



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

www.uccnorwichny.org



CONTACT US

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607-334-3434
office@uccnorwichny.org

CHURCH OFFICE OPEN

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday
8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
(closed 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.)

WORSHIP SERVICES

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

Ministers: All the People
Pastor and Teacher: Rev. Jason Boyd
Moderator: John Kolb
Director of Music Ministries: Mary Williams
Organist: Jason Handy
Organist Emeritus: Bob Oehme
interim Children's Ministries: Jessica Posner
Parish Coordinator: Cheri Oakley
Financial Assistant: Jennifer Mallozzi
Custodian: Eric Burgher

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Christmas Eve Service **December 24th** **Candlelight and Communion** **Special Music**

4:45 p.m. Prelude
5:00 p.m. Service

In-Person or livestream
www.uccnorwichny.org/live-stream-2



God's Doors are Open to All



From the Pastor

Rev. Jason Boyd

Advent is upon us!

Some of you have heard me say this before, but now you all get to know: Advent is my favorite liturgical season of the church year. I will probably make a joke about how it is better than Lent at some point. ☺

This wonderful season of watching and waiting began on November 27, and soon we will be doing what I refer to as “hanging the greens” as we start our collective journey of watching and waiting for the One who is come. This journey will take us through candles and cantatas and lead us to the manger. Along the way, we may do well to challenge ourselves anew in asking who Jesus is to us.

The United Church of Canada uses this question in its Advent candle-lighting liturgies in a program called Advent Unwrapped. This is not the liturgy we will be using this year (watch out for the future though!), but it still helps us reflect on the Advent journey to come, and what we might discern anew:

Who do you say Jesus is? We might say a wise teacher and guide who leads us to hope. We might say a firm foundation and careful gardener who nurtures peace. We might say a bright morning star who brings joy with His rising. We might say Emmanuel, God-with-us who spreads love. We might say all of those, and who knows what more.

I invite you to ask those questions for and of yourselves, and as we travel the road of Advent, as each candle is lit and each word is spoken, to make space for whatever new revelations the Holy Spirit of our Still-Speaking God may have to offer you.

Christmas is a glorious and joyful season for we as followers of Christ, but let us also remember that the journey to it matters, as does what we learn along the way. Christmas is a season that we’ve experienced myriad times before, but I invite you to allow yourself to imagine experiencing it again for the first time and discover what you learn about Jesus. Embrace the watching and waiting of Advent. Let yourself look for the signs of the One who is to come. Open yourself up to the Holy Spirit and see where it leads you as we journey to the manger these next few weeks.

Blessings,

Pastor Jason



Christmas Fund Collection

News from The Pension Boards-United Church of Christ regarding The Christmas Fund for Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund Collection
“Year after Year, Your Gift Brings Joy”

The Advent season of waiting and watching is also a season of preparing. Our generosity prepares the way for hope, peace, justice, and community. United Church of Christ retired clergy, servants of the church, have spent lifetimes baptizing and blessing, teaching and preaching, marrying and burying, comforting and empowering God’s people. Now, through the Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross, we have the opportunity to sustain and empower them. Our gifts of gratitude and love bring hope to the hopeless, joy to the sorrowful, and deep love to those who have ministered in God’s love for so long. By giving generously to the Christmas Fund, we will help retired clergy, church staff, and their families to pay bills, maintain health insurance, and meet emergency needs. Year after year, our gifts make a difference, easing the anxiety of constant financial worries. Last year, the Christmas Fund, administered by the Pension Boards of the United Church of Christ, provided over \$1.6 million in pension and health benefits supplementation, emergency grants, and thank-you checks to retired servants of the church and their families. Every cent of that money came from the pockets of people like you. Please give as generously as you are able this year! (Luke 2:10)

In 2021, gifts to the Christmas Fund enabled:

- Monthly pension supplementation for 231 retired clergy and lay employees (\$1,104,479)
- Health benefits supplementation for 87 retired clergy and lay employees (\$177,600)
- Emergency grants for 53 individuals and families (\$150,338)
- Christmas “Thank You” gift checks to 509 retired clergy and lay employees (\$254,000)

HOW TO DONATE: UCC Norwich will hold the collection on Christmas Eve. Envelopes will be in the bulletin. Checks can be made out to our church with “CHRISTMAS FUND” in the memo. We will send along all donations to the UCCNYConference on behalf of our congregation.

Thanksgiving Baskets

by Ericka Tyler

Our 2022 Thanksgiving basket project was a great success thanks to the efforts of many community and individual volunteers. The United Church of Christ was able to provide a total of 100 families with either a gift card and basket filled with Thanksgiving foods or at least a gift card. The project was definitely a group effort from beginning to end! Weeks of planning began months prior to our culminating event. Many phone calls were made (and made again), boxes and bags secured, donations requested, and plenty of shopping done! We are extremely blessed to have received a generous donation of food products and money from the Alvogen company in Norwich! Thank you also to Carlo Masi Sons & Daughter in Utica who donated toward the cost of the produce!

Finally, church and community volunteers gathered on a Sunday afternoon to separate and bag produce, including potatoes, apples, and carrots. Others packed boxes with gravy, vegetables, cranberry sauce, and stuffing. On Monday, the boxes were topped off with butter and rolls or bread. Generous donations of bread or rolls came from Magro's, Nina's, and the Cottage Bakery, all located in Norwich. We are so thankful for this!

In addition, the Norwich City School District and a local Girl Scout troop collected their own donations and created 24 additional boxes and donated 10 gift cards for us to give away. This brought our total up to 134 families being served!

The local community didn't stop there. Between the Emmanuel Episcopal Church, St. Bartholomew Catholic Church, and the City Church of Norwich, an additional 250 Thanksgiving boxes were provided to families in need.

It takes a great deal of planning, organization, effort, and old fashioned manual labor to complete a project like this. I'll admit, there were times when I simply wished we had our precious Linda here to guide us on what to do. But, we did it! Families were blessed. And they were so thankful! Linda, we thank you so much for your years of tireless work on this mission. I hope we have made you proud!



Deacons Doings

Mary Williams, Chair

Core Value: Spiritually Alive

The season of Advent is here! We will decorate the church Saturday December 3 at 10:00 a.m. All are welcome! The deadline to order poinsettias is December 16th. See page 6 for the order form.

WORSHIP PLANS:

December 4 10:00 a.m.

Communion

December 11 10:00 a.m.

Handbells play during the service.

(Budget vote after the service).

December 18 10:00 a.m.

Music Sunday featuring the Choir and

Handbell Choir

December 18 4:00 p.m.

Performance of the cantata, *Seekers of the Light*

December 24 4:45 p.m.

Candlelight service, Communion

and lots of special music

December 25

No worship service

Core Value: Neighborhood Engagement

THE DEACONS FUND

The church office receives calls each month from individuals who are requesting help with unanticipated or emergency expenses of all types, including situations where the continuity of their housing or utilities is in jeopardy. The Deacons work in cooperation with other churches on larger requests. The Deacons Fund welcomes donations of any amount at any time! Just put your offering in the special envelopes located in the pews (or write "Deacons Fund" on your check). Thank you for your support which allows us to respond when someone asks for help.

MITTEN TREE

Bring in new mittens, hats and scarves of all sizes to decorate the Mitten Tree in the Founders' Room. After Christmas we donate these items to Perry Browne School.



Core Value Making Disciples

Pastor Jason is leading us in a book study of *The First Christmas* by Marcus J. Borg and John Dominic Crossan. Books are still available in the church office. You are welcome to read the book, whether or not want to be a part of the discussion groups.

Discussion Group are broken down into the same three sections as the book. Remaining discussions on Zoom are:

Part II: Tuesday, 12/6 at 2:00 p.m. or
Thursday, 12/8 at 7:00 p.m.

Part III: Tuesday, 12/13 at 2:00 p.m. or
Thursday, 12/15 at 7:00 p.m.

If you need the Zoom links, please contact Cheri in the church office.

Core Value: Loving Church Family

- UCC Norwich is a welcoming place! We need your friendly face to greet folks on Sunday morning as an usher, liturgist, or coffee hour host. Please sign up on the bulletin board in the front hallway.
- Join the ZOOM Prayer Circle Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 10:00 a.m. for a time of prayer and devotion.



First Sunday of Advent 11/27/22

Elsbeth Hunter lighting the candle for Hope.

Deacon Book Box




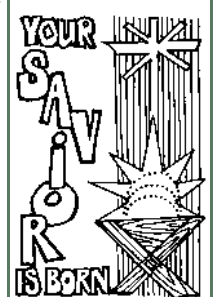
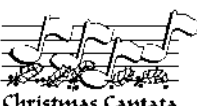



by Rose Laughlin

The Deacons Book Box has been relocated to the Mayflower Room. Many old books have been donated to the Guernsey library to make room for the new books. The shelves will be labeled and there will be a new donation box if you'd like to "take a book and leave a buck." All donations will go to the Deacon's Fund. We are not taking any more books at this time, but when we are ready for more books, we will let you know.

December 2022



The Norwich Muslim Community meets upstairs every evening and Friday afternoon.
Children's Sunday School is held weekly on Zoom. Sometimes it is also in person at the same time. Check our Facebook page for updates.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 7:00 p.m. Book Group on Zoom	2 10:00 a.m. Prayer Group on Zoom 3:00 p.m. J. Handy Lessons, Nave	3 10:00 a.m. Decorate the church for Advent and Christmas
4 9:00 a.m. Sunday School and Nursery 10:00 a.m. Worship/Communion 11:00 a.m. Coffee Hour 11:30 a.m. Bell Choir Rehearsal 3:00 p.m. Cantata Rehearsal, Zoom 6:00 p.m. LGBTQ+ Fellowship, Zoom	5 10:00 a.m. Knitting Group, kitchen 10:00 a.m. Prayer Group, Zoom 3:00 p.m. J. Handy Lessons, Nave 3:00 p.m. Tai Chi, Founders' Rm. 7:00 p.m. Trustees Meeting, Zoom 7:00 p.m. Music Committee, Chapel	6 1:00 p.m. Piecemakers Circle, Kitchen 2:00 p.m. Book Group on Zoom 7:00 p.m. Executive Council meeting, Zoom	7 9:00 a.m. Home Bureau, Founders' Rm. 10:00 a.m. Prayer Group, Zoom 7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal, Nave, Founders' Rm.	8 1:00 p.m. Piecemakers Meeting/Luncheon, Founders' Rm. 7:00 p.m. Book Group on Zoom 7:00 p.m. Hospice Tree Lighting. See p. 6.	9 10:00 a.m. Prayer Group on Zoom 3:00 p.m. J. Handy Lessons, Nave	10 
11 9:00 a.m. Sunday School and Nursery 10:00 a.m. Worship 11:00 a.m. Budget Vote Meeting 11:00 a.m. Coffee Hour 11:30 a.m. Bell Choir Rehearsal 2:00 p.m. Mid York Concert Band at NHS See p6. 3:00 p.m. Cantata Rehearsal, Zoom 6:00 p.m. LGBTQ+ Fellowship, Zoom	12 10:00 a.m. Prayer Group, Zoom 3:00 p.m. J. Handy Lessons, Nave 3:00 p.m. Tai Chi, Founders' Rm. 3:30 p.m. E. Fischer Lessons, upstairs 6:00 p.m. Garden Club, Founders' Rm. 7:00 p.m. Deacons Meeting, Zoom	13 1:00 p.m. Piecemakers Circle, Kitchen 2:00 p.m. Book Group on Zoom 	14 9:00 a.m. Home Bureau, Founders' Rm. 10:00 a.m. Prayer Group, Zoom 7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal, Nave, Founders' Rm.	15 7:00 p.m. Book Group on Zoom	16 10:00 a.m. Prayer Group on Zoom 3:00 p.m. J. Handy Lessons, Nave 6:00 p.m. The Place Teen Forum Cookie Exchange and Gift Making. See p. 6.	17 3:00 p.m. Cantata Dress Rehearsal, Nave 
18 9:00 a.m. Sunday School and Nursery 10:00 a.m. Worship 11:00 a.m. Coffee Hour 4:00 p.m. Cantata performance. See back cover. 6:00 p.m. LGBTQ+ Fellowship, Zoom 	19 10:00 a.m. Knitting Group, kitchen 10:00 a.m. Prayer Group, Zoom 4:00 p.m. J. Handy Dress Rehearsal Nave 3:00 p.m. Tai Chi, Founders' Rm. 7:00 p.m. Trustees Meeting, Zoom	20 1:00 p.m. Piecemakers Circle, Kitchen 7:00 p.m. J. Handy Students' Recital, Nave	21 9:00 a.m. Home Bureau, Founders' Rm. 10:00 a.m. Prayer Group, Zoom 6:00 p.m. Democratic Committee, Founders' Rm. 7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal, Nave, Founders' Rm. 7:00 p.m. Blue Christmas Service.	22 	23 10:00 a.m. Prayer Group on Zoom	24 Christmas Eve 4:45 p.m. Prelude 5:00 p.m. Candlelight and Communion Service Nursery Available 
25 Christmas Day No worship service today. 	26 <i>Church Office Closed</i> 10:00 a.m. Prayer Group, Zoom 3:00 p.m. Tai Chi,	27 <i>Church Office Closed</i> 1:00 p.m. Piecemakers, Kitchen	28 9:00 a.m. Home Bureau, Founders' Rm. 10:00 a.m. Prayer Group, Zoom	29	30 10:00 a.m. Prayer Group on Zoom	31



Hospice Light Up a Life

Thursday, December 8, 7:00 p.m.

Hospice Office

33-39 Court Street, Norwich

Join Hospice of Chenango for a memorial tree lighting service to honor the lives of loved ones that have passed. Memorial ornaments are available for purchase. Call (607)334-3556 for more information.



Mid York Concert Band Holiday Concert

Sunday, December 11

2:00 p.m.

Norwich High School

Free will offering.



Blue Christmas Service

A community worship service of comfort and hope
**Wednesday, December 21,
7:00 p.m.**

**Broad Street United
Methodist Church
74 N. Broad St., Norwich**

What is a Blue Christmas Service?

For many people, the approaching Christmas holiday doesn't bring with it the joy and happiness that's advertised in the media or in greeting cards. Facing a holiday: after the death of a loved one, after a divorce or separation, while suffering with a life-threatening illness, while coping with the loss of a job, or any other situation that puts a question mark over our future can leave us feeling overwhelmed and downhearted. This service is intended to provide a sacred, reflective, and safe gathering time and space for people to grieve yet will focus on the message of comfort and hope that God offers to all of us during difficult times.

Everyone within the community is welcome to join us for a quiet, spiritual time in the midst of this busy season. We hope that you'll consider joining us.

Poinsettias



Poinsettias will be used in decorating the church for Christmas from December 3 through Christmas Eve. You have the opportunity to provide one in memory or honor of someone. Please return this form to the church office by December 16th and indicate if you want to purchase one or if you will bring one in.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Yes, I would like to dedicate a poinsettia
(circle one) IN MEMORY or IN HONOR of:

Choose one:

- ☐ Please bill me \$15.00
- ☐ Payment enclosed
- ☐ I will bring in a poinsettia.

Choose one:

- ☐ The Deacons can give my plant to a homebound person.
- ☐ I will pick up my plant after the Christmas Eve Service.



Teen Program Cookie Exchange and Gift Making (for teens 13-19) at The Place

December 16, 6 - 8 p.m.

Bring your favorite home-baked cookies and a reusable cookie container so we can share.

We will make mason jar gifts perfect for loved ones and friends.

Call Julie at 607-336-9696 to register or for more information.

We've Got Mail



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. We appreciate you and we hope you, and your family, stay healthy and safe in these uncertain times.

Please keep in mind that our organization provides grief services and counseling to anyone in Chenango County, free of charge. In times of crisis, this resource is valuable and crucial to our entire community.

Thank you.

Nolleen Barber

Hospice & Palliative Care of Chenango County

Dear UCC,

On behalf of the volunteers and clients that are part of Our Daily Bread Food Pantry, we want to thank you for the donation you made in early October. As you know, we are now giving our families a 5 day/15 meal package and have increased the amount of milk that we give each household on the milk voucher. Your donation will help with the increase in food that we need to be able to do this. Our clients continue to be grateful for the food and milk that we are able to give them. We couldn't provide food for the numbers of people that we're feeding without generous donations like yours. With the increase in food and gas prices, we have seen an increase in the number of families coming to the pantry for the past five months. In September, we provided food to 114 households, consisting of 121 children, 215 adults and 26 seniors. We assume this will continue and are happy that we can be there to assist families.

Gratefully yours,

Barbara and Gary Tompkins

Food Pantry Coordinators

Our Daily Bread Food Pantry



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.
- ◆ all those affected by the worldwide Covid-19 Pandemic
- ◆ those for whom the holidays are a sad time
- ◆ these members of our church family as they deal with health concerns: Rita Giangarra, Julie Gonzalez, Vicki Gray, Cheri Oakley, Ericka Tyler

Contact the church office if you'd like an address to send a card or to add or remove someone from this list.

OUR PRAYERS AND SYMPATHY TO

- the family of **Irene Sobers** who died on October 27, 2022.
- **Ed Tucker** for the loss of his wife, **Ruth Tucker** who died on November 11, 2022.



December Celebrations

BIRTHDAYS

- 2 Pat Whitmore
- 3 Pete Williams
- 10 Bonnie Carpenter
- 11 Judy Smith
- 12 Jamie Maholchic
- 14 Elizabeth Bronson
- 16 Vicki Gray, J. R. Hamilton
- 18 Margaret Burke
- 19 Marissa Phelps
- 27 Mary Carson
- 30 Jason Boyd

ANNIVERSARIES

- 12/01/07 David and Rena Hall
- 12/18/05 Matt and Jamie Maholchic

SEEKERS OF THE LIGHT

A Cantata for Christmas

by Mark Hayes and Lloyd Larson

Mary Williams, Director

Jason Handy, Accompanist

LIVE AND IN-PERSON

Sunday, December 18, 2022 at 4:00 p.m.

United Church of Christ

11 West Main Street, Norwich NY

or livestream at www.uccnorwichnyorg.live-stream-2

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

www.uccnorwichny.org

607-334-3434

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



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