



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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#### **Church Staff**

*Senior Pastor:*  
 Rev. Vicki Burtson

*Associate Pastor:*  
 Rev. Gary Smith

*Sexton:*  
 Gary Harrington

*Financial Secretary:*  
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*Treasurer:*  
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*Church Administrator:*  
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## ***Abbreviated Newsletter***

Holy Week and Easter 2018 are past. Now we carry the Good News to the world. As with the ancient church, the news of Jesus Christ is carried beyond the upper room by the original disciples, their friends and (no doubt) their families. In a similar manner, you carry the news beyond our church, into the world.

We have been praying for Anne Wingard's mother, who is stabilizing now. Anne is due to return to the office sometime next week. So you are now reading the best version we can create of our monthly newsletter. If there are people who need to read this news, *we will depend on YOU* to hand-deliver this piece. This will give everyone the chance to reach out to neighbors and friends for a brief visit, even if just at the door, as you drop this off.

### ***From the senior pastor's mind and heart...***

Wow! What a holy season. In the pages that follow, you will see how Home Congregational United Church of Christ has been diligent in sharing the journey through Lent.

- We walked *together*, bearing the light of Christ symbolized by candleholders which were gourds carved by Kathleen McKenna.
- Disciples continued studying the Bible, reading and discussing one Gospel per week during March.
- On our behalf, Stephen Ministers talked with and brought comfort to individuals traveling a rough patch on life's road.
- Our Boards and Committee met and the bills were paid.
- Our Deacons retreated and together with our Trustees, they *advanced* in conversation about violence in our schools.

Keep reading. I am overwhelmed with the joy of serving in ministry with you. Happy Easter!

*Pastor Vicki*



**SENIOR FELLOWSHIP NEWS**

In April ...

Senior Fellowship - Tuesday, April 10, 2-4 p.m.

As we celebrate the Easter Season, there is a plan in the works to go back in time to a year when we were much younger! So join us for a trip back to 1976 and a patriotic parade that went right past our church. You might even see a few faces you remember! As always, there will be some kind of sweet treat! We hope you will join us! PLEASE NOTE: Pastor Gary would love to have a small committee that meets quarterly to plan for Senior Fellowship. You don't need to be a senior to help plan! Just bring your ideas! If interested, see Pastor Gary after worship!



**Faith Formation News...**



**Children's Faith Formation**

Both Pre-K to 4<sup>th</sup> grade and 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade classes are meeting on Sunday's from **9:30-10:15 a.m.** All children in these grades are welcome, and invited to bring a friend if they would like! In April, the younger children will learn celebrate that "Jesus Is Alive" (John 20:1-18), understand that "You've Got the Power" (John 21:15-25), and find their "Prayer Power" (Acts 12:1-18). The older children will learn "What Makes a Good Friend?" (1 Samuel 18:1-4), discuss "Creation and Evolution" (Genesis 1:1-2:3), and be challenged by "Decisions! Decisions! Decisions!" (Matthew 25:1-10). All children in Pre-K to 8<sup>th</sup> grade our welcome always! If you have any questions, feel free to call Pastor Gary (607-423-6456) or e-mail him (associatepastor@homercc.org).

**FAITH FORMATION**

**Faith In Action**

On the morning of Sunday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> our Children's Faith Formation program will leave the building! Like last year, we will be out doing yard work for anyone who has an outside project that needs doing! It's an opportunity for our youth to put their faith into action! So if you have an outside project that we could work on that morning, please give the office a call to sign up. We will need your name, address, phone, a brief description of work to be done (i.e. raking the yard, cleaning a garden, etc.), and whether you have any tools that we could use to complete the work. Our office number is 607-749-2604. Don't delay! Be at the top of our "To Do" List!!!

**Youth Group**



**Love. Grow. Serve.**

Our Youth Group is a joint effort between Homer and Preble Congregational churches, and it is for youth in grades 5 to 10. In April it will meet on Sundays, April 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Each time we get together, youth have the opportunity to fellowship, have fun, and explore their faith. And eat pizza or some other tasty food! Besides

Sunday night gatherings, the youth also participate in fun trips, do service in the community, and engage in some fun-fundraising. Just as our church believes that "no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey you are welcome here" so does our Youth Group! We are creating a safe, open, sacred, and enjoyable space for youth to express and learn more about themselves. And as always, youth may feel free to bring a friend! Questions, please call Pastor Gary at (607) 423-6456.

*Pastor Gary*



## FFM UPDATE

THANK YOU to all who participated in our Chili Cook-off, Bingo and Silent Auction night. Thanks to those who cooked and entered their chilis, to those who donated bingo prizes, and to those who donated and bid on auction items. It was a fun night, and we raised over \$500 for Faith Formation Ministry!

### Chili Winners:

- 1st place Gold Spoon - Bert Bertram
- 2nd place Silver Spoon - Terre Dennis
- 3rd place Bronze Spoon - Bill Masterson



## NEWS FROM OUR OUTREACH TEAM:

**A Community Conversation** - Understanding the challenges of migrant workers and their families living in our community. Our guest presenter will be Claire Soules, Director of Migrant Educational Tutorial Services at SUNY Cortland. Please join us as we open our church doors on April 8th from 6:30-7:30 for this discussion. Open to the community and all are welcome. Light refreshments will be provided.

**Diaper Drive** - In the month of April we will be having a diapers and wipes drive. Please bring donations of diapers and/or wipes any Sunday in April to support this effort. We are collaborating with CAPCO (Community Action Program of Cortland County) and their Emergency Assistance Program and Everybody's Baby Shower they host in May. Join us in this worthwhile effort!

The Outreach Team welcomes and appreciates support and assistance in all projects, please join us!



**Give Us Your Spring Projects!  
Faith Formation  
is putting *Faith into Action*  
on April 22.**

**Worship in April**

Tracy Bertram & Darci Gumaer share worship leadership in April.

**Sunday, April 15**

Regular Faith Formation at 9:30 and worship at 10:30

**Sunday, April 22 *Earth Day***

We are putting our **Faith in Action** as people leave the building to accomplish helpful projects. 10:30 worship will be in the Russell Fellowship Room.

**Sunday, April 29**

We will have a guest preacher this Sunday. Pastors Vicki & Gary will be in Greene for the Spring Meeting of the Susquehanna Association.

Church by the numbers: **59 + 7**

On Palm Sunday, *seven* members of Homer Congregational UCC gave away *fifty-nine* loaves of *homemade* bread to our friends in the community of Homer. The bread was given with a friendly, personal invitation to join us for Easter Sunday – or anytime!

Church by the numbers: **50 + 9 + 3, 2, 1**

On March 24, at least *fifty* people gathered for our Chili Cook-off. We enjoyed *nine* different versions of chili, played bingo and bid on items in our silent auction.

***Third place chili*** ~ Bill Masterson

***Second place chili*** ~ Terre Dennis

***First place chili*** ~ Bert Bertram

They won bragging rights for the *whole* year!

Church by the numbers: **14 + 12 + 1 = 101**

How does *that* add up? Take *fourteen* sandal-clad men dressed in jeans, tee shirts and a piece of colored fabric draped over their shoulders, add *twelve* gifted musicians and creative artists, add *one* Jack Carr and you get a Holy Maundy Thursday experience attended by *over one hundred* people. Thank you to everyone who helped to create a very memorable worship opportunity.