

**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 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
Director of Children and Youth Ministries:
Ericka Tyler
Parish Coordinator: Cheri Oakley
Financial Assistant: Jennifer Mallozzi
Custodian: Eric Burgher

In This Issue

Anniversaries and Birthdays	7
Calendar	5
Children and Family Ministries	4
Deacons Doings	3
Music Ministries	4
From the Pastor	2
Prayer Concerns	7



**Sunday
February 19
10:00 a.m.**

Swing out of Epiphany and into Lent!
(The jazz kind of swing we mean!)

**Join us
for a joyous, Mardi Gras style worship service
followed by a special
New Orleans style potluck!**

**Break out your beads, masks and boas!
Wear your most garish outfits!**

Laissez les bons temps roulez!



From the Pastor

Rev. Jason Boyd

Lent! *Wait, what?* OK, OK. It's not here yet. But it is coming. Ash Wednesday is February 22. We hope you will join us for worship that evening at 7pm, which will be a community Ash Wednesday Service and Ukraine Prayer Service. Our Lenten journey soon begins, but we have some stops along the way coming.

Mardi Gras! A new tradition begins this year as with good humor and celebration, we will have our "Feast Before Fast" on Sunday, February 19. Grab your beads and masks and your boas, pull out your most garish apparel, and laissez les bons temps roulez! Your Spirit will be lifted high with a joyous worship that Sunday morning, followed by a wonderful New Orleans-style potluck meal together in the Founder's Room. A huge thanks to Pat Burke for coordinating, and to all those who have signed up to help her. Don't hesitate to be in touch with her to offer your help as well.

Soon thereafter we enter into one of the holiest times of the year, a walk through the 40 days and 40 nights which leads us to the Resurrection on Easter Sunday. Our Lenten worship will include a new ritual this year, similar to our candles of Advent, a Service of Diminishing Lights. Our first Lenten Sunday is February 26.

That number, 40, is significant beyond just the number of days in Lent. Frequently in scripture, the number 40 is a bit of a metaphor for "a long time." In other words, 40 doesn't always mean 40. So, when you count the number of days from Ash Wednesday to Easter and notice it's 46, it's OK. I promise. Technically, Sundays don't "count." We don't have to be exact with this.

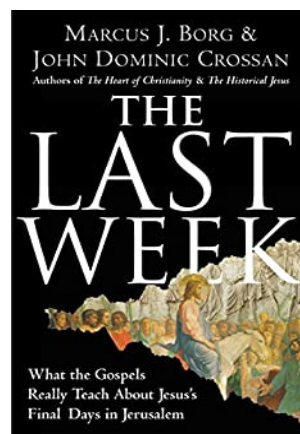
The scriptures tell us that Moses spent 40 days on Mount Sinai with God, and that God's chosen people wandered the desert for 40 years. The story of the Noah and the flood included 40 days of rain, and when the story of Jesus being tempted in the desert had him there for – you guessed it – 40 days. We have that symbolism of '40' and we know that it represented significant time.

Historically, fasting is one of the more commonly selected Lenten disciplines. Giving up chocolate or coffee for Lent, as difficult as that sounds to some of our ears, is common – as is giving up some other food. But if you are seeking a Lenten discipline, fasting from a food is not your only option. Perhaps holding on to your coffee and

chocolate and letting go of something else might be more faithful for you. As Lent is a time for us to prepare ourselves for the coming Resurrection, are there other ways that you might make ready for the Risen Christ? Is there penance you need to make? Are there things for which you need to seek forgiveness? If you often forget to spend time in prayer, you might even try "fasting from forgetting," committing yourself to that important time connecting with God.

Or are there other things in your life and world which keep you from being closer to God? Might you fast from them and see where the Spirit leads you? Be well and blessed on your Lenten journey.

Pastor Jason



Lenten Book Read and Study

Pastor Jason has chosen another book for us all to read together — *The Last Week: What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus's Final Days in Jerusalem*, by John Dominic Crossan and Marcus J. Borg. Copies

are available in the church office. Discussion groups will be held **Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m. or Thursdays at 2:00 p.m. on Zoom beginning February 21st and running through April 13th**. You can attend some, or all or none of the discussions. You are not obligated to join a discussion if you pick up and read the book.

Lenten Litany on Fasting and Feasting

Fast from judging others —

Feast on seeing Christ within them.

Fast from emphasis on differences —

Feast on the unity of life.

Fast from thoughts of illness —

Feast on the healing power of God.

Fast from words that pollute —

Feast on phrases that purify.

Fast from discontent —

Feast on gratitude.

Fast from anger —

Feast on patience.

Fast from pessimism —

Feast on optimism.

Fast from complaining —

Feast on appreciation.

Fast from negatives —

Feast on affirmatives.

Fast from unrelenting pressures —

Feast on unceasing prayer.

Fast from hostility —

Feast on non-resistance.

Fast from bitterness —

Feast on forgiveness.

Fast from self-concern —

Feast on compassion for others.

Fast from personal anxiety —

Feast on eternal truth.

Fast from discouragement —

Feast on hope.

Fast from lethargy —

Feast on enthusiasm.

Fast from suspicion —

Feast on truth.

Fast from thoughts that weaken —

Feast on promises that inspire.

Fast from shadows of sorrow —

Feast on the sunlight of sincerity.

Fast from idle gossip —

Feast on purposeful silence.

Fast from problems that overwhelm —

Feast on prayer that undergirds.

Fast from instant gratification —

Feast on self-denial.

Fast from worry —

Feast on divine providence and trust in God.

Fast from sin —

Feast on the abundance of God's mercy.

Adapted from text of William Arthur Ward - American author, teacher and pastor, 1921-1994

Deacons Doings

Rose Laughlin, Deacon



Our Deacons Book Club is up and running in its new location, The Mayflower Room. Many new titles have been added and there is a collection box so that you can “take a book and leave a buck.” Please feel free to take a look at your convenience. All money collected will go to the Deacons Fund, which helps people in our community who are in need.

I would like also like to thank those people who have signed up to volunteer in the services on Sunday as liturgists, ushers and coffee hour hosts. We appreciate you! And please continue to check the board and sign up in February and March.

Bible Study

The Epiphany Bible Study continues through February 20th at 2:00 p.m. on Zoom on Mondays, except for the week of February 12 when it will be held on Tuesday February 14th. We gather on Zoom each week to read together and discuss the Lectionary scriptures. You are welcome to join! Printed and electronic copies are available from the church office. For the Zoom meeting link, contact the church office or Pastor Jason.

Children and Family Ministries

Ericka Tyler

Change is upon us! After a few weeks of research and review, a new curriculum has finally been chosen for our Sunday School program! The program is called **Grow Students**. This program is designed to work in person and/or online and can be adapted to use with both our upper elementary as well as middle school age youth. The curriculum will come packed with resources, including 50 weeks of lesson plans, short (1 minute!) video sermons for each week, weekly Teaching Guides, games and activities, discipleship tools, and much more! The program is interactive, discussion-driven, and centered around four basic spiritual habits that lead to long term spiritual growth. *Grow* believes that “spiritual growth should be the lens through which we see everything else we do in our ministries.” In order for our children to grow closer to God, we need to help them engage in these habits on a regular basis! Throughout the next year, the four spiritual habits your children will be focusing on include spending time with others, spending time with God, using their gifts, and sharing their story. In addition to these, the program addresses other important topics such as family and friendship, identity, wisdom, loving others, hurt & pain, doubt, justice, and evangelism. I cannot wait to receive the curriculum and get started with our new *Grow* program!

Aside from a new program, we have also chosen to adjust our Sunday School lesson time! The new time will be **during** the worship service, after the Children’s Moment. When the Children’s Moment has concluded, children will be invited to head upstairs with both myself and Leona (our assistant) to begin our lesson. Sunday School will conclude around the time the worship service ends each week. Please stay tuned for an official start date as we await the arrival of our new curriculum.

Keep checking your weekly church bulletin and watch for email updates about both the Sunday School program and our new teen Youth Group! I will also do my best to keep you updated with regard to the renovation progress of the Youth Room. When the time comes, I will likely

be asking for help moving furniture and supplies from our old Sunday School room to our new one!

Thank you so much for your support and prayer as we go through these many changes. God Bless!



It’s that Time of Year!
**In case of inclement weather
please don’t take any risks to
get to church on a Sunday morning.**

You can tune in to the livestream at
<www.uccnorwichny.org/live-stream-2>

If we cancel church all together, we will post on Facebook and Instagram, and also with a message on the church phone (607-334-3434).







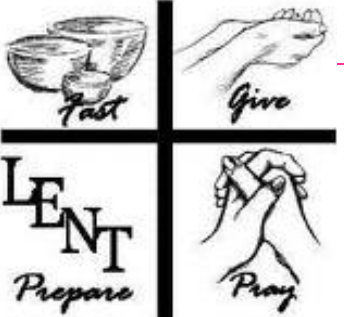
Music Ministries

Thank you to everyone who attended the cantata, *Seekers of the Light* on December 18. It was a wonderful afternoon of beautiful music as we prepared for Christmas. And thank you for your generosity in giving toward the offering. We collected over \$450 for The Christmas Fund, which provides emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas “Thank You” gift checks to lower-income UCC retirees.

February is Black history month. To celebrate, music heard and sung during worship has been selected to highlight the talents of African American composers.

February 2023

The Norwich Muslim Community meets upstairs every evening and Friday afternoon.

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 9:00 a.m. - Home Bureau, Founders Rm. 10:00 a.m. - Prayer Circle, Zoom 5:45 p.m. - Missions Comm, Mayflower Rm. 7:00 p.m. - Choir	2 9:30 a.m. - AARP Tax Training, Founders' Rm.	3 10:00 a.m. - Prayer Circle, Zoom 3:00 p.m. - J. Handy Lessons, upstairs	4 10:00 a.m. - Pastor Parish Relations Committee Training, Mayflower Rm., Nave
5 9:00 a.m. - Nursery 10:00 a.m. - Worship/Communion 11:00 a.m. - Coffee Hr. 11:30 a.m. - Bell Choir, upstairs 6:00 p.m. - LGBTQ+ Forum, Zoom	6 9:00 a.m. - AARP Tax Training, Founders' Rm. 10:00 a.m. - UCC Knitting Group, Mayflower Room 10:00 a.m. - Prayer Circle, Zoom 2:00 p.m. - Bible Study, Zoom 3:00 p.m. - Tai Chi, Mayflower Rm. 3:00 p.m. - J. Handy Lessons 3:30 p.m. - E Fischer Lessons, Nave	7 9:00 a.m. - AARP Tax Training, Founders' Rm. 1:00 p.m. - Piecemakers, Mayflower Room 5:00 p.m. - Soup Kitchen at St. Bart's.	8 9:00 a.m. - Home Bureau, Founders Rm. 10:00 a.m. - Prayer Circle, Zoom 7:00 p.m. - Choir 	9 1:00 p.m. - Piecemakers Mtg. Founders Rm. 5:30 p.m. - Soul Kitchen Free hot meal at Emmanuel Episcopal Church	10 9:00 a.m. - AARP Tax Training, Founder's Room 10:00 a.m. - Prayer Circle, Zoom 3:00 p.m. - J. Handy Lessons, upstairs	11 9:00 a.m. - Piecemakers Super Sew Day Founders' Rm., Kitchen
12 9:00 a.m. - Nursery 10:00 a.m. - Worship, 11:00 a.m. - Coffee Hr. 11:30 a.m. - Bell Choir, upstairs 6:00 p.m. - LGBTQ+ Forum, Zoom	13 8:00 a.m. - AARP Tax Prep, Founders' Rm. 10:00 a.m. - Prayer Circle, Zoom 3:00 p.m. - Tai Chi, Mayflower Rm. 3:00 p.m. - J. Handy Lessons, upstairs 7:00 p.m. - Deacons Mtg, Zoom	14 8:00 a.m. - AARP Tax Prep, Founders' Rm. 1:00 p.m. - Piecemakers Circle, Mayflower Rm. 2:00 p.m. - Bible Study, Zoom 5:00 p.m. - Soup Kitchen at St. Bart's.	15 9:00 a.m. - Home Bureau, Founders' Rm. 10:00 a.m. - Prayer Circle, Zoom 6:00 p.m. - Democratic Comm., Founders Rm. 7:00 p.m. - Choir	16 8:00 a.m. - AARP Tax Prep, Founders' Rm. 6:00 p.m. Helping Hands Give-away at the YMCA 7:00 p.m. - Trustees Meeting, Zoom	17 10:00 a.m. - Prayer Circle, Zoom 3:00 p.m. - J. Handy Lessons, upstairs DEADLINE FOR MARCH NEWSLETTER ITEMS	18 
19 9:00 a.m. - Nursery 10:00 a.m. - Worship <i>Mardi Gras</i> 11:00 a.m. - Lunch, Founders Rm. 11:30 a.m. Bell Choir, upstairs 6:00 p.m. - LGBTQ+ Forum, Zoom	20 President's Day Church Office Closed 8:00 a.m. - AARP Tax Prep, Founders' Rm. 10:00 a.m. - Prayer Circle, Zoom 3:00 p.m. - Tai Chi, Mayflower Rm. 3:00 p.m. - J. Handy Lessons, upstairs 3:30 p.m. - E. Fischer Lessons, Nave	21 8:00 a.m. - AARP Tax Prep, Founders' Rm. 1:00 p.m. - Piecemakers Circle, Mayflower Rm. 5:00 p.m. - Soup Kitchen at St. Bart's. 7:00 p.m. - Book Discussion, Zoom	22 Ash Wednesday 9:00 a.m. - Home Bureau, Founders' Rm. 10:00 a.m. - Prayer Circle, Zoom 7:00 p.m. - Ash Wednesday/Ukraine Prayer Service, UCC Nave 	23 8:00 a.m. - AARP Tax Prep, Founders' Rm. 2:00 p.m. - Book Discussion, Zoom	24 10:00 a.m. - Prayer Circle, Zoom 3:00 p.m. - J. Handy Lessons	25 9:00 a.m. - Fourth Sataurday Diaper Distribution, First Baptist Church,
26 9:00 a.m. - Nursery 10:00 a.m. - Worship 11:00 a.m. - Coffee Hour 11:30 a.m. - Bell Choir, upstairs 6:00 p.m. - LGBTQ+ Forum, Zoom	27 8:00 a.m. - AARP Tax Prep, Founders' Rm. 10:00 a.m. - Prayer Circle, Zoom 3:00 p.m. - Tai Chi, Mayflower Rm. 3:00 p.m. - J. Handy Lessons, upstairs	28 8:00 a.m. - AARP Tax Prep, Founders' Rm. 1:00 p.m. - Piecemakers Circle, Mayflower Rm. 5:00 p.m. - Soup Kitchen at St. Bart's.				

We've Got Mail



Dear UCC,

On behalf of the United Way we would like to extend our gratitude for your very generous donation. All donations raised in Chenango County stay in Chenango County and help provide vital funding to local programs.

Through the generosity and community support of donors like you we will be able to provide funding to our Chenango Community Partners, which in turn provides the programming that improves the quality of life for our family, friends and neighbors in times of need.

Again, thank you for your donation to the United Way for Campaign 2023. Your generosity creates results that enable our community to more fully LIVE UNITED.

Elizabeth Monaco, Executive Director
Chenango United Way

Dear UCC,

Thank you so much for your recent gift to the Chenango SPCA, a no-kill shelter. As part of the gift of Life Campaign your generous donation will be part of a matching program.

I want to thank you for always being so good to our animals. The last few years have been challenging with the pandemic, too many animals and costs of everything going up – so this will help tremendously.

Annetta J. Clarke, Executive Director
Chenango SPCA

Dear UCC,

Thank you for your gift in support of the ministry of theological education at Lancaster Seminary. Your gift provides support for Lancaster Seminary's mission "to educate and nurture leaders to join God's redemptive and liberating work so that all creation may flourish." The support you provide with your prayers and your gifts opens the doors for our students' education, opens their minds to learning, and opens their hearts to serving.

Matthew Hanna, Assistant Director
Data Management and Reporting
Lancaster Theological Seminary

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 very generous donations that you sent in December. Your donations will be used to purchase food to be given out at the pantry.

With the increase in food and gas prices we have seen an increase in the number of families coming to the pantry. We assume this will continue and are happy that we can be there to assist families. In November, we provided food to 102 families/285 people and in December 99 families/298 people.

Barb and Gary Tompkins, Co-Coordiators
Our Daily Bread Food Pantry

Dear UCC,

My wife and I would like to formally thank you for your generous gift of the Pack 'n' Play crib provided by Public Health Nursing. we really appreciate it considering what we have had to overcome the last month or so. Fostering a child we were not expecting to foster certainly comes with its costs. So again, helping with alleviating some of that burden has not gone unrecognized. Thank you.

Alexander and Carrie

Dear Pastor Jason,

Your Christmas service was really nice; the church looked so beautiful - so glad you are still doing Youtube. I can't always get them, but I always try. I loved the prayers with the kid's music. Glad to see Scarlett also. Blessings to you all.

Lucia Buck (Tally and Bella)

Weekly Soup Kitchen

The Norwich Catholic Community Soup Kitchen has a sit-down dinner every Tuesday from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m. at our parish center, 81 East Main Street. The dinner is open to all, is free of charge, and it runs from September through May. There is plenty of room for seating. If Norwich schools are closed, then the soup kitchen is closed too. Any questions, call the Catholic parish office at 607-337-2215.





High School Seniors & College Students

United Church of Christ, First Congregational, Norwich, NY has a long history of gifts bequeathed by former members and memorial gifts given by family and friends. Scholarship amounts vary up to \$1,000.

General Information

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

Applications will be available from the church office or online at www.uccnorwichny.org/links after February 15.

Deadline for applications is April 15.

**Church Office Closed
January 30 - February 12**

Voicemail and email will be checked periodically.



Spring is less than 50 days away

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
- ♦ these members of our church family as they deal with health concerns: Rita McCumber,
- ♦ Julie Gonzalez, Vicki Gray, Jennifer Mallozzi, Cheri Oakley, Ericka Tyler

CONGRATULATIONS TO



Rita Giangarra and Ernest McCumber who were married on December 1, 2022.



February Celebrations



BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Betty Yeahl
- 6 Rose Laughlin
- 9 Matthew Craig
- 16 Audrey Aitken
- 17 Jason Yantz
- 22 Norma Kinney
- 28 Gwendolyn Breese

ANNIVERSARY

John Brereton and Cynthia Maynerd - 2/4/19



Community Ash Wednesday Service and Ukraine Prayer Service

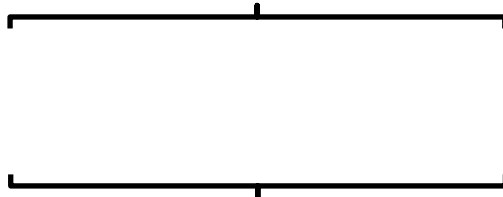


**Wednesday, February 22 at
7:00 p.m.**

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

Livestream available at www.uccnorwichny.org/live-stream-2

All are welcome.



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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