



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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Church Staff

Pastor:

Rev. Vicki Burtson

Sexton:

Gary Harrington

Financial Secretary:

Bev Berry

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Andrea Herzog

Church Administrator:

Sheila Shea

From your pastor's mind and heart...



Grace and peace to you, dear family and friends of Homer Congregational United Church of Christ. October is upon us, though as I write it is 87 degrees outside. I am so ready for cool autumn mornings and evenings; so ready for God's artistry in the trees.

Fall is also the season of homecoming – that opportunity for people who have been away to return, to greet old friends, to reconnect, to relive memories and, most likely, make some new ones. I offer two stories.

This past June, my high school class celebrated our 40th Class Reunion. I am not yet at the “I am proud of that”-stage; rather, I still think “FORTY? When did that happen?” For an array of reasons, I chose not to attend. But I poured over the pictures on Facebook and relished in seeing my high school chums. Frank was there – the other “most musical” award winner. Barb & Linda were there – people who played in the band and sang in the choir with me. Some people had changed a lot. Others looked exactly as they did on that night in 1976 when we received our diplomas. As I looked at the pictures, it seemed that everyone was enjoying the evening. Old hurts had been forgotten. The walls once separating our friend groups had been dismantled. People had grown and changed and old wounds were, hopefully, healed. We see that every year during Holiday in Homer. Homer graduates are on hand to reminisce and to re-connect to the modern-versions of who we used to be.

Second story...told in the newsletter in which we list and prepare to celebrate our long-time church members.

The preacher went to visit a congregant who had been absent from church life for some time. Before they began talking, the preacher picked up the tongs and pulled a live coal from the fireplace – laying it on the hearth away from the fire. Together they visited. Together they watched the fire in the fireplace. Together they witnessed the coal beginning to lose its glow. Eventually they sat in thoughtful silence until, taking the tongs again, that preacher returned the coal to its place within the fire. Point gently made. The congregant was in a pew the following Sunday.

It is October. Time to come on home and be enlivened by the warmth of a community that misses you. Wounds heal. Walls that separate get dismantled. People grow and change. I invite you to come and share the modern-version of yourself. Let the past be the past. Going home can make one feel vulnerable. I assure you that God's love is here, waiting to give you warmth and life. Whether you have been away for a couple of weeks, or a couple of months, or several years...come on home this month. We don't know your circumstances, but we do know that your presence completes us. When you feel able, come on home. We cannot wait to see you!

With Hope!

Pastor Vicki



SENIOR FELLOWSHIP NEWS

The Senior Fellowship Club is back! In September, Bill Hopkins relayed his experience with the Memory Café. October’s meeting will be held October 10 at 2 pm, with Cindy Stout speaking about Health & Wellness Programs in Cortland County.



FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITY – YOU CAN HELP!

We are considering having a booth for the church next year at the Route 90 Sale. If we begin to start collecting items now, and save them throughout the winter, we could have a very successful fundraiser without a lot of effort. We can work out the details of collecting, storage, and transportation. Please contact me with any thoughts, or if you would be interested in contributing or helping organize the sale.



Thanks,
Belinda Burtson



NEIGHBORS IN NEED



There will be a special offering on **October 1** for **Neighbors in Need**, a special UCC mission that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two-thirds of the offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM) to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects through grants. Neighbors in Need grants are awarded to churches and organizations doing justice work in their communities. These grants fund projects whose work ranges from direct service to community organizing and advocacy to address systemic injustice. Donations can also be made online at <http://ucc.org/nin>.



CROP WALK

Save the Date – Sunday, October 22

It’s fall - the season for crisp apples, pumpkins, colorful leaves, and the Cortland CROP Hunger Walk! Join fellow Homer Congregational Church members as we raise money while we walk to provide food for the hungry both locally and globally. The funds raised by the walk are divided with 25% staying right here in Cortland County; the remaining 75% are sent to help in sustainable food efforts around the world.



The CROP Walk will take place on October 22, with registration at 1pm and the walk at 1:30 pm. Walkers will meet at Grace and Holy Spirit Church, 13 Court St. in Cortland. Walk, sponsor a walker, or donate to the church team! We have an online team page, which makes all of this very easy: <http://bit.ly/hcc-cropwalk2017>

To donate, click on the orange “Donate” button. To sign up as a walker, click on the orange “Join Our Team” button. Donate early and donate often! Our HCC team goal is \$2,000. Yes, that’s a large amount, but just watch – we can do it!

If you prefer paper to computers, walker forms and donation envelopes will be available in church very soon. Stay tuned! For more information, please see Jeanine Rose.

THE DEACON'S BENCH



October is here and we are back into the “hustle & bustle” and the beauty of autumn. The Deacons are busy with plans for World Communion Sunday (Oct. 1st), Member Recognition Sunday (Oct. 15th), and Crop Walk (Oct. 22nd). We are also making plans for two retreats, our 2018 budget and the HCC Christmas worship schedule. We have a great deal to be thankful for here at Homer Congregational and we get a lot of good things accomplished when we all work together. During a recent Church Council meeting we learned of a few vacancies on some of our boards and committees. Specifically: 2 seats on the Board of Trustees, 3 seats on Christian Education Ministry and 1 seat on the Stewardship Committee. I would ask each of you to prayerfully consider volunteering for any of these vacancies. If you are interested in helping out, please contact the Nominating Committee (Co-Chairs: Sherri Masterson: 607-345-4875 and Lori Schmidt: 607-745-5377).

Peace,
Bill Masterson for the Board of Deacons

MORE STEPHEN MINISTRY FAQs

Where did Stephen Ministry start?

Stephen Ministry has been around since 1975, when Kenneth Haugk, a pastor and clinical psychologist, began it to multiply the caregiving in his congregation in St. Louis, Missouri. We are just beginning our Stephen Ministry here at the Homer Congregational Church, and are one of more than 10,000 Stephen Ministry congregations from more than 150 denominations. Stephen Ministries St. Louis, the organization behind this international ministry, is headquartered in Missouri.



Why the name Stephen?

The name Stephen comes from St. Stephen, who was the first lay person commissioned by the apostles to provide caring ministry to those in need as recorded in Acts 6.

Can I trust a Stephen Minister?

Trust is essential to a caring relationship, and Stephen Ministers are people you can trust. Confidentiality is one of the most important principles of Stephen Ministry, and what a care receiver tells his or her Stephen Minister is kept in strictest confidence.

What is the Pastor's role?

Pastors will always be the primary caregivers, but there is no way pastors can meet all the needs for care. God has called all of us, not just pastors, to minister to one another. Stephen Ministry multiplies ministry by turning pastors into equippers so they can enable lay people to provide caring ministry as well.

How can someone receive care from a Stephen Minister?

You may speak with a Stephen Leader or Pastor Vicki; they will be happy to help you through the process of receiving care. If you know someone who may be in need of care from a Stephen Minister ask the individual to contact Pastor Vicki or one of our Stephen Leaders.

How much does it cost?

Stephen Ministry is a caregiving ministry available to our members and community free of charge. Our Stephen Leaders are: Belinda Burtson 607-756-2454 & Bill Masterson 607-345-4874



MEMBER RECOGNITION SUNDAY ON OCTOBER 15

For 24 years, we have honored longtime church members on a Sunday in October, the approximate anniversary of the formal founding of Homer Congregational Church over 200 years ago. This year we will honor the following members during worship and reception afterwards.

Please join in these membership anniversary celebrations of our church family.

25 years

Carol Agate
Kurt Schmidt
Lori Schmidt

50 years

Bev Berry
Jane Ann Fisher

70+ years

Carleton Potter, 73 years
Barbara Hale, 74 years
Jaff Harris, 74 years
Don Lawson, 74 years
Esther Twentyman, 82 years



ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE INFORMATION

Elizabeth M. Baldwin Society

Elizabeth Baldwin was a friend of mine. Her only relatives were a few cousins scattered about. For years, she was the librarian for Philips Library and the treasurer and Financial Secretary of Homer Congregational Church. I had planned to spend more time with her when I retired in September 1993. Unfortunately, she died March 9, 1993. It took seven people to fill all her jobs in the church. In her will, she left her Pine St. home to the church. It was sold at auction and the church retained the mortgage. Since we were not landlords, after a while, the homeowners paid the mortgage off. Elizabeth was very well organized and through ahead to the future by including the church in her will.



Don't be like Scarlet O'Hara and "think about it tomorrow." Life is short. Help the church survive and please remember it in your will.

Anna McConnell, Endowment Committee



THANK YOU

Dear Homer Congregational Church.

Thank you very much for your generous donation of \$100 to Habitat for Humanity of Tompkins and Cortland Counties. We truly appreciate your support; each gift makes a difference for our organization and future Habitat owners.

Shannon MacCarrick, Executive Director

THE TRUSTEES CORNER



Members of the Board of Trustees met on Tuesday evening, September 19th 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 a board retreat. The following are some of the issues covered:

- We are now making good use of or new technology with improved computer and networking systems, a scanner, and TVs to help with presentations and information.
- The September expenses are about \$9,000 ahead of our income and we hope to catch up now that summer is over; 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.
- We voted to hire Samantha Baffuto and Brianna Darling as our new Child Care Coordinators. Please welcome them.
- 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. Long-term planning for large capital projects was also initiated.
- Magic on Main Street worked, thanks to efforts by Paula and Gary Harrington and Pastor Vicki; thanks to all of our brave volunteers who faced the wet weather. The Roast Pork dinner is coming up in early November, but WE NEED A COORDINATOR to make it happen. Please see a Trustee or Pastor Vicki if you can help or have other fund-raiser ideas.
- Remember to check out our [church website](#) and [Facebook page](#). Electronic newsletters have been distributed and are also 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.

It is now near the end of September and it seems that summer has just arrived. Our pleasant weather is in stark contrast to the violent winds of the hurricanes that have stayed just off our shore; remember the victims of those storms and help our church help them. God continues to be with us and to guide us all to help the church and our community flourish. The work of the boards allows the church to think and grow in new ways as the church vision unfolds. When you are tapped on the shoulder, please help where you can. 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



ROAST PORK DINNER – SAVE THE DATE

Our annual pork dinner is on Saturday, November 4. Please join us for dinner and fellowship. Details will follow in bulletins, Weekday Words, and the November newsletter.



UCC NEWS AND DISASTER RESPONSE – September 25, 2017

Hurricane Maria

Hurricane Maria hit islands in the Caribbean on Sept. 19 as a Category 5 hurricane. Maria follows in the path of Hurricane Irma that hit just 2 weeks prior. Maria hit Puerto Rico as a Category 4 hurricane and has since been downgraded to a Category 3 hurricane on its way to Turks and Caicos.

The Disaster by the numbers:

10,600 people in shelters in Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico's power grid is completely down. There is no electricity on the island and officials estimate 6 months to completely restore the grid.

40 inches of rain in just 24 hours landed in parts of Puerto Rico

90% of buildings in Dominica were damaged

All 32 provinces in the Dominican Republic are under hurricane alert

Media is reporting around 30 storm-related fatalities

Hurricane Irma

Hurricane Irma made landfall in Florida on Sept. 10 with record-force winds and storm surges. The storm then continued north to Georgia and South Carolina. Millions of people in Florida evacuated or moved to approved shelters before the storm hit.



Hurricane Irma hit islands in the Caribbean early on Sept. 6 and has caused widespread destruction and loss throughout the region. As Global Ministries partner churches or ongoing partners through Church World Service are affected or responding, UCC Disaster Ministries is there – now and for the long term. Hurricane Irma hits just as Global Ministries has begun an 18-month focus on long-term partnerships in the region, the Caribbean Initiative.

In the United States, the ongoing team of UCC Disaster Coordinators is active with local, statewide, and national disaster networks and communication with their local UCC churches. UCC Disaster Ministries is there – now and for the long term.

The Disaster by the numbers:

49 million people in the area of impact

185-mph winds sustained for 37 hours, longest and strongest storm in history

Category 5 on impact in Caribbean, Category 4 on impact in Florida

1,100 people in shelters in the US currently

Media reporting 68 storm-related fatalities

6 million people were without electricity in Florida and 1 million in Georgia and South Carolina

70% of homes in Puerto Rico lost electricity

80% of structures in US Virgin Islands suffered severe damage or were destroyed

13 of 15 provinces in Cuba withstood damage

2.3 million people in Cuba with a disrupted supply of power

The UCC Response

The UCC is part of response networks you see on the news and those you don't see. UCC Disaster Ministries already is gearing up for our long-term recovery work in the region and your contributions for Irma survivors means providing community support for holistic recovery, repairing house and home for families and children and restoring dignity for the most vulnerable who have lost everything in the wake of this catastrophic event. For detailed information about how the UCC is actively responding to Hurricane Irma, Hurricane Maria, and Hurricane Harvey, visit <http://bit.ly/ucchurricaneresponse>.

Donations and HCC Response

We were able to raise \$112 with a “noisy can” collection by the children during worship on September 10, which is going toward relief buckets. The collection continues! Donations toward more buckets are accepted in Sunday School and on an offering plate in the front of the sanctuary. If you would like more information on how you can help, or would like to donate directly to the UCC disaster relief fund, please visit <http://bit.ly/ucc2017relief>.



Worship in October

Tracy Bertram & Darci Gumaer will share responsibility as worship leader for October.

Sunday, October 1 ***World Communion Sunday***

Lectionary: Exodus 17:1-7; Philippians 2:1-13; Matthew 21:23-32

This Sunday at 9:30 begins our new book discussion. Rev. Barb Wright will provide leadership for a 3-week discussion of Anne Lamott's *Help, Thanks, Wow*. Come and talk about these three forms of personal and honest prayer.

During worship, we will wrap ourselves in the sounds of peace, expressed in different languages: Peace, Salaam, Shalom. Communion will reflect our global family of faith via cups from our ethnic heritage.

Sunday, October 8

Lectionary: Exodus 20 selected; Psalm 19; Philippians 3:4b-14; Matthew 21:33-46

Sunday, October 15 ***Member Recognition Sunday***

Lectionary: Exodus 32:1-14; Philippians 4:1-9; Matthew 22:1-14

We will celebrate those who have been members for 25, 40, 50 and over 70 years. See the list elsewhere in our newsletter.

Sunday, October 22 ***CROP Walk***

Lectionary: Exodus 33:12-23; Psalm 99; Matthew 22:15-22

Something new at 9:30 – join us for “TED Sunday School”. TED Talks usually last about 15 minutes. We’ll view a “talk” and then enjoy some good conversation about the theme of the talk. Some of our Deacons will be on hand to provide coffee (likely from Origins) and some great nibbles to enhance the experience. Bring your kids to Sunday School, then stick around for coffee and the TED experience!

Sunday, October 29 ***5th Sunday – combined service with Preble UCC***

We are working with a team of people from both churches to develop a very special worship experience expressed through jazz music. Bring your neighbors and friends as we welcome the good folks of the Preble UCC to our sanctuary. Imagine what will happen when our directors of music – Steve Wilson (Preble) and Joe Ford (HCC) – collaborate!



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

Darci Gumaer, Tracy Bertram

Trustee Verifier

Eugene Wright

October 1 @ 10:30 am

Ushers & Greeters – Gail Van Patten, Janice Bacon,
 Terry Pedersen, Jenelle Pedersen
 Flowers – (open)
 Nursery – Cindy Stout
 Coffee Hour –

October 8 @ 10:30 am

Ushers & Greeters – Dale Halstead
 Flowers – Vicki & Belinda Burtson
 Nursery – Mark Bertram
 Coffee Hour – Carol Agate

October 15 @ 10:30 am

Ushers & Greeters – Carol Costell Corbin,
 Belinda Burtson, Joanne Cincotta
 Flowers – (open)
 Nursery – Carol Costell Corbin
 Coffee Hour – Deacons (Member Recognition)

October 22 @ 10:30 am

Ushers & Greeters – Dale Halstead, Phil Zollweg
 Flowers – Sylvia Hammond & Dale Halstead
 Nursery – Anne Wingard
 Coffee Hour – Ingrid Fox, Tracy Bertram

October 29 @ 10:30 am

Ushers & Greeters – Shirley Osterhoudt,
 Jim McKenna, Bev Berry, Anne Wingard
 Flowers – (open)
 Nursery – Sue Urban
 Coffee Hour – The Harrington Family



BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Kathleen Alvord,
 Connie Applegate
- 2 Virginia Knobel
- 5 Steven Cinquanti,
 Linda Lansdowne
- 8 Nancy Hopkins
- 9 Tracy Durkee
- 10 Russell Oechsle
- 11 Randy Weatherby,
 Donald VanSlyke
- 12 Garrett Mead
- 13 Nicholas Dentes
- 15 Jacob Durkee, Christopher Root,
 Muriel Newcomb
- 17 Lynn Olcott
- 21 Lindsey Raymond
- 23 Olivia Harrington
- 24 Paul Root, Marc Settineri
- 28 Frances Armstrong

From the Treasurer:

- Operating Revenues at 8/31/17 - \$162,527, 71.5% of budget;
- Operating Expenses at 8/31/17 - \$173,490, 76.4% 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
 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