

UCC NEWS

December 2014

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

Christmas Eve

Candlelight

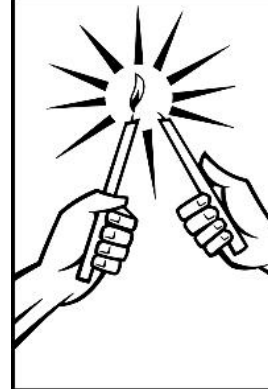
and Communion

5:00 p.m., Nave

Prelude at 4:45 p.m.

Featuring instrumental

and vocal soloists



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

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From the Pastor

Dear Friends in Christ,

I want to start the December letter with a shocking statement. Christmas has changed. No, it's not the date which has changed. The date is the same. What has changed over the course of the history of Christianity, over the course of two millennia, is our practices when it comes to the observance of Christmas.

Toward the beginning of our Christmas Eve service in our church this statement is made: "This is the eve of the Feast of the Incarnation—the Incarnation, the Feast of the Birth of the Messiah. The Hebrew word Messiah is translated into Greek as 'The Christ' and means the Anointed One. So the term 'Christ' is not a name, but an office, the office of Messiah."

"This feast is more commonly called Christmas. Christmas is an Old English word which means Mass or service of worship celebrated on the day upon which the Messiah's birth is commemorated. So, Christmas actually refers to the service of worship, not to the day."

"Ancient Rome had a winter solstice celebration, celebrating the return of the sun and on their calendar the solstice was on the 25th of December. It's likely Christians adopted it to celebrate the birth of the Messiah, as we claim Jesus to be both the Messiah and the Light of God born to our lives. Many scholars think Jesus was born not at the time of the solstice but in the Springtime of what we would call the year Four Before the Common Era."

Indeed, there is no particular evidence the birth of the Messiah was celebrated with its own feast in the early church. It's the middle of the Fourth Century before there is any evidence a special day is set aside to celebrate the birth.

The prevailing atmosphere of Christmas celebrations has continually evolved. Observances have ranged from a raucous, drunken, carnival-like state in the Middle Ages, to tamer family and children-centered themes which were introduced in the 19th-century.

It is sometimes said much of the way we observe the birth of the Messiah today was, if not invented, solidified by Charles Dickens (writer of *The Christmas Carol*) and Clement Moore,

to whom the poem *A Visit from St. Nicholas* (better known as *'Twas the Night Before Christmas*) is attributed.

Additionally, the celebration of Christmas was often banned within certain Protestant groups. The concern was that a celebration of Christmas might be too unbiblical or too pagan or too “Pope-ish.” Those groups include our ancestors, the Puritans. Indeed, Christmas did not become a regularly celebrated feast in many Congregational Churches until into the 18th Century.

To say that the two World Wars and the Great Depression of the 20th Century did not have a strong influence on how we celebrate Christmas today would be to ignore how the feast has changed in more recent times. For me a song that was popularized in the 1950s and 1960s, *Christmas Is for the Family*, encapsulates at least some of how the observance of Christmas has changed.

The long and the short of that change is twofold. First, Christmas has become widely observed as a cultural, civil holiday. Its observation as a religious holiday has diminished.

To more clearly illustrate that thought, you probably realize people who once would not have dreamed of any kind of Christmas observance pay attention to its trappings now. Folks who claim no religion whatsoever do what the culture encourages, everything from buying Christmas trees to decorating their houses with lights.

Second, Christmas has become a time when many pay attention to family. They make cross country visits, gather for family meals, exchange gifts sometimes with even distant family members.

To be clear: none of that is bad. It’s simply different from what had been. To reiterate that shocking statement with which I started: Christmas has changed.

Let me come back to that song title: *Christmas Is for the Family*. I embrace that thought. But it leads me to the question: who is family?

Christians believe God calls us to be family one to each other. Family includes those in need. Family includes those who are not like us. Christian “Family” says we are one because we are all members of the family of God, bar none.

Which brings me back to the first reason to celebrate Christmas: the presence of Christ among us. That is what

Christmas is about.

And Christmas is about the goodness of God, the mercy of God, the peace of God, the joy of God, the hope of God, the wisdom of God, the love of God. These are the reasons to celebrate.

The God of the Covenant is with us, walks at our side, is present in our lives. As Christians, the reason we celebrate the Feast of the Incarnation, is the reality of the mystery of God's love for us as that love is expressed in the Christ.

This is a quote I've used before and it is worth repeating. They are the words of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J. (1881–1955). "We are not human beings having a spiritual experience; we are spiritual beings having a human experience." And Christmas, if we celebrate it not as a holiday but as a holy day, reminds us that we are tied to the Spirit of God.

Bonnie and I wish you all a happy, peace centered, hopeful, joyous Christmas, filled with the love of God.


In Faith,


Joe

Deck the Halls.....

The Deacons invite you to come decorate our church for Christmas on December 6th at 11:00 a.m. Decorate trees, hang garland, hang bows, string lights. We all enjoy how beautiful the church looks decorated for Christmas – and the more people who help, the more fun it is to do it.





'Advent' Means Coming

Advent is a season of reflection, waiting and preparation which leads to the observance of the coming of Jesus, the Christ. The Advent wreath probably comes from the Lutheran tradition and is rich in symbolism. The circular shape is symbolic of God who is eternal and God's never ending love. Some wreaths have evergreens at the base indicating everlasting life. The four candles represent the four Sundays in Advent. Each candle lit marks the growing anticipation for the light that came into the world in Jesus and symbolism is in each. The first is HOPE, as we reflect on the birth and return of Jesus. The second focuses on PEACE, not the absence of war, but the presence of God's Spirit as understood in Jesus. The third is for LOVE, as God shows steadfast love for us in sending Jesus to be the Messiah. The fourth (pink) candle is for the JOY one finds in the Lord. The fifth 'Christ' candle symbolizes the life found in Christ and is lit at the Christmas service.



Mitten Tree

A Mitten Tree will be in the Founders' Room after December 6th and will need new mittens, hats, gloves and scarves for decoration. Place your donations on the tree anytime the church is open. Items are given to the Perry Browne school nurse for children who need them to stay warm during the coming months.

REMINDER - Deadline to turn in Pledges for 2015 is December 15th.

From the Deacons

Reflections of the 200th Anniversary celebration:

- On December 1st, 2013, the beginning of the new church year, we started the 200th Anniversary celebration with the beginning of monthly birthday coffee hour celebrations.
- On January 26th, 1st Soup and Bread Sunday was a great success.
- On February 9th, 1st Friends and Family Sunday followed by Sweet Tooth Coffee Hour was another super success.
- On March 16th, our Corned Beef and Cabbage Pot Luck dinner was great fun and a huge success.
- On April 6th, we had Laity Sunday aka Pastor Appreciation Sunday. We actually pulled off a surprise for Pastor Joe and Bonnie. Thanks to all who made this a joyous occasion!
- On May 11th, the men of the church hosted a Women's Breakfast before church.
- June 15th found us worshiping with the Baptist Church which is also celebrating their 200th year. The worship was held in the park between the Baptist and the UCC churches. A picnic lunch followed. It was a lot of fun.
- On June 22nd, we had a full day celebration for our 200th. Worship was special with The Rev. David Gaewski, NY Conference Minister, preaching. An afternoon concert featuring Soprano Cathy Hammons, UCC Organist Robert Oehme, Alto Mary Williams and Accompanist Sue Franco was followed by an Old Fashioned Ham and Turkey Dinner. We fed 71 people and the event was a great success. Thanks to all who helped to make it a success. Everyone worked very hard and it is very much appreciated.
- On June 29th, the women hosted a men's breakfast. (We really are good at feeding people.)
- July 6th, we had our own outdoor service followed by a barbeque at the South Broad Street Park (across from McDonald's.) Hamburgers and hot dogs were provided and everyone brought a dish to share. That was lots of fun. Linda and Pete were the cooks.
- On August 3rd, we celebrated with an Ice Cream Social for Birthday Sunday.
- September 14th was the first day of Church School and we had a Blessing of the Backpacks during worship.

- September 27th we hosted the Association Meeting.
- On October 19th, there was an Organ Concert by Al Fedak which was open to the public.

November was filled with all kinds of ways to serve.

- On Sunday, November 23rd, we blessed and sent off the Operation Christmas Child boxes during the service.
- November 24th and 25th we had our Thanksgiving Basket event. Monday evening after the setup, we had a pizza dinner and fellowship. Thanks to all those who helped; it really is a lot of fun!! Due to the early newsletter copy deadline, final figures and an update will be published in the January Newsletter.

2 Reminders

On November 30, Rev. John Koopman will be sharing the Word with us during our regular worship service.

Remember to sign up for Birthday Coffee Hour (1st Sunday of each month) and regular coffee hours, as well as Liturgist, Usher, Communion Stewards, and Flowers.

If you have any ideas for fun and fellowship, please speak with Linda Oehme or any of the Deacons.



Pasta Sunday ~ December 7

Bring in non-perishable boxes or cans of pasta

Paper Products Sunday ~ December 21

Bring in paper products and personal care items



Music Sunday
December 14th
10:00 a.m. in the Nave



Our musicians will share their talents
 as we worship God in music and in song.



Poinsettias

If you would like to donate a poinsettia to be used in decorating the Nave for Christmas from December 14 through Christmas Eve, please call the church office (334-3434) or return this form **by December 12**. Please indicate if you want the office to order a poinsettia OR

if you will bring a poinsettia to church by December 12.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Choose one:

- Please order a poinsettia and bill me \$15.00.
- I will bring in a poinsettia

The plant is given: (circle one) IN MEMORY or IN HONOR of:

Choose one:

- Please ask the Deacons to take the plant to a member or friend of the church. (Every year our homebound and ill friends receive a poinsettia from the church.)
- I will pick up my plant after the Christmas Eve Service on December 24th.

Note: For the purposes of decoration, some of the flowers may be placed in areas of the church other than the Nave.

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 (the lectionary having been published and revised). In our Congregational tradition, while pastors are encouraged to use the assigned readings, it's not mandatory. We will publish each Sunday's readings and some from major church feast days each month. Most assignments consist of at least a reading from the Hebrew Scriptures, i.e.: an excerpt from the Torah, the Prophets or the Writings, a Psalm, an Epistle reading and a Gospel reading. This is published in the hope that some may use these readings in their personal prayer and devotional time.

Second Sunday of Advent - December 7

Isaiah 40:1-11, Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13
2 Peter 3:8-15a, Mark 1:1-8

Third Sunday of Advent - December 14

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11, Psalm 126 or
Luke 1:46b-55, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24, John 1:6-8, 19-28

Fourth Sunday of Advent - December 21

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16, Luke 1:46b-55 or
Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26, Romans 16:25-27, Luke 1:26-38

Christmas Eve - December 24

Isaiah 9:2-7, Psalm 96, Titus 2:11-14, Luke 2:1-14, (15-20)

Christmas Day - December 25



Isaiah 52:7-10, Psalm 98, Hebrews 1:1-4, (5-12), John 1:1-14

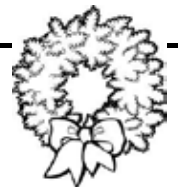
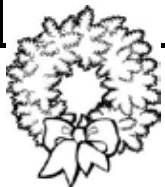
First Sunday after Christmas Day - December 28, 2014

Isaiah 61:10-62:3, Psalm 148, Galatians 4:4-7, Luke 2:22-40



Community Concert
SING OUT & CELEBRATE
Sunday December 7th at 7:00 p.m.
at Broad St. United Methodist Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>December 2014</h1> 						
	1 3:00 p.m. Place Teens 6:00 p.m. Prayer Shawl	2 3:00 p.m. Place Teens 6:00 p.m. AA Mtg. 6:30 p.m. TNT Quilters	3 9:30 a.m. Home Bureau 2:00 p.m. A. Humer, Nave/Founders' Rm. 3:00 p.m. Place Teens 6:00 p.m. Bible Study 7:00 p.m. Choir	4 12:00 p.m. Executive Council Meeting 3:00 p.m. Place Teens	5 3:00 p.m. Place Teens	6 10:00 a.m. Deacons Mtg. 11:00 a.m. Decorate the Church
Pastor Joe and Bonnie will be away visiting family in Dallas through December 3.						
7 8:30 a.m. Nursery/Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship/Communion Pasta Sunday 11:00 a.m. Coffee Hour 3:00 p.m. Pastor Joe at Chenango Valley Home	8 3:00 p.m. Place Teens	9 11:00 a.m. Food Pantry Mtg. 3:00 p.m. Place Teens 6:00 p.m. AA Mtg. 6:30 p.m. TNT Quilters 7:00 p.m. Peace Action Film Series	10 9:30 a.m. CAM Mtg., Homer 2:00 p.m. A. Humer, Nave/Founders' Rm. 3:00 p.m. Place Teens 6:00 p.m. Bible Study 7:00 p.m. Choir	11 11:00 a.m. Susquehanna Clergy Mtg., Groton. 3:00 p.m. Place Teens 6:00 p.m. Piecemakers	12 3:00 p.m. Place Teens	13 3:00 p.m. Voices of Tabernacle, Episcopal Church, Sherburne
14 8:30 a.m. Nursery/Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship Music Sunday 11:00 a.m. Coffee Hour 7:00 p.m. Sing Out & Celebrate. See p. 9.	15 <i>Pledge Deadline</i> <i>Newsletter Deadline</i> 3:00 p.m. Place Teens 6:00 p.m. Prayer Shawl	16 <i>Hanukkah starts.</i> 9:00 a.m. Head Start Policy Council 3:00 p.m. Place Teens 6:00 p.m. AA Mtg. 6:30 p.m. TNT Quilters	17 2:00 p.m. A. Humer, Nave/Founders' Rm. 3:00 p.m. Place Teens 6:00 p.m. Bible Study 7:00 p.m. Choir	18 3:00 p.m. Place Teens 6:00 p.m. Alzheimer's Support Group 7:00 p.m. Trustees Mtg.	19 9:00 a.m. Collate January Newsletter 3:00 p.m. Place Teens	20 Hanukkah Open House, Norwich Jewish Center
21 8:30 a.m. Nursery/Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship <i>Paper Products Sunday</i> <i>Christmas Fund Offering</i> 11:00 a.m. Coffee Hour	22 3:00 p.m. Place Teens	23 3:00 p.m. Place Teens 6:00 p.m. AA Mtg. 6:30 p.m. TNT Quilters	24 Christmas Eve 4:45 p.m. Prelude 5:00 p.m. Candlelight & Communion Service	25 <i>Christmas Day</i> Church Office Closed 	26 <i>Christmas Day</i> Church Office Closed	27
28 8:30 a.m. Nursery/Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship 11:00 a.m. Coffee Hour	29 6:00 p.m. Prayer Shawl	30 6:00 p.m. AA Mtg. 6:00 p.m. TNT Quilters	31 <i>New Year's Eve</i>	1 <i>New Year's Day</i> Church Office Closed	2	3





Look in the Mailbox

From the church website e-mail:

Greetings to your Church and membership.

I was doing research on the ancestors of Upton family members and happened to come across your newsletter and an article written by Pat Evans on the history of your church for your 200th year celebration. The article was in reference to Reverend Augustas Goodnow Upton. Reverend Augustas Goodnow Upton is related to my branch of the family as follows: Lucious W. Upton is Augustas Upton's brother and my great grandfather. Lucious W. Upton was born in 1853 so he was the younger brother of Augustas. Lucious stayed in the Elyria, Ohio area and became a respected photographer in the Elyria area. Lucious and his wife had children and a son named Deforest Miles Upton which is my grandfather. Deforest Miles Upton and his wife had two boys and a daughter. The youngest boy is Richard Deforest Upton.

My mother and father had eight children and all eight of us are still living and range in age from 55 years of age to 73. Oldest to youngest: Joy, Glenn, Debra and Donald (twins), Timothy, Steven, Nancy, Tamera.

Once again, thank you for sharing your history and allowing us to discover another important link to our family history. God Bless your church and congregation as you approach the end of your 200th year celebration.

Timothy A. Upton

Dear Friends,

It is with pleasure that I acknowledge receipt of your donation to St. Paul's Church to help with our Christmas baskets. 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, Pastor
 Church of St. Paul

Dear Friends,

Your recent gift will mean so much for all the animals that are in our care. What a wonderful gift - I cannot even express how much this helps all our shelter animals. A safe and caring environment is important to the well-being of all our stray and homeless animals and a comfort while they patiently wait for their forever home. You have helped make this possible!

Annette J. Clarke, Executive Director
Chenango SPCA

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the Chenango Housing Council, please accept my sincere thanks for the donation from your church. This money will be deposited into our projects account and used for the next project sponsored by the housing council We are very grateful for your continued support.

Wayne Patafio, Secretary
Chenango Housing Council



Director of Children and Youth Ministries

Linda L. Oehme

Church School has been hearing and working with “desert” box stories. This month the stories have been: “Exile and Return”, “Ten Best Ways to Live”, “Ark and the Tent for God”, “Temple, House for God”. Come and see for yourself. There is always an open and welcome invitation to all.

Remember, Church School is not just for kids. There are Sunday adult classes meeting in the Chapel and Bible Study most Wednesday evenings led by Pastor Joe. WE'RE never too young or old to learn and explore our faith in new and exciting ways. This is an open invitation for anyone who would like to join us. See you on Sunday.

Meet Your Neighbor: Cathy Hammons

By Elizabeth Barber-Breese

Five months ago we had a service of Shalom for Cathy Hammons as she left to begin her retirement in Montrose, Pennsylvania. Since then, she hasn't wasted any time. Luckily she found a moment between her book group and choir practice to grant an interview.

If you know Cathy, her community involvement comes as no surprise. She's been very active in the UCC church— 18 years as choir director, hand bell conductor, chair of the deacons, guest organist— to name only a few positions. Music has been the common denominator in many of her church activities. Again, no surprises there, as it was the renowned music program that drew her to the UCC in the first place.

Music has always been a part of Cathy's life. As a young girl, she remembers sitting through the service just so she could sing the hymns. She longed to join the choir for *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* in the Christmas concert. 6th grade proved to be an especially pivotal year. She was finally able to sing in the choir, and she realized another important dream. One of the things eleven year old Cathy desperately wanted was a piano. Her father scoured the *Pennysaver* ads and found a free, upright piano. When he brought it home, it was old, and battered, but Cathy was thrilled. Her church choir director insisted that she had a knack for music, and her parents supported her, making sure that she had lessons even though they had to make financial sacrifices to pay for them.

Cathy describes herself as a life-long learner with many interests, someone who likes to keep her options open. She follows her curiosity wherever it takes her. Her choice of band instrument in the 7th grade is one example of this. She became mesmerized by the sound of the oboe; it was something different, something challenging. Other girls wanted to play the clarinet or the flute, but the oboe would set her apart. The oboe would give her more chances for a solo. Before she could even play a single note, let alone a solo, she had to start out with the clarinet. She remembers the thrill of finally graduating to the oboe. With eager anticipation, she took it out of its case and blew her first triumphant note, only to have her dog come running to stick his nose up the instrument's bell. Maybe it wasn't such a stellar beginning, but she stayed with it for six years.

After high school, her love of music brought her to Temple University in Philadelphia as a voice major. She did not have a clear-cut career goal— she was following her intuition and her interests. At Temple, she realized that music was her passion, but she didn't think that she could turn it into a career.

Temple was much larger than her school in Montrose. In high school, she was a big fish in a small pond, and in college, the competition was stiffer. Metaphorically speaking, she was no longer a lone oboe surrounded by flutes and clarinets. She knew that to be a professional musician she would have to constantly work at it, to focus on music, but she wanted the freedom to do other things, to have, as she says, a “normal life.” In her junior year of college, she decided to major in German. Why German? Well, let's go back to that all important 6th grade year again.

In 6th grade, Cathy became acquainted with a Rotary exchange student from the Netherlands. From that moment, Cathy wanted to travel and be an exchange student. She has always been fascinated by language and drawn to people from other cultures. As a high school student, she got her chance and became a German exchange student, becoming fluent in German. This love of languages and cultures proved to be very influential.

In her 40s, after raising her son, Scott, Cathy realized that she needed a profession. She enrolled at Hartwick College to become a music teacher. For nine years, she taught music at an elementary school, but, as she had known at Temple, music was more of an avocation for her, not a job.

That's when she became aware of a need for English as Second Language teachers and she knew that her love of meeting people and her language background would make her perfect for this line of work. She moved to Albany for ESL training and found the career that would sustain her until retirement.

Now that she is back in Montrose once again, she is continuing to expand her horizons. She hopes to find an organ teacher to help her improve her skills; she'd like to audit some courses in history, music, language, philosophy. And of course, the book group has pot lucks to organize; the choir needs her to fill in. Since Cathy's experiences show that she trusts her instincts and follows her heart, we will see her again, too, because a piece of her heart is in Norwich, and it's keeping time with the music.

- an anonymous poem referring to a character based on St. Nicholas having a sleigh, pulled by a single reindeer.
- *The Night Before Christmas* poem was published, anonymously, in a newspaper in Troy, NY, on December 23, 1823 by author, Clement Clarke Moore.
 - Commercialization of the holiday started as early as the 1830s with newspapers filled with ads—from raisins for baked goods, to pianos for the parlor—for Christmas shoppers. The importance of Christmas and the potential of the “gift-giving season” was quickly recognized by merchants. People found seasonal jobs by impersonating Santa starting in Philadelphia. Thus Santa Clauses started to appear on street corners and in stores by 1850.
 - Johann Hinrich Wichern of Germany used an advent wreath made from a cart wheel to educate children about the meaning and purpose of Christmas in 1839. This helped them count the approach of Christmas. A white candle was put in the wreath for every Sunday of Advent, starting with the fourth Sunday before Christmas and a red candle for every day in between. The Advent wreath is now constructed of evergreens to represent everlasting life brought through Jesus and the circular shape of the wreath represents God, with no beginning and no end.
 - Prince Albert and Queen Victoria made Christmas trees fashionable by installing a Christmas tree at Windsor Castle in 1841. Christmas trees were decorated with various edibles and home-crafted ornaments and candles. By 1860 glass trinkets made in Germany were becoming available to adorn the branches.
 - Music exclusively associated with Christmas was added to songbooks after the 1840’s – *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear* (1851), *See Amid the Winter’s Snow* (1851), *There Came A Little Child to Earth* (1856), and *We Three Kings of Orient Are* (1859). Caroling was increasingly practiced.
 - *Kriss Kringle’s Book* (1842) told of St. Nicholas, or Kris Kringle, as a “nice, fat, good humored man” who brought gifts for good children. Illustrations by Robert Weir, changed the image from a thin character to a robust one.
 - *A Christmas Carol* the tale of Ebenezer Scrooge by Charles Dickens was published October 1843.
 - Christmas greetings where first thought to be issued by



a New York engraver in 1851. Richard Pease printed cards that showed a family dinner scene that read “A Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year, to:” But they were not widely used until 1875 when a line of

cards by Louis Prang of Boston were introduced.

- The Santa Claus image drawn by Thomas Nast a magazine illustrator in 1863 is credited with the modern depiction of Santa Claus . It appeared on the cover of *Harper’s Weekly* of January 3, 1863.
- Christmas as a legal holiday was first adopted in Alabama, 1836. Then between 1850 and 1861, fifteen states joined in this included Illinois, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. It officially became a United States holiday, June 28, 1870, signed into law by President Ulysses S. Grant. This helped standardize the date for celebration. Previously, celebrations took place at varying times during the month especially December 6th, St. Nicholas’s day, or January 6th, Epiphany.
- The first electric Christmas tree lights appeared in the 1880s (candles were used before this time). They were created by Edward H. Johnson, an associate of inventor Thomas Edison. While vice president of the Edison Electric Light Company, (now Con Edison) he had Christmas tree light bulbs especially made. The tree was hand-wired with 80 red, white and blue electric incandescent light bulbs the size of walnuts, on December 22, 1882 at his home on Fifth Avenue, New York City.
- The First White House Christmas Tree was in 1889, during the presidency of Benjamin Harrison. It was decorated with toy soldiers and glass ornaments.
- *Yes, Virginia, There Is a Santa Claus* letter from eight year old girl to the New York Sun appeared in the newspaper in 1897.

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 persons, and all those who feel isolated and alone.

Visitors to Our Church in November

Wendy Stanton, Oneonta

Melanie Williams, Snellville, Georgia



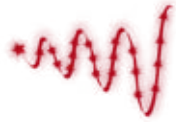
These are the birthdays of members and friends of our church family. If you know someone on the list who's having a birthday, feel free to send that person a card. Even if you don't know anyone on the list, feel free to send any celebrant a card. More importantly, strive to hold each of these people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

December

2	Pat Whitmore	16	J. R. Hamilton
3	Pete Williams		Vicki Gray
10	Bonnie Carpenter		Joe Connolly
11	Judy Smith	19	Marissa Phelps
12	Jamie Maholchic	27	Mary Carson

UCC NEWS

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



DATED MATERIAL: Please Deliver Promptly.
This issue mailed 12/01/2014.

STANDARD A
PERMIT 24
NORWICH NY 13815

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Ministers: **All the People**
Pastor and Teacher: **The Rev. Mr. Joseph Connolly**
Moderator: **Janet Johnson**
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 Lanfear**