



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
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Andrea Herzog
David Barnes
Russ Pedersen
Bonnie Haaland
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Church Staff

Senior Pastor:
Rev. Vicki Burtson

Associate Pastor:
Rev. Gary Smith

Sexton:
Gary Harrington

Financial Secretary:
Bev Berry

Treasurer:
Andrea Herzog

Church Administrator:
Anne Wingard



From your senior pastor's mind and heart...

Grace and peace to you, dear family and friends of Homer Congregational United Church of Christ. I have a colleague who periodically invites folks to join her in reflecting on life. Recently she wrote: *The sun is out today. What else is good today?* Think about that. What

else is good today? My list includes these things:

- The sun is out today...it really is!
- I am listening to quiet music from the Baroque era. For me, it soothes my soul and opens avenues of creativity.
- Pastor Gary is downstairs working with a couple who wish to be married in our church. There are many "good" things in that sentence. A young couple wants to take another step in commitment, and they want to do so in our church. Since I will be on vacation on their special day, I was able to ask our Associate Pastor for Faith Formation, Rev. Gary Smith to officiate for that wedding. Good, indeed.
- Our ministry team is working hard to care for the needs of this congregation. Yesterday, Gary (our sexton) spent a lot of time installing a new toilet on safer flooring in the ladies' bathroom. Bev was here to count and deposit your offerings so that Andrea can pay the bills. Anne was here early today completing the work required to publish the newsletter you are now reading. Meanwhile, our Stephen Ministry leaders are working with a new care-receiver who will soon begin talking with a trained care-giving Stephen Minister.
- Pastor Gary just gave me the curriculum schedule for our 5th-8th graders' faith formation. He has already planned from the end of February to June.
- I have been fascinated by the conversations around the table during Disciple Bible Study. What a privilege to teach and to learn from the circle of thoughtful and faith-filled people who are joining me in our study.

I think that my friend, Corey, asks the question about *what is good...* because we are deluged by sobering bad news. It is overwhelming, particularly on our upstate gray days. As people of faith, we try to make a difference, yet day after day there is more bad news. As of January 23, *eleven* school shootings so far this year? In the midst of our world's reality; in the midst of divisions in our country, we have this thing called Homer Congregational United Church of Christ. Truthfully, we do not all agree on all things. But we do agree on this: no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here. In the midst of our differences, we have a place where we can gather to offer respect to one another. We have a place where our kids can be surrounded by people who are trying to love God and neighbor. We have a place where we can be quiet; where we can acknowledge our pain; where we can seek help; where we can share our joy. In short, we have each other. Most of all, we have our God whose love is beyond our understanding. That is what is good today – and always.

In joy!
Pastor Vicki



Senior Fellowship

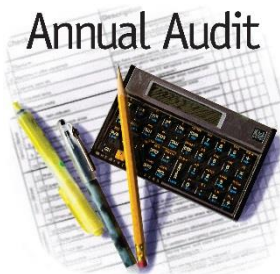
SENIOR FELLOWSHIP NEWS

In February ...

Senior Fellowship - Tuesday, February 13

Debbie Walls, an Aging Services Specialist, will be with us on Tuesday, February 13 for Senior Fellowship. She will present information on the new Medicare cards that will be mailed to all Medicare beneficiaries

starting in April 2018. Her presentation will highlight what changes these cards will present to Medicare beneficiaries, how to spot possible scams related to the new cards, and cost savings programs for related health insurances. We begin at 2 pm with chitchat, followed by the presentation, then a dessert, and conclude by 4 pm. Come and join us!



ENDOWMENT FUND

The annual audit of the First Religious Society Endowment Fund has been completed for the calendar year January 1 – December 31, 2017. All financial transactions, bank statement and investment reporting has been reviewed. It is in my opinion that the activity has been managed and reported accurately.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Richards, Auditor



HOMER NURSERY SCHOOL UPDATE

Homer Nursery School is back to 22 students as of Tuesday, January 23rd. We raised approximately \$600.00 with our December Coffee Mania fundraiser. We will be accepting applications for the 2018-2019 school year starting in March. Please pass this information on to family and friends.



-Lisa Clark, Director of HNS



Do you know that Homer Congregational Church has an official Facebook page on the internet? This is where you can find information about events in the life of the church, as well as what is going on each Sunday, reminders, and important announcements such as schedule changes and cancellations due to weather, etc. It is a public group and all you have to do to become a member is go to Facebook and search for “Homer Congregational Church” and then request to be added. (If you are not already a Facebook member, you may need to register on Facebook in order to join our group and use all of the features of Facebook.)

Faith Formation News...



“This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.” (Psalm 118:24) I am rejoicing! And I am glad! Thrilled actually. In many ways, I’m feeling a bit like Dorothy from the Wizard of Oz...I clicked my heels together three times, and found myself HOME. Or more accurately...HOMER...which, of course IS home. As the new Associate

Pastor for Faith Formation, I’m committed to creating opportunities for people of all ages to deepen their relationship with God, and explore any and all aspects of our shared faith. That is why we have the name change—from “Christian Education” to “Faith Formation.” While not necessarily intended, any title with the word “education” always seems to me a bit limiting, because education implies a time when we could be finished learning (“I’ve graduated!”). Yet Faith Formation is lifelong. And by that I mean *eternally* lifelong. We are journeying with God and with one another toward deeper and deeper union. So may our journey together cause us all to “rejoice and be glad.” May we always be open to the many ways our faith is formed. And may we help one another deepen the most important relationship in our lives...the one with our Loving God! I look forward to walking this faith formation journey with you!

Peace!

Pastor Gary

Children’s Faith Formation

K-4 grade is meeting NOW (Feb. 4 and 11) with Pastor Gary leading class. On the 4th we’ll focus on Jesus the Good Shepherd, and on the 11th the Love of Jesus. We’ll be off for February 18 (the first Sunday of school break), then return for the official “new and exciting” kickoff of both K-4 grade and 5-8 grade Children’s Faith Formation (Faith Formation Reboot!). **Meeting time is 9:30-10:15 a.m.** All children in these grades are welcome!

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

Mark your calendars and plan to attend! **Tuesday, Feb. 13 from 6-7 p.m.**

Also known as Fat Tuesday or Mardi Gras, Shrove Tuesday is the day before Lent. It is a tradition to celebrate, have fun, and eat sweets or pancakes before the more reflective period of Lent. Once again, CEM is co-hosting the supper with the Outreach Team. We invited the families of Homer Elementary and Intermediate Schools to join us for fellowship (and pancake races!), so please come welcome our Homer neighbors. Pancakes; sausage; fruit; coffee, milk, and juice - free of charge! However, we will take a free will offering at coffee hour the Sundays prior to supper (Feb. 4 and Feb. 11) to help support the event.



Sharing Your Faith

We are blessed with a great team of teachers and aides who share their faith with our children on Sunday mornings! And we’re always willing and hopeful for others to join us (men...that means you too!). Our planned schedule is to have a team of two lead Children’s Faith Formation for two weeks, and then have four weeks off to nurture their own faith in one of our Sunday morning adult offerings, before coming back to teach another two weeks. Are you that person to share your faith with our young ones? If so, let Pastor Gary know! As per our “Reduce the Risk” policy, anyone working with children and youth must complete an application including a background check (free for the applicant).

MARK YOUR CALENDARS...YOUTH GROUP STARTS MARCH 4

Pastor Gary



Board of Trustees

THE TRUSTEES CORNER

Members of the Board of Trustees met for their usual monthly meeting on Tuesday, January 16th. The Trustees managed the usual committee reports and board activities, and spent considerable time evaluating the proposed 2018 budget. There was extensive discussion about fundraising, which was continued the following Sunday at the Annual Meeting. We discussed updated information about the Nursery School. A variety of church repairs have been accomplished and others are underway.

It is now nearly February and winter comes and goes. We celebrate an enjoyable and productive Annual Meeting and welcome our Associate Pastor, Gary Smith. We look forward to building on the enthusiasm of the Christmas season and our Annual Meeting. God continues to be with us and to guide us all to help the church and our community flourish.

Peace be with you!

Jim McKenna, Chair



Please have your articles for the monthly newsletter to my office no later than the Wednesday before the last week in the current month. I am attempting to get on a regular schedule for the monthly newsletter. I appreciate all of the assistance and patience you have provided me with during these first weeks of transition.

Thank you!
Anne Wingard

NEWS FLASH!!!

**Save Your Spring
Projects!
Sunday School is
Leaving the Building
in late April**



Homer Congregational Church Fellowship Hour 2018

Thank you for hosting. It is a wonderful way to support church fellowship. We have done our best to assign everyone to a convenient date, but we realize there may be conflicts for some people. If needed contact someone else on the list and switch with them. **Please** let the church office (749-2604) know of the change so that the correct name will be in the Sunday bulletin.

There are cupboards in the kitchen that are labeled coffee hour supplies. They can be accessed from inside the kitchen or from the Russell Fellowship Room. Here you will find the following items:

Teas Sugar Powdered Creamer Stirsticks Coffee cups drink cups
paper plates and napkins

You may use the large platters, bowls, pitchers, baskets, and silverware found in other kitchen cupboards. Tablecloths (if desired): you may use your own or you may use the church's, which can be found in the drawers immediately to the left of the coffee maker (by the Russell Fellowship Room windows).

Items you will need

Beverage (juice, milk, water, punch, etc.)
Things to eat
Other paper plates and napkins.

Please don't feel like you need to bake. Store bought-items are fine. There are typically 20-50 people at fellowship hour. Don't worry if you don't have a lot. It is not a meal, just enough for people to have a bite and chat.

It works best to set everything up before the service then come out during the last hymn to serve up drinks and finish setting up, if needed. If the coffee -machine is not plugged in when you arrive please do that first. It takes about 15 minutes to warm up. There are instructions taped to the coffee machine and everything you need is right there. Just ask someone if you need help. Usually 1 carafe of regular coffee and 1 carafe of decaf is sufficient. If you would like to serve tea you will need to fill the carafe *marked hot water* by running water only through the coffee-machine. Once the coffee is made it can go on the table along with the cups, sugar, creamer, and stir sticks.

Once Fellowship Hour is over, please wash and clean up any dishes used and wipe the tables. **Please take any left overs with you.** Towels can be found in the drawers to the right of the ovens. If you used a tablecloth or towels, please take these home, wash them, and return them to the drawers. If you have questions please call Kathy McKenna.

Again, thank you for hosting. Many hands make light work.

-Board of Deacons



2018 Homer Congregational Church Fellowship Hour Schedule

January-7	Janet Bertram	July-8	Belinda Burtson/Bonnie Haaland
January-14	Ulrich Family	July-15	Ingrid Fox/Janice Bacon
January-21	Bertram Family	July-22	Sylvia Hammond/Dorothy Kelley
January-22	Annual Meeting-Pot Luck	July-29	Rachel Rood/Stan Nilsson
January-28	Carol Costell-Corbin	August-5	Chautauqua - No Fellowship Hour
February-4	Lori Schmidt/Kathleen Dentes	August-12	Carol Costell-Corbin
February-11	Leslie and Gene Wright	August-19	Gail and Nick Brennan
February-18	Cindy Stout	August-26	Shirley Osterhodt
February-25	Gwen Hayne	September-2	Edlunds/Betty MacNeil
March-4	Kathy Alvord	September-9	CEM Rally Morning
March-11	HCC Choir	September-16	Barb and Peter Wright
March-18	Andrea Herzog	September-23	Sherri Masterson
March-25	Jen and Don Van Slyke	September 30	Lori Schmidt/Kathleen Dentes
April-1	Easter -Deacons		
April-8	Gumaer Family	October-7	Carol Agate
April-15	Janet Bertram/Terri Dennis	October-14	Member Recognition---Deacons
April-22	Doris and Peter Hoffmann	October-21	Ingrid Fox/Tracy Bertram
April-29	Becky/Dora Jones	October-28	Harrington family
May-6	Joanne Cincotta	November-4	Janet Bertram/Terri Dennis
May-13	Mother's Day---Deacons	November-11	HCC Choir
May-20	Connie and Carl Applegate	November-18	Gumaer Family
May-27	Pat Buchholz	November-25	Kathy McKenna
June-3	Gwen Hayne	December-2	
June-10	Children's Day---CEM	December-9	CEM -Pageant Sunday
June-17	Father's Day/Grads---Trustees	December-16	
June-24	Bev Berry/Ann Wingard	December-23	
July-1	Clay Benedict/Elaine Olson	December-30	Kathy McKenna

Worship in February

Terry Pedersen is worship leader for February.

Sunday, February 4

Scripture: I Timothy 4:6-16

Sermon: One Sweet World

Rev. Gary Smith is preaching. Both Pastor Gary and Pastor Vicki will preside for Communion.

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

Sunday, February 11

Scripture: TBA

Sermon: God Won't Give You More Than You Can Handle

This will be Pastor Vicki's final sermon in the series based on Adam Hamilton's *Half Truths*. It is a simple phrase. It *sounds* Christian – like something you might find in the Bible. But this is another phrase that requires thoughtful consideration. What do we mean when we say it? What does it reveal about our understanding of God and humanity?

Sunday, February 18

Lectionary: Genesis 9:8-17; Psalm 25:1-10; I Peter 3:18-22; Mark 1:9-15

Sunday, February 25

Scripture: Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16; Psalm 22:23-31; Romans 4:13-25; Mark 8:31-38

Special Opportunities for Lent

Do not be afraid, I am with you.

It is never easy to look within and to fess up to God. Still, each year during Lent we have the chance to contemplate our own lives and to take stock. The prophet Isaiah shared a message with ancient people that is still relevant. God assures us that we are not alone. "Do not be afraid," says God, "for I am with you." As we approach this holy season, take my hand and let's do this together. God is with us and we will be with each other.

Ash Wednesday, February 14

Gather in the Russell Fellowship Room for a time of contemplative worship. This year, Ash Wednesday falls on Valentine's Day. The prophet Joel says "...rend your hearts and not your garments." The ashes remind us that God is compassionate with humans – slow to anger and of great kindness. Take my hand. We approach this season together.

Sunday, February 18 at 9:30 AM

Calling all adults! Copies of Viktor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning* are available. One of Bill Hopkins' favorites, the book describes Frankl's experiences and observations as a prisoner in German-run concentration camps during the Holocaust. Bill says, "It is not a gruesome reflection. It is a work that reveals how we can engage life meaningfully under any circumstance. Please underline passages and make notes in the margins. Your book is a working copy. Your heart, soul and mind will be affected." Can't make it every Sunday? Come when you are able.

Wednesday, February 21 at 7 AM and each Wednesday following

Join Pastor Vicki and Belinda for early breakfast and communion at the manse. We gather each Wednesday during Lent for 30 minutes. If school is delayed we will NOT meet.

Monday, February 26 at 7 AM and each Monday following

Everyone in High School – your turn! Come for breakfast and devotions. If school is delayed, we will not meet.

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

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

Terry Pedersen

Trustee Verifier

Lee Dennis

February 4, 2018

Ushers & Greeters – Jan & Bert Bertram
Terre & Lee Dennis

Flowers – Kathy Alvord

Nursery – Jenelle Pedersen

Coffee Hour – Lori Schmidt/Kathleen Dentes

February 11, 2018

Ushers & Greeters – Bonnie & Elijah Smith
Russell and Jenelle Pedersen

Flowers – Bonnie Haaland

Nursery – Mark or Tracy Bertram

Coffee Hour – Leslie & Gene Wright

February 18, 2018

Ushers & Greeters – Kathy, Jim and Kelly McKenna
Jenelle Pedersen

Flowers – Terre Dennis

Nursery – Susan Benedict

Coffee Hour – Cindy Stout

February 25, 2018

Ushers & Greeters – Bev & Steve Berry
Doris & Pete Hoffman

Nursery – Joanne Cincotta

Coffee Hour – Gwen Hayne



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

2 Lloyd Gmoser

3 Gordon Johnson, Matthew Dentes

4 Gwen Cappy

8 Jane Morenus

1 Susan Urban, Dorothy Hopkins

13 Heather Miller

15 Jaffrey Harris, Jacob Morenus

16 Cassandra Mead

17 Christine Loomis

19 Anne Barnes, Grace Dewey

20 Susan Weatherby

21 Christina Cincotta

26 Dale Halstead

27 Alexis Settineri

28 Rebecca Jones

We're sorry if we missed your birthday. It's because it is not in our computer membership files. Please contact the office and we'll update our records.

From the Treasurer:

- Operating Revenues at 12/31/17 - \$233,266, 102.7% of budget (budget overage due to use of capital reserve not originally budgeted)
- Operating Expenses at 12/31/17 - \$221,403, 97.5% of budget

Email Contacts:

Office: office@homercc.org

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!](#)

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