



A monthly publication of
United Church of Christ, First Congregational, Norwich, NY

www.uccnorwichny.org



CONTACT US

11 West Main St. Norwich NY 13815
607-334-3434
office@uccnorwichny.org

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday
8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. (Closed for lunch 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.)
Friday
8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

WORSHIP SERVICES

Sundays, 10:00 a.m. in the Nave
[Click here for live stream.](#)

Ministers: All the People
Pastor: Rev. James K. Boodley
Moderator: Pete Williams
Director of Music Ministries: Mary Williams
Organist: David Burch
Director of Children/Youth Ministries: Ericka Tyler
Parish Coordinator: Cheri Oakley
Financial Assistant: Jennifer Mallozzi
Sexton: Eric Burgher

**PENTECOST
SUNDAY
May 19**

**Worship at
Broad St. United Methodist Church
(74 North Broad St., Norwich)
10:30a.m.**

We will join in worship at the BSUMC at 10:30 a.m. on May 19th. Plans are underway for a combined choir and for our handbell choir to play.



**UNITED
CHURCH
OF CHRIST**
First Congregational of Norwich, NY

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From the Pastor

Rev. James K. Boodley

Fieldstones



This time of year, area farmers' fields already have one crop in abundance: fieldstones – some large, some small and flat, still others of various shapes and sizes. I've lived across from one such field for decades and a new crop of fieldstones never fails to come up each spring. When the farmer plows the field, you can hear his plow blades hit the stones, sometimes with a small "ting," sometimes with a jarring ring.

That can't be good for the plow, but the farmer keeps coming back, plows the field, then finally plants his crop. He might plant corn, soybeans with sunflowers along the edge of the field, or alfalfa and clover. The alfalfa and clover allow the soil to rest and recover after the previous year's plantings. Even then, the farmer cuts the alfalfa and clover every few weeks, taking the crop back to feed his cows.

With all of the fieldstones coming up each year, what if the farmer said, "Enough! No matter how many stones I remove each spring, more take their place. My equipment and I can't take it!" There were several years during the pandemic when the field wasn't plowed. The farmer still came by at times to cut hay. After all, his cows still needed to eat, however, hay isn't a major cash crop on its own. And fieldstones most definitely aren't in demand. If my neighbor is going to continue being a farmer, he'll need to plow again this spring. And one of the conditions he'll face is dealing with a fresh supply of fieldstones.

How about us? In our own lives, there are always fieldstones (challenges) that arise on a daily basis. As with farming, challenges come with life. As difficult as they may be, the challenges we face become even more difficult when we carry them from one day to the next. Imagine what our own fields would look like if we insisted on bringing yesterday's challenges with us to add to the new challenges that will inevitably come up today. It wouldn't take long for our fields to be covered in fieldstones, with no room for our crops to grow.

What to do? First, realize that life, like farming, has a never-ending supply of challenges. They're part of the experience. Second, stop insisting on carrying yesterday's challenges into today. Give them to God: "Lord, I can't carry this burden / problem / challenge / fieldstone any longer. I'm giving it to you." That doesn't mean you won't have new challenges in life, but by handing over what you can no longer carry, you'll have – with God's help – the strength to deal with what comes along today.

On the topic of farming, Jesus used agrarian imagery in many of his parables. He noted there were crops ready for harvesting, but few people to do the work. No doubt that will feel all too familiar for a small community of faith such as Norwich. I know there's behind-the-scenes work being done to help get the work of the church done. As that happens, an important question for all of us will always be, "How does what we're doing serve God?" Answering that question will include dealing with the fieldstones / challenges that come with serving God, however, let's also imagine what we can do with God's help. To that end, I'll look forward to seeing how God provides inspiration for us in the weeks and months ahead.

In Faith,
J.K.

Parsonage Open House (65 West Main St.)

The parsonage has some wonderful new living room furniture and has had a spic-and-span spring cleaning. I'm looking forward to spending time with you there when I come to town on Thursdays. Let's start with an open house from 4:00-6:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 2nd. Nothing fancy, just an opportunity for you to come in to see a space that hasn't been open to you in the past.



From the Deacons

Pat Burke, Chair

God won't give you something you can't handle. We've all heard this popular phrase. The sentiment most likely comes from 1 Corinthians 10:13 where Paul says God "will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear." I have been challenged chairing the Board of Deacons. And I've been wondering how to handle being in a position in the church that seems to require more time and energy than I can give. Many questions and answers run through my mind. However, I am learning to ask the question, "What would Jesus do?" Other questions that come to my mind are – Is this really necessary? Who am I serving, my ego or the church? And why did I take this on? Ultimately, I am looking at this as an opportunity to learn and grow.

When I think about all these questions, I am reminded of the changes our church leadership is working on. Currently there are three committees, each with fewer than the required number of members and often meeting without a quorum. The proposed updated by-laws will combine the Deacons, the Trustees and the Executive Council into one leadership body which will keep the title of Executive Council. This change makes it possible for anyone who is committed to the church (not just covenant members) to have the opportunity to choose to take on responsibilities where they feel called to serve. (Members will vote on this change on April 28th.) This is thinking outside of the box, and I love these ideas that allow everyone to be involved and grow.

Deacons Fund Update

Already this year we have received many requests for assistance from members of the community and the church. We are grateful and blessed to have the funds in the budget to be able to offer help. This is a list of help we have given since January:

- Rental assistance for someone to move into a safer apartment.
- Avoid a shut-off and bring the account balance to current for a domestic violence survivor.
- A dumpster for cleaning up after a house fire.
- Aldi gift cards for a family who unexpectedly took in four children.
- Fees for a Christian camp this summer for two middle-school age boys.
- House a homeless man for seven days at a local hotel, splitting the cost with First Baptist Church.
- A part of the past-due amount to avoid shut-off from NYSEG for an individual, working with Emmanuel Episcopal Church Mission Outreach.

Donations to the Deacons fund are always accepted. If you would like to donate to the Deacons Fund, you can use the envelopes in the pews, write Deacons on your check memo, or go to www.uccnorwichny.org/give.



Monday Evening Musical Club

presents

Advanced Students and Scholarship Winners

May 6, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

United Church of Christ, 11 West Main St., Norwich

Livestream at [Facebook.com/mondayeveningmusicclub](https://www.facebook.com/mondayeveningmusicclub)

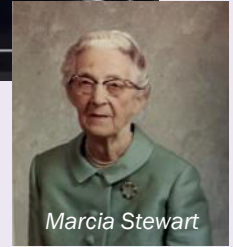
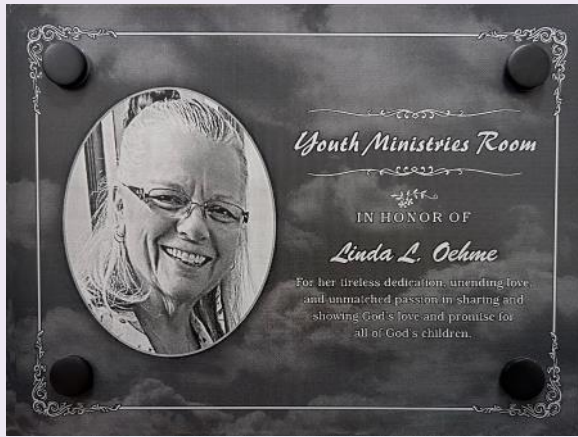
Since 1954, MEMC has been awarding scholarships to high school seniors going on to study music. Come and hear these talented students perform!

A colorful graphic advertisement for a youth group. The background is a vibrant, multi-colored splatter. In the top right corner, there is a heart-shaped icon with the words "SAFE SPACE" inside. The text "Free 2B Me" is in a purple font, and "YOUTH GROUP" is in large, bold, yellow-outlined letters. At the bottom, the schedule and details are listed in blue text.

SAFE SPACE

Free 2B Me
**YOUTH
GROUP**

Sundays 12:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Grades 5 - 12
Everyone is welcome
music, games, snacks conversation



During the worship service on April 7, we dedicated two spaces in the church in honor of two faithful and giving individuals. Plaques (pictured above) will be hung to commemorate these dedications.

The Oehme Family gave a generous gift in memory and honor of Linda L. Oehme for a new Youth Ministries Room. The old Youth Room was remodeled and updated last year and is now used for both Sunday School and Youth Group. Linda served as our Director of Children and Youth Ministries from September 2012 until she passed away in October of 2022. The inscription on the plaque reads: *“For her tireless dedication, unending love and unmatched passion in sharing and showing God’s love and promise for all of God’s children.”*

In December 2022, we received a generous gift from the Estate of Marcia Stewart. Marcia had been a member of this church from 1904 until her death in 1987. She joined at the age of 15 and in 1950, became the first woman to serve as the Moderator. A portion of her bequest was used to construct a sound booth and to improve the quality of our livestream with an upgrade to the sound, computer and video equipment in the Nave.

It's Time to Write Your Annual Report

If you are responsible for one of the following, please submit your report to the church office by May 29th.



- Executive Council
- Nominating Committee
- Board of Trustees
- Memorial Gifts Committee
- Board of Deacons
- Historian
- Director of Children & Youth Ministries
- Knitting Group

Copies of last year's reports are available from Cheri Oakley, Parish Coordinator. Email her at office@uccnorwichny.org or call 607-334-3434 and leave a message.

Letters - Emails - Notes

Dear Missions Committee,

Many thanks for investing in our co-op and helping us grow. Many of our products come from Chenango County, enabling us to be more self-sustaining and supporting our neighbor businesses and farms.

Deb Whitman, Chenango Family Food Co-Op

Dear Friends,

On behalf of all who are part of the BTS Center community, I want to offer my sincere thanks for your recent gift. How grateful we are for donors and friends like you, who give generously to support our work in this season that is so fraught with challenges and so filled with opportunity. The roots of The BTS Center run more than 200 years deep, all the way back to the founding of Bangor Theological Seminary in 1814. Although no longer a degree-awarding institution, today The BTS Center seeks to honor a proud and rich heritage in ways that are responsive to a rapidly changing religious landscape and a rapidly changing planet. In pursuit of this mission – *to catalyze spiritual imagination, with enduring wisdom, for transformative faith leadership* – we are pleased to offer theologically grounded programs of spiritual and vocational formation.

We are so very grateful for your support of the work of The BTS Center! Your generosity means so much to us.

Rev. Dr. Allen Ewing-Merrill, Executive Director, The BTS Center

Dear UCC,

On behalf of Hospice & Palliative Care of Chenango County, I would like to thank you for your generous donation. With the support of people like you, our organization has been caring for our community since 1991. As the demand for our services continues to grow, your contribution enables us to provide quality care, comfort, support, and relief to terminally ill patients and their families in Chenango County, regardless of ability to pay. Your generosity does not go unnoticed, and reflects the true *Neighbors caring for neighbors* spirit of Hospice Care. Thank you.

Cassandra Pfoh, Hospice & Palliative Care of Chenango County

Dear UCC,

On behalf of the American Red Cross, thank you for your generous gift. Support from companies like yours is truly making an impact in the lives of those we serve every day. During their darkest hours, people know they can turn to the Red Cross for comfort and care. Our humanitarian mission of preventing and alleviating human suffering in the face of emergencies depends on the compassion of our generous donors. I am profoundly grateful for your commitment to the lifesaving work of the Red Cross. Thank you once again for standing with us to help turn heartbreak into hope.

Gail J. McGover, President and CEO, American Red Cross

Dear Friends,

Thank you so much for your generous donation to Family Planning of South Central New York. With your support, more individuals in Broome, Cortland, Chenango, Delaware, and Otsego can access affordable, high quality reproductive medical care and comprehensive sexual health education. Your donation helps so many, including [this patient] who visited us recently: *“At Family Planning of South Central New York, I feel like I can tell them anything. They listen and offer great medical care, explanations and advice. This is important, because lots of times I feel unheard at other providers.”* Your investment empowers a brighter future for individuals in our community. We’re so grateful you’re with us.

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

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your donation to the Chenango County Historical Society in support of the Elinor Robb Troicke Memorial Scholarship. Your generosity is deeply appreciated by the entire CCHS community – we can’t thank you enough! Your support allows us to fulfill our mission, and impacts CCHS in ways you may not even imagine. From all of us at CCHS – thank you! I hope that you are able to visit our museum campus sometime in the near future and to join in our ongoing celebration of Chenango County History!

Jessica Moquin, Executive Director, Chenango County Historical Society

MAY



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 10:00am Prayer Circle, Zoom 7:00pm Choir, Nave	2 4:00 - 6:00pm Open House at the Parsonage	3 10:00am Prayer Circle, Zoom <div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px;">BSUMC Rummage & Bake Sale Friday 5/3, 9:00am - 7:00pm Saturday, 5/4 - 9:00am - 2:00pm</div>	4 10:00am (tent.) Norwich Theater Co.
			5 9:00am Nursery 10:00am Worship - Communion, Sunday School 11:00am Coffee Hour 12:30pm Youth Group	6 10:00am Knitting Group, kitchen 10:00am Prayer Circle, Zoom 3:00pm Tai Chi, Founders Rm. 7:00pm Monday Eve. Music Club concert. See p. 3.	7 1:00pm Piecemakers Circle, Kitchen 4:00pm Soup Kitchen at St. Bart's Parish Center	8 10:00am Prayer Circle, Zoom 7:00pm Choir, Nave
12 <i>Mother's Day</i> 9:00am Nursery 10:00am Worship Sunday School 11:00am Coffee Hour 12:30pm Youth Group	13 10:00am Prayer Circle, Zoom 3:00pm Tai Chi, Founders Rm.	14 1:00pm Piecemakers Circle, Kitchen 4:00pm Soup Kitchen at St. Bart's Parish Center 5:00pm Pride Alliance Board Meeting, Founders Rm.	15 10:00am Prayer Circle, Zoom 4:00pm Laundry Love, Byrne Dairy 6:10pm Democratic Committee, Founders Rm. 7:00pm Choir, Nave	16 5:30pm Soul Kitchen Free Meal, Emmanuel Episcopal 6:00pm Helping Hands Give-away, YMCA	17 10:00am Prayer Circle, Zoom	18
19 <i>Day of Pentecost</i> 10:30am Union Service at Broad Street United Methodist Church 12:30pm Youth Group	20 10:00am Knitting Group, kitchen 10:00am Prayer Circle, Zoom 3:00pm Tai Chi, Founders Rm.	21 1:00pm Piecemakers Circle, Kitchen 4:00pm Soup Kitchen at St. Bart's Parish Center	22 10:00am Prayer Circle, Zoom 7:00pm Choir, Nave	23 	24 10:00am Prayer Circle, Zoom	25 9:00am - 11:00am Diaper Give-away, First Baptist Church
26 <i>Trinity Sunday</i> 9:00am Nursery 10:00am Worship Sunday School 11:00am Coffee Hour 12:30pm Youth Group	27 <i>Memorial Day</i> Church Office Closed 10:00am Prayer Circle, Zoom 3:00pm Tai Chi, Founders Rm.	28 1:00pm Piecemakers Circle, Kitchen 4:00pm Soup Kitchen at St. Bart's Parish Center 7:00pm Deacons Meeting, Zoom	29 10:00am Prayer Circle, Zoom 7:00pm Choir, Nave	30	31 10:00am Prayer Circle, Zoom 	

Prayer Concerns

Let us keep in our prayers the following concerns:

- families, 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.
- the people of Ukraine, Russia, Israel, Gaza, Haiti



Celebrations

Birthdays

8 Luci Yantz
14 Marcos Flindt
17 Joanne Ferguson
20 Tim Carson
23 Terri Yantz
24 Aria Maholchic
25 Todd Bachman
29 Mary Williams



Anniversaries

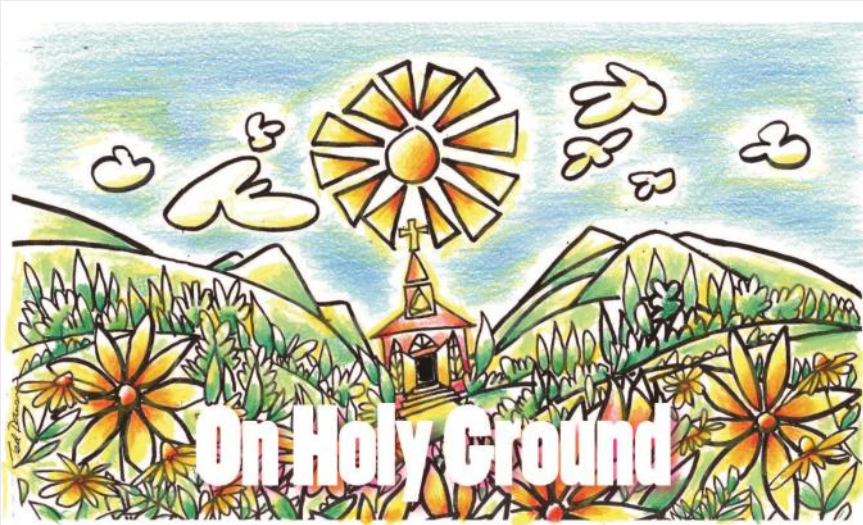
Miranda and William Hunter
5/27/2000



CONGRATULATIONS to **Mary and Tim Carson** who welcomed two granddaughters in April, **Olivia Rose (David)** and **Julia Suzanna (Brian)**.

STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH (OFFERING DATE TBA)

by Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson

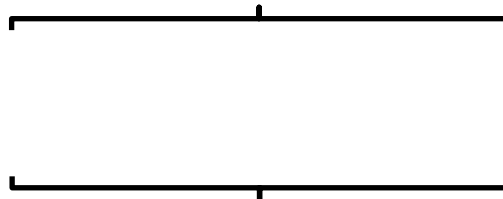


God calls us into community. God desires for us a big, inclusive expansive, welcoming community. One where “no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you're welcome.” I call this a “big tent” community. God wants our congregations and our whole Christian movement to be a “big tent” where all can be genuinely welcomed.

The **Strengthen the Church Offering** supports congregations and initiatives that help us to live into United Church of Christ's “big tent” vision. Funds raised support

leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and renewal initiatives in existing congregations. Your conference and the national ministries work together to use these funds for projects that matter now and for the future of our movement.

Through this offering, we further our commitment to being a multi-racial/multicultural church that is accessible to all. Will you join people across the UCC in making a gift to **Strengthen the Church**? Together, we can be the “big tent” God calls us to be.



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

11 West Main Street
Norwich, NY 13815-1612

