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

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
First Congregational of Norwich, NY

Office Hours

May 20 - May 30
by appointment only.

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From the Pastor

Rev. James K. Boodley

Not Very Accurate

I love levels – the tools with bubbles in them. I have several of various sizes, including a very handsome 48" level I bought at my local reuse store. It's made of wood with brass edges and has a prominent label reading, "Made in USA." (Finding a tool – any tool – made in the USA is a rare find these days.) The level's previous owner also attached two labels that read, "Not Very Accurate." Because levels are used to ensure a project is level from side-to-side or plumb from top to bottom, one would expect them to be as accurate as possible. Nowadays, there are even electronic levels that make use of lasers as well as cell phone apps do the same thing. Still, I loved the admission this particular level wasn't precise, wasn't perfect: "not very accurate." I smiled thinking, "I think we can all identify with that." It reminded me of one of my favorite parables Jesus told about two men who went to the temple to pray:

"Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus, 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people, thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income. But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner.' I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted." (Luke 18:10-14)

I wish I could say I identify with the tax collector. I don't. Except for fasting and tithing, I identify more with the Pharisee. Growing up with a father who had an unpredictable temper, I made sure I didn't screw up *anything*. It was a matter of survival. Being blamed, being *(gasp!)* wrong were causes for deep dread. Avoiding that sense of dread is still an extremely strong – and extremely old – motivator. And yet. These days, I'm actually relieved when some aspect of a worship service doesn't go according to plan: "Now, I can just relax; I don't have to live up to expectations." I don't have to strive for perfection, like the Pharisee, however, I also don't have to beat myself up, like the tax collector. By allowing myself to be human, that gives breathing room for others to be human, too.

The same holds true by letting go of the need to be perfect and, instead, experiencing the world with a sense of humility. By being "not very accurate," we allow God to work through us, make use of us, in ways that help us join the Risen Christ in building the kingdom of God and join others doing the same. That being the case, the tools we bring to that effort – accurate or not – are invaluable.

In hope and faith,

J.K.

Transition Committee Update

Michael Moren, Co-Chairperson

The committee has been working steadily on the narrative for the UCC profile document. We have made updates and changes to pages 1 - 18 so far. There have been many deep conversations regarding the various questions raised by the profile outline. We have also asked others for assistance with pages 19 - 32 which are mostly data and reports with some brief narrative. There are about 8 more pages of narratives after that.

At the present, we are asking for your help with pictures for the profile. If you have any pictures of church services, gatherings, meetings, Sunday school, meals, any activities inside or outside the church or any other picture that relates to UCC, please email them to myself at mjmoren487@gmail.com or Cheri Oakley, Parish Coordinator at office@uccnorwichny.org.

New York Conference Annual Meeting
June 5 - 7 in Albany

We still have one opening for a representative to attend. Registration deadline is May 9, 2025. The church will reimburse all registration and travel expenses.
Information and details can be found here: https://uccny.org/annualmeeting
Talk to Pete Williams for details.

Attention Action Committees Facilitators

The June Annual Meeting date is set for June 22. At that time, the Annual Report will be shared with the congregation. As part of that report, the Executive Council is inviting each Action Committee to submit a brief summary of activities, including the goals and purpose of the group. This information can be sent to the church office at office@uccnorwichny.org.

Broad St. United Methodist Church
74 N. Broad St., Norwich
Friday May 2, 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m
Saturday May 3, 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. (bag sale)

Music Ministries

Mary Williams, Director

Our congregation will be learning a new sung peace response this month called *Deep Peace* by Marian M. Thomas. Here is the text:

> Peace, peace, deep peace, my peace I give to you. (repeat)
> Not as the world gives, I give to you. Not as the world gives, I give to you.
> Peace, peace, deep peace, my peace I give to you.

Kudos to the Choir - We received a compliment from the composer of the anthem that the choir sang from the balcony on Easter morning. Tom Keesecker sent an email after seeing the recording on our Youtube channel. He wrote: "Your choir's performance of 'Alleluia' was beautiful." You can listen to the choir sing "Alleluia" HERE. It starts about 53:45.

The Bell Choir Rehearsal Room has a new door sign. Have you heard of having "*bats in the belfry*"? What is a BELFRY anyway? The belfry is a structure enclosing bells for ringing as part of a building, usually as part of a bell tower or steeple. Our church building has two: a belfry that houses the bell you hear at 10:00 on Sunday mornings and a second space we call "The Belfry" which is the rehearsal room for our bell choir. While it is not a stretch to see a bat in our church building (just ask our custodian, Eric!), I assure you, our Belfry contains wonderful musicians! The new room sign has been installed and incorporates our church logo. The ringers are now working on anthems to be featured in June for Pentecost/New Member Sunday, and Pride Sunday.

Handbell Choir Pictured on Palm Sunday, April 13, 2025
Front row left to right: Ericka Tyler, Amy Rogers, Heavenly Mahaffey, Lilit Danielyan. *Middle row:* Mary Williams (Director), Michael Moren, Dave Burch, Janet Johnson, DJ Smith. *Back row:* John Kolb, Maxine Gage, Pete Williams

Easter Sunday - April 20, 2025 Pictured: Dave Burch (piano), Emma Palmer (flute), Steve Emmons (soloist) perform *Still We Sing Alleluia* by Paulo K. Tirol. Click Here to listen.

Ecumenical Palm Sunday Service 2025

with Broad Street United Methodist Church and United Church of Christ.

"Today's service was a complete success and pleasure from beginning to end. The bell choir— great, the choir— great and Dave' s and Mary's duet was the best. It was so apparent that they enjoyed it as much as the congregation did. Ryan's message set the stage for a meaningful Holy week. Finally, coffee hour was fun. Judy and I sat with ladies from the Methodist Church. They shared the hope that we could have more services together. Thank you to everyone that helped."- Norma Kinney

Spring clean up at the church and parsonage has begun. A lot of work done by volunteers goes on behind the scenes to keep our properties looking nice. The flower beds in front of the parsonage were cleaned up with stone borders added, ready for flowers to be planted when the chance of frost is past.

In addition, the area in front of the church where the large bushes were removed last fall has been raked and cleaned up and is ready for the installation of our new sign.

The city of Norwich's Street Tree Committee planted a tree in in front of the church on Friday, April 25 to coincide with Earth Day. The tree is a Ginkgo tree that will grow about 50 feet tall. Both trees in front of the church have now been replaced.

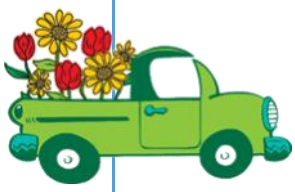
Parsonage Flower Beds - BEFORE

Parsonage Flower Beds - AFTER

Church Front where bushes were located.

Church Front flower bed with spring flowers

New Tree

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1 4:00pm M. Maholchic, Nave	2 *Church Office Closed* **Rummage Sale at BSUMC. See p. 3.**	3
4 9:00am Nursery 10:00am Worship/ Communion Sunday School 11:00am Coffee Hour 12:30pm Youth Group 12:30pm Service at Chenango Valley Home 1:30pm Chenango Change Mtg., Founders Rm.	5 **Cinco de Mayo** *Church Office Closed* 10:00am Knitting Group, Kitchen 2:00pm Tai Chi, Founders Rm. 6:30pm Music Committee, Chapel, Zoom	6 1:00pm Piecemakers Circle, Kitchen 4:00pm M. Maholchic, Nave 5:15pm Free Dinner at St. Bart's. Parish Hall (doors open at 4) 5:30pm Search Committee, Chapel 7:00pm Executive Council, Chapel, Zoom	7 10:00am Prayer Circle, Zoom 7:00pm Choir, Nave	8 1:00pm Piecemakers Monthly Meeting, Founders Rm., Kitchen 4:00pm M. Maholchic, Nave 	9	10
11 *Mother's Day Festival of the Christian Home* 9:00am Nursery 10:00am Worship Sunday School 11:00am Coffee Hour 12:30pm Youth Group 1:30pm Chenango Change Mtg., Founders Rm. 7:00pm M. Maholchic, Nave	12 2:00pm Tai Chi, Founders Rm. 7:00pm Advanced Students Recital, Monday Evening Musical Club, Founders Rm. (See p.10) 	13 1:00pm Piecemakers Circle, Kitchen 3:30pm Search Committee, Chapel 4:00pm M. Maholchic, Nave 5:00pm Pride Alliance Meeting, Founders Rm. 5:15pm Free Dinner at St. Bart's. Parish Hall (doors open at 4)	14 10:00am Prayer Circle, Zoom 7:00pm Choir, Nave	15 4:00pm M. Maholchic, Nave 5:00pm Free Meal at Emmanuel Episcopal (Take outs only at 5:30pm) 6:00pm (until 8)Helping Hands Give-away at YMCA	16 	17
18 9:00am Nursery 10:00am Worship Sunday School 11:00am Coffee Hour 12:30pm Youth Group 1:30pm Chenango Change Mtg., Founders Rm. 2:00pm Mid York Concert Band. See p. 10. 4:30pm Free Meal at BSUMC. See p.8.	19 10:00am Knitting Group, Kitchen 2:00pm Tai Chi, Founders Rm.	20 1:00pm Piecemakers Circle, Kitchen 4:00pm M. Maholchic, Nave 5:15pm Free Dinner at St. Bart's. Parish Hall (doors open at 4)	21 10:00am Prayer Circle, Zoom 4:00pm (until 6) Laundry Love, Byrne Dairy 6:00pm Democratic Comm., Founders Rm. 7:00pm Choir, Nave	22 4:00pm M. Maholchic, Nave 	23	24 9:00am (until 11) Fourth Saturday Diaper Give Away at First Baptist Church
25 9:00am Nursery 10:00am Worship Sunday School 11:00am Coffee Hour 12:30pm Youth Group 1:30pm Chenango Change Mtg., Founders Rm. 7:00pm M. Maholchic, Nave	26 **Memorial Day** *Church Office Closed*	27 1:00pm Piecemakers Circle, Kitchen 4:00pm M. Maholchic, Nave 5:15pm Free Dinner at St. Bart's. Parish Hall (doors open at 4)	28 10:00am Prayer Circle, Zoom 7:00pm Choir, Nave	29 **Ascension Day**	30 	31

Monthly Topic from the Chenango County Health Department

May is ***Older Americans Month***, a time to recognize, honor, and support the older adults in our community. This year's national theme, *Powered by Connection* highlights the importance of social connection and community engagement in promoting physical, mental, and emotional well-being among older adults. It's also a reminder of the many ways to stay healthy as we age by staying active, eating nutritious meals, engaging with others, and seeking out support when needed.

Healthy Aging: Small Steps Make a Big Impact

Staying healthy as we age doesn't have to be complicated. Simple daily choices like staying active, eating well, managing medications, and maintaining social connections can significantly improve the quality of life. Light physical activity such as walking, stretching, or gardening helps with mobility, strength, and balance. A balanced diet of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins supports energy levels and immune function. Just as important is staying socially active by connecting with friends, family, and community groups, which can reduce feelings of isolation and help keep the mind sharp.

Local Programs Available to Support You

The Chenango County Area Agency on Aging offers a wide range of services aimed at helping older residents remain safe, independent, and connected, including:

- Medicare counseling and assistance with healthcare coverage questions
- Home Delivered Meals, available to income-eligible residents to ensure consistent access to nutritious food
- Recreational and wellness activities across the county to promote engagement and healthy living
- Transportation assistance for medical appointments and essential errands
- Support with light housework, shopping, and yardwork through volunteer programs

If you or a loved one could benefit from these services, don't hesitate to reach out.

Support and Connection Make a Difference

Volunteers also play an important role in supporting older adults throughout the county. Whether delivering meals, helping with errands, or simply offering a friendly face, these efforts help older adults live with dignity and comfort in their own homes.

Contact Us to Learn More

To learn more about available programs or how to get involved, contact the Chenango County Area Agency on Aging at (607) 337-1770. If you're interested in the Home Delivered Meals program, ask to speak with the Nutrition Services Coordinator to see if you or a family member may qualify based on income and need. You can also contact the Chenango County Health Department at (607) 337-1660 for help with independent living support, placement assistance, and connecting with personal care aides. This May, let's honor older adults by recognizing their contributions, supporting their well-being, and building stronger connections across generations. Stay connected. Stay active. Stay well.

SUNDAY, May 18th

COMMUNITY DINNER

MENU: *Chicken Parm with pasta, roll, tossed salad, and peanut butter fudge*

LOCATION: Broad St. Methodist Church
74 North Broad St. Next to YMCA

4:30 – 6:00 pm EVERYONE WELCOME

Hospice & Palliative Care
OF CHENANGO COUNTY
Caring for Chenango County Families Since 1991

Service of Remembrance
June 5, 5:30 p.m.
at Hospice Office 33-39 Court St., Norwich

Candlelight ceremony honoring the lives of those who have recently passed.

For more information call 607-334-3558

Letters - Emails - Notes

Dear UCC,

We TRULY appreciate the financial help your church is providing for us to continue to provide meals to the community. As you know, our church is functioning in the red, and we have a two million dollar roof/steeple project that we are trying to complete. So again, your funds are really appreciated!!!

I would like to give you some updates on our community meals since you are an integral part of their success.

We provide a free community meal once a month on Sundays from 4:30 to 6:00. We make enough for 200 meals. However, we have been serving over 200 meals lately. We serve about 100ish dine in meals and the rest are takeouts. As people come in, they are able to take free hats, coats, mittens, socks, boots, etc. (These are donated items.) We celebrate and sing to people having a birthday or anniversary that month. We have games, coloring books, etc. for children to do while waiting. We just had the Easter bunny come and visit as our next dinner will be after Easter on April 27th. It was a fun time because our Easter Bunny posed for individual or family pictures.

The challenge of these dinners is the cost. Our church is sadly in the red. Our roof project of 2 million dollars has prevented us from doing fundraising events for extra things such as our dinners. Our church still gives us $400. each month and the UCC gives us $300. Although $700 seems like a lot for the meals, it averages out to be about $3.50 per meal. We think this is a good deal, and indicates some very careful shopping as well as some kind donations. A big issue is the cost of the takeout containers, plastic silverware and plastic bags. It turns out to be about 50 cents per takeout. Therefore, if we have 117 takeouts, that adds an extra $58.00 to the cost of the meals. We are working on trying to get extra funding for these meals since the cost of food is rising so quickly.

We have had very good responses from our guests. Their thank yous and positive comments have been appreciated. We have also taken some informal surveys of the dine in guests. They have helped us as we try to make improvements. We were giving out up to 6 or 8 meals if requested. However, with the input from our diners, we have been told that some people were selling the meals. We are now only giving out 2 takeout meals per person. We continue to look for ways to improve. A suggestion from some of our diners was to consider giving meals to the Warming Center. So, now we are giving 12 meals to the Warming Center each month. We deliver those meals since people are not allowed to leave once they are in the Center.

We have over 30 people coming together to do the meal, set up, serve, take down and clean up. It is an ecumenical event since we have people serving from the Lutheran Church, the United Church of Christ, and from the Catholic Church. Then we have a few people who are community members who have offered to help.

I hope the above will give your church an idea of the impact your funding has had and why it has been so important for us. It has really enabled us to continue this service to the community.

With Sincere Thanks and Gratitude,
Barbara Korver
The Broad Street United Methodist Church

Dear UCC Congregation,

Thank you all so much for the generous donation that you gave to support the soon to be young mothers and babies at Aunt Mary's House. Your donation will help make a difference in their live. We are very grateful for your support.

At Aunt Mary's House, a woman will come to us lost, feeling she is at the end of the road; homeless, hungry, and exhausted, she may only be looking for a hot meal and a safe place to sleep. What she will find is hope and a path to a future she didn't now existed. Some will stay a short time, some will stay up to 2 years, all will have their lives improved by their experience at Aunt Mary's House.

They enter the program to carry out healthy full-term pregnancies, learn to parent an infant/child already born, or to compete a successful adoption. While at the house, they can continue their education and gain the necessary life-skills for a smooth transition into independent living or a safe return to family. Thank you for being a part of this amazing and worthwhile program, we are truly honored! Stay safe and know you are loved!

Brenda White, Executive Director
Aunt Mary's House

Dear Red Cross Supporter,

On behalf of the American Red Cross, thank you for your generous gift in March, which will be applied where it is needed most. 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 deeply 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.

Cliff Holtz, President and CEO,
American Red Cross

Dear Friends,

We graciously thank you for your thoughtful donation to the Danielle House. We are blessed by the enduring kindness of our donors. Your generosity especially at this uncertain time in our world is so appreciated.

Because of you and others like yourself we continue to be able to offer a safe, secure shelter to individuals far from home during medical care or crisis. During 24 years of service we have provided a place of hope and healing to more than 12,000 guests in a time of anxiety and uncertainty.

A recent guest noted: *Danielle House is a wonderful place. I have needed them several times over the years and my experience there is always comforting, welcoming and sometimes even joy during very difficult times. Thank you for making us feel like we were home.*

Thank you for supporting our sacred mission with this charitable gesture; and thank you from our guests for giving them hope in their time of need and through this world crisis.

Diane Stento, Executive Director
Danielle House

Dear UCC,

Please accept our gratitude for your generous donation to the Chenango Family Food Co-op. The support of our community is vital to our growth.

Board of Directors
Chenango Family Food Co-op

Monday Evening Musical Club
presents
Advanced Students and Scholarship Winners

May 12, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.
United Church of Christ, 11 West Main St., Norwich

Livestream at Facebook.com/mondayeveningmusicclub

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Mid York Concert Band
Spring Concert
Sunday May 18 at 2:00 p.m.
Norwich High School Auditorium.

Free admission - Children welcome

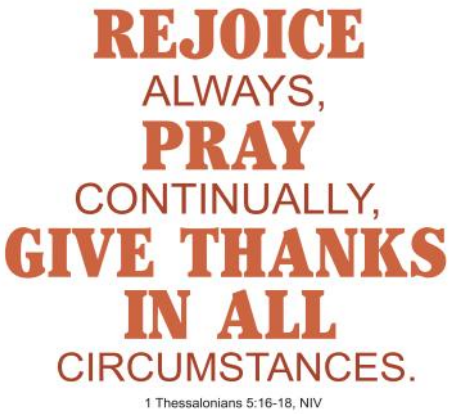
Selections from *Beauty & the Beast*, Highlights from *Carousel*, *The Flag Parade* from *Star Wars Episode 1*, *Swing & Square* from *American Dances*, patriotic tunes & more.

Donations accepted for operating costs and the Mid-York Concert Band Scholarship.
This concert funded by R.C. Smith Foundation.

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



May Celebrations

Birthdays

8	Breanna Rogers
	Luci Yantz
14	Marcas Flindt
17	Joanne Ferguson
20	Tim Carson
23	Terri Yantz
24	Aria Maholchic
25	Bridget Rice
29	Mary Williams

Anniversaries

Miranda and William Hunter 5/27/2000

June 1 - New Members Join

The new member Sunday originally scheduled in April has been moved to June 1. If you've been thinking about joining, here's your chance. It's an easy process - start by talking to Pastor J.K. or contact the church office.

June 8 - Pentecost- Strengthen the Church Offering

The Strengthen the Church Offering furthers the work of our conferences and the national UCC as we work together to strengthen and renew existing congregations, fund leadership development, and provide exciting new programs for youth and young adults. The offering is divided with 50% staying regionally within your conference and 50% supporting the National Ministries.

June 22 - Annual Meeting

We will vote on new Executive Council members and hear reports from the Action Committees.

Note: The June newsletter will be delayed until June 13 to include reports
on the UCCNY Conference that is happening June 5-7 and photos from New Members Sunday .

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
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Norwich, NY 13815-1612

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED