



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.

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

Church Office

phone: (607) 749-2604
 email: office@homercc.org

Thank You

Dear Friends at the Homer Congregational Church; Thank you so much for the big donation of basic necessities for the Christmas Holiday Baskets. It was great to be able to include these items along with the foodstuffs. We really do appreciate your continued support all through the year. We filled 45 requests for aid from needy families!



Sincerely,

Barbara Gerhardt for the Homer Methodist Food Pantry



Come Ring Bells

I would love to get an adult bell choir active again. If you might be interested, please meet with me on Sunday, March 12 after worship at 12:30. Place will be advised.

Thanks,

Jan Jeffers, Director Chapel Bells

One Great Hour of Sharing

One Great Hour of Sharing is one of the five special offerings in which Homer Congregational Church participates each year. It is a part of our global outreach.



One Great Hour of Sharing works with international partners to provide clean water, food, education, health care, small business micro credit, emergency relief and advocacy/resettlement for refugees and displaced persons. It also supports domestic and international disaster preparedness and response.

Our collection for One Great Hour of Sharing will take place on March 26. We hope that you will prayerfully consider a generous contribution. For more information visit ucc.org/OGHS.



Mission Lunch

Mission Lunch

Please join us for a Mission Lunch on March 19. Marleah Dentes, Olivia Harrington, and Rachel Ditch will give a presentation on their February visit to the Youth Leadership Forum New York City.



A Note About Our Stephen Ministry From a Care Receiver

This is a note from someone in our congregation who is receiving care from a Stephen Minister:

I asked for a Stephen Minister because, as an older woman, I had many thoughts and emotions about my present situation and what the future might look like. I know that God is still calling me; but physically, I just can't do what I used to do. I see many people my age who are not able to do much of anything. They can't get out, not even to go to church and it is sad to think of people being so isolated. I am not content to just be at home. Stephen Ministers are trained to be good listeners and I felt I needed someone to listen to me and help me explore some of the feelings I have. It is great to have someone who listens deeply, as I think about and attempt to work out my future direction(s). At first it was a little bit difficult to have a Stephen Minister, because I am not used to receiving care (and she was new to giving care). We are both learning. She has a great sense of humor; so sometimes we laugh and then back up and start over. It is refreshing to talk about things that people usually don't talk about in ordinary conversation. I know with my Stephen Minister I can explore my thoughts and feelings in safety because what we talk about is confidential. I look forward to each meeting with her and, in between our meetings; I find that I have incentive to think things through thoroughly. I would definitely recommend having a Stephen Minister to anyone who is experiencing one of life's "bumps in the road". Having a Stephen Minister has been a very helpful and rewarding experience for me.

If you would like more information about Stephen Ministry, please contact a Stephen Leader:
Belinda Burtson - [756-2454](tel:756-2454) or Bill Masterson - [745-8933](tel:745-8933)



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 teamed up and have invited the families of Homer Elementary School to share the meal with our congregation. Plan to attend to welcome our Homer neighbors in the spirit of fellowship and community! Pancake races will still occur!



A free will offering at the meal will not be taken. However, if members of the congregation would like to help support the meal, a free will offering will be taken at coffee hour after worship on Sunday, Feb. 26.

*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.



Christian Education Ministry

It's Valentine's Day as I write this, so perhaps it is fitting to share some of the things I love about my position here as the Director of Christian Education. I

love seeing the smiles of joy on young faces as we gather for our morning worship and lessons; it is these smiles which remind me of joy our God hopes for us. I love the brightening in the eyes of those who have an "Aha!" moment they cannot wait to share. I love the challenges presented each Sunday during the Children's Message (no...really!) because these challenges from young and inquisitive minds help keep me mindful of the awe with which we can see our God, if we allow ourselves.

In short, there are plenty of moments each day which I love about this position, and I know that as the months come, I'm going to love it even more.

In January we started taking a different approach to Sunday School. We decided to go back to the basics and start where it all started, Creation! Since then we've explored the complicated lives of Adam and Eve, journeyed through sibling rivalry and God's unending love with Cain and Abel, and pondered the significance of the rainbow and God's covenant after Noah's family and the animals survived the 40 day and 40 night flood (it was a very long time). Our intermediate class has been exploring these Bible lessons with a bit more depth as they ponder what they are taught in school and what they read in the scriptures.

We start each Sunday morning with a bit of singing, some wriggling, and a whole bunch of laughter. Each week we've shared our thanksgivings and our concerns, and we've reminded each other why God loves us unconditionally! As we head into March and Lent, we'll continue building the foundation of our faith stories, and we'll add in some new ideas about spiritual practices.

Moving forward, we'll be adding a Mission Component to our morning gathering. We'll explore why we give back as a congregation, we'll explore the many ways we are already

giving back, and we'll begin our mission of collecting socks and underpants for the Back to School Prep Program!

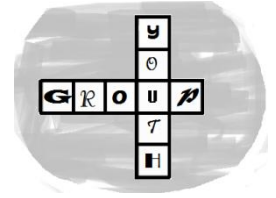
Our Superbowl Sub Sale raised \$120, and those subs sure were fun to make. If you've never seen organized chaos, I hope our February 5th antics gave you some idea of what it looks like.

We hope you'll join us on Sunday morning! We love having people read us stories, sing us songs, or teach us games!

Peace, Rachel

Youth Group

March is upon us, and we have some great opportunities for fun and fellowship. Come and bring your friends!



Our all church outing to Lime Hollow was great fun! We had thirteen people join for either cross-country skiing or snowshoeing. Mr. Glenn at Lime Hollow explored animal tracks with us, and then joined us in playing some games. Being in nature was good for all of us! We rounded out the day with some nice warm (very hot) hot cocoa. A special thanks goes out to Lime Hollow for the wonderful time we had, to Mr. Glenn for helping us snowshoers get up and around, and to Chuck Feiszli for leading our skiers around the Lime Hollow property. It is certainly a place we will be visiting again in the future. Come join us!

March 12th will be a 7th-12th grade movie outing! We'll watch a movie together and then have some discussion over dinner. Youth are asked to bring \$10; all other costs will be covered by CEM. Parents are welcome to join! Anyone with any questions should contact Rachel at christianed@homercc.org or by phone at [607.749.2604](tel:607.749.2604) (O) or [607.221.0882](tel:607.221.0882) (cell & text)

Mark your calendars for March 19th, when Olivia Harrington and Marleah Dentes will present about their February trip to the United Nations where they explored the topic of Islamophobia.

Along with Sunday School, Youth Group will be collecting socks and underpants to help support the Back to School PREP Event. And we'll soon be launching a brand new mission project!

Keep Youth Group in your prayers as we begin trying new things and venturing out in faith and fun!

The Deacon's Bench



The Deacons met on Tuesday February 14th; the first time since the departure of interim pastor Kathleen Waters and long-time Deacon Chair Karen Dudgeon. We will miss both of them on the board and their strong leadership & dedication to the Homer Congregational Church. The focus of our meeting was to reorganize and to welcome our new pastor, Vicki Burtson and new deacons: Terry Pedersen and Jim Ulrich. We look forward to working together with Pastor Vicki as we attempt to live up to our mission statement, and move in new directions.

The board elected an executive committee for 2017: Bill Masterson, Chair; Gary Harrington, Vice-Chair and Kathy McKenna, Secretary.

Our latest mission, the Homer Nursery School is doing very well and running at or near full capacity. This is great news; however we could use your help. We are in need of willing volunteers to serve as a committee to support the nursery school. If you are willing to help, please contact Anne Wingard or Bill Masterson.

Blessings,
Bill Masterson for the Board of Deacons

Homer Nursery School Update

Since we were blessed with additional student enrollment in our program this year, we are happy to announce that we were able to contribute \$3,000.00 toward the cost of the carpet in the nursery school area. It has made such a difference in the classrooms and we couldn't be happier. Some of the highlights during the month of March in nursery school include, celebrating Dr. Suss' birthday, Wacky Wednesday and having our class pictures taken. We will also be holding an art work fundraiser for the school. Some people have donated items to the nursery school from our wish list and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them. As always, we greatly appreciate your help.



Thank you for believing in us, Lisa Clark

**Senior Fellowship Club Meeting:
Tuesday, February 14, 2017**

The Senior Fellowship Club met on Valentine's Day, Tuesday, February, 14th amidst a bevy of red roses, shiny red hearts and other decorations. We opened our meeting with a prayer for the New Year and also heard a prayer for Valentine's Day. We enjoyed a joke entitled "Heaven's Entrance Exam" followed by a series of short jokes entitled "Holy Humor." After listening to an interesting reading entitled "Old People Pride" which made us all feel good about ourselves, it was time for refreshments. Our dessert was a delicious red raspberry concoction. Many thanks to Gwen Hayne and Nita Baldwin for not only baking but also decorating and doing kitchen duty.



After refreshments, we welcomed our special guest, Kris Behuke from the Cortland Repertory Theater. Kris has worked with the CRT since the summer of 2009. She currently oversees the Youth Program as well as educational opportunities. Kris traced the history of the CRT from the "Little York Pavilion" to its evolution as a theater opening in 1972. She discussed the staff and their many responsibilities such as: scenery, costumes, sound, lighting, stage management and choreography. She also discussed how CRT finds actors by going to auditions in New York City or attending theater conferences to watch actors audition. Some roles require actors to physically look a certain way. Kris spoke of past programs and future programs with such enthusiasm it was contagious. She also discussed the plays and programs which have been available for children in the past and literally radiated with excitement about future plans. Many thanks to Kris for an inspiring presentation and reminding us how lucky we are to have the CRT in our community.

Our next meeting will take place on Tuesday, March 14th. Rachel Ditch will be our special guest and will present a program with slides about her trip to India. Mark your calendars and we'll see you there.

-Dottie Kelley

Homer Congregational Church Fellowship Hour 2017

Below is the Fellowship schedule for 2017. A big thank you to those who have signed up to host this year. There are guidelines and instructions posted on the bulletin board and in the church kitchen, if needed. If you are interested in signing up, please contact one of the Deacons.

2017 Homer Congregational Church Fellowship Hour Schedule

January-1	Gumaer Family	July-2	Clay Benedict/Elaine Olson
January-8	Ulrich Family	July-9	Belinda Burtson/Bonnie Haaland
January-15	Bertram Family	July-16	Ingrid Fox/Janice Bacon
January-22	Annual Meeting-Dish to pass	July-23	Sylvia Hammond/Dorothy Kelley
January-29	Carol Costell-Corbin	July-30	Rachel Rood/Stan Nilsson
February-5	Laurie Leach/Kathleen Dentes	August-6	Chautauqua - No Fellowship Hour
February-12	Leslie and Gene Wright	August-13	
February-19	Kathy Alvord	August-20	
February-26	Neta Baldwin/Gwen Hayne	August-27	Shirley Osterhodt/Pat Signor
March-5	Cindy Stout	September-3	Edlunds/Betty MacNeil
March-12	HCC Choir	September-10	
March-19	Andrea Herzog	September-17	
March-26		September-24	Sherri Masterson
April-2	Gumaer Family	October-1	Susan Urban
April-9	Jaff and Naydne Harris	October-8	Carol Agate
April-16	Easter -Deacons	October-15	Member Recognition---Deacons
April-23	Doris and Peter Hoffmann	October-22	Ingrid Fox/Tracy Bertram
April-30	Becky/Dora Jones	October-29	Harrington family
May-7	Bev Johnson	November-5	Dudgeon family
May-14	Mother's Day---Deacons	November-12	Ford Family
May-21	Pat Buchholz	November-19	Gumaer Family
May-28	Dottie Greene/Gwen Hayne	November-26	Hanging Of The Greens CEM soup
June-4	Children's Day---CEM	December-3	Kathy McKenna
June-11	Phyllis Adams	December-10	Church Christmas Party/Pageant
June-18	Father's Day/Grads---Trustees	December-17	Joanne Cincotta
June-25	Bev Berry/Ann Wingard	December-24	
		December-31	



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

Grace and peace to you, dear family and friends of Homer Congregational Church! This is a season of welcoming. The sun has chosen to be our companion for a few days, and if you are like me, that is a welcomed change. We experience similar delight whenever we see old and new faces in our pews on Sunday mornings.

Transitions continue, but we are settling into this new relationship aren't we? Here are some joys from these past weeks:

- Yesterday, when it was time for Caoimhe to read our scripture, she scampered to the pulpit with delightful energy... I had a smile on my face anticipating the word from the Gospel.
- There are new (and very happy) faces in our choir.
- My visits reveal a richness of wisdom and deep faith in our congregation.
- Our deacons and trustees have reorganized for the year, elected new officers and are continuing to work on our behalf.
- We have just celebrated the life of Felicia Thomas amidst her rich legacy of children, grandchildren, great and great-greats!
- Our elders have been seen around church playing bridge, learning some of the history of the Cortland Repertory Theater and studying the Bible.
- Rachel just took two of our high school seniors to NYC where they will tour the United Nations and think deeply about our need to respect people of other faiths. They will share their experience at a Mission Lunch on March 19.
- Our nursery school is at full capacity, which means one end of our building is alive with the sounds of children for the better part of the week.
- We have been sharing the good news about Courtney Stafford's new job and her acceptance into Binghamton University's MSW program...and the good work accomplished by Maddie, Sophia, Kyle and Caoimhe in the recent Science Fair (did I miss anyone?)...and Grace's participation in the play at school.
- We hold in prayer our folks who are in the military or at college. You may not be here, but you are not forgotten!

In these next days, we will journey to the mountaintop with Jesus, but quickly return to the valley where the real work begins. Wednesday, March 1 is Ash Wednesday. Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find a rich menu offering you ample opportunities to tend the garden of your soul. As Lent approaches, let us consider adding some means of allowing our souls to be touched by the Holy. Welcome sun! Even more, welcome Holy Presence to our journey through Lent.

In joy and anticipation,
Pastor Vicki

Pastor Vicki's office hours are Monday 10 am - 2 pm,
 Tuesday 9 am -12 pm, Wednesday 9 am -12 pm *and* 3 pm -5 pm.
 You may call for an appointment or drop in. She will also be glad to meet at other times, by appointment. Please feel free to contact her via email: pastor@homercc.org or via her cell phone: [\(607\) 624-9940](tel:6076249940).

The menu for our Lenten Journey

Tuesday, February 28 at 6 PM **FREE Community Meal**

Traditionally our Shrove Tuesday pancake supper, this will be our *first community meal of 2017*. The Outreach Team and CEM teamed up and have invited the families of Homer Elementary School to share the meal with our congregation. Plan to attend to welcome our Homer neighbors.

Tuesday, February 28 at 11 AM or 7 PM **Book Study with Discussion**

Throughout Lent, we will be sharing opportunities with our friends at the UMC. Rev. Rachel Morse is offering another discussion series, and you are invited. Based on Ta-Nehisi Coates' *Between the World and Me*, the series will focus on America's radical compassion. Choose either the daytime or the evening option. Should you have to miss one – no worries. Attend as you are able.

Wednesday, March 1 at 7 PM **Ash Wednesday Service – Prayers and Music of Taizé**

As you enter into contemplative, meditative worship based on scripture and short songs repeated again and again, we hope you will find a new way of listening to God. The music will be supported by recorders, guitar and perhaps a harpsicord. Since it is often in times of quiet and stillness that we can hear the whisper of God inside us, silence is a critical element in this form of worship. So we will sing, we will listen and we will receive ashes as a sign of our human-ness. Join us in the Russell Fellowship Hall amidst candle light and beautiful music.

Sundays during Lent

Advent candles help us count down our way to Christmas. Beginning March 5, we will track our Lenten journey as we pray, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

Beginning Wednesday March 8 at 7 AM **Early Wednesday Devotions with Communion**

Adults! You are invited to join the Burtsons, *at the manse* for very simple breakfast and devotions. We will gather at 7 AM...yes...AM! There will be bagels or fruit and yogurt, scripture, communion and prayers. You'll be off to work by 7:30.

Beginning Monday March 13 at 7 AM **Mondays at the Manse**

Students in **grades 7-12** ...this one is for you! You are invited to breakfast at the manse beginning at 7 AM - yes...AM! Pastor Vicki and Belinda will provide breakfast. We will share in a time of devotions before everyone is off to school. Feel free to bring a friend, but let the Burtsons know with a text to [607.624.9940](tel:607.624.9940).

Sunday, March 26 at 3 PM **A Celebration of Installation and Ordination**

Members of the Susquehanna Association will join our congregation as Pastor Vicki is installed as our settled pastor. In addition, Rachel Ditch has now met all the requirements and on March 26, she will be *ordained* and then installed into her various ministry settings. This will be a great day of joy and you won't want to miss it!

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).

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Deacon Worship Leader:

Anne Wingard

Trustee Verifier

Jim McKenna

March 5 @ 10:30 am

Ushers & Greeters –
Liturgist –
Acolytes –
Flowers –
Nursery – Anne Wingard
Coffee Hour – Cindy Stout

March 12 @ 10:30 am

Ushers & Greeters –
Liturgist –
Acolytes –
Flowers – Joanne Cincotta
Nursery – Terry Pedersen
Coffee Hour – HCC Choir

March 19 @ 10:30 am

Ushers & Greeters –
Liturgist –
Acolytes –
Flowers –
Nursery – Joanne Cincotta
Coffee Hour – Andrea Herzog

March 26 @ 7:30 pm

Ushers & Greeters –
Liturgist –
Acolytes –
Flowers –
Nursery – Philip Zollweg
Coffee Hour –



1 Isabel Coon
4 Ione Niese, Ruth Knickerbocker
5 Phyllis Adams, Carl Applegate
10 Kelly McKenna
11 Terre Dennis
13 Stanley Nilsson
14 Danielle Lansdowne
16 Adam Feiszli
18 Janice Bacon, Patricia Signor
20 Marguerite DeForest
21 Kelly Settineri, Carrie Gumaer
22 James McKenna
23 Hannah Agate, Johannes Helgren,
25 Douglas Adams, Pat Buchholz
27 Gail Benedict
29 Amanda (Jeffers) Porto, Stephen
Hoffmann, David Hoffmann
31 Mary Lansdowne

From the Treasurer:

Operating Revenues at 1/31/17 - \$23,790, 10.5% of budget;

Operating Expenses at 1/31/17 - \$22,440, 9.9% of budget

Find us online!

HCC website - homercc.com

Digital calendar - homercc.com/calendar

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

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