



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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 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.

Do you ever get emotionally frayed? Do you ever feel so busy that even the smallest glitch in schedule feels overwhelming? Do you ever snap at a person at home for no apparent reason? In fact, does the stress of life sometimes make you a short-fused person? Me, too! I dare say that at one time or another, this happens to each of us. So what does one do?

The first step may be as simple as recognizing that something is awry. Giving a sharp response to an otherwise innocent question; feeling unusually frustrated by tiny disruptions; waking in the middle of the night to fixate on details of your day past...all of these may provide a hint that one is emotionally or spiritually out of balance. Then what?

Self-help gurus will offer an array of valid remedies. Exercising, eating right, turning off screens are all good and helpful techniques when life is out of balance. But I wonder if our penchant to help ourselves might not be a part of the issue? Perhaps instead of finding a self-remedy, we could explore a God-remedy?

Some years ago a young parent spoke of her desire to be in church so that she could have *one hour* to quietly ponder life. That is why we have a nursery. Another "God-remedy"? When waking in the night, rather than allowing the mind to fixate on life details, attempt to focus one's mind, instead, on the Holy. I often use the breathing exercise that uses *Be still and know* (as I inhale) ...*that I am God* (as I exhale). This has allowed my mind to ease in the middle of the night and I have been able to return to sleep feeling safe in God's care.

When life is *really* unbalanced, it may be necessary to take a break and to, in essence, get the noise out of one's life. Listening to the soul; making room to hear a whisper from the Universe; just pausing...these can aid in making the bigger decisions in life.

Exercise; eat right; turn off screens...all good. I also encourage quiet contemplation; deep, soul-listening; scheduling silence in your day; reminding yourself that there is a Holy Presence holding onto you.

What works for you? I would be pleased to hear your thoughts.

Together, let us seek balance in life remembering that God is near.

from a fellow seeker,
Pastor Vicki



Senior Fellowship

SENIOR FELLOWSHIP NEWS

We have two more Senior Fellowship meetings before we take a summer hiatus. The first gathering is on Tuesday, May 8 from 2 to 4 p.m., which will feature Mindy Riha from the Cortland County Historical Society presenting a “200 Year Pictorial History of Cortland County.” Then when we meet on Tuesday, June 12, also from 2 to 4 p.m., the presenter will be

David Beale from The Picture Shop in Cortland. Each meeting includes time to catch up with friends, a delicious dessert, and a presenter. Please consider joining us. All seniors are welcome!



Faith Formation News...



Children’s Faith Formation

We had a GREAT month in Faith Formation!!! Great classes, great children, and great teachers! April started out with a wonderful Easter celebration that has continued because “it’s still Easter!” Pre-K-4th grade learned about Easter Joy and Prayer Power while 5th-8th grade learned about the Bible and the kinds of books that it contains. Our Confirmation class watched a video by Rob Bell entitled, “Everything is Spiritual” where they learned about the interconnectedness of all God’s creation. In addition, thirty

adults and youth participated in a pretty amazing Faith In Action Day to celebrate Earth Day by doing eight yard work projects around the community. And last but not least our Youth Group had a great time building connections with one another through games and food, and also chose its first fun activity (SkyZone...indoor trampolines) and service project (Relay for Life).

Looking ahead in May...

Children’s Faith Formation

The K-4th graders will learn about the importance of loving others and sharing with them, and our 5th to 8th graders will discover that they have a lot to give (because God gave them some really great gifts). We meet every Sunday from 9:30 to 10:15 a.m. in the upstairs classroom in Jones Hall, and all children in Pre-K to 8th grade are welcome (as are parents if your child is new and you’d like to see what it’s like or make it easier for your child to “come in for the first time”).

Confirmation Class

Will meet on Sunday, May 6 from noon to 1 p.m. where we will prepare for our Confirmation liturgy, which will happen on May 20 (Pentecost) during our Sunday Worship Service. In addition, the deacons are planning a special dinner for our Confirmands and their families, which will take place on Saturday, May 19 at 6 p.m.

Youth Group

Meets on Sundays, May 6 and 20 from 6 to 7:30 p.m. On May 6 the youth will participate in team building activities to further strengthen their relationship with one another, and then on May 20 we hope to go to Preble Congregational Church (since we are a combined group) to make dinner together and play games. Anyone in 5th to 12th grade is invited to participate in Youth Group (and you can even bring a friend) because “no matter where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome!”

Pastor Gary (Please feel free to call me with questions or comments, 607-423-6456.)



TRUSTEE’S CORNER

Members of the Board of Trustees met for their usual monthly meeting on Tuesday, April 14th. The Trustees managed the usual committee reports and board activities, and spent considerable time discussing property issues, activities on the Green, and a donation policy. Lee and Jim attended a Zoning Board meeting where the Village considered a zoning change request associated with sale of the Perfetti house. We are adjusting the lease to allow the village to acquire the White Church. We are also developing a strategy for new fundraising options and will work with the Board of Deacons and Church Council to implement a program. A variety of church repairs have been accomplished, including replacement of the handicap access door to Jones Hall and work in the lady’s room; there are always more things that need attention.

The Easter season draws to a close, but winter hangs on. In this time of new beginnings, we have heard a number of moving sermons from Pastor Vicki. There are clearly serious problems in our world, but always hope. We continue to work with Pastor Vicki and everyone in the church to thoughtfully and considerately do what we can to address these problems in the way that works best for our church. God continues to be with us and to guide us all to help the church and our community flourish. Christ has risen indeed!

Peace be with you!
Jim McKenna, Chair



NEWS FROM OUR OUTREACH TEAM:

Recent Accomplishments:

Bread and Postcard Invitation Distribution ~ a small team of church members recently provided homemade loaves of bread and an invitation to our Easter church services, to the residents of the Pine Hill Trailer Park in Homer.

Easter Egg Hunt on the Green ~ a small team of church members recently provided hot coffee and goody bags to those who participated in this event. A small flyer was also provided, giving information about our church.

Diaper Drive ~ Through Mother’s Day in May, we will be having a diapers and wipes drive. Please bring donations of diapers and/or wipes any Sunday 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 June. Join us in this worthwhile effort.

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



Calling our 2018 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 17**. Please contact the office by **Wednesday, May 17** by phone: (607) 749-2604 or by email: office@homercc.org.



Worship in May

Kathy McKenna is our Deacon of the Month.
Andrea Herzog is our Trustee Verifier.

Sunday, May 6 Rural Life Sunday with Communion; Pastor Gary is preaching
 Scripture: John 15:9-17 Sermon: To Dwell Without Fading
Ushers & Greeters ~ Don & Jen VanSlyke, Brianna Darling, Jim McKenna
Nursery ~ Sue Urban Coffee Hour ~ Gumaer Family
Flowers ~ Jan Jeffers

Sunday, May 13 Mother's Day
 Lectionary: Acts 1:15-17, 21-26; Psalm 1; I John 5:9-13; John 17:6-19
Ushers & Greeters ~ Lori & Kurt Schmidt, Jim McKenna
Nursery ~ Jenelle Pedersen Coffee Hour ~ Deacons
Flowers ~ Don & Jen VanSlyke

Sunday, May 20 Pentecost and Confirmation Sunday
 Lectionary: Acts 2:1-21; Psalm 104; Romans 8:22-27; John 15:26-27, 16:4b-15
 We will receive the *Strengthen the Church* Mission Offering
Ushers & Greeters ~ Alex & Evan Faulkenbury, Sue Benedict, Terre Dennis
Nursery ~ Mark/Tracy Bertram Coffee Hour ~ Shirley Osterhoudt
Flowers ~

Sunday, May 27 Pastor Gary preaching;
 Lectionary: Isaiah 6:1-8 Sermon: Send Me!
Ushers & Greeters ~ Anne Wingard, Bev Berry, Bonnie and Elijah Smith
Nursery ~ Joanne Cincotta Coffee Hour ~ Pat Buchholtz
Flowers ~ Anne Wingard

**Attention Writers!**

There will be a retreat for writers on Saturday May 26 from 2 to 5 in the afternoon at our church. There is no formal program. The idea is to provide protected time for people to work on poems, novels or whatever people are writing. If you would like to attend, please RSVP to Lynn Olcott at lolcott@twcnny.rr.com. Thanks very much.

NEW CONTACT DIRECTORY UNDERWAY

If you have a new address, phone number or email address, please inform the office. If you are new to our faith community, please send all of your contact information, including family birthdays. You do not have to be a member of the church in order to be included. Please help us stay connected by sharing the most current contact information for you and your family.

From the Treasurer:

- Operating Revenues at 3/31/18 - \$51,640, 21.2% of budget (budget overage due to use of capital reserve not originally budgeted)
- Operating Expenses at 3/31/18 - \$50,894, 20.9.% of budget



MAY BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Logan Schmidt
 2 Belinda Burtson, Shannon (Wainman) West
 3 Phillip Rumsey
 4 Nancy Richards
 6 Alphonse "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

Email Contacts:

Office: office@homercc.org

Pastor: pastor@homercc.org

Associate Pastor:

associatepastor@homercc.org

Financial Secretary: finsect@homercc.org

Treasurer: treasurer@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

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.