



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
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Chuck Feiszli
Andrea Herzog
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Gary Harrington
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Anne Wingard
Jim Ulrich
Terry Pedersen

Church Staff

Pastor:

Rev. Vicki Burtson

Sexton:

Gary Harrington

Financial Secretary:

Bev Berry

Treasurer:

Andrea Herzog

Church Administrator:

Sheila Shea

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



Grace and peace to you, dear family and friends of Homer Congregational United Church of Christ. Soon after receiving this letter (Sept. 10), we will be back to a "normal" schedule – worship at 10:30 on Sunday, school and Sunday School back in session, summer vacation a fading memory.

What a summer it has been! Remember these things?

- Special Music that delighted our souls... Jeannine & Nan on the flute, Steve Jones, Dorothy Thomas' service of hymns, Joe Ford on saxophone, Homer Brass outside, the quartet of women's voices, Sheila Shea, and the Chautauqua Choir directed by Joe. We are so grateful to Joe for coordinating all the music and to Jim, Joe & Andrea for playing the services.
- Tea in the Garden and Happy Hours for the whole family. Now we know the difference between high and low tea.
- There was Holiday in Homer, which is so much more than a fund-raiser. It is about our congregation showcasing a magnificent display of people's gifts and talents. It is about our congregation hosting an event that fosters laughter, conversation, sharing and community-building.
- There were special dinners and picnics that brought folks from our congregation together for an evening here or there. There was one very special dinner at the manse with 12 college students, too.
- We had our first "go" at Magic on Main by selling pulled pork sandwiches. Even in the midst of a deluge of rain, our team served delicious food and a side of gracious hospitality.
- This summer we prayed for people who needed healing; we mourned with others; we celebrated engagements and birthdays and anniversaries; some of us moved.
- Nearly every Sunday, we had delicious nibbles for coffee hour – including one Undies Sunday, which was celebrated with ice cream sundaes, to boot!

I know that, for some of you, this has been a hectic summer. The weeks go by so quickly that many of us can hardly believe summer has come to a close. Still, I believe that God has been with us – blessing our times of worship, present with those in need of healing, upholding those who have struggled with a life issue too large to even share. I believe that God has made US a blessing through a free community dinner one Wednesday evening and our recent PREP event in which we helped over 100 young ones get ready for school.

This summer was my first experience with Magic on Main. It may have encapsulated how I feel about living here in Homer and sharing this ministry with each one of you. I saw joy as people embraced in the middle of Main Street. I saw delight as children jumped in the puddles. I saw contentment as people sat at the tables sharing food and good conversation. In the midst of our diversity, we were one town-of-Homer. Everyone belonged. The rain spared no one! And we were the better for it.

Thanks be to God for the privilege of Being The Church with the fine people of Homer Congregational United Church of Christ.

With Joy!

Pastor Vicki

A FEW GOOD VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED!

Pastor Vicki could use some help staffing the church office on Wednesday mornings. Our Administrator is not in the office on Wednesdays and, with Rachel gone, there is no one to answer the phone. I have been doing it for the last several weeks, but if I could get just three more people to help, we would each only have to work one Wednesday day per month. I think people are used to Sheila not being there on Wednesdays, so I mostly have been reading the books I bring. There are occasional light office tasks that I also do to assist. If you are interested in helping, please see me, Pastor Vicki, or contact Sheila in the office ([607-749-2604](tel:607-749-2604); office@homercc.org). Thanks, Bonnie Haaland



ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE INFO



Endowment Committee

We bring your attention to the Baldwin Tree Plaque on the wall of the Russell Fellowship Room. If you have never read the plaque, please take a couple of minutes to do so. If you have read the plaque, please take a couple of minutes to read it again to refresh your memory.

It is quite possible that this church would not exist today if it were not for the contributions that the people named on the Baldwin Plaque made to the Endowment Fund. Without the Endowment Fund, the congregation of this church may not have been able to support the church financially throughout the years.

You can learn more about Elizabeth Baldwin and the Endowment Fund in the pamphlet, located on the rack in the hallway opposite the kitchen. More information about the Endowment Fund and the Endowment Committee will periodically be presented in this newsletter.

Your Endowment Committee,
Carl Applegate, Dave Barnes, Lee Benson, Chuck Feiszli, Becky Jones, and Anna McConnell

Sunday Morning Book Group:

THE THREE ESSENTIAL PRAYERS

Prayer, in a nutshell, is communication between our own hearts and God's. Some of us, though, are intimidated by the idea of such intimacy with God. Occasionally we encounter people who seem to believe the best prayers are those that contain the most words.

Best-selling author Anne Lamott declares, "I do not know much about God and prayer, but I have come to believe, over the last twenty-five years, that there's something to be said about keeping prayer simple." In her book, *Help, Thanks, Wow: The Three Essential Prayers*, she describes how simple it can be for us to deepen our relationship with our Creator by using these three simple words.

I invite you to join a conversation based on Lamott's book during the Sunday School hour beginning October 1. We will take three or four weeks to examine the wit and wisdom in this little book and, hopefully, to deepen our own prayer lives as a result.

Copies of *Help, Thanks, Wow*, will be available prior to our first class, and the meeting room will be announced. If you don't think you have the time to read it, have no fear – it's a little book, and only 100 pages. I hope to see you on October 1.

-Barbara Wright





ALL CHURCH PICNIC

Saturday, September 9, from 3 – 7 pm
at Little York Park, Pavillion #3 – part of Rally Weekend

- Here is a chance to gather the entire Church family for an afternoon picnic.
- Get to know old and new church members better.
- Join in the intergenerational relay games.
- Paint a stone with an inviting message from HCC. Your stone will be hidden somewhere in Homer for someone else to discover.
- Meat and beverages provided by CEM.
- Previous messages said bring a dish to share, but we will be getting the sides catered.
 - Bring a DESSERT to share!
- Bring a lawn chair.
- Sing an old song... or a new one.
- Thank God for Homer Congregational Church.
- Come when you can. Leave when you must.

...and then on Sunday, Sept. 10 of Rally Weekend:

9:30 am – Young and old will join in the kick-off of our many options for faith formation. We'll be in the Russell Fellowship Hall for an opening, followed by our age-appropriate options for kids from infant to ninety-nine. *There will be something for everyone!*

Parents – stick around to complete Sunday School and Nursery Care registration forms!

10:30 am – Worship with Blessing of the Back packs. Kids, bring your back packs for a special blessing as we help prepare you for an exciting year!



SENIOR FELLOWSHIP NEWS

Great news, seniors! We all agree that the Senior Fellowship program provides an important time of learning and fellowship. We are so grateful to the array of people who have helped coordinate the program for all these years. Cindy Stout and Bill Hopkins are working with Pastor Vicki to recruit the program for this fall. We will continue with the schedule: 2nd Tuesday of each month from 2 – 4 in the afternoon. Presenters for this fall are:

September 12	Bill Hopkins
October 10	Cindy Stout
November 14	Clay Benedict
December 12	Rev. Vicki Burtson

Specific titles for each month will be published via bulletins and future newsletters. See you on Tuesday, September 12 from 2 – 4.

THE TRUSTEES CORNER



Members of the Board of Trustees met on Tuesday evening, August 15th for the monthly board meeting and continued to make progress on a variety of church issues. The board discussed progress on the budget, church repairs, and Magic on Main. The following are some of the issues covered:

- We have started making the best of or new technology by improving the computer systems.
- The August expenses are somewhat ahead of our income, which is common for the summer; we appreciate everyone's continued support though the offering and other contributions. Work on the budget for next year has begun and we expect to have a draft ready by October.
- Basic church repair and maintenance also continue. The handicapped access door to Jones hall will be replaced soon and we are looking into repairs of the steps in Jones Hall.
- The Route 90 yard sale was a success and Magic on Main Street are coming up. See a Trustee or Pastor Vicki if you have other fund-raiser ideas.
- Remember to check out our church website and Facebook page. Electronic newsletters have been distributed and are available on our website. If you elected to pick your hard copy up at church, please find your addressed copy in the Russell Fellowship room.

As August winds down and squeezes every bit of enjoyment from summer, we are also looking forward to the great activities coming up this fall. God continues to be with us and to guide us all to help the church flourish. The work of the boards allows the church to think and grow in new ways as the church vision unfolds. When you tapped on the shoulder, please help where you can. Please consider being part of one of our committees and using your time and talents to help our church grow and prosper. Please see me or Pastor Vicki, if you are interested. 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

THE EXTRA MILE

The Trustees appreciate all of your donations of money and time but sometimes there are items that can't be covered by our regular yearly budget. These items or projects would enhance our ability to keep the church running, make work easier for the staff, or just make things nicer at the church. Each month we will be listing items or projects that you could help with by going "the extra mile"! See Russ Pedersen or any other Trustee if you are willing to help.

September Idea:

6 tables that fold in half so that one person can easily move them (\$55 each)

MISSION LUNCH

Please join us for a Mission Lunch on Sunday September 17th after worship. Soup and bread will be available and our Stephen Ministry team will provide an informative and entertaining program with: role playing, audience participation and so much more!

- The HCC Stephen Ministry Team: Belinda Burtson, Leslie Wright, Sherri Masterson, Barb Wright, Pete Wright, and Bill Masterson



THE MINISTRY OF LISTENING



Think of a time when you really felt cared for. Chances are someone focused on what you had to say, was attentive to your needs, and listened to how you felt instead of telling you how you should feel or what you should do.

Listening is one of the most powerful ministry tools at your disposal. It demonstrates that you care about the other person. In Stephen Ministry, a great deal of time is spent in teaching and practicing listening skills because of its importance as a caregiving tool. You too can become a more caring listener by understanding and applying these six listening concepts from Stephen Ministry training:

1. **Listening is active.** It takes energy and commitment to listen really well. Focus your attention on what the other person has to say instead of thinking of what you'll say next. Look at him or her while you listen, and nod along from time to time so the person knows you are tuned in.
2. **Listening takes patience.** Often you need to build trust before someone will open up to you. Constant, patient listening is a key.
3. **Listening involves more than just words.** Pay attention not only to what is said, but to what is not said – or to what is said with a smile or a sigh. Pay attention to body language, too. Does it agree with or contradict a person's words?
4. **Good listeners aren't completely silent.** They restate key thoughts or ideas to be sure they understood correctly or ask focused questions to encourage the person to reach a little deeper.
5. **Listening happens over time.** One conversation might build upon an earlier one. As you listen over several conversations, are there any recurring themes or patterns in what the person has said? Are there any contradictions from what was said earlier? These are signs there may be more to explore underneath.
6. **Listening is confidential.** A great way to build trust and to show the person you really care for him or her is to maintain confidentiality and not to share with others what was discussed in a private conversation.

Jesus was the model of a good listener. Much of his ministry was listening to people. By listening to what people had to say he demonstrated how much he really cared about them. Remember the stories of the woman at the well, Nicodemus, or the disciples on the road to Emmaus. All were times when Jesus showed his care and concern by first listening to people and then giving them what they needed. We all want the Homer Congregational Church to be a caring place where members and guests truly feel people care about who they are and how they feel. Just as our Stephen Ministers use good listening skills to communicate how much they care, so can you. Follow and practice these listening principles and make a concentrated effort toward becoming a better listener. Listening is a great gift we can give to one another, and a skill we can all use in order to make our church a more caring place.

For more information about Stephen Ministry please contact one of our Stephen Leaders:
Belinda Burtson: [607-756-2454](tel:607-756-2454) or Bill Masterson: [607-345-4874](tel:607-345-4874).

BE THE CHURCH

*Protect the environment. Care for the poor.
Forgive often. Reject racism.
Fight for the powerless.
Share earthly and spiritual resources.
Embrace diversity. Love God. Enjoy this life.*

HOMER CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

BE THE CHURCH T-SHIRTS!

Did you miss out on ordering a church t-shirt the first time around? We are putting in another order! An order form will be in the Russell Fellowship Room throughout September, and we'll place the order in October. Youth and Adult sizes available. FREE!!

LET'S RING OUR BELLS!

Bell Choir will begin rehearsals on Sunday, October 1st at 5:00 p.m. in the 'Bell Room'. I encourage everyone interested to join. A multi-aged group would be great fun. Please see me if you have questions or might be interested.

Jan Jeffers, Director



CHOIR

Choir rehearsals will resume on Wednesday, September 6 at 7 pm. If you are interested in lending your voice, please see Joe Ford or show up to the first rehearsal. The choir will sing during worship starting on Rally Day, September 10.

SPECIAL THANKS...

...to Dorothy Hopkins, Lori Schmidt, and Jack Carr for co-hosting summer tea with Vicki. And to everyone who attended a tea – thank you for sharing a bit of summertime conversation with everyone.

...to Gary Harrington, Belinda Burtson, and Dean Corbin for co-hosting our family friendly Happy Hours in the garden with Vicki. We are so grateful for your gifts of hospitality and fine cooking as we visited.

...to Paula Harrington for being Paula... at Holiday in Homer and at Magic on Main. You have a team, but these events wouldn't have happened without you!

...to Carol Costell Corbin, Kathy McKenna and other members of CEM for sprucing up the Sunday School area with curtains and sorting and organizing and new cushions and bulletin boards and all manner of preparation for our kick-off on Rally Weekend.

...to Bonnie Smith and the entire P.R.E.P. team for helping us to reach out in ministry to help over 100 children get ready to return to school with new sneakers, socks, and underwear.

...to Gary Harrington for setting up the memorial garden for every tea or Happy Hour, for cooking pulled pork, for setting things up for Holiday in Homer, Magic on Main, the PREP event, and our outdoor worship services—and for smiling in the midst of all of it.



Notes of **THANKS**

SEPTEMBER 2017 WORSHIP



Joanne Cincotta will be our worship leader for September.

Sunday, September 3 **Our final Sunday worshipping at 9:30 AM**

The Burtsons are on vacation.
Preacher: Rev. Barbara Wright
Sermon: Scents and Sensibility
Scripture: Matthew 16:21-26; Romans 12:9-21
Special Music provided by Joe and some young saxophonists!

Sunday, September 10 **Rally Day we worship at 10:30 AM**

Lectionary: Romans 12:1-8; Matthew 7:12
Rally Weekend concludes with worship to rally our flock at our usual 10:30 AM.
Blessing of the Backpacks
We will do to others what we wish to have done to ourselves.

Sunday, September 17
Lectionary: Genesis 50:15-21; Psalm 103:1-13; Romans 14:1-12; Matthew 18:21-35
Mission Lunch: Stephen Ministry
Our Deacons will provide soups & breads while we hear from our Stephen Ministers.

Sunday, September 24
Lectionary: Jonah 3:10-4:11; Psalm 145:1-8; Philippians 1:21-30; Matthew 20:1-16



Senior Fellowship News:

Great news, seniors! We all agree that the Senior Fellowship program provides an important time of learning and fellowship. We are so grateful to the array of people who have helped coordinate the program for all these years. Cindy Stout and Bill Hopkins are working with Pastor Vicki to recruit the program for this fall. We will continue with the schedule: 2nd Tuesday of each month from 2 – 4 in the afternoon. Presenters for this fall are:

Table with 2 columns: Date and Presenter. Rows include: September 12 (Bill Hopkins), October 10 (Cindy Stout), November 14 (Clay Benedict), December 12 (Rev. Vicki Burtson).

Specific titles for each month will be published via bulletins and future newsletters. See you on Tuesday, September 12 from 2 – 4.



COMING THIS FALL...

Confirmation Class for people in grades 9 and up. You will receive a letter with organizing details early in September. The schedule will be planned collaboratively with an eye toward a Celebration of Confirmation on Sunday, May 20 – Pentecost Sunday.



BIRTHDAYS

Note: If you see "(open)" below, please contact the church office if you are available to volunteer!
office@homercc.org or (607) 749-2604

Deacon Worship Leader

Joanne Cincotta

Trustee Verifier

Russ Pedersen

September 3 @ 9:30 am

Ushers & Greeters – Clay Benedict, Becky Jones,
 Dora Jones, Brianna Darling
 Flowers – (open)
 Nursery – Terry Pedersen
 Coffee Hour – The Edlunds & Betty MacNeil

September 10 @ 10:30 am

Ushers & Greeters – Darci & Carrie Gumaer,
 Bev Berry, Susan Benedict
 Flowers – (open)
 Nursery – Lori Schmidt
 Coffee Hour – CEM (Rally Day)

September 17 @ 10:30 am

Ushers & Greeters – Bonnie Smith & Elijah Smith,
 Flowers – (open)
 Nursery – Sherri Masterson
 Coffee Hour – Barb & Peter Wright

September 24 @ 10:30 am

Ushers & Greeters – Rachel Rood & Stanley Nilsson,
 Dorthy & Bill Hopkins, Bill & Sherri Masterson
 Flowers – (open)
 Nursery – Phil Zollweg
 Coffee Hour – Sherri Masterson

2 Joanne Cincotta
 9 Marleah Dentes
 10 Lee Benson
 13 Matthew Banazek
 14 Luke Morenus
 15 Heather Benedict
 19 Shannon Tinkham
 20 Harley DeShane
 22 Rob Rumsey
 23 Scott Lawrence
 24 Luke Pedersen, Kurt Schmidt
 26 Les Wainman
 28 Jan Jeffers

From the Treasurer:

- Operating Revenues at 7/31/17 - \$149,074, 65.6% of budget;
- Operating Expenses at 7/31/17 - \$160,440, 70.6% of budget

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