



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, chair
Paula Harrington, vice chair
Bonnie Haaland, secretary
Lee Dennis
Chuck Feiszli
Andrea Herzog
Russ Pedersen

Board of Deacons

Bill Masterson, chair
Gary Harrington, vice chair
Kathy McKenna, secretary
Tracy Bertram
Joanne Cincotta
Evan Faulkenbury
Darci Gumaer
Doris Hoffmann
Terry Pedersen
Bonnie Smith
Jim Ulrich
Anne Wingard

Church Staff

Senior Pastor:
Rev. Vicki Burtson

Associate Pastor:
Rev. Gary T. Smith

Office Administrator:
Anne Wingard

Sexton:
Gary Harrington

Financial Secretary:
Bev Berry

Treasurer:
Andrea Herzog

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

Grace and peace to you, dear family and friends of Homer Congregational United Church of Christ. As I approach this writing, I have many thoughts which may appear disjointed. Perhaps you will find within them the abiding question we all must address: Who is God calling us to be?

Quoting Martin Luther King:

*Darkness cannot drive out darkness. Only love can do that.
Hatred cannot drive out hate. Only love can do that.*

Jesus was a good Jewish man who understood the power of love.

Violence is not the answer. Guns have their place for hunting and sport. But it is frightening how often our society resorts to violence to solve our disputes. Does it not require more strength, more courage to do as we learned at the earliest stages of life ~ *Use your words!* Words matter.

Silence matters, as well. In the midst of my own strong feelings, I want to be quiet and listen. I want to hear what others think. Out of love and respect, I want to understand.

And then I want to find the words and actions that will bring maximum hope and love into the world. Jesus, our Jewish Rabbi, walked from town to town, no doubt kicking up some dust along the way. To use a phrase borrowed from Rob Bell, I want to follow my Rabbi so closely that I am *covered in his dust*. May our words and actions mirror those of Jesus. May we counter current division with more love than hatred can sustain.

Thank you to every veteran who has served this country. Perhaps the best expression of our thanks could be our best efforts to live up to the love and hope represented by the Statue of Liberty: *Give me your tired and your poor...*

God showers our lives with blessing. In the midst of this month of Thanksgiving, we also find the chance to commit our resources for ministry in 2019. Good news: we have ALL that we need. Bad news: it may still be in our pockets! Pray and then bring your gifts of time, talent and treasure to God.

Please vote on November 6.

My mind and heart are full. I offer this with love and respect for each one of you.

I thank God for this call to serve you in ministry,
Pastor Vicki

From your associate pastor for Faith Formation...



Ok, I did it. I reset the home page picture on my cell phone. For months...these glorious months of summer and early fall...it had been a picture of my favorite childhood baseball player. But now, as I anticipate the flakes of winter, I have put a full-blown winter scene onto my phone. That might not seem like a big deal. But I LOATHE winter. I'll take hot days, summer sunshine, and the lush green beauty of our Homer hills every time over winter. Don't ski. Don't sled. Don't snowmobile. Don't want to! So why the winter scene on the phone? Because I'm trying to surrender to the natural movement of the seasons in Central New York. I'm trying to surrender to the good and necessary changes in God's Creation. And isn't that what our faith journey is about? Ever more fully surrendering ourselves into the loving arms of our God? Letting go of the false aspects of our life that overshadow and mask our True Self? Because in doing so, we ALWAYS move deeper into knowing the God in ourselves, and ourselves in God. So this year I'm letting go of my disdain for winter. And in letting go, I'm going to have faith that God will fill that empty space with a deeper appreciation for the divine winter beauty that has always been waiting for me to see it. I hope that if there is anything in your life right now that is limiting your seeing God's Love and wonder, that you will risk its surrender. If you do, I trust that you will also be blessed with a new experience of the Divine. May God's grace and peace be with you!

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



In November, Children's Faith Formation will meet on November 4, 11, and 18. There will not be a class on Thanksgiving Weekend. However, our Nursery will be open as it always is each Sunday from 9 a.m. to noon. Classes meet on Sundays from 9:30 to 10:15 a.m. in our Jones Hall classrooms. We have three classrooms—Pre-K to 2nd grade, 3rd and 4th grades, and 5th to 8th grades. All are staffed with a teacher and aide. This month, our children will learn about Ruth and Naomi, the widow's mite, and trusting God. Also, please mark your calendars for December 9, which is the date for our wonderful annual Christmas Pageant.



Our Homer-Preble Congregational Youth Group and our Homer Faith Formation children raised \$1,471 last month for CROP Walk! Way to go!!! In November, Youth Group will meet on Sundays the 4th (in Homer) and 18th (in Preble) from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Anyone in 6th to 12th grade is invited to participate in Youth Group (and we encourage you to bring a friend)! Each meeting will include food, faith, and fun, and we will plan additional events throughout the year. If you're not already part of this great group, then get it in gear and join us!



Mark your calendars for Tuesday, November 13, from 2 to 4 p.m., because it's time to paint! Once again, one of our local artists, David Beale, from The Picture House, will return and do some painting with the seniors. Not only will we paint and sip (coffee or tea), but there will also be a sweet treat for everyone to enjoy. We hope you will join us!



TRUSTEE'S CORNER

Members of the Board of Trustees met for their usual monthly meeting on October 16th and managed committee reports and board activities. The draft 2019 budget is nearly ready for review and a number of policy and property issues were addressed. The budget remains slightly in the black and continued support from our fundraising efforts is a great help. The annual Roast Pork dinner will be held on November 3rd. The chimney of Jones Hall has been repaired and should stand for many years to come – thank Russ Pedersen for getting that done. Several other building issues will be addressed over the winter or in the spring. A couple of our computers have been rejuvenated, thanks to Dean Corbin, and will be put to good use. Two important policies were established. We drafted and voted to implement a Sexual Harassment Prevention policy, which the State of New York required to be in place by October 9th. We also discussed our annual internal audit, and at Carl Applegate's suggestion, voted to establish an "Internal Financial Review" covering the period from December 1st through November 30th each year. This will allow more time for the report to be generated before the Annual Meeting. We are also looking into another official external audit. With the snow flying in October, it feels like Fall has come and gone, but there is a lot of activity in and outside of the church. Continue to be alert for "God Sightings" and may your spirit continue to be bright. Jesus is with us and guides us all to help the church and our community flourish. Thanks for all of your support and enthusiasm. Contact me or any of the Trustees, if you have questions about our activities or needs.

God's Peace be with you!



Jim McKenna, Chair



From the DEACON BENCH

Please join us on November 11th after worship for a "Learning Lunch". The Deacons will provide a light lunch (bread and soup) and one of the owners' of Coffee Mania will be here to talk about their business. We plan to offer additional "Learning Lunches" and Mission Lunches in the coming months; so please check future newsletters for details. The Deacons will be offering Coffee Mania coffee for sale as an HCC fund raiser during the pre-holiday season. This is a perfect way to give the gift of delicious Coffee Mania coffee to family, friends & coworkers and to assist the Homer Congregation Church financially. During a recent meeting the Deacons agreed to a request from the Global Connectors to donate \$300.00 to "Days for Girls" (from the Dorothy Jane Andrews mission fund). Days for Girls is a global movement that prepares and distributes sustainable mensural health solutions to girls. This assistance helps girls and young women continue to go to school, or work and to maintain their dignity. We may be offering more opportunities to the congregation in the near future to help in this movement.



Blessings, Bill Masterson for the Board of Deacons

Homer Nursery School Notes



Homer Nursery School has been featured in the Homer News and on Channel 9 “Cool Schools” for participating in the cleaning bucket campaign. The students really enjoyed seeing themselves on TV. Also, we have a new nursery school aide who started in October. She is replacing Mrs. Morrell who accepted a newly created position at her own church. Welcome Miss Ford. Also, this month the students will be learning about and celebrating Thanksgiving.



Sunday, November 11 we celebrate **Stewardship Sunday**. The Deacons and Trustees are already working on a vision and plan for ministry in 2019. Join us in prayer as, together, we discern the future to which God calls us and the resources we will need to accomplish our shared ministry.



Who in the world is Quinn Caldwell?

Quinn G. Caldwell is a father, husband, homesteader and preacher living in rural upstate New York. His most recent book is a series of daily reflections for Advent and Christmas called [All I Really Want: Readings for a Modern Christmas](#). Quinn writes for the *Still-Speaking* devotional group.

We are very glad to share that Rev. Dr. Caldwell has agreed to be with us on several Sundays during Advent. During Adult Faith Formation, we will share the Advent journey provided by his devotional, as follows:

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Sunday, November 25 at 9:30 | Covenant Making kick-off |
| Sunday, Dec. 2 at 9:30 | Advent I discussion |
| at 10:30 | Rev. Caldwell will preach during worship |
| Sunday, Dec. 9 at 9:30 | Advent II discussion |
| Sunday, Dec. 16 at 9:30 | Advent III discussion |

During the month of November, watch for samples of Quinn’s writing in the bulletin and our other means of communication. You will soon see that this is an extraordinary opportunity for us to welcome a very gifted man of deep faith. We will strengthen our connection with God as Quinn leads us into discussion.



The Lunch Bucket Campaign continues.

Look for the lunch buckets at the businesses in our community. Proceeds support the United Methodist Food Pantry.

General Information to Note:

Hearing Aides Available

If you are having trouble hearing Sunday services hearing aids are available and can be assigned to you for your personal use. Due to hearing aid maintenance and keeping them sanitary please use only hearing aids assigned to you. Contact Russ Pedersen if you would like a hearing aid assigned to you or if you have any questions.

Turn the page of your calendar to December:

Church Family Christmas Party & Greening of the Church

Saturday, December 1 at 4:00 pm in the Russell Fellowship Room
Come and be part of the decorating, music of the season, yummy food and a Christmas Socks Contest. Help us make this a joyous intergenerational occasion.

Final Thursday Worship in 2018:

December 13

A Blue Christmas Service

This special service will help us acknowledge that the holiday may not be joy-filled for every person. We will remember that we celebrate the birth of Immanuel ~ God With Us.

Annual Meeting Date

Mark your calendars for the Annual Meetings of the First Religious Society of Homer and the Homer Congregational United Church of Christ: **Sunday, January 20**. Snow date is Sunday, January 27. We are in this together, so it will be important for you to attend as we finalize our plans for ministry in 2019.

Worship in November

Bonnie Smith is the Deacon of the Month.
Lee Dennis is our Trustee Verifier.

Sunday, November 4

Communion Sunday

Scripture: Ruth 1:1-18; Matthew 112:28-34 Sermon: We Are in This Together
As we celebrate communion, we will be assisted by Deacons Joanne Cincotta, Bill Masterson, Kathy McKenna and Anne Wingard. Hallelujah!

Nursery volunteer ~ Susan Benedict

Coffee Hour ~ Janet Bertram/Terre Dennis

Flowers – Janet Bertram in memory of Kurt Bertram

Sunday, November 11

Stewardship Sunday

Scripture: Mark 12:38-44

Sermon: Synergy: Here's My Two Cents

During the service, you will have the opportunity to bring your offering of time, talent and treasure to God. We look forward to this time of synergy, as we witness that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Nursery volunteer ~ Joanne Cincotta

Coffee Hour ~ Deacons

Flowers ~ Terre Dennis in memory of Elizabeth Dennis and Veteran's Day

Following the service, we will have a *Lunch and Learn* presented by Craig & Michelle Brooks, owners of Coffee Mania. We look forward to learning about their unique style of business.

Sunday, November 18

Thanksgiving Sunday

Scripture: I Samuel 1:4-20

We welcome to our pulpit one of our own: the Rev. Barb Wright! Barb is our Moderator, and she was ordained in our church. We look forward to her leadership in worship. Word on the street is that Peter Wright may be doing the Children's Time!

Nursery volunteer ~ Darci Gumaer

Coffee Hour ~ Ingrid Fox/Tracy Bertram

Sunday, November 25

Scripture: II Samuel 23:1-7

Sermon: Who is in Charge?

Nursery volunteer ~ Kathy/Jim McKenna

Coffee Hour ~ Gwen Hayne/Ingrid Fox

Flowers ~ Andrea Herzog in honor of Heather's birthday



BIRTHDAYS

- 5 Jean Cadwallader,
Gavin Zollweg
- 7 Alyse Masterson Nauseef,
Richard Seymour
- 15 Rev. Gary Smith
- 16 Joseph Settineri
- 18 William Rumsey,
Paula Harrington
- 19 Bonnie Smith,
Dorothy Green,
David Hoffmann
- 22 Wayne Bacon
- 26 Barbara Rhudy
- 28 Brian Cornwell
Stephen Jones
Marilyn Miller
- 29 Stuart Jones
- 30 Katrina Allen

*We're sorry if we missed your birthday.
Do let us know any birthdays that were missed. Thanks!*

From the Treasurer:

- Operating Revenues at 9/30/18 - \$163, 267, 67% of budget (budget overage due to use of capital reserve not originally budgeted)
- Operating Expenses at 9/30/18 - \$158,576, 65.1.% of budget

Email Contacts:

Office: office@homercc.org

Senior 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

Follow Homer Congregational Church on [Facebook!](#)

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