



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
- Terry Pedersen

Church Staff

Pastor:
Rev. Vicki Burtson

Director of Christian Education:
Rev. Rachel Ditch

Sexton:
Gary Harrington

Church Administrator:
Sheila Shea

Donations Needed!

Calling all HCC Members! The HCC Youth Group is in need of some materials for a mission project! Sole Hope is an organization that sends shoes to children in Uganda who suffer from chiggers (sand fleas). We are in need of old blue jeans and thin plastic items (such as plastic folders, laundry detergent bottles, 2-liter soda bottles, or milk jugs). On May 21st, using a pattern provided by Sole Hope, youth will cut out and assemble shoes made from blue jeans and plastic! These shoes will help children be children and play without pain!



If you have any questions, please contact Rachel at christianed@homercc.org, or [607.221.0882](tel:607.221.0882).

Please have donations to the church by **Friday, May 19th**.



Men's Choir Forming

Come and join the first ever Homer Congregational Mother's Day Men's Choir! We'll practice at 7:30 pm on Wednesday May 3 and May 10. We'll share our music on Mother's Day, Sunday, May 13, in honor of all women of the congregation. All levels of singers are welcome!

Calling our 2017 Graduates

If you or someone you know is graduating from high school, trade school, or college, please let us know. We would love to hear about their plans and share them in next month's newsletter. The Deacons will honor all graduates in worship on **Sunday, June 18**. Please contact the office by **Wednesday, May 17** by phone: (607) 749-2604 or by email: office@homercc.org.



A Thank You to Stephen Ministers



My experience with Stephen Ministry has been a Godsend. I was in a low place in my life, with loss of loved ones and dealing by myself with everyday life. Having a Stephen Minister in my corner has helped me immensely. We have a lot in common and the compassion that is expressed is appreciated. I can have a bad day, but by the time our time is over, I feel relaxed and spiritually ready to have anything. We say a prayer at the end of our hour together, which makes me assured that God is always with me.

Senior Fellowship Meeting: Tuesday, April 12, 2017



The Senior Fellowship Club met on Tuesday, April 12 in the RFR. We opened our meaning with an Easter “poem-prayer,” by Helen Steiner Rice. We also reminisced a bit about noteworthy events that had previously taken place on April 12. Our Civil War began on April 12, 1861 when Confederate soldiers fired upon Fort Sumter and in 1944 President Franklin Delano Roosevelt passed away at Union Springs, Ga. before the end of World War II.

Rachel Ditch was the special guest for our meeting. We’d had to cancel Rachel’s visit twice, once in January and again in March, due to weather. Finally, we were going to hear about her two-week trip to India and see her slides. Rachel’s presentation was well worth waiting for. She pointed out the route of her travels throughout India accompanied by excellent slides. She mentioned that 80% of the population is Hindu, 15% Muslim, and 2 - 3% Christian. India is densely populated and still retains its caste system. The poor and the wealthy coexist. Rachel mentioned that Hindu shrines are red and white; nothing else is allowed to be painted with those colors. Cows, which are sacred in the Hindu religion, wander everywhere in the streets feeding on trash. Rachel’s slides were phenomenal, showing fantastic towers and other architectural marvels. She visited the Gandhi Memorial, a spice plantation, mosques and Christian seminaries. Her presentation was outstanding and truly informative. I can’t begin to adequately describe it here. Many thanks to Rachel for sharing her incredible experience with us.

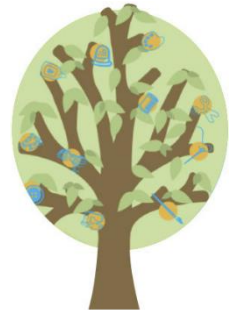
Many thanks to Marilyn, Sylvia, and Nadine for the delicious dessert they provided for us. Our next meeting will take place on **Tuesday, May 9**. Our special guest will be Bill Locke, whose musical talents we have previously enjoyed. Mark your calendars and we’ll look forward to seeing you then.

-Dottie Kelley

Holiday in Homer: July 15 2017, 10 am-4 pm

We are only 2 months for Holiday in Homer 2017!

With the weather warming quickly, so too are the preparations for our 2017 Fundraiser! Entertainment has been booked! Homer Brass will continue their tradition of opening the show at 10am and we welcome back The Jeff Love Band as our headliner from 12-3. Dan the snake man returns as well as bubbles and fun with Doug the Bubble Guy for the kids! The horse rides with Tom Crane are also coming back. We are also looking into some other new entertainment – so stay tuned ☺



A huge **Thank You** to sponsors who make the entertainment possible! We could not do this without their continued support: **CCC Construction, Yaman Real Estate, and Cortland Self Storage.**

Vendors continue to come in daily and we look forward to having our Green full of fun, including the demos of Hilltop Pottery and Woodcarving. Of course, there will be food! We will have the BBQ luncheon, which has been a huge success, as well as ice cream and all the favorites from popcorn to smoothies.

In the next two weeks, we will be sending out letters for advertising for map/brochure. Please like us and follow us Facebook - we are just a few “likes” shy of 500! You will get the latest updates on the show!

As the show gets closer, there will sign up sheets to help. This is our chance to open our hearts and doors to the community and show them what a wonderful church family we have. This will also be the first Holiday in Homer for our very own Pastor Vicki! It is very exciting to have her in the gazebo as our ambassador, letting her light shine ☺

-Paula Harrington, Holiday in Homer Chairman

Christian Education Ministry



It seems impossible that May is here... where has the time gone? May is my favorite month; I find that the weather in May is perfectly suited to my liking. Although a busy month, it is one I always cherish.

Throughout Lent, we talked about spiritual practices, and remembered ways we have prayed through action during Lent. We often talk about ways we can make the world a better place, but sometimes it can be challenging to put what we've learned into practice when we're so busy learning new things! Our Faith in Action day provided us even more opportunities to put our faith into action in our community. A special thanks to all of our crew leaders, our drivers, and our volunteers who helped to make the day successful and memorable.

In Sunday School the students finished the mural; come and check out all of their hopes and dreams for the future! We'll be presenting the mural during Children's Sunday on June 11th, and then we'll need to find a place to hang the masterpiece! Through these lessons, we've been reminded of the many ways our God who loves and cares for us.

The youth have enjoyed learning and sharing about God's work in their lives. We know that we all have abilities, which are skills God has given us to make the world a better place, and we all seek ways we can be closer to God.

As we moved into the season of Easter, we learned that doubt and faith can sometimes go hand in hand and questions are a natural part of growing and learning in faith. We know that we don't need to be afraid of God if we find ourselves wondering how it all "works," and we know God is always with us as we journey and learn.

Please continue to keep our Christian Education Program in prayer. We are learning and growing together, and your prayers nourish and encourage our spirits.

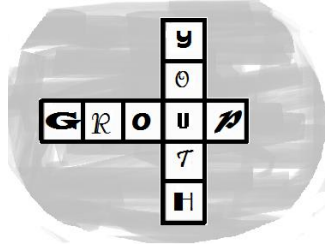
Peace,
Rachel



Vacation Bible School! Mark Your Calendars!

VBS will be held Monday, **July 31st, to Friday, August 4th. All ages are welcome!** We will gather together in the evenings **from 5:30-7:30PM**. A community meal will be shared each night, and there will be opportunities for engagement for people of all ages. Come explore the ways in which our God is creating in our world, learn how to be a part of what God is doing new each day!

Youth Group



If you are a youth in grades 4-12 at Homer Congregational, you are invited to join the Homer Congregational Youth group. Activities will indicate age requirements in order to ensure age appropriate activities. Friends are always welcome to join.

Our April recap: April offered plenty of opportunity for fun! We had seven youth in grades 8-12 join us for our new tradition of a Youth Overnight from Holy Saturday to Easter Sunday morning. Whether playing the M&M question game, seeking and hiding while playing sardines, or running after the volleyball, laughter filled our church! At 11:00 we had hotdogs and s'mores, and at 11:30 we had an Easter Vigil and Communion. The light of Christ which was brought into our church by the youth was used in our Easter Sunday service to light the altar candles. If you're in grades 6-12, mark your calendars for March 31, 2018 and join us next year!

Marleah Dentes, Olivia Harrington, and Rachel Ditch presented a Mission Luncheon about our February trip to the United Nations where we explored Islamophobia and its impact upon our community. The presentation was well attended, and people asked wonderful questions. If you missed out, be sure to ask Marleah and Olivia to give you an exciting recap!

Coming up:

Saturday, May 6, 2017, 9am to 11am – Cleanup in Jones Hall! We have tons of fun stuff to sort through and organize! Movies, video games and systems, sporting equipment, board games galore. All youth in grades 4-12 are invited to come help get our items organized!

Sunday, May 21, 2017, 12:30 – 2:30 – Sole Hope. Children in Uganda are impacted by chiggers, painful parasitic insects which make walking and playing difficult. We'll make shoes together which will allow children to run and play freely without these painful insects. Plan to come, and we'll work together to make shoes!

When you come, try and bring the following with you!

- Old blue jeans
- Large Safety Pins
- Plastic (plastic folders, laundry detergent bottles, 2-liter soda bottles, etc.

Homer Nursery School Monthly Update



The nursery school has only 2 openings left for the 2017-18 school year. If you know of anyone interested in our program, please have them contact Lisa Clark at [\(607\) 749-6753](tel:6077496753). Thank you.

During the month of May, the students will be very busy learning about mother's day, the letters M and B, and oceans. They will also be taking a trip to the community gardens to plant vegetables and having a Teddy bear picnic on the green. We hope the weather cooperates!

– Lisa Clark

The Trustees Corner



Members of the Board of Trustees met on Tuesday evening, April 18th for the monthly board meeting and continued to make progress on a variety of church issues. The board discussed progress on the church technology upgrade, Manse rejuvenation, and fund raising. The following are some of the issues covered:

- With financial assistance from the Board Deacons, we are making progress on a much needed upgrade of the computer technology. Wiring of the building and installation of wireless hotspots has been completed and we have secure internal and guest networks that cover the entire building. We may now embrace new technology to carry out our mission in new and better ways. Some of these upgrades are covered by our Capital Project Funds, but other components are not. If this project is of interest to you, we would welcome any donations to help make your technological vision a reality.
- Most work on the Manse has been completed, but some additional work will have to be completed now that spring has arrived. Basic church repair and maintenance also continues.
- We are watching the budget closely this year and will explore new fundraisers. All ideas and volunteer efforts are welcome.
- As mentioned last month, our church webpage now has a donation button for anyone who wishes to give electronically, and Electronic newsletters have been distributed and are available on homercc.com/resources. If you elected to pick your hard copy up at church, please find your addressed copy in the Russell Fellowship room.
- Preparations for Holiday in Homer have begun. If you wish to help, contact Paula Harrington.

The last snows of the season came later than expected, but the warmth of spring has arrived with the celebration of Easter. I hope you all embraced the peace and insight of Lent and are invigorated by the new life of Easter. The work of the boards allows the church to blossom in new ways as the year proceeds and you can help. Please consider being part of one of our committees and using your time and talents to help our church grow and prosper. 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



Bill Masterson and Jim McKenna hold Snack & Chats on communion Sundays. Please bring your questions, concerns and joys. Contact Bill at [607-345-4874](tel:607-345-4874) or Jim at [607-345-9863](tel:607-345-9863).



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

Grace and peace to you, dear family and friends of Homer Congregational Church! And happy Easter! We have been celebrating this season of resurrection hope as we have contemplated the words of Frederick Buechner, who said, “Resurrection means that the worst thing is never the last thing.” We do not offer these words flippantly! Life turns on a dime, and at any moment, we can be leveled by unexpected grief, financial disaster or any other calamity. Still, the essence of this season is that God has the last word and as Easter People, we claim that good news as our own.

During this Easter season, this is what I know... we need you! As you consider your own schedule, priorities and values, here are some options to consider for fellowship, nurture and growth with your siblings-of-faith at the Homer Congregational United Church of Christ:

- *Join us for worship each Sunday.* We begin with kid-friendly words and songs so that our entire “family” can worship together. We believe this one of the ways that our wee ones learn about God’s love for each one of us.
- *Our choir* is always looking for new members.
Don’t have time to for the entire year? Some folks make a short-term effort – joining for special projects. On May 14, there will be a MEN’S CHOIR for Mother’s Day conducted by Joe Ford. And on June 18, a special WOMEN’S CHOIR for Father’s Day will be conducted by Vicki Burtson.
- *Looking for a one-day commitment?* Holiday in Homer is Saturday, July 15 and we can use your help! If you have the time, we have a spot for you. Paula Harrington is our coordinator. Come join in the fellowship of the day – and don’t forget about the barbecue luncheon. It kind of makes my mouth water thinking about it!
- *Two words...The Legends!* Our softball team is about to start practices. See Darci Gumaer for more information. I intend to cheer the team on from the bleachers, so I’ll be watching for you!
- *For the WHOLE family* - Mark your calendars for our Vacation Bible School from July 31 – August 4 from 5:30 – 7:30 PM. Perhaps you can volunteer? Perhaps you can be a student. Make it a priority for the week, and it will surely be rewarding.
- *Want to pray with your hands and feet?* In late August, we will host our P.R.E.P. event, offering help to families as they get ready for the new school. Now is the time to pick up children’s shoes, underwear, socks and other items. We have room to store them here at church.

This is what I know – we need you! This is what I believe...ALL of these opportunities are made better when you are able to join us!

See you in church or around town,
Pastor Vicki

2017 May Worship

Sunday, May 7 Communion Sunday

Deacons Joanne Cincotta, Bill Masterson, Kathy McKenna and Anne Wingard will assist with communion.

We will install new Deacons - Terry Pedersen and Jim Ulrich

Pastor Vicki will lead the Brewster House Communion at 2 PM.

Sunday, May 14 Mother's Day

As a special gift to the women, the men of our congregation, singing in a Men's Choir under the direction of Joe Ford, will provide the anthem.

Sunday, May 21

The Burtsons will be on vacation. Rev. Rachel Ditch will lead our worship.

Sunday, May 28 Memorial Day Celebration & Conference Sunday

The New York Conference of the United Church of Christ meets May 25-26. We are represented at Conference by Belinda Burtson and Peter Wright and by Rev. Burtson. Rev. Ditch attends, as well. Barbara Wright is the Conference Secretary.



Pastor's
Office Hours

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 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.

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Deacon Worship Leaders:

Darci Gumaer, Tracy Bertram

Trustee Verifier

Andrea Herzog

May 7 @ 10:30 am

Ushers & Greeters – Courtney Stafford, Brianna
Darling, Carrie Gumaer, John Gumaer
Flowers –
Nursery – Kevin Cappy
Coffee Hour –

May 14 @ 10:30 am

Ushers & Greeters – Gail VanPatten, Terre Dennis,
Shirley Osterhoudt, Janet Bertram
Flowers –
Nursery – Carol Costell Corbin
Coffee Hour – Deacons (Mother's Day)

May 21 @ 10:30 am

Ushers & Greeters – Courtney Stafford, Brianna
Darling, Carrie Gumaer, John Gumaer
Flowers –
Nursery – Sue Urban
Coffee Hour – Pat Buchholz

May 28 @ 10:30 am

Ushers & Greeters – Gary & Paula Harrington,
Don and Jennifer VanSlyke
Flowers –
Nursery – Cindy Stout
Coffee Hour – Gwen Hayne



1 Logan Schmidt
2 Belinda Burtson, Shannon
(Wainman) West
3 Phillip Rumsey
4 Nancy Richards
6 Alfonse "Furby" Gumaer
7 Bill Masterson
11 John Gumaer, Carol DeShane
16 Esther Twentyman, Lori Schmidt,
Leslie Wright
18 Elizabeth Etz, Maria Urban
20 Sylvia Hammond, Emily Lawrence
22 Bill Hopkins
23 Andrew Leach
24 Luke Bertram, Alexander Bertram
26 Mary Reif
29 Matthew Pelowski, Arthur Allen,
Elizabeth Allen
31 Bennett Kraus

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

Email Contacts:

Office: office@homercc.org

Pastor: pastor@homercc.org

Financial Secretary: finsect@homercc.org

Treasurer: treasurer@homercc.org

DCE: christianed@homercc.org