



On April 6, 2014, the members of Homer Congregational Church voted to become an Open and Affirming Church of the United Church of Christ. Open and Affirming (ONA) is the United Church of Christ's (UCC) designation for congregations, campus ministries, and other bodies in the UCC which make a public covenant of welcome into their full life and ministry to persons of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions. Churches also commit to welcoming people of all descriptions.

Board of Trustees

Chair:

Jim McKenna

Vice-Chair:

Paula Harrington

Secretary:

Becky Jones

Kevin Cappy

Chuck Feiszli

Andrea Herzog

Eugene Wright

2 vacancies

Board of Deacons

Chair:

Karen Dudgeon

Vice-Chair:

Bonnie Haaland

Secretary:

Kathy McKenna

Tracy Bertram

Belinda Burtner

Joanne Cincotta

Darci Gumaer

Gary Harrington

Doris Hoffmann

Vicki Johnson

Bill Masterson

Anne Wingard

Church Staff

Interim Minister:

Rev. Dr. Kathleen Waters

Director of

Christian Education:

Rachel Ditch

Sexton:

Gary Harrington

Church Administrator:

Sheila Shea

Children's Pageant and Congregation Christmas Party



The HCC Sunday School will present their Christmas program during the 10:30 am service on December 11. You are invited to celebrate Christmas with our congregation immediately following the Sunday School's annual Christmas Pageant. Please bring a snack to share; drinks are provided by Christian Education Ministry.



Special Offering: Christmas Fund

December 18, we will participate in the UCC Christmas Fund. The Christmas Fund is one of the five Special Mission Offerings of the United Church of Christ and provides us with a means to directly assist clergy and lay leaders who have so faithfully and selflessly served and now find themselves facing unexpected financial needs. This fund enables the Ministerial Assistance program to provide, on behalf of the whole church, Pension supplementation, Health Premium Supplementation, Emergency Grants, and Christmas "Thank You" Gift Checks to individuals and families in need.



Trustees of the First Religious Society of the Town of Homer and Homer Congregational Church Special Meeting Announcement for Call for our New Pastor

The Pastor Search Committee has concluded its search and selected a candidate to recommend to the First Religious Society in the Town of Homer and the Homer Congregational Church. The board of Trustees is calling a special meeting of the First Religious Society in the Town of Homer on Sunday, December 4, 2016 immediately following worship service for the purpose of voting to call the new Minister and Pastor of the Parish of Homer. The Board of Deacons is also calling a formal meeting of the Homer Congregational Church on Sunday, December 4, 2016 for the purpose of voting to call the new Pastor of the Homer Congregational Church, immediately following the First Religious Society meeting. The candidate will preach from the pulpit during worship that Sunday and at the meetings members will be given the opportunity to ask questions of the Pastor Search Committee and to vote on the Call.

James E. McKenna, Jr., Chair,
Board of Trustees for the First Religious Society in the Town of Homer

Karen Dudgeon, Chair,
Board of Deacons for the Homer Congregational Church

THE DEACON'S BENCH



Christmas is the perfect time to celebrate the love of God and family and to create memories that will last forever. Jesus is God's perfect, indescribable gift. The amazing thing is that not only are we able to receive this gift, but we are able to share it with others on Christmas and every other day of the year.

Joel Osteen

WORSHIP

There are two services offered each Sunday through December except Christmas Day. The first service is an early Prayer Service from 8:30- 9:00 am and led by Pastor Kathleen. The second service is at 10:30 with music and children's moment followed by refreshments in the Russell Fellowship Room. Holy Communion is celebrated at both services on the first Sunday of the month.

MISSIONS

The Homer Nursery School has 24 students and is in the process of hiring a teacher's aide for the January-June semester.

PASTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE

The Pastor Search Committee has selected a candidate for the position of pastor. Candidating Sunday will be December 4, 2016. The candidate will preach during worship. A congregational meeting following the worship service will offer each member an opportunity to ask questions of the Pastor Search Committee, and to vote on the Call to our new pastor.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Pastor Kathleen and the Deacons continue to update the Active Membership Roll. Via letters and personal conversations, we are reconnecting with members and reconfirming membership in the Homer Congregational Church and hope to complete updating the Active Membership Roll during the early part of the New Year. The Deacons continue to work on meeting everyone's needs in the church.

KEEP THE DATES

December 11th Pageant Day - Our children will help us once again to understand the real meaning of Christmas.

December 24th Christmas Eve - Come join your Homer Congregational Church Family as we share a dish to pass meal, Christmas Eve at **6pm**. Christmas Eve Service follows at **7:30pm** with the **Homer Brass Ensemble** joining our service.

December 25th Christmas Day- At **10:30am** there will be a simple Carol/Hymn sing gathering in the Russell Fellowship Room led by Pastor Kathleen Waters (p.s. Kids may come in their pajamas and bring their toys).

There will not be an 8:30 Prayer Service this day.

January 8th We will be the host church for the Cortland County Council of churches Epiphany Choir Festival.

*The Memory Cafe
Third Tuesday of every month,
10:30 am until noon*

The Memory Cafe is located in the old Railroad Station on Central Avenue in Cortland. If you have a family member, or know someone who is caring for a loved one with memory loss, this is a place where you can go to enjoy social activities, get support and just relax. Snacks and coffee are available. For more information, contact Bill Hopkins at william.hopkins@cortland.edu.



I've enjoyed the wonderful weather we're experiencing, and I hope that you too have enjoyed the turn of fall this year. I have tried to soak up each moment of opportunity outdoors in the sunshine for I know it will be a while before we have such an opportunity again.

At the end of October we had 11 walkers join together for the CROP Walk! The weather was crisp and clear, and we raised over \$600 for Church World Service, 25% of those funds stay right here in Cortland County, and 75% go to helping in food sustainability efforts worldwide. It's wonderful to know we are having both a local and a global impact through the CROP Walk. Thank

you to everyone who donated and walked together.

A very special thank you to everyone who supported our Spaghetti Dinner and Time and Talent Auction! Whether you donated food items, provided a little extra funding for supplies, helped in the kitchen with cooking, serving or cleaning up, or whether you donated an item or bid on one, it was a major success and we couldn't have done it without you!

We've been learning in Sunday School about the ways in which Jesus invites us to change, what we can do to be steadfast in prayer, the many talents we have been gifted with by God (and how we can share them), and the importance of being thankful to God for our blessings in life. Our wonderfully wise and creative learners have been working to learn creatively, and we hope you can notice our work appearing around the building. Don't be afraid to ask us what we've been learning, we'd love to share and show you! We're excited to be heading into Advent and experiencing all that the next four weeks have to offer in Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.

Our Christmas Pageant will be Sunday, December 11th, and we're looking forward to bringing you another diverse and exciting show. We can't give away too much, but the young learners of HCC Sunday School have been working hard in preparation to bring you several exciting experiences. We're sure this is a Sunday you won't want to miss.

Peace to you,
Rachel

Youth Group in December

If you are in the 7th -12th grade, you're invited to join the Homer Congregational Church Youth Group! We are trying for Sunday night at 7pm Youth Group Gathering meetings, so plan to come and bring your friends! The events will be listed in the monthly newsletter and weekly church bulletins and Rachel will talk with you during Sunday School each week.

Dec. 4 – SUNDAY, 2pm – Brewster House Service.

No Youth Group Gathering at 7 PM

Dec. 11 - Youth Group Gathering happens from 7:00 – 8:00 PM in the basement of Jones Hall.

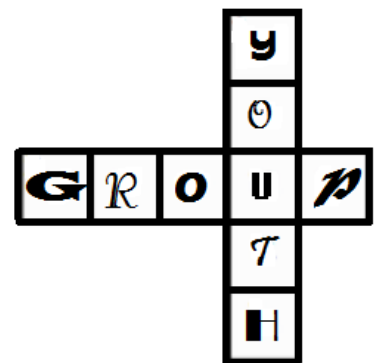
Conversation Theme: New Year's Resolutions...
Do you think they work?

Have you ever tried one? Where is God in your improvement plans?

Dec. 18 – 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM - Cocoa, Cookies, and a movie! We'll gather and watch a classic Christmas movie (of your deciding)

Dec. 25 – Its Christmas. Go spend time with your family. Mess around with your new tablet. Eat tons of food. Just don't plan to be at church in the evening.

**Don't forget the pageant on December 11th!
We want everyone to come and have a hand in creating a wonderful worship experience!**



Senior Fellowship Club Meeting, Tuesday, November 8, 2016

The Russell Fellowship Room was aglow with the lovely colors of fall... flowers, gourds, cornucopias, and bright leaves as the Senior Fellowship Club gathered for its pre-Thanksgiving meeting. A million thanks to Pat Signor, Nita Baldwin and Gwen Hayne for their skills in decorating and providing a festive atmosphere for us. I think a lot of us voted early on this Election Day as we had a fair-sized group present.



We opened our meeting with a special prayer in honor of all our veterans, those retired and those still on active duty. We also heard a story about a 90-year old retired soldier, a Congressional Medal of Honor winner who defied his local Homeowners Association and refused to take down the 25-foot flag pole on his property in Virginia along with the large American Flag he flew on it. The Homeowners Association said he could fly a flag but only on a bracket. The elderly soldier insisted that in the time he had left he was going to fly his large American Flag. He was denied a permit and faced court action.

This story then made National TV news telling of the soldier's extraordinary heroic actions in 1944 when he walked through a mine field and singlehandedly took out three enemy machine gun positions and returned with 17 prisoners of war. And later on he returned and took out three German tanks. The Homeowners Association rethought its position and agreed to indulge this aging hero who dwelt among them. A wise decision for the HOA as this soldier's medal of honor citation made it clear that he wasn't particularly good at backing down.

We also played some "Presidential Trivia" which seemed appropriate for Election Day, and then we enjoyed our refreshments, thanks to Nita B. and Sylvia H. for their delicious culinary creations.

Our special guest was Gail Bundy who presented an interesting program on Historic Markers in Cortland and Onondaga Counties. Gail discussed the history and background of historic markers, saying they are an important part of our landscape as they educate and inform us. She mentioned the marker here on our own village green and the one on Hooker Avenue as well as others throughout the county.

There are about 3,400 markers in New York State... 81 in Onondaga County and 34 in Cortland County. The program was started in 1926 by the New York State Education Department to commemorate the sesquicentennial of the American Revolution and was discontinued in 1966. New York State no longer manages the historic marker program. Instead, local authorities, individuals and other organizations are responsible for the approval, installation, and maintenance of historic markers. Gail also discussed how the plaques themselves have changed over the years in the materials used, the colors, and the engraving.

Although no longer funded by the State, markers are still being installed throughout New York State. They are loved by the public and deemed a success. They have become a major way to inform the public and tourists of local history. We thank Gail for sharing her considerable knowledge with us and making us all aware of another way to learn about our proud heritage.

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday, Dec. 13th. Plans are still underway, and we are looking forward to having our own Vicki Burtson come and share Christmas carols with us. Mark your calendars.

- Dottie Kelley

A Message From Your Pastor Search Committee



It was with great Joy that we were able to announce during service on November 13, 2016, that we have selected a candidate for the position of pastor. Our candidate will preach during the 10:30 am service of worship on Candidating Sunday, December 4th. Following the worship service, a First Religious Society meeting and Homer Congregational Church meeting will offer each member an opportunity to ask questions of the Pastor Search Committee and to vote to Call our new pastor.

On December 3rd at 4:30 pm the Pastor Search Committee will host a meet and greet with the candidate. Simple hors d'oeuvres and punch will be served. Following at 5pm there will be a congregation dish-to-pass supper. All are invited to attend. Childcare will be provided.

We wish to express our gratitude for the prayers, support, and trust you have placed in us and look forward to calling our next pastor.

In loving faith,

The Pastor Search Committee

Chuck Feiszli (chair), Dorothy Hopkins (co-chair), Bev Berry (secretary), Tracy Bertram, Miles Dudgeon, Kathy McKenna, Lori Schmidt, and Jim Ulrich

You're invited to our



CHRISTMAS EVE DISH-TO-PASS SUPPER

6:00pm

*Bring your favorite dish,
(and your own place setting!)*

To share a holiday meal with your friends
before the Saturday Evening Worship service at 7:30pm
Russell Fellowship Room
Childcare will be provided

We hope you will join us!!

Trustees Corner

The Board of Trustees met on Tuesday evening, November 15th for the monthly board meeting and continued to make progress on a variety of church issues. The Trustees have been working with the Board of Deacons on personnel issues and finance. The following issues were covered:



- The Personnel Committee and boards are working on extending the DCE contract, hiring a Teacher's Aid for the Homer Nursery School, and have finalized the Financial Secretary's Job Description.
- Actions are being taken to prepare the Manse for our new pastor.
- The railings for the front steps should be installed by the time this newsletter is distributed.
- We also continue to work on better ways to communicate among ourselves and with our community. The board has voted to make improvements to our webpage and an initial inventory of our electronic equipment has been completed.
- We have managed to follow the budget well so far in 2016. It is not clear how we will finish the year and everyone's continued support is appreciated. Draft 2017 budgets from both boards are now available for review and we encourage anyone who has not yet submitted their pledge to do so as soon as they are able; it really helps with planning for next year. Speak with any trustee, if you have questions about the budget; a final version will be approved at our Annual Meeting in January.

With the first snows of the season falling, I feel the peace and hope of Advent. It has been said that the symptoms of Advent include, an ability to appreciate and enjoy each moment, loss of interest in conflict and judging other people, susceptibility to the love extended by others and the uncontrollable urge to extend it, and contented feelings of connectedness with others and nature. I have faith that each of us shares these warm feelings and that is what makes our church family a great part of the body of Christ. As we anticipate the call of our new pastor, let us all look for ways we can support our church and carry it into the future. As always, any of the Trustees are available if you have questions or want to bring up issues for the board to consider.

Peace be with you!

Jim McKenna, Chair

From the Financial Secretary

Just a reminder that December 30, 2016 is the closing date for all donations, pledges, gifts, etc. that will be credited to the Financial Year 2016. I'll be making the last deposit at noon on that Saturday, December 30, 2016.
Thanks! Bev Berry



Snack & Chat

Karen Dudgeon and Jim McKenna continue to hold Snack & Chats on communion Sundays. Please bring your questions, concerns and joys. Contact Karen at [914-886-2239](tel:914-886-2239) or Jim at [607-345-9863](tel:607-345-9863).

2016 December Worship

A simple Prayer Service is offered on Sunday mornings from 8:30 - 9:00 AM and worship with music at 10:30 AM. Miss a Sunday and want to review the bulletin? You can find weekly bulletins at our website: <http://www.homercc.com/resources/>. Share with a friend. At Homer Congregational Church we believe that children of all ages have a place in worship and in the life of the church. A children's bulletin and other supplies are available each Sunday morning.

Sunday, December 4

2nd Sunday in Advent

Prayer Service 8:30 AM
Worship Service 10:30 AM

The HCC **Pastoral Candidate** will lead this worship service followed by a congregational vote on their candidacy. On this Sunday **Holy Communion** will be celebrated, we will light the Advent Candle of Peace. When God's people are in distress, messengers of hope come to remind of God's steadfast love. John the Baptizer is a messenger pointing to the future – a future of hope.



Sunday, December 11

3rd Sunday in Advent

Prayer Service 8:30 AM
Worship Service 10:30 AM

We will light the Advent Candle of Joy and hear anew the Christmas story through our children. The **Christmas Pageant** will be filled with wiggles, giggles and enthusiasm. You won't want to miss this. Plan to stay after for a soup and bread lunch.



Sunday, December 18

4th Sunday in Advent

Prayer Service 8:30 AM
Worship Service 10:30 AM

On the fourth Sunday of Advent we light the Advent candle of love and our Choir will present "Bethlehem's Child" Christmas Cantata by Victor Johnson and Lloyd Larson.



Saturday, December 24

7:30 PM

Christmas Eve

The Service of Lessons and Carols follows an ancient custom of placing music between scripture readings. Homer Brass will be playing and service concludes with candle lighting.



Sunday, December 25

10:30 AM

1st Sunday in Christmas

On Christmas Day we will gather for an intergenerational service of carols and scripture that will also include musical gifts by members of the congregation.



Pastor Kathleen's time in the office varies each week, but she is available to visit those with special needs or to meet for any other reason. Please feel free to contact her via email: pastor@homercc.org or via her cell phone: (315) 380-0744.

WORSHIP
SCHEDULE
for December



Deacon Worship Leader:

Karen Dudgeon

Trustee Verifier

Becky Jones

December 4 @ 10:30 am

Flowers –

Nursery – Kevin Cappy

Coffee Hour – Deacons

December 11 @ 10:30 am

Flowers –

Nursery – Cindy Stout

Coffee Hour –

December 18 @ 10:30 am

Flowers – Gumaer Family

Nursery – Carol Costell Corbin

Coffee Hour – Joanne Cincotta

December 24 @ 7:30 pm

Flowers –

Nursery – (No nursery today)

December 25 @ 10:30 am

Flowers –

Nursery – (No nursery today)

Coffee Hour –

3 Dottie Kelley

5 Nicholas Cinquanti

7 Tasker Dennis

8 Rachel Rood

9 William Allen

10 Donald Root

14 Tina Helgren

15 David Benedict, Alison Miller

18 Terry Pedersen

21 Nathan Krause

28 Cathy Renninger

29 Erin Leach

30 Laura Cinquanti

31 Elise Schmidt

Email Contacts:

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Pastor: pastor@homercc.org

Financial Secretary: finsect@homercc.org

Treasurer: treasurer@homercc.org

DCE: christianed@homercc.org

Find us online!

HCC website - homercc.com

Digital calendar - homercc.com/calendar

Follow Homer Congregational Church on [Facebook!](https://www.facebook.com/homercc)

To receive our mid-week email, Weekday Words,
please email the office: office@homercc.org