

STRAWBERRY THANKSGIVING

The Iroquois people have a public thanksgiving ceremony every spring in the presence of the spiritual leaders. Everyone is invited and in order to give thanks for the land which produced the strawberry, they offer everyone some of its gift, the gift of the strawberry. The point is that everyone receives a gift. No one is excluded.

In the Iroquois tradition, the strawberry is also a symbol of friendship, forgiveness and new life. If there has been a falling out between two people, and one person seeks to be reconciled, he or she will send a basket of strawberries. If they are received, then the other person is open to being reconciled. If they are not received the other person is not ready at this time.

Strawberries are used when there is a need for forgiveness in people's lives. They are also about newness of life, for they come in the springtime when there is newness all around.

We are reminded to focus on new ideas, try new things and believe in new life. They are invited to see that mother earth is ready to give birth and bring new life by producing crops, fruits, plants and vegetables.

As we receive the strawberry, we are invited to reflect on the areas of our lives where we are in need of forgiveness and where we need to offer forgiveness. Lastly, we receive the strawberry in order to receive the newness that the Creator has for us in Jesus Christ.



CHURCH IN THE PARK

Sunday, July 19, 2015
9:30 A.M.

Homer First United Methodist Church
16 Cayuga Street, Homer NY
Rachel Morse, Pastor
www.HomerFirstUMC.org

Homer Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
28 South Main Street, Homer NY
Kathleen Waters, Interim Pastor
www.homercc.com

Service of Worship

8th Sunday after Pentecost

July 19, 2015

9:30 am

*those who are able, please stand

For Quiet Meditation

Most giving God, help us to recognize the abundance of your grace. Your desire to meet our needs and to reveal your presence to us is nothing short of miraculous. May we faithfully receive your love and care, letting Christ dwell in our hearts through faith. Amen.

There are people in the world so hungry that God cannot appear to them except in the form of bread.

Mohandas Gandhi

GATHERING MUSIC

GATHER AND PREPARE FOR WORSHIP

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

THE PEOPLE OF GOD GATHER

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Here we see the richness of God's love made real in the gifts of friendship, grace, food, and faith.

All: **God's presence keeps us going and gives us more than we need.**

One: Come closer, search deeply,
expect to receive daily bread – and then some.

All: **God makes a place for all
and gives to all with generous abundance.**

One: Let us live with hope and trust in God

All: **and worship abundantly.**

OPENING PRAYER *(let us pray together . . .)*

Aware of our longings we sometimes wonder:

Will there be enough? Will our deepest hungers be satisfied? Will we receive enough to survive? O God, calm our anxious spirits, fill us with your sustaining presence, and satisfy us with your enduring love. May we feast on the goodness you provide so we can overflow with your presence in our world. Amen.

*HYMN # 284

Gather Us In

1 Here in this place the new light is streaming;
now is the darkness vanished away;
see in this space our fears and our dreamings
brought here to you in the light of this day.
Gather us in, the lost and forsaken;
gather us in, the blind and the lame;
call to us now, and we shall awaken;
we shall arise at the sound of our name.

2 We are the young; our lives are a mystery.
We are the old who yearn for your face.
We have been sung throughout all of history,
called to be light to the whole human race.

Gather us in, the rich and the haughty;
gather us in, the proud and the strong;
give us a heart, so meek and so lowly;
give us the courage to enter the song.

3 Here we will take the wine and the water;
here we will take the bread of new birth.
Here you shall call your sons and your daughters,
call us anew to be salt for the earth.
Give us to drink the wine of compassion;
give us to eat the bread that is you;
nourish us well, and teach us to fashion
lives that are holy and hearts that are true.

4 Not in the dark of buildings confining,
not in some heaven, light years away:
here in this place the new light is shining;
now is the kingdom, and now is the day.
Gather us in and hold us forever;
gather us in and make us your own;
gather us in, all peoples together,
fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

STRAWBERRY THANKSGIVING

Community Prayer:

**Holy One, we raise our hearts and voices in thanksgiving
for all the good gifts of your creation:
for the strawberry,
the first fruit of the season,
for all the gifts in creation that send your promise
of new life.**

**We give you thanks for the gift of your son, Jesus,
who reconciles us to you and to each other.**

**We give you thanks for the Holy Spirit,
who draws us together and helps us in our journey
with Jesus.**

**Creator of all, you gave your people the strawberry as a
sign and celebration of new life: may we, your people
taste the sweetness of new life together. May we honor
you and each other in receiving these gifts, by using them
in service to you and our neighbors. Amen.**

***MUSICAL RESPONSE # 528**

Give Thanks

**Give thanks with a grateful heart,
give thanks to the Holy One,**

Give thanks because he's given Jesus Christ his Son.

(repeat)

And now let the weak say, "I am strong,"

let the poor say, "I am rich

Because of what the Lord has done for us."

(repeat)

Give thanks!

SPECIAL MUSIC

HCC and HUMC choirs

I Am Going to Eat at the Welcome Table

GOD'S WORD TO GOD'S PEOPLE

SCRIPTURE

John 6:1-15

Feeding the Five Thousand

¹ After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee,
also called the Sea of Tiberias. ² A large crowd kept

following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. ³ Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. ⁴ Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. ⁵ When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, “Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?” ⁶ He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. ⁷ Philip answered him, “Six months’ wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.” ⁸ One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him, ⁹ “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?”

¹⁰ Jesus said, “Make the people sit down.” Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. ¹¹ Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. ¹² When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, “Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.” ¹³ So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. ¹⁴ When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, “This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.”

¹⁵ When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

CHILDREN’S MOMENT

(Children of all ages may leave to make cookies.)

*HYMN # 420

I Come With Joy

- 1 I come with joy, a child of God,
forgiven, loved, and free,
the life of Jesus to recall,
in love laid down for me,
in love laid down for me.
- 2 I come with Christians far and near
to find, as all are fed,
the new community of love
in Christ’s communion bread,
in Christ’s communion bread.
- 3 As Christ breaks bread and bids us share,
each proud division ends.
The love that made us, makes us one,
and strangers now are friends,
and strangers now are friends.
- 4 The Spirit of the risen Christ,
unseen, but ever near,
is in such friendship better known,
alive among us here,
alive among us here.
- 5 Together met, together bound
by all that God has done,
we’ll go with joy, to give the world
the love that makes us one,
the love that makes us one.

SERMON

GOD'S PEOPLE RESPOND

PRAYERS OF THE CONGREGATION

One: Loving God, in the privilege of prayer we come, speaking what is in our hearts for ourselves and others.

All: May we be signs of God's presence.

One: We pray your blessing on every commitment to feed those who are hungry, so that both the one who gives and the one who receives are honored.

All: May we be signs of God's presence.

One: We pray for people burdened by fears of scarcity, and for those whose anxiety is not based in their need.

All: May we be signs of God's presence.

One: We pray for people who are afraid to embrace your abundance and for those who are learning to trust and believe in your abundant provision for their lives.

All: May we be signs of God's presence.

One: We pray for those who struggle against winds of adversity and oppression, and currents of injustice.

All: May we be signs of God's presence.

One: We pray for our congregations, for ourselves and for each other, that we may be free from fear, blessed with faith and hope, and empowered to live your love more fully in this world.

All: May we be signs of God's presence.

One: Remember now those for whom we pray . . .

The Lord's Prayer (*let us pray together . . .*)

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

OFFERING

Invitation

Offertory

***Doxology** (*or see page 46 in the Chalice Hymnal*)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;

Praise God all creatures here below;

Praise God above, ye heavenly host;

Creator, Savior, Holy Ghost. Amen

***Prayer of Dedication** (*let us pray together . . .*)

Generous God, we offer these gifts freely just as the young boy offered his bread and fish for others. In your hands may they and we become enough to feed those who hunger for signs of your reign in our world. Amen.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

INVITATION

COMMUNION PRAYER

WORD OF INSTITUTION

SHARING OF THE BREAD AND CUP

You are invited to come forward and take a piece of bread, dip it into the cup, eat. The elements can be brought to you if you wish. The juice is unfermented and gluten-free bread is available for those with wheat allergies. All are welcome at this table! Come and be fed!

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING *(let us pray together.)*

We give thanks to you, God, for this meal. Simple, elegant, refreshing, re-creating. May we hear the call: love one another as you have loved us. One body, many members, the body of Christ. Amen.

THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

You are invited to share a sign of peace with others.

GOD'S PEOPLE DEPART TO SERVE

***HYMN # 433**

Blest Be the Tie That Binds

- 1 Blest be the tie that binds
our hearts in Christian love.
The fellowship of kindred minds
is like to that above.
- 2 Before our Father's throne
we pour our ardent prayers.
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
our comforts and our cares.

3 We share our mutual woes;
our mutual burdens bear.
And often for each other flows
the sympathizing tear.

4 When we are called to part,
it gives us inward pain;
but we shall still be joined in heart,
and hope to meet again.

***BENEDICTION**

All: God's love is overwhelming!

As we have been fed this day, let us go and offer food and drink to others. Grant us holy instincts of faith as we trust in you, O God, to place the final touches on our culinary masterpieces. Amen.

POSTLUDE

Worship Service

Participants

Worship Leader

Darci Gumaer

Special Music

Congregational and Methodist
"Pick up" choir

Nursery Volunteers

Tracy Bertram,
Abby Elkins

Coffee Hour

Ingrid Fox and Janice Bacon

Attendance:

Sunday July 12 – 70

Vacation Bible School Donations

We are looking for VBS snacks and snack-related products. Grocery store gift cards or buying items individually and dropping them off would greatly be appreciated. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Mark Bertram. Thank you very much! We need, in addition to grocery store cards, paper plates, plastic cups, pretzels, napkins, Goldfish crackers, and lemonade mix.

Save the dates: Chautauqua+ is August 6-9.

Life in the Parish Week of July 19

TODAY – July 19

9:30 am – Worship service on the Green

MONDAY – July 20

6:30 pm – Legends vs Grace Christian Fellowship IV at Cortlandville 2

7:30 pm – Al-Anon meets

TUESDAY – July 21

2:00 pm – Bridge Group

6:30 pm – Trustees meeting

6:30 pm – Deacons meeting

WEDNESDAY – July 22

Newsletter Deadline

THURSDAY – July 23

Noon – Bible Study Group

6:30 pm – Church Council meeting

NEXT SUNDAY – July 26

9:30 am – Worship service

10:45 am – Special Church Meeting

Vacation Bible School Registration

We celebrate "Everest: Conquering Challenges with God's Mighty Power" August 3-7. Register on homercc.com

NOTES AND NOTICES

We are making booth spaces available on the Green for the Route 90 Garage Sale on July 25. Registration forms are in the Russell Fellowship Room and should be returned by July 22.

Applications are still being accepted for our Interim Director of Christian Education. Send résumé to "Resumes@homercc.org." Job description available on our web site at www.homercc.com.

A Call for a Special Church Meeting

As announced in worship on July 12, the Board of Trustees of the First Religious Society in the Town of Homer New York are calling a Special Meeting of the Society on July 26, 2015, following the 9:30 am worship service at the Homer Congregational Church.

The following items will be covered:

1. Accepting the resignation of Jean Cadwallader as Treasurer of the First Religious Society, and voting to elect Andrea Herzog-O'Hara as the new Treasurer of the First Religious Society.
2. The Trustees will supply the members of the First Religious Society with a complete update on the finances for the 2015 budget. Wording will then be given at this time for a motion to use Endowment funds to help with any budget shortfall. The vote on that motion will take place at a future meeting whose date will be set at this meeting.
3. Kevin Cappy will give a presentation on the replacement of the church steps. He will have a couple of renditions to look at and discuss, with quotes from Tom Kile. Hopefully, Kevin will have a possible starting date for this project so we can get a time-line going. Wording will then be given at this time for a motion to use Endowment funds to pay for this project. Voting on this motion and project will take place at a future date set at this meeting.

Next Sunday in worship, we will explore how God's abundant presence sustains us and provides more than we need – food, faith, grace, salvation. Miss a Sunday? See bulletin on homercc.com