

UCC NEWS



February 2017

An Open and Affirming Church
"A fellowship in Jesus, the Christ showing God's love to all people."

A monthly publication of

United Church of Christ, First Congregational

11 West Main Street, Norwich, NY 13815

The Rev. Mr. Joseph Connolly, Pastor and Teacher



**The 5th Annual
SAME Expo**
(Support Art and Music Education)
Saturday, February 4th
4:00pm
United Church of Christ, Norwich
Student Art Exhibit / Music Performances / Silent Auction

The purpose of this event is to increase community support for Arts instruction in our schools and to gather donations to support art and music students.

Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00 a.m.
Childcare Provided

Church Office Hours:

Monday - Thursday 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., 1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

Friday 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Telephone: 607-334-3434

E-mail: office@uccnorwichny.org Website: www.uccnorwichny.org



From the Pastor

Dear Friends in Christ,

It's January! Well, this is my letter for the February Newsletter but as I write this missive it's still January.

It being the end of January our Annual Budget Meeting is about to happen. Therefore, the Annual Report went out and many of you should have it in your hands by now.

Many people who are not currently members do read this Newsletter but do not get that Annual Report. I want those of you who do not get the report and do get the Newsletter to be aware of two reports we included in the Annual Report for the first time.

One is about Project Safe Sleep. The second is about Our Daily Bread Food Closet. What follows is a précis of each of those reports.

Project Safe Sleep

Project Safe Sleep is, technically, a program originated by the Interfaith Council of Norwich. But we at the United Church of Christ, First Congregational, oversee and coordinate it.

The program is run in conjunction with Chenango County. The Interfaith Council was approached by nurses from the County Health Department with a specific issue. The rate of infant death in Chenango County was comparatively high. One reason for that issue is there was a lack of adequate sleeping facilities for newborns in lower income families.

Certainly one solution was to see if the Interfaith Council could purchase Pack & Play portable cribs, both safe and affordable. The Council put together some money and then this church, with the assistance of the nurses from the Department of Health obtained a grant for two years worth of funding from the R.C. Smith Foundation.

This grant has been renewed once and we have every expectation that it will be renewed again when the need arises. Note: the county could not do this on its own since, by law, funds received in this way would wind up in the General Fund and probably not be used for the intent of getting these cribs.

This brings us back to the role of our church. The nurses from the Department of Health identify the families who need

a safe crib.

Through the good auspices and good work of our Parish Coordinator, Cheri Willard, we order Pack & Play cribs using the aforementioned grant money. The County Nurses pick up and deliver the cribs as needed. In 2016 we facilitated the delivery of 34 cribs which cost \$2,083.

Our Daily Bread Food Closet

For many years our church has supported Our Daily Bread Food Closet, which is located at Emmanuel Episcopal Church. A number of our parishioners assist as volunteers with the operation and a number of parishioners make generous donations to this effort. Pastor Joe Connolly acts as the current President.

It is important to be aware that all money given to the Closet goes directly to food. There are no overhead costs and no paid staff. Funds are raised from individuals and from foundation grants.

Further and indeed, much of the food stocked by the Closet is ordered from the Central New York Food Bank at a very, very, very low cost. When necessary, additional food is acquired locally.

Last year \$65,786 was spent on food or \$5,482 a month. Hence, we needed to raise \$5,482 each month to keep the shelves stocked.

Last year we helped a total of 2,414 household/families and 65,169 meals were provided. That math is easy. If we spent \$65,786 each meal we distributed costs slightly more than \$1 per meal.

What all these numbers actually tell us is a real need is there. I have, personally, spoken to a number of our volunteers. They realize many of the clients who access the Food Closet do so only once or twice a year, when the need is severe. What that also tells us is people are, generally, not accessing this resource to “rip off the system.”

Indeed, at a recent meeting of volunteers I was told the story of a man who for several months in a row has brought in boxes of food. Why? Several years ago, when he was down on his luck, he needed to access the Closet. This was his way of paying back.

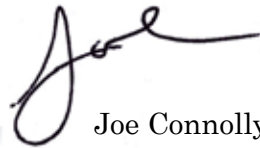
Please note: Our Daily Bread Food Closet is always open to

accepting monetary contributions from individuals, no matter how large or small.

So, why did I want to offer a report on these items in the Newsletter? I wanted to emphasize one of the many things members of a church do is help others, especially those in need. We are church. This is what we do. Help others, especially those in need.

By the way— see you in church— a place where we help one another. And this is not just what we do. This is who we are; we are church.

In Faith,



Joe Connolly

February 5th - “Souper” Bowl Sunday

Bring in cans of soup for donation to Our Daily Bread Food Pantry.

February 19th - Paper Sunday

Bring in paper products such as paper towels and bathroom tissue, personal care items such as razors, soap, shampoo, feminine products. Disposable diapers of any size are also collected for the First Baptist Church’s monthly diaper give away.

Looking Ahead to Lent

Ash Wednesday Service March 1st - 7:00 p.m. at Broad Street United Methodist Church.

Weekly Study based on the book, *The Altars Where We Worship: The Significance of Popular Culture*. Wednesdays at noon beginning March 8th at a different church each week.



Historian Notes

by Patricia Evans, Church Historian

James Hollister, the son of Dr. James and Marjorie Hollister of Groton, CT, was a graduate of Robert E Fitch Sr. High School in Groton, CT; Colgate University in Hamilton, NY; and Union Theological Seminary, New York City, NY.

After completing his masters degree at Union, and having received approval for ordination pending a call (through the New London Association of the CT Conference UCC), he was called in August 1988 as pastor at the United Church of Christ, First Congregational, in Norwich, NY. His ordination service was held in his home church (First Congregational of Groton, CT) on November 13, 1988, with several members of the Norwich church in attendance. He enjoyed the ministry in Norwich very much, especially weekly gatherings with the young group, Bible studies and small groups. He also enjoyed his relationships with clergy colleagues in Norwich.

In February 1990, Jim met his future wife, the Rev. Julia Oatman, who was serving as Associate Pastor of First Congregational Church, UCC, in Ithaca. They met at an Association gathering for area clergy. They dated for more than three years and enjoyed fellowship with both congregations as time allowed. Julia is a graduate of St. Olaf College and Pacific School of Religion. They were married in Julia's home church (First Congregational UCC of Dundee, IL) on August 14, 1993 with several members of the Norwich church in attendance. After their wedding, they shared an apartment in Cortland, NY, and commuted to their respective congregations throughout the week. Jim also maintained a residence in the parsonage in Norwich, which was handy for those snowy days.

In the fall of 1994, Jim received a call to serve as Senior Minister of First Congregational Church, UCC, in Sheboygan, WI. The position allowed Jim and Julia to live together and be close to family in the Chicago area (Julia's parents and Jim's sister), as well as the Oatman cabin in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Originally the position was only for Senior Minister,

but after a year or two, Julia began serving as Director of Christian Education. Eventually that led to her call to serve as one of the pastors of the Sheboygan church.

Rev. Jim Hollister's resignation letter (Fall 1994) noted: "We all knew from the day that I first arrived in August 1988 that a time would come when I would move on. My six years with you have been very satisfying ones. I learned to be a pastor, preacher, and administer under your encouraging care. I met and married Julia during this time with you. Together we have been through many occasions of joy and sorrow; these experiences have deepened the bonds between us. I have always thought that this Norwich church was a near-perfect match for me; I don't think there could have been a better place to begin my ministry fresh from the seminary. I love you and pray for your continued support." —*September 1, 1994 letter to the First Congregational Church of Norwich, NY*

Rev. Hollister's last service at the UCC Church in Norwich, NY was November 20, 1994. As of this writing, Jim and Julia Hollister continue to serve as pastors together at the First Congregational Church of Sheboygan, WI. They have two children: Jonathan (a student at St. Olaf College) and Jessica (a junior at North High School in Sheboygan).

Hospice Kids Corner

Valentine Making

February 9, 5 - 6 p.m.

Hospice Office, 21 Hayes St., Norwich

Hospice invites children in Chenango County who have experienced the death of a loved one to participate in their latest *Club 4 Seasons* event. Participants will make valentines while sharing feelings and experiences related to grief. Dinner is included. Please RSVP by February 7th.

Save the Date - March 25, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.

Habitat for Humanity 2017 Souper Bowl Fundraiser

Norwich YMCA, N Broad St.

Tickets will be \$7.00.

More details next month.



UCC, First Congregational, Norwich, NY has a long history of gifts bequeathed by former members and memorial gifts given by family and friends. To recognize and honor our past and encourage growth in our future, our scholarship program is supported by some recent generous gifts. Scholarship amounts vary up to \$1,000.

General Information

- The successful candidates will be chosen by the Memorial Gifts Scholarship Committee.
- Scholarships can be used for post-secondary undergraduate education.
- Preference will be given to UCC members, UCC employees, and the children/grandchildren of UCC members and UCC employees.
- Awards for graduating seniors will be presented at the Dollars for Scholars Presentation.
- The awards will be made on character, service, scholarship and financial considerations. Some awards have additional criteria as noted.

Scholarships for Applicants who are Covenant Members of UCC, First Congregational Norwich:






Memorial Gifts Scholarship (number of scholarships varies)
Alexander and Alice Neill Scholarship (1 scholarship)

Scholarships for All Applicants

Donald Tracy Scholarships (4 scholarships)
Theodore Dolgos Scholarships (2 scholarships)
Theron and Margaret Hust Scholarship (1 scholarship)

Applications will be available from the church office or online at <www.uccnorwichny.org> after February 1.

Deadline for applications is April 15.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>February 2017</h1>						
			1 10:00 a.m. Norwich Interfaith Council 2:00 p.m. A. Humer, Founders' Rm. 3:00 p.m. M. Conant, upstairs 6:00 p.m. Bible Study 7:00 p.m. Choir	2 10:00 a.m. Tutoring, Chapel 12:00 p.m. M. Conant, upstairs	3 Setting up for SAME Expo	4 4:00 p.m. SAME Expo. See front cover.
5 8:30 a.m. Church School 9:15 a.m. Nursery 10:00 a.m. Worship/Communion Souper Bowl Sunday - See p. 4. 11:00 a.m. Coffee Hour 11:30 a.m. Bellss 1:00 p.m. Super Sew Sunday Quilting, Founders' Rm.	6 10:00 a.m. Prayer Shawl Ministry 4:00 p.m. Tutoring, Founders' Rm. 5:00 p.m. K. Given, Founders' Rm.	7 10:00 a.m. Tutoring, Chapel 1:00 p.m. TNT Quilters, Kitchen 5:30 p.m. SAME Meeting, Kitchen	8 9:30 a.m. Committee on Authorized Ministry Mtg. 2:00 p.m. A. Humer, Founders' Rm. 2:30 p.m. General Ministry Team Meeting 3:00 p.m. M. Conant, upstairs 6:00 p.m. Bible Study 7:00 p.m. Choir	9 10:00 a.m. Tutoring, Chapel 12:00 p.m. M. Conant, upstairs 5:00 p.m. Hospice Kids Corner - See p. 6. 6:00 p.m. Piecemakers, Founders' Rm.	10 	11 Fundraising Dinner for NHS Musical, Founders' Rm.
12 8:30 a.m. Church School 9:15 a.m. Nursery 10:00 a.m. Worship 11:00 a.m. Coffee Hour 11:30 a.m. Bells 2:30 p.m. Ecclesiastical Council	13 4:00 p.m. Tutoring, Founders' Rm. 5:00 p.m. K. Given, Founders' Rm. 7:00 p.m. Trustees Meeting, Chapel	14 Valentine's Day 9:00 a.m. Headstart Policy Council, Founders' Rm./Nursery 10:00 a.m. Tutoring, Chapel 1:00 p.m. TNT Quilters, Kitchen 	15 1:30 p.m. PAC Meeting 2:00 p.m. A. Humer, Founders' Rm. 3:00 p.m. M. Conant, upstairs 6:00 p.m. Bible Study 7:00 p.m. Choir 7:00 p.m. Democratic Comm	16 10:00 a.m. Tutoring, Chapel 12:00 p.m. M. Conant, upstairs 6:00 p.m. Alzheimer's Support Group, Founders' Rm.	17	18 
19 8:30 a.m. Church School 9:15 a.m. Nursery 10:00 a.m. Worship Paper Products Sunday-See p. 4. 11:00 a.m. Coffee Hour 11:30 a.m. Bells 3:00 p.m. Pastor Joe shares the Word at Chenango Valley Home	20 Presidents' Day <i>Church Office Closed.</i> 10:00 a.m. Prayer Shawl Ministry 4:00 p.m. Tutoring, Founders' Rm. 5:00 p.m. K. Given, Founders' Rm.	21 10:00 a.m. Tutoring, Chapel 1:00 p.m. TNT Quilters, Kitchen	22 2:00 p.m. A. Humer, Founders' Rm. 3:00 p.m. M. Conant, upstairs 6:00 p.m. Bible Study 7:00 p.m. Choir	23 10:00 a.m. Tutoring, Chapel 12:00 p.m. M. Conant, upstairs	24 9:00 a.m. Collate and mail March Newsletter	25
26 8:30 a.m. Church School 9:15 a.m. Nursery 10:00 a.m. Worship 11:00 a.m. Coffee Hour 11:30 a.m. Bells	27 9:30 a.m. Headstart, Founders' Rm. 4:00 p.m. Tutoring, Founders' Rm. 5:00 p.m. K. Given, Founders' Rm.	28 10:00 a.m. Tutoring, Chapel 1:00 p.m. TNT Quilters, Kitchen	1 Ash Wednesday 7:00 p.m. Ecumenical Service, Broad St. UMC	2	3	4 Only 16 more days until  Spring

Letters

Dear Members of UCC,

On behalf of the clients and volunteers at Our Daily Bread Food Pantry, we would like to thank you for all the boxes of food and hygiene products that you donated during December as part of the Reverse Advent Project at UCC. Your donation certainly helped to replenish the pantry after the holidays.

We are seeing a continuous need for the food and milk that the pantry is able to provide to supplement the food needs for families each month, so the donation is appreciated. We couldn't provide food for the numbers of people that we're feeding without generous donations like yours.

Barbara and Gary Tompkins, Co-Coordinator
Our Daily Bread Food Pantry

Dear UCC,

Thank you for your recent gift to the Chenango SPCA. We really appreciate your continuous support and it is your thoughtfulness that allows us to provide animals with the care and safety they need. Without help such as yours, our job would be so much more difficult. Please visit our website at www.chenangospca.org to see the many wonderful animals who are looking for a new home or for our latest event information.

Thank you so much for continuing to be such a strong supporter of what we do. This will help many, many animals!

Annette J. Clarke, Executive Director
Chenango SPCA

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your gift in support of the ministry of theological education at Lancaster Seminary. Your gift provides support for Lancaster Seminary's mission "to educate and nurture leaders to join God's redemptive and liberating work so that all creation may flourish." We seek to bring a gifted and dedicated faculty, committed and called students, and supporting churches, organizations, and friends into a vibrant community of faith. The support you provide with your prayers and your gifts opens the doors for our students' education, opens their minds to learning, and opens their

hearts to serving.

Your generosity is such a gift to us - Thank You! Hope upstate New York isn't too cold this winter!

Rev. Dr.Carolyn Call, Executive Director of
Development and Communications
Lancaster Theological Seminary

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, staff, and the thousands of people in our community served by Family Planning of South Central New York, thank you for your generous donation.

Your support makes it possible for us to provide high quality reproductive healthcare, including family planning and cancer screening to the thousands of women, men and teens who will come to our health centers this year. It will also enable our educators to provide resources to thousands more individuals, families and organizations. We remain dedicated to serving and meeting the reproductive and basic healthcare needs of our community. Your support is essential to achieving our mission, and we are very grateful for your gift.

Debra Marcus, Chief Executive Officer
Family Planning of South Central New York

Dear UCC,

Our sincere and grateful thanks for the generous donation from the Missions Committee. We are pleased that you recognize the value of our programs. Your donation will allow us to meet the needs of additional isolated seniors in our community.

Brian F. Wessels, Director
Chenango County Area Agency on Aging

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your generous contribution to the work of Church World Service - which we appreciate more than ever in these challenging times.

Your compassionate support is helping impoverished communities to develop clean, reliable water sources, teach poor farmers sustainable ways to create food security, provide food, water, shelter and other necessities to families struggling

to rebuild their lives and livelihoods, after natural disasters and civil conflict.

I have seen both the resilience and the resolve of the women, men and children we assist. And I have been deeply moved by the generosity of people like you, who give hope and opportunity to people in need, here in the U.S. and around the world.

Rev. John L. McCullough, President and CEO
Church World Service

Dear Joe,

Thank you for coming down and bringing me that beautiful red poinsettia. Your visits always make me feel like a part of the church when I haven't been able to attend.

Joy (Barrows)

Dear Rev. Connolly and Friends,

Thank you so much for your thoughtful donation to Danielle House as a missions donation. We are grateful for your support of our healthcare hospitality mission as we continue to provide lodging and comfort to patients and their loved ones when far from home during medical crises or treatment.

Celebrating our 15th year of service, Danielle House has been gratified to provide accommodation for more than 9,000 individuals in a time of personal hardship. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we can offer our guests clean linens, hot showers, nourishing fare, and home-like comforts in a healing environment. Please know how appreciative we are of your generous gesture.

Diane P. Stento, Founder / Executive Director
Danielle House

Dear UCC,

Thank you for the very generous donations of hats and mittens for our students at Perry Browne Intermediate School. Please know that your kindness and support for our students is appreciated. On behalf of the students and their parents, a heartfelt thank you!

Jennifer J. Post, Principal
Haley Crimmins, Assistant Principal
Perry Browne Intermediate School

Dear Church Members,

Thank you for your generous donation to The Christian Neighborhood Center of Norwich, dba The Place. Your contribution will assist us in providing educational and enriching programs and opportunities for our community's youth. With programs, such as our KIDS Program, Youth After School Program, Summer Youth Employment Program, and Headwaters Youth Conservation Corps Program, our youth have the opportunity to learn and grow in a safe environment.

With your support we look forward to the opportunity to continue to develop our programs so we can meet the needs of our community and youth.

Sharon Vesely, Executive Director
The Place

Director of Children and Youth Ministries

Linda L. Oehme

We continue to explore the fourth unit in the *Whole People of God* entitled "New World, New Day." We are in a new year and we are in a new day. The gospel stories that we read in this season tell of the beginnings of Jesus' ministry, and we certainly can think of the disciples discovering that they were in quite a new world and new day as they left their old lives behind and chose to follow Jesus. As we read some passages from the *Sermon on the Mount*, we recognize that the new world Jesus is speaking about is something we are called to help bring about. God calls us to see the world and everyone in it the way God sees it. God calls us to welcome the poor and the hungry and the weeping, because they have much to teach us. When we seek out ways to love our enemies, and to live the essence of God's law rather than the letter of it, amazing things can happen!

The Adult Church School class meets at the same time on most Sundays and there is an Adult Bible Study at 6:00 p.m. on most Wednesdays. We're never too old to learn and refresh our faith. Come join us!

Prayer Concerns

Let us keep in our prayers the following concerns:

- * families-those families that may be going through particularly difficult times, families seeking God's guidance;
- * those who are moving because of their work, those looking for work, and those looking for meaning in their work.
- * those who are ill, who are recovering from illness or surgery, or who anticipate going to the hospital.
- * those who grieve over the death of someone they love.
- * our church, that it might be faithful to its calling, our pastor, all staff members and committees.
- * peace in the world.
- * gay, lesbian and bisexual and transgendered persons, and all those who feel isolated and alone.

OUR PRAYERS AND SYMPATHY TO:

Rev. Susan Polizzi, former pastor at First Baptist Church Norwich and her family for the loss of her father, **Edward Panek**, who died on January 17, 2017.

Betty Stone, Susquehanna Association Treasurer for the loss of her husband **Donald Stone** who died on January 8, 2016.



Bulletins from Other Churches

Pat Sternberg - South Church in Andover, Mass.,
December 24, 2016

Gary and Vicki Gray, St. John's Church, Fountain Square
Larchmont, NY, December 24, 2016

Visitors in January

Anthony Greig
Mary Greig, Norwich
Rev. Tom and Pat Olson
Denise Walters, Norwich

Revised Common Lectionary

You may be aware that the readings used at services of worship in most Mainline Protestant churches and in Roman Catholic Churches are from the list of assigned readings known as The New Revised Common Lectionary. In our Congregational tradition, while pastors are encouraged to use the assigned readings, it's not mandatory. This is published in the hope that some may use these readings in their personal prayer and devotional time.

Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany - February 5

Isaiah 58:1-9a (9b-12), Psalm 112:1-9 (10),
1 Corinthians 2:1-12 (13-16), Matthew 5:13-20

Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany - February 12

Deuteronomy 30:15-20 or Sirach 15:15-20, Psalm 119:1-8,
1 Corinthians 3:1-9, Matthew 5:21-37

Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany - February 19

Leviticus 19:1-2, 9-18, Psalm 119:33-40,
1 Corinthians 3:10-11, 16-23, Matthew 5:38-48

Transfiguration Sunday - February 26

Exodus 24:12-18, Psalm 2 or Psalm 99, 2 Peter 1:16-21,
Matthew 17:1-9



These are the birthdays of members and friends of our church family. If you know someone on the list who's having a birthday, feel free to send that person a card. Even if you don't know anyone on the list, feel free to send any celebrant a card. More importantly, strive to hold each of these people up in prayer on the anniversary of their birth. Please call the church office with additions or corrections (334-3434).

February

1	Betty Yeahl	9	Matthew Craig	24	Linda Oehme
4	Bonnie Connolly	11	Joshua Miller	25	Irene Sobers
6	Rose Laughlin	16	Audrey Aitken	28	Gwendolyn Breese
	Ron Musson	22	Norma Kinney		

UCC NEWS

United Church of Christ
First Congregational
11 West Main Street
Norwich, NY 13815-1612



DATED MATERIAL: Please Deliver Promptly.
This issue mailed 01/27/2017

STANDARD A
PERMIT 24
NORWICH NY 13815

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Ministers: **All the People**
Pastor and Teacher: **The Rev. Mr. Joseph Connolly**
Moderator: **Steve Craig**
Director of Children/Youth Ministries: **Linda Oehme**
Director of Music Ministries: **Mary Williams**
Financial Secretary: **Donna Wood-Craig**
Parish Coordinator: **Cheri Willard**
Counselor, Family Counseling Ministry: **Joanne Ferguson**