

THE FLAME

Monthly Newsletter
for

Central and Algonquin United Methodist Churches

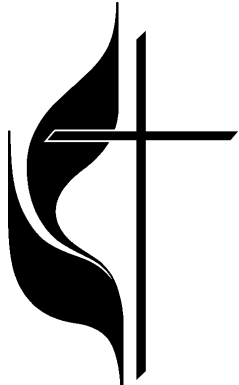
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September 2026

REFLECTIONS FROM THE PASTOR



We Gather Together...Again

There's a hymn that is often sung later in the fall that I just love. You probably know it: "*We gather together to ask the Lord's blessing...*" For many of us, "**We Gather Together**" belongs to Thanksgiving. Maybe it brings to mind a Thanksgiving Eve service, a sanctuary decorated for the season, or simply that wonderful time of year when family and friends somehow find their way back around the same table.

But this year, I find myself thinking about those words a little early.

We gather together. There's something wonderfully simple about that. Summer has a way of scattering us. We travel. We visit family. We go camping. We spend weekends at the lake, in the garden, on the road, or simply enjoying those precious Upper Peninsula days that always seem far too short once September arrives.

But sometimes life scatters us in other ways too. I know something about that this year. For much of the spring and summer, an injured leg and ankle changed the rhythm of everyday life. Then, just as things were beginning to feel more normal, Tina and I said goodbye to Domino, our beloved Australian Shepherd.

Suddenly, home itself felt a little different.

Those experiences have reminded me that being "scattered" isn't always about where we are. Sometimes it is about what life has done to us along the way.

Maybe you know something about that too.

Maybe this summer brought a loss you didn't expect. Maybe there was an illness, a disappointment, a change in a relationship, or simply a weariness you can't quite explain. Or maybe it was a wonderful summer filled with family, travel, laughter, and memories you will treasure.

Whatever the summer has held, September comes, the rhythm begins to change, and we gather together...again.

I wonder sometimes if we underestimate how important that gathering really is.

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Reflections from the Pastor Continued:

We don't come to church because God needs to see our face in a particular pew every Sunday. We don't gather because faith is another box to check before the week begins.

We gather because **we need one another.**

There are Sundays when our faith feels strong, when the words of the hymns come easily and we can sing them with conviction.

And there are other Sundays when they don't.

That is one of the gifts of being the church.

When I don't have much of a song in me, I can hear you singing.

When your faith is struggling, perhaps mine can help carry you for a while.

When someone is grieving, we can sit beside them. When someone has something wonderful to celebrate, we can rejoice with them. And when someone is lonely, frightened, or overwhelmed, sometimes the greatest gift we can offer is simply our presence.

The writer of Hebrews encouraged the early Christians not to neglect meeting together, but to encourage one another. I don't hear that as a scolding. I hear it as wisdom born from experience.

Faith may be personal, but it was never meant to be private.

Jesus understood that. Yes, he sometimes went away by himself to pray. But again and again, Jesus gathered people. He walked with them, listened to them, ate with them, laughed with them, and sat with them in their pain.

And on the night before his death, he gathered his friends around a table.

Maybe that is one of the best images for the church.

A table with room for the lifelong believer and the person who isn't quite sure what they believe anymore. Room for the joyful and the grieving. Room for the confident and the questioning. Room for the rested and the weary.

Come back to worship.

Come back to the table.

Come back to one another.

Reflections from the Pastor Continued:

Come with your gratitude. Come with your questions. Come with your weariness. Come with whatever this season of life has given you to carry.

Because when we gather, we are reminded of something we can easily forget when life scatters us:

We belong to God.

And, by the grace of God, we belong to one another.

So this fall, once again...

We gather together.

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.



ALGONQUIN AND CENTRAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCHES MISSION: CONNECTING ALL PEOPLE TO GOD BY BUILDING BRIDGES OF CARING, OUT-REACH AND ACCEPTANCE.

THANK YOU, THANK YOU!!

Our September “Flame” is being sponsored by Robin Myers

A Heartfelt Thank You

After many years of faithful service, **Sharon Jones and Barb Larson**, the dedicated editors of *The Flame*, are stepping into retirement. We are deeply grateful for their commitment, creativity, and the countless hours they have devoted to keeping our church family informed, connected, and up to date. Their hard work and care have been a wonderful gift to our congregation.

Thank you, Sharon and Barb, for your many years of faithful service to *The Flame* and to our church family. We wish you both a well-deserved and joyful retirement!

Learn more about the new editors of *The Flame* in the October edition.

Women of Faith Side Walk Sale

On a hot and humid day, three Women of Faith members braved the heat for two enjoyable days of meeting, greeting, and representing Central United Methodist Church at the Annual Downtown Sidewalk Sales! We brought a selection of items from our “workshop” and, although we sold a little less than we had hoped, we still felt we came out ahead in more ways than one. We raised **\$164.00** to add to the Women of Faith treasury, and we enjoyed the fellowship and opportunity to share a little of Central with our community.

A special thank-you to **Teri Lamoreaux** for bringing her pop-up tent and tables, which helped us create such a wonderful display. We also want to thank **Gary and Lori Horner** for hauling all the crafts to our assigned spot on Ashmun Street—and then taking everything back home, not once, but twice!

Mark Your Calendars!
Don't forget to mark your calendars for this year's **Women's Bazaar on November 14, 2026!**
Our theme this year is **“Star of Wonder”!**

We welcome all women who would like to join us in creating crafts, making sandwich loaves, baking, sewing, knitting, helping during the bazaar, or cleaning up afterward. A sign-up sheet will be available in the bulletin very soon..



As always, everyone is welcome to stop by the **Workshop on Wednesdays from 8:00 a.m. to noon** for a cup of coffee, a cookie, and some good conversation. We might even put you to work.

We would love to have you join us!

A REMINDER: The deadline for material to be submitted for our next “Flame,” the October 2026 issue, is September 10, 2026, at noon. Watch the weekly bulletin for an update on who to send the material to.

BIRTHDAY AND ANNIVERSARY BLESSINGS AND WISHES

Central Birthdays

September 3 - Debbie Smart
September 4 - Diana Morgan
September 6 - Terry Myers
September 8 - Kay Miller
September 10 - Evelyn Bush
September 15 - Marcia Jenkins-Ball

September 16 - Hazel Taylor
September 20 - Fred Smith
September 22 - Sheri Garee
September 25 - Marquette Bruce
September 27 - Nate Moran

Central Anniversaries

September 1 - Jamie and Brenda Coullard (41st)
September 12 - Ray and Diane Bell (38th)

Algonquin Birthdays

September 9 - John O'Connor
September 19 - Sharon Bennett

September 21 - Bob Sibbald
September 23 - Chris Meicher

September 20 - Ed Rousseau



We had an amazing crew of children, youth helpers and adult volunteers this summer at Rainforest Falls VBS. It was a spiritual and fun experience. We appreciate our church partners at Algonquin, Faith Lutheran and First United Presbyterian. It is a joy to share this strong commitment to VBS with our faith community friends and look forward to next year VBS at Central United Methodist.

We want to thank our excellent youth and adult volunteers from Central and Algonquin: Nora Baier, Meeah Griffin, Mason Atkins, Madison Atkins Mara Bell, Bev Atkins, Rachel Pratt, Bev Proulx, Ray Bell, Diane Bell, Kay Miller, Mary Artstrom and Sherry Hutchins. The children looked up to them and loved hanging out with them at VBS. Food and money donations were collected as a mission project for the Sault Area Schools food pantry program.

Submitted by Terri Bush

RECIPE ROUNDUP CORNER

Zucchini! That lovely green vegetable is in its season right now. Whether one of those lovely, green, cylindrical shaped squash have been left on your doorstep, on your car seat by an unsuspecting neighbor, or growing in your garden, it's nice to have a way to use them. Try out this recipe for a delicious cake. No one will suspect you've hidden zucchini inside.

Recipe from Sherry Hutchins: Chocolate Zucchini Cake

8 Tbsp. unsalted butter, softened	2 1/2 cups all purpose flour
1/2 cup vegetable oil	3/4 cup unsweetened cocoa
1 3/4 cups granulated sugar	2 tsp. espresso powder (optional)
1 tsp. vanilla extract	3 cups shredded zucchini
1 tsp. baking powder	1/2 cup chocolate chips
1/2 tsp. baking soda	Icing (Optional)
1/2 tsp. salt	1 1/3 cups chocolate chips
2 large eggs (room temperature)	7 Tbsp. half-and-half or heavy cream
1/2 cup sour cream, buttermilk, or yogurt (room temperature)	

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Lightly grease a 9" x 13" pan.
2. **To make the cake:** In a large mixing bowl, beat together the butter, oil, sugar, vanilla, baking powder, baking soda, and salt until smooth.
3. Beat in eggs.
4. Stir in the sour cream, buttermilk, or yogurt alternately with the flour.
5. Add the cocoa and espresso powder, mixing until smooth.
6. Fold in zucchini and chocolate chips. Spoon the batter into the prepared pan.
7. Bake the cake for 40 to 45 minutes, until the top springs back lightly when touched. A toothpick inserted into the center should come out clean when the cake is done.
8. Remove the cake from the oven and cool in the pan on a wire rack.
9. **To Ice the Cake:** In the microwave oven or on the stovetop, combine the chocolate chips and half-and-half, heating until the chocolate softens. Stir to melt the chocolate, and spread over the completely cooled cake. Store leftovers, well covered, at room temperature. May be frozen for a treat after zucchini season.

I will walk by

Faith

even when I cannot see.

2 Corinthians 5:7

ALGONQUIN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

1604 W Fourth Avenue
Sault Ste Marie, MI 49783

ALGONQUIN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Our Worship Servants for the month of September are:

September 6th: Communion Bernita Sibbald, and Greeter Sharon Bennett and Usher Bob Sibbald

September 13th - Liturgist Bev Atkins, Greeter and Usher Laura Anderson; Coffee Hour AUWF

September 20th - Greeter and Usher Laura Anderson

September 27th - Greeter Jim Atkins and Usher Bob Sibbald

News to Share: Change Jar donations: \$125 was donated for July and went to the Long Term Care Activity Fund at MyMichigan Hospital



Thank you to everyone from both Central & Algonquin who donated to help pay to have the steeple cleaned. It looks wonderful.



**Algonquin had their Annual Summer dinner, on Sunday August 9th.
It was an enjoyable night of Fellowship and Good Food!**



HAPPY BIRTHDAY/ANNIVERSARY COLUMN

Every month we include in *The Flame* birthday and anniversary greetings to those in our two churches. If you are interested in having a greeting mentioned to you or to a member of your family, please fill in the form listed below (or write up your own form) and deposit it in the box marked for *The Flame*, which is located outside of the church office door, or give it to one of the newsletter editors. Ages or number of anniversaries may or may not be included, as you prefer.

NAME(S) _____

BIRTHDAY(S) DATE(S) _____

ANNIVERSARY DATE _____

Family Ministries

In Celebration of Family Ministries and Christian Education activities we will celebrate our Kickoff to fall Rally Day after worship with an All-Church Luncheon on Sunday, September 13th. If you are willing to donate food for the luncheon there will be tags for items (on a easel) in both entrances to select what you are willing to bring. Just pick-up a tag and *Join the FUN!*



Rally Day
Sunday, September
13th. Join us for an All-
-Church-Luncheon
following worship
in the social hall



United
Women
in Faith

*Northern Skies District
Annual Celebration*

Saturday, October 10, 2026

Registration/continental breakfast/bookstore 9:15 a.m.; Program 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Sault Sainte Marie Central UMC, 111 E. Spruce St., 906-632-8672

(use the entrance on Court St.)

Registration fee is \$25 (includes breakfast and lunch)

Registration deadline is October 3, 2026

Theme: "Grace Sufficient, Always"

Speaker Sara Wolfsen, Deaconess Candidate in the UMC, Dean of Mission u



Sara Wolfsen has a day job as a non-profit administrator but is also a Deaconess Candidate in the UMC and is currently Dean of Mission u. Together we will take a step back and a closer look at letters, diaries and publications of early Methodist women who, despite societal expectations to be pious and pure, used their pens to begin organizing for change. You will meet women who were anything but weak and dependent as they used their pens and persuasive positions to rally support to meet the needs of society through personal letter-writing and articles published in women's magazines. These women appeared polite and passive; yet their quiet pen strokes revealed a secret system of bold determination to address the injustices around them as they clung to the promise that God's grace was sufficient for them to drive change without neglecting their domestic duties.

Mission Focus: Blessing bags for Malcolm Alternative High School and the homeless. Please bring personal care items, non-perishable food, socks, gloves, hats, water bottles, journals & pens, towels & washcloths.

Offering: Will be split between the NSD Pledge to Mission and the Blessing Bags mission of Sault Ste. Marie.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Email _____

Home Church _____

Local Unit Officer Position _____

Mail registration form and payment (checks made out to NSD United Women in Faith)

to: Nancy Goodyear, 335 Isenhauer Rd., Grayling, MI 49738



Fall - Family Night - Practice Joy

5:30 to 7:00 pm

3rd Wednesday of each month

What does Practice Joy mean?

From the Follow Me Biblical Practices for Faithful Living curriculum

We usually think of joy as a feeling, a response to something we experience. Scripture, however, invites us to experience joy as more than a passive response, instead we practice joy as a faithful choice. Joy is something that we experience, something we savor, and something that is gifted to us by a loving and merciful God. The practice of joy is not just for momentary happiness; joy is a lifelong practice of faithfulness, in which we rejoice that God is with us and will lead us into a future that is still to come.

We see joy throughout the Bible; from Psalms, which urge joy's expression in countless circumstance, through the Gospels where Jesus tells his followers "I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice and no one will take your joy from you" (John 16:22). The biblical concept of joy is beyond mere happiness. These and other texts tell us joy comes from God and from the faithfulness of living in God's way. Joy is both a gift and a response coming from the goodness of God's blessings in our lives and in the lives of the people around us.

All Families, Children and Adults are welcome. We hope you will join us for dinner at 5:30 pm followed by our study in Practice Joy

Wednesday, September 16th - See Joy in God's Creation (Psalm 65)

Wednesday, October 21st - Feel Joy in God's Mercy (Psalm 30)

Wednesday, November 18th - Share Other's Joy (Luke 15)

Wednesday, December 16th - Practice Joy in all Times

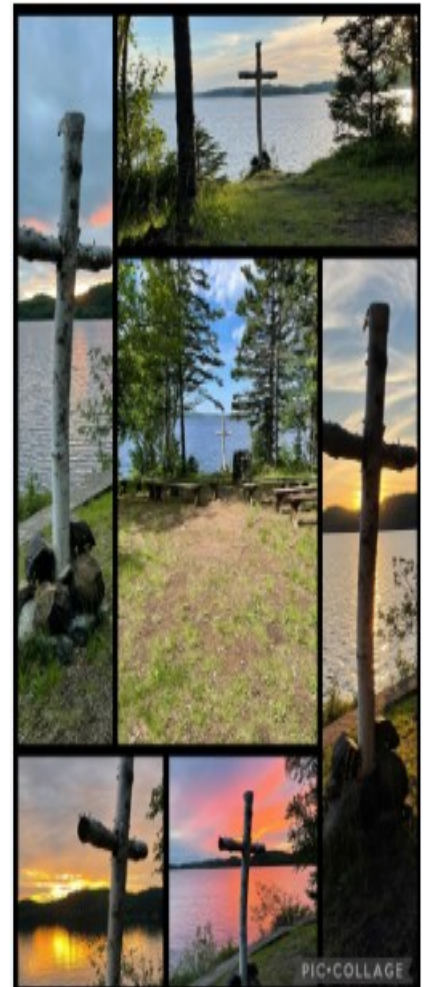


Dear Church, thank you for the camp scholarship.
I had a lot of fun, I would love to go again.
My favorite part was the arts and crafts and
the morning worship. I also liked making new
friends.

Sincerely Nora

Dear Church, thank you for the camp
scholarships. I had fun. My favorite parts
were my new friends I made & sleep
I wish I could go forever.

xo, Meeah



Cross picture from PresbyteryPoint.org

Nora and Meeah attended Church Camp this summer at Presbytery Point in Michigamme. They would like to thank the church for the scholarships given to them to be able to attend. Please note that scholarships to church camp are available through the Endowment Fund. Talk with someone on the Education Committee to help obtain a scholarship for camp!

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

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September 2026

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