

UCC NEWS



January 2018

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

SUNDAY, JANUARY 7TH

- 10:00 a.m. The Transition Committee will be installed during the worship service.
- 11:00 a.m. Potluck brunch after worship
Bring a dish to pass.
Table Service and beverages provided.

*Following brunch all are invited to help
the Deacons undecorate the church.*

**Call to 204th Annual Meeting
Sunday January 28th
during the worship service.
All members are urged to attend to vote**

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,

I do not often talk about upcoming events in these letters to the church. Most of the time that is because those announcements are in other places in the Newsletter.

This is an exception. On **January 7, 2018** there are **two events** happening on the same day to which I want to call your attention. One of the events is just fun.

The fun event is that after the morning service on the 7th we shall have a brunch. We are labeling it a brunch but I am sure many kinds of food will be offered. (I know a pastor who was trained as a cook in the Army who has promised to make scrambled eggs!)

After the brunch everyone who's there is invited to help what we call "un-decorate the church." *You do not have to join in that activity. You can simply "eat and run."* But please stay if you can.

Many hands make light work and we will take down all the decorations we put up for Christmastide. And yes, I think that kind of activity is fun.

It would be probably inappropriate to call the other event solemn. Perhaps the word I'm looking for might be important.

As you know and as has been stated publicly, I shall be retiring in July of 2019. I will be in the 24th year of my pastorate.

And yes, that date is still 18 months away. However, because I have made this announcement this church can get a head start in working on the process of searching for a new pastor. This often takes more than 18 months.

Therefore, we shall begin this process at the morning service on **January 7, 2018**. We shall **install** the "**Transition Committee**" to start work on the search process. You will find the names of the people on the Transition Committee elsewhere in this newsletter.

These days the search process breaks down into two separate functions. Generally at least, the Transition Committee will take the church through to the point where this congregation has completed a profile. That work alone often takes more than a year.

Once that portion of the work is complete, this committee will hand things over to a “Search Committee.” That committee has yet to be formed. Both the Transition Committee and the Search Committee, as is outlined in the bylaws, consists of seven people. Two people will be on both committees to provide for continuity.

Of course one might ask the question, “Is it not unusual for this process to start when we have a settled pastor?” I do not mean to split hairs but the answer is yes and no. Or as one parishioner recently said to me, “You have given this church a great opportunity to start work on this process.”

And the truth is there are many ways to do a search, especially when a pastor is retiring. These include the old fashioned way: wait until the current pastor leaves. Another way is to call a new pastor even before the current pastor leaves. Then there is the way we are now endeavoring to do it. Start the process before the current pastor leaves.

I think the way we have chosen is wise. It is wise for two reasons. First, we are indeed getting a head start on the search process. Second, while there may be advantages to calling a second pastor to work with the pastor who is about to retire, there are disadvantages.

A clear disadvantage is the two pastors might become too much alike. That’s a disadvantage? Yes, it is. You see, all of us (not just pastors) have our own special, unique gifts and talents. We all have a **multitude** of unique gifts and talents. The special gifts and talents of a pastor who starts to work with a previous pastor might become subsumed in and by that style of transition. You would not want that. I would not want that.

Which brings me to an important point. People have asked me what I intend to do in retirement.

Sometimes the question is posed this way: “You are a preacher and you don’t really have to retire. Surely you will keep preaching.”

The answer is: “Yes, probably. But not here. Bonnie and I intend to go to Maine (or at least someplace in New England), from whence we came.”

Sometimes a second question then gets asked. “You mean you’re not going to retire in Norwich?”

The answer to that is, “I love Norwich, its people, this

church. But were I to retire in Norwich there is only one church I could not attend— The United Church of Christ, First Congregational of Norwich.” You see, the ethics of most “main line” denominations frown on a pastor continuing to attend a church that pastor has previously served. So, even if I retired in Norwich, if I attended this church that would be a violation of pastoral ethics.

I already can hear this next question being asked: “Don’t many churches have a ‘Pastor Emeritus?’” Yes, but even then it is less than wise for a previous pastor to be a regular attendee or to in any way be involved. Attend on special occasions? Perhaps, given the right situation. A regular attendee? No.

Further, we are a congregational church. **The congregation**— the people of the church— are **the pivotal piece** of the church, not the pastor. In a very real sense all pastors are interim pastors. It is the people of the church who provide real continuity.

Last, I need to make another thing clear. It would also be a violation of ethics for me to have any say whatsoever in who the next pastor might be. That work is in the hands of **the congregation**.

All that having been said, we need to remember this congregation is in its 204th year. I expect this congregation will be around 204 years from now. And I also expect the next 18 months will provide both you and I with their own special challenges, excitement, joys and sorrows as we seek the guidance of God for our future.

So what is there to say except, “See you in church.” And yes, this is a wonderful, exciting, loving church.

In Faith,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Joe Connolly

Letter from the Moderator

Dear friends in Christ,

I first want to thank you all for such an incredible response to our request for Transition Committee members. We needed 7 members and received 29 volunteers and recommendations. Also, a sincere thank you to the Executive Council for their careful consideration of all the names presented. The committee met Sunday, December 17 to organize and select a chair and secretary.

The Transition committee names are as follows:

Linda Oehme, Chairperson

Julie Gonzalez, Corresponding secretary/co-chair

Judy Smith

John Kolb

Edwin Tucker

Mary Williams

Janet Johnson

Jack Brereton, Alternate

These members will be charged and installed on January 7, 2018 at the 10:00 a.m. service.

They will meet with the Rev. Dr. Marsha Williams on January 8 to begin their service to our church community.

For those who were not selected for this committee, there is still a chance to serve. You may be asked by this committee to assist in one way or another. Your opinion will be sought, and there is still a Search committee that will be formed.

Our congregation will be updated periodically with reports at our Sunday morning service and as a part of our monthly newsletters. The Transition Committee will be in contact with every member of our church family.

Finally, "Thank You" to those who have agreed to commit their time and energy to take the lead on this journey. May God be with you!

In Christ,



Bob Oehme

Wish List

Opportunities for Chenango, Inc.

Head Start/Early Head Start Program

Contact: Karen Randall at (607) 334-7114 or krandall@ofcinc.org

Items for Children **(ages infant- 5 yrs.)**

Children's Books- (infant- age 5) board books or hardcover
(new or gently used) puppets

Art Supplies for Toddlers-Preschool Age- Crayons,
washable markers, construction paper, colored pencils, stencils,
notebooks, items for collages (pom-poms, ribbon etc.)

Block Play- Mega blocks, Duplo blocks, foam, cardboard or
wooden stacking blocks, animal figurines, cars and trucks,
dramatic play theme sets (farm, zoo, doctor) stacking and
sorting toys, dolls and doll clothes

Manipulatives- items for sorting and matching, Play-dough
and Play-dough tools, wooden puzzles, items to enhance math
and science skills, preschool age board games

Items for Parent Training Sessions

Fabric, thread, lace for sewing projects, new canning jars,
new crock pots, gallon size zip lock freezer bags for cooking
classes.

Other

We also would welcome gift cards or checks which would allow
us to purchase the food items for our cooking classes and
additional items to equip our classrooms.

Director of Children and Youth Ministries

Linda L. Oehme

The Christmas Pageant was presented on December 17th during worship. We actually recorded the children explaining the Symbols of Christmas. The recording was fun and the children were able to see and hear themselves. Also, the children led most of that service. It was a fun worship and the children are becoming more comfortable with worship.

We are continuing the *Whole People of God* curriculum which inspires children from 3-12 year olds. We will be starting our 4th Unit entitled, “Extraordinary Time.” The title is a bit of word play or irony because this season is known as “Ordinary Time” in many traditions, since this time is not part of Advent/Christmas, Lent/Easter or lead up to major festivals. The encounters with God in many of the stories we hear in this unit are far from ordinary. There is a sense of the extraordinary in the encounters that people like Samuel and Jonah have, who encounter God in unusual settings and circumstances. Another theme woven throughout this unit is that of “call.” People, including children, are called to ministry; sometimes they say yes and sometimes they, like Jonah, initially say no. Our encounters with God turn the ordinary into the extraordinary. God encounters and calls people in many ways, often when they least expect it. And we can encounter God in many different ways and at many different stages of our lives.

Church School meets most Sundays at 8:30 a.m. Come and see what it is all about. Adult Church School meets most Sundays at 8:30 a.m. and an Adult Bible Study meets most Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m. We’re never too old to learn and refresh our faith.

While we are still in the beginning stages of reorganizing activities for the teens to get them involved in the life of the church, we welcome any ideas that would help us to meet the needs of our tweens and teens. Stay tuned for the details.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>January 2018</h1>						
	1 New Year's Day <i>Church Office Closed</i>	2 10:00 a.m. Tutoring 1:00 p.m. Quilters 4:00 p.m. M. Conant 5:30 p.m. Breastfeeding Support Group	3 9:00 a.m. Collate newsletter 11:00 a.m. M. Conant 2:30 p.m. A. Humer 6:00 p.m. Bible Study 7:00 p.m. Choir	4 9:00 a.m. Tax Training 10:00 a.m. Tutoring 4:00 p.m. M. Conant	5	6 9:00 a.m. Colorscape Meeting, Founders' Rm., Kitchen
7 8:30 a.m. Church School 9:15 a.m. Nursery 10:00 a.m. Worship/Communion Transition Comm. Installation <i>Food Donation Sunday</i> 11:00 a.m. Brunch Potluck and Undecorating 4:00 p.m. SAME meeting	8 10:00 a.m. Prayer Shawl 4:00 p.m. K. Given 7:00 p.m. Trustees Meeting 7:00 p.m. Transition Committee Meeting	9 9:00 a.m. Tax Training 10:00 a.m. Tutoring 1:00 p.m. Quilters 4:00 p.m. M. Conant	10 9:30 a.m. CAM Mtg., Homer 11:00 a.m. M. Conant 2:30 p.m. A. Humer 6:00 p.m. Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Chenango Change 7:00 p.m. Choir	11 9:00 a.m. Tax Training 10:00 a.m. Tutoring 11:00 a.m. Food Pantry Mtg. 4:00 p.m. M. Conant 3:30 p.m. Interfaith Council 6:00 p.m. Piecemakers	12	13 10:00 a.m. UCCNY Conference Board Meeting.
14 8:30 a.m. Church School 9:15 a.m. Nursery 10:00 a.m. Worship 11:00 a.m. Coffee Hour 3:00 p.m. Pastor Joe at Chenango Valley Home	15 Martin Luther Kin Jr. Day <i>Church Office Closed</i> 4:00 p.m. K. Given	16 9:00 a.m. Head Start Policy Council 10:00 a.m. Tutoring 1:00 p.m. Quilters 4:00 p.m. M. Conant	17 11:00 a.m. M. Conant 2:30 p.m. A. Humer 6:00 p.m. Bible Study 7:00 p.m. Choir 7:00 p.m. Democratic Committee	18 9:00 a.m. Tax Training 10:00 a.m. Tutoring 4:00 p.m. M. Conant 6:00 p.m. Alzheimers' Support Group	19	20
21 8:30 a.m. Church School 9:15 a.m. Nursery 10:00 a.m. Worship <i>Paper Products Sunday</i> 11:00 a.m. Coffee Hour 4:00 p.m. Deacons Meeting	22 10:00 a.m. Prayer Shawl 4:00 p.m. K. Given	23 9:00 a.m. Tax Training 10:00 a.m. Tutoring 1:00 p.m. Quilters 4:00 p.m. M. Conant	24 11:00 a.m. M. Conant 2:30 p.m. A. Humer 6:00 p.m. Bible Study 7:00 p.m. Choir	25 9:00 a.m. Tax Training 10:00 a.m. Tutoring 4:00 p.m. M. Conant 7:00 p.m. Executive Council	26	27
28 8:30 a.m. Church School 9:15 a.m. Nursery 10:00 a.m. Worship/Annual Meeting 11:00 a.m. Coffee Hour	29 <i>Newsletter Deadline</i> 4:00 p.m. K. Given	30 9:00 a.m. Tax Training 10:00 a.m. Tutoring 1:00 p.m. Quilters 4:00 p.m. M. Conant	31 11:00 a.m. M. Conant 2:30 p.m. A. Humer 6:00 p.m. Bible Study 7:00 p.m. Choir	1 10:00 a.m. Tutoring 4:00 p.m. M. Conant	2 9:00 a.m. Mail February Newsletter	3

Cantata Update and Thank You

Thank you to all who were involved in the cantata Darkness Into Light. The experience was successful and very well received by the community. Approximately 45 singers participated and our church nave was full of audience members for the performance. The free-will offering collected \$518 in donations to benefit Our Daily Bread Food Closet. A special thanks to the Deacons (and friends!) for preparing and serving the soup dinner for the singers and to Tim and Eric Burgher and Chris McSweeney for their help with set up and tear down logistics.

Participating Organizations:

Broad Street United Methodist Church, Norwich
 Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church, Norwich
 Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Norwich
 First Baptist Church, Norwich
 First Baptist Church, South New Berlin
 Norwich Central Schools Staff/Student/Parent
 Otego Presbyterian Church
 Oxford United Methodist Church
 Sidney Central Schools
 St. Bartholomw's Roman Catholic Church
 United Church of Christ, Norwich
 United Church of Christ, Sidney
 Sherburne United Church of Christ
 Unadilla Valley Central Schools

Notes from Participants:

We can't thank you enough for inviting us to participate. It all seemed to be over too soon. As I was in the second row with the tenors those alto and soprano voices behind me were awesome, especially in the 'Sing we all Noel' number. What a great way to begin to celebrate Christmas! Best to all,

David and Mary Jane Plummer

WOW!! What a great experience to sing with all of you! I loved every minute of it. Thank you so much Mary for your willingness to do this. I know there's a lot of work to it but you make it fun. And thanks to you Bob for a great job on the piano. Merry Christmas to all.

Kathie Burnside

Letters

Dear Missions Committee,

It is with pleasure that I acknowledge your donation to St. Paul's Church to help with our Christmas baskets to the needy. Continued generosity, such as yours, is very much appreciated and on behalf of the parish, I thank you.

Sincerely in Christ,

Rev. Ralph A. Bove, St. Paul's Catholic Church

Dear Pastor Joe,

Thank you once again for bringing the Word of God to our residents. Your dedication is greatly appreciated.

Merry Christmas from

Rose and the residents of Chenango Valley Home

Dear UCC Family,

Thank you so much for the very generous scholarship. It is greatly appreciated and will only help me to further my education at Methodist University. It means a lot knowing I have such supportive people surrounding me at all times.

Corey Johnson

Dear Members of Norwich UCC,

Wishing you the blessings of peace, love and joy this Christmas and with warm wishes for good health and good times also in the New Year.

Barbara Werner

The church received Christmas cards from the following:

Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School

Family Planning of South Central New York, Inc.

United Church of Christ Denomination Offices

United Church of Christ New York Conference Office

Barbara Werner

Chenango Valley Home

Christmas letters from David and Rena Hall and Don and Doris Esslinger are posted on the bulletin board outside the office.

2017 Thanksgiving Baskets (corrected)

**updated and corrected*

Baskets Distributed from UCC		257
UCC with First Baptist & Jewish Center	200	
Norwich Schools	56	
Private Family	1	
St. Bart's distributed Baskets		100
Emmanuel Episcopal \$50.00 Gift Cards		100
Total Families served:		457

Alvogen donated 547 items of Stuffing, canned goods, etc.

<u>Expenses:</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>(+ or -)</u>
Turkeys	\$2,476.25	\$1,957.24*	-165.01
Produce	976.00	998.50	+ 22.50
Bread	200.00	200.00	0.00
Margarine	176.00	154.00	- 22.00
Stuffing	77.25	0.00	-77.25
Total	\$3,905.50	\$3,309.74*	-\$241.76

Comparisons:

2017 Cost per basket = \$16.55 -2.98 less per basket*
 2016 Cost per basket = \$19.53 +\$2.22 more per basket
 2015 Cost per basket = \$17.31 -\$1.78 less per basket
 2014 Cost per basket = \$19.09 -\$.20 less per basket
 2013 Cost per basket = \$19.29 -\$3.43 less per basket
 2012 Cost per basket = \$22.72

Helping Our Daily Bread Food Closet

Food Donation Sunday - January 7

Bring in non-perishable food items

Paper Products Sunday - January 21

Bring in paper products and personal care items as well as diapers for First Baptist Church's free diaper project.

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.

Epiphany of the Christ - January 6, 2018

Isaiah 60:1-6

Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14,

Ephesians 3:1-12

Matthew 2:1-12

Baptism of the Christ - January 7, 2018

First Sunday after the Epiphany

Genesis 1:1-5

Psalm 29

Acts 19:1-7

Mark 1:4-11

Second Sunday after the Epiphany - January 14, 2018

1 Samuel 3:1-10, (11-20)

Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

John 1:43-51

Third Sunday after the Epiphany - January 21, 2018

Jonah 3:1-5, 10

Psalm 62:5-12

1 Corinthians 7:29-31

Mark 1:14-20

Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany - January 28, 2018

Deuteronomy 18:15-20

Psalm 111

1 Corinthians 8:1-13

Mark 1:21-28

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.

Get There

Mobility Management of South Central New York (MMSCNY) is a program of the Rural Health Network of SCNY that seeks to improve transportation access and coordination in South Central New York, with particular regard to the area's rural communities. MMSCNY operates the ***Getthere* Call Center** to assist people throughout the region and beyond. ***Getthere*** is staffed Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Call 1-855-373-4040. ***Getthere*** offers no-cost transportation assistance, including information and education, trip planning, and referral services. Additionally, individuals with an expressed financial need can get help accessing health-related services through a separate program called **Connection to Care**, or **CTC**. For qualifying individuals with no other options, **CTC** can help offset transportation expenses through fuel cards, volunteer drivers, public transportation, or private transportation providers, like taxis. **CTC** utilizes the lowest cost option or combination of options that is appropriate to the individual's specific need.

Visitors to Our Church in December

Wendy Stanton, Oneonta

Pat Wassenaar, South New Berlin

Karen Starker

Joseph Lombardi, Norwich

Bud & Cheryl Eberwein, Bonita Springs, Florida



It's That Time of Year

Snow, wind, ice and cold are here. In case of bad weather, please don't take unnecessary risks to get to church. Pastor Joe lives close to the church and will be here regardless of the weather. A chapel service may be held.



January Birthdays

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).

2 Fiora Breese
Keegan Prime
4 Barbara Kraft
5 Timothy Duke
7 Elizabeth Barber-Breese
10 Joy Barrows



11 Antonio Adams
20 Briana Phelps
22 Steve Emmons
24 Corey Johnson
31 Virginia Chaplin

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First Congregational
11 West Main Street
Norwich, NY 13815-1612



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STANDARD A
PERMIT 24
NORWICH NY 13815

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Ministers: **All the People**
Pastor and Teacher: **The Rev. Mr. Joseph Connolly**
Moderator: **Robert Oehme**
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**