and Alli Largent, granddaughter of Scott and Dorothy Cornell, and great granddaughter of Marge and Earl Tomlinson, will be graduating from Brighton High School on June 5, 2026. She is excited to begin her next chapter, joining the Navy and serving as a Navy Corpsman, providing care to Navy and Marine personnel, with a future goal of working in an emergency room. Emma enjoys spending time with family and friends and sharing her love of baking. We celebrate her accomplishments and wish her God's blessings in the journey ahead.

Submitted by Dorothy Cornell



Eric Donarski: I am happy to say that Eric has completed his PHD in Chemistry and his Masters in Public Health from the University of Virginia. I went down to hear him defend his thesis in early April. He has accepted a post doctoral position at Aberdeen, Maryland in an Army lab.

Submitted by Kris Donarski

SPRING NOTES

“Our Lord has written the promise of resurrection, not in books alone, but in every leaf in springtime.” — Martin Luther

“Spring adds new life and new beauty to all that is.” —Jessica Harrelson

“The deep roots never doubt spring will come.”—Marty Rubin

**We hope you join us for
Family Night
Wednesday, May 20, 2026
Dinner served at 5:30 pm**



We have a night of activities, games, food and fun planned for everyone. This will be our celebration for the final family night until September, 2026.



ALGONQUIN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

1604 W Fourth Avenue
Sault Ste Marie, MI 49783

ALGONQUIN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Our Worship Servants for the month of May are:

May 3 - Liturgist Bev Atkins, Communion Steward Bernia Sibbald,

Greeter Laura Anderson

May 10 - Greeter Sharon Bennett, Usher Bob Sibbald

May 17 - Liturgist Bev Atkins, Greeter Todd Vollick, and Usher Mary Beth Vollick

May 24 - Greeter Rachel Pratt and Usher Bob Sibbald

May 31 - Greeter Mary Beth Vollick and Usher Bob Vollick

News to Share: Change Jar: In March we collected \$130 for the "I Am the Storm" Mackenzie (Kalchick) Memorial Scholarship. April's donation will go towards the cost to have the church steeple cleaned. Lenten Project: Algonquin Women in Faith made personalized Easter baskets for the Merlin Home residents. The picture is shown here.

Submitted by Bernita Sibbald



EASTER FLOWER DEDICATIONS AT ALGONQUIN

IN MEMORY OF:

Randy Bennett by Sharon Bennett

Guy & Lorayne LaCross by Sharon Bennett

Howard Vollick by Todd and Mary Beth Vollick

Tom & Alice O'Neil by Todd and Mary Beth Vollick

Ken & Alma Fowler by Lillie Dost and Janice Wilson

Jim Wilson & Richard Scott by Lillie Dost and Janice Wilson

Ron & Bev Harwood by Jerry & Jackie Harwood & Ashley Young

Howard & Maizie Atkins by Sam and Marcia White

Bev & Lorne Sibbald by Bob and Bernita Sibbald

Donna & Arthur Greiner by Bob and Bernita Sibbald

Jeff Gaus by Sandra Gaus

George & Laura Rousseau by Grace & Ed Rousseau

Lewis & Jessamine Knoll by Grace & Ed Rousseau

PRAYER FROM PASTOR MARTY

On March 24, I fractured a bone in my leg. Like most injuries, it brought more than pain. It brought limitation, disruption, frustration, and a reminder that even ordinary routines can change in a moment.

My first response was not especially noble. I wanted things fixed quickly. I wanted life to return to normal. But as the days unfolded, I realized I needed more than physical healing. I needed patience. I needed perspective. I needed grace for the waiting.

That led me to begin praying the following prayer each day.

Before sharing it, I want to say thank you. Thank you for the cards, the prayers, the kind messages, and the many expressions of care. Your encouragement has meant a great deal to me. I have felt supported not only by medical care and time, but by the kindness of God's people.

This prayer has helped steady me. It has given words to my dependence on God, to my desire for healing, and to my gratitude for Tina, who has been carrying extra weight in these weeks with love and faithfulness. I share it here in case it may be helpful to someone else walking through weakness, recovery, caregiving, or a season that simply feels hard.

Gracious and faithful God,

*You are the One who knit this body together,
and You are the One who holds it even now in its weakness.*

*I place this injury into Your hands.
Bring healing to the bone, strength to what has been shaken,
and steady restoration to every part that has been affected.
Let each day carry quiet progress, even when I cannot see it.*

*In moments of frustration, grant me patience.
When I feel limited, remind me that I am still held, still called, still Yours.
Teach me to receive this season—not as interruption alone,
but as a place where Your grace meets me in new ways.*

And Lord, I lift Tina to You.

*You see the added weight she now carries,
the tasks she has taken on without complaint,
the quiet ways she serves and supports.*

*Strengthen her for these days.
Give her energy when she is tired,
peace when the load feels heavy,
and small moments of rest and joy in the midst of it all.*

*Help me to remain grateful, present, and kind—
to notice her efforts, to speak words that build up,
and to walk this season together with grace.*

*Carry us both, Lord, through these weeks.
And in Your time, restore what has been broken—
in body, in rhythm, and in spirit.*

(Continued on the next page)

Prayer from Pastor Marty Continued:

*We trust You in the healing.
We trust You in the waiting.
We trust You in all things. Amen.*

Thank you again for your prayers and encouragement. They have been a real blessing to me. And perhaps this prayer may also be a help to someone else who is learning, day by day, to trust God in the healing and in the waiting.

Pastor Marty

(At the end of March Pastor Marty slipped on the ice as he was going into the church. He fell and fractured his leg, so he is using a walker that he can rest his leg on and help with his walking. He is on the mend, but we continue to keep him and Tina in our prayers.)

Vacation Bible School

Root Kids in a Relationship with God

Join Central & Algonquin United Methodist Churches, and our partners from Faith Lutheran Church and United Presbyterian Church as we **Explore the True Nature of God**. Show kids what it means to be rooted in relationship with God, their safe place in life's storms for **Vacation Bible School**.

United Presbyterian Church will be hosting this year's VBS
Monday, June 29th through Thursday July 2nd
From 9:00 am until 12:00 noon
Ages 3 years through 11 years (free for all children)



Step through the mist into Rainforest Falls, overflowing with wild waterfalls, towering trees, and colorful creatures. Beneath a canopy of chattering birds and howling monkeys, kids plunge into a lifelong adventure of discovering the nature of God. They'll explore what it means to be rooted in relationship with God, their creator, a safe place in life's storms. We welcome anyone who feels called to volunteer your help for VBS. It is 4 days of fun and spiritually filling. Contact Bev Proulx, Sherry Hutchins or Terri Bush.



CENTRAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
111 EAST SPRUCE STREET
SAULT SAINTE MARIE, MI 49783-2189

Return Service Requested
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May 2026

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SAULT STE. MARIE, MI

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CHRISTIAN ONE-LINERS

WE DON'T CHANGE THE MESSAGE, THE MESSAGE CHANGES US.

YOU CAN TELL HOW BIG A PERSON IS BY WHAT IT TAKES TO DISCOURAGE HIM.

THE BEST MATHEMATICAL EQUATION EVER SEEN: 1 CROSS + 3 NAILS = 4 GIVEN.

GOD PROMISES A SAFE LANDING, NOT A CALM PASSAGE.

THE TASK AHEAD OF US IS NEVER AS GREAT AS THE POWER BEHIND US.

DON'T PUT A QUESTION MARK WHERE GOD PUT A PERIOD.