



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**

- Jim McKenna
- Paula Harrington
- Chuck Feiszli
- Andrea Herzog
- Eugene Wright
- David Barnes
- Russ Pedersen

**Board of Deacons**

- Bonnie Haaland
- Kathy McKenna
- Tracy Bertram
- Belinda Burtson
- Joanne Cincotta
- Darci Gumaer
- Gary Harrington
- Doris Hoffmann
- Bill Masterson
- Anne Wingard
- Jim Ulrich
- Terri Pedersen

**Church Staff**

- Pastor:*
- Rev. Vicki Burtson
- Director of Christian Education:*
- Rachel Ditch
- Sexton:*
- Gary Harrington
- Church Administrator:*
- Sheila Shea



**TRANSFIGURATION**

**Transfiguration Sunday**

**Sunday, February 26 at 10:30 am**

Transfiguration Sunday is the last Sunday after the Epiphany (January 6) and celebrates the mountaintop experience of Peter, James, and John as they glimpse the mystery of Jesus' glorious relationship with God.

**Scripture:** Exodus 24:12-18; Matthew 17:1-9



**Severe Weather**

If there is a severe weather forecast which would make traveling hazardous, HCC services and events may be canceled or rescheduled for another date. A decision to cancel will normally be communicated no later than 3 hours before the scheduled time. Notice will be sent through a congregational email and the church's outgoing phone message. Also, people may call Pastor Vicki to confirm a cancellation plan.



**Shrove Tuesday Pancake Community Meal**

We are expanding on our tradition of a **Pancake Supper on Shrove Tuesday** by making this our first community meal of 2017! The Outreach Team and CEM plan to invite the families of Homer Elementary and Intermediate Schools to share the meal and fellowship with our congregation on **Tuesday, Feb. 28 at 6:00 pm**. Plan to

attend and welcome our Homer neighbors! Pancake races will still occur! For more information, please contact Bonnie Smith or Carol Costell-Corbin.



**Directory Update**

We are updating our Church Contact Directory for 2017. If you have new contact information, please let the office know. If you would like to add an email address and/or cell phone number to your current listing, please contact the office: [office@homercc.org](mailto:office@homercc.org) or (607) 749-2604.



Dear Church Family:

Thank you all for your concern and prayers during my recuperation. A special thanks for the pastoral visits, homemade soup, cards, and emails. Feeling the support from my church family has, no doubt, helped in my recovery process.

God bless you all,  
Cindy Stout

## **A Review [NOT official minutes] of our Annual Meeting on January 22, 2017**

submitted by Vicki Burtson – as experienced from my perspective... *Thanks be to God!*

The 216<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Homer Congregational Church – Moderator Rev. Barb Wright led us through the printed agenda. Our Board of Deacons offered an “inside/out” report, first highlighting the ministry INSIDE our church:

- Stephen Ministry -- During 2016, eight Stephen Ministers were trained. Those present stood and were recognized. Care *Receivers* have been meeting with these skilled Care *Givers* and for this Stephen Ministry we all said *Thanks be to God!*
- Safe Churches – our Director of Christian Education, Rachel Ditch, has worked with Karen Dudgeon to develop a policy that provides a safety net for our children and youth. To date, Rachel has provided “Reduce the Risk” training for 15 adults who work with our Christian education programs. For these dedicated adults and for the intentional safety provided within our church, we all said, *Thanks be to God!*
- Pastoral Search Committee – As Kathy McKenna reported for the group, her notebook of paperwork made an audible “THUD” on the podium, providing an effective visual of the team’s commitment. For the purposeful and spiritual work of the PSC, we all said, *Thanks be to God!*

A voice called out, “And what did we do OUTSIDE the church in 2016?” To answer, we heard these highlights:

- PREP – our grassroots Outreach Team reported on our first, ever, give-away before school started in the fall. Because of our congregation’s generosity, we provided sneakers for 70 children in our community along with socks, underwear and various hygiene products. For this first effort in helping area families prepare for children to go back to school, we all said, *Thanks be to God!*
- VBS – for Mark Bertram’s leadership, our youth’s participation, everyone who made this project come to life, and each student who participated, we all said *Thanks be to God!*
- Homer Nursery School – In 2016, our congregation received the Homer Nursery School as a new mission project. For the cooperation between Deacons & Trustees, the skill of our Nursery School teachers, the ways that we offer this mission to families within our community and for each child-student, we all said, *Thanks be to God!*

We were delighted by the news that in 2016, our Church family gave a tithe of our budget, giving away over \$22,000 for missions, including the Homer Food Pantry, the Council of Churches, Our Churches Wider Mission and help to Grace & Holy Spirit as they recovered from a fire. Together we exclaimed, *Thanks be to God!*

The 218<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the First Religious Society in the Town of Homer – Our moderator called the meeting to order, and called upon Jim McKenna who celebrated:

- successful efforts in organizing procedures and policies, the dedication during worship of the front steps & railings, cooperative efforts working with the Deacons, the UMC, the Landmark group, Al-Anon and the Girl Scouts.
- augmented by pictures, we were updated about the manse. Cleaning & painting are underway.
- the personnel committee worked to update job descriptions and annual reviews.
- there have been renewed efforts in communication via electronic and social media.
- Holiday in Homer profited over \$4,500. For the work of Paula Harrington and her entire team, as well as the effort in community building, we again said, *Thanks be to God!*

Both groups approved their nominations reports and, after review, received or voted on the budgets. Karen Dudgeon and Jim McKenna were thanked for their leadership in 2016. In the midst of good humor and positive energy, we offered words of thanks for the Rev. Dr. Kathleen Waters.

This is but a glimpse of our ministry in 2016. Copies of the entire reports are still available. We look forward to seeing you as, together, we minister inside and outside in 2017. *Thanks be to God!*

### New Officers

The Annual Meetings of both the Religious Society and the Congregation were held on January 22. During our gathering many individual were elected to serve as officers, board and committee members. See the list below:

#### Nominating Committee (Serves both boards)

<u>Term Ending 2020 (3 yr)</u>	<u>Term Ending 2019 (2 yr)</u>	<u>Term ending 2018 (1 yr)</u>
<i>Belinda Burtson</i>	Lori Schmidt	Tracy Bertram (*)
<i>Russell Pedersen</i>	Sherri Masterson	Patricia Buchholz (*)

#### Board of Trustees

<u>Term Ending 2020 (3 yr)</u>	<u>Term ending 2019 (2 yr)</u>	<u>Term ending 2018 (1 yr)</u>
<i>David Barnes</i>	Paula Harrington	Eugene Wright (*)
<i>Russell Pedersen</i>	Charles Feiszli	James McKenna (P. Jeffers)
<i>Andrea Herzog (*)</i>	_____(open)____	_____(open)____

#### Endowment Fund Committee

<u>Term Ending 2020 (3 yr)</u>	<u>Term ending 2019 (2 yr)</u>	<u>Term ending 2018 (1 yr)</u>
<i>Carl Applegate (*)</i>	Becky Jones	David Barnes
<i>Charles Feiszli</i>	<i>Lee Benson (Harris)</i>	Anna McConnell (Dudgeon)

#### Memorial Committee

<u>Term Ending 2020 (3yr)</u>	<u>Term ending 2019 (2 yr)</u>	<u>Term ending 2018 (1 yr)</u>
<i>Anna McConnell</i>	Jan Jeffers (*)	Janice Bacon (*)
<i>Russell Pedersen (T)</i>	Bonnie Haaland (D)	Beverly Johnson (*)

#### OFFICERS

Moderator: Barbara Wright (2019)  
 Financial Secretary: Beverly Berry (2019)  
 Treasurer: Andrea Herzog (2019)  
 Auditor: **Becky Jones** (2020)  
 Stewardship Chair: *Cindy Stout & Kurt Schmidt* (2019)  
 Endowment Fund Auditor: \_\_\_\_\_(open)\_\_\_\_ (2020)  
 Historian: (open)

#### Board of Deacons

<u>Term Ending 2020 (3 yr)</u>	<u>Term Ending 2019 (2 yr)</u>	<u>Term ending 2018 (1 yr)</u>
<i>Jim Ulrich</i>	Kathleen McKenna (*)	Gary Harrington
<i>Joanne Cincotta (*)</i>	Anne Wingard	Bonnie Haaland
<i>Bill Masterson</i>	Doris Hoffman	Belinda Burtson (*)
<i>Tracy Bertram</i>	Darci Gumaer (*)	<i>Terry Pedersen (V. Burtson)</i>

**Christian Education Ministry**

**Term Ending 2020** (3 yr)  
**Kathleen McKenna**  
**Bonnie Smith**  
**Courtney Stafford**

**Term ending 2019** (2 yr)  
 Ingrid Fox (\*)  
 Laurie Leach  
 \_\_\_\_ (open) \_\_\_\_

**Term ending 2018** (1 yr)  
 Tracy Bertram  
 Carol Costell Corbin  
 \_\_\_\_ (open) \_\_\_\_

**Worship & Music Committee**

**Term Ending 2020** (3 yr)  
**Katrina Allen**  
 \_\_\_\_ (open) \_\_\_\_

**Term ending 2019** (2 yr)  
 Charles Feiszli (\*)  
 Patricia Buchholz (\*)

**Term ending 2018** (1 yr)  
 Sylvia Hammond (\*)  
 Jim Ulrich (\*)

**Stewardship Committee**

(Serves Both: HCC &amp; FRS)

**Term Ending 2020** (3yr)  
**Karen Dudgeon**  
**Susan Benedict**

**Term ending 2019** (2 yr)  
 Gary Harrington (\*)  
 \_\_\_\_ (open) \_\_\_\_

**Term ending 2018** (1 yr)  
 Cindy Stout  
 Kurt Schmidt

**Delegates to:**

**Susquehanna Association:** Belinda Burtner, Jan Jeffers, \_(need 2)\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

**New York Conference:** Belinda Burtson, Peter Wright

**Cortland County Council of Churches:** Miles & Karen Dudgeon

**Pastoral Relations Committee** (Staggered 3-year terms established in 2010)

**Kurt Schmidt (2018) (At Large)**

**Karen Dudgeon (2020) (At Large)**

**Cindy Stout (2019) (Pastor's Choice)**

**Jim Ulrich (2018) (Deacon)**



*Thank You*

*Dear Homer Congregational Church,*

*We want to thank you profusely, not only for your thoughts and prayers for all of us, but for your monetary help which will go towards the restoration of our church building.*

*By the aid of your generous donation, everyone at Grace and Holy Spirit Church is strengthened in faith and encouraged to forge onward after the misfortune of fire and smoke damage at 13 Court St.*

*Thank you again for all of your heartfelt support.*

*Sincerely,  
 The Stewardship Committee*



## Christian Education Ministry

January has been quite busy in the world of Christian Education! After a break over the holidays, we have gathered together and are trying changing the way we gather, how we teach, and what our space looks like. Sunday mornings will be a bit different in February, and we are very excited to be trying new things as we transition into our time with our new pastor.

We've been working on making our classroom more kid-friendly for Sunday School, and we are looking for helpers! If you can sew, paint, and sing, we want to invite you to come help us bring more creative worship and

education to our youth.

We're going to be inviting members of the congregation to come and share in storytelling, so be on the lookout for your invitation! We all have spiritual gifts which can enrich our worship lives, and our Sunday School program is seeking your gifts. Rachel will be coming to speak with you.

Kelly McKenna will be presenting about her trip to Belize on February 19th after worship. It promises to be a wonderfully engaging time, and I hope we can all hear about Kelly's exciting work!

Rachel

## Youth Fellowship

Youth Fellowship is open to young adults in 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade and their friends. We encourage you to invite your friends and have fun together.

Youth will be hosting the annual submarine sandwich sale on February 5<sup>th</sup>! For those who have placed orders (due Jan. 29), they will be available after Worship at 11:45 am.



Saturday, February 11th from 1pm to 4pm will be an all-church skiing and snowshoeing day! We will meet at Lime Hollow at 1pm where we will rent our equipment needs and head for the trails. Youth equipment rental will be covered by CEM, others can plan to rent their equipment at a discount of 50%. We'll have hot cocoa and marshmallows available after our time on the trail, and we are excited to have everyone join in this great adventure. Please RSVP to Rachel by February 5th at [christianed@homercc.org](mailto:christianed@homercc.org), by call or text at 607.221.0882, or call her at the church at 607.749.2604.

February 20th-22nd Marleah Dentes, Olivia Harrington, and Rachel Ditch will travel to New York City to attend a Youth Leadership Forum sponsored by the New York State Council of Churches. The topic of the forum is Islamophobia, and the journey includes a tour of the United Nations and attendance of a Broadway Show, "Come From Away" about the 9/11 attacks.

Special thanks to CEM and Global Connectors for sponsoring Olivia, Marleah, and Rachel for this trip! Plan ahead for March 19th where they will present about the trip. Joining them on March 19th will be Dr. Alexandru Balas of SUNY Cortland, Assistant Professor of International Studies and Director of the Clark Center for International Education.

**New Office Hours for Rachel!** Rachel's schedule varies, but her regular office hours are **Monday 3 pm - 6 pm** and **Wednesday 9 am - 12 pm**. She can also be reached at [christianed@homercc.org](mailto:christianed@homercc.org) or (607) 749-2604, option 4.

## The Deacon's Bench



*Be faithful in small things because it is in them that your strength lies.*

*~Mother Teresa*

### WORSHIP

Worship service is at 10:30 with music and children's moment followed by refreshments in the Russell Fellowship Room.

On February 5<sup>th</sup> we will be celebrating the beginning of our ministry with the Reverend Vicki Burtson (Johnson). Elected overwhelmingly to serve as the next pastor of the Homer Congregational Church, Reverend Burtson will be installed during service. Holy Communion will be celebrated in the pews.

### MISSIONS

The Homer Nursery School's coffee fundraiser was a wonderful success. Thanks to all who support the fundraiser. The Nursery School will be purchasing some new indoor activity toys and art supplies.

With support from the Dorothy Jane Andrews Fund and the sponsorship of the NY State Council of Churches, Rachel Ditch (DCE) will be taking some of our youth to New York City to participate in the United Nations Youth Leadership Seminar, February 20 -22, 2017.

### TECHNOLOGY IMPROVEMENTS

The Deacons are funding and working with the Trustees on the church's technology initiative. Our Church Administrator, Shelia Shea, has put together an Executive Summary of our current technology inventory and needs. The Trustees are awaiting a proposal from Plan First Computer Company.

### 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.

### FAREWELL

The Board of Deacons would like to thank Reverend Kathleen Waters for investing in us these last 2 years. Her spiritual guidance, organizational skills, attention to details has been invaluable. Pastor Kathleen has encouraged us to strive to give our best, to improve our practices, and assisted us in preparing for the coming of our next pastor. We wish her well as she moves on to her next church family.

## The Trustees Corner



The Board of Trustees met on Thursday evening, January 12<sup>th</sup> jointly with the Board of Deacons for the monthly board meeting and continued to make progress on a variety of church issues. Together, the boards discussed a summary of accomplishments in 2016, the IT upgrade, Manse rejuvenation, the budget, and the Annual meeting. The Trustees have been working with the Board of Deacons on personnel issues and finance. The following issues were covered:

- Thanks to the Board Deacons, we are working on a much needed upgrade of the computer technology. This will give us great new capabilities and better security
- The Manse has not been painted or substantially renovated since the Garrisons were here and is in need of extensive work. This large project is being carried out so that our new pastor's family may move into their new home.
- The 2016 budget will be very close to balanced and with your support, the 2017 budget will support church activities throughout the year.
- The Annual Meeting will be another enjoyable event like last year, with a dish to pass and highlights of 2016.
- The newsletter is available in electronic form and our webpage has upgraded with a button and more improvements are planned.
- Our new front steps are complete and the railing been installed!

As we approach the end of the month, big changes are happening. We will welcome our new pastor, continue great programs, start new ones, and say good-bye to our fearless leader of the last two years. Rev. Kathleen Waters, Ph.D. saw us through some difficult times and guided us to decisions that improved our way doing business and our spiritual condition. Please join the Board Trustees in thanking Kathleen for all her help and hard work, and wish her well in new church challenge.

Peace be with you!  
Jim McKenna, Chair

### **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).



*This is what I know...this is what I believe...*

Transitions happen! As I pen these thoughts, our country is 24 hours away from inaugurating a new president. At church at this hour, new carpeting is being laid in what will be my office. The manse is in the midst of a facelift on the inside, with cleaners and painters augmenting the work that some of you have accomplished during these last years. Transitions happen.

This is what I know... teams of people have been at work in our nation's capital, preparing for the "peaceful transfer of power". As with any election, there are people who are very excited and people who are filled with apprehension, but the transfer is going to happen. If I were to be honest, the same is likely true at Homer Congregational! There is about to be a transfer – not so much of power, but in ministry. Our Pastor Kathleen is going to move forward in her ministry, transferring oversight of the ministries and the spiritual needs of the congregation to me. I am aware that there are people who are very excited and perhaps some people who are filled with apprehension. Teams of people have been at work on our behalf. Our Pastoral Search Committee, our Boards of Trustees and Deacons, our church staff – all have been preparing for February 1, 2017. For my part, I have been tying up loose ends with the Council of Churches at the Interfaith Center. I have been packing boxes. I have been listening for God's continued direction as I lay plans for worship and for ministry in Homer.

This is what I believe... God has us covered and all will be well. In the midst of these transitions, we must never take our eye off of the truth. This is a spiritual transition and God will see us through. I am not perfect, but I intend to work hard, to visit a lot, and to reach out in our community. I also intend to take time to pray and to constantly seek the wisdom of the Holy so that I can stay grounded as I serve in your midst.

Here's what YOU can do... Please include me and Belinda in your prayers every day. Make a decision to become vulnerable by sharing your joys and blessings and concerns with me. Communicate openly with me. We are about to start over...to reacquaint ourselves...to meet one another again. I cannot express how excited I am!

If you have been away for a time – come on back. If you have been spotty in attendance – consider being in a pew with your family of faith throughout February. As a church, we are nothing without you! God is calling each one of us. So, *together*, let's see this transition through to the goal of a bright future...God's dream for us. Let's make a difference in Homer and around the planet.

I close with a word of profound thanks for Pastor Kathleen's leadership. She is extraordinarily gifted at the work of interim ministry and we have been blessed beyond description by God working through her. As with all of our pastoral leadership, her "spiritual DNA" is now a part of who we are – all thanks be to God!

With a grateful heart and some dancing in my soul!

*Pastor Vicki*

Pastor Vicki'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](mailto:pastor@homercc.org) or via her cell phone: (607) 624-9940.



## 2017 February Worship

Please welcome Pastor Vicki for our February Worship.

**February 5**      *Communion Sunday*

**Lector:** Olivia Harrington

As we worship, we'll be thanking God as we welcome our new settled pastor, the Rev. Vicki Burtson.

**Scripture:** I Kings 19 & Matthew 5:13-16

**Sermon:** "Get Up and Eat"

We're planning a musical communion setting, and the elements will be passed in the pews. It will be a "Super" Sunday...with our youth making subs for you to purchase.

Brewster House Communion is at 2 PM.

**February 12**

**Lector:** Elijah Smith

*Under construction – watch the bulletin for more information.*

On Sunday afternoon at 3 PM, Pastor Vicki, Belinda and other representatives of our church will attend Becky West's Ecclesiastical Council at Preble. Pastor Vicki is the Moderator of the Susquehanna

Association and Belinda is a member of the Association's Committee on Authorized Ministry. In that role, Belinda has been one of the people working with Becky, as she prepares for this next step in her call to ministry.

**February 19**

**Lector:** Caoimhe Dudgeon

*Under construction – watch the bulletin for more information.*

Following Worship we'll have a Mission Lunch. Kelly McKenna will share about her recent trip to Belize. Come and support one of our college students as she describes her adventures from January!

**February 26** *Last Sunday after*

*Epiphany/Transfiguration*

**Lector:** Grace Wright

**Scripture:** Exodus 24:12-18 & Matthew 17:1-9

**Sermon:** "Training for the Mountaintop"

*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](mailto:william.hopkins@cortland.edu).



### Senior Fellowship

Senior Fellowship was canceled for January, due to inclement weather. The Senior Fellowship Club will resume its regular schedule of meetings on Tuesday, February 14th at 2:00 pm in the Russell Fellowship Room.

# WORSHIP SCHEDULE



## Deacon Worship Leaders:

Tracy Bertram, Darci Gumaer

## Trustee Verifier

Eugene Wright

### February 5 @ 10:30 am

Ushers & Greeters –  
Liturgist – Olivia Harrington  
Acolytes –  
Flowers –  
Nursery – Lori Schmidt  
Coffee Hour – Laurie Leach/Kathleen Dentes

### February 12 @ 10:30 am

Ushers & Greeters –  
Liturgist – Elijah Smith  
Acolytes –  
Flowers –  
Nursery – Tracy Bertram  
Coffee Hour – Leslie and Gene Wright

### February 19 @ 10:30 am

Ushers & Greeters –  
Liturgist – Caoimhe Dudgeon  
Acolytes –  
Flowers –  
Nursery – Darci Gumaer  
Coffee Hour – Kathy Alvord

### February 26 @ 7:30 pm

Ushers & Greeters –  
Liturgist – Grace Wright  
Acolytes –  
Flowers –  
Nursery – Susan Benedict  
Coffee Hour – Neta Baldwin/Gwen Hayne

2 Lloyd Gmoser  
3 Gordon Johnson,  
Matthew Dentes  
4 Gwen Cappy  
8 Jane Morenus  
11 Susan Urban,  
Dorothy Hopkins  
13 Heather Miller  
15 Jaffrey Harris, Jacob Morenus  
16 Cassandra Mead  
17 Christine Watkins  
19 Anne Barnes, Grace Dewey  
20 Susan Weatherby  
21 Christina Cincotta  
24 Betty MacNeill  
26 Dale Halstead  
27 Alexis Settineri  
28 Rebecca Jones

#### **From the Treasurer:**

Operating Revenues at 12/31/16 - \$221,572, 102% of budget

Operating Expenses at 12/31/16 - \$226,339, 104% of budget

The revenue and expense figures above include a \$24,139 transfer from the Endowment Fund and corresponding disbursements for the steps. The First Religious Society in Homer, NY ended the 2016 year with a net loss of \$4,767.

#### **Find us online!**

HCC website - [homercc.com](http://homercc.com)  
Digital calendar - [homercc.com/calendar](http://homercc.com/calendar)  
Follow Homer Congregational Church on [Facebook!](#)  
To receive our mid-week email, Weekday Words,  
please email the office: [office@homercc.org](mailto:office@homercc.org)

#### **Email Contacts:**

Office: [office@homercc.org](mailto:office@homercc.org)  
Pastor: [pastor@homercc.org](mailto:pastor@homercc.org)  
Financial Secretary: [finsect@homercc.org](mailto:finsect@homercc.org)  
Treasurer: [treasurer@homercc.org](mailto:treasurer@homercc.org)  
DCE: [christianed@homercc.org](mailto:christianed@homercc.org)